

tant idea throughout the book and discusses the problematics of such a formulation of Jewish identity, as the sociological basis for Jewish existence as a separate group undergoes change over time. Indeed, it can disappear completely. The issue of intermarriage for Jews is particularly relevant to this as it becomes difficult if not impossible to justify a preference for endogamy once the basis of sociological Jewishness breaks down. That is to say that when there is really little religious or social distinction between Jews and non-Jews, how does one frame a preference for in-marriage as a legitimate claim? This is an issue that American Jewry has to grapple with, and, as Berman discusses quite thoroughly, it has led the Reform and Conservative denominations to reconsider their definitions of Jewishness and how to reach out to non-Jews and to welcome religious converts.

Lila Corwin Berman's study is a very insightful analysis of how Jews in the United States react to their environment and seek to be accepted as equals. In her very significant contribution to understanding the construction of Jewish identity in the

United States, she points out constantly how the explanations that Jews give to their non-Jewish neighbors become an important element in their definition of Jewishness for themselves. Such a process can be expected to take place for other religious groups and in other societies as well, and it is for this reason that the value of this book extends beyond the specific case it studies. For example, in recent years Muslims in the United States and in Europe have had to explain their religion in an environment that is at times quite hostile to them. This volume sensitizes us to the analysis that can be done to inquire whether the definition of Islam undergoes change in light of the explanations given to non-Muslim neighbors. Berman also provides us with an interesting theoretical basis for undertaking a comparative study of Jews (and members of other religions) in various societies, to see how explanations affect religious definitions and lead the same religious movements to develop variations in form and content in different societies.

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## Archaeology of Religions, Cultures and Their Beliefs in Worldwide Context

By *Sharon R. Steadman*

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The archaeology of religion has generated increased interest among social scientists involved in the scientific study of religion. Sharon Steadman recognizes that most of the cultures discussed in this interesting text did not recognize the existence

of "religion." It is largely Western intellectuals who have sought to elevate "religion" as a phenomenon of human society in need of clarification by social scientists. However, Steadman rightly explores the world views of ancient cultures insofar as they overlap

with what contemporary anthropologists recognize as religion.

The text is divided into six parts, with varying numbers of chapters per part. Part I introduces Method and Theory in the Archaeology of Religion. In three chapters it introduces the reader to the Archaeology of Religion, an overview Anthropology of Religion, and Interpreting Religion in the Archaeology Past. These chapters provide the reader with a context within which the archaeology of religion is viewed, as a vital framework for understanding what modern social scientists view as religious and cosmological world views.

Part II discusses the emergence of religion in human culture, beginning with Shamanism and following through with a study of the Neanderthals and the Rock Art of Africa and Australia. In each case, the focus is upon how artifacts can be used to infer the world views of the cultures represented by the residuals of cultures long past.

Parts III through VI discuss religions in the Americas, Europe, South and South-eastern Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. Each region is treated with a balanced perspective of what archaeologists know and what they can reasonably speculate about the religious and cosmological beliefs associated with these regions. The organization of the chapters in Part III is both geological and chronological making for an effective structure and summary of a massive amount of information that is more than effectively presented in a succinct fashion.

Throughout the text, Steadman draws parallels between the beliefs of various cultures. For instance, students who are likely familiar with the story of Noah's ark will be perhaps surprised to find that it bears

a remarkable similarity to Ut-napishtim's account of the flood story in Gilgamesh. However, Steadman wisely acknowledges such parallels without demeaning the value of flood narratives in any tradition. Likewise, parallels between the early life of Moses and that of Sargon, King of the Akkadians are acknowledged with the reader left to infer reasons for such close parallels. The exploration of cannibalism in various ancient traditions is seen as a reasonable outcome of cosmological beliefs, however distant from those acceptable to modern sensibilities. The overall effect is to present the reader with the fact that religious and cosmological beliefs are not simply derivative from a single set of discreet empirical facts, but form the raw material from which archaeology seeks to illuminate the institution, values, and ideal of societies perhaps distant from our own in chronological time, but no less mirrored in their religions and cosmologies than our own.

Sharon Steadman has produced a highly readable and instructive text. It is most suitable for use as a primary text in the archaeology of religion and as a supplementary text in courses dealing with the social scientific study of religion. It is a richly illustrated, and also provides valuable maps for each of the major geographical areas discussed in the text. In addition, it provides a brief list of useful sources for each of the major chapters of the text. Finally, there is also a useful reference list and index at the end of the text. This is a student friendly text in every way and the publication of a reasonably priced paper edition will hopefully make this a text many instructors will adopt to the benefit of their students.

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