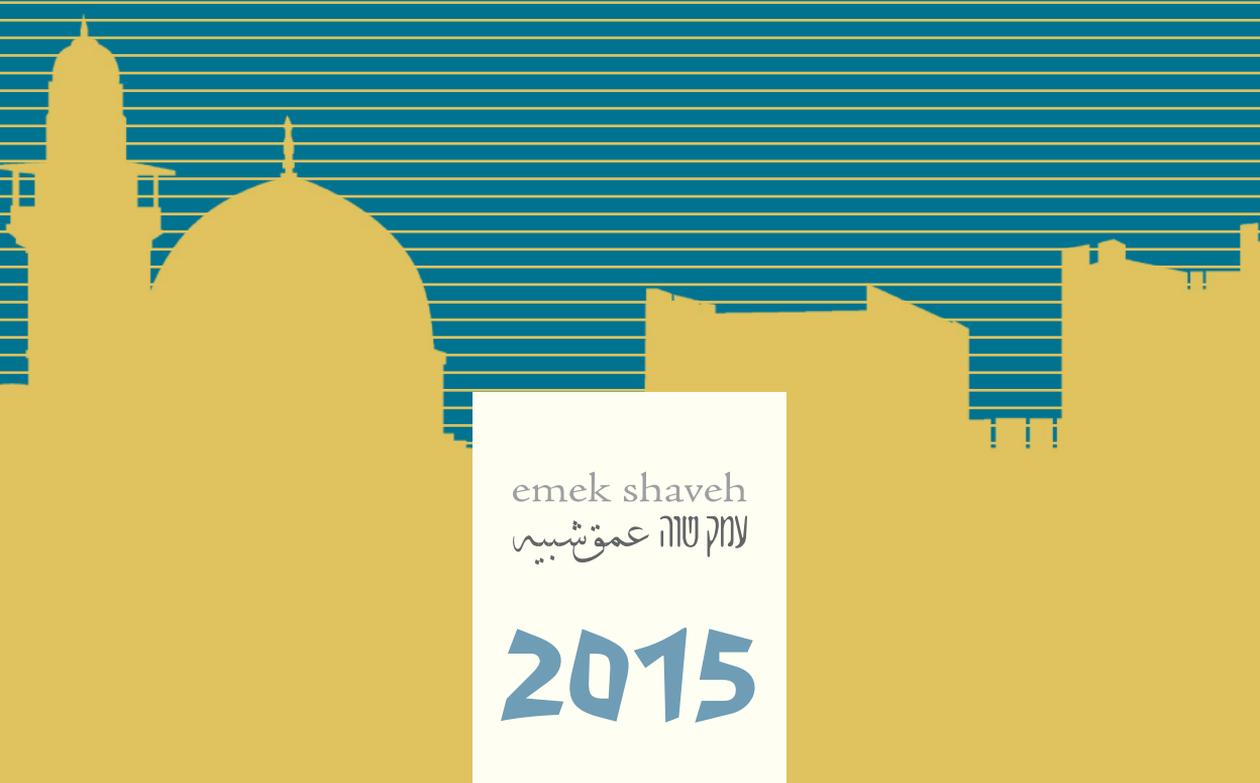


*Emek Shaveh's 2015 Conferences:
Summary and recommendations
for antiquities in Jerusalem*



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Emek Shaveh is an organization of archaeologists and heritage professionals focusing on the role of tangible cultural heritage in Israeli society and in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We view archaeology as a resource for strengthening understanding between different peoples and cultures.

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Introduction

In 2015 the organization Emek Shaveh held two conferences that considered how archaeological activities impact different aspects of life in Jerusalem, especially in and around the Temple Mount. Researchers, intellectuals, professionals and social activists were asked to discuss the relationships between archaeological sites and the various aspects of the daily lives of visitors and residents who use them. This report presents the conclusions of these conferences. Our aim is to expose the impact of archeological practice--including decisions on excavation, preservation of finds, and interpretation of ancient sites--on Israeli society as a whole, in particular on disputed locations like the Temple Mount and its surroundings. We further offer recommendations on how archeology can be used to create dialogue rather than exclude identities in the urban landscape of Jerusalem.

Conference 1

Preserving Antiquities in Holy Places: The Temple Mount and its surroundings as a case study

Van Leer Institute, Jerusalem, 15 January 2015

Prof. Yitzhak Reiter

Chair of Department of the Land of Israel, Ashkelon Academic College; senior researcher at the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies and at the Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace, Hebrew University, Jerusalem

This lecture dealt with the proper way to handle tensions between the Jewish and Muslim Palestinian populations on the Temple Mount and its surroundings. Archaeological excavations are seen as part of the struggle for sovereignty over, identity and the future of the Temple Mount. The archaeological excavations advanced by the Israeli authorities are unequivocally perceived as evidence of the belief, widespread in the Muslim world, of Israel's desire to destroy the mosques on the Temple Mount. Accordingly Prof. Reiter suggested several ways to promote and strengthen the dialogue between the Israeli authorities and the Waqf, in the hope of avoiding unilateral actions that could end in bloodshed:

1. Strengthen the authority of the Israel Archaeological Committee over excavations taking place in highly sensitive areas.
2. Prevent oversight of archaeological activities on the Temple Mount by organizations whose political agendas and ideologies seek to exclude competing agendas through the use of archeology.
3. Compel the Israel Antiquities Authority, the government body in charge of the archaeological excavations, to manage excavations in this volatile area.

