

Conservation Concurrent with Excavating

Excavator's Guide

2012

Conservation Concurrent with Excavating, Excavator's Guide

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Introduction

Throughout history Israel's geographic location has attracted different people and cultures to it. All of the cultures that lived in the country have left their mark on the region. Since the late nineteenth century the heritage of these cultures, their tangible remains, including their ethnic and social characteristics, have become a subject of archaeological research.

About 30,000 sites in the country are declared antiquities sites under the Antiquities Law. These represent a variety of past heritages, the impact of which is felt in the country to this very day.

Ever since the beginning of archeological research many scholars from around the world have flocked to explore the archaeological sites in Israel. Every year scientific expeditions working on behalf of different academic institutes arrive in Israel for archaeological excavations in order to further our knowledge about these cultures.

The scientific and social values of the sites are not in doubt. Nevertheless, at the start of the 21st century we can no longer ignore the fact that these sites are an exhaustible physical resource. It is therefore necessary to balance the needs of scientific research, that is to say, the needs of the archaeological excavation, which is destructive in nature, with the need for conservation, protection of the finds and presenting them to the public.

In 1990 the IAA, acting in accordance with the Antiquities Authority Law and the Antiquities Law, was established in order to safeguard the country's antiquities based on a national outlook that encompasses the totality of their values. The Conservation Department of the IAA, which acts to promote the conservation of the cultural heritage in Israel, is the body entrusted with the preservation of archaeological sites in the country. The IAA directive concerning "Conservation Concurrent with Excavating" is intended to advance the conservation of sites at the time of excavation and afterwards. To this end a supervisory system was established to guide the scientific expeditions, bodies and institutes working at antiquities sites, and accompany them in all aspects of heritage conservation.

The following guide is a product of ongoing cooperation between the IAA and the research institutes and scientific expeditions. The purpose of the guide is to facilitate the process of receiving an excavation license, and simplify it as regards the conservation section. This will be done by specified and uniform work procedures for all of those involved.

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It is our hope that the guide will clarify IAA procedures with respect to conservation of the finds during the excavation seasons and between the seasons. In that way the guide will contribute to slowing the processes that cause the deterioration and destruction of cultural heritage for the benefit of archeological research and of the public.

Sincerely,

Ami Shahar

National Conservation Inspector

Conservation Department –
Israel Antiquities Authority

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1. Granting Excavation Licenses in Israel

The following considerations are taken into account when granting excavation licenses to archaeologists, whether from Israeli institutes or foreign institutes: the qualifications of the archaeologist submitting the request and his experience, the academic standing and archaeological research of the requesting institute, and the scientific significance of the site in question.

Guidelines for Granting Excavation Licenses in Israel

1. Preference will be given to applications for sites endangered by impending development, or threatened by man-made or natural processes, in accordance with a list of sites prepared by the IAA.
2. It is recommended that the applicant's institute be a recognized institute of archaeology, with infrastructure for research, laboratory treatment, processing and publication of finds, with an academic faculty and research students in relevant fields, and research experience in field archaeology.

An applicant submitting a request for a license on behalf of a foreign institute will attach to the application a profile of the research conducted by the institute, and will provide information on the above subjects.

Excavation licenses will be granted to archaeologists working on behalf of recognized Israeli institutes of archaeological research.

3. The institute on whose behalf the application has been submitted, and the archaeologist receiving the license, will be responsible for directing the excavations, for publication of its finds according to accepted scientific standards, and for conservation of the excavated area as required by the Conservation Department of the IAA.
4. A license application submitted by a foreign institute lacking an archaeological infrastructure as required above, will be advised to form a research collaboration with a recognized archaeological institute.
5. Details of the applicant's experience and that of the field research team, in processing finds and publication, research partners and independent work will be attached to the license application. If the applicant has no past experience in directing complex scientific excavations, it is recommended that no application be initiated for a site of prime scientific significance.

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6. Each license application will be accompanied by a detailed research proposal stating the aims of the excavation, subjects for research, amount of time planned for research, and cost of the various components: the field research excavation, processing the finds, area conservation, and accompanying research.
7. The Licensing Committee of the Archaeological Council will reassess the continuation of each license every four years, based on the progress of the excavation and its scientific publication.

2. Guidelines for Receiving an Excavation License, Conservation Concurrent with Excavating (Appendix 7a to Regulation 3.10)

In the process of granting the excavation license by the Israel Antiquities Authority the application is submitted to the Conservation Department for the purpose of including the department's requirements in the conditions of the license.

The following are the required conditions for conservation when submitting an application for an excavation license:

1. Coordination and Cooperation – General

- a. Granting an excavation license to an expedition in the first season is conditional upon an initial allocation of 5% of the excavation budget for conservation. The allocation is intended for professional guidance, preventive conservation measures, "first aid" and essential protective measures.
- b. After the first season of excavation and based on the condition of the remains, the conservation needs will be jointly assessed and the required budget will be determined for the conservation treatment from the following season's excavation budget.
- c. The licensee shall be responsible for protecting the exposed remains from the date the excavation license is issued.
- d. The conservation work will be performed in coordination with representatives of the IAA.

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- e. Representatives of the IAA will visit the excavation site, in coordination with the excavator, in order to identify problems and define the conservation needs in the excavation.
- f. The plan of action and planning phases of the conservation work and their implementation will be defined in coordination with the licensee or his representatives.

