

Display and Presentation

In late 1947, a group of senior Jewish archaeologists gathered to discuss the future of the Palestine Archaeological Museum (PAM). Their wish was to maintain this “unique centre of knowledge” so as not to disrupt the scientific completeness of the collection and compromise its cultural and public merit.

Whatever the future of the land of Israel, there is no doubt that its past is one and united, and must be learned as one unit. This is possible archaeologically only in a central museum of the entire land. . . . Dividing the museum will be against Jewish interests, for the study of the past of the land is important in maintaining the living, organizing relations between the people and its land. This connection is one of the sure means to induce Zionist conscience in the hearts of the people. . . . We need to act in the best way possible to ease that study, and not to burden it. Furthermore, we must strive to maintain and develop our cultural positions in Jerusalem. . . . Dozens of thousands of tourists and immigrants will visit Jerusalem in the future. By keeping our interest in the museum, which thousands of foreign people will visit, we maintain a valuable means of propaganda and influence.¹

Defining a museum as a “means of propaganda and influence” may appear radical. However, it is not unique to Jerusalem or the period in question. Napoleon’s concept of a museum as an agent for nationalistic fervor, after all, had a profound and long-lasting influence throughout Europe and numerous art museums around the world. Even today’s “encyclopedic collections,” born of the Enlightenment, which claim to promote a greater understanding of humanity, are being examined for a lack of political neutrality and suspected for their implicit support of imperialisms, past and present.²

Any ancient artifact or monument that is taken out of its original context and displayed in a museum takes on an entirely new meaning. Curators may strive to represent the artifact in a specific cultural context, but it is often reduced to little more than an aesthetically pleasing object. Similar choices determine conservation policies of archaeological sites, where specific layers or structures are preserved to the detriment of others, as if they were representative of an entire region or culture—a claim that is difficult to sustain as ruins are, by definition, partial.

Contrary to the intentions expressed during the 1947 meeting of archaeologists regarding the PAM, the collection never gained much public attention, even after control of the buildings fell into Israeli hands in 1967. Officially renamed the Rockefeller Museum, it has housed the head offices of the IDAM (and, as of 1990, the IAA), and thus many major decisions regarding the management and execution of archaeological activity, as well as the policies of Jerusalem's cultural heritage, have been made within the confines of the complex. Very few visitors, however, and hardly any Israelis—as a result of its location in the city's Arab sector—have explored the displays of the museum's showcases, especially after the First and Second Intifadas (1987–91 and 2000–05). More importantly—and also in contrast to the intentions expressed in the 1947 meeting—the completeness of the collection was compromised by the removal of a number of significant artifacts to other museums that have been more readily accessible to Israeli and Jewish visitors.

Numerous other museums and open-air facilities, both in East and West Jerusalem, have enabled the presentation of local antiquities. Other than the PAM, two additional museums were established in the city prior to 1947: the Islamic Museum of the Haram al-Sharif and the Museum for Jewish Antiquities on Mount Scopus. During Jordanian rule, the Israel Museum was built in West Jerusalem to enable Jewish residents, not allowed to visit the Old City, to view some of the country's principal antiquities collections. Upon Israel's 1967 capture of East Jerusalem, numerous parks, monuments, and additional museums in and around the Old City as well as in West Jerusalem were established to present the city's historical and archaeological heritage to the public.

The display and presentation of archaeological finds in Jerusalem, including artifacts, monuments, and sites, have been the subject of both high praise and harsh criticism. Accomplishments and failures in this context can be best measured and appreciated in light of the recommendations made by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), which were approved in 1990. Article 7 of the ICOMOS charter, which underlines the significance of presenting archaeological findings and disseminating information, states that “the presentation of the archaeological heritage to the general public is an essential method of promoting an understanding of the origins and development of modern societies. At the same time, it is the most important means of promoting an understanding of the need for its protection. Presentation and information should be conceived as

a popular interpretation of the current state of knowledge, and it must therefore be revised frequently. It should take account of the multifaceted approaches to an understanding of the past.”³ Much effort, time, and funding has been invested to promote Israel’s Jewish origins through the lens of its archaeological heritage. Artifacts, monuments, and sites in the Old City and beyond have been mobilized to inform the wider public: in the streets, in parks, in museums. And the approaches to display and interpret the city’s antiquities are indeed multifaceted, but also surprisingly unified in the message they promote.

NATIONAL PARKS

Jerusalem is one of the region’s fastest growing cities, and yet compared to many other urban centers, public green spaces and open areas are abundant. Numerous national parks (see figure 15) have been established by the Israeli government and enhance the impression of a sparsely built and carefully planned city. These parks provide a natural and particularly attractive setting for archaeological findings, both embracing and contrasting the city’s architectural heritage. As a governmental agency, the INPA is charged with the protection of nature, landscape, and heritage, which includes Jerusalem’s Old City as a World Heritage Site (WHS) and the city’s national parks. Contrary to popular belief, however, the Old City itself is not a national park.⁴ The city’s national parks, established after Israel’s capture of the Old City and East Jerusalem, form a nearly continuous and only sparsely built territory between the walled city and the eastern municipal boundary—with the exception of the densely populated Silwan neighborhood.⁵ The natural and archaeological heritage, however, plays only a minor role in the decision to gradually expand the territory of these parks.

The Jerusalem Walls National Park (also known as the City of David National Park) and the Tzurim Valley National Park are officially declared national parks. The Mount Scopus Slopes National Park and the King’s Valley National Park are in advanced stages of planning.⁶ It is important to note that all INPA decisions regarding the preservation of archaeological remains within the confines of those parks and the way in which the antiquities are presented to the public are made in conjunction with the IAA.

Established in 1974, the Jerusalem Walls National Park covers some 1,100 *dunams* (ca. 270 acres).⁷ It represents the city’s most important national park and one of the country’s most significant ones. This park spreads far beyond the area popularly known as the City of David, which has recently turned into a major tourist attraction. It encompasses the entire Ottoman city wall, including the gates giving access to the Old City as well as the Ophel Garden (also known as the Jerusalem Archaeological Park). This zone was originally designed by the British to form a ring around the Old City, separating the ancient and medieval nucleus from the

