Picturing Biblical Pasts
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Theoretical considerations.

1. In thinking about illustrations and their use in
historiography, I have drawn mainly on some recent work
in human geography (e.g., Livingstone 1992)[1] and more
specifically, J. J. Harley, Denis Wood and others for
their views that cartography offers purposeful,
partisan, and value laden versions of the world (Harley
1988; 1989; Wood 1992). Maps embody specific purposes
and choices, as well as "prejudices, biases, and
partialities (not to mention the less frequently
observed art, curiosity, elegance, focus, care,
imagination, attention, intelligence and scholarship)
their makers bring to their labors." (Wood 1992:24)
And yet maps are not simply individual creations. Maps
also inscribe social realities, the network of people,
communities, and nations that have vivified and will
continue to animate cartographic spaces with specific
cultural interests, traditions, values, and ideological
commitments.

I believe the evidence and arguments used to support
this perspective on cartography apply equally well to
other forms of visual representation. Thus, for
example, some historians of the visual arts and
cultural historians have recently begun to parse
photographs, paintings, and drawings as social and
rhetorical constructs. There seem to be two main goals
of such criticism. One is to understand, however
partially, the localized cultural circumstances in
which an image is produced, distributed, and received.
The second goal is to uncover the tangled lines of
social power and privilege that are inscribed and re-
inscribed in the cultural lives of such visual texts.
David Gunn (Gunn 2002) brought something of this

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[1]   I have not yet seen Livingstone's most recent book in which he
highlights the importance of physical location, or space, to the actual
practice and constructions of scientific knowledge. (Livingstone 2003)

perspective to our seminar last year. Among many instructive examples, I have found particularly useful Bram Dijkstra's *Idols of Perversity,* a richly documented study of Victorian images of women (Dijkstra 1986).

2. I have also drawn on Edward Soja for his re-reading of Lefebvre and theorizing of space as complexly layered social construction (Soja 1996; Lefebvre 1991). Since Soja is no stranger to this seminar, I need not say very much more. I have tried to digest his sensitivities and ideas, but have refused the analytical categories "first space," "second space," and "third space." As our continuing discussions indicate, these terms are both suggestive and devilishly problematic.

Elsewhere and in this seminar, I have extended Soja's and Lefebvre's insights into studies of holy land spaces. Sometimes the Holy Land may be realized physically, for example in models and theme parks. Other holy land spaces may be generated imaginatively in documents such as travel diaries and letters. Photographs, maps, and paintings construct visual holy lands (Long 2002; Long 2003a). Of course, these modes of representation are not mutually exclusive. Whatever the medium, analytical criticism seeks to describe some of the elements that made, or make, each holy land first of all, constructed, and second, a localized reality of cultural, ideational and material power. The questions have to do with spatial constructions that are enacted in specific places, which is also a matter of space.

I accept the premise that any given space, say the historically imagined Holy Land, is a complexly layered social construction. Physical place (which has to be imagined spatially and temporally), plus symbolically charged conceptuality (which imparts significance and value to place), plus multiple simultaneous perspectives and actions (which allow for competing constructions and vantage points inside of particular spaces)—all these overlap and bleed into one another in human activity, spatial practice lived out in specific places. There are many spaces or rather, many localized spatial practices, including actions that flow from, resist, or reinforce social formations expressed through a particular enactment of space.

If spatial practice is not simply a matter of individual creativity, then, it may be better to speak of *socio*-spatial practice. The places that count in human affairs have been imagined and enacted in

localized social practices that vest and energize place with dense networks of politics, commerce, demographic and quotidian patterns of life (cf. Hayim Lapin's paper for this year), ideological commitments, social relationships, theology, religion, values—in short with social histories of interested significance. And if there is one imagining, then many imaginings. If one living, many livings.

3. Now—at last, you may say—to the focus of this working paper, historiography of biblical peoples and its illustrations. Many imaginings of a spatialized past, many implied local socio-spatial practices can be discovered by studying the interplay between historical narrative and visual image. (Should one also speak of imagining a readerly space, an ideational realm in which implied readers and authors participate in constructing and enacting specific spaces?)

I propose to view the combination of visual image and accompanying narrative text as both artifact and occasion of socio-spatial practice. As artifacts, word/images may be considered as evidence of a particular historian's thickly textured, and often largely unrecognized, socio-spatial practice in constructing historical knowledge. I also take such artifacts as may be scattered within a work of historiography as occasion for my own localized socio-spatial practice. I invite others (one topic among many for discussion in the seminar?) to help me parse my own socio-spatial practice.

