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## The Discussion of Who or What Matters

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Raphael Greenberg and Yannis Hamilakis argue for archaeology's revolutionary potential, borne of its ability to see what is hidden by typology, process and projection. I admire the project that these scholars advance in their individual life's work which includes actions of professional commitment, archaeological expertise, and activism that draws others to enhanced awareness. Their interchanges, as captured in *Archaeology, Nation, and Race* left me newly aware of potentials and responsibilities for me as an archaeologist, as an agent engaging in activities that span pasts and presents. I particularly appreciated their willingness to lay bare the possibilities for an archaeologist to do better in understanding and even untangling, rather than reproducing, structures of power and advantage. The maneuvers that diminish those who experience systemic limits on their access to knowledge, opportunity and narrative control are more apparent to me following my engagement with these interpretations of Israel and Greece. I am prompted to consider anew the processes of typologization, of defining archaeologies as plural, and also allowing space for concern with *things* which may possess "sentient, affective and emotive properties" (Greenberg and Hamilakis 2022: 91).

Archaeologies are redefined as discourses and practices involving things from another time (Greenberg and Hamilakis 2022: 89). If I take seriously the narrative limitations that emerge from my acts of categorization, of typologization, of my assigning value, I am drawn to think toward dismantling or radically expanding my bounded concepts of "who" matters, which can emerge from limiting concepts of race and which may be understood as "a technology of power and control" (Osanami Törngren and Suyemoto 2022: 2; Lentin 2020). I am drawn to consider "what" matters, too, both to me as an agent, actor, empathetic being in the world and archaeologist. In this, there is considerable new terrain to explore, which Hamilakis and Greenberg engage as they define archaeologies and the project of understanding crypto- and overt colonialism. One domain of expansive thinking looks toward the genius and scientific ideas that are embedded in certain indigenous ontologies about which I am informed and updated by culture bearers fairly regularly (personal communication, June 2022, Cindi Alvitre, Craig Torres). In Los Angeles, where these exchanges occurred, the expression of relatedness among animals, plants, land, water, trees is lively and potent, with responsibilities and reciprocity expected and expressed. When the archaeological project stands in opposition to the interests of all, that is, when archaeology is not living up to its potential to deliver benefits with justice, widely for all, I find myself feeling diminished about my contribution and the outcomes, and wondering what community investment is even possible to redress such an imbalance among those with whom I can consider myself to be related. I may envision myself related to everyone, for we all have a place on the Tree of Life and all species of *Homo* are members of the biological kingdom known as eukaryotes, with humans standing alongside animals, plants, and fungi in a conceptual relatedness that grows out of our shared morphological evolution. We all possess cells with a membrane-isolated nucleus (Woese et al. 1990). Likewise, scientists such as ecologist Suzanne Simard identify adaptations among plants and fungi that sound eerily human, such as defense signaling and kin recognition, yet these occur in underground forest communication networks (Simard 2009, 2021). Eduardo Kohn (2013) opens a rich conversation on nature of agency and interrelatedness for the Runa, a people whose perceptions of their forest, animals and themselves in it, are expressed in ways that we might speak of other people in a city. A wider conception of relationality prompted Tim Ingold (2021) to think through relationality and relatedness with beyond-humans, whether earth, wind, sky or materials with which a doer does things, as constitutive of being alive, affected, connected and thus (my interpretation) co-diminished when these other relationships are

not noticed, embraced, attended to by one seeking to fully live. Greenberg and Hamilakis reflect on inter-species interactions, *Homo* or otherwise. Entities which we designate as other, as not us, as not in connection with us may be agents or affective nonetheless, and so there are values in deciding to accord respect, notice and reciprocity, as well as necessities for limiting them, too. Post-humanism thinking takes seriously the ways in which subtleties of mobilizing socially constructed categories (e.g., race, consciousness) are pathways in discourse and viaducts for parsing out rights and respect. The potential of beyond-human relationality is obvious to those already enmeshed in such an ontological framework, and it is typically equally strange to those who see distinctions and separations. However, there is a history of crossovers in the realm of policy that at least hint that, even within a logico-positivist conceptualization of the world, there may be levers and linkages within and between realms of life, and that these can become visible or indirectly mobilized. One case relates the unhappy irony of child protection laws in the UK, where it was possible to advance laws to protect animals from abusive treatment, and then only secondarily to use those laws to finally extend protections to children. Concepts of property and hierarchy gave way somewhat to allow for the limitations of non-majority.

In a somewhat similar vein, Chiara De Cesari (2014) explains that the ancillary interest in nature and cultural heritage provided the needed traction for an Israeli High Court in a case concerned with the protection of the archaeological site of Battir from the route of the wall. In this instance, perhaps in a situation of reverse advocacy, heritage was an agent for human benefits when arguments founded on human rights had lost their discursive and persuasive force.

Greenberg and Hamilakis mention that “archaeology was a part of the project of acquiring the land through studying it, mapping it and quantifying it.” These processes, too, entrain value through “the on-going dynamic of crypto-colonizing (and being crypto-colonized), which is tightly entangled and interwoven with the on-going nationalizing process” (Greenberg and Hamilakis 2022: 44). Meanwhile, we are able to see “the national making and remaking of the country through its archaeologization [as] an on-going process, not an old and nearly forgotten story” (Greenberg and Hamilakis 2022: 24). In Jerusalem, this process of national narrative making occurs partly through people’s moving through a space given psychic charge for tourists or pilgrims, whether internal or from abroad. These are seductions (come to Jerusalem!) that require transformations via movement and story, as well as through a deft, planned and vast overcoming of the archaeological status quo, both overtly and covertly.



Fig. 1. An annotated aerial image © Maxar Technologies from Google Earth dated January 2022. The image shows the relationship between the Haram el-Sharif / Temple Mount (on left) and the City of David excavation and tourism development area within the Silwan neighborhood (on right). The tunnel system not seen in the image links up to the Siloam Pool which itself lies adjacent to the large area (parcel 46 & 47). The southeastern parcel is shown being excavated rapidly in this video (<https://bit.ly/DiggingUpSilwan>) and in Fig. 2.

The focus is an Israel in which the visitor sees themselves and their aspirations. Archaeologists have been hard at work refashioning places for such experiences to unfold, as many spent their pandemic years contributing to massive changes in the subterranean realities of East Jerusalem under the Muslim quarter, the Western Wall Plaza, near the Temple Mount, across the City of David (Silwan) and under the Old City and Its Walls. Most of this took place invisibly, underground. This process also was ongoing above ground on a day in February, 2023 when I happened to visit Siloam Pool. Over the course of approximately an hour, two large mechanical excavators continued their multi-day moving of thousands of square meters of soil, uprooting olive and citrus trees on a plot of land at the southern tip of the Silwan neighborhood that has been recast in the past 60 years as the City of David. Their project is reconfiguring the space adjacent to the slim Siloam Pool perhaps to test or prove the estimated size of the pool based on Bliss and Dickie's estimate back in the 1800s when they visited the site that, even then, was filled with layers of accumulation.

A short film of this clearance underway is posted at this location: [bit.ly/DiggingUpSilwan](https://bit.ly/DiggingUpSilwan). See Fig. 2 for a still photograph taken at this same location, at the southern end of the City of David, a section of East Jerusalem that extends down the spine of the hill southward from the Haram el-Sharif or Temple Mount and Ophel. A map (Fig. 1) depicts the location of the pool and the land that was officially taken possession of in December, 2022. The sliver of the Siloam pool and its steps that currently comprise the southern end of the City of David, play a role in which Israel stages its narrative of Iron Age nascent nationhood for visitors from near and far. Also, the location of Siloam Pool is traditionally associated with the story of a blind man's healing by Jesus in the New Testament.



Fig. 2. Image of earth moving equipment at work in the approximately 500 square meters of land directly adjacent to the Siloam Pool, formerly owned by the Greek Patriarchate (Orthodox Church). Photograph by author dated 20 February 2023.

Purportedly, a long term lease or purchase of this plot transferred control of the property from the Greek Patriarchate and their leaseholders, the Sumarin family (Terrestrial Jerusalem 2022). Its transformation was intended to uncouple it from its former identity. It had been an orchard and garden on property owned by the Greek Patriarchate, a Christian church, and apparently leased to a Palestinian family. The site managers – the El'ad settler organization – hoped it would become the southern half of a grand Siloam Pool that would enable people to experience a time when the temple was still accessible.

Images that are posted in various locations throughout the City of David depict this pool. For example, in this video: <https://youtu.be/Fdhvks0XGvI?t=770> the Dome of the Rock and al-Aqsa Mosque are depicted atop a pilgrim road that is constructed from archaeological data, contemporary details and historical reconstruction. It is noteworthy that a different version of this image shows the Second Temple at the top of the pilgrim road. However, I did not see it used in the City of David site or tunnels where it would have been visually incongruent with reality as well as potentially inflammatory: [https://bit.ly/pilgrim\\_road\\_2nd\\_temple](https://bit.ly/pilgrim_road_2nd_temple). Even though Church lands are not necessarily subject to the same antiquities regulations as state land or other property owned by private parties, archaeology and archaeologists play a constitutive role in making the experience as well as the conduits in which they unfold.

Thus, while the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) seeks to work collaboratively with such institutions (churches and other religious entities, such as the Western Wall Heritage Foundation), it is not always certain that usual, required procedures of professional archaeological work are being followed. So, I wondered what was known about the contents of the soil located there in this large plot of land. The archaeologists with whom I visited the site were not able to tell me who had done or was doing the archaeological assessment there in advance of the soil removal. Legally, an archaeological test should have been done once the church no longer owned the property. The IAA archaeologist involved in the assessment required to be undertaken in advance of the earth clearance reports that publication of the results of the investigation is forthcoming (personal communication Nahshon Szanton). The underlying excavation records should exist on file with the IAA. For the sake of discussion, we may assume that the assessment was done, and that significant remains predating 1700 CE were not found. Had they been located, these would have required archaeological documentation or protection in accord with expected professional practices. The rapid clearance of soil that I witnessed would be unremarkable if this area had been deemed not to have been of any archaeological importance, in accord with Israel's antiquities laws and practices. Obviously, while we may not categorize remains as "archaeology" from a legal perspective (not pre-1700 CE), there is certainly much that an archaeologist or historian could learn about a half-dunam plot of land at the southern tip of such a sensitive site (the City of David). In the 323 years since 1700 CE, the world has witnessed the making of modern nations, a global history of colonialism, a local imperial collapse (Ottoman), two world wars that left traces often curated in other states, and other wars associated with the establishment of the State of Israel and of Palestine in their current configurations. The Israel Antiquities Authority delegated to the backhoe operator, through its relationship with the El'ad organization, the permission to ignore those possible stories in order to reveal (or create) the envisioned width of the Siloam Pool.

This feature is to become a part of the recreated pilgrim's ascent through tunnels which penetrate an underground mélange of materials that derive from the Hellenistic (Hasmonean) through Ottoman periods (see imaginative reconstruction at this URL: [https://bit.ly/siloampool\\_reconstruction](https://bit.ly/siloampool_reconstruction)). Details shared at the site and in publications suggest that this pool was used in Hasmonean times and later as a purification site for the faithful on their approach to the temple precinct. In preparing this purification experience, the soil containing whatever it may contain is removed. In accord with the ideas of Greenberg and Hamilakis, the purification tool is the bucket of a backhoe. Greenberg's (2019) 'digwashing' is apropos here, as the process is excavation amid a massively funded complex of being-revealed archaeological spaces resulting from entrepreneurial activity within underground tourism complexes that are being developed by El'ad, the East Jerusalem organization which works in collaboration with Atheret Cohanim and other settlers. A range of archaeological traces, from nearly every period post-dating the Hasmonean period, have been revealed by archaeologists tunneling up to and around the Haram el-Sharif or Temple Mount and extending beneath the Old City and Its Walls, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Greenberg's and Hamilakis' critique of the project of purification seems particularly apt in view of the millions of shekels being committed to this project annually. The entire experience unfolds within a Palestinian neighborhood which has no access to the benefits of the tourism development. The City of David experiences enable the visitor

to avoid interactions with anyone except the members of their tour group, their guide, the staff at the City of David and people who smile their 2-D smiles from images attached to the walls (Kletter 2020: 8). This is a highly curated experience in which the tourist never needs to be aware of divided Jerusalem, of second-class citizens or need to see a single face that is not involved in the creation of the tourism experience (Greenberg 2009: 44–45; Hasson 2011; Mizrahi 2012; Kletter 2020: 55). Disputed Jerusalem is overcome by Desired Jerusalem in which pilgrimage and purification is again possible, using both archaeologies and “archaeology’s therapeutic reputation as healer of ruptured memories and supplier of salutary pasts” (Greenberg 2018: 375).

Another kind of purification is at issue under the Western Wall plaza where ever-enlarging tunnels have uncovered walls blooming with green algae resulting from light encountering ancient (and possibly modern) sewage seepage underground in close proximity to sacred space. The structures of the state intended to protect antiquities were subordinated to tourism access and service needs and, thereby, antiquities, people and their alimentary processes became conjoined in direct proximity (Kletter 2020). This alliance speaks to a vast and thorough transformation of audience understanding, now not for those seeking purity but rather relief, now not for those arriving in ritual obedience but in search of spectacle and story, each of them contributing to the narrative of a nation colonizing disputed and occupied territory to recreate a period of time in which the forebearers whom the narratives recall were themselves subjected to occupation, a story neither old nor forgotten but whose remains leave lessons to be learned.

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