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Underground – Archaeological Research in the West Bank, 1948–1967: Management, Complexity, and Israeli Involvement

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The outcome of the 1948 war in Palestine resulted not only in the country's partition between the state of Israel and the Kingdom of Jordan but also in the division of its archaeological research. The Jordanian Department of Antiquities, which was responsible for administering archaeological research in the West Bank until 1967, prioritized research in the East Bank over research in the West Bank as a function of broader Jordanian government policy. The bulk of the research in the West Bank during this period was conducted by foreign institutions and researchers, who were forced to choose between researching in Israel and researching in the Arab countries, including the West Bank. Those who chose to research in Israel were denied the ability to simultaneously research and excavate in the West Bank. In this way, the choice of the foreign researchers divided them, placing them on the two different sides of the 'Green Line'.

The excavations in the West Bank piqued the curiosity of the Israelis, who never ceased trying to acquire information about them and their findings. These efforts included secret meetings with foreign researchers, attempts to acquire the Qumran scrolls, and the secret transfer to Israel of a few findings for the sake of secret research. For many years, part of their story remained classified in archives. It is shared here for the first time.

Introduction

The years of the British Mandate to Palestine witnessed accelerated development in numerous realms, including the thriving of archaeological research. For the first time, a local department of antiquities was established and an impressive museum was opened. During this period, excavations were also conducted by resource-rich research teams (Ben-Arieh 1999a; 1999b). The leap in research also affectedmembers of the country's Jewish population (*Yishuv*). In 1920, the initial excavation of Hamat Tiberias was conducted by the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society, and 1925 marked the establishment of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, which quickly began to take part in the excavations of the 'Third Wall' in Jerusalem (Ben-Arieh 2001). The increasing strength of the *Yishuv* also resulted in a growing number of studies, and more than 20 significant excavations were carried out by Jewish archaeologists who lived in the country during the Mandate.

As a result of the violent clashes and the riots that occurred in Palestine over the future of the country and the authorities' treatment of its inhabitants, British Royal Commissions were established to consider the situation. The various conclusions of these bodies included a call to partition Palestine, while leaving certain zones subject to different levels of international administration (Biger 2004). The commissions had little impact on the selection of the archaeological research sites of members of the *Yishuv*, which were being conducted throughout Palestine. For example, between 1940 and 1942, Moshe Stekelis (1993) excavated a prehistoric site in Bethlehem, and in 1941 he conducted exploratory excavations at Tinshemet Cave (*Mugharet Al Watwat*), located near Shuqba Cave in Wadi en-Natuf in western Samaria (Stekelis 1942) (**Figure 1**). The violent events themselves had significant influence on the excavations and resulted in their cessation on more than one occasion. However, as long as Palestine was not partitioned, it continued to be researched as a single unit. The outbreak of World War II resulted in a decline in the activity of the foreign research delegations and schools, raising the profile of local Jewish researchers, who never stopped excavating. They even continued a number of unexpectedly halted excavations that had been started by their foreign counterparts (as was the case of Stekelis's excavation in Bethlehem). Jewish excavation enterprises, such as the Beit She'arim dig and the discovery of ancient synagogues, were incorporated into the constructing of the Zionist narrative. The close relationship between archaeology and nationalism that began to emerge at the time only intensified after the establishment of the state of Israel (Feige and Shiloni

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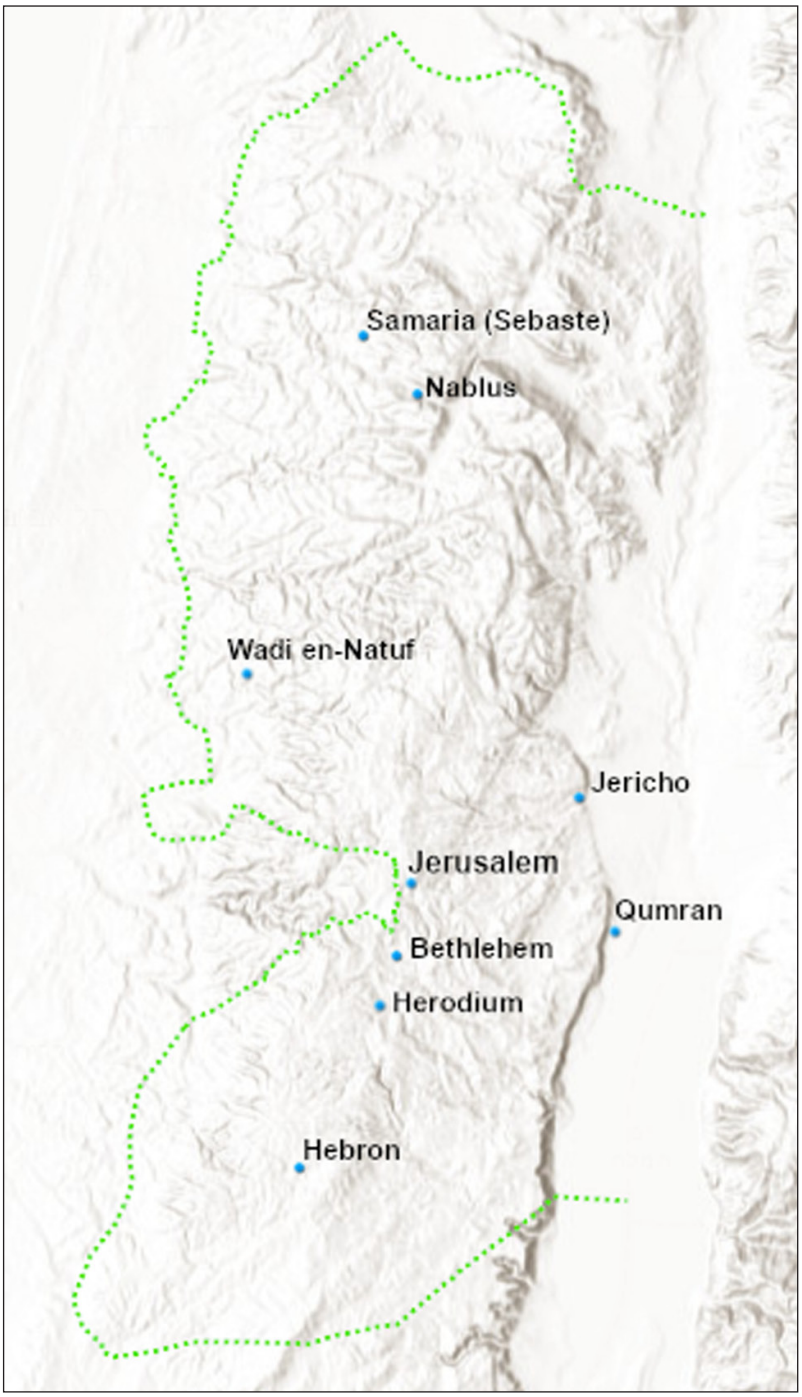