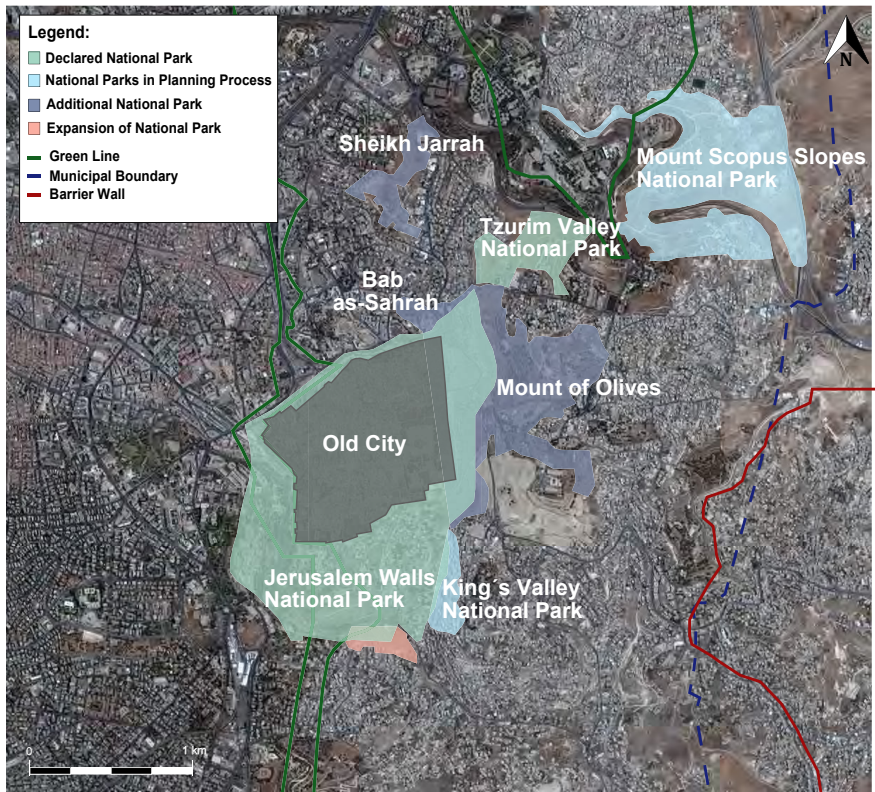


FIGURE 15. Map showing national parks. Redrawn by Franziska Lehmann, after: *Bimkom: From Public to National. National Parks in East Jerusalem*, Map 1.

new constructions outside the walls. The combined use of modern design ideas and the preservation of the ancient “biblical city” is yet another concept that Israel inherited from the British, rooted in much wider instances of colonial visual culture and modern cityscape and landscape visions.⁸ Beyond fostering a sacred landscape, the park established under Israeli rule has also prevented new construction near the walls’ exterior face and has served as a territorial link between disconnected areas captured by Israel in 1967, now encompassing the Jerusalem Walls National Park and the Tzurim Valley National Park.

Significant efforts and funds have been invested in the preservation of the archaeological remains, their presentation to the public, and in the overall development of the area for the city’s expanding tourist industry. Excavations and surveys within the confines of Jerusalem Walls National Park have been carried out under Ottoman, British, and Jordanian rule, and they were intensified and

expanded significantly under Israeli rule, beginning in 1967. Important heritage sites and monuments include the archaeological remains in Silwan and around the southwestern corner of the Temple Mount / Haram al-Sharif, as well as numerous historic buildings that spread to the east, south, and west of the Old City. Most significant among these are the Church of St. Peter in Gallicantu on the eastern slope of Mount Zion; the Tombs of Absalom, Jehoshaphat, Bnei Hezir, and Zechariah aligned in the Kidron Valley; the Tomb of the Prophets, the Grotto of Gethsemane, and the Churches of Dominus Flevit, St. Mary Magdalene, the Assumption, and the Basilica of the Agony spread throughout the western slope of the Mount of Olives; and, finally, the Tombs of Ketef Hinnom and Akeldama, St. Andrew's Church, and the Monastery of St. Onuphrius in the Hinnom Valley.⁹ Major conservation and development efforts initiated in 1994 were carried out by the Ministry of Tourism, the Jerusalem Municipality, the IAA, and the East Jerusalem Development Company (PAMI), with increased investment in excavation and publication presentation efforts after 2002. These efforts have been largely dedicated to the two large-scale excavations carried out in Silwan (City of David excavations) and in the Ophel Garden around the southwestern corner of the Haram (Southern Temple Mount excavations), turning this general area into one of the most frequently visited national parks in the country. Exposed ruins range in date between the Chalcolithic period and the Mamluk era.¹⁰ Conservation efforts and periods highlighted for public presentation, however, almost exclusively focus First and Second Temple period structures and layers.¹¹

Declared a national park in 2000, the Tzurim Valley National Park is located northeast of the Old City on the slopes of Mount Scopus and the Mount of Olives, spreading toward the Kidron Valley. Extending over 165 *dunams* (ca. 40 acres), it was designed to recreate the "biblical landscape." The park includes and is surrounded by agricultural terraces and olive groves. Though no major archaeological remains have been uncovered within the confines of the park, the so-called Temple Mount Sifting Project—also known as the Temple Mount Antiquities Salvage Operation—has been hosted on its grounds since 2004.¹² The project is dedicated to examining construction debris from the Haram compound.

The Mount Scopus Slopes National Park is located between the Old City and the urban settlement of Ma'aleh Adumim, located in the West Bank. The area designated for the park measures approximately 730 *dunams* (ca. 180 acres). Archaeological remains in the area are relatively insignificant and poorly preserved and include a Roman- and Byzantine-period burial ground, agricultural installations, quarries, industrial facilities for the production of stone vessels, and a Byzantine church that was transformed into a roadside *khan* (inn) during the early Islamic period.¹³ Another park in an advanced state of planning is the King's Valley National Park. Excavations carried out by Tel Aviv University since 2013 have not yet achieved any noteworthy results.¹⁴ The park comprises some 50 *dunams* (ca. 12 acres) in the

al-Bustan neighborhood of Silwan and is planned as an integral part of the Old City Historic Basin.¹⁵

Jerusalem is the first city in which the Israeli government planned and declared built environments as national parks. Given the limited nature and heritage value for most of the surface enclosed within the areas designated or planned as national parks, and only minor enclaves of archaeological remains, the establishment of these parks is clearly linked with other known efforts of the Israeli government and the Jerusalem Municipality to prevent the development of Palestinian neighborhoods.¹⁶ These efforts are tied to the larger goal of fostering a Jewish territorial continuity around the Old City and in East Jerusalem, preventing any possibility of dividing the city, and circumventing clear-cut US governmental and international opposition to settlement.¹⁷

THE JEWISH QUARTER

Additional antiquities sites integrated into Jerusalem's urban fabric are featured in the Jewish Quarter. Located in the southeastern sector of the Old City, it represents one of its four traditional quarters. Its area stretches from the Zion Gate in the south, borders the Armenian Quarter to its west, runs parallel to the Street of the Chain in the north, and extends and incorporates the Western Wall, marking its eastern boundary.

