

**The New Jewish Underground: Occupation, Excavation, and Neoliberalism in East**

**Jerusalem**

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April 1, 2019

The City of David archaeological park in Silwan, East Jerusalem, is a political and spatial microcosm of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. A thriving tourist destination in a densely-populated Palestinian neighborhood on occupied territory, the site uses extensive multilingual signage to focus exclusively on ancient Jewish history, threading its way over- and underground in an effort to connect the biblical dots scattered throughout the area. The streets outside and surrounding the City of David park provide ample evidence of the broader tensions it encapsulates: security cameras line the sidewalks; private security vehicles are dotted along the road; and the area opposite the entrance to the park is a building site—formerly a complex built by local Palestinian residents that included a community center, cafe, and playground, all of which was demolished in 2012 in order to make way for an expanded visitor center for the City of David.<sup>1</sup> Once inside the park, however, all evidence of the surrounding Palestinian neighborhood disappears. Alongside the City of David’s old-new crossover of a biblical diorama and well-equipped tourist site, then, a third intended impression is cultivated, this time by omission: that of a site which is, and always has been, exclusively Jewish.

There is, however, more than just nationalism, archaeology, and occupation in East Jerusalem at work in the City of David. Despite being a national heritage site the park has, since the early 2000s, been privately run by Elad, a non-governmental organization with an explicit political goal of settling Jews in East Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> Since its founding in the mid-1980s, the group has received both public and private funding for its various activities in

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<sup>1</sup> Nir Hasson, “Israel Approves New East Jerusalem Visitors' Compound, Razes Palestinian Community Center,” *Haaretz*, February 13, 2012. <https://www.haaretz.com/1.5185218>.

<sup>2</sup> Certificate of Non-Profit Registration for El Ir David, issued by the Ministry of the Interior [in Hebrew], September 8, 1986, [http://www.guidestar.org.il/vf\\_view\\_file?guid=fef8f93f1982ffa-0696c42a9bd82e76-9b2a14d594e1d0c3c134efaa549f564c2d-ca4595667952be5b77d273d7d1df8a-5f3d0b44011e44b5-37634852c3b1c4848](http://www.guidestar.org.il/vf_view_file?guid=fef8f93f1982ffa-0696c42a9bd82e76-9b2a14d594e1d0c3c134efaa549f564c2d-ca4595667952be5b77d273d7d1df8a-5f3d0b44011e44b5-37634852c3b1c4848).

pursuit of this goal. Prior to taking over the City of David, which it has helped turn into one of Jerusalem's prime tourist destinations, Elad focused on settling in Silwan by evicting Palestinians from their homes, either by forcibly taking over their houses, or by arranging deed transfers and purchases, often in murky circumstances.

The City of David's hybrid function<sup>3</sup>—as a site of ancient national heritage, a private profit-making initiative, and a means of wresting control over and settling occupied territory—presents an opportunity to look at how economic factors, and in particular neoliberalism, have affected the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Several key questions emerge when we reinsert a modern economic doctrine into the history of a modern instance of settler colonialism, and examine how archaeology became entangled in those threads: Firstly, how and why did an archaeological site on occupied territory become privatized, and whose interests did such a move serve? Secondly, what was the relationship between neoliberalism, nationalism, and settlement during this process? Thirdly, why was archaeology particularly vulnerable to being caught in the crosshairs of these forces? And, finally, what does the evolving status quo at the City of David over the past few decades tell us about the wider Israeli-Palestinian conflict?

This paper will address these questions by assessing the tripartite relationship between nationalism, the economy, and the occupation as it played out in East Jerusalem in the final third of the twentieth century. In particular, it will propose neoliberalism as an understudied force in the evolution and endurance of the Israeli occupation, and in Israeli right-wing nationalism, using the changing status quo at the City of David as a case study. For the purposes of this paper, neoliberalism is to be understood as a politico-economic doctrine, birthed in the West at the end of the 1970s, that enacts privatization, deregulation, budget

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<sup>3</sup> Chaim Noy, "The Political Ends of Tourism: Voices and Narratives of Silwan/the City of David in East Jerusalem," in *The Critical Turn in Tourism Studies: Creating an Academy of Hope*, eds. Irena Ateljevic, Nigel Morgan, and Annette Pritchard (New York: Routledge, 2011), 31.

cuts, shrinking of the public sector, and globalization. The proposed rationale for these practices is to provide the individual with maximum opportunities to thrive by ensuring trade and market freedoms along with private property rights.<sup>4</sup> In practice, however, neoliberalism also serves to “inoculate capitalism against the threat of democracy...[and] reorder the world after empire as a space of competing states in which borders fulfill a necessary function.”<sup>5</sup> As we will see, these various facets of neoliberalism—along with the security and legal apparatuses the state uses to enforce them—are highly pertinent to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including to Elad’s takeover at the City of David. Using this political and economic reading of neoliberalism, then, I take the mid-1980s as a turning point which introduced neoliberalism to Israel at the end of a turbulent long decade that began with the 1973 Yom Kippur War. The rest of the 1970s witnessed economic instability; the birth of the settler movement; the election of Israel’s first right-wing government; the 1978 Camp David Accords; and the subsequent mobilization of Israel’s radical settler right in response to the looming loss of territory. These ructions came to a head in the mid-1980s when, within the space of a year, Israeli society was shaken by numerous dramatic episodes involving the Jewish radical right, and by the government’s formal adoption, in 1985, of capitalism and neoliberalism through the Emergency Economic Stabilization Plan.<sup>6</sup> As this essay will argue, the ascendance of ultra-nationalism at the same time as neoliberalism was not a contradiction or even an accident, but rather the result of deeply-entrenched structural dynamics in Israel’s political and economic spheres.

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<sup>4</sup> David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 2.

<sup>5</sup> Quinn Slobodian, *Globalists: The End of Empire and the Birth of Neoliberalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018), 2.

<sup>6</sup> Maariv, July 1, 1985 [in Hebrew].

This is, perhaps, a counterintuitive reading at both the universal and the particular level: one of the core tenets of neoliberal doctrine is, supposedly, a form of border-flattening globalism that undermines the insularity and isolationism that nationalism encourages. Moreover, Israel has typically been left out of scholarly investigations into neoliberal history, politics, and practice,<sup>7</sup> not least because of the country's self-identified socialist roots.<sup>8</sup> Yet, as numerous scholars have argued, socialism was always a secondary consideration to Jewish nationalism and nation-building, and the government largely followed market principles during the state's first decades.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, while Israel's adoption of neoliberalism was indeed a drastic change in policy, it was not as abrupt as it seemed; moreover, the subordination of economic policy-making to nationalist prerogatives was already an established precedent. And indeed, the government's neoliberal policies never fully extended to the occupied territories, where the settlement industry—the largest-ever public project undertaken by the state—has, since its beginnings, been underwritten by welfare initiatives and massive subsidization.<sup>10</sup> The state's adoption of a Western, liberalizing economic model was thus circumscribed, yet—as the Israeli political economist Arie Krampf has argued—the economic independence won by Israel's embrace of neoliberalism served to insulate it from

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<sup>7</sup> John L. Campbell, "Israel, Neoliberalism, and Comparative Political Economy," in *Neoliberalism as a State Project: Changing the Political Economy of Israel*, eds. Asa Maron and Michael Shalev (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2017), vii.

