

DUST TO DUST

Analysing the political use of archaeology in Israel

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Introduction

‘One cannot ignore the original document of the British Mandate, which is binding in the eyes of international law. In that document (...) recognition has been given to the historical connection of the Jewish people with Palestine (...) Therefore it is so important for those who want to throw mud at us, and delegitimize us, to try to disconnect this historical connection [...]’¹

This quote was taken from a speech delivered by Dore Gold, director-general of Israel’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He gave this speech during the 17th Annual Archaeological Conference on the 8th of September 2016.² The conference was organized by the City of David foundation and was held at the foot of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.³ Gold decried the ‘international attempt to disengage Jerusalem from Jewish history’.⁴ While making his accusations, Gold specifically focused on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) resolution adopted in April 2016 as the latest example of this international conspiracy. The resolution calls on Israel to cease excavations in East Jerusalem and defines it as an ‘occupying power’, a turn of phrase derided by Gold.⁵ He went on to applaud the archaeological endeavour undertaken to prove the Jewish people’s connection to Jerusalem and stated that archaeologists are defending the State of Israel like ‘only the IDF can’.⁶

Gold’s bellicose words are a testimony of how archaeology can be made to serve a political purpose. His speech is but one example of the widely spread practice in Israel of using archaeology to achieve a political goal. But why does archaeology so often serve a political purpose in Israel and what ideas underlie this practice?

Gold’s speech offers some tantalizing clues to a possible answer to this question. First off, the setting of the archaeological congress and Gold’s speech, in the shadow of the Temple Mount, is especially relevant. The congress was organized by the City of David foundation, a foundation named for the archaeological site at the foot of the Temple Mount that is now consistently called the City of David.⁷ The foundation is ‘committed to continuing King David’s legacy as well as revealing and connecting people to Ancient Jerusalem’s glorious past [...]’.⁸ The physical setting of Gold’s speech combined with the City of David foundation’s stated agenda, add a tangible political dimension to his

¹ T. Zieve, ‘Dore Gold: Archaeology is best defence of Jewish connection to Jerusalem’ (9 September 2016).

² Arutz Sheva, ‘Watch: 17th Annual Archaeological conference’ (8 September 2016).

³ The City of David foundation is also known as the ‘Ir David’, or ‘Elad’ foundation. See: ‘City of David, ‘The Ir David Foundation’ and City of David, ‘The 17th Annual Archaeological Conference’ (date unknown).

⁴ Arutz Sheva, ‘Watch: 17th Annual Archaeological conference’ (8 September 2016).

⁵ The UNESCO resolution was submitted by Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, and Sudan. The resolution passed with 33 votes in favour and 6 against. It is important to note here that the U.S., UK, Germany, the Netherlands, Estonia, Lithuania voted against. See: UNESCO, Executive Board 119th session, Programme and External Relations Commission, 11 April 2016.

⁶ IDF stand for ‘Israel Defence Forces’. See: T. Zieve, ‘Dore Gold: Archaeology is best defence of Jewish connection to Jerusalem’ (9 September 2016).

⁷ M.L. Steiner, ‘From Jerusalem with love’, in: I. Hjelm and T.L. Thompson ed., *History, Archaeology and the Bible Forty Years after “Historicity”* (Abingdon 2016) 71-84.

⁸ City of David, ‘The Ir David Foundation’ (date unknown).

words. Furthermore, Gold's choice to allude to a supposed 'international attempt' to separate Jerusalem from Jewish history frames Israel as a nation beset by insidious adversaries which needs to defend itself. At the same time, Gold defines those archaeologists engaged in proving the Jewish people's connection to Jerusalem as 'defenders of the state of Israel'. By characterising these archaeologists in such a way, Gold clearly incorporates their findings in a broader political battle.

In sum, Gold's words may give us the idea that the answer to the question 'Why does archaeology so often serve a political purpose in Israel and what ideas underlie this practice?' could be 'Archaeology is so often employed in Israel's political arena because it plays a central role in the ongoing attempts to prove the veracity of Israel's national historical narrative, a nation beset by insidious conspirators bent on undermining its legitimacy, because it provides physical evidence for this historical narrative'. While this answer might seem adequate at first glance, upon closer inspection it becomes clear that it is in fact glaringly inconclusive. The main problem is that it does not offer a more extensive and detailed analysis of the ideas that influence contemporary archaeological practice in Israel and how they came to do so. Coming up with a more inclusive and convincing answer will be the purpose of the following essay.

It will also be argued that the highly politicized nature of archaeological practice in Israel is detrimental to the ongoing peace process. By prolonging the resolution of the conflict, by ostensibly validating political polemics with the aura of scientific objectivity and by continuously delegitimizing or undermining Palestinian claims to statehood and cultural heritage, politicized Israeli archaeology contributes to the difficulties plaguing the peace effort. It seems clear that, in order to help facilitate the peace process, archaeology in Israel should live up to the vaunted ideals of scientific objectivity and forswear the ideological goals that it so often serves.

However, this may be easier said than done. It is challenging to avoid choosing sides when discussing any dynamic as complex and politically sensitive as the political use of archaeology in Israel. How then should we proceed with our analysis and avoid the risk of becoming a part of the political debate surrounding this dynamic instead of analysing it?

Theoretical framework.

The difficulties plaguing any attempt to get at the core of this dynamic and to present an objective analysis are nicely illustrated by another excerpt from Gold's speech:

'It is quite customary today in different circles, academics, to speak about narratives: there is the Palestinian narrative [and] there is the Israeli narrative. I am not crazy about this term 'narrative' because the word 'narrative' suggests there is no truth in it. There is only just your point of view or my point of view [.] We need to determine our own truth, *the* truth, and this is

what archaeology is doing here. Therefore, it is extremely important to stress the *real* history.⁹ [emphasis added by author]

This second quote taken from Dore Gold's speech at the 17th Annual Archaeological Conference hits the nail right on the head concerning the difficulty inherent to uncovering the 'true' history of Israel and Palestine. However, Gold's remarks were made in the broader context of his allegations that there is an ongoing international attempt to separate Jerusalem from Israel's national history and therefore constitute a political truth claim. It would be a fruitless endeavour to try and ascertain here which of the possible interpretations of the use of archaeology in Israel is the 'right' one. Such an attempt would run the risk of turning into a polemic. Therefore, this essay will approach this complex dynamic by analysing the ideas that influence contemporary archaeological practice in Israel and the way archaeology is used in Israel's political arena. This approach will avoid making any value judgments while at the same time enabling a comprehensive analysis of the complex dynamics at play concerning the political use of archaeology in contemporary Israel. However, the purview of the current format does not allow for us to break down these dynamics to their constitutive parts; it simply does not allow for us to 'do away' with complexity. We will therefore not try do dismantle the inherent complexity, but rather show why it so complex.

But what exactly are these ideas that make politicised Israeli archaeology so complex? Merely stating that ideas such as 'the archaeological finds substantiate Israel's national history' or 'there is no archaeological evidence for the historicity of the patriarchal traditions', exist and influence contemporary archaeological practice in Israel would not be a sufficiently convincing base to build our analysis on. At this point we can state that the following analysis will be based on the premise that there *are* ideas that influence contemporary archaeological practice in Israel and that these ideas are prevalent enough that together they form the behavioural norm 'the Jewish historical experience mandates the politicisation of archaeology in contemporary Israel'. This norm is viewed as legitimate by the various actors (e.g. Israeli policymakers) involved. These actors frame certain interpretations of archaeological evidence as consistent with this norm and thereby as 'legitimate'. However, we will first have to show what we mean when we talk about a 'behavioural norm'. Only then will it be possible to show where it originated, how it was formed and how it exerts influence.

Let's start with a cliché by looking at the encyclopaedic definition of 'norms'. In the Encyclopaedia Britannica, a norm is defined as a 'rule or standard of behaviour shared by members of a social group'.¹⁰ The Britannica's editors further note that a norm can either be internalized or be enforced. They round off their description by stating that there are two schools of thought concerning the function of norms in society; the functionalist and conflict school of sociology. The former defines norms as a reflection of a common value system that develops through socialization and allows an individual to learn the culture of his or her group, thereby fulfilling a certain 'need' of the social

⁹ Arutz Sheva, 'Watch: 17th Annual Archaeological conference' (8 September 2016).

¹⁰ Encyclopaedia Britannica, 'Norm' (date unknown).

system. The latter rather defines norms as a mechanism for solving recurring social problems, while Marxist scholars state that norms are in fact a tool with which the ruling class dominates the other sections of society through coercion and sanctions.¹¹ A definition as concise as the one offered by the Encyclopaedia Britannica of a term as complicated as ‘norm’, can never do justice to the nuances inherent to the academic debate concerning its meaning. However, it does offer a useful starting point for coming up with a suitable definition for the purposes of the present discussion.

As this essay is concerned with the ideas influencing contemporary archaeological practice in Israel and the way archaeology is used in the Israeli political arena, it would seem that a functionalist approach to the term ‘norm’ would be appropriate. After all, we are interested in finding out why certain actors define and use archaeological finds in certain ways and how the ideas that influence this behaviour came to play such an important role. Following this train of thought, our preliminary definition of the term ‘norm’ could be: ‘An internalized or enforced rule of behaviour shared by members of a social group that develops through socialization and allows an individual to learn the culture of his or her group’. This still leaves the question of how we can discern norms from superficial ideas and how the socialization process works; how do ideas become widespread and influential norms?

In order to adequately explain how ideas become influential norms and eventually become institutionalised, we could look to the constructivist school of international relations theory. Daniel Philpott is a constructivist scholar who seeks to explain the advent of state sovereignty through the rise of ideas. While his theoretical model is meant to help explain a phenomenon far removed from the topic of the current essay, his explanation for how ideas can shape policy is effective for explaining how ideas can become norms.

Philpott asserts that ideas exert influence over policy formation in two ways; by shaping identities and by the exertion of social power.¹² He argues that ideas shape identities through a process by which individuals actively reflect on ideas and incorporate favourable ones into their own identity.¹³ Those individuals that incorporated certain ideas into their own identity, Philpott calls them ‘converts’, then often seek to convince those in positions of power to promote policies in line with their ideas. They do this by altering the costs and benefits facing those in power (e.g. by promising to pay more taxes or by threatening rebellion).¹⁴ Especially important for the current discussion is Philpott’s claim that ideas also have reputational power. This means that converts can demand the implementation of policies in line with their beliefs by challenging those in power to act in line with their own publicly professed ideals.¹⁵

¹¹ Encyclopaedia Britannica, ‘Norm’ (date unknown).

¹² D. Philpott, *Revolutions in Sovereignty* (Princeton 2001) 49.

¹³ Philpott, *Revolutions in Sovereignty*, 52.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, 58.

¹⁵ In the case of Israel’s government, this explains why it so reluctant to really challenge the settler movement because of its fear of being criticized for betraying Zionism. See: Philpott, *Revolutions in Sovereignty*, 58.

Once the ideas have spread to the leaders and functionaries of an institution, they gradually become embedded in that institution; this is what we call ‘institutionalisation’.¹⁶ Ideas then exert social power within the institutions themselves. This happens when powerful converts within the institution use their influence to implement policies in line with their ideas and when ideas are adopted into the legal norms and routines that guide future members of the organisation.¹⁷ Once the ideas have become institutionalised, Philpott describes them as ‘norms of appropriateness’ (i.e. ‘behavioural norms’).¹⁸ This then is how ideas can become norms; individuals shape their identity through reflection on certain ideas and become converts who then wield social power to effectuate the implementation of certain policies in line with their ideas that then gradually become institutionalised and transform into ‘norms’.

Incorporating these insights results in a new and final definition: ‘A behavioural norm is an internalized or enforced idea shared by members of a social group that has gradually become institutionalized through the application of social power’. A description of a norm influencing contemporary archaeological practice in Israel using this definition could look like this: ‘The norm ‘the Jewish historical experience mandates the politicisation of archaeology in contemporary Israel’ began as an idea that was internalized by the majority of the Israeli populace and actively enforced by Israeli policymakers which has gradually become institutionalised through the application of social power by groups such as Gush Emunim and influential individuals such as Benjamin Netanyahu’. While this description nicely encapsulates the definition of a norm utilised here, we still have to add one final pillar to our theoretical framework: the entrapment hypothesis.¹⁹

The entrapment hypothesis is the idea that broadly accepted norms can come to limit the ability of actors in a given political system to adopt new ideas. Daniel Thomas utilises normative institutionalism and the entrapment hypothesis to analyse the policies of the European Union (EU). He states that behavioural norms were established by Member States during the creation of the Union, its institutions and when they decided on previous policies governing internal dynamics and external relations.²⁰ Thomas then divides these behavioural norms into two meta norms: joint action as an intrinsic value and the wish for consistent and coherent EU policies across time and issue-areas.²¹ Normative consistency across time and issue-areas is achieved through political framing: the process by which prospective EU policy is framed as consistent with existing norms in order to disempower opponents.²² Thus, Member States’ behaviour is significantly shaped because of the perceived need to support those policies that are most in line with existing norms and previous policies. This is the so-

¹⁶ Ibidem, 69.

¹⁷ Ibidem, 69.

¹⁸ Ibidem, 162.

¹⁹ I became familiar with normative institutionalism and the entrapment hypothesis during my earlier work concerning the ethical contradictions between the ideals of the European Agenda on Migration and its implementation on the ground. Parts of the following section concerning the entrapment hypothesis were taken from this earlier work. See: T. Stroomer, *Paradise Lost. A Critical Analysis of the European Agenda on Migration* (Essay European Integration and Transatlantic Cooperation, Utrecht 2017).

²⁰ D.C. Thomas, ‘Explaining the negotiation of EU foreign policy: Normative institutionalism and alternative approaches’, *International Politics* 46 (2009) 339-357.

²¹ Thomas, ‘Explaining the negotiation of EU foreign policy: Normative institutionalism and alternative approaches’, 344.

²² Ibidem, 345.

called ‘entrapment hypothesis’; the process by which the normative consistency of prospective policies is ensured through political framing (i.e. actors arguing that the policies are in line, or conflict with previous policies).²³

Frank Schimmelfennig elaborates on the entrapment hypothesis. He describes four conditions that should be met for entrapment to influence policy outcomes.²⁴ First, entrapment relies on the strength and legitimacy of the behavioural norm. Second, the relevance of the behavioural norm to the matter at hand needs to be established. Third, an independent political actor needs to be involved to facilitate the entrapment process. The final condition is that entrapment only works if all the involved parties act in accordance to the norm.²⁵ This last condition shows that Member States ‘play along’ with norm-consistent policy for as long as the rewards for doing so outweigh the social costs.²⁶

Approach.

The following analysis will show that the entrapment hypothesis can indeed be said to apply to the way in which archaeology is employed in Israel’s political arena. This will open up the possibility of arguing that contemporary archaeological practice in Israel and its highly politicized nature are in fact detrimental to the peace process. The ideas that underlie the ethnocentric characterisation of Israel’s past, which is prevalent in Israel today, limit the ability of policymakers to adopt policies conducive to the peace process because these policies can sometimes be in contradiction with these ideas. The process of political framing thereby ensures that these policymakers are entrapped in adopting policies in line with the norm ‘the Jewish historical experience mandates the politicisation of archaeology in contemporary Israel’. However, as Schimmelfennig’s fourth condition shows, entrapment only occurs when actors are willing to ‘play along’ with norm-consistent policy as long as the rewards for doing so outweigh the costs. This means that entrapment is not absolute or permanent and that change is possible.

However, before any of this can be convincingly argued it is imperative to show what the ideas, and their accompanying narratives, that influence contemporary archaeological practice in Israel are, where they came from and how they affect policy. The above-mentioned actors can be broadly categorized as those institutions, politicians and scholars that support the ‘Israeli perspective’ (i.e. the ethnocentric interpretation of archaeological finds). By applying the entrapment hypothesis, it will be possible to analyse and assess how the behavioural norm ‘the Jewish historical experience mandates the politicisation of archaeology in contemporary Israel’ affects the behaviour of these actors.

The following analysis will be based on academic literature, news articles, statements made by relevant persons (e.g. politicians or activists) and primary sources (e.g. UN resolutions and archaeological finds). The first of the following chapters consists out of a concise history of

²³ *Ibidem*, 345.

²⁴ F. Schimmelfennig, ‘Entrapped Again: The way to EU membership negotiations with Turkey’, *International Politics* 46 (2009) 413-431.

²⁵ Schimmelfennig, ‘Entrapped Again: The way to EU membership negotiations with Turkey’, 429.

²⁶ Thomas, ‘Explaining the negotiation of EU foreign policy: Normative institutionalism and alternative approaches’, 345.

archaeological practice in Israel. This brief historical overview will serve as the prelude to an analysis of the narratives influencing contemporary archaeological practice in Israel, which will be the subject of chapters two and three. Special attention will be paid to the historical events that facilitated the formation of these narratives which together form the bedrock on which the institutionalisation of the norm ‘the Jewish historical experience mandates the politicisation of archaeology in contemporary Israel’ rests. Chapter four will consist out of an exposé of how contemporary archaeological practice in Israel is detrimental to the ongoing peace process. In this last chapter we will also consider if the entrapment hypothesis is a valid theoretical framework for the analysis of the complex ways in which archaeology is politically employed in contemporary Israel and if it can offer a constructive contribution to the conflict’s resolution. Finally, a proposal will be put forward for possible future research. This proposal will centre on the ‘emotional history’ perspective, which could help to further elucidate the complex vagaries surrounding the politicisation of archaeology in Israel.

Chapter 1: Nationalistic Myths and their Political Narratives

‘The first exhibition entirely dedicated to Herod the Great, Israel’s greatest builder and one of the most controversial figures in Jewish history. Large reconstructions and new finds from Herod’s palaces in Herodium, Jericho, and other sites are on display. Exhibited to the public for the very first time, these artefacts shed new light on the political, architectural, and aesthetic influence of Herod’s rule [.].’²⁷

This is the summary offered by the digital portal ‘Museums of Israel’ for a controversial exhibition at the Israel Museum in West Jerusalem.²⁸ The exhibition was controversial not only because of its subject – King Herod is rightly described as ‘one of the most controversial figures in Jewish history’ – but also because of the provenance of the artefacts on display.

