

JUST PAST?

The making of Israeli archaeology

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*Iron are our lives
Molten right through our youth.
A burnt space through ripe fields
A fair mouth's broken tooth.*

Isaac Rosenberg, "August 1914" (1949: 70)

THE DARK SIDE

The British Mandatory period is "generally regarded as the formative 'Golden Age' of Archaeology in Palestine" (Gibson 1999: 115, with references). True, the period signalled unprecedented progress, but it was not very difficult to improve Ottoman Palestine. There remained many dark spots: ethnic groups were segregated; the bulk of archaeological research was carried out by foreigners; the Law of Antiquities was accomplished at the price of creating legal trade in antiquities (Kletter & Kersel, forthcoming) and each separate group was interested in "our past" (Jews in synagogues; Arabs in Islamic periods and so on) (Broshi 1986: 25-6; Gibson 1999; Ben-Arieh 1999a,b, 2001; Abu el-Haj 2002).

Early Israeli archaeology was very popular (Fig. 29). By 1958 the IES had 1,500 local members and 200 members abroad (*BIES* 16 (1951/52): 76). Hundreds were attending annual conferences: 300 in 1948, 500 in 1949, 800 in 1957 (*BIES* 15 (1949/50): 124, 19 (1960-61): 87; *Alon* 3 (1951): 57). The young were also interested (Yeivin 1960: 2; cf. Dever 1985: 43; Elon 1997: 41-3; Rosen, in press). IES members came, as a whole, from the upper classes. State leaders were enthusiastic about archaeology: President Ben-Zvi was a keen scholar and David Ben-Gurion chaired a Bible study circle. The IES council in 1952 included the Minister of Education, the mayors of Tel Aviv and Haifa, Yosef Weitz of the JNF, Chief of Staff Yadin and American archaeologist Nelson Glueck, and the IES dealt not just with archaeology but also with nature and the recent history of Israel. Was this, then, the Golden Age of Israeli archaeology?

The files and newspaper clippings are filled with the darker side of public interest in archaeology: vandalism and damage to antiquities and sites through carelessness or malice. Contractors, drivers and even official institutions ignored



Figure 29. School visit to Zori's excavations at Beth Shean. (Photograph by Zori, IAA 1337)

and destroyed antiquities without letting anyone know (*Alon* 5–6 (1957): 5). People stole antiquities of all sorts, as well as equipment and materials from restored sites (*Alon* 4 (1953): 1–2). This was facilitated by the lack of an updated Law of Antiquities and effective supervision of sites.

One common custom was the writing of new inscriptions on ancient monuments. This stubborn and stupid habit still exists, but is hardly recent. Even the “holy” site of Masada was not protected from abuse by youth groups and other travellers (*Ma'ariv*, 10.4.1955, copy in GL44875/10 no. 7465). It became a plague:

The walls become black or white from all the names. A new history was glued to them: Izhak from Kiryat Motzkin decided to love Rina of Migdal Ashkelon, especially on the tomb of one of the followers of Rabbi Yehuda ha-Nasi. Plainly, white on black, inscribed with a broken heart and dripping drops of blood ...
(Lavie 1956)

Damage and destruction of remains during development was a serious problem. Remains found during the erection of the Binayaney ha-'Ummah buildings in Jerusalem were destroyed on purpose by the entrepreneurs (*Ma'ariv*, 10.4.1955). On 2 December 1953 the newspaper *Masa* published details of some shocking instances: during works in the Negev ancient tombstones were used as filling material for a modern road; near Yeruham an entire site was destroyed.