<sup>8</sup> Arie Krampf, *The Israeli Path to Neoliberalism: The State, Continuity, and Change* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2018), 4.

<sup>9</sup> Michael Shalev, "Have globalization and liberalization 'normalized' Israel's political economy?" *Israel Affairs* 5, no. 2-3 (April 2007), 123; Zeev Sternhell, *The Founding Myths of Israel: Nationalism, Socialism, and the Making of the Jewish State* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 116.

<sup>10</sup> Shlomo Swirski and Noga Dagan-Buzaglo, "The Occupation: Who Pays the Price?" *The Adva Center*, June 2017, 9.

outside pressure to moderate its national security policies.<sup>11</sup> This latitude to disregard international law and opinion extended into the realm of archaeology: the very first excavations conducted in the occupied territories following their capture in 1967 contravened the Hague Convention on cultural property in conflict zones, as have all subsequent digs in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.<sup>12</sup> At the same time, the hollowing out of public sector budgets in the wake of the 1985 plan left archaeological excavations increasingly underfunded and subject to the infiltration of private financing attached to specific donor interests. In the case of the City of David digs, these donations overwhelmingly came from American Jewish philanthropists who shared the religious-nationalist objectives of the East Jerusalem-based settlers who would take control of the archaeological park. That these donors' interests often coincided with those of the Israeli government—or, at least, specific actors within it—only underscores the degree to which neoliberal policies can create the space for right-wing nationalism to thrive. The evolving situation at the City of David in the 1980s and 1990s follows this model.

The Israeli case is, ultimately, proof that “globalism without globalization”<sup>13</sup> is eminently possible—and the shifting status of the City of David park is an apt example of this phenomenon. Thanks to the political and economic developments of the 1980s and 1990s, the park would become a settlement, a privatized national heritage site, and an international tourist destination on one of the most explosively-contested plots of land in the

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<sup>11</sup> Krampf, *Israeli Path to Neoliberalism*, 223.

<sup>12</sup> United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, “Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict with Regulations for the Execution of the Convention 1954,” [http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=13637&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13637&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html).

<sup>13</sup> Asher Schechter, “Illiberal Neoliberalism,” *The Tel Aviv Review of Books*, December 2018, <http://www.tarb.co.il/illiberal-neoliberalism/>.

world. That it did so thanks to the intervention of a local organization largely funded from abroad in order to pursue local, nationalistic goals, further illustrates the symbiosis between neoliberalism and right-wing nationalism. The story of the City of David archaeological park in the last third of the twentieth century is, then, an opportunity to reinsert the economy into the existing narratives about the strengthening of Israeli right-wing nationalism and the occupation, at the same time as reinserting Israel into the broader narrative of the so-called “age of neoliberalism.”

## Archaeology and the negation of the diaspora

The ties between archaeology and nationalism are well-established, both as a general principle and in the specific case of Israel-Palestine.<sup>14</sup> There is a substantial literature on the political trajectory of archaeology before and after the state’s establishment, from its use to expand Israeli territorial control to its contribution to myth-making, place-making, and the curation of Israeli collective memory.<sup>15</sup> The role of religion in archaeological excavation in the region, from the British Mandate era to the present day, has also been well-explored.<sup>16</sup> Nonetheless, it is worth briefly reviewing the historical contours of politics and archaeology in Israel-Palestine in general, and in East Jerusalem in particular, in order to consider how

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<sup>14</sup> See: Nadia Abu El-Haj, *Facts on the Ground: Archaeological Practice and Territorial Self-Fashioning in Israeli Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

<sup>15</sup> See: Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

<sup>16</sup> See: Neil Asher Silberman, “If I Forget Thee, O Jerusalem: Archaeology, Religious Commemoration and Nationalism in a Disputed City, 1801-2001,” *Nations and Nationalism* 7, no. 4 (2001): 487-504; Michael Feige, “Recovering Authenticity: West-Bank Settlers and the Second Stage of National Archaeology,” in *Selective Remembrances: Archaeology in the Construction, Commemoration, and Consecration of National Pasts*, eds. Philip L. Kohl, Mara Kozelsky, and Nachman Ben-Yehuda, 277-298. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.

excavations contributed to the development of a useable past in Israel—one that Elad would eventually monetize and instrumentalize in service of its political goals.

The Israel Department of Antiquities and Museums (IDAM) was established in July 1948, and followed the guidelines and processes of the British Mandate Department of Antiquities Ordinances.<sup>17</sup> Israeli archaeologists in this period were heavily influenced by nationalist imperatives, and findings related to Islamic history tended to be overlooked in favor of antiquities dated to the biblical period.<sup>18</sup> Equally, Jewish citizens used archaeology as a means of searching for a national identity, while the state viewed it as a tool for integrating disparate immigrant communities into a fledgling society with an ostensibly shared culture. During this foundational period, archaeology played a functional role in underscoring Zionism's teleological narrative of exile-diaspora-return: the narrow focus of the excavations served to emphasize the continuity between the biblical age and the modern State of Israel, thus contributing to the wider nationalist project of negating the exile and liquidating the diaspora. Decades later, Elad's cultivation of a pre-exilic environment in the City of David park would play exactly the same role—albeit with far more explicit territorial ambitions in mind.

Israel's capture of East Jerusalem in the 1967 Six-Day War, and the renewed proximity to ancient Jewish history, further politicized the country's archaeological scene. Within two months of the occupation commencing, Israel passed the Protection of Holy

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<sup>17</sup> Katharina Galor, *Finding Jerusalem: Archaeology Between Science and Ideology* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017), 38.

<sup>18</sup> Raz Kletter, *Just Past? The Making of Israeli Archaeology* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 315.



Places Law<sup>19</sup> and declared the entire Old City an antiquities site.<sup>20</sup> During the same period, then-Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek struck an agreement with the ultra-Orthodox factions in the government, giving the Ministry of Religious Affairs responsibility for excavations along the Western Wall.<sup>21</sup> The ministry began digging under the wall in 1969 without oversight from professional archaeologists, eventually opening a new tourist site, the Western Wall Tunnels, in the early 1980s.<sup>22</sup>

Full Israeli excavations in the Old City commenced in 1968.<sup>23</sup> Centrally administered and funded by the government, archaeology was relatively insulated from the interests of private agents during this period. However, Kollek's decision regarding the Western Wall excavations was an early indicator of archaeology's vulnerability to exploitation by actors pursuing national, religious, and economic goals. Moreover, the Western Wall Tunnels would, in an eventuality Kollek could not possibly have predicted, end up modeling the potent impact of neoliberalism combined with right-wing nationalism on the status quo in Jerusalem—and went on to serve as a blueprint for Elad's takeover of the City of David. Before then, however, would come a long decade that irrevocably altered Israel's political and socioeconomic landscape.

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<sup>19</sup> Protection of Holy Places Law 5727 (1967), <https://www.knesset.gov.il/laws/special/eng/Holy-Places.htm>.

