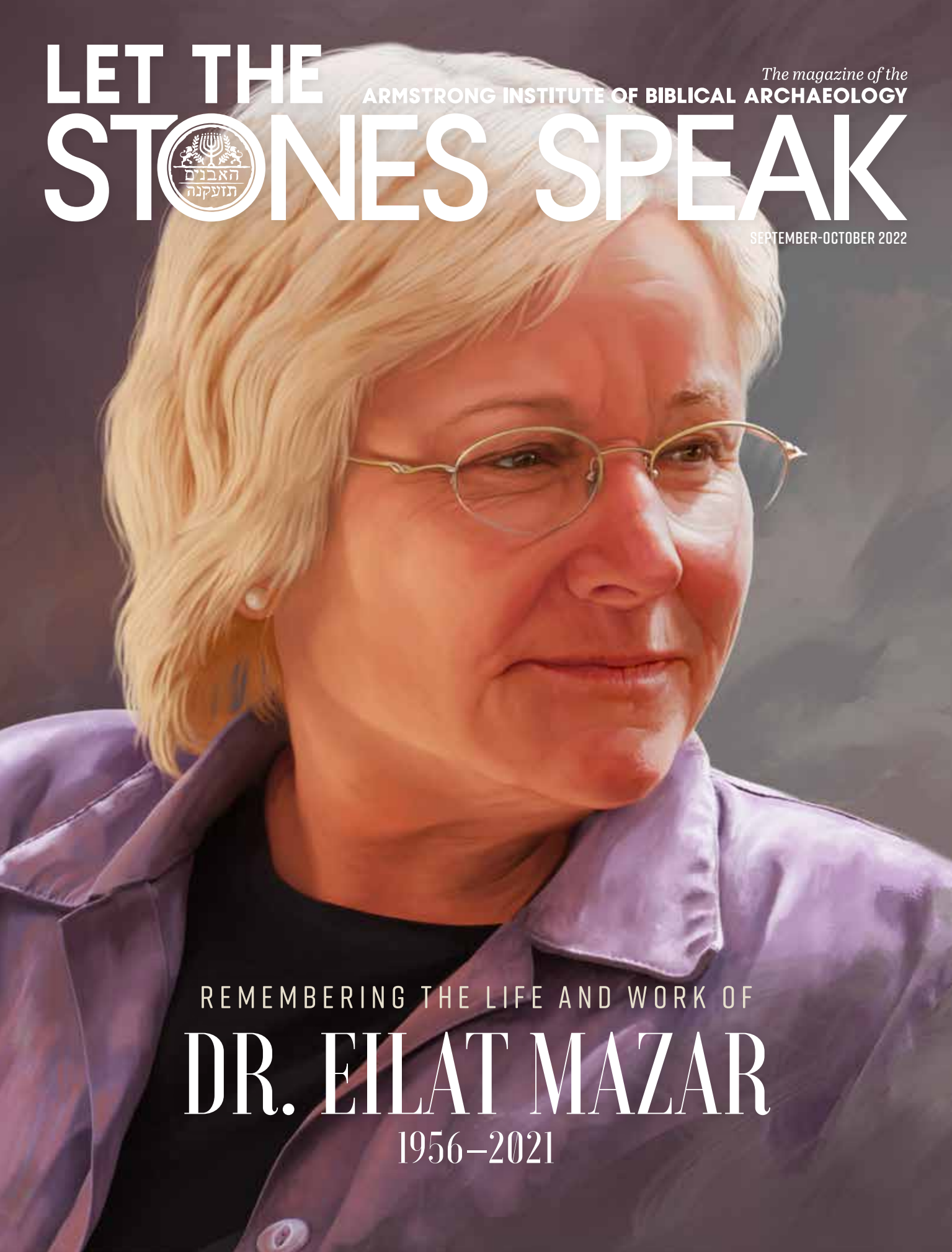


LET THE STONES SPEAK

The magazine of the
ARMSTRONG INSTITUTE OF BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY



SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2022



REMEMBERING THE LIFE AND WORK OF
DR. EILAT MAZAR
1956–2021

LET THE STONES SPEAK

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2022 | VOL. 1, NO. 5 | CIRCULATION: 2,555

FROM THE EDITOR

A TRIBUTE TO OUR FRIEND,
DR. EILAT MAZAR 1

CONTINUING THE
MAZAR LEGACY 6

THE WORK OF DR. MAZAR ON ...

THE SUMMIT
OF THE CITY
OF DAVID 8

THE OPHEL 15

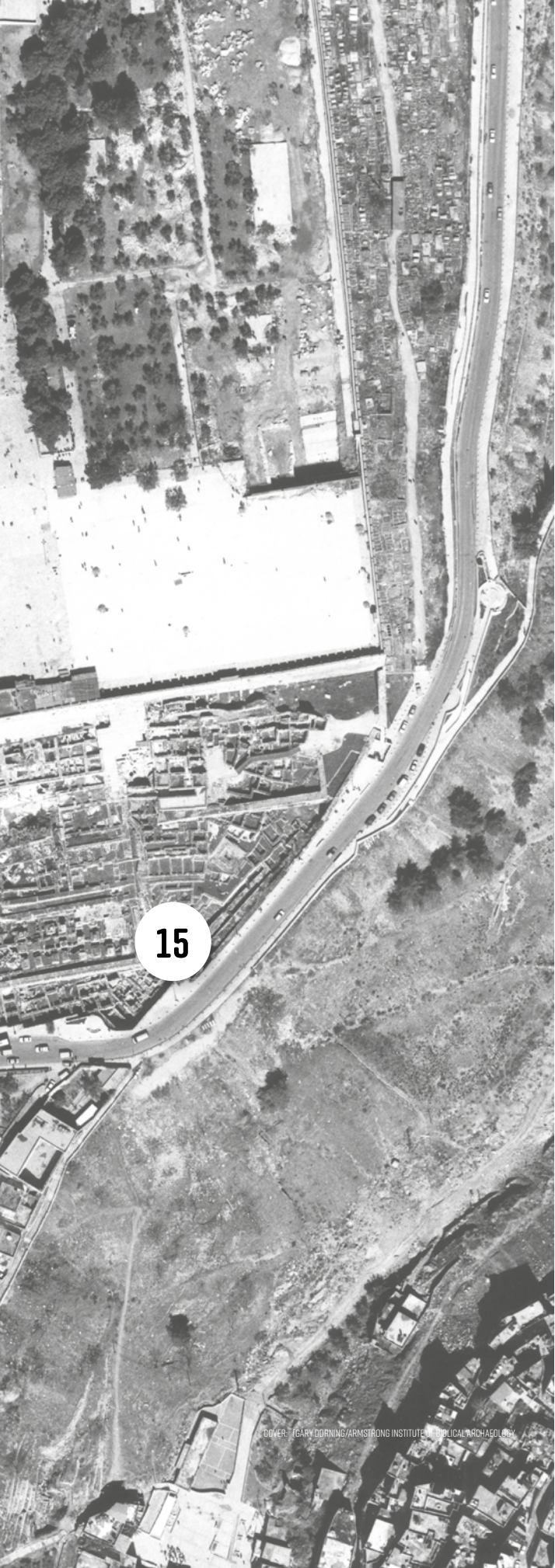
THE TEMPLE
MOUNT 28

TRIBUTES TO A LEGENDARY
ARCHAEOLOGIST 32

WORKING WITH
DR. MAZAR 36

28

8



FROM THE EDITOR | GERALD FLURRY

A TRIBUTE TO OUR FRIEND, DR. EILAT MAZAR

Why I believe Eilat Mazar will be remembered as one of the greatest archaeologists of all time

WHEN JERUSALEM ARCHAEOLOGIST Dr. Eilat Mazar died on May 25, 2021, at age 64, the world lost a truly extraordinary person. Eilat was one of the best friends I ever had, and her infectious passion for Jerusalem archaeology was deeply inspiring. Through her archaeology, Dr. Mazar was a tremendous source of education and hope.

In this special issue of *Let the Stones Speak*, we remember the incredible life and legacy of Dr. Mazar, our friend and partner, and a scientist whose work, I believe, will **ULTIMATELY CAUSE AN EARTHQUAKE IN THE WORLD OF ARCHAEOLOGY.**

There are some very talented archaeologists in the world, especially in Jerusalem. But I believe Dr. Mazar will be remembered as one of the greatest archaeologists of all time. Let me explain why.

15

When you think of some of the Bible's most famous kings, priests and prophets, what flashes to mind are epic figures like David, Solomon, Hezekiah, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Nehemiah. These men were involved in some of the greatest events and accomplishments recorded in the Bible. Through her archaeology, Dr. Mazar revealed evidence of all these individuals and some of the Bible's greatest stories—and she shared these sensational discoveries with you and me.

There isn't enough space in this issue to give a detailed description of each of Dr. Mazar's discoveries. The science is available, mainly in Dr. Mazar's various scientific reports (see page 26). If you are seriously interested in Dr. Mazar's archaeology, I recommend you study these reports. I am also pleased to reveal that we are working on a full-length, high-quality book about Dr. Mazar and her archaeology, so stay tuned for that.

The purpose of this special issue is to highlight the sheer volume of biblical figures and events uncovered by Dr. Mazar and to feature the key to her stunning success.

Of all the brilliant, hardworking archaeologists in the world, not one has come close to uncovering evidence of this many biblical events and personalities. Most archaeologists finish their career without ever discovering even a small percentage of what Dr. Mazar did. How did she do it?

What made Dr. Eilat Mazar such a spectacular success?

A Biblical Scientist

Dr. Mazar was a brilliant scientist who placed tremendous importance in the scientific method. I heard her say on multiple occasions that “WE MUST LET THE STONES SPEAK.” This was one of her mottoes as an archaeologist.

Our college, Herbert W. Armstrong College, has partnered with Dr. Mazar on all of her excavations since 2006. Our students are young and energetic, and they would dig year round if they could. When we weren't excavating, students would often ask Dr. Mazar when we would be back in the field digging again. Eilat was so patient. She would explain that the work she was doing in the office and laboratory—studying and cataloging the finds, and documenting them in scientific reports—was just as important as digging, if not even *more* important.

In a 2007 article in *Biblical Archaeology Review*, the late Hershel Shanks highlighted Dr. Mazar's credentials. “No one would question her professional competence as an archaeologist,” he wrote.

Dr. Mazar was what we could call a biblical scientist. Unlike the vast majority of scientists today, she had no problem bringing the Bible into her science. In fact, she

was EAGER to do so. *I believe this is the reason she was such an outstanding archaeologist.*

A lot of scientists and academics today see religion and science as being in competition. Many consider the Bible and science to be mutually exclusive, that you can't believe in one without disbelieving the other. Most scientists view Bible history as incompatible with their profession. This simply isn't true, and it's certainly NOT what the Bible teaches.

So often, the Bible and science complement one another beautifully. This truth is proved powerfully in the archaeology of Dr. Mazar.

The truth is, it was Dr. Mazar's *fidelity to science* that led her to *use* the Bible! This is how Dr. Mazar explained it to us many years ago. *When an archaeologist excavates ancient Greece, she said, he consults the famous Greek authors and texts, such as Herodotus or the History of the Peloponnesian War, by Thucydides. If he were excavating ancient Rome, he would study ancient Roman texts. It's exactly the same with Jerusalem and Israel. To excavate in the Holy Land and in Jerusalem especially, you must study and consult Bible history.*

Who can argue with this reasoning? It is so simple and rational. Yet surprisingly, it was also somewhat revolutionary in the world of modern archaeology and science.

Many scholars and academics would consider it an embarrassment to use the Bible as a reputable historical document. Some even specifically study archaeology in an effort to *disprove* the biblical narrative. But for Dr. Mazar, the Bible was a crucial tool when digging in Israel and trying to understand Jerusalem archaeology.

To know which approach is more accurate, ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS LOOK AT THE FRUITS, which is what we are doing in this issue.

Dr. Mazar learned about the important role the Bible must play in archaeology from her grandfather Prof. Benjamin Mazar. Born and raised in Poland, Benjamin Maisler (as he was formerly named) earned his doctorate in Berlin before moving to Israel around 1927. Professor Mazar quickly became one of the fledgling nation's most influential scholars and academics. He knew and worked closely with Israel's founding fathers: figures like David Ben Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, and Zalman Shazar, Israel's third president.

Professor Mazar had a Bible with him everywhere he went. In discussions about Israel's history or a potential new development, he would consult the Bible. When he traveled across Israel, visiting a dig or starting his own, he would open his Bible and study the biblical history of the site.

For Professor Mazar and his granddaughter, the Bible was a companion in their science rather than a

competitor. Many scholars today reject the Bible as irrelevant and unimportant. But to Eilat and her grandfather, biblical history was just as important as the spade and field journal.

The fruits of this method, as you will see in this issue, are incontrovertible—and inspiring. When archaeology is informed by the Bible, it becomes one of the most hope-filled and important occupations there is.

A Good Friend

I first met Dr. Mazar in 2006, but our history together goes all the way back to 1967. That was the year I enrolled in Ambassador College—and the year the Six-Day War broke out in Israel. God intervened and gave Israel a miraculous victory that awarded the Jews control of East Jerusalem. The following year, Israel began what was called the “Big Dig,” a massive archaeological excavation at the southern part of the Temple Mount. This dig was directed by Prof. Benjamin Mazar.

The Temple Mount dig attracted the attention of Ambassador College and its founder, Herbert W. Armstrong. Mr. Armstrong met with Professor Mazar, Tourism Minister Moshe Kol and other leaders at the Israeli Knesset at the end of 1968. He formed a partnership with Professor Mazar and Hebrew University of Jerusalem to supply half the funding for the excavations and hundreds of enthusiastic Ambassador College student workers until the conclusion of the dig in 1976. I remember fellow Ambassador students being excited to travel to Israel for that project. Professor Mazar and Mr. Armstrong developed a deep friendship that lasted until Mr. Armstrong’s death in 1986.

While I was at college in Pasadena learning how to excavate the Bible under Herbert Armstrong, Eilat, my future friend, was spending her time on the “Big Dig,” being taught how to conduct archaeological excavations by her grandfather. Even as a girl, Eilat was fascinated by archaeology. She was also well acquainted and deeply impressed with Mr. Armstrong and the Ambassador College students.

Our connection with Eilat deepened in 2006 following her discovery of King David’s palace in the City of David. Between 2006 and her last excavation in 2018, we supplied Dr. Mazar with more than 50 laborers and supervisors over seven excavations. For

Eilat Mazar studies pottery at the City of David in 2007.



over 15 years, our employees and students assisted Dr. Mazar with myriad endeavors: excavating; cataloging and photographing artifacts; researching, writing and editing reports; producing artwork; and publishing and publicizing her work, as well as that of her grandfather.

I visited Eilat in Jerusalem many times and have some fond memories of our meetings on the portico at the YMCA in Jerusalem. One of my favorite memories was the meeting in which Dr. Mazar pulled her chair closer and then removed a handkerchief from her pocket. Leaning in, Eilat unfolded the handkerchief to reveal a tiny clay seal. Speaking in a whisper, but with great emotion and excitement, she read the seal’s inscription: “Belonging to Hezekiah, [son of] Ahaz, King of Judah.” I was so proud and happy. My friend had discovered the only seal impression belonging to a Judean king ever found in controlled scientific excavations!

This is what Dr. Eilat Mazar did *over and over* again: She used the Bible and impeccable archaeological practices TO BRING TO LIFE SOME OF THE BIBLE’S GREATEST PERSONALITIES AND HISTORICAL EVENTS!

Today, thanks to Dr. Mazar extending the legacy of her grandfather, people visiting the City of David can walk within the same walls that King David did. Thanks to Dr. Mazar, we can touch the walls of King Solomon’s palace and examine the signature of King Hezekiah!

