

Review

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***Three Stones Make a Wall: The Story of Archaeology.*
By Eric H. Cline.**

Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017. Pp. xix + 455.
Hardcover, \$35.00. ISBN 978-0-691-16640-7.

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Popular books on archaeology come in many guises. Some are edited volumes, others are textbooks, a few have a narrower focus or cater to *National Geographic* kinds of readers. All of them have a specific audience in mind. Many cater to undergraduates. Others aim firmly at very broad audiences, which is where Eric Cline assumes that his *Three Stones* belongs. The subtitle calls it “The Story of Archaeology,” which means that the book does not necessarily have to be a chronological account of great discoveries. This allows the author considerable latitude in what he writes about, of which he takes full advantage. Better, however, that he had called it “A Story of Archaeology.” There are narratives of archaeology around and this certainly is not *The* story with a capital T. Cline tells us that the text is based on introductory archaeology lectures he has given over the years. Fair enough, but I think that the best way to describe the book is as a kind of eclectic tour of selected archaeological discoveries, sites, and research, historical and modern.

Three Stones is divided into six parts, with four shorter essays between them that discuss such often-asked questions as “How do you know where to dig?” The prologue is, perhaps inevitably, the discovery of Tutankhamun’s tomb in 1922, the description briefly updating events since then, notably the CT-scans and DNA research, also the claims of hidden chambers revealed by remote sensing. From the golden pharaoh, we go back in Part 1 to the beginnings of archaeology, to the familiar eighteenth- and

nineteenth-century excavations at Herculaneum and Pompeii. Chapter 2 finds the Schliemanns excavating at Troy. Their discoveries are familiar; those of later researchers like Dörpfeld and Blegen are less so and are briefly discussed here, as are the researches of Manfred Korfmann, who showed with remote sensing that Schliemann and his successors had merely dug the citadel of a much larger Troy. The third chapter takes us to Egypt, which covers Champollion, Lepsius, Mariette, and other well-known figures. We are treated to a description of mummification and pyramid construction. Chapter 4 on Mesopotamia begins with Ur, Leonard Woolley, Max Mallowan, and Agatha Christie, then leaps back to Paul Botta, Austen Henry Layard, and Henry Rawlinson in the mid-nineteenth century. The story would have worked much better if the author had begun with Botta and Layard, then Rassam and Place (often neglected), then told the Ur story. The same is true of Chapter 5, where we learn about LIDAR surveys, then find ourselves back in the 1840s with Catherwood and Stephens and the Maya. We end with Edward Thompson at Chichen Itza’s cenote. The coverage of what we know today about the Maya is very quick fire.

Part 2 has but two chapters, one on “Our Earliest Ancestors,” a second on early farmers in the Near East. Cline plunges into the often-told stories of Lee Berger’s fossil hunting in South Africa, and the discoveries of Mary and Louis Leakey. Then, suddenly, we jump forward in time (but back historically) to Dorothy Garrod at Mt. Carmel. Then we learn about Upper Palaeolithic art—Altamira, Lascaux, and the Grotte de Chauvet. Early prehistory is painfully short-changed. There is no mention anywhere of the controversies over the antiquity of humankind or the discovery of *Homo erectus* by Eugene Dubois. One of the fundamental questions of archaeology surrounds human origins, and we were attacking that mystery long before the Leakeys. A mere twelve pages survey the origins of food production, which cover Göbekli Tepe and Jericho, also Çatalhöyük, but, surprisingly, not Abu Hureyra, an exemplary piece of research. We then receive a brief discussion of processual and postprocessual archaeology, which, while obviously important, does not belong in a popular book of this nature when there are so much more exciting stories in archaeology to captivate the general reader than Lewis

Binford or Ian Hodder, important as their work is to professional scholars.

Part 3 takes us to the Bronze Age Aegean, with chapters on the first Greeks, Atlantis, and underwater archaeology. Schliemann reappears at Mycenae, Arthur Evans excavates Knossos. The description of his misguided restoration of friezes is useful. From the great palace, we travel to Santorini and Akrotiri and the long-discussed theory of Atlantis, where the author thinks that Plato may well have been right about the catastrophe that “created” the lost continent. With the Uluburun ship, we enter the world of George Bass, underwater archaeology, and Bronze Age trade, an often-told story.

Part 4 takes us to the classical world. Chapter 11 describes successive excavations at Olympia, taking us beyond the early German excavations. The French excavations at Delphi and the Athenian Agora receive brief mention, the latter where Cline himself worked as a young student. From Athens, Chapter 12 moves to Rome, where the author describes major monuments in Rome, with a cast of characters that briefly includes Mussolini. Nationalism has long played a role in the archaeology of Rome and is briefly discussed here. An essay on excavation follows, in which Flinders Petrie finally makes an appearance, and we learn about the daily routine on two of Cline’s excavations.

Four chapters form Part 5, which covers the Holy Land and slightly further afield. The author has excavated in other areas, but this is clearly his primary interest. Chapter 13, “Excavating Armageddon,” takes us to Megiddo in Israel, where the author dug for ten years. The city has a long and checkered history, and is well-known for its long water tunnel and stone hallways known (dubiously) as Solomon’s Stables. The most interesting passage covers the identification of a battle at Megiddo in 1948—battlefield archaeology conducted like a forensic investigation. Chapters 14 and 15 cover familiar subjects—the Dead Sea Scrolls and Masada. We hear much of the work of Yigael Yadin, arguably the most famous of Israeli archaeologists, with its undertones of nationalism. The final chapter in Part 5 covers Ebla, predictably Palmyra because of the tragic destruction, and Petra.

