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From Silwan to the Temple Mount

Archaeological Excavations as a Means of Control in the Village
of Silwan and in Jerusalem's Old City – Developments in 2012



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Emek Shaveh is an organization focusing on the role of archaeology in Israeli society and in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We view archaeology as a resource for building bridges and strengthening bonds between different peoples and cultures, and we see it as an important factor impacting the dynamics of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

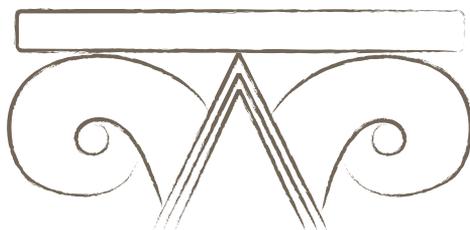
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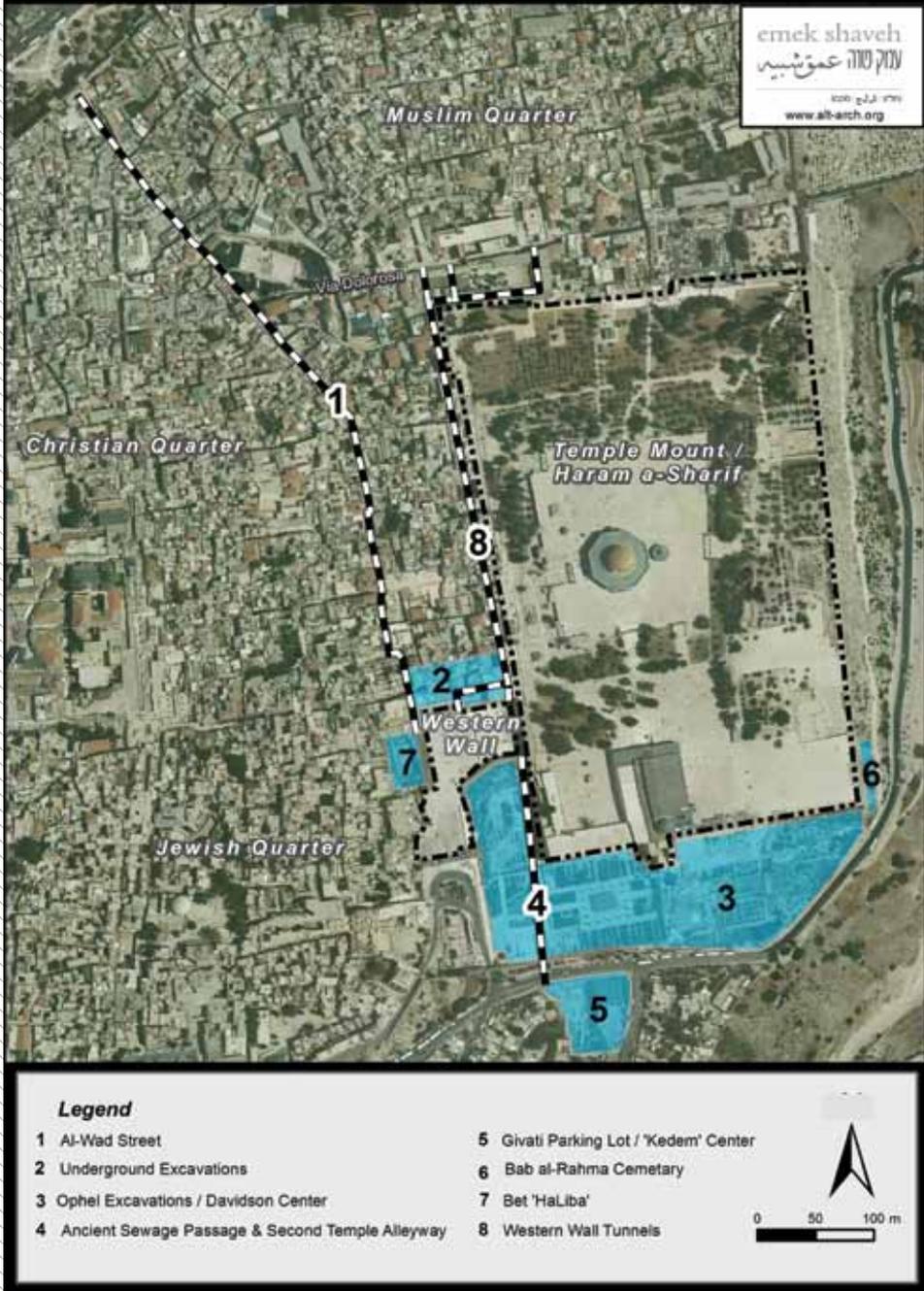
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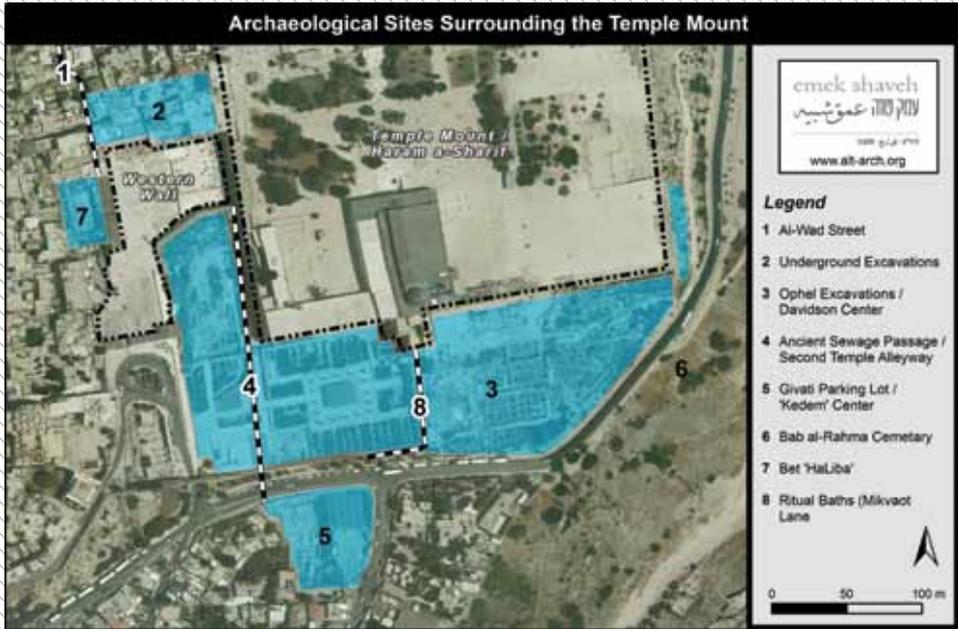
Israeli activity in the Old City of Jerusalem since 2005, has focused on archaeological excavations and on the advancement of construction plans for public and tourist buildings on the excavation grounds, mainly in the vicinity of the Temple Mount/al-Haram a-Sharif and the Village of Silwan. The archaeological excavations have become a main channel for efforts to create a new “Old City”. Excavation sites are changing the lay of the land, lending force to an historical narrative focusing on the Jewish people, and marginalizing the Palestinian residents from their environment and from their connection to the Temple Mount/al-Haram a-Sharif. The excavations have broad implications for the multi-cultural character of the city and for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In this document, we seek to present the main archaeological-tourism initiatives advanced in 2012 and those planned for 2013.

According to the view that has gained ground in Israel since the annexation of the Old City to Jerusalem in 1967, the Old City is an inseparable part of Israeli Jerusalem. This idea runs contrary to the international perspective, which views the Old City as part of the West Bank. The Palestinians view the Old City as an integral part of Palestinian Jerusalem, which in the future will be transferred to their jurisdiction in the framework of a political agreement.

