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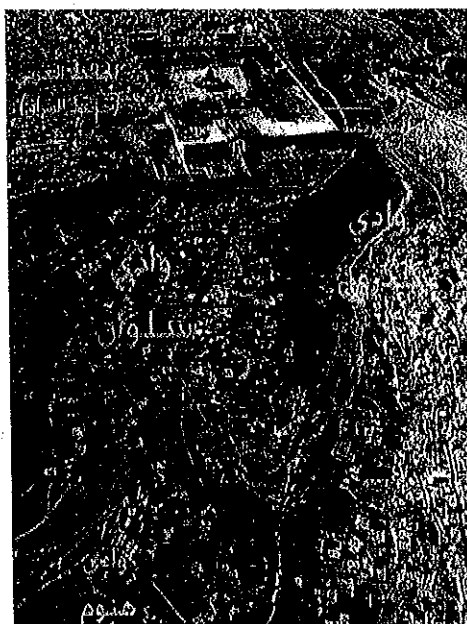
## Israeli violations in the Occupied City of Jerusalem and the Surrounding Area\*

Prof. Dr. Mo'awiya Ibrahim,

Representative of Jordan to

the UNESCO World Heritage Committee

Jerusalem is situated on the southern spur of a plateau in a central area of Palestine, lying about 800 meters above sea level. It looks higher because of the depression of the Jordan Valley that lies about 400 meters below sea level. Jerusalem has been populated for more than 5,000 years in the past, witnessing more than main epochs, with each characterized with a unique building style. It is to be noted that officials in charge of the city used to remove the monuments left over by earlier epochs.



..... photograph showing topography  
of Jerusalem

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\* The author had the chance to make field visits over the past few years, during which he could identify Israeli violations and encroachments on the ground and documented some of them. He also took some photographs contained therein, unless otherwise indicated.

The city was inhabited by the Canaanites (circa 3000-1500 BC, Jebusites (1500-1000 BC), Jews (?-750 BC), Babylonians (-539), Persians (539-332 BC), Greeks (332-70 BC). Romans (70 BC-423 AD, Byzantines (324-638 AD, Muslim Arabs (638-1099 AD), Crusaders (1099-1149 AD), Ayyubids and Mameluks (1187 -1517 AD) and Ottomans (1517-1917 AD).

Palestine was subject to the British Mandate from 1917 to 1948 when the Israeli entity emerged and the West Bank, including old Jerusalem, was subordinated to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and was occupied by Israel in 1967.

The majority of these people and human groups held Jerusalem as a sacred city and as such it has been one of the most famous cities of the world and the focus of the three Heavenly Religions. References traced on Jerusalem are estimated at more than 7,000.

Archeologists from various countries of the Western world have alternately conducted excavations in Jerusalem. Starting from theologian E. Robinson (1856), the majority and earliest of those excavations were aimed to discover Biblical monuments. He was followed by the British C. Wilson and C. Warren (1864, 1865, 1867-1870). Between 1894 and 1897, a joint British-American team was formed under British architect F. Bliss and American Biblical researcher A. Dickie. They opened up a number of trenches and ducts in the area of al-Quds Sanctuary and around the city walls. The French archeologist Clemont Ganneau sought to trace what was called the Jihoun and focused on the eastern slope. Before World War I (1909-1911 a British team, under the supervision of M. Parker resumed their excavations in order to identify the Temple Mount in the al-Haram al-Shareef.

The first Jewish excavations were carried out during 1913, 1914, 1934 and 1924 under the French E.Weill in the eastern ridge in search of the tomb of David and other Jewish kings, but their mission failed.

Under the British Mandate (since the end of World War I) time was quite opportune for dozens of British archeologists, such as R.A. Macalister and J.G. Duncan (1923- 1926), J. Crowfoot and G. Fitzgerald

and Hamilton (1927- 1928) and R. Hamilton (1937- 1938, 1940) to continue excavations in Jerusalem.

The most important of those were large-scale scientific excavations were made in the southeaster slopes of the city during the period from 1961 up to the occupation of Jerusalem in 1967. These excavations were supervised by the famous British archeologist Kathleen Canyon. Thee most significant findings of these excavations were that from the 18<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> Century BC, the walls of Jerusalem ran along the eastern slope outside the existing walls and the Holy Sanctuary of al-Quds. Since the Israeli occupation of Jerusalem excavations in Jerusalem have been pursed up till town However, no discoveries have been so far made as to vestiges of the old city from old biblical eras.

Jerusalem has not been subject of in-depth Arab field studies. However, restoration and maintenance works undertaken by the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, through its Ministry of Endowments, covered the Dome of the Rock, al-Aqsa Mosque and a number of the old city districts. The Technical Office | the Old City Rebuilding Program conducted a comprehensive survey of the landmarks of the old city, analyzed its districts and renovated various building. It also conducted a study of demographic, economic and social conditions as well as the status of institutions and entities operating there.

It is hard to count the plethora of references published on Jerusalem in different languages. But they mostly made with political and religious motives and were influenced by the conditions of the Middle East and religious interests represented in the Holy City. And so motivated were the archeological excavations and survey that covered Jerusalem and the surrounding area. Those motives were forced into interpretations of archeological discoveries reflecting biblical goals or views that are not per necessity in harmony with the unearthed objects.

Studies by Kafafi and Schick (2007) reveal a significant part of facts and conclusions mad out of archeological realities and ancient historical

sources, particularly as regards those related to Jebusites, Egypt and Mesopotamia.

This contribution was preceded by a three-volume study issued by the University of Topengan in 1994, titled "History of Architecture in Jerusalem from the Copper Stone Age to Ottoman Era. In spite of the fallacies contain therein, this was an important study in the Stone Age Klaus Bieberstein and Hanswulf Bloedhorn, 1994).

Apparently, the Israeli authorities had already had their own conception of their plans for the city and the surrounding area, even before they occupied Jerusalem. Israeli actions in this respect included the following:



The most significant features of change were in al-Buraq ( Wailing ) area and al-Magharba ( Moors') district that was demolished by the

▪ ▪ ▪ Demolition of houses and transfer of population:

Since the initiation of the Jewish settlement policy, new districts outside its walls were to house Jewish immigrants. Since the Zionist occupation in 1948 and after, Israel had sought to radically change the demographic and physical structure of Jerusalem by demolishing Arab houses and transferring them out.

As part of its schemes, the Israeli occupation forces have recently demolished the Mores (Magharba) and al-Sharaf districts, expelled their residents, confiscated or purchase, through devious and fabricated means, residential buildings within the Islamic

quarter in order to infiltrate and tight control. Demolition or seizure of their houses of Jerusalemites have been still pursued by settlers and Jewish societies active in this field. Residents of Jerusalem were arrested or banished.