I try to dismantle neatly packaged pictures of the past and insert consciousness of socio-spatial practice into the discourse of historiography. And all with one critical eye fixed on production, distribution, and consumption of such practices. The challenge, probably one that is impossible to execute satisfactorily, is to expose this complexity by situating spatial practices, including historical knowledge packaged with word and image, in the broadest, and most local, cultural, material, and social context. A tall order. Work for a team of researchers?

4. In what follows, I offer a few preliminary observations about the interplay of narrative and visual image in three recent renderings of biblical history. My examples come from J. Maxwell Miller and John H. Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986); John Bright, *A History of Israel* (first published in 1959; reissued, with new introduction and appendix by William P. Brown. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2000); and John

Dominic Crossan & Jonathan Reed, *Excavating Jesus. Beneath the Stones, Behind the Texts* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001)

Note: Because of copyright restrictions, I have not reproduced visual images for this working paper. They may be consulted in the original publication. In some cases, I have indicated a web address where members of the seminar may conveniently view digital reproductions. To facilitate discussion in Atlanta, I will bring a personal study copy of all relevant illustrations.

Miller/Hayes; John Bright

Miller and Hayes are pragmatists who frequently worked together as friend and colleague for some 30 years at Emory University. (That social location, or space, needs further investigation.) While committed to the goals of finding facts and achieving historical objectivity, they realize that available sources as well as the historian's unavoidable biases limit every attempt to reconstruct simply and directly what happened in the past. Miller and Hayes adopt "an extremely cautious and eclectic compromise position" (Miller/Hayes 1986:77) between two extremes: on the one hand, accepting the Bible as thoroughly reliable history and, on the other hand, rejecting the Bible as useless for historical reconstruction" (Miller/Hayes 1986:74-75).

In evaluating sources and constructing their narrative, Miller and Hayes forthrightly tell us that they relied on their own "threshold of credibility." That threshold, it turns out, is crucial and little remarked as they go about their work of assessing the literary character and usefulness of biblical texts, "nonbiblical documents," and the appropriateness of using certain social or historical models. In addition Miller and Hayes confess to using "a considerable amount of intuitive speculation" in creating a coherent narrative for their readers.

In the end, the authors reject much of the biblical tradition that recounts earliest national origins (what one Amazon.com reader called the "more speculative aspects of Israel's history" or, in the words of another reader, the "myth, miracle story, folk tradition, and theological overlay"). Miller and Hayes concentrate their efforts on events after the tenth century BCE (where the first Amazon.com reader, evidently agreeing, thought that "conclusions are more certain." See <www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/066421262X/qid=1064325969/sr=1-4/ref=sr_1_4/103-0185964-7301478?v=glance&s=books>)

For my purposes, it is unnecessary to extend the discussion of these matters (see Davies and Gunn 1987). However, we may pose a few questions, knowing of course that not all can be answered satisfactorily, especially in this paper. Is this ruling perspective of skeptical pragmatism (is it as secularized as the Amazon reader implies?) expressed through a Miller/Hayes socio-spatial practice? If so, can one define its localized cultural genealogy? For example, what ideological and other cultural elements, what personal and communal and institutional histories have been built into their spatial rendering of ancient Israel? Does the Miller/Hayes use of visual images + text reinforce, contest, or exclude spatial practices that are associated with identifiable groups, such as specific academic or religious communities? How have the Miller/Hayes spatial renderings of ancient Israel been received or resisted? And by whom? And why?

In Miller/Hayes, it is striking that there are no maps depicting the "Exodus," "Conquest" or "Tribal Allotments." These themes have been among the stalwarts in the history of Holy Land cartography (Nebenzahl) and in countless books of theologically oriented biblical geography and history published since the 17th century (Butlin 1992; 1993). The omissions, of course, reflect the authors' largely negative assessment of the historical value of the biblical pre-monarchical traditions.

More importantly for spatial analysis, the omission signifies a break with theologically oriented historiography that has frequently constructed an iconic ancient Israel, a construction of sacrality as opposed to a fully historical, material and secular "Israel." Within this cultural stream, "Israel" has meant a unified entity that may be located geographically, that is cartographically, and may be followed developmentally through time. Yet this "Israel" also is presumed to be an ahistorical essence set within materiality and in the ideational space of theological truth. In socio-spatial practice, localized in specific religious communities or institutions, ancient "Israel" is imagined historically, but her essence remains available for instruction and incorruptible within a grand narrative of teleological destiny.