Figure 1: Map of the excavation sites mentioned in this article.

2008). Eliezer Lipa Sukenis's acquisition of the Dead Sea Scrolls in December 1947 was perhaps the high point of the period, during which archaeology joined the effort to establish a Jewish national home by proving the Jews' ancient bond to the Land of Israel.

The outcome of the 1948 war, including the demarcation of the armistice lines in 1949, resulted in the partition of Palestine and brought significant change to archaeological research within it (**Figure 2**). The West Bank, including the foreign research institutions and the Rockefeller Museum, which had served not only as a museum but also as the seat of the British Mandate Department of Antiquities, remained on the Jordanian side of the border, where Israelis were not permitted to set foot. In one fell swoop, Jews were denied the opportunity to explore significant archaeological sites – which continued to be researched and developed under the Jordanian Department of Antiquities and foreign research institutions. The research conducted in the West Bank during this period intrigued the Israeli public, and the findings of excavations in Jericho, the Old City of Jerusalem, Nablus (Shechem), and Hebron, and of course the discovery and study of the Dead Sea Scrolls, were translated into Hebrew and published for the Israeli public (Anon 1961: 15–6; 1964: 26; 1966: 27; Kenyon 1961). These publications, like discussions of their results, are familiar to readers of the archaeological literature of the period. However, Israeli curiosity was not limited to reading and

Figure 2: Map of Jordan 1948–1967.

translation. The research presented here highlights a different, intriguing picture of the Israeli state's involvement in archaeological research in the West Bank under Jordanian rule. This involvement did not emerge suddenly. On a number of occasions, the reality of most of the archaeological research in the West Bank being conducted by foreign researchers, combined with loose Jordanian supervision, nearby borders, and immense curiosity, led to Israeli involvement – overt and covert – in archaeological research in the West Bank.

This article focuses on three interrelated topics. It begins by briefly reviewing the management trends of the Jordanian Department of Antiquities in the West Bank, a subject which has thus far been explored only minimally. Next, it describes the reality with which foreign researchers needed to contend while working in the country, and then it depicts the open and veiled efforts of the state of Israel to acquire information and to analyse the findings from the West Bank until the Six-Day War. A great deal of this information has remained buried in the Israel State Archive (ISA) for decades under a cloak of confidentiality and is published for the first time in this article.

The Management of Archaeological Research in the West Bank under Jordanian Rule

Whereas archaeological research thrived in Palestine under British Mandate rule, it experienced only limited development in Eastern Transjordan. In 1921, the British handed over Eastern Transjordan to Abdullah who ruled the area as a local king under British auspices. In 1946, the Kingdom of Jordan declared its independence (Robins 2019). In 1923, an antiquities protection unit was established in Mandatory Transjordan as part of the Department of Palestinian Antiquities run by British archaeologist George Horsfield (Thornton 2014). On February 15, 1925, an Antiquities Law was enacted for Transjordan based on the law that had been drawn up by John Garstang for Palestine in 1920. In 1928, this unit became an independent department of the government of Transjordan, and its first director was Rida Tawfiq (Alawneh, Alghazawi and Balaawi 2012: 106). In 1936, at the recommendation of Flinders Petrie, Gerald Lankester Harding was appointed as chief inspector of Antiquities of Jordan, and between 1939 and 1956 he served as director of the Jordanian Department of Antiquities (Thornton 2015; Sparks 2019). Harding's management abilities, fluency in Arabic, and warm relations with the local workers were key to his successful direction of the department (Thornton 2016).