Prof. Alona Nitzan-Shifan

Chair of Architecture Program, Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning, Technion—Israel Institute of Technology

This lecture introduced practicalities for allowing public participation in urban planning processes that enable open discussions about the symbolic meanings transmitted about sacred spaces, such as the Temple Mount and its surroundings. In her lecture Nitzan-Shifan compared the degree of transparency of the planning process in two major projects on the Temple Mount and its surroundings after 1967. The first plan, which was not executed, intended to expand the Western Wall plaza. The second plan is for the construction of the "Kedem" visitors' center in the Givati parking lot in Silwan, which is currently debated in the

planning committees.¹ The first plan, to extend the plaza, encouraged open professional and public discussion about its various facets and its impact on the space. After a public debate that lasted about two years, the plan was shelved, although it was approved by the planning committee. By contrast, the design of the Kedem complex was drawn in secret, preventing architects, planners, residents and the public to express their views on it. These differences reflect the attempt, in recent years, to use archeology as a tool to minimize and exclude Palestinian identity within the space of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount.

Accordingly, Prof. Nitzan-Shifan suggests promoting public participation, in order to prevent the monopoly of certain ideological groups over municipal planning policy, particularly when it comes to planning monumental projects in areas with great religious, political and symbolic sensitivity.

Attorney Kais Nasser

Doctor of Law candidate at Tel-Aviv University; Specialist in planning issues in Jerusalem

This lecture focused on the legal framework that regulates the preservation of ancient structures in Israel. Nasr presented several examples of development projects planned in ancient sites, and showed how these plans have ignored the future effects of building on the archaeological sites. The analysis of the legal framework indicates undefined criteria that allow for the advancement ideological goals and political agendas, resulting in the erasure of material culture remains of disadvantaged groups in society.

In view of this, Nasr proposes the creation of a clear and coherent conservation policy to be used by planning agencies, led by the Israel Antiquities Authority, as a necessary guide whose criteria must be followed in projects carried out on archaeological sites. This guide would enable transparency of the legal framework in the field of conservation of ancient buildings in Israel.

Rabbi Shmuel Rabinovich

Rabbi of the Western Wall and of the Holy Sites, the Western Wall Heritage Foundation

This lecture dealt with the relationship between sanctity and archaeology in holy places such as the Western Wall. Rabinowitz claimed that in holy sites which also constitute antiquities sites, such as the Western Wall, there is a clear hierarchy between the sanctity of the site and its use to preserve ancient history. The archaeological work process tends to "freeze"

¹ For more information see Rafi Greenberg (2014) [A Privatized Heritage: How the Israel Antiquities Authority Relinquished Jerusalem's Past](#), Emek Shaveh: Jerusalem; Yonathan Mizrachi (2012) ["Beit Haliba" and the Givati Parking Lot: Archaeological Excavations and their Effect on the Status Quo in the Old City of Jerusalem and in Silwan](#), Emek Shaveh: Jerusalem.

the site and disconnect it from everyday life. In contrast, sanctity is a source of content and significance that enable a person's connection to the place.

Therefore, Rabinowitz concludes that archeology's status is secondary to that of holiness. As a result, despite the importance of the two fields, there is a need to establish a hierarchy in the planning and development of sacred sites, which also constitute ancient sites on the Temple Mount and its surroundings.

Conference 2

Whom does Archaeology serve? Archaeology in the political conflict and in Israeli Society

Nalaga'at Center, Jaffa Port, 11 February 2015

Yonathan Mizrachi

Director, Emek Shaveh

This lecture addressed the possibility of reducing the involvement of political bodies in the management of archaeological sites in Jerusalem. Most of the archaeological sites in the Old City and its environs are run by Jewish Israeli bodies. This situation cuts off groups with competing identities who make use of these spaces, which comprise their cultural heritage. To cope with this difficulty, Mizrachi proposed to adopt and implement international conventions, which require the involvement of international organizations and marginalized groups, such as the Palestinians, in Jerusalem's archaeology. Doing so will decrease the exclusive influence of Jewish narratives on archaeological sites, and enable more diverse groups to take part in shaping the ancient heritage of Jerusalem.