Exactly what Miller and Hayes refuse is what John Bright chose in 1959. His *A History of Israel* successfully wrapped Scripture, archaeology, and ancient Near Eastern history into a "robustly theological investigation" (Brown 2000:20). The book grew directly out of the scholarly and political dynamics of the Albright inspired Biblical Seminar (Long 1997: 55-59). It was revised twice, appeared in several translations, and sold over 100,000 copies (Brown 2000:1). And after some 40 years, the publisher apparently gambled that the book would still have appeal to theological students, teachers, and members of their constituent church communities.

Just as the Bible is taken as the unique proclamation at the foundation of Christian, especially Protestant, communities, so for Bright, iconic Israel—her religious quality, unique standing among the nations, and witness to the one God's deeds in history—is fundamental to a certain kind of Christian theology. For John Bright the Presbyterian churchman, and for other members of the mid-20th century Albrightean school of biblical interpretation (Long 1997), there could be no authentic understanding of God without integrating archaeological data into the newly rendered material and religious history of ancient Israel. And even with such empirical data there could be no true understanding of Israel's history (the referent now shifts to "iconic" Israel) without God (Brown 2000:21; Bright 2000: xvii).

Cover Art

The illustration on the cover of Bright's fourth edition (a departure from the marketing of earlier editions) visually represents this conjunction of materiality and theological essence, just as the cover art of Miller/Hayes rejects it. See, for Bright, http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/0664220681/qid=1064600420/sr=1-2/ref=sr_1_2/104-1830736-8949547?v=glance&s=books. And for Miller/Hayes: http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/066421262X/qid=1064928906/sr=1-9/ref=sr_1_9/104-1830736-8949547?v=glance&s=books.

Bright's cover image is a cropped version of a 19th century painting by pre-Raphaelite English artist Thomas Seddon. Like so many painters of the time, Seddon traveled to Ottoman Palestine in search of inspiration in what they took to be an authentically Biblical landscape. In 1854 he painted "Jerusalem and the Valley of Jehoshaphat from the Hill of Evil Council." It is but one of many visual and literary examples of widely shared socio-spatial practices, the attempts by Europeans and North Americans to lay hold of a scrubbed up and Christianized land of Scripture. In the tradition of romanticism, Seddon saw biblical space in terms of scripturalized Nature Sublime, a numinous landscape whose overlay of distasteful "Oriental" features had been erased, and whose Arcadian features thus were ready to be read for their disclosure of divinity. There was no filth, poverty, disease, or fanaticism (a charge often leveled at Islam). Nor was there misguided Christian piety to be seen (usually the failings of Orthodox and Catholic Christianity). There was only a reified landscape of vibrant witness to the things of God that, as the Holy Book testifies, passed long ago. By means of this largely Anglo-European Protestant fantasy, Seddon and other artists, theologians, and travelers of similar conviction rescued the Holy Land

aesthetically and religiously from what they saw as centuries of neglect. (See Davis 1996)

Seddon registered a human presence in his landscape by painting a solitary ornamental shepherd (not shown in the cropped image) in the foreground under a shade tree. (To see the full canvas, go to http://www.artrenewal.org/asp/database/art.asp?aid=2083&page=1&order=u. Click on the small image for a larger view). The shepherd is diminished by the high walls of Jerusalem, surrounding hills, and the empty, or at least lifeless, dwellings that cling to hills rolling away to some luminescent infinity. An unsettling light emanates high from the left, as though to suggest radiant energy from a known presence, the early afternoon sun, and at once the unknown presence, a supernal light of divinity.

With Seddon's cropped painting on the cover, the publishers of John Bright's *History of Israel* drew readers into this cultural stream of Christian tourism and fantasy travels, image-making, scholarship, cartography, pilgrimage, pious longing, and the accumulated economic and political apparatus of dominance that construed the "Orient" as the lesser valued, yet prized, counterpart of the "Occident." Readers of Bright's *History* join this socio-spatial practice, so to speak, and contemplate a walled city and environs suspended in space (the cover design resembles a landscape set against a luminous body—a quote from modern photographs of earth from the moon?). Even lacking Jerusalem's landmark Dome of the Rock that was contained in the original (which is only identified on the copyright page), the picture confirms countless popular, mostly Protestant expectations of what the Bible land should look like. It is a culturally specific Holy Land space of devotional attachment to first of all, the Bible, and second, to an idea of the land itself as a place of authentic divine encounter (in opposition to the gaudy shrines and ritual fussiness of Orthodox and Catholic Christianity). Iconic Israel, that revelatory witness, moved through this Protestantized space of antiquity. And she lives on in readerly spaces of John Bright's narrative.

