Towards an Inclusive Archaeology in Jerusalem: The Case of Silwan/The City of David

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The village of Silwan, in East Jerusalem, contains the remains of most ancient Jerusalem, often termed "The City of David". In recent years the excavation and presentation of the archaeology of Silwan has been placed in the hands of a Jewish settler non-governmental organization. Their incorporation of this site into the Jewish-Israeli narrative is multifaceted — mixing religious nationalism with theme-park tourism. As a result, conflict with local Palestinians occurs at the very basic level of existence, where the past is used to disenfranchise and displace people in the present. The volatile mix of history, religion and politics in the City of David/Silwan threatens any future reconciliation in Jerusalem, which must be based on the empowerment of local people and the adoption of a proactive inclusive archaeological stance in which the many voices of the past are heard.

KEYWORDS Jerusalem, City of David, Silwan, Archaeological politics, Archaeological ethics

Introduction

While much has been written about archaeology, nationalism, and identity building in Israel and about the use of archaeology in recreating history in the Old City of Jerusalem (Shay, 1989; Silberman and Small, 1997; Killebrew, 1999; Abu el-Haj, 2001; Halotte and Joffe, 2002; Baram, 2007; Feige, 2007, to name but a few), the situation on the ground is not static. Forty years of occupation have elapsed since 1967, the global context has changed dramatically, and with it the manner in which Jerusalem is being contested. Although seeming progress has been made toward a two-state solution, and a joint Israeli-Palestinian working group has drawn up an archaeological agreement that includes Jerusalem (http://www.usc.edu/dept/LAS/religion/arc/sh/), Israel's grip on Jerusalem is unyielding. In recent years, the role of Jerusalem in Palestinian nation building has receded under relentless pressure (Cohen, 2007), to be replaced by increasing concern for civil and cultural/religious rights of Palestinians.

These can no longer be deferred indefinitely, pending a political settlement, and it is within the context of those rights, as well as of the cultural concerns of other stake-holders in the city, that the archaeology of Jerusalem must be considered. As excavations continue at a breakneck pace, serious ethical questions come to the fore. These require an active, rather than a passive, response. Archaeologists are required not only to refrain from doing harm, but to engage in activities that will promote understanding rather than conflict.

In this paper I will present the case of the 'City of David' in the village of Silwan which, although quite close to the Temple Mount/Haram esh-Sharif and definitely influenced by the proximity of this holy and violently contested site (Gonen, 2003; Eliav, 2005), has a virtually self-contained identity influenced to a great extent by the results of archaeological excavations. In recent years, thanks to a political and economic regime that has favoured the outsourcing of both ideological and infra-structural functions of the central government, the excavation and presentation of the archaeology of most ancient Jerusalem has been placed in the hands of a Jewish settler non-governmental organization. Their incorporation of this site into the Jewish-Israeli narrative is multifaceted — mixing religious nationalism with theme-park tourism. The past is, of course, a palpable presence, used both to shore up the new Jewish settlers' claim for primacy and to attract Bible-oriented tourism. As a result, conflict with local Palestinians occurs at the very basic level of existence, where the past is used to disenfranchise and displace people in the present.

The volatile mix of history, religion, and politics in the City of David/Silwan threatens any future reconciliation in Jerusalem. But because it is based on a superficial approach to history and archaeology, it can — as I shall argue — be defused. This requires, as a first step, a reassertion of state and municipal control, followed by empowerment of local people, and the adoption of a proactive inclusive archaeological stance in which the many voices of the past are foregrounded, using archaeology's privileged situation to hear those voices.

Archaeology in the 'Holy Basin'

Greater Jerusalem, as defined by Israel, is home to approximately 730,000 residents, of whom over 30 per cent are Palestinian. In the heart of historic Jerusalem, that is, in the Old City and its environs (often termed the Holy or Historic Basin), including the Wadi Hilweh neighbourhood in the northern part of Silwan, Palestinians comprise a far greater proportion of the inhabitants, accounting for about 90 per cent its present population of 40–50,000 (extrapolated from Ramon, 2007). The archaeology of this area, however, is considered of vital interest to Jewish and Christian history, and since 1967 has been to all intents and purposes an Israeli project. This means that, while professing neutrality and in fact collecting data on most periods of the city's occupation, archaeology has in fact been implicated in the greater political project of 'unifying' Jerusalem (Greenberg, 2007) (Figure 1).

