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Raz Kletter, “A Very General Archaeologist-Moshe Dayan and Israeli Archaeology.”

A VERY GENERAL ARCHAEOLOGIST- MOSHE DAYAN AND ISRAELI ARCHAEOLOGY

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Dedicated to the memory of Gil Covo, a true friend

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** Moshe Dayan was a renowned military leader and politician, whose influence over Israel was considerable (Slater 1991:vii-viii, 208, 279; Golani 1998:5, 195, 199). Born in May 1915, he was jailed by the British authorities in Akko prison in 1939, and lost an eye in an operation in Syria in 1941. During the 1948 war, Dayan served as commander of a division and head of the Jerusalem front. In October 1949 he was appointed commander of the southern front, and in December 1952 chief of operations at the GHQ. Between 1953-1958 he was Chief of Staff, leading the army to- and in- the 1956 war. After a short interlude of studies in the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Dayan was elected to the Knesset [Israel's Parliament] and became Minister of Agriculture (1959-1964). On the brink of the 1967 war he was appointed Minister of Defense, and the 1967 victory made him a mythical hero. He held this post until 1974, after the shattering crisis of the 1973 war, for which he was blamed by many Israelis. Yet, he prospered by deserting the labor party to join Begin's government in 1977 as foreign minister. In this post he conducted the peace talks with Egypt's president Saadat, that lead to the Israeli-Egyptian peace agreement. Meantime Dayan's health deteriorated rapidly, until he finally succumbed to death in October 1981.
- 1.2** During three decades between 1951-1981, Dayan established a vast collection of antiquities acquired through illicit excavations; as well as bought, exchanged and sold

antiquities in Israel and abroad. These activities seem to be a well-known secret in Israel, and yet, there are many good reasons to discuss them in a scholarly forum. First, they have never been investigated fully from an archaeological viewpoint. It is no easy task: seldom did he speak explicitly about them, though one reads a lot between the lines of his books (especially “Living with the Bible”, Dayan 1978). Second, many of Dayan’s deeds remain unknown outside Israel, being mentioned only in remote, secondary Hebrew sources. In his footsteps, Dayan left a huge legacy of gossip, anecdotes and rumors, and it is often difficult to separate these from facts. Even certain facts were deemed for many years to be too embarrassing to expose publicly. Yet, the most pressing need for review derives from the way writers about Dayan, even today, admire his deeds. Even his most recent biographer tells us that he was a learned explorer of sites, who saved antiquities from destruction, a sort of Robin Hood who fought stupid bureaucracy (Ben Ezer 1997:121, 218-219).

This paper is a preliminary investigation, to be followed by a more detailed study currently under preparation. I will present a sketch of Dayan’s deeds and try to explain why they were possible. The study is mainly based on written sources, especially trustworthy ones in that they are written by eyewitnesses or by persons who bore no known grudge against Dayan. In translations from the Hebrew I tried to convey exact meanings, at the expense of literary style.

(Note: The terms Israel and, of course, Israeli/s refer to the modern state and its people, whereas Israelites or Kingdom of Israel signify the Iron Age entity and its population. I will use the shortenings IDAM for the Israeli Department of Antiquities and Museums, and IAA for the Israeli Antiquities Authority—replacing the IDAM since 1989).

2. ROBBERY OF SITES

2.1 Dayan considered his quest of antiquities as part of his private life. Naturally, books written by Dayan and about him concentrate on military and political aspects. His digging

activities are mentioned only briefly in order to color his life or to break tension, as an exciting, romantic and innocent hobby. There were a few exceptions where the diggings interfered with Dayan's public sphere, and could not be hidden. The most famous one occurred at Azur near Tel Aviv in 1968, when Dayan was badly injured by landslide while robbing a burial cave, and hospitalized for three weeks.

The first site touched by Dayan was Tel el Hesi. It is ironic, since this site is considered as the birthplace of modern archaeology in Israel/Palestine: the first scientific excavation in our area was conducted at this site by Flinders Petrie in 1890 (Petrie 1891; for the new excavations there see Blakely and Bennet 1989). On one weekend in winter 1950-51, Dayan went hunting with his son, and by chance happened to visit Tel el Hesi. This winter was especially blessed with rains, which caused exposure of remains on the slope of the site. Dayan took a jar and showed it to Yigael Yadin, an army colleague- and already a noted archaeologist. Yadin told him it is an ancient Iron Age jar. Dayan was caught with the fever of antiquities, and started to devote his free time to it.

At first, Dayan was helped by family members, but soon he became involved with amateur and professional robbers, dealers and smugglers. I have documented 35 sites where evidence of robbing and illegal digging by Dayan exists. No doubt, this is only the tip of the iceberg, but it testifies to the scale and temper of his activities. The distribution of sites fits his arena of activities, first in the south when he commanded the southern front, then in whole Israel until 1967, later extending to the Occupied Territories. I present a sample of four of the robbed sites.

2.2 Serabit el Khadem in Sinai (robbed at least twice, November 1956 and July 1969).

Dayan first visited this site during the Sinai war of 1956. He landed there on a helicopter tour with other generals. The visit, but not the looting, is described by Dayan himself (1978:56-58). Dayan took Egyptian stelea (the number of which varies in the sources- see

Miberg 1991:20), and used a military truck to move it/them to his Zahala house. At the same period, an outstanding high army-officer, whose disciple stole a sack of sugar, was harshly treated and expelled from the army (Amitai 1998:8). Professor Repha'el Giveon of Tel Aviv University helped Dayan to ascertain the authenticity of Egyptian finds and to decipher the Hieroglyphic inscriptions, though there is no evidence that he was involved in the Serabit el Khadem case (Giveon published items from Dayan's collections, Giveon 1973; 1976, and described Dayan as one who "cultivates a large and important archaeological collection"- Giveon 1973:177). Eventually, the finds were returned to the site (Ben-Ezer 1997:209; the story is also shortly mentioned by Silberman 1989:126) to avoid an international scandal (Miberg 1991:20).

Many readers would surely suspect that this story is nothing but a myth. However, confirmation of it materialized slowly during the passing years. A journalist named Naftali Lavi served as a media-consultant to Dayan during the late years of his life. Lavi sympathizes Dayan, and obviously cannot be considered as one who would intentionally blemish his memory. In an interview with Amiram Cohen (Cohen 1991:16), Lavi said: "There was the famous story about Serabit al Khadem, that he brought army-officers to carry a pillar [meaning stele- R.K.] for him from there. I once asked him about it. It is an artistic-archaeological valuable, he said. The Egyptians don't deal with it, and instead of it being destroyed there, let it be in a museum". We encounter here for the first time the theme, cultivated by Dayan and his admirers, that he acted out of 'humanitarian causes'- to save antiquities from destruction. However, no imminent destruction threatened Serabit al Khadem- except Dayan's acts-and the finds he robbed never reached public exhibition in a museum.

Dayan himself had to refer to this story when he was asked about it in the Knesset in 1971. He admitted that he took by helicopter one stele from Serabit el Khadem in 1956. Yet, he claimed that he was just a messenger, the stele being "chosen by a senior Israeli

archaeologist and, as planned, delivered to the IDAM in Jerusalem” (Dayan, in *Divrei HaKnesset* 7, 1971, no. 62:532). This seemed at that time to lift the blame from his shoulders, so no further questions were asked.

One eye witnesses to the robbery of Serabit el Khadem was a private soldier named Ido Dissentchik. Ido’s father was the editor of Ma’ariv, a prominent Israeli daily newspaper (Dissentchik 1981:12-13, quoted by Slater 1991:284). By sheer chance, Ido’s unit happened to be in reserve duty in Abu Rudeis in Sinai in July 1969. The unit was ordered to provide protection for defense minister Dayan at Serabit el Khadem (misspelled in Slater 1991:284). Arriving there, they found “Dayan and his friend for archaeological matters [not named] busy on a tour. It was not a regular military tour, but an archaeological one. The pilots... took aboard the helicopter the treasured antiquities that Dayan desired”. They watched in amazement, says Ido, and on the way back one of his unit suddenly said: “We provided security for a crime. Just like in the movies: the robbers inside the bank, the covering men outside. We are accessories to a crime”. The ‘simple soldiers’ realized the nature of what they saw, whereas the eyes of the generals were blinded by greed. Dissentchnik (1981:12-13) continues to tell how he argued with his father, who refused to publish any of this in his newspaper, saying: “What you tell does not surprise me. No story about Moshe Dayan will surprise me. He’s capable of any bad deed. But we will not write such things about him. Moshe Dayan must be accepted as he is, with the good and the bad in him... because we need him. When D day comes, he is our hope and our savior”. In response to which Ido asked, “regardless of price”? The answer of his father was unequivocal and quite typical of the period, “there is no price for the independence and safety of a nation.” After the 1973 war, the father admits his mistake, and remarks that he knows many more stories about Dayan, mostly about money, but he would still not publish them, because “after all these years, it will be hypocritical on my part.”

