



Ms. Marissa Gross, Coordinator
Quality Assessment Division
The Council for Higher Education
Jerusalem

Sunday, December 25, 2011

לשכת הרקטור

Office of
The Rector

Dear Ms. Gross,

**Re: Evaluation of Dept. of Archaeology
and Ancient Near Eastern Studies**

Attached are two very frank and detailed responses to the Evaluation report of the Department Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Studies, one by the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and the other by the Department's chairperson. Let me join both of them by thanking the committee for their investment in writing this detailed and insightful report. This report, together with the replies of the Dean and the Chair, will be discussed by the University's Committee for Academic Policy, where the actual decisions about structural and functional academic changes at the Hebrew University are made.

In their replies, the Dean and the Chair refer to all the concerns and the recommendations of the Committee. They both note that we are (and will be) working toward rectifying the deficiencies the committee highlighted, although I should note that we are not in full agreement with all of the recommendations, for the reasons outlined in the two replies.

Let me thank again the committee members and the CHI personnel for their work on this important mission.

Sincerely,

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22 December 2012

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פרופ' ראובן עמיתי
דיקן
הפקולטה למדעי הרוח
Prof. Reuven Amitai
Dean
Faculty of Humanities

Dear Ms. Gross,

**Re: Evaluation of Dept. of Archaeology
and Ancient Near Eastern Studies**

I am happy to take up the opportunity to respond to the Report of the Committee for the Evaluation of Archaeology Study Programs in Israel. I will relate mainly to the program at the Faculty of Humanities at the Hebrew University (which also includes the Program in Ancient Near Eastern Studies). I will, however, here and there relate to the wider question of the study of Archaeology in Israel.

Before commencing on the essence of my response, let me note that I greatly appreciate the efforts that the members of the committee invested in this report, which is both comprehensive and insightful. I found it refreshing to read a report that was both sympathetic and appreciative of much that goes on at the Department of Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Studies (and the Institute of Archaeology with which it is intertwined), and yet had much constructive criticism. Most of the suggestions of the committee are cogent to my mind, and can be embraced by the Department, the Faculty and the University as a whole.

I will begin by mentioning that the Department of Archaeology is distinguished by a real *esprit de corps* among its regular faculty, its adjunct faculty, and the graduate and undergraduate students, and these groups interact well. This is a substantial matter, and provides a strong basis for the future activities of the Department. The Program in Ancient Near Eastern Studies is slowly integrating within the larger framework, although here and there this has not been without problems. Most importantly, the research excellence of the members of the Department is beyond dispute, and happily this also holds for the new faculty, recent recipients of the doctoral degree, and graduate students. This high level of research, as expressed in the quality and quantity of publications (and the platforms where they appear), research grants and prizes, is warmly noted by the Committee.

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However, one cannot rest on ones laurels, particularly when there are certain pressing problems that need addressing, some more serious than others. I will note the most blatant:

1. The run-down infrastructure of much of the Institute of Archaeology building, a good portion of which is unpleasant, unsecure and unsafe. This is generally a matter that the University administration must address in the immediate future. This matter is noted in recommendations nos. 11 and 12.

2. The depletion of the ranks of faculty members through retirements and the need to make hires that will maintain areas of excellence in research and teaching, while developing new areas of study and innovative approaches. This is mainly the responsibility of the Faculty of Humanities and the Department of Archaeology together, although the University Administration is ultimately responsible for the number of new teaching posts for the Faculty of Humanities. These matters are addressed in recommendations nos. 2 and 6.

3. The need to examine and reform the teaching program, again to guarantee expertise in key areas on the one hand, and offer a broad exposure to methodologies and bodies of archaeological knowledge and related subjects on the other hand. This is mainly the responsibility of the Department of Archaeology. These matters are addressed in recommendations nos. 3-7, 9-10. I am not in full agreement with recommendation no. 3 and 4: see below.

Several challenges present themselves:

1. To develop a vision and strategic plan that preserve what is important and compelling in a grand scholarly tradition while looking forward to innovate in methodologies, research areas and teaching programs (recommendation nos. 1 and 2: see below).

