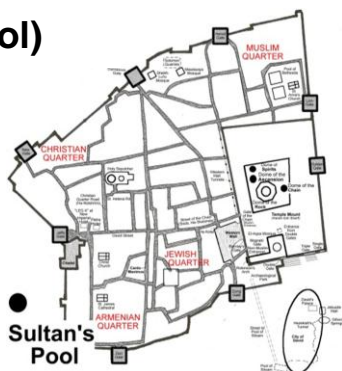


Sultan's Pool (Suleiman's Pool)

A flat area in the Hinnom Valley west of the Old City, which today is known as Sultan's Pool, was likely a hippodrome for racing chariots in Herod's day. It was later made into a water reservoir during the Roman and Byzantine periods, by means of a dam that was constructed in the Valley of Hinnom on the south side of the Hippodrome.



The pool is about 220 feet wide and 550 feet long. It collected rainwater and overflow from the older Herodian aqueduct that approached the pool from the west and looped around the north side before it entered the city. The Ottoman sultans rebuilt the walls of the dam in the 1380's and again 1536. Today, as seen in the photos below, Sultan's Pool is home to concerts and festivals.



Looking west at Sultan's Pool. On the far side, the Herodian aqueduct from Bethlehem approaches the pool and turns right (north) before turning back west to enter the city. The pool sets in the bottom of the Hinnom Valley with a dam built across the south end (just off the left end of this photo). During the time of Herod this area may have been the hippodrome mentioned by Josephus (Antiquities of the Jews, 15:8:1) and used for entertainment such as chariot races and horse races.



Looking down from the west side of the Old City at Sultan's Pool. To the left (south) behind the bleachers is the ancient dam that held the water.