Changing the city map and building settlements within and outside the city:

By expanding the construction of Israeli settlements, Israel has always sought to change the landmarks of Jerusalem. It also annexed the villages of Bait Hanaina, SourBaher, al-Isawiyya and Kafr Oqb to Jerusalem. The Israeli Government has consistently pursued its plans of urban expansion within Jerusalem, creating a belt of Israeli settlements, including Ma'ale Adomim, Pisghat Za'iv, Avir Yacouv and Ghosh Atzion, on the periphery of the enlarged city. While these settlements were linked with convenient roads to make urban texture more coherent, Palestinian urban expansion was disrupted and demolished. At present, the Israeli occupation authorities are carrying out a new settlement scheme



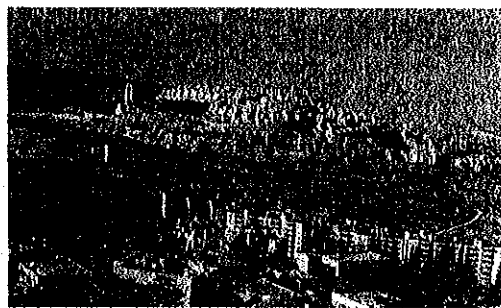
Ma'ale Adomim settlement

involving the construction of 180 settlement units south of Jerusalem, having confiscated about 67 denims of occupied Palestinian territories and demolished houses there. To this end, the Israeli occupation

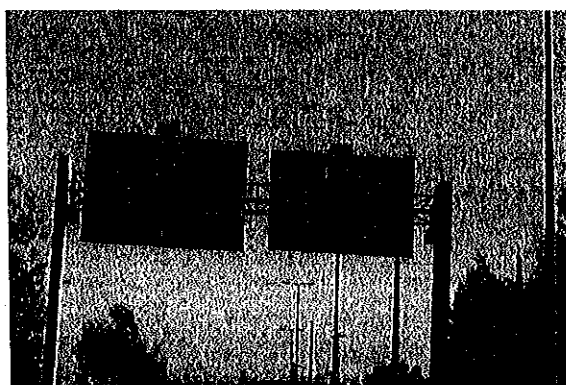
authorities fabricate the so-called law of trying stones rather than people. This racist law allows occupation authorities to demolish houses even though they have building permits and makes it easy to circumvent law for settlement expansion purposes. In addition to these residential settlement units, about 30 denims will be assigned as green areas and public utilities.



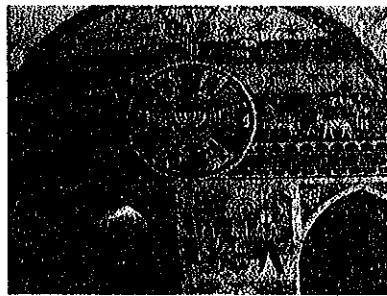
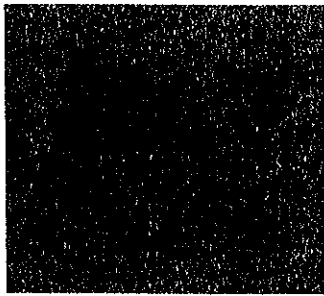
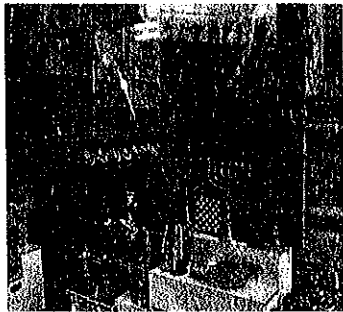
**Abu-Ghunaim settlement**



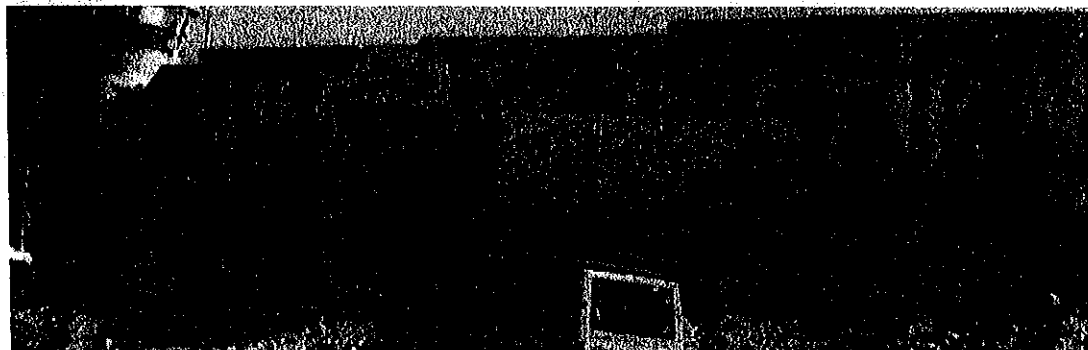
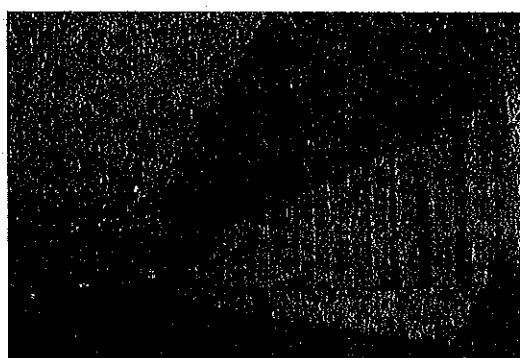
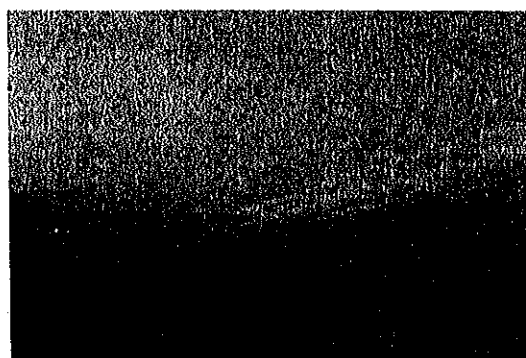
**An Israeli settlement around  
Jerusalem**



**Original Arabic names of street names and public buildings in the City are changed  
into Hebrew ones**



**Conventional Jerusalemite and Palestinian products and industries in shops were replaced with Israeli-made products bearing Jewish and Zionist symbols**



**The separating wall with examples of slogans and expressive signs protesting against the wall and Israeli occupation and calling for peace**

**Occupation authorities replaced Arab names of streets, lanes and historical landmarks with Hebrew names and conventional**



Jerusalemite products in shops with Israeli-made products bearing Jewish and Zionist symbols.