2. To cooperate effectively with other scholars and units in the Faculty of Humanities and outside it (particularly the Social Sciences and the Natural Sciences, but other areas also present themselves) in innovative teaching programs and research projects (recommendations nos. 5-7, see below).

3. To maintain and develop the natural specialization for the archaeology of the Levant, while widening the horizons to neighboring regions and beyond (recommendation now. 5-6, see below).

4. To increase the numbers of worthy students in the Department, both undergraduates and graduates, to provide a firm basis for the future of the profession, both within the university system and beyond. It should be noted here that archaeology is one of the few subjects in the Faculty of

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Humanities which provides a firm basis for a defined career in academia, public service and elsewhere.

With these salient problems and challenges before us, we can look at some of the recommendations made by the Committee, in the order that they were presented:

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- Strategic planning for hiring (no. 2): This is a complex issue. Firstly, it is obviously affected by the total number of positions that the University Administration plans to grant the Faculty of Humanities over a certain number of years. Secondly, the Faculty (i.e., the Dean and the Development Committee) in dialogue with the Departments and Schools, put together an overall plan for the various areas of study that we think important for the future of the Faculty (taking into account faculty retirements, preserving traditional areas of excellence, and developing new areas of scholarly work). Finally, there is the ongoing reality: how many new positions are actually allocated to the Faculty of Humanities, who are the young stars in the profession and in which fields do they specialize, changing priorities in real time, etc.). This all being said, the development of the Department of Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Studies is a top priority of the Faculty. In the past year, the following decisions were made: 1) to appoint a senior lecturer (yet untenured) who combines pre-historical archaeology with computers and mathematics (effective the summer of 2011; she is currently the head of the new laboratory for computerized archaeology); 2) to appoint (effective in the summer of 2013) and untenured senior lecturer in Assyriology (with 1/3 position in the School of Philosophy and Religions). On the planning table are: 1) A position in Classical Archaeology; 2) Another position in pre-history; 3) a position in Medieval Archeology (most probably Islamic Archaeology). It is highly conceivable that some or all of these positions will be joint appointments with other departments or even faculties. The scope of this plan is five years.
- Erasing sub-departmental distinction (no. 3): Of course, all matters are open to discussion, but personally I would recommend against this particular suggested change. I think that the ongoing demand for wide horizons in a particular field demand the preservation of these distinctions, even at the B.A. level. We can have either archaeologists with wide acquaintance with all of archaeology, or archaeologists with wide knowledge of their period (none of which are short): thus, e.g., the person specializing in the Classical Period should have some acquaintance with Classical art, the history of Greece and Rome, the Jewish history of the period, and ideally some Greek or Latin (and perhaps Aramaic and Coptic).
- Exploring further to develop other forms of undergraduate training (no. 4): Again, this subject can be mooted, but I am unconvinced about some of the suggestions. Basically much of the Faculty of

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Humanities (and some of the Social Sciences) deals with “cultural heritage”. This is neither a discipline nor a profession. With a degree in archaeology (along with art history, Jewish history, geography, etc.) one can somehow find a job that might fit such a job title, but it is both amorphous and ultimately unsatisfying to try to train someone in “cultural heritage”. If we want people to be involved in cultural heritage work, they need a good grounding in a particular discipline. My view of tourism studies at a University is similar: for those graduates wishing to pursue a career in tourism – as guides or managers – the best thing is to do the non-academic tourist guide course after they complete their B.A. Their training in archaeology will hold them there in good stead. Geography, of course, is already taught at the Hebrew University, and is taken as a second major by many archaeology students. If I could think of one path of study that should be developed within the framework of archaeology, I would suggest museology, for which a B.A. studies in archaeology (or art history) is a sound basis.