<sup>20</sup> Jon Seligman, "The Departments of Antiquities and the Israel Antiquities Authority (1918–2006): The Jerusalem Experience," in *Unearthing Jerusalem: 150 Years of Archaeological Research in the Holy City*, eds. Katharina Galor and Gideon Avni (Winona Lake, In.: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 135.

<sup>21</sup> Raphael Greenberg, "Extreme Exposure: Archaeology in Jerusalem 1967-2007," *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites* 11, no. 3-4 (2009), 267.

<sup>22</sup> Emek Shaveh, *Selectively Sacred: Holy Sites in Jerusalem and its Environs* (Jerusalem: Emek Shaveh, 2016), 8-9.

<sup>23</sup> Greenberg, "Extreme Exposure," 262-67.

## State of Emergency: 1973-1985

### The national picture

In the summer of 1985, two watershed events occurred within ten days of each other that had shared roots in the long-running turbulence instigated by the 1973 Yom Kippur War. On July 1, the Israeli government passed the Emergency Economic Stabilization Plan, which revolutionized the country's socioeconomic identity and policies. The following week, the Jerusalem district court convicted eleven members of a Jewish terrorist organization of murder, violence against Arabs, and numerous other offenses.<sup>24</sup> Though seemingly disparate events, each reflected the extent of the various crises that had been set in motion following the surprise attack by the Syrian and Egyptian armies that marked the start of the 1973 war. The intelligence failures that led to the attack; the ease with which the invading forces swept into the Golan Heights and the Sinai; and the loss of life by the end of the war shook Israelis' faith in their government and their military leaders, and profoundly damaged the national psyche.<sup>25</sup>

The trauma of the war contributed significantly to the 1977 election of Israel's first right-wing prime minister, Menachem Begin.<sup>26</sup> There were other elements to his victory: a veteran political operative, he cannily appealed to Mizrahi Jews by highlighting the responsibility of Israel's Ashkenazi-socialist hegemony for their economic woes. Promising the rejuvenation of the dilapidated development towns that Mizrahim had largely been relegated to since their arrival during the early years of the state, Begin inspired what became

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<sup>24</sup> Thomas L. Friedman, "Jewish Settlers Are Convicted in Terror Cases," *New York Times*, July 11, 1985.

<sup>25</sup> Ephraim Torgovnik, "A Movement for Change in a Stable System," in *The Elections in Israel—1977*, ed. Asher Arian (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Academic Press, 1980), 76.

<sup>26</sup> Itzhak Galnoor, "Transformations in the Israeli Political System Since the Yom Kippur War," in *The Elections in Israel—1977*, ed. Asher Arian (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Academic Press, 1980), 122-3.

known as “the Ballot Rebellion” at the 1977 national elections.<sup>27</sup> This savvy campaign worked in tandem with the sense that the Labor government had brought Israel to the brink of catastrophe in the 1973 war, leading Begin to finally break the stranglehold of the socialist parties on the levers of power. Yet his election at the head of the Likud brought additional economic upheaval to the country, and inflation rates—which had already skyrocketed as a result of the war<sup>28</sup>—further soared owing to the government’s embrace of economic liberalization.<sup>29</sup> The Likud’s monetary policies brought an already teetering Israeli economy to the precipice and, in 1985, the Likud-Labor national unity government headed by Shimon Peres passed the Economic Emergency Stabilization Plan, backed by U.S. and international economic bodies. Accordingly, national budgets in the second half of the 1980s emphasized national deficit reduction by, *inter alia*, reducing the public sector,<sup>30</sup> privatizing government activities,<sup>31</sup> freezing government hiring,<sup>32</sup> and lifting restrictions on trade.<sup>33</sup> The path of a liberalizing economy paired with increasingly illiberal politics—from which the Israeli government would rarely stray—had been laid out.

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<sup>27</sup> Sami Shalom Chetrit, *Intra-Jewish Conflict in Israel: White Jews, Black Jews* (Oxon: Routledge, 2010), 141-2.

<sup>28</sup> Michel Strawczynski and Joseph Zeira, “Reducing the Relative Size of Government in Israel after 1985,” in *The Israeli Economy, 1985-1998: From Government Intervention to Market Economics*, ed. Avi Ben-Bassat (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2002), 64.

<sup>29</sup> Uri Ram, *The Globalization of Israel: McWorld in Tel Aviv, Jihad in Jerusalem* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 53.

<sup>30</sup> Lev Grinberg, “Paving the Way to Neoliberalism: The Self-Destruction of the Zionist Labor Movement,” in *Neoliberalism as a State Project*, 38.

<sup>31</sup> Strawczynski and Zeira, “Reducing the Relative Size of Government,” 66.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>33</sup> Ministry of Finance, “State Budget 1988” [in Hebrew], file ISA-mof-InternationalAffairs-000542p, Israel State Archives.

As Israel's economic identity was on the way to being rewritten, the settlement project also took on new life in the wake of the Likud's 1977 triumph, albeit for deeply contradictory reasons. Begin, a staunch and vocal supporter of the settlers, had campaigned on a promise to invest in the settlements as well as in the periphery, and subsequently prioritized the funding of settlement-building.<sup>34</sup> Yet even as the settlement project received official backing from the prime minister, its leading ideologues—drawn primarily from the Ashkenazi religious-Zionist elite—began to view the government as a threat to their vision for a Greater Israel. Already following the Yom Kippur War, the government's partial withdrawal from the Syrian territory it captured during the Six-Day War led to the formation in 1974 of Gush Emunim, an extra-parliamentary settler group that would go on to have considerable influence on government policy.<sup>35</sup> Now, the Camp David Accords—heavily facilitated by the post-1973 restoration of U.S.-Egypt diplomatic ties that had been severed in 1967<sup>36</sup>—brought fresh territorial compromises. Following the return of the Sinai to Egypt in exchange for peace, and the subsequent evacuation of the Yamit settlement, a cadre of Gush Emunim leaders decided to take even more drastic action.<sup>37</sup> Forming a new group, the Jewish Underground, in 1979, around two dozen Gush members began carrying out terrorist attacks against Palestinian targets, while simultaneously plotting to blow up the Dome of the Rock

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<sup>34</sup> Michael Feige, *Settling in the Hearts: Jewish Fundamentalism in the Occupied Territories* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 2009), 24.

<sup>35</sup> Ian Lustick, *For the Land and the Lord: Jewish Fundamentalism in Israel* (New York, NY: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1988), 45.

<sup>36</sup> Krampf, *Israeli Path to Neoliberalism*, 192.

<sup>37</sup> Colin Shindler, *The Rise of the Israeli Right: From Odessa to Hebron* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 235.

and the Al-Aqsa Mosque in order to try and derail the peace deal with Egypt and avoid the loss of the Sinai.<sup>38</sup>

Israel's internal security services arrested the group in April 1984, before it could carry out its final plan. Nonetheless, the Jewish Underground enjoyed considerable political support: calls for their early release began from the moment of their conviction, and repeated presidential pardons saw every imprisoned member of the underground set free within a few years of their conviction.<sup>39</sup> This affair heralded several dynamics that would prove significant for the next phase of our story, and which resulted, directly or indirectly, from Begin's election in 1977: the extent to which the Israeli government would appease radical right-wing settlers, even as it professed to oppose their methods; the drastic consequences of the government emboldening settlers on the one hand, and frustrating their efforts on the other; and the role that Jerusalem's volatility would play in right-wing settlers' efforts to upend the political status quo.