Main Archaeological Sites in Silwan and the Old City

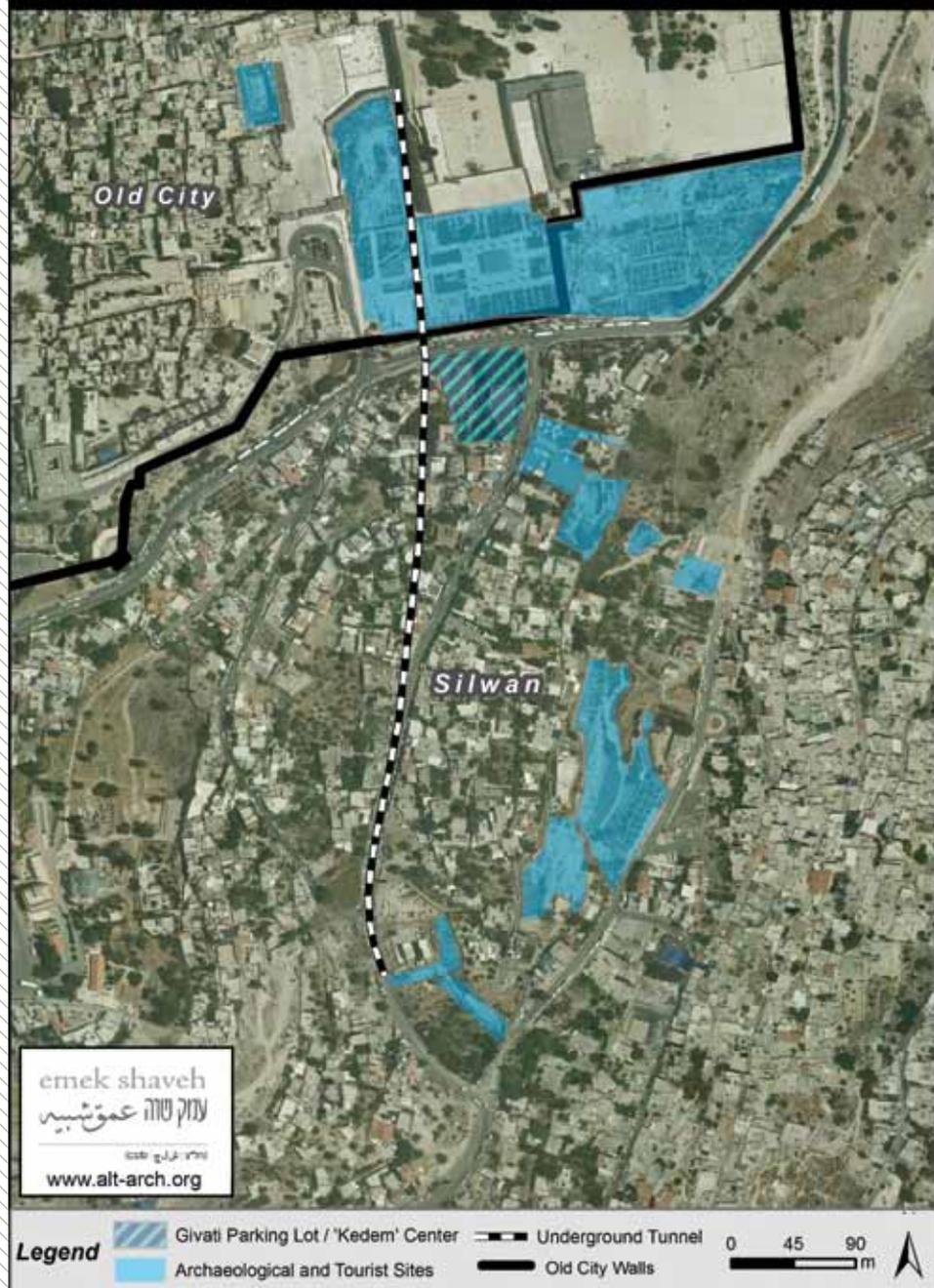


Map 1 Main excavation sites in Silwan and the Old City



Map 2 Archaeological excavations around the Temple Mount/al-Haram a-Sharif

Archaeological and Tourist Sites Surrounding Givati Parking Lot / 'Kedem' Center



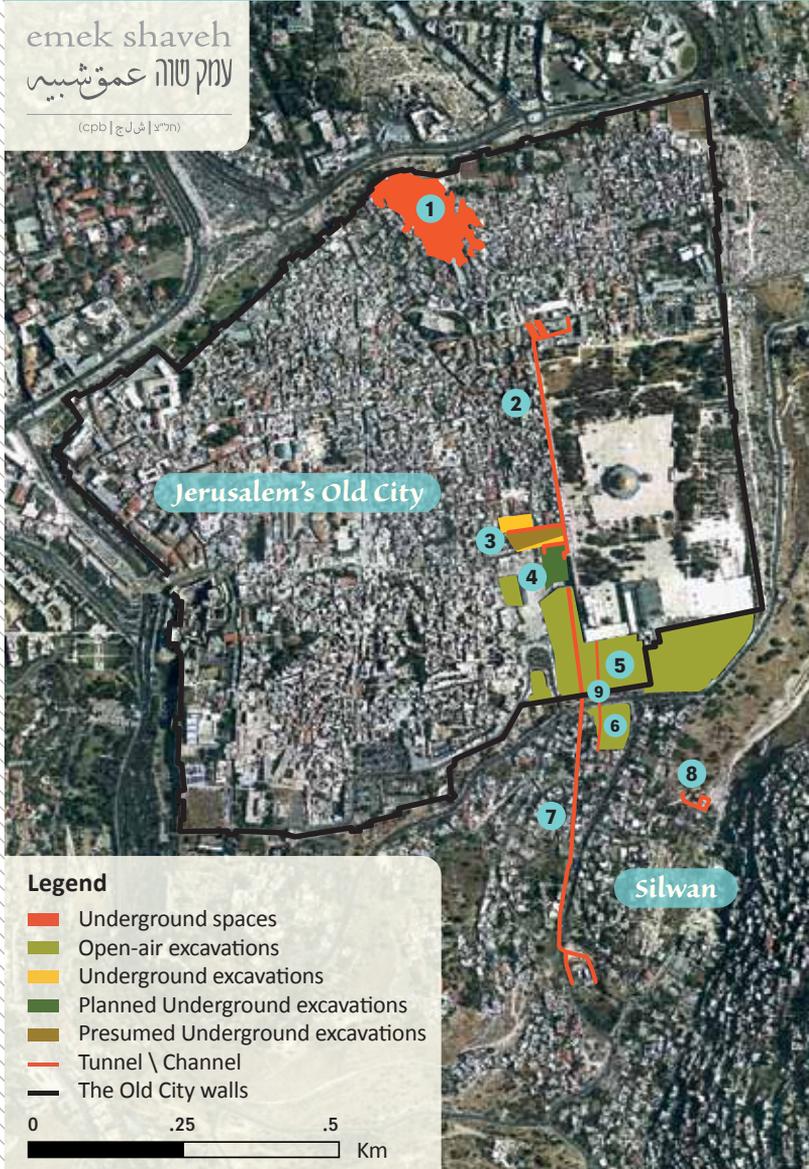
Map 3 Kedem Center/Givati Parking Lot and antiquities sites in its vicinity