- Creating and strengthening cross-cutting programs in archeological science (no. 5): I fully endorse this suggestion.
- Strategic hires that combine periods with methodological skills (no. 6): Again, I fully approve, and in fact, this is what we just did with the hire of the pre-historian with a strong background in mathematics and computers, who is now directing our laboratory for computerized archaeology.
- Islamic archaeology (no. 7): I am in complete favor. Until this year, the Hebrew University was the only university in Israel with a position in Islamic archaeology (a joint appointment with the Dept. of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies); just now, Haifa University has made a similar appointment. From our ongoing discussions with senior people from the Israel Antiquities Authorities, it is clear the Middle Ages, which mainly include Islamic archaeology (but also that of the Crusader period) will be one of the most important fronts for work in the next generation. The right thing to do would be to make another appointment (and there are worthy candidates on the horizon). While the matter has yet to come to a full-fledged discussion, I completely support the idea of a separate track for Islamic (or medieval) archaeology, perhaps on the M.A. and in cooperation with the Dept. of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies.
- Mentoring Junior Faculty (no. 8): This is already being done: all new faculty get a mentor from a more senior colleague.
- Language training (no. 9): I am in full agreement with this suggestion. I think that all specialists, certainly in Biblical, Classical and Islamic archaeology need a working knowledge in at least one relevant “ancient” language, in order to read sources and to understand better the culture that they are studying. At least one modern language is necessary too, to read modern studies (yes, not everything is in English). The whole matter of restrictions on

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- credits has to be reconsidered and reformed. The Committee members have hit the nail exactly on the head here.
- Curriculum reform in M.A. (no. 10) is worth considering. It is a real challenge balancing the needs of cultural and geographic specialization with wide horizons, but an open approach can lead to innovative programs. As for giving teaching opportunities to graduate students (mainly Ph.D. students): Of course, the Committee is correct. This matter, unfortunately, is directly affected by budgetary constraints that have affected the University and the Faculty as a whole over the past decade. However, we seem to be entering a period of relative budgetary relaxation, and there is a reasonable chance that we will see some improvement here.
 - The physical infrastructure (nos. 11 and 12): I will not repeat myself (and the Committee) on the sorry state of most of the Institute of Archaeology building: this demands the immediate attention of the University Administration, and calls for a strategic, long-term plan. Besides this, I would advise the Institute and Department of Archaeology to work hard *vis-à-vis* to find a way to remove much of the material that is stored in the building and will probably not be studied in anyone's lifetime.

I will make four other comments:

1) Some of the administrative problems of the Department and Institute have been addressed recently by the Faculty of Humanities. Firstly, the secretary of the Institute will move from a half to full time position. Secondly, finally after a period of several years, an curator of the teaching collection of the Institute will be appointed (half time, moving in a few years to full time). Finally, the Faculty (and the Personnel Division of the University) is aware of the problems in the Departmental secretariat, and is looking at ways to alleviate them.

2) In the future, the Department should make an effort to make some of its hires from candidates whose education is not 100% at the Hebrew University. We are very proud at what we do, but we do not have a monopoly on insight and knowledge, and it is important to broaden the educational base of our faculty.

3) In the national report, the Committee notes the gross gender balance in departments of archaeology. However, it notes (without too much comment) that at the Hebrew University, the gender balance is exactly 50%-50%. This is something to be proud of, and can serve as a model for other departments in the Faculty and beyond.

4) There is a pressing need to create some type of rational planning for the study of archaeology in Israel. The deans of Humanities in Israel are trying to lay the groundwork for a general plan for the Humanities in the

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country, where there will be distribution of study areas in the different Faculties. It seems to me that the heads of the different Institutes / Departments of Archaeology should be working to reach an agreement on a national level: what needs to be taught and researched at every university, and what fields can be the specialization of this or that university.

I hope that these remarks will be of some help in the further discussions on the future and development of the study of archaeology at the Hebrew University.

Sincerely yours,

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**The Council for Higher Education Evaluation Report:
The Department of Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Studies
A Response**

Before responding to the comments and suggestions made in the evaluation report we would like to thank the Committee members for their comprehensive report and the efforts they invested in composing it as well as for their understanding and recommendations detailed in the report. After receiving and reading the report the faculty members met to discuss its results and recommendations. The following is our response based on this discussion to the recommendations made by the Committee in their elaborate report.

