Introduction

Topic and Scope
Archaeology in Israel of the biblical period is one of the most exciting in the discipline. It has been a tool to confirm or reject the historicity of the Bible and, in
the formation of the state of Israel, put to politic use. It is apparent from researching this topic and calling up sources that had nothing to do with Israel that political aspects of archaeology is not new, that interests other than scientific have and continue to influence excavations—such that many published works on archaeology are not about excavations but about the nature of an excavation in relation to ethnic and historical claims to the land. This is one of the political angles that is explored in this guide.

Because there is no lack of materials, and because archaeological methodology and discoveries build on earlier excavations, with scholarship being superseded by later work, the decision was made to limit the scope of this bibliographic guide to works published from 1990 to the present.

Reinterpretation of earlier archaeological digs is always exciting and there has been no lack of controversies in the last 15 years. All the more so when the archaeological site is a hotly contested piece of real estate where Israeli Jews and Palestinians struggle for ownership of land and its history, where Orthodox Jews fight against excavations of cemeteries, and where governments and agencies have their own self-interests of control to advance.

One interesting development of archaeology in Israel is that in contrast to conducting excavations for the purposes of validating the Bible, archaeological work of the past few decades has focused more on the scientific aspect. What does that mean in terms of politics and agenda? Probably not much.

As a minor note, the geographic sphere of biblical archaeology in this research paper is restricted to present day Israel, formerly known as Palestine.

**Audience**
General lay readers interested in the ways in which archaeological scholarship in Israel has been put to use to advance sociopolitical interests and the societal disturbances that manifest from excavations of the biblical period from the late Bronze Age (1550 BCE) to the Roman period (324 CE). Some familiarity with Biblical stories and the history of the ancient peoples of Palestine, including the Israelites, is assumed.

**Citation Style**
The style manual used in this bibliography plan is the seventh edition of *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*.

**Key**
Subject headings—controlled vocabulary (CV)—are in ALL CAPS, as well as Boolean operators: AND/OR. Natural language (NL) terms are lower case and italicized, and truncated terms are noted with an asterisk (*).

**Search Terms**

**Library of Congress Subject Headings**
(Most relevant subject headings)

- Excavations (Archaeology) – Political aspects – Israel

- Archaeologists – Israel

- Ethnoarchaeology -- Israel

Or subdivided by aspects of geographic category:

- Israel – Antiquities – Political aspects
Library of Congress Call Numbers

Class D – World history and history of Europe, etc.
Subclass DS Asia
DS101-151 Israel (Palestine). The Jews
DS109-109.94 Jerusalem
DS111-111.9 Antiquities
DS113.2-113.8 Ethnography. Tribes of Israel
DS114-128.2 History

Thus, Israel – Politics and government – 20th century is DS11
Hence, Israel – Antiquities is DS111.1

Search Results

OPACs (Online Public Access Catalogs)

Voyager: University of Hawai`i at Manoa Library

Using the advanced search, I entered the search term ARCHAEOLOGY AND POLITICAL ASPECTS in the keyword default fields and received 22 results. Out of the 22 results, 6 were highly relevant; 5 were possibly relevant (it wasn’t possible to tell from the notes) while the remainder were irrelevant. This translates to anywhere from 27% to 50% relevant. I also picked up some additional CV: Archaeologists – Political activity; Archaeology -- Political aspects -- Case studies; Archaeology -- Social aspects; Archaeology--Moral and ethical aspects; Archaeology and state – case studies; Middle East – Antiquities; and Archaeology – political aspects -- Middle
East. Meandering through one of these links, such as Archaeology – Moral and ethical aspects, brings up interesting works and within a work, such marginally relevant articles such as “Descendant communities: linking people in the present to the past” by Joe Watkins.

I suppose part of being a sleuth is recognizing—when no other information is available in a record, names of Israeli archaeologists in a compilation or collection, or noting the Jewish origins of last names among a team of authors—likely denoting an Israel-related subject.

From this search, several valuable works were discovered and are to be found in the sample annotated entries section, including *Archaeology as Political Action* by Randall McGuire and *Facts on the Ground: Archaeological Practice and Territorial Self-fashioning in Israeli Society* by Nadia Abu El-Haj. There was also *Archaeology Under Fire: Nationalism, Politics and Heritage in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East*, edited by Lynn Meskell.

