

King Herod in Jerusalem: The Politics of Cultural Heritage

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From his own time to the present day, King Herod the Great (74/73 BCE–4 BCE) has been celebrated as one of the greatest builders of the ancient world. Depictions of his character have been less favorable. Not so popular with his own subjects, and rather negatively profiled in Josephus and the Gospels, he has somehow risen to a national hero in contemporary Israel. His initiatives in Jerusalem, encompassing fully preserved, partially restored, imagined, or recreated artifacts and buildings, have taken on a symbolic function in the dispute over occupied East Jerusalem. This status ties in favorably with numerous other Herodian period sites located in the West Bank, suggesting a territorial claim in which archaeological heritage participates as a seemingly inconspicuous carrier of an ideological message.¹

The roots of Herod's physical legacy in the context of current Israeli territorial ambitions appear in initial mid-nineteenth century efforts to survey and document Jerusalem's surviving antiquities, initiated by organizations representing different countries seeking to gain control over various regions of the declining Ottoman Empire. As the most visible surviving structure from the time of Jesus, the Temple Mount, as well as other contemporary sites and artifacts, was of particular interest to the early explorers, most of whom were inspired formally or informally by their Protestant or Catholic backgrounds. For the most part, their endeavors were determined both by scientific curiosity and by religious dedication. This model of framing religious and political ambitions in a chronologically targeted exploration impacted early Zionist endeavors, for which the Herodian period provided not an association with Jesus's ministry and crucifixion, but rather a visual

and physical context for the late Second Temple period, understood as one of Judaism's most powerful religio-political eras.

Documenting, excavating, and showcasing King Herod's Jerusalem has thus developed into a key potential tool for the framing of religious and political ambitions within a historical context. From the early twentieth century, educational and governmental establishments have fostered an agenda in which Christian and Jewish aspirations to claim the city's cultural heritage overlap. This confluence of Judeo-Christian interests in the visual and material legacy of Herod's Jerusalem has tended at least partially to eclipse the city's Muslim cultural heritage.

Since Israel's occupation of East Jerusalem in 1967, archaeology has played a major role in solidifying the notion that the city will remain the "eternal, united capital" of the Israeli state. In addition to the swift establishment of the Ring Neighborhoods, the passage of the 1980 Basic Law – Jerusalem has provided the political framework for various additional physical transformations that would create so-called facts on the ground. The use of cultural heritage, in particular antiquities that highlight the city's Jewish legacy, has proven to be a particular potent agent in asserting the reclamation of the land of Israel's biblical and post-biblical ancestors. Officially and practically, the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) engages all archaeological fieldwork in East Jerusalem in the same way and according to the same legal precepts as in West Jerusalem.² In response, UNESCO has condemned and declared illegal all archaeological activity in East Jerusalem following the 1967 War. Palestinian archaeologists, for their part, have largely refrained from excavating in the city, demonstrating their refusal to accept occupation and to recognize imposed Israeli political as well as archaeological sovereignty. The exclusive emphasis on First and Second Temple period archaeological remains in Jerusalem has met with repeated criticism, as have recent excavations and tourist activities in Silwan, closely tied as these are with Israel's Jewish settlement and Palestinian home demolition policies.

Scant attention has been paid, however, to the significant role King Herod the Great has played in this context. In this paper I will provide an overview of past and recent efforts to deploy the architecture and material culture associated with Herod in the service of a combined agenda of cultural heritage and national politics. Focusing on Jerusalem, I will establish the religious, social, economic, and political context of Herod's interest among Israelis and in the Judeo-Christian world more generally, which exceeds that of such illustrious Biblical kings as David and Solomon.

Herod's legacy has determined Jerusalem's physical and spiritual landscape for the past two thousand years. The Haram al-Sharif (Noble Sanctuary)/Temple Mount area, shaped like a trapezoid measuring approximately 144,000 square meters, still dominates the Old City with its enormous elevated platform. In spite of its solid nature, this architectural complex has seen numerous alterations and adjustments reflecting political changes – locally, regionally, and internationally – as well as the volatile relationship between secular and religious residents and visitors, Jews and Muslims, Israelis and Palestinians.

For Jews, the attachment to the physical remainders of King Herod's legacy, more specifically his Temple, dates back to the late Roman period, a concept that shaped both Rabbinic and later forms of Judaism as well as more tangible aspirations of virtually and

physically recreating the destroyed Temple.³ Among the first visual representations of the Temple are the Bar Kokhba coins from the time of the Second Jewish Revolt between 132–135 CE, reproducing its façade less than seventy years after the Temple’s destruction.⁴ Beyond the numerous two dimensional depictions of the ark of the law and the seven branched menorahs in both domestic and public contexts, the synagogue building itself and various paraphernalia found within were meant to replicate or at least symbolically evoke the destroyed house of God.⁵

For Christians, the desire to expose and touch the physical remainders of Herodian Jerusalem first emerged in the Byzantine period and was linked with Helena’s mission to find the True Cross and more generally the goal to retrace Jesus’s ministry in the city and various holy sites. This tradition was captured in countless medieval and renaissance paintings, such as Giotto’s *Christ Entering Jerusalem* (c. 1310), Raphael’s *Christ Falling on the Way to Calvary* (1514–1516), or Agnolo Gaddi’s *Discovery of the Cross* (1380s).