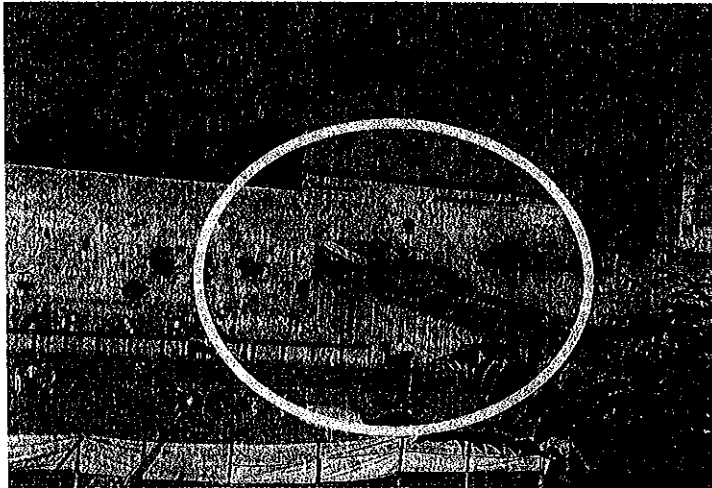
#### Archeological excavations:

UNESCO has adopted several resolutions denouncing and condemning flagrant violations perpetrated by the Israeli occupation authorities in the occupied territories and religious places in Jerusalem. It condemned excavations undertaken by the Israeli occupation authorities within the bounds of al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock. These excavations threaten the old Jerusalem site entered on the List of World Heritage and the List of Vulnerable World Heritage.

Following occupation of Jerusalem in 1967, the Israelis started unlawful excavations in south-western area parallel to the Holy Sanctuary (al-Haram). Contrary to expectations, they discovered a series of Umayyad palaces, in addition to Byzantine archeological remains. Still not disappointed at these excavations, the Israelis secretly started during the 1980s to excavate into al-Haram area and to trace the underground tunnel running along the Western Wall of al-Haram, running from the Wailing (al-Buraq) (beneath al-Tankaziyya School) to al-Ghawanmah Gate( lying at the northwestern corner of al-Haram). These excavations caused cleavages to the overlying buildings, such as the Ottoman School that date back to Arab-Islamic eras.

The Israelis also excavated a number of tunnels: the so-called 495-long Hashmonime tunnel that dates back to Ummayad, Ayyubid, Mameluke and European eras and an underground tunnel that runs eastwards from the Dome of the Rock to the entrance of Qaitbey fountain ( Sabeel Quatbey) well ( Warren' Gate). Secret excavations continued into the tunnels, thus endangering the safety of the Sanctuary program Jerusalem. Excavation works were carried out under umbrellas to screen the discovered finds.

### **Al-Magharba (Moors') Gate:**



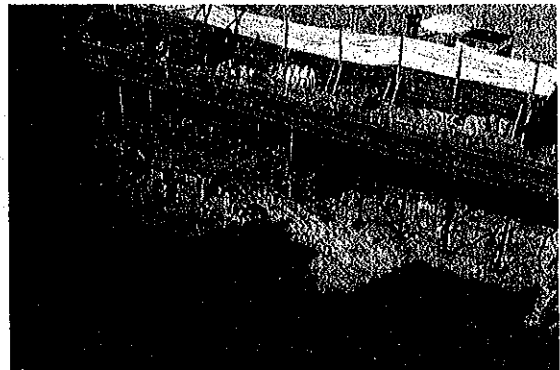
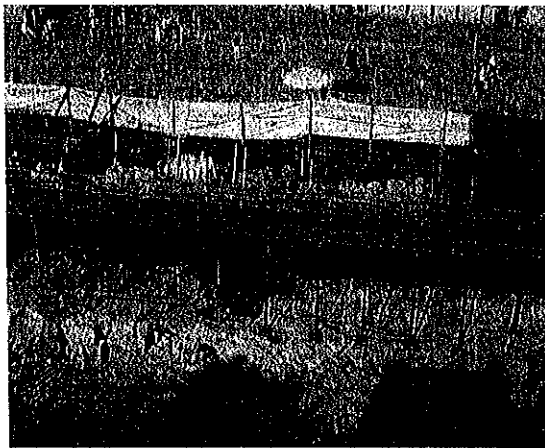
The demolished al-Magharba ( Moors') district and the bridge leading to al-Magharba ( Moors') Gate

Since 1967, the Israeli authorities seized al-Magharba district, particularly as it overlooks al-Buraq Wall ( that Israelis call Wailing Wall and claim it is part of the western wall of their so-called Temple) surrounding al-Aqsa. The Israelis completely destroyed the area and turned it into what they called the Wailing Area. In the meantime, they built an alternative bridge over the area leading to al-Magharba (Moors') Gate and on to al-Aqsa Mosque. To allow Israeli police and occupation forces to break into it.

Muslims were denied access to al-Buraq Wall, preventing them from using al-Magharba (Moors') Gate. Keys to this historical gate were confiscated. Motivated by false claims as to the so-called Temple, the Israeli authorities pursued excavations into al-Buraq area (formerly al-Magharba district) up to the western wall of al-Aqsa Mosque. In part of the tunnel they built a Jewish synagogue. These excavations caused rarefaction of the hill underlying the Magharba Gate road. They removed the falling earth and fall of the Wall, with no consideration for any Islam monuments that

may contained therein. In stead of restoring it, the Israelis announced their intent to pull down the whole of this historical road, which is considered the gravest violation to al-Aqsa Mosque since 1967.

The occupation authorities have developed a plan to build fly-over leading to the upper Magharba Gate south west to the Holy Sanctuary of Jerusalem on the archeological remains of al-Magharba district to the west. This fly-over distorts the general view if the area, particularly the Sanctuary from the west side. This fly-over is to be built on a large number of columns, which can destroy wide spaces of the ancient monuments under the fly-over.



Archeological excavations

### **Silwan (David's Town)**

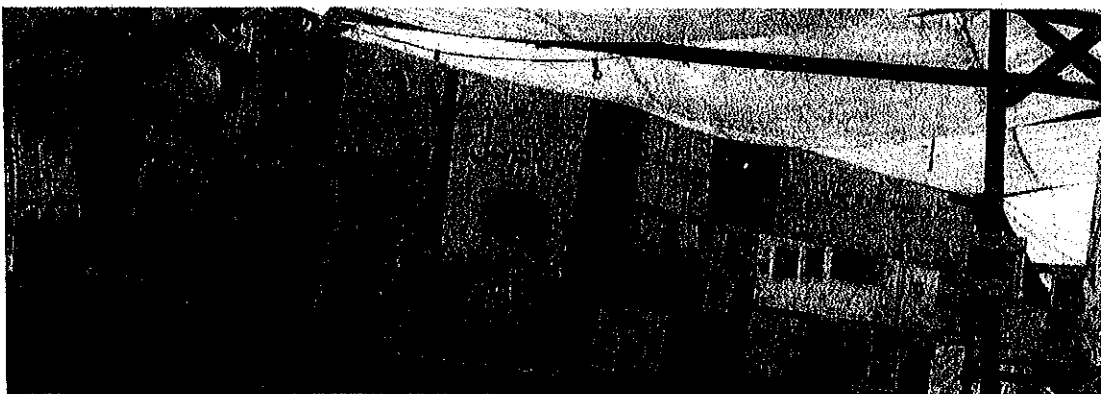
The Israeli occupation authorities are conducting excavations to discover what they call "David's Town" beneath the houses of indigenous Arab inhabitants,