The cover art for Miller and Hayes evokes little of this romanticized construction. Instead, a color photograph suggests the socio-spatial practices of science, the ostensibly secular world of modern geography and the verities, not of God, but of high tech geographical imaging. The publishers credit the Pictorial Archive Inc., a company that produces high quality images and maps based on surface and satellite photography and the Survey of Israel database. Part of a "Wide Screen Project" and the *Student Map Manual* (Pictorial Archive 1979), and descended from work done in the early years of the State of Israel (Survey of Israel 1956), these materials are heavily marketed as aids to the scientific study of historical geography and archaeology of "Bible Lands."

The connections between modern Israeli land surveys and cartography (in part belonging to the history of Zionism), the practices of science, and the theologically powered field of "Bible Land" archaeology (a happy alliance of certain Christian, Jewish, and Zionist interests), and further the possible links to Miller/Hayes, deserve more research than I can give it here. (Anybody looking for a project?!!) Suffice it to say that in terms of socio-spatial practice, the Miller/Hayes cover art suggests not only the authors' refusal of theological or "iconic" Israel, but also an alternative socio-spatial practice associated with localized scientific research and probably entangled with the politics of modern Israeli archaeology and cartography.

Maps

Iconic "Israel" is visualized through a series of maps that were appended to all editions of Bright's *History*. The full color maps derive from Wright and Filson, ed., *The Westminster Historical Atlas to the Bible.* This atlas was a key element in Wright's "biblical archaeological crusade," an attempt by W. F. Albright and some of his brilliant students to dominate mid-twentieth century American biblical research and theological education with their blend of erudite scholarship, apologetics and theology. This socio-spatial practice of mapmaking was localized first, in the history of Johns Hopkins and other major universities, second, in the Albrightean inspired Biblical Colloquium, and third, in the cultural history of religion in America (Long 1997; 2001:187-201). In addition to these matters, Wright's and Filson's approach had deep roots in an old cultural tradition of Protestant Bible atlases that mainly reinscribed the canonical biblical text through paraphrase, photographs and drawings, geographical studies, and cartography.

The maps chosen for inclusion in John Bright's *History* follow the sequence of the Biblical narratives, or in Christian terms, they span the centuries from Old to New Testament times. Cartography tracked "Israel" and the "early Church", not in their historical and social complexities, but as unique bearers of revelation and exemplars of both faith and apostasy. As Bright wrote near the end of his *History*, "The destination of Old Testament history and theology is Christ and his Gospel" (Bright 2002:464). Thus, the *History* includes maps of "Palestine During the Ministry of Jesus" and "The Journeys of Paul." Both topics lay beyond the actual limit of Bright's text, but not beyond its teleological structure of expectation and fulfillment. And not, one might add, beyond Bright's audience and his own identity as a Presbyterian churchman.

The map "Exodus from Egypt" (Bright 2002:plate III) replicated visually the biblical narrative (already in the title) with some hint of uncertainty (a dashed line for the actual route) and location of sites (sometimes given a

question mark) along the way to the Promised Land. It is significant in this regard that Mt. Nebo, a site that even the most ardent student of biblical toponymy has never been able to locate, retains its traditional position on the map, near the end of the exodus route. And therein lies a tale of socio-spatial practice that will not let go of the inspiring romanticism of a solitary heroic Moses surveying all of the God-given Holy Land at one glance (Long 2003b: 308-14)

For Wright and Filson, this map illustrated the spatial movements of the "Children of Israel" and a "mixed multitude" that joined them (Exodus 12:38). Or more simply the "Hebrews" or "Israel" (Wright and Filson 1956:38). Acknowledging some of the source and evidential difficulties, John Bright (and by extension the map of Exodus) depicted the journey of "the group that experienced exodus and Sinai…the true nucleus of Israel" (Bright 2002:140). In both cases, map and text constructed theological spaces of God-chosen destiny. At the same time, cartography conveyed a sense of settled history and its geographical location that reinforced not Bright's critical paring back of some of the Bible's claims, but his underlying predisposition to accept them.