Underground excavations in Jerusalem's Old City and Silwan

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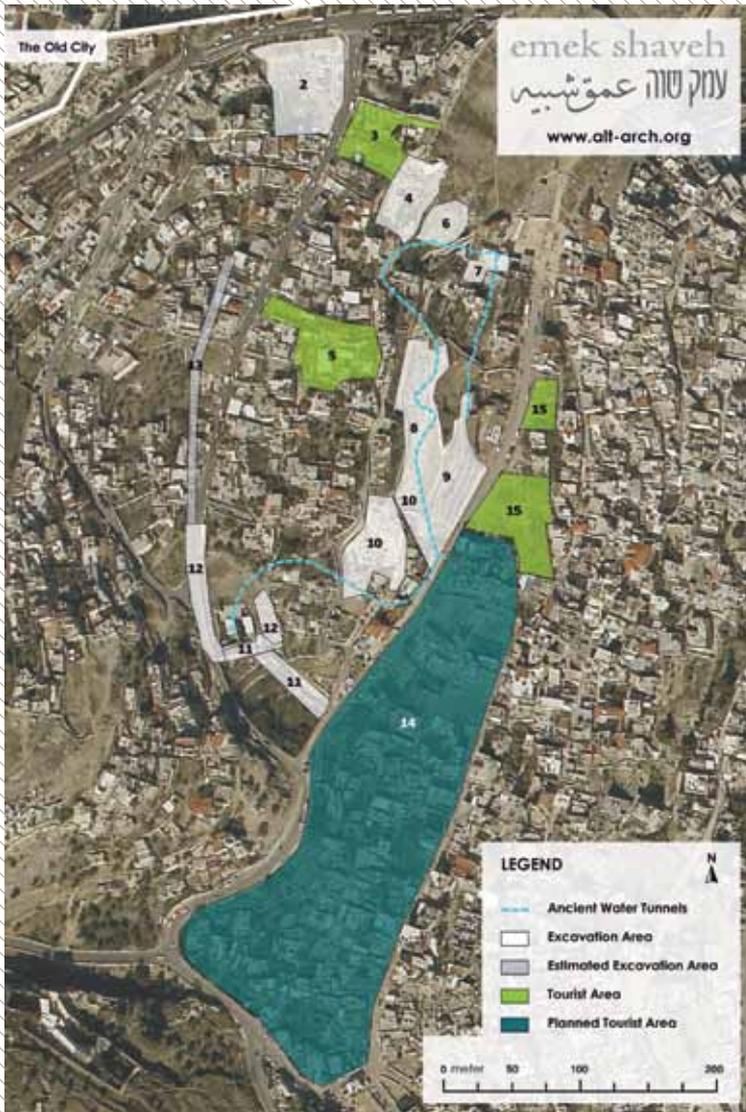
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(מסלול | שילוח | עוב)



Map 4

1. Zedekiah's Cave
2. Western Wall Tunnels
3. Ohel Yitzhak Synagogue
4. Western Wall Plaza
5. Ophel excavations
6. Givati parking lot excavation
7. Tunnel following drainage channel and 'Herodian' Street
8. 'Gihon' Tunnels
9. Excavated by Ch. Warren



Map 5 Excavation areas in Silwan

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Silwan | 8. The Shiloah tunnel |
| 2. The Givati Parking lot | 9. Area E |
| 3. The City of David visitors' center | 10. Weill Excavation |
| 4. Area G | 11. The Shiloah pool |
| 5. The Aderet Compound | 12,13. Underground tunnel excavation |
| 6. Kenyon's excavation | 14. Al-Bustan neighborhood |
| 7. The Gihon Spring excavation | 15. The Parking lots |

Introduction

Since 2005, the government of Israel has been promoting tourism development as an overarching project in the historical basin of Jerusalem. The initiative focuses on the Old City, the Village of Silwan, and the open spaces surrounding them. From 2005-2013, the Israeli government and Jerusalem municipality allocated more than 620 million shekels for the development of tourism and archaeology in the area of this historic basin. A budget of 480 million shekels was allocated from the government budget, and 144 million shekels from the municipal budget.¹ In the government meeting that took place in May 2012 in honor of Jerusalem Day, a decision was made to allocate an additional sum of 350 million shekels for continuation of the project in the years 2013-2019.² The overall investment stands at 970 million shekels.

One of the plan's main projects is located primarily in the area of the Givati Parking Lot in the Village of Silwan. This site is the future location of a tourist center known as "The Kedem Center". The complex is expected to be joined with other archaeological sites in Silwan and in the Old City via existing underground spaces and tunnels that will be dug out between them. The Kedem Center is one of the main buildings that will have an impact, if current plans are carried out, on the landscape between the Old City and Silwan, and on the way in which this area is perceived. In parallel, in the Ophel area, which is south of the Temple Mount/Haram a-Sharif, excavations are being carried out – conservation and development work that will lead to the creation of tourist routes that end at the Kedem Center.

In this publication, we present the main project of the excavation or archaeological development of the Old City and Silwan that are anticipated to have a political impact on these areas. When examining each initiative individually, a mistaken impression may be created that each project makes an important contribution to the understanding of the city's history and development. However, when one considers the projects as a composite whole, it becomes clear that the Israeli government is also using the archaeological excavations and conservation work to reinforce the physical connection between the Village of Silwan and the Old City in order to fortify the Israeli hold on the Old City itself, and as a cover for the advancement of monumental building plans. For example, between 2005 and 2009, archaeological excavations were carried out in the Western Wall (Kotel) Plaza area as preparation for the establishment of a planned building, known as "Beit Haliba". Although the building will affect the Western Wall Plaza and holy places in the vicinity of the Temple Mount, its construction has received almost no public attention or critique.³

In what follows, the relevant sites are reviewed systematically. The overview begins in the northern part of the Old City, continues south, and ends at the edge of the Village of Silwan. The report concludes with a description of the role played by the Israel Antiquities Authority and UNESCO in shaping the heritage and preservation of Jerusalem.

1 Al-Wad Street

(Map 1, Site 1)

Not long after entering the Old City from the Damascus Gate, the street splits into two main thoroughfares that transverse the Old City across almost its entire length. The easternmost of these is al-Wad/HaGai Street, and a walk down it brings one into an encounter with the sites holiest to the three monotheistic religions. The street crosses the Via Dolorosa, sacred to the Christians, and identified with Jesus' path prior to the crucifixion. Continuing along this route, one finds the Muslim entrances to the al-Haram a-Sharif; at its far end is the entrance to the Western Wall. Based on excavations undertaken during the twentieth century in a number of sections of the street, the prevalent estimation is that it was built by the Romans in the second century BCE. During that period, Jerusalem was part of the Roman Empire, and was called Aelia Capitolina. Examples of this period include the smaller, side entrances of the main Roman gate, exposed under what is today the Damascus Gate. Additionally, remains of paving from this period were found where the street intersects with the Via Dolorosa at the western part of the Kotel Plaza, the area slated for the construction of Beit Haliba. The southernmost section of the street was exposed near Tanners' Gate in the Old City wall, a pedestrian gate located a few dozen meters from the Dung Gate.

In October 2012, the Jerusalem municipality began development work on the street. Among other things, the sewage line passing below it is being replaced. Over the past forty years, many underground excavations have been carried out beneath the houses and streets of the Old City. Such excavations are also being carried out today in the area between the Western Wall and al-Wad/HaGai Street, in the area of the Ohel Yitzhak Synagogue. Excavations deep under the earth are also being carried out in various segments that are adjacent to the Western Wall Tunnels. Based on conversations with settlers, settler organizations and some of the authorities have long been aspiring to create an underground connection within the Muslim Quarter between the various homes of settlers and antiquities sites there, such as Zedekiah's Cave; beyond hearsay, however, we have been unable to obtain evidence of these intentions. Upgrading the sewage system is an opportunity to dig along the entire length of the street and to explore its history. As stated, at the southern end of al-Wad/HaGai Street is the Ohel Yitzhak Synagogue (see Map 1, Site 2). Beneath this synagogue, since 2005, there have been excavations of underground spaces that on one end connect to the Kotel Tunnels, and on their other end can be ultimately joined to spaces that will be exposed in al-Wad/HaGai Street. Based on precedents in the Old City and following the interest in underground passageways among certain groups, we believe it is highly likely that if expandable underground spaces are discovered, the Antiquities Authority will decide to expand the excavation area using government funding.⁴