**An overview of Salwan Area**

exposing these houses to cracks or collapse. The excavations are made by wide earth deflations with the

sides retained by wooden and steel strutting. Israelis claim that the monuments discovered in these areas are extensions of "David's Town". In fact, these excavations are part of the scheme of judaizing Jerusalem and the surrounding area as well as a means of misleading tourist and foreign visitors coming in to identify the history and antiquities of Jerusalem. The Israelis have also a similar scheme to demolish al-Bustan district, which is inhabited by a large number of Silwan residents, in order to complete their archeological excavations in the area.



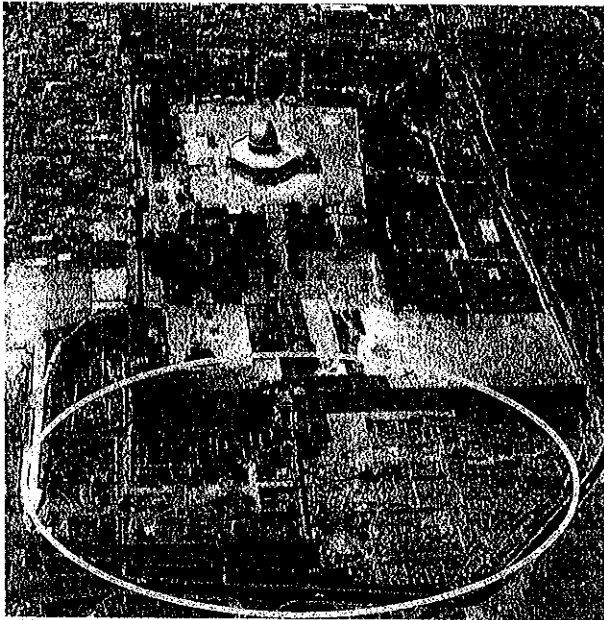
**Protests against Israeli acts of demolishing house of al-Bustan district in Salwan**



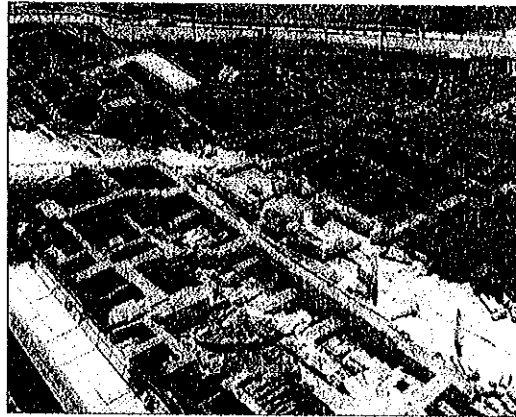
Israeli explorations in Salwan

## **Excavations of Umayyad palaces:**

Since 1968, Israeli archeologists have been conducting large-scale excavations, hoping to find what can be related to biblical monuments that earlier archeologists failed to.

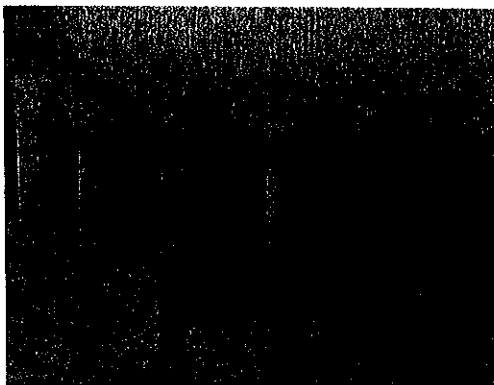


An overview of the the City of Jerusalem showing excavations of Umayyad palaces



Remains of Umayyad palaces south of al-Aqsa Mosque

## **Roman Cardu Street**



Roman Cardu Street

This main street, marked with its colonnades, dates back to the Roman era. The street was discovered by Nathman Avigad from the Archeological Institute of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. As a form of the Israeli judaization process of this significant landmark, the street was renovated, with a model of a candelabra erected between columns. The shops lying on both sides of this street were renovated anew to be used by Zionist merchants. There lies a drainage canal beneath the street that leads to a small semi-amphitheater. As such, this street was known as the main trading streets in Byzantine Jerusalem. The discovery of Cardu Street led to a perception of the plan of the city of Jerusalem during the Roman-Byzantine era as shown in the famous mosaic Madpa map. These excavations will put to risk some districts and buildings in Jerusalem or even pull down some of them.

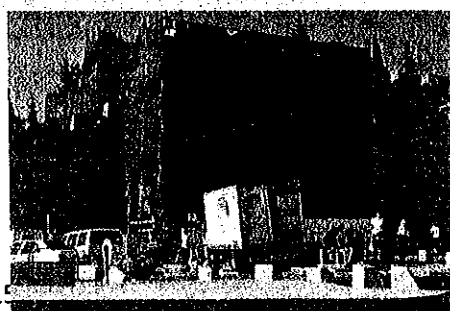


ing women recruits



A model of Hebrew candelabra mid-way in Cardu Street

(google search/cardo



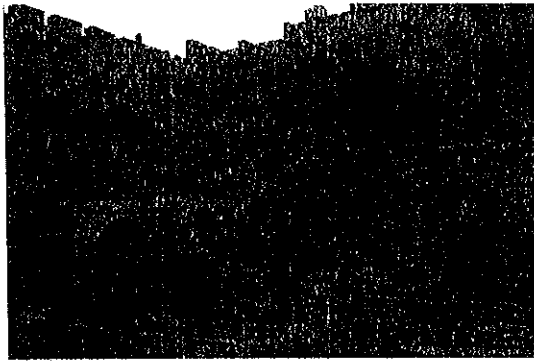
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Archeological excavations and renovation works being undertaken under cover

Excavations around al-Aqsa Mosque:

A number of Israeli excavations and renovation works are currently made under cover in the area of al-Aqsa Mosque. Prominent among archeologists who worked in this area was Mazar; he discovered landmarks from the Roman era, including a relatively intact bakery and a bath house as well as remains of a third building lying south east of those structures. He also discovered other remains from the late Roman era, including Latin inscriptions, some of which showed names of emperors and leaders from the Roman era. Also found were bronze and marble statues, precious stone, coins, jewelry and a clay seal belonging to a Roman legion in addition to large quantities of other archeological artifacts.





