



## **Committee for the Evaluation of Archaeology Study Programs**

### **General Report**

**November 2011**

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## **Chapter 1: Background and Committee Procedures**

The Council for Higher Education (CHE) decided to evaluate study programs in the field of Archaeology during the academic year 2010 – 2011.

Following the decision of the CHE, the Minister of Education, who serves ex officio as a Chairperson of the CHE, appointed a Committee consisting of:

- **Prof. Charles Stanish, Cotsen Institute of Archeology, University of California, USA– Committee Chair**
- **Prof. Susan Alcock, Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology, Brown University, USA**
- **Prof. Ofer Bar-Yosef, Department of Anthropology, Harvard University, USA**
- **Prof. Manfred Bietak, Vienna Institute of Archaeological Science (VIAS), University of Vienna, and Austrian Academy of Sciences, Austria**
- **Prof. Margalit Finkelberg, Department of Classics, Tel Aviv University, Israel**
- **Prof. Amihai Mazar, Institute of Archaeology, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel**
- **Dr. Melinda A. Zeder, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, USA**

**Ms. Alisa Elon - Coordinator of the Committee on behalf of the CHE.**

Within the framework of its activity, the Committee was requested to submit the following documents to CHE:

1. A final report for each of the institutions that would include an evaluation of Archaeology programs, the Committee's findings, and recommendations.
2. A general report regarding the status of the evaluated field of study in Israeli institutions of higher education.
3. Recommendations for standards in the evaluated field of study.

The Committee's letter of appointment is attached as **Appendix 1**.

The entire process was conducted in accordance with the CHE's Guidelines for Self-Evaluation (of October 2009).

The Committee held its first meetings on February 15, 2011 during which it discussed fundamental issues concerning higher education in Israel, the quality assessment activity, as well as Archaeology study programs.

During the period of February-May 2011 committee members paid a two-day visit to each of the five institutions under evaluation.

During the visits, the Committee met with various stakeholders at the institutions, including management, faculty, staff, and students.

In the course of its work, the Committee also met with Dr. Gideon Avni of the Israel Antiquities Authority and with Prof. Steve Weiner from the Kimmel Center for Archaeological Science at the Weizmann Institute of Science.

**This report deals with the committee's general impression of the field of Archaeology within the system of higher education in Israel.**

The Committee wishes to thank the management of the institutions and the Archaeology departments for their Self-Evaluation Reports and for their kind hospitality towards the committee during its visits. We particularly acknowledge and thank Ms. Elon for her outstanding work during this process.

## **Chapter 2: Evaluation of the Field of Archaeology within the Israeli System of Higher Education**

### **Executive Summary**

The study of the ancient and historical past is central to the intellectual life of any people. Archaeology is likewise central for the proper preservation and presentation of a country's cultural heritage, from museums to parks, from books to popular media. Proper university training in archaeology, therefore, serves the State of Israel in many tangible and intangible ways. As such, we were pleased to take on the assignment from the Council for Higher Education (CHE) to evaluate the state of the discipline and offer our suggestions for improving the archaeology in the five university departments where archaeology degrees are offered.

At the outset, the committee is pleased to report that archaeology in Israel is a small but vibrant academic discipline that meets international standards in teaching and research. Our interactions with the many stakeholders were highly professional and overall quite positive in tone. We are quite optimistic for the future of academic archaeology in Israel, as long as adequate funding is forthcoming and if universities make the appropriate adjustments to changing environment in which the discipline is conducted.

In the course of our work however, we were able to identify a number issues that should be addressed to strengthen Israeli academic archaeology. First, as in North America, Europe, Australia etc. the study of the ancient and historical past in Israel is conducted in both humanistic and scientific traditions, making archaeology arguably the most bridge-building, multi-disciplinary of modern academic programs. Archaeology is a natural vehicle for the transdisciplinary perspectives and research models increasingly expected of a 21st century university. Yet the present disciplinary location of archaeology in divisions such as Humanities or Land of Israel Studies leads to budget shortfalls for the needs of the discipline including fieldwork, field trips, laboratory facilities, and scientific applications. The committee recommends that archaeology in the country be financially supported in a manner consistent with its legitimate research needs as a both humanistic discipline and as a multi-disciplinary science.

A second broad issue concerns the relationship between the Israeli Antiquities Authority (IAA), by far the largest employer of the students by the five universities that we visited. We fully understand the sensitive fact that the IAA is statutorily autonomous and is beyond CHE mandates, and vice-versa. Nevertheless, a major inconsistency exists regarding the nature and level of training students required for IAA recognition. We urge a national discussion to address the certification of archaeologists by the universities. We furthermore recommend that some mechanism be devised to more efficiently coordinate the work of these separate entities for emergency excavations and other basic archaeological research.

We also recommend some changes in the content and structure of the curriculum. We address the specific issues of each Department in the separate reports. However, in general terms, we recommend a liberalization of the BA programs stressing a broader introduction to the field and the acquisition of critical thinking and writing skills, to make them more useful for students who wish to pursue careers in other professions. Likewise, we recommend that the MA focus more on the acquisition of skill sets that equip students to pursue careers in archaeology. Language skills at the MA and Ph.D level should be strengthened, and teaching experience for Ph.D. candidates allowed and encouraged.

We recommend that CHE and the five archaeology departments look to areas where strengths and resources of individual programs can be combined to create cross-institutional study programs in various areas of archaeological training. In particular, we believe that an inter-institutional MA/PhD track in the archaeological sciences (involving all five study programs and the Weizmann Institute Kimmel Center of Archaeological Sciences) could leverage resources of the individual centers in various sciences that have grown-up across the country to create a powerful program for training and research in the archaeological sciences.