Whereas some of the news stories were based on rumours that the IDAM denied, Yeivin admitted some cases (GL44875/10, 9.12.53). The journalist Zvi Lavie wrote more stories:

Two weeks ago young inhabitants near Shivta – from the new settlement opposite it – were amazed ... Old Shivta began to be methodically stolen, hastily taken upon lorries and carried away. It was one of the strangest discoveries of ignorance, stupidity and lack of logic by one contractor for building, who found no other way to save expenses on buying building materials ... Those who directed the operation of theft were not satisfied with the thousands of stones strewn over the huge area. A direct order was given to bulldozer drivers ... The steel arms went down on some buildings that stood hundreds of years against the power of nature. (Lavie 1956)

Contractors of the new road to Eilat built a toilet right inside a Byzantine bathhouse and then when the nearby section of the road was finished, they destroyed the whole site rather than just dismantle the toilet. There is a story that Yadin forced them to rebuild the bathhouse. At Ozem in the Negev, a Tell was saved by the IDAM by moving a new settlement, but the road to the settlement was not moved and it damaged the Tell (Lavie 1956).

Trespassers were rarely brought to court. Until 1955 no cases came to trial (Amir 1955). Once they reached court, allegations often could not be verified and punishments were ridiculous. Here are a few examples of cases that did not reach court:

- An agricultural company planted “various vegetables, such as watermelons and zucchinis”, on the Tell of Ashdod (Dothan, GL44886/4, 14.5.59).
- On 18 October 1958 a group of respectable people from the Kaiser-Frizer Company took “four pillars and four capitals” from Ashkelon for a private house one of them wanted to build. The items were damaged during transport. The commander of the local police station tried to avoid registering a complaint, suggesting that the group acted in innocence (*betom lev*) (GL44886/4, 16.4.59). The Minister of Education ordered Yeivin to ask the police to close this file (GL44880/13, 11.2.59).
- The Safad municipality gave a licence for building in the fortress area, despite knowing it was an ancient site. The police refused to act and once foundations were laid it was too late (GL44886/4, 21.1.59).
- A church inside Caesarea was ruined by a driver (GL44886/4, 11.1.59).
- A supervisor of the JNF robbed a Roman period tomb near Bir es-Safsaf. The police forgot to summon to court the two workers who were digging on the man's orders, so he was just warned (GL44886/4 no. 4566, letters 26.11.57, 4.12.57).

However, the authorities were particularly sensitive in cases involving foreigners. Rabbani, an antiquities guard, reported on 28 May 1950 (GL44886/4) that HL and OV – two Finnish tourists and students of the Biblical archaeologist Aapeli Saarisalo – visited Guy (without Saarisalo's knowledge) and showed him a drawing of a juglet they had "found". Rabbani went to the site and discovered that the two had dug a deep pit and did not find the juglet "by chance", as they said. Yeivin complained to the Director-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (GL44886/4 no. 3380, 25.7.50), since in the meantime the two had left Israel. Yeivin's letter was translated and sent through the consular department to the Finnish consul in Israel (GL44886/4 no. 3080, 7.8.50). The two finally returned the juglet to the Consul of Israel in Helsinki (GL44886/4 no. 4029, 13.10.50).

In another strange case the IDAM reached the conclusion that tourists and diplomats were engaged in robbing sites along the coast. It asked the police to make sudden inspection tours on Fridays in Ashkelon, Yavne-Yam, Caesarea and so on, having previously placed warning signs at all these sites. There were traces of more robbery, but the robbers were not apprehended. In one tour in Caesarea, Prausnitz was showing the police sites that had been robbed when the British consular car arrived. Of course, when the travellers saw the police they refrained from committing an illicit act – even if this had been their intention (GL44886/4, "first report on police and IDAM acts"). Still, Prausnitz was confident that diplomats had stolen antiquities and notified the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Soon he reported robbery by diplomats and UN personnel at Minat Rubin south of Tel Aviv (GL44886/4 no. 2197, 21.9.56). A picture of the "evidence" was sent by the IDAM to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, showing "preserve tins [i.e. cans of food] used by illicit diggers" (GL44886/4 no. 2795, 5.11.56). This photograph (IAA 15,505) was delivered on 18 November 1956 to embassies and UN bodies in Israel, together with a letter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