Archeological excavations being undertaken by the Israeli occupation forces around al-Aqsa Mosque

### **Mount Zion:**

Between 1970 and 1981, Israeli archeologists, including Magen Broshi conducted excavations in the Mount Zion area. These included the Armenian Park, Christ Church, alongside the southern and western side of Jerusalem Wall, the House of Caiaphas area, Zion's Gate and the Ayyubid Gate at the southern end of Cardu (Area E).

Mount Zion comprises the south-western hill of Jerusalem, including the Armenian district and what is known as David's Tomb, beyond the wall to the south. Found also were remains dating back to the Metal Era, including homes, pottery remains and some relics of fortifications, stone catapults, tombs, human and animals statutes and IMLK seal inscribed on pottery ware handles.

During the Hellenistic era, Mount Zion was incorporated in the city of al-Hishmanin that was rebuilt as the Supreme City during the time of Great Herod in the First Century, as mentioned by historian Josephus Flavius. The main finds were remains from the Byzantine, early Islamic, Crusade, Ayyubid and Ottoman eras. Discovered also were a macadamized street that ran parallel to

the Roman Cardu Street, houses dating back to the Abbasid and Ayyubid eras, pottery remains, coins and small finds.

**The Jewish district:**

During the period 1969- 1982, archeological excavations were made in the Jewish district under the supervision of Nahman Avigad on behalf of the Hebrew University Institute of Archeology, the Israeli Discovery Society and the Israeli Antiquity Authority. These excavations unearthed remains of a burned house in Area B on the eastern edge of the Jewish district, dating back to the First Century AD in the area overlooking al-Aqsa Mosque. With a total area of 200 square meters, the house comprised several rooms, a kitchen and other utilities. According to the findings of the excavators, the house was deliberately set on fire by the Roman army.

Excavations by Ben Yamin Mazar during the period 1978 -1986 focused on the Herodian or the early Roman era from the First Century BC to the Second Century AD, in addition to remains from the late Roman era in the Second and Third AD.

**Jerusalem railway "tramway":**

Jerusalem railway "tramway" project basically aims to link West to East Jerusalem and the settlements in East Jerusalem and its suburbs. The tramway line starts from the Bishat Za'iv through Shi'vat to Mount al-Masharif and then to the area parallel to the northern wall of Old Jerusalem. There are plans for the 14- km line to partially pass through both the western and eastern sides of East Jerusalem, including through about 6 km of the West Bank area.

This project will have negative effects on Jerusalem and its surroundings; it distorts the character of the city, causes fractures to its walls and other surrounding landmarks and causes damage to ancient monuments, particularly in the area parallel to the wall

to north-west, including remains from Arab –Islamic eras, through the work of bulldozers and other machinery.



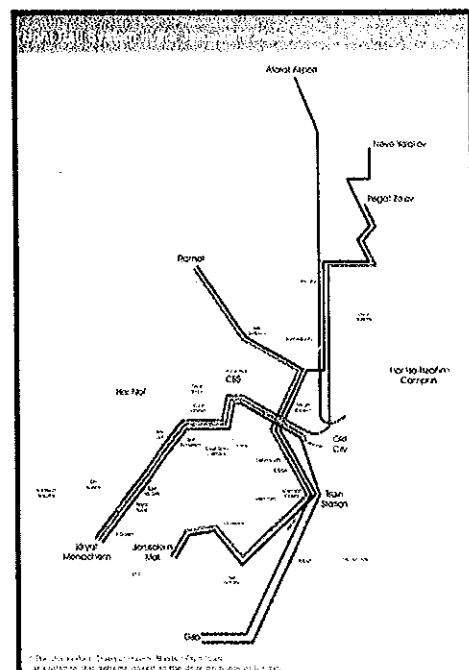
Israeli supervision of the progress of a project to build a railway line along the northwestern corner of the old Jerusalem wall, photo shows remains of ancient monuments being removed



Railway building works using heavy machinery by the side of historical Jerusalem walls above ancient monuments



An advanced phase of implementing the Jerusalem tramway project

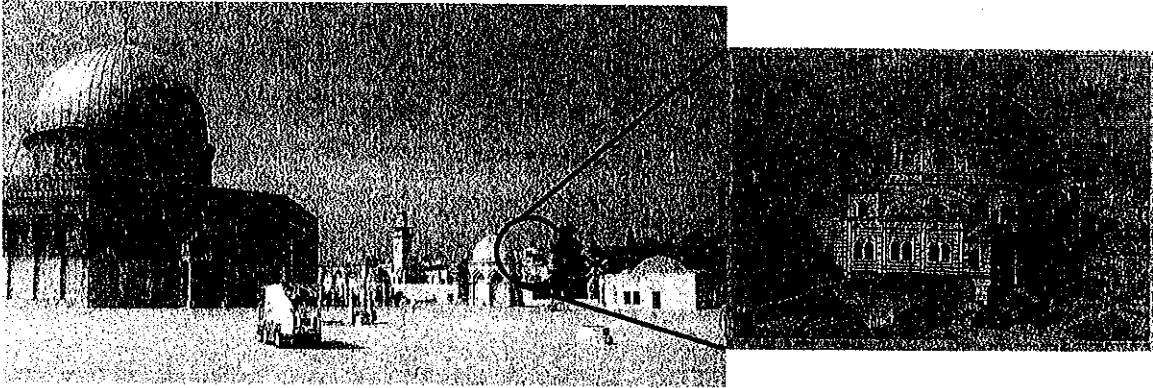


### **Hurva Synagogue:**

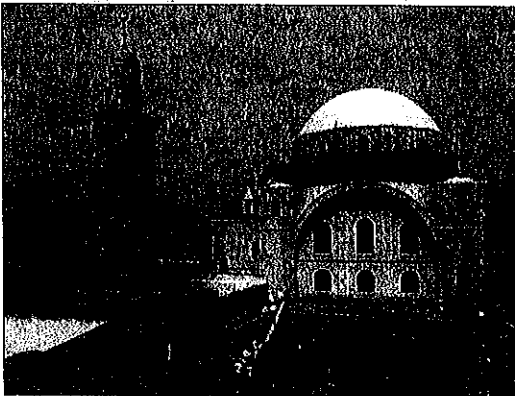
**On March 15, 2010, the Israeli occupation authorities dedicated the newly rebuilt and renovated Hurva Synagogue built an Islamic endowment land and a part of the Omari Mosque that is aligned with the Mosque in what was called as ash-Sharaf district in the heart of the old city of Jerusalem.**

**The purpose of rebuilding this tall synagogue with a large dome was to create Jewish building in Jerusalem to compete with the Dooms Day Church and the Dome of the Rock.**

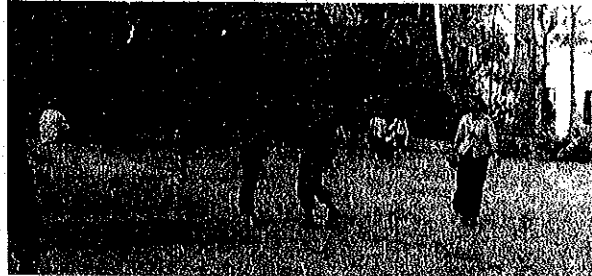
There is another Jewish synagogue called Al-Ain Bath that lies only 50 meters away from al-Aqsa Mosque in the heart of the Islamic district. The synagogue is visited daily by hundreds of settlers and tourists. The occupation authorities continue to excavate beneath this synagogue.