In two recent papers, Avni and Seligman (2006; 2007) illustrate the pitfalls and pressures attending archaeological investigation of the two holiest places in Jerusalem, the Holy Sepulchre and the Haram ash-Sharif. While pointing out signifi-cant differences in the attitude of the religious authorities involved in each case (Christian sects in the Sepulchre appear to have a stake in the archaeological findings as these impact on their rival claims to authenticity, whereas the Muslim authorities
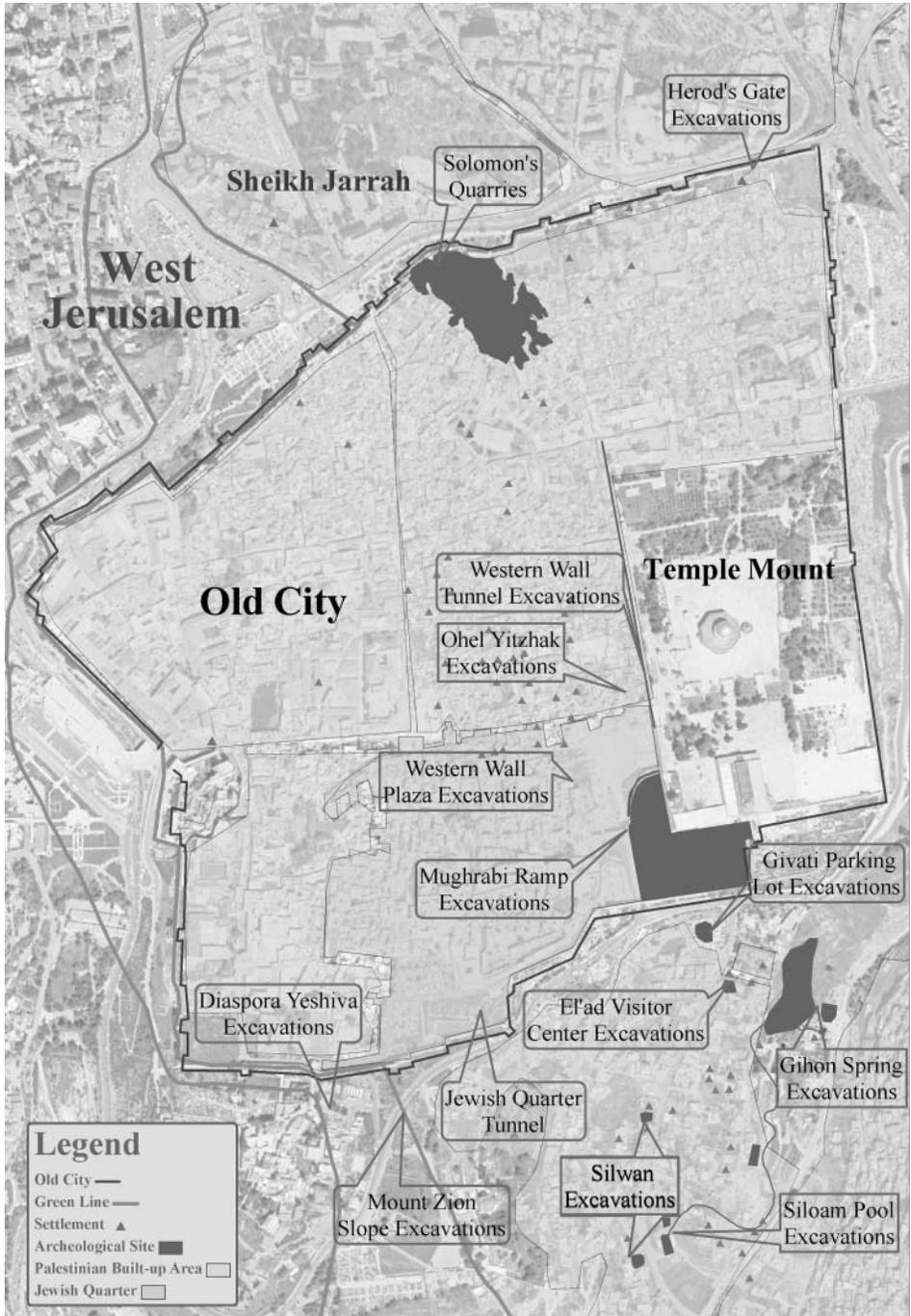
FIGURE 1   Map of recent archaeological work in the Temple Mount and Silwan/City of David area (courtesy of D. Seidemann)

tolerate technical architectural studies that can further the maintenance of the mosques, but are resistant to excavations that may encourage rival claims to the mount itself), the authors correctly note that in neither case do the archaeological finds determine the nature of the site or the beliefs concerning its sanctity. The latter serve as a fixed frame of reference, allowing archaeologists to concentrate on the technical aspects of their work.