We are indeed in the process of "creating an overarching rationale for the inclusion of the department constituent parts under a single umbrella." This is reflected in the new studies curriculum introduced for the first time in 2010, which is more comprehensive and cuts across the traditional division into sub-departments. It is especially true for the integration of ANES courses into the study curricula.

The main difficulties in implementing a cross-cutting program of studies and research are:

- A. The *study points* restriction ("nazim") imposed on Archaeology and ANES due to its inclusion in the Humanities Faculty (e.g., Recommendation 9).
- B. Being understaffed (e.g., Recommendation 7).
- C. The nature of the Archaeological discipline, the study of which must incorporate: theoretical and practical aspects, classroom lectures, "hands-on" workshops, and field experience.

Notwithstanding these restrictions there are currently at least five new study programs for undergraduate and graduate training (e.g., Recommendation 4) in various stages of progress, developed in collaboration with other departments across the university:

- An integrative study program for BA and MA in **Archaeology and Earth Sciences** in collaboration with the Institute of Earth Sciences, Science Faculty.
- **Interdisciplinary Honors Graduate Program in the study of Late Antiquity in the Mediterranean Region and its Legacy** (see p. 11 of the report).
- **MA program in the Archaeology of Israel in its pre-classical Near Eastern context** - A program intended for students who wish to widen their prospects in the arts, archaeology, history and textual sources of the ancient Near East and Egypt.
- Create a new integrative interdisciplinary BA and MA programs for **Egyptology and Linguistics** and **Egyptology and Bible Studies**, in order to prevent Egyptology from turning into an “ancillary discipline” in the department of Archaeology.
- An interdisciplinary program in **Museology** for MA students intended for students from archaeology and various other HU disciplines: from art history to biology. Considering museums as we know today as institutions of modern societies, the program will engage faculty from the social sciences. Half-to-a-third of a student’s curriculum will be taken at his/her ‘home’ departmental MA program; the rest will be devoted to methodological and theoretical aspects of museology. There is currently no other similar academic program in Israel.
- There are also negotiations with the Rothberg Overseas School as regards a MA program in English.

Content, Structure, and Scope of the Study Program

There are ongoing changes and modifications of the study curriculum in our department. For example, in the past every student was required to choose **Biblical Archaeology** with another sub-department, either **Prehistory** or **Classical Archaeology** (specified on p. 9 of the report). Recently this rule was cancelled, and our students can now construct their own study program in the second year,

choosing any two sub-departments according to their interests - Prehistoric, Biblical, Classical, Islamic Archaeology or ANES studies (starting 2010-2011). In addition, we made some modifications in the structure of introductory courses given in the first year and the first semester of the second year and have incorporated also an obligatory course in ANES for all students (and see p. 10 of the report). The new program also affected the number of courses taken in each of the sub-departments in the second and third year of the undergraduate studies, or issuing the “Dig Certificate” after completing the particular requirements, during the MA studies.

We intend to introduce more changes into the study curriculum, as suggested by the Committee, in short - a broader scope of BA studies including the addition of some “overarching” courses whereas the MA studies would be more professionally oriented. These changes and modifications take time to implement and they are also hampered by the rigidity of the restricted allocation of the *study points*. Our MA students are required to study a second modern language but, due to the restrictions of the 'points' quota, they are unable to study any ancient language (no. 9 on p. 6). PhD candidates in Classical Archaeology are expected to study either Greek or Latin as part of their course work.

We are committed to cooperation with other departments in the University, as befitting the interdisciplinary character of the Archaeological discipline. While research cooperation between faculty members from different universities does take place, joint structured study programs between the various Archaeology departments do not exist. However, whenever students are interested in a particular specialization that is not represented in our department, they may participate in some courses given in other universities. For example, students who are interested in Crusader Archaeology take some supplementary courses in Haifa University where a former student of ours, Prof. Adrian Boas is struggling to found a sub-department of Medieval/Crusader periods Archaeology. At the same time, we have MA students from Tel Aviv coming here to take courses at the Institute, in line with the respective administrative regulations of the other universities.