Alteration of major landmarks, overall view of the old City of Jerusalem, through building structures and the City.



كنيس الخراب و تعدياته على المسجد العمري

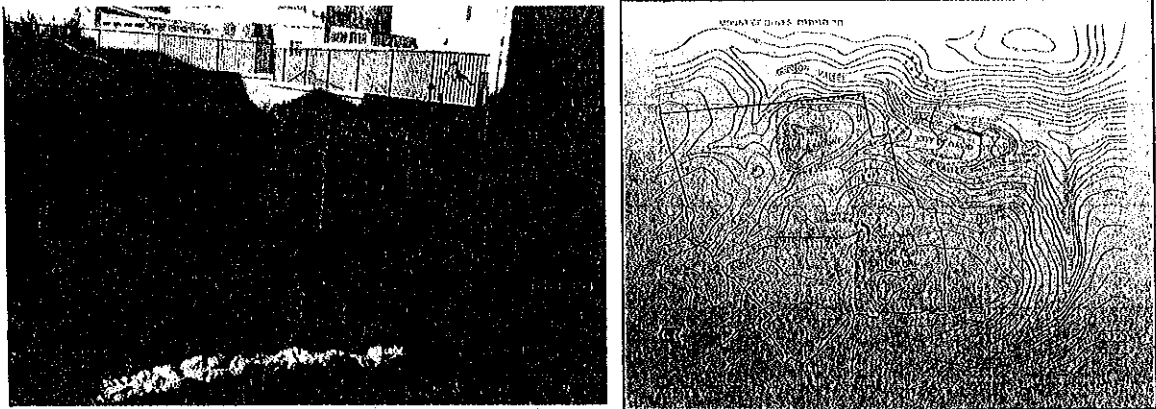


Israeli occupation forces present at the court of David Synagogue

### Israeli perception of the City of David and Solomon:

A number of Israeli archeologist are trying to relate some architectural remains to the First millennium BC so as to fit in with their perceptions and prepositions for the City if Jerusalem during the time of David and Solomon. And so they did with some monuments discovered earlier. However, a number of international, including Israeli archeologists such as Israel Finkelsfein, and Niels Silberman and Za'iv Herzog objected to that association; even some of them said stated that they had never

found a single crust of pottery of what is called the ancient Israeli era,

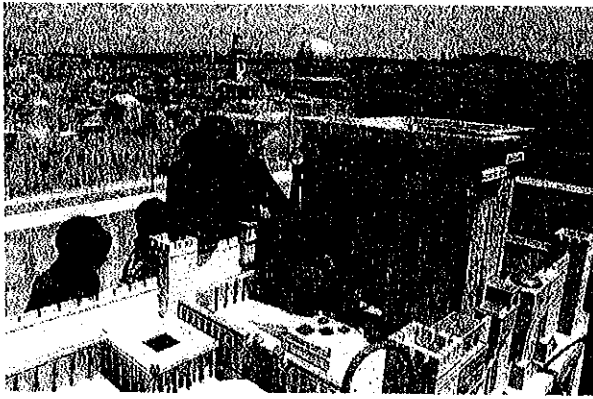


Master plan showing the Jerusalem wall in the Iron Age ( as claimed by some Israeli archeologists and a wall with unidentified date or nature

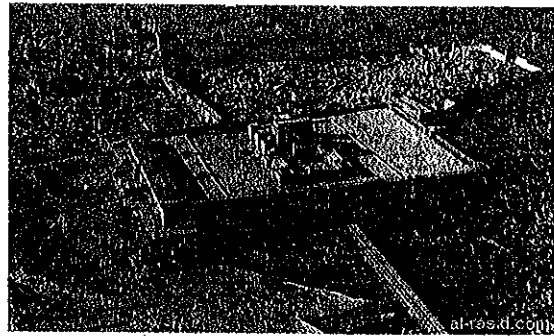
#### **Israeli perception of rebuilding the Temple:**

Some Israeli associations and organizations are supporting and financing the process of rebuilding the alleged Temple that they call Temple Mount, claiming that it lies beneath the Holy Quds Sanctuary. The underground excavation pit to risk al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock.

In 1988, a group called "Sons of the Temple" was founded by Yraliel Arbil. It obtained an official Israeli license to operate under the name of "Science, research and Temple Rebuilding Foundation " . Members of the foundation raise money and promote this project.



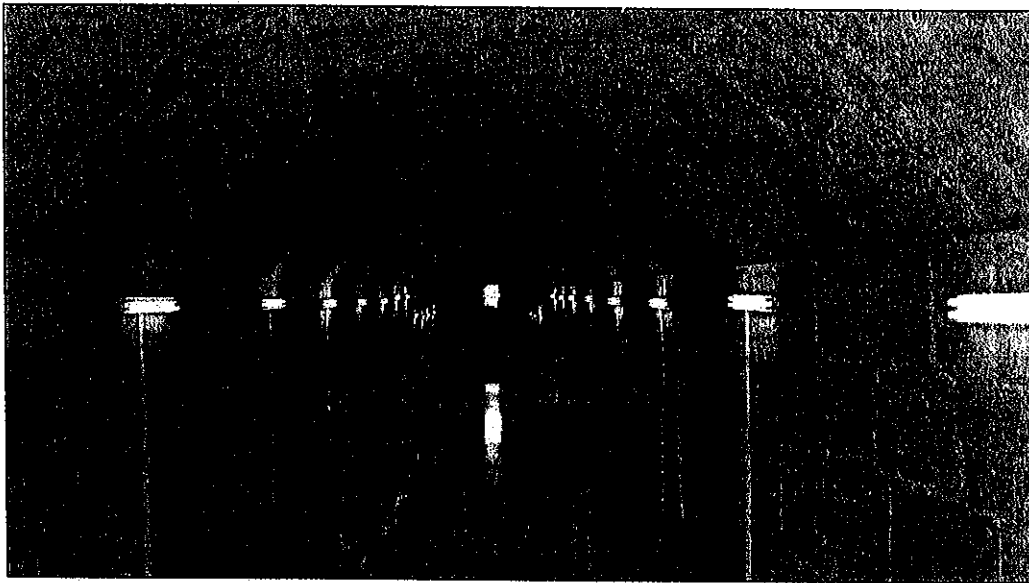
Conceptual and actual preparations for building the alleged Temple ( Temple model)