It was not until the mid-nineteenth century, however, that scholarly investigations, excavations, and surveys were carried out to expose what was believed to be remnants of Herod’s time. One of the first monuments to be thoroughly investigated at the very beginning of archaeological exploration in the city was the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount area. Between 1865 and 1869, a survey of the complex, including numerous underground installations and various features of the enclosure wall, was carried out under the auspices of the Palestine Exploration Fund by Charles Wilson and Charles Warren.⁶ Despite the fact that methodologies and knowledge were not yet sufficiently developed to differentiate between Herodian and earlier or later material culture, the results of their work are used as guidelines for archaeologists to this day.⁷

For decades, numerous structures and sites in the city were mistakenly identified as dating to the time of Herod, or more appropriately to the time of Jesus, who lived and died in the city that Herod built and who thus contributed to the posthumous fame the latter gained within Christian lore. Some of these misidentifications were based on Byzantine, Crusader, or later traditions.⁸ Commemorative churches marking the sites of various miracles performed by Christ were built throughout the city and beyond its boundaries. These include the early versions of the Imbomon, the Eleona Church or Hagia Sion, the later Crusader adaptations such as the Chapel of the Ascension or the Martyrium, as well as the more recent constructions of Dominus Flevit and the Church of All Nations.⁹ Most sites that were identified with Jesus during the Byzantine period continued to be venerated throughout the centuries of Christian and Islamic rule, undergoing complete or partial renovations. Some locations were newly discovered during the Crusader period; additional sites started to be venerated during the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries as a result of the increase of Eastern and Western pilgrimage practices. One of these newly created sites, prompting the construction of the Sisters of Zion convent in 1858, is marked by the so-called Ecce Homo Arch, identified as the place where Pontius Pilate pointed to Jesus and said “Behold the Man” [Ecce Homo] (John 19:5). A segment of the large central arch spans the Via Dolorosa, the Way of Sorrows, which in the Crusader period was held to be the path that Jesus walked, carrying his cross, on the way to his crucifixion. The remains of this arch as well as another smaller

one next to it were incorporated into the newly built ecclesiastic complex. Excavations carried out in the 1960s by Pierre Benoit from the *École biblique et archéologique française* established that the original triple-arched gateway was built at the time of the emperor Hadrian, about a century after the crucifixion.¹⁰ Despite the scientific proof that the *Ecce Homo Arch* post-dates the Herodian period, like numerous other sites in the city originally associated with Jesus's ministry, hundreds of thousands of pilgrims continue to pay homage annually to these places sanctified by long-standing traditions of veneration.

The most extensive excavations to be carried out near the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount area were initiated immediately after Israel's occupation of East Jerusalem in 1967. The area of investigation surrounds the southwestern corner of the enclosure wall and extends all the way to the southeastern corner. The first seasons were directed by Benjamin Mazar from the Hebrew University between 1967 and 1982; then between 1994 and 1996 excavations were renewed under Ronny Reich from Haifa University and Yaacov Billig from the IAA; and finally between 2005 and 2012 by Eilat Mazar, once again under the auspices of the Hebrew University.¹¹ These campaigns have contributed tremendously to our knowledge of Herodian architecture, material culture, chronology, and typology. In recent years, significant progress has been made in differentiating components that date precisely to the rule of King Herod the Great and elements that pre-date and post-date his rule. One of the more surprising discoveries relates to a ritual pool (*miqveh*) uncovered underneath the southern extension of the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount platform. Coins, the latest of which were struck by the Roman procurator Valerius Gratus in 17–18 CE, indicate that the construction of the platform was not completed under Herod the Great but about two decades after his death, a fact also supported by literary sources.¹²

Beyond these minute observations concerning the different building phases of the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount platform, it is important to note that other than the period pertaining to the Herodian rule (lasting 33 years for King Herod or 107 years for the Herodian dynasty), numerous other periods and cultures spanning roughly three thousand years of presence and activity have been exposed. While the remains of these other cultures have not been entirely ignored, they are severely underrepresented in both the scholarly literature and in the public presentation of the finds.

Indicative of this trend is the display at the Davidson Center housed in the Ophel Archaeological Garden, located near the southwestern corner of the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount area, which opened its doors to the public in 2001. The highlight of the exhibition includes a real-time virtual reality reconstruction of the Herodian Temple as well as a high-definition digital video. Developed jointly by the Urban Simulation Team at UCLA and the IAA, they bring to life Jewish pilgrimage to Jerusalem during the Second Temple period.¹³

The Herodian Temple Mount and its role in contemporary Jerusalem cannot be discussed without addressing their political, legal, and administrative status, and how they affect both the relationship between Israelis and Palestinians and, more broadly, between Jews and Muslims. After the 1967 War, Israel has claimed political sovereignty over the compound, but has granted the Waqf (the Islamic religious and charitable foundation created by endowed trust funds) to retain custodianship of the platform. After 1,400