Remnants of the Roman gate beneath the Damascus Gate >>>

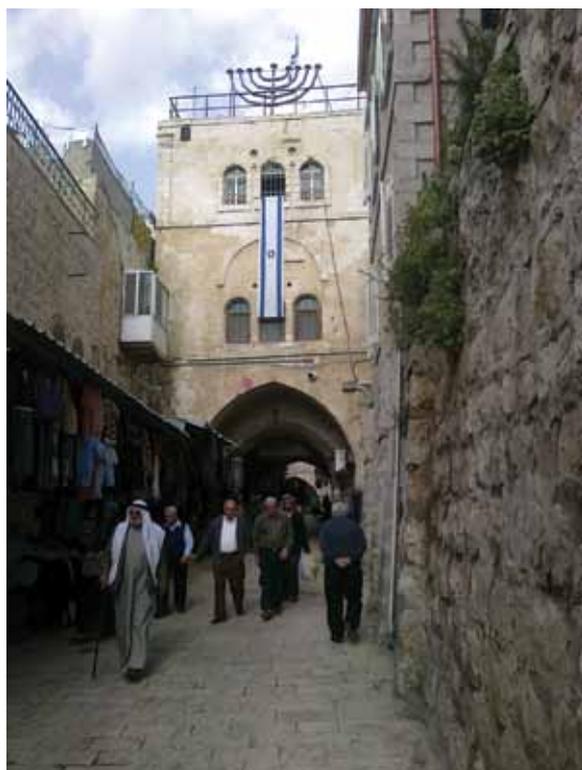


The development plans for al-Wad/HaGai Street, which accentuate the paving from the Aelia Capitolina period could potentially serve as an example for the continuous connection between the various periods in the city's history and the influence of each culture on those that followed. Instead, it appears that the developers aim to imbue visitors with the sense that they are walking along a road in an ancient Roman City, obscuring the character of the street that exists today. While the preservation and restoration work along the street will not erase the traffic of Palestinian shoppers or its Arab character, emphasis of the Roman past, during which there was no Muslim or Arab character to the street, will serve to deflect attention from this present reality.⁵

Along al-Wad/HaGai Street are a number of key buildings under the jurisdiction of the settler organization Ateret Cohanim. The organization's activity is devoted to Judaization of the Muslim and Christian quarters of the Old City. One of the buildings under its control is the home of Ariel Sharon, purchased in the 1990s and located a short distance north of corner of the Via Dolorosa and al-Wad/HaGai Street. Among the first structures purchased by the settlers in the Muslim quarter, also located on al-WadStreet, is the Ateret HaCohanim Yeshiva. The yeshiva serves as a study and spiritual center for hundreds of students who visit it yearly. Further along the street are several homes of settlers, and a path that leads to the "Little Kotel", adjacent to the Temple Mount and serves as a prayer site for the ultra-Orthodox and settlers. Prayer services at the Ohel Yitzhak Synagogue were renewed in 2007 after it was renovated.⁶ The preservation work will give the street an appearance that will blend in well with the houses of the settlers scattered along it, and will strengthen the Jewish presence there.



Remnants of the street from the Roman Period, beneath the Tanners' Gate



Home of Ariel Sharon on al-Wad/HaGai Street



Remnants of the street from the Roman Period, beneath the Tanners' Gate

2 Western Wall Plaza

Beit Haliba (Map 1, Site 7)

In 2005, the Antiquities Authority began excavating the western portion of the Kotel Plaza. The excavations, in an area spanning approximately 1.5 dunam (just under two-fifths of an acre) went on almost consecutively until 2009.⁷ Remnants of the Mughrabi neighborhood, which Israel destroyed in 1967, were unearthed, as well as ancient remains, including from the Mamluk Period (13th- 16th c. CE), from the Byzantine Period (4th-7th c.) and from the Roman Period (between the 2nd-4th c), and even a building dating to the 7th century BCE. After removing the archaeological layers from the Muslim and Byzantine periods, the Roman street, dated to the 2nd c. CE –from the days of Aelia Capitolina – was exposed.

The excavations serve as a foundation for the plan to establish an office and conference building for the Kotel Heritage Foundation, a government organization under the auspices of the Prime Minister's Office. The foundation is vested with overseeing prayer arrangements at the Kotel Plaza and tourism in the Kotel Tunnels. The construction plan for Beit Haliba is reminiscent of the planning in the Givati Parking Lot (see below): the archaeological area compromises the ground level of the building, and above it three floors, spanning 3,700 square meters, are to be erected. The building will be identical in height to the Kotel, and after it is erected, the character of the plaza will change from an open area to a compound that ends in a monumental building across from the mosques on the mount. In Emek Shaveh's publication: "Beit Haliba and the Givati Parking Lot – Archaeological Excavations and their Impact on the Status Quo in the Old City and in Silwan", we elucidate how the archaeological excavations are utilized to advance the establishment of controversial buildings in the area of the Old City. Beit Haliba will obscure the archaeological excavations, and create a link between the history of the location and the building, while ignoring thousands of years of history exposed in the excavation.

Establishment of the building has sparked opposition on the part of various Muslim groups. They claim that the status quo in the holy sites must be maintained, and all construction must be carried out in coordination and cooperation with Jordan and the Muslim Waqf. These claims are anchored in decisions by Israel's High Court of Justice regarding the construction at the Mughrabi Gate, and in the peace agreement between Israel and Jordan, in which it was agreed that the latter would be part of any permanent status agreement over the Old City.⁸

Excavations at the Mughrabi Bridge

The Mughrabi Bridge, leading to the Mughrabi Gate, is the only entrance to the Temple Mount/al-Haram a-Sharif for non-Muslims. The bridge divides the Kotel Plaza from the area where the Davidson Center archaeological excavations are underway. The Israeli authorities have been working for many years on a plan to build a new bridge via which visitors can reach the Temple Mount/al-Haram



Excavations in the Western Wall Plaza and remnants of the Roman street that were exposed



Awnings erected over the archaeological excavations adjacent to the Mughrabi Gate

a-Sharif. Every attempt to renovate the bridge, however, meets immediately with international pressure and arouses fears among the Muslim Waqf, which claims that the renovation will change the status quo of the Temple Mount.⁹ In June 2012, the Antiquities Authority initiated archaeological excavations alongside the Mughrabi Bridge. The excavations are located at a number of segments along the base of the bridge, and it appears that their goal is to prepare surfaces that will serve as foundations for construction of the new bridge.

The Western Wall Plaza

Jerusalem's local building committee approved expansion of the area of the Kotel Plaza by 600 sq.m.¹⁰ It appears that the bulk of the expansion will be carried out through underground archaeological excavations that will enable prayers on two levels, one at the surface and two deep below it. The plan goes hand-in-hand with various other projects being carried out in the Kotel Plaza, including the establishment of Beit Haliba and the excavations near the Mughrabi Bridge. In this chapter, we present three projects being carried out today or that will be carried out in the future in the area of the Western Wall: Beit Haliba, the Mughrabi Bridge, and plans to dig beneath the Kotel Plaza. Each of these is viewed by the Israeli public as an isolated activity, whose influence on the historic basin is miniscule. However, when examined as part of an overall program, it becomes clear that all of these initiatives together contribute to a dramatic alteration of the Western Wall area, and herald further significant ramifications for the space surrounding the Temple Mount/al-Haram a-Sharif.

3 The Ophel Excavations – The Davidson Center

(Map 1, Site 3)

This is the largest contiguous excavation area in the Old City. The site is located south of the Temple Mount/al-Haram a-Sharif and the Old City Walls, and north of the Village of Silwan. The excavations extend the entire length of the Temple Mount on its southern side, and along a sizable portion of its western side. Remains from the early Muslim period were exposed in the area: graves from the 'Abbasid Period (the 8th - 9th centuries CE), and the remains of large buildings identified as palaces or government buildings from the 'Umayyad Period (7th and 8th c.). Beneath and alongside them a Byzantine level has been exposed (4th-7th c.) with dwelling structures and an additional building identified as a monastery. Most of the remains found from the Late Roman Period (1st-4th c.) have been identified as military buildings, such as a bakery that served the 10th Roman Legion stationed in Jerusalem. An additional layer at this site is dated to the Early Roman Period, that is, the Second Temple Period (2nd c. BCE – 1st c. CE). In addition, a relatively small quantity of findings was revealed from the days of the Kingdom of Judea (8th and 7th c. BCE).¹¹

The location was declared a national park at the end of the 1990s, and a few years later, as 2010 approached, the Davidson Center was constructed and the site was turned into an active museum. The center is run by East Jerusalem Development Ltd., a municipal government corporation. In order to prepare the site to receive visitors, conservation work was carried out to restore the 'Umayyad Palaces, identified with the beginnings of Islam, the Herodian Street, identified with the Second Temple days, structures from the Byzantine Period (beginning of the Christian rule in Palestine) and more.