The Committee is also concerned by the fact that the number of doctoral students exceeds the capacity of the existing, and likely future, job market. How we train Ph.D. students is an issue for all archaeology programs, worldwide, given the sharp decline in opportunities in the normal academic career track. Promoting the consideration of alternative careers (the Israeli Antiquities Authority, the Ministry of Tourism, private industry, etc.) should form one part of this evaluation.

Another essential element would be a close examination of what might prevent graduates from performing well on the job market, be it in Israel or internationally. Some significant impediments to graduate success can readily be identified.

Other issues, such as student counseling, alumni tracking, student funding, faculty “inbreeding”, infrastructure, faculty teaching loads and other issues are dealt with in this General Report insofar as they are common across departments. Other more Department-specific issues are of course dealt with in the individual Department reports.

## Archaeology Studies in Israel: A General Overview

- *This Report relates to the situation current at the time of the visit to the institutions, and does not take account of any subsequent changes. The Report records the conclusions reached by the Evaluation Committee based on the documentation provided by the institutions, information gained through interviews, discussion and observation as well as other information available to the Committee*

The Committee was charged with the task of evaluating Archaeology study programs at all those institutions that have received full accreditation to offer such programs. These include: Bar-Ilan University, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, the University of Haifa, Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv University. All five institutions offer B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in this discipline.

Archaeology is not an easy field to categorize. As mentioned, the discipline can be conducted as either a humanistic discipline, or as a scientific one. In the former, the ancient past as represented by architecture, objects, texts, and other material evidence is rigorously analyzed to produce a rich narrative about life centuries or millennia ago. In the latter tradition, archaeology is a comparative social and behavioral science that seeks answers to universal problems of the human experience such as the origin and spread of religions, empires, agricultural origins and so forth. Even within the humanistic tradition, there is a need for scientific support to derive maximum information from the data. As an innately interdisciplinary study, archaeology extends across all academic divisions, including the natural and exact sciences.

In Israel, as in many countries, departments of archaeology are often housed in the Humanities, the traditional home of archaeology. The discipline, however, is an evolving one, requiring ever more diverse training in both theoretical perspectives and practical skill sets. In the 21st century, archaeologists will continue to excavate, to map, to study pottery, and cope with historical questions and texts. But they will also use the computer tools of urban planners, the DNA techniques of molecular biologists, the ecological models of geologists, the heritage marketing strategies of the business sector, and the ethical debates of philosophers and policy makers. To

teach and to study archaeology is to bridge multiple disciplines within the academic world, as well as to bridge distinctions between academic and public audiences. Archaeology is, then, a natural vehicle for the multidisciplinary perspectives and research models that are increasingly expected of contemporary science and humanistic scholarship.

The Committee believes that the study of archaeology in Israeli institutions of higher education is very strong, and is in a very strong position for future growth. This is particularly significant given the relatively small size of the faculties in Israel compared to other departments in the US and Europe. Academic quality, as measured by research excellence and productivity, is admirably high across all institutions explored. The commitment of instructors and researchers to their field, and the enthusiasm level of students at all levels, is to be applauded. The richness of Israel's archaeological heritage provides an excellent laboratory for intensive local research, as well as for student training. The institutions visited are clearly turning out numerous, highly proficient practitioners of archaeology.

We would, however, identify certain topics that we believe require serious consideration. Topics that concern specific institutions are discussed in our institutional reports; here we focus on major themes that crosscut individual universities.

### **Study Programs**

Each institution visited offers degrees at the BA, MA and Ph.D. We first make some observations about each level and then raise some thematic points for consideration.

#### **B.A. studies**

B.A. studies at all five institutions as a rule follow the same standard pattern: general introductory courses during the first year, more narrowly focused ones during the second, and specialized courses and seminars during the third. Several institutions are working to broaden the BA curriculum, changing the emphasis of the undergraduate program away from training professional archaeologists and toward promoting archaeological literacy and appreciation for Israel's and the world's cultural heritage.

This ‘liberalizing’ of the undergraduate curriculum is a welcome development that, in our opinion, should be taken even farther. This is especially important in view of the fact that the majority of the undergraduate archaeology majors do not study archaeology to pursue professional careers but, rather, express other reasons for the choice of this course of study. The Committee strongly recommends further steps toward shaping the BA program along the lines of the liberal arts education and further separate it from the graduate studies (MA, Ph.D). Overarching courses placing the discipline within a larger context (such as history of ancient civilizations, social anthropology, or the history of human/environmental interactions) should be especially encouraged.

### MA studies

M.A. studies, in contrast, should have a more distinctive curricula from the BA program, and should focus on the acquisition of skill sets that equip students to pursue careers in archaeology and/or related fields. In almost all institutions we were struck by the thinness of the MA study program and the lack of a clear distinction between the BA and the MA curricula. In contrast to a broad-based BA study program, the MA study program should allow students to concentrate in a more focused way on gaining specific topical and methodological expertise. This change in emphasis would include, for example, deferring specialized courses in pottery and lithic typology, currently offered at the BA level, to the MA level. It would also emphasize specialized training in areas like the archaeological sciences and ancient languages. Consideration should also be given to adding a comprehensive examination as part of the MA studies as way of further professionalizing this degree.

We were also concerned that there is an imbalance between the number of students enrolled in MA study programs and the capacity of the various sectors of archaeological employment to absorb graduates of these programs. Budgeting formulas based on student numbers and admission policies that accommodate all students meeting certain standards encourage much larger MA enrollment than either the institutions themselves or the post-graduate employment sector can accommodate.