Just outside the Haram, in the Western Wall area, there is an interesting interface between the religious and the archaeological. Here, in an area controlled by the state-sponsored Rabbinate, Israel Antiquities Authority archaeologists are employed intensively both to enhance the visibility of ancient remains — principally those that can be associated with Herod's temple — and to create new spaces for religious and tourist activity at the borders of the plaza and in the tunnel complex that extends to its north. At the much-debated Mughrabi gate ramp, archaeology is being used as a secular buffer between the Jewish and Muslim authorities on the Haram and outside of it.

The case of the 'City of David', although immediately adjacent to the Temple Mount/Haram esh-Sharif, is a markedly different one. Here, the 'sanctity' of the site has been manufactured to a great extent in reference to archaeological work. It is, so to speak, a secular and political sanctification, and as such its character and content are open to reinterpretation to a far greater extent than is the case with holy places proper, where the authority for the validation of historical claims is embedded in a chain of command that resists academic scrutiny.

History of 'the City of David'

The south-east spur of ancient Jerusalem lies just outside the Ottoman walls of the Old City of Jerusalem, south of the Haram/Temple Mount. Unnamed in most nineteenth-century maps (in 1914 Raymond Weill identified it as ed-Dawara, a common Palestinian topographic epithet), it was partly cultivated by residents of the village of Silwan, which lay across the wadi Sitti Maryam (Kidron) on the south-west slope of the Mount of Olives (Figures 2 and 3). During the twentieth century, Silwani settlement on the hill gradually expanded; concomitantly, archaeological investigation, begun in the last decades of the nineteenth century by the Palestine Exploration Fund, was pursued with increasing vigour. It thus transpired that, even as the modern Silwani outlier, Wadi Hilweh, became more densely settled, archaeology began to identify ever more significant remains of Jerusalem's earliest history on the self-same spot. Where, in early modern times, only 'the Virgin's Fount' ('Ain Umm el-Daraj) or the 'Waters of Siloam' ('Ain Silwan) emerging at the foot of the hill possessed any historical or religious significance, archaeological discoveries added new locales that could be associated with biblical events.

The modern use of the term 'City of David' — a biblical epithet, '*ir david* (II Samuel 5:9), that appears to indicate David's citadel rather than the city as such — can be attributed to French archaeologist, Raymond Weill, who mounted the first open-area excavations on the south-east spur in 1913–1914, on land acquired for the purpose by Baron Edmond de Rothschild (Weill, 1920; 1947). The term was, however, only rarely employed in the literature; excavators generally preferred 'Ophel', another biblical term that appears to refer to the northernmost part of the spur. The principal excavations carried out on the south-east spur included Bliss

FIGURE 2   Mid-nineteenth-century historical map of Jerusalem (based on Robinson and Smith), identifying the south-east ridge as 'Ophel'.