An essay on dating and preservation follows, which should probably have appeared much earlier in the book

for the benefit of uninformed readers. Here Cline covers an array of dating methods, including association, cross-dating, and seriation. A broad range of examples includes the Chinese terracotta army and other prominent tombs, also mummies. Then there’s Ötzi the Ice Man, bog bodies, and Andean mummies, obligatory cast members in any general archaeology book.

American archaeology gets minimal coverage compared with the eastern Mediterranean. Eleven pages skate lightly over the Nazca lines and the Lords of Sipan in Peru, then end with a rapid once-over of Machu Picchu, and, of course, its discoverer Hiram Bingham. Only ten breathless pages are devoted to the Olmec, the Aztec Templo Mayor, and Teotihuacan, the Maya having received cursory treatment in the same chapter as Catherwood and Stephens. Chapter 19 covers historical archaeology in North America with the *Huntley* and Jamestown. Then we jump to Kennewick Man and Ishi, with a brief mention of NAGPRA legislation. We end with Chaco Canyon, Mesa Verde, and Cahokia in a rapid description of the “wonderful diversity of the archaeological landscape” in North America. I was surprised to find nothing on the First Americans, one of the longest lasting and most challenging mysteries of America’s past.

An essay on collecting, looting, and legislation should have been much longer, for the points it makes are important. The Epilogue, “Back to the Future,” makes the point that archaeology is about preserving and curating the archaeological record for future generations. I would argue that it’s about a lot more. What, for example, does archaeology tell us about human behavior and human diversity that may be of use in the future? What approaches to governance, to cooperation, from the past may be helpful in the future? We archaeologists are, after all, the only people who study human behavior over immensely long periods of time, something often forgotten. There is so much we can do outside the narrow frontiers of archaeology itself, in which *Three Stones* lives.

I had considerable difficulty reviewing this long book, largely because it is hard to decide exactly what the author had in mind, or who will read this book. This is certainly not a history of archaeology, nor does it delve

with any depth into basic methods and theories. There is no chronological gradient to the book, which makes it hard to reconstruct the unfolding history of a complex enterprise. Nor is it global, even if the author wants to give the reader that impression. World prehistory is barely mentioned. There is virtually no coverage of China and Southeast Asia, nothing on Australia, New Zealand, or the Pacific. The chapters on the Americas are grossly inadequate. Three chapters on the Americas, two on classical archaeology, and two on the entire span of prehistory lie alongside five chapters on the discovery of the early civilizations and four on the Holy Land and environs. The Indus civilization is effectively ignored. I found one reference to Harappa, none to Mohenjodaro.

A book like this is very difficult to write, far more so than C.W. Ceram's classic *Gods, Graves, and Scholars*, published over sixty years ago. There have been few efforts at writing an alternative, hardly surprising given the explosion in both knowledge of the past and in archaeological methods. This is not such a work, nor is it a structured textbook. Cline's valiant effort raised questions in my mind. Would a lay person like this book? Would it inform them adequately and get them interested in archaeology? Obviously, there are some readers interested in eastern Mediterranean and biblical archaeology who will enjoy this book. But I wonder how strongly *Three Stones* will appeal to much wider audiences. I suspect the book is too long to entertain and inform general readers in an era of sound bites and social media. My suggestion would have been to cut out the detailed references, which would have saved as much as a hundred pages, and use them to focus the narrative. I would also have shaped the book around a taut story based on several important themes, or questions, rather than areas, which would have made it shorter and more compelling. This is difficult to achieve, but would result in a fascinating, even powerful, work. And what a pity that drawings, while of good quality, rather than photographs, illustrate these pages. Cline has written a rather breathless and fast moving journey through archaeology, which displays a broad knowledge of the ancient Mediterranean world. I hope that he uses the experience gained from this work to write a popular book about the eastern Mediterranean past. It should be well worth reading and attract a broad audience.

***Impact of Tectonic Activity on Ancient Civilizations: Recurrent Shakeups, Tenacity, Resilience, and Change.* By Eric R. Force.**

Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015. Pp. vii +199.

Hardback, \$80. ISBN: 978-1-4985-1427-9.

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“Civilization occurs with the consent of geology.”

—Will Durant

American historian Durant's comment says it all for this interesting book. This succinct presentation concerning the huge role tectonics plays in human development and success is exactly what is too often neglected or misrepresented in interpretations of civilizational life cycles extracted from archaeological excavations. Simply stated: tectonics . . . shapes geography . . . shapes culture. Eric Force presents an impressive portrayal of that relationship in a book that should be in every library that focuses on the archaeological and geological sciences. His presentation needs considerable expansion, especially on environmental/climatic factors and tectonics, and does have some issues needing thought and correction. But it is an impressive start that deserves more attention than this review can provide.

The book is in four parts. Part I discusses “Great Ancient Civilizations” and the “tectonic footprints” imbedded in their setting, interaction, success, and survival. He covers the classical Hellenistic period, Iron Age, and Etruscan-Roman periods with an emphasis on volcanism; Bronze Age in the Aegean focusing on volcanism and seismicity; the Levant, Southwest Asia, and the Judeo-Christian cultures and traditions and local tectonism; then addresses cultures in India and China.

Part II attempts a simple quantitative analysis of that tectonic footprint on ancient cultures and their geographic setting, endurance, and interaction. The application of rudimentary probability statistics to a dataset that is so limited it is perhaps not suitable, especially