One of these settlers, David Beeri, was a contemporary of the Jewish Underground who was, himself, briefly detained by the security services after refusing to provide its officers with names of the group's members.<sup>40</sup> The year after his peers were jailed, Beeri established Elad, through which he and other religious-Zionist settlers would, like the Jewish Underground, attempt to derail diplomatic processes that threatened territorial losses. Elad's methods focused more on structural violence than interpersonal violence, however: a sign not only of the increasing overlap between the state's political objectives and their own, but also

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<sup>38</sup> Robert I. Friedman, *Zealots for Zion: Inside Israel's West Bank Settlement Movement* (New York, NY: Random House, Inc., 1992), 128.

<sup>39</sup> Associated Press, "3 Israeli Terrorists Are Released In 4th Reduction of Their Terms," December 27, 1990.

<sup>40</sup> Roi Yanovsky, Eti Abramov, and Tamar Trabelsi-Hadad, "The Man Who Brought the City of David Back to Life" [in Hebrew], *Yedioth Ahronoth*, March 17, 2017.

of the space opened up by neoliberal policies, into which Elad could bring its considerable financial resources. By the time the organization had identified archaeology as its next front for establishing physical presence in East Jerusalem, budget cuts and privatization had left the City of David—and archaeology in Jerusalem more broadly—vulnerable to the highest bidder.

### **Jerusalem**

Jerusalem was profoundly altered as an urban, political, and legal space by this mass of changes between 1973 and 1985, while also undergoing numerous local processes that permanently altered the face of the city. In 1974, the Jerusalem Municipality established the Jerusalem Walls National Park, effectively outlawing construction in an urban environment which included densely-populated Palestinian neighborhoods, most notably Silwan.<sup>41</sup> The original planning document which set out the park limits, approved by the city in 1970, stated that it would serve to safeguard the area's "national-historical, religious, traditional, archaeological, architectural, and...landscape values."<sup>42</sup> In 1976, the municipality passed a further local plan that designated Wadi Hilweh/the City of David as a "special open area,"<sup>43</sup> making explicit the ban on residential construction in the neighborhood. These building restrictions would, in time, play a considerable role in dictating the means by which Jewish settlers attempted to establish themselves in East Jerusalem's Palestinian neighborhoods.

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<sup>41</sup> Israel Lands Authority, "Local Master Plan no. 6" [in Hebrew], April 1969, <http://apps.land.gov.il/IturTabotData/takanonim/jerus/1004899.pdf>.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Israel Lands Authority, "Local Master Plan no. 9" [in Hebrew], February 1976, <http://apps.land.gov.il/IturTabotData/takanonim/jerus/1008681.pdf>.

The national park declarations were not motivated by cultural and environmental concerns alone. As the anthropologist Joel Bauman argues, such ‘greening’ of occupied territory contributed to a broader process of Palestinian displacement, “from actual physical expropriation of land...to excavating under them and removing the layers of their history.”<sup>44</sup> Indeed, the 1970 plan was passed in conjunction with expropriation orders that confiscated 12,280 dunams of land in East Jerusalem, around 10,000 of which belonged to Palestinians.<sup>45</sup> The purpose of these expropriations was two-fold: to set aside land to build Jewish settlements in East Jerusalem, and to prevent Palestinian construction.<sup>46</sup> These land confiscations, which had begun in the 1960s and continued until the 1980s, formed the backbone of Jewish settlement in East Jerusalem by providing thousands of dunams of open land for construction. The areas affected by the declaration of the Jerusalem Walls National Park, including Wadi Hilweh/the City of David, however, were already either densely built-up or newly subject to building restrictions, meaning that settlers’ Judaization of the area would have to take place by other means—whether through takeovers of existing Palestinian homes, or archaeological exploration.

The first Israeli archaeological dig at the City of David began in July 1978.<sup>47</sup> The excavation had been prompted by South African Jewish industrialist and philanthropist

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<sup>44</sup> Joel Bauman, “Tourism, the Ideology of Design, and the Nationalized Past in Zippori/Sepphoris, an Israeli National Park,” in *Marketing Heritage: Archaeology and the Consumption of the Past*, eds. Yorke Rowan and Uzi Baram (Walnut Creek, Ca.: AltaMira Press, 2004), 209.

<sup>45</sup> Yifat Holzman-Gazit, *Land Expropriation in Israel: Law, Culture, and Society* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2016), 146.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Yigal Shiloh and Mendel Kaplan, “Digging in the City of David,” *Biblical Archaeology Review* V, no. 4 (July/August 1979), 40.

Mendel Kaplan's visit to Jerusalem in 1977; shocked at the "cesspool and rubbish heap"<sup>48</sup> that he found at the site, he called Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek to propose a plan for resuscitating "a symbol of our beginnings."<sup>49</sup> Following Kollek's enthusiastic intervention, excavations commenced within a year, funded by Kaplan and other South African Jewish donors, and directed by Israeli archaeologist Yigal Shiloh. Significantly, this dig foreshadowed the later trend of donor-driven projects that would take hold of archaeology in East Jerusalem in the 1990s: writing just before the excavation commenced, Kaplan noted the need to take the considerations of "financial sponsors"<sup>50</sup> into account. And, in another preview of a dynamic that would fully establish itself with the appearance of Elad on the scene, Kaplan and Shiloh's first dispatch from the excavation discusses in detail all their deliberations around Wadi Hilweh's land, urban space, and topography without once mentioning the area's Palestinian inhabitants. ("People still live there,"<sup>51</sup> they wrote, without clarifying who those people were.)

The City of David dig was, incidentally, the first excavation initiated under the new Antiquities Law, which passed in February 1978 after having been initially tabled in 1976.<sup>52</sup> The law, which replaced the existing British Mandate legislation, was proposed by Labor Zionist Aharon Yadlin, who as minister for education and culture was responsible for archaeology. During the bill's first reading, Yadlin cited archaeology's role in tying Jewish

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<sup>48</sup> Mendel Kaplan, "Teddy Kollek, in Memoriam," *Eretz-Israel: Archaeological, Historical, and Geographical Studies* 28 (2007), xi.

<sup>49</sup> Mendel Kaplan, "Ancient City of David to Be Re-excavated," *Biblical Archaeology Review* IV, no. 1 (March 1978), 42.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>51</sup> Shiloh and Kaplan, "Digging in the City of David," 39.

<sup>52</sup> Antiquities Law 5738 (1978), <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/pressroom/1998/pages/antiquities%20law-%201978.aspx>.



history, heritage, and people to the land of Israel, and noted the importance of recent excavations in and around Jerusalem's Old City. Significantly, Yadlin proposed extending the cut-off date for classifying (and thus protecting) archaeological finds as antiquities, from 1700 to 1800. This extension, Yadlin argued, would allow for the inclusion of "important sites from the Ottoman period."<sup>53</sup> Pinchas Scheinman, of the National Religious Party, rejected this amendment, and the law eventually passed with the cut-off date unchanged—leaving over two centuries of history that predated the Jewish return to the land of Israel unprotected.