Following the 1967 war, the government of Israel established the Jewish Quarter Development Company (JQDC) with the goal of developing it as a "national, religious, historic and cultural site, stressing its unique style and character."¹⁸ This historic sector of the Old City, the planning and reconstruction of which was completed in 1975, was intended to be one of Israel's main heritage tourism attractions.¹⁹

The poor condition of the quarter prior to these refurbishment efforts was a result of destruction and neglect of the historic buildings during Jordanian rule, aggravated by damage incurred during the war of 1967. After the first archaeological discoveries in 1969, a decision had to be made regarding the excavation and development efforts. Two options were considered: to preserve the neighborhood as a "living museum" inhabited by real people or to establish the area as an archaeological park.²⁰ Ultimately, the decision was taken to systematically raze most of the dilapidated quarter.²¹ This destruction provided opportunities for both archaeologists and developers, whose overlapping efforts and needs were managed by architects, planners, and archaeologists working jointly under the aegis of the JQDC and the IDAM. The 1978 Antiquities Law, prohibiting what Israel would later regard as illegal destruction and construction, had not been passed yet, thus enabling the demolition of countless historic buildings. At the time of the restoration project, the only convention that Israel had inherited from the British,

stipulated that before new construction could begin in the ruined Jewish Quarter, preliminary excavations had to be carried out.²²

The Jewish Quarter excavations were conducted by Nahman Avigad between 1969 and 1982.²³ Spreading over an area of 20 *dunams* (ca. 5 acres), representing about 20 percent of the total surface of the neighborhood and one of the largest excavations in the State of Israel, some twenty-five trenches were opened. Discoveries included fortifications and buildings from the Iron Age and the Hellenistic and early Roman periods, as well as the Byzantine *Cardo* and Nea Church complex. Archaeological and architectural remains from the early and late Islamic periods were almost completely erased and only few of them were recorded. A selection of excavated sites and monuments, featuring the First and Second Temple periods and reflecting the Jewish narrative of the city, were preserved and incorporated into the urban fabric of the Jewish Quarter. The archaeological highlights representing the First Temple period are the Israelite Tower and the Broad Wall; those representing the Second Temple period are the Wohl Archaeological Museum and the Burnt House.

The Israelite Tower (part of the Iron Age fortification system), located in the basement of a modern building in the outskirts of the quarter, is presented to the visitor as “one of the most impressive testimonies to the strength and might of Jerusalem during the First Temple period.”²⁴ The full height of this tower is not known, but 8.2 meters of it have survived above ground. The display also includes the lower courses of an adjacent tower from the late Hellenistic (Hasmonean) period.²⁵

An additional remainder of the city’s Iron Age fortification is the so-called Broad Wall (see figure 16); sixty-five meters of the wall survives, and it is preserved in places to a height of 3.3 meters. This find disproves the view that Jerusalem was a relatively small settlement confined to the Eastern Hill in the eighth century B.C.E.; it shows that by this time the city had expanded to the Western Hill and was an important capital of the Southern Kingdom of Judah, well prepared for an attack by the Assyrian enemy.²⁶ The open-air display of a segment of the wall can be viewed from street level (looking down about two meters) and is accompanied with explanatory labels and an enormous panel showing the location of the wall within the context of Jerusalem in the Second Temple period—the decades preceding the destruction of the Herodian Temple and the city in 70 C.E.

The Wohl Archaeological Museum, located in the basement of the modern Yeshivat HaKotel building—three to seven meters below street level—features the remains of several buildings from the late Second Temple period. The remains are of “an upper class quarter, where the noble families of Jerusalem lived, with the High Priest at their head.”²⁷ These include buildings identified as the Western House, the Middle Complex, and the Palatial Mansion. The display features the basement levels with storage and water installations, many of which were used as ritual pools



FIGURE 16. Broad Wall in Jewish Quarter, looking south. Photo by Katharina Galor.

(*miqva'ot*). The lower and upper levels of the houses, some of which indicate a second story above ground, are decorated with stucco, polychrome frescoes, and mosaic floors (see figure 17).²⁸ Display cases and platforms show architectural details, fragments of stone furniture, stone objects, glassware, and ceramics, evocative of the luxurious lifestyle of the Upper City's residents. Evidence of fire damage was left in place as a reminder of the destruction caused by the Romans in 70 C.E. Labels and holograms supplement the display and facilitate and enhance the visit of this underground museum.

Visitors to the Wohl Archaeological Museum are encouraged to explore the Burnt House, which is also preserved in the basement level of another modern building, located five minutes' walking distance away. Based on the findings, including a stone weight with an inscription reading "son of Kathros," the Burnt House was identified as belonging to a wealthy family of high priests, mentioned by name in the Babylonian Talmud, written between the third and fifth centuries C.E. This find brings to life the direct link between the residential areas exposed in the Jewish Quarter and the Herodian Temple on the other side of the Central Valley. In addition to the architectural remains, several pieces of furniture and other objects found during the excavation can be seen. A sound



FIGURE 17. Mosaic floor, stone tables, and vessels in Palatial Mansion, Wohl Archaeological Museum. Photo by Katharina Galor.

and light show dramatically recreates the fall of Jerusalem under the Romans and presents the archaeological discovery as part of the Jewish Quarter's restoration program.²⁹

Significant remains from the Byzantine period include the Nea Church and the *Cardo* (the main road in Roman and Byzantine eras). Despite the fact that the Nea Church is known as one of most important churches built by the emperor Justinian and the largest church in all of ancient Palestine, most of its remains are located in a locked building situated in a poorly accessible, neglected corner of the Jewish Quarter, with no signs indicating its location or significance.³⁰ The *Cardo*, however, is incorporated as one of the major highlights of the neighborhood.³¹ The original stretch of the *Cardo* (today located in the Christian and Muslim Quarters) was built in late Roman period as the major thoroughfare bisecting the city from north to south, but its southern extension (partially restored in the Jewish Quarter) was built during the time of the emperor Justinian in the sixth century, possibly to facilitate pilgrims traveling between the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (erected under the emperor Constantine in the fourth century) and the newly built Nea Church. Segments of this southern extension were exposed during Avigad's excavation. From the restored open-air section of the Byzantine *Cardo*, visitors can continue northward along a still later section of the *Cardo*, built in the Crusader period. This latter section has been remodeled, covered, and transformed into an upscale shopping area featuring souvenirs and Judaica (in this context, mostly Jewish religious artifacts and ritual items).³² The original Christian context of this

principal Jerusalem thoroughfare was thus effectively redesigned without distorting the Jewish narrative of the quarter's exposed and highlighted antiquities.