years of nearly uninterrupted Muslim governance, this compromised authority has been at the root of repeated conflicts, often involving physical violence. Despite our ability to differentiate between Herodian and later building additions and transformations, the religio-political conflict has blurred the facts, and each side of the conflict stresses or ignores one or the other aspect of the monument's building history. For Jews and most Israelis, the Herodian Temple Mount represents Judaism's most venerated site, attributing a special role to the Western Wall. Ironically, however, it was not until after the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE that the enclosure wall started to be perceived as holy. For as long as the compound was intact, its sanctity was restricted to the Temple and its surrounding courtyards by the *soreg*, a low balustrade, which separated it from most of the platform accessible to gentiles. For Muslims, the Haram al-Sharif represents the "Farthest Mosque" mentioned in the Qur'an (17:1), marking the place of Muhammad's miraculous Night Journey to heaven (*surat al-isra*). Despite the fact that the city's early Muslim conquerors and builders of the Dome of the Rock intended to mark the exact spot of the former Jewish Temple, in recent decades, its existence has been contested by Muslims, a view that is exacerbated by the political conflict between Israelis and Palestinians.¹⁴ If Jews and Israelis can be criticized for stressing their religious, historical, and cultural claims on the Temple Mount by highlighting the Herodian features reminiscent of the Jewish Temple, Muslims, on the other hand, have been made responsible for undermining the site's Jewish heritage, an attitude which further contributes to the existing ideological rift between Israelis and Palestinians as well as tensions between Jews and Muslims around the globe.

Indicative of this latter tendency is the recent conversion of the so-called Solomon's Stables, into the country's largest mosque (which can accommodate approximately ten thousand worshippers). This ancient vaulted structure, commonly attributed to King Herod the Great's expansion of the Temple Mount, but most recently identified as a surviving structure of Mu'awiya's mosque built in 640 CE, is located underneath the northeastern corner of the platform.¹⁵ A Jewish religious fringe group had previously earmarked the space for a conversion into an underground synagogue.¹⁶ The Islamic Movement of Israel, which has sponsored and supervised the construction, has been criticized by the Temple Mount Antiquities Salvage Operation, a project sponsored by Bar Ilan University with funding from Elad (a radical settler group aiming at establishing a Jewish majority in Arab Jerusalem), for using bulldozers and for willfully destroying and eliminating antiquities without proper archaeological supervision.¹⁷ Other than damaging the vaulted underground structure, and supposedly evidence for the First and Second Jewish Temples, the Waqf was blamed for appropriating an important heritage site for the exclusive use of Muslims.¹⁸ This case study exemplifies how a Herodian structure and its religious and cultural heritage are intertwined with the religio-political conflict between Jews and Muslims, between Israelis and Palestinians.

The Jewish Quarter excavation represents an additional project in the Old City launched shortly after Israel's occupation of East Jerusalem. Conducted under the direction of Nahman Avigad from the Hebrew University between 1969 and 1982, the chronological and thematic focus of the exposed ruins appears to be even more exclusively centered



Figure 1: Israeli Army training of tour guides. Photo by K. Galor.



Figure 2: Rabbi Shmuel Rabinovitz lecturing in the “Herodian Hall.” Photo by K. Galor.

on the Herodian period than the southern Temple Mount excavations.¹⁹ The project is known to have bulldozed almost all of the site’s early Islamic and medieval layers.²⁰ The public presentation of the remains is very instructive in this regard.

Within the basement levels of modern buildings, the Wohl Archaeological Museum is today housed in the Yeshivat HaKotel, located between 3 to 7 meters below street level. Visitors can walk through several well-preserved and restored Herodian period dwellings, exposed during the course of the excavation. Very few finds from earlier periods are displayed in the vitrines along numerous artifacts from the Herodian layers. Almost nothing post-dating the destruction of 70 CE has been preserved or is featured in the exhibit.

Identical is the thematic and chronological choice in the Burnt House, which visitors are encouraged to explore in conjunction with the Wohl Archaeological Museum. Located some five minutes’ walking distance from the latter, this museum is also preserved in the basement level of a modern building. Based on the findings and a stone weight with an inscription reading “son of Kathros,” the Burnt House was identified as belonging to a wealthy family of high priests active in the Herodian Temple.²¹ The display presents a very one-sided narrative zooming in on the Herodian period, the Jewish priestly families, and their lives during the time of the Second Temple.

Another popular tourist destination, equally focused on the Herodian remains, is the Western Wall Tunnel, an additional site where excavations were initiated immediately after 1967. Originally carried out without proper archaeological supervision, the scientific accuracy and

documentation was partially compromised, in particular during the early years of investigation.²² The site is administered by the Western Wall Heritage Foundation, a governmental organization in charge of excavations, education, and worship in the tunnel. Guided tours are almost exclusively dedicated to understanding the Herodian structure. Indicative are the multiple models of the Herodian Temple Mount located near the tunnel entrance. These are used to introduce visitors and to place the tour into a specific chronological context. The site attracts hundreds of thousands of tourists, Israeli school children, families and soldiers. In recent years, only the City of David Archaeological Park has attracted larger numbers of visitors. Soldiers of the Israeli army (IDF) are trained to become guides for organized army visits of the Western Wall Tunnel. Educational missions also focus heavily on religious instruction. Shmuel Rabinovitz, Rabbi of the Western Wall and the Holy Sites of Israel, regularly holds lectures in the so-called “Herodian Hall.” Organized or individual prayers take place in designated areas. Following the Orthodox convention, female and male worshipers are segregated. The Women’s section is located in a position, which is perceived to be at the closest physical point to the Holy of Holies.