While it could be claimed that presentation of these excavations is merely a means of making Jerusalem's history over the ages known, when the actual findings are reviewed, it becomes clear that those remains identified with Jewish history are specially emphasized.

Following is a description of four highly significant initiatives advanced at the site during the years 2011-2012:

a. Conservation work on what is referred to as the "Ritual Bath (Mikve) Trail", (Map 2, Site 7). The trail features a number of ritual baths from the Second Temple Period exposed in the eastern section of the Ophel excavations, outside of the Old City Walls. The ritual baths are scattered among remains from other periods, and in some of the cases, served during various periods for different needs (mainly to collect water). Immersing in the ritual baths was part of a religious ritual during Temple days, and remains a Jewish observance to this day.¹² The Ritual Bath Trail begins beneath the southern wall of the Temple Mount/al-Haram a-Sharif and the al-'Aqsa Mosque. A system of gates was exposed there, known as "Hulda's Gates", and the staircase leading to them. The gates and the stairs are dated to the Second Temple Period, and are identified with the route taken by pilgrims on their way to

pray in the Temple. The path ends at the exit adjacent to the wall of the Old City, across from the northern entrance to the Village of Silwan and just a few meters from the excavations at the Givati Parking Lot and the City of David site. The Israeli authorities are planning to create an underground or aboveground connection between this path and the excavations in Silwan.

The physical reality created by the site's current presentation misleads the visitor into an imprecise historical conception of an uninterrupted continuum from Temple-period ritual bathing to contemporary observance of the practice. This impression serves a simplistic narrative that erases the intervening years of a multi-cultural Jerusalem, and sets the ground for a political present in which the city's non-Jewish inhabitants are marginalized politically and culturally.

b. In June 2011, the "Ophel Walls" site was opened to the public. This is a small segment of the Ophel excavation area, located east of the Ritual Bath Trail. There, a number of remains dated to the 8th and 7th centuries BCE, that is, to the period of the Kingdom of Judea, were exposed. They include wall segments identified as part of a tower or a residence. In later periods, building was continued on top of these walls. Due to their subsequent use during later periods and the destruction brought upon the site over the years, scholars are not in agreement regarding identity of the remains and their significance.¹³ Generally speaking, this section has few findings, particularly relative to the Ophel layer. However, it has become a central part of the tourist route. Emphasis of a particular layer (with few findings) in a multi-layer locus leads to a partial understanding of the site. The project emphasizes the relationship between the City of David site and the Ophel excavations, and marks one period as more important due to the aspiration to bolster a particular historical narrative and not according to the importance of the archaeological findings.

c. An initiative for digging a tunnel connecting the Village of Silwan/City of David to the Kotel Plaza. The Antiquities Authority, since 2007, has been excavating a tunnel from the Shiloah/al-Hamra Pool towards the north. In 2012, the tunnel reached the Davidson Center area in the Old City, south of the Western Wall Plaza and the Mughrabi Bridge (Map 1, site 4; see also the chapter "Jerusalem Underground", from Emek Shaveh's publication, *Between Holiness and Propaganda*, and enclosed films.¹⁴

d. In August 2012, conservation and excavation work at the southeastern end of the Ophel excavation area began, continuing the excavations undertaken at the site of the Ophel Walls by Dr. Eilat Mazar. The area on its northeastern side borders on the Muslim cemetery Bab a-Rahmeh (for information on prevention of Muslim burial at the site, see Chapter 4, below). The area was excavated in the 1970s, at which time remains from various periods in Jerusalem's history were exposed. Those digging there now aspire to find at this site remains from the days of the Kingdom of Judea, to match those exposed in the area known as the "Ophel Walls".

The conserved ritual baths and the Ophel Walls, together with the excavation of the tunnels, create a tourist route contiguous with the City of David site in the Village of Silwan. Excavation of a tunnel that will connect the Old City and portions of the



Davidson Center – Remains of the street dated to the first century CE (Second Temple Period)

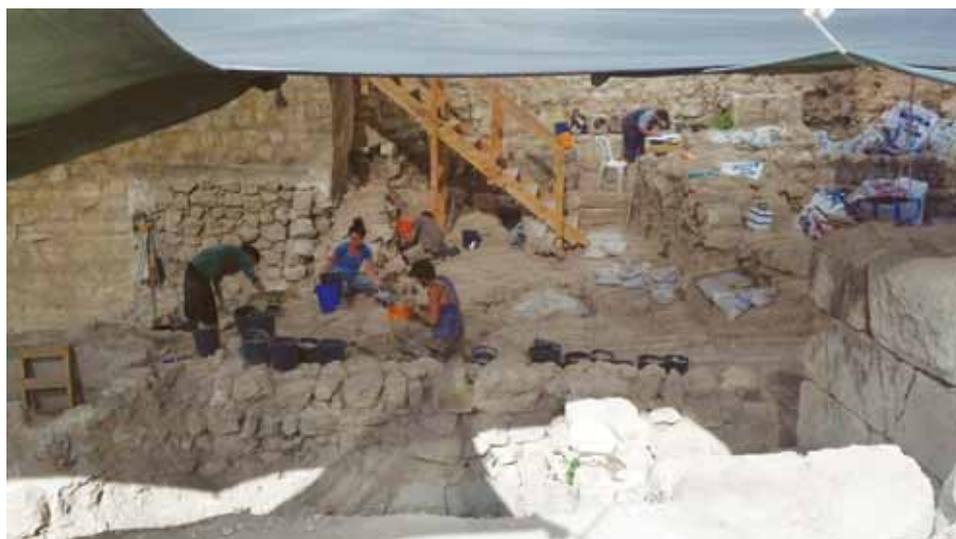


Conservation work along the Ritual Baths (Mikve) Trail

site, and identifying the Ophel Walls with King Solomon are part of the same trend expressed by presenting the archaeological remains in the City of David as part of King David's Palace, and by presenting the site overall as connected to King David and his descendants. In both cases, the remains are ostensibly from one of the most important periods in the history of Israel, but this period – the remnants from which are most scarce – is not presented proportionally relative to the other periods from which remains were exposed at the site. While the actual findings at the excavations bring to life the history of the city of Jerusalem and illustrate the tremendous impact of the Roman, Byzantine and Muslim periods of the city, the visitor receives the impression that the site's importance stems mainly from its connection to Jewish history. Since in Israeli society ancient Jerusalem is identified as an inseparable part of Israel and Israeli identity, most of the visitors are not aware that this presentation of the site is problematic. Rather than using the archaeological finding as a key tool for illustrating the multicultural nature of Jerusalem in the past and present, the authorities chose to present the site in a manner that strengthens their Israeli historical narrative regarding the Old City, and the Temple Mount in particular.



Ophel Walls at the Davidson Center after conservation



Excavation work – the Ophel Excavations



The excavation area with the al-Aqsa Mosque in the background

4

Bab a-Rahmeh

(Map 1, Map 2, Site 6)

The Muslim cemetery Bab a-Rahmeh is immediately adjacent to the eastern wall of the Old City. It appears that the Golden Gate/Bab a-Rahmeh was closed off in the 8th century CE, and therefore apparently was built long before construction of the Ottoman Wall in the 16th century. No archaeological excavations were carried out to date the earliest graves there, but according to Muslim tradition, burial at the cemetery – which continues to this day and still take place all along the eastern wall of the Old City – began not long after the gate was closed off.