In 2007, our workers were able to assist Dr. Mazar in excavating a tower where they found Persian-period pottery and artifacts. Dr. Mazar identified the tower as having been built during the time described in the biblical book of Nehemiah. The next year she and a

handful of our workers returned to the City of David, where she discovered the Gedaliah bulla. This clay seal impression was originally owned by one of the princes who persecuted the Prophet Jeremiah (Jeremiah 38). We later had the honor of featuring this bulla and the bulla of Jehucal, an associate of Gedaliah, at an exhibit in Armstrong Auditorium on our home campus, visited by thousands of people.

Between 2009 and 2018, Dr. Mazar conducted four seasons of excavation on the Ophel, locating a royal complex built by King Solomon, a proto-aeolic capital, the first Bes figure found in Jerusalem, many scarabs and seal impressions, coins minted during a first-century C.E. Jewish revolt, a plaster-lined cave with shafts and tunnels, and the bullae of King Hezekiah and Isaiah the prophet.

For years, archaeologists used the lack of physical evidence from David's time and Nehemiah's day to justify their lack of faith in the Bible. But as you will see in this issue, Dr. Mazar discovered more than a dozen artifacts DIRECTLY RELATED to the First Temple Period. These discoveries alone SHOULD put those doubts to rest—if the critics and scholars would only accept the truth.

Exalting Dr. Mazar's Work

In our final conversations together, Dr. Mazar shared some of her concerns about the state of biblical archaeology in Israel. She was bothered that too few were willing to seriously bring the Bible into their

science and to highlight the crucial connection between Jerusalem archaeology and the Bible.

"You really need to have vision to do a dig in Jerusalem. YOU NEED TO SEE THE BIG PICTURE OF HOW THINGS FIT IN THE BIBLICAL PICTURE," she told us. Eilat was troubled that some of Israel's archaeologists and leaders lacked vision because they were unwilling to use the Bible.

However, she also said that "MANY OF THE EVERYDAY PEOPLE STILL HOLD IT FIRMLY IN MIND."

I have thought a great deal about this statement. Dr. Mazar's remark is very similar to one made by the Prophet Isaiah nearly 2,700 years ago. Isaiah 40:9 says, "O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, Get thee up into the high mountain; O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, Lift up thy voice with strength; Lift it up, be not afraid; Say unto the cities of Judah: 'Behold your God!'"

I'm not sure if Dr. Mazar was familiar with this verse; if she was, she never mentioned it to me. But I believe Isaiah 40:9 summarizes Dr. Mazar's life and work. In a way, this verse even encapsulates the best parts of her personality.

Dr. Mazar spent most of her career working in the City of David, on the Ophel and in her grandfather's office at Hebrew University—all three of which are situated on a "high mountain." From these "high mountains," Dr. Mazar made some dramatic discoveries, then wrote articles and scientific reports—which were routinely reported on in the international media—that declared "good tidings to Jerusalem."

For 40 years, Dr. Mazar lifted up her voice with strength! She was not afraid to talk about the Bible or to happily admit when the Bible intersected with her archaeology. Dr. Mazar had many critics and faced a lot of opposition, especially from other archaeologists (mainly the biblical minimalists). But she never let the antagonism bully her into silence. When it came to her archaeology and the Bible, she courageously lifted up her voice!

And what is the essential message bound up in the discoveries of King David's palace, King Solomon's royal complex, the seals of King Hezekiah and Isaiah the prophet, the seals of Gedaliah and Jehucal, and Nehemiah's wall? The message broadcast to Judah by these sensational discoveries is "BEHOLD YOUR GOD!"

Eilat Mazar gives Gerald Flurry a tour of the Ophel excavation in October 2012.





AC students and alumni on the 2012 Ophel dig, along with other crew members

Whether she knew it or not, Dr. Eilat Mazar declared, “Behold your God!” to the people of Israel.

The more I think about Dr. Mazar and her archaeology, and her courage, work ethic and love for Jerusalem, the more inspired I am by it.

When Eilat died in May of 2021, some wondered if it might slow down our work in Jerusalem. To the contrary, I am more inspired than ever to follow Dr. Mazar’s example and deliver Isaiah’s “Behold your God!” message.

With the world’s greatest biblical archaeologist gone, there is now a massive vacuum. It has NEVER BEEN MORE IMPORTANT for *someone* to teach about the symbiotic relationship between archaeology and the Bible, to show how crucial the Bible is to understanding Israel’s past.

It is my goal to exalt the mantle of Dr. Eilat Mazar in Jerusalem, and I passionately want to help continue her work.

With Dr. Mazar’s support and guidance over the past 15 years, the Armstrong Institute of Biblical Archaeology and Herbert W. Armstrong College have undertaken some wonderful and important ventures in Jerusalem. We have participated in seven separate excavations on the Ophel and in the City of David. We have curated two top-quality archaeological exhibits in America. We have worked with Eilat in the office, processing finds and documenting digs. And through this magazine (and website), we spotlight the crucial role the Bible plays in archaeology.

The way I see it, although Dr. Mazar is no longer with us, *we are beginning a new chapter*. Personally, I am MORE MOTIVATED THAN EVER to uphold and build upon my friend Eilat Mazar’s legacy. Even now, we are working

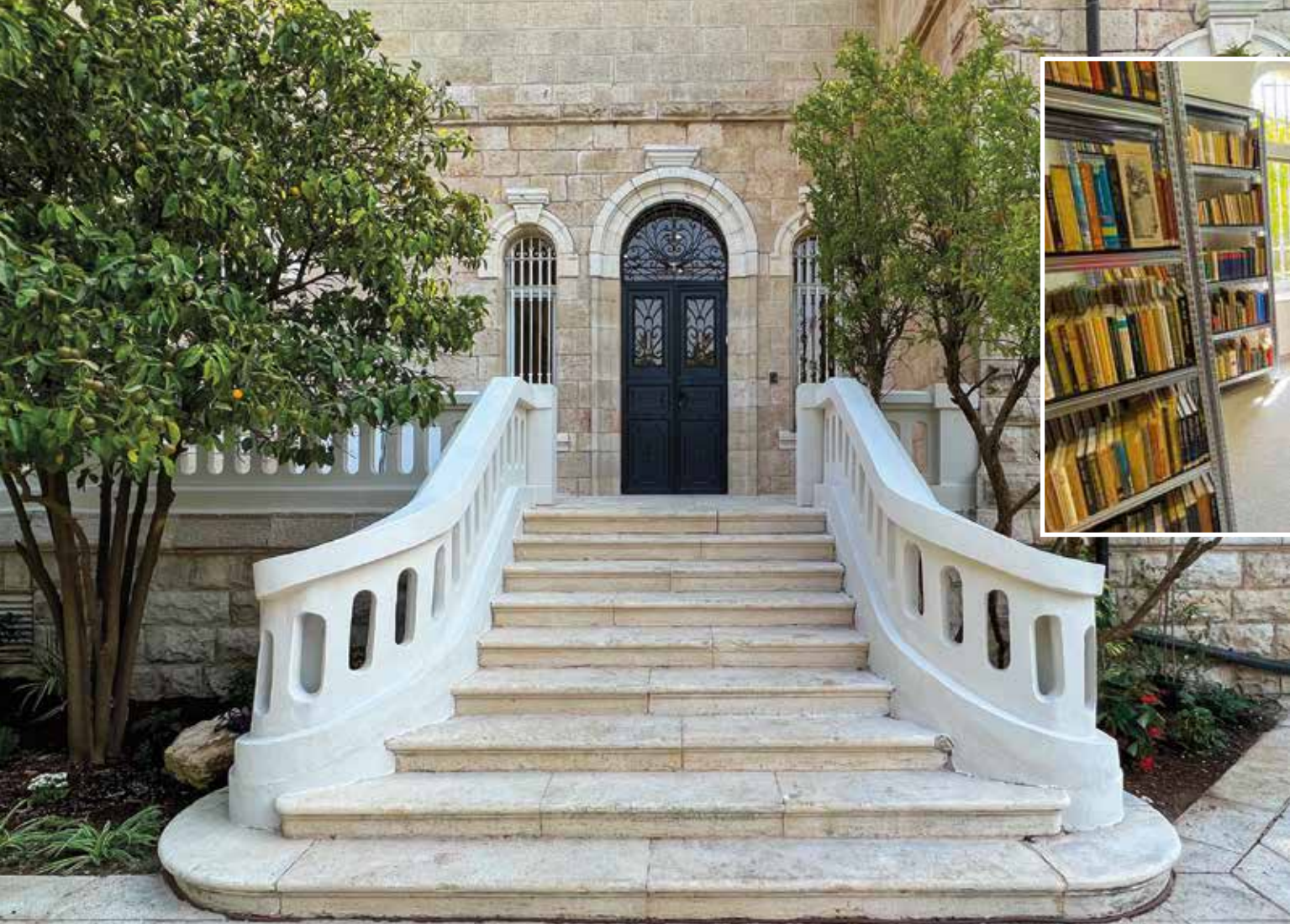
with Hebrew University and Dr. Mazar’s family to help finish some of Eilat’s projects. We are grateful to Hebrew University and the City of David for their support over the years, and we look forward to collaborating with these great institutions in the future. We are also exploring some exciting and important new ventures.

Whenever I think about our work in Israel, Dr. Mazar’s statement rings in my mind: “MANY OF THE EVERYDAY PEOPLE STILL HOLD IT [THE BIBLE] FIRMLY IN MIND.” *These are the people we aim to reach* with Dr. Mazar’s archaeology message. We are working to exploit every possible tool to do that. The “everyday people” are a tremendous audience!

The archaeology taking place in Jerusalem—and across Israel—can be and should be *teeming* with vision! We want to emulate Dr. Mazar in this way, and surely there are archaeologists out there who feel the same. If you are one of them, we would love to hear from you. Dr. Mazar did all she could to exercise *vision* in her work. We hope we can continue to reach the everyday people of Israel with that vision and simply “LET THE STONES SPEAK.”

Through her work in the City of David and on the Ophel, the name Eilat Mazar will forever be attached to Jerusalem’s greatest personalities, including its greatest king. I believe that, together with her grandfather, Eilat Mazar conducted the most important archaeology ever undertaken in Jerusalem, the city God has chosen. We will forever cherish the 15 years we had working with Dr. Mazar, and we will sorely miss her profound passion for Jerusalem archaeology.

In the coming years, we will endeavor to preserve Dr. Mazar’s archaeological legacy and keep it alive by working with the same passion, urgency and love. ■



CONTINUING THE MAZAR LEGACY

SITUATED IN THE BEAUTIFUL JERUSALEM neighborhood of Talbiyeh, not far from the residences of both the prime minister and the president, the Armstrong Institute of Biblical Archaeology continues the archaeological legacy of Dr. Eilat Mazar and her grandfather Prof. Benjamin Mazar.

When Dr. Mazar died in May 2021, she left behind a superb library of about 4,000 books and research materials. Eilat inherited many of the books and other belongings, including furniture, from her grandfather. Professor Mazar was one of the first to

practice archaeology in Israel. He was an esteemed biblical historian who was often called the “dean” of biblical archaeology. He was also president of Hebrew University and a man who, thanks to his pioneering role in many of Israel’s institutions, could be considered one of Israel’s founding fathers.

When a scholar dies, it is common for his or her research library to be consolidated and sold at auction. Many institutions and wealthy collectors are prepared to pay good money to own the personal library of an honored scholar.



Mr. Armstrong with Benjamin Mazar



Mr. Armstrong with Mayor Teddy Kollek

Our new institute in Jerusalem opened on September 4. The institute houses a library of books from the personal libraries of Drs. Benjamin and Eilat Mazar that were purchased from their estates.

Following Eilat's death, we asked Dr. Mazar's family about their plans for her library. After a few short discussions, Dr. Mazar's family agreed to sell us the library. In November 2021, thanks to the tireless efforts of Avital Mazar (Eilat's sister) to catalogue and process the books, we began taking possession of the library.

In addition to the libraries of Prof. Benjamin and Dr. Eilat Mazar, we acquired another 4,000 archaeology- and history-related books and research materials from Hebrew University in Jerusalem. We are grateful to Hebrew University for these books and for their encouragement and support generally.

Today the Armstrong Institute of Biblical Archaeology has a research library of about 8,000 volumes. Roughly half of the books are in English; the rest are mostly Hebrew, with a selection in other languages. The library and institute are now open to the public and we welcome visitors. To arrange a visit, please e-mail letters@ArmstrongInstitute.org.

Along with the books, we also acquired much of the living room furniture of Benjamin and Eilat Mazar. If this furniture could talk, it would tell some incredible stories. For decades during the mid-20th century, when Israel was still a fledgling nation, Professor Mazar's home was a gathering place for many of Israel's "greats," including many of its top politicians, generals and scholars. Huddled in Professor Mazar's living room (served coffee by young Eilat and her sister), these great figures discussed the issues of the day and mapped out the future of the burgeoning nation.

AIBA is a nonprofit, academic and educational institute named after our predecessor Herbert W. Armstrong, a popular 20th-century humanitarian, educator and unofficial ambassador for world peace. Mr. Armstrong was close friends with Professor Mazar and an avid supporter of his archaeology. These men

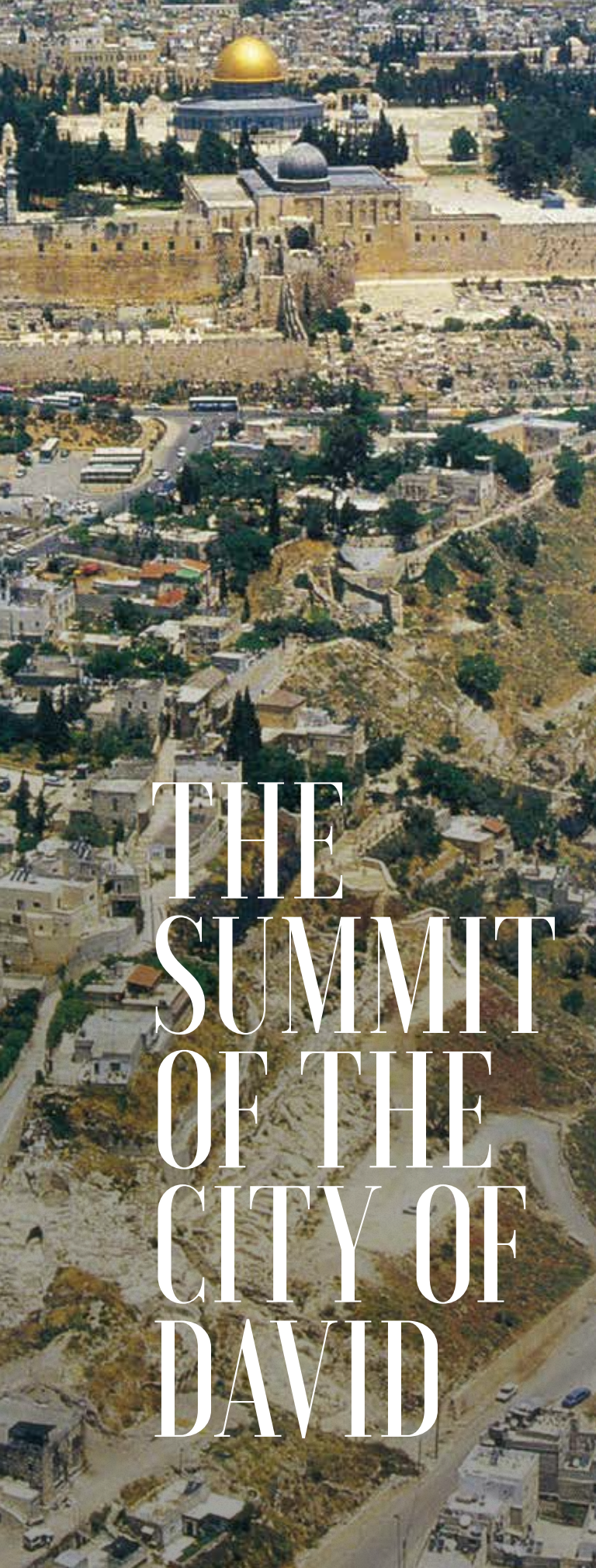
first met in 1968, just as Professor Mazar and Hebrew University were preparing to begin archaeological excavations on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Their meeting quickly resulted in a formalized "iron bridge" archaeology partnership between the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Ambassador College (the college founded by Mr. Armstrong).