There are several important aspects and events related to the Western Wall Tunnel that have impacted the political climate in Jerusalem and the larger region. One is the excavation itself, which many Palestinians – and much of the Arab world – fear undermine the Haram al-Sharif and adjacent neighborhoods both physically and ideologically. When Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu decided to facilitate circulation by opening the northern end of the tunnel in 1996, located in the heart of the Muslim quarter, it was viewed as yet another provocative step taken by the Israeli government. Palestinian protests and violent clashes in East Jerusalem erupted, ultimately spreading to the West Bank and Gaza Strip, killing a total of 57 Palestinians and 15 Israelis.²³ Activism in response to the opening of the Western Wall Tunnel is commonly referred to by Palestinians and various Islamic groups as the “al-Aqsa Intifada.”²⁴

More recently, objections were raised to the plan to construct the so-called Beit Haliba building on the Western Wall plaza. Between 2005 and 2009, the IAA conducted excavations to prepare for the establishment of an office and conference complex for the Western Wall Heritage Foundation, designed to oversee prayer and tourism on the plaza and in the Western Wall Tunnels.²⁵ The planned building would be identical in height to the Western Wall and thus completely transform the current landscape, an initiative that contravenes UNESCO rules. Protests led by local archaeologists and residents were recently brought before the High Court. In June 2014, the National Council for Planning and Building’s appeals committee issued a ruling according to which the planned building will have to be more modest in size than originally planned. The Beit Haliba building thus represents another example of how religious, historical, cultural, and national aspirations are closely intertwined.

Scientifically, one of the most questionable recent projects pertaining to the Herodian period is another tunnel excavation in Silwan, popularly known as the “City of David.” It is located outside the boundaries of the Old City, just to the south of the Haram. The underground system consists of a drainage or sewage system artificially linked to an Early Roman street segment. Referred to as the Herodian Street and Tunnel, they



Figure 3: Steps communicating between the exposed “Herodian Street level” and the drainage system located at a higher level. Photo by K. Galor.



Figure 4: Artist reconstruction illustrating pilgrims walking on the “Herodian Street” near an exposed pavement section. Photo by K. Galor.

are presented to visitors as the path trod by pilgrims on their way to the Temple Plaza.²⁶ A modern staircase connects two levels: the Herodian Street, positioned at the bottom, and a drainage system at a significantly higher level (about ten meters above the Herodian Street). This project is questionable for different reasons. First, for this purpose the IAA has resorted to using tunnel excavations, which is a procedure commonly used by explorers in the nineteenth century before being replaced by stratigraphic excavations by the beginning of the twentieth century. The method used in Silwan is thus scientifically outdated by more than a hundred years. Second, this multi-million dollar project has neither solved any chronological or functional problems that could not have been answered prior to the excavation, nor did it promise to elucidate any interesting aspects concerning Second Temple period Jerusalem.

To enhance the experience of the visitor, two artists’ reconstructions illustrate a rather uninspiring walk through the tunnel. One features pilgrims wearing Roman-style tunics walking on the Herodian Street, the other a birds-eye view of the Herodian Street connecting between the southern tip of the Southeast Hill and the northwestern corner of the Haram platform.

This new underground circuit, opened to the public in 2011, begins at the so-called Siloam Pool, discovered in 2004. According to the excavator, Ronny Reich, the installation was used as a ritual pool (*miqveh*) by pilgrims visiting Herod’s Temple.²⁷ He furthermore stipulated that it was here that Jesus healed a blind man (John 9:1–11). Both assumptions have found little support among fellow archaeologists, but find resonance in the

coherent emphasis on the Judeo-Christian heritage of East Jerusalem by the means of a physical and visual reenactment of Herodian Jerusalem.

Another project, which has not yet been fully implemented, is set to extend this new archaeological circuit to the northern extremity of the Old City, reaching Zedekiah's Cave, which spreads east of Damascus Gate underneath the present Muslim Quarter.²⁸ Zedekiah's Cave is traditionally believed to have served as the main quarry for the construction of Herod's Temple Mount complex. These initiatives to earmark new underground spaces and to highlight a specific aspect and period of the city's cultural heritage are linked to recent efforts to increase archaeological activity and tourism in East Jerusalem, a mission for which the Israeli government has allocated some \$270 million between 2007 and 2013, in addition to millions of dollars that various private donors and NGOs contribute.²⁹ Thus, the Herodian Street and Tunnel, rather than presenting a valid scientific endeavor, can be viewed as part of a larger project of the Israeli government to lay cultural and territorial claims on their internationally contested ownership of East Jerusalem. These new initiatives indicate how Herodian Jerusalem increasingly dominates the landscape of the Historic Basin, both above the ground and underneath the surface.

Beyond these archaeological projects, several virtual or physical reconstructions of Herodian structures or artifacts highlight the widespread interest in this period. A physical model of the Temple exists at the Temple Institute, established in 1987 in the Jewish Quarter, whose ultimate goal is to see "Israel rebuild the Holy Temple on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem, in accord with the Biblical commandments."³⁰ The same institute sponsored the construction of a two-hundred-pound gold menorah, creating an imaginary replica of what Herod's Temple would have contained, built for use in a future Third Temple. It was recently placed in a transparent case overlooking the Western Wall.

Another model of Herod's Temple, allegedly the world's largest, built at a scale of 1:60, is displayed on the roof of the Aish HaTorah Yeshiva, also located in the Jewish Quarter near the Temple Mount. It was inaugurated in 2009.³¹

Various digital initiatives supplement these efforts to recreate Herod's Temple visually. An existing video game that invites players to participate in a virtual tour of the Temple Mount could potentially reach a much wider interest group. One of the images in the game shows archaeologist Gaby Barkay guiding the tour, while another shows



Figure 5: The Temple Institute's golden menorah in a glass case near the staircase leading from the Jewish Quarter to the Western Wall Plaza. Photo by K. Galor.