The centrepiece of the exhibition was a restored section of a mausoleum from Herodium, reputedly that of Herod himself.²⁹ The literature accompanying the exhibition made no mention of the ongoing debate concerning the tomb’s attribution and stated that Herodium was situated in ‘Judea and Samaria’, thereby obliquely reinforcing the claim that the West Bank is part of Israel.³⁰ The fact that the Israel Museum could exhibit these artefacts without stating that its centrepiece came from one of the occupied territories is a result of the Oslo accords.³¹ These accords were ostensibly meant to offer better legal protection for the Palestinians living under occupation and give the Palestinian Authority (PA) a chance to evolve into a functioning government. The fact that the Israel Museum could so blatantly misrepresent the artefacts’ provenance shows just how intangible the protection offered by the Oslo accords really is. The museum’s failure to mention the disputed provenance of the artefacts on display is a sign that archaeology in Israel is often entangled with politics related to the thorny issue of the occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The exhibition about King Herod is but one example of how the ebb and flow of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has affected archaeological practice in Israel and Palestine. The object of the current chapter will be to offer a concise overview of the historical context of the archaeological investigation of Israel and Palestine. The second and third chapters will then offer an analysis of the narratives that underlie the political use of archaeology in Israel today. It will also be shown where these narratives and their underlying ideas came from and how they facilitated the institutionalisation of the norm ‘the Jewish historical experience mandates the politicisation of archaeology in contemporary Israel’. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict will feature prominently in this overview.³² By

²⁷ Museum in Israel the National Portal, ‘Herod the Great: The King’s Final Journey’.

²⁸ S.F. Singer, ‘Herod the Great—The King’s Final Journey. Take a closer look at the exhibit with a web-exclusive slideshow’.

²⁹ M.M. Kersel, ‘Fractured oversight: The ABCs of cultural heritage in Palestine after the Oslo Accords’ *Journal of Social Archaeology* 15 (2015) 24-44.

³⁰ Kersel, ‘Fractured oversight’, 25.

³¹ *Ibidem*, 25.

³² I have discussed the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and especially the Six Day War, in some of my earlier work. I have incorporated, and will build on, my earlier conclusions here. See: T. Stroomer, *American Feet of Clay. Does the United States have what it takes to solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?* (Essay The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, Utrecht 2017).

first considering the broader historical context of the archaeological investigation of Israel and Palestine we will achieve a more thorough understanding of the historical development in which we can place the contemporary politicization of archaeology in Israel.

The history of the archaeological investigation of Israel and Palestine.

When considering the history of the archaeological investigation of Israel and Palestine we can discern three broad phases. The first, which lasted from the middle of the 19th century until the 1970s, was characterised by a close-knit alliance between archaeology and biblical studies.³³ This so-called ‘biblical archaeology’ sought to affirm the historicity of biblical origin stories (i.e. the patriarchal narratives as found in the book of Genesis).³⁴ During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the United States of America and Great Britain, as well as other European nations, established a number of research institutions in the region. Because European and American Christians relied on the Bible as their primary source of historical knowledge for the history of ancient Palestine, these research institutions sought to expand their biblical-era knowledge base by archaeological research.³⁵ The result of this situation was that much of the history Palestine was rewritten to fit or substantiate biblical history.³⁶ This meant that until the 1970s, the majority of archaeologists investigating Palestine adopted the Israeli ethnocentric perspective that identified the Bronze Age as ‘Canaanite’ and the Iron Age as ‘Israelite’ and even adopted this ethnocentric construct as a secure assumption of their research, thereby substantiating Israel’s claim to legitimacy.³⁷ This is the so-called ‘Israeli perspective’ that we find in the archaeological investigation of Palestine.

Biblical archaeology’s search for confirmation of the patriarchal traditions and adoption of the Israeli perspective came under fire during the 1970s. This second phase of the archaeological investigation of Palestine is characterised by a fundamental criticism of biblical archaeology’s core tenets. The critique centred on falsifying biblical archaeology’s established theory of a historical patriarchal period in the Bronze Age.³⁸ It was shown that the origin stories found in the Bible were actually of a much later date and could therefore not be historically accurate.³⁹ The result of this development was that biblical archaeology became less important for the historical investigation of Palestine and that the tide moved towards a more inclusive history of Palestine beyond the Israeli perspective.⁴⁰

³³ I. Hjelm and T.L. Thompson ‘Introduction’, in: I. Hjelm and T.L. Thompson ed., *History, Archaeology and the Bible Forty Years after “Historicity”* (Abingdon 2016) 1-14.

³⁴ Hjelm and Thomsson, ‘Introduction’, 3.

³⁵ S.H.A. Al-Houdalieh, ‘Archaeology Programs at the Palestinian Universities: Reality and Challenges’, *Archaeologies: Journal of the World Archaeological Congress 5* (2009) 161-183.

³⁶ Al-Houdalieh, ‘Archaeology Programs at the Palestinian Universities’, 164.

³⁷ Hjelm and Thomsson, ‘Introduction’, 2.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, 3.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, 4.

⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, 5.

The herald of this monumental change was Thomas L. Thompson. In his book *The Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives*, Thompson argues against the historicity of biblical origin stories. He states that archaeology has not proven a single event mentioned in these stories to be historical and that it has also not shown any of the patriarchal traditions to even be likely.⁴¹ According to Thompson, it is better to appreciate Genesis as the subjective experience of the authors and historically determined expressions about Israel and Israel's relationship to its God, rather than viewing it as a source for historical truth.⁴²

One author who has built on Thompson's criticism is Nadia Abu El-Haj. In her book *Facts on the Ground. Archaeological Practice and Territorial Self-Fashioning in Israeli Society*, El-Haj defines the creation of Israel as an example of colonialism. In this context, archaeology emerged as a vital scientific tool to justify this turn of events because of the manner in which the colonial settlement was framed in the language of and belief in the Jewish national return.⁴³ Archaeology produced the material signs necessary to substantiate Israel's national history and produced Eretz Israel as the national home.⁴⁴ This 'Israeli archaeology' has not yet been effectively countered by 'Palestinian archaeology'. The effect of this has been, according to El-Haj, that Palestinians are seen as a 'less than fully developed nation'.⁴⁵

The turn of the millennium saw the end of the second phase of the archaeological investigation of Palestine. Instead of focussing on independently defining the historical background of the region, the third phase of the archaeological investigation of Palestine seems to be defined by a return to biblical archaeology's desire to prove the veracity of the biblical texts,⁴⁶ despite the pioneering work done by authors such as Thompson. Ilan Pappé, a revisionist scholar deeply critical of Israel, even contends that the biblical narrative, which justifies the Zionization of Palestine (i.e. the Israeli perspective), is still accepted by mainstream academia as empirical fact.⁴⁷

When we consider this brief discussion of the development of the archaeological investigation of Palestine, it becomes clear that there are important political, cultural and religious factors that influence the way in which the archaeological investigation of Israel and Palestine is conducted and interpreted. However, the return to archaeology with 'Bible and spade' that characterises the third phase of this development seems almost counterintuitive: had the debate not already been settled about the Bible's historicity? By looking at where the ideas that influence the highly politicized use of archaeology in contemporary Israel originated and how certain nationalistic myths (and their concomitant political narratives and practices) developed and helped institutionalise the norm 'the

⁴¹ T.L. Thompson, *The Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives* (Berlin 1974) 328.

⁴² Thompson, *The Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives*, 330.

⁴³ N.A. El-Haj, *Facts on the Ground. Archaeological Practice and Territorial Self-Fashioning in Israeli Society* (London 2001) 280.

⁴⁴ El-Haj, *Facts on the Ground*, 281.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, 274.

⁴⁶ M.L. Steiner, 'From Jerusalem with love', 75.

⁴⁷ I. Pappé, 'The Bible in the service of Zionism: "we do not believe in God, but he nonetheless promised us Palestine"', in: I. Hjelm and T.L. Thompson ed., *History, Archaeology and the Bible Forty Years after "Hitoricity"* (Abingdon 2016) 205-217.

Jewish historical experience mandates the politicisation of archaeology in contemporary Israel', it will be made clear that this development is not as surprising as it might seem at first glance.

Narratives informing the political use of archaeology in Israel.

So what are these narratives, these ideas that we keep referring to? To be blunt, we can state that there are two main narratives that influence the political use of archaeology in contemporary Israeli politics. These are:

- Israel's ethnocentric national history is verified by archaeology and corroborated by the Bible.
- The Palestinians do not have a right to a state.

However, merely arguing that these narratives exist, exert influence and helped institutionalise the norm 'the Jewish historical experience mandates the politicisation of archaeology in contemporary Israel', even with extensive annotation, is hardly convincing, let alone a sufficient base for stating that the entrapment hypothesis applies to the way Israeli politicians employ archaeology in the political arena. To substantiate this claim, two steps must be taken. To start, we must consider how these narratives developed; where did they originate and how did they become influential? Following this we will look at how these narratives helped institutionalise the norm 'the Jewish historical experience mandates the politicisation of archaeology in contemporary Israel'; what did the process by which converts used social power to further their goals look like? The definition of an institutionalised norm that was given in the introduction will be instrumental to the following analysis.⁴⁸ In the fourth chapter it will then be argued that this behavioural norm entraps Israeli policymakers and is detrimental to the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

⁴⁸ To recap, this definition was: 'A norm is an internalized or enforced idea shared by members of a social group that has gradually become institutionalized through the application of social power'.

Chapter 2: The First Narrative

As stated above, this chapter will focus on the first narrative informing the political use of archaeology in contemporary Israel, which is 'Israel's ethnocentric national history is verified by archaeology and corroborated by the Bible'. By considering key historical events and by incorporating arguments put forward by other scholars, an attempt will be made to elucidate the process by which this narrative became embedded and, eventually, helped to institutionalise the norm 'the Jewish historical experience mandates the politicisation of archaeology in contemporary Israel'. The Six-Day War will feature prominently in this analysis. This is because the war had major repercussions for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in general and contemporary Israeli archaeological practice in particular.

Katharina Galor, in her book *Finding Jerusalem*, argues that Israeli archaeology is often intertwined with religion and politics.⁴⁹ She presents a compelling overview of archaeological practice in Jerusalem since the middle of the nineteenth century until the present, focussing on the post-1967 period. By looking at the archaeologists themselves, Galor is able to elucidate the ever-changing sociocultural and political contexts that shape the way in which the archaeological finds and sites are interpreted and presented.⁵⁰ In regards to the archaeological excavations in Jerusalem, she asserts that one of the primary concerns of archaeologists has been to uncover the city's glorious biblical past.⁵¹ Despite the fact that these endeavours have little scientific value and are primarily ideologically motivated, the public image of many of these projects (such as the previously mentioned City of David) remains compelling and subsequently popular.⁵² Some aspects of Galor's study are similar to the current analysis. She even asserts that the issues surrounding cultural heritage are detrimental to the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.⁵³ However, the object of the current discussion is to apply the entrapment hypothesis to the analysis of the political use of archaeology in contemporary Israel, something not yet done by Galor.

Galor presents us with the first half of the first narrative that informs the political use of archaeology in Israel: the idea that the archaeological evidence substantiates the national historical narrative. There are in fact numerous authors that agree that archaeology plays a pivotal role in Israel's ongoing attempt to substantiate its national history and unequivocally prove its legitimacy as a state. But what does this national historical narrative entail?

Ilan Pappé, who was introduced above, informs us that the Zionist movement exploited the Bible as both a scientific truth and moral justification for the colonization of Palestine and to garner support from large sections of the Western Christian world.⁵⁴ These early secular Zionists used the

⁴⁹ K. Galor, *Finding Jerusalem. Archaeology between Science and Ideology* (Oakland, 2017) 165.

⁵⁰ Galor, *Finding Jerusalem*, 4.

⁵¹ To accomplish this goal, these archaeologists often revert to outdated practices which can be detrimental to the living conditions of the Palestinian villagers living near, or above, the sites. See: Galor, *Finding Jerusalem*, 167.

⁵² *Ibidem*, 167.

⁵³ *Ibidem*, 170.

⁵⁴ Pappé, 'The Bible in the service of Zionism', 205.

Bible to show that there was a divine imperative to redeem Eretz Israel (i.e. colonize Palestine).⁵⁵ One of the effects of the primacy of the Bible as a justification for the Zionist colonisation of Palestine was that both Zionist thinkers and Western Christian scholars began to ‘Zionize’ anyone who lived in the biblical era and to de-Palestinize other people’s connection to the land up until the arrival of Zionism.⁵⁶

At its core, a national historical narrative relies on a national imagination; the proposed national history needs to be evocative and inspirational in order for it to be effective. Few tools are better suited to this purpose than the strategic use of archaeology. By making the national history ‘visible’, archaeology serves as the foundation upon which a national history can be built.⁵⁷ Maja Gori tells us that when the Zionists pioneers arrived in Palestine, they sought to remake the land into ‘Eretz Israel’.⁵⁸ Archaeology provided the artefacts that became the tangible symbols of the land’s Jewish identity; an identity that was continuous with biblical times.⁵⁹ Parts that conflicted with this Jewish identity, such as Arab, Palestinian and indigenous heritage and history, were ignored or obscured.⁶⁰ This trend has persisted in contemporary Israeli archaeological practice as well as in Israeli politics. In sum, we can state that the overarching idea that informs the Israeli national historical narrative is as follows: The State of Israel is the result of a return of the Jewish people to their ancient homeland, a land whose Jewish identity has remained continuous since ancient times. As discussed above, the narrative that this view of Israel’s history is substantiated by archaeological evidence first emerged when Western Christian scholars sought to expand their historical knowledge of the biblical era. This narrative would become increasingly accepted by the Israeli public after 1967. While religious texts and traditions form a fundamental part of Israel’s national historical narrative, they do not constitute it wholly. As will be shown, the Israeli national historical narrative also incorporates political myths which are supposedly substantiated by archaeological evidence. The aftermath of the Six-Day War would provide Israeli archaeologists with plenty of opportunities to substantiate these political myths.

It is no coincidence that Galor chooses to focus on the post-1967 period. She asserts that the outcome of the Six-Day War profoundly affected archaeological practice in Israel. According to her, the fact that Israel ended up being an occupying force had various practical, administrative, legal and political consequences for Israeli archaeology.⁶¹ The fact that the Six Day War fundamentally affected archaeological practice in the region during the following decades and up until today necessitates that we take a close look at this complex conflict.

⁵⁵ Ibidem, 206.

⁵⁶ Pappe, ‘The Bible in the service of Zionism’, 209.

⁵⁷ M. Gori, ‘The Stones of Contention: The Role of Archaeological Heritage in Israeli–Palestinian Conflict’, *Archaeologies: Journal of the World Archaeological Congress* 9 (2013) 213–229

⁵⁸ Gori, ‘The Stones of Contention’, 218 .

⁵⁹ Ibidem, 218.

⁶⁰ Ibidem, 218.

⁶¹ Galor, *Finding Jerusalem*, 3.

The Six Day War was a conflict fought out between Israel on one side and Egypt, Jordan and Syria on the other and took place between the fifth and the tenth of June 1967.⁶² The conflict was the result of a period of increased tensions between Israel and its neighbours. A few of the hallmarks of this crisis intensive period were the Israeli-Syrian dispute over the exploitation of the Jordan River,⁶³ Jordan's inability to protect the Palestinian towns on the West Bank against Israeli raids combined with its increasingly isolated position in regional politics,⁶⁴ and Gamel Abdel Nasser's (Egypt's leader from 1956 until 1970) efforts to establish and shore up his position as the de facto leader of the Arab front against Israel (while he at the same time wished to avoid open conflict).⁶⁵ Nasser's efforts, combined with the increasingly volatile situation in the region, led to the signing of a mutual defence treaty between Egypt and Syria on November 7, 1966,⁶⁶ and to the signing of a mutual defence pact between Egypt and Syria on May 30, 1967.⁶⁷

Nasser was given a Soviet report on the 13th of May 1967 that stated that Israel had massed forces on the Syrian border, ostensibly with the aim of overthrowing the Syrian regime.⁶⁸ This report later proved to be false. Nasser subsequently ordered his forces to occupy the Sinai and requested the UN forces stationed there to withdraw. He closed the Straits of Tiran to all shipping destined to Israel on May 22, thereby re-creating the *casus belli* stipulated by Israel.⁶⁹ Understandably perhaps, this situation caused considerable alarm among Israeli citizens and politicians. This mood was eloquently described by the Israeli Foreign Minister at the time, Abba Eban, in a speech he made at the United Nations Security Council meeting of June 6, 1967:

‘An army, greater than any force ever assembled in history in Sinai, had massed against Israel's southern frontier. Egypt had dismissed the United Nations forces which symbolized the international interest in the maintenance of peace in our region. (...) [There] was peril for Israel wherever it looked. Its manpower had been hastily mobilized. Its economy and commerce were beating with feeble pulses. Its streets were dark and empty. There was an apocalyptic air of approaching peril. And Israel faced this danger alone.’⁷⁰

Eban succeeded in adequately describing the sense of isolation and impending violent conflict espoused by the Israeli government and military. Eban went on to state that Israel had exhausted every possible diplomatic solution to the crisis.⁷¹ However, when Egyptian forces, according to Eban, engaged Israeli forces by land and air on June 5, Israel responded ‘defensively [and] in full strength’.⁷² Before engaging in open warfare, Israel had responded to Egypt's actions by mobilizing its own forces

⁶² C. D. Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Boston 2013) 284.

⁶³ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 267.

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, 273 and 274.

⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, 274.

⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, 274.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, 291.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, 280.

⁶⁹ *Ibidem*, 281.

⁷⁰ UN SC, 1348th meeting: 6 June 1967, paragraphs 144 and 148.

⁷¹ UN SC, 1348th meeting: 6 June 1967, paragraph 154.

⁷² UN SC, 1348th meeting: 6 June 1967, paragraph 155.

and calling up its reserves.⁷³ The hesitant Israeli Prime Minister Levi Eshkol was forced to accede to public demand for a government of national unity.⁷⁴ The ‘hawk’ Moshe Dayan was brought into the cabinet on June 1, 1967, and was put in charge of organizing the Israeli attack on the Arab world, in line with demands by the Israeli military.⁷⁵ The Israeli military, inspired by both strategic concerns and nationalist thinking, had been developing plans for a swift occupation of the West Bank since the 1950s.⁷⁶ Combined with the severe domestic criticism levelled at him for not acting more decisively, Eshkol was unable to withstand the military’s demands.⁷⁷ The Israeli cabinet approved Dayan’s plan of attack on June 4, 1967.⁷⁸

In any case, the war was a resounding success for Israel. Not only was it able to defeat its adversaries but it also occupied the Sinai, the Golan Heights, the West Bank and East Jerusalem.⁷⁹ On the 22nd of November 1967, the U.N. Security Council (UN SC) passed the infamous resolution 242 which was meant to offer principles for a peaceful settlement of the conflict. The two core principles were the withdrawal of Israel’s armed forces from occupied territories and the ‘just settlement’ of the refugee problem.⁸⁰ Critically, the war transformed Israel into an occupying force in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Furthermore, the war established new territorial frameworks that are still subject to negotiation.⁸¹ The pre-1967 borders are still the primary reference line in any discussion about a two-state solution for the Israeli-Palestinian dispute and are subscribed to by many international actors.⁸² The ramifications are indeed far-reaching and (part of the) reason why the Israeli-Palestinian conflict still has not been resolved. For the present discussion however, it is more prudent to look at how the consequences of the war facilitated the substantiation of the narrative ‘Israel’s ethnocentric national history is verified by archaeology and corroborated by the Bible’.