A few years after this burst of activity, several government maneuvers opened the door for ideological settlers to begin changing facts on the ground in East Jerusalem. These changes marked the start of the state's facilitation of private initiatives to settle Jews in Palestinian East Jerusalem, and the end of Teddy Kollek's longstanding efforts to keep Jewish and Palestinian Jerusalemites in separate neighborhoods.<sup>54</sup> In July 1980, Israel implicitly made formal its annexation of the city's east with the passage of the Basic Law: Jerusalem, Capital of Israel.<sup>55</sup> Almost exactly a year later, the Ministry of Religious Affairs adopted an addendum to the 1967 Protection of Holy Places Law that designated as a Jewish holy site not only the Western Wall and its adjoining plaza, but also "any overground or underground building or passageway which is accessed via the plaza"<sup>56</sup>—helping establish a form of subterranean Israeli jurisdiction. And, in 1982, Minister of Industry, Trade, and Labor Ariel

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<sup>53</sup> Knesset Plenum, "First Reading of the Antiquities Law," 323rd meeting of the eighth Knesset [in Hebrew], July 26, 1976, [https://fs.knesset.gov.il/8/Plenum/8\\_ptm\\_253399.pdf](https://fs.knesset.gov.il/8/Plenum/8_ptm_253399.pdf), 3766.

<sup>54</sup> Peter Hirschberg, "The Gradual Buyout of the Muslim Quarter," *The Jerusalem Report*, October 31, 1996, 18.

<sup>55</sup> Basic Law: Jerusalem, Capital of Israel (1980), [https://www.knesset.gov.il/laws/special/eng/basic10\\_eng.htm](https://www.knesset.gov.il/laws/special/eng/basic10_eng.htm).

<sup>56</sup> Regulations Regarding the Protection of Jewish Holy Places [in Hebrew] 5741 (1981), [https://www.nevo.co.il/law\\_html/Law01/P224K1\\_002.htm](https://www.nevo.co.il/law_html/Law01/P224K1_002.htm).

Sharon took advantage of Jerusalem's new 'unified' status by giving private organizations the authority to identify and purchase homes for Jewish settlement in the Old City's Muslim Quarter—a task that had previously been restricted to the Israel Lands Authority, a public body.<sup>57</sup> Within two years of Sharon's intervention, Atara LeYoshna (later Ateret Cohanim)—a religious, right-wing settler organization with similar objectives and *modus operandi* to Elad—was appointed “the government's principal agent in everything regarding the policy of purchasing and populating Jewish properties in the Muslim Quarter.”<sup>58</sup> By the early 1990s, as will be discussed below, both Elad and Ateret Cohanim would be receiving millions of shekels of government money at the behest of Sharon, all in the interest of further Judaizing East Jerusalem.

These national and local processes—the multiple afterlives of the Yom Kippur War, the various laws and policies that changed the territorial status quo in Jerusalem, and a new economic paradigm—set the stage for religious-Zionist settlers, among them peers of the Jewish Underground, to establish themselves in and around the City of David. They would achieve this initially via government support, then by means of overseas philanthropy, and, finally by using both those resources in order to take on, and then emerge victorious against, the state's own archaeological body.

## **United Capital, Private Capital: 1986-1997**

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<sup>57</sup> Amir S. Cheshin, Bill Hutman, and Avi Melamed, *Separate and Unequal: The Inside Story of Israeli Rule in East Jerusalem* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999) 216-7.

<sup>58</sup> Proposal submitted to Jerusalem Committee of the Ministry of the Interior by Jerusalem district chief for the Ministry of the Interior Yehuda Ziv, June 1, 1984. Cited in Menachem Klein, *Lives in Common: Arabs and Jews in Jerusalem, Jaffa, and Hebron* (London: Hurst and Company, 2014), 262.

The first decade after the 1985 plan offered, according to Arie Krampf, a more typical model of neoliberalism in which Israel faced out to the world rather than adopting the hawkish siege mentality characteristic of its more right-wing governments.<sup>59</sup> For Krampf, the Oslo peace process of the early-to-mid-1990s typified the ‘internationalism’ that came, at least initially, from Israel’s turn to neoliberalism. This period came to an end, he argues, with the November 1995 assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who was the face of that brief moment in Israeli politics. This sharp dividing line is somewhat overstated: seen from today, it is clear that Rabin’s term as prime minister represented a glitch in the Likud’s steady monopolization of Israeli politics, and not the reassertion of the old left-wing parties after fifteen years of right-wing dominance. Moreover, Rabin was considerably more hawkish than his Labor colleagues: this was, after all, the same man who as defense minister in 1988 instructed soldiers to break the bones of Palestinians participating in the first intifada.<sup>60</sup> Nonetheless, at the time, Rabin’s victory seemed to herald a new era in Middle East politics—and the contemporary debates on economic, as well as political, policy reflected that view.

Developments in Israel’s tourism industry in the early-to-mid-1990s typified this internationalist neoliberalism. Government budgets reflected an increasing awareness of the profits that could be won through expanding tourism opportunities, even as the tourism sector had been steadily privatized throughout the late 1980s.<sup>61</sup> Israel’s integration into the global economy and optimism over the peace process brought growing numbers of tourists to the country, and the number of tourist arrivals between 1991 and 1995 more than doubled.<sup>62</sup> At

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<sup>59</sup> Krampf, *Israeli Path to Neoliberalism*, 219.

<sup>60</sup> Reuters, “Colonel Says Rabin Ordered Breaking of Palestinians’ Bones,” June 22, 1990.

<sup>61</sup> “State Budget 1988.”

<sup>62</sup> Central Bureau of Statistics, *Tourism in Israel 1990-2010*, January 2012, <http://www.cbs.gov.il/statistical/touris2010e.pdf>, 3.

the same time, as part of efforts to reduce the national deficit, state investment in tourism initiatives grew five-fold between 1991 and 1994.<sup>63</sup> A detail from the state budget for 1995 encapsulates the multiple dynamics at work during this period: the treasury projected that the passage of the Oslo Accords would lead to Israel being integrated into Middle East package tours, thus boosting the country's tourism services exports.<sup>64</sup> Yet this growth in tourism would end up being one of the very factors that led to Elad consolidating its hold over the City of David. With archaeology presenting one of Israel's key tourist attractions,<sup>65</sup> it became increasingly vulnerable to both political and financial objectives—with profound consequences for Jerusalem, as we shall see below.

On that note, Krampf's argument is further undermined by the fact that the trends at the national level during this period did not extend down to the local level. Within eighteen months of Rabin's victory, municipal elections in Jerusalem brought a religious, right-wing council into power, headed by the Likud's Ehud Olmert. While Rabin and members of his cabinet talked peace, Jerusalem's local politicians openly collaborated with David Beerli and his ideological cohort, helping to bring Elad to the brink of control over excavations at the City of David. This disparity between national and local politics could be read as Jerusalem inhabiting a separate ecosystem with its own sociopolitical currents, due to its unique and highly fractured geography, demography and legal landscape. Given the events that would unfold in the 1990s, however, the more accurate reading may be that as the symbolic and

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<sup>63</sup> The Israeli government invested 38 million NIS in tourism in 1991, 77 million NIS in 1992, 150 million NIS in 1993, and 200 million NIS in 1994. Ministry of Finance, "State Budget 1995 (2)" [in Hebrew], file ISA-EconomyPlanning-Minister-000n8d1, Israel State Archives.