### Ph.D. studies

It is clear that numerous excellent Ph.D. students graduate in Israel. As is the case with MA study programs, however, we are concerned that too many are being accepted and trained in doctoral programs. The Committee was concerned by the fact that the number of doctoral students exceeds the capacity of the existing, and likely future, job market. This is typical for archaeology around the western world. Moreover, given that scholarships and other forms of financial support are limited in number, and that these resources are being divided among so many students, it is clear that the majority of qualified individuals receive inadequate or no support at all.

The Committee believes that it would be preferable to provide more robust financial support to fewer, truly excellent students while maintaining opportunities for additional qualified students to study for the Ph.D, as long as they are aware of the job prospects.

Selective archaeology programs in the US and Europe (approximately the top 20 out of 100 doctoral programs in archaeology) apply very high admission standards that allow for a better balance between the number of students enrolled in their graduate programs and the faculty, institutional, and financial resources available to students. In Israel, achieving a similar balance would require disengaging the direct relationship between student numbers and budgets that currently affect CHE budgetary allocations.

Another liability of the Ph.D programs in most institutions in Israel is the very limited opportunity for students to gain teaching experience during their training. The absence of experience in this area limits the student's prospects in the academic job market, in Israel and, especially, abroad where such experience is given high priority in hiring decisions.

Removing barriers to writing Ph.D theses in English, and activity encouraging students to do so, would make it easier to publish thesis research in international venue. This step would help to increase the visibility of Israeli scholarship and open employment opportunities for those Israeli archaeologists interested in working for a time outside of Israel.

### Thematic Points

Chronological and Geographical Focus. A traditional tripartite chronological structure (Prehistoric, Bronze/Iron Age, Classical) and a dominant focus on the land of Israel to a great extent govern the study programs of all departments visited. Post-Classical archaeology, particular of Islamic periods, is relatively invisible in the study programs of most departments, a particularly noteworthy given the perceived need of the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) for archaeologists trained to deal with such material.

While excellent work has been and is done within such a framework, it can equally inhibit newer modes of archaeological analysis and training that are finding considerable support in international archaeological circles. Israel's rich archaeological resources are a tremendous asset to the country's archaeology study programs, offering students many varied opportunities to gain valuable hands-on field and laboratory experience. The deep span of human experience and the mosaic of cultures that have left their stamp on the land of Israel also provide a unique archaeological laboratory for the study of a wide range of key issues in human history - from the migration of modern humans out of Africa, to the development of agricultural economies, to the formation of states and empires. The dominant focus of most archaeology departments on the land of Israel makes a great deal of sense in this light. But our concern is that this focus can become somewhat myopic at the expense of an understanding of the place of culture history of Israel within the broader context of human cultural evolution in general. Increasing development of more thematic or comparative forms of teaching and the introduction of more theoretical perspectives at all levels of training would help ameliorate the issue of "insularity" that was occasionally perceived by the Committee.

Languages. The international norm for Ph.D. students who work in the cultures of the ancient Mediterranean and Near East is proficiency in at least two modern European languages and in some cases a proficiency in Arabic. Training in ancient languages, such as Greek, Latin, for classical archaeologists, is absolutely essential for those working on past literate cultures, as many Israeli students do. Introductory classes in Akkadian or Ancient Egyptian are useful for Biblical Archaeology. Failure to learn the languages adequately leads not only to bad scholarship, but poor job prospects, especially internationally where relevant language training

will be automatically expected. Yet various barriers, such as limits on the number of courses students can take without incurring additional fees, currently too often prevent such language acquisition. Every effort should be made to identify and remove any impediments to such courses of study, both to improve scholarly quality and to improve competitiveness on the job market. Current requirements for modern languages vary a great deal between different universities; with many students we encountered having only very basic command of English. Proficiency in English is extremely important if Israeli archaeologists are to participate in international scholarship. In addition, proficiency in a second foreign language such as French or German would improve the future career of students. An added requirement of a second modern language at the MA level is highly recommended.

Archaeological Science. Each of the archaeology departments under review acknowledged the central role that the archaeological sciences play in current-day archaeological practice. Some departments have high performing programs in one or more branches of archaeological sciences, while others had aspirations at building such programs. Each department was seeking to expand upon current strengths in the archaeological sciences in both their undergraduate and graduate level study programs.

The Committee fully supports efforts at building the profile of the sciences in archaeology study programs. We believe that an overview of the range of scientific approaches to archaeology, how they are practiced, and how they contribute to the narrative of the human past should be a core element of any undergraduate program in archaeology. Similarly, professional training in archaeology (at either the MA or Ph.D level) should at the very least familiarize all graduate level students with how archaeological sciences can be applied to the study of the human past and the basic requirements for their practice. Opportunities to obtain in-depth training in some avenue of archaeological science should be a featured component of all graduate programs.

At the same time, we recognize that it is neither possible nor very healthy for each university to try to branch into all of the many different areas of archaeological sciences on their own. Instead, we recommend the development of greater cooperative linkages between the different centers of archaeological sciences that have grown up in the various archaeology departments around the

country. Specifically, we urge departments to move beyond the somewhat informal current linkages in which students based in one department receive training in some branch of the archaeological sciences in a different university. Instead we recommend that a formal inter-university study track in the archaeological sciences be established. From both a financial and academic perspective, such a program would be beneficial for all parties, but it would require a concerted effort. There are several models that might be followed here. One might involve a first year rotation of study in scientific applications offered by different universities, with a second year focus on a single archaeological method. Another option might feature ‘block courses’, given over several full days to enable students from various universities to participate. Financial aspects of such cooperation would have to be worked out. The Ancient Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations program of Yad Hanadiv provides useful precedent for such a program.