Between 1968 and his death in January 1986, Mr. Armstrong and Ambassador College supported numerous archaeological digs across Israel, as well as other humanitarian projects. Mr. Armstrong traveled the globe visiting with world leaders and dignitaries, but always had a special affection for Israel. (He flew to Israel more frequently than anywhere else; during one four-year period, he returned about 50 times.) As a devoted student and teacher of the Bible, he was keenly interested in the past, present and future of Jerusalem.

During his many visits, Mr. Armstrong met with (and in several instances grew close to) most of Israel's top leaders and officials. These included President Zalman Shazar, Prime Minister Golda Meir, President Ephraim Katzir, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Prime Minister Menachem Begin, President Yitzhak Navon, President Chaim Herzog, Prime Minister Shimon Peres and Tourism Minister Moshe Kol. He formed an especially strong bond with Teddy Kollek, the longtime mayor of Jerusalem who was often called "the greatest builder of Jerusalem since Herod." Mr. Armstrong and Teddy Kollek would occasionally be seen walking arm-in-arm through the streets of Jerusalem.

When Mr. Armstrong died in 1986, his work and legacy were continued by Gerald Flurry, founder of the Armstrong Institute of Biblical Archaeology. Like his predecessor, Mr. Flurry is a passionate and longtime student of the Bible and biblical history. He

MAZAR LEGACY PAGE 35 ►



THE SUMMIT OF THE CITY OF DAVID

JERUSALEM TODAY IS A LARGE, BUSTLING CITY covering nearly 125 square kilometers, with a sprawling metro area of over 650 square kilometers. More than 2 million people live in the Jerusalem metropolitan area.

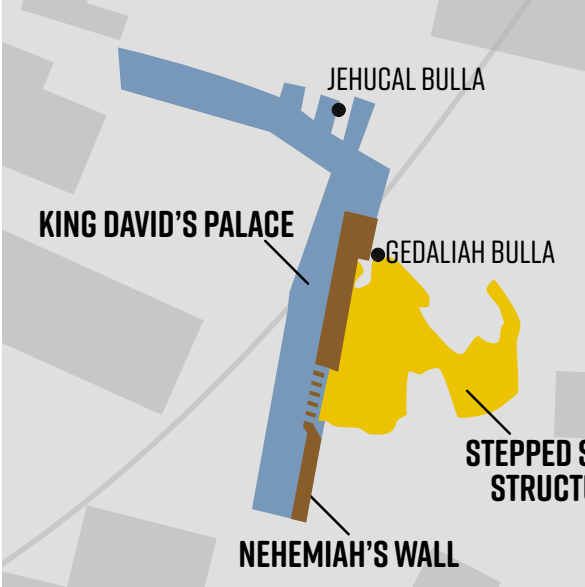
Compared to modern Jerusalem, the Jerusalem of King David's time was minuscule. Situated on a crescent-shaped mountain ridge, the "city of David" was only about 12 acres in size. Yet this tiny speck of land was the setting for some of history's most epic events and personalities.

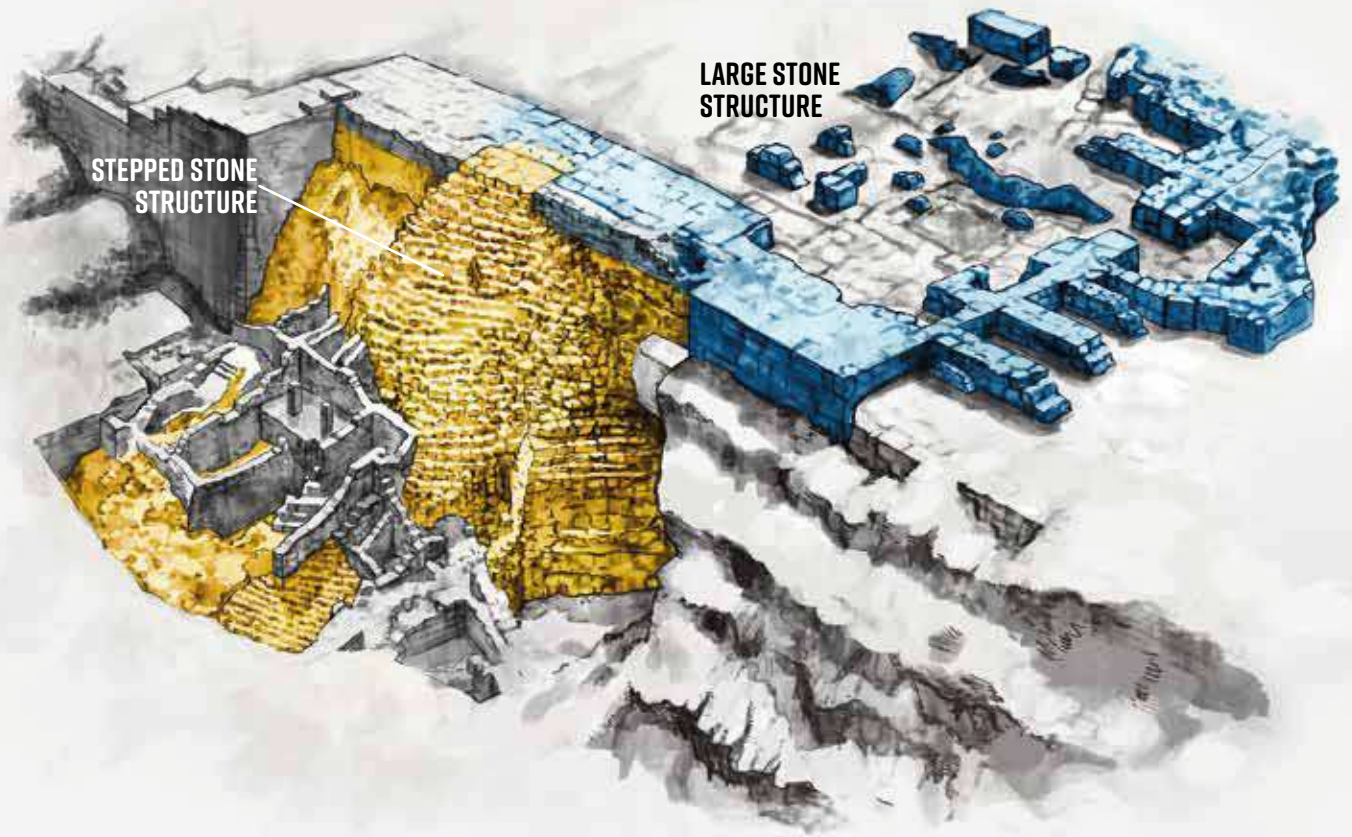
Naturally, Jerusalem's long, rich history attracts the attention of historians. For archaeologists—historians who like to use spades as well as books—Jerusalem is the ultimate place to excavate. And some few have. Beginning in the mid-19th century, a handful of archaeologists have excavated various parts of the "original" hill of Jerusalem, most notably Sir Charles Warren, R. A. S. Macalister and Dame Kathleen Kenyon.

In the early 1980s, Prof. Yigal Shiloh undertook excavations at a site known as "Area G" at the summit of the City of David. On his staff was a young, energetic, recently graduated archaeologist. She was newly married and had just delivered her first child. Her name was Eilat Mazar.

Eilat might have only just graduated, but she wasn't inexperienced. As the granddaughter of Prof. Benjamin Mazar, one of Israel's top historians and archaeologists, Eilat had spent her childhood visiting and working on archaeological sites all across Israel. Within two weeks of starting work on Professor Shiloh's City of David dig, Eilat had moved from assistant area supervisor to area supervisor. Between her degree, her experience and legacy, and her unmatched enthusiasm and work ethic, Eilat was destined for greatness.

When Yigal Shiloh died in 1987, it was Eilat who, in a sense, picked up his mantle in the City of David. ■





DISCOVERY ONE

KING DAVID'S PALACE

When David became Israel's king, Jerusalem (called "Jebus") was inhabited by the Jebusites. As king, one of David's top priorities was capturing Jerusalem. David understood Jerusalem's connection to Abraham, and he knew Jerusalem would be Israel's capital city.

2 Samuel 5 describes how David and his army conquered Jebus by penetrating the fortress through a series of underground water tunnels. After taking the city, King David (with the help of King Hiram of Tyre) built his palace and then "waxed greater and greater" (verse 10). Given the small size of Jebus, archaeologists have wondered how there was room enough for a royal palace. One theory was that King David demolished the existing Jebusite structures in order to make room for his new palace.

In 1996, when Eilat Mazar began thinking about and researching this question, she did something entirely logical but all too rare in the field of archaeology. She researched the Bible's answer to these questions.

"Pore over [the Bible] again and again, for it contains within it descriptions of genuine historical reality," her grandfather had taught her. So this is what Mazar did.

When she studied 2 Samuel 5, one particular verse leapt into focus. "And when the Philistines heard that David was anointed king over Israel, all the Philistines went up to seek David; and David heard of it, and *went down to the hold*" (verse 17). Mazar noted that the word "hold" was the same word for the Jebusite fortress itself—*metsuda* (mentioned in verse 7). She also noted the fact that when threatened by the Philistines, David went DOWN and INTO the fortress from his dwelling place.

In order to do this, Mazar concluded, David's palace must have been situated at the *summit* of the City of David, just *outside* the northern edge of the Jebusite city, in a location not yet within the fortress itself.

In 1997, after almost a year of researching this theory—and having just received her doctorate from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem—Dr. Mazar,



with her grandfather's encouragement and support, published her theory in *Biblical Archaeology Review*. Her article, titled "Excavate King David's Palace!", left no doubt about her intentions.

"A careful examination of the biblical text combined with sometimes unnoticed results of modern archaeological excavations in Jerusalem enable us, I believe, to locate the site of King David's palace," she wrote. "Even more exciting, it is in an area that is now available for excavation. If some regard as too speculative the hypothesis I shall put forth in this article, my reply is simply this: Let us put it to the test in the way archaeologists always try to test their theories—by excavation."

The article was accompanied by a large photograph of the City of David, with a giant arrow pointing to the spot she believed King David's palace could be found. "It's there," she boldly declared.

Mazar's theory was met with some scholarly resistance, partly due to the fact that past excavations in the area had not unearthed any evidence to prove this theory. The skepticism over Mazar's theory made it difficult to raise the funds necessary to dig. It wasn't until 2005, nearly a decade after Mazar originally published her theory, that two brave American

philanthropists stepped forward to back Mazar. In February, thanks to the support of Roger and Susan Hertog, Mazar was finally able to put her theory to the test—by excavation!

Within weeks, Mazar and her team discovered the foundations of a *massive* wall. Measuring 30 meters long and up to 3 meters wide in places, this was not a wall of any ordinary structure. Moreover, Dr. Mazar was able to date the giant edifice to the 11th–10th centuries B.C.E.—the same period as King David. The dig was off to a spectacular start, and the best was yet to come.

The following season (2006), Mazar discovered another *even larger* wall. In some places, this wall measured *6 meters wide*. Just as significantly, this larger wall connected with the giant walls uncovered earlier, indicating that both were part of the same massive structure.

In 2007, during the third season, Mazar made another crucial discovery. She learned that the walls of the grand, palatial structure found in the previous excavations actually interlocked with the famous Stepped Stone Structure. Standing 20 meters tall and clearly visible from the Mount of Olives across the valley, the Stepped Stone Structure is the largest uncovered Iron Age structure in Israel. Prior to Mazar's

discovery, many archaeologists believed the Stepped Stone Structure was built during the Jebusite control of Jerusalem.

But the fact that the walls Mazar uncovered *interlocked* with the Stepped Stone Structure indicated that both the walls and the Stepped Stone Structure were part of the same massive Davidic-era building!

“The fact that the two structures were part of the same construction was an astonishing discovery for us,” Mazar said. “Laid before our very eyes was a structure massive in proportions and innovative in complexity. It bears witness to the impressive architectural skill and considerable investment of its builders, to the competency of a determined central ruling authority, and most notably to the audacity and vision of that authority.”

To go along with the massive walls, various pottery finds and the carbon samples all pointing to

a large-scale construction dating to circa 1000 B.C.E., Mazar also found a number of smaller finds that demonstrated the royal nature of the structure. These included ornate ivory utensils, remains of exotic foods and seals of royal individuals—all finds that attest to a royal edifice.

In her reports on the palace excavations, Mazar also recalled the discovery of a royal Phoenician style pillar capital by Kathleen Kenyon at the base of the Stepped Stone Structure. A pillar capital is the decorative upper part of a column. Capitals are often adorned with intricate carvings. Dr. Mazar’s giant walls and associated finds reveal how it got there: This Phoenician-style pillar capital must have fallen down from King David’s palace (built with the assistance of the Phoenician King Hiram), which was situated directly atop the Stepped Stone Structure!

In a 2005 article for *Aish.com*, Rachel Ginsberg recognized the significance of Dr. Mazar’s palace-of-David discovery: “Dr. Eilat Mazar, world authority on Jerusalem’s past, has taken King David out of the pages of the Bible and put him back into living history. Mazar’s latest excavation in the City of David, in the southern shadow of the Temple Mount, HAS SHAKEN UP THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORLD” (emphasis added). ■

Dr. Mazar boldly proclaims her hypothesis in the January-February 1997 issue of *Biblical Archaeology Review*.



“Belonging to Jehucal, son of Shelemiah, son of Shovi”



“Belonging to Gedaliah, son of Pashur”

DISCOVERIES TWO AND THREE THE JEHUCAL AND GEDALIAH BULLAE

During the 2005 excavation season, Dr. Mazar’s area supervisor, Yoav Farhi, made a remarkable discovery. Working on the dig one day, he spotted a tiny bulla (clay seal impression) sitting in the crack of a wall, the sunlight glancing off its raised letters. Mazar took the bulla home to study it and later recalled a “special” family moment she experienced while deciphering it.

Using a lexicon that had been compiled by her second husband, himself an archaeologist who had died in 1997, Mazar found that the bulla read “Belonging to Jehucal, son of Shelemiah, son of Shovi.”

“Archaeology cannot stand by itself as a very technical method. It is actually quite primitive without the support of written documents. Excavating the ancient land of Israel and not reading and getting to know the biblical source is stupidity. I don’t see how it can work. It’s like excavating a classical site and ignoring Greek and Latin sources. It is impossible.”