<sup>64</sup> "State Budget 1995 (2)."

<sup>65</sup> Uzi Baram and Yorke Rowan, "Archaeology After Nationalism: Globalization and the Consumption of the Past," in *Marketing Heritage: Archaeology and the Consumption of the Past*, eds. Yorke Rowan and Uzi Baram (Walnut Creek, Ca.: AltaMira Press, 2004), 11.

practical heart of the conflict, the status quo in Jerusalem is the truer reflection of how Israeli politics is poised at any given time.

Ultimately, as noted above, Israel's growing economic independence during this period, which coincided with the election of the country's most right-wing government yet in 1988, bolstered the state's capacity to resist international pressure against settlement-building in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. At the same time, the policies responsible for assuring that independence began to seriously undermine the responsibilities of numerous government departments—not least that responsible for archaeology. Nonetheless, for a brief moment at the end of the 1980s, Israeli archaeology seemed to gain a new lease of life with the establishment of the Israel Antiquities Authority, a successor to IDAM intended to operate as a partly independent government body.<sup>66</sup> This process was spearheaded by Amir Drori, a recently-retired army officer with limited archaeological experience who was appointed head of IDAM in 1988, replacing the archaeologist Avraham Eitan.<sup>67</sup> The appointment of a career officer to a leadership role for which he had little relevant experience was part of a broader phenomenon, partly linked to privatization, that was unfolding in Israel at the time: Drori was one of many IDF generals who, having served in the army as young men since the state's early years, began to retire in the 1980s. In search of a second career, and buoyed by a reputation for having established themselves in the most trusted institution in the country, many of these former officers were 'parachuted' into a range of high-ranking jobs—beneficiaries of an abundant private sector and a now-highly competitive, restricted public

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<sup>66</sup> Amendment to Israel Antiquities Law [in Hebrew], 1989, [http://fs.knesset.gov.il/12/law/12\\_1-sr\\_210745.PDF](http://fs.knesset.gov.il/12/law/12_1-sr_210745.PDF).

<sup>67</sup> Galor, *Finding Jerusalem*, 39.

sector that was in growing need of profits.<sup>68</sup> Notably, each of Drori's successors have been retired military or intelligence officers with little-to-no archaeological expertise.<sup>69</sup>

The IAA, which came into being in April 1990, enjoyed increased size and autonomy compared with IDAM. Yet, in keeping with the broader economic trends it was born into, its budget was unable to match its growing needs, meaning that it became ever-more reliant on contract work underwritten by developing agents<sup>70</sup>—which would eventually provide a crucial opening for Elad. Before then, however, Elad's mission was advanced by another government body—the Ministry of Housing and Construction, which Ariel Sharon took over in June 1990. Despite budget cuts that had compelled various ministries associated with urban planning and construction to begin outsourcing responsibilities,<sup>71</sup> Sharon took further his intervention on behalf of East Jerusalem settlers nearly a decade earlier and allotted millions of dollars to both Ateret Cohanim and the since-founded Elad, along with substantial sums to their directors—Mati Dan and David Beerli, respectively.<sup>72</sup> This illicit funding coincided with the commencement of Elad's settlement activities in East Jerusalem in late 1991, when its members took over a Palestinian house in Silwan with the logistical and financial support of Sharon and his ministry.<sup>73</sup> Sharon's ministry also collaborated with Elad in planning the construction of two hundred homes for Jewish settlers in Silwan—a proposal

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<sup>68</sup> Henriette Dahan Kalev, "Officers as Educators: The Ex-Military in the Israeli School System," *Israel Affairs* 12, no. 2 (April 2006), 271.

<sup>69</sup> Galor, *Finding Jerusalem*, 39.

<sup>70</sup> Greenberg, "Extreme Exposure," 273.

<sup>71</sup> Ram, *Globalization of Israel*, 64.

<sup>72</sup> Klugman Commission, "Commission Report on Inspection of Buildings in East Jerusalem" [in Hebrew], September 9, 1992, 24.

<sup>73</sup> Ir Amim, *Shady Dealings in Silwan*, May 2009, 11, <http://www.ir-amim.org.il/sites/default/files/Silwanreporteng.pdf>. The efforts of both Elad and Sharon were facilitated by the 1950 Absentees' Property Law 5710 (1950), [https://knesset.gov.il/review/data/eng/law/kns1\\_property\\_eng.pdf](https://knesset.gov.il/review/data/eng/law/kns1_property_eng.pdf).

that was shelved, in large part, due to protests from Israeli archaeologists working at the site.<sup>74</sup>

This phase of the collaboration between the government and settler organizations in East Jerusalem was put to an abrupt halt following Labor's victory in the 1992 elections. Convinced by Teddy Kollek to investigate the Housing Ministry's support for settler activity in Palestinian neighborhoods, Yitzhak Rabin appointed a commission of inquiry headed by then-Justice Ministry Director General Haim Klugman.<sup>75</sup> The commission's findings, published in September 1992, revealed the government's apparently illegal funneling of public money to Ateret Cohanim and Elad, in order for them to acquire homes in the Old City's Muslim Quarter and in Silwan.<sup>76</sup>

The withdrawal of national state sponsorship might have signaled a change in fortunes for Elad, whose activists were now compelled to try and purchase Palestinian homes directly.<sup>77</sup> Yet the change in Israel's leadership failed to cut off either Elad's financial or political support: the former persisted through large amounts of private capital being pumped into the area by overseas donors, most prominently the Miami-based bingo hall magnate Irving Moskowitz;<sup>78</sup> and the latter persisted thanks to the election in 1993 of a religious, right-wing city council in Jerusalem, which saw the Likud's Ehud Olmert put an end to Kollek's almost three-decade career as mayor. The timing of Kollek's dislodging held as much symbolic as practical significance: Olmert's victory came at the tail-end of the first

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<sup>74</sup> Galor, *Finding Jerusalem*, 127.

<sup>75</sup> Cheshin, Hutman, and Melamed, *Separate and Unequal*, 214.

<sup>76</sup> Klugman Commission, "Commission Report" 25-6.

<sup>77</sup> Nir Hasson, "How the State Helped Right-wing Groups Settle East Jerusalem," *Haaretz*, November 7, 2010, <https://www.haaretz.com/1.5136031>.