The Westminster *Atlas* included a map of "Palestine During the Period of the Judges," or what many older atlases frequently called the "tribal allotments" in Canaan (Bright 2002: Plate IV). This map gives a strong impression of centralized political order, with sovereign powers and defined borders indicated even if some of the territorial limits were marked as uncertain. John Bright speaks of tribes in a "league" and tribes that were individually "in possession of those holdings that would be theirs through the centuries to come." These were territorial claims whose extents are known "rather precisely from certain boundary lists" found in the Bible" (Bright 2002: 165). Here, one begins to see elements of spatial practice that constructed ancient "Israel" not only from within a culturally specific stream of biblical scholarship, but within the history of modern nation-states and a cluster of assumptions about ethnicity, territoriality, and sovereignty. (See the past papers by Keith Whitelam for this seminar.)

We have then to ask questions about the academic, political, and religious communities and their socio-spatial practices that involved reading the Bible with such nationalist premises, now wed to an idea of reified, ethnically defined "Israel" (the "true nucleus" of Hebraic monotheists). One might find a Zionist counterpart to Bright's Christianized history in Michael Avi-Yonah, ed., *A History of Israel and the Holy Land*, recently reissued with updates for the twenty-first century and a foreword by Shimon Perez.

In strong contrast to John Bright, the Miller/Hayes maps, specially drawn for this book, represent indeterminate and fluid "domains" and "approximate areas" of tribal influence, not borders and sovereign territories.

Cartography does not locate iconic Israel, and certainly does not isolate a "true nucleus" of people that are distinguishable ethnically or in any other important way from other "Early Iron Age villagers, (who) settled primarily in the central hill country with enclaves in the Transjordan." (Miller/Hayes 1986:85. See Maps 7 and 8, pp. 95 and 99)[2]

It is important to note that in historical narrative and cartography, Miller and Hayes have loosened the hold of nationalist imagination on our pictures of ancient Israel and Judah. Seen under the aspect of social organization, Israel's space is not homogenous or filled with an homogenous people defined by religious conviction and the preferred tenets of biblical theologians. Miller and Hayes encourage their readers to imagine an ancient space defined by overlapping local networks of segmented, political and religious relationships and activities. "Israel" of antiquity and Israelite space consist of fluid affiliations, domains of shifting influences, localisms and disorder, resistance and disunities.

In short, the maps and text of Miller/Hayes do not represent the sovereign spaces of national origins nationalistically cleared of ethnic diversity. And Miller/Hayes do not reinscribe the socio-spatial practices of the Bright/Wright/Albright school. Why? In part because they are not, in terms of background and training and history, part of the Albrightean school. And in part, because they refuse the theological task, and a good deal of the Bible's story and perspective. A fuller answer would inquire into their social positioning at Emory University within the field of biblical studies, their own socio-spatial practices that run parallel and somewhat counter to that of the Albrighteans, and their apparent embrace of certain canons of secular historiography. In other words, one would not only parse the elements of Miller's and Hayes' socio-spatial practice in their *History*, but try to locate it in a social and material place, in a genealogy of social formations from which they perpetuate certain kinds of social power and influence, even counter-influence.

Crossan and Reed

Excavating Jesus and its public celebration at the SBL meetings in 2001 seem a familiar blend of American marketing savvy, professional society blessing, scholarly inquiry, imaginative synthesis of information, and desire to lay hold

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[2]   See also map 13 and accompanying text, pp.140-141, which depict Saul's "domain" and the episodic and localized authority which he could occasionally assert. Also map 15, p. 181, "The Approximate Extent of David's Kingdom," which Miller and Hayes describe as a "domain" of limited and contested p. 179; also map 17, "The Approximate Extent of Solomon's Kingdom," p. 215.

of the "real" Jesus. (See Long 2002: 204-208.) The authors walk in the great company of scholarly and popular investigators, mostly Protestant and mostly assembled since the nineteenth century, who sought to find the original Jesus. Crossan and Reed search for the man unadorned by legend, the godly teacher before fervent faith and temporal power transformed him into the formidable Savior of the World. Their (or Crossan's) conclusion? Jesus was an observant Jewish peasant who actively resisted the repressive, urbanizing and commercializing kingdom of Rome by preaching the kingdom of God, a call for bringing distributive justice on earth.

