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Author(s): Ann E. Killebrew, Dana DePietro, Reema Pangarkar, Shelley-Anne Peleg, Sandra Scham and Evan Taylor

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ARCHAEOLOGY, SHARED HERITAGE, AND COMMUNITY AT AKKO, ISRAEL

Ann E. Killebrew

Dana DePietro

Reema Pangarkar

Shelley-Anne Peleg

Sandra Scham

Evan Taylor

ABSTRACT

The international significance of Akko's heritage is best illustrated by the inscription of two UNESCO World Heritage sites in this town of just over 55,000 people. This article describes three projects that focus on the concept of a shared heritage at a World Heritage site in a multi-ethnic, multi-religious, diverse town situated in a region that continues to experience ongoing religious and ethnic conflict. The most recent, and still ongoing, effort to balance archaeology and community interests is the Tel Akko Total Archaeology Project. While attempting to incorporate community building through archaeology and dialog, the Total Archaeology approach described here aims for a socially just and inclusive archaeology that will benefit local community stakeholders rather than disenfranchise them. It also emphasizes the need for local perspectives and experiences to play an active role in the interpretation of the past.

KEYWORDS: Akko, Acre, Akka, Tel Akko, total archaeology, community archaeology, shared heritage, UNESCO World Heritage Site

There has been much discussion in the past two decades about public versus community archaeology versus public-interest archaeology. Archaeology that involves the community often is described as focusing on the empowerment of communities in the archaeological process, thus making the needs of the present equal with the analysis of the past in every aspect of the project.¹ There is a dearth of projects, however, that attempt to work within established archaeological frameworks to educate, engage, and bring together diverse, sometimes antagonistic, communities by means of understanding the past as shared heritage. The authors of this paper and the Tel Akko Total Archaeology Project (TAP; <http://www.telakko.com/>)² attempt to accomplish just that.³ At Tel Akko, Total Archaeology encompasses past, present, and future communities. Akko's past is reconstructed by means of excavation, survey, geophysical analyses, environmental studies, and landscape archaeology, utilizing 3D technologies to document the excavation process. Our custom designed multi-disciplinary archaeological field school, on-site conservation program and community-outreach efforts aim to promote the training of future archaeologists and engagement of Akko's contemporary inhabitants with its rich heritage, as well as encourage commitment to protecting its future (Killebrew and Olson 2014; Killebrew and Quartermaine 2016). Within this framework, community engagement includes (1) targeted community outreach, (2) a study of

the impact of heritage on Akko's many stakeholders, and (3) a program designed to bring together diverse communities by means of the message of a shared heritage. We approach this through the documentation of Akko's multi-layered tangible built heritage and the intangible heritage of the city's different ethnic and religious groups, a study of the impact of UNESCO's World Heritage designation on Akko's inhabitants, and outreach programs that highlight Akko's shared heritage and encourage community agency in its protection.

Our interest in applying a framework of shared heritage at Tel Akko TAP is in reaction to the history of heritage in the region being defined as a resource for nationalist claims-making (Silberman 1989; Abu El-Haj 2001) and more recently the economic repurposing of historical and archaeological sites for mass tourism (Baram and Rowan 2004; Baram 2008; Killebrew 2010). A. Labrador theorizes shared heritage as "a culturally mediated ethical practice that references the past in order to intervene in alienating processes of the present to secure a recognizable future for practitioners and prospective beneficiaries" (Labrador 2013: 1). As archaeologists working to open up a piece of the city's past at the Tel Akko excavations, we hope to create and maintain a space where local knowledge, histories, and aspirations can find traction with our expedition's objectives. Using a framework of shared heritage does not suggest that all communities and institutions in the city should ground their identities and sense of belongings in a common referent in the past. Rather, it is an ethical stance that sharing knowledge of a place (which may include a range of different historical epistemologies among participants and team members) can foster empathy, co-existence, and collaboration.

Community outreach in the context of the Akko project seeks to raise consciousness and awareness, and encourage different ways of interacting with a past that often forms a physical part of people's homes and work places (Little 2012). Outreach has always been the active component of public archaeology, but outreach at Akko encourages engagement with communities that are the most recent inhabitants of a locale with a history spanning over five millennia. Exploring the impact of heritage in the community is the complementary obverse of making heritage relevant to local populations.

The approach used in this project for working with communities is akin to what Clifford Geertz called "thick description," that is, the careful observation and attention to both objective details and the possible meanings those details convey. Our method aims to privilege discourse with communities over generalized group discussions of their "heritage" based on the interpretations of outsiders. The process of observation and absorption must take into account, as Geertz cautions, that "we are not actors, we do not have direct access, but only that small part of it which our informants can lead us into understanding" (Geertz 1973: 20). This is never more important than it is with respect to examining a heritage that, whether willingly or not, is shared by a community. In a diverse community, this is difficult enough. In a community that is divided by ethnic and religious differences as in Akko it is exponentially more so (Scham 2015).

Akko's Past and Present Communities

Approaching the past and present at Akko as a continuum, we incorporate a holistic view of its tangible and intangible heritage. Akko's twenty-first-century inhabitants are, as they have been in the past, a mixed community that represents the major cultural traditions and religions of the region. This historic town is home to numerous synagogues, churches, and mosques as well as the locale of the Sufi Shadhiliyya-Yashrutiyya Zawiya world spiritual center and the most revered site for the Baha'i community. In the old city, elaborate Ottoman buildings sit on top of the best-preserved Crusader town in the world. To the east of the old and new cities, on-going excavations on Tel Akko (Tell el-Fukhar) are revealing the earlier settlements dating to the third through late first millennia BCE (Fig. 1). During this time, Akka or Ake as it is referred to in ancient texts, or Akko as it is referred to in the Bible, was a Canaanite and Phoenician city-state whose significance is attested to in New Kingdom Egyptian, Neo-Assyrian, Achaemenid, and Greek historical sources (for a general history of Akko see Schur 1990; regarding second- and first-millennia-BCE historical sources, see Dothan 1976: 1–3).