The ‘Dig Certificate’. The committee is aware that we were charged to evaluate only the academic component of archaeology in the five universities. Technically, the additional professional aspects of archaeology that fall under the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) or other institutions are not part of our mandate. This is in spite of the fact that the IAA conducts excellent basic research as part of its duties, publishes this work in fine venues, and eventually trains generations of archaeologists in the field. The reality is that the close interrelationship between the IAA and the universities so strongly affects the production of archaeological knowledge and the training of professionals Israel, that we cannot ignore the obvious

The certification needed to acquire an excavation license from the IAA is a course of study often referred to as the ‘dig certificate’. Other than providing a general set of desired criteria for these programs, the IAA has little or no formal input or oversight as to how these programs are structured. As mentioned above, this is based upon the institutional autonomy of the IAA and the universities (CHE has had no input at all in this issue). At present, the dig certificate is awarded at the B.A. level at all institutions, except for Hebrew University, where the certificate is awarded at the MA level. The certificate requires an additional amount of focused professional course and field-work, though it should be noted that the content varies enormously both from institution to institution, and from the specifications outlined by the IAA itself. The somewhat ad-hoc and non-standardized requirements of the different university licensing

programs raises serious doubts as to whether the current system assures that this training is uniformly attained.

We the committee in no way would recommend that the IAA have any control over the academic autonomy of the archaeology departments in the universities or vice-versa. At the very least, however, there is clearly a need for a coordinated effort on the part of the IAA, the universities, and CHE to periodically review both the content and requirements of these programs and to make non-mandatory suggestions for improvement. We encourage the archaeology departments to take into account the needs of all “consumers” of their efforts, including the IAA, in producing new data, in refining new methods, and in training professionals that both meet the demands of basic research as well as the needs of Israeli archaeology in its totality. We likewise recommend that the IAA show more flexibility in supporting academic archaeology when contracts are awarded, perhaps establishing some formal linkages with university departments. Such cooperation would be mutually beneficial, and serve to eliminate some inefficiency in data management and publication. Most importantly, the contract work with university departments would provide the ideal practical training for the dig certification process.

Moreover, in light of the Committee’s recommendations in the direction of broadening and liberalizing the B.A. curriculum, thought must now be given to how the professional training required for the ‘dig certificate’ can be implemented at the undergraduate level of student training. It is, in fact, the consensus opinion of the Committee that the more technical aspects of the licensing program (especially the in-depth courses in pottery and lithic typology and the intensive field work requirements) should be deferred to the MA study program

Cultural Heritage. The richness of the Israeli archaeological heritage, and intense touristic interest in its appreciation, opens clear opportunities for training in heritage studies and management, building off and extending current curricula aimed at tour guides. Sharing the country’s archaeology with its people and the broader world and protecting it for future generations is not only a major responsibility of the state of Israel, it is also a remarkable, and as yet largely untapped, opportunity for economic development. Such opportunities should be exploited to offer alternative forms of employment in the domain of archaeology.

Some of the departments we visited have established, or are trying to build, study programs in cultural heritage that include training in site and material culture preservation, high school and primary school teacher training, and guide programs. We applaud these efforts and encourage all departments of higher education in archaeology to consider enhancing both BA and MA study programs in this area, not least with a view to opening new areas of potential employment for archaeology graduates (see below, Students). One area that remains largely unexplored in archaeology study programs is the role of archaeology in the development of cultural heritage tourism as a means for both sharing and preserving Israel's rich cultural resources, and we urge departments to consider adding this component to their study program, perhaps in collaboration with departments of geography, natural resources, hotels, and tourism.

Sharing Resources. In most instances, students of each university are exposed mainly to the subjects available in their own institutions. In a country the size of Israel, it seems sensible (and cost-effective) to develop inter-university programs around certain archaeological topics. As mentioned, the Ancient Near Eastern languages and Civilization program of the Yad Hanadiv provides one model of an inter-university collaborative program. We recommend above the creation of another such program in the archaeological sciences. We are certain there are other areas where taking a cross-institutional approach, especially at the MA level, would both help leverage resources across institutions and help combat a tendency toward insularity that we noted during our site visits.

## **Faculty and Research**

### Quality and Resources

The quality of faculty in Israeli departments of Archaeology is, on the whole, exceptionally strong, and the level of faculty enthusiasm for their subject and their students is to be commended.

The scope of the research topics in Israeli archaeology is broad, paralleling and contributing to developments in world archaeology. Research projects include broad regional surveys,

excavations in sites covering all time periods—from the Early Paleolithic to Medieval — in-depth studies of artifacts using state-of-the-art analytical techniques, work on ancient iconography, art and epigraphy, research on the relationship between texts and archaeological data, work on ancient technology, underwater archaeology, and broad syntheses utilizing a healthy mix of contemporary theory. In general, Israeli archaeologists are quite good in publishing their data, though certain problems exist that prevent more timely distribution of certain projects. Likewise, individual productivity varies among faculty. Most research in Israel is based upon team efforts that integrate students, graduates and colleagues from various specialties. These projects, to meet international standards, require a variety of resources that have to be raised by senior principle investigators who are usually faculty members in various institutions.

The Israeli Science Foundation is an outstanding institution that awards competitive, peer-reviewed grants. Israeli archaeologists are very successful in receiving these competitive awards. Likewise, Israeli faculty are to be commended for their high success in obtaining international, peer-reviewed research grants including those from the National Science Foundation of the US, the Wenner-Gren foundation, the National Geographic, the Leakey Foundation and so forth.