Another direct and credible eyewitness was Uri Yarom, who happened to be the helicopter pilot who carried Dayan's looted finds. In his autobiography, Yarom (2001:170-173) tells about the "Steiner operation" in 1956- after the German word *Stein* (stone). Dayan is explicitly mentioned as the one responsible for this 'operation', in which he used the new military vehicle- the helicopter- to haul the heavy antiquities. Yarom landed at Abu Rudeis where, "over a picnic-lunch, the commander of the camp described our next mission: to reach to the ruins of Serabit el Khadem... and carry a load of stones of archaeological-historical value, already marked by Shmaryah Gutman, and to land them at Abu Rudeis. The booty [sic, *shalal* in Hebrew- R.K.] will be loaded on a Dakota plane [at Abu Rudeis], to be taken to Israel" (Yarom 1971:171). The looting took place on 27.11.56; Yekutiel Adam and Uzi Narkis, two high-ranking officers of the IDF, were present in the helicopter. They made three rounds at least, taking an inscribed stele, a large obelisk, and "a few more pieces". Some 20 soldiers helped to transfer the 'booty' to a plane going home, in which they themselves hoped to get a lift for a leave. According to Yarom, one stele with Hathor's face was damaged by a careless driver when loaded on a military truck. Most of the stones, writes Yarom, reached the Hebrew University collection, but at least one "found its way to the private collection of Dayan (Yarom 2001:173). A photo of an obelisk being hauled by the helicopter from the site appears in the book.

Rumors (which I could not verify) explain that when Dayan was handed the query about this in the Knesset in 1971, he did make his homework. He took the stele out of his house shortly before the scheduled date of discussion. Then he testified in the Knesset that he does not have any stele from Serabit el Kahdem in his house *at the moment*. This, in his eyes, made him truthful.

Professor Ze'ev Meshel of Tel Aviv University, in an interview made on 15.1.02, recalls that he saw stelea from Serabit el Khadem in the IDAM stores in Shlomo Hamelekh street in Jerusalem. A former IDAM worker, Shimon Nahmani, showed them wrapped in cloth

inside a room closed to the public. He told Meshel that the IDAM never asked for these stelea, and that Dayan brought them suddenly in 1956 without warning. They did not know what to do with them. I have heard similar versions of this same story from other archaeologists, who asked to remain anonymous. According to them, after the peace treaty with Egypt was signed, the IDAM had to work hard in order to persuade the air force to return these very heavy antiquities to Sinai.

The case of Serabit el-Khadem demonstrates the myth cultivated by Dayan, and especially by his daughter Yael, that he never lied and did everything openly, with knowledge and even consent of Israel's authorities, hence he was not a despised "burglar at night". Those who advocate this myth seem to confuse two things. The style of bad deeds, that is, whether they are made in broad daylight or under cover of darkness, cannot vindicate the deeds themselves. Many details remain enigmatic. Shmaryah Gutman is well known as a capable archaeologist and excavator of Gamla in the Golan Heights, and perhaps his name was involved by mistake. Yet, many knew and participated in the looting. They also knew that Dayan's answers in the Knesset were not truthful.

2.3 Givataim (1958). Dayan carried digging in Givataim, a town on the outskirts of Tel Aviv, for two months without finding anything, but then he found a "treasure". The nature of this treasure is not clear (the story is told by Yael Dayan 1986:108). According to IAA archives (administrative files), Chalcolithic period ossuaries were reported from Koslowski hill in Givataim (coordinates 132/164) as early as 1951, and on 24.8.1958 the Department of Antiquities asked the Ramat Gan police to prevent damage to antiquities discovered on Ha-Gilboa street. Baruch Isserlin, supervisor of this area, reported in a letter dated 21.9.1958 that citizens living in Givataim told him that Dayan visited the site once again during the holiday of Rosh Hashanah (New Year) and asked to arrange a salvage excavation. It was carried out in November- December 1958. Varda Sussman and Sarah

Ben Arieh excavated eight graves, of which six had already been robbed or ruined (Sussman and Ben-Arieh 1966:27). Ben-Arieh (pers. comm.) testified that Dayan came to visit her excavation, but she refused to cooperate with him. “*Ha-Olam Hazeih*” published a short note on 20.11.1963, according to which Dayan heard that Chalcolithic ossuaries were found in Givataim, went there on Saturday and robbed caves, but “the municipal council of Givataim demanded of him to return these finds, reproaching him harshly that a man of such high public position breaks the municipal law that forbids to take archaeological finds.” Shimeon Ben-Zvi, then mayor of Givataim, indeed wrote to the IDAM on 2.6.1964 (Givataim administrative file, IAA archive): “ossuaries found [at this site] have been taken by antiquities lovers, anyone can come and take... We want to stop this infamy and put a hand on the antiquities, which are found at this hill”. However, Dayan kept his booty. Chalcolithic ossuaries from Givataim from Dayan’s collection were published by Perrot and Ladiray (1980:27, Appendix 2), and after Dayan’s death were found in his collection (Ornan 1986: 1-2, 111-113).

2.4 Tel Birah (Bir el-^cArabi) near Kibbutz Yasur (August 1959). A letter from 26.8.59 (IAA Archives, administrative file Tel Birah) by Adam Druks describes how military units damaged a grave during training, and officers robbed vessels from the grave and refused to hand them back to Y. Ben-Yosef, IDAM’s “Antiquities Trustee” in this area (“Antiquities Trustees” were a voluntary body of the IDAM, raised to help the chronic shortage of personnel by reporting damage to sites, new discoveries, etc.). The excavation was stopped, but the grave remained open; in the next morning a group of children from Kibbutz Yasur, who went “to see the soldiers”, found a car and Moshe Dayan, digging and taking vessels out of the grave. Ben Yosef was again called to the place, and, upon arrival, “demanded from General Dayan to leave the vessels in peace or at least hand them to his custody, as an antiquities-trustee of this place. To this, he [Dayan] responded- that if

Yas'ur is ready to exhibit these vessels, he, General Dayan, is ready to loan them these vessels." The letter continues: "It appears that this morning Dayan visited the IDAM and described to Mrs. Miriam Tadmor a vessel, which, he said, was handed to him by an anonymous soldier from an anonymous place in the Galilee. He refused to give the name of the soldier or the site, claiming that revealing this source of information will lead to stopping it". Druks concludes: "we ought to infer from these reports.. that Dayan's words and Rot's words [about the grave at Tel Birah] describe the same grave".

On 2.9.1959 Moshe Prausnitz visited the IDF chief of staff's office, and filed a complaint on 6.9.1959. The complaint clarifies that the robbery started during army training around 10th August 59. It also specifies that Dayan robbed this site on 23.8.59. A letter by Prausnitz from 30.9.1959 estimates that "the excellent vessel held by Dayan now" was probably found in the first days, and this led to more robbing, stopped only on 24.8. "Eight vessels are known [to be held] by Mr. M. Dayan. He visited the site on 23.8.1959 and found two small vessels (water juglets). 8 broken vessels were returned by two high army officers". The IDF, directed by chief of staff Gen. Haim Laskov, started a military investigation and promised to return the vessels, estimated by Prausnitz to be in the number of dozens. The two high rank officers who were involved in the investigation were appointed to new positions, so Prausnitz was notified, and no further results were reached. "The military investigation", wrote Prausnitz on 30.9.1959 "does not relate to Mr. Moshe Dayan, who is a citizen"...

