

Picturesque Palestine, Sinai and Egypt.

## Remaking the City

Archaeological Projects of Political Import  
in Jerusalem's Old City and in the Village of Silwan

emek shaveh  
לאמק שוה עמושב

2013

---

## Remaking the City

Archaeological Projects of Political Import  
in Jerusalem's Old City and in the Village of Silwan

---

emek shaveh

למק טוה עמושב

2013

November 2013

---

**Written by:** Yonathan Mizrachi

**Research:** Anna Veeder, Gideon Sulymani, Yonathan Mizrachi

**Edited by:** Ayala Sussmann

**Translation:** Jessica Bonn

**English Editing:** Martha Roth

**Graphic Design:** Lior Cohen

**Mapping:** Elka Gotfryd

---

emek shaveh

למק שוה עמושב

Emek Shaveh (cc) | Email: [info@alt-arch.org](mailto:info@alt-arch.org) | website [www.alt-arch.org](http://www.alt-arch.org)

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.

---

This publication has been co-funded by the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Tel Aviv, The Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) and Cordaid. The opinions expressed in the publication “Remaking the City” are the sole responsibility of Emek Shaveh (cc) and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the co-funders.

## Contents

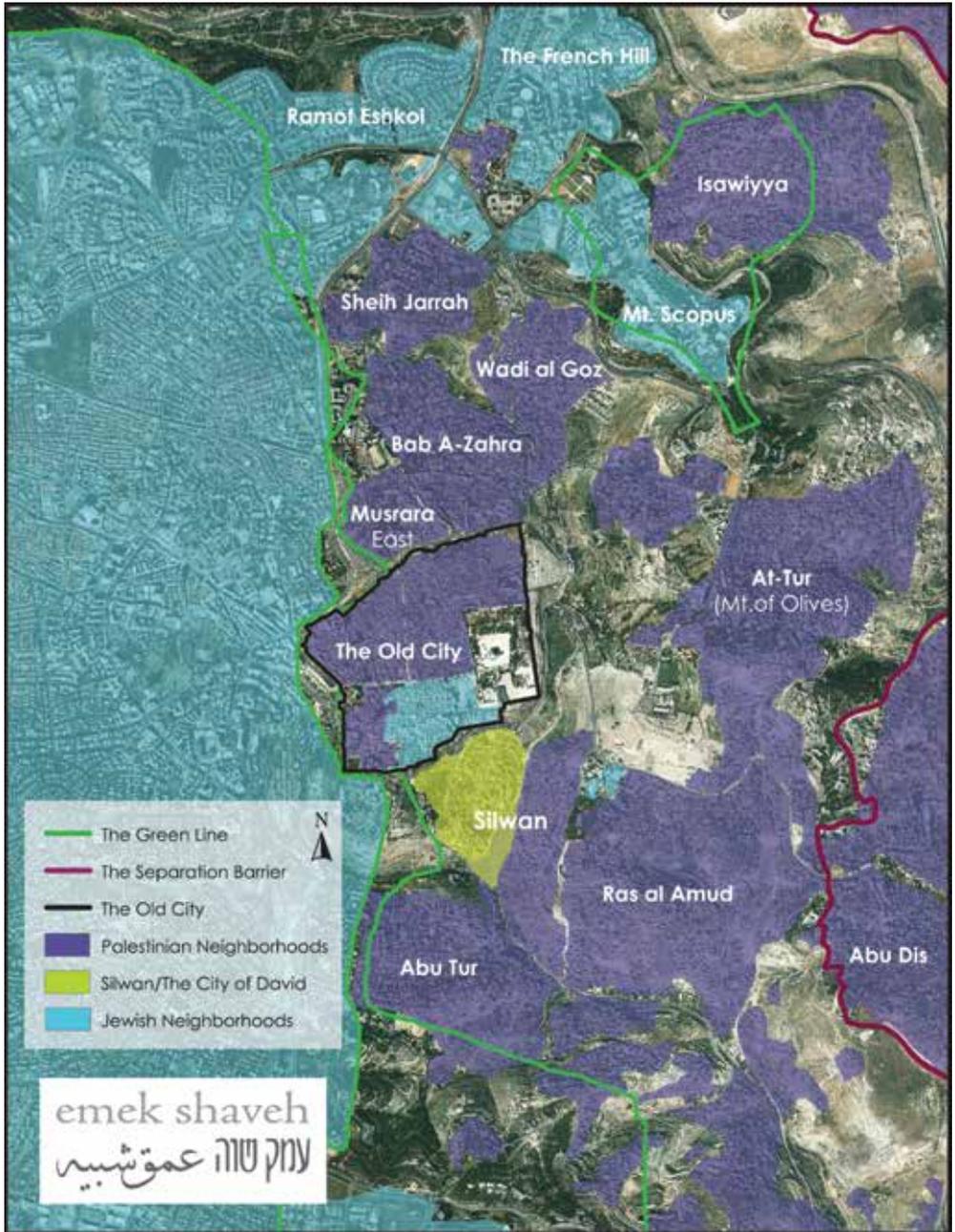
Introduction .....	4
Maps .....	5
1. Tel Aviv University Excavations in Silwan .....	8
2. Givati Parking Lot .....	8
3. Excavation of a New Tunnel in Silwan .....	10
4. Excavations at the Spring House (Beit HaMa'ayan) .....	10
5. Excavations between Warren's Shaft and The Silwan Spring .....	12
6. Conservation Work and Excavations South of the Temple Mount ("Ophel Excavations") .....	12
7. The Mughrabi Bridge .....	14
8. Beit HaLiba .....	16
9. Additional Projects at the Western Wall Plaza .....	18
10. The Excavation of Underground Tunnels .....	20
11. The Little Western Wall .....	22
12. Burj al-Laqlaq (Herod's Gate) .....	22
Summary .....	23