A number of Israeli organizations have in recent years been waging a struggle against burials in the southern part of the cemetery, which serves the residents of Silwan. In 2005, The Public Committee for the Prevention of Destruction of Temple Mount Antiquities, comprising archaeologists, public figures and legal professionals, petitioned the Israeli High Court of Justice, demanding that it order the state to enforce the prohibition against burial in the southern portion of the cemetery. An additional petition on the matter was submitted in 2004.¹⁵ According to the committee's claim, the area was declared an archaeological site comprising part of the Jerusalem Walls National Park, and therefore, digging and burial at the site constituted damaging antiquities.¹⁶ Following submission of the petition, the State agreed, even before the High Court (HCJ) discussion, to prevent burial at the site. In 2009, the HCJ ruled that the law dictated rejection of the petitions, but at the same time, it stated the authorities' obligation to enforce the law and to protect the site from harm, including prevention of additional burials there.¹⁷ Today, residents seeking to bury their dead in the southern portion of the cemetery require a court permit. In most cases, the families do not apply to the court after the death of their loved ones, and in some cases, burial attempts there have ended with arrests of family members or transfer of the corpses to other family plots.

In August 2012, which coincided with the end of the month of Ramadan, the Israeli authorities extended the strip where burial was forbidden northward. The difficulties heaped on Muslim burial along the eastern side of the Temple Mount/al-Haram a-Sharif go hand in hand with the Israeli aspiration to prevent or at least to reduce the Muslim presence in the area and to attenuate the Muslim ties to this cemetery, so close to the Temple Mount/al-Haram a-Sharif.



The Bab a-Rahmeh Muslim cemetery, southward-facing view

5 Givati Parking Lot

(Map 1, Map 2, Site 5)

The area known by Israelis as the “Givati Parking Lot” is located at the northern edge of the Village of Silwan, and has been excavated almost continuously from 2007 to this day. The government and the Elad non-profit organization, whose agenda is settlement and operation of tourist sites in East Jerusalem in order to strengthen the Jewish hold on it, are planning to establish a visitor center there to be called the “Kedem Center”. According to the plan, visitors will use the center as a starting point for a variety of routes in the Village of Silwan and the Old City. The excavations at the Givati Parking Lot, immediately adjacent to the Western Wall, are already connected to a tunnel north of the Ophel/Davidson Center excavations. Moreover, the excavations are connected to the Shiloah Pool in the southern part of the Village of Silwan. Two additional future projects relating to the Givati Parking Lot are the underground connection between it and the City of David visitor center, located across the street to the east, and an additional underground connection to the Ritual Bath Trail, located in the Ophel excavation area, immediately adjacent to the Old City Wall and ending just a few meters away from the Givati Parking Lot. The existing routes, together with the planned routes, will establish the Kedem Center as an alternative to today’s main tourist entrance to the Old City, the Jaffa Gate. This trend has been further enforced by the government decision of May 20, 2012 in a meeting held on the occasion of Jerusalem Day. According to the decision, the possibility of establishing a Bible museum in the Givati Parking Lot/Kedem Center in the Village of Silwan is being considered.¹⁸

The government’s decision constitutes an additional example of the close association between the plans of the settlers and the government plans. The Givati Parking Lot excavations were initially run by the Antiquities Authority and funded by Elad; subsequently, the Nature and Parks Authority joined Elad’s plan to build the Kedem Center in the excavation area. Approximately two months following the decision of the Jerusalem District Planning and Building Committee to approve the complex, the government announced that it had been decided to consider erecting a Bible museum there. If this decision is approved, the structure will receive much more legitimacy among the Israeli public, and strengthen the presence of the Elad organization in Silwan.

The archaeological excavations in the Givati Parking Lot are the main pretense for establishing the Kedem Center tourism complex above them. In Emek Shaveh’s publication “Beit Haliba and the Givati Parking Lot – Archaeological Excavations and their Impact on the Status Quo in the Old City and in Silwan”, we make clear the way in which the archeological excavations are used to advance the construction of various buildings under debate, without any adjustment and proportionality to the



Excavations at the Givati Parking Lot in Silwan – view towards the al-Aqsa Mosque

area. The planned area of the Kedem Center is some 16,000 square meters, and it is expected to reach the height of the Old City walls. The structure is anticipated to have a decisive influence on the landscape, on the way in which the walls of the Old City are perceived and enter the public consciousness, the character of the space between the Village of Silwan and the Temple Mount/al-Haram a-Sharif, and the Village of Silwan itself. Additionally, it is expected to have far-reaching implications for movement in the area, access to residents' homes, and development of the Wadi Hilweh neighborhood.

6 Tunnels and Underground Spaces

(Map 4)

The tunnels are underground passageways that follow a course through archaeological remains, and create a structural separation between the reality in the field and the way through which the authorities are interested in conveying an historical narrative onto the public. The proliferation of underground spaces creates a physical link between the Village of Silwan and the Old City, and among various areas in the Old City. The two central axes of the underground routes are the Givati Parking Lot and the Western Wall Plaza. Excavation of the tunnels and the underground spaces in the depths of the earth is a very important means for creating a narrative that focuses on Jerusalem's Jewish past, emphasizing the Second Temple Period and remains identified with it (a detailed description of the role of the tunnels in the political struggle can be found in Emek Shaveh's publication: "Between Holiness and Propaganda", in the chapter Jerusalem Underground. For a description of the main underground route, beginning at the Pool of Shiloah and ending near the Western Wall, see also Chapter 8, below).



Model of the Kedem Center Visitor Complex, planned for the entrance of Silwan

7 Pool of Shiloah/Birket al-Hamra

(Map 5, Site 11)

At the southern tip of the City of David site and the northern border of the al-Bustan neighborhood in the Village of Silwan, the remnants of an ancient building were exposed in 2004. Sections of the complex were known from many excavations undertaken in the area since the 19th century. The archaeologists estimate that it is a pool from the 1st century BCE, i.e. from the early Roman Period, and have identified it as the Pool of Shiloah from the Second Temple days. For purposes of the excavations, the area was closed off from village residents, and later became a tourist complex with a mandatory entrance fee. The complex is presented as a place where Jewish pilgrims used to immerse in a ritual bath prior to ascending to the Temple, and from which they set out to make sacrifices. The connection between the Temple Period and the site is emphasized both in the signage posted there, and in video clips produced by the City of David and the Antiquities Authority.¹⁹ An underground path sets out from the pool, arriving ultimately at the Old City.



Pool of Shiloah / Birket al-Hamra



Sign at the entrance to the Pool of Shiloah/Birket al-Hamra



Sign at the Pool of Shiloah /Birket al-Hamra, focusing on the Temple service

8 *Underground connection that passes under the Village of Silwan and reaches the Western Wall* (Map 4, Site 7)

Since 2007, the Antiquities Authority has been digging adjacent to the Pool of Shiloah/Birket al-Hamra along a length of street dated to the 1st c. BCE, in other words, the Second Temple Period. The street was documented already during the 19th century by the scholars Bliss and Dickie.²⁰ The length of the stretch of road exposed is approximately forty meters. Further down, at a level higher than that of the previous street, a covered drainage channel was exposed, taller than the height of the average man, and constructed of stone. The channel passes beneath Wadi Hilweh Street in the Village of Silwan along its entire length, and below the surrounding houses. It continues through the excavation area at the Kotel (the area of the Davidson Center) in the Old City, arriving at the Kotel Plaza.²¹

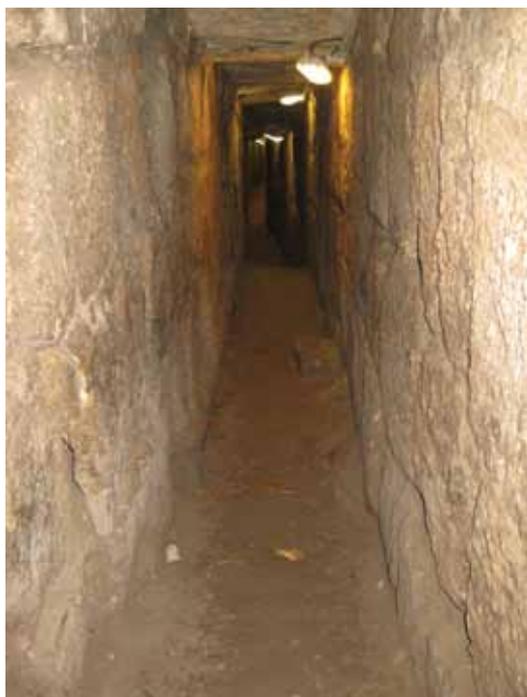
While excavation of the tunnel exposed an ancient street, further along there is an ancient sewage system that is higher than the street level, leading one to conclude that the two were built during different periods. The question of dating of the street remnants and the sewage system has still not been resolved. Despite this, the Antiquities Authority and the City of David site present both the street segment and the sewage system as part of the street constructed during the Second Temple Period (the period of Roman Antiquity, i.e. between the 1st and 2nd century BCE). The authority and the site administration even present this section of the street and the sewage system as the path tread by pilgrims on their way to the Temple Plaza.²²