At the same time, it is disproportionally difficult (relative to North America and Europe) for young scientists and scholars of archaeology in Israel to obtain funding for large-scale research early in their career. This is especially true given their heavy teaching and supervisory obligations, loads which are not typical of most academic faculty in the humanities in other countries. Faculty members in archaeology are obliged to carry a full teaching load (6-8 weekly hours), on top of which they have additional teaching responsibilities in the field (including guiding educational field trips and conducting study digs during the summer). Moreover, their research requires long periods of fieldwork during the summer months, when other faculty find time to write and publish. All of this leads to a disproportionately heavy burden on archaeological faculty, and is an issue to be taken into consideration.

The Committee believes that, while prehistorians often work on problems of global relevance and import, Biblical archaeology and Classical archaeology too often incline to more localized

studies, focused on the particular geographical region of the eastern Mediterranean. Wider ranging work (for example, studying the classical world at large), or comparative studies, while not unknown, remains rare. International conversations are thus harder to stimulate, a negative consequence of which can be a more ‘parochial’ tone to research in these subfields. Again, opening up boundaries between fields and considering cross-temporal and cross-regional appointments should be very strongly considered as one way to ameliorate this situation

### *Retirements and Recruitments*

Several of the departments reviewed have been, or will soon be, undergoing losses owing to retirements. The Committee firmly recommends the replacement and, where possible, the augmentation of these faculty lines: to cut these typically relatively small (by many standards) departments would be directly to imperil the study and the practice of archaeology in Israel.

Hires, however, should not be aimed at simply replicating past strengths, or aiming for one to one replacements of individuals with certain geographical and temporal interests (normally Prehistoric, Biblical, or Classical). Recruitment should revolve around individuals who possess such a specialization, but also have the capacity to add other high level expertise — in theory, archaeological science, or other skills — into the departmental mixture.

The Committee would like to comment on one other common practice, which is the tendency for faculty to hire their own students. There is a marked ‘inbreeding’ to departmental cultures, across the board in which department hire their own Ph.D’s. This trend is perhaps understandable particularly when the new graduates are excellent, but it is nonetheless unhealthy. This trend should be discouraged and departments should seek to hire PhD’s from other institutions, as has happened in a few instances in Israeli archaeology programs.

### *Gender Balance*

Finally, the gender balance at the faculty level, in almost all departments of Archaeology, is highly asymmetric. A more equal distribution (or even female dominance) exists at the B.A, MA,

and Ph.D level in Israel (as is the case in the United States and European countries). Yet at the faculty level, a ‘glass ceiling’ appears to continue in place.

Senior Faculty*	BGU	TAU	Haifa	BI	HU
% Male	100%	94%	75%	71%	50%
% Female	0%	6%	25%	29%	50%
Total Number of facult	5.5	17	12	14	16

\*Data based on inter  
and self-evaluation rep

In certain instances, this imbalance may reflect the older demographic of faculty who were hired when males outnumbered females among professional archaeologists. That, however, is no longer the case. In order to be more representative of its student population and to reach international standards for the representation of women in this discipline, more female appointment should be made. We accordingly recommend that CHE urge departments to pursue additional female faculty, so long as they are no less capable than the best male applicants.

## **Students and Learning**

### *Enrollment and Completion Rates*

The most heartening aspect of each institutional visit was time spent with the students, particularly at the B.A. level. Archaeology is an attractive discipline, and many students embrace it passionately.

BA enrollments in archaeology are generally down in Israel, Europe and Northamerica and this trend should be observed carefully. This is due in large part to the substantial growth in the discipline from the 70’s through 90s. We are now experiencing a normal “regression to the mean” phenomenon in which enrollments are dropping. However, the long-term trend is for a slow, but steady growth in the archaeological profession around the world. Broadening the BA

study program and deferring some of the more technical aspects of professional training until the MA level might help boost numbers of undergraduates who are interested in archaeology but who do not plan on seeking a professional career in the field. We note, however, that enrollments are generally down in all of the Humanities, so that the declining student numbers seen in archaeology are not necessarily a reflection of problems in the undergraduate study programs of archaeology departments.

We also note that the psychometric standards for admission into archaeology BA programs (as is the case with the Humanities in general) are low, especially when compared to those in the sciences. We conjecture that these low admission standards are seen as necessary to help to combat declining enrollments. However, it is clear to us that these standards also contribute to the generally high dropout rate in undergraduate study programs (25-35%<sup>1</sup>), which seems to typically occur after the first year of study. We were told by both faculty and students that the high attrition rate in archaeology can be attributed to students expecting archaeology to be a “romantic” or “less challenging” subject, becoming disenchanted by the difficult archaeology study program that draws from humanities, social sciences, the natural and the exact sciences and which carries the extra burden of fieldwork requirements.

We suggest that the low admission standards contribute to the high dropout rate when students lacking the necessary prerequisites are admitted into this challenging course of study. While perhaps boosting initial enrollment in archaeology undergraduate programs, in the end these low standards serve no one’s interest – least of all the students. Although raising these standards might lower initial enrollment in BA study programs even further, it would almost certainly help counter the high dropout rates seen in across the board in all study programs, resulting in stronger programs with higher completion rates.

We are, moreover, concerned that the Israeli system emphasizes enrollment numbers over excellence in teaching and research for resource allocation decisions – be it budget, faculty lines, or space and infrastructure. We believe that a recalibration of evaluation criteria is long overdue

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<sup>1</sup> These data are culled from the self-evaluations.

that gives more credit to the caliber of instruction, the quality of graduates, and the research profile of the faculty over student numbers.

### *Inbreeding*

There is a general tendency for students to remain at the same university for both undergraduate and graduate degrees. Even when another institution offers more opportunities in the student's chosen field of specialization, students seemed reluctant to pursue these opportunities citing a high level of satisfaction and degree of "comfort" in their home institution. In fact, we note a very marked level of "inbreeding" in departmental cultures, across the board, extending even into a strong (though not universal) tendency to hire one's own graduates as faculty (both in tenure-track and adjunct positions).

