description of some of the procedures involved are at times difficult to follow.

The book also introduces the reader to a whole series of new problems involved in the archaeological process, in other words the problems confronted by a nautical archaeologist over against those confronted by the traditional field archaeologist. For instance, how do you excavate a wooden boat buried in the mud or silt for perhaps 2,000 years, the cells of the wood having deteriorated to the point that the wood is something akin to wet cardboard? How do you preserve a boat of this type? How do you identify a boat of this type?

While Wachsmann takes the reader through these challenging problems and the means by which the team carefully worked out the solutions, he also introduces the reader to a variety of other valuable topics, that is, important pools of information about the culture, geography, and history of Palestine as it relates to the ancient world of which the boat was a part. For instance, Wachsmann dedicates an entire chapter to the Sea of Galilee in which he introduces the reader to important information about the large inland lake, the names associated with it and the important stories, traditions, and legends about the lake. Though the information about the Sea of Galilee is encyclopedic in nature, Wachsmann again delivers it to the reader through his storyline approach. Other important topics Wachsmann highlights include the role of the Sea of Galilee and seafaring activities in the Gospels, the role of the naval battle at Migdal in the Jewish Roman War, the origin and evolution of oil lamps and the role they play in dating, as well as others.

All this adds up to an informative reader-friendly volume. Wachsmann is to be commended for his excellent report, the style by which he brings it to the reader, and the manner in which he shares his own intrigue and personal involvement with the project. The Sea of Galilee Boat should be read by anyone interested in archaeology, Jewish history, or early Christianity. Though not all field reports—whether they be from land or from sea—lend themselves to this format and style, the book is an excellent model for archaeological reporting that bridges the gap between research and the lay reader.

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Timnah: A Biblical City in the Sorek Valley


This is the sort of popular account of an excavation which every dig director should aspire to write. In plain, non-speculative, jargon-free English, it describes the results of the twelve excavation seasons (1977-79, 1981-89) directed by the authors at Tel Batash, biblical Timnah. Not only is the text well written, but the volume is profusely illustrated with uniformly excellent black and white photographs, plans, sections, isometric views, drawings of artifacts, and thirty-eight color photographs.

The introduction provides the reasons for the excavation: the elucidation of the Late Bronze to Iron I transition and the desire to provide a field school for students and volunteers. Chapter 1 gives a brief overview of the geographic setting of Tel Batash and the history of its identification with Timnah. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the course of the excavation, the areas excavated, and the system used to record the site’s remains (further information on the excavation’s daily routine, its staff, and its sponsors are found in three appendices).

The meat of the excavation results is contained in chapters 3-8, which cover Timnah in the Neolithic to Middle Bronze Ages, the Late Bronze Age, Philistine Timnah, Timnah during the United Monarchy, eighth-century Timnah, and seventh-century Timnah. These chapters follow the same basic form: historical introduction for the period, including biblical and extra-biblical sources, discussion of sources which mention Timnah in particular, account of the architectural remains on an area by area basis (and by stratum where a chapter deals with more than one stratum), description of artifactual remains of particular importance, and an account of the end of the stratum. The authors are especially to be congratulated for their efforts to set Timnah in its regional and Near Eastern context. Moreover, the text is mercifully free of exaggerated claims and speculations presented as fact. When the artifactual data necessary for dating a building or stratum is not there, the authors feel free to admit it, rather than pressing the issue.

Chapter 8, the seventh-century Stratum II, is perhaps the most interesting chapter as this stratum was violently destroyed and yielded rich ceramic assemblages. In addition, the remains of this stratum emerged just below the ground surface and so were widely exposed. Excavators uncovered the remains of private dwellings, part of a public building, two olive pressing complexes (similar to those at nearby Tel Miqne), two industrial complexes possibly used for textile dyeing, a possible cult room, part of a road, and sections of the town fortifications. The authors point out that olive pressing and textile production were complementary, not conflicting, industries. They provide a useful summary of the settlement plan and a comparison to other broadly excavated sites and discuss several problematic issues.

The book has only two weaknesses. First, it lacks a bibliography and indexes. The end notes for each chapter contain the pertinent sources, but a comprehensive bibliography would have made it more user friendly for the reader. Second, the figures are not keyed into the text; an occasional parenthetical reference to the appropriate figure would have been helpful. These two matters aside, this is a book which will provide the scholar with a good overview and introduction to the site, and the lay person with an eminently readable excavation account.

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