The IDAM now communicates that, unfortunately, illegal digging still continues and I am enclosing a photograph supplied by the IDAM of a beer can, an empty cigarette pack, a Super Coola can and some Dixie cups found at Yavne. If any member of your mission was involved in this quest for ancient objects, an appeal from you to desist from such diggings would be very much appreciated ... (GL44886/4 no. 4009)

We do not know whether W. Murray Anderson, administrative officer of the headquarters of the UN Truce Supervision Organization, was impressed with this sort of evidence, but he politely replied: "None of the UNTSO staff was in the area of Yavne and none of our staff is working in the discovery of antiquities. The items appearing in the photograph are, in the main, not stocked by the Truce Organization" (GL44886/4, 23.11.56).

One cannot avoid the conclusion that the IDAM was ready to go to great lengths when damage was caused by foreigners, even if it amounted to only one small juglet. The matter was treated as a national insult. On the other hand, Israelis like Dayan managed to rob dozens of sites and steal thousands of objects.

Similar problems arise everywhere, and are ongoing in Israel. Measuring their extent is difficult. The letters and newspapers of the 1950s create the impression that this was something new. However, it was known earlier in the Mandatory period, but not to such an extent, mainly because development was much more limited. It is also likely that public attitudes towards antiquities in the early 1950s were influenced by the policy towards abandoned refugee property. With so many abandoned places and looting during the war, and systematic destruction later, people were bound to treat anything as abandoned until proved otherwise. To "save" antiquities, in the few cases where something could be saved, often meant to tear them out of walls of houses before demolition, then remove them to some nondescript storage site, inaccessible to the public. What could laymen deduce from such acts? Add to that the harsh economic conditions and the contempt towards everything old. It was a "new" period; the ideal was to build new settlements, new roads, a new society and a new citizen. Why should old ruins have value? The educated could separate between "our" ancient sites, to be admired and cherished, and more recent sites identified with foreigners and with enemies. The "common man" was not likely to follow such subtleties.

The IDAM realized that the solution to vandalism, robbery and destruction of antiquities was general education of the public (*Alon* 4 (1953): 1-2). The wide media coverage of the phenomenon started in earnest around 1952/53; those who damaged the past were much more strongly criticized, regardless of political positions. The newspapers actually took it upon themselves to educate the Israeli public, mainly about their "past". The common claim was that it was not just the land that was theirs now, but also its past. This past gave Israelis legitimization, so they must keep the remains and nurture their study. In the long run, it was a crucial contribution. || *

After 1967, "imported" antiquities stolen in the occupied territories became a major problem again. The robbers who looted the sites were motivated by the dire economic situation in these areas. The spoils were mainly enjoyed by Western/Israeli dealers and connoisseurs. However, this is beyond the scope of this book.

Thus it seems that the 1950s were not the "Golden Age" of Israeli archaeology, but maybe the concept of a Golden Age is a myth. When we look for a Golden Age we can never hope to make it real because it is always related to the past. Perhaps the only possible Golden Age is the present. Now is the only time when options are still open, actions possible, and Walter Benjamin's angel of history has not yet seen us (cf. Grunfeld 1988: 240).

THE POLICY OF SALVAGE EXCAVATIONS

The IDAM had an advantage in comparison with the former period: it had more workers and a bigger budget but a smaller area to supervise. However, the pace of development was chaotic (*Alon* 5–6 (1957): 2–3), calling for fast solutions to numerous problems. A policy towards salvage excavations was essential, although the term “salvage excavations” was only coined later.