Seventeen years later, Dayan himself casually revealed who was the soldier and robber who gave him the vessel and helped him to rob this grave. It was General Yekutiel Adam ("Kuti"). Dayan (1976:258) described a meeting with Kuti, "who shared my interest in archaeology", before the 1967 war broke: "Kuti poured his heart to me at his being unable [because of the war alert] to use the bulldozers at his disposal for archaeological digs. If only, he said, he could find a tomb in this region like the one he had discovered in Yissor!

[sic]. Some time before, he had found several beautiful jugs in that tomb and had offered one to me”...

2.5 Azur (between 1957-1975?). Dayan started to rob this site as early as 1957 (Perrot and Ladiray 1980:27, 43). He made many robbing visits to this site, on the southern outskirts of Tel-Aviv. Arie Rosenbaum, a local 10 years old child then, helped him. Dayan exchanged antiquities with Arie, who used to inform him when antiquities were revealed during construction works. Dayan claimed that he was saving antiquities that would otherwise be ruined by the construction (Dayan 1978:132; Ben-Ezer 1997:217-222).

Menashe Busheri (Brosh), the IDAM supervisor of this area, reported more than once during 1964 that the site was being robbed. On 30.11.1964 Brosh reported (Azur administrative file, IAA Archive): “I made a tour near the Philistine cemetery, and it seems that there are excavations outside the fence. The area is full of pits and broken vessels... This area, situated outside the fence recently built by the Moslem Department of the Ministry of Religion, does not contain late burials, and is purely an Iron Age cemetery. Broken parts of vessels are thrown in heaps, including Philistine decorated fragments. It is very difficult to protect this site, since it seems that it is being robbed on Friday nights and Saturdays [Israeli weekends- R.K.]. Since this is not the first report I am writing on [illicit] diggings at this site, I think an act to save this important site must be initiated, otherwise I’m afraid it will be too late”.

On 7.1.1965 Brosh caught Dayan robbing this place. There are two reports by Brosh (Azur administrative files, IAA archives), from 7.1 and 13.1.1965. Both reports are very similar, but the second is longer- presumably Brosh was asked to hand a more detailed report. I will quote this report here: “On 7.1.1965, at 15.15, while driving on the bus from Tel Aviv to Ashdod on my way home, I saw someone who seemed to be digging at the site. I asked the bus driver to halt at the nearest bus stop, and from there walked back on foot to the site

of the Philistine cemetery. On arriving, I saw Moshe Dayan [later, the word “Mr.” was added above the line] digging in the site and taking out parts of vessels. I greeted him, and addressed him with a question:

Question: Do you know that you are digging in an antiquities site?

Answer: To the best of my knowledge the antiquities site is in the fenced area, and here are neither fence nor a sign to indicate that this is an antiquities site.

Question: Do you think that these sherds, taken out by you, are ancient?

Answer: Undoubtedly.

Question: Do you know that a dig in order to take antiquities is an offence even in an area not defined as an ancient site?

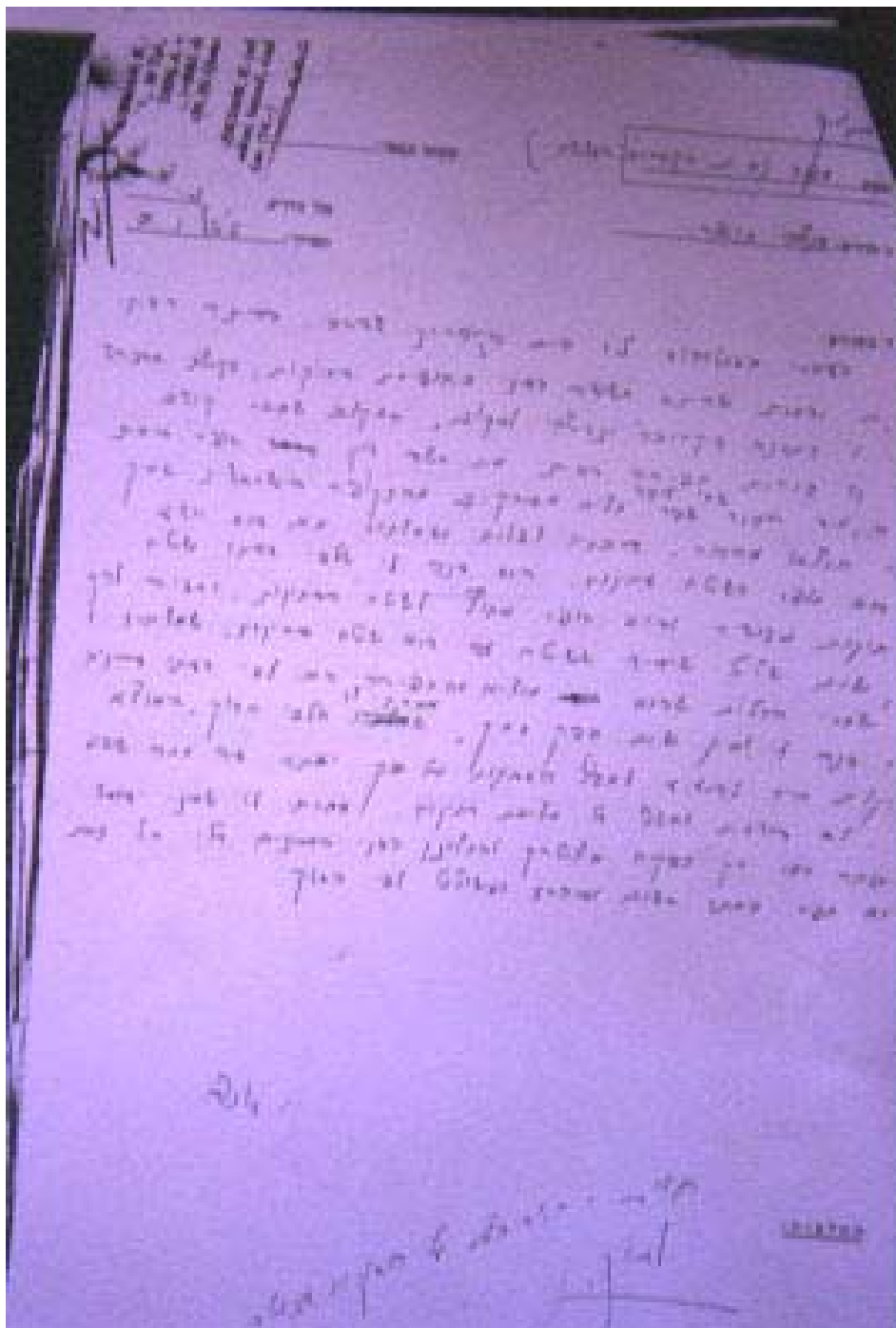
Answer: I do not know about it.

Question: According to the law one who finds antiquities must inform the Department of Antiquities. And according to the best of my knowledge no notification was given by you about finding antiquities at this site?

Answer: No, I do not know that I should have done so.”

The conversation was perhaps less dramatic in reality, but in any case, Brosh continued thus: “During this short conversation I explained to Mr. Dayan that the fence was not built by us, but...in order to protect the [later] Moslem burials from damage. A sign stating that this is an antiquities site is posted at a prominent location on top of the hill. I told Dayan that I would file a complaint against him to my superiors. I took with me the broken vessels that Dayan exposed and went. On 10.1.1965 I notified Dr. [Avraham] Biran, head of the IDAM, and Y[oseph] Naveh, area supervisor. On 11.1.65 I approached the Jaffa Police room no. 5 to Lieutenant ---- [name missing- space left empty]. To his question, against whom the complaint is, I answered, against MK [member of Knesset/MP] Moshe Dayan. He went to the officer in charge of the station who explain to me that one cannot file a complaint against an MK unless the presidency of the Knesset rescinds his immunity.

One needs first to apply in writing to the presidency of the Knesset on the matter, and only then, with such letter the police will deal with the case.”



Hand-written report by Brosh about Dayan's activities at Azur, January 1965. Courtesy the IAA Archives, Jerusalem.