Dr. Michael Feige

Ben Gurion University of the Negev

This lecture surveyed the reasons for the transformation of archaeology into a major tool among religious Zionists. Unlike the situation in secular society, archaeology has never served religious Zionism as evidence of its relationship to the Land of Israel. However, as Feige suggests, the increased involvement of religious Zionism in archaeology in recent years is based on its desire to become part of the Israeli mainstream. As a result, it is possible to discern an increase in the number of archaeological conferences held in the settlements as well as intensifying use of archaeological sites located in tourist sites that address the entire Jewish society in Israel.

While Feige does not offer tools for dealing with this phenomenon, he outlined the extensive connections that enable us to understand right-wing organizations' emphasis on archaeological sites in Jerusalem, and their efforts to appropriate them physically and symbolically.

Neta Amar-Shiff

Diakonia—International Humanitarian Law Resource Centre

This lecture dealt with the legal framework regulating Israeli archaeological activity in the West Bank and Jerusalem and its conflict with and breach of international law that applies to the area as occupied territory. By comparing the international laws to which Israel is signatory with legislative actions and their implementation by Israel, Amar-Shiff pointed to two major failures underlying Israel's archaeological activities in Judea and Samaria and Jerusalem.

First, although a different legal system exists in Israel and the Occupied Territories, and while separate entities were established to enforce the rules in the OPT, in practice there is no distinction between the law that is practiced in Israel in the OPT.

Secondly, even though international law clearly states that any activity carried out in the occupied territories must be made with the consent of the local population, it is evident that there is no Palestinian representation in the Archaeological Council that advises the Staff Officer of Archaeology, and that the vast majority of archaeological activity in the territories—including archaeological excavations, construction of museums displaying archaeological finds, and development of archaeological sites for tourism—is done without participation and without the consent of the local Palestinian population.

Amar-Shiff claims that without strict separation of law as practiced in Israel and the Occupied Territories, and without the involvement of the Palestinian population and sharing with them the management of archaeological sites, archaeology cannot be used to promote the recognition of Palestinian identity and rights.

Ramez 'Eid

Doctoral candidate in Anthropology, Bern University, Switzerland

This lecture examined the use of UNESCO World Heritage sites in Israel. According to Eid, a review of several heritage sites such as Masada and Acre, as well as of sites nominated to the Israeli list of World Heritage Sites, such as Lifta and Ein Kerem, indicates that their mode of conservation and presentation produces a one-dimensional narrative about them. As such, these sites do not meet the basic requirements of World Heritage sites: to empower universal

values that represent all of humanity. Moreover, ignoring the Muslim past of sites such as Acre, Ein Karem, and Lifta reinforces the physical and symbolic exclusion of populations inside and outside the society.

The conclusion of this lecture is that the exclusion of populations through World Heritage Sites is a systemic problem, which affects the process of selection and presentation of World Heritage Sites in Israel. This process also occurs in Jerusalem: A survey of the content that is promoted through the development of archaeological sites as tourist destinations, points to the disregard of the Muslim past, and as a result - of the Muslim Palestinian population of the Old City. It is necessary to re-examine their universal values that are embedded in each of these sites and to work to strengthen them in the urban landscape of Jerusalem.

Dr. Nili Shchory

Urban planning and economic development specialist

This lecture presented a model for managing archaeological sites located in modern cities as an organic part of the urban space. According to Shchory, conservation and planning trends practiced in the world today recognize the need to integrate archaeological sites as part of the urban fabric, to allow the community's connection to the site and to make the site a platform for economic growth.

Shchory suggested a general model, adaptable to individual cases, which would enable the implementation and application of this planning approach. This model seeks essentially to consider three main aspects: the physical aspect of the site (site boundaries, architectural artifacts), financial business aspects of the site (the economic gains to be had), and socio-economic aspects of the community living near the site. According to Shchory, the right combination of these three elements will allow the integration of an archaeological site into a natural part of the urban space and avoid the often resulting separation between the city's past and present. Thus, the archaeological site is transformed into a source of income and growth, linking the community and its surroundings and encouraging its involvement in caring for the site.

Conclusion

These two conferences focused on the role of archaeology in Israeli society particularly in Jerusalem, as a tool for physically shaping space and for highlighting or erasing identities and competing narratives. The lectures centered on several topics:

The legal frameworks governing archaeological activities in Israel and the West Bank; the place of archaeological activities in practices of design and construction; the relationship between the sacred and historical values of ancient sites important to different groups; and the role of archeology in shaping the cultural heritage of Israeli society.

Each of the lectures dealt with these issues somewhat differently. However, this report identifies some key trends that we intended to promote in order to deal with the challenges generated by the manner in which archeology is practiced in Jerusalem today.

One solution is to increase the transparency of the decision-making process regarding the care and conservation of archaeological sites. This transparency involves maintaining a clear distinction between the systems of laws and institutions governing the archaeological activities in Israel and the Occupied Territories, and the publication of conservation plans that are accessible to the public.

The second solution is finding ways to increase public participation in decision-making processes relating to archaeological activity. We hope that in the coming years it will be possible to implement these conclusions and to transform archaeology from a tool for polarization to creating a bridge between past and present and between different groups in society.

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