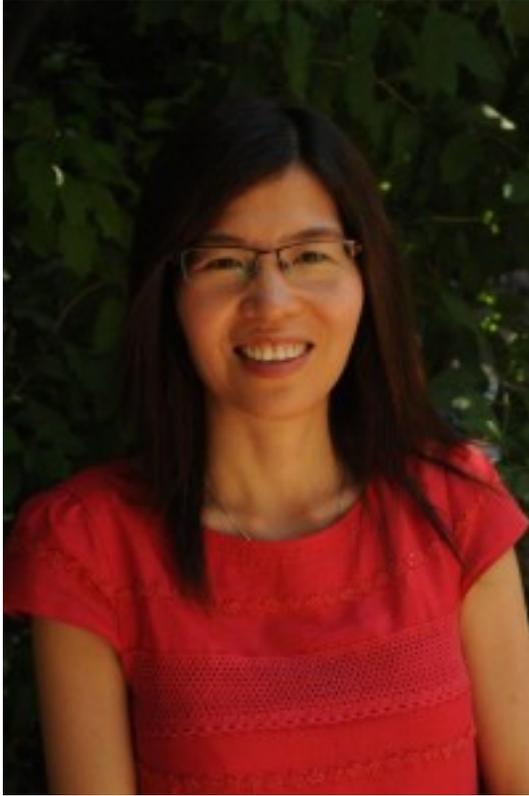


Introduction to Archaeology and the New Testament (Mandarin Language)



Wenhua Shi

There are currently few resources available in the Mandarin language for the study of the archaeology of Israel/Palestine as it relates to the study of nascent Christianity. The demand for such resources in China is growing and as the study of early Christian literature expands so too does the need. My project offers resources for the study of material culture, archaeology, topography, and geography as they relate to contextualizing the gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. The first stage of this research project has been to develop digital materials in Chinese (maps, diagrams, and images). The second stage offers introductory material that provides a basic intellectual foundation for Chinese academics to access archaeology. The project has in view scholars who specialize in the historical and literary context of New Testament literature.

My research at the Albright Institute has focused on gathering materials for three main chapters: the Galilee, Jerusalem, and the Dead Sea region. Because of the significance of the Dead Sea Scrolls for understanding the broader religious and intellectual environment of the Jesus movement, early on in my fellowship I

completed a chapter on this topic, which is already forthcoming with a Chinese publisher as an excursus in a monograph I recently completed on the Apostle Paul.

The Galilee and Jerusalem clearly are central to the study of Christian origins. My introduction to the Galilee focuses especially on the northwest corner of the Sea of Galilee and seeks to offer a commentary on the social characteristics of the region. The recent excavations at Magdala feature in this section and I have been able to suggest how this site contributes to our ongoing discussions about the economy, culture and politics of the area.

My research period at the Albright Institute has been invaluable. The result, I hope, will begin to contribute to my two main objectives:

- 1) Studying early Christian texts in their context. There has been a growing interest in biblical studies among Chinese scholars in the last few decades. There are currently no less than thirty universities, and a considerable number of social science academies throughout China that have different forms of biblical studies in their curricula. Many Chinese scholars are only engaged with “biblical” literature in a comparative context and take little interest in its formation. My work aims to promote archaeology as it relates to historical and critical approaches to reading ancient literature.
- 2) Dissemination of information. Resources for the study of archaeology in ancient Palestine are limited in China, and those available are dated. Not only will my project result in a book that is accessible to specialists and non-specialists alike, but I also aim to disseminate knowledge through public lectures and online resources. In the future, I hope to develop a website in Mandarin that will be able to take into account ongoing excavations and their significance.

Without the Noble Group Fellowship and the support of the Albright Institute this research would not have been possible. I am grateful to the Noble Group and Professor Seymour Gitin for their vision for Chinese scholarship and for building bridges between the Near and Far East.

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