In the Hellenistic period, the anchorage at the southern base of the mound where the Na'aman River meets



FIG. 1

Regional map depicting Tel Akko in relation to the old city and modern Akko. (Graphic work by B. R. Olson. Satellite imagery Courtesy of 2012 Nokia, 2012 Digital Globe, and Microsoft Corporation.)

the Mediterranean Sea began to silt up. In response, the city, at that time known as Ptolemais, moved westward to areas now covered by modern Akko and its old city. With King Herod's construction of the harbor at Caesarea, the centrality of Ptolemais declined during the Roman and Byzantine periods. Following the seventh-century-CE Islamic conquest of the region, the city's original Semitic

name, Akka, was restored. At the beginning of the twelfth century CE, Acre, as this harbor town was known by European Crusaders, once again served as a major maritime center and main port of disembarkation for both European pilgrims and settlers. After the surrender of Crusader Jerusalem to Salah ed-Din in 1187, Acre became the capital of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem and its

wealthiest city, second only to Constantinople. In 1291, the town was conquered and destroyed by the Mamluks, led by al-Malik al-Ashraf (for a discussion of Crusader sources see Folda 1976: 4–6; Grabius 1983; Kesten 1993; for a brief summary of later historical sources, see Dothan and Goldmann 1993: 17).

After the Ottoman conquest in 1516, Akka gradually began to regain its importance. In the late eighteenth century, this port town became the capital of the vilayet of Sidon under Pasha Ahmad al-Jazzar, who developed Akka into a political and military center strong enough to defeat Napoleon in 1799 during his unsuccessful siege of the city. It remained an important and prosperous town until 1832 when Ibrahim Pasha besieged and destroyed many of Akka's buildings. The city was damaged again during the Oriental Crisis of 1840 when it was bombarded by the allied British, Austrian, and French squadrons. Turkish rule was restored in 1841. Akka's fortunes improved during the final days of the Ottoman empire with the construction of the Hejaz Railway linking it with Haifa (Fig. 2; see Sharon 1997: 26–29 for an overview).

Akka fell under British Mandate rule in 1918. Subsequently it was assigned to the Arabs in the 1947 partition of Palestine, but was captured by Israeli forces in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. As a result of these clashes, many of Akko's Arab inhabitants fled, leaving their homes unoccupied. Initially, Jewish immigrants and displaced Arabs were settled in these properties by the Custodian of Absentee Property. Later, Amidar, a state-owned housing company, was appointed to lease and administer these residential and commercial structures that fell under the Absentees' Property Law and its later amendments (Fischbach 2003: 77). As a result, most of today's residents in the old city arrived after 1948 and do not own their homes, which in many cases are designated as historic buildings. The remaining property in Acre either belongs to Muslim and Christian religious institutions (10%), with a smaller percentage (5–10%) owned privately (see, e.g., Khirfan 2014: 26–31).

Known today as Akko in Hebrew and Akka in Arabic, the town comprises two sections: the underground Crusader city covered by the living historic Ottoman-period walled old town, often referred to as the old city of Acre, and the new city outside the perimeters of the

historic walled town (Fig. 3). Its population of 56,000 inhabitants is approximately two-thirds Jewish and one-third Arab. Of those, between 5,000–9,000 residents, mainly Arab and of a lower socio-economic class, live within the historic old city. Akko's international significance has been validated by the inscription of two UNESCO World Heritage sites in this town of just over 55,000 people: (1) the old city of Acre, Israel's first UNESCO World Heritage site in 2001; and (2) the Baha'i garden of Acre, which is a part of the Baha'i Holy Places in Haifa and the Western Galilee, in 2008.

The Relationship between Akko's Tangible Heritage, Local Institutions, and Its Communities: An Overview

Two key criteria of Acre's inscription as a UNESCO World Heritage site included the preservation of its tangible built heritage together with a concern for the protection and well-being of the current communities living within the historic old city (see, e.g., World Heritage Committee 2002: 6 regarding community concerns). The importance placed on preserving the local community is highlighted in the original decision by the World Heritage Committee to designate the old city as a World Heritage site, which requests "that the State Party incorporate into its management plan a coherent policy for the improvement of the economic and social condition of local residents of the old city of Acre and to ensure that it remains a living city" (World Heritage Committee 2002: 44). These concerns are reflected in the most recent Master Plan. First conceived in 1993–1994, it recognized that the old city was suffering from neglect, a lack of modern urban infrastructure, and a very high rate of unemployment (Abu Baker 2000: 128–31). Implemented by the Old Acre Development Company, a quasi-government agency under the jurisdiction of the Israel Ministry of Tourism (<http://www.akko.org.il/en/About-the-Old-Acre-Development-Company>), it replaced the 1962 Kesten development plan that had focused largely on tourism without taking into consideration the old city's residents. In contrast, the most recent plan also addressed the living conditions of Acre's inhabitants (Peleg 2017: 181). Among