<sup>78</sup> Michael S. Serrill, "The Power of Money," *Time*, September 29, 1997.

intifada, the violence of which had caused Kollek to seemingly realize the shaky foundations on which his optimism for coexistence in Jerusalem had been built.<sup>79</sup> Even as national politics appeared to be moving toward his career-long vision, therefore, the scene in Jerusalem took an altogether darker turn. Moreover, Kollek embodied the inherent politicization of excavations in East Jerusalem due to both the connection between archaeology and Zionism, and the explicit power imbalance in the city. Meron Benvenisti, deputy mayor of Jerusalem for much of the 1970s, noted his former colleague's "deep affinity for the treasures of the past,"<sup>80</sup> along with the important role Kollek had played on the city's archaeological council. Nonetheless, Benvenisti reflected, most of Kollek's decisions were "based on a classic Zionist worldview...[in which] the mission of settling and building Jerusalem took precedence,"<sup>81</sup> precisely in order to insure the city's future as the capital of both Israel and the Jewish people. This complicated narrative of Kollek's career suggests one of his most telling legacies: laying bare the impossibility of equality and neutrality in a settler-colonial situation. His vision of 'peace' in the city was premised on separation, an illusion that the violence of the intifada unmasked; equally, his engagement with archaeology reflected the impossibility of such a symbolically-loaded science ever being free of the power differential in the environment in which it was being conducted. The end of Kollek's tenure as mayor, then, represented not so much the cutting short of a political vision, but rather the revelation of its internal contradictions.

At this early-to-mid-1990s juncture, several critical factors came to a head that would push Elad ever-closer to control of the City of David: ideological and political support from

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<sup>79</sup> Jonathan Broder, "Jerusalem a Divided City Again," *Chicago Tribune*, February 10, 1988.

<sup>80</sup> Meron Benvenisti, "Teddy Kollek: The Last Optimist," *Eretz-Israel: Archaeological, Historical, and Geographical Studies* 15 (2007), xii.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*



the Jerusalem city council; the changing national atmosphere due to the Oslo peace process; deepening budget cuts and privatization; and financial support from Moskowitz. The specter of potential land losses as a result of the Oslo Accords provoked the wider settler movement into action; in East Jerusalem, this manifested as groups such as Elad and Ateret Cohanim redoubling their efforts to bring as many Jews as possible to live in and around the Old City, not least to prevent the division of the city they feared might result from the Oslo Accords. Consequently, the mid-1990s saw a wave of activity by Elad—substantially underwritten by their American sponsor—that deepened the organization’s ties to the Jerusalem municipality (largely through the efforts of city councilor Shmuel Meir of the National Religious Party, who worked assiduously on behalf of settlers in East Jerusalem), and which would prove the cornerstone of its intrusion into East Jerusalem’s archaeological sphere.<sup>82</sup> Moskowitz’s support was fundamental here: of all the Israeli settler projects he funded, those in East Jerusalem were the closest to his heart.<sup>83</sup> Elad, as one of the chief beneficiaries of Moskowitz’s funds, was thus able to maintain its efforts to increase their footprint in Jerusalem’s Palestinian neighborhoods, despite Rabin’s intervention. At the same time, however, Elad was also in growing need of new approach on the ground: firstly, to circumvent the antiquities and national parks legislation that effectively barred construction in Silwan; and secondly, to mitigate the loss of governmental support for their project. The organization duly identified excavations as a means of settlement, as well as a way to acquire targeted tracts of land without carrying out construction.<sup>84</sup> The IAA’s increasing financial difficulties wore down its ability to resist such an intervention, and after persistent lobbying

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<sup>82</sup> Greenberg, “Extreme Exposure,” 273.

<sup>83</sup> Ami Pedahzur, *The Triumph of Israel’s Radical Right* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 86.

<sup>84</sup> Galor, *Finding Jerusalem*, 127.

before a receptive city council, Elad began underwriting excavations in the City of David in 1994.<sup>85</sup>

This chain of events brings us up to the turning point in Krampf's timeline of Israeli neoliberalism. Certainly, the picture at the national level gives some weight to the idea that Israel's first decade of neoliberal policy-making brought liberalizing politics along with a liberalizing economy. But the picture in Jerusalem, as we have seen, casts a different complexion on that assertion. What will never be known is whether, had Rabin not been assassinated, the national and local political scenes would have reconciled themselves. But Rabin's murder by a right-wing settler in November 1995, six weeks after signing the Oslo II Accord and following a persistent campaign of incitement by religious-Zionist rabbis and settlers, cemented the trends that had been progressing in Jerusalem, and reinstated them at the national level.

The national elections in May 1996, the first since the shooting of Rabin, brought Benjamin Netanyahu into power at the head of the Likud. A few months later, and a year before the government handed Elad the keys to the City of David, a series of decisions taken by both Netanyahu and Olmert provided a glimpse of settler groups' influence over East Jerusalem's archaeological sites, as well as the role tourism played in facilitating their goals. Three months after taking office, Netanyahu announced the opening of an exit from the Western Wall Tunnels onto the section of the Via Dolorosa that runs through the Muslim Quarter. This was the same site at which Teddy Kollek had allowed the Ministry of Religious Affairs to conduct excavations, and which opened as a tourist attraction in the early 1980s. In 1988, it was handed over to a newly-formed non-profit organization, the Western Wall

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<sup>85</sup> Raphael Greenberg, "Towards an Inclusive Archaeology in Jerusalem: The Case of Silwan/The City of David," *Public Archaeology* 8, no. 1 (2009), 41-2.

Heritage Foundation, which sat under the Prime Minister's Office and whose heads were closely aligned with the religious settler right.<sup>86</sup> The foundation, which was also funded by Irving Moskowitz, joined Elad in the 1990s in helping the IAA meet its budgetary shortfall for archaeological digs in East Jerusalem.<sup>87</sup> The plan to open the tunnel exit in the Muslim Quarter was supported by Ehud Olmert,<sup>88</sup> but was also, according to reports at the time, intended as a “political payoff”<sup>89</sup> to some of Netanyahu's American donors—including Moskowitz, who helped fund the venture.<sup>90</sup> Moreover, the tunnel opening was a significant boost to religious settler organizations intent on Judaizing the Muslim Quarter, such as Ateret Cohanim. The days-long bloodshed sparked by the affair left a hundred Palestinians and seventeen Israelis dead;<sup>91</sup> nonetheless, it was ultimately put to what Olmert had insisted was its intended use: increasing visitor capacity at the Western Wall Tunnels.<sup>92</sup>

The opening of the tunnel exit was, according to Raphael Greenberg, a “pilot project”<sup>93</sup> for the settler right's new tactics in Jerusalem. As an event that had resulted from the maneuverings of an emboldened right-wing ideological group; the influence of private capital and tourism; and a political atmosphere that had tacked sharply to the right, the

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<sup>86</sup> Ir Amim, *Shady Dealings in Silwan*, 23 fn. 57.

<sup>87</sup> Galor, *Finding Jerusalem*, 104.

<sup>88</sup> Emek Shaveh, *Underground Jerusalem: The Excavation of Tunnels, Channels, and Underground Spaces in the Historic Basin*, October 28, 2015, <http://alt-arch.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/19-Underground-city-Eng-Web.pdf>, 4.

<sup>89</sup> John Donnelly, “U.S. Donors Pressured Israel to Open Tunnel,” *Miami Herald*, September 29, 1996.

<sup>90</sup> Charlie LeDuff, “California Bingo Hall Plays on World Stage,” *New York Times*, November 25, 2002.

<sup>91</sup> Anshel Pfeffer, “Netanyahu Returns to the Western Wall Tunnels, the Bedrock of His Political Existence,” *Haaretz*, May 28, 2017.

<sup>92</sup> Emek Shaveh, *Underground Jerusalem*, 4.

<sup>93</sup> Greenberg, “Extreme Exposure,” 274.