**WorldCat**

I entered the LCSH search terms ARCHAEOLOGY AND POLITICAL ASPECTS AND ISRAEL in the keyword default fields and received 25 results. Some of the entries turned out to be redundant, the only difference being its publication or market outside of the U.S. Others were the same works found in UH Voyager. Still, the listing was on target, and new, interesting works were found:

This new one was particularly germane:

Flora S. Kaplan’s *Museums and the Making of "Ourselves": The Role of Objects in National Identity* (London: Leicester University Press, 1994). To the degree that museums are often repositories of archaeological objects, I thought this was another valuable CV: museums – political aspects. Upon looking at
the record, there was indeed an article on archaeological museums in Israel.

One record that was “possibly highly relevant” in the Voyager catalog but not detailed I was able to confirm here: Kohl, Kozelsky, and Ben-Yehuda’s *Selective Remembrances Archaeology in the Construction, Commemoration, and Consecration of National Pasts*.

I found this highly relevant Hebrew title: *Archaeology and nationalism in Eretz-Israel*. I didn’t use the Descriptors given however:
Nationalism -- Israel.
Jews -- Identity.

I was particularly pleased to discover a fictionalized drama on video with the focus on a Palestinian excavation, *al-Sabbar Cactus*.

**Indexes and Databases**

**JSTOR Arts and Sciences Collection**

There was no controlled vocabulary in this database. I wasn’t sure whether I was doing this correctly because no matter what combinations of *israeli archaeology AND political aspects* (1078 entries) or *excavations AND israel* AND *politic* (12 entries), the entries themselves were not relevant with the exception of a few.

With israeli archaeology AND political activism. I got 188 entries. It seems that this was a miss. Most of the entries were not relevant. I did pick up one gem, though: *Archaeology, Ideology, and the Quest for an “Ancient” or “Biblical Israel.”*

In general, I found the articles too old for the objectives of this guide.
GeoBase\textsuperscript{12}

This was a rather hard to use database because of its unfamiliarity. I used a number of combinations and retrieved 0 results:

- politics.kw. and archaeology -- israel.af.
- archaeolog*.kw. and israel*.af. and political aspects.af.

with:

- (archaeolog* and israel*).af. = 282 results
- again zero results with:
- archaeolog*.kw. and israel.af. and politic*.af.

Finally, I came up with a reasonable number of entries—13—using the following search terms:

- (archaeolog* and israel and politic*).af.

But the results were not really on target, perhaps two of relevance.

One of them was very much on target: *If I forget thee, O Jerusalem: Archaeology, religious commemoration and nationalism in a disputed city, 1801-2001.*\textsuperscript{13}

With the above article, I was able to find Descriptors:

- archaeology
- nationalism
- political ideology
- religion
- Israel

The articles in this database are historical or technical in nature, often in a completely different time period. So the “politics” often refers to the political structure of an ancient society.

Academic Search Premier\textsuperscript{14}
My second try in this database (I could not understand my own notes from the first try) I used the following search terms in various combinations of SU, KY, and default mode (see appendix): ARCHAEOLOGY AND POLITICAL ASPECTS AND ISRAEL. Best results were from truncating and ANDing these three to archaeology* AND politic* AND Israel in the default fields (81 results) and excavation* AND politic* AND Israel in the default fields (27 results), and then using the thesaurus to work with some combinations. Using Archaeolog* AND PALESTINIAN Arab brought 13 results—9 of which were highly relevant. Finally, some works I hadn’t yet seen… Such as this article published in 2009 which views the issue of excavations as a means to encroach upon Palestinian property: “Settlers or Squatters?” by Edward Platt.¹⁵

The following article describes how artifacts allegedly taken from Palestinian territory as illegal in exhibitions.

I also found this record interesting: "Palestinians Protest Exhibition of Dead Sea Scrolls In Toronto."¹⁶

Yet another interesting article concerns the author of one of the books in the Sample Annotated Entries section: "Who Got to Decide on Nadia Abu El-Haj's Tenure?"¹⁷

I found these subject terms but they were not helpful in bringing up relevant materials:

Subjects: EXCAVATIONS (Archaeology); PALESTINIAN Arabs -- Israel; ARCHAEOLOGY & state; ANTIQUITIES; JERUSALEM; ISRAEL

Historical Abstracts, Military & Government Collection, Peace Research Abstracts, Religion and Philosophy Collection¹⁸
Within EBSCO provider, I chose the following databases Historical Abstracts, Military & Government Collection, Peace Research Abstracts, Religion and Philosophy Collection.

I used the following search terms and Boolean operators and got 53 entries (what a gold mine!), which were highly relevant: (archaeolog* OR excavation*) AND Israel AND politic* in the default fields.