Until now a comprehensive study of trends in the management of archaeological research in the West Bank between 1948 and 1967 has not been conducted. The researchers who have considered the history of archaeological research in Israel up to 1967 have focused on the work that was done under Israeli control (e.g. Kletter 2006; Katz 2011: 73–145), and only a few have briefly surveyed the research developments in the West Bank under Jordanian rule (e.g. Faust and Katz 2019: 29). On the other hand, studies devoted to reviewing the development of

research in Jordan have focused on the East Bank, in addition to a brief description of the work that was done in the West Bank until 1967 (e.g. Adams 2008; Corbett 2014; Van der Steen 2019). The studies that have concentrated on archaeology in the West Bank have dealt primarily with the work done under Israeli rule after 1967 and have provided only a cursory summary of what preceded it (e.g. Greenberg and Keinan 2007; Keinan 2013). The information for this article gleaned largely from the writings of those who were charged with its management and from reading between the lines of the writings of the archaeologists who took part in it.

Following the conclusion of the Mandate in May 1948, Harding recommended Palestinian archaeologist Dimitri Baramki to oversee the realm of archaeology in the West Bank as its head director. Baramki declined; instead, the position was assigned to Awni Dajani, who in 1959 was appointed director of the Jordanian Department of Antiquities (Whitcomb 2014: 80). The year 1951 marked a substantial jump in the activity of Harding and the Department of Antiquities. That year, for the first time ever, an archaeological museum was established in Jordan. The museum, which was built on Citadel Hill (*Jabal al-Qala*) in Amman (Harding 1959: 190), was smaller and less impressive than the Rockefeller Museum. It served as a Jordanian national museum and displayed findings from Jordan and the West Bank. The findings that are still on display there today include the Copper Scroll from Qumran and prehistoric findings from Jericho. The museum was opened with the aim of encouraging tourism to East Bank Jordan and creating a counterpart to the Rockefeller Museum in Jerusalem (Alawneh, Alghazawi and Balaawi 2012: 108). That year, at Harding's initiative, the museum also started publishing a scientific journal on the antiquities of Jordan titled *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* (ADAJ), which constitutes an important source of information regarding the activities and management of the department.

In the first issue of the journal, Harding called on archaeologists and researchers to take part in excavations in Jordan and the West Bank, which, in his words, 'Jordan offers unique opportunities now for excavations. Security has never been so good, even in Roman times' (Harding 1951: 6). No article in this issue dealt with the excavations in the West Bank. However, this first issue concluded with a brief review by Dajani, the inspector of antiquities in the region at the time, of the new archaeological developments from 'Western Jordan'. These developments were the result of the rescue excavations conducted due to the settlement of large numbers of refugees on vacant land near the cities. Discovered, for example, were graves from different periods near Nablus and Jericho (Dajani 1951: 47–8). The research relations between the two banks of the Jordan River changed rapidly. In the following issue, published in 1953, approximately half of the articles concerned sites in the West Bank. This orientation continued virtually uninterrupted with a slight preference for the East Bank until Jordanian rule in the West Bank came to an end.

In any event, in March 1956, as part of Jordan's disengagement from British patronage, Harding was suddenly dismissed from his position as department director, which led to a number of years of unstable management and changes in the character of the department. Harding was replaced by Abdul-Karim Gharaybeh, who served in the position for less than a year. From 1956 to 1959, the department was directed by Saeed al-Durrah who was then replaced by Awni Dajani, who held the position until 1968.[1] These changes were also reflected in the department's journal: beginning in 1960, Dajani renewed Harding's project of publishing the journal, which had ceased upon his departure in 1956. In the new issue, Dajani apologized for the delay in publication and explained the crisis that gripped the department upon Harding's departure and the recurring replacement of the directors who succeeded him (Dajani 1960). From this issue onward, the journal was also published in Arabic and not only in English, as had been Harding's practice. Under Dajani, the department was professionally managed in comparison to his two predecessors, and between 1964 and 1966 the journal was published every year due to the large number of excavations and studies.

Although Harding left his position, he continued his activity regarding archaeology in Jordan and the surrounding area. In 1959, he published a book on the antiquities of Jordan, which also covered archaeological sites in the West Bank (Harding 1959). The book, which was meant primarily for tourists, devoted three of its nine chapter to antiquities in the West Bank. All three deal with sites that are in close proximity to the East Bank: Qumran, Tel es-Sultan, and Khirbat al-Mafjar in Jericho. The book contains no details regarding the mountain ridge in the West Bank, and sites such as Jerusalem, Sebaste (Sebastia), and Nablus are not mentioned, despite the excavations that had been conducted there in the past. Although Harding warmly recommends a visit to the Rockefeller Museum, he does so only after recommending a visit to the new museum on Citadel Hill in Amman (Harding 1959: 190–1).

In 1962, the Department of Antiquities began to set up small museums adjacent to ancient sites in the kingdom. In the West Bank, a museum was opened at Khirbat al-Mafjar in Jericho, and on the East Bank museums were opened in Madaba, Irbid, and Jarash (Dajani 1962: 5). Alongside the national museum that was established in Amman, these institutions reflected the government's clear priority for East Bank development.