The original goal of the Jewish Quarter restoration project was to blend it functionally and architecturally into the rest of the city. This initiative was intended as the first step in a large-scale restoration of the entire Old City.³³ The nature of this program deviated from the British Mandatory policy, which excluded the Old City from the modernization process. According to William McLean's town plan of 1918, the Historic Basin was to be maintained as a religious, historical, and architectural preserve.³⁴

In spite of the general consensus that the JQDC project neglected numerous aspects of heritage conservation and presentation, as reflected in the Venice Charter of UNESCO (1964) and the National Historic Preservation Act of the United States (1966), it is debated whether this defiance of official regulations was unique to Israel or reflected the international norm at the time.³⁵ Further disagreements concern the authorities and professionals involved in the planning and execution of the project and whether other countries would also have appointed an exclusively national team (without including any international experts) to coordinate and implement a major restoration project.³⁶

One of the obvious shortcomings of the project is the fact that no overall architectural and archaeological survey of the quarter's historic buildings was carried out prior to their destruction. The history of different ethnic groups living in or passing through the quarter during the medieval, Ottoman, and British Mandate periods, as well as under Jordanian rule and during the 1948 and 1967 wars, were barely documented and studied. Sites and monuments representing religious or ethnic groups other than Jewish are only minimally represented in public installations.³⁷ The excavated ruins highlight periods of significance to the Jewish narrative, but few remains of importance to the Christian and Muslim traditions were preserved.

Surprisingly though, the Jewish remains preserved are primarily from the First and Second Temple periods; later periods are poorly represented. Although the Protection of Holy Places Law of 1967 stipulated the renewal of desecrated synagogues, most of them were left in a state of ruin and only a few select Ottoman-period synagogues and yeshivot were restored.³⁸ The failure to implement the recommended renovations can be linked, at least partially, to the lack of funding. But another reason for the failure was the prevailing attitude among many Israelis at the time that medieval and early modern synagogues were of little interest to the mostly secular aspirations of the new Zionist state, an attitude which for some reason did not affect their interest in Jewish antiquities.³⁹ The overall excavation, preservation, and presentation policies, as designed and implemented by the JQDC, thus reflect the broader ideological goals of the State of Israel prevalent during the early decades of its existence, which only took into account a very narrow perspective with regard

to the city's cultural and religious heritage. The recent ambitious reconstruction project (2000–10) of the nineteenth-century Jewish Quarter Hurva Synagogue suggests that Jewish heritage priorities have shifted since.

A NEW ARCHAEOLOGICAL CIRCUIT

Since the mid-1990s, the IAA—in cooperation with several other governmental and various private establishments, including the INPA, the East Jerusalem Development Company (PAMI), the Western Wall Heritage Foundation, and Elad—has initiated a number of new large-scale excavations in East Jerusalem. These will be transformed into cultural-heritage sites for the public. Two of these excavation projects, the Western Wall Plaza excavations (see figure 18) and the Givati Parking Lot excavations (see figure 19), are tied to the planned construction of two building complexes that will serve the administration and display of archaeological sites and finds. Some of the new discoveries, along with previously exposed remains, have been incorporated into an archaeological circuit linking a number of dispersed sites that until 2012 were disconnected (see figure 20).

The Western Wall Plaza excavations, begun in 2005 and completed in 2009, was initiated in preparation for the construction of the Beit Haliba Building, an office and conference complex for the Western Wall Heritage Foundation, which will oversee prayer and tourism at the plaza and in the Western Wall Tunnels.⁴⁰ The planned building was originally designed to be identical in height to the Western Wall and would have completely transformed the current landscape, an initiative that contravenes UNESCO rules.⁴¹ After objections were raised by planners, Jewish Quarter residents, and archaeologists, it was decided that the size of the building would be reduced.⁴² The second complex, the Kedem Center, to be built on the site of the current Givati Parking Lot excavations—which were initiated in 2003 and resumed in 2007—will incorporate offices for the City of David Visitors Center and its Megalim educational institute, as well as a Bible Museum displaying artifacts from the excavations conducted in the City of David and other sites in the city.⁴³ As with the case of the Beit Haliba Building, the seven-story Kedem Center will have a significant impact on the surrounding landscape, which until the establishment of the City of David Visitors Center was largely defined by residential buildings and public structures that served the local community.⁴⁴ Since the beginning of the twentieth century, some Bronze and Iron Age water installations, fortification system, and domestic complexes had been accessible to visitors. These had been presented modestly, with interconnected trails and simple explanatory labels and several display cases featuring locally found artifacts. The new infrastructure of the City of David Visitors Center, incorporating more recent discoveries from the Bronze and Iron Ages, however, completely transformed the site's profile and turned it into the city's most popular archaeological attraction. The

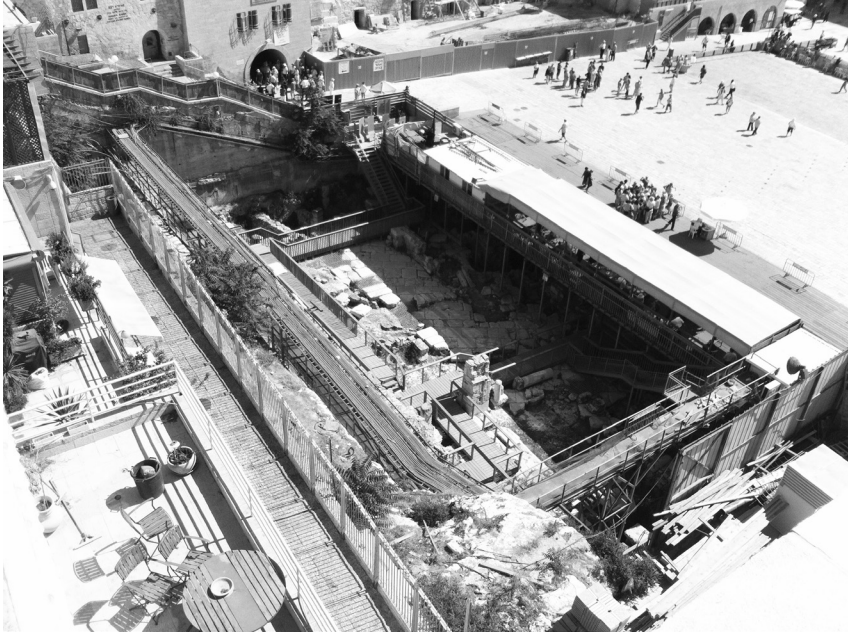


FIGURE 18. Western Wall Plaza excavations. Photo by Katharina Galor.

original modest presentation was replaced by a state-of-the-art tourist complex, radically transforming the residential character of the area into a magnet for the expanding tourist industry. Along with the standard labels explaining artifacts and remains, the City of David Visitors Center now offers a variety of instructional and entertaining support media, including an auditorium for the screening of a 3-D sound and light show, cafeterias, souvenir shops, well-paved pathways, rest areas, and display sections, located both above and below ground. This newly created infrastructure provides scattered archaeological remains with a unified modern architectural framework surrounded by flowers and olive trees evocative of the biblical landscape. As the original presentation did, the City of David Archaeological Park highlights the biblical narrative of King David and his city built in place of the former Jebusite settlement.