and Dickie's elaborate tunnelling efforts of the 1890s (Bliss and Dickie, 1898), the investigations of Jerusalem's ancient water systems by the Parker expedition (Vincent, 1911), the 1923–1925 excavations of Macalister and Duncan, which revealed fortifications attributed to the Jebusite citadel conquered by David (Macalister and Duncan, 1926), and the 1961–1967 excavations of Kathleen Kenyon (1974), that set out to place the investigation of most ancient Jerusalem on firm scientific foundations. The results of these excavations — as well as of later ones — established that the crown and eastern slope of the spur had indeed been settled nearly consecutively from proto-historic times until the late Iron Age. After the Babylonian destruction in 587/6 BCE, the slope was uninhabitable, and later settlement — Persian, Hellenistic, Roman,
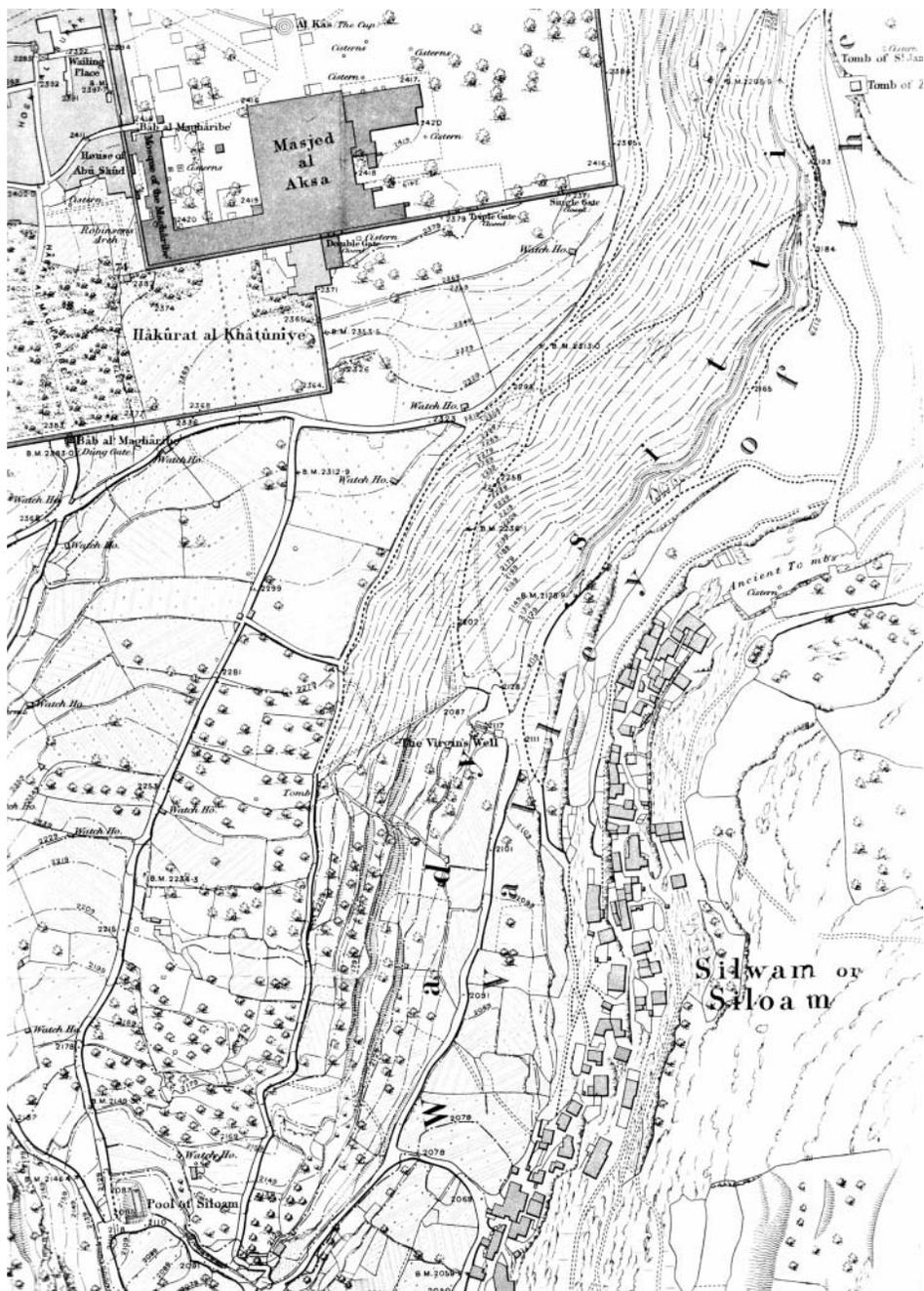
FIGURE 3   Detail of Charles Wilson's Ordnance Survey, 1864-1865, showing the south-east ridge (note location of The Virgin's Well [= Gihon spring] and the Pool of Siloam).

Byzantine, and Early Islamic — occupied only the top of the ridge. From later medieval times onward the site was by and large abandoned.

The first sustained Israeli excavations were those conducted by Yigal Shiloh of the Hebrew University from 1978 until 1985 (Shiloh, 1984). These excavations reinstated the identification of the site as 'the City of David', and without a doubt contributed significantly to the elevation of the public profile of this heretofore forgotten corner of Jerusalem. At the same time, the work was strictly academic in conception and in execution (meaning, *inter alia*, that no attempt was made to engage the local Palestinian community, beyond purely commercial matters). In fact, due to the highly publicized confrontation with Jewish ultra-orthodox factions who claimed that the excavation had destroyed a Jewish cemetery, Shiloh and his excavations became a symbol of secular resistance to religious encroachment on scientific research (Feige, 2003). So it came about that, when the City of David became incorporated in the contiguous band of national parks surrounding the Old City of Jerusalem, it was in a rather subdued role of a strictly archaeological site, with few of the dramas associated with the presentation of archaeology in other parts of the city. As a result, not many tourists frequented the site, and little friction between archaeologists and local Palestinian residents was recorded.