Figure 6: Temple Institute scale model of Herod's Temple, overlooking the Haram. Photo by K. Galor.

an overlay plan of the Second Temple positioned atop the Dome of the Rock. Indicative of the Israeli government's endorsement of this project is the fact that Israeli Minister of Construction and Housing Uri Ariel officially released this virtual tour of the Temple Mount in July 2013, in conjunction with Tisha B'av, an annual fast day in Judaism which commemorates the destruction of the First and Second Temples.³² Another video game in which a hologram of the Temple hovers over the Dome of the Rock was designed in 2004 by Yitzhak Hayutman. In his view, a "techno temple does away with the need for a physical building." Under his scheme, "Jews and Christians would get a biblically accurate temple without razing the Dome of the Rock."³³

Several recent efforts to recreate Herodian Jerusalem and to educate the layperson also concern the new part, or western half of the city, outside of the Historic Basin. Commissioned in 1966, the Holyland Model of Jerusalem is a 1:50 scale model of Jerusalem as it appeared prior to the outbreak of the Second Jewish Revolt in 66 CE, based on Josephus's description and archaeological remains. In 2006, the model was moved from its original location at the Holyland Hotel in Bayit VeGan, Jerusalem, to a new site in the gardens of the Israel Museum. The high cost of the move (3.5 million U.S. dollars) was justified by the expectation that the nearly one million people who visit the museum annually would dramatically increase the model's exposure.³⁴

Perhaps the most significant recent museum project dedicated to the Herodian period, or more specifically to King Herod the Great, was a temporary exhibit at the Israel

Museum from February of 2013 through February 2014. Entitled “Herod the Great: The King’s Final Journey,” James Snyder, the museum director declared it at a press preview to be “the most expensive temporary exhibit the museum has ever curated.”³⁵ Artifacts on display with a Jerusalem provenance were relatively few in comparison to finds from other sites. An ionic capital originally part of the Royal Stoa at the southern end of the Temple Mount platform was the most sizeable one.³⁶ Political criticism of the exhibit focused on the fact that about eighty percent of the artifacts on display came from sites located in the occupied territories. According to international law, the codes of ethics for the preservation of antiquities, and the Oslo accords, these antiquities should have fallen under Palestinian control and responsibility.

Similarly, the Israeli government’s support for the unveiling of a model of the reconstructed mausoleum at Herodium in April of 2013 was probably not completely unrelated to the motivation to display West Bank artifacts associated with King Herod in Israel’s National Museum. Public figures present at the unveiling of the model included government ministers, Knesset members, and settler leaders.³⁷

Jerusalem also offers more consumer-oriented enterprises presenting visitors or collectors with an opportunity to take home a bit of history associated with King Herod. Some eighty antiquities dealers compete with each other in Jerusalem, most of them located in the Old City. According to a recent market survey, Herodian artifacts are among the most desired items available.³⁸ The following sample labels attached to two different pottery vessels on display in the vitrine of an antiquities shop on Muristan Street during the summer of 2013 are indicative of the consumer “target group.” One, reads: “Roman; Roman Herodion; King Herods BC 50–50 AD; Time of Jesus; Holy Land;” the other: “Roman Period BCE 63–330 CE; Herod the Great enlarges the Temple; Time of Jesus; Christianity.” The chronological and terminological inaccuracies are both amusing and alarming. The labels provide these rather simple objects with a meaning that associates them with Herod’s Temple reconstruction in Jerusalem, its implied relevance to Jesus, and even its indirect tie with the site of Herodion, located near Bethlehem in the West Bank.

The most popular item among all Herodian period artifacts offered in the antiquities market is the so-called Herodian oil lamp, with the characteristic wheel-made round body and attached spatulate-type nozzle. The prices of the hundreds of Herodian oil lamps available in the shops of the “licensed” antiquities dealers, some of them authentic, others fakes, range between sixty and three hundred dollars. More affordable replicas can be purchased in some of the Old City souvenir shops for as little as ten dollars. Herodian oil lamps can also be purchased remotely, using vendors such as Amazon or Ebay. Some of them come from licensed dealers, some are fakes, others are replicas. Among those sold as “Herodian,” are some typical Byzantine or early Islamic period oil lamps. However, despite the fact that dealers are familiar with Herodian oil lamp typologies, they adjust the labels, as they know that this classification allows them to more easily sell their merchandise.

The Jerusalem heritage of King Herod is more accessible than that of any other historical or biblical figure. His material legacy clearly dominates the city’s landscape, both above the ground and under the surface. A century and a half of archaeological



Figure 7: Drawer with Herodian lamps in one of the Old City's antiquities stores. Photo by K. Galor.