After looking at some of the entries, I realized that the articles were about politics and Israel and archaeology but the politics part was about the archaeological findings in the context of ancient history and not necessarily about the political aspects of archaeology in the present. How to limit this using Boolean operators? I didn’t know how to do this but I thought I would give it a try. So I tried using politic* as a subject term and got 15 results.

Here I found “Shifting Ground in the Holy Land” (one of sample the annotated entries) as well as “Playing With Fire,” a right-on target article about the inflammatory nature of archaeological digs.19

Project Muse20
This was the first time I had used this database. I started with the advanced search and entered I entered archaeology AND political aspects AND israel in the keyword default fields and garnered 304 results. The result displayed was:

“Displaying: 1-10 of 304 results for archaeology in All Fields w/Text AND political AND aspects in All Fields w/Text AND israel in All Fields w/Text.” I wasn’t sure whether this meant that I had just ANDed political aspects. So I went back and put political aspects into quotations. I then got 21 hits instead. It was exciting to view
works I hadn’t seen before.


In Project Muse, one gets to see why the database selected the record, for example, Ian Hodder’s “An Archaeology of the Four-field Approach in Anthropology...Theory and the Arab-Israel Conflict.” In this case it was not possible to tell if the word “archaeology” was used as a discipline or as a metaphor. I decided it was used as the latter and decided it was not relevant.

I did find a gem in this database, though—“The Politics of Reading the Bible in Israel.”

In summary, I was only able to find four highly relevant articles. I therefore decided to refine my search terms. I did the following: using (excavation* in All Fields w/Text OR archaeologist*) in All Fields w/Text AND politic* AND in All Fields w/Text AND israel in All Fields w/Text, I got a 265 results. I did worse! Because they are listed by relevancy, I was able to go through the first 20 and determine 6 as highly relevant. There were no new subject headings discovered, except for the LCSH/Voyager CV: Archaeology and state -- Israel. I did find two gems:

“Reflections on Archaeology and Israeli Settler-Nationhood” by the same author Abu El-Haj, Nadia.

I also found: “The Politics Behind the Construction of the Modern Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth,” which was Christian politics.
As one last try using a different approach, I used archaeolog* (Su Subject Term) AND Israel* (Su Subject Term) AND politic* (default field) and got 14 results. 12 of these were highly relevant.

**Encyclopedias**

**Encyclopedia Britannica Online**

I was not certain I was searching properly here as the search mechanisms were rudimentary. After zero results with “archaeology,” “Israel,” and “politic*”; and “Palestinian Arabs” and “archaeology, I inputted: “biblical archaeology” in the “with all these words” and then put “politics” in the “with any of these words” and came up with 32 entries of which very few if at all seemed relevant. I thought perhaps some may be relevant in the actual biographies of archaeologists, such as Charles Clermont-Ganneau who exposed archaeological frauds, W.F. Albright, an American heavyweight in biblical archaeology, and Yigael Yadin who excavated the Dead Sea Scrolls and Eliezer Sukenik who identified them. But here I was guessing—or imagining the political reverberations of their discoveries more than whether the articles discuss them. After consulting the short articles—which I’m glad I did—I confirmed that there were no political aspects discussed there.

**Global Books in Print**

My first search attempt was with a keyword subject search in the advanced mode, using archaeology AND Israel AND politic* in the subject. This resulted in 4 entries, of which only 1 was very relevant: *Just Past?: The Making of Israeli Archaeology.*

I attempted to refine my search by putting the search terms as Subject (all) but I came up with the same results.
After some fiddling around, I put in Keyword: EXCAVATION* [and] Keyword: ISRAEL [and] Keyword: POLITIC* and came up with 30 results. Another search after this, with CV from GBI: keyword: PALESTINE ANTIQUITIES [and] Keyword: POLITIC* Sadly, there were 42 results with no relevancy.

**Internet**

Google.com

I first inputted “biblical archaeology politics” and called up 1,130,000 records. Among those sources listed on the first screen of 10 was a Yahoo directory of biblical archaeology. There was, unfortunately, nothing relevant there. There was one article from the BAS Library (Biblical Archaeological Review): “Kathleen Kenyon's Anti-Zionist Politics—Does It Affect Her Work?” But it was written in 1975.