Such a policy was formulated early. An expression is found in a memorandum by Yeivin of 31 December 1950, of a meeting between the IDAM, the Planning Unit (Makhlaka le-Tikhnun) of the Housing Department in the Ministry of Labour, the Planning Department of the Prime Minister’s Office and the Property Department of the Ministry of Finance. This considerable team met to discuss building new neighbourhoods near Ashkelon. Some of the plans included areas of antiquities:

Mr Yeivin explained in detail the policy of the IDAM concerning development projects that include parts of historical sites; in this case the IDAM distinguishes three types:

- (i) The first type [A], important sites where no development projects will be permitted under any condition, for example, the area of ancient Ashkelon within the Crusader walls that are seen today above ground.
- (ii) The third type [C], sites whose importance is lesser, according to the information known to the IDAM. The IDAM will permit development projects immediately, provided that during the works (digging foundations, levelling areas, etc.) a representative of the IDAM will be present. He will supervise the work and be allowed to stop it if remains are found that, according to his judgement, necessitate further archaeological examination [meaning excavation, although not written explicitly].
- (iii) Between the two former types there is type B, where the IDAM will be ready to permit development projects after an initial archaeological examination. In case such an examination discovers monumental remains that require restoration and exposure for exhibition, these remains will be removed from all the areas where development work will be permitted. The examinations made in relation to types B and C must be budgeted according to the following division: the IDAM pays the expenses of the scientific work (manager of examination, survey, photographs, treatment of finds, final publication, etc.); while the body that performs the development project pays the full expenses of the work salary ... (GL44875/9)

Yeivin asked that developers also supply the services of an engineer or surveyor, which the IDAM lacked; the IDAM would pay the cost. Then, when discussing

the specific case of Ashkelon, Yeivin mentioned a fourth type of site (but not explicitly) – previously unknown or “new” sites:

As for area X in the eastern part of the suggested neighbourhood, it does not interest the IDAM at all, since as far as is known it is found outside the area of the ancient site. However, the rule that is valid for the entire country is also valid in this area. If during works there ancient remains should be found, the developers must notify the IDAM and stop work until the IDAM permits its continuation. The conclusions of the examination of the remains [will be decided] as above.

As for area Y, its western part belongs to type B and its eastern part to C; but setting the exact borders between the B and C type areas is impossible by sight ... Excavation of a few trial trenches is needed and hopefully their results will allow setting the borders between these two areas ... Mr Levison explained that a contract will be signed on building these neighbourhoods ... on sums that will exceed a million Lira and more. Mr Yeivin demanded that in this case, 1% to 2% of the entire sum be dedicated to the expenses of the initial archaeological examination of the planned neighbourhoods.

(GL44875/9)

It is a remarkable document, although it could be better arranged. Actually, archaeological salvage in Israel is based today on similar principles. Development of major sites (Tells) is forbidden (with few exceptions, often due to legal problems). All other sites (Yeivin's types B and C), if registered officially (*mukhrzim*), require preliminary examinations and, if needed, excavations. So do “new sites”, but financing their excavation is more difficult. Yeivin probably underestimated the number and significance of “new sites”. The decisions had to be made in advance, that is, before projects were started. In many cases, the nature of a site was not well known, especially in the case of “new” sites. Often, sites or areas hold unforeseen surprises. Yeivin also suggested three possibilities following a salvage excavation: releasing the area for development; releasing the area after removal of important remains; and refusing development if very important remains were found. Even more remarkable was the estimation of 1–2 percent of the development budget that Yeivin demanded for archaeology. It was common knowledge, used in many cases in later years.

This policy of salvage excavations was good – on paper. The problem was its enforcement over developers, including the state's various developing bodies. Perhaps the gravest problem was financing excavations. In a lecture delivered in 1951 Yeivin followed a similar typology of sites:

- A. Important, where no development is allowed (most of the Tells, about 200 in all).

- B. Second in importance, where the IDAM will require trial excavations to decide whether to allow development (but he added that sites of this type were "few and not well defined", e.g. "near Caesarea", "near Ramla's white mosque").
- C. Suspected sites, where supervision or small-scale probes are enough, e.g. some parts of Tiberias, the new town of Beth Shean, areas further away from Ashkelon's walls (*Alon 4* (1953): 9).