Conceptual plan to re-build the Third Temple within the sanctuary of al-Aqsa Mosque

(Google search /temple)

### Israeli plans for endangering al-Aqsa Mosque and al-Marwani Prayer Area:

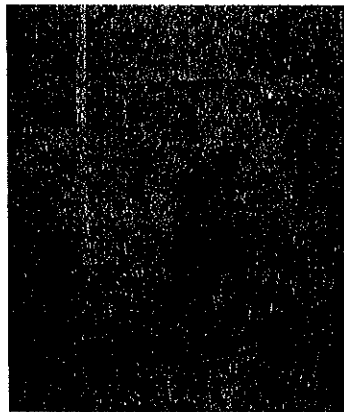


Entrance of al-Marawani Prayer Room

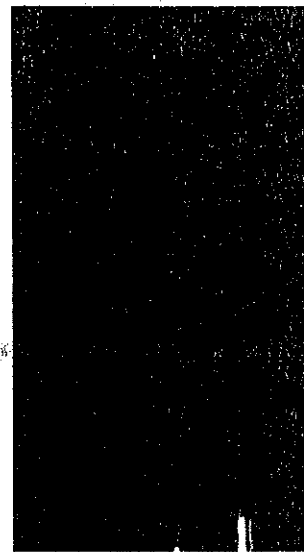
Endangering al-Aqsa Mosque and al-Marwani Prayer Area had been an ongoing theme in Zionist ideology, claiming that this is the "Land of Promise". Zionist believe that for good to prevail, al-Aqsa Mosque should be pulled down and the alleged Solomon's Temple be built in its place. Therefore, excavations were started beneath the foundation of al-Aqsa Mosque with purpose of unsettling them and consequently pulling its structure apart, let alone earlier attempts to burn it.



Renovation works inside al-Marawani Prayer Room



Erosion of the stone column of the Prayer Room



Weathering effects on the ceiling of al-Marawani Prayer Room

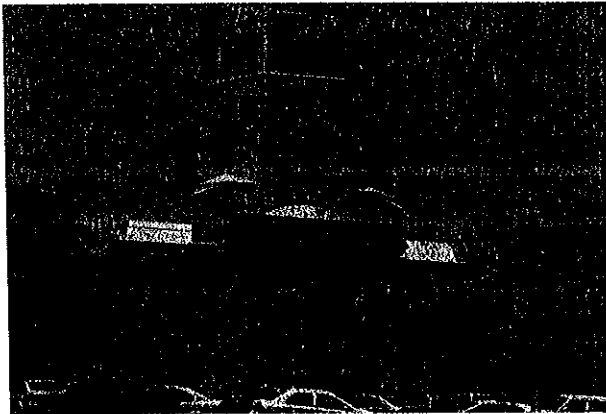
These illegitimate excavations by the Zionist will lead to the collapse of al-Marawani and Southern Prayer Areas as well as breakdowns in buildings nearby al-Aqsa Mosque. Al-Marawani Prayer Area lies beneath the south eastern forecourts of al-Aqsa Mosque, with its southern and eastern walls extending along both walls of al-Aqsa Mosque. The occupation authorities also demolished parts of the Umayyad palaces adjoining the Prayer Area and with the purpose of expanding the court before the trilateral gate to the south, which has



remained closed for decades. They might be planning to re-open the southern gate as the main entrance to the proposed synagogue.

The Israeli occupation authorities scheme, by controlling Al-Marawani Prayer Area, to seize al-Aqsa Mosque in two phases: first to seize the underground area beneath and the Prayer Areas and second to seize the Mosque itself and then carry out their scheme of building the alleged Temple.

#### **The Palestinian Antiquity Museum:**

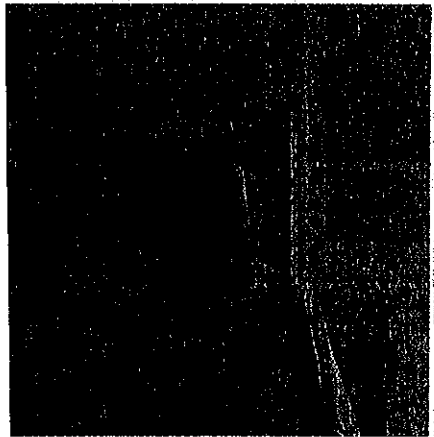


**The Palestinian Antiquity Museum**

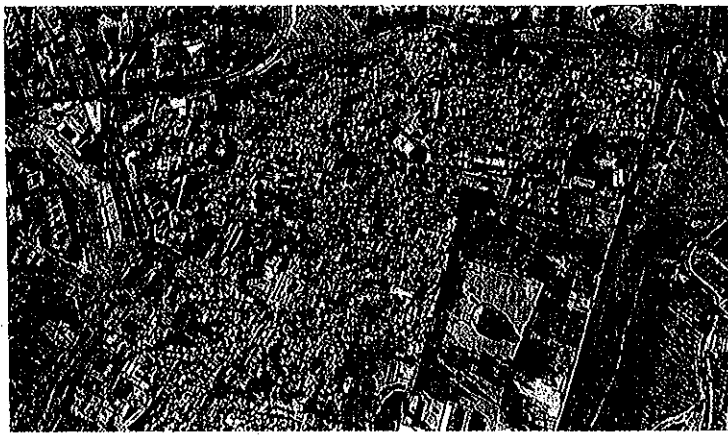
The Museum lies opposite to the north-eastern corner of Jerusalem Wall. Built in 1930 during the British Mandate on Palestine with a donation of US Dollar 2 million by John Rockefeller. The museum (known also as Rockefeller's Museum) was opened to the public in 1938. The museum was run by a world-level board of trustees, until nationalized by the Jordanian Government in 1966.

Following the occupation in 1967, the museum was used as the seat of the Israeli Antiquity Authority; the Jordanian Antiquity Authority staff were arbitrarily discharged and replaced with

Israelis. The museum contains monuments unearthed from both eastern and western banks, including the Dead Sea manuscripts. Following the seizure of Jerusalem, these manuscripts were confiscated and moved to the West side of the city by the occupation authorities and deposited in a special museum called "the Shrine of the Book". The international scientific committee stabled by the Jordanian Government to conduct research and studies on the manuscripts was dissolved by Israel. Furthermore, Israel issued publications and staged exhibitions in Western countries without consulting the committee. They even falsely claimed ownership o and misrepresented facts about the dates of discovery of the manuscripts.