Excavating Jesus assembles a story of forensics, non-technical explanations, photographs, and full color paintings to carry readers through layers of earth and text and time. Like archaeologists, the authors and their readers sift through layers of social and architectural spaces, the surface shrines and buried remains of Orthodox and Catholic devotion. They seek the bedrock of hallowed place, the spaces traversed by Jesus and the social and religious movement he inspired.

The authors reputedly close in on Jesus as he really was. But they also imagine the focal points of Holy Land geopiety, those beguiling mysteries that lay beneath the topsoil and rubble of a modern landscape that has been emptied of all consequence save the old siren song of lost antiquities. (See the cover image, a photograph by Richard Misrach, at http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/search-handle-form/104-1830736-8949547). Click on the image to get to a larger size. Does it make any difference to Crossan's and Reed's socio-spatial practice that this scene may be from the American desert southwest? For further information on the artist and his work, see http://www.artcyclopedia.com/artists/misrach_richard.html . What seems important is that the image reflects the drive and wonder of archaeological excavation, in short, the socio-spatial practices that construct and respond to a sense of mystery and its plea, "Dig! For beneath these stones lies the truth!" Cf. other Misrach landscapes that evoke a similar sense of mystery at http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/Landscapes/s-ig4-e.php3# and http://nature.org/aboutus/inresponse/about/misrach.html# .

Readers are encouraged to imagine the "Jewish homeland" with its "people different from those who lived around them and even among them" (Crossan and Reed 2001:271), the village where Jesus was born, the house in Capernaum where he may have tarried, the place he was buried. All are carefully distinguished from later ecclesiastical overlay, the *in*authentic "Holy Land" spaces created out of the localized practices of Christian piety. Readers are encouraged to visualize, for example, a "first century Jewish hamlet. . .Jesus' Nazareth," the tiny village that was home to Jesus and where all families, though poor, were

"observantly Jewish." It was a town of no religious discord or dissent, apparently, where families "circumcised their sons, celebrated Passover, took a day from work on the Sabbath, and valued the traditions of Moses and the prophets (Crossan and Reed 2001: 248, 16, 36).

Like John Bright's "Israel," Nazareth is an iconic space of sacrality. Crossan and Reed construct an idealized and idyllic hamlet, a unitary space, an "entirely Jewish" village in an ethnically and geographically bounded "Jewish homeland," a town in which there was no "religious discord." The authors invite their readers into a value laden space of Jesus' presence-in-absence (might this be the main idea at the experiential heart of Protestantism?). Crossan and Reed join centuries old attachments to savior and Christian pilgrimage with a version of scientific rationalism that they express through the socio-spatial practices of archaeological science. But from what place? Here one would have to inquire further into the personal, social, and institutional history (their academic communities as well their relationship to publisher HarperSanFrancisco, which not only proposed the book to Crossan and Reed, but sponsored the SBL session at which it was celebrated).

Artwork is integral to the reader's journey. Twelve paintings by Balage Balogh, a Czech artist said to be the "best archaeological artist in Israel today," offer the fantasy spaces of "historically accurate recreations of first century sites" according to the dust jacket publicist.

For example, Balogh depicts the economically deprived all Jewish hamlet of Nazareth without any of discomforting features that would have been associated with actual, historical poverty (Crossan and Reed 2001:color plate following p. 170). For all its professed historical and archaeological realism, the painting draws upon conventional visual language rooted in the European romantic movement. A viewer gazes down slope, past vineyard workers to a cluster of rectangular one-story houses, all in good repair, which cling to a verdant hillside. The scene recalls "picturesque Holy Land," a phrase often encountered in 19th century European and American travelogues. Little plots of green and brown suggest orderly cultivation of the earth. Workers harvest grapes near cutaway bedrock used for crushing grapes. The scene appeals to one who values industry. It evokes a nostalgic kinship with these agrarian people living close to the soil. A fieldstone wall to the right, in perfect repair, holds back the soil of terraced vineyards. There is no sign of dirt, thirst, or ill health. No tattered clothing. Nothing of hard-scrabble poverty. The caption reads simply "Reconstruction of First-Century Nazareth." The spaces of a romanticized Holy Land scrubbed up for devotional attachment and historical rectitude.