Western Wall Tunnels episode would indeed prove a harbinger of things to come. In December 1996, three months after the affair, the IAA temporarily halted all its major archaeological digs due to government budget cuts. Its funds were reduced by fifty percent in 1996, and were cut in half again in 1997,<sup>94</sup> further increasing its dependency on private funders. Finally, in October 1997, Elad's steady climb toward official and overt collaboration with the Israeli government reached its peak: with Olmert's backing,<sup>95</sup> the organization was awarded full responsibility for the City of David National Park (including the archaeological park) by the Israel Lands Authority (ILA), taking over from the Nature and Parks Authority. This move presented the organization with consolidated territorial control, a formal title with which to exert influence over archaeology in East Jerusalem, and access to a significant stream of tourist revenue—which it could reinvest in taking over Palestinian properties in Silwan.<sup>96</sup> The IAA sent a strongly-worded letter of protest to the government, in which attorney Yoram Bar-Sela pointed out that Elad had not only planned and initiated construction at the City of David, despite being an archaeological site in a national park, but that it had also damaged antiquities in the process. Moreover, the organization had repeatedly circumvented the need for an excavation license under the 1978 Antiquities Law by classifying its activities as salvage digs—despite the open emphasis on the search for and presentation of antiquities related to specific periods of Jewish history, and despite the fact that salvage digs should not have been necessary, given the ban on construction in the area.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Jack Katzenell, "Budget Cuts Halt Major Archaeological Digs," *Associated Press*, December 13, 1996.

<sup>95</sup> Greenberg, "Towards an Inclusive Archaeology," 42.

<sup>96</sup> Noy, "Political Ends of Tourism," 29. With around half a million visitors a year, the City of David is the second-most popular archaeological park in the country, after Masada.

<sup>97</sup> This has also facilitated construction of tunnels below Silwan, without the permits ordinarily required under the Planning and Building Law (Planning and Building Law 5725 (1965)).

Bar-Sela further deemed “outrageous” the prospect of transferring responsibility for such a sensitive site to a private organization that had demonstrably broken the law, and urged the Israel Lands Authority to immediately put a halt to the transfer.<sup>98</sup> The letter, and the fact that Elad was the subject of several lawsuits at the time of the transfer, temporarily suspended the process, but did not stop it: by 2002, after numerous proceedings, Elad’s takeover of the City of David Park was complete.<sup>99</sup> Free to run the site as a tourist destination in its own image, Elad now had the practical and financial means to assert over- and underground territorial control, while presenting excavation findings in a manner almost solely designed to bolster the narrative of ancient Jewish connection to the land. Neoliberal policies had carved open a financial space for Elad to turn archaeology into an instrument of territorial control, as well as a profit-making initiative that would further fund those efforts. The Israeli government’s steady progression to the right after the Yom Kippur War—a march that Labor’s few years back in power failed to halt—assisted with Elad’s incursion. And, as Krampf has shown, it is the very liberalizing of Israel’s economy that was, and continues to be, crucial to allowing the government to resist external pressure to abide by international law, whether over matters of building, excavating, or settling on occupied territory. Politics, money, and ideology had colluded to hand Elad the reins to archaeological exploration in East Jerusalem—and with it, all of the history that remained buried in the earth below.

## Conclusion

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<sup>98</sup> Yoram Bar-Sela to Elyakim Rubinstein, Attorney General, December 17, 1997, published on Emek Shaveh website: <https://bit.ly/2YwXPHT>.

<sup>99</sup> Ir Amim, *Shady Dealings in Silwan*, 20.

Since the late 1990s, Elad has continued to sponsor and initiate numerous tourist sites and archaeological projects in Jerusalem's Holy Basin. Among the most notable of these is the "Temple Mount Sifting Project," which recently came close to shuttering after Elad announced it was pulling its funding. According to reports at the time, Elad's decision came after the archaeologists leading the project proposed temporarily halting the sifting in order to research and publish their findings from a range of different historical periods.<sup>100</sup> This episode encapsulates many of the dynamics that brought the City of David into Elad's hands: a tourism-driven archaeological project at a deeply sensitive site on occupied territory, reliant on private funds, and consequently at the mercy of the sponsor's whims.

Meanwhile, Elad's appropriation of archaeology has finally served its ultimate purpose: in November 2018, the organization's failed 1992 effort to build inside the City of David was resuscitated when the Knesset passed a bill, advanced by Elad, that would permit construction in national parks. While the law does not mention the City of David by name, the necessary conditions under which it allows construction are in line with the park's dimensions. After the bill passed its final reading, the Likud's Yoav Kisch—who tabled the legislation—praised Elad for its "holy work...to renew the City of David."<sup>101</sup>

The case of Elad and the City of David is rooted in the very relationship between the occupation and neoliberalism. As Shlomo Swirski and Noga Dagan-Buzaglo argued in a recent watchdog report, each process has created its own "one percent" in Israel: an "economic one percent"<sup>102</sup> that emerged after the country's wholesale import of American

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<sup>100</sup> Carl Hoffman, "Temple Mount Sifting Project at a Crossroads," *Jerusalem Post*, July 20, 2017, <https://www.jpost.com/jerusalem/Temple-Mount-sifting-project-at-a-crossroads-500232>.

<sup>101</sup> Jonathan Lis, "Knesset Passes Law Intended to Expand City of David Settlement" [in Hebrew]. *Haaretz*, November 19, 2018, <https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/1.6662823>.

<sup>102</sup> Swirski and Dagan-Buzaglo, *The Occupation: Who Pays the Price?*, 9.

neoliberalism in the 1980s, and a “political one percent”<sup>103</sup> that emerged following the Six-Day War—namely, the religious-Zionist settlers who have acquired increasing political influence over the decades, even as they have continued to comprise a minority of the Israeli population. Elad must be seen as a product of those two elites: a group that has managed to accumulate considerable political power, partly by exploiting a legal framework undermined by the reality of the politics of occupation, and partly through reaping the opportunities presented by the ravages of neoliberal policies.

This last point hints at the central role played by the Israeli state throughout these proceedings, oscillating between overt engagement and passive acquiescence. Active interventions on behalf of the Jerusalem settlement industry—the vast sums of public money funneled into the area by Ariel Sharon, and the pro-settler policies of Begin, Netanyahu, and Olmert, for example—have been complemented by the government’s failure to enforce the law, and its relinquishment of various duties and responsibilities that were then swiftly inherited by ideological groups. This, combined with the increasing alignment between religious-Zionist settlers and the government, brought an archaeological site—which should ordinarily be under the auspices of the state—into the hands of a private, right-wing nationalist organization that used the space in order to settle, make money, and self-certify its right to do both. Meanwhile, the very people most affected by these developments—the Palestinian residents of Silwan, whose homes have been tunneled under, demolished, and taken over in the middle of the night, and whose public spaces have been closed off to them—have effectively been locked out of the decision-making processes that determined the fate of their neighborhood. And that was precisely the intention of Elad, who cultivated a tourist destination that goes beyond merely erasing the presence of the Palestinians living around it:

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

the City of David's even broader aim, by creating facts both on and under the ground, is to make to seem as if the Palestinians had never been there at all.

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