## Introduction

During 2013, the Israeli authorities and the settlers' organizations continued advancing archaeological excavations and tourist projects in the Old City and in the Village of Silwan – the "Historic Basin of Jerusalem". Most of the excavations and projects are a continuation of previous years' activity. As we have made known in the past through our publications, the archaeological excavations, exposure of the tunnels and construction planned for the area are part of a multi-year government plan intended to strengthen the Israeli hold on the Old City and to create facts on the ground, the goal of which is to impede on the attempts to reach a political solution for the historic basin.

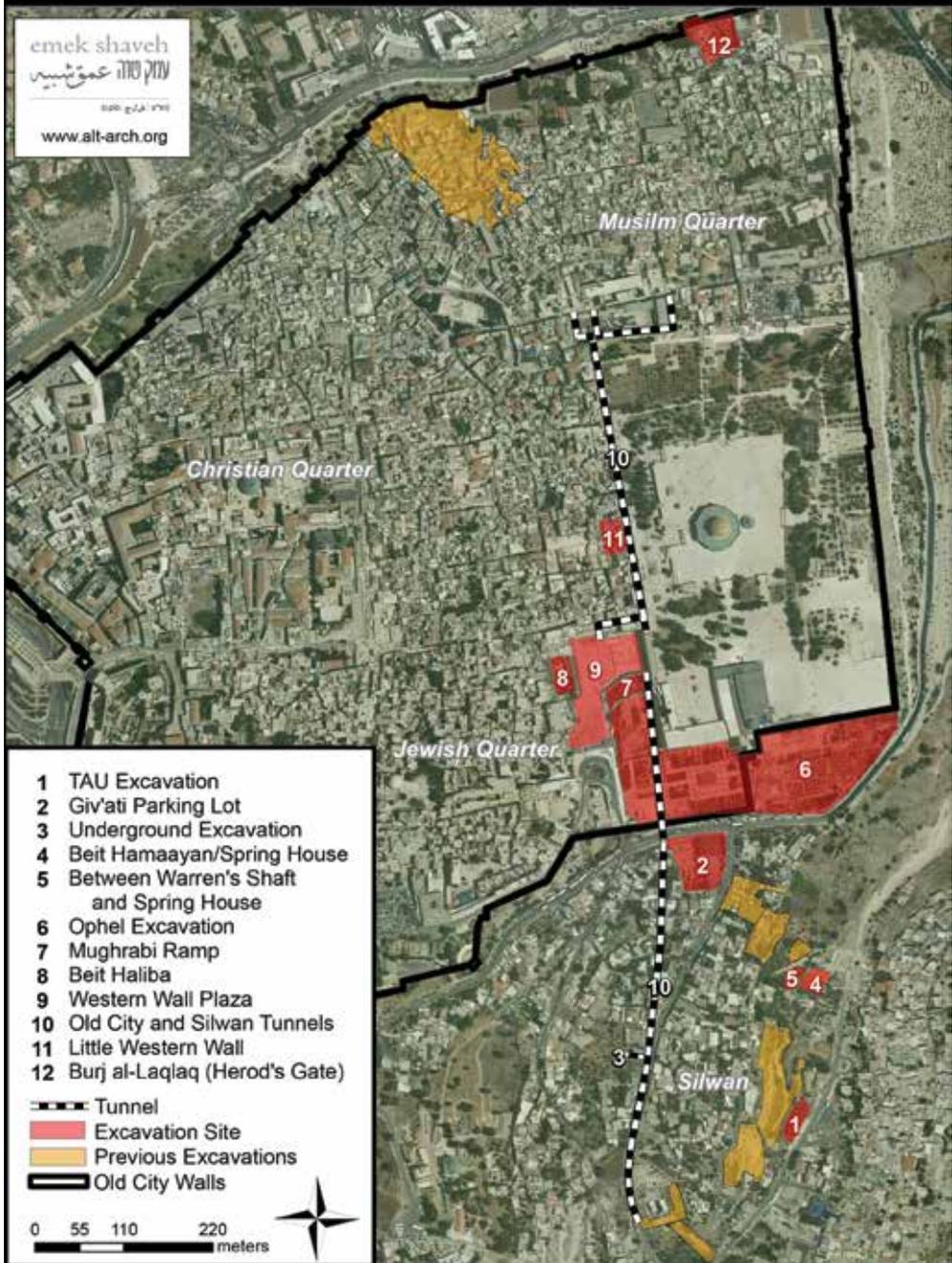
It appears that archaeological activity these days is based on a carefully conceived work plan, and the only changes introduced correspond to the dates of when plans are to be deposited to the planning committees, and their advancement. These decisions are often based on political decisions, whether to create facts on the ground to keep pace with the advancing political process, or whether based on an understanding that local and international public opinion will not create pressure against them. Emek Shaveh's publications, such as *Between Holiness and Propaganda* (2011) and *From Silwan to the Temple Mount* (2012), indicate that over the years, the focus of archaeological activity has been those sites that have been under excavation for many years. New excavations that have been launched are all connected to prior excavations. In addition, no plan raised in the past has been frozen for very long or changed its objectives. Moreover, plans that were created, approved and not implemented are now being advanced with vigor. The two areas where most of the projects are taking place are the Village of Silwan and the Western Wall Plaza / Temple Mount areas.