—Eilat Mazar

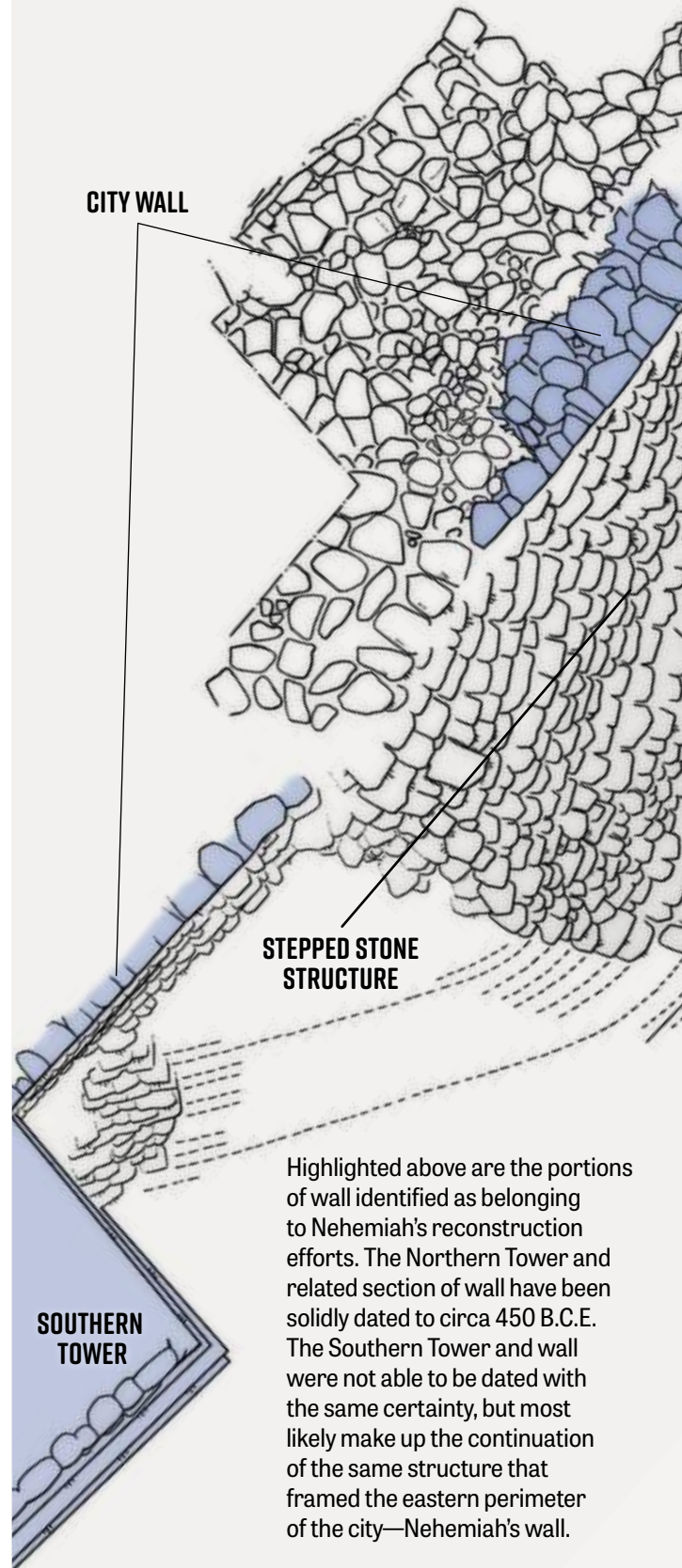
Mazar then opened her Bible encyclopedia, curious if the name appeared in the Bible. “When I opened the encyclopedia and saw the same name in the Bible as was on the bulla, I let out a shriek of surprise that rang out through the still house. Fortunately, the children slept soundly. I felt as though I had just ‘resurrected’ someone straight out of the Bible,” she wrote. She later brought together her children and showed them how she had used their father’s lexicon to compare and translate the Hebrew text.

Jeremiah 37:3 records that Judah’s King Zedekiah sent Prince *Jehucal, son of Shelemiah* to the Prophet Jeremiah to beseech him to pray for Judah. Jehucal is also one of the princes who conspired against Jeremiah in Jeremiah 38:1-6—here, he is referred to by the shortened form, “Jucal.”

But the Jehucal-bulla find wasn’t the end of this remarkable tale. Two years later, Mazar’s wet-sifting team discovered another bulla from a nearby area. This one was inscribed with the words, “Belonging to Gedaliah, son of Pashur.” Once again, Dr. Mazar searched the Bible, curious if this man was mentioned. Amazingly, she discovered that “Gedaliah, son of Pashur” is mentioned right alongside Jehucal in Jeremiah 38:1. He was another one of the princes who sought to kill Jeremiah the prophet!

The Jehucal and Gedaliah bullae are two of nearly 250 seals, bullae and bullae fragments discovered by Mazar in the City of David excavations. The sheer number of official and royal paraphernalia attests to this specific location being used as a royal administrative area right up until the destruction of Jerusalem around 586 B.C.E.

Moreover, Mazar’s finds fit with the discoveries made by Shiloh’s team in the 1970s and ’80s—notably a “House of Bullae.” In a single room uncovered alongside the Stepped Stone Structure, Shiloh uncovered 51 bullae, including another biblical individual: “Gemariah, son of Shaphan.” Who was Gemariah? He was a scribe in the court of King Jehoiakim, mentioned in Jeremiah 36:10. Refreshingly different from Jehucal and Gedaliah, Gemariah was one of the few people who supported the work of Jeremiah the prophet. ■



Highlighted above are the portions of wall identified as belonging to Nehemiah’s reconstruction efforts. The Northern Tower and related section of wall have been solidly dated to circa 450 B.C.E. The Southern Tower and wall were not able to be dated with the same certainty, but most likely make up the continuation of the same structure that framed the eastern perimeter of the city—Nehemiah’s wall.



NORTHERN
TOWER

DISCOVERY FOUR

NEHEMIAH'S WALL

During the Phase 2 excavation of the City of David in 2007, Dr. Mazar began a simple salvage excavation of a short and stout tower that was commonly assumed to be Hasmonean (second to first century B.C.E.). Because the tower could not continue to be repaired without risk of collapse, Mazar was required to thoroughly deconstruct it, carefully documenting the stones and their positions, so that a new foundation could be laid and the tower reconstructed.

The excavation led to a sensational discovery nobody expected.

Beneath the tower, excavators found the remains of two deliberately buried dogs, along with a wealth of *Persian*-period pottery and assorted finds. The two dogs, buried after dying of old age, also indicated the wall was built during the Persian period. In Persia, dogs held a special status; excavations elsewhere in Israel have uncovered similar large-scale dog burials dating to the Persian period.

Using pottery typology—which clearly pointed to the *early* part of the Persian period—as well as the dog burials, Mazar dated the construction of the wall to around 450 B.C.E.

As she always did, and just as her grandfather taught her, Mazar turned to the Bible to better understand this poorly constructed wall from the Persian period. This search led her to the book of Nehemiah. This book

documents the history of a Jewish servant (Nehemiah) who worked in the royal court of the Persian king Artaxerxes but then returned to Jerusalem to help rebuild the city. These events occurred in the mid-fifth century B.C.E.

Upon returning to Jerusalem, Nehemiah (instated as governor) immediately conducted a reconnaissance of the city and determined that the city urgently needed its broken-down walls to be refortified. With a spade in one hand and a sword to fight off enemies in the other, Nehemiah and his supporters worked rapidly to build a wall around Jerusalem. Remarkably, and to the great surprise of their enemies, Nehemiah's wall was “finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, IN FIFTY AND TWO DAYS” (Nehemiah 6:15-16).

While building a wall in such a short space of time is impressive, it comes with a downside. The *quality* of construction suffers. The tower and short preserved section of wall was of a notably poorer, “rushed” quality and finish, as Mazar noted.

One final point: The section of wall Mazar excavated was situated atop the Stepped Stone Structure. Was this section of the wall the same section described in Nehemiah 3:15-16 and 12:37, a section of wall built by Shallun and Nehemiah, against “the stairs that go down from the city of David,” alongside the “house of David”? ■



Eilat Mazar stands in the tunnel behind the Stepped Stone Structure discovered in 2008.



DISCOVERY FIVE JOAB'S TUNNEL

2008 was the last year Dr. Mazar would drive a shovel into the soil at the City of David. In this excavation, Mazar's team discovered an ancient tunnel in the bedrock behind the Stepped Stone Structure. The tunnel was traceable to almost 50 meters long and barely wide enough for a man to squeeze through. Mazar believed the tunnel may have been used for channeling water, and was eventually integrated into the construction of the Stepped Stone Structure during the 10th century B.C.E., at the time of King

David's construction at the site.

Mazar wondered if the tunnel might be the one featured in 2 Samuel 5. "The tunnel's characteristics, date and location testify with high probability that the water tunnel is the one called *tsinnor* in the story of King David's conquest of Jerusalem," said Mazar. The passage reads: "Now David said on that day, 'Whoever climbs up by way of the water shaft [*tsinnor*] and defeats the Jebusites ... he shall be chief and captain'" (2 Samuel 5:8; New King James Version). One of

David's mighty military men, Joab, did just that to infiltrate the city (1 Chronicles 11:6).

Mazar and her team discovered this tunnel near the end of the 2008 season. There wasn't enough time to investigate further, which means the tunnel is not yet fully excavated. "We have a general knowledge of the tunnel," she said, "but we are far from having a complete picture." Let's hope Mazar's tunnel excavation can soon be completed and its no-doubt remarkable history be revealed! ■



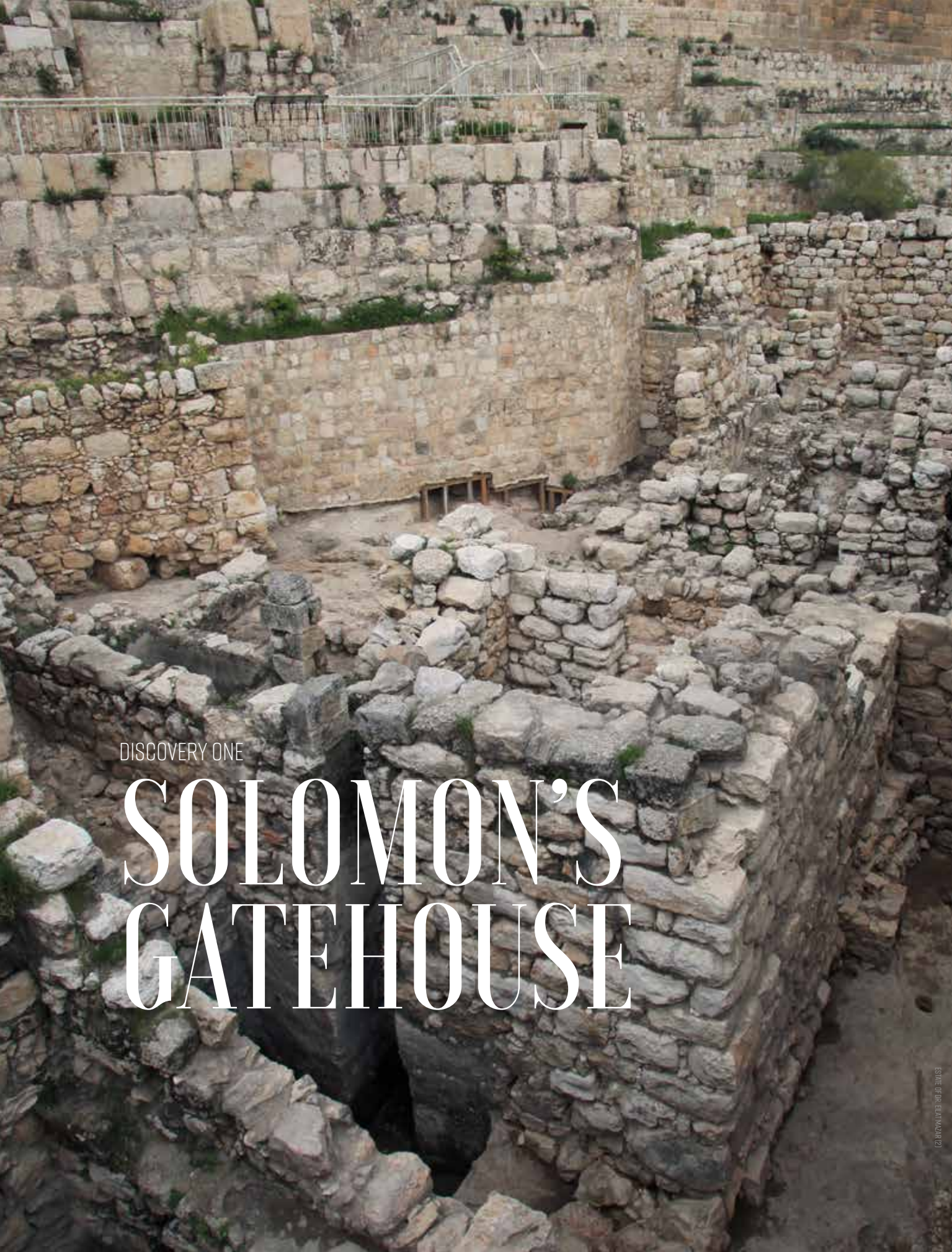
THE OPHEL

THOUGH DR. MAZAR IS BEST KNOWN FOR HER WORK in the City of David, she spent most of her career excavating the Ophel. It was on the Ophel, south of the southern Temple Mount wall, where Eilat developed a passion for archaeology as a young child, helping on her grandfather's "Big Dig" Temple Mount excavations that spanned from 1968 to 1978.

Following Israel's victory in the Six-Day War, Prof. Benjamin Mazar and Hebrew University of Jerusalem were commissioned by Israel's government to excavate the area. Working together with Herbert W. Armstrong and Ambassador College, the largest excavations ever conducted in Israel began. For a decade, these institutions worked side by side to uncover the southern border of the Temple Mount and the Ophel.

When Dr. Mazar began digging on the Ophel in the mid-1980s, much of the work had already been completed by her grandfather. With a lot of the top fill already excavated, Eilat would not have far to go to reach "gold"—Iron Age remains from the period of Judah's monarchy! ■

Eilat Mazar stands beside the massive stones of the Extra Tower in 2010.



DISCOVERY ONE

SOLOMON'S GATEHOUSE

Dr. Mazar directed her first excavation on the Ophel in 1986–1987 with the guidance of her grandfather. Her objective was to find an original First Temple Period floor layer within a series of what were believed to be Iron Age rooms. Uncovered by Professor Mazar in earlier excavations, these rooms had been repurposed for use during the Second Temple Period. Dr. Mazar found her First Temple Period floor layer and a whole lot more.

The excavation started small, with a probe of 50-by-50 centimeters. Almost immediately, Dr. Mazar uncovered a burn layer that clearly related to the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem. The excavation expanded and within weeks the team had uncovered numerous pieces of 12 broken pithoi (large First Temple Period storage vessels). Dr. Mazar's pithoi were the largest ever discovered in Jerusalem and evidence of an impressive administration.

The vessels dated to around the seventh century B.C.E. One of the pithoi bore a partial inscription that, upon reconstruction, read "Belonging to the Minister of the Bak[ery]." Another was inscribed with an image of a palm-type tree, perhaps signifying that the vessel held oil or date wine. Following these finds, Mazar began to refer to the site as the "Royal Bakery," as part of the lavish Ophel "royal quarter." (The Bible states that King Solomon built himself a new palace and royal area north of the City of David, on the Ophel: 1 Kings 7; Nehemiah 3:25-26.)

Adjacent to the Royal Bakery and connected to it by corridors, the Mazars found a limestone floor among a series of peculiar, small-chambered rooms. Initially, it wasn't clear what the network of corridors and rooms was. But when the excavation surveyor drew up the architectural plans, Mazar and her grandfather immediately recognized what they had uncovered. Dr. Mazar described the moment in her final report on the excavation. "[W]e could not believe what we saw All of a sudden we realized that we were looking at a typical First Temple Period city gatehouse, characterized by four identical chambers and a large approach tower [Warren's 'Large Tower']" (*Discovering the Solomonic Wall in Jerusalem*).

At the time, Dr. Mazar successfully dated the gatehouse and the "Large Tower" to the early Iron Age II (the period of the early Judahite monarchy), but she wasn't able to identify a more specific date. It wasn't until nearly 25 years later, when she returned to excavate the Ophel in 2009, that Dr. Mazar was able to more accurately date them to the 10th century B.C.E., the time of King Solomon.

Dr. Mazar had uncovered archaeological evidence of King Solomon's massive expansion of Jerusalem, as described in 1 Kings 6 and 7!



Eilat Mazar places her hand into the impression created by a large pithos pottery vessel in 1986.

The exposed gatehouse has a preserved height of up to 6 meters and is built in a style similar to other ancient gatehouses discovered at Megiddo, Gezer and Hazor. These gates are known colloquially as "Solomonic gates" because they date to the same 10th-century period and indicate the presence of a strong, centralized government standardizing their construction. Fascinatingly, these same locations at this same time period are mentioned in a scripture about King Solomon: "And this is the account of the levy which king Solomon raised; to build ... *Jerusalem, and Hazor, and Megiddo, and Gezer*" (1 Kings 9:15).