According to Teveth (1972:321), on January 15th 1965 Dayan was summoned to the police following the complaint against him, after he declared that he is ready to forego his parliamentary immunity. He was questioned on January 25th, but reached an agreement

with the IDAM (headed by Avraham Biran and Shmuel Yeivin)- so he was not prosecuted. This agreement was condemned by Yadin, according to Teveth (1972:321; similar story repeated in Slater 1991:326-327): “when they tried to explain the awkwardness of their position in dealing with the misdemeanors of a former Cabinet minister, the hero of the Sinai Campaign, and now a member of the Knesset, Yadin told them: “You’re the criminals, not he! If you allow him to dig, what will all the small fry do?” Despite these words and despite his own stature and influence, throughout his whole life, Yadin never *wrote* anything about this affair or against the illegal activities of Dayan in general.

The circumstances surrounding the complaint to the police are not clear, for, on July 20th 1965, a tabloid called “Bul” published the story of Dayan’s illegal digging at Azur. According to this report, “Bul” photographer Avi Naveh managed to photo Dayan robbing the site on 9th July 1965. Gad Peri, a reporter of ‘Bul’, asked Dayan why he did not notify the IDAM about his finds, but Dayan retorted “if you want, you can notify them”. A complaint was handed to officer Doron of the Tel Aviv southern district, and the two ‘Bul’ workers were invited to testify. Thus, either Dayan returned immediately to looting Azur and was caught twice during the same year, or the police inquiry of the case started only after the journal’s exposure, not because of Brosh’s complaint... The one clear fact is that Dayan was never brought to justice and the case was closed. According to Dan Ben-Amotz (1974:32), Dayan promised to the police to stop all illegal acts. The 1965 event is alluded to in Ilan (1986:7), who interviewed Orna Hess of the IDAM. She said that the complains against Dayan were closed, she doesn’t understand why. She also said that the IDAM tried about 1976 to do something, but was told that antiquities robbed by Dayan years ago are under ‘law of obsolescence’, so he cannot be prosecuted any more.

Dayan referred to a ‘deal’ with the IDAM when writing: “I was less happy having to part with the vessels I had collected [at Azur]. It was with no ease of heart that I handed them all over to the antiquities Department. I was left with only a few sherds... (Dayan

1978:132). What did he mean by “few sherds”? A photo of an ossuary from Azur, glued by Dayan, appears proudly in ‘Living with the Bible’ (Dayan 1978:40), as well as that of an Iron Age I wailing figurine from this site (Dayan 1978:43). Ossuaries from Azur in Dayan’s collection were published by Perrot and Ladiray (1980:27, 41, 43). Artifacts from Azur were found in his collection after his death (Ornan 1986: 32, 72). Yael Dayan (1986b:15) claimed that Dayan’s ‘alibi’ to continue digging was a letter from the IDAM, stating that the department has free access to the collection and the right to visit occasionally and confiscate items that were “valuable for a museum”. She claimed that they also did take such items. Again, the collection as it was in 1981 proves that rarely, if ever, was anything confiscated. Slater (1991:326) says that Dayan himself proposed in the 1960s that IDAM officials “cart off whatever part of his collection they wished. They removed half the collection.” If so- where are publications of such finds, or IDAM archaeologists who heard or participated in such confiscations? Surely the IDAM would have presented such confiscation as an achievement, especially after being blamed for not acting against Dayan. The Minister of Education, responsible over the IDAM, confirmed in the Knesset that the IDAM had not visited, registered, or confiscated anything from Dayan’s collection during eight years between 1963 and 1971 (*Divrei HaKnesset* 7/3, 1971). This includes 1965, when the Azur incident occurred and supposedly there should have been such a confiscation. The whole story of an agreement between the IDAM and Dayan is confused. It is inconceivable that the IDAM would have handed Dayan an official letter allowing him to do further illegal diggings. Dayan, his daughter Yael and other supporters try to turn some agreement, perhaps about Azur, into an official permit or alibi for robbery of antiquities all over Israel. If such a permit existed, why did Dayan or his supporters never publish it?

Even being caught by the IDAM did not stop Dayan from robbing Azur again. On 14.12.1966, Brosh wrote (Azur administrative file): “I was informed by local kids that the

digging is performed by Moshe Dayan...on Friday afternoons and Saturdays. By the way, this is in the same place where I once saw Dayan excavating". On 20 March 1968 Dayan was injured by a landslide during robbing of a grave at Azur. Dayan himself wrote about it, since he was hospitalized for three weeks and the story could not be held in secret (Dayan 1976:337-342; Dayan 1978:132; Dayan Y. 1985:195-197; Teveth 1969:262-267; 1972:320-321, 356; Elon 1971:284; Dayan R. and Dedman 1973:224; Falk 1985:262-265; Amitai 1998:8; Slater 1991:304-305). It could not be kept in secret because of rare combination of circumstances. The failure of the digging at Azur happened to coincide with the failure of the IDF at the Karameh operation in Jordan; Dayan went digging on the same day, and people wondered about Dayan's decision to go digging rather than supervising the operation. On this matter see also Amitai (1998:8).

Ido Dissentchnik knew that Dayan was injured during looting at Azur when he arrived, as a journalist, to the hospital to interview Dayan. Dissentchnik phoned Avraham Biran, head of the IDAM, and asked him: "Are you going to file a complaint against him? Biran, having heard that Dayan might be dying, retorted: Do you think that my only worry is to charge the defense minister with something like this?" (Slater 1991:305-306).

Even after this accident, Dayan returned again to Azur to see if anything is left, as he proudly tells (Dayan 1976:342; Ben-Ezer 1997:222). In 1975, a short notice [Jerusalem Post 1975:3, author not named] appeared about a left-wing MK named Dov Zakin, who accused Dayan for carrying out illicit digs at Azur in April 1975, taking a large quantity of vessels from "a Canaanite period tomb". He asked Aharon Yadlin, then Minister of Education responsible over the IDAM, to "probe the allegations and take steps if needed". Yadlin, it seems, never took steps against Dayan (cf. H. Bar'am 2001:43).



Dayan is visited by Prime Minister David Ben Gurion when he was hospitalized as a consequences of the injuries he suffered during his illicit dig at Azur. Courtesy Uri Avneri and Ha-olam Ha-zeh.

2.6 Probably most of Dayan’s looting was done in areas conquered after 1967 and under his own military rule. There he faced no democratic institutions to oppose him. For exactly this reason, we know very little about his deeds in the West Bank and Gaza after 1967. The cases brought above are not exceptional, nor the worst. Perhaps the worst case of antiquities robbery by Dayan happened at Deir el Balah in the Gaza strip and concerned dozens of Late Bronze Age anthropoid coffins and their contents (for the site and the finds see Dothan 1973; 1978; Givon 1977; Hestrin 1972; New Acquisitions 1972; 1975). However, it is a long story, whose details are partly still obscure. Surprisingly, photographs of Dayan looting sites were published, mainly after the six days war, when he became a national hero. A large photographic album of victory edited by P. Yurman (1968, without page numbers), shows pictures under the following captions: “The amateur archaeologist surveys the area, equipped with a shovel” (Dayan with two soldiers in uniforms behind him). “After surveying a cave which may have had antiquities” (Dayan sorting a hewn cave). “Checking carefully something in the far away Negev: an ancient

sherd? A sherd of a jug? Behind him his chief of staff” (this picture shows both men in uniforms, with hunched backs, looking after antiquities in the ground).

3. ‘GIFTS’

3.1 Apart from looting antiquities on his own, or with army comrades, professional robbers or personal friends, Dayan also received and gave antiquities. In many cases the lines between gift, acquisition or looting is blurred. During earlier years of his ‘hobby,’ Dayan received considerable help from army comrades and friends. This was an improvised net based on personal ties and appreciation or sometimes on dependency of lower ranks on their commander. Dayan also used personnel and equipment of the army for his private hobby (Dalumi 1991:9; Slater 1991:327). Ariel (1986:9) claimed that Dayan even ordered a training exercise with soldiers practicing entrenching to be located at a known antiquity-site, so that once the exercise was over he could come and look for antiquities. Other IDF commanders began to follow Dayan in collecting and robbing antiquities (Ariel 1986:9; see Dayan’s own words, 1976:258).