In this document, we present the developments and changes that have occurred during 2013. In some of the sections we will provide a link to previous reports published by Emek Shaveh, which described in detail the significance of a particular site and its political importance, both separately and as part of the overall Israeli plan in the historic basin.

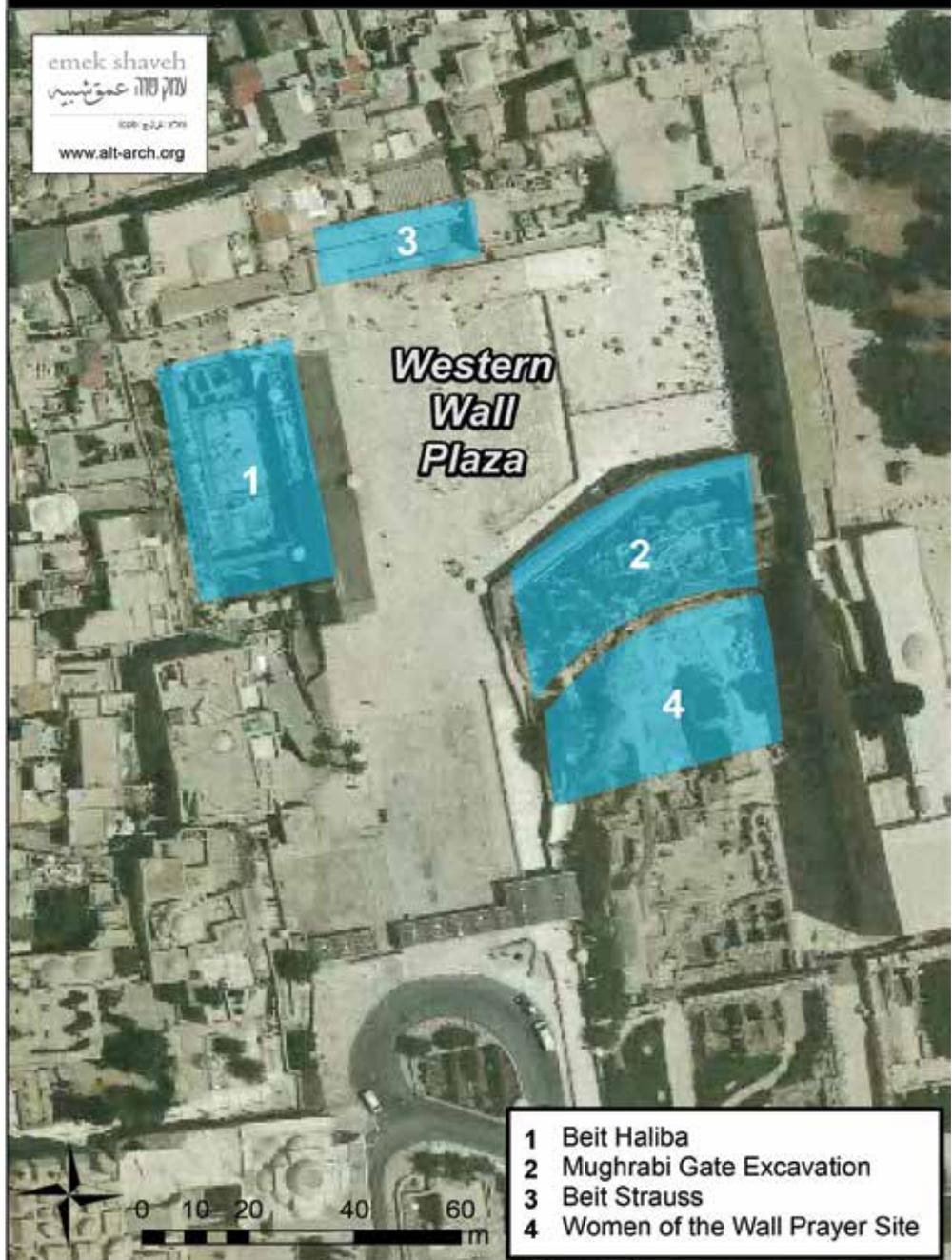


Map of Jerusalem

# Main Archaeological Sites in Jerusalem's Historic Basin - 2013



## Archaeological Excavations in the Western Wall Area - 2013



## 1. Tel Aviv University Excavations in Silwan

In December 2012, Tel Aviv University (TAU) began collaborating with the Elad organization and the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) in excavating at the southeastern edge of the City of David site, in an area known as Area E. The TAU excavation area is located outside the fence of the City of David site but within the national park, and near the streets of the Al-Bustan neighborhood. The excavation season continued through May 2013. No findings or remains of any importance were discovered there. The excavation fits in with Elad's plans to develop the City of David tourism site towards the east and towards the few open areas at the edge of the Al-Bustan neighborhood.

The university's excavations in Silwan strengthen the image and status of Elad and of the settlement in the Village of Silwan as a legitimate Israeli activity of the highest professional order. The university is contributing to the settlements venture by lending an ostensibly apolitical professional-academic status to these archaeological projects.

The excavation is scheduled to continue for three seasons and will be resumed, as far as is known, at the end of 2013, continuing until mid-2014.



Tel Aviv University excavation area

## 2. Givati Parking Lot

In June 2013, the Antiquities Authority began excavating the last unexcavated area in the "Givati Parking Lot," at the northern entrance to the Village of Silwan. The excavation completely consumes the parking lot that had been there, and ultimately, the entire parking lot area (some 5,000 sq.m.) will be excavated. Based on the remains uncovered in other parts of the site, today's excavations are apparently taking place at the Early Muslim layer, i.e., the

‘Abbasid and ‘Umayyad Periods (7th -9th centuries CE). As we have previously noted<sup>1</sup>, the goal of the archaeological excavation is to prepare the ground for the construction of a planned tourist center known as the “Kedem Compound”. The planned project serves as a key tool for strengthening the control of Israel and the settlers in the Old City and in the Village of Silwan<sup>2</sup>. To our understanding, carrying out this plan may be more damaging than any other current plan to the city’s historic character, the life fabric of the Palestinian residents, and the possibility of reaching a political agreement regarding the historic basin.