In her final report, Dr. Mazar compared the Ophel gatehouse with the one in Megiddo and showed how the wall lengths, the width of the central passages, the thicknesses of the walls, and the sizes of the chambers are virtually identical, almost to the centimeter. This "seem[s] to indicate that the two gatehouses were built according to an identical blueprint, most likely originating from the same architectural office," Dr. Mazar concluded.

The Large Tower (discovered by Sir Warren, see page 21), provided a protective fortified right-angle entrance into the city gatehouse. Today this tower is nearly entirely covered by the Ophel Road (in fact, it is the primary thing holding the road up). But if it were excavated, the Large Tower would be one of the tallest ancient structures in all Israel (around 20 meters tall).

Dr. Mazar's discovery is the only Iron Age gatehouse that has been found in the city of Jerusalem. Dr. Mazar referred to this structure as the "Water Gate," as she believed it might have been the same gate mentioned in Nehemiah 3:25-27. ■

THE LIFE OF EILAT MAZAR

1956

Born in Jerusalem

1960

1970

1980

1984

Codirects Achziv-Northern Cemetery excavation in Phoenicia.

1981

Obtains bachelor's degree in archaeology and Jewish history.

1985-1995

Research assistant to Prof. B. Mazar

1968-1978

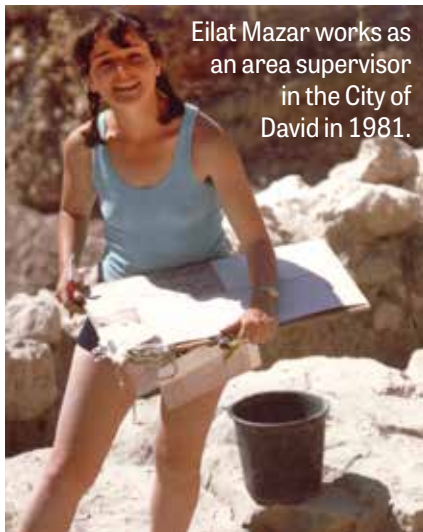
"BIG DIG" TEMPLE MOUNT EXCAVATIONS.

Eilat starts helping at her grandfather's Temple Mount Excavations in 1968, when she was 11 years old.

1979-1985

YIGAL SHILOH'S CITY OF DAVID EXCAVATIONS.

From 1981 to 1985, Eilat participates in Yigal Shiloh's City of David excavations. She becomes an area supervisor for the first time on this dig.



Eilat Mazar works as an area supervisor in the City of David in 1981.



Eilat Mazar with her grandfather Benjamin Mazar

THE ARMSTRONG-MAZAR RELATIONSHIP

1968

Ambassador College forms joint archaeological partnership with Prof. Benjamin Mazar and Hebrew University.

1969

First AC volunteers arrive in Jerusalem and begin excavating at the southern wall of the Temple Mount. Students are sent over every summer until the excavation ends in 1978.

1979-1985

AC joins Hebrew University for City of David excavations under Yigal Shiloh.

1996

Gerald Flurry revives Mr. Armstrong's humanitarian work, founding the Armstrong International Cultural Foundation.

2006

First Armstrong College students join Dr. Mazar's excavations in the City of David.

2008

The final season of Dr. Mazar's City of David excavation finishes, again aided by several AC students.

1988-1994

Directs excavations periodically in Achziv and Atlit.

1994

Director of Ophel Excavations

1997

Attains Ph.D. in archaeology from Hebrew University.

1997

Writes an article identifying the location of David's palace.

2002

Directs another season in Achziv.

2004

Directs another season in Achziv.



Eilat Mazar presents the menorah medallion.

1990

2000

2010

2020

1986-1987

OPHEL EXCAVATIONS

Codirects a three-season excavation on the Ophel with her grandfather. They find remains of a First Temple Period gatehouse, the first ever discovered in Jerusalem (p. 15).

2005-2008

CITY OF DAVID EXCAVATIONS

Phase 1

FEBRUARY-AUGUST 2005

King David's palace (p. 9)
Jehucal bulla (p. 11)

Phase 2

SEPTEMBER 2006-FEBRUARY 2007

Gedaliah bulla (p. 11)

Summer Dig

MAY-JULY 2007

Wall repair leads to discovery of **Nehemiah's wall** (p. 13)

Phase 3

NOVEMBER 2007-MARCH 2008

Joab's tunnel (p. 14)

2009-2018

OPHEL EXCAVATIONS

Phase 1

NOVEMBER 2009-FEBRUARY 2010

Isaiah and Hezekiah bullae (pp. 22-23)

Solomon's gatehouse (p. 20)

Akkadian Tablet (p. 24)

Tower of Uzziah (p. 21)

Phase 2a

AUGUST-DECEMBER 2012

Great Projecting Tower (p. 21)

Pithos inscription (p. 24)

Phase 2b

MAY-JULY 2013

Menorah hoard (p. 25)

Phase 2c

JANUARY-APRIL 2018

Revolt coins (p. 24)

2021

Dr. Mazar announces the **gold baby ring** find (p. 31).

2021

Publishes final work: **Over the Crossroads of Time: Jerusalem's Temple Mount Monumental Staircases.**



Eilat Mazar presents the Hezekiah bulla.

2009

AC students join Dr. Mazar in the first phase of the Ophel excavations.

2011

The Armstrong foundation provides funding for the Israel Exploration Society to aid with publishing the finds of the Temple Mount excavations.

2012-2015

The foundation hosts the exhibit "The Seals of Jeremiah's Captors Discovered" at Armstrong Auditorium.

2016

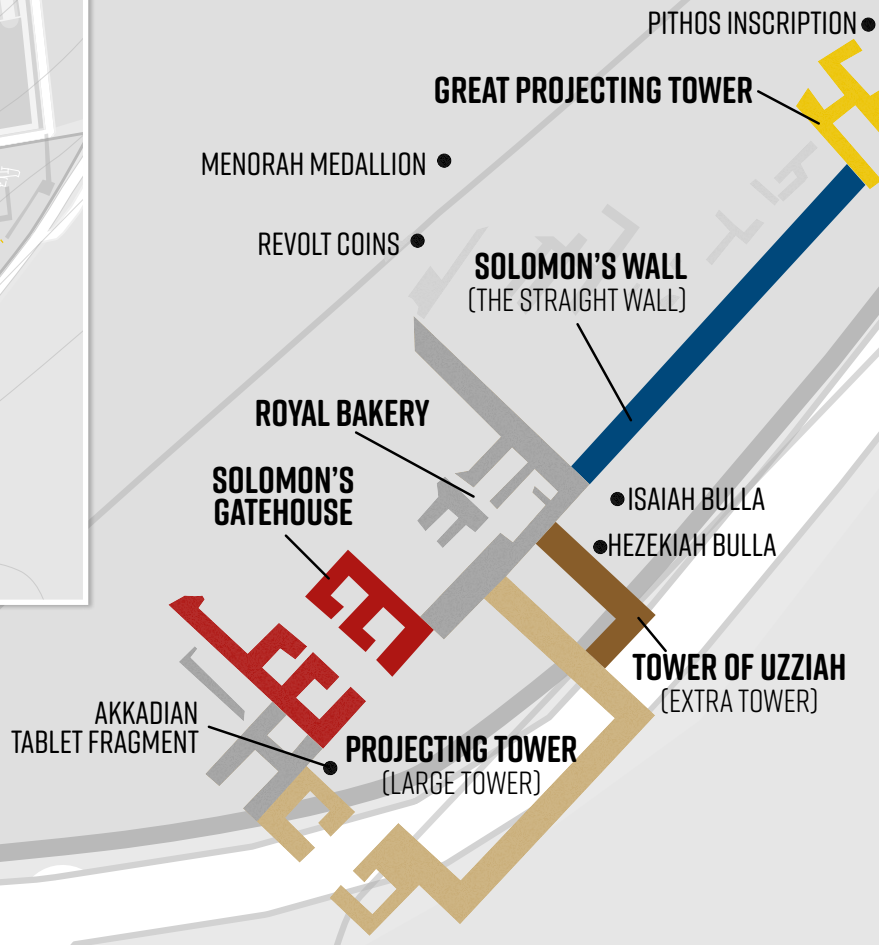
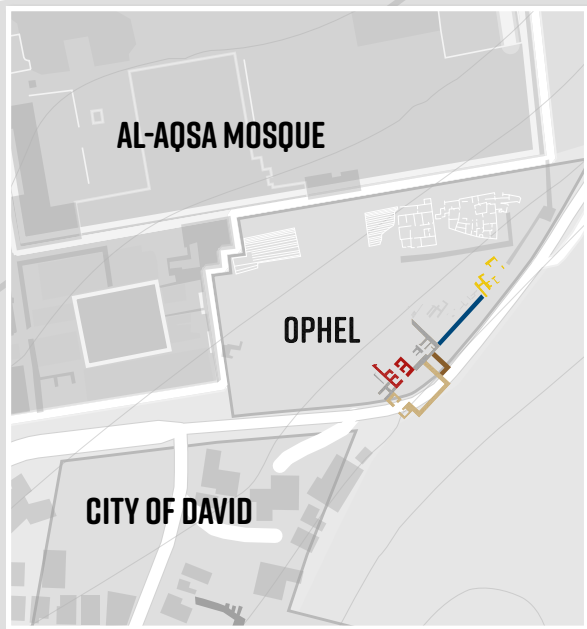
The Armstrong foundation establishes a permanent office in Jerusalem.

2018

AC students and alumni participate in the final phase of the Ophel excavations, an excavation fully funded by the foundation.

2018-2019

The foundation hosts the exhibit "Seals of Isaiah and King Hezekiah Discovered" at Armstrong Auditorium.



DISCOVERY TWO

SOLOMON'S WALL

During her 2009-2010 Ophel excavation, Dr. Mazar continued to excavate the giant wall extending from the gatehouse. This was no regular wall. It was 70 meters long, 3 meters wide, and in some sections measured 6 meters high. During the 2009-2010 dig (and then again during the 2012 dig), Dr. Mazar was able to accurately date the wall to the 10th century B.C.E.

Together, the dating of construction and its massive size indicated that it was built by a centralized and powerful government. "The city wall that has been uncovered testifies to a ruling presence. Its strength and form of construction indicate a high level of engineering," Mazar wrote, attesting to the biblical account of Solomon's powerful reign.

Based on the long, dead-straight nature of the wall (officially named the "Straight Wall") and the way it was situated between two parallel "towers" at each end (the "Large Tower" and the "Great Projecting Tower"), Dr. Mazar also wondered if this was a section of the wall referred to as *Miktsoa* in Nehemiah 3:25.

She wrote: "Now that we knew that the Straight Wall was built together with the rest of the fortified complex, we could not help remembering Nehemiah 3:25, which seems to refer to this very wall. This verse describes two structures, one as an extension of the other: the Large Tower and the 'Miktsoa,' meaning the straight line formed between two sides. No structure fits this description better than the Straight Wall." ■

“[My grandfather] expected new and fresh thinking every single day. He really pushed me. On the one hand, it was quite distressing; but on the other hand, it pushed me to constantly be thinking every time that I am excavating.”

—Eilat Mazar

DISCOVERY THREE

GREAT PROJECTING TOWER

In 2012, Dr. Mazar and her team continued to excavate adjacent north. During this phase, Mazar uncovered the north end of the Straight Wall. Digging in the same area, she unearthed another large wall, one that connected to the Straight Wall and ran perpendicular. This wall ran to the east, underneath the Ophel Road, as with the Large Tower.

This structure was apparently another exceptionally large tower, although it was in a much worse state of preservation. Dr.

Mazar concluded that this tower dated to at least the same period as the Straight Wall (given that the wall is built against it). Not much of this tower, sitting beneath the road (and also beneath a Byzantine tower), was able to be revealed. Dr. Mazar named it the “Great Projecting Tower” based on Nehemiah 3:27, which describes this as the next identifiable feature along the wall after the Water Gate, Projecting Tower and *Miktsoa* of verses 25-26. ■

DISCOVERY FOUR

TOWER OF UZZIAH

During the 2009–2010 excavation, Dr. Mazar excavated alongside another tower that was built directly against the Large Tower and the Straight Wall. This structure was called the *Extra Tower*. It was built with large ashlar stones—the largest found, in fact, before the building of the Temple Mount in the first century B.C.E. Given that this tower only *abuts* the Ophel wall, rather than being built *into* it, it was evidently built after the Large Tower and Solomonic wall. Without further excavation, Dr. Mazar was only able to get a general dating for the Extra Tower’s construction—she believed it was constructed between the 10th and eighth centuries B.C.E.

As always, Dr. Mazar searched her Bible to see if there were any biblical relevance to

this First Temple Period structure. As it turns out, there might be. 2 Chronicles 26 describes the rule of King Uzziah of Judah in the early eighth century B.C.E. Much like David and Solomon, Uzziah expended a lot of energy expanding and fortifying Judah, especially Jerusalem. Verse 9 says that “Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the corner gate, and at the valley gate, and at [against] the Turning [*Miktsoa*], and fortified them.”

Given that the dating meant the Extra Tower could have been built around the time of King Uzziah, and that it was situated against the same area as the Straight Wall (“*Miktsoa*”), Mazar concluded: “The question thus remains: Was the Extra Tower one of the towers built by Uzziah?” ■

DISCOVERY FIVE
**HEZEKIAH
BULLA**



During the 2009–2010 phase of the Ophel excavations, Dr. Mazar made what she considered to be her single greatest discovery. While digging beside the Extra Tower, excavators removed material that was then wet-sifted to reveal multiple bullae, which were cataloged and set aside to be investigated later.

It wasn't until 2015, when a member of her team began to seriously analyze one well-preserved bulla, that Dr. Mazar realized the significance of the find. The seal impression had an inscription that read: "Belonging to Hezekiah, son of Ahaz, King of Judah."

This personal seal impression of Judah's King Hezekiah remains the only confirmed bulla of an Israelite or Judahite king ever found on a controlled scientific excavation. (Others have been discovered but are unprovenanced from the antiquities market.)

Together with the names of *two* biblical kings, Hezekiah and Ahaz, the bulla displays an image of a sun with downturned wings, flanked by *ankh* symbols (which symbolize "life"). A similar winged-sun design can be found stamped on commonly found *lmlk* pottery handles of this period. The design is commonly associated with King Hezekiah.

Antiquities market seals and *lmlk* handles from apparently earlier on in Hezekiah's reign have noticeably different symbolism. The designs on these artifacts include the winged scarab, representing the

Egyptian god Khepri. The Prophet Isaiah warned Israel about the dangers of trusting in or forming an alliance with Egypt (Isaiah 30-31). 2 Kings 18:21 indicates that King Hezekiah placed his trust in Egypt for a time, and the scarab symbolism attests to that.

The imagery on the Hezekiah bulla that Dr. Mazar discovered, however, reflects a significant change. As summarized by Mazar, based on its design, this seal can best be attributed to the time directly after Assyria's defeat, following King Hezekiah's repentance and miraculous healing. The image of a sun with *downturned*—rather than proud, upturned—wings is unusual for a king and signifies humility.

The ankh symbols fit well with Hezekiah's miraculous healing and the 15 years added to his life (Isaiah 38). Perhaps the *winged* sun, with the lines projecting from it, may even be a nod to the miracle of the "flying" sun that "turned back" on the sundial of Ahaz as God's sign for Hezekiah's healing (verse 8).

Several biblical verses parallel the sun and wings imagery. Psalm 84:12 reads, "For the Lord God is a sun and a shield"; Psalm 91:4 says, "[U]nder His wings shalt thou take refuge." The language in Malachi 4:2 is remarkable—it's almost as if Malachi was looking at Hezekiah's royal seal as he was writing. "The *Sun of Righteousness* shall arise *with healing in His wings ...*" (Malachi 4:2; NKJV). ■

"Everybody is most welcome to observe how we work and, afterwards, how we process the finds. We make sure that everything can be observed and criticized. Then nobody can blame us that we are not doing the best ... work."