Yael Dayan, his daughter and “protector” and according to whom the defining characteristics of her father were “pragmatism, flexibility, extreme cautiousness, and- ho!- lack of selfish ambition for power” (1990:6), rather naively, give examples of this situation in her diary of the 1967 war in Sinai, without any awareness of the ethical problems involved. She notes that Dayan received help of generals as well as of simple soldiers. On the brink of war, Yael met an army bulldozer-driver named Amiram: “there is no time for archaeology, said Amiram, who used to go to my father often whenever he dug and found something which could be a grave or an ancient dwelling” (Dayan Y. 1967:18). Later, General Yekutiel Adam (“Kuti”) collected flint arrowheads with Yael (Dayan Y. 1967:35), giving them to Dayan (Dayan Y. 1967:39-41; cf. Dayan 1976:129). Kuti found a Roman-period jar in El-Arish and told Yael: “here’s something for your father!... I still

did not have time to search the area, but maybe he will like this one” (Dayan, Y. 1967:136).

3.2 Gifts could be also very large antiquities: “A large stone [from Wadi Mukhateb in Sinai] bearing Nabatean inscriptions lies in the garden of my home at Zahala... It was brought to me some time after I left the Ministry of Defense [in 1974] by a young man who worked on road construction in Sinai... I thanked him warmly, and agreed to his request not to mention his name so as not to get him into trouble with his employer. He said that the contractor “doesn’t like us to meddle with such things. If we come across antiquities we are to bury or hide or destroy them, for otherwise government officials come out and stop all work” (Dayan 1978:88-89, with photo). In the Hebrew version of this book the man says, “if we come across antiquities we are to destroy them immediately” (Dayan 1978:80). Dayan (1978:89) ended this story with a moral conclusion: “both they [the inscriptions] and the stone are an integral part of Sinai”. He somehow forgot that this integral part of Sinai lies now in his Zahala garden in Tel Aviv. This is an example of his double standards: instead of notifying the IDAM, so that a salvage excavation can be arranged (perhaps there were more antiquities in the vicinity?), Dayan received ‘a gift’, torn away from its integral place, and as a consequence lacking any archaeological context.

4. BUYING AND “BUYING” ANTIQUITIES

4.1 There is evidence that that Dayan was buying antiquities as early as 1956. But after the 1967 war he started to buy antiquities on a large scale in shops in the West Bank and Gaza, mainly in Jerusalem (Dayan Y. 1986a:142). In Jerusalem alone, Dayan frequented four different shops (Dayan 1978:215); but he also bought from stores and private individuals in Hebron, Nablus, and Gaza. The exact extent of buying is unknown, and the few items detailed below give just an example.

4.2. The Governor of Raphiah. Dayan (1981:246-8; Falk 1985:346-7) bought this stone head for 5,000 Israeli pounds (at that time, a considerable sum; if it was bought in 1971-1975 period, then the amount stood in the range of U\$S 700-1200) from Haj 'Omar, an antiquities dealer in Jerusalem. The name was given by Dayan, but the head portrays Raamses II, not any local governor; and even the exact place of origin is not certain. The identification of the Egyptian king was made by Professor R. Giveon of Tel Aviv University: "Giveon was not late in coming. I presented the head to him and waited for his verdict... The head, he said, was excellent. Genuine, Egyptian, and interesting. As far as he knows, it is the only one in such [large] size found in Israel" (Dayan 1981:247-8). Perhaps this explains why, when visiting Bonn on a state mission in 1978, Dayan posed for a picture next to a bust of Raamses II in the Bonn museum (Keller 1978:3).

4.3. Neolithic Stone Mask. Dayan bought after 1967 a Neolithic stone mask from an antiquities dealer who lived in 'Idna. He went to the field where the mask was supposedly found by an Arab tractor-driver, and while "running my hands through the upturned earth in this field", the owner of the field approached him. The last complained that the hired driver got the money, not him, who owes the land, so Dayan compensated him with 50 Israeli pounds. Dayan also learned the tractor-driver had no license- since he had a left eye missing, just like Dayan himself, so Dayan gave the driver a "note" to the Beer-Sheba licensing bureau, asking them to arrange a license, hinting that they should not ignore the power of one eyed-men to see things (Dayan 1978:18-19, photos 19 and frontpiece). Dayan (1978:20) handed the mask to "experts of the government department of antiquities for their study and confirmation of dating"- but it remained in his property.

4.4. An Incense Stand bought after 1967 from Abu Ali, a Bedouin of the Ta'amrah tribe in the Judean desert, supposedly from a burial cave south of Bethlehem. According to Dayan's story, the vessels were found by Palestinian fighters hiding in the cave. "Antiquities were

one thing and terrorists another”, writes the Defense Minister who was in charge of the war against the latter (Dayan 1978:111).

4.5. Ammonite King. Dayan also bought antiquities smuggled from neighboring countries.

“The finest piece of antique sculpture in my Zahala home”- an Ammonite Iron Age II stone head- was smuggled from Jordan and bought by Dayan in Israel. “When I bought this bust I realized that I had acquired a rare antiquity. But only later did I learn that it could well symbolize the figure of King David, wearing the crown of the King of Ammon” (Dayan 1978:190-192). The completely imaginary relating of this head with King David shows how little Dayan understood archaeology as an academic profession. The poor Ammonite head was placed on a bookshelf between the Bible on one hand, and works of David Ben-Gurion on the other hand, “for nothing in these books is unknown to it” (Dayan 1978:193; in the English version of the same book, books on “the history, geography and archaeology of the land of Israel” are mentioned). Admirations of Dayan’s “deep knowledge” in archaeology (Y. Dayan in Ornan 1986:9; Y. Dayan 1986b:16-17; Aarons 1982:36) are based on total ignorance of what archaeology should be.

It is often difficult to assess whether Dayan bought something or received it as a gift. When Egyptian Pharaohs speak about gifts, it is often euphemism for trade or political bribe. Dayan used his status to receive ‘gifts’ for which less influential people would have had to pay dearly. A journalist named Yosef Zuriel documented this during one of Dayan’s shopping visits in East Jerusalem: “A few days after the six days war I received a tip from the police, that Moshe Dayan goes to purchase antiquities in the Old City [Jerusalem]. I went there and he was already in the shop with a little hammer and magnifying glass, surrounded by people and the shopkeeper serving him, bringing him sherds, and vessels, and glass finds. He bought something, they put it in a bag and placed in the Jeep. And then Dayan asked how much is it. The owner of the shop answered, ‘com’on, leave it’, but Dayan insisted- so did the owner. Finally, Dayan wrote a check for

2500 Israeli pounds (ca. U\$S 830 in 1967) and gave it to the owner of the shop. Everybody went but I stayed and asked the owner what was the real price. He says: “*Dahilak*, he’s the Ministry of Defence, I am keeping the check for souvenir.” I immediately came to the office and handed the story to the newspaper. Next day I opened it, and nothing. I went to the head of office, Yehoshua Yustman, and asked what happened, and he said that Dissentchnik [the Editor] said: ‘after this victory [of 1967] Dayan is allowed to make mistakes’... I suppose today it would hit front page. Then journalism meant national responsibility” (quoted in Lori 2002:34).

5. THE VALUE OF ANTIQUITIES- DONATING AND SELLING

5.1 Dayan occasionally gave antiquities from his collection, e.g. to the king of Morocco (Dayan 1981:42; Ben Ezer 1997:286). A Chalcolithic ossuary from Azur reached the Louvre, Paris, where it was proudly marked as a donation from Dayan (Ben-Ezer 1997:219). Ruth Dayan gave, for Christmas, an ancient lamp from Dayan’s collection to a Christian father in Nazareth (Dayan R. and Dedman 1973:237). When Ron Miberg, a journalist, visited Zahala in 1977, Dayan gave him a head of a Roman pillar as a gift for Miberg’s father (Miberg 1991:20).

On special occasions Dayan gave antiquities to relatives. When Yael gave birth, he gave her a statuette of a lioness and a cub (Dayan Y 1985:193; Yael’s introduction in Ornan 1986). Sometimes Dayan could not offer love or affection, so he gave antiquities instead (Dayan Y. 1985:108; Yael’s introduction in Ornan 1986). Dayan’s grandson Saar showed interest in archaeology, and was allowed to chose three items from the collection in each visit to his grandfather. “Well, Saar, what shall I miss from the collection this time?... Usually, he would allow me to take one [item]; during hours of special generosity, all the three” (Dayan S. 1991:20). On his last visit, Dayan gave Saar a special holiday present of ten scarabs. According to Saar, they came from Egypt: “Grandfather knew that my interest

in archaeology reached a point where I could distinguish real from fake. He lit the lamp, held close the magnifying glass...and we both looked at the scarabs like experts evaluating the merchandise” (Dayan S. 1991:20). Indeed, the term merchandise is appropriate here.