The politics of consecration

A dramatic change in the fortunes of the archaeological site of the City of David and of the Palestinian inhabitants of Wadi Hilweh occurred in the days of the first Palestinian uprising (intifada). At this time, in a manner that has been reported in various media and will not be recounted here, a Jewish NGO bearing the acronym El'ad (*el ir david* — 'to the City of David') began to acquire property within Wadi Hilweh. Soon, the management of the archaeological park was awarded to this militant settler group, which introduced a new, powerful narrative exploiting to the hilt the biblical and Jewish connotations of the site (and excluding almost every other viewpoint). Since 1994 El'ad has underwritten several excavations — including, most recently, that of the purported palace of King David (Mazar, 2006) — the results of which have been recruited to enhance the presentation of Jewish continuity.

The following description, based on excerpts from the settlers' own statements and on investigative media reports (e.g., Rapoport, 2006), illustrates how archaeology, nationalism, and theme-park tourism have become intertwined in the way the site is experienced by and presented to the public.

> When David Be'eri (David'le) first visited the City of David in the mid-1980s, the city was in such a state of disrepair and neglect that the former excavations that had once been conducted were once again concealed beneath garbage and waste. . . . Inspired by the historical record of archeological discoveries made in the City of David in prior years, and by the longing of the Jewish People to return to Zion, David'le left the army to establish the Ir David Foundation in 1986. (www.cityofdavid.org.il/IrDavidFoundation_Eng.asp)

> Today, the Ir David Foundation is actively involved in redeeming land bought by Baron Rothschild and in repurchasing much of the additional surrounding area. Land and buildings acquired in the area are used primarily for the building of a residential neighborhood, archeological salvage operations, and for capital projects geared towards tourism of the site.

> Today, much of the City of David forms a top-class tourism site and center of archeo-
> logical study along with a growing Jewish community that hosts a synagogue, nursery,
> and center for archeological study. Today, hundreds of Jewish residents live in the City of
> David and help form the inspiring new mosaic of the return of the Jewish People to their
> homeland and eternal capital — Jerusalem. (http://www.cityofdavid.org.il/Baron_eng.asp)

El'ad's initial moves were the acquisition of houses using a variety of legal and
quasi-legal means, coupled with vigorous lobbying, especially with then Housing
Minister Ariel Sharon, for the construction of new housing units *on top* of the
antiquities of most ancient Jerusalem. The change of government in 1992 put Sharon
out of power and raised, from the perspective of the national-religious right, the
spectre of a political settlement in Jerusalem. Spurred by a sense of urgency and
backed by the right and ultra-orthodox municipal coalition headed by then Mayor
Ehud Olmert, El'ad succeeded in obtaining a contract from the Israel Nature
and Parks authority to manage the archaeological park in the City of David. This, in
turn, offered new funding opportunities, permitting El'ad to underwrite large-scale
excavation and reconstruction projects.

The warming climate towards outsourcing of as much government work as
possible favoured this strategy, and the settlers used well-placed sympathizers in
various ministries and municipal organizations to obtain control of additional slices
of the archaeological zones in and around Silwan and the adjacent Kidron valley.
Better still, the Israel Antiquities Authority (or IAA, the government body responsible
for the regulation of all work pertaining to the antiquities of Israel), called in at first
to restrain the settler's appetite for construction on antiquities, soon found itself in
the position of sub-contractor for El'ad, carrying out large-scale excavations as part
of the development of the National Park managed by the settler organization.

> The Ir David Foundation is committed to continuing King David's legacy and strengthen-
> ing Israel's current and historic connection to Jerusalem through four key initiatives:
> archaeological excavation, tourism development, residential revitalization and educa-
> tional programming. (http://www.cityofdavid.org.il/IrDavidFoundation_Eng.asp)

> The Ir David Foundation directs and finances the archeological excavations in the
> City of David, along with the tourism development of the site. The Foundation partners
> with a reputable archeological authority (ex. the Israel Antiquities Authority, Hebrew
> University, and the Shalem Center) which conducts the actual excavations, and assimi-
> lates the discoveries for publication. (http://www.cityofdavid.org.il/TheReturn_eng.asp)

With direct government funding for its operations in constant decline, the IAA has
been lured ever deeper into the City of David ventures, and has by now invested
more than ten years of nearly continuous excavation in the area. The archaeological
value of these excavations is considerable, and the discoveries contribute to the
understanding of many phases of Jerusalem's history, from the Early and Middle
Bronze Age to Byzantine times. The presentation of these finds to the public,
however, has been left to a great extent in the hands of El'ad, with the result
that they are selectively exploited to further the agenda of this group. Archaeology
provides physical and symbolic capital for their settlement project, in the form of a

narrative emphasizing Jewish continuity and eliding other cultures, and of relics that testify to such continuity.