The 1951 lecture marked a deterioration in standards of protection. Yeivin did not mention "new" sites. He took it for granted that the importance of an area was directly related to its proximity to the centre of a site. There were no criteria as to how much must be excavated in sites of types B and C before release for development. Yeivin even agreed to excavate large Tells in certain circumstances:

The prohibition on touching historical sites even of type A is not eternal. It is temporary, as long as the site is unexplored. Even an important Tell, once completely excavated, if it yields no outstanding monuments, [then] its right for preservation is annulled and it should be treated like any other land in the state. (*Alon 4* (1953): 9-10)

Yeivin wrote similarly to the Planning Department on 5 August 1951:

Usually the IDAM will object to including Tells such as Zippori, Megiddo or Wadi 'Ara [Ar'ara] in any plans of building or development. These extensive Tells require detailed archaeological investigation and, owing to their size and depth, such an investigation will take many years and very large investment, impossible in current conditions – also for lack of experts (archaeologists, surveyors, photographers, etc.).

In some other places, it may be possible to release sites after checking, on certain conditions. But even here one cannot make general rules, each place necessitates special visits ... (GL44875/9 no. 6298)

With these words Yeivin signified that the IDAM would not automatically stop any plan: matters of the living come before those of the dead. In small Tells or *khirbehs*, from "periods for which our knowledge is plentiful", it would be sufficient to carry out just a small trial excavation. Sometimes, even this could be avoided, if developers agreed to leave the centre of the site empty, for example, as a garden (*Alon 2* (1950): 5-6). A typology of sites is a difficult and much debated matter even today (why classify? how? what is "important"?). Yeivin could and would not object to the dream of development as an ultimate ideal: Israel clothed "in a robe of cement and concrete" (from Natan Alterman's famous poem "A

Song to Moledet"). Rather than speaking about an archaeology of protection, Yeivin's concern was to fit archaeology into the vision of development. In this he was only typical of his period. Similar views are common today (even the present IAA mission statement speaks about maintaining a balance between development and archaeology); that sites are a sort of "endangered species" is still a minority view (Gal 1996; Kletter and de-Groot 2001).

Policy was one thing; practice another. Developers – public or private – paid for work in the field, usually by cheap relief workers. The IDAM paid the salary of the professional team. The transportation of excavation workers was a grey area. During the 1950s a team in a typical salvage excavation was very small, led by one manager and perhaps an assistant or two (Fig. 30). The manager took the photographs and made interim plans; only the final plans required a professional surveyor. The team consisted of IDAM workers covered by the regular budget. The shortfall in professional excavators was filled with guards, Friends of Antiquities and students. The IDAM paid for post-excavation expenses until final publication. Excavations were almost never undertaken in the "dead" winter (unlike today). There was little understanding of how expensive and complex is the road to final publication (compare Delou-gaz, in Ch. 4, pp. 92–5).

While supervision was improved and procedures for checking development plans and coordinating the work were arranged with most developing bodies, funding for salvage excavations remained a stumbling block. Yeivin defined the payment for workers as "help" from developers, including private individuals "on whose premises remains requiring examination were found" (Yeivin 1960: 3; see also Yeivin 1955b: 3). However, the regulations did not legalize this procedure and some developers refused to "help", or even avoided the problem by destroying antiquities. In 1957 Yeivin wrote:

The problem of financing the IDAM investigations, required because of development works, is becoming grave, especially now when the Ministry of Employment has cut the allocation of relief workers for archaeological works. It is not always possible, and it is always difficult, to demand finance for the investigations from the developers. (GL44883/12, 4.12.57)

Yeivin's pleas for special governmental funding to finance investigations were ignored, although he warned that without it he would have to forbid development even in sites of "secondary importance" (*ibid.*). In a report about the use of the 1955/56 budget Yeivin wrote:

In all, we made 28 excavations this year. It would not be possible ... unless other institutions paid the salary of the workers. Most of the works were done with the kind help of the employment department of the Ministry of

Labour, who put at our disposal 8,926 work-days. But in most places the IDAM paid for the transportation of the workers ... and in some places also social insurance. (GL44880/12)

When the Nirim Synagogue in the Negev was discovered in 1957, the IDAM did not have the budget to handle it. Yeivin hoped that relief workers would be found, but was not sure if there was unemployment in the region. He begged for funding, playing on the fact that it was a synagogue with "political importance in relation to the discussions over the Gaza strip", which was completely untrue. The site had been discovered during roadbuilding; once the road had been shifted slightly the IDAM was not able to demand that the developer pay for an excavation (GL448880/12 no. 3842, 1.3.57).