In addition to carrying on with the archaeological excavations, Elad is advancing the “Kedem Compound” plan, which is coming up for discussion in the objections sub-committee of the District Planning and Building Committee. This is the last planning stage before a building permit is granted. The tourist center is intended to occupy some 16,000 sq. m. and it will include commercial areas as well as a museum, a parking lot, and an underground connection from the excavation area to the City of David Visitor’s Center, located across the road to the east.

In May 2013, the Israeli government decided to consider the establishment of a planned Bible museum<sup>3</sup> called “Shrine of the Bible” at the Kedem Compound. It appears that this decision is gathering momentum, and many refer to the Kedem Compound as the location of the Shrine of the Bible, even though no official decision has been made on the matter.

In large-scale and multi-layer archaeological excavations such as the Givati Parking Lot, it is desirable to preserve remains from the Early Muslim periods, in order to reflect the ongoing dwelling at the site. Although at present a section of the Muslim layer is being exposed in the southeastern corner of the site, we fear that this professional conservation consideration will not be taken into account.



Excavations at the Givati Parking Lot and houses in the Village of Silwan

---

1 Emek Shaveh, *Between Holiness and Propaganda*, 2011

2 Emek Shaveh, *From Silwan to the Temple Mount*, 2012

3 Nir Hasson, “New Bible Museum to be built in Jerusalem”, *Haaretz*, 14 November 2011

### 3. Excavation of a New Tunnel in Silwan

In the past we have written about the excavation of tunnels in the Village of Silwan – for example, in the report “Jerusalem Underground – The Excavation of Tunnels, Channels and Underground Spaces in the Historic Basin”. The main tunnel excavated by the Antiquities Authority originates at the Shiloah Pool (Birket el-Hamrah) and passes near the Givati Parking Lot excavations, ending at the Old City. Recently, we have seen extensive excavations from the main parking lot towards the west. Apparently, the excavations follow the path excavated by archaeologists at the end of the 19th century, passing between Silwan and Mt. Zion.<sup>4</sup> It appears that the goal of this excavation is to create an underground passageway that will connect Mt. Zion with the Village of Silwan.