Firstly, the 1967 war had substantial consequences for Israeli domestic politics. One group of Israeli policymakers was especially pleased with the results of the war. This group, referred to by Israeli scholars as the ‘redeemers’, regarded the West Bank, which they called Judea and Samaria, as a critical region that had to be incorporated into the Jewish state.⁸³ The redeemers considered the occupation of the West Bank (and Gaza, the Golan Heights and the Sinai) as a historic chance to establish defensible Israeli borders while they at the same time considered the incorporation of the West Bank as the (partial) fulfilment of the Zionist dream.⁸⁴

⁷³ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 282.

⁷⁴ I. Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine. One Land, Two People* (New York 2004) 187.

⁷⁵ Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine*, 187 and Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 283.

⁷⁶ Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine*, 187.

⁷⁷ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 283.

⁷⁸ *Ibidem*, 284.

⁷⁹ *Ibidem*, 284.

⁸⁰ UN SC, res. 242 (22 November 1967) para. 1 (i) and 2 (b).

⁸¹ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 289.

⁸² These actors include the EU and the Arab League. See: B. Atzili, 50 years after the Six-Day War, Israel’s pre-1967 borders are still a hot topic. Here’s why.’ (June 8 2017).

⁸³ Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine*, 187.

⁸⁴ *Ibidem*, 188.

The results of the war seemingly validated the idea of ‘Greater Israel’ and reinforced the political strength of those right-wing expansionists and religious fundamentalists who saw the war’s outcome as divine providence.⁸⁵ Israel’s general population felt reassured by the conclusion of the war; Israeli’s self-confidence was boosted and the Jewish element of their national identity reinforced.⁸⁶ The Israeli government wasted no time in consolidating its success and quickly began expansive building programs in the acquired territories, including extensive fortifications.⁸⁷ Israel experienced a period of economic growth, a welcome relief from the stagnation that had characterised the period of mass mobilisation before the war.⁸⁸

In 1968 the so-called ‘Allon Plan’ was devised. The plan called for the retention and colonisation of the acquired territories.⁸⁹ The main concern behind the plan was to create ‘facts on the ground’ whereby Israeli presence in areas of strategic and political significance would be consolidated to create a permanent right to them before significant external pressure could be exerted to effectuate a withdrawal.⁹⁰

One of the most blatant examples of Israel’s attempts to incorporate the newly occupied territories into Greater Israel were the numerous largescale ‘rescue excavations’ undertaken in Jerusalem.⁹¹ It should come as no surprise that the city had been an archaeological hotbed long before Israel took possession of it. What changed with the end of the Six-Day War was that the Israeli archaeologists now sought to legitimize Israel’s claim to the city through archaeological investigation. Focussing on architecture from the so-called First and Second Temple periods, with less attention paid to the intervening strata belonging to the long Arabic-Islamic history of the city, these archaeologists spared no expense to reach those artefacts they believed proved the Jewish nature of the city and thereby validated the connection between the city and Israel’s national history.⁹² This flagrant disregard for Jerusalem’s Arabic history has been a hallmark of Israeli archaeological investigation of the city ever since. The abovementioned speech by Dore Gold and exhibition featuring a section of Herod’s supposed mausoleum are only the latest iterations of this lamentable trend.

The efforts to substantiate the idea that Jerusalem’s identity was Jewish and had been since biblical times, thereby upholding the broader Israeli historical narrative, were not limited to excavations. The politicization of toponomy and (the reshaping of) the landscape surrounding the city,⁹³ as well as in Israel and the occupied territories in general, both served to reinforce the Jewish identity of the land. The struggle over toponomy has been raging in Israel since the first Zionist settlers arrived in the late nineteenth century and has only exacerbated since the founding of the state

⁸⁵ D. Machairas, ‘The strategic and political consequences of the June 1967 war’, *Cogent Social Studies* 3 (2017) 1-9.

⁸⁶ Machairas, ‘The strategic and political consequences of the June 1967 war’, 4.

⁸⁷ Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine*, 188.

⁸⁸ Machairas, ‘The strategic and political consequences of the June 1967 war’, 4.

⁸⁹ *Ibidem*, 7.

⁹⁰ *Ibidem*, 7.

⁹¹ Steiner, ‘From Jerusalem with love’, 74.

⁹² *Ibidem*, 74.

⁹³ The Encyclopaedia Britannica defines toponomy as the study of place names. See: Encyclopaedia Britannica, ‘Name’ (date unknown).

and the conclusion of the Six-Day War.⁹⁴ Since 1948, the Israeli government and military have systematically Hebrewised existing Palestinian Arabic place names.⁹⁵ This is done by claiming precedence, map-making and, critically, referencing archaeological finds. In its most extreme form, this practice can lead to the creation of Israeli ‘national heritage parks’ on the ruins of Palestinian towns.⁹⁶ These parks are managed by the Israel Nature and Parks Authority (INPA). Despite this organisation’s declaration that it is committed to ‘preserve and maintain distinct elements of the appearance of different regions of the country for all the inhabitants of Israel’,⁹⁷ the heritage industry it supports negates the non-Jewish heritage of the land.⁹⁸ An especially relevant example for the present discussion is the reshaping of the landscape surrounding Jerusalem. Thousands of acres of pine forests were planted around the city to both camouflage destroyed Palestinian villages and to give the impression of an ‘authentic’ biblical landscape.⁹⁹

Apart from appropriating destroyed Palestinian villages as national parks, the Israeli state has also endeavoured to erase Palestinian place names from geography and history.¹⁰⁰ By replacing the historic Arabic place names with biblical, Talmudic and new Hebrew names, the landscape was reshaped to fit the Zionist narrative following the 1948 Nakba (i.e. the Israeli War of Independence).¹⁰¹ The Palestinian rural and urban landscape was dramatically altered as a consequence of the war. Half of the Palestinian rural villages were destroyed to make way for Israeli settlement and cultivation while Palestinian neighbourhoods in mixed towns were destroyed or emptied while solely Palestinian towns were either cleared of people or were left intact but became hopelessly overcrowded due to the massive influx of refugees.¹⁰²

The toponymic policies initiated by Israel’s government following the 1948 war continued in the decades following the Six-Day War. Israel started interfering with Arabic toponyms immediately following the conclusion of the war and in recent years has incorporated the renaming of thousands of Arabic road signs in its attempt to erase the Palestinian toponymic heritage.¹⁰³ The reasons for this extensive effort have, once again, to do with Israel’s continuous attempt to (re-)create its national history. By erasing the Palestinian toponymic heritage, by camouflaging Palestinian ruins and by giving (new) settlements biblical, Talmudic or Hebrew (-ized) names, the Israeli state sought, and still seeks, to substantiate its national historical narrative (i.e. the idea that the State of Israel is the result a return of the Jewish people to their homeland, a land whose Jewish identity has remained continuous since ancient times).

⁹⁴ N. Musalha, ‘Settler-Colonialism, Memoricide, and Indigenous Toponymic Memory: The Appropriation of Palestinian Place Names by the Israeli State’, *Journal of Holy Land and Palestine Studies* 14 (2015) 3-57.

⁹⁵ Musalha, ‘Settler-Colonialism, Memoricide, and Indigenous Toponymic Memory’, 5.

⁹⁶ *Ibidem*, 43.

⁹⁷ Israel Nature and Parks Authority, ‘About us’ (date unknown).

⁹⁸ Musalha, ‘Settler-Colonialism, Memoricide, and Indigenous Toponymic Memory’, 43.

⁹⁹ *Ibidem*, 42.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibidem*, 31.

¹⁰¹ *Ibidem*, 31.

¹⁰² Pappe, *A History of Modern Palestine*, 139.

¹⁰³ Musalha, ‘Settler-Colonialism, Memoricide, and Indigenous Toponymic Memory’, 47.

Following the excavations in Jerusalem, the creation of ‘facts on the ground’ in the occupied territories, the execution of highly politicized toponymic policies and the erasure of the Palestinian presence from the landscape, we will now discuss two examples of nationalistic policy (and their accompanying political narratives). This will allow us to further illustrate how the narrative ‘Israel’s ethnocentric national history is verified by archaeology and corroborated by the Bible’ became ever more substantiated and influential between 1967 and the present and thereby helped institutionalise the norm ‘the Jewish historical experience mandates the politicisation of archaeology in contemporary Israel’. These examples are the nationalistic myths surrounding the fabled fortress of Masada and the Heritage Plan announced by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in 2010.

Israel, like so many other states, tries to substantiate national myths (i.e. political myths) with archaeology. If possible, these myths are coupled with archaeological sites. Political myths are concerned with the territorial claim of a people and the origin of individual nations and legitimize the social order and promote group identity; the Masada myth is an excellent example of such a myth.¹⁰⁴ The Masada myth first became prominent in Jewish circles as a result of Zionist historiography.¹⁰⁵ For the Zionists who came to Palestine at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Masada myth offered a tempting vehicle to proclaim their right to self-determination.¹⁰⁶ In the following section it will be shown that the myth falls in line with the previously discussed endeavour by Zionist thinkers and Western Christian scholars to ‘Zionize’ Palestine’s history. It will also be shown that the Masada myth continues to influence Israeli policy today, which will prove that the narrative ‘Israel’s ethnocentric national history is verified by archaeology and corroborated by the Bible’ has become part and parcel of Israeli political thought.

The Masada fortress is located in the Judean Desert on a mountaintop overlooking the Dead Sea. The fortress was besieged by the Romans during the closing acts of the Jewish revolt (which lasted from 66 until 73 CE). The siege was recounted by the Roman historian Titus Flavius Josephus in his book *The Jewish War*.¹⁰⁷ In this book, Josephus describes how the Roman procurator Flavius Silva set out to subdue the last remaining stronghold of Jewish rebellion: the fortress of Masada.¹⁰⁸ Silva anticipated a difficult fight and made extensive preparations for the siege; even ordering the construction of a wall that would encircle the entire fortress.¹⁰⁹ Seeing the Roman forces arranged against him, the rebel commander Eleazar called on his fellows to interpret the damage already suffered by them as God’s punishment for their sins, a punishment not received ‘from the Romans, but from God himself, as executed by our own hands’.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁴ B.R. Shargel, ‘The Evolution of the Masada Myth’, *Judaism* 28 (1979) 357-371.

¹⁰⁵ Shargel, ‘The Evolution of the Masada Myth’, 359.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibidem*, 359.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibidem*, 359.

¹⁰⁸ T.F. Josephus, *The Jewish War*, book VII chapter 8 and 9.

¹⁰⁹ Josephus, *The Jewish War*, book VII chapter 8.

¹¹⁰ *Ibidem*, chapter 8.

‘They then chose ten men by lot out of them to slay all the rest; every one of whom laid himself down by his wife and children on the ground, and threw his arms about them, and they offered their necks to the stroke of those who by lot executed that melancholy office; and when these ten had, without fear, slain them all, they made the same rule for casting lots for themselves, that he whose lot it was should first kill the other nine, and after all should kill himself. Accordingly, all these had courage sufficient to be no way behind one another in doing or suffering; so, for a conclusion, the nine offered their necks to the executioner, and he who was the last of all took a view of all the other bodies, lest perchance some or other among so many that were slain should want his assistance to be quite despatched, and when he perceived that they were all slain, he set fire to the palace, and with the great force of his hand ran his sword entirely through himself, and fell down dead near to his own relations. So these people died with this intention, that they would not leave so much as one soul among them all alive to be subject to the Romans.’¹¹¹

When the Romans discovered the gruesome scene the following day, Josephus tells us that:

‘[They] could take no pleasure in the fact, though it were done to their enemies. Nor could they do other than wonder at the courage of their resolution, and the immovable contempt of death which so great a number of them had shown, when they went through with such an action as that was.’¹¹²

While it is highly debatable if the account offered by Josephus is historically accurate, the gruesome scenes and the stalwart resistance of the Jews described by him paint a picture ideally suited for a political myth. Nearly nineteen centuries after the fall of the fortress, the Zionists who reintroduced the tragedy of Masada into Jewish history did not overly concern themselves with the reliability of Josephus tale.¹¹³ Josephus’ tale is the dramatization of Zionist philosophy’s core tenet that the State of Israel that was established in 1948 is in fact a continuation of the Second Jewish Commonwealth which came to an end when the fortress fell in 73 CE¹¹⁴ It provided a vital link between antiquity and the modern age, thereby reinforcing the claim that the region’s identity had been continuously Jewish since biblical times. The Masada tragedy was further immortalised by Yitzhak Lamdan when he wrote the poem *Masada* in 1927. The poem contains the infamous lines:

‘Ascend, chain of the dance
Never again shall Masada fall’¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ Ibidem, chapter 9.

¹¹² Ibidem, chapter 9.

¹¹³ Shargel, ‘The Evolution of the Masada Myth’, 360.

¹¹⁴ Ibidem, 361.

¹¹⁵ As translated by L. Yudkin, *Isaac Lamdan: A Study in Twentieth-Century Poetry* (New York 1971) 225, as referenced in: Shargel, ‘The Evolution of the Masada Myth’, 362.

Lamdan was the first to equate the Jewish resistance against the Romans with contemporary Jewish colonisation in Palestine in the early twentieth century; the settlement of Palestine was the last Jewish stronghold against the hostile European world (i.e. modern 'Rome').¹¹⁶ The connection between the ancient and contemporary Jewish state through the Masada myth was made tangible when the fortress was excavated between 1963 and 1965.

These excavations were conducted under the leadership of Yigael Yadin, who had been chief of staff of the IDF between 1949 and 1952, from which time he devoted his life to archaeology.¹¹⁷ The excavations required an immense logistical effort. The fact that they were at all possible can be explained by Yadin's army connections. The army supported the excavations logistically, financially and by supplying volunteers.¹¹⁸ However, the army was by no means the only source of volunteers for the project. Many thousands of volunteers participated in the excavations, greatly increasing the public's exposure to the Masada myth.¹¹⁹ The army also established a symbolic link with Masada. This was done when in 1968 the skeletal remains of 28 individuals, the so-called 'Masada defenders', were reburied under the same headstones used for the IDF's casualties of the recent Israeli-Arab wars.¹²⁰ Another example of the symbolic link between the IDF and Masada was the annual swearing-in ceremony that took place there until 1991 for the new recruits of the Israeli tank corps. During this ceremony, the recruits would swear every year that 'Masada shall not fall again'.¹²¹

It is important to remember here that the IDF's function in Israel's society is not limited to a strictly military role. The IDF is also an important agent of socialization and education and as such invests heavily in the nationalistic education of its soldiers.¹²² Masada plays a pivotal role in this regard. Since the 1950s hundreds of thousands of IDF soldiers have visited the fortress on trips meant to familiarize them with the geography and symbolic history of Eretz Israel.¹²³ The military commanders used Masada to inculcate their soldiers with the ideals associated with Masada: a love of freedom, active resistance and loyalty.¹²⁴ Through this process a continuous link was forged between the ancient defenders of Masada and the IDF soldiers defending Israel against a hostile world.

The Masada excavations are a classic example of how a connection between a contemporary community and its supposed ancient predecessors can be constructed through the use of archaeology. The Israeli archaeological tradition that emerged during the early years of statehood went beyond mere observation of the archaeological evidence as the primary source of knowledge. It also sought to verify a very specific archaeological culture.¹²⁵ This dynamic produced an archaeological paradigm through

¹¹⁶ Shargel, 'The Evolution of the Masada Myth', 362.

¹¹⁷ B. Nachman, *Masada Myth: Collective Memory and Mythmaking in Israel* (Madison 1995) 54.

¹¹⁸ Nachman, *Masada Myth*, 55.

¹¹⁹ *Ibidem*, 56.

¹²⁰ Gori, 'The Stones of Contention', 220.

¹²¹ *Ibidem*, 220.

¹²² Nachman, *Masada Myth*, 147.

¹²³ *Ibidem*, 147.

¹²⁴ *Ibidem*, 159.

¹²⁵ El-Haj, *Facts on the Ground*, 15.

which the ancient Jewish nation became an observable entity; the nation became a historical fact.¹²⁶ This paradigm came under attack during the 1990s; archaeology faced numerous challenges to its practices and to the realities it had helped to create.¹²⁷ However, we have already seen that some scholars such as Ilan Pappé contend that the paradigm is still accepted by mainstream academia today. The identity of the State of Israel (or Eretz Israel) that was created with the help of archaeology is inherently Jewish and is presented as historically continuous. This essentialist reading of history glosses over those discrepancies that cannot be incorporated into the national narrative. The modern State of Israel is thereby perceived not as a new historic achievement but as a restoration of the status quo.¹²⁸

Thus the substantiation of Israel's national historical narrative's core tenet,¹²⁹ through the efforts undertaken to spread the Masada myth and prove its veracity on the basis of archaeology, are another clear example of how the first narrative has become increasingly institutionalised. The fact that Masada still plays an important role in contemporary Israeli politics only adds further credence to this assessment.

Echoing Lamdan's characterisation of hostile Europe as the new 'Rome', the Masada myth has developed into a political tool to delegitimise the EU's practice of funding those NGOs critical of the human rights situation in Israel.¹³⁰ The Masada myth is used by members of the Israeli government (and certain Israeli NGOs, media and scholars) to link contemporary political realities to Israeli self-perceptions of isolation, persecution and, especially, eternal victimhood.¹³¹ The opponents to the EU's funding of critical NGOs assert that the practice interferes with Israel's democracy and compromises its sovereignty.¹³² For them, the Masada myth symbolizes the collective Jewish identity as a besieged people beset by a hostile world.¹³³ As stated above, the myth was fundamental in formulating a new national identity during the years preceding and directly following the founding of the State of Israel; it reflected the espoused ideals of a love of freedom, active resistance and loyalty.¹³⁴ Masada personified the feelings of national unity and solidarity and bound the emerging nation together.¹³⁵ During recent years the Masada myth has been effectively employed by those seeking to undermine the EU's funding of critical NGOs. In a broader sense, this politicization of the myth has reinforced Israel's self-perception as an isolated and persecuted people.¹³⁶ This 'state of mind' also affects Israel's stance in the peace process, a topic to which we will return below. The aforementioned remarks by Gold and Netanyahu are similar examples of how this narrative is espoused.

¹²⁶ *Ibidem*, 16.

¹²⁷ *Ibidem*, 239.

¹²⁸ Gori, 'The Stones of Contention', 218.

¹²⁹ To recap: The State of Israel is the result of a return of the Jewish people to their homeland, a land whose Jewish identity has remained continuous since ancient times.

¹³⁰ G. Harpaz and E. Jacobsen, 'The Israeli Collective Memory and the Masada Syndrome: A Political Instrument to Counter the EU Funding of Israeli non-governmental human rights organizations', *Mediterranean Politics* 22 (2017) 257 – 277.