Steps along the Herodian street



Ladder connecting the level of the Herodian street and the ancient sewage channel



Ancient sewage channel beneath homes of Silwan residents

9 Northern Entrance to the Village of Silwan (Map 5)

In 2012, four new projects in the area of the City of David National Park were approved by the Israeli government and/or the Jerusalem District Planning and Building Committee. All of the projects are located in the northern part of the Village of Silwan. Sites excavated in the past (no. 4 and no. 6 on the map) together with the approved projects create a continuous strip of archeological sites which disconnects the houses of Silwan from the Old City and the Temple Mount/al-Haram a-Sharif.

Givati Parking Lot (Map 5, Site 2)

See chapter 5, above

Jeremiah's Pit (Western Edge of Site 3, Map 5)

Near the entrance to the visitor center there is a water cistern used by the residents of Silwan before their homes were hooked up to the municipal water system. With the establishment of the visitor center there at the beginning of the millennium, those in charge of the center began referring to the place as “The Prophet Jeremiah’s Pit”, and to present it as the example of the pit into which Jeremiah was cast as punishment for his prophecy. The visitors descend into the water cistern via a ladder, and listen to the biblical story of the Prophet Jeremiah and his imprisonment in the pit (Jeremiah 38, 2-13). According to archaeologists, the pit originated during the Byzantine Period or later, that is, at least a thousand years after the event relayed in the Bible. The combination of the seven-meter-deep pit, the biblical story, and the biblical quotes, creates the sensation that this is the location where Jeremiah was cast into the pit.²³ In May 2012, the State of Israel and City of Jerusalem approved a four million shekel budget for producing a sound-and-light show in the cistern that will describe the story of Jeremiah the prophet.²⁴ Critique of the work for readying Jeremiah’s Pit as a public site, and of the gap between the archaeological finding and the story told by the visitor center was also voiced even by researchers working with Elad who identify with a large portion of the biblical content presented at the City of David site.²⁵

Excavation at the Entrance to the City of David Visitor Center

Since 2011, the Antiquities Authority has been carrying out excavations at the entrance to the City of David Visitor Center. The excavations are taking place on the main road of the Village of Silwan, some two meters from Jeremiah’s Pit. In the framework of the excavations, a mosaic floor was exposed, as well as part of an expansive building from the Late Roman Period. A similar structure from this period, attesting to the importance of the area at the time, was exposed in the Givati Parking Lot across from the visitor center. The archaeological excavation immediately adjacent to the entrance of the City of David Visitor Center will in the future connect underground to the planned building in the Givati Parking Lot. This connection will be the last link necessary for creating a tourist route that begins at



Excavations at the Givati Parking Lot with Silwan houses in the background



The Silwan Spring complex

the Givati Parking Lot and ends at Beit Ha-Ma'ayan / the Spring House (see below).

Beit Ha-Ma'ayan – The Spring House (Map 5, Site 7)

During a discussion that took place on June 11, 2012 at the District Planning and Building Committee in Jerusalem, Elad’s plan for preparing the building in the vicinity of Ein Um a-Darej /HaGihon Spring in the Village of Silwan, and subsequent expansion, was presented. The plan includes approval of the existing building and readying ground for visitors at the City of David site, connecting the Warren Shaft, the spring, and the beginning of the walking path through the tunnel. The complex includes three buildings constructed over the spring and alongside it; an additional floor and a porch will be added to the central building, with a view to the wadi. The area totals 200 square meters.

The spring of the Village of Silwan for hundreds of years served as the water source for the residents, and later, as a relaxation spot for children and their parents. Since 1995, the site has witnessed the most protracted archaeological excavations ever carried out in Jerusalem. In this context, the area was annexed from the village for the benefit of the settlers and the City of David tourist site. What began as an archaeological excavation for “research purposes” and as development work on the site, again became a tool for Israeli control over one of the village’s few water sources, also doubling as one of its only public spaces. And yet, among Israelis, the work there is not considered as wresting control of public land.



Excavations at the entrance to the visitor center at the City of David in Silwan, with village homes in the backdrop

10

The Antiquities Authority in East Jerusalem

Almost all of the archaeological excavations in the Village of Silwan and in the Old City are carried out by the Antiquities Authority. The excavating archaeologists are subordinate to this authority, and it is vested with scientific responsibility for their activities. Funding for the excavations comes from settler organizations, such as Elad in the Village of Silwan, and from government organizations such as the Company for the Reconstruction and Development of the Jewish Quarter in the Old City of Jerusalem. As part of the archaeological digs, the surface and subsequent layers are necessarily being destroyed. Since the surface layer will never return to its original state, the Antiquities Authority bears the legal responsibility for preventing excavations expected to wreak irreparable destruction. The archaeological excavations in the Givati Parking Lot and in Beit Haliba included removal of various archaeological layers that are no longer visible in the area. The Antiquities Authority could have left some of the archaeological structures from later periods, for example, the Abbasid layer in the Givati Parking Lot, and the Ayyubid-Mamluk layer at Beit Haliba. In so doing, the authority could have presented a continuum of the layers excavated. It appears that the decision to remove these layers was intended to ease the work of the entrepreneurs in the event of future building. The more that layers are removed en masse, and the deeper the excavation, the larger the underground area available to the builder. The decision of the authority to excavate was undertaken without consulting with other interest groups and without soliciting the opinion of the local residents. A discussion involving all of those affected by the excavation, including the residents, leaders of the various ethnic groups in the Old City and independent professionals, would enable excavations that took into account the needs of the place and not the political needs of one group or another, or political interests.

The agreement of the Antiquities Authority to carry out excavations that suit the political plan of the government of Israel, leads to the implementation of work methods that are unacceptable in scientific research. For example, horizontal excavations of the tunnels and underground spaces, rather than stratigraphic (vertical) excavation, from the surface to the depths of the earth, that would expose all levels of the site. One can see that in East Jerusalem, the professional status of the Antiquities Authority lends credibility to a policy that emphasizes particular strata and ignores others.

11

Jerusalem – World Heritage Site

The 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, created a system that enabled signatory countries to propose the candidacy of sites for the World Heritage List.²⁶ In 1981, the Old City of Jerusalem and its walls were declared by the Kingdom of Jordan as a World Heritage Site.²⁷ In 1982, Jerusalem and its walls were declared an **Endangered World Heritage Site**.²⁸ Jerusalem is the only city on the World Heritage List that, according to this list, are not considered to be under the sovereignty of any nation. The city is mentioned only as a site proposed by Jordan. Due to the ongoing political conflict, an overall and comprehensive plan could not be implemented for protection of cultural heritage in Jerusalem. In its plan formulated in 2003, some three years after the outbreak of the Second Intifada, UNESCO initiated an activity for protecting the cultural heritage of the Old City of Jerusalem. In the framework of the initiative, a comprehensive plan was prepared, which included the establishment of a unified information bank for all heritage resources in Jerusalem, implementation of projects for the preservation of abandoned buildings, streets, sites or open areas, and restoration of residential and commercial buildings with the goal of improving the quality of life of the residents while preserving the original architecture and supporting cultural activity for youth.²⁹

According to the World Heritage Site Convention (WHC), the Old City must be protected from building and development within and **outside** of its walls. In keeping with this, extensive archaeological excavations adjacent to the walls, and building such as the tourist complex known as the Kedem Center, which will be erected outside of the walls, constitutes a violation of the preservation of Jerusalem as a World Heritage Site.³⁰

Because the Old City of Jerusalem was declared as a World Heritage Site without being associated with a particular country, it is under the jurisdiction of the UNESCO offices in Paris, and not in Jerusalem or Ramallah. Despite this, UNESCO is attempting to work with all the parties involved in Jerusalem. The head of the Israel Committee for World Heritage in UNESCO is a key partner in protecting the city's heritage. In 2011, the Ministry of Education appointed an architect, Aryeh Rachamimov, to head the committee.³¹ Rahamimov is one of the main architects working in East Jerusalem, and he is involved in many plans of settlers and the authorities. He is also the planner of the Kedem Center, slated for construction in the Givati Parking Lot. Therefore, it seems that the appointment testifies to collaboration between settler organizations in East Jerusalem and the Israeli government, and their shared interests. Naturally, this situation obviates the ability of UNESCO's Israel Committee for World Heritage to consolidate a professional and independent opinion pertaining to the plans for construction and development in the Old City of Jerusalem.