This situation was no better in the 1960s, when Biran replaced Yeivin as Director of the IDAM. Biran took it naturally that "supremacy" was given to excavations, not publications (IAA 1962). Allegedly, the bulldozer was the friend of the archaeologist: "Thus, under vigilance, the bulldozer and the plough safely lay bare the groundwork for scientific quests" (Biran 1962: 175).

The problem of financing salvage excavations was never properly solved. The use of relief workers, and later the unemployed, was taken for granted. Tragically, even the 1978 Antiquities Law took it for granted, thus failing to acknowledge salvage excavations. The 1978 Antiquities Law did not define what salvage excavations are, who performs them, when they are performed and who funds them. The results of the gaps in the legislation were discovered only in the 1990s. The price Israeli archaeology paid, and will pay, for them is immense (financially, as well as ethically).

EARLY ISRAELI EXCAVATIONS

A dichotomy existed between Jordan and Israel in the 1950s and 1960s (Wright 1970: 35-6). British archaeologists in Jordan had adopted the revolutionary Wheeler-Kenyon method of excavation (Kenyon 1952; Moorey 1979, 1992; Dever 1985: 37; Prag 1992; for criticism see Dever 1973; Barkay 1992; Prag 1992: 115; Reich 1995: 142-7). Local archaeologists on both sides of the Jordan were later to use this method. Israeli archaeologists, writing in the 1960s and 1970s hailed a different "Israeli method of excavation", invented in the 1950s. Allegedly, it was also stratigraphically precise, but avoided the drawbacks of the Wheeler-Kenyon method by excavating large areas and stressing pottery restoration (Aharoni 1973b; Bar-Yosef & Mazar 1982: 314). Today we know that this picture was idealized (Bar-Yosef & Mazar 1982: 314; Dever 1985: 35; Ussishkin 1982: 94-5). Final reports and later excavations at the same sites show

that sections were not used; with the exception of prehistorians, archaeologists worked in the "architectonic" or "locus to stratum" method of the Mandatory period (for which see G. R. H. Wright 1966; G. E. Wright 1969: 129–32). Shortage of professionals (*Alon* 4 (1953): 3, GL44883/11), intense pressures of development and inexperienced relief workers aggravated the situation. Standards of excavation in early Israeli archaeology were not good (Figs 31–2, cf. also Figs 16, 30).

Registration of finds was often crude. There was no obligatory system and no specific numbers for each excavation. Sometimes, Hebrew initials were used ("A.H." signified "Ayyelet ha-Shahar"), which was hardly satisfying if more than one excavation was held at a site (Fig. 33). The State Comptroller noticed the faulty registration in 1954: finds were registered neither in the field, nor when reaching Jerusalem (GL44868/7 no. 1/9/1-90, 30.9.54). Yeivin claimed that most finds were sherds that did not require registration; and that the IDAM lacked the manpower to handle the problem (GL44868/7 no. 5031a).