This trend, though perhaps understandable, is nonetheless unhealthy and should be discouraged. Students should be urged to consider enrolling in other universities for higher-level degrees, or at the very least to take classes at other universities. Search committees should take care to consider as wide a range of candidates as possible for both adjunct and senior faculty lines, drawing candidates with training and perspectives that both augments and expands upon that of the home institution.

Another way to help counter this inward looking tendency would be to encourage students to participate in the excavations of professors from other universities or in those of foreign archaeologists. More vigorous and formalized programs of guest and visiting lecturers (both from other Israeli and outside universities) should also be considered. It is especially important that these programs include lecturers with experience in neighboring and more distant regions who could help situate the archaeology of Israel more properly within the broader Near East and beyond.

### *Counseling*

There is, by and large, a very undeveloped 'culture of counseling' in Israeli higher education, compared to mentoring systems in other countries. This has been recently exacerbated by

moves to online course registration, etc., which allows students, if they wish, to avoid faculty interaction.

Each cohort of students, but particularly at the B.A. level, should have a proactive faculty member appointed as advisor to the group, offering them a mentor and mediator apart from their class instructors and from the department chair. At more than one institution reviewed students were unaware that such resources actually existed! Explicit instructions on requirements and on where to go for help, regarding both courses and careers, should be provided.

Beyond course selection, student counseling should also extend to helping students target and prepare for future careers. It is particularly important, in this regard for all departments of Archaeology in Israel to consider alternative career paths for their students, apart from the traditional academic career. An undergraduate degree in archaeology (especially from a less professionalized more globally oriented study program) can serve as a platform for a number of different career paths outside of academic archaeology. There are also alternative career paths for holders of higher-level degrees (especially MA degrees) outside of traditional university teaching or the IAA (i.e. cultural tourism, conservation, grade school and high school teaching). Making student's aware of these various career paths and assisting them in preparing for these careers is a key component of student counseling (at all degree levels) that is sorely lacking in Israel.

### Alumni Tracking

A better understanding of the subsequent career paths of departmental alumni could help greatly in the career counseling of current students. It would also help departments shape their study programs and, potentially, adjust the number and complexion of students admitted into their programs. A well-organized alumni network would also serve as a foundation for any development (fundraising) efforts geared toward bringing in extra revenue and resources beyond that provided by the university and external grants. For all these tangible benefits, however, only one university has a program in place that keeps track of alumni of their various degree programs. All universities, however, recognized the need for such tracking and maintained that they had plans to implement them in the future.

## **Infrastructure and Resources**

We emphasize again that archaeology can be conducted as humanistic research with few infrastructure demands, or as a natural science with significant laboratory, staff, computing, and other infrastructure needs. Clearly, the historical trend is toward the latter, with most young archaeologists involved in expensive field research that requires labs, technology, staff and other costs along the lines of the natural sciences. In this light, we identify a few programs that need significant infrastructure investment in the individual reports.

The computing resources of most of the universities seemed to be adequate, but it is imperative to maintain an appropriate level of support for the kinds of research conducted.

It is vital that Israeli archaeology keep up with the latest information available through a vigorous library system. It is also necessary to have access to site reports from the century of research in the region, and access to site reports from around the world. As a natural history, the canon of knowledge (data from site reports) is cumulative. The amount of data from around the world is growing substantially every year. With only five universities in Israel that study archaeology, it seems like an ideal situation for a shared, digital library and database in archaeology. Obviously, the academic archaeologists in the IAA would also benefit from such a centralized library and digital archive.

## *Budgeting*

There are two areas of concern on the allocation of financial resources to archaeology departments. The first centers on the budgetary formulas that universities and other regulating entities such as the Planning and Budgeting Committee (PBC) use to allocate resources to departments in different faculties. As mentioned at the outset of this report, the Committee is generally comfortable with the Israeli model of placing archaeology within faculties of humanities where it can serve as a bridge to other disciplines across the entire academic spectrum. Archaeology, however, has very different budgetary requirements than other humanities departments. Field trips and, especially, fieldwork are essential components of any

archaeology study program that carry costs not generally found in other humanities study programs. Laboratory analyses, which are also a critical component of these programs, carry additional costs (especially those incurred by the increasing number of scientific analytical approaches used in archaeology today). These costs simply cannot be covered following the budgetary formula Israeli universities use for departments in the humanities. All departments we visited struggle to maintain these vital parts of their study programs. Despite their best efforts, which often involve the redirection of research funding to support study program activities, departments routinely have to cancel field trips, shorten fieldwork, or skimp on critical laboratory training of students. Clearly, these costs must be taken into account for these study programs and some adjustment to the blanket humanities budgetary formulas needs to be made to compensate for these costs.

Our second overarching budgetary issue concerns the over-reliance on student enrollment in making budgetary allocations. This emphasis on enrollment makes sense as a broad, national strategy to determine student interest and need in an era of limited resources. However, we believe that it is necessary to fine tune this strategy to protect the small, yet vital academic programs like archaeology and most certainly for other programs as well. We note above the relationship between declining enrollments, lower admission standards, and high dropout rates (see **Students and Learning**). We believe that this whole cycle is driven in part by the over-emphasis the PBC places on student numbers in making budgetary allocations. We think a reconsideration of the PBC's budgeting formula is necessary and encourage the PBC to reallocate the weight given to teaching, student achievement, and faculty research as well as enrollment in making these important decisions.<sup>2</sup>

### Research Institutes

Another issue that relates to the unusual nature of archaeology programs involves the support for the research institutes that, in all cases, serve as integral part of the study program of archaeology.