An Israeli museum worker with a sign in the background reading "the Palestinian Antiquity Museum" in lower archives floor of the museum"



the Palestinian Antiquity Museum

the Stork Tower

An overall view of the city of Jerusalem showing its wall and the location of the Stork Tower " Burj al-Google )Laqlaq", and the Palestinian Antiquity Museum in the northeastern corner of the Holy Sanctuary

Worthy of note is that the manuscripts were found in Khirbat Qamaran and the surrounding caverns and sites that lie on the western bank of the Dead Sea within the Jordanian territories. It was the Jordanian Antiquity that had arranged for the studies and exploration works and procured manuscript clippings from the Bedouins of the surrounding areas, spending more than JD 80,000 on the project out of its own budget.

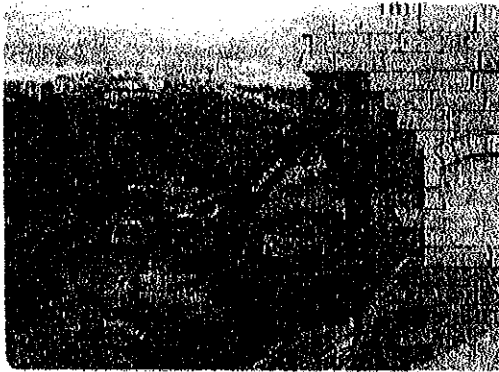
It is also worthy of note that Khirbat Qamaran and the surrounding caverns and sites re registered on the Palestinian Tentative List of World Heritage.

#### The Stork Tower (*Burj al-Laqlaq* :)

Lying at the northeastern corner of the city, the Stork Tower is a strategically located beautiful elevated area of about 14 denims. The Israeli occupation authorities have been trying to control this area, by demolishing Palestinian houses, confiscating land and harassing population. They have also tried several times to burn down and seize the Stork Tower Society, but their arbitrary measures were resisted by hundreds of Palestinians, including residents of the area.

The Israeli occupation authorities have also conducted archeological excavations on the western side of the Stork Tower and found architectural remains of a residential nature dating

back to Arab-Islamic eras. But since the finds were not related to biblical history, the site was turned into a garbage dumping area.



Demolition of houses of Jerusalemite  
Palestinians in the Stork Tower

#### **Jerusalem on the World Heritage List:**

As part of Israeli attempts to judaize and control Jerusalem, the Israeli delegation to the World Heritage Committee meetings in Quebec, Canada, 2008 submitted a nomination file on "the Sacred Basin" for inclusion into the Israeli List of World Heritage. The Sacred Basin comprised Mount Zion, Silwan and the Tombs. However, representatives of Arab state-members manage to defeat the application and it still remains that the nomination file as a whole removed from the Israeli Tentative List Of World Heritage, based on the fact that it contradicts with international legitimacy resolutions as these zones lie within Arab territories occupied in 1967, as endorsed by the Committee Resolution No. 25 of 2001. Concerted Arab diplomatic efforts, including by the Arab League Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ALESCO) are being exerted, in cooperation with friendly countries, to mobilize efforts to abort this Israeli file.

#### **Jerusalem and UNESCO:**

In 1981, Jerusalem and its walls were registered on the World Heritage List at the request of Jordan. But, due to Israeli encroachments and violations, Jerusalem was included into the List of World Heritage in Danger.

UNESCO has issued large number of resolutions on the conservation of the Holy City. Many meetings of international experts have been organized in order to arrive at practicable measures to put an end to Israeli transgressions and violations in the occupied City and to implement international resolutions and conventions, including the 1954 the Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in Armed Conflict Settings and the 1972 Convention concerning the Protection of International Cultural and Natural Property (World Heritage)

In this context, UNESCO sent a high-level mission in March 2004 to assess the state of conservation in the City. On January 26, 2004, former UNESCO Director-General Kuechera Matsura opened the first meeting of the expert panel that was formed to conserve cultural heritage and the exceptional world value of this distinguished old city.

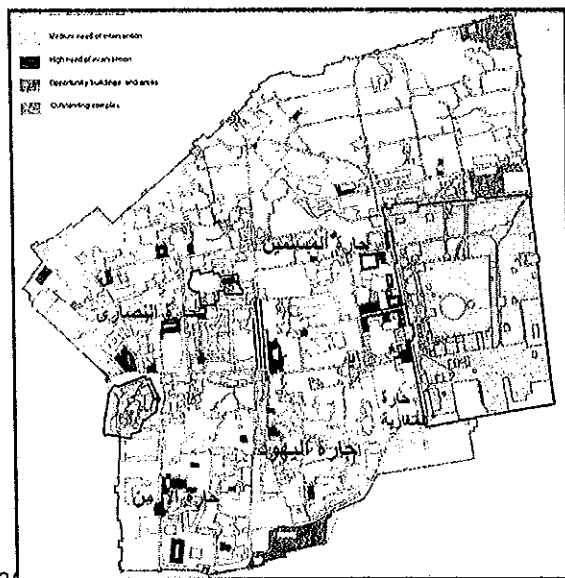
Such committees have issued repeated resolutions, calling upon Israel to cooperate with the world community and to abstain from illegal archeological excavations, demolition of houses and districts, expulsion of population, alteration of landmarks and any other measures.

Although the resolutions of UNESCO and related advisory bodies were often timid, the occupation authorities gave no heed to them and are still committing violations of all sorts.

In September 2010, UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova met with the experts, including the author, and the conferees stressed the importance of sending a mission to monitor the situation in the City as a preliminary step to appoint a permanent UNESCO mission to monitor on-going changes on the ground and seek to address the situation with concerned parties.

The Technical Mission report issued on February 27, 2007 contained five recommendations as follows:

1. The Government of Israel should observe its commitments to archeological excavations and World Heritage sites , such as the old City of Jerusalem, particularly Resolution No. 30/com/34 adopted by the World Heritage Committee in this connection in July 2006, in Vilnius, Lithuania.
2. The Government of Israel should immediately stop archeological excavations.
3. The Government of Israel should submit the final plan of the entrance to al-Magharba Gate, without any alteration to its form or structure and to maintain the authenticity of the place and its inter-relationship with adjoining landmarks.
4. The Government of Israel should immediately engage relevant bodies, particularly the Endowments (Awqaf) Authority in Jerusalem and Jordan.
5. All these resolutions and steps should be supervised by a team of experts, in coordination with UNESCO, in order to reach an appropriate solution for renovating al-Magharba Gate.



Priority plan for renovation works as conceived by UNESCO flouted by Israeli occupation authorities

Mr. Matsura decided to send this report, including the recommendations, to heads of relevant organizations, including the chairperson of World Heritage Committee and permanent missions to UNESCO.

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