In August of 2011, the so-called Herodian Street and Tunnel—created by linking several Roman street segments with a sewage channel over a 550-meter stretch—was opened to tourists.⁴⁵ The tunnel is presented by the IAA as a trail used in the Second Temple period by pilgrims climbing toward the Temple.⁴⁶ It conducts visitors from the Siloam Pool in Silwan to the Western Wall Plaza. The Western Wall Tunnels, accessible from north of the plaza, lead visitors along the western enclosure wall of the Haram platform, debouching in the Muslim Quarter. Features highlighted in the underground tour date to various late Hellenistic (Hasmonean) and early Roman (Herodian) phases of construction and use of the Jewish Temple Mount.



FIGURE 19. Givati Parking Lot excavations, looking north. Photo by Katharina Galor.



FIGURE 20. Map showing Western Wall Plaza, Mughrabi Gate, and Givati Parking Lot excavations, Herodian Street and Tunnel, Siloam Pool, Davidson Center, and Zedekiah's Cave. Drawn by Franziska Lehmann.

Another major destination accessible from the Western Wall Plaza is the Davidson Center, housed in the Ophel Garden. Significant finds in the open-air area include the southern Temple Mount staircase and entrances, Byzantine houses, and Umayyad palaces. Recently implemented changes facilitate a new route along the “Ritual Baths Lane,” identified with the Jewish tradition of immersion in stepped pools (*miqva’ot*) prior to the visit at the Herodian Temple, as well as the visit of the “Ophel Walls” site, featuring several late Iron Age wall segments dating to the era of the Judean Kingdom.⁴⁷

The Davidson Center is located within one of the Umayyad-period palaces uncovered during the Temple Mount excavations. The center’s architectural design emphasizes the contrast between the modern materials used, such as wood, glass, and steel, and the massiveness of the original palace’s stone walls. A short documentary film presents the story of the excavations conducted near the Temple Mount and provides the visitor with a brief historical overview. The building houses an exhibition gallery featuring artifacts from four main periods: the Second Temple, the Roman, the Byzantine, and the Islamic periods. Highlights include a digital 3-D simulation of the Herodian Temple as well as a high-definition digital video describing Jewish pilgrimage to Jerusalem during the Second Temple period.

Plans to extend the archaeological circuit to connect to further tourist sites within the Muslim Quarter of the Old City are in place.⁴⁸ Improved infrastructure in al-Wad Street will allow visitors to more easily reach Zedekiah’s Cave, also known as Solomon’s Quarries. This ancient limestone quarry stretches the length of five city blocks under the Muslim Quarter. It is believed to have served as the main quarry for the construction of the Herodian Temple Mount and for the Old City’s walls built by Suleiman the Magnificent in the sixteenth century. Zedekiah’s Cave is located between Damascus Gate and Herod’s Gate in the Muslim Quarter. Excavations have been carried out at both gates. An ancient Roman gate, opened to tourists in the late 1980s, can be seen underneath the currently used Damascus Gate, built at the time of Suleiman’s construction of the city wall.

Since 1967—and in particular after the First and the Second Intifadas—the main destination for Jewish and Israeli visitors in East Jerusalem has been the Jewish Quarter. The recent initiatives to link various sites in Silwan with the Jewish, Christian, and Muslims Quarters fulfills the goal to create a contiguous territory more readily accessible to both local and foreign visitors. All previous and recent excavation and conservation works in the Old City and Silwan in combination, clearly represent efforts “to fortify the Israeli hold on the Old City itself” and provide “a cover for the advancement of monumental building plans.”⁴⁹ A remarkable escalation has taken place—from conducting excavations in open and accessible public areas in the immediate aftermath of Israel’s capture of East Jerusalem to encroaching upon densely built residential areas, both above and

below ground, since the mid 1990s. The only consistent aspect of the public presentation of archaeological finds appears to be the continued focus on the First and Second Temple periods, which together inform and remind visitors of Jerusalem's Jewish origin.

MUSEUMS

More than half a century separates Jerusalem's earliest excavations from the construction of its first museums. Originally, several significant artifacts had been shipped to Constantinople, following the standard established by the Ottoman Antiquities Law (originally passed in 1874 and revised in 1884) stipulating that finds discovered in Ottoman territory were the property of the Imperial Museum. Various factors contributed to the decision to establish facilities to store and display the region's antiquities locally. Among them was the desire to lay claim to Jerusalem's heritage and to prevent export of antiquities, reflecting a new awareness of cultural legacy prevalent during the Mandate period. Equally important was the objective to educate the public through exposure to the local and regional material culture, also a byproduct of other outreach efforts. Despite the focus on local cultures, collections and displays increasingly encompassed artifacts from other world cultures as well.⁵⁰

Established in 1922, the Islamic Museum of the Haram al-Sharif was the first museum to be opened in Jerusalem and, in fact, in Palestine as a whole.⁵¹ Originally located in the thirteenth-century Ribat al-Mansuri, west of the Haram near Bab al-Nazir, the collection was moved to its present location in 1929, inside the restored Crusader building additions to the west of the al-Aqsa Mosque. The museum is thus integrated into an architectural complex that houses, one of Islam's most venerated shrines. Three large halls accommodate the displays, storage facilities, and offices, all of which were formerly used as places of worship: the twelfth-century Jami' al-Magharibah, the Jami' al-Nisa in use during the Mamluk and Ottoman periods, and the fourteenth-century Madrasa al-Fakhriyah, later converted into a *zawiyyah* (Islamic monastery), whose mosque has been preserved and currently serves as an office for the museum administration. The museum was closed between 1974 and 1981, when renovations and a reorganization of the collection were carried out, under the auspices of the French Foreign Ministry. Owing to concerns over security, the museum was once again closed to the public in 1999 and has not been opened since. UNESCO, in collaboration with the Waqf administrations of Jordan and its Jerusalem branch, currently facilitates a safeguarding, refurbishment, and revitalization project, aiming to renovate the interior of the museum, to conserve, inventory, and store the collections, as well as to build capacity among the staff.⁵² The reopening, however, will likely depend more on the political climate rather than on the state of the museum, the installations, and its personnel.