¹³¹ Harpaz and Jacobsen, 'The Israeli Collective Memory and the Masada Syndrome', 258.

¹³² *Ibidem*, 260.

¹³³ *Ibidem*, 263.

¹³⁴ *Ibidem*, 263.

¹³⁵ *Ibidem*, 264.

¹³⁶ *Ibidem*, 272.

In sum, we can state that the Masada myth is one of the clearest examples of how the narrative that the archaeological evidence substantiates Israel's national history can affect the interpretation of archaeological evidence. The physical fortress is inextricably linked with the mythical tale about Jewish rebels standing up to a tyrannical regime, their love of freedom and their willingness to make the ultimate sacrifice rather than linger in oppression. By physically and symbolically linking the contemporary state, for example through the military's ceremonies and incorporation of the myth in political rhetoric, with this heroic tale does the Israeli government try to link the ancient with the new and prove that the land's identity is unequivocally Jewish. At the very least, these practices have facilitated, together with the excavations in Jerusalem, the creation of 'facts on the ground' in the occupied territories, the execution of highly politicized toponymic policies and the erasure of the Palestinian presence from the landscape, the institutionalisation of the norm 'the Jewish historical experience mandates the politicisation of archaeology in contemporary Israel'. To conclude our discussion of this narrative, we will now look at the so-called 'Heritage plan'.

'Our existence here in our country depends not only on the strength of the IDF and our economic and technological might. It is anchored, first and foremost, in our national and emotional legacy, which we instil in our youth and in the coming generations. It depends on cultural heroes and national symbols. It depends on our ability to recognize and explain the justice of our cause, and to underscore our links to the Land, first and foremost, to ourselves as well as to others.'¹³⁷

These words, taken from a speech delivered by Benjamin Netanyahu on the 21st of February 2010, leave no doubt about the Prime Minister's opinion on archaeology and its political significance. In the same speech, the Prime Minister announced a plan to 'rehabilitate archaeological and Zionist heritage sites'. The plan would cost approximately 115 million US dollars, include 150 historical sites, rely on the assistance of 16 government ministries and incorporate Israel's ancient history (i.e. the biblical and Second Temple era) with its contemporary history (i.e. since shortly before the foundation of the State of Israel).¹³⁸ Included in these 150 sites would be numerous sites located in the occupied territories. One of these sites was located in Hebron and is known by Jews as the 'Tomb of the Martyrs'.¹³⁹ Muslims know the site by a different name: the al-Ibrahimi Mosque, the site of the horrendous 1994 massacre. Netanyahu's intent to include this and other controversial sites in the heritage plan incited considerable Palestinian outrage.¹⁴⁰ UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova expressed concern that the plan would exacerbate the existing tension in the area.¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Cabinet Communique' (February 21, 2010).

¹³⁸ Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 'Cabinet Communique'.

¹³⁹ Ibidem.

¹⁴⁰ Anna Willard, 'UNESCO worried about Israel heritage plan in West Bank' (February 26, 2010).

¹⁴¹ Willard, 'UNESCO worried about Israel heritage plan in West Bank'.

The heritage plan has been denounced by critics as an attempt by Israel to take over the sites, one terming the plan an ‘aggression against the cultural right of Palestinian people’.¹⁴² The plan’s sole focus on Jewish history was legitimized by David Baker (spokesperson for the Israeli Prime Minister’s office) by stating that the plan’s purpose is ‘education about our heritage and preservation of the sites’ critical importance to our national history’.¹⁴³ This harmless seeming intent is somewhat undermined by the plan’s promotional literature, which states that ‘the program’s goal is to breathe new life into Zionism’ in the face of ‘the danger of ideological and cultural decline, and in light of the loss of identity rampant among the younger generation and the public in general—a crisis that endangers national cohesion and Jewish existence in the land of Israel’.¹⁴⁴ A sentiment echoed by Netanyahu in 2014, when he commented that the plan ‘links Israelis with their roots’ and that each of the sites ‘presents fascinating aspects of the wonderful story of the Jewish People in its Land’, a story that, according to the Prime Minister, stretches over 3000 years.¹⁴⁵ Netanyahu made his remarks following a report on the implementation of the plan. The report stated that a total of 750 million NIS had been invested in approximately 300 initiatives ranging from the creation of archives, educational activities for children near archaeological sites, to renovation activities.¹⁴⁶ The wide-ranging plan is another example of how Israel’s government actively promotes the narrative that ‘Israel’s ethnocentric national history is verified by archaeology and corroborated by the Bible’. By investing considerable financial capital in the plan’s implementation, and ignoring or disregarding domestic, Palestinian and international criticism on the plan’s intended purpose and biased focus, Israel’s government actively seeks to advocate and substantiate the Israeli perspective on the archaeological investigation in the region.

Thus we can track the advent and institutionalisation of the narrative that ‘Israel’s ethnocentric national history is verified by archaeology and corroborated by the Bible’ since the middle of the nineteenth century. Through the efforts of Western Christian scholars who sought to elaborate on their biblical-era knowledge by the archaeological investigation of Palestine, the idea that archaeology could be used to substantiate the biblical narrative was first established. The early Zionist then adopted the Bible as a foundational text that legitimized their proposed plan of colonizing Palestine. When they joined forces with those Western Christian scholars who tried to prove the veracity of the biblical narrative, and thereby the Jewish connection to the land, the narrative gradually became institutionalised. After the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, and the subsequent evolution of Israeli archaeology, this institutionalisation gathered pace, helped along by political myths such as Masada. The effects of the 1967 war helped to firmly embed the narrative in all levels of Israeli

¹⁴² Hamdan Taha, director of the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, as quoted in: R. Berg, ‘Israel heritage plan exposes discord over West Bank history’ (April 16, 2013).

¹⁴³ David Baker as quoted in: R. Berg, ‘Israel heritage plan exposes discord over West Bank history’.

¹⁴⁴ As referenced in: Emek Shaveh, ‘Israel’s “National Heritage Sites” Project in the West Bank: Archeological importance and political significance’ (September 13, 2013).

¹⁴⁵ Benjamin Netanyahu, as quoted in: Ari Yashar, ‘PM Says Heritage Plan 'Linking Israelis To Roots' (March 25, 2014).

¹⁴⁶ Prime Minister’s Office, ‘PM Netanyahu Receives Report on the 4th Anniversary of the Plan to Strengthen National Heritage Sites’ (March 24, 2014).

politics, leading to a point where a project such as the culturally biased Heritage plan could be proposed and carried out with great vigour by Israeli policymakers despite severe criticism. Philpot's proposed dynamic for the evolution of ideas into norms is corroborated by the development described in this section: Western Christian scholars and early Zionists became converts to the idea that archaeology could be used to prove Israel's ethnocentric national history and the Bible's veracity. By the application of social power this idea then gradually became embedded in Israeli politics and society from 1948 onwards.

As stated, Ilan Pappé argues that the Zionist movement exploited the Bible as both a scientific truth and moral justification for the colonization of Palestine and to garner support from large section of the Western Christian world. The early Zionists used the Bible to show that there was a divine imperative to redeem Eretz Israel (i.e. colonize Palestine). On the fringes of this movement a group of religious people formed that adopted large parts of Zionist thinking, but added the idea that the various Jewish exiles throughout history were a divine punishment that only came to an end with the arrival of Zionism in Palestine.¹⁴⁷ To ensure that the exile would not happen again, this group argued that a more pious behaviour was required of the colonists. While this issue remains disputed to this day, both religious and secular Zionists agree that the Bible has a central place in their worldview as a historical document that confirms their claim to the land.¹⁴⁸

The conclusion of the 1967 war heralded a shift in Israel's domestic politics from a secular to a more overtly religious Zionism. The military success reinforced Israel's Jewish national identity and improved its confidence while retention of the occupied lands was increasingly legitimized through reference to the Bible.¹⁴⁹ This turn of events would critically contribute to the re-emergence of biblical archaeology in Israel and Palestine. One essential hallmark of this development was the advent of the settler movement.

The settler movement Gush Emunim emerged simultaneously with the Allon Plan in 1968. Instead of the essentially strategic considerations dictating the Allon Plan, Gush Emunim saw the settlement of especially the West Bank as a chance to redeem the heart of the Jewish ancient homeland.¹⁵⁰ The movement emerged in nationalistic religious Israeli learning centres and would rely on the biblical map to determine where to settle in the occupied territories.¹⁵¹ It first exploded onto the Middle East's political scene in 1968 with the forceful entrance of eighty Jewish settlers into Hebron.¹⁵² The Jordanian representative to the UN strongly protested this turn of events and the unwillingness demonstrated by the Israeli authorities to challenge to settlers' right to settle in

¹⁴⁷ Pappé, 'The Bible in the service of Zionism', 206.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, 206.

¹⁴⁹ Machairas, 'The strategic and political consequences of the June 1967 war', 7.

¹⁵⁰ Pappé, 'The Bible in the service of Zionism', 212.

¹⁵¹ *Ibidem*, 212.

¹⁵² UN SC, 'Letter from the Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations Addresses to the Secretary General' (June 3 1968)', paragraph 2.

Hebron.¹⁵³

Gush Emunim claimed the annexation of the territories occupied by Israel during the Six-Day War. They based this assertion on their belief that God promised the territory that they call Judea and Samaria to the Israelites. In an attempt to substantiate this claim and convince the world of its legitimacy, Gush Emunim promoted the building of settlements near archaeological sites which were then given biblical names.¹⁵⁴ This was done to create a sense of continuity between the ancient past and the present. The similarities with the Israeli government's official toponymic policies seem obvious.

The movement was formally disbanded in the 1980s. However, despite the organization's formal end, it has continued to serve as the ideological umbrella for the West Bank settler movement and has provided the justification for the right wing non-withdrawal arguments in Israeli politics for the last thirty years.¹⁵⁵ The underlying ideology can be summarised in four ideological tenets: fulfilling the Zionist dream, the word of God, security and peace, and democracy and legitimacy.

In regards to 'fulfilling the Zionist dream', it is important to note here that Gush Emunim considered itself as the movement that took up the mantle of the early Zionist pioneers by establishing settlements in difficult locations in a hostile environment.¹⁵⁶ Therefore, any voluntary move towards relinquishing territorial control by State of Israel was seen by the movement as a betrayal of Zionism.¹⁵⁷ At the same time, relinquishing control of Judea and Samaria was considered by the movement as contradicting God's word: to Gush Emunim the building of settlements was an essentially religious act that facilitated the process of ultimate Redemption.¹⁵⁸ To appeal to a broader audience, the settler movement that was inspired by Gush Emunim portrays their activities as a way to ensure the security and peace of Israel. They assert that the 'land for peace' principle is a falsehood. If Israel were to relinquish territorial control it would only embolden the Palestinians to make more demands and compromise Israel's security.¹⁵⁹ When the settler movements come into conflict with the democratically elected government of Israel, which happens quite often, that government's decisions are portrayed as conflicting with the movement's beliefs and as inherently undemocratic.¹⁶⁰ This assertion is based on the belief that the laws of the Torah supersede that of democracy.

The 'Gush Emunim-ideology' has had a fundamental impact on Israeli politics, especially since the reign of the first Likud government in 1977.¹⁶¹ Since then, Israeli politics have become increasingly defined by a strong nationalistic orientation, due in large part to the ideological appeal of

¹⁵³ UN SC, 'Letter from the Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations Addresses to the Secretary General' (June 3 1968)', paragraph 7.

¹⁵⁴ Gori, 'The Stones of Contention', 223.

¹⁵⁵ D. Newman, 'From Hitnachalut to Hitnatkut: The Impact of Gush Emunim and the Settlement Movement on Israeli Politics and Society', *Israel Studies* 10 (2005) 192 – 224.

¹⁵⁶ Newman, 'From Hitnachalut to Hitnatkut', 196.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, 196.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, 198.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, 198.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, 199.

¹⁶¹ *Ibidem*, 217.

the Gush Emunim movement,¹⁶² but also because of the spectre of violence and terrorism that has haunted Israeli politics since the Rabin assassination and the Oslo Process.

The tactics employed by the settler movement are aimed at legitimizing (religiously inspired) territorial claims, to ensure the security and peace of Israel, to substantiate nationalistic sentiment (through referencing the 'brave pioneers' building settlements in a hostile environment) and to, ultimately, bring about the fulfilment of God's Divine plan. However, the advent of the settler movement has not been entirely beneficial to Israel. It severely complicated Israeli domestic politics over the following decades; the settlement lobby now wields significant political power and acts a limitation on the country's ability to manoeuvre while also inciting Arab anger.¹⁶³ It could even be argued that the settler movement has failed to significantly enhance Israel's safety.

The biblical texts inspired, and continue to inspire, great energy and zeal.¹⁶⁴ While the settler movement cannot be considered a direct attempt by the Israeli government to promote its view on the use of archaeology, it does condone the movement's ideology and it has subsequently had a significant political impact. It also shows that the promotion and institutionalisation of the narrative 'Israel's ethnocentric national history is verified by archaeology and corroborated by the Bible' is the result of a complex dynamic comprising nationalistic, religious, political and security considerations. As stated above, the early secular Zionists and Western Christian scholars that advocated the Jewish colonisation of Palestine considered the Bible to be a foundational text for this endeavour. The centrality of the Bible in Israel's ongoing attempt to legitimize its existence only increased after the 1967 war and when Likud first came to power in 1977; both events heralded a shift in Israel's domestic politics from a secular to more overtly religious Zionism and towards a stronger nationalistic orientation.

The link between this ostensibly political development and contemporary archaeological practice is that the Bible is used to both legitimize access to, and appropriation of, the archaeological finds. In Israel, archaeology is used as a tool to revive the biblical landscape while at the same time Israeli settlements are often found near places identified as the sites mentioned in the Bible.¹⁶⁵ The toponymic practices mentioned above are also an example of this. In Israel, a state where religion plays an important role in politics, archaeology is used to support biblical narratives.¹⁶⁶ A rather unfortunate consequence of this is that the Palestinians are seen as temporary trespassers: how can they be the legitimate inhabitants of the land if its identity has been continuously Jewish since biblical times as evidenced by archaeology?¹⁶⁷

¹⁶² *Ibidem*, 219.

¹⁶³ Machairas, 'The strategic and political consequences of the June 1967 war', 7.

¹⁶⁴ Pappé, 'The Bible in the service of Zionism', 212.

¹⁶⁵ Gori, 'The Stones of Contention', 217.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibidem*, 219.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibidem* 223.

Now that we have traced the development of the narrative 'Israel's ethnocentric national history is verified by archaeology and corroborated by the Bible' since the 19th century until the present day, we are well-situated to consider how the narrative 'the Palestinians do not have a right to a state' became institutionalised as a consequence of this development. The following chapter will offer a detailed analysis of this dynamic. At this time it does seem prudent to recognize that there are obvious impediments for Israelis to recognize the Palestinian right to self-determination when their own claim to legitimacy is so strongly based on a (quasi-)religiously inspired ethnocentric essentialist national history. It is the humble opinion of the author that Israel's claim to legitimacy as a state would only be strengthened if a more inclusive national history, considerate of all the other peoples that have called the region home, would be promoted. This in turn would also work towards achieving a final settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that would be acceptable to both parties. An analysis will be presented in the following chapters to further substantiate these preliminary conclusions.

Chapter 3: The Second Narrative

‘There were no such thing as Palestinians. When was there an independent Palestinian people with a Palestinian state? It was either southern Syria before the First World War, and then it was a Palestine including Jordan. It was not as though there was a Palestinian people in Palestine considering itself as a Palestinian people and we came and threw them out and took their country away from them. They did not exist.’¹⁶⁸

This quote by Golda Meir, Israel’s Foreign Minister from 1956 until 1966 and its Prime Minister from 1969 until 1974, is indicative of the attitude towards the Palestinians adopted by some Israeli hardliners shortly after the conclusion of the Six-Day War.¹⁶⁹ This condescending attitude has unfortunately become part and parcel of the Israeli government’s actions, if not its rhetoric, and has also influenced Israeli archaeological practice. In this chapter an overview will be presented of how the narrative ‘the Palestinians do not have a right to a state’ first became prevalent and how it affects contemporary archaeological practice in the region. Critically, we will also consider the role played by the PA in this dynamic.

Despite the risk of becoming repetitive, it is important to once again consider the efforts made by the early Zionists to legitimize their proposed colonization project. As stated above, they joined forces with Western Christian scholars to ‘Zionize’ anyone who lived in the biblical era and to de-Palestinize other people’s connection to the land up until the arrival of Zionism. When the Zionists pioneers arrived in Palestine, they sought to remake the land into ‘Eretz Israel’. Archaeology provided the artefacts that became the tangible symbols of the land’s Jewish identity; an identity that is continuous with biblical times. Parts that conflict with this Jewish identity, such as Arab, Palestinian and indigenous heritage and history, were ignored or obscured. This trend has persisted in contemporary Israeli archaeological practice as well as in Israeli politics.

As mentioned, one example of the effects of this development are the rescue excavations undertaken in Jerusalem after the Six-Day War. These excavations focused on those strata best suited for proving the Jewish history of the city and disregarded or neglected strata belonging to the city’s Islamic history. The toponymic policies adopted by Israel’s government, combined with the active reshaping of the landscape, further contributed to the erasure of the Palestinian heritage from the land. The exhibition featuring the sarcophagus supposedly belonging to King Herod is another recent example of how the narrative ‘the Palestinians do not have a right to a state’ affects contemporary archaeological practice in Israel.

However, without a doubt the clearest evidence for the institutionalisation of the narrative ‘the Palestinians do not have a right to a state’ is the continued occupation of the West Bank and the fact that, at best, Palestinians are second-class citizens in Israel. Numerous activists, students, academics

¹⁶⁸ G. Meir, as quoted in the *Sunday Times* June 15, 1969 and *The Washington Post* June 16, 1969.

¹⁶⁹ Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ‘Golda Meir’.

and even some high-ranking Israeli politicians and generals, have gone as far as to compare Israel with Apartheid South Africa. The following quote, taken from a comment made by Rafael Eytan, is one example of such a comparison:

‘Blacks in South Africa want to gain control over the white minority just like Arabs here want to gain control over us. And we too, like the white minority in South Africa, must act to prevent them from taking us over.’¹⁷⁰

While it is not the purpose of the current discussion to comment on the validity of such a comparison, it is important to briefly mention that such comparisons are not unheard of; according to some they are even quite prevalent. This situation is indicative of the fact that the narrative ‘the Palestinians do not have a right to a state’ is in fact institutionalised. But how, apart from the already mentioned events, did this happen? How can we continue to trace the gradual institutionalisation of this narrative that is fundamental to current archaeological practice in Israel? Excellent places to start would be the adoption of UN SC resolutions 242 and 338.

Meant as a solution for the problems created by the conclusion of the Six-Day War, resolution 242 was adopted by the UN SC on November 22, 1967. The resolution was meant to offer principles for a peaceful settlement on the basis of a withdrawal of Israel’s armed forces from the occupied territories and the ‘just settlement’ of the Palestinian refugee problem.¹⁷¹ Resolution 338 was adopted by the UN SC on the 22nd of October 1973 and was meant to end the Yom Kippur war. The resolution called on all the involved parties (Israel, Egypt and Syria) to implement resolution 242 and to start negotiations aimed at establishing a ‘just and durable peace in the Middle East.’¹⁷² These resolutions seemed to signal the international community’s intent to take the ‘question of Palestine’ seriously.

This is further corroborated by the fact that the United Nations General Assembly (UN GA) adopted resolution 2535 on December 10, 1969, which states that the UN GA recognizes ‘that the problem of the Palestine Arab refugees has arisen from the denial of their inalienable rights under the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights’ and calls on the Government of Israel to ‘take effective and immediate steps for the return without delay of those inhabitants who had fled the areas since the outbreak of hostilities’.¹⁷³ When the UN GA invited the Palestinian Liberation Organization to ‘participate in the deliberations of the General Assembly on the question of Palestine’ in 1974, it seemed as if the tide of international politics was moving towards the establishment of a Palestinian State.¹⁷⁴ When the General Assembly adopted resolution 3236 on November 22, 1974, it seemed as if Palestinian statehood was just around the corner. In the resolution, the General Assembly expressed ‘grave concern that the Palestinian people has been prevented from

¹⁷⁰ Rafael Eytan was the Israeli Chief of the General Staff. See: R. Eytan, as quoted in: I. Pappé, ‘Introduction: The Many Faces of Apartheid’, in: Ilan Pappé ed., *Israel and South Africa. The Many Faces of Apartheid* (London, 2015) 1-20, 1.

¹⁷¹ UN SC, res. 242 (22 November 1967) para. 1 (i) and 2 (b).

¹⁷² UN SC, res. 338 (22 October 1973) paragraph 1, 2 and 3.

¹⁷³ UN GA, res. 2535 (December 10, 1969) section 2, paragraph 1 and 4.

¹⁷⁴ UN GA, res. 3210 (October 14, 1974) paragraph 2.

enjoying its inalienable rights' and reaffirmed that the 'Palestinian people *in* Palestine' [emphasis added by author] have the 'right to self-determination without external interference' and the 'right to national independence and sovereignty'.¹⁷⁵ The stage seemed set for the international recognition of a future Palestinian declaration of independence.

'The Palestine National Council hereby declares, in the Name of God and on behalf of the Palestinian Arab people, the establishment of the State of Palestine in the land of Palestine with its capital at Jerusalem. (...) The State of Palestine further declares, in that connection, that it believes in the solution of international and regional problems by peaceful means in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and the resolutions adopted by it [...].'¹⁷⁶

These words were taken from the Palestinian Declaration of Independence submitted by the Palestinian National Council to the UN SC and the UN GA on the 18th of November 1988. The General Assembly acknowledged the declaration on December 15, 1988.¹⁷⁷

Looking at all these resolutions might give the impression that the narrative 'the Palestinians do not have a right to a state' is not institutionalised at all and that the opposite is in fact true. It would indeed seem as if the international community, with a few notable exemptions, has been in favour of the establishment of a Palestinian State for quite some time. It might therefore even seem that recounting the UN's attitude towards Palestinian independence undermines the persuasiveness of the argument put forward here. However, the purpose of the current essay is to get to grips with the ideas influencing the political use of archaeology in contemporary Israel, not to better understand the UN GA's (in-)ability to enforce its resolutions. The concise overview of UN resolutions in favour of Palestinian independence offered here is meant to show just how idiosyncratic contemporary Israeli archaeological practice really is. So, to better understand how the narrative 'the Palestinians do not have a right to a state' became institutionalised in Israeli political thought and affects archaeological practice in the region, we must step down from the lofty heights of idealistic international politics and consider the situation on the ground and the interactions between Israel and Palestine themselves. The Oslo accords seem like an obvious place to start.

'The aim of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations within the current Middle East peace process is (...) to establish a Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority, the elected Council (...) for the Palestinian people in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, for a transitional period not exceeding five years, leading to a permanent settlement based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.'¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵ UN GA, res. 3236 (November 22, 1974) paragraph 6 and 9.

¹⁷⁶ UN SC and UN GA, agenda item 37, 'Question of Palestine: Declaration of Independence' (November 18, 1988) Annex 3, paragraphs 15 and 30.

¹⁷⁷ UN GA, res. 43/177 (December 15, 1988) paragraph 8.

¹⁷⁸ The Government of the State of Israel and the PLO, Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (September 13, 1993) article I.

This quote, taken from the Declaration of Principles (DOP) signed on September 13, 1993, seems to offer little doubt about the intended purpose of the negotiations between Israel and the PLO. Apparently, the negotiations were meant to offer a permanent solution, after a relatively short transitional period, to the ongoing conflict between Israel and the Palestinians on the basis of UN SC resolutions 242 and 338. The DOP seemed a promising step towards achieving the goals enumerated in these resolutions. Especially when Israel and the PLO reaffirmed their desire to end the ‘decades of confrontation and to live in peaceful coexistence’ and ‘achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement’ with the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip of 1995.¹⁷⁹ However, the Middle East peace process, initiated in Madrid in October 1991,¹⁸⁰ has not yet achieved the goals stipulated in the above mentioned resolutions. Most commentators have even gone as far as to state that ‘Oslo has failed’.¹⁸¹

The Oslo talks were held simultaneously with, but not as a part of, the Madrid talks. The Madrid talks were significant because the belligerents involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict engaged in direct negotiations for the first time. Despite this however, these talks yielded little results.¹⁸² The Palestinian delegates, represented by the Jordanian delegation, were willing to accede (with PLO approval) to interim stages for deciding the fate of the occupied territories but insisted that Palestinian sovereignty would be the end goal.¹⁸³ The Israeli representatives during the tenure of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir sought to grant Palestinians autonomy with continued Israeli control of the territories.¹⁸⁴ At the same time however, Shamir sought to prolong negotiations in order to be able to build more settlements in the occupied territories and effectuate a ‘demographic revolution’.¹⁸⁵ This is clear evidence that top Israeli officials and politicians did not consider the Palestinian claim to statehood legitimate. Shamir, who was a member of the Likud party, was replaced by Yitzhak Rabin, a member of the Labour party, as Prime Minister after the 1992 elections.¹⁸⁶ Rabin was more forthcoming than his predecessor but still opposed the idea of a Palestinian state and insisted that significant parts of the West Bank would remain under Israeli control, especially Jerusalem.¹⁸⁷

¹⁷⁹ The Government of the State of Israel and the PLO, Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (September 28, 1995) paragraph 2 and 3.

¹⁸⁰ Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, paragraph 1.

¹⁸¹ Consider the remarks made by Knesset Speaker Reuven Rivlin in 2012 ‘‘I believe the concept of Oslo is fundamentally erroneous and is not applicable in the area between Jordan and the sea.’, see: P. Podolsky, ‘Oslo aim of separating Israel and the Palestinians has failed, Knesset speaker says’, (October 28, 2012), the article written by Rashid Khalidi, which featured in *The New Yorker*, in which he states that ‘[t]he Oslo Accords (...) have been a disaster for Palestinians’, see: R. Khalidi, ‘Beyond Abbas and Oslo’ (October 12, 2015), or the speech made by Amb Danon, Israel’s permanent representative to the UN, in 2015, in which he firmly placed the responsibility for the failure of the peace process on the Palestinians ‘You can raise a Palestinian flag here in the UN, but as long as the Palestinians fail to raise a generation committed to peace and reconciliation, there will be no end to violence.’, see: Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ‘Amb Danon addresses UN General Assembly on the Question of Palestine’ (November 23, 2015).

¹⁸² Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 421.

¹⁸³ *Ibidem*, 421.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibidem*, 421.

¹⁸⁵ Yitzhak Shamir as quoted by the Israeli newspaper *Maariv*. A spokesperson for Shamir alleged that he had been misquoted while acceding that he had not been present during the interview or had been able to discuss the matter with Shamir. See: C. Haberman, ‘Shamir Is Said to Admit Plan To Stall Talks ‘for 10 Years’’, *The New York Times* (June 27, 1992).

¹⁸⁶ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 421.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibidem*, 422.

Rabin's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Yossi Beilin, together with the Norwegian scholar Terje Rod Larsen, came up with the idea to instigate clandestine negotiations simultaneously with the Madrid talks.¹⁸⁸ Because Beilin appointed two Israeli history professors to act as delegates in Oslo, his government could always deny the outcome of the talks if it proved unfavourable to Israel.¹⁸⁹ These negotiators had a rare mandate to go beyond some of the Labour movement's traditional positions and could seek an agreement with the PLO that would be acceptable to the Zionist parties left of labour.¹⁹⁰

Four main concerns dictated the Israeli negotiators' strategy in Oslo. Firstly, Rabin, in line with Labour's proposals for ending the conflict in the 1980s, still favoured a Palestinian confederation with Jordan to constrain the territorial ambitions of the Palestinians'.¹⁹¹ Secondly, the vaunted 'land for peace' principle was interpreted by the Israeli negotiators to mean that Israel would retain at least 20 percent of the West Bank by unilateral annexation if necessary.¹⁹² Thirdly, the end of the Cold War and the Gulf War established American global supremacy and damaged the Arab radical camp, which boosted Israel's ability to impose its terms.¹⁹³ Finally, the events of the preceding years had financially and politically weakened Arafat, who was willing to make far-reaching concessions to re-establish himself as leader of the Palestinians.¹⁹⁴ This became immediately clear when Israel and the PLO exchanged letters of recognition.

'Mr. Prime Minister,

The signing of the Declaration of Principles marks a new era in the history of the Middle East. In firm conviction thereof, I would like to confirm the following PLO commitments:

The PLO recognizes the right of the State of Israel to exist in peace and security. The PLO accepts United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

In view of the promise of a new era and the signing of the Declaration of Principles and based on Palestinian acceptance of Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, the PLO affirms that those articles of the Palestinian Covenant which deny Israel's right to exist, and the provisions of the Covenant which are inconsistent with the commitments of this letter are now inoperative and no longer valid.'¹⁹⁵

'Mr. Chairman,

In response to your letter of September 9, 1993, I wish to confirm to you that, in light of the PLO commitments included in your letter, the Government of Israel has decided to recognize

¹⁸⁸ Ibidem, 438.

¹⁸⁹ Ibidem, 439.

¹⁹⁰ Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine*, 242.

¹⁹¹ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 442.

¹⁹² Ibidem, 442.

¹⁹³ Ibidem, 442.

¹⁹⁴ Ibidem, 442.

¹⁹⁵ Y. Arafat, 'Letter from Yasser Arafat to Prime Minister Rabin' (September 9, 1993).

the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people and commence negotiations with the PLO within the Middle East peace process.¹⁹⁶

These quotes were taken from the letters of recognition authored by Yassir Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin respectively. It immediately becomes clear that the so-called 'mutual' recognition between the signatories was deeply unequal. While Arafat, and thereby the PLO, officially recognised the 'right of the State of Israel to exist in peace and security' and accepted the UN SC resolution 242 and 338,¹⁹⁷ Rabin only recognized the PLO as the 'representative of the Palestinian people' and as the negotiation partner.¹⁹⁸ Israeli negotiators in Oslo refused to allow any reference to a Palestinian state, as is evidenced by Rabin's letter. Thus the narrative 'the Palestinians do not have a right to a state' was further institutionalised, in line with the negotiating tactics employed during the Madrid talks under Shamir.

By accepting the letter of recognition, Arafat had traded the Palestinian right to self-determination for a place at the negotiation table; proof that he was willing to go to great lengths to ensure his position as the leader of the Palestinians. What, then, did the PLO gain as recompense for this appallingly unequal exchange? First off, the DOP was intended as an agenda for further negotiations rather than a permanent peace treaty.¹⁹⁹ Negotiations for a permanent settlement based on UN SC resolutions 242 and 338 would begin as soon as possible but 'not later than the third year of the interim period'.²⁰⁰ By placing UN SC resolution 242 at the core of the peace process and future permanent settlement, Israel recognised that Jerusalem, Gaza and the West Bank were 'occupied territory, that international law prevails and that withdrawal is a basic component of the agreement' - at least according to Hanan Ashrawi, spokesperson for the Palestinian delegation.²⁰¹ Further concessions that were made to the Palestinians include a freeze on land confiscation and the building of new settlements by the Israelis, the pledge to work towards settling the refugee problem created by the Six-Day War during the interim period, and the establishment of a Palestinian government that would be responsible for five major portfolios.²⁰² Two of these portfolios are of paramount importance to the present discussion: education and culture, and tourism.²⁰³ We will return to the impact of the transfer of these portfolios to the PA on contemporary archaeological practice in Israel and Palestine below.

¹⁹⁶ Y. Rabin, 'Letter from Prime Minister Rabin to Yasser Arafat', (September 9, 1993).

¹⁹⁷ Y. Arafat, 'Letter from Yasser Arafat to Prime Minister Rabin' (September 9, 1993).

¹⁹⁸ Y. Rabin, 'Letter from Prime Minister Rabin to Yasser Arafat', (September 9, 1993).

¹⁹⁹ G. Usher, *Palestine In Crisis: The Struggle for Peace and Political Independence* (London 1995) 8.

²⁰⁰ The Government of the State of Israel and the PLO, Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, article 5, paragraph 2.

²⁰¹ Hanan Ashrawi as quoted by Usher. See: Usher, *Palestine In Crisis*, 9.

²⁰² Usher, *Palestine In Crisis*, 9.

²⁰³ The other portfolios were: health, social welfare and direct taxation. See: The Government of the State of Israel and the PLO, Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, article 6, paragraph 2.

Critically, the DOP also stipulated that ‘the Palestinian side will commence in building the Palestinian police force’.²⁰⁴ This police force would be responsible for guaranteeing ‘public order and internal security for the Palestinians of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip’.²⁰⁵ Rabin considered the interim period a chance for the Palestinians to prove that they were able to set up an effective government. By establishing an effective government apparatus and controlling budgets during the interim period, Rabin reasoned that confidence in Palestinian ability would grow and that they would be able to make good on the promises made to Israel.²⁰⁶ If Arafat proved unable to effectively control the areas granted to him and, critically, contain dissidents and ensure internal security, then Rabin reserved the right to withdraw from talks and return to the status quo ante.²⁰⁷ This effectively made the PLO Israel’s enforcer in the occupied territories.²⁰⁸ This is the first sign that the apparent (limited) sovereignty that was offered to the Palestinians by the Israelis in the DOP was in fact hollow; by becoming Israel’s enforcer, Arafat had effectively agreed to suppress his own people and act as a subsidiary to Tel-Aviv.

Perhaps the most telling aspects of the DOP were those issues that were relegated to the future ‘permanent status’ negotiations. These issues included: Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, security arrangements, borders, relations and cooperation with neighbouring countries and other issues of common interest.²⁰⁹ The fact that these fundamental issues were subject to future negotiations made the DOP decidedly ambiguous. Furthermore, taking a page out of Shamir’s book, Rabin sought to use the drawn-out negotiations to effectuate control over Jerusalem. By strengthening the Jewish position in the Old City and consolidating the area annexed by Israel in 1980 (105 kilometres to the north and south of Jerusalem), Rabin sought to establish a *fait accompli* and to guarantee Israeli retention of the city and its extended environs.²¹⁰ The ambiguity surrounding the fundamental issues was what pro-Palestinian critics focussed their attention on, as it ostensibly gave the Israelis a lot of leeway in interpreting the DOP. In the words of Haidar Abdel-Shafi, this meant that the by partaking in the Oslo process, the Palestinians had ‘helped confer legitimacy on what Israel had established illegally’.²¹¹

It seems, then, as if Arafat had achieved very little for the Palestinian people when he and Rabin formally signed the DOP in Washington on September 13, 1993. Many critics argued that Arafat had, in his bid for leadership of the Palestinian people and international recognition, traded the Palestinian right to self-determination for an agreement that suppressed Palestinian dissidence in the West Bank and Gaza and declared Palestinian autonomy as a ‘stage on the road to liberation’.²¹² Thus, a negotiating process seemingly instigated to finally allow the Palestinian people to build a state, resulted in the further institutionalisation of the idea that they in fact had no such right. The follow-up

²⁰⁴ Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, article 6, paragraph 2.

²⁰⁵ *Ibidem*, article 8.

²⁰⁶ D. Madovsky, ‘Interim self-rule for Palestinians: Rabin for, Peres against’, *The Jerusalem Post* (May 7, 1993).

²⁰⁷ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 446.

²⁰⁸ E. Said, ‘The Morning After’, *London Review of Books* 15 (October 21, 1993) 3-5.

²⁰⁹ Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, article 5, paragraph 3.

²¹⁰ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 443.

²¹¹ As quoted in: Usher, *Palestine In Crisis*, 10.

²¹² Q.B. Mazin, *Popular Resistance in Palestine: A History of Hope and Empowerment* (London 2010) 162-163.

agreement, the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, further consolidated this sorry state of affairs.

‘The Government of the State of Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization [...] the representative of the Palestinian people;

Within the framework of the Middle East peace process initiated at Madrid in October 1991;

[Reaffirm] their determination to put an end to decades of confrontation and to live in peaceful coexistence, mutual dignity and security, while recognizing their mutual legitimate and political rights;

[Reaffirm] their desire to achieve a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement and historic reconciliation through the agreed political process;

[Recognize] that the peace process and the new era that it has created, as well as the new relationship established between the two Parties as described above, are irreversible, and the determination of the two Parties to maintain, sustain and continue the peace process [...]²¹³

This quote was taken from the preamble of the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, also known as the Oslo II accord. The accord was initialled by Rabin and Arafat on September 24, 1995, with the official signing taking place in Washington four days later.²¹⁴ The document states that the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations at the time were aimed at establishing a Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority ‘for a transitional period not exceeding five years from the date of signing the Agreement on the Gaza strip and the Jericho Area’.²¹⁵ Among other things, Oslo II stipulated the release of Palestinian prisoners from Israeli prisons and the creation of a safe passage route for Palestinians between Gaza and the West Bank.²¹⁶ Oslo II further specified the powers and responsibilities the PA would and would not have, such as signing cultural or scientific pacts with foreign countries.²¹⁷ Critical for the current discussion however, Oslo II divided the West Bank into three areas labelled ‘A’, ‘B’, and ‘C’. This territorial division is the clearest and most tangible manifestation of what the institutionalisation of the narrative ‘the Palestinians do not have a right to a state’ has led to. The abovementioned appropriation of the sarcophagus attributed to Herod is only one example of how this situation has affected contemporary archaeological practice in Israel and Palestine. A close look at the interim agreement is therefore warranted.

²¹³ The Government of the State of Israel and the PLO, Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (September 28, 1995) preamble.

²¹⁴ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 449.

²¹⁵ This agreement was signed on the 4th of May 1994 and effectuated Israel’s withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho. See: The Government of the State of Israel and the PLO, Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (September 28, 1995) paragraph 5.

²¹⁶ Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, article 16, paragraph 1, article 29,

²¹⁷ *Ibidem*, article 9, paragraph 5.

Areas A and B comprised six major population centres in the West Bank and about 450 smaller towns respectively.²¹⁸ The agreement stipulated that the PA would assume full responsibility for overall security and internal affairs in Area A.²¹⁹ The PA would also be in charge of public order and internal security in Area B, but Israel would have final responsibility for security ‘for the purpose of protecting Israelis and confronting the threat of terrorism.’²²⁰ Area C was the designation used in the Oslo II agreement to denote the areas of the West Bank outside Areas A and B – 70 percent of the land.²²¹ Israel would, initially, remain responsible for ensuring the overall security and public order in Area C and retain ‘all the powers to take the steps necessary to meet this responsibility’.²²² Over time, Area C would gradually be transferred to Palestinian authority, except for the ‘issues that will be negotiated in the permanent status negotiations’.²²³ The ambiguity inherent to this particular turn of phrase would lead to vastly contrasting interpretations of the treaty’s results; Arafat claimed that Oslo II would guarantee the return of 80 percent of the West Bank while Rabin assured the Knesset that the entirety of Area C would remain under Israeli control.²²⁴

The territorial division was of course severely compromising for the Palestinian effort to achieve statehood. This was exacerbated by the stipulation that the PA was only allowed to engage in limited diplomatic activity (i.e. the signing of signing cultural or scientific pacts with foreign countries). This meant that the PA was not allowed to ‘have powers and responsibilities in the sphere of foreign relations’, which severely limited the Palestinians’ ability to engage in international diplomacy and politics.²²⁵ What made the Palestinians’ plight even worse was the stipulation that the status of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which was defined as a single territorial unit, would be ‘preserved during the interim period’.²²⁶ This meant that Arafat could not declare a Palestinian state without risking civil war with Israel – a truly frightening prospect.²²⁷ By signing the Oslo II accord, Arafat had once again sacrificed his people’s right to self-determination on the altar of peace with Israel.

Arafat and his PA struggled to live up to the difficulties and expectations of the Oslo years. This was not in the least surprising as the accords left them very little room to manoeuvre, limited their authority to a small territory (Area A and, to a lesser degree, Area B) and effectively left them only mundane governmental matters.²²⁸ Being bound by the accords to ensure civil obedience, guarantee internal security and eliminate attacks made against Israel and Israelis, Arafat was placed in

²¹⁸ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 450.

²¹⁹ See: Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 450 and Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, article 13, paragraph 1.

²²⁰ See: Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 450 and Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, article 13, paragraph 2.

²²¹ See: Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 450 and Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, article 11, paragraph 3.

²²² *Ibidem*, article 12, paragraph 1.

²²³ *Ibidem*, article 11, paragraph 3.

²²⁴ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 450.

²²⁵ Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, article 9, paragraph 5.

²²⁶ *Ibidem*, article 11, paragraph 1.

²²⁷ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 454.

²²⁸ Mazin, *Popular Resistance in Palestine*, 165.

the unenviable position of a leader who had to retain popular support and simultaneously appease external forces while at the same time coping with growing popular resistance amongst the Palestinians.²²⁹ The resulting PA regime can be termed draconic and authoritarian; corruption was rife, members of the Palestinian press were detained with very little pretext and most of the available funds were spent on security to be better able to suppress dissent and resistance.²³⁰

The majority of the Palestinian population decided to be patient and hope that the Oslo process would lead to the hoped-for improvements, a final peace settlement and perhaps even independence.²³¹ However, at the supposed end of the interim period in 1999, the Israeli occupation was more entrenched than ever before. Not only were there hundreds of Israeli checkpoints dotting the occupied territories, severely restricting the Palestinians' freedom of movement, and were Palestinians not allowed into Jerusalem, but the increase in size and number of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories had also continued and even accelerated.²³² The success of the occupation notwithstanding, all was not well on the Israeli front; the advancement of the Oslo process would be accompanied by acts of severe violence, such as the Rabin assassination and the Cave of the Patriarchs massacre. The spectre of violence has haunted Israeli politics ever since.

The division of the land mandated by the Oslo II accord would prove detrimental for the Palestinians' ability to effectively counter the Israeli perspective on the interpretation of archaeological finds in the region as it put into official, politically sanctioned practice the narrative 'the Palestinians do not have a right to a state'. Regarding archaeological practice in the region, the effects of the Oslo process have been fundamental for the Palestinians. Bluntly put: the Oslo process has prevented the Palestinian people to effectively counter the Israeli perspective on archaeology and its use in the Israeli political arena. We will now look at how the Oslo process has influenced the (in-)ability of the Palestinians to counter the Israeli perspective on archaeology and effectively advocate their right to self-determination on the basis of their cultural heritage. This will enable us to better understand just how the narrative 'the Palestinians do not have a right to a state' can inform policy and have real-world consequences.

As stated above, the PA regime that was set-up following the Interim Agreement can be described as authoritarian and highly corrupt. Nepotism was (and still is) prevalent, with people being appointed to positions of authority not because of their capability but of their personal relationships with people of import. The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, which is responsible for the care and management of antiquities in the Palestinian territories, is no exception to this. The recruitment system within the ministry is based not on supply and demand or on competition, but on the personal preference of dignitaries.²³³ The nepotistic environment in the ministry is highly detrimental to its

²²⁹ *Ibidem*, 165.

²³⁰ *Ibidem*, 165 and 166.

²³¹ *Ibidem*, 166.

²³² *Ibidem*, 166.

²³³ Al-Houdalieh, 'Archaeology Programs at the Palestinian Universities', 179.

performance as it is unable to effectively carry out its responsibilities.²³⁴ The fact that 90 percent of the ministry's annual budget is spent on its payroll and that it lacks a clear career structure,²³⁵ compound the difficulties the Palestinians face when trying to counter the Israeli perspective on archaeology.

The archaeology programs at Palestinian universities have also proven ineffective in countering the Israeli perspective. All of these programs, except at Birzeit University, were developed under the patronage of the PA or during the Oslo process.²³⁶ These programs suffer from a lack of registered students, a lack of funding and the restricted freedom of movement of the researchers that is a result of the Israeli occupation.²³⁷ The main cause for the universities' plight however, seems to be the PA's reluctance to take full responsibility for protecting the Palestinian cultural heritage.²³⁸

The third reason why the Israeli perspective has not been effectively countered by a Palestinian perspective that was the direct result of the Oslo process is the partition of the land. The occupation and partition of the land has enabled Israeli scholars to gain almost completely unfettered access to the archaeological treasures of the West Bank (as is evidenced by the Museum of Israel's exhibition featuring the supposed tomb of King Herod). Palestinian scholars enjoy no such privileges. Because of the legal structures that dictate the status of Area C, Israeli archaeology in most of the West Bank is accountable to no one.²³⁹ Because of a complex legal system comprising Ottoman, British Mandatory, Egyptian (the Gaza Strip), Jordanian (the West Bank), Israeli military orders, and international accords (Oslo) stipulations, there now exists no clear legal framework for the protection of Palestinian cultural heritage.²⁴⁰ As part of the Oslo process, both sides agreed that a joint committee would be set-up to deal with archaeological issues of common interest and publish archaeological discoveries so that they would be accessible by all who were interested.²⁴¹ Virtually none of these aims have been fulfilled.

These three reasons (i.e. the organisation of the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the organisation and funding of Palestinian universities, and the division of the land into separate administrative areas) are at the core of why the Israeli perspective has not been effectively countered by a Palestinian perspective on archaeological investigation which in turn contributes to the inability of the Palestinians to effectively advocate their right to self-determination and counter the legitimacy of the narrative 'the Palestinians do not have a right to a state'. At the same time, it now becomes clear that the Israelis are not solely responsible for the status quo; the Palestinians themselves, and especially the PA, also bear part of the blame.

²³⁴ *Ibidem*, 180.

²³⁵ *Ibidem*, 180.

²³⁶ *Ibidem*, 180.

²³⁷ *Ibidem*, 169, 173, 174.

²³⁸ *Ibidem*, 181.

²³⁹ Kersel, 'Fractured oversight', 25.

²⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, 28.

²⁴¹ *Ibidem*, 29.

What then, in light of the current discussion, are we to make of the Oslo process? How did it facilitate the institutionalisation of the narrative ‘the Palestinians do not have a right to a state’? First off, the inequality of the reciprocal recognition between the PLO and Israel legitimised Israel’s sovereignty and right to exist while the Palestinians’ right to self-determination was not recognized. This clearly made Israel the superior partner as Arafat ostensibly gave up the Palestinian right to a sovereign state. This disparity was institutionalised by the Oslo I and the Oslo II accords. As noted above, the latter explicitly stated that the status of the occupied territories would remain unchanged, thereby excluding the possibility of a Palestinian state. Israeli supremacy was further institutionalised by the division of the West Bank into separate areas, each with their own legislative layout, with Israel retaining the right to intervene and remaining in direct control of 70 percent of the land. The effects on this status quo on archaeological practice, enumerated above, have been severe.

However, it also seems clear that the narrative first introduced by those 19th century archaeologists investigating Palestine’s earliest history and early Zionists’ who sought to ‘Zionize’ the region (i.e. ‘the Palestinians do not have a right to a state’), a notion reaffirmed by the outcome of the Six-Day War and strengthened when the PLO further legitimized the norm ‘Israel is a sovereign state with the right to exist in peace and security’, was formally institutionalised with the signing of the DOP and the Interim Agreement. The inequality of the reciprocal recognition between the PLO and Israel, the stipulation in the Interim Accord that the status of the occupied territories would remain unchanged during the interim period, the governmental structure adopted by the PA, the difficulties faced by Palestinian universities, and the division of the land into separate administrative regions, all of which were a result of the Oslo process, helped to institutionalise this narrative. Henceforth, the State of Israel’s legitimacy would be irrevocable while Palestinians still had no right to an independent state that would be allowed to exist in ‘peace and security’. The effects of this situation on archaeological practice can best be illustrated by looking at the controversial construction of the Jay and Jeanie Schottenstein National Campus for the Archaeology of Israel in Jerusalem.

The campus was commissioned by the Israel Antiquity Authority (IAA), the government department responsible for the excavation, preservation and conservation of Israel’s antiquities and antiquity sites.²⁴² The campus is being constructed on Museum Hill in West Jerusalem and will house nearly two million archaeological objects, various conservation and restoration laboratories and cover about 36,000 square meters.²⁴³ According to IAA director Israel Hasson a ‘small hop, skip and a jump over to the archaeology campus will allow every one of us to make a gigantic leap back in time’ and engage with heritage that ‘belongs to all of the public, and it is our obligation to share with everyone the treasures that were safeguarded until now in the storerooms.’²⁴⁴

²⁴² Israel Antiquities Authority, ‘The Israel Antiquities Authority - Vision and Goals’ (date unknown).

²⁴³ Israel Antiquities Authority, ‘The Jay and Jeanie Schottenstein National Campus for the Archaeology of Israel’ (date unknown).

²⁴⁴ Israel Hasson, as quoted in: S. Udasin, ‘Antiquities Authority Building National Campus for the Archaeology of Israel’, *The Jerusalem Post* (October 9, 2016).

Yvonne Friedmann, Chairman of the IAA Board, explicitly stated that the archaeological evidence uncovered in Israel shows that the land has a ‘multifaceted cultural heritage’ and that it is in the general interest to ‘preserve and nurture these diverse aspects as part of the national heritage’.²⁴⁵ However, in apparent contradiction to these commendable goals, the website of the IAA also explicitly states that the agency shall act ‘as the leading professional body for the study of the archaeology of *Eretz-Israel*’ [emphasis added by author].²⁴⁶ It is the use of the term ‘Eretz Israel’ that problematizes the IAA’s supposedly objective intent to educate the public on the culturally and religiously diverse history of Israel; by defining the territory as ‘Eretz Israel’ the IAA apparently subscribes to the view that the entirety of Israel and the occupied territories belong to Israel and therefore fall under her authority. The construction and intended purpose of the Jay and Jeanie Schottenstein National Campus for the Archaeology of Israel is one example of the IAA’s biased mission statement. This is because the IAA depends on numerous archaeological and academic depositories to substantiate the campus’ collection and achieve its ambitious goals. One such a depository is the Rockefeller Museum’s archaeological library.

Built during the British mandate and located in East Jerusalem, the Rockefeller was originally known as the Palestine Archaeological Museum. The museum opened in 1938 and became a repository for locally discovered archaeological finds, thereby negating the need for sending them back to Europe for proper study and conservation.²⁴⁷ After the British mandate ended in 1948, the museum was supervised by an international team of trustees until King Hussein of Jordan nationalised the museum in 1966. Shortly after the Six-Day War, during which Israel gained control over East Jerusalem, the IAA moved its offices to the museum, renamed it the ‘Rockefeller Museum’ and seized its collection.²⁴⁸

‘The High Contracting Parties,

[Recognize] that cultural property has suffered grave damage during recent armed conflicts and that, by reason of the developments of the technique of warfare, it is in increasing danger of destruction;

[Are] convinced that damage to cultural property belonging to any people whatsoever means damage to the cultural heritage of all mankind (...);

[Consider] that the preservation of the cultural heritage is of great importance for all peoples of the world and that it is important that this heritage should receive international protection
[.]’²⁴⁹

²⁴⁵ Israel Antiquities Authority, ‘The Chairman of the IAA Board, Professor Yvonne Friedmann’ (date unknown).

²⁴⁶ Israel Antiquities Authority, ‘The Israel Antiquities Authority - Vision and Goals’ (date unknown).

²⁴⁷ Palestine Archaeological Museum, ‘History’ (date unknown).

²⁴⁸ M. Pelletier, ‘Where Do Israel’s Antiquities Belong?’, *Apollo* (June 26, 2017).

²⁴⁹ UNESCO, ‘Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict’ (The Hague, 1954) preamble.

This is an excerpt from the Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property which was signed in The Hague in 1954. The convention states that ‘damage to cultural property belonging to any people whatsoever means damage to the cultural heritage of all mankind’ and that the High Contracting Parties ‘shall refrain from requisitioning movable cultural property situated [in the territory of another High Contracting Party]’.²⁵⁰ Israel signed the convention on May 14, 1954.²⁵¹ The convention, and Israel’s signing of it, is recounted here because the Rockefeller is considered an institution that upholds a status quo that reflects the convention.²⁵² The annexation of East Jerusalem has never been recognized by the international community. This means that anything that has anything to do with archaeology in Jerusalem has become entangled in high stakes political games.²⁵³ The already mentioned activities by the City of David foundation are an example of this, the IAA’s intention to move the Rockefeller’s library to the new Jay and Jeanie Schottenstein National Campus another.

Emek Shaveh, an Israeli NGO working against the political use of archaeology, appealed to Israel’s Supreme Court in May 2016 to try and prevent the IAA from transferring the Rockefeller’s library to the new campus. The organization sought to safeguard the Rockefeller Museum as a ‘multicultural site open to the general public, where knowledge of the magnificent, diverse past of the space would be preserved for anyone who was interested in researching it or learning about it’.²⁵⁴ The Supreme Court turned down the appeal, stating that the IAA is licensed to transfer the library and, critically, that Israeli law trumps international law in East Jerusalem.²⁵⁵ The IAA’s choice to move into the new campus, thereby delegitimizing the Rockefeller’s legacy of multiculturalism in the region, and the Supreme Court’s legal sanction of this move, and especially its assessment that international law does not apply in East Jerusalem in this case, both go to show that the IAA’s actions are in line with the narrative ‘the Palestinians do not have a right to a state’ and that it has become institutionalised to the degree that even the Israeli Supreme Court acts in accordance with it.

This is further evidenced by IAA’s director Hasson’s speech made during the opening ceremony of the campus’ public wing, in which he compared UNESCO to ISIS (in response to a UNESCO resolution passed on October 12, 2016) and that ‘we all can be proud that our answer to the terrible process is this building, our activities, that all of us involved in preserving the inheritance and the history of this land’.²⁵⁶ The reason for Hasson’s vehement comparison is the UNESCO resolution’s strong condemnation of Israel’s refusal to implement previous UNESCO decisions concerning Jerusalem and its call on Israel to immediately cease archaeological excavations in East Jerusalem.²⁵⁷ By presenting the campus as protection to the danger of the destruction of the ‘inheritance of this land’

²⁵⁰ UNESCO, ‘Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict’ (The Hague, 1954) preamble paragraph 3 and article 4, paragraph 3.

²⁵¹ Website: UNESCO, ‘Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict 1954’ (date unknown).

²⁵² Pelletier, ‘Where Do Israel’s Antiquities Belong?’.

²⁵³ Pelletier, ‘Where Do Israel’s Antiquities Belong?’.

²⁵⁴ Emek Shaveh, ‘Press release: The Supreme Court permits the transfer of a library and archaeological artifacts from the Rockefeller Museum to West Jerusalem’ (July 21, 2016).

²⁵⁵ Emek Shaveh, ‘Press release’.

²⁵⁶ I. Hasson, as quoted in: A. Friedman, ‘Antiquities Head Compares UNESCO to ISIS’, *Breaking Israel News* (October 20, 2016).

²⁵⁷ UNESCO, ‘Occupied Palestine: Draft Decision’, Executive Board 200th session (October 12, 2016) articles 4 and 5.

and equating UNESCO to ISIS, Hasson partakes in the rhetoric that Israel needs to defend itself against a supposed international attempt at separating Jerusalem from Israel's national history. We have already seen that both Dore Gold and Benjamin Netanyahu subscribe to this view, the negative effects for the peace process of which will be the subject of the following chapter. In any case, the Jay and Jeanie Schottenstein National Campus for the Archaeology of Israel will be much more than simply an institution for the scientific, objective study of archaeology; it is rather the physical embodiment of the Israeli perspective on archaeology, the IAA's biased policies and the consequences of the institutionalisation of the narrative 'the Palestinians do not have a right to a state'.

'I have spoken about the need for Palestinians to recognize our rights. In a moment, I will speak openly about our need to recognize their rights. But let me first say that the connection between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel has lasted for more than 3500 years. (...) [O]ur right to build our sovereign state here, in the land of Israel, arises from one simple fact: this is the homeland of the Jewish people, this is where our identity was forged.'²⁵⁸

'Eretz-Israel was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and political identity was shaped. (...) After being forcibly exiled from their land, the people kept faith with it throughout their Dispersion and never ceased to pray and hope for their return to it and for the restoration in it of their political freedom. Impelled by this historic and traditional attachment, Jews strove in every successive generation to re-establish themselves in their ancient homeland.'²⁵⁹

'What we really want is not that the land remain whole and unified. What we want is that the whole and unified land be *Jewish* [emphasis original]. A unified Eretz Israel would be no source of satisfaction for me—if it were Arab.

(...)

[We] can no longer tolerate that vast territories capable of absorbing tens of thousands of Jews should remain vacant, and that Jews cannot return to their homeland because the Arabs prefer that the place [the Negev] remains neither ours nor theirs. *We must expel Arabs and take their place* [emphasis added by author]. Up to now, all our aspirations have been based on an assumption – one that has been vindicated throughout our activities in the country – that there is enough room in the land for the Arabs and ourselves. But if we are compelled to use force – not in order to dispossess the Arabs of the Negev or Transjordan, but in order to guarantee our right to settle there – our force will enable us to do so.'²⁶⁰

²⁵⁸ B. Netanyahu, Address at Bar-Ilan University (June 14, 2009).

²⁵⁹ D.B. Gurion, Declaration of Establishment of State of Israel (May 14, 1948).

²⁶⁰ D. B. Gurion, 'Letter from David Ben Gurion to his son Amos' (October 5, 1937).

These three quotes, taken from a speech by Prime Minister Netanyahu in 2009, the Declaration of Establishment of State of Israel (May 14, 1948) and a letter from David Ben Gurion respectively, make clear that the historical connection of the Jewish people to the region of Israel and Palestine is of paramount importance to its leaders. It is this historical connection to the land that necessitates, from the Israeli perspective, the denial of the Palestinian right to self-determination. Through the developments described in this section, from the early Zionists and Christian scholars seeking to 'Zionize' the region's history to the construction of the Jay and Jeanie Schottenstein National Campus for the Archaeology of Israel, the narrative 'the Palestinians do not have a right to a state' has become one of the foundations of contemporary archaeological practice in Israel. Together with the narrative 'Israel's ethnocentric national history is verified by archaeology and corroborated by the Bible' the idea that Palestinians do not have a right to self-determination and to live in a free, independent state, critically influences contemporary archaeological practice in Israel and adversely affects the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

Chapter 4: How Israeli archaeological practice affects the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

At its core, Israeli archaeological practice is concerned with legitimizing Israel's national history as the nation state of the Jewish people. In the preceding chapters we tracked the development of the narratives that made possible the consecration of the tendency to use archaeology in Israeli politics as an institutionalised norm. Because the use of archaeology is so pervasive in Israeli politics, it also affects the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The object of the current chapter will be to elucidate exactly how this happens. To do this, we will adopt a three-pronged approach. First, a concise summary of the preceding chapters' key argument will be offered to refresh our memory as it were. Doing this will make these insights more manageable and easily applicable to the core issue of the current chapter. Secondly, we will consider if the entrapment hypothesis, as defined by Schimmelfennig, can be said to apply to the matter at hand. This will allow for the argument to be put forward that the ethnocentric focus of Israeli archaeology does indeed influence Israeli policy. Following this, the third part of this chapter will consist of a concise summary of how the ethnocentric focus of Israeli archaeology exacerbates the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and prolongs its resolution. Correspondingly, this approach will achieve the twin goals of proving the entrapment hypothesis' analytical usefulness for the study of Israeli politics in general, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in particular, and of showcasing how the seemingly 'lame duck' of archaeology can have real-world consequences.

Concerning Narratives

We started the first chapter with a brief discussion of the exhibition centred on the sarcophagus attributed to Herod the great without truly realizing what made it so controversial or, after finding out why it was so controversial, why it was carried out in the first place. The main objective of the current discussion has been to better understand the context in which the exhibition can be placed: what historical developments led to the emergence of the ideas that underlie the exhibition's inception? This was done by first concisely discussing the three stages of the archaeological investigation of Israel and Palestine: biblical archaeology, critical archaeology and 'Israeli' archaeology. By first considering the history of archaeological investigation in Israel and Palestine we were well-suited to investigate the apparent return of biblical archaeology as a prominent force in Israeli politics. An argument was presented that this development can be explained by the fact that there are two main narratives that influence contemporary archaeological practice in Israel: 'Israel's ethnocentric national history is verified by archaeology and corroborated by the Bible' and 'the Palestinians do not have a right to a state'. By analysing how these narratives developed, what historical events pre-empted their emergence and how converts used social power to advocate their implementation, it was shown how these narratives helped to gradually institutionalise the norm 'the Jewish historical experience

mandates the politicisation of archaeology in contemporary Israel’.

The aim of this endeavour is, as was stated in the introduction, to get to grips with the complexities inherent to contemporary Israeli archaeological practice without ‘choosing sides’. While it does seem obvious that contemporary archaeological practice in Israel often serves a political purpose, and is therefore far-removed from scientific objectivity, it simply won’t do to just condemn it on the basis of this assessment. As contemporary Israeli archaeological practice also influences the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian peace process, we have to take into account the implications of adopting a narrow-minded view concerning its legitimacy; simply stating the obvious (e.g. contemporary archaeological practice in Israel often has little to do with scientific objectivity) does not contribute towards achieving a lasting peace in the slightest.

Now that our understanding of the narratives influencing contemporary archaeological practice in Israel is well-grounded, we can look at how this situation affects the ongoing Israel-Palestinian peace process, which will be the topic of the remainder of the current chapter. It will be argued that the two narratives and the behavioural norm they helped institutionalise discussed here can be said to limit Israeli policymakers’ ability to manoeuvre. The entrapment hypothesis is therefore applicable to the case at hand, or so it would seem.

Entrapment

To rehash, the entrapment hypothesis is the idea that broadly accepted norms can come to limit the ability of actors in a given political system to adopt new policies. Frank Schimmelfennig describes four conditions that should be met for entrapment to influence policy outcomes; the norm should be strong and legitimate, the relevance of the norm to the matter at hand needs to be established, an independent political actor needs to be involved to facilitate the entrapment process, entrapment only works if all the involved parties act in accordance to the norm. In the following section it will be shown that all these conditions apply to the way archaeology is politically employed in Israel.

As the abundance of quotes and literary references incorporated throughout this essay show, the norm ‘the Jewish historical experience mandates the politicisation of archaeology in contemporary Israel’ is considered strong and legitimate by Israeli policymakers. While there are those who challenge the political use of archaeology, such as the NGO Emek Shaveh, the majority of Israeli policy makers have no qualms about utilising archaeology to further their goals. Prime examples of this are the abovementioned Heritage plan, the vagaries surrounding the proposed construction of the Jay and Jeanie Schottenstein National Campus, the use of the Masada myth to counter the human rights rhetoric utilised by certain EU backed NGOs, the condonation of the building of settlements in the occupied territories, the toponymic policies employed by Israel’s government and the ideological use of archaeological sites and artefacts such as with the City of David foundation’s activities in Jerusalem and the exhibition featuring the supposed tomb of Herod the Great. While the individual specificities of these examples vary, they do show without a doubt that the political utilisation of

archaeology is considered a strong and legitimate norm by Israeli policymakers.

From these same examples it also becomes readily apparent that the politicisation of archaeology in Israel is not limited to establishing and substantiating the national historical narrative as it also plays an important role in the legitimisation of the continued occupation of Palestinian territories. In this regard, it is important to remember that a crucial argument put forward in support of Israel's right to exist as a country centres on the idea that the establishment of the state is in fact a 'return' of the Jewish people to their ancient homeland. The above given quotes taken from Ben Gurion's letter to his son, the Declaration of Establishment of State of Israel and a speech given by Benjamin Netanyahu at Bar-Ilan University in 2009, plus a number of other citations pervading the essay, all serve to show that the idea that modern Israel is situated in the ancient Jewish homeland permeates contemporary Israeli political thought. As was extensively discussed above, archaeology provides the physical 'proof' for this notion. Schimmelfennig's second condition (i.e. the relevance of the norm to the matter at hand needs to be established) undoubtedly applies to the norm under discussion.

Regarding Schimmelfennig's proposed requirement that an independent political actor needs to be involved to facilitate the entrapment process for the entrapment hypothesis to be applicable, we find ourselves in slightly murkier waters. What 'independent political actor' is involved in facilitating the process by which the norm 'the Jewish historical experience mandates the politicisation of archaeology in contemporary Israel' entraps Israeli policymakers? A likely candidate would be the international community in the form of UNESCO. However, as is evidenced by the remarks by Dore Gold, director-general of Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and IAA director Israel Hasson, Israel and UNESCO have a complicated relationship, especially since Palestine was awarded full membership to the UN organization in 2011.²⁶¹ UNESCO therefore seems an unlikely candidate for us to show that Schimmelfennig's third condition is met. However, if we consider that archaeology radiates an aura of scientific objectivity simply by being a well-respected historiographic discipline, it becomes clear that Schimmelfennig's third condition does indeed apply; the very reason archaeology is so politicised in Israel is because it provides scientific proof that this or that narrative is based in truth. When Israeli policymakers state that the archaeological evidence proves the connection between ancient and contemporary Israel, they rely on archaeology's aura of scientific objectivity to strengthen their claim. This is how, in a land where the Supreme Court ruled that The Hague Convention takes second place to national law, an independent actor in the form of supposed scientific objectivity facilitates the entrapment process.

While this may all seem fine and dandy, it is important to consider one major caveat at this point, and that is that the aura of scientific objectivity surrounding the archaeological evidence that is politically utilised in Israel only exists when it is not comprehensively questioned. In other words: the

²⁶¹ UN News Centre, 'UNESCO votes to admit Palestine as full member' (October 31, 2011).

aura of scientific objectivity can only be said to facilitate entrapment as an independent actor when there is a dearth of critical voices. And, as we have seen, this is simply not the case in regards to contemporary Israeli archaeology. Considering the arguments put forwards by authors such as Thomas Thompson, Nadia Abu El-Haj and Ilan Pappé, as well as others, it is safe to say that contemporary Israeli archaeological practice is far from being undisputed. Nonetheless, the assertion that archaeology's aura of scientific objectivity acts as an independent political actor in the facilitation of the entrapment process is still valid despite these criticisms. This is because the archaeologists, museums, ministries and NGOs (e.g. the City of David Foundation) that are engaged in perpetuating the ethnocentric interpretation of Israel's archaeological past, do not rely on the critical acclaim of academics, but on the popularity and political success that the narratives that they disseminate enjoy. These narratives are presented as being based on the physical evidence unearthed in Israel, homeland of the Jewish people, and therefore true. Criticism from outside this club of storytellers only strengthens the idea that Israel is beset by a hostile world, as is evidenced by Dore Gold's words that form the very beginning of this essay.

Finally, Schimmelfennig's condition that entrapment only works if the involved parties act in accordance to the norm, is also applicable to the way archaeology is politicised in Israel. This is because, as stated above, the idea that there is a tangible connection between ancient and contemporary Israel permeates Israeli politics. While it is certainly true that individual Israeli politicians have employed different tactics based on different ideas, such as the differences in negotiating tactics employed during the Madrid talks and Oslo process by Prime Ministers Yitzhak Shamir and Yitzhak Rabin respectively, and the differences between the latter and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu regarding their willingness to truly resolve the conflict with the Palestinians, one of the enduring and common aspects of these tactics and ideas is that this historical connection is unquestionable. Naysayers such as the NGO Emek Shaveh or Ilan Pappé have proven ineffective in countering this dynamic. Not even the strongly worded resolutions penned down by the World Archaeological Congress (WAC) held in Ramallah in 2009 affected Israeli policy in any meaningful way:

'We recognize that the past is a powerful resource for groups in the present. Connections to the past have been used to establish identities and to legitimize claims to land, monuments, and objects. Rival claims have too often led to violence, both physical and structural, in the present.

(...)

We call on all people, archaeologists and non-archaeologists alike, to use the power of the past in support of equality, justice, and a fulfilling life for all as well as to counter exploitation and oppression.

(...)

We acknowledge that an end to the occupation of Palestinian territory is essential to effectively countering the structural violence inherent in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.²⁶²

It is important to note that there were no Israeli scholars present for the congress until the second day of proceedings, and then only two.²⁶³ In fact, senior Israeli archaeologists, including the chair of the IAA board Benjamin Kedar, criticised the congress for being biased and placing Israeli archaeology in the role of the accused.²⁶⁴ While it is not clear if Israeli archaeologists were actively barred from attending, a notion strongly opposed by the president of the WAC Claire Smith,²⁶⁵ or if they boycotted the congress, it is telling that the Israeli critique centres on the congress' condemnation of contemporary Israeli archaeological practice and its destructive effects. By arguing that the congress was biased and unfairly placed the blame on Israeli archaeology, and not admitting that their work is sometimes flawed and can have destructive consequences, these Israeli archaeologists once again succeeded in avoiding taking responsibility. They thereby continue to 'play along' with the norm that the use of archaeology in Israeli politics is justified.

In sum, we can state that all four of Schimmelfennig's conditions for the entrapment hypothesis to be applicable are met with regards to the politicisation of archaeology in contemporary Israel. The ethnocentric focus of Israeli politics, which has only deepened since the assassination of Rabin in 1995,²⁶⁶ is substantiated by Israeli archaeology. We must, however, keep in mind the caveat, mentioned in the introduction, that entrapment is not absolute; contemporary Israeli archaeology does not *dictate* Israeli politics but it does *influence* it in that the politicisation of archaeology provides the physical evidence upon which political, national and historical narratives can be build. Because this norm has become part and parcel (i.e. institutionalised) of Israeli political thought, and has of yet to be successively assailed by critics, it has had a profound effect on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Showing exactly how this works will be the topic of the following section.

How Israeli archaeology affects the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

'Honoured guests, citizens of Israel.

Peace has always been our people's most ardent desire. Our prophets gave the world the vision of peace, we greet one another with wishes of peace, and our prayers conclude with the word peace.

(...)

²⁶² WAC, 'Resolutions from World Archaeological Congress Inter-Congress on Structural Violence, Ramallah, Palestine' (August 2009) resolution 1 and 2.

²⁶³ H. Watzman, 'Uproar over Palestinian archaeology congress' (August 19, 2009).

²⁶⁴ H. Watzman, 'Uproar over Palestinian archaeology congress' (August 19, 2009).

²⁶⁵ H. Watzman, 'Uproar over Palestinian archaeology congress' (August 19, 2009).

²⁶⁶ M. Al-Halabi, 'The destructive potential of Israel's nation-state bill' (May 9, 2017).

I turn to you, our Palestinian neighbours, led by the Palestinian Authority, and I say: Let's begin negotiations immediately without preconditions.

Israel is obligated by its international commitments and expects all parties to keep their commitments. We want to live with you in peace, as good neighbours. We want our children and your children to never again experience war [.]

(...)

Even as we look toward the horizon, we must be firmly connected to reality, to the truth. And the simple truth is that the *root of the conflict* was, and remains, *the refusal to recognize the right of the Jewish people to a state of their own, in their historic homeland* [emphasis added by author].

Those who think that the continued enmity toward Israel is a product of our presence in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, is confusing cause and consequence.

(..)

The claim that territorial withdrawals will bring peace with the Palestinians, or at least advance peace, has up till now not stood the test of reality.

(...)

[A] fundamental prerequisite for ending the conflict is a public, binding and unequivocal Palestinian recognition of *Israel as the nation state of the Jewish people* [emphasis added by author]. To vest this declaration with practical meaning, there must also be a clear understanding that the Palestinian refugee problem will be resolved outside Israel's borders. *For it is clear that any demand for resettling Palestinian refugees within Israel undermines Israel's continued existence as the state of the Jewish people* [emphasis added by author].²⁶⁷

These words were taken from a speech by Benjamin Netanyahu already cited earlier in the text. What becomes clear from this rather lengthier excerpt, is that Netanyahu places the connection between the Jewish people and their ancient homeland, and their concomitant right to a state there, at the centre of the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. By blaming the conflict's continuation on the Palestinians' failure to recognize 'the right of the Jewish people to a state of their own, in their historic homeland' he ostensibly denies that Israel's behaviour has also contributed to the conflict's continuation. This then is the crucial way in which the norm 'the Jewish historical experience mandates the politicisation of archaeology in contemporary Israel' contributes to the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflicts; it enables politicians such as Netanyahu to 'scientifically' validate political narratives centred on the

²⁶⁷ B. Netanyahu, Address at Bar-Ilan University (June 14, 2009).

connection between the Jewish people and their ancient homeland. These narratives are often quite inflammatory for the other groups involved, such as the Palestinians. Exacerbating this dynamic is the fact that important archaeological, often religious, sites form the flashpoints around which Israelis and Palestinians clash. The Temple Mount is, of course, the most well-known example. The following section will offer an explanation of how the ethnocentric narrative, validated by archaeology, employed by Israeli policymakers worsens the prospect of ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

A large part of why the ethnocentric rhetoric often espoused by politicians such as Netanyahu exacerbates the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict has to do with the exclusivity inherent in it. When Netanyahu states that Israel is the 'nation state of the Jewish people' and that a return of Palestinian refugees would undermine 'Israel's continued existence as the state of the Jewish people', he sends a powerful message about Israel's character. Not surprisingly, Netanyahu's demands did not go down well with the Palestinians and they contributed to the failure of the attempt to resume negotiations in 2014.²⁶⁸ As mentioned above, Netanyahu's assertions are primarily based on the core argument that the Jewish people have an unassailable historic connection and concomitant right to the region in which Israel now lies. As was extensively discussed, this historic connection is often substantiated by referencing archaeological finds. It is therefore not in the least surprising that 'land', and who holds sovereignty over it, plays a key role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

We already discussed the Oslo process and its vagaries when we considered how the narrative 'the Palestinians do not have a right to a state' became embedded in Israeli political thought. As mentioned above, one of the key consequences of the Oslo process was the division of the occupied territories into separate territorial units, each with its own governmental structure. It is important to remember here that the provisions in the Oslo accords were of a transitory nature. Hot button issues, such as Jerusalem and the return of Palestinian refugees, were allocated to future negotiations. One of these issues, the final territorial arrangement between Israel and a (possible) Palestinian state, is of particular importance to the current discussion.

To say that the final territorial arrangement between Israel and a future Palestinian state were allocated to future negotiations is not to say that there was no discussion about what such a territorial arrangement would or, rather, should, look like. During the Oslo process (and after) there were numerous plans put forward for what the territorial arrangement should look like.²⁶⁹ Most of these proposals had in common that they focussed on a final territorial configuration based on the highest degree of territorial and demographic separation of the two peoples.²⁷⁰ These proposals also show just how ideologically important, and politically sensitive, the Jewish settlements in the occupied territories are.

²⁶⁸ F. Abdel-Nour, 'High Stakes for Palestinians: Israel as 'the State of the Jewish People'' (October 24, 2017).

²⁶⁹ D. Newman, 'Creating the fences of territorial separation: The discourses of Israeli-Palestinian conflict resolution', *Geopolitics and International Boundaries* 2 (2007) 1-35.

²⁷⁰ D. Newman, 'Creating the fences of territorial separation', 17.

Traditionally, the Israeli government based their policy concerning boundary demarcation (i.e. the territorial arrangement) on its defensive capabilities, access to water resources and the location of Israeli settlements.²⁷¹ The advent of new technologies has however significantly decreased the importance of military considerations and access to water resources in regards to Israeli policy concerning boundary demarcation. Jewish settlements in the occupied territories have at the same time retained their central importance to Israeli considerations concerning a final territorial arrangement.²⁷² As was extensively discussed above, the settlers in these settlements often employ archaeological ‘evidence’ (as well as politicized toponomy) to legitimize their presence. This is one of the ways in which archaeology contributes to the continuation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: settlers assert the legitimacy of their settlements in the occupied territories by referencing the Bible and archaeological finds and are given free reign by Israeli policymakers as they fear the potential backlash from this very vocal and bellicose community against any move towards dismantling (some of the) settlements. For the Palestinians, the presence of the Israeli settlements is, of course, unacceptable, as they are the most concrete example of the Israeli occupation.²⁷³ It almost goes without saying that this dynamic has severely complicated the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Netanyahu’s 2009 speech has proven to be a precursor to his government’s following attempts to reinforce Israel’s ethnocentric character. The Heritage Plan, as was discussed above, was adopted in February 2010 and is one of these attempts. The project is aimed at strengthening the connection of the Jewish people to the land by developing and promoting sites linked to the history of Zionism and archaeological sites that mark the Jewish presence in the land throughout the ages.²⁷⁴ The fact that the Heritage Plan also incorporates sites in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, combined with the fact that the efforts undertaken to develop and promote these sites mostly fail to mention the other peoples and cultures connected to them, is evidence that Israel’s government actively tries to blur the distinction between the occupied territories and Israel.²⁷⁵ Israel’s government thereby tries to legitimize the annexation of some or all of the occupied territories to Israel.²⁷⁶

The Jewish nature of Israel is further reinforced by its government’s attempts to change the nation’s Basic Laws.²⁷⁷ A bill was proposed by members of Likud, and endorsed by Prime Minister Netanyahu, in May 2017 that would amend the Basic Laws to state that ‘the right to realize self-determination in the State of Israel is unique to the Jewish people’.²⁷⁸ The law’s provisions would disrupt the precarious balance between Israel’s simultaneous ‘democratic’ and ‘Jewish’ character in favour of the latter by making the Supreme Court powerless to oppose laws that contradict the more

²⁷¹ *Ibidem*, 17.

²⁷² *Ibidem*, 19.

²⁷³ *Ibidem*, 17.

²⁷⁴ Gori, ‘The Stones of Contention’, 222.

²⁷⁵ Emek Shaveh, ‘Israel’s “National Heritage Sites” Project in the West Bank: Archeological importance and political significance’ 18.

²⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, 18.

²⁷⁷ Israel’s Basic Laws act as the country’s constitution. See: Knesset, ‘Basic Laws’.

²⁷⁸ As quoted in: Al-Halabi, ‘The destructive potential of Israel’s nation-state bill’.

democratic principles encoded in the Basic Laws.²⁷⁹ While it remains to be seen if the law will be adopted, and in what form, it is important to state here that it is not a ‘fluke’; some Israeli lawmakers have been working since 2011 to change the Basic Laws to unambiguously state Israel’s Jewish national identity.²⁸⁰ If these efforts succeed, all future right-claims made in Israel would be interpreted on the basis of their potential to preserve or foster the state’s Jewish identity, thereby also negating the need to sustain a demographic Jewish majority as Israel’s Jewish identity would be encoded in law.²⁸¹ This opens up the possibility that an expanded Israel (e.g. by annexation of the occupied territories) would still be considered a Jewish state despite not having a Jewish majority population.

What these considerations concerning the proposed amendment of Israel’s Basic Laws, the Heritage Plan, Netanyahu’s demand that Palestinians recognize ‘Israel as the nation state of the Jewish people’ and the politically volatile presence of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories have in common, is that at the core of all these efforts is the promotion of the unassailable historic connection between the land and the Jewish (ancient) right to a state there. As this connection derives much of its legitimacy from archaeology, it becomes clear that the discipline plays a central role in the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Furthermore, because politicised archaeology, and the historic connection between the Jewish people and its territory, has been institutionalised in Israeli political thought, it has become exceedingly difficult for Israeli policymakers to step away from this ethnocentric perspective and adopt new policies not necessarily in line with this norm. If we further recount that Israeli archaeology was used from the very start to construct a national identity, a common historical background for Israel’s citizens,²⁸² it once again becomes clear that it is much more than a ‘lame duck’; it is at the core and forefront of Israeli politics and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The ethnocentric narrative employed by Israeli policymakers, which is supposedly backed up by archaeological evidence, clearly exacerbates the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. This becomes all the more apparent when we step out of the staterooms and down to the street level where Israelis and Palestinians meet.

There are, sadly, many examples to choose from when discussing the violent clashes between Israelis and Palestinians that centre on key archaeological sites. The most well-known of these have of course taken place in Jerusalem. In this section we return to one example of such clashes that has featured prominently throughout this essay: the City of David. By briefly discussing this example we will be able to get a representative glimpse of how Israeli and Palestinian interests can sometimes violently clash over key archaeological sites. Furthermore, this approach will also allow for the argument to be put forward that the analysis of archaeology’s role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would benefit greatly from the inclusion of an ‘emotional history’ perspective (something that the purview of the current essay does not allow us to do).

²⁷⁹ Al-Halabi, ‘The destructive potential of Israel’s nation-state bill’.

²⁸⁰ Abdel-Nour, ‘High Stakes for Palestinians: Israel as ‘the State of the Jewish People?’’.

²⁸¹ *Ibidem*.

²⁸² Gori, ‘The Stones of Contention’, 216.

As stated in the introduction, the City of David is an archaeological site at the foot of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. It's eponymous foundation is 'committed to continuing King David's legacy as well as revealing and connecting people to Ancient Jerusalem's glorious past [.]'.²⁸³ To recapitulate Katherina Galor's arguments concerning the archaeological investigation of Jerusalem, we can consider the continued excavation and exploitation of the archaeological site by the City of David foundation a clear example of an endeavour that is ideologically motivated and has little scientific value.²⁸⁴ The activities in the site known as 'the City of David' are an example of the tendency of archaeologists investigating Jerusalem to uncover its glorious biblical past, as described by Galor.²⁸⁵ What makes the City of David especially problematic, and consequently relevant to the present discussion, is that it is located in the middle of the Palestinian neighbourhood of Silwan.

For many years now, the City of David foundation (and others) has been buying Palestinian homes in Silwan and moving Jewish families there.²⁸⁶ The consequence has been that in November 2015, approximately 700 Israelis were living among 50.0000 Palestinians.²⁸⁷ The City of David foundation was given control over the City of David archaeological site in 2005.²⁸⁸ Since then, clashes between disgruntled Palestinians living in Silwan and Israeli security forces have been frequent. Despite this, the archaeological site remains an immensely popular tourist destination.²⁸⁹

On the ground the effects of this situation have manifested in a deep divide between the Jewish and the Palestinian parts of Silwan. While the Palestinians in Silwan often live in modest and improvised houses along roads that are sometimes unpaved, the Jewish settlers live in well maintained houses that are connected by newly paved streets.²⁹⁰ The same goes for the City of David Visitors Centre and surrounding archaeological park. Besides the obvious differences in the quality of housing, the divide between the Palestinian and Jewish community in Silwan is also maintained by security personnel and infrastructure (e.g. guard posts, electric fences, cameras).²⁹¹ What makes this situation worse, and the Palestinians' anger all the more understandable, is that the scientific grounds for the further excavation of the site are controversial to say the least.²⁹² Even worse is the fact that the tours and tourist attractions mostly fail to mention the rich cultural heritage of the site and surrounding neighbourhood, instead focussing on its Jewish history. This cobweb of religious, political, ideological and archaeological factors has fuelled tensions between Jewish settlers and the original Silwani residents.²⁹³

²⁸³ City of David, 'The Ir David Foundation' (date unknown).

²⁸⁴ Galor, *Finding Jerusalem*, 167

²⁸⁵ *Ibidem*, 167.

²⁸⁶ I.L. Silwan, 'Why Israelis are buying up Palestinian homes in riot-torn East Jerusalem' (November 7, 2014).

²⁸⁷ I. Creatura, 'Digging for the Holy Land: The politicization of archaeology along the Israel-Palestine border' (November 6, 2015).

²⁸⁸ Creatura, 'Digging for the Holy Land'.

²⁸⁹ *Ibidem*.

²⁹⁰ Galor, *Finding Jerusalem*, 120

²⁹¹ *Ibidem*, 120.

²⁹² *Ibidem*, 120.

²⁹³ *Ibidem*, 121.

The City of David archaeological site and its impact on the Silwan neighbourhood are a prime example of how politicised archaeology in Israel (and the occupied territories) can exacerbate the already existing tensions between Israeli and Palestinian communities on the ground. The potential that this tension spills over into actual violent conflict is ever present.

While the two narratives discussed above form the main reason behind the institutionalisation of the norm ‘the Jewish historical experience mandates the politicisation of archaeology in contemporary Israel’, there is one more factor that has yet to be discussed here. That factor is the effect that the threat of violence has had on Israeli government policy concerning archaeology. While archaeological practices, such as controversial excavations or exhibitions, can sometimes lead to vehement protests, these confrontations rarely lead to physical violence in most parts of the world. However, due mainly to the settler movement’s belligerent presence in Israeli politics, archaeological practice has increasingly come under the sway of violence’s iron spectre. This has to do with the fact that the Israeli settlers are strongly opposed to any form of Israeli withdrawal and are not afraid to use violence to defend their claim, even sometimes targeting other Israelis. Because archaeology forms an integral part of the settlers’ claim to legitimacy, denying that the archaeological finds are valid can be a very dangerous affair indeed. Primarily, violence influences the contemporary political use of archaeology in Israeli politics because it prohibits Israeli politicians from forcing the settlers to evacuate or even too sharply criticizing them. The iron spectre of violence has cast its shadow over Israeli politics at least since the assassination of Prime Minister on November 4, 1995.

Of course, it might seem a far-fetched notion to state that archaeological practice is influenced by the ever-present threat of violence in Israeli politics. And it is indeed difficult to track down a direct reference to the idea that certain interpretations of archaeological finds are influenced by ‘the threat of violence’. The influence exerted by the two narratives discussed above is, at the very least, much easier to track and substantiate. At the same time however, the idea that the threat of violence influences Israeli policymakers seems almost too obvious to be worth mentioning. The core consideration guiding any analysis of this topic should be that Israeli policymakers have been careful not to force the settlers too hard on the point of withdrawal since the Rabin assassination. These settlers often legitimize their presence in the occupied territories by referencing the Bible as supposedly substantiated by archaeological evidence. It stands to reason that this particular interpretation of the archaeological evidence is not scrutinized too harshly in part because policymakers are afraid for either their political career or their physical safety. In sum, we can state that violence influences contemporary archaeological practice in Israel because policymakers are afraid of challenging certain interpretations of archaeological evidence because doing so could endanger their physical safety.

Finally, we should also remember that Israeli archaeological policy has often resulted in violence against Palestinian residents (e.g. by expelling them from archaeological sites in order to make room for the construction of tourist attractions) and that the archaeological sites themselves,

especially if they are key religious sites, are often the site of violent clashes between Israelis and Palestinians. All this amounts to a situation in which Israeli archaeology is inextricably linked to violence or the threat thereof.

Because archaeology can evoke such strong emotions and can even lead to violent confrontation, it seems apparent that an analysis of Israeli archaeology's role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would benefit greatly from the incorporation of an 'emotional history' perspective. The suppression, undermining and delegitimation of the Palestinian right to a state and cultural heritage has taken pride of place throughout this essay. Going by the above given arguments, it would be easy to assume that contemporary Israeli archaeological practice causes feelings of resentment, oppression and outright anger among Palestinians as their claims to sovereignty over their own land and cultural heritage are denied time and again by Israel. Less attention has been paid to the Israeli emotional counterpart to these feelings.

While it has been discussed extensively what role archaeology has had in the founding of the State of Israel and the writing of its national history, we have not yet considered the emotional dimension of these developments. It stands to reason to assume that Israeli archaeology can evoke strong feelings of national pride, attachment (to the land) and righteousness (i.e. the Jewish return to their homeland after centuries of persecution). Incorporating how these feelings, together with their Palestinian analogues, are affected by archaeological practice and in turn contribute to the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict would undoubtedly yield some interesting results. The goal of the present discussion was to show what factors contributed to the institutionalisation of the norm 'the Jewish historical experience mandates the politicisation of archaeology in contemporary Israel' and not to present an emotional historical analysis of the same topic. This means, unfortunately perhaps, that we will have to leave such an endeavour to future scholars hoping to get to grips with the complex vagaries of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In any case, what the present discussion has succeeded in doing is show just how contemporary Israeli archaeological practice contributes to the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. From the ethnocentric rhetoric employed by politicians such as Benjamin Netanyahu and Dore Gold, to the exploitation of sites such as the City of David, the continued use of archaeological finds as 'evidence' for the Israeli national narrative has done nothing to dispel the tensions between Israelis and Palestinians; in fact, it has only heightened these tensions. Because the norm 'the Jewish historical experience mandates the politicisation of archaeology in contemporary Israel' has been institutionalised in Israeli political thought, it seems unlikely that Israeli policymakers will escape from their self-devised ideological trap.

Concluding Remarks

So, have we accomplished what we set out to do? At the beginning of this essay we asked ourselves the simple-seeming question: ‘Why does archaeology so often serve a political purpose in Israel?’. In an attempt to avoid turning the current essay into a polemic, we adopted a normative institutionalist approach to finding an answer to this question. One of the key considerations underlying this decision was the acknowledgement that the topic is decidedly complex and that the current format was inadequate for breaking this complexity down to its constitutive parts. Adopting normative institutionalism allowed us to nonetheless gain a deeper understanding of the vagarious complexity of the dynamic under consideration. Additionally, the application of normative institutionalism was warranted because it has not yet been applied to the analysis of contemporary politicised Israeli archaeology. This is not to say that the conclusions presented in this paper do not (partly) mirror those reached by scholars such as Ilan Pappé, Nadia Abu El-Haj and Katharina Galor. In fact, the similarities between the findings presented in the current essay and the work done by scholars such as these, only add credence to the main argument put forward here: the politicisation of archaeology has become institutionalised in contemporary Israeli politics and adversely affects the ability of Israeli policymakers to manoeuvre in the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Putting this approach into practice, we first looked at the general history of the archaeological investigation of Israel and Palestine. Following this, we ascertained that there is in fact a behavioural norm (i.e. ‘the Jewish historical experience mandates the politicisation of archaeology in contemporary Israel’) that has become institutionalised in Israeli political thought which explains the ostensible return of biblical archaeology in Israel. By then looking at the two main narratives that drove this development (i.e. ‘Israel’s ethnocentric national history is verified by archaeology and corroborated by the Bible’ and ‘the Palestinians do not have a right to a state’) we deepened our understanding of Israeli archaeology and why it is so ethnocentric.

In the fourth chapter we considered how the entrapment hypothesis can be said to apply to the political use of archaeology in contemporary Israel. It was shown that Schimmelfennig’s four conditions do indeed apply to the case at hand and that it remains to be seen if Israeli policymakers are able (or willing) to escape the ideological trap they have laid for themselves. The fact that the behavioural norm ‘the Jewish historical experience mandates the politicisation of archaeology in contemporary Israel’ has become institutionalised in Israeli politics means that archaeology also directly contributes to the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The sad fact is that politicised archaeology in Israel is a tool used to continue the oppression of the Palestinian people by both reinforcing Israeli national historical claims and by undermining Palestinian territorial and cultural sovereignty. If anything, this situation should be more than enough reason for Israeli archaeologists to live up to the vaunted ideals of scientific objectivity and forswear the ideological goals that their work so often serves.

As it stands, the idea that the archaeological finds substantiate Israel's national history is taken for granted by the majority of the Israeli populace and is actively enforced by Israeli policymakers. Through the application of social power by groups such as Gush Emunim and influential individuals such as Benjamin Netanyahu, this norm has been institutionalised in all levels of Israeli society. This severely limits the ability of Israeli policymakers to adopt policies conducive to the peace process because these policies can sometimes be in contradiction with this norm.

While entrapment is not absolute, the lack of a clearly formulated and strongly advocated Palestinian archaeological perspective combined with the ironclad inequality consecrated by the Oslo process, makes it unlikely that the present situation will change in the foreseeable future. However, this is not to say that it cannot be done and it is indeed the sincere hope of the author that efforts are undertaken to make the archaeological investigation of the region more equal and less politicised.

I also wish to reiterate that the study of politicised Israeli archaeology would benefit greatly from the application of an 'emotional history' perspective. While it seems obvious that contemporary Israeli archaeological practice, and the political ramifications thereof, is influenced by strongly felt emotional contexts (e.g. Israeli feelings of national pride and righteousness and analogues Palestinian feelings of suppression and injustice), it can be a challenge to quantify this influence. This is doubly true for any attempt made to get to grips with the ways in which the threat of violence influences the same dynamic. However, these difficulties are of course inadequate reason for not exploring this promising approach. The current essay and the findings presented therein could therefore perhaps best be understood as a prelude; an introduction that succeeded in recognizing the complexities plaguing Israeli contemporary archaeological practice and enumerating its effect on the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict that will hopefully serve as a springboard for future researchers to further explore this crucial research topic.

We began our search for the ideas underpinning contemporary Israeli archaeological practice by stating that a behavioural norm is 'an internalized or enforced idea shared by members of a social group that has gradually become institutionalized through the application of social power'. The tale we spun from these humble beginnings took us to the very foundations of Zionism in the Middle East, past the Six-Day War and the Oslo Accords and finally brought us to the 2017 attempt to amend Israel's constitution. At the very least this journey through Israel's history has brought home the lesson that things are never what they seem at first glance; politicised archaeology is not just a convenient rhetorical tool utilised by certain Israeli policymakers, but rather a behavioural norm that has become institutionalised as a result of a string of historical events and the application of social power by capable and committed political actors since the middle of the 19th century.

It seems as though looking at contemporary Israeli archaeology is like taking a Rorschach test: if the observer is amenable to the veracity of Israel's national historical narrative, then he or she accredits its findings as truthful, if the observer doubts this historical narrative then he or she doubts the veracity of these findings. Truth is truly a rare commodity when dealing with Israeli politics in

general and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in particular. Dore Gold's dislike for the term 'narrative' is understandable in that it does indeed seem very hard to get to grips with what the 'true' history of Israel looks like and what role archaeology should play in its investigation. That the ethnocentric perspective on archaeology espoused by Israel's government is politically motivated is however beyond doubt. The 'lame duck' of archaeology has definitely spread its wings and is making its presence felt in the most unmistakable of ways.

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