Figure 8: Replicas of Herodian oil lamps sold in a souvenir shop of Jerusalem's Old City. Photo by K. Galor.

exploration and interpretation have enhanced the inherent power of Herod's physical heritage and have taught the public to recognize the highly distinct visual and material culture of his projects. Following in the footsteps of Jerusalem's first Christian explorers, whose missions were both religiously and politically motivated, the first Zionist excavators in the city felt drawn to this era associated at once with unprecedented growth as well as with ruthless destruction. For Christians, Herodian Jerusalem is associated with Jesus's ministry; for Jews it represents the abiding glory of the ancient city's Temple and priesthood. Like the crucifixion, the destruction of the Temple was intended by the Romans to show political supremacy over an apparently threatening spiritual force. For both Christianity and Judaism, however, precisely such attempts of physical annihilation have survived as key elements in the respective religious traditions. Herod's built legacy is thus a sort of tangible reminder of the Judean-Christian spiritual force, which has survived and persevered against the destructive forces of the Romans and throughout other difficult times of religious persecution. Jerusalem's material past is particularly meaningful in the context of Zionism, which from the beginning has placed great emphasis on reclaiming the land of the forefathers through physical labor and contact with its soil and stones. Fostering the visual and physical exposure and reconstruction of a mostly lost Herodian city has gained particular momentum in the context of Israel's occupation of East Jerusalem, where Zionist ambitions and the evangelical Christian support for Israeli policy overlap with unusual efficacy.

Today, locals and tourists can visit the archaeological sites, explore them physically, walk through them, touch them, look at them – in the Old City, in the National Parks, in museums, in both East and West Jerusalem. They can engage with them in real or virtual spaces, locally and online, from anywhere in the world. The Israeli government and various other Israeli institutions spend millions of dollars annually to enhance the public image of King Herod, who has evolved from a villain to a hero of the Judeo-Christian-identifying public. Much of this profile is motivated by religious, cultural, and economic aspirations. Those, however, cannot be separated from the political agenda that seeks to strengthen Israel's reach into East Jerusalem, using archaeology as a tool. Archaeological activity and the associated tourist industry are entirely controlled by Israel with little or no participation of Palestinian individuals or institutions. Herod's building initiatives in Jerusalem have left tangible traces; his reconstruction of the Temple Mount compound has undoubtedly remained one of Jerusalem's most significant landmarks. Solomon's alleged fortification wall in the Ophel or David's assumed palace wall and floor segment in Silwan – whose identifications have been refuted by most scholars – pale in comparison with this most ambitious undertaking. Furthermore, this Jerusalem project parallels additional Herodian constructions, which speckle the landscape of the West Bank, forming a chronological, cultural, and ideological chain of continuity and identification in the assertion of Jerusalem as the "eternal, united capital" of Israel.

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Endnotes

- 1 A preliminary version of this paper was presented at a conference entitled “Herodes – König von Judäa. Römerfreund, ‘Kindermörder,’ Baumeister” held at the Akademie Bad Boll, Germany, in February 2014. I am grateful to the organizers, especially Jürgen Zangenberg. I would also like to express my gratitude to Yonathan Mizrahi with whom I have discussed some of the facts and ideas presented in this paper, to the anonymous reviewers of *Jerusalem Quarterly*, and to Michael Steinberg for their numerous valuable suggestions.
- 2 Since the redrawing of Jerusalem’s municipal boundaries after 1967, no distinction is made between work conducted east or west of the Green Line. See Raphael Greenberg and Adi Keinan, *Israeli Archaeological Activity in the West Bank 1967–2007: A Sourcebook* (Jerusalem: Ostrakon, 2009), 1, 9.
- 3 On how the sanctity of the Jewish Temple gradually encompassed the entire Mount, following its destruction in 70 CE, see Yaron Z. Eliav, *God’s Mountain: The Temple Mount in Time, Place, and Memory* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005)
- 4 Lawrence D. Sporty, “Identifying the Curving Line on the Bar-Kokhba Temple Coin,” *Biblical Archaeologist* 46, no. 2 (1983): 121–23.
- 5 On the ark of the law in ancient synagogues, see Rachel Hachlili, “Torah Shrine and Ark in Ancient Synagogues: A Re-evaluation,” *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 116, no. 2 (2000): 146–183. On Temple symbolism in the ancient synagogue, see Steven Fine, “From Meeting House to Sacred Realm: Holiness and the Ancient Synagogue,” in *Sacred Realm: The Emergence of the Synagogue in the Ancient World*, ed. Steven Fine (New York: Oxford University Press and Yeshiva University Museum, 1996).
- 6 Charles William Wilson and Charles Warren, *The Recovery of Jerusalem: A Narrative of Exploration and Discovery in the Holy Land* (London: R. Bentley, 1871).
- 7 See for example, Shimon Gibson and David M. Jacobson, *Below the Temple Mount in Jerusalem: A Sourcebook on the Cisterns, Subterranean Chambers, and Conduits of the Haram al-Sharif* (Oxford: Tempus Reparatum, 1996); and Eilat Mazar, *The Walls of the Temple Mount* (Jerusalem: Shoham Academic Research and Publication, 2011).
- 8 On the importance of Jerusalem and its antiquities sites for American Evangelical Christians, see Roger Friedland and Richard Hecht, “The Symbol and the Stone: Jerusalem at the Millennium,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 558 (July 1998): 144–162.
- 9 See Katharina Galor and Hanswulf Bloedhorn, *The Archaeology of Jerusalem: From the Origins to the Ottomans* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 131–142, 182–198.
- 10 Pierre Benoit, “L’Antonie d’Hérode le Grand et le forum oriental d’Aelia Capitolina,” *Harvard Theological Review* 64 (1971): 135–67.
- 11 See Eilat Mazar and Benjamin Mazar, *Excavations in the South of the Temple Mount: The Ophel of Biblical Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1989); Meir Ben-Dov, *In the Shadow of the Temple: The Discovery of Ancient Jerusalem* (New York: Harpercollins, 1982); Ronny Reich and Yaakov Billig, “Jerusalem, Robinson’s Arch.” *Excavations and Surveys in Israel* 20 (2000): 135; and Mazar, *Discovering the Solomonic Wall in Jerusalem: A Remarkable Archaeological Adventure* (Jerusalem: Shoham Academic Research and Publication, 2011).
- 12 Eli Shukron, “Did Herod Build the Foundations of the Western Wall?” online at www.cityofdavid.org.il/sites/default/files/shukron-en.pdf (accessed 12 February 2015).
- 13 See www.archpark.org.il/virtual.shtml.
- 14 On the recent political implications of the religious associations for Jews and Muslims, see Yitzhak Reiter and Jon Seligman, “1917 to the Present: Al-Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount (Har ha-Bayit) and the Western Wall,” in *Where Heaven and Earth Meet: Jerusalem’s Sacred Esplanade*, ed. Oleg Grabar and Benjamin Z. Kedar (Jerusalem and Austin: Yad Ben-Zvi Press and University of Texas Press, 2009), 231–273; and Nazmi al-Jubeih, “1917 to the Present: Basic