### 4. Excavations at the Spring House (Beit HaMa’ayan)

The most protracted excavation in the Village of Silwan, managed by the Antiquities Authority and funded by Elad, began in 1995 and has continued this year as well. The Spring House excavation is located at the foot of the City of David site, at the northern end of the Village of Silwan, along a tributary of the Kidron Stream. We published information about the site and its importance in the booklet *Archaeology in the Shadow of the Conflict* (2009). Over the past year, in continuation of previous years, the excavations have been penetrating deep into the earth, hollowing out underground spaces towards the west. Today, excavations in the tunnel have reached the foot of Warren’s Shaft (see next chapter) and the area excavated by Kathleen Kenyon in the 1960s.

Although the spring is meant to be accessible to all residents of the Village of Silwan, the archaeological excavations there have enabled Elad and the Israeli authorities to appropriate it as part of the tourist route, which is closed to the residents. In June 2012, The District Planning and Building Committee approved the construction of a tourist center above the spring, spanning an area of 200 sq. m. As in the case of the Givati Parking Lot the protracted archaeological excavations at the Spring House made it possible to pass the decision through the planning committee with great ease, bolstered by the support of the Antiquities Authority.

This tourist center, together with the tunnels being excavated towards the west, the excavations between the Warren Shaft and the “City of David” visitor’s center and the Givati Parking Lot, create a contiguity of Israeli tourism sites all along the northern edge of the Village of Silwan. In the east, the Spring House is planned to be integrated into a promenade built in the Kidron Valley at the foot of the Mount of Olives.

---

4 F. Bliss and A. Dickey, *Excavations at Jerusalem 1894–1897*, 1920.



Opening of the western tunnel that runs beneath houses in the Village of Silwan



Construction at Beit HaMa'ayan

## 5. Excavations between Warren's Shaft and The Silwan Spring

A significant portion of the investment of Elad and the Israeli authorities is focused on the northern border of the Village of Silwan. The main project we have mentioned is the Givati Parking Lot excavation (see part 2), but an examination of the other archaeological excavations and planned tourism centers reveals an almost uninterrupted line from the Givati Parking Lot excavations to the City of David Visitor's Center, and from there, to the Spring House.<sup>5</sup>

One of the only areas along this path, which until recently had not been excavated, is located between the entrance to Warren's Shaft and the Village Spring at the bottom of the slope. In February 2013, a hole appeared in the plaza adjacent to the entrance to Warren's Shaft, and the area was closed to visitors. Immediately following this, excavations commenced there. Digging is being carried out in various parts of the site, at least some of which are identified as archaeological excavations. As a result, a contiguous series of excavation areas has been created from the spring to the entrance to Warren's Shaft. Together with the construction of the tourist center at the Spring House and the tourist center at the Givati Parking Lot (both approved by the District Planning and Construction Committee), this is a significant and final piece in the creation of a chain of antiquities sites that hem in the Village of Silwan from the north. This contiguity constitutes a significant link that reinforces the identity of the place as the City of David site – rather than the Village of Silwan – and cuts off the village's convenient access to the Old City.

## 6. Conservation Work and Excavations South of the Temple Mount (“Ophel Excavations”)

The conservation work of the Antiquities Authority at the Ophel Excavations south of the Temple Mount / Haram a-Sharif are continuing as a planned part of the tourist routes from the Village of Silwan to the southern excavations of the Old City. Alongside them, to the east, is the archaeological excavation directed by Eilat Mazar, under the auspices of the Hebrew University. The preliminary results of the excavation were publicized by the media in July 2013, including the discovery of a large water cistern.<sup>6</sup>

In excavations carried out at the site in the 1970s, remains of a public building from the early Islamic period in Jerusalem (7th c CE) were uncovered. The structure is identified as part of the 'Umayyad Dynasty's palace complex. The excavation taking place today is located at the foot of the Al-Aqsa Mosque, in the area of the Umayyad palace remains. As a result, many warnings have been sounded by Palestinian and Muslim voices against damage to the Islamic heritage there. Although to our understanding these Umayyad remains were not harmed during the excavations, their location, combined with the zeal of the excavators to reveal remnants identified with Jewish history, make the location politically charged.