12

Summary and Conclusions

The funds that Israel has invested in tourism and archaeological initiatives in Jerusalem's historic basin since 2005 and the funds that it plans to invest in these projects by 2019 amount to approximately one billion shekels. A significant portion of the money was invested and will be invested in the future, in the area of the Village of Silwan and the Old City. The project at hand is complex and long-term, and it is anticipated that its various parts over time will create a new reality. Each excavation is perceived by the public as an isolated issue, and the relationship between the excavations and their cumulative influence are not always clear. Only an overall treatment of the issue illustrates the change that the excavations bring about in the nature of the area and the changes that they bring about in the space, both above and below ground.

The large investments and archaeological excavations changing the lay of the land, together with the presentation of the antiquities as proof of the historical right of the people of Israel to these sites, create a new historical basin. The Village of Silwan thus becomes the City of David site, the area of the Temple Mount/al-Haram a-Sharif is identified with the Ophel excavations and the Kotel Tunnels, and all of these emphasize Jerusalem of the Second Temple Period and ignore the importance of the city for members of other religions and cultures. The tunnels that connect Silwan and the Old City create a physical contiguity and uniform historical narrative that ignores the Palestinian residents. The excavations under the canopy of sky and those in the depths of the earth together create a new Jerusalem, a city based on a physical connection established between the various archaeological sites. The structure that will be erected according to plan in the Givati Parking Lot will serve as a central tourist route for the entire area. Any political solution that separates between the various parts of the Old City and the Village of Silwan will have to cope with this tourist setup that spreads out across the area and beneath it underground.

The State of Israel is responsible for enabling freedom of worship and culture to members of all of the ethnic groups and people in Jerusalem. As the body responsible for this city, it must present the history of the city from its inception and to this day in a balanced manner in which all of its layers are present. The authorities responsible for the antiquities of the city can present a city whose complex past comprises an inseparable part of its complex present. In Jerusalem's reality, and in an environment that is daily growing more extreme, emphasis of Jerusalem's past as part of life today is not a privilege but a necessary result of the struggle against extremists on both sides and a means of building a life of dignity for all residents of the city, side-by-side.

13 Principles for Subsequent Archaeological Development

- The initiation of new excavations should be limited to the greatest extent possible. Every excavation must proceed slowly, with maximum sensitivity both to the needs of the residents and to scientific integrity. Unacceptable excavation methods should be rejected out of hand, such as excavation in the tunnels, and the enabling of visits of active excavations should be strived for as a standard.
- The excavation area of the Givati Parking Lot is a fait accompli. It should be integrated into the urban and archaeological environment where it is located, left open and accessible to the entire public, and any construction that would hide the antiquities and separate the excavation area from the Village of Silwan and from the Old City opposing it must be avoided.
- Public awareness of the political effect of archaeological excavations in the Jerusalem historic basin area and the Temple Mount must be strengthened.
- Recognition of the fact that Jerusalem's cultural heritage arises from the city's historical importance to all of humanity, and not to a specific religion or people, must be increased.

Footnotes

1. Government decision 4090, "Priorities – Strengthening the City of Jerusalem" (in Hebrew), August 9, 2005, as well as based on publications of the Jerusalem Development Authority on its internet site.
2. Government decision No. 4651, "Development of the City of Jerusalem, May 20, 2012
3. Plan 11053, "Western Wall Heritage Center, Kotel Plaza in the Old City", (in Hebrew)
4. See, for example, a report concerning underground spaces beneath the Old City: M. Rapaport, "Underground Jerusalem", Haaretz (Hebrew edition), September 13, 2005.
5. S. Poni, "Conservation and Development at the foot of the Temple Mount – Solomon's Gates and the Ophel Ritual Baths", (in Hebrew) presented at the annual conference of the Israel Antiquities Authority, entitled, Archaeological Innovations in Jerusalem and Environs, October 2012.
6. On the relationship between Ateret HaCohanim and the excavation of underground spaces in the Old City and the house of Ariel Sharon, see M. Rapaport, "Underground Jerusalem", Haaretz (Hebrew edition), September 13, 2005.
7. S. Wexler and A. On, "Jerusalem – Excavations at the Western Wall Plaza", Hadashot Archeologiyot, 121, 2009.
8. Atty. Qays Nasser, speaking before the district committee against the construction of Beit Haliba. Protocol, District Planning and Building Committee discussion, pp. 13-14, par. 35. [*This does not cite a meeting date or other vital publication info] and Dr. Mahmoud Maslha v Western Wall Heritage Foundation, Admin. Pet. 7490/10.
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10. Y. Eli, "For the first time since '77: The Old City of Jerusalem will be Renovated", (in Hebrew), NRG, December 5, 2012.
11. E. Mazar, Excavations in the South of the Temple Mount: the Ophel of Biblical Jerusalem, Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, Institute of Archaeology, 1989.
12. The conservation project of the Ritual Bath Trail south of the Temple Mount was carried out from 2010-2012 at the initiative of East Jerusalem Development, Ltd.
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16. N. Shragai, "Temple Mount Politics Make Strange Bedfellows", Haaretz (English edition), May 16, 2006, and N. Shragai, "State Struggles against Illegal Muslim Burial beneath Temple Mount", Haaretz (Hebrew edition), June 21, 2009.
17. HCJ 05/7800, and HCJ 04/7192, ruling of July 19, 2009.
18. Protocol of government meeting 151, May 20, 2012, Development of the City of Jerusalem, appendix 812, revised version (in Hebrew).

19. City of David video clip: "Herodian Road from Shiloah Pool to the Western Wall", November 4, 2010, as well as video clip of the Antiquities Authority: "City of David – Exposing the Road to the Temple", July 29, 2012.
20. Bliss, F.J. and A.C. Dickie, *Excavations at Jerusalem*, London, 1898.
21. N. Hasson, "Digging Completed on Tunnel Under Old City Walls in East Jerusalem", *Haaretz* (English edition), January 25, 2011.
22. City of David film, "Herodian Road from Shiloah Pool to the Western Wall" (in Hebrew), April 5, 2012.
23. Video clip about Jeremiah's Pit produced by the City of David: "The Cistern – City of David".
24. N. Hasson, "Jerusalem Planning NIS 4 Million Light Show to Draw Tourists to East Jerusalem", *Haaretz* (English edition), May 29, 2012
25. Ir Amim, *Shady Dealing in Silwan*, 2009, p. 32, and N. Hasson, "Top Archaeologist Decries Jerusalem Dig as Unscientific 'Tourist Gimmick'", *Haaretz*, October 11, 2011.
26. World Heritage Convention of 1972: Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.
27. UNESCO, Justification for inscription on the List of World Heritage in Danger, 1982: Report of the 6th Session of the Committee, 1982.
28. UNESCO, Action Plan for the Safeguarding of the Old City of Jerusalem, September 2007.
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