> Welcome to the place where it all began ...
>
> The story of the City of David began over 3,000 years ago, when King David left the city of Hebron for a small hilltop city known as Jerusalem, establishing it as the unified capital of the tribes of Israel. Years later, David's son, King Solomon, built the First Temple next to the City of David on top of Mount Moriah, the site of the binding of Isaac, and with it, this hilltop became one of the most important sites in the world.
>
> A tour through the City of David brings visitors face to face with the personalities and places of the Bible. As such, this is the only place on earth where the only guidebook needed is the Bible itself. (http://www.cityofdavid.org.il/about_eng.asp)

But a mere archaeological encounter is not enough. A numinous experience is required:

> The Ir David Foundation protects what is perhaps maybe the holiest place in the world ... We are now in the cradle of civilization for Jerusalem ... As a matter of fact, 60% of the Bible was written on this little hill ... (4:15)
>
> This place is so rich in archaeology that of course that's what draws everybody to get closer and closer, to pile house on top of house, to be close to the energy of this place. (5:05)
>
> There are few places in the world that you can stand and say: "No question, they were here". I can tell you with certainty that David, Solomon, Batsheva, Jeremiah, Isaiah — go through all the prophets and all the kings of the ancient world, perhaps the Queen of Sheba, they all stood here and walked down this very shaft. (8:39)
>
> And the archaeology itself speaks: "This is not just a stone; this wall is not just a wall." I'm not touching just a stone here ... I feel King David's hand as I put my hand on this stone. (9:45) (All excerpts from El'ad spokesperson Doron Spilman, in Dudinski, 2008)

The sanctity of the City of David is newly manufactured, and is a crude amalgam of history, nationalism, and quasi-religious pilgrimage. As such, it curiously incorporates many of the qualities used, according to Ben Israel (1998), by nationalist movements in the creation of hallowed land: a revised and selective history, cased in religious terminology ('holiness' imparted by the Bible, the kings and the prophets), with mystical overtones (invoking the 'energy' of the place; stating that 'the wall is not just a wall'). 'Curiously', because one would have thought that the nearness to the Temple Mount and the quality of the finds would immediately invest them with the qualities of a holy place. Yet in this case, the primacy of the secular interpretation of the site — established through decades of scientific excavation — inoculated the site, so to speak, against the kind of popular hagiolation effected in countless sites throughout Israel and Palestine (Benvenisti, 2000: 270–306). The nature of El'ad as primarily a national, and only secondarily a religious, organization, required that consecration take the nationalist route. Thus, the presentation of the archaeological finds as a magnet for the multitudes relies on a historical narrative, though indeed bolstered

with religious terminology. In the same vein, reference to what is essentially a mystical union of the Jewish visitor with the native soil imparts El'ad and the state of Israel 'transcendent authority over past, present, and future' (Ben Israel, 1998: 282).

Because of the dubious and superficial nature of its sanctity, still distinct from that of the Temple Mount itself, the role of the City of David in both the conflict and post-conflict realities is far from decided. Representing, as it does, so many diverse layers of Jerusalem's history, the site can be recast as a place in which contrasting narratives meet, mingle, and overlap. In fact, as will be suggested below, the high road of ethical archaeological practice can make Silwan and the City of David a place in which archaeology might contribute to peace rather than to conflict.

Towards an inclusive archaeology: some general considerations

Current archaeological thought stresses the need of the discipline to overcome its own colonialist and nationalist origins (Trigger, 1984, 1989). This often takes the form of an ethical imperative: narrow definitions of the stakeholders and beneficiaries of archaeological activities must be abandoned in favour of a more inclusive approach, one that takes cognizance of the fact that archaeology affects people's lives, in its physical aspects (the impact of fieldwork) as well as in its ideological effect (the perception and role of the past in the present) (ICOMOS, 1990; Hodder, 2003; Wylie, 2003).

In the present case, proponents of the present Israeli archaeological activity in the historic basin often argue that all the development activity currently under way in Jerusalem is strictly legal; that excavations are statutory and should be carried out by a publicly accountable body such as the IAA; that since Palestinians in Jerusalem do not recognize Israeli sovereignty and do not co-operate with municipal bodies, there is no way to integrate them in the planning and conduct of archaeological activities; and finally that, as unlicensed construction threatens antiquities, all work in the historic basin is, by definition, salvage work (Figure 4).