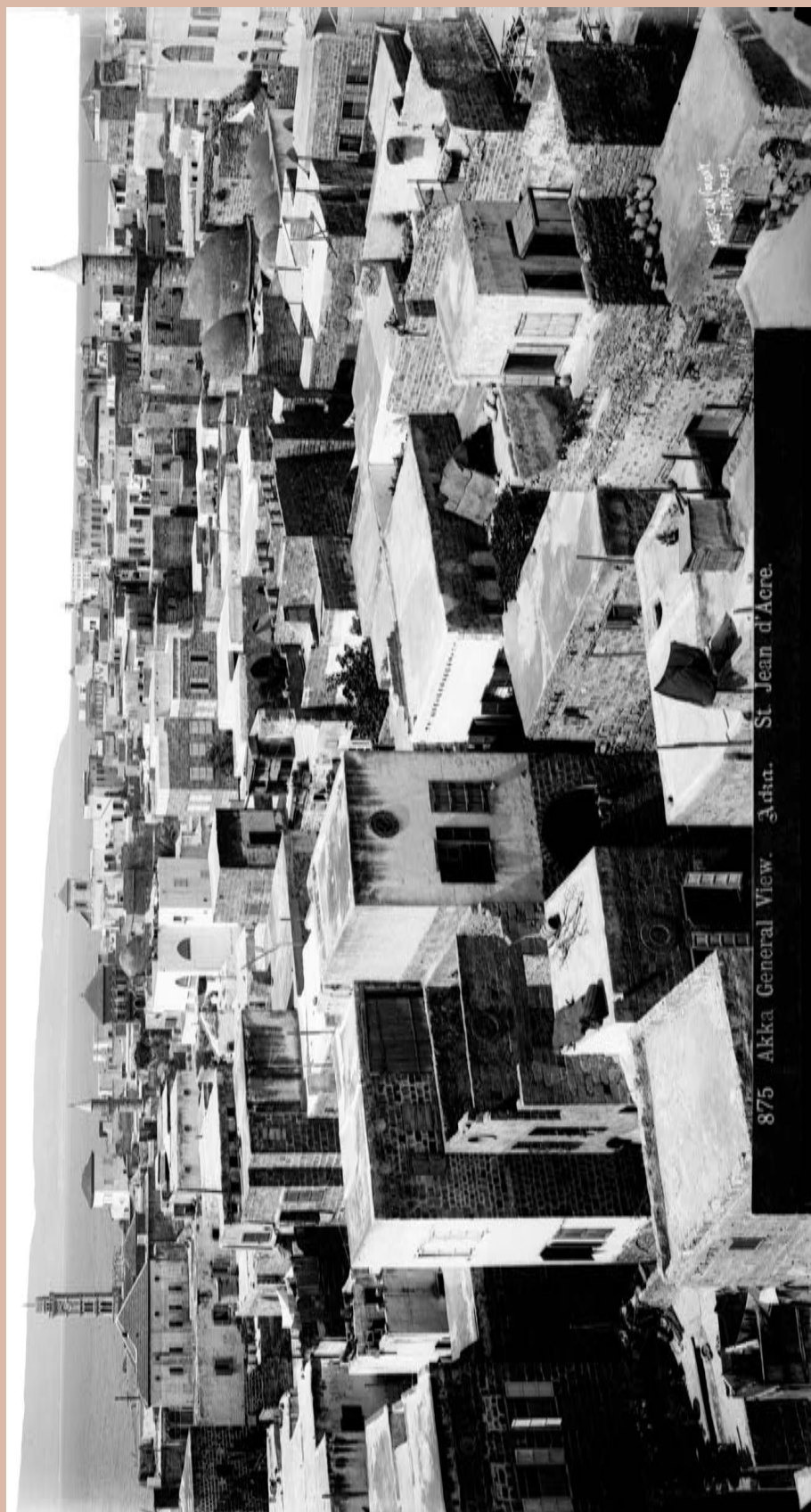


FIG. 2

View of Ottoman-period Akka, looking south across the Bay of Haifa towards the Carmel Mountain range. Photo taken between 1898 and 1914. (Photo: American Colony [Jerusalem] photographer. Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, LC-DIG-matpc-07132 [digital file from original photo], LC-M361-875 [b&w film copy negative]; <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/mpc2004007509/pp/>; detail: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Akka_between_1898_and_1914_matp_c.07132.jpg.)



FIG. 3

Aerial view of Old Acre and the new city of Akko. (Photo by Y. Dekel, CC BY-SA 4.0 [<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>].)

its major accomplishments are the renovation of the old city's infrastructure, including the installation of new pavements and floors in the alleys, street light systems, and a new sewage system (<http://www.akko.org.il/en/Acre-Tourism-Development-Strategy>; Peleg 2010: 59, 87).

The 1993–1994 Master Plan also envisioned tourism as a major impetus for the economic development of the city and a means to address the high rate of unemployment in the old city itself (Pasternack 2000: 195–96). To better present Acre's rich Crusader heritage for touristic development, extensive excavations and conservation projects were necessary that over time increasingly recognized the importance of Acre's residents (Rahamimov 2000: 220–42; Khirfan 2014: 54–57). Crusader attractions such as the Crusader Citadel (Fig. 4) and the Templar Tunnel (Fig. 5), whose touristic appeal is well known at Acre and other sites (Scham 2002), were prioritized along with several Ottoman period monuments, including the restoration of the impressive Turkish Bath (Fig. 6; Pasternack 2000: 177–87, Brook 2000).

Recognizing both the historical and touristic importance of preserving Akko's Crusader and Ottoman-period architecture, the State of Israel in 2007 added a conservation addendum onto the Master Plan with the primary purpose of preserving Akko's tangible built heritage. It outlined standards for building activities in residences and businesses that exist within the historical structures built during the Ottoman period 100–300 years ago, which rest directly on top of and incorporate Crusader structures. These guidelines include height restrictions, procedures for building additions and renovations, specifications for architectural elements, and instructions for building materials. While having a positive impact on the protection of Acre's historic structures, these regulations also pose ongoing challenges for residents living in the old city (Peleg 2017: 207–8). On the one hand, these protected buildings contribute to the beauty and uniqueness of Akko as a living heritage city. On the other hand, adding modern infrastructure, such as electricity and running water, into these historic structures requires



FIG. 4

View of the Column Hall, which likely served as the dining room in the Citadel of Acre (Knights' Halls). This compound was the Hospitaller order's main headquarters in the thirteenth century. (Photo by A. E. Killebrew.)



FIG. 5

The Templar Tunnel, a 350-meter long tunnel that connected the templars' fortress to the port. (Photo by A. Jones, CC BY-SA 2.0 [<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/>].)



FIG. 6

Restored Turkish Bath (Hamam al-Basha) and its multi-media public presentation. (Photo by Zxc0505, CC BY-SA 3.0 [<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/>].)

technical and financial resources that are beyond the means of the majority of the old city's inhabitants.

Additional complications relate to the original building materials of the historic structures. These include walls that were constructed out of a local type of sandstone known as *kurkar*, which deteriorates in Akko's climate and is difficult to protect (Figs. 7, 8, and 9). Other costly materials that appear in these historic buildings are wood, used for roofs, windows, and doors, and marble, employed for steps, pavements, window openings, and ornamental elements (Cohen and Na'aman 2004). Beautiful ceiling and wall paintings that once decorated the interior of Acre's Ottoman period houses are deteriorating and require expensive conservation work (Fig. 10). Unfortunately, the use of cheap, modern materials such as plasterboard walls, aluminum, metal, and concrete to repair, modernize, or expand their houses

and businesses, often installed by tenants themselves, damage the historic buildings and have contributed to the most common structural problems in the old city (Figs. 11 and 12).