But in general, the results were not exactly on target. I then inputted “political archaeology Israel” and called up 835,000 entries. On the first page were some very relevant pieces, such as a blog on http://www.heardworld.com/higgaion/?p=593 about a published book:

“Yesterday, I mentioned the new book *Political Archaeology and Holy Nationalism* by Terje Oestigaard. Since the author makes the book freely available on his web site, and since it seemed interesting, I thought I would give it a read and share my reactions here…”

Another interesting find was the “political archaeology” page of Jonathan Cook’s website. Jonathan Cook is the author of several books pro-Palestinian/anti-Israeli government.

In general, the retrieved records are a motley collection of blogs, recent, anonymous articles written for such electronic magazines called China Confidential, reviews of published books, BBC news, pro-Palestinian web sites maintained by published and unpublished authors, excerpts of articles and whole articles from scholarly journals, and nuggets of on-
target articles written anonymously on unknown websites. Here is an example: “Do Israeli Archeologists Have Religious, Political Motives?”

**Wikipedia**

Wikipedia’s article on Biblical Archaeology is a very nice introduction to the subject of archaeology in the Middle East with an emphasis on William Dever’s quotations, the current American godfather of biblical archaeology. Riding on the results of search terms used on Google.com, I inputted “political archaeology israel” and came up with 748 results. As motley collection of retrieved records similar to Google and just as targeted. I even found a movie called “The Body” produced in 2001 about an archaeological find that stirs up trouble between the Palestinians and the Israeli Jews. The currency of entries was impressive. An entry on “Excavations at the Temple Mount” with many references to the political ramifications revealed editing as late as 12 April 2010.

**Clusty.com**

I was impressed with this search engine after always using Google.com Queries were broken down to reveal sources. Inputting the same search terms as with Google and Wikipedia, retrieved records were 2,350,00 with the “top” 208 listed first. So what makes the “top” listings, I was curious to know. There were Ask, Bing, NY Times, Open Directory, sponsored listings (Amazon.com and Questia.com), Yahoo! and Yahoo News!

But what was especially helpful were the sub-topics of political archaeology in Israel in the sidebar:

Bible (63)
+
Jerusalem (28)
Clicking on the Science or the Government rubric called up records that were, in general, relevant. Some very, some not so, and some redundant. Like Wikipedia and Google, the records were from a variety of sources, from www.mfa.gov.il/ (Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs) to http://www.followingthespirit.org/ (a Christian ministry). From archaeology.50webs.com (there are some 50 archaeological websites, including, of course, Israel archaeology)\textsuperscript{32} to jewwatch.com. There are some articles that are purely opinion and suspect in their emotional content, but there are other gems that one would never find in scholarly journals, such as: “Barnard's Shame, Columbia's Dirty Deal” by Paula R. Stern on israelinsider.com.\textsuperscript{33} This article protests the upcoming tenure of author of Facts on the Ground for her unscholarly research.

The search engine calls up landmines and goldmines, too.
Conclusion

There are fine distinctions in the results of entries from using the search terms or a variant of these: “political aspects and archaeology and Israel.” This triad can mean:

a) how an archaeological site reveals the politics or political life of an ancient culture;
b) how an archaeological site and other components of a geographic area fall under the jurisdiction of a socio-political structure
c) how an archaeological site inflames a current political issue
d) how the practice of archaeology can be manipulated by or manipulate a political objective.
e) Separate from each other: archaeology as applied as a metaphor or of a different culture, politics of a different culture, and Israel as an example of a study or the name of one of the authors.

Ideally, I would have liked to limit resources to the practice of archaeology as a method of political influence. But this would have been too defined and restrictive, so I compromised and strived to gather sources falling under c) and d).

However, limiting finds to c) and d) of archaeology was frequently not clear or possible, even after reading the summary or abstract of an entry.

The date of sources and the type of periodical or database was sometimes helpful as an indicator of the categories predominating. For example, the JSTOR and GeoBase databases revealed sources falling predominantly under categories a). JSTOR in particular had sources that were too old to be included in this bibliographic guide. Project Muse also included a) but also b). Articles that were written in the 1990s were frequently under c)—although a little too old for this project. Those sources reflecting d) usually concerned the early state of Israel and also tended to be written fifteen or
more years ago. Does that mean that there were no current applications of c) and d) today? On the contrary, they were to be found, especially in Academic Search Premier, GIP, and WorldCat.

I could have done a better search if I had taken advantage of the subject terms given in certain databases. For example, in the Military & Government Collection, some subject terms offered, included:
ISRAEL -- Military policy
NETANYAHU, Binyamin
ARMED Forces
POLITICS, Practical
I did not consult them but I might have combined them with archaeology to see if any interesting results might have come up.