The collection features artifacts spanning a period of ten centuries, and encompassing many regions of the Islamic world: North Africa, Arab Asia, Turkey, Iran, and part of East Asia.⁵³ The vast array of Qur'an manuscripts and other objects represent endowments to the al-Aqsa Mosque, the Dome of the Rock, and other religious institutions in Jerusalem as well as several important Palestinian cities by Muslim rulers, sultans, princes, and other donors. Those gifts are indicative of the significant role the al-Aqsa Mosque and al-Quds (the Holy City) has held for Muslims from the early Islamic period onward. The collection also includes architectural details and various artifacts retrieved during restoration campaigns carried out on the Haram complex. The most notable objects from the al-Aqsa Mosque include carved wooden panels and painted architectural details from the original eighth-century structure, fragments of Nur al-Din's Ayyubid-period *minbar* as well as stained glass and gypsum windows from the Ottoman period. Among the materials collected from the Dome of the Rock are the carved and gilded marble panels from the original eighth-century construction and the glazed tiles from the Ottoman-period restorations to the exterior. Additional precious artifacts featured in the collection are incense burners, mosque lamps, candlesticks, caldrons, armor, weapons, coins, and textiles, primarily from the Mamluk and Ottoman periods.

As the most contested site in the city, and the most politically and religiously sensitive monument, the Haram and the museum, which forms an integral part of the complex, have suffered tremendously. Though under the official administration of the Waqf, the museum as all other Muslim establishments on the platform are caught in the midst of the power struggle between the local and Jordanian administrators and the Israeli government. As a focal point of tension between Muslims and Jews, Palestinians and Israelis, violent clashes on and near the Haram have led museum officials to take extreme measures with regard to display choices. Since the First Intifada, the torn and bloodied clothes of Palestinians were exhibited in a showcase near the museum entrance. This display was removed around the time the Second Intifada broke out, when access to the Dome of the Rock and the al-Aqsa Mosque became restricted to Muslim visitors only. Given the lack of coordination and adequate support, the museum—in spite of its prime location, the historic significance of the architectural setting, and the priceless nature of its collection—is not utilized to its fullest potential and advantage. Conservation and presentation standards are far below the level of Israeli museums in the city, and in spite of UNESCO's recent initiatives, much work and significant funds will be necessary to adequately preserve and present the museum's singularly important antiquities in the manner of a world-leading institution of Islamic heritage.

The establishment of the PAM was a landmark in the history of archaeology of Palestine. In 1917 the Ottoman authorities planned to transfer about six thousand antiquities from Jerusalem to Constantinople. This plan failed at the last moment, due to the declining fortunes of the Ottomans in the First World War. In the fall

of 1917, the British took over Jerusalem, and the objects were ultimately left packed up and never left the city. Later, the British decided to exhibit the artifacts, which became the kernel of a museum for Palestine.⁵⁴ It was James Henry Breasted of the Oriental Institute in Chicago who, in 1925, initiated the construction of the first proper building to house and display the collection, and it was John David Rockefeller Jr. who financed the enterprise.⁵⁵ The collection was meant to represent the history of the region from the first appearance of humankind until the beginning of the eighteenth century, as reflected in archaeological finds.⁵⁶ On January 13, 1938, the doors of the museum were opened to the public. Known since as the Rockefeller Museum—in addition to its official name, PAM—it was built from quality materials in a neo-Gothic style, using a blend of Eastern and Western architectural traditions and conveying what archaeologist James Henry Breasted described as “the reverence felt by western civilization for the past of Palestine, a past which means more to the nations of the west than that of any other country.”⁵⁷ Decades later, this colonial attitude found new meaning in the nationalistic goals, which the IAA promoted on a much larger scale, displaying archaeological collections in significantly grander contexts. The cornerstone of PAM was laid in 1930. The discovery of an ancient cemetery at the site, however, delayed the construction for three years. Excavations carried out on the grounds revealed tombs dating from the Hellenistic period through the Byzantine period, including a stone sarcophagus decorated in relief, funerary plaques bearing Greek inscriptions, as well as many burial gifts, such as ceramic and glass vessels, oil lamps, jewelry, and coins. The collection also features antiquities—ranging from prehistoric times through the Ottoman period—from excavations conducted during the time of the British Mandate throughout the region.⁵⁸ Highlights of the collection with a Jerusalem provenance include a third-century marble Aphrodite, several carved wooden panels and friezes from the original eighth-century al-Aqsa Mosque, and the twin portal lintels from the twelfth-century Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The current display of the collection almost fully reflects the format of the original exhibit, including the spatial organization and display cases.⁵⁹ According to the official policy adopted by Israel upon the museum’s takeover in 1967, the collection was to be maintained in the state it was in.⁶⁰ In contravention of this stipulation, however, numerous artifacts have been removed to other museums, mostly on long-term loans.⁶¹ Since Israel’s occupation of East Jerusalem, the Rockefeller Museum is under the management of the Israel Museum and houses the head office of the IAA.

Hebrew University’s Institute of Archaeology recently celebrated the seventieth anniversary of the Museum for Jewish Antiquities, which was established in 1941 on the Mount Scopus campus.⁶² Just as the museum was going to open its door to the public, the 1948 war broke out, and the collection was removed from the campus. It was returned in 1967, when the university regained access to Mount Scopus. The original building of the Museum for Jewish Antiquities was built in

the international style characteristic of Jerusalem architecture at the time. A stone brought from the excavations of the Third Wall in Jerusalem, the first archaeological project undertaken by Hebrew University, was incorporated in the facade north of the courtyard.

The creation of the museum was meant to reflect “the aspirations of the 1930s Jewish community in the pre-state Yishuv to establish cultural institutions and reinforce the link between the nation and its past.”⁶³ An additional objective was to study other cultures in the country and its environs, including Transjordan, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Anatolia, Mesopotamia, Cyprus, and Greece. The collection is based on a core of artifacts from the private collections of Hebrew University archaeology professors Eliezer Sukenik and Benjamin Mazar. The original assortment of objects was supplemented by acquisitions and donations, including artifacts from the Baron Edmond de Rothschild collection and the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society. Thousands of additional pieces were acquired during the course of the institute’s excavations in the country. Comprising today about thirty thousand objects, the collection includes pottery vessels, stone tools, glassware, ancient weapons, dozens of cuneiform clay tablets, Egyptian vessels, Hebrew seals, jewelry, ancient coins (with an emphasis on Jewish numismatics), and an extensive ethnographic collection. Among the most significant items from the Jerusalem area are ossuaries and burial gifts from tombs from the Second Temple period, including some discovered on the grounds of the Mount Scopus campus. Beyond those original objects, the collection also features replicas of significant finds relating to the history of the Jewish people. Other than a few objects currently on display and a few select artifacts on loan (mostly to local museums), the collection primarily serves study and research purposes. Though one of the city’s earliest museums, access to the collection thus remains relatively restricted.