5.2. Dayan also sold antiquities. When Yael Dayan was married in 1967, he sold a few valuable antiquities to the Israel Museum, including a fish-shaped vessel from Tel Poleg, to finance her wedding. This is documented in a Museum newsletter (New Acquisitions 1968:72), but the price is not specified (the vessel was later published by Gophna 1969). Gradually, Dayan became obsessive with money (Dayan A. 1994:161), and used antiquities as a source of income, which he hardly needed. He sold oil lamps signed with his name (Dayan Y. 1985:231, 254, 256). Unlike claims to the contrary, he also sold finds that were excavated illegally. Yael admitted this, and she knew, because she bought from him finds on which he marked the place of origin (Y. Dayan 1991:15). Public Museums knew as well, and bought from Dayan antiquities marked in his handwriting, including anthropoid coffins from Deir el-Balah. Yaacov Meshorer of the Israel Museum said “Dayan had even sold a number of precious pieces to the Museum” (Aarons 1982:28). Yael Dayan complained that she had to pay her father for a signed oil lamp- which she intended to give as a present to a third party (Y. Dayan 1985:255). She complained about an Eames armchair- not an antiquity this time- which she bought as a “deal”, but returned because it was an imitation (Dayan Y. 1985:255). She complained because she hoped that she, as a daughter, would receive antiquities cheaply or free of charge; or because, in the case of the Eames Armchair, she was cheated. The merchandise sold by the dealer, General Moshe Dayan, was fake.

5.3. The case of Kh. Gomer is an interesting example. It is a site near Lahav, about 5 kms south west of Tell Eitun in the Judaean Shephelah (Coordinates 1399/0976). During the 1970’, Amos Kloner was supervisor of the area for the IDAM, and he heard in summer 1973 about the robbery of a burial cave at this site. He surveyed the cave, with the help of

John Landegraff. There was an Aramaic funerary inscription in Hebrew letters above the entrance which they planned to take out, but the 1973 war broke and Kloner was called to active military service. Upon returning, he met Joseph Naveh to discuss robbery of sites. Naveh told Kloner that he saw a new inscription held by Dayan, and described it to Kloner- it was the same inscription from Kh. Gomer. The inscription was brutally carved out of the rock. Kloner phoned Dayan, and tried to speak with him about the inscription, but Dayan said he had no time for him. Kloner approached A. Biran, and negotiations with Dayan started. Dayan claimed that he bought the inscription for a considerable sum. Finally, the Ministry of Education had to allocate 2500 Israeli pounds (ca. US\$ 600 in 1973) of its budget for paying Dayan. The Minister of Defense of the State of Israel sold the inscription to the State of Israel (Kloner, interview 20.3.2002; Kloner 1986:96-97, n. 3).

5.4 Recent confirmation of Dayan's involvement in smuggling of antiquities is found in an interview held with Shlomo Moussaieff (on Moussaieff see Shanks 1996:27-31). Moussaieff, a famous millionaire who divides his time between London and Israel, admitted that in the 1950' he himself "smuggled gold and antiquities from Jordan to Israel"... but says "it is hard for me to depart from my antiquities, so I am not an antiquity-trader but a collector." Until he left for London in 1963, Moussaieff, "through dealing with antiquities became acquainted with Moshe Dayan... I used his *tender* [vehicle] to transport antiquities. In return, I gave him antiquities. Sometimes we used to go to dig together" (Liebowitz-Dar 2001:26).

6. THE COLLECTION AND ITS FATE

6.1 Nobody disputes the wealth and diversity of Dayan's collection, but can it be detached from its owner and become a basis for enthusiasm and admiration? For example, Aarons (1982:36) writes: "his collection transcended avarice or possessiveness. It was his poetry,

his statement, his romance with history.” A closer look at this romance involves a lot of monetary details.

Dayan turned his Zahala house into an archaeological garden (Dayan 1976:125; Ben-Ezer 1997: 122-3). At first, the collection was a source of joy, but it gradually became an obsession. Pictures of the garden were published, e.g., “In the family circle, on uniform and in a civilian [dress]”- Dayan holding an ancient bowl. Another photo states that “archaeology requires not only patience, but also wisdom-of-hands”, showing Dayan restoring a clay jar (Yurman 1968). In fact, museum workers had to re-treat many objects, because Dayan’s restorations were not good (Ornan 1986: introduction; M. Ben Gal, interview 2.9.01).



Dayan in his Zahala Garden of Antiquities. Courtesy Uri Avneri and Ha-olam Ha-zeh.

- 6.2** The last meeting of Dayan and his family in the garden is mourned by Yael Dayan in these words: “Father sat on the garden swing, surrounded by his offsprings, a tribal patriarch... the children were all over the place, climbing into Roman sarcophagi and sitting on Byzantine gravestones and church pillars, dipping apples in honey, as it is customary in

Rosh Hashanah, having a good enough time” (Dayan Y. 1985:260). In the Hebrew version (Y. Dayan 1986a:189), the children also toyed with bronze church-bells.

According to Yael Dayan, Rahel (Dayan’s second wife) invited antiquities dealers to evaluate the collection soon after his death (Dayan Y. 1985:269; cf. Aarons 1982:28-29). Many of “the less rare antiquities” were sold together with the Zahala house (Dayan Y. 1986:288; 1986b:16-17; Ariel 1986:9; Silberman 1989:127-128). A journalist named L. Inbal (1991:9) saw a few antiquities during an interview of Rahel Dayan in her new flat, and admired how the world of Rahel “is still surrounded on all sides by Moshe Dayan”. There is no further description of these ‘leftovers’.

6.3 Most of the collection was sold by Rahel Dayan to the Israel Museum for US\$ 1,000,000 mostly paid by a donation of B. and L. Tisch of New York (Ornan 1986:1-2; Aarons 1982:28). According to the public relation officer of the Israel Museum at that time, if correctly quoted by Segev (1986:61-62), Rahel Dayan demanded US\$ 2,000,000, and a donor was found but asked to break this sum into payments. Rahel refused, and finally an agreement was reached: Rahel allegedly sold to the Museum what Dayan “bought” for US\$ 1,000,000, and donated the rest, what Dayan “acquired illegally”. Yael Dayan (1986b:17) explains that Rahel Dayan “even gave-up half a million dollars [by not selling to higher bidders], thus acquiring for herself an honorable place of a willing supporter [of the Museum], with open heart and generosity.” Segev found no written evidence for such a separation, and rightly suspects this apologetic story. Broshi (1986:27) seemed to believe it, but in a paper published in the Israel Museum Journal, naturally not a place for criticism. Aarons (1982:29) received the same story, presumably from Meshorer: “the part of the collection that Dayan had bought (about 90%) was purchased with US\$ 1,000,000. The rest 10% of the collection, illegally excavated by Dayan, was simply given to the Museum as part of the deal.” Pay attention to the peculiar use of language. On the one hand, a commercial transaction, on the other hand, “simply given” antiquities. Slater

(1991:328) mentions a similar division- only now 85% are bought and 15% are robbed. This story does not fit what Teveth wrote in total admiration of Dayan only a few years earlier: “the unique aspect of the collection is the fact that Dayan himself uncovered and reconstructed most of the pieces” (Teveth 1972:202).

6.4 During his life, Dayan actually promised to donate the collection (Aarons 1982:28). Meshorer explains why he changed his mind: because of “family obligations” and the fact that Dayan realized “he was going to leave a young widow” (in Aarons 1982:28). But Dayan’s young widow, Rahel, was not exactly poor- she sold the Zahala house for US\$ 400,000—a huge sum in Israeli terms of that period (Slater 1991:441). Furthermore, Dayan left very little to the rest of his family, so what did his “family obligations” mean? Dayan never apologized for his deeds, and from all we know, never had any intention of doing so. Shortly before his 55th birthday in 1970, Dayan told Teveth (1972:202) that “the one thing about old age that worries me is that I might not be able to dig with a pickaxe from morning till night”.