It can be assumed that this orientation of the Department of Antiquities, which was based in Amman, was a function of Jordanian state policy, which discriminated in favour of the East Bank (Lavie 2009: 6–7; Ryan 2018: 90–113). This despite the fact that Albert Glock, one of the founders and the first director of the Institute of Archaeology at Bir Zeit University near Ramallah, maintained that the conclusion of the Mandate left the West Bank with a worthy foundation for the advancement of local independent research. Development of West Bank archaeology under Jordanian rule, however, was precluded by two factors. The first was the effects of the 1948 war, which created local disorder due particularly to the absorption of war refugees. The second was the Jordanian regime's distinct bias in favour of supporting the East Bank, including in the realm of

archaeological research (Glock 1994: 77). Harding's book, and the trends of the department's management, provide evidence of this view.

The Jordanian Department of Antiquities had a small budget and did not conduct significant research excavations in the West Bank on its own (Harding 1959: 186). The department's main activity was regulatory: issuing excavation permits, collecting and presenting findings, conducting rescue excavations, and acquiring and supervising the study of the Dead Sea Scrolls.[2] Still, the department did take part in the excavations of foreign delegations by sending its employees to supervise their work, thereby building up experience and knowledge (Glock 1994: 78). Whereas most of the investment of the Department of Antiquities was directed toward the East Bank, most activity of the foreign schools occurred in the West Bank. For example, between 1948 and 1967, the American School of Oriental Research in East Jerusalem was involved in 19 archaeological projects – 11 in the West Bank and eight in the East Bank (King 1983: 111–79). In addition, in 1964, a project for developing archaeological sites in Jordan under the patronage of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) got underway. The project promoted the conservation and development of historical sites for tourism purposes. Seven sites were selected for the project – three in the West Bank (Qumran, Jericho, and Sebastia), and four in the East Bank (Jarash, Amman, Kerak, and Petra) (Meyers 2001: 25). In comparison to the Jordanians, USAID activity was a relatively balanced manner on both banks of the Jordan.

In another view, the actions of the Jordanian government can be seen as a support for the claim that there is a close connection between archaeology and nationalism by the Israelis (e.g. Feige and Shiloni 2008). While the Jordanians ruled the West Bank, they rarely conducted excavation projects in this region, contrary to the excavations that took place in this region by the State of Israel after 1967 and especially after 1977 (Greenberg and Keinan 2007). Most of the structures and the activity of archaeological research in the West Bank was in the hands of researchers from Western countries – American, British, and French. In addition, there were individual researchers from various countries: Belgium, Poland, Italy, Denmark, and others. The fact that the Department of Antiquities was based in Amman, whereas most foreign research institutions were based in Jerusalem, resulted in a unique reality of a 'breathable border' between Israel and Jordan from an archaeological perspective. Although on a formal level the border was not breached, researchers and findings crossed it into Israel in the underground and in secrecy on more than one occasion, as discussed below this article.

Picking a Side: Foreign Researchers in Israel and the West Bank

The Arab countries, which did not come to terms with the outcome of the 1948 war, remained as enemies with Israel for many years. Archaeologists who openly expressed sympathy for Israel or who took part in excavations there relinquished their ability to simultaneously excavate in Arab countries. The country's partition created a reality in which foreign researchers needed to pick a side. Those who chose Israel were prevented from entering the Arab countries, including the West Bank. The result was a split, between 1948 and 1967, in foreign activity in what had been Mandate Palestine. Particularly impacted by this state of affairs were American researchers, who had forged close relationships with members of the Jewish *Yishuv* during the Mandate period. Whereas the American School continued to operate in Jordan and the West Bank, in 1963 Nelson Glueck established the School of Biblical Archaeology in West Jerusalem, which operated under the auspices of Hebrew Union College, the rabbinical seminary of American Reform Judaism (Brown and Kutler 2005: 165–209).

Glueck was not alone. William Dever, a Harvard graduate who was raised Christian and converted to Judaism, began excavations in Israel in the 1960s (Sherrard 2011: 181–8). Anson Frank Rainey, a native of Texas, was a supporter of the state of Israel who began researching in Israel in the 1960s and converted to Judaism in 1980 (Levin 2011). Another example was French archaeologist Jean Perrot, who also chose to pursue excavations in Israel and, in the 1950s, married an Israeli woman: Drora Ben-Avi (Bar-Yosef and Garfinkel 2008: 327). Brooke Sherrard has noted an interesting parallel in the worldview of a number of American researchers regarding the veracity of the Bible and Zionism on the one hand, and the choice of the country under which to excavate on the other hand. According to Sherrard, Jewish and pro-Zionist researchers chose to dig in Israel. They were joined by successors of William Albright, such as George Ernest Wright, whose worldview linked ancient Israel to the modern state of Israel.[3] On the other hand, there were also pro-Palestinian researchers, such as Paul Lapp and Albert Glock, who engaged in excavations in the West Bank until 1967 and subsequently refused to continue working under Israeli rule (Sherrard 2011).