In September 2012, the Antiquities Authority issued a press release announcing the discovery of an additional large water cistern in the Ophel Excavation area.<sup>7</sup> Scholars date this cistern, as well as that mentioned above, to the time of the Kingdom of Judah (9th - 7th c BCE). Since the cistern was found in an excavation made via horizontal tunnels – a method that is unacceptable

---

5 Emek Shaveh, *From Silwan to the Temple Mount* (2012)

6 “Archaeologists Excavate Jerusalem Cave and Tunnel Network,” *Popular Archaeology*, July 5, 2013.

7 Antiquities Authority, “A Public Water Reservoir Dating to the First Temple Period has been Exposed for the First Time next to the Western Wall,” September 2012.

in contemporary archaeology – it is difficult to date the remains exposed and sometimes even to identify their purpose. This discovery is not surprising based on the past research. In the 19th century, British and French researchers mapped out the many water cisterns exposed at the Temple Mount / Haram a-Sharif and its environs.<sup>8</sup> The water cisterns that were exposed recently in this area corroborate what we know from these studies.



Excavation area between Warren's Shaft and Beit HaMa'ayan



Ophel Excavations

---

8 Emek Shaveh, "Underground excavations in Jerusalem: From 1865 to the present," in *Between Holiness and Propaganda* (2011).

## 7. The Mughrabi Bridge

In June 2012, the Antiquities Authority began a salvage excavation beneath the Mughrabi Gate intended to prepare the area for the construction of a new bridge providing access from the West to the Temple Mount / Haram a-Sharif. The construction of this bridge is a contentious political issue because the new bridge is a violation of the status quo. The salvage excavation exposed remains from the 7th c CE (early Islam) through the 20th century. In addition, more layers were removed in order to prepare the ground for construction. These layers were from the various Muslim periods. At this time, parts of the Umayyad palace system (another of which was found at the Ophel excavations) dated to the beginning of the 'Umayyad Period (7th c CE – Early Islamic) were dismantled.

The new bridge has yet to be built. Approximately one year ago a new wall/cement column was observed at the eastern edge of the excavation area. The Israeli authorities built this wall to replace, according to their claim, walls that had been removed during the excavations, because these walls had supported later structures resting upon them. In our opinion, the new wall/column was built for the purpose of supporting a new bridge. In addition, within the excavation area, one can discern four deep squares just a few meters from one another. The squares are pits, apparently intended for the placement of four columns to support the future bridge. The extent of the works there indicates the intention to prepare the area beneath the bridge for the benefit of those who have come to pray as well as for other visitors. The future bridge will be more massive and central than the temporary bridge there today.



Archaeological excavations beneath the Mughrabi Bridge



Excavations at the Mughrabi Bridge – close-up view

## 8. Beit HaLiba

In February 2013, the District Planning and Building Committee heard objections to the construction of Beit HaLiba in the western portion of the Western Wall Plaza. In the discussion, the Beit HaLiba plan was presented; its area is approximately 7.3 acres and it reaches a height of 3.5 stories, 2.5 of which are to be at the level of the Western Wall Plaza, with one underground storey intended to house archaeological findings. The total building area is 3,722 sq. m., including the archaeological level.<sup>9</sup> The intended structure is part of the plans for altering the Western Wall Plaza.

Together with the construction planned around the walls of the Old City, such as the construction at the Givati Parking Lot in Silwan, they will create a new skyline for the Old City in the area around the Temple Mount / Haram a-Sharif. This skyline will compete with the familiar skyline of the church spires and minarets that stand out today in the landscape of the Old City. In all of the cases, the construction is being carried out in archaeologically significant areas and will damage findings and the manner in which they are presented to the public.

In the past, a few ultra-Orthodox rabbis protested against the plan.<sup>10</sup> Even the Rabbi of the Western Wall said he would not advance the plan, but it appears that since that time, it has garnered the support of a number of important rabbis. A group of archaeologists from various universities who oppose the construction activity for scientific reasons submitted an objection to the decision of the Antiquities Authority in support of the structure.<sup>11</sup> Ultimately, the position of the Antiquities Authority was accepted, and the planned structure was approved.

---

9 Information regarding the Beit HaLiba plan appeared in Emek Shaveh's report "*Beit Haliba*" and the Givati Parking Lot: Archeological Excavations and their Effect on the Status Quo in the Old City of Jerusalem and in Silwan (January 2012) and in our publication *From Silwan to the Temple Mount* (2012).

10 A. Cohen, "Storm – Torah Giants Issue Harsh Letter against New Western Wall Project" (in Hebrew), *Be-hadrei Haredim*, April 2, 2012.