6.5 About a hundred objects were published by the Museum (Ornan 1986; cf. also Clamer 1986), with introductions that glorify Dayan- one written by another antiquities collector, Tedi Kollek (former mayor of Jerusalem), the other by Yael Dayan. No wonder they do not see any problem. Yael Dayan (in Ornan 1986: introduction) even believed that her father acquired “deep knowledge” and shared with them “the secrets of Hieroglyphs and the delicate observations about levels of cultures and their meanings”. The feelings of Tallai Ornan, the curator, against this collection and the way in which it was acquired were expressed in an interview (Bar Kedma 1986:24), but she was in no position to decide. The managers of the Museum were proud of buying the collection and of exhibiting it. Meshorer (in Aarons 1982:28-29) felt that he had “accomplished a national mission” in saving the collection from being dispersed, so at last the “books [sic] of the Department of Antiquities, which was so much embarrassed by Dayan, can now be closed”. (The IDAM

never held any “books” about Dayan; complains by citizens who saw him digging illicitly were collected in a secret dossier marked “complaints file – Moshe Dayan”. I could not locate this dossier at present, and according to rumors it was intentionally destroyed many years ago). Aarons (1982:29) happily concludes: “The reputation of the Dayan collection is now assured, that of the collector must be left to history”. More details about the fate of the collection after Dayan’s death can be found in Zemer (1991), which I hope to review in more detail in the future.

7. REACTION TO DAYAN’S ACTIVITIES

The discussion below reflects a preliminary stage of research. The conclusions are tentative, but still noteworthy.

7.1. During Dayan’s Lifetime

7.1.1 During the early 1950’, Dayan was completely free, and his deeds were unknown or unnoticed by authorities and the public. Between 1956 and the early 1970’ Dayan became a national hero, his actions became more overt, and criticism commenced. At four sites, at least, Dayan was caught on person during the act of illicit robbing of antiquities: at Benaya near Gedera in 1957 and also in 1962, at Tel Birah in 1959, at Azur in 1965 and at Tel Megadim in 1968 (only two cases were described here). Dayan was caught by IDAM workers or by citizens, but even when a military or police investigation started as a result, he was so strong that people refused to complain or testify against him; or the allegations were abolished on some irrelevant pretense. While simple field workers of the IDAM carried their duties and tried to interfere, higher authorities failed. The ability to act was inadequate, but authorities also showed lack of will to act. They did not realize that this would only make the problem more difficult to solve later. Efforts were directed at hushing up the embarrassing scandal, instead of at exposing the villain. Furthermore, the IDAM was subordinated to a government in which Dayan served as an important minister, hence

the motivation and ability to act against Dayan were inadequate. Even when he was questioned in the Knesset, the IDAM helped to protect him. Part of the problem was the prevailing norm, according to which high army officers and leaders were not treated as common citizens. Even Biran, head of the IDAM, admitted that Dayan broke the law and was not prosecuted. Biran's excuse was that other robbers were not prosecuted as well, for "it required a lot of effort to prosecute in most cases, and it was not important. No one was holding the equivalent of the Elgin marbles". These words were said many years after Dayan's death (in Slater 1991:326), and -if correctly quoted- they raise numerous questions.

7.1.2 Leaders of Archaeological research institutions (including Yadin, who had an especially high status) also failed to stop Dayan. One (unverified) story claims that Yadin complained to Ben-Gurion, Israel's first Prime Minister, many times about Dayan, and finally it was concluded that Dayan is not allowed to dig illicitly, but is allowed to "go after the plough"- that is, to pick 'stray' antiquities. If true, such a vague term gave him free leash. As late as 1976, Yadin as editor of *Qadmoniyot* accepted and published a paper on the Machpela cave in Hebron, written by no other than Moshe Dayan (1976b). Archaeologists knew about Dayan, visited his house, saw the collection, and some were given permission to publish items from it.

7.1.3 Even before his downfall in 1973, Dayan was criticized by dovish, radical and/or left-wing politicians and journalists. Their criticism was motivated not so much by love of antiquities, but by hatred of his politics. However, because of their political standing, they were treated as enemies and their criticism was discarded even when it was accurate. Such early critics included Dan Ben Amotz and Uri Avneri. Dan Ben-Amotz published detailed reports in the radical newspaper "*Ha-olam Ha-zeh*" ("This World"). In December 1971 he made a long list of accusations against Dayan, republished in one of his books (Ben-Amotz 1974:29-34): Dayan robbed antiquities; lied about it; abused his high position by using

army personnel and material for his private aims, sold antiquities, and did not pay income taxes for profits from selling antiquities. Desperate about the authorities' lack of action, Ben Amotz staged a "demonstrative excavation" at Tel Qasileh near Tel Aviv. The police only took his *turiyah* [hoe] and did not arrest him. He complained at the police, but the file was closed on pretence that the complaint was unfounded (for another early critique see Geva 1977).

7.1.4 Uri Avneri, a journalist, radical politician who was also an MK, handed a series of queries against Dayan on 6th December 1971 in the Knesset (cf. Kim 1991:4). Dayan denied all allegations. He claimed that he never bought antiquities for money and did not hold "any antiquity of archaeological value that is not known to archaeologists working in Israel Museum, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv Universities and the IDAM. Furthermore, archaeologists used and are using, freely, all the finds in my collection for their scientific work and exhibitions". Dayan said that he "never sold or gave an Israeli object of archaeological value to someone who has no authority [for dealing] in that by the IDAM ... to the best of my knowledge I do not transgress the law of antiquity and do not use bulldozers, tractors, lifts, trucks and helicopters for excavating and delivering antiquities." Dayan only admitted that occasionally he visited sites while on work-tours (*Divrei HaKnesset* 7, 1971, no. 62:532).

Avneri (*Divrei HaKnesset* 7, 1971, no. 62:533) surprised Dayan with another question: "I am holding in my hand here an advertisement from the "Los Angeles Times" of 12.10.1970, where archaeological items of the Biblical period "from the famous collection of Moshe Dayan" are offered for sale, priced 100 or 200 dollars each. Have you received permit to excavate, search, trade or export antiquities, and if not- what is the origin of these antiquities"? Dayan replied (*Divrei HaKnesset* 1971, no. 62:533): "This is not exactly another question, certainly not relating to the Ministry of Defense, but I will gladly answer... I already said that according to the best of my knowledge, I did not transgress

any law of antiquities. Second, I do not export or trade in antiquities. As for the advertisement, it is conceivable that the buyer or man from Los Angeles bought while in Israel antiquities from my collection... Occasionally, I take out surplus items from my collection and sell them, so perhaps he bought them in Israel and later sold them in Los Angeles.” Avneri’s remark: “but this is definitely against the law” remained unanswered.

A second round of queries was heard on 22.12.1971 (*Divrei HaKnesset* 7/3, 1971, no. 62:721). Yig’al Alon, answering for the Ministry of Education, admitted that Dayan had not received permit to excavate, export or trade in antiquities. Furthermore, no supervision of his collection was made “after December 1971”. Avneri asked Prime Minister Golda Meir on 19.1.1972 whether ministers are allowed to trade; whether she investigated if Dayan trades in antiquities; and if so, was he required to cease? Golda Meir answered (*Divrei HaKnesset* 7/3, 1972, no. 62:1053) that the law does not specifically forbid a Minister to trade; that she was informed that all these complains were checked properly. Avneri asked: “Honorable Prime Minister, it is a question of principles: does right order permits a minister in the state of Israel to be a professional trader, in any kind of merchandise? Does not the Prime Minister have an opinion about this? Golda only mocked him: “If MK Avneri wishes to ask about good order- he may, though I am not quite sure if he is interested in my private opinion. In any case, if he is, he can ask me privately, and if I find it worthy of answering him, I shall.” (*Divrei HaKnesset* 7/3, 1972, no. 62:1053).

As long as Dayan was a national hero the media refrained from criticizing him, turning a blind eye to his deeds, with very few exceptions. This attitude changed after 1973, but then Dayan was mainly robbing sites through help of others, or buying antiquities, not digging with his own hands.