These claims may have legal validity (to the extent that a unilaterally imposed legal system can be legitimized), yet they are all based on a myopic perspective, as if each plot acquired or excavated is an independent entity, existing in a vacuum. Also, they seem to suggest that that archaeology represents a pure, unalloyed component in each site that can be distilled and analyzed in a sterile scientific environment. In fact, archaeology in Jerusalem is always imbued with political, economic, and social content, dictated by the context in which it is conducted. Every inch of the Holy Basin is contested. In fact, the very soil is contested: since 2005 a meticulous sifting operation has been underway of hundreds of tons of deposits removed by heavy machinery during massive, unsupervised renovations in the El-Aqsa mosque. Construction and development in the historic basin have been motivated, over the last decade, by a strong political agenda (unification) on the Jewish side. The effects of this construction are virtually offset by a relentless population explosion on the Palestinian side (largely a product of Jerusalem's Separation Wall, which hems Silwan in on the east). Virtually all the excavations carried out in Jerusalem since 1967 have been conducted by Israeli institutions, and virtually none by Palestinians. Furthermore, a stark economic disparity underlies the massive archaeological effort

FIGURE 4   Wadi Hilweh today, looking north toward the Haram esh-Sharif/Temple Mount.

in Silwan: while millions are poured into the recovery and preservation of ancient remains, the tax-paying Palestinian residents are entirely elided from the 'renovation' process, their dilapidated infrastructure standing in marked counterpoint to both the remarkable engineering feats required to expose the antiquities and to the grandeur of the ancient remains themselves. Rather than existing as some sort of unsullied, noble element, archaeology has been implicated in the conflict of communities and identities in what is still a divided city. What is required, therefore, is an overall archaeological policy that transcends conflict and allows archaeology to serve the needs of all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, under any future configuration.

The archaeological findings actually offer clues to the conduct of such a policy. Undoubtedly, Jewish antiquities comprise a prominent part of Jerusalem's archaeological heritage, but there is much more. For one thing, settlement around the Gihon spring began as early as 5000 BCE, four millennia before King David, and the first evidence for the city's rise to prominence comes when the city was inhabited by Canaanites, around 1700 BCE. For another, during the main periods of prosperity under the kingdom of Judah, in the days of Roman rule, and in the Byzantine and Islamic periods, the cultural identity of the town and its inhabitants was contested: any reading of the Bible and of history confirms this, and archaeology certainly bears it witness. Jerusalem's archaeology can therefore provide a basis for many views of history. The importance of preserving evidence for all cultural strata in historic cities has long been recognized in international forums (e.g., UNESCO, 1956; Turner, 2005), and recently served as the basis for preserving Mameluke, Ottoman, and even twentieth-century Palestinian remains adjacent to the Mughrabi ramp.

In order for archaeologists to re-position themselves in a manner that will promote inclusiveness and multiple narratives about the past, they must adopt a positive, proactive ethical stance. This means not only avoiding harmful practice, but encouraging positive, conflict-reducing, approaches to the past (Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson, 2006; Cooper, 2006).

One such approach emphasizes individual responsibility: whenever and wherever they excavate, archaeologists should ask themselves the following questions:

Who are our clients, in the broadest sense?
What kind of impact are we making on the place in which we have chosen to excavate?
Have local people been involved in the decisions that will affect their environment?
What is being done to enhance the positive effects of our work?
What is being done to mitigate negative effects of our work?
What is our legacy to the site and its surroundings, after we have left it?

Beyond the issue of personal participation in the present state of affairs, there are also positive contributions that archaeology can make in order to foster understanding between different groups, social strata, and religions. Multilingual guidebooks can offer contrasting perspectives on the past; signposts can suggest alternative interpretations; tours can emphasize not only the different cultures in the city, but also the different social strata or gender roles of people in different times; the city can be celebrated as a palimpsest of world cultures, rather than the exclusive property of this or that group — all these are strategies and activities in which archaeologists can play a constructive professional role.

Discussions that I have recently had with Palestinian colleagues reveal broad realms of agreement on professional issues. The main threats to the archaeological heritage are shared: looting of sites and unbridled construction and infrastructural development (Ziadeh-Seely, 2007; Yahya, 2008). Both sides sense a need to curb the enthusiasm of politicians and ideologues who corral archaeology for their own purposes. The tension between the symbolic role of some archaeological sites and the best practice expected in the profession is mutually recognized.