- Changes, But Not Dramatic: Al-Haram al-Sharif in the Aftermath of 1967,” in *Where Heaven and Earth Meet*, 275–289.
- 15 Bahat and Ben-Dov describe the structural changes over time arguing in favor of a Herodian date. See: Dan Bahat, “Re-Examining the History of Solomon’s Stables” [in Hebrew], *Qadmoniot* 34 (2001): 125–130, especially 128–29; Meir Ben-Dov, “The Underground Vaults west of the Western Wall” [in Hebrew] *Qardom* 21–23 (1982): 102–5. On the remains of the Mosque of Mu’awiya, see Beatrice St. Laurent and Isam Awwad, “The Marwani Musalla in Jerusalem: New Findings,” *Jerusalem Quarterly* 54 (2013): 7–30.
 - 16 See Reiter and Seligman, “1917 to the Present,” 259–260. Mordechai Eliyahu, Israel’s Sephardi Chief Rabbi from 1983 to 1993 had already suggested that a synagogue be built on top of the Temple Mount. See Motti Inbari, *Jewish Fundamentalism and the Temple Mount: Who Will Build the Third Temple?* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009), 24.
 - 17 Elad, also known as the City of David Foundation, was established in 1986, and was originally committed to increase the Jewish presence in Silwan without any interest in archaeology. Since the mid-1990s, however, the foundation has turned into one of East Jerusalem’s main sponsor’s of archaeological activities, using cultural heritage as a means to strengthen the Jewish narrative and thus justifying Israel’s occupation of Silwan and other Palestinian neighborhoods. On the renovations of Solomon’s Stables and the Temple Mount Salvage Operation, also known as the Sifting Project, see Reiter and Seligman, “1917 to the Present,” 269; Jon Seligman, “Solomon’s Stables, the Temple Mount, Jerusalem: The Events Concerning the Destruction of Antiquities 1999–2001,” *Atiqot* 56 (2007): 33–53, especially 50–51; and Jubeh, “1917 to the Present,” 281–82, 288–89. On the significance of the renovations and the need to change the current political status quo of the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif compound, see Yusuf al-Natsha, *al-Musalla al-Marwani bayna atma’ al-madi wa makhatir al-mustaqbal* [The Marwani Mosque between Past Aspirations and Future Dangers] (Jerusalem: Idarat al-awqaf wa-l-shu’un wa-l-muqaddisat al-Islamiyya, 2012). On the history of the Islamic movement in Israel and its role in the context of Jerusalem’s cultural heritage, see Craig Larkin and Michael Dumper, “In Defense of al-Aqsa: The Islamic Movement inside Israel and the Battle for Jerusalem,” *Middle East Journal* 66, no. 1 (Winter 2012): 31–52.
 - 18 According to Bahat, most of the fill removed by the Islamic Movement of Israel post-dates the Ayyubid period renovations of this area. Bahat’s claim implies that since the fill post-dated the Ayyubid period, the removal had no impact on remains that could have been of importance to the site’s Jewish heritage. See Bahat, “Re-examing the History.”
 - 19 For a preliminary narrative of the excavation, see Nahman Avigad, *Discovering Jerusalem* (New York: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1983). For the final reports, see: Hillel Geva, *Jewish Quarter Excavations in the Old City of Jerusalem Conducted by Nahman Avigad, 1969–1982*, vols. 1–4 (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2000–2010); and Oren Gutfeld, *Jewish Quarter Excavations in the Old City of Jerusalem Conducted by Nahman Avigad, 1969–1982: Volume V, The Cardo (Area X) and the Nea Church (Areas D and T)* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2012).
 - 20 See Nadia Abu El-Haj, “Translating Truths: Nationalism, the Practice of Archaeology, and the Remaking of Past and Present in Contemporary Jerusalem,” *American Ethnologist* 25, no. 2 (1998): 166–188, especially 171–72; Nadia Abu El-Haj, *Facts on the Ground: Archaeological Practice and Territorial Self-Fashioning in Israeli Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 148–158.
 - 21 Avigad, *Discovering Jerusalem*, 120–139.
 - 22 The first archaeologist to supervise excavations in the Western Wall Tunnels was Meir Ben-Dov, replaced in 1985 by Dan Bahat. See Dan Bahat, “The Western Wall Tunnels” [in Hebrew], *Qadmoniot* 101–2 (1994): 38–48; Dan Bahat, *The Jerusalem Western Wall Tunnel* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 2013); and Dan Bahat and Solomon, “Innovations in the Excavations of the Western Wall Tunnels” [in Hebrew], *Judea and Samaria Research Studies* 11 (2002): 175–186. Between 2007 and 2010, Alexander Onn continued the excavations on behalf of the IAA. See Shlomit Weksler-Bdolah, Alexander Onn, Brigitte Ouahnouna, and Shua Kisilevitz, “Jerusalem, the Western Wall Plaza Excavations, 2005–2009: Preliminary Report,” *Hadashot Arkheologiyot* 121 (2009), online at www.hadashot-esi.org.il/report_detail_eng.aspx?id=1219 (accessed 12 February 2015).
 - 23 The informal contacts that existed between the Waqf and the IAA since 1967 came to an end after the opening of the Tunnel. See Reiter and