7.2. Criticism by Biographers

7.2.1 Most of Dayan's biographers do not condemn his deeds. Taslitt barely mentions Dayan's interest in archaeology, and does so in praising terms: "the farm tools tucked away in the trunk of his car were for a purpose quite apart from agriculture- to dig for ancient sites and uncover relics from days long gone by" (Taslitt 1969:158). Teveth (1972) does not accept Dayan's hobby-horse as good, but repeats and accepts his arguments for defending it. Teveth also admires the man 'above the law', and his contempt is directed towards those who fail to stop him. Teveth (1972:202) quotes Dayan's words that "if he were given the choice of digging for antiquities half of his life and spending the other half in jail, or not digging at all and remaining a free man, he would choose the former." Teveth (1972:202) also admires Dayan's collection: "the precious relics in the garden, as well as in his house, have made ancient Israel, Egypt, Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean Islands an inseparable part of his daily thoughts." Falk (1985, cf. Adler 1987) was the only biographer who criticized Dayan's digs clearly and consistently, perhaps because he, a psychoanalyst, was used to handle deceptive statements (regardless of the contribution of this psychological biography, which can be doubted). Falk understood that Dayan's claim of saving antiquities is paradoxical, and that "the fact that Israeli society was not able to limit the narcissistic greatness complex of Moshe Dayan, and put an end to the attitude that he can do whatever he wants, is a sad evidence to its lack of maturity at that time". It was like in the period of the Judges before the Kingdom, said Falk, quoting Judges 21:25 (Falk 1985:246).

7.2.2 Surprisingly, later biographers did not follow Falk. Slater repeated Dayan's excuses and the unfounded appraisals of his deeds: "As time went Dayan became a great expert in the subject. He had a dexterity that enabled him to take the relics and piece them together into a whole" (Slater 1991:161). "By all accounts, Dayan was a superb archaeologist... the commonly held view of Moshe Dayan as an archaeologist was unfailingly complimentary;

it was said that he had a keen sense of where to dig, and when he reached a site, he had the diligence and patience of a prospector looking for gold” (Slater 1991:161-162- not understanding that archaeology is the very opposite of gold prospecting). “Besides, through some of Dayan’s efforts, valuable relics were saved from being destroyed by oncoming bulldozers” (Slater 1991:326). As late as 1997, Ehud Ben-Ezer still had a tone of approval and admiration: “Moshe does not intend to devote himself to archaeology, like chief of staff Yadin... he remains an amateur. But what an Amateur!” (Ben Ezer 1997:121; cf. Ben Ezer 1997:218-219).

7.3 Criticism following the display of his collection

7.3.1 An event that furnished occasion for public debate about Dayan’s illicit digging was the display of his collection in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem in April 1985. Many criticized the Israel Museum for displaying stolen antiquities, and for buying them for so much money. Most clear is Tom Segev (1986:61-62). Segev mocks Dayan by reference to an old white porcelain night-pot of Winston Churchill, exhibited in the London WWII bunkers, which he had once seen, “but Churchill, as far as I know, had not stolen this pot, and if he had, his widow had not sold it back to the state”. Other critics included Ariel (1986:9); Bar Kedma (1986:23-24); Ilan (1986:7); Hareven (1986) and Boshes (1986). A demonstration of a group of archaeologists took place at the opening day of the exhibition (Ilan 1986:7; Meshel, pers. com.). Though some still admired the collection and the Museum (Aarons 1982), it seems that the wide public started to despise Dayan’s deeds as a result of this exhibition. The Israel museum soon dispersed the collection.

8. CONCLUSIONS

8.1 It is not easy to conclude such a long and complicated story. First, it must be made clear that Dayan never was an archaeologist. Only blind followers can call him “a superb

archaeologist” (Slater 1991:161). Dayan was a robber of antiquities, who had never acquired nor showed the slightest interest in acquiring scientific knowledge, such as methods of excavation, dating, stratigraphy, etc. This is the very soul of archaeological excavation, which should never be a crude search of nice finds. Dayan never took academic courses in archaeology, though he had an opportunity in 1959. His allegedly “deep knowledge” was confined to antiquities-dealing- identifying forgeries, estimating monetary value, bargaining and possessing ‘merchandise’.

8.2 Dayan honestly loved his hobby and was searching for roots and everything that could come under that term. When he became Minister of Defense in 1967, he chose four pictures “reflecting Jewish history” to decorate his office- including one of the Egyptian temple at Serabit el Khadem (Dayan 1976:354-5). He associated all antiquities with his roots, because he related it first of all with himself. Chalcolithic or Canaanites dwellers were *his* forebears, this was the important point, and not the religion they practiced. Hence those who disliked Dayan’s allegedly ‘Canaanite’ or ‘un-Jewish’ preferences miss the point (e.g. Sheshar 1986; Rosenson 1991). Dayan was eclectic in his collection. What allured him was the “hunting”, the sense of danger and excitement, the pride in doing it himself and the desire to possess. Possession was a key motive in his life. Archaeologists also know the same desire- we often err in speaking about “our sites”, “our finds”. Archaeologists collect books- a sublimation of the same desire. But this is legitimate, and we do not use army helicopters for that aim.

8.3 The evidence indicates the immense scope of Dayan’s illicit robbery of antiquities during three decades. From an innocent help by friends, he gradually developed nets of informers and accomplices- children, soldiers, robbers and dealers. From symbolic gifts, he moved into precious items on the antiquities-markets. Nothing mattered except possession: Dayan robbed sites even when they were being excavated at the same time by professional

archaeologists; hampered scientific excavations while robbing sites; damaged sites with bulldozers; and used army equipment and personnel for private gains.

8.4 Miberg's verdict (1991:20), that Dayan corrupted in his archaeological activities the whole archaeology of Israel is too extreme. Yet, Dayan's activity caused a lot of damage by undermining principles of law and order in a democratic state. Dayan corrupted others. Army commanders started to cultivate their own collections; citizens erected private antiquities gardens. Dayan did not invent or cause all these phenomena, but because of his high public status, he became a negative model for others. It is common for modern states to use archaeological sites and finds in order to prove common descent, rights to disputed territories, and political legitimacy. Archaeology and antiquities are used to weld social bonds and consciousness that build nations (cf. Smith 1991; Anderson 1983). While antiquities belong to humanity in general, we still live in a world of nations in which antiquities are said to belong to nations. Although this is not an ideal system, it is far better than the former world of antiquaries and private ownership of antiquities. Thus, one cannot justify Dayan as a sort of modern Robin Hood who fights 'the establishment'. Dayan was part and parcel of the establishment, and all his digging and robbing were done to satisfy his private greed.

8.5 Because of an unfortunate combination of factors, Dayan was not stopped. This was due to his very high position and influence, to the weakness of the IDAM at that time, to the lack of act by the higher authorities, and to the shortcomings of the Antiquities law. The Israeli law of antiquities in use today was passed only in 1978, and even this law does not prohibit dealing and selling of antiquities. The failure to stop Dayan cannot be placed at the feet of the IDAM alone. Museums bought robbed antiquities from Dayan, archaeologists published selected finds from his collection, the media turned almost a blind eye to his deeds and the police and the Knesset ignored complaints against him. The failure to stop Dayan shows the state of immaturity of society as a whole (Falk 1985:245-246).

8.6 Fortunately, there is an optimistic side to this story, when we compare it to the situation in Israel at present. What Dayan did is unthinkable today. The media is much stronger, and criticism of public figures is a daily matter. Prime Ministers cannot escape police inquiries, and Ministers are condemned in court (as recent cases of Ministers Der'i and Mordechai prove). The IAA, the body that replaced the IDAM in 1989, is also much stronger. Supervision and protection of sites are better and result in many more sites being saved, or at least documented by salvage excavations (Kletter and De-Groot 2001). The public, by large, accepted the view that robbing antiquities is illegal, and that antiquities are a public treasure. The once common habit of individuals placing antiquities in their gardens, for example, has passed away. Museums signed an international treaty prohibiting purchase of stolen antiquities. I am not naive to think that all the problems are solved, and Israel is still a focus of a large scale illicit robbing and trade in antiquities. No doubt, archaeologists still make mistakes, but almost all academic and professional archaeologists in Israel today would never lend a hand to illicit robbery and trade.

In his poem *Gerontion*, T.S. Elliot (1935:38) writes: “After such knowledge/ What forgiveness?/ Think now/ History has many cunning Pages/ Contrived corridors/ And issues, deceives with whispering ambitions/ Guides us by vanity”. After this long and laborious review, the question whether the “books” about Dayan’s illicit archaeological activities should finally be closed is a matter I leave for readers to decide.

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