—Eilat Mazar

DISCOVERY SIX
**ISAIAH
BULLA**



During the 2009–2010 dig, Dr. Mazar unearthed another bulla right alongside Hezekiah's. In fact, this bulla was found just 3 meters away in the same strata of soil. It also dated to the end of the eighth century B.C.E.

The challenge with this bulla was that it was damaged, which made it difficult to interpret. Its top section was missing. But this missing section did not hinder its interpretation, as the top half contained a picture, or motif, not text. (A small remaining section of this motif can be seen on the upper right-hand side of the bulla.)

The lower half of the bulla contains the all-important inscription bearing the name of its owner. Two lines of text have been preserved. Both lines are slightly damaged on the left side by a visible thumbprint, probably made by the owner of the seal as he held down the edge of the clay while stamping it. Despite the damage, the first line of script is easy to interpret. All the experts agree that it reads, "Belonging to Isaiah."

The debate revolves around the text on the bottom line, or lower register. Three letters are legible: "Nvy." A Hebrew speaker, upon hearing this word (without adding vowels), would naturally take it to mean "prophet." However, the Hebrew language is built on critical root letters. The final root letter of "prophet"—the aleph—is silent. Thus, "prophet" is correctly transliterated as *Nvy*; with four letters, and properly pronounced with an added "a" vowel, *Navy*.

But the place where the fourth letter, aleph, would be expected was damaged by the thumbprint. The thumbprint covers just after the third letter from the right on the bottom line (note that Hebrew reads from right to left). Much of the debate over this bulla revolves around whether or not the aleph existed. If there were an aleph, then the word would read

"prophet." If the aleph did not exist, then it would be a different word entirely.

Without knowing the identity of the missing letter, no one can say for certain what the inscription says. Some say *Nvy* is a reference to a specific place in Judah; others suggest it is referring to the known name "Novi" (not the name of Isaiah's father).

While Dr. Mazar recognized the debate surrounding the identification of this Isaiah, she believed that among all the possible scenarios, the most logical conclusion was that the bulla inscription read, "Belonging to Isaiah the prophet." A reconstruction of the outline of the bulla shows that the lower line indeed could (and should) have a fourth letter, to balance the seal design. Additionally, the seal was found *right alongside* the seal belonging to Hezekiah—the same king mentioned together with the Prophet Isaiah in over a dozen scriptures—in the same strata of soil, and in the same area of Jerusalem in which Isaiah the prophet served. Further, only select individuals owned their own private seals, so they were evidently important figures.

Given all of the above, Dr. Mazar asked the question: "What are the chances that this could be *another* Isaiah *Nvy*[?]*—and not the famous Isaiah the Navy*—the prophet? Thus, the most logical reconstruction of the bulla as 'Belonging to Isaia[h] Proph[et].'"

Mazar wrote: "[A]ccording to the Bible, the names of King Hezekiah and the Prophet Isaiah are mentioned in one breath 14 of the 29 times the name of Isaiah is recalled (2 Kings 19–20; Isaiah 37–39). No other figure was closer to King Hezekiah than the Prophet Isaiah." Similarly to Jehucal and Gedaliah, King Hezekiah and Isaiah the prophet are paired together both in scriptures and in archaeology. ■

DISCOVERY SEVEN

AKKADIAN TABLET FRAGMENT



This tiny clay tablet fragment was one of the first of the small finds extracted from Dr. Mazar's 2009–2010 Ophel season. Written in cuneiform text and dating to the 14th century B.C.E., it is the oldest text ever discovered in Jerusalem.

Due to its fragmentary condition, it is impossible to read the script with any context. The words “you,” “you were,” “them,” “to do” and “later” have been deciphered on the fragment. According to cuneiform expert Prof. Wayne Horowitz of Hebrew University, the high quality of the writing “indicates that the person responsible for creating the tablet (made from local clay) was a first-class scribe.”

The tablet fragment parallels the square-ish Canaanite Amarna letter tablets (also dated to during the 14th century B.C.E.); this one perhaps making up a small corner edge of just such a tablet. The Amarna Letters are a collection of Akkadian cuneiform-script clay tablets found in Amarna, Egypt, that contain correspondence from leaders throughout Canaan sent to Egypt's pharaoh at the time. The letters urgently beseeched the pharaoh for help against the invading “Habiru” nomads who were taking over the land of Canaan. These “Habiru,” in name, actions and dating, are a good fit with the biblical account of the Hebrew invasion of the Promised Land at this same time in biblical chronology.

Several Amarna letters found in Egypt were sent specifically from the king of Jerusalem, such as the following: “May the [pharaoh] give thought to his land; the land of the king is lost. All of it has attacked me I am situated like a ship in the midst of the sea ... the Habiru have taken the very cities of the king. Not a single mayor remains to the king, my lord; all are lost.” Mazar believed her fragment might have been an archival copy of one such letter.

It is also notable that her Jerusalem tablet was *burned*; Judges 1:8 says the tribe of Judah “set the city [Jerusalem] on fire” before leaving it in the hands of the enemy. ■

DISCOVERY EIGHT

PITHOS INSCRIPTION

During Dr. Mazar's 2012 excavation season, another remarkable inscription surfaced—this time on the rim of a large ancient *pithos* storage vessel. Dating to the 11th or 10th century B.C.E., during or just before the period of King David, this inscription is the oldest alphabetical script ever discovered in Jerusalem.

There has since been significant debate about whether or not the inscription is Canaanite or Hebrew. The alphabets are related, and it can be extremely hard to tell them apart at this early period. Dr. Gershon Galil of Haifa University believes one of the words on the inscription refers to *wine*—suggesting that the pithos was designated either to contain the beverage or at least the ingredients for producing it. The inscription has primarily been recognized as Canaanite, and given the dating, this would fit the biblical account of this area being operated, before David purchased it, by the famous Canaanite Jebusite of the Bible, Ornan (2 Samuel 24; 1 Chronicles 21), who operated this upper Ophel/Temple Mount area as an agricultural site. ■



DISCOVERY TEN

REVOLT COINS

Dr. Mazar's fourth and final excavation on the Ophel (in 2018) concentrated on a large Ophel cave, as well as an upper Byzantine building. This dig was fully funded, and largely staffed by, Herbert W. Armstrong College. One of the significant discoveries of this season was the large number of 2,000-year-old Revolt coins found in the Ophel cave.

The 15-by-8-meter cave was discovered in near-pristine condition, virtually untouched since the Jewish Revolt of 66–70 C.E. The Jewish historian Josephus wrote that the Jews descended into tunnels and caves in order to hide during the closing moments of the siege

DISCOVERY NINE

MENORAH HOARD

While most of Dr. Mazar's most famous finds are related to the Bible, there are exceptions. One of her most famous finds comes from a much *later* period and is notable for its inherently Jewish appearance. This kind of find is the "holy grail" of archaeology—*gold* treasure—and Dr. Mazar heralded this as a "once in a lifetime" discovery.

Only five days into Dr. Mazar's 2013 Ophel season, her team found a hoard of 36 gold coins, silver and gold jewelry, and other silver and gold items inside a sixth-century C.E. Byzantine structure. This building is located about 50 meters south of the Temple Mount. The most notable treasure was a large gold medallion and chain, the face of the medallion stamped with a large seven-branched menorah symbol, a Torah scroll and a shofar.

Dr. Mazar believed the menorah medallion was probably the sort typically used to adorn a large synagogue Torah scroll. If so, the medallion and accompanying items would be the earliest known Torah scroll ornaments ever discovered.

Based on the date and the nature of the strata, as well as the minting of the gold coins, the hoard had evidently been hurriedly buried in the floor of the Byzantine building at the beginning of the seventh century C.E. Based on historical sources, Dr. Mazar was able to get even more specific—postulating that the treasure was abandoned around the time of the Persian conquest of Jerusalem in 614 C.E.



The Jews at the time had been promised by the Persians that if they helped overthrow the Christian Byzantines, they would be allowed to rebuild the temple. This they did, and there is speculation that construction even got as far as an altar—but suddenly, the Persians turned on the Jews and violently drove them out of the city. Dr. Mazar believed the menorah medallion hoard was a gift intended for the reconstruction of the edifice (with the gold coins to be melted down for other items)—but that the treasure was hurriedly buried as the Jews fled for their lives.

The menorah medallion and accompanying treasure are now featured in the Israel Museum as one of the three largest—and certainly the most symbolically significant—gold hoards ever discovered in Israel. ■

against Jerusalem by the Romans. This was the case on the Ophel, and a significant hoard of coins was found throughout the cave.

During the four-year Great Revolt, the Jews minted their own coins. The coins were decorated with various Jewish symbols, including the traditional "four plant species" of the Feast of Tabernacles/Sukkot—palm, myrtle, citron and willow—and a goblet that was likely part of the temple service. The most common of these coins are the Year Two coins.

The rarest are the Year Four coins, showing that—besides Jerusalem—most of Judea had been reconquered by Rome to that point. It was during this final year that the ancient-Hebrew-script message on the coins changed. Instead of proudly declaring, "To the Freedom of

Zion," they bore the sober message, "To the Redemption of Zion."

It was most notably these Year Four coins that were discovered in the cave, attesting to its use right at the closing moments of Jerusalem's fall. The dozens of coins that were found constitute one of the largest (if not *the* largest) Year Four coin hoards ever discovered.

The coins were found alongside broken pottery vessels, including jars and cooking pots. The undisturbed cave, said Mazar, created a "time capsule" of Jewish life during the revolt. "It's not a usual phenomena that we can come to such a closed cave," she said, "untouched [for] 2,000 years, including the very last remains of life of the people who were besieged in Jerusalem, suffered in Jerusalem, till the very last minute of the Second Temple Period." ■



THE PUBLICATIONS OF EILAT MAZAR

“THE GOAL OF ARCHAEOLOGY IS NOT EXCAVATION; it’s publication.” That reflection belongs to archaeologist Dr. Jodi Magnes. One of the major ongoing challenges in the world of archaeology is the sluggish production of excavation reports and other publications. Unfortunately, it’s not rare for an archaeologist to retire or die before his or her excavations are properly published.

Dr. Mazar was known and respected for her prolific amount of published material. Eilat was working on processing and publishing until the very end. Her final full publication was completed two months before she died (and she had four more underway). In her final weeks, Eilat, in handwriting that was shaky and hard to read, was writing out her plans for a tour guide of the Ophel and the City of David.

The following books were published by Dr. Eilat Mazar during her long career. Many of them can be found in museums or tourist shops around Israel or ordered online at ArmstrongInstitute.org (click on Publications and Reports).

Pending Completion:

The Summit of the City of David Excavations 2005–2008, Final Reports Vol. II

The Ophel Excavations to the South of the Temple Mount 2009–2013, Final Reports Vol. III

The Ophel Excavations to the South of the Temple Mount 2009–2013, Final Reports Vol. IV

The Excavations Beneath Robinson’s Arch, Directed by Benjamin Mazar

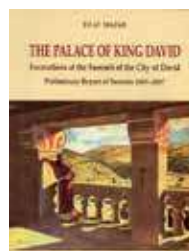
The Excavations Beneath Robinson’s Arch, Directed by Benjamin Mazar



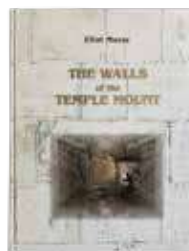
Excavations in the South of the Temple Mount. Final Report: The Ophel of Biblical Jerusalem (Qedem 29)
1989



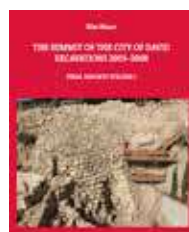
The Temple Mount Excavations in Jerusalem, 1968–1978, Directed by Benjamin Mazar, Final Reports Vol. II: The Byzantine and Early Islamic Periods (Qedem 43)
2003



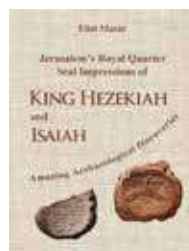
The Palace of King David, Excavations at the Summit of the City of David. Preliminary Report of Seasons 2005–2007
2009



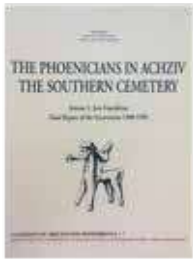
The Walls of the Temple Mount
2012



The Summit of the City of David Excavations 2005–2008, Final Reports Vol. I
2015



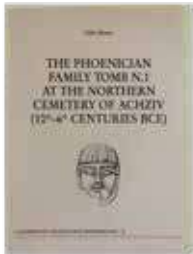
The Seal Impressions of King Hezekiah and Isaiah: Amazing Archaeological Discoveries
2019



The Phoenicians in Achziv, The Southern Cemetery, Final Report of the Excavations
2001



The Complete Guide to the Temple Mount Excavations
2002



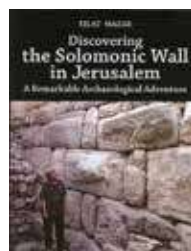
The Phoenician Family Tomb N.1 at the Northern Cemetery of Achziv (10th-6th Centuries B.C.E.), Final Report of the Excavations
2004



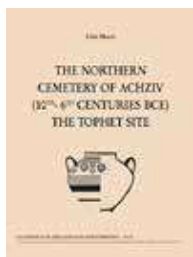
The Temple Mount Excavations in Jerusalem, 1968-1978, Directed by Benjamin Mazar, Final Reports Vol. III: The Byzantine Period (Qedem 46)
2007



The Temple Mount Excavations in Jerusalem, 1968-1978, Directed by Benjamin Mazar, Final Reports Vol. IV: The Tenth Legion in Aelia Capitolina (Qedem 52)
2011



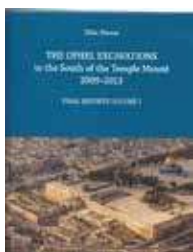
Discovering the Solomonic Wall in Jerusalem
2011



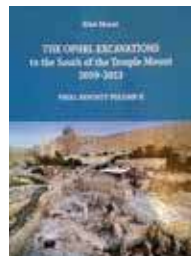
The Northern Cemetery of Achziv (10th-6th Centuries B.C.E.), The Tophet Site
2013



The Discovery of the Menorah Treasure at the Foot of the Temple Mount
2013




The Ophel Excavations to the South of the Temple Mount 2009-2013, Final Reports Vol. I
2015



The Ophel Excavations to the South of the Temple Mount 2009-2013, Final Reports Vol. II
2018



Over the Crossroads of Time: Jerusalem's Temple Mount Monumental Staircases, As Revealed in Benjamin Mazar's Excavations (1968-1978)
2021



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To purchase select books by Eilat Mazar visit
ARMSTRONGINSTITUTE.ORG/PUBLICATIONS

THE TEMPLE MOUNT

EILAT MAZAR'S EARLIEST ARCHAEOLOGICAL MEMORIES were tied directly to the Temple Mount excavations. The “Big Dig” was led by her grandfather Prof. Benjamin Mazar every summer from 1968 to 1978. These excavations were focused primarily at the base of the southern wall of the Temple Mount and at the southern end of the Western Wall.

Eilat spent the better part of her teen years assisting her grandfather in the Temple Mount excavations. Mazar noted that due to her grandfather's ailing health in the late '70s, the dig was forced to shut down rather “messily.” During this time a lot of items went missing or were stolen, and some documents were lost.

After she finished her mandatory military service and obtained her university degree, Dr. Mazar picked up her grandfather's baton. She collected all his research, and throughout her career—in between raising four children and conducting excavations in Achziv, the City of David and on the Ophel—worked to process, document and publish her grandfather's findings. Eilat worked on her grandfather's Temple Mount project right up until she could no longer write.