Of a completely different scale in terms of size, outreach, and public impact is the Israel Museum, founded in 1965 and located in Givat Ram in West Jerusalem.⁶⁴ Just a little over two years after the establishment of the State of Israel, Teddy Kollek, then director-general of the prime minister’s office, conceived of a plan for an encyclopedic museum in Jerusalem that would join the ranks of the great national museums of the world’s cultural capitals.⁶⁵ The original buildings, designed as a showcase of universal modernism, were recently renovated and expanded with the goal of creating a unified gallery space with improved display capacity. The archaeology, fine arts, and the Jewish art and life wings were completely redesigned, linking the original buildings with a new entrance pavilion.⁶⁶ The project was meant to reinforce the museum’s “original spirit, both ideological and physically, by enhancing the power of its international modernist heritage and drawing strength from the equal power of its ancient landscape.”⁶⁷ The new additions follow the same modular grid geometry of the original architectural complex. But rather than presenting opaque modular cubes clad with Jerusalem stone finishes on the

exterior and concrete finishes on the interior, the new pavilions are made of glass curtain walls.

From the Israel Museum's inception, along with its exhibition halls, the grounds accommodated the offices of the IDAM, whose antiquities would be displayed for the first time rather than being kept in storerooms.⁶⁸ One of the original goals of the museum was to complement archaeological excavation and research by presenting the finds to the public, enabling the visitor to "acquire an understanding of the life of the people in ancient times and the development of the material and spiritual culture in all its aspects during their long history within the confines of the State of Israel."⁶⁹ As an attempt to counter the nationalistic tendency of Israel archaeology in the 1950s, the director of the IDAM suggested that "the national museum should include exhibitions of antiquities from other cultures, which would have 'an invaluable influence not only on the widening of the mental horizon of the Israeli public, but also on jolting it out of the rut of a national and cultural provincialism.'"⁷⁰

The collection represents the most extensive holdings of biblical archaeology in the world, encompassing nearly half a million objects. The recently renovated and expanded Samuel and Saidye Bronfman Archaeology Wing consists of seven units.⁷¹ The installations are organized chronologically from prehistory through the Ottoman period, weaving together significant historical events, cultural accomplishments, and technological advances, incorporating aspects of the everyday lives of the peoples of the region. Beyond the local material culture, the collection includes artifacts from Near Eastern, Greek, Roman, and Islamic cultures. In addition to the permanent collection, new discoveries and other thematic exhibits are displayed on a temporary basis. Finds uncovered in various locations in Jerusalem include several inscriptions, such as a Greek dedicatory plaque from the first-century B.C.E. Theodotos synagogue and a first-century Greek panel forbidding gentiles from entering the Temple.⁷² Additional artifacts from the first century include several carved limestone ossuaries, a heel bone with an iron nail used for crucifixion still embedded in it, and fine pottery and stoneware from domestic contexts.⁷³ Byzantine finds include lead sarcophagi decorated with crosses, censers, and pilgrim's flasks.⁷⁴ The highlights of the local Islamic collection include a *mihrab* (a prayer niche, usually in mosques, indicating the direction of prayer toward Mecca) featured on a ninth- to tenth-century mosaic from Ramla, a Fatimid jewelry hoard from Caesarea, and a bronze hoard from Tiberias dating to the same period.⁷⁵ Relatively few artifacts from Jerusalem are displayed, all of which are minor-art objects. These include, two silver and gold jewelry assemblages from the Fatimid period and glass sprinklers and bowls from the Mamluk period.⁷⁶ Most of the Islamic artifacts featured in the galleries, however, come from regions outside Israel. This limited repertoire of local finds may be the result of earlier tendencies to discard finds and layers from early and late Islamic cultures. The inclusion of

artifacts from other countries in the region may reflect the desire to compensate for this shortcoming in the recent reinstallation of the archaeological wing.

Other popular permanent exhibitions of ancient art at the Israel Museum are located in a separate building. These include the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Aleppo Codes, and other rare biblical manuscripts, which are housed in the Shrine of the Book. Furthermore, a 1:50 scale model of Jerusalem in the Second Temple period, originally constructed on the grounds of Jerusalem's Holyland Hotel, where it was displayed until 2006, can now be visited in the outdoor garden section of the Israel Museum. It replicates the city's topography and architectural features as they appeared prior to the destruction by the Romans in 70 C.E.

The museum also features temporary exhibits. The nine-month show on Herod the Great, the Jewish proxy monarch who ruled Jerusalem in the first century B.C.E., opened in February of 2013. It represented the museum's largest and most expensive archaeological project to date. The inclusion of numerous significant artifacts illegally removed from various West Bank locations, featured in Israel's national museum, brought forth severe criticism.⁷⁷ The Israel Museum thus serves both as a showcase for the region's multifaceted cultural makeup and no less as a hub for politically audacious exhibitions.

Adjacent to the Israel Museum, but built some thirty years later, stands the Bible Lands Museum, which opened its doors to the public in 1992.⁷⁸ The artifacts were donated by Batya and Elie Borowski, renowned collectors of ancient art who accumulated the collection over more than half a century and were recently implicated in the illicit trade of antiquities.⁷⁹ The permanent holdings encompass a vast array of ancient objects, revealing the numerous cultures of the ancient Near East from the "from the dawn of civilization through the roots of monotheism and early Christianity."⁸⁰ Scale models of ancient sites in Jerusalem, a Mesopotamian ziggurat, and Egyptian pyramids enhance the presentation. The galleries are organized chronologically, illustrating the technological and cultural changes that took place in lands mentioned in the Bible: from Egypt eastward across the Fertile Crescent to Afghanistan, and from Nubia northward to the Caucasian mountains. "The Biblical quotations throughout the galleries are intended to place the Biblical text into its historical context, thereby adding another dimension to our understanding of the world of the Bible."⁸¹ Some of the themes featured in the temporary exhibits go beyond the biblical world and incorporate topics and objects from the Far East as well as classical Greece and Rome.