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<sup>2</sup> We are informed that the budgeting model has been updated recently to better reflect the research component and to allow more flexibility between disciplines. As a committee, we report what we heard from the departments at the time of the interviews, but we certainly welcome any revision in the budgeting model.

These institutes not only support the research of departmental faculty, they are also integral part of the training of professional archaeologists. In addition, the research funds channeled through these institutes (through faculty research grants and, in the case of some programs, contracted “emergency” work<sup>3</sup>) are often the only source of financial support available to students.

Despite the key role these institutes play in promoting the caliber of archaeology study programs in Israel, there is often little university support awarded for their upkeep and staffing needs. Universities cannot be expected to cover all of the costs of the support staff needed to keep these facilities running (i.e. photographers, pottery restorers, draftsmen, lab managers), and there is clearly a continuing need for the soft money support generated by grants and contracts for these services. However, universities should bear more of the administrative costs for these facilities than is currently the case. Moreover, responsibility for the physical upkeep of these Institutes and the allocation of space for their activities falls squarely on the universities. These Institutes should be viewed as a showcase for university research and they require greater support from university administration.

### Libraries

Library facilities were uneven in the five different study programs under review. While certain programs had stand-alone archaeology libraries with extensive physical and electronic holdings, other programs had little access to archaeological library resources in their central libraries. We recognize that this is a major structural issue and that younger departments will always be at a disadvantage to more established programs in this regard. But as is the case in other domains, there is a real need and an opportunity for better cross-university collaboration and sharing in archaeology library resources. A countrywide digitization project and the creation of an inter-university platform for sharing resources is highly advisable.

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<sup>3</sup> “Emergency” archaeology is that conducted to recover archaeological materials prior to their destruction from construction activities. This work is regulated by the IAA.

## **Recommendations**

### *Study Programs*

- 1) We suggest renewed examination of the academic goals for the B.A. and M.A. degree. B.A. studies should become more ‘liberal’, providing a wide variety of introductory studies to various aspects of the field, as well as intensive training in critical writing and writing of scientific texts. More professional and technical studies (such as in depth pottery or lithic analysis) should be postponed to the MA degree. Such an approach is already underway at some institutions, and would require some (but not drastic) changes to the B.A. and M.A. study programs. Consideration should be given to adding a comprehensive examination as part of the MA studies as way of further professionalizing this degree.
- 2) It seems both wise and timely for institutions, either individually or collectively, to discuss and evolve a responsible policy regarding the numbers and the funding of students who should be accepted to and funded for both MA and, especially, Ph.D. programs. Stricter and more selective admission standards should be adopted at both degree levels. The duration and levels of financial support for PhD students needs to more realistically reflect the length of time it takes to complete a PhD in archaeology and the financial needs of the student.
- 3) A committee of university representatives, in coordination with appropriate national authorities, should meet to consider the issue of the ‘Dig Certificate’, with an eye toward ensuring equivalencies in training between institutions. Strong consideration should be given to deferring some of the more technical courses required for this certificate and the award of the certificate itself to the MA level. Concurrently, the IAA and the academic Departments should integrate rescue archaeology contracts in such a way that MA and Ph.D students can get practical training. This would help with funding for the Departments and have students gain IAA experience prior to graduation.
- 4) The Committee advocates the goal of making students, at all levels, conversant with topics and trends in global archaeology, moderating the current fairly concentrated culture historical

focus on the archaeology of the eastern Mediterranean. In addition to curriculum changes that broaden the geographic focus and emphasize more thematic (rather than strictly chronological) approaches, these goals might also be served through the initiation of international lecture programs and visiting professorships to teach courses in under-represented areas (e.g. Chinese or American archaeology), or symposia organization.

- 5) Classical language classes and epigraphy for students in Biblical and Classical Archaeology should be strongly encouraged in the post-BA level. Introductory classes in ancient Near Eastern languages should be offered as an optional track for students of archaeology if the university has the resources of teachers. Mastery of another modern language, in addition to English, should be encouraged at least in the MA and Ph.D levels.
- 6) The requirement that forces students to pay additional fees for classes beyond a set requirement of hours should be removed. This counterproductive policy not only inhibits students from acquiring critical language skills, it also discourages them from seeking out additional course work (i.e. in the natural sciences, geography, anthropology, computing and statistic) that are increasingly becoming critical components of archaeological training.
- 7) The Committee strongly recommends the establishment of an inter-institutional MA/PhD track in the archaeological sciences that involves the voluntary participation of any archaeology program along with the Weizmann Institute of Science. On the institutional level, an introduction to the archaeological sciences needs to be incorporated as a required element in both the BA and the MA curriculum. Future faculty recruitments should seek individuals that combine topical/chronological expertise with training in some branch of the archaeological sciences who can both bolster coverage in traditional areas of archaeological training as well as build study and research programs in the archaeological sciences.
- 8) Greater opportunities should be provided for PhD students to obtain teaching experience. Greater use of MA students as teaching assistants in undergraduate classes should be provided.

- 9) Archaeology departments should look for opportunities to expand or create BA and MA level study programs in cultural heritage preservation and interpretation, seeking out in particular collaborative linkages with relevant departments with expertise and interests in materials analysis, natural resource management, and tourism.
- 10) Greater effort should be made to encourage more cross-institutional resource sharing and the development of more inter-institutional programs that both leverage resources and help combat a tendency toward institutional insularity.