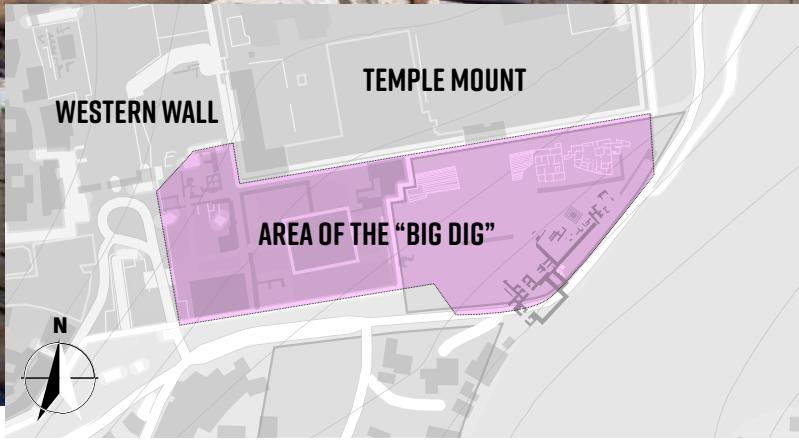
Less than two months before she died, Dr. Mazar completed her final book: *Over the Crossroads of Time: Jerusalem's Temple Mount Monumental Staircases*. This report documents the stunning staircase associated with Herod's first-century B.C.E. temple. ■



Eilat Mazar
with her
grandfather
Benjamin
Mazar



ROBINSON'S ARCH



TEMPLE MOUNT WALLS SURVEY

In addition to continuing her grandfather's excavation work on the Temple Mount, Dr. Mazar embarked on the ambitious job of surveying the walls of the Temple Mount. This survey culminated in a large two-volume work—the most expensive of Dr. Mazar's publications, selling for around \$250—described as “the most comprehensive and detailed documentation of the walls of the Temple Mount to date.”

Dr. Mazar and her team spent years photographing, drawing

and carefully documenting every single stone in the Temple Mount walls. Her two-volume set, titled *The Walls of the Temple Mount* (published 2012), displays their research in high-quality 1:300-scale maps and drawings.

The book also serves to preserve in book form the Temple Mount walls as they currently stand; Dr. Mazar was a passionate activist against the Islamic Waqf's destruction and desecration of the Temple Mount, including the deteriorating state of its walls. ■

HEROD'S STAIRCASE

Robinson's Arch is a famous ruin affixed to the southern end of the Temple Mount's Western Wall. The partially preserved, nearly 14-meter-wide arched walkway, seen emerging from the southwest corner of the Temple Mount, was first clearly documented by Bible scholar Edward Robinson in 1838. There was a lot of speculation about the nature of this walkway, constructed by the first-century King Herod. Where did it go exactly? What did it look like?

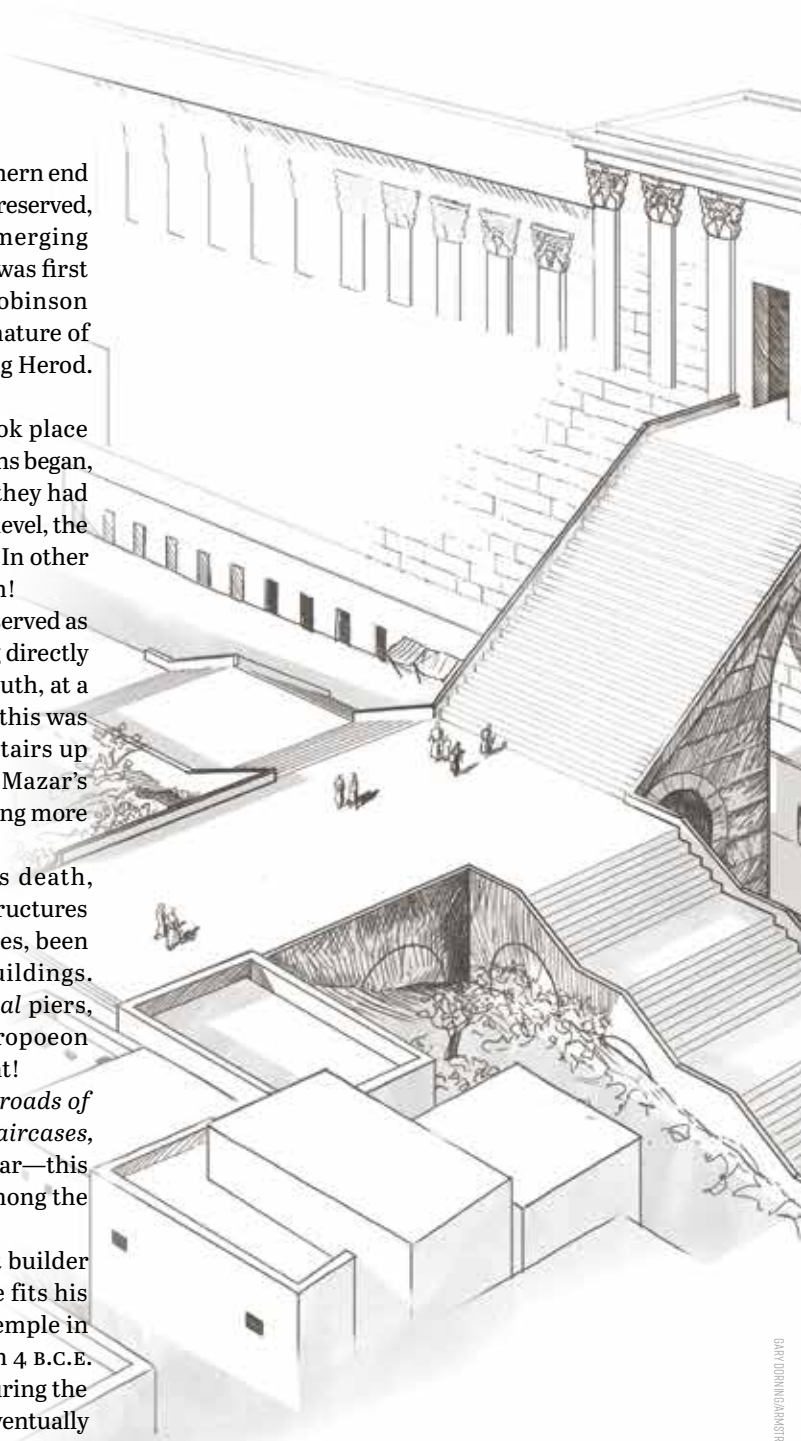
Part of Prof. Benjamin Mazar's excavations took place directly below Robinson's Arch. When the excavations began, the arch was roughly at head-height; by the time they had dug down and reached the original Herodian street level, the arch stood an impressive 21 meters above ground. In other words, this staircase was more than 20 meters high!

Professor Mazar discovered a row of vaults that served as foundations for the arched walkway piers, running directly west from the Temple Mount and then directly south, at a right angle. As such, the prevalent belief was that this was simply a preposterously *huge* one-way flight of stairs up to the Temple Mount from the street. Professor Mazar's architect, however, felt that there must be something more than just a one-way staircase.

In the decades following her grandfather's death, Dr. Mazar realized he had *misdated* a handful of structures west of Robinson's Arch that had, over the centuries, been broken down and incorporated into Islamic buildings. She realized these were the remains of *additional* piers, continuing both farther *west*, down into the Tyropoeon Valley, as well as *north*, alongside the Temple Mount!

As she wrote in her final book, *Over the Crossroads of Time: Jerusalem's Temple Mount Monumental Staircases*, "With four turns—not the one suggested by B. Mazar—this was a Four-Way Monumental Staircase, unique among the structures of the classical world."

King Herod was known as Jerusalem's greatest builder since Solomon, so such a grand, unique staircase fits his reputation. King Herod started his work on the temple in 19 B.C.E. and completed much of it before dying in 4 B.C.E. However, construction on the temple continued during the following decades. It seems storefronts that were eventually built into the piers along the street level weren't fully developed until the governorship of Pontius Pilate, or King Agrippa I (circa 26–36 C.E.). This means that the complete, grand construction—surely among the most impressive in the known world at that time—was only finished for a few decades before it was destroyed by the Romans in 70 C.E. ■





GOLD RING

Professor Mazar’s excavations below Robinson’s Arch included another discovery, which remained buried in his archives and was only revealed for the first time in March 2021, two months before Dr. Mazar died. This special, tiny discovery was a gold “baby’s ring.” This was the last find released by Dr. Mazar before her death.

The miniature, 2,000-year-old gold ring was etched with a seven-branched menorah symbol. The ring had been buried within a Herodian layer, inside a vault located outside the Temple Mount walls. It was roughly dated to the early first century C.E. Due to its miniature size (less than 1 centimeter in diameter), Dr. Mazar pointed out that the ring “could fit only the finger of a newborn.”

Fittingly, even this latest discovery of Dr. Mazar goes together with a particular passage, this time from the New Testament. The book of Matthew, chapter 2, describes the arrival of the “wise men” from the East to visit the newborn Jesus (verse 1). When they came, “they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto



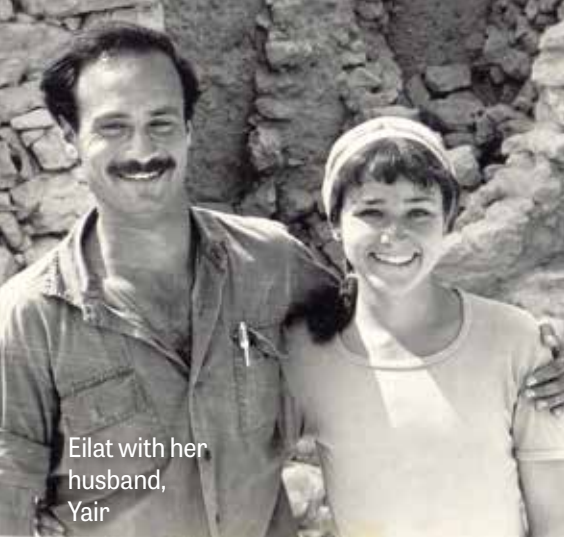
him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh” (verse 11; King James Version). Another New Testament passage, 1 Timothy 2:9, uses this very specific word for “gold” to refer directly to gold jewelry.

Here, then, is a biblical account of a *Jewish newborn*, during the *Herodian* period, being gifted some sort of precious *gold* trinkets. This corresponds with Dr. Mazar’s discovery of a *Jewish symbol* on a *newborn-sized gold ring*, dating to the *Herodian* period. The “baby’s ring,” paired with this biblical account, surely attests to a practice of gifting newborns (of rich or royal descent) precious jewelry. Other ancient infant and child rings have been discovered throughout antiquity (including with Jewish motifs), often made of poorer-quality metal such as bronze. But this exceptionally small ring, made of gold, and including this famous Jewish symbol, is an especially fine example.

This “final discovery” released to the public from Dr. Mazar—really, from *both* Eilat, “queen of Jerusalem archaeology,” and her grandfather Benjamin, “dean of biblical archaeology”—is a tiny testament to nearly a century of archaeology work, uncovering the rich history of the Holy Land. ■

“Now the stones will speak, not me.”

—Eilat Mazar



Eilat with her husband, Yair



Eilat gives a tour along the coast.



Benjamin and Eilat Mazar

TRIBUTES TO A LEGENDARY ARCHAEOLOGIST

WHEN NEWS BROKE OF DR. EILAT MAZAR'S death, the flood of tributes was overwhelming. The influx of warm messages from friends, family and admirers; from fellow archaeologists and scholars—and even from some who had disagreed with her interpretations—were a testament to Eilat's incredible personality and esteemed career.

Here are just some of the tributes honoring the life and work of Dr. Eilat Mazar. (Longer tributes have been edited for concision.)

“With heavy hearts, the Hebrew University reports the passing of pioneering archaeologist Dr. Eilat Mazar. During her tenure, Mazar unearthed King David's Palace in the City of David, sections of King Solomon's Walls, and clay seals belonging to King Hezekiah and possibly Isaiah the Prophet.”

—*The Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

“The City of David mourns the untimely death of archaeologist Dr. Eilat Mazar who contributed greatly

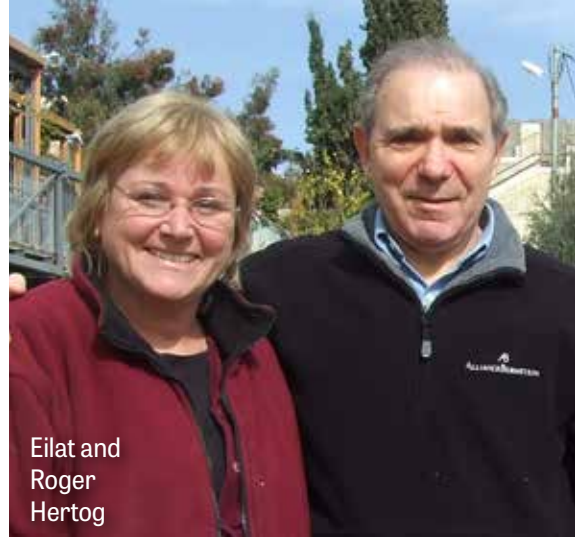
to the study of the City of David and Jerusalem and left a significant mark on understanding the history of the city. We are so honored to have worked alongside Dr. Eilat Mazar who helped uncover and discover the City of David, ancient Jerusalem.”

—*The City of David*

“Eilat's love for Jerusalem led her to focus on excavations in the city and thanks to it the whole world was exposed to a variety of amazing finds of international importance, including the large stone structure identified by Mazar as David's Palace, the Jerusalem Wall from the First Temple Period, and her most prominent find—the seal of King Hezekiah. Eilat was a brilliant, original, daring researcher who stuck to her work and did not shy away from criticism. She always stood by her principles and believed in herself to the end. I remember the phone call late at night, when she called me about discovering the seal of one of King Zedekiah's ministers. She was gripped by excitement. She was so happy about having the privilege of being part of revealing findings that correspond exactly with



Eilat and
Prof. Larry
Stager



Eilat and
Roger
Hertog

the verses of the Bible and to see with her own eyes the Bible being brought to life. Eilat z”l will forever be remembered as a pioneer standing shoulder to shoulder with the greatest scholars of Jerusalem throughout the ages. May her memory be a blessing.”

—David Be’eri (*City of David CEO*)

“I am deeply saddened by the passing of Dr. Eilat Mazar, fearless defender of Israel’s past and present, a fighter for archaeological truth, and a friend. May her memory live on in the artifacts she revealed and the biblical history she substantiated.”

—Ambassador Michael Oren

“Eilat Mazar, one of Israel’s greatest archaeologists, passed away this week. Though born a decade after the Jewish state was established, Mazar is seen by those privileged to know her as being among the country’s founders because she had that rare and unmistakable character of the generation of leaders who brought the state into being against all odds. She was driven by an instinctive love for the land of Israel, felt deeply connected to the Bible without being traditionally religious, and embraced archaeology, with its alluring combination of the spiritual and the earthly. Like Israel’s “Greatest Generation,” Eilat was supremely confident and touchingly modest, naturally charming and exasperatingly stubborn, totally committed to the national cause but even more devoted to her family. May her example light a path for all those seeking to be part of the incredible story of the renewal of Jewish sovereignty in the Land of Israel.”

—Dr. Daniel Polisar (*The Shalem Center*)

“Eilat Mazar, one of the most prominent and important Israeli archaeologists, has died. Probably her most significant discovery is the Large Stone Structure that she attributed as having been David’s palace, which almost certainly is correct. Mazar received a firestorm of opposition for making such attributions, especially since

many academics have embraced the minimalistic position that the Bible’s United Monarchy of Israel has no place in reality. To her credit, she withstood the opposition with strength and conviction. This is what an archaeologist faces when he or she attempts to connect monumental architecture or material finds with elements in the biblical narrative. Mazar’s stance was heroic.”