Addressing these concerns and recognizing the need to protect Acre's deteriorating historic structures, a conservation appendix was approved in 2007 and added to the Master Plan. In addition, the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) established a Conservation Field Office in the old city of Acre. One of its goals is to assist local residents improve their living conditions within Acre's historic buildings, discourage the use of inappropriate and illegal building materials, and provide tenants with tools and materials that are better suited for historic buildings (see, e.g., Kazakov 2014). A second institution, the International Conservation Center—Città di Roma (ICC), was established in 2005 by the IAA, in



FIG. 7

Deteriorating façade of the Old Acre Community Center (House of Crafts) two decades after initial restoration work. (Photo by A. E. Killebrew.)



FIG. 8
Remnants of the Crusader-
period Pisan Harbor wall prior to
conservation work. (Photo by D.
Matisons, CC BY 2.0 [[https://
creativecommons.org/licenses/
by/2.0/deed.en](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/deed.en)].)



FIG. 9
Pisan Harbor wall after the
completion of conservation work
to protect the deteriorating stones.
(Photo by J. Munro.)



FIG. 10

Deteriorating Ottoman-period ceiling painting in the Khammer House (Beit Shukri) prior to restoration work for the Efendi Hotel (2004). (Photo by A. E. Killebrew.)

cooperation with the Akko municipality and the Old Acre Development Company. The ICC aims to promote practical conservation training programs and public awareness about the protection and conservation of Israel's archaeological and historic heritage. Its mandate includes training and educating Akko's population regarding correct conservation procedures of Acre's historic structures by means of conservation workshops for local residents. It also serves as the national and international training center for the practical conservation of built heritage (Peleg 2010: 139; Giladi 2013).

Over the years, the conservation and restoration in the old city has had a positive impact on Acre's built

heritage (see, e.g., a series of articles published online that summarize a variety of conservation projects carried out in old Akko/Acre by the Conservation Department of the IAA: http://www.iaa-conservation.org.il/Article_Subjects_eng.asp?section_id=3). However, attempts to involve the community in the future of their historic town and to improve their quality of daily life have been mixed (see Khirfan 2014: 112–13, 118 for an overview). One promising development, driven from within the local community, is the creation of home-based bed and breakfasts and hostels enclosed by Acre's walls. It addresses the high rate of unemployment while taking into consideration the old city's culture of hospitality



FIG. 11
Modern additions to residential buildings in Acre, before restoration work.
(Photo by A. E. Killebrew.)



FIG. 12
Modern additions to structures currently used as shops, restaurants, and houses in Acre.
(Photo by A. E. Killebrew.)

(Fig. 13). In addition to these community initiatives, new boutique bed and breakfasts (Fig. 14) and hotels (Figs. 15 and 16), restaurants and other tourism-based businesses, are gradually generating new employment opportunities and improving the economic prosperity of the town (Peleg 2017: 233–34).

Community Outreach and World Heritage at Akko

Despite international recognition, institutional or governmental outreach efforts, and improved living conditions, local responses to the declaration of Akko's old city as a protected archaeological site have been mixed. Local residents often feel alienated or antagonistic

towards Akko's heritage, fearing gentrification and disenfranchisement (see, e.g., Khirfan 2014: 114–16). To address these concerns, three community outreach projects have been implemented by the Tel Akko TAP, together with the ICC, University of Haifa, Palestinian Association for Cultural Exchange (PACE),⁴ and the Society for Humanitarian Archaeological Research and Exploration (SHARE).⁵ The Wye River People-to-People Shared Heritage Project (2001–2005); an impact study of how Akko's status as a UNESCO World Heritage has affected its residents; and a youth-outreach program (still ongoing), encompassing the town's diverse communities through the promotion of shared heritage, were undertaken for the express purpose of examining the relationship between the city's inhabitants and their heritage.



FIG. 13
Locally-owned budget Sand Hostel. (Photo by A. E. Killebrew.)



FIG. 14
Breakfast at Arabesque, an arts and residency center that provides accommodations and hosts special events. (Photo by J. Munro.)

Wye River People-to-People Shared Heritage Project

The Wye River People-to-People Shared Heritage Project served as the first stage of our expanded community-based shared heritage program. This initial project, funded by the United States Department of State as part of the Wye River Memorandum between Israel and the Palestinian Authority in 1998, explored the shared heritage of Israelis and Palestinians. Teams from the University of Haifa and the PACE implemented community-based heritage projects at several locales in the West Bank and Israel (see, e.g., Balter 2002; Killebrew et al. 2006). Between 2001 and 2005, a team of archaeologists funded by the Wye River Project, in partnership with the Israel Antiquities Authority, implemented several programs dealing with

Akko's diverse communities. The Wye River Project had three major goals pertaining to Akko that have either been realized or are being implemented. First, the extensive British Mandate period archival material relating to Akko's heritage has been digitized and made accessible to the public via the Israel Antiquities Authority website ("The scientific Archive 1919–1948": http://www.iaa-archives.org.il/search.aspx?loc_id=15002&type_id=). Second, diverse students from the University of Haifa and Wye River team members have completed a study of Akko's tangible and intangible heritage and its community ties through collecting historical sources, documenting conservation efforts through the years, and recording community oral histories of 18 historic structures in the old city of Acre (see Fig. 17 for a list of the 18 historic monuments; Killebrew and Raz-Romeo 2010). These include houses of worship (the Jewish community/Ramchal Synagogue, Greek Orthodox community/Church of St. George, the Malkite Greek community/St. Andrew Cathedral, Muslim community/Al-Mualeq Mosque, and the Sufi Shadhiliyya-Yashrutiyya Zawiya), Ottoman-period structures and monuments (including Khan al-Umdan and the Serai) and 19th–early 20th century villas (e.g., the House of Crafts [Fig. 7] and the Khammer House/Beit Shukri [Figs. 10, 15, 16, and 18]). Lastly, a project that is currently in progress is community involvement in the conservation and protection of Akko's heritage, now being implemented by the Tel Akko TAP (see below).