2. Conditions for Receiving an Excavation License – Conservation

- a. Every excavation will be accompanied by a conservator who will perform the necessary conservation work to protect the archeological finds uncovered during the excavations seasons.
- b. The licensee is responsible for submitting the conservator's particulars (who will accompany the excavation and perform the conservation work) for IAA approval.

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- c. IAA approval will be granted to a professional conservator according to his field of expertise, such as: art conservation (fresco, plaster, marble, stone elements etc) or general-engineering conservation (stabilization and support of buildings, walls, earthen barks, etc).
- d. From the standpoint of the IAA, the excavation licensee will be responsible for the conservator's work.

3. The Conservation Plan

The conservation plan will include these elements:

- a. Mapping of the compounds slated for conservation on the site plan, including marking the compounds slated for covering over and those where excavating is to continue in future seasons.
- b. Verbal and graphic analysis of the physical state of preservation at the site, according to: 1) complex, 2) building, 3) element.
- c. Determining conservation priorities, graphically marked on the site plan.
- d. Drawing up a conservation plan in which treatment priorities are specified. The plan will include: sections, implementation details and materials.

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- e. The different levels of treatment will be detailed in the conservation plan: "first aid", protection, temporarily covering over, complete or supplementary conservation, or replacement of elements, etc.
- f. The conservation plan will specify the kinds of treatment, such as: pointing up joints, *klinim*, sealing the tops of walls (coping), completing stone work for the purpose of stabilizing walls and foundations, injecting mortar into cavities in wall cores (grouting).
- g. The plan will relate to other elements such as: proper drainage, vegetation, filling in excavation squares (upon completion of the scientific research), safety and fencing.
- h. The conservation plan will include a written description of the site's values and the remains exposed in it.
- i. The conservation plan will be submitted to the IAA for approval.

4. Levels of Intervention in the Conservation of an Antiquities Site

- a. "First aid": immediate intervention to salvage remains, including the removal of safety hazards.
- b. Covering over a site or a compound or both.
- c. Complete conservation to stabilize the remains (element/structure/complex).

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- d. Conservation of the site and organizing it for visits by the public.
- e. Conservation maintenance.

5. Documentation, Planning and Final Report (at the end of the excavation season)

- a. Conservation measures will be implemented in accordance with an approved conservation plan.
- b. The conservation plans will be adapted to suit the level of conservation decided upon in coordination with all responsible bodies.
- c. Planning documents:
 - Basic statement of fundamentals for planning: covering over or treatment or development.
 - Survey and documentation.

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- Planning program.
 - Detailed planning: physical conservation plan; architectural plan for presentation and development.
- d. Final Report

The implementation of conservation measures requires the submission of a final report for the IAA archive. Submission of the report will be a precondition to receiving an excavation permit for the following season. Submission of the report is the responsibility of the licensee.

The final report will include information about the site and the conservation measures:

- Cover page: the site name, excavators' names, conservators' names, date and excavation season.
- Location of the site on a map of Israel and regional map.
- Brief archaeological background about the site.
- The treated areas will be marked on the site plan (the complex should be denoted, for example: room, bathhouse, courtyard).
- Documentation of conservation measures that were performed in each focal point will include: a verbal description, drawings of views and basic details, and before and after photographs of the intervention. The documentation will include complete information about the composition of the types of mortar used.

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3. Excavation Director's Commitment to Perform Conservation Concurrent with Excavating (Appendix 7a to Regulation 3.10)

Date: _____

To:
The Director of the Department of Excavations and Surveys
Israel Antiquities Authority

Re: Excavation Director's Commitment to Perform Conservation Concurrent with Excavating

We, the applicants for the excavation license, hereby promise to perform conservation concurrent with excavating in accordance with the Antiquities Law, 1978 (below the "law") and the directives of Section 11 (a) (2) of the law.

The guidelines and conditions for implementing the conservation work at the site _____ (site name) for which the excavation license is requested will be determined by the Director of Conservation of the Israel Antiquities Authority, after an inspection of the site together with the excavator.

The essence of conservation concurrent with excavating is defined as: protective measures, preventive conservation, stabilization and the covering over of archaeological remains. The principal aim of conservation concurrent with excavating is to prevent or slow down the destructive and weathering processes at the site.

We promise to allocate 5% of the excavation budget, which stands at _____ NIS, and a total sum of _____ NIS for the carrying out of conservation concurrent with excavating of the immovable artifacts during the _____ excavation season(s).

It has hereby been made clear to us that in future excavations seasons (if there will be any) the amount for conservation concurrent with excavating will be determined in accordance with the professional requirements and the conservation needs of the site and the immovable antiquities that were exposed/discovered in it.

The excavator has the right to engage a professional body or conservator approved by the Israel Antiquities Authority, on the condition that the body and/or conservator has the experience and professional ability to perform conservation concurrent with an archaeological excavation

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and/or alternatively by a conservator of the Israel Antiquities Authority, all in accordance with the choice of the excavator.

The conservation work concurrent with excavating will be carried out in accordance with implementation plans that will be prepared by the conservator after having been approved by the director of conservation.

The name of the proffered conservator is: _____

Sincerely yours,

Signature of individual authorized to make the commitment in the name of the institution: _____

Excavator's signature: _____

Signature of the Conservation Dep. Director: _____