This broad understanding must be translated into effective action in the public sphere. All sides need to be better educated and informed about the cultural and social history of Jerusalem. Archaeological sites should be perceived as signposts of the past that should provoke thought and challenge entrenched world-views. Touring Jerusalem should be experienced as a series of encounters with different pasts. These encounters may be woven into a narrative congenial to the person or group involved in them, but they should not impose a narrative, beyond that which emphasizes diversity.

Inclusive archaeology in Silwan/City of David

In Silwan, Palestinian residents have come together with Israeli archaeologists (including the author) to present an alternative to the tour offered to thousands of tourists daily by the settler NGO that has been awarded the management of the 'City of David' national park. The alternative tour of the antiquities and the modern village emphasizes both the multiple voices of Jerusalem's past as well as the social and political context of the practice of archaeology in the present. Thus, for example, we

present a view that Jerusalem's symbolic pre-eminence may well date to the Middle Bronze Age, when Canaanites defied nature and appropriated the waters of the Gihon spring. And in the Iron Age, when the ruling elites occupied the crest of the mound, considerable archaeological evidence has come to light for the existence of a domestic sub-culture and popular religion in lower-income neighbourhoods just down the slope from the administrative centre. In a large excavation area at the northern edge of the site, recent excavations have uncovered remains of what might have been the Jewish quarter of 'Abbasid Jerusalem (ninth–tenth centuries CE). Such finds could be used to testify to an earlier era of coexistence in the city (tragically, nearly all evidence of this quarter is being cleared away, in deference to the construction of a car park and tourist centre) (Figure 5).

En route from one part of the ancient site to the next, we also meet with local Palestinian inhabitants; they present the impact that the present lust for new antiquities areas — excavated at a feverish pace by IAA archaeologists bankrolled by the settler NGO El'ad — has had on their lives. Together we also reflect on the ways that the archaeological site could be used to effect a positive transformation on their lives.

Our guiding principles are as follows:

- Our archaeology provides a rich tapestry of the lives of people in Jerusalem, allowing everyone to find their own links to the past.
- Our archaeology is not text-bound or selective: it serves to tell an inclusive and independent story of human existence, culture, and achievement.

FIGURE 5   Excavations in Silwan/City of David, 2006.

- We do not assign different value to different cultures: all strata contribute to an understanding of Jerusalem's history on equal terms.
- It is not our business to establish links between modern ethnic identities (e.g., Palestinians, Israelis, Europeans) and ancient ones (e.g., Judeans, Canaanites, or Crusaders). We do not use archaeology to prove precedence.
- Since archaeology provides an independent view of human and social origins, it is inherently critical of all historical narratives.
- Where archaeological and textual narratives overlap, each serves to illuminate the other: both are interpretive, neither has absolute truth-value.
- Since archaeologists appropriate public property, the use they make of this property must be justified, particularly to the public whose property was appropriated.

These principles differ from a 'neutral' approach to the past in that they recognize that different aspects of the finds key into different narratives. That is, the finds support some very specific understandings of the past (e.g., that the spur was not settled after medieval times), but these scientific observations can be incorporated into different world-views: religious, materialist, Jewish orthodox, moderate Muslim, etc. Just as one is not required to relinquish one's beliefs in order to incorporate archaeology (at least, not in most cases), so too can archaeology accommodate different narratives. It is not a zero-sum game between the varying interpretations. Moreover, since Jerusalem is and will remain culturally, religiously, and politically diverse, recognizing the multivocality of its antiquities even under current conditions paves the way for any future political accommodation, when all sides will be asked to exhibit sensitivity to each other's historical claims.

Conclusion

Archaeology can provide a robust and viable alternative to nationalist and exclusivist readings of history. Jerusalem's material remains are so varied and contradictory that only by ignoring large parts of them can a single narrative be offered. Once it is recognized that conflicting narratives can coexist, and that there is no unitary historical truth, then the stranglehold of the past on the present begins to weaken. Archaeology is all about context — that of past actions as well as of present practice. Archaeology tells us that nothing is eternal, that all things are subject to change, and that the most enduring human achievements are often those made away from history's limelight. It tells us of the importance of communities and of social organization, and it warns of the dangers of ideologies that cause communities to lose sight of the objective conditions of their existence. Far from the mere confirmation of prior beliefs, the best kind of archaeology challenges what we think we know about the world and about humanity. Perhaps a little less complacency — and a little more humility — about our past is what we need to give Jerusalem a viable future.

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