Those who sought to engage in research on both sides of the border were forced to do so in secret. One example was Anna Shepard, who resided in Israel for approximately half a year in 1966 and collaborated with Ruth Amiran in advancing petrographic research (Katz 2011: 137). Their work together, however, was not documented, as requested by Shepard in a November 14, 1965 letter to Amiran:

> I heard that Dr. Ernest Wright cannot return to Jordan, which reminded me of the importance of refraining from any mention of my work with you in all Hebrew-language publications. I emphasize this point… Such publication could destroy my ability to continue working on the archaeology of Palestine and to assist geologists who need my help (Katz 2011: 137).

Entry into Jordan was denied not only to Israeli researchers or those who collaborated with them, but also to Jewish citizens of foreign countries. This resulted in the cessation of support of American Jews, such as Louie Rabinowitz, for the American School and a shift of funding to support Jewish-American research in Israel (King 1983: 113).

This complex reality had a direct impact on the style and the character of the research. Whereas research in

the initial days of the state of Israel was conducted and implemented almost entirely by local Jewish researchers, research in the West Bank was influenced by a diverse collection of scholars from different countries, which enriched its methods. While the research within Israel was incorporated into national-Zionist work, the research in the West Bank was influenced by different worldviews, some of which had no connection whatsoever to history (Silberman 1998). Archaeology was dear to the hearts of the Israeli public, primarily as a means of clarifying historical questions, and it was therefore curious about its findings across the border as well. For example, although Kathleen Kenyon refrained from determining the extent to which the findings of excavations were consistent with the biblical account of the conquest of Jericho, her conclusions were quickly published on the Israeli side of the border. In 1961, her book *Discovering Jericho* was translated into Hebrew and sold in Israel, despite the fact that it did not address the two most recent excavation seasons (Kenyon 1961). Israeli interest continued to grow, and, beginning in 1961, with the appearance of the *Archaeological News*, a journal published by the Israeli Department of Antiquities and Museums (the Israeli antiquities department), a special column was devoted to work being done in the West Bank, titled: 'Archaeological News from Across the Border'.[4] These articles were not produced by the researchers themselves but rather summarized and translated their findings from different languages. Their aim was to share major new developments in archaeological research from the West Bank with the Israeli reader, who thirsted for this knowledge.

The State of Israel's Involvement in Archaeology in the West Bank

The Israeli public viewed the results of the 1948 war with some reservation. On September 26, 1948, Ben-Gurion proposed to the provisional government that Israel conquer part of the West Bank, although the proposal was ultimately rejected. Later, he would refer to this rejection as '*bekhiya l'dorot*' – something to lament for generations. Whether these words expressed true disillusionment or were merely paying lip service for political reasons, they nonetheless reflected a public national sentiment that had not come to terms with the state's narrow borders (for more details, see: Goldstein 2019: 734–6). Until the 1967 war, the aspiration to incorporate West Bank within the borders of Israel was prevalent in Israeli public life. This aspiration found expression in culture, politics, and the education system (e.g., Hornstein 2017; Vaadia 2018).

The armistice agreements between Israel and Jordan (1949) severely disrupted the smooth continuation of Jewish-Israeli archaeological research. In addition to the Rockefeller Museum, which is located in east Jerusalem, the Museum for Jewish Antiquities and the seat of the Hebrew University's Department of Archaeology on Mt. Scopus also remained almost completely inaccessible to Israeli researchers. By 1967, some of the equipment and the findings of these institutions had been transferred via roundabout routes to West Jerusalem, but most remained in the university buildings on Mt. Scopus. According to a 1986 report of Israel's State Comptroller, according to the estimation of the curator of the institution, 40% of the museum's findings were stolen between 1948 and 1967. The report also noted that valuable findings, including a large number of ancient coins, had remained in the museum's safe but that the safe had been broken into and most of its contents had been stolen (Protocol 155 of the State Comptroller Committee, June 30, 1986, Appendix 1, Sections 30–31). Until 1967, the Hebrew University's archaeological research was restricted to different locations in West Jerusalem. Nonetheless, archaeological research within the state of Israel grew quickly, and dozens of excavations and surveys were carried out by Israeli archaeologists throughout the country. Still, they could not help but look with curiosity across the border.

French consul René Neuville and the scrolls that vanished

The first affair pertaining to archaeological findings from the West Bank that occurred in Israel transpired in 1948. A file at the Israel State Archive (ISA) bearing the title 'The Hidden Scrolls' reveals an interesting story that remains unfinished (ISA, file *gimel*-273/27). In the summer of 1948, senior Foreign Ministry officials received information about several Dead Sea Scrolls that were in Palestine and had disappeared. On October 21, 1948, an 'urgent' letter was sent from the Kirya in Tel Aviv (The center for Israeli Government Ministries in 1948) to Dov Yosef, the military governor of Jerusalem. In this letter, Walter Eitan, director general of the Foreign Ministry, requested that the disappearance of the scrolls be investigated with extreme caution and noted concern that they were being held by the consuls of France and the United States. 'I am certain that you yourself understood the delicacy of the situation and the possibility for embroiling us in international difficulties it poses.' Yosef assigned the task of investigating the case to Yehuda Golan, who in turn asked Eleazar Lipa Sukenik to explore the matter cautiously with René Neuville, the French consul in Jerusalem.

A response from Yosef dated November 9, 1948 clarified that the suspicions had been justified. Neuville (an archaeologist) met with Sukenik and provided him with some of the findings that were at his disposal. According to Sukenik, following the establishment of Israel Neuville was angry and planned to hand over the archaeological findings to France.[5] It is not known whether Neuville's plan was implemented, as, for diplomatic reasons, Sukenik was unable to ask him about it. The question of whether Neuville did indeed transfer the scrolls to France, and whether the American consul was also involved in the matter, still remains open.

Secret meetings between Yitzhak Ben-Zvi and French clergymen

On February 21, 2017, a file titled 'Yitzhak Ben-Zvi' was digitized at the Israel State Archive, and the documents it contained were classified as 'secret' (file *pey*-1898/9). The records in question contain documentation of a secret meeting between the president of the state of Israel at

the time (1952–1963), Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, and the Dominican priest who researched the Dead Sea Scrolls, Raymond Tournay of the French School of Biblical and Archaeological Research in Jerusalem. The meeting, convened through the mediation of Father Jean-Roger Héné of the Assumptionist order of the Notre Dame monastery in Jerusalem, was held on March 16, 1959, and both Tournay and Héné asked that it remain completely confidential. The document itself explains the reason for this: '...Father Tournay lives in the Old City and the Jordanians could cause damage to and disrupt his scientific work.' In the meeting, Ben-Zvi requested information and details about parts of the Book of Job that were found in the caves of Qumran (part of the Dead Sea Scrolls).[6] Both said that it would be a long time before the scrolls could be studied, but that they would try to get the information as soon as possible. Tournay also provided Ben-Zvi with information regarding the pace of the progress of the excavations, the discoveries form the Murbaat Caves, and other details requested by the president.

On June 11, 1959, Ben-Zvi attended another secret meeting, this time with a Catholic clergyman named Father Baillet (file *pey*-1898/9). The goal of the meeting was to clarify the relationship between the Samarian calendar on which Ben-Zvi was working and the calendar that was discovered at Qumran. Baillet believed that the two calendars were related and explained his view to the president. These meetings remained secret for many years to come and may not have been the only such meetings to occur during the period.

Yadin, Allegro, and the Scroll that Was Not Handed Over

The success reflected in Sukenik's acquisition of the Dead Sea Scrolls on the eve of Israel's War of Independence was carried on by his son, Yigael Yadin. In 1954, for the price of a quarter of a million dollars, Yadin acquired four scrolls for Israel in the United States, which were added to the three scrolls that had been acquired by his father (Eshel 2009: 4). These scrolls had been found at Qumran prior to the establishment of the state of Israel, and the Jordanians had no right to claim them. But this was not enough for Yadin. In February 1956, some Bedouin spotted a bat exiting a crack in the calcite cliff at Qumran, which led to the discovery of Cave 11. Inside, they found 25 scrolls that had been preserved in good condition and that, with the assistance of antiquities dealer Khalil Iskandar Shahin (Kando), were offered for sale to the Jordanian Department of Antiquities. Scroll one (the Temple Scroll) was particularly long (some 8.30 meters), and therefore Kando decided not to sell it to the Jordanians. He believed that this scroll would provide him with significant income, and he therefore buried it under the floor tiles in his home in Bethlehem. Assuming that researchers of the scrolls would refuse to purchase it because of the possibility of its being claimed by the Jordanians, he planned on selling it to Yadin (1983: 1–5), who provides a detailed account of the secret attempts to acquire the scroll. Only after his death was the name of the intermediary who kept Yadin in touch with Kando, the antiquities dealer, published. His contact was a Protestant clergyman from Virginia named Uhrig (Eshel 2009: 21). Yadin examined two sections of the scroll and paid $10,000 but did not end up receiving it. To use Yadin's description, this intriguing story remains sealed in the pages of history.

Documents in the Israel State Archive that were labelled 'classified', and that have recently been reviewed, shed new light on the mystery (ISA, file *het-tsadi*-3353/25). At the outset of the negotiations, another contact mediated between Yadin and Uhrig: John Marco Allegro, one of the researchers of the scrolls at the Rockefeller Museum.[7] In a telegram sent to the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem on June 13, 1960, an Israeli intermediary from London known as 'Shomron' stated that he had had two telephone conversations with Allegro, who agreed to show Yadin a portion of the scroll. According to this source, Allegro believed that the price Yadin had quoted, £10,000–12,000, was too low, as Uhrig had already paid Kando 50,000 (currency not indicated in the telegram). In addition, Allegro expressed concern that the Jordanian authorities could learn of the dealings, which would leave them exposed. A few days later, on June 19, the Foreign Ministry responded with a telegram that recommended refraining from offering more than £10,000 for evidence of the scroll. The telegram also asked Shomron to inform Allegro that Yadin could meet with him in Rome at the beginning of August, or at a conference in Moscow scheduled for August 9–15, which was to be attended by both Allegro and Yadin. The connection with Allegro bore no fruit, and the negotiations continued through a direct exchange of letters between Yadin and Uhrig. The transaction never occurred, and Yadin makes no mention of Allegro's involvement. Ultimately, Yadin obtained the scroll only during the Six-Day War, when soldiers who were sent to Kando's home found the scroll in his possession. The scroll had sustained damage over the eleven years during which it lay buried in his home, and its upper section had decomposed. In exchange for the scroll, the state of Israel paid Kando $125,000 (Yadin 1983: 1–5).

Kathleen Kenyon's Excavations in the Old City of Jerusalem

During the entirety of Jordanian rule in the West Bank, the state of Israel did not interfere, in an official capacity, with the archaeological excavations being conducted under Jordanian authority, with the exception of an isolated case. At the beginning of June 1960, the excavation team of British archaeologist Kathleen Kenyon set up base in the Old City of Jerusalem. In Israel, rumours held that Kenyon was about to begin excavating near the Western Wall, and the matter was raised for discussion in the Knesset. Herut MK (Member of Knesset) Esther Raziel-Naor demanded that the Israeli government 'not sit idly by' and rather 'take action against this severe blow' (Knesset Plenary Records, June 27, 1960). Finance Minister Levi Eshkol responded to these remarks on the government's behalf, clarifying that the Jewish People's right to the holy places did not only stem from Article 8 of the armistice agreements, but that the sites were 'eternally sacred'. According to Eshkol, the Foreign Ministry had already raised the matter with the chairman of the Joint Armistice Commission, who said

that there was no intention to excavate adjacent to the Western Wall. Eshkol went further by contacting Kenyon herself, who said in response that she did not intend to dig near the Wall. This position was also articulated by the Jordanian governor of the Old City, who issued a statement maintaining that excavations had never been conducted at the Wall, and that there was no intention to do so in the future. Eshkol concluded by promising that the government would continue to monitor the matter (Knesset Plenary Records, June 27, 1960). The following year, Knesset Members Moshe Nissim submitted a parliamentary question on the matter to Foreign Minister Golda Meir. Eshkol, acting in her stead, stated that the ministry was aware of the problem and that nothing had changed regarding past decisions (Knesset Plenary Record June 7, 1961). Kenyon and the Jordanian governor kept their word, and until 1967, excavations had not been conducted adjacent to the Western Wall.

Phillip Hammond's Excavations at Tel Rumeida (Hebron)

Between July and September 1964, the first season of excavations at Tel Rumeida (Hebron) was conducted by Phillip Hammond of the University of Utah (Chadwick 1992). Hammond, who recognized the site's importance to the Jewish population, sought to take preventative measures by sending a letter of clarification before he began excavating. In the letter, which was published that year in *Archaeological News*, he first emphasized that the excavation team had no intention of conducting excavations in the Cave of Machpela or the surrounding area, and that a permit had been issued to excavate only Tel Rumeida (Anon 1964). We can assume, that this letter was a result of the Israeli reactions to Kenyon's excavations in the Old City of Jerusalem.

Solomon Steckoll, the Nuclear Reactor, and the Research of Foreign Foundations

The final excavation undertaken in the Qumran region under Jordanian rule was Solomon Steckoll's excavation of nine graves in the cemetery of Qumran between 1966 and 1967. Steckoll was not an archaeologist by profession but rather a Canadian Jew engaged primarily in journalistic writing for the *Toronto Star* who appears to have concealed his Jewish identity from the Jordanian authorities. Roland De Vaux referred to him derogatorily as the 'Sherlock Holmes of Archaeology' (de Vaux 1973: 48), and Gideon Avni characterized him as an 'adventurer' (Avni 2009: 49). Steckoll's excavation was considered to be unprofessional and various researchers have been critical of him, particularly for not indicating the location of the graves he excavated (Schultz 2006: 196). Nonetheless, it is important to note that he sent his findings to be analysed by various experts and did not interpret them purely on his own. For years, Steckoll's excavation remained a concluded episode, joining a long list of marginal and unimportant excavations in the country.

In 2016, the Israel State Archive digitized and released a file bearing the title 'S.H. Steckoll – Dr. and Anthropologist'. The file contains documents that had been classified as 'secret' and 'top secret' in 1966–1967. It turns out that in his excavation of one of the graves, Steckoll, who, as already mentioned, was Jewish, had discovered minor inscriptions on stones and had surreptitiously brought them to Israel to be researched prior to the Six-Day War. He believed that one of the writers of Qumran had been buried in the grave along with the unique stones that were secretly taken to be examined in Israel. With the assistance of Weizmann Institute researchers Aharon Katzir (who at the time was serving as president of the Israel Academy of Sciences and the Humanities) and David Wapsi, the stones were then sent to the Soreq Nuclear Research Centre. The tests yielded no significant findings, and Steckoll promised to maintain their secrecy. In a brief telephone conversation with the Israeli security officer involved, he promised that when his nuclear research was published in the future, he would report that the tests had been conducted at the Brookhaven National Laboratory in the United States.

In addition, on August 30, 1966, Steckoll contacted Shaul Bar-Haim, director of the Middle East Department of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, with a request to transfer parts of the skeletons he had discovered at Qumran to Israel to undergo tests. In a document classified as 'top secret', the Foreign Ministry confirmed receipt of the findings. At the beginning of 1967, Steckoll sent a skull to Aharon Beller of Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem for testing, as well as a jaw to the dental clinic of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where it was examined by Nico Haas and Hillel Nathan. The results of the studies of the jaw were published in the journal *Revue de Qumrân* after the Six-Day War (Haas and Nathan 1968).

In an article summarizing the results of his excavation, Steckoll warmly thanked the Jordanian Department of Antiquities for its assistance and reported that he had asked Israel to allow him to continue the excavation after the Six Day War but that his request had been denied (Steckoll 1968). In this matter, Steckoll petitioned Israel's High Court of Justice against the Minister of Defence, but the effort was unsuccessful (High Court of Justice 180/67).[8] The state of Israel resolutely refused to allow him to continue his excavations, now in the Israeli-occupied West Bank; however, despite the extended legal discussions, secrecy was maintained (ISA, file *het-tsadi*-7054/28). This is interesting, as the list of the different experts thanked by Steckoll for their assistance includes the names Beller, Nathan, and Haas. However, unlike the others, their names appear without the specification of institutional or national affiliation (Steckoll 1968: 323), and absolutely no mention is made of the testing of the findings at Israel's nuclear reactor, a study that ended without significant results.

Conclusion

The partition of the territory that had constituted Mandatory Palestine at the end of the 1948 war changed the face of local archaeological research in the country. Our examination of the management of the realm of archaeology in the West Bank is indicative of two parallel trends. Whereas the Jordanian Department of Antiquities tended to invest in the East Bank under the direction of the regime, they

chose foreign research bodies to focus their excavations in the West Bank. This created a situation in which almost all of the archaeological research activity in the West Bank was conducted by foreign researchers, who were forced to choose between researching in the Arab countries or researching in the young state of Israel. The former were denied the opportunity to also work in Israeli territory, as the Arab countries did not allow researchers working in Israel to also work in their territory. A small number of these researchers (for example, George Ernest Wright) engaged in excavations in the West Bank for a number of years, and then began conducting excavations within Israel. The state of Israel was also active in this complex reality. In partnership with a few specific researchers, both openly and clandestinely, Israel was involved in a number of cases of research across the border. This appears to have stemmed from a sense of scholarly curiosity and scientific responsibility. Most of the Israeli attention focused on the archaeological research activity pertaining to the Dead Sea scrolls, including attempts to acquire them, findings, and information regarding the site and the scrolls. This activity also included secret communication with archaeologists, intermediaries, and antiquities dealers and, it should be noted, included state involvement at the highest possible level (for example, by the president of the state) and high-level involvement in the scientific realm (for example, by Yigael Yadin of the Hebrew University). These actions constitute a clear manifestation of the linkage between nationalism and archaeology, for which there was much room in the young state of Israel – both in the public realm and in the scientific world (Shavit 1997; Feige and Shiloni 2008).

Notes

[1] For details regarding the department directors and a brief historical review, see the website of the Jordanian Department of Antiquities: http://doa.gov.jo/contents/brief-historyar.aspx.

[2] In 1967, documentation of the excavations that were conducted in the West Bank under Jordanian rule remained in the Rockefeller Museum. Today, they are located in the archive of the Antiquities Authority. Most have been digitized and are available for viewing: http://www.iaa-archives.org.il/.

[3] Wright excavated in Jordanian-controlled Nablus, but in 1964 he moved his research across the border into Israel. In 1964–65, he served as the guest director of Hebrew Union College's school of archaeology in West Jerusalem. As a result, he was not permitted to enter Jordan until 1967.

[4] This news was sometimes reported under various titles. For example, in 1963, the Herodium excavation was reported on under the title 'Archaeological Excavations from Abroad' (Anon 1963: 26–7).

[5] Does not appear in the document on what exactly Neuville was angry about. Perhaps on the declaration of the State of Israel.

[6] Ben-Zvi's special interest in the Book of Job stemmed from the studies he conducted on the beginnings of Jewish settlement in the Arab countries. As a result, he wanted to examine the different versions of the place names mentioned in the Book of Job and to clarify whether the book originated in Hebrew or in Aramaic (Ben-Zvi 1967: 26–7). Tournay concurred with Ben-Zvi's view that the Book of Job was originally written in Hebrew.

[7] Allegro was an exceptional figure among the scrolls' researchers. He published the scrolls he was allocated by the researchers with speed and incompetence. He invested most of his energy in the country searching for the Copper Scroll. To this end, he excavated at Herodium, in the Kidron Valley in Jerusalem, in the Schacha River Canyon, and elsewhere (Allegro 1973). No objects of value were found during his quests, which were subsequently halted. He was subjected to criticism for his publications and his excavation, consistent with his energetic and adventurous image (Brown 2005). De Vaux summed up his own bitter reaction to Allegro's misdeeds: 'The time has come to stop these childish deeds and get back to serious work' (de Vaux 1961: 146–7). Had de Vaux known about the attempt to sell the scroll to Yadin, he would have evidently reacted even more severely.

[8] Brian Schultz has conjectured that Israel's refusal to allow Steckoll to continue his research after the Six-Day War stemmed from the fundamental lack of professionalism of Steckoll's work (Schultz 2006: 196).

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The authors have no competing interests to declare.

Author Contribution

Lash conducted the archives study and wrote the draft. Goldstein and Shai edited the paper, Shai was in charge of the archaeological perspective and Goldstein on the modern historical aspects.

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