Doing this plan was certainly a challenge and there are aspects of the search process that are still puzzling to me which I didn’t have time to clear up because of time constraints. (At least I know what I need to tackle.) There is something to be said about actually going into a database, and by both strategy and trial and error, call up sources for examination. The actual doing of it was a learning experience. Methodical progression, organization, and attentiveness to detail are important! I must admit I learned how sloppy I can get. To improve, I need to be more meticulous in my operations so that steps can be retraced if necessary.

Sample Annotated Entries

**Activist approach to archaeology**

Studies the role that Israeli archaeology has played in building nationalism, reinforcing or conflicting with certain sociopolitical institutions, and provoked controversy. Based on a doctoral thesis, the author is now professor of anthropology at Barnard College. Has been hailed as a brilliant and important work on the one hand, as well as lambasted as a flimsy, supercilious one on the other by authoritative reviewers. For this alone, deserves a look.


A book to cut one’s teeth on for a general introduction of archaeology as politics. Terms one would have never associate with archaeology: emancipatory archaeology, critical archaeology, Marxist archaeology, feminist archaeology…learn about them here. Anthropology professor McGuire views archaeology as inherently political that can be employed to create a more humane world. In discussing Marxist concepts, refers to country-specific archaeological studies, including Israel, and therefore brings an interesting dimension to the topic.


Informative documentary video of how a right wing group ELAD has taken control of a Palestinian village in Jerusalem to advance an archaeological dig on what is believed to be King David’s city of antiquity. Interviews of a resident, ELAD representative, and Israeli archaeologist give this controversial excavation a flavor of immediacy. At issue is dislocation from family homes, manipulating archaeology to consolidate claims to land, and archaeologists speaking out on social justice. Highly recommended as an introduction and in tandem with Eric Cline’s article on the status
of archaeological interpretations concerning David and Solomon. Might be interesting to compare with Israel Antiquities Authority (a government department within the State of Israel) City of David archaeological video from their website (http://www.antiquities.org.il/IRD_movie_eng.asp).

David Ilan is director of the Nelson Glueck School of Biblical Archaeology at Hebrew Union College, Jerusalem. He is one of a handful of Israeli archaeologists who signed a petition protesting archaeological excavations in the City of David, the most ancient part of Jerusalem. This short guest column written for BAR is less about archaeology and more about the political implications of excavations in the City of David on the surrounding Palestinian village from an archaeologist’s point of view. An important nugget of information.

**Historical or contextual approach to archaeology**


Analyzes the relationship between archaeology and minority-group politics in Israel from the 1950s to the 90s through opposing attitudes held about burial site excavations. Written by history professor Hallote and historian/archaeologist Joffe. Some social science jargon and unclear references to contemporaneous literature (such as when, exactly, is the “Second Republic”?) but for the most part very readable and on the mark. Interesting bibliography.

Very readable, journalistic article with human interest elements and color photos on the status of biblical archaeology in Israel today. Summarizes some of the major contested theories, recent excavations, and players involved, and references how it is impacting settlement activities. Writer is the author of *Digging the Dirt: The Archaeological Imagination*.


Short, current article on the ongoing struggle between Israelis and Palestinians as revealed in the excavations of East Jerusalem. Attitudes expressed by archaeologists are in contrast to the ideas expressed in Randall McGuire’s book on the political nature of archaeology. Human interest-style of writing brings the topic down to an intimate level.

**Appendix**

**Subject Heading/Search Terms Table**

**Degrees of Relevance:**

HR= Highly Relevant   R= Relevance

Key:

CV = Controlled vocabulary (ALL CAPS)

AND/OR = Boolean operators (ALL CAPS)

NL = Natural language terms (lower case and italicized)

= Truncated terms are noted with an asterisk.

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Biblical archaeology and “with any of these words”: politics

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<td>Wikipedia</td>
<td>Political archaeology israel</td>
<td>Unwieldy</td>
<td>Moderate R</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Endnotes


8 Kiryat Sede-Boker, Archaeology and Nationalism in Eretz-Israel (Beersheba: Universitat Ben-Guryon ba-Negev) [DS111.2]

9 Patrick Bürge, Max Farhni, Zuhaira Sabbagh, and Hans Bernath, al-Sabbar Cactus (Seattle, WA: Arab Film Distribution, 2000).

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14 Academic Search Premier (EBSCO Industries, Inc., 2010).