There is certain ambiguity in the translations of the name of the museum, all featured prominently on the entrance facade: the Bible Lands Museum in English, *Museon ha Mikrah* in Hebrew, and *Museon ha Ketub* in Arabic. Only the English version reflects the range of objects presented in its galleries, addressing the vast scope of the Judeo-Christian heritage. Both the Hebrew and the Arabic versions suggest that the museum features artifacts related to the ancient scriptures. The

Hebrew *Museon ha Mikrah* may be understood as focusing on the Hebrew Bible alone; the Arabic *Museon ha Ketub*, on themes related to the people of the books, that is, the three monotheistic religions. Other than in a small thematic exhibition called “The Three Faces of Monotheism,” however, no objects pertaining to Islam are featured in the museum displays.⁸²

The most recently established institution of significance is the Tower of David Museum, dedicated to the history of the city. Also known as the Jerusalem Citadel, it is located near Jaffa Gate, at a meeting point between the Old City and the New City. Apart from the Islamic Museum on the Haram al-Sharif, it is the only permanent exhibition housed in a historic building and thus represents an ideal setting for a history museum. The complex served as a citadel throughout most of its history, beginning in the Ayyubid period, with changes and additions made during the Crusader, Mamluk, and Ottoman eras. Among the most striking features are the Crusader moat surrounding the fortress and the Ottoman minaret, visible from afar and lending the whole a distinct shape that stands out as visitors approach the Old City from the east and the south (see figure 2). After initial renovations during the British Mandate period, the medieval citadel first served as a cultural center and then, from the late 1930s until 1948, as the Palestine Folk Museum. It was not until 1989 that the Tower of David Museum was opened to the public.⁸³ Unlike the city’s publicly displayed archaeological collections, this museum never aspired to feature original artifacts. Instead, it uses a historic monument from the medieval and late Islamic periods—the building it is in—as the setting for illustrating Jerusalem’s past in chronological order. Eight exhibition halls, each dedicated to a different period, are organized around an archaeological garden located in the courtyard of the medieval fortress (see figure 21). Replicas, models, reconstructions, dioramas, holograms, photographs, drawings, and audio and video recordings are used to recount the narrative.

The building in which the museum is housed is a significant documentation of the city’s Islamic presence throughout the Ayyubid, Mamluk, and Ottoman periods, a timespan covering some seven hundred years, in addition to nearly hundred and fifty years of Christian rule during the Crusader period. But the structural and historical development of the building is barely documented in the museum. Other than a small-scale model on top of the roof, representing a palimpsest of Jerusalem, none of the original architectural features, details, and artifacts is adequately labeled. Those include Crusader-period capitals in the entrance hall, inscriptions from the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods, as well as the Ayyubid-period *mihrab* and Ottoman-period *minbar*. The labeling in the courtyard, featuring archaeological remains from the Iron Age through the Ottoman period, is kept to a minimum and fails to document the city’s historical development on the very ground of the museum.⁸⁴



FIGURE 21. Tower of David Museum courtyard. Photo by Katharina Galor.

The exhibit halls, which explicitly highlight the Jewish and Israeli heritage of the city, represent another curatorial decision that has invited criticism.⁸⁵ Though all major historical periods are featured, the primary focus is on events relevant to the Israelite and later Jewish presence in the city. Some of the periods represented are named according to Jewish textual sources (such as the First Temple, the Second Temple, and the Hasmonean periods), rather than conventional, neutral terminology. The last room is entirely devoted to Israel's capture of East Jerusalem, celebrating the achievement of a "united Jerusalem" under Israeli rule, with no attempt to present the Palestinian and international perspective of an occupied city.

The spatial organization and curatorial choices of the exhibition display direct the visitor's attention toward an illustrated history rather than the actual building, which merely serves as an aesthetically pleasing and atmospheric background. In the words of the museum's chief curator: "It is important to recognize that there is no such thing as an objective presentation. All presentations are based on interpretive choices, and these choices combine to tell a story. It is up to the presentation professional, in consultation with other specialists, to select which particular story will be told."⁸⁶

And the stories told, not only in the Tower of David Museum, but in most museums throughout the city of Jerusalem, perhaps with the sole exception of the Islamic Museum of the Haram al-Sharif, seem to consistently reflect the primary interest in the Jewish narrative. The packaging, however, is increasingly sophisticated, multifaceted, and convincing.

THE CITY—A LIVING MUSEUM

The desire to preserve and display Jerusalem's archaeological heritage has always been linked to the colonial and nationalistic aspirations of fostering specific cultural and religious associations with the city and its larger region. The legal and administrative commitment to enhance the natural, built, and designed environment by projecting a certain narrative has been consistent, and has become increasingly efficient and professional, beginning with the British and acquiring new levels of excellence under Israeli rule. The first steps of increasing awareness of cultural heritage were taken during the British Mandate period, focused on the Historic Basin, speckled with monuments signaling the city's monotheistic traditions. These early initiatives were enhanced by the display of movable artifacts in Jerusalem's first museums. After a certain stagnation under Jordanian rule, the preservation and display of the city's visual and material legacies received increased attention under Israeli rule. Radical change occurred first upon Israel's capture of East Jerusalem, with the establishment of extensive archaeological and national parks, in particular in the occupied sectors of East Jerusalem and the display of artifacts in several new museums in all sectors of the city. Since the mid-1990s, this change established itself more solidly, seen in improved standards of Israeli policies, redefining rules and conventions of Jerusalem's cultural preservation and display modules. Both in the context of open-air and underground displays of archaeological sites and monuments, as well as in museum settings, conservation methods and display features have made significant progress. In recent years, the level of curatorial achievements can be compared to preservation and display modes used in major Western capitals, including Rome, London, and Paris. Thematically, however, as from the beginning of Israeli rule, presentations continue to highlight the Jewish and Israeli narrative of Jerusalem, which tend to be embedded in a seemingly multicultural setting, featuring periods that are also relevant for people of other faiths and nationalities. Thus, the general staging of antiquities over the past two decades has been committed to Zionist aspirations but is packaged in a progressively more sophisticated manner.

Exposing, presenting, and collecting antiquities that emphasize Jerusalem's Jewish legacy has clearly served the Israeli government as a most efficient means to strengthen its historical ties with the city, as well as to develop and maintain East Jerusalem and West Jerusalem as a unit. This focus on the Jewish narrative has been to the detriment of both the Christian and the Islamic heritage. In spite of financial support from UNESCO and several Arab countries, Palestinian preservation and display efforts have been modest compared to Israel's initiatives. Against the background of the existential struggle for survival and nationalist propaganda, the presentation of the city's archaeological heritage is not seen as a priority among Palestinians. Beyond some limited restoration projects of Ayyubid, Mamluk, and Ottoman buildings in the Old City's Christian and Muslim quarters—which are

aimed at improving housing and living conditions for its Palestinian residents rather than educating and attracting visitors or making an explicit statement of cultural heritage and nationalism—very little investment is made in the preservation and display of Christian and Islamic sites, monuments, and artifacts.

When the Jewish archaeologists gathered in 1947 to discuss the collection of the PAM, their intent was to maintain the unity of its holdings and to use its contents for Jewish interests. The future of the museum itself did not play out as planned. The vision of those archaeologists found expression in a far more ambitious project. The entire city, not just merely the museum, was united and transformed into a living and thriving exhibition of Jewish antiquities, constantly expanding both horizontally and vertically, below and above the surface.