- Seligman, "1917 to the Present," 255.
- 24 The entire Second Intifada (2000–2005) is also commonly referred to as al-Aqsa Intifada. According to Reiter and Seligman, this term is used only by radical Islamic groups. See Reiter and Seligman, "1917 to the Present," 258.
 - 25 On the excavation, see Weksler-Bdolah et al., "Jerusalem"; and Yuval Baruch and Danny Weiss, "Jerusalem, the Western Wall Plaza: Final Report," *Hadashot Arkheologyot* 121 (2009), online at www.hadashot-esi.org.il/report_detail_eng.aspx?id=1285&mag_id=115 (accessed 12 February 2015). Regarding the problematic nature of the Beit Haliba construction, see Yonathan Mizrahi, *From Silwan to the Temple Mount: Archaeological Excavations as a Means of Control in the Village of Silwan and in Jerusalem's Old City – Developments in 2012* (Jerusalem: Emek Shaveh, 2013), 9, 14–16, online at alt-arch.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Frm-Sil-to-Tmpl-Mnt-English-Web-.pdf (accessed 12 February 2015).
 - 26 See Ronny Reich and Eli Shukron, "The Second Temple Period Central Drainage Channel in Jerusalem – upon the Completion of the Unearthing of Its Southern Part in 2011," in *City of David Studies of Ancient Jerusalem: The 12th Annual Conference*, ed. Eyal Meiron (Jerusalem: Megalim, City of David Institute for Jerusalem Studies, 2011), 68–95; and Mizrahi, *From Silwan*, 6–7, 29–30.
 - 27 Hershel Shanks, "The Siloam Pool: Where Jesus Cured the Blind Man," *Biblical Archaeology Review* 31, no. 5 (2005): 16–23.
 - 28 Plans for this work were submitted by the Jerusalem Development Authority (JDA) in 2011, a project to be conducted under the aegis of PAMI. See Mizrahi, *From Silwan to the Temple Mount*, 9–13.
 - 29 On the sources and breakdown of the funding, see Emek Shaveh, Principal Archaeological Activities in the Old City of Jerusalem in 2011 and Their Socio-Political Impact (Jerusalem: Emek Shaveh, 2011), online at alt-arch.org/en/oldcityreport (accessed 12 February 2015).
 - 30 See mission statement of the Temple Mount Institute, online at www.templeinstitute.org/main.htm
 - 31 On the model and various building initiatives in Jerusalem, as well as the religious and ideological aspirations of Aish HaTorah, see "Aish HaTorah International: Jerusalem Building," online at www.aish.com/ai/jb/ (accessed 12 February 2015).
 - 32 Noah Wiener, "A Virtual Tour of the Temple Mount," *Bible History Daily*, 17 July 2014, online at www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-sites-places/temple-at-jerusalem/a-virtual-tour-of-the-temple-mount/ (accessed 12 February 2015).
 - 33 Joshua Davis, "Apocalypse Now: How a Hologram, a Blimp, and a Massively Multiplayer Game Could Bring Peace to the Holy Land," *Wired* 12, no. 4 (April 2004), online at archive.wired.com/wired/archive/12.04/holtland.html (accessed 12 February 2015).
 - 34 Annabel Jane Wharton, *Selling Jerusalem: Relics, Replicas, Theme Parks* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 220.
 - 35 See Carol Strickland, "King Herod, Master Builder, at Israel Museum," *Art in America*, 26 March 2013, online at www.artinamericamagazine.com/news-features/news/king-herod-master-builder-at-israel-museum/ (accessed 12 February 2015).
 - 36 Ehud Netzer, "Herod, Master Builder," in *Herod the Great: The King's Final Journey*, ed. Silvia Rozenberg and David Mevorah (Jerusalem: Israel Museum, 2013), 80.
 - 37 See Joel Greenberg, "Museum Exhibit Becomes Front in Israeli-Palestinian Struggle," *Washington Post*, 13 February 2013; Jonathan Cook, "Herod Exhibit Digs Up Controversy," *al Jazeera*, 1 March 2013, online at www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/02/201322881122698399.html (accessed 12 February 2015).
 - 38 According to Kersel, in 2003–2004 there were 80 dealers licensed by the IAA, of which 75 were located in Jerusalem's Old City. Morag M. Kersel, "The Trade in Palestinian Antiquities," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 33 (Winter 2008): 33.