The Impact of UNESCO World Heritage Designation on Akko's Communities, Stakeholders, and Tourism

Building on the insights that resulted from the Wye River People-to-People Project, the Tel Akko TAP commenced in 2010, incorporating a vigorous community engagement program. From the beginning, we believed that our work would benefit from a deeper understanding of how residents currently understand and encounter "heritage" in their daily lives. We were also interested in speaking with local business owners, heritage professionals, and tourists to understand how the recognition of the old city of Akko as a UNESCO World Heritage site impacted their livelihood and experiences.



FIG. 15

Ottoman-period triple-arch window adjoining a balcony, Khammer House (Beit Shukri) prior to restoration work for the Efendi Hotel. (Photo by A. E. Killebrew.)

The old city of Acre was designated a World Heritage site according to three selection criteria from the World Heritage Convention:

- *Criterion (ii)*: Acre is an exceptional historic town in that it preserves the substantial remains of its medieval Crusader buildings beneath the existing Moslem fortified town dating from the 18th and 19th centuries.
- *Criterion (iii)*: The remains of the Crusader town of Acre, both above and below the present-day street level, provide an exceptional picture of the layout and structures of the capital of the medieval Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem.
- *Criterion (v)*: Present-day Acre is an important example of an Ottoman walled town, with typical

urban components such as the citadel, mosques, khans, and baths well preserved, partly built on top of the underlying Crusader structures. (World Heritage Committee 2002: 43).

At present, Akko's major stakeholders include the Old Acre Development Company (described above), Amidar (Israel National Housing Company and administrator of abandoned properties, mentioned above), UNESCO, the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA), municipality of Akko, numerous local and religious groups (including the Baha'i community, which considers Akko its most holy site), pre- and post-1948 communities, private investors, local businesses, tourists, and academics.

In the summer of 2014, we formally embarked on a two-season-long case study to investigate the impact of



FIG. 16

The triple-arch window adjoining a balcony after restoration, the Efendi Hotel. (Photo by C. Garofalo, CC BY 2.0

[<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>].)

UNESCO World Heritage designation on resident life, businesses, and tourism in the old city of Acre. In order to better serve the interests of community participants and ensure that the project unfolds on a trajectory of responsiveness and reciprocity, two team members, aided by visiting professionals and field school students from the Tel Akko TAP, assumed the task of daily visits to the old city. They were tasked with documenting the visual presence of the UNESCO World Heritage designation (Fig. 19A and 19B), conducting in-depth semi-structured interviews with residents, business owners, and heritage professionals (a total of 20), and monitoring tourist activity. Interviews were transcribed and coded using qualitative data analysis software, from which the themes explored in this section emerged. The purpose

of our study was less to evaluate the implementation of World Heritage designation (see Mansfeld et al. 2011) than to track how people think about World Heritage and how they perceive its consequences. Our research revealed little in terms of consensus on the impact of World Heritage designation among tourists, residents, or heritage professionals.

Daily monitoring of tourist activity in public spaces over the course of four weeks each summer focused on qualitative observations and short interviews. While not a quantitative study and thus not equipped to draw conclusions about specific numbers of visitors to the old city, it is clear from our observations that the majority of tourists, international and domestic, visit Acre as part of a day trip and do not spend the night in the city.



FIG. 17
Aerial view and map of key historic structures and sites documented by the Wye River People-to-People Heritage Project.
(Photo by M. Eisenberg; graphics by K. M. Barry.)



FIG. 18

View of the Khammer House (Beit Shukri) prior to restoration of the upper floor for the Efendi Hotel.

(Photo by M. Eisenberg; Wye River Shared Heritage Project.)

Interview data with independent travelers (not part of an organized tour group) suggests that few tourists knew that the old city was a UNESCO World Heritage site prior to visiting. Interviewees were most likely to express surprise and admiration at the mixed Arab-Jewish population of the city and general excitement about the city's monumentality and antiquity without specific reference to Crusader or Ottoman histories. When asked if UNESCO World Designation had an impact on their decision to visit or their general impression of Acre, none suggested that it played a major role. Rather than being a primary destination for independent travelers, Akko is more likely to be included as a short stop on a multi-day itinerary of travelling in Israel, often alongside other northern destinations including Haifa, the Sea of Galilee, and Nazareth. All organized tour groups that we observed spent no more than three hours in the old city, with visits to the two main Crusader attractions

(the Hospitaller Compound [see Fig. 4] and the Templar Tunnel [see Fig. 5]), occasionally the restored Turkish Bath (see Fig. 6), one of two souvenir shops, and a restaurant near the main parking lot for tour buses. Most day tours that include Akko make several stops along the northern Israeli coast, including at Caesarea, the Baha'i gardens in Haifa, and the sea caves at Rosh HaNikra, before returning to hotels in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

On the other hand, residents and heritage professionals that we interviewed were generally aware of Akko's World Heritage designation, however, they imagined the reason for nominating the old city and the experience of the following years differently. Two overarching themes that emerged from analyzing our interviews and fieldnotes with residents, business owners, and heritage professionals are worthy of exploration in this space: misunderstandings and alienation, and creative refashionings of World Heritage. What follows is our preliminary



FIG. 19
Two instances of site branding using the UNESCO and World Heritage logos alongside local managing institutions. (Photos by E. Taylor.)

analysis of these themes accompanied by representative vignettes from de-identified interview data, used here with the consent of our interlocutors.

(1) *Misunderstandings and alienation:* Knowledge of UNESCO World Heritage status is widespread among the local community. We encountered only one local resident living outside the old city who was not aware that Acre was a World Heritage site. However, when asked to describe UNESCO or the role it plays in listing Acre as a World Heritage site, the majority of residents that were not also heritage professionals offered explanations that deviated significantly from UNESCO's actual mandate. The main misunderstanding that came up repeatedly was that UNESCO provides monetary funds or other direct assistance to sites and local communities for conservation and promotion. For example, one local old city shop owner told us that, "I don't know who helps, but I think it's UNESCO because there is a lot of development in Akko by the Crusader halls, by the Turkish baths, the tunnels, the museums, the streets, the lights, and a lot of new and good stuff, very good stuff."