11 Nir Hasson, "Sharanksy's solution for the Wall will Ruin the Country's Archaeological Treasure, Israeli Scholars Fear," *Haaretz.com*, May 14, 2013



View of remains of a Roman street exposed during the excavations at the planned site of Beit HaLiba

## 9. Additional Projects at the Western Wall Plaza

Alongside the main projects described above taking place in the Western Wall Plaza, there are at least two smaller projects that have a profound influence on the character of the plaza. The northern area of the Western Wall Plaza will house the new Beit Strauss. This building will reach a height of two stories. In September 2013, the Antiquities Authority began a salvage excavation in the area. There is still no information about what has been found there, and whether the excavations will descend to the bedrock. Since the area was part of the Mughrabi Neighborhood, and was a built-up area from the 14th to the 20th century, it is expected that structures from the various stages of the Mughrabi Neighborhood, as well as from even earlier periods, will be exposed.

An additional project has the goal of expanding the Western Wall Plaza for mixed prayer (following the struggle of the Women of the Wall).<sup>12</sup> Adjacent to the Mughrabi Bridge, from the south, in the area of the archaeological excavations known as “The Davidson Center,” a prayer plaza was erected atop and inside the excavation area, at a level lower than the present Western Wall Plaza. Although the bulk of the project is not at the Western Wall Plaza, it should be considered as part of the plan to expand the Western Wall Plaza.

The expansion serves as a kind of temporary solution for mixed-gender prayer at the Western Wall. And yet, even as a temporary solution, it creates a number of problematic facts on the ground: 1. It expands the prayer area into the archaeological area, and in so doing, creates a precedent by which prayer areas can be expanded without taking into consideration civil/ secular or other public interests, such as preservation of an antiquities site for the public-at-large, including those especially interested in the history. In this case, the damage is in giving precedence to prayer while allowing damage to the structures and limiting the presentation of archaeological remains. This is a dangerous political precedent, since it enables the expansion of prayer areas at various locations in the Old City. See, for example, the chapter on the Little Western Wall, or the struggle of Jews seeking to pray on the Temple Mount.

2. It is necessary to balance the areas intended for prayer with those intended for presenting the city’s history. This balance is required in order to prevent a disproportionate emphasis on religious significance at the expense of the historical.

3. Experience teaches that temporary building in the Old City often sets the stage for a permanent change. Temporary structures can survive for a very long time, the most notable example being the Mughrabi Bridge, which is a temporary bridge built after the collapse of its precursor in 2004.

---

<sup>12</sup> J. Lis, “Female Israeli MKs Join Women of the Wall; No Arrests for First Time in Months”, *Haaretz.com*, March 12, 2013



Demolition works at the Beit Strauss compound



Prayer area intended for Women of the Wall

## 10. The Excavation of Underground Tunnels

This year, as part of the multi-year program of the State of Israel, the excavation of tunnels and underground cavities continues under the auspices of the Antiquities Authority funded by Elad and the Western Wall Foundation.

As we have already stated, in the Village of Silwan, a tunnel connects the Shiloah's Pool excavation with that of the Givati Parking Lot.<sup>13</sup> In the middle of this tunnel an additional tunnel is being excavated towards the west, the goal of which, apparently, is to lead to Mt. Zion.

An additional tunnel excavation being funded by Elad is the continuation of the tunnel that connects the Givati Parking Lot with the Davidson Center in the Old City. The tunnel in Silwan continues to the north, beneath the Old City walls, and arrives beneath Robinson's Arch. In recent months, the Antiquities Authority has continued the excavation and reached the area beneath the Mughrabi Bridge.

The Western Wall Foundation, together with the Antiquities Authority, is proceeding with excavation of the tunnels and underground spaces north of the Western Wall, as part of a project known as "The Western Wall Tunnel Excavations". These excavations take place in different areas, which together span hundreds of square meters.<sup>14</sup> A large portion of these excavations take place below the homes of residents of the Muslim Quarter. Parts of structures and domes dating to the Late Roman period (2nd c. CE) as well as spaces that were first carved out during the Crusader, Mamluk or Ottoman periods, have been uncovered in the excavations. The boundary of the excavation is Al-Wad / HaGai Street to the west, and the Temple Mount / Haram a-Sharif Plaza to the east; in other words, there are no excavations beneath the sacred compound, but large-scale excavations are creating extensive underground tourist routes that lead from the Western Wall Plaza to the Via Dolorosa in the Muslim Quarter.

The excavations taking place beneath the Muslim Quarter are one of Israel's most ambitious and politically dangerous projects in the Old City. These excavations are creating an underground city that ignores the Palestinian population living above it, creates an exclusive Jewish-Israeli narrative, and increases the difficulty of finding a political solution for the Old City.