A painting positioned on the opposite page depicts "Twenty-First-Century Nazareth" from the identical vantage point. In the foreground, that same hillside, now arid and uncultivated, slopes toward a modern Arab town toward, at

center, the Basilica of the Annunciation. On the right, a
wall of coarse fieldstone (a part of the wall seems a bit
tumbled down) curves away into the distance. The Basilica,
though not huge in size, dominates the cityscape and the
viewer's field of vision. This is the Christianized, shrine
adorned Holy Land space to be gotten through in the authors'
quest for the real Jesus. The slightly disheveled wall seems
a harbinger of this more authentic Holy Land/Jesus space of
biblical memory. For beneath the ruins, say Crossan and Reed
so many times, may be found the authenticity of Jesus and
the original innocence of Christian devotion.

A smaller photograph of the same painting maps this
romanticized landscape as instructional space (Crossan and
Reed 2001:37). Numbers superimposed on the black and white
image identify collection vats, Galilean made storage jars,
and pruning hooks as if these mark the landscapes of
biblical and archaeological authenticity. But the spatial
practice still calls forth an idealized Holy Land space. One
imagines a space of antiquity from a localized place—the
literary work of Crossan and Reed presented from within the
discourse of science and their personal and institutional
affiliations. These are the loci of socio-spatial practices
dominated and controlled by the rigors of forensic
investigation and the excavators' overweening desire to lay
hold of the quotidian "real." Here, the authors' caption
tells a reader, is the "hometown of Jesus."

Sometimes Crossan and Reed illustrate and reinforce the
historical trustworthiness of Gospel narratives in the
manner of older travelogues and pilgrimage texts. For
example, artist Balogh renders Capernaum in two paintings,
the "site most frequently associated with Jesus' ministry"
Crossan and Reed tell us. One picture depicts a typical
(according to the archaeologists) courtyard house in the
town. The compound is clean and neatly arranged. It shows no
sign of unskilled construction or disrepair. Here one is to
imagine "the simple peasant life of a Galilean family,"
explain Crossan and Reed in the caption. They point to
feature number five, a flat roof, as being made of "thatch
and mud as presumed in Mark 2, where friends of the
paralytic 'dig through' the roof to lower him to Jesus."
(Crossan and Reed, 2001:88, 126; color renderings of
Capernaum follow p. 170).

A second view of Capernaum is as a fisherman might have
seen the town from his boat on every working day. The low
lying village, fishers at work on the lake, workers on shore
mending nets, townspeople mingling along the open shoreline—
all these elements blend harmoniously in a fantasy of a Holy
Land of untroubled ordinariness (Crossan Reed 2001:88 and
following p. 170)

In rendering this picture of antiquity, artist Balogh of
course relied on the excavators of ground and text. But he
also constructed Capernaum out of an established tradition
of devotional romantic realism, a diverse intellectual and
artistic tradition that has its own social and institutional

history. (See, for example, some of Balogh's other biblical and Holy Land paintings at http://www.art-exchange.com/art-exchange/ArtResult.asp?ArtistLN=Balogh&ArtistFN=Balage&ArtistMN=_)

Set within *Excavating Jesus*, then, this image of Capernaum from within a fisher's boat suggest a complex socio-spatial practice whose elements involve localized devotion, artistic training and production, Bible study and geopiety. The tiny shoreline village of Capernaum, set against radiant sky and hillsides, and viewed from within a boat (a space constructed for Jesus's presence-in-absence?), is a locus of call and response.(How localized these practices are, from what places they come, and with what load of social and intellectual history, all remain to be investigated.)
Crossan and Reed tell their readers that the painting shows a boat exactly like that which was recently discovered by archaeologists. The artifact is surely "unlikely" to have been "the actual boat used by Jesus,"
they assure their readers. Nevertheless, they slyly state elsewhere, the little boat "could certainly hold thirteen people" and is now "usually called the *'Jesus Boat*.'"
(Crossan and Reed 2001: xvi-xvii, 3, and 85-87. Color rendering follows p. 170.) At the least, authors and painter enact holy land spaces that are distant from such unscholarly enthusiasm for a holy relic. At the same time, they give voice to such pious longings as well, and so allow its associated socio-spatial practices to thrive amidst their own, their search for the realistic "Reconstruction of First-Century Capernaum."

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Well, colleagues, I've prolonged this exercise long enough. You have, I hope, some idea of what I'm trying to accomplish. I send the efforts into the gentle jaws of seminar discussion. Chew but don't swallow whole.

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