Faculty

We are keenly aware of the dangers of current and future understaffing (p.12) and expect that the University authorities will adopt the recommendation of Committee as stated in the report: “The committee acknowledges the strong, indeed imperative, justification for future recruitments to replace recent and upcoming retirement. Failure to do so will seriously jeopardize Hebrew University’s current high standing in both Israel and international archaeology. The Committee has repeatedly referred to this issue and we do hope that the University authorities will pay attention and forestall the perils of a future with no or very little hiring. This point was also stressed by the committee in the part discussing research (p. 17). To maintain the excellence of our department, future hiring will definitely have to take into consideration the possession of special skills, as recommended by the committee; however, first and foremost we shall look for exceptional scholars specializing in various fields of archaeology according to the fields of research conducted in our institute. In doing so we believe that our future staff will be able to lead in teaching, field work and research while meeting the international standards of archaeological excellence.

The severe financial situation currently makes it difficult to include adjunct faculty in the framing of the core curriculum. Moreover, there are particular branches of research that are currently in serious danger of disappearing altogether from the study curriculum though they are crucial for the learning and training of future archaeologists. Suffice it to mention numismatics, epigraphy (Aramaic, Hebrew or Greek), archaeobotany and, in the near future, physical anthropology to illustrate this severe situation.

There is no bias against hiring professionals trained in other institutions. On the contrary, we would be happy to appoint such qualified scholars as has been done in some of our recent hiring. The open hiring procedures adopted in recent years assure that the best candidate is chosen, regardless of where her/his schooling took place. At the same time, one has to take into consideration that the Institute of Archaeology is the oldest of its kind in the country and thus was actually the training institution for most of the archaeologists in all the other

institutions. The current state of affairs will undoubtedly change in the future, but the homogeneity of the faculty background reflects this history.

Students

We were pleased by the compliments given by the committee concerning faculty-student relations. We have been always proud to have created a special atmosphere for our students who feel the deep commitment of both faculty and administrative staff. We hope that the committee evaluation will help us in getting back some of the services that were denied to us recently, with the administrative re-organization of the faculty, while ignoring our special position within the Faculty of the Humanities. This has been a grave hindrance in the smooth running of the institute both as a research and a teaching facility.

The students' complaints concerning lack of training in archaeological theory and historiography, as well as insufficient teaching of skills in writing and critical thinking were seriously considered. Some of those already have been taken into account within the curriculum (e.g. a writing course that has been part of the core curriculum for MA prehistory students. At times students from other sub-departments have participated in this course. Personal tutorials ["Hadracha ishit"] for MA students are offered by all sub-departments, etc.). The lack of theoretical training is an issue discussed at length in the department and will be amended in due course, although some courses and seminars in our program include a discussion of theoretical issues (e.g. Household Archaeology or Processes of Abandonment and Destruction in the Archaeological Record).

We endorse the demand of the committee for opportunities of teaching by doctoral students. Still this is something that we have to ask the University authorities for since it is a question of costs. We do hope that the committees' strong recommendation will help us in pursuing this goal.

Infrastructure and resources

We applaud the Recommendation (11) to undertake rapid interventions to improve the overall physical condition of the departmental space. This will enable us to tackle the problem of working and storage space for junior and some of our senior staff members (Recommendation 8). Unfortunately, it is very difficult to move away non-active collections as the legitimate 'owner' of the archaeological finds in Israel, the IAA is currently suffering from a storage space crisis. We prepared in the past a program to renovate our facilities, especially the old wing of our building which houses most of the laboratories, and will be happy to share it with the University authorities.

Last, but not least, we thank the committee for its enthusiastic support and clarifications as regards the urgent need for extra administrative staff since recent cuts "have proved extremely debilitating to aspects of the functioning of both Department and Institute". We expect that the joint plea, of the Department and the committee will help in convincing the University authorities of the "glaring need to find funding for these interventions and replacements in physical space and personnel" (p. 19).

Hopefully, the next time there will be an evaluation of the Department of Archaeology and ANES, all of the above will be amended, as indeed "[the] HUIJ has definitely not exploited its potential for substantial fundraising". We, on our part, will do our utmost to keep the excellence of the Archaeology and ANES department at the HUIJ as noted by the esteemed committee in its present report.