This interview excerpt captures a widely expressed sentiment that UNESCO is responsible for a cash infusion into the old city, which has led to infrastructure upgrades and improvements to tourist site facilities. Such projects fall under the aegis of the municipality, the Old Acre Development Company, and the Israel Antiquities Authority. The improvement projects that people like the above interviewee enumerate are partly prompted by the World Heritage designation, but local managing organizations do not receive instruction or funding from UNESCO or the World Heritage Committee.

Lack of understanding is generally accompanied by lack of interest in UNESCO. Attempts by managing bodies to engage with local residents are not uncommon, particularly through the ICC (see above), but residents and professionals alike expressed frustration that often these projects are not carried out as long-term partnerships. One resident, an artist in the new city, complained that, "One of the situations is that there are so many things that are done, and so many people with good ideas, that they start more and more projects, but sometimes they never finish the projects." Another informant, a heritage outreach professional, suggested that more local

involvement was called for, stating that, "I would like to see more of the community engaged, or us engaging with the community. I would like to see that. I still don't know how exactly. But I think we're in the right direction. [. . .] Meeting more people and reaching out to everyone slowly, slowly, slowly." Despite ongoing efforts, collaboration between local residents and site managers has been minimal, and residents that we spoke to have felt little incentive to pursue relationships with or knowledge of local managers, UNESCO, or the values espoused in the site's nomination.

(2) *Creative refashionings of World Heritage:* For many residents and heritage professionals, the World Heritage designation is a living and evolving statement on the old city's values. One professional conservator expressed satisfaction with the slow pace and obstacles faced in ensuring that the city fulfills expectations of a World Heritage site, "I think the slow pace is good, it's not a bad thing, it's a good thing. Because then you can have the time to study things, allow for perspectives to change or to be altered, for the local people and for the municipality as well."

Alongside misunderstandings and dissatisfaction in the years following the World Heritage designation, people have reflected on what makes Acre a remarkable place in their own eyes. It was not unusual for people to tell us their own alternative reasons that the old city should have been inscribed that do not solely stem from the monumental remains that alone figure in the inscription's selection criteria. One local resident and archaeologist expressed this kind of sentiment, thusly:

"World heritage, it means something, it means that there are special things in the city that make us different than any other place. It means that you need to keep something there, and I think it is so important, I'm happy that it happened. [. . .] In the old city itself people have their own language, words, things that are really so special. No one sees them as part of the need to preserve, and yet they are so simple. Even today, there are families that have lived here since before '48, and we have special food, different food, and words to describe it."

Residents and professionals alike value the monumental remains from the Crusader and Ottoman periods,

but go about using them differently in their daily lives. Heritage professionals are principally concerned with the physical integrity of the historic structures, but do express interest and concern with integrating the “tangible” and “intangible” dimensions of the city’s heritage. Other residents are less concerned with this distinction. Most view the houses built during the Ottoman period foremost as family homes and use the dense urban network of roads and houses as a social technology for maintaining extended family ties. For many, the old city is understood as a place where refugee families from Haifa and Arab villages surrounding Akko found safe haven, in houses “abandoned” by their owners in the wake of the 1948 War. While very few pre-1948 inhabitants currently reside in their houses, now declared historic properties, post-1948 Akko represents a blending of different village traditions with those of Akko’s pre-1948 Arab residents.

The city is often described in terms of a community of living and non-living entities that provide mutual care. Residents are aware that tourists are attracted to monumental and historical places, with additional “value” added by the UNESCO inscription, and view the city, often the very buildings they were raised in, as allowing them to make a good living. Amid increasing outside interest in old city properties and fears of gentrification (Figs. 20 and 21), one local resident described his decision to open a guesthouse as a way of maintaining his family home:

“I once had guests staying here in my house, and they offered to buy the house, and they offered a lot of money to buy the house. They offered my neighbors downstairs to take their house. They wanted to take the whole building. And since I’m the son of my parents, I still believe what they believed. They fought all their lives for keeping the locals in the old city, even though the big parts of the municipality and the government tried to push us out. My father all the time was pushing to stay, and not be one of those who would leave the city. [. . .] After my mother died, since I have a big house, one of the things that came to mind was to turn the place into a guesthouse.”

In these instances, World Heritage recognition has prompted reflection on the meaning of the old city, but not about the significance of the Ottoman or Crusader



FIG. 20
Banners, such as this one reading “NOT FOR SALE,” appeared in 2014 in response to increasing sales of old city properties to outside buyers. (Photo by E. Taylor.)

periods espoused in the official inscription. Herzfeld (1991) recognized a distinction between the way local residents spoke about “monumental” time and “social” time during a program of intensive historic conservation in Rethymno, Crete, and here in Akko there is a blurring of those categories. Residents and professionals alike recognize that tourists in the city may be drawn to the “monumental” historicization of the city as Ottoman/Crusader, but adapt to this designation on their own social and familial terms, fashioning their own uses for the World Heritage concept.

The insights gained from our interviews with different community members and stakeholders are important for the Tel Akko TAP as we plan for long-term conservation



FIG. 21

Other Banners Expressed Concerns Relating to Gentrification and Population Relocation. (Photo by R. Pangarkar.)

and promotion of the site, our communications strategy with local communities, and the grassroots and institutional partnerships that we choose to cultivate. This research brings new partners to the project and allows us to meaningfully calibrate its community-based components to lived experience around issues of cultural heritage.

Akko's Shared Heritage Community Archaeology Program and the SHARE Common Ground Initiative

Many scholars have called for new approaches in public and community archaeology that involve local populations more fully in their explorations of the history beneath their feet. These approaches emphasize the need for local perspectives and experiences to play an active role in the interpretation of the past. A collaborative approach to reconstructing the past also creates an opportunity for creative discourse in the present. This concept informed our creation of an archaeological field program sponsored by the Tel Akko TAP, the ICC/Israel Antiquities Authority, and SHARE. The goal of this program is to provide local youth from diverse backgrounds the opportunity to interact with their past and with one another and explore their relationships to this history.⁶ At the same time, they work alongside team members from abroad who gain important local perspectives through interaction with Akko's youth. The highly

physical and collaborative process of archaeological fieldwork naturally promotes teamwork, camaraderie, and the creation of meaningful, lasting relationships.