—Prof. Douglas Petrovich

“The indomitable and self-effacing Eilat Mazar never flinched as she rose to fame as the doyenne of ancient Jerusalem, saying that people would see her truths, even if it took them some time to come around. A sad time for biblical archaeology.”

—Roger Isaacs (*The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*)

“Dr. Eilat Mazar was one of the most prominent and influential Israeli archaeologists, well-known and respected both at home and on the world stage. She contributed greatly to our understanding of the archaeology and history of ancient Israel, especially regarding Jerusalem in biblical times. Her most outstanding contributions were the excavations in two locations in the ‘City of David’ ridge—above the Gihon spring and in the ‘Ophel’ south of the al-Aqsa mosque. The results of these projects enabled reconstructing the layout of the city, its material culture and its impact on Judah and beyond. Excavating in Jerusalem is a complicated task, which calls for special personal skills. Eilat Mazar’s strong character and resolve were essential to her success in the field. Despite our interpretational differences, I have respected her work; we were good friends and shared a passion for the past of the land of Israel. Eilat Mazar’s impacts on the archaeology of Israel in general and Jerusalem in particular will always be counted among the cornerstones of the archaeology of Israel. She will be greatly missed.”

—Prof. Israel Finkelstein



AC students and alumni on the 2018 Ophel dig

many wonderful meetings we had together and with friends. Rest in peace, my dear friend. You will not be forgotten.”

—Dr. Peter van der Veen

“I am heartbroken by the passing of a personal hero of mine, archaeologist Dr. Eilat Mazar, who discovered the City of David and many other historic biblical findings. Her love for Tanach, and the history of our people, guided her life and archaeology. Rest in peace.”

—Rabbi E. Poupko

“Dr. Eilat Mazar was archaeology royalty. While she made significant contributions to understanding the Phoenicians, Eilat Mazar became a household name when she returned to dig

in Jerusalem with her grandfather. In addition to her prowess as an archaeologist, Eilat was kind and gracious. She will be missed by family, friends and the archaeology community alike.”

—Biblical Archaeology Review

“The Israeli woman to whom the stones spoke. Eilat Mazar helped uncover the truth about Jerusalem’s past and King David’s realm. Her critics never forgave her for it, but her achievements made Jewish history.”

—Jonathan Tobin (*JNS editor in chief*)

“A great archaeologist of Jerusalem and a remarkable woman. I remember the combination of scholarship and excitement with which she conveyed to a group of us at the City of David the significance of the excavation of the palace of the biblical King David.”

—Bill Kristo (*The Bulwark editor at large*)

“Although she did not regard herself as personally religious, her sense of intellectual and scientific honesty and inquiry led Dr. Eilat Mazar to use the Bible as a crucial, historically accurate document. Dr. Mazar’s work was blessed in a special way.”

—theTrumpet.com

“I am deeply upset to hear of the passing of Eilat Mazar, one of Israel’s greatest archaeologists of our time. I got to know her at the Shalem Center, where she led the charge to (successfully) find King David’s palace in Jerusalem. What a huge loss.”

—David Hazony (*independent editor*)

“We are saddened by the news that renowned Israeli archaeologist Eilat Mazar, has passed. The granddaughter of famous archaeologist, Benjamin Mazar, she made numerous important contributions to Israel archaeology herself. Eilat Mazar considered herself a nonreligious person. But when it came to her work, few took the Bible more seriously than her. May her memory be a blessing!”

—Christianity Today

“Legendary archaeologist Eilat Mazar, the ‘Jewish Indiana Jones,’ found the palace of the kings of Judah in a dig in Jerusalem, 2005. No one in our generation did more for the reputation of the Bible. ברוך דיין אמת”

—Yoram Hazony (*author*)

From her excavation volunteers and staff:

“Dr. Eilat Mazar’s archaeological finds and digs will literally never be forgotten. They will live on into eternity. She has the most impressive archaeology resume in the history of mankind. Honored to have worked around the GREATEST OF ALL TIME.”

—Jeremy Cocomise

“Dr. Eilat Mazar will be greatly missed. Her contribution to the archaeology of Jerusalem (and Phoenician archaeology too) has been great and she is to be greatly thanked for all the wonderful work she has accomplished over the years. I will never forget the

“Today we lost a real ‘mother in Israel’ (Judges 5:7), but we celebrate her life’s work and the mountain of archaeological discoveries she brought us from biblical Jerusalem. Working for Dr. Mazar was one of the great privileges of my life.”

—Christopher Eames

Headlines:

Armstrong Institute of Biblical Archaeology:

“Dr. Eilat Mazar, Queen of Jerusalem Archaeology, Has Died”

The Times of Israel:

“Fearless Pioneering Biblical Archaeologist Eilat Mazar Dies at 64”

The Times of Israel Blogs:

“Eilat Mazar, One of Israel’s Founders”

Haaretz:

“Dr. Eilat Mazar, Doyenne of Ancient Jerusalem Archaeology, Dies”

Christianity Today:

“Died: Eilat Mazar, Archaeologist Who Believed the Bible”

Jewish News Syndicate:

“The Woman to Whom the Stones Spoke”

The Jerusalem Post:

“Remembering Eilat Mazar, the Archaeologist of Jerusalem”

Biblical Archaeology Review:

“Remembering Eilat Mazar”

The Trumpet Daily:

“Eilat Mazar Will Be Missed”

The Telegraph:

“Eilat Mazar, Leading Light of Israeli Biblical Archaeology Who Uncovered What She Claimed Was the Palace of King David—Obituary”

Mosaic Magazine:

“Remembering the Archaeologist Who Uncovered Biblical Jerusalem”

Aish:

“Dr Eilat Mazar: Queen of Biblical Archaeology”

Mishpacha:

“The Woman Who Unearthed Jerusalem” ■

► MAZAR LEGACY FROM PAGE 7

has authored more than 50 books on biblical figures and biblical history, and is the chancellor of Herbert W. Armstrong College.

More than 50 years have passed since Herbert Armstrong and Professor Mazar first began practicing biblical archaeology together. Today our goal is the same as it was in 1968: to promote and share Israel’s biblical archaeology and history! Operating from our new building in Jerusalem, AIBA hosts the library of Dr. Mazar, publishes *Let the Stones Speak*, and hosts ArmstrongInstitute.org, an engaging website that features articles, videos, visuals and podcasts showcasing Israel’s biblical archaeology. We also sponsor public seminars, create archaeological exhibits, and conduct private tours of ancient Jerusalem, primarily the Ophel and the City of David.

AIBA also continues to work with Dr. Eilat Mazar’s staff and her sister, Avital, in continuing to publish the several remaining academic volumes that Dr. Mazar was unable to finish during her lifetime (see page 26 for more detail about these works).

In addition to the ongoing projects and work, one of our longer-term goals is to see the dig sites of Dr. Mazar and her grandfather on the Ophel continue to be developed, renewed and revitalized for tourists.

Finally, we don’t just talk and write about Israel’s archaeology; we practice it too. Following our first excavations on the “Big Dig” Temple Mount excavations in the 1960s and ’70s (and then later excavations with Prof. Yigal Shiloh), our institute has for more than 15 years continued joint participation with Dr. Eilat Mazar in her several City of David and Ophel excavations. Most recently, since the death of Dr. Mazar, we continued where she left off on the Ophel in the summer of 2022, resuming excavations under the direction of the Hebrew University’s head of the archaeology department, Prof. Uzi Leibner.

AIBA could not function without the friendship and support of numerous individuals and organizations, both in Israel and beyond. These include Hebrew University, with whom the “iron bridge” partnership continues, the Israel Antiquities Authority, the City of David Foundation, and the Israel Exploration Society, to name a few. We are also deeply grateful to the Mazar family, particularly Eilat’s sister Avital, Eilat’s children, and her cousin, esteemed archaeologist Prof. Amihai Mazar, for their warmth and hospitality in inviting us, in many ways, to be part of their family. We look forward to what the future brings.

The Mazar name is one of the most important in biblical archaeology, and the Armstrong Institute of Biblical Archaeology is honored to play a role in continuing that legacy. ■

A photograph of Brent Nagtegaal and Eilat Mazar at an excavation site. Brent is on the left, wearing a grey polo shirt and glasses, smiling. Eilat is on the right, wearing a dark jacket over a red shirt and glasses, also smiling. They are standing in front of stone ruins. A smartphone and some papers are on a red surface in front of them.

Brent Nagtegaal sits with Eilat Mazar at the Ophel Excavations in 2018.

WORKING WITH DR. MAZAR

BY BRENT NAGTEGAAL

IMAGINE SCULPTING BESIDE LEONARDO DA VINCI OR playing basketball on Michael Jordan’s team. For me, that is what those 15 years of working beside Dr. Mazar was like—I was part of something truly special.

I first met Dr. Mazar in October 2006. I was in Jerusalem for the first time, volunteering on her dig as a college student. She greeted me with a giant smile, introduced me to a few Hebrew words, and quickly put me to work under the guidance of another archaeologist supervisor. During the break, she sat beside me and began asking about my family and my life. I was surprised. The director of the excavation was interested in me, a grubby, uninitiated college student. She made me feel special and important. I soon realized that I wasn’t—Eilat treated every single one of her diggers like this. We were family.

It is hard to express how masterful Dr. Mazar was at her job. I remember an occasion toward the end of the 2006 excavation season when I was having difficulty discerning whether a certain layer connected with a wall. Eilat, as she insisted on being called, walked by and noticed my baffled expression. She asked if I’d like some help. I handed her my trowel and she went to work. There was purpose and thought in every stroke; the confidence with which she worked revealed experience and passion. It was as if she could see through the soil; she knew exactly what needed to stay and what could go. Within seconds, the truth began to emerge.

The dirt was flying and I quickly bucketed it up. Fifteen minutes later, Eilat had finished a job that would have taken me more than an hour. And we had an answer: The layer did not touch the wall.

Eilat taught me a lot about humility, and how important it is that science and truth triumph dogma

and personal ambition. I can recall a moment during the final week of the same excavation when I looked up and saw Eilat giving a tour. I recognized Prof. Israel Finkelstein, a well-known archaeologist, but also a biblical minimalist and staunch critic of Eilat and her archaeology. Afterward, I asked Eilat why she embraced someone who disagrees with her so strongly. She mildly admonished me and told me that Jerusalem’s history did not belong to her (or me)—that it belongs to everyone. Eilat believed archaeology strengthened the soul of the nation.

Another memory I have was when I accompanied Eilat to an archaeological convention in Tel Aviv. Dr. Mazar was releasing her recent discovery of Nehemiah’s wall to a standing-room-only crowd of hundreds of people. The professor who followed Eilat used his time to discredit Dr. Mazar’s work and conclusions. Some of his claims were simply preposterous and clearly inspired by his aversion for the Bible. I was upset! Not Eilat—she was unaffected and determined to continue her work and “let the stones speak.”

A few months later, Eilat announced a reading of an inscription found in her excavations. She read it as “Temech,” a family mentioned in the Bible that went with the Jews who returned from Babylonian exile during the Persian period. In the weeks following this announcement, some epigraphers viewed the inscription online and questioned Dr. Mazar’s conclusion. They explained why they thought Eilat was wrong. Instead of digging in her heels and holding fast to her theory, Dr. Mazar studied their science and happily conceded that they were right. She told them

how wonderful it was that the Internet allowed scholars around the world to work together.

I witnessed Dr. Mazar's intellectual honesty many times over those 15 years. While Eilat was stubbornly committed to her work, she was not stubbornly committed to her theories.

Dr. Mazar was also a tremendous force for unity. There were the many times when we would leave the dig site together in her car, crawling through the congested streets of Silwan, the predominantly Arab village in which the ancient City of David is situated. Whenever we stopped, Eilat would roll down her window and chat with the locals. Initially, I thought she was merely being friendly with strangers. But then I noticed they called her Eilat and they'd chat about personal topics. Some were Arabs, some were Jews, but it didn't matter to Eilat: She was interested in them all. It says a lot about Eilat that she worked in the most volatile neighborhood on the planet and everyone loved her.

Eilat was like a mother to me. In 2016, when I moved to Israel with my pregnant wife, Eilat was the first to help. No mattresses to sleep on? No problem; Eilat showed up at our new apartment with bedding. When our daughter arrived, Eilat was there. It was the same when my son arrived, and even when our third arrived (even though Eilat was clearly very ill). Dr. Mazar knew we didn't have family in Israel, so she brought us into her own.

Finally, there was Eilat's love of Jerusalem and its archaeology. I remember the last call I received from Dr. Mazar. With some difficulty, she thanked me for our support through the years, remarking that we were always a source of strength and encouragement. She then asked me about a project I was working on for her, telling me that she needed it for her upcoming book on Jerusalem. To me, this anecdote captures the life and personality of Eilat: No matter what was happening in her life—even when she was clearly suffering—Dr. Mazar's mind was always on Jerusalem's archaeology.

Of all the incredible opportunities and blessings I have experienced, working beside the woman responsible for the discoveries showcased in this magazine is one of the greatest. Eilat was more than just an archaeologist; she was a visionary who understood that revealing the true history of Jerusalem was critical to strengthening the soul of the nation. She dedicated her life to that cause. And though her life was cut short, her impact will live on. She didn't waste her time in endless debates with dishonest scholars. She stated her proofs, she "let the stones speak," and then focused on the next archaeological endeavor.

And through it all, she never overlooked those who worked alongside her—her family and friends. ■

FEEDBACK

IN RESPONSE TO

"EXCAVATING THE OPHEL"

May God guide and inspire you to understand the exact history of this important site!

Olena Ann Zubi NAZARETH, ISRAEL

IN RESPONSE TO

"THOU SHALT NOT SEETHE A KID IN ITS MOTHER'S MILK': PECULIAR SCRIPTURE ILLUMINATED BY ARCHAEOLOGY"

Very well-written explanation of a difficult subject. Makes so much sense and it seems even some of the older rabbinical scholars had the right idea but still got off course.

Daniel Blauser ISRAEL

IN RESPONSE TO VIDEO

"THE ISHMAEL PAPYRUS, A SILVER SHEKEL AND A FULLY STOCKED 3,300-YEAR-OLD TOMB"

You guys have a great YouTube site. Up-to-date announcements about biblical archaeology. And your magazine is very good also.

Walter Dolen

IN RESPONSE TO VIDEO

"INTERVIEW: 2,600-YEAR-OLD ORNATE IVORIES DISCOVERED IN JERUSALEM"

I had no idea ivory was more expensive than gold. Now I understand the phrase in the Bible about ivory couches.

Gina Sawyer

FEEDBACK TO AIBA OPENING

Yesterday was an interesting, warm and well-organized event. Please, let me express my gratitude to you. Your archaeological work is very important and necessary for the Jewish people, for the State of Israel and for the whole world. May God bless you with good health and new outstanding discoveries!

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LET THE STONES SPEAK

September-October 2022, Vol. 1, No. 5 is published bimonthly by the PCG. Address all communications to Armstrong Institute of Biblical Archaeology; PO Box 8314, Jerusalem, 9108201, Israel. How your subscription has been paid: *Let the Stones Speak* has no subscription price—it is free. This is made possible by donations freely given to the Armstrong International Cultural Foundation. Those who wish to voluntarily support this worldwide work are gladly welcomed as co-workers. © 2022 Armstrong International Cultural Foundation. Unless otherwise noted, scriptures are quoted from the *Jewish Publication Society of America of the Tanakh* version of the Bible.

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Open the Bible, and you will find great events, great deeds and great hope within Jerusalem. Open the ground of that city today, and you will discover artifacts and ruins that prove the biblical record. Dr. Eilat Mazar met that challenge and uncovered rich history from the reigns of David, Solomon and Hezekiah, the work of Nehemiah, and the warnings of the prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah.

To learn about some of her most impressive archaeological discoveries, the greatest ever made in this special city, request your free copies of **Seals of Jeremiah's Captors Discovered** as well as **Seals of Isaiah and King Hezekiah Discovered**.

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