---

13 Emek Shave, "Jerusalem Underground – The Excavation of Tunnels Channels and Underground Spaces in the Historic Basin", in the report *Between Holiness and Propaganda* (2011)

14 Ibid



Cavity in the Western Wall Tunnels



View of the Western Wall from the Western Wall Tunnels

## 11. The Little Western Wall

In August 2013, the Knesset's Interior Committee held a discussion regarding the ascent of Jews to the Temple Mount during the High Holiday period (Rosh HaShanah, Yom Kippur and Sukkot). Some of the discussion focused on the Little Western Wall, which the State of Israel recognized as a prayer site in 2006.<sup>15</sup> Some of the Knesset discussion dealt with plans for developing the Jewish Prayer area at the site. The Little Western Wall is located in a side courtyard in the Muslim Quarter, and it leads to houses of the Palestinian residents living there. Therefore, any change in the area becomes a charged issue. For example, one of the issues that has occupied the Knesset has been the location of two trash dumpsters<sup>16</sup> that served the residents. The members of the Knesset Interior Committee complained about their location at a holy site. This is how the Israeli Knesset found itself occupied with a question of the location of trash dumpsters in an alley of the Old City.

## 12. Burj al-Laqlaq (Herod's Gate)

In the month of May, a building plan for the Jewish neighborhood in the area of Herod's Gate, located in the Muslim Quarter, was re-deposited. In the years 2004-2005, the plan was delivered to the various planning and building committees, but the suggestion was ultimately rejected by the district committee. The plan submitted included the construction of 21 residential units in the area known as Burj al-Laqlaq, adjacent to the Old City walls.<sup>17</sup> At the moment, it is unclear if and when the proposal will be discussed in the local and district planning committees. It appears that if a decision is made to build at the site, the first stage will be to continue the archaeological excavations there.



The Little Western Wall and garbage dumpsters in the left-hand corner

---

15 Emek Shaveh published information regarding the Little Western Wall in *Between Holiness and Propaganda* (2011).

16 Announcements of the Interior and Environmental Protection Committees, MK Miri Regev, Chairwoman of the Interior Committee, in a discussion regarding the state of the Small Western Wall, "Why is the Small Western Wall not Treated as Part of the Western Wall? It is Inconceivable that the Trash there Not Be Collected" (in Hebrew), 19th Knesset, Aug. 31, 2013.

17 Information regarding the site and the plans deposited were published in Emek Shaveh's report *Between Holiness and Propaganda* (2011).

## Summary

A summary of the archaeological activity for 2013 attests that the Israeli government's choice to position archaeology at the forefront of the political struggle in the historical basin is continuing unhindered, and is even expanding from year to year. The main sense from the study and from an analysis of the political significance of the excavations is that many excavations are taking place in a relatively small area of the historic basin. To our understanding, all of the excavations presented in this document are part of the main goal of strengthening the Israeli hold on the historic basin and creating a new topography (and underground reality) for the Old City.

Alongside the excavations, which have been continuing for many years, such as the Givati Parking Lot, the Spring House and the tunnels, the Israeli authorities and settlers' organizations, mainly Elad, are initiating new excavations located between old excavations – for example, the excavation between the Spring House and Warren's Shaft in Silwan, or the new tunnel being excavated west of the main tunnel that transverses the Village of Silwan. Other excavations, separate from known excavation areas, such as the Tel Aviv University excavations, also constitute part of the program of expanding Israeli control of the historic basin.

As in past years, today as well the archaeological activity is the main Israeli activity taking place in the area. This is evident from the number of excavations, their scope and duration. The archaeological excavations are one stage in the development, and often, construction projects are advanced in their wake: for example, the Spring House and The Givati Parking Lot in Silwan, where the tourist center is likely to be established, as well as in the Beit HaLiba in the Western Wall Plaza, intended to serve the Western Wall Foundation. Although the law does not relate to archaeological excavation as part of the development work, the Antiquities Authority exploits its legal power and turns the archaeological excavations into part of the infrastructure work that set the stage for construction upon them.

Continued excavation of the tunnels in the Old City and Silwan illustrates that this method, which is scientifically invalid and unacceptable in archaeological research, continues to serve as a main means by which the Antiquities Authority collaborates with Elad or the Western Wall Foundation. The excavations in underground spaces create a new "historical" layer that ignores the layer of contemporary life.

As we have claimed in the past, Jerusalem's international significance as an historic and religious center necessitates the involvement of additional organizations besides the Israeli organizations in making fateful decisions: where, how and to what extent to excavate and to conserve historical sites in the Old City basin. The sole responsibility today rests on the State government, which is influenced by ideological and religious elements that prevent fair development and protection of the heritage of members of the various peoples and religions who are strongly tied to the city's past, as they are to its life today.

emek shaveh  
למק שוה עמק שבי

---

For further information please visit the Emek Shaveh  
website: [www.alt-arch.org](http://www.alt-arch.org)

For tours, workshops, or lectures,  
please contact us at:  
[info@alt-arch.org](mailto:info@alt-arch.org) or +972-(0)545-667299

[www.alt-arch.org](http://www.alt-arch.org)

---