#### *Faculty and Research*

- 1) Field trips and excavations, especially those which incorporate field schools, should be counted in the teaching credits for archaeology.
- 2) Replacement of retired faculty members is essential. In certain departments predictable mass retirements may cause collapse of programs.
- 3) Archaeology departments should make a conscious effort to diversify their faculty, both with hires that break the traditional 'categories' of the field as practiced in Israel, and with hires that will reflect the training and networks of other institutions, in Israel or overseas.
- 4) Archaeology departments and appropriate administrative units should ensure against gender bias in hiring senior faculty positions.

#### *Students and Learning*

- 1) Admission standards at both the BA and the MA levels should be brought more in line with the challenging nature of study programs in archaeology. Boosting enrolment levels with students who do not have the qualifications to succeed in these programs does a great disservice to students, the study programs, and to higher education in Israel. This

recommendation would require the decoupling of student enrollment figures and PBC budgetary allocations (see Infrastructure recommendations).

- 2) Departments of archaeology should work to counter tendency toward inbreeding in both the composition of their student body and in their hiring. Students should be encouraged to consider different institutions for graduate studies, especially when these students offer resources better suited to the student's interests. Greater effort should be made to expose students to other perspectives and approaches to archaeology outside those practiced at their home institution.
- 3) Student counseling needs to be enhanced at all levels. This includes counseling BA and MA students on course selection, as well as in the varied career options open to archaeology graduates (especially non-academic options) and the training needed to prepare for these careers.
- 4) All archaeology departments need to establish alumna associations that keep track of the whereabouts and career paths of former graduates (at all degree levels). Data garnered about alumna career paths should be used in career counseling of current students and in shaping study programs and admission targets. These associations should also be used in development efforts.

#### Infrastructure

- 1) As an exceptionally interdisciplinary branch of study, archaeology has special needs and requirements, including fieldwork, field trips, and laboratory facilities. These necessities place unsustainable pressure on their departmental budgets. Thus, though archaeology in Israel is taught within the framework of faculties of Humanities and Land of Israel Studies, we recommend that the PBC budget archaeology students following a tariff more commensurate with that followed in the natural and exact sciences.

- 2) Archaeological research institutes are a remarkable asset to archaeology study programs and to their host universities' research profile. They are also an important source of revenue for the departments and for the university. University support of these institutes (both in terms of their physical infrastructure and other administrative costs) should be increased.
- 3) CHE should work with universities to create a national digital library that allows for the sharing of library resources in archaeology across all study programs. This would be cost-effective and would enhance research and teaching productivity.

**Signed by:**



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**Prof. Charles Stanish  
Committee Chair**



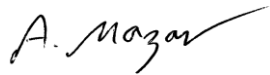
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**Prof. Susan Alcock**



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**Prof. Manfred Bietak**



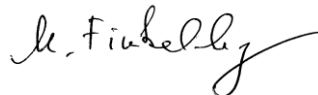
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**Prof. Amihai Mazar**



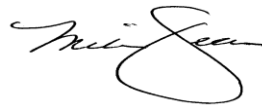
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**Prof. Ofer Bar-Yosef**



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**Prof. Margalit Finkelberg**



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**Dr. Melinda A. Zeder**

## Appendix 1- Copy of Letter of Appointment



January, 2011

Prof. Charles Stanish  
Department of Archeology  
University of California  
USA

שר החינוך  
**Minister of Education**  
وزير التربية والتعليم

Dear Professor Stanish,

The State of Israel undertook an ambitious project when the Israeli Council for Higher Education (CHE) established a quality assessment and assurance system for Israeli higher education. Its stated goals are: to enhance and ensure the quality of academic studies; to provide the public with information regarding the quality of study programs in institutions of higher education throughout Israel; and to ensure the continued integration of the Israeli system of higher education in the international academic arena. Involvement of world-renowned academicians in this process is essential.

This most important initiative reaches out to scientists in the international arena in a national effort to meet the critical challenges that confront the Israeli higher educational system today. The formulation of international evaluation committees represents an opportunity to express our common sense of concern and to assess the current and future status of education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond. It also establishes a structure for an ongoing consultative process among scientists around the globe on common academic dilemmas and prospects.

I therefore deeply appreciate your willingness to join us in this crucial endeavor.

It is with great pleasure that I hereby appoint you to serve as the chair of the Council for Higher Education's Committee for the Evaluation of Archeology Studies.

The composition of the Committee will be as follows: Prof. Charles Stanish (Chair), Prof. Susan Alcock, Prof. Ofer Bar-Yosef, Prof. Manfred Bietak, Prof. Margalit Finkelberg, Prof. Amihai Mazar and Dr. Melinda A. Zeder.

Ms. Alisa Elon will coordinate the Committee's activities.

In your capacity as the chair of the Evaluation Committee, you will be requested to function in accordance with the enclosed appendix.

I wish you much success in your role as chair of this most important committee.

*Gideon Sa'ar*  
Sincerely,  
*Gideon Sa'ar*  
Gideon Sa'ar  
Minister of Education,  
Chairperson, The Council for Higher Education

*Enclosures:* Appendix to the Appointment Letter of Evaluation Committees

cc: Ms. Michal Neumann, The Quality Assessment Division  
Ms. Alisa Elon, Committee Coordinator

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רח' שבטי ישראל 34 ירושלים מיקוד 91911 • טל' 02-5602330 • פקס 02-5602246  
34 Shvtei Israel St' 91911 Jerusalem. Tel. 02-5602330. Fax 02-5602246  
شارع شبطي يسرائيل 34 . اورشليم القدس 91911 . هاتف 02-5602330 فاكس 02-5602246  
<http://gov.il> כתובת אתר ממשל זמין:  
<http://www.education.gov.il> כתובת אתר המשרד: