

# Trashing Jewish Holy Sites

---

*Source:* <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.archaeology/2007-09/msg01123.html>

---

- *From:* "Peter Jason" <pj@xxxxxxxxxx>
  - *Date:* Sat, 15 Sep 2007 10:49:32 +1000
- 

<http://frontpagemagazine.com/Articles/Read.aspx?GUID=53C06FE5-A640-43CA-96B6-3DA6C17D80E5>

FrontPageMagazine.com | Friday, September 14, 2007

Every time someone daubs a swastika or anti-Semitic epithet on a synagogue in any American city, there is a quick, firm and loud condemnation from Jewish leaders, "watchdog" agencies, even leaders of other faiths and usually government officials.

Yet remarkably, as the holiest site in all of Judaism and its rich antiquities are deliberately and methodically desecrated and even obliterated, there is barely a peep, though mostly no outcry at all.

How can this be?

For those who may be unaware, the Temple Mount is the site in Jerusalem of both the First Temple and the Second Temple – which Jews believe is the resting place of G-d on Earth – is quite literally under attack. Heavy machinery and excavation equipment is gouging, tearing and smashing this sacred ground and the artifacts that were preserved beneath it until the Muslim officials (operating as per the Palestinian Authority) recently began ripping it apart.

Based on what some archaeologists are saying, this may be the worst devastation at this site since the Romans destroyed the Second Temple in 70 CE.

"The Temple Mount is one of the most fantastic historical and archaeological

## Trashing Jewish Holy Sites

monuments. It needs to be preserved for all humankind, and people are forgetting this," says Dr. Eilat Mazar, a leader of the Public Committee for the Prevention of the Destruction of Antiquities on the Temple Mount.

"Many people don't know that under the Temple Mount there is a whole world [of antiquities]."

Mazar, a Senior Fellow at the Shalem Center, and a scholar at the Institute of Archaeology at Hebrew University, added on "The ZOA Middle East Report" radio show: "The whole behavior toward the Temple Mount is a crime really."

A little background:

Since the Jewish nation entered the land of Israel, the city of Jerusalem has been the centerpiece for the Jewish people. For thousands of years, there has been a continuous Jewish presence in Jerusalem. For millennia Jews have prayed for the peace and sanctity of Jerusalem three times a day and face toward Jerusalem to pray.

At Jerusalem's heart is the Temple Mount, where the Israelites were commanded by G-d to build his Temple. The Temple was first destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BCE, and after the Jews were allowed to return to Israel, they rebuilt the Temple (the Second Temple) on this same site, where it stood until the Romans destroyed it in the year 70.

Some 600 years later, after the Islamic religion was founded and then became a world power, the Muslims conquered Jerusalem and first built a shrine to their Prophet Mohammad ("The Dome of the Rock") and later, the Al-Aksa Mosque.

Though Jews continued to live in Jerusalem, for the next 1,300 or so years Jews did not have any control over the holiest site in all of Judaism.

It seemed that this would change after the

British Mandate offered the land to the Jewish people to re-establish a nation on its historical homeland, and once the League of Nations (predecessor of the United Nations) approved the Partition Plan carving out a nation for the Jews and a nation for the Arabs (The British had already given most of the land of historically Jewish "Palestine" to the Arabs to create the nation of Jordan.).

While the Jewish people gladly accepted the sliver of land the world offered them for a nation, the Arabs rejected the land offered to them, and on the May, 1948 day that Israel declared its independence, the armies of five Arab nations attacked Israel, with Jordan illegally seizing control of the Old City of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount.

The Jordanians forbade the Jews from setting foot anywhere near the Temple Mount, and also from even being able to see its only remnant – the Western Wall (known also as "the Wailing Wall") -- except for one lone vantage point.

After the Jordanians again attacked Israel during the 1967 Six-Day War, the Israelis drove back the Arabs, liberating the Temple Mount. It was a joyous moment for the country and Jewry worldwide.

But no sooner did the Jewish people regain control over their holiest site did Israel's leaders give the Palestinian-Arabs the authority to administer the site through the Wakf or "Muslim trust."

To further mollify the Arabs, Israeli officials have mandated that only for a few hours each week non-Muslims may ascend the Temple Mount, and Jews and Christians are forbidden to ever pray on the Temple Mount.

This has been the status quo since 1967. While the Temple Mount has been under the control of the Israeli government, it has permitted the Muslim authorities to call the shots: limiting access and freedom of religion to non-Muslims, while frequently

## Trashing Jewish Holy Sites

conducting excavations allegedly to make repairs or additions to the Islamic structures.

Going hand and glove with this situation has been the constant denial by the Palestinian–Arab leaders and clergy as well as much of the Muslim and Arabs worlds that the two Jewish Temples existed at this site, and that the Temple Mount has no religious or historical significance to the Jewish people whatsoever.

The current round of "excavations" by the Muslim authorities on the Temple Mount today – according to them to allegedly replace electrical cables – are seen by renowned archaeologists and others as the continuation and acceleration of previous efforts by the Muslims and Arabs to erase the Jewish heritage there by removing the "facts on the ground" and as many traces as possible that this was a Jewish holy place.

As if this is not obscene enough, the Israeli government can step in at any time and stop this desecration, but has chosen not to intercede. And, the Israeli police and the government's Antiquities Authority have been preventing the esteemed archaeologists and concerned activists from intervening. They have even interfered with and blocked efforts to document the damage.

Yes, the government of Israel led by the prime minister is aiding and abetting the destruction not only of the most venerated area to Jews in the world, but also an effort that could ultimately lead to the very delegitimizing of that government and the nation of Israel — should the Muslims and Arabs be able to complete their diabolical plot and convince most of the world that the Jewish Temples were never there..

"The Israeli authorities actually almost do nothing, and if they do, they kind of observe," Mazar says, noting that there are supposed to be careful methods of excavation. The site and work should be meticulously documented, there should be measuring,

collecting of fragments and the like.

"They [Antiquities Authority] don't fulfill their obligations because they are told not to do so [by the government], not that they don't know how," Mazar charged.

"Tractors are working on the Temple Mount. This is a place that no tractors should be. . . It looks like a construction site . . ."

Mazar said that "The prime minister should order right away that no machines should be on the Temple Mount." "We need people to appeal directly to the prime minister and demand what seems to be very obvious: that the Temple Mount compound should be kept preserved."

But, the archaeologist noted that, "Many people really don't know [about the damage]" taking place

"The Israeli media and other media is not allowed to go on the Temple Mount and take shots and really interview people," she said. "The media don't cover the issue or get people's awareness."

For many who are aware of what is going on, Mazar said, "the Temple Mount is a political issue only."

But obviously politics should not be a factor when it comes to destroying holy sites.

This is a desecration that cannot be covered up with white-wash as leaders of so many Jewish congregations have done the world over when their synagogues have been targeted by vandals. Once the Temple Mount artifacts are fully obliterated, the damage cannot be undone with a fresh coat of paint.

If we protest and condemn when a synagogue is defaced, surely we, led by our leaders, should be shouting and perhaps crying over this worst-of-all defacements threatening not only our religion, but also our nationhood.