The Akko program was designed to engage local youth (aged 14–16) from diverse backgrounds in an exploration of the city's past and present. During the summers of 2013–2017, a cohort of approximately fifteen Jewish and Arab youth participated each season in an archaeological field program consisting of conservation training in Akko's old city and a week of excavation at Tel Akko. The setting for the excavation at Tel Akko was especially conducive to bringing the participants together because it sits on the outskirts of the old and new cities, and provides a neutral location where participants are able to engage with the city's rich heritage devoid of the politicization of so many sites in the region, as well as with one another.

Participants spent part of the program at the ICC, located in a historic Ottoman house within the old city of Akko (Fig. 22). Building on a curriculum developed and refined over the years, participants learned all stages of planning, documenting, and preserving historic structures within Akko's old city. They were grouped into several conservation teams and had to work together at each stage of the process to carry out their projects from start to finish. Under the guidance of professional conservators, participants learned how to perform free-hand and scale drawing of historic walls in the old city; how to mix and use mortar for restoration; and how to precisely measure, cut, and install masonry. They were then able to apply all these new skills by helping to restore a section of the courtyard of the historic ICC building (Fig. 23).

During the second week, participants joined the archaeological excavations taking place at Tel Akko, where they worked alongside international students and field staff from a number of universities (Fig. 24). Each day, participants joined the excavation for a communal breakfast, participated in workshops on topics related to archaeology and the city's history, and excavated alongside the other team members. Workshops included faunal analysis, stratigraphy, and even 3D mapping using radio-controlled drone aircraft (Fig. 25).⁷

The program has experienced a high rate of return participants each year. As a result, they built upon the certificate of completion they earned in year one, taking on responsibilities as junior and associate staff members.



FIG. 22
The 2014 program participants including youth from Akko, international students, and staff. (Photo courtesy of SHARE.)



FIG. 23
Program participants applying lime mortar (pointing) to the exterior courtyard walls of the ICC. (Photo courtesy of SHARE.)

This included taking the lead in discussions, participating in community outreach, and sharing their experiences of building bonds and understanding with more junior participants. Additional components of the program have entailed youth-led tours of the old city at the end of the season that chronicled Akko's history and landmarks

from their perspective, as well as the experiences—both different and shared—of young people growing up in separate areas of a mostly divided city. In recent years, Akko's youth have been involved with a project to photograph their favorite locale in historic Acre and describe why it is significant to them.

Over the course of the five-year program we observed lasting friendships that developed between program participants, as well as with foreign students participating in the archaeological field school. These interactions between local participants and foreign participants played an important role in the program's overall success. First, the Tel Akko TAP students and staff were able to gain a local perspective from members of the community that otherwise they would not have experienced; second, the TAP team gave our younger participants an opportunity to practice their English skills and a sense that the work they were doing was not only interesting, but also had intrinsic value of international significance; and third, by introducing an outside party into the discussion, the dichotomy between Arab and Jewish participants naturally shifted to local and visitor, which helped establish bonds within and



FIG. 24

Youth, international students, and staff excavating on Tel Akko. (Photo by A. E. Killebrew.)

between the “local” groups. This participant-driven, bottom-up, and mutually beneficial approach lies at the heart of the program’s curriculum and philosophy of change.

In addition to fostering bonds between participants and communities, a key objective was to understand the nature and degree of impact the program may have had. Each season, entry and exit interviews were conducted with each participant, and their feedback was used to improve details of the program and our approach. We also asked participants to share their thoughts and reflections in a daily journal, as well as to write about their experiences at the end of the season. While some aspects of the program were more popular than others, and the inherent nature of the program can be trying at times, the majority of responses were positive. The following are illustrative of these comments:

“It was a perfect challenge: I got to learn about beautiful and new things, and got to know beautiful and new people.”

“Today was all about restoration, and I learned how to restore a wall. Working was nice because we all worked, talked and laughed together. I really enjoy the interaction with people :)”

“Today I explored parts of my own city that I’ve never seen before, and did it with new people I liked very much.”

“At first I was afraid to walk in the old city by myself—I was brought up to believe that Muslims and Arabs were bad people who wished to harm me. But now, I know that is not the case. I have made many new



FIG. 25
Archaeozoology workshop for Akko's youth on the tell. (Photo by A. E. Killebrew.)

friends in the old city, and I'm not afraid to go there anymore."

"Because of the program, I've been exposed to ideas and individuals that I never would have been otherwise. The experience has been life-changing and has changed my point of view."

While testimonials provide valuable insights into personal experiences, they can be hard to quantify when trying to assess degrees of overall change. For this reason, we employed Interaction Network Mapping, in which we asked participants to map the strength of their interactions with other participants at various points over the course of the program. Participants were asked to draw connections between their name and the names of others

using solid lines, dotted lines, or no lines at all depending on the frequency and strength of their interactions. By comparing interaction maps from different points in the season, we were able to see and quantify change over time. Overall results revealed a net increase in total interactions ranging from 20–80 percent and an increase in interactions with members from the opposite group ranging from 20–60 percent. These numbers are encouraging, and when paired with the testimonials above, make a strong case for the efficacy of the initiative and its programing.

While the shared-heritage community-archaeology program at Tel Akko was not without challenges, the dedication of our participants and partners ensured that any adversity we encountered was quickly transformed into an opportunity. Overall, the level of enthusiasm for the program, as well as the degree of camaraderie and

friendship that developed as a result of it, far exceeded our expectations at a time when dialogue and understanding in the region could not be more important.

This initiative at Tel Akko, still in progress, has demonstrated how archaeological fieldwork can provide a powerful opportunity for dialogue between communities in ethnic and territorial conflicts. These ideas and approaches have been presented here with the hope of stimulating further interest and discussion about how community archaeology and the study of the past may be used to address conflict in the present and find solutions for the future.

