

The Van Leer Platform for Public Discussion

Protecting Antiquities in the Holy Sites: The Temple Mount and Its Environs as a Test Case

Thursday, 15 January 2015, 19:00, at the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute

Jerusalem's holy sites are hundreds, even thousands of years old. Most of them are built on top of earlier remains, but their sacred status takes precedence over their being archaeological sites. Consequently, archaeological excavations in these holy sites constitute a charged political issue that fans the tensions in Jerusalem and beyond.

The Temple Mount – Al-Haram al-Sharif – is perhaps the best-known site where Israelis contend that antiquities have been destroyed. They claim that work on a project begun in the 1990s to expand the mosques on the Temple Mount has caused great damage to antiquities there. On the other hand, there are complaints about archaeological excavations being conducted by Israelis in tunnels under the Temple Mount and around it, and about work to expand the Western Wall Plaza. The discussion will address the possibility of conducting religious worship in the holy sites and, at the same time, protecting the relics of the past, in the complex and multifaceted reality in which we live.

Participants:

Greetings: **Prof. Gabriel Motzkin**, Director, the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute

Chair: **Dr. Yoni Mendel**, the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute

Introduction: **Yonathan Mizrahi**, Archaeologist, Emek Shaveh

Prof. Yitzhak Reiter, Chair, the Department of Eretz-Israel Studies, the Ashkelon Academic College; senior researcher at the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies and at the Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Prof. Alona Nitzan-Shifan, Head, the Archaeology Track, the Faculty of Architecture and Town Planning, the Technion—Israel Institute of Technology

Adv. Kais Nasser, Doctoral candidate in law, Tel Aviv University; specialist in planning issues in Jerusalem

Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz, the Rabbi of the Western Wall and Holy Sites

The discussion will be conducted in Hebrew and will be accompanied by simultaneous translation into English

Admission is free



The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute, 43 Jabotinsky St., tel. 02-560-5222, www.vanleer.org.il

Parking is not allowed on the Institute's campus (metered parking is available on adjacent streets).

Photographs taken during the event will be published on the Institute's site and on the social media.

