

3 September 2008

Press release

**Conclusion of Geophysical Survey
Snipiskes Jewish Cemetery, Vilnius**

The Experts Group which met in May 2007 appointed Arieh Klein, a geotechnical consultant from Israel, and Gintautas Zabiela, a leading Lithuanian archaeologist, to oversee a geophysical and archaeological research program to try to find the boundaries of the Jewish cemetery in Snipiskes, Vilnius.

In June 2008 the Lithuanian Geological Survey signed contracts with Geotec, a geophysical survey company, to conduct the geophysical survey of the cemetery, and with Arieh Klein to supervise the survey. The actual survey was carried out from June 25 – July 6, 2008.

On Sept. 3, 2008, the results of the geophysical survey were presented by Mr. Amit Ronen of Geotec to Mr. Mockevicius and his team at the Lithuanian Geological Survey. Arieh Klein also presented his summary report and conclusions at the same meeting.

The main results of the geophysical survey show graves at the correct alignment (north-west to south-east) and at the relevant depths, further south than any of the previous maps, including those of the Historical Institute. There are graves in the south-west corner, under the grass and the paved area directly to the east of the new King Mindaugas buildings. The geophysical survey also showed that there are graves in the south-eastern corner, east of the memorial, again in lines along the correct alignment and at the relevant depths.

One conclusion that arose from the geophysical survey is that the southern boundary of the cemetery runs along Olimpieciu St. This finding, when combined with the results of previous archaeological surveys (laying of pipes, etc.) strengthens the conclusion of the Experts Group from May 2007 that the King Mindaugas buildings were erected within the boundaries of the Snipiskes Jewish cemetery.

It was impossible to determine the northern and eastern boundaries of the cemetery, since that part of the cemetery is covered with reinforced concrete plates, which prevented the geophysical equipment from penetrating into the ground underneath.

The owners of the cemetery did not agree to remove some of the concrete plates, in order to find the northern and eastern boundaries. Also, the geophysical survey team was not allowed to work in the southern part of the Zalgiris Stadium, just north of the northern fence of the parking area, in order to possibly confirm that no graves exist in this area. We hope that the government of Lithuania will come to an agreement with the owners of these areas, in order to allow the completion of the geophysical survey.

Unfortunately, the archaeological survey, which was meant to support the geophysical survey by uncovering the tops of some of the graves discovered in the geophysical survey, did not succeed. This was because in the first excavation, on the grassy area to the east of the Mindaugas buildings, many human bones were uncovered in the fill above the graves. The rabbinical authorities who supervised the archaeological excavation, demanded that the excavations cease, and they have not agreed to allow the renewal of the archaeological survey.