Conservation, Archaeology, and Community at Akko

Akko's well-preserved Ottoman town and underground Crusader city have constituted a source of interest to tourists, heritage professionals, conservationists, and archaeologists over the years. Acre's built heritage has been subjected to many conservation efforts over the years—but very few of them have taken into account that the city is a microcosm of Israel's present, often contentious history and culture. Akko's population is comprised of a minority Arab community within a larger Jewish one, and alongside multiple local and national institutions that are tasked with caring for the city's many historic structures and sacred spaces representing four religious traditions. Many parts of the city are economically depressed and the populations of these areas are skeptical of the kind of top-down tourist development espoused by national government funded organizations. In the old city especially, many residents express frustration about the difficulty of both living in and making a living with their homes, those most valued objects of heritage-tourism development, considering the many restrictions on how they can modify their living space.

In recent years, those engaged in the conservation of cultural heritage in Akko have realized that the protection and future of Akko's heritage will best succeed with the participation of its diverse communities in an ethic of shared heritage. Our team is embracing such a practice by recovering and maintaining access to diverse histories, understanding how people in Akko are currently thinking about and using the concept of "heritage," and

creating an open platform for local youth to participate in and contribute to conservation and archaeological research. The Tel Akko TAP, with its outreach projects, is working hand-in-hand with a variety of local communities and institutions to create and maintain a *peopled* historical environment—one that resonates with the cultural and religious lives of the city's current residents. The majority of Akko's population has an understandable interest in seeing the city thrive economically as a heritage destination, while at the same time preserving its unique built and human landscape.

Notes

1. See, e.g., Green, Green, and Neves 2003; Greer, Harrison, and McIntyre-Tamwoy 2002; Rizvi 2006; Scham 2010; Moshenska and Dhanjal 2011; and Skeates, McDavid, and Carman 2012; relevant regional case studies focusing on the eastern Mediterranean include Rosenzweig and Dissard 2013 and Shai and Uziel 2016.
2. The excavations are conducted on behalf of the University of Haifa, in collaboration with the Pennsylvania State University, Baker University, Claremont Graduate University, Claremont McKenna College, Trinity College (Hartford, CT), Miami University (Ohio), the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, University of Warsaw, and the Israel Antiquities Authority, under the direction of Professors Ann E. Killebrew (Pennsylvania State University) and Michal Artzy (University of Haifa).
3. The term "total archaeology" has been described by scholars as research that integrates standard practices encompassing survey, excavation, and archival research with geophysical analyses, environmental surveys, landscape studies, and virtual reconstructions (Evans et al. 2006; Ceraudo 2013).
4. Founded in 1996, The Palestinian Association for Cultural Exchange (PACE) is a Palestinian NGO with a mission to protect and promote Palestinian cultural heritage through education, preservation work, research, and exchange programs. It comprises a group of Palestinian academics, writers, and other professionals who are committed to Palestinian heritage and strengthening Palestinian culture (<http://pace.ps/index.php/about/>).
5. The Society for Humanitarian Archaeological Research and Exploration (SHARE), directed by Dana DePietro, is a non-profit/nonpartisan organization made up of students, academics, and everyday people who believe archaeological research is valuable, that it is relevant in modern political discourse, and that it has the potential to play a transformative role in ethnic and territorial conflicts (www.archshare.org).
6. These ideas are in keeping with the pro-dialogue and restorative-justice approaches pioneered by organizations like

Seeds of Peace and Abraham's Vision. The program differs in a key respect, however, in that it engages young Israelis and Palestinians within their communities, as opposed to operating outside of them. This avoids what a long-term study published in the journal of *Group Processes and Intergroup Relations* refers to as "re-entry problems" in which participants begin to regress to their prior mode of thinking upon returning to the setting and circumstances of the conflict (Schroeder and Risen 2016).

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ANN E. KILLEBREW is an associate professor at the Pennsylvania State University and research fellow at the Recanati Institute for Maritime Studies, University of Haifa. For the past thirty-five years she has participated in or directed numerous archaeological projects in Israel, Turkey, and Egypt. She is currently the co-director of the Tel Akko Total Archaeology Project (TAP) and serves as co-editor of the *Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology and Heritage Studies*. (The Pennsylvania State University, 108 Weaver Building, University Park, PA 16802; aek11@psu.edu)

DANA DEPIETRO serves as executive director of the *Society for Humanitarian Archaeological Research and Exploration (SHARE)*, a not-for-profit organization whose archaeological field programs allow stakeholders in ethnic or territorial conflicts the opportunity to engage with the past, present, and each other while opening new avenues for the future. He received his Ph.D. in Near Eastern Art and Archaeology from U.C. Berkeley, where his research examined the complex relationship between the practice of archaeology, the production of historical narratives, and the politics of the modern Middle East. (1329 Arch Street, Berkeley, CA 94708; depietrodana@gmail.com)

REEMA PANGARKAR graduated from Penn State University with degrees in Art History, Classics and Ancient Mediterranean Studies, and International Politics. She is currently a J.D. candidate at the University of California, Davis School of Law and is passionate about cultural heritage and art law. (5250 Aldersgate Circle, Mechanicsburg, PA 17050; rpangarkar@ucdavis.edu)

SHELLEY-ANNE PELEG has worked for the Israel Antiquities Authority since 1992. She served as the director of the Archaeological Educational Center in the North for 12 years and as the Director of the International Conservation Center—Città di Roma for 12 years. She specializes in community outreach and conservation training programs. (Meron 10/2, Yokneam, Israel; shelleypeleg@gmail.com)

SANDRA SCHAM is a visiting associate professor of archaeology and anthropology at the Catholic University of America. She is the co-editor of the *Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology and Heritage Studies*. (3125 Quebec Place NW, Washington, DC 20008; scham@cua.edu)

EVAN TAYLOR is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. He is a community-archaeology and heritage specialist at the Tel Akko Total Archaeology Project, and is pursuing doctoral research on the commodification of cultural heritage at field sites in Israel and Greece. (215 Machmer Hall, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003; eptaylor@anthro.umass.edu)

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