Despite all the difficulties, the IDAM alone performed about 30 salvage excavations per year during the first decade of Israel's existence (Table 5; *Alon* 4 (1953): 1; Yeivin 1955a: 163–7, 1955b: 4, 1960: 3–47). The growth in comparison with the Mandatory period was huge and directly related to the frenzy of development. The IES and the Hebrew University made relatively few excavations, but these were larger and usually longer. The Hazor excavations, led by Yadin with a large team, were especially important. Many later prominent archaeologists in Israel started there. The findings of the excavation were published fast (Yadin *et al.* (eds) 1959, 1960, 1961; cf. Yadin 1972) except the final volume (Ben-Tor



Figure 30. Afulah (Jezreel valley), 1951. Excavation by Dothan. Note the lack of sections. The excavation follows the architecture. (IAA 3412)



Figure 31. Tel Dor, 1950. Excavation by Leibowitz. Workers follow the remains along narrow trenches. (Photograph by Leibowitz, IAA 2729)



Figure 32. Ramat Rahel, excavations of Aharoni, 1955. Note the "office" with the tools. (Photograph by Biberkraut, IAA 11,016)

Table 5. Excavation in Israel, 1948-67.

Year	Foreign research institutions	Universities, museums, IES, GTC	IDAM salvage work (estimated)	IDAM initiated excavations	General number	Notes
1948		1	3	1	5	War of independence
1949		2	22		24	
1950	1	3	55		59	
1951		1	46		47	
1952	3	1	28		32	
1953	3	4	36		43	
1954	2	2	28		32	
1955	4	3	41		48	
1956	1	3	43	1 ("Gat")	48	Sinai War
1957	1	4	28	1	34	
1958	1	6	32	1	40	First GTC excavation at Avdat (Avi-Yonah)
1959	7	2	21	1	31	
1960	9	5	26	1	41	
1961	10	2	26	1	39	
1962	7	4	35	1 (Dan)	47	
1963	6	10	23	1	40	
1964	10	10	32	1	53	
1965	6	15	40	1	62	First local underwater excavation (Linder)
1966	9	11	48	1	69	
1967	10	7	28	1	46	Six Days War
Total	90	96	641	13	840	

Notes: IDAM reports usually follow budget years (measured from April to March at that period). Since winter was a dead season, not used for excavations, I have assumed that all excavations within a certain budget year were performed in spring/summer of that year. For example, excavations in budget year 1956-57 were performed in 1956.



Figure 33. Claire Epstein sorting pottery at Susita, c.1954. (IAA 10177)

& Bonfil 1997). It proved the ability of Israeli archaeologists to carry out large projects with success (Albright 1970: 62; Bar-Yosef & Mazar 1982: 314).

Local volunteers were used in the 1950s, for example, in Aharoni's 1953 excavation at Kedesh (Galilee); mostly IES members (*BIES* 17 (1952/53): 158). The idea of using foreign volunteers was raised by the GTC. In 1955, Pierre d'Harcourt, travel editor of the London-based *Observer* Sunday newspaper, asked about "excavation parties which amateurs of British nationality could join", but the matter was not taken up in earnest (GL44882/9, 17.11.55; cf. nos. 8428a, 422). On 18 March 1957, Aharon Zvi Propes, manager of the Special Events Department of the GTC, suggested that the IDAM should use foreign volunteers and promised to help with publicity (GL44882/9 nos. 1801, 1911). Yeivin failed to realize the potential (GL44882/9 no. 3957). In 1961 the IDAM turned down similar expressions of interest. Yadin started to use volunteers in Masada in the 1960s. The lack of interest during the 1950s was also due to the availability of cheap relief work: there was no need to look elsewhere.

THE FIRST EXCAVATIONS IN ISRAEL: A CORRECTION

It is commonly believed that the first excavation in Israel was that by Mazar at Tell Qasileh near Tel Aviv. It received licence no. 1, issued on 21 October 1948, signed by the Minister of Labour on behalf of the still temporary government. The licence stipulated that the excavation would be performed using "new scientific methods"; the manager would have "a team of experts sufficient for the work" and enough funding to "achieve reasonable scientific results and their publication" (*Qadmoniyot* 117 (1999): 58). The licence was announced in the press (*Ha'aretz* 1948), and the excavation started on 27 October 1948 (*BIES* 15 (1948/49): 8). But this was not the first excavation in Israel.

Two salvage excavations preceded it. They were small ones and did not receive a licence, because licences for salvage excavations were given only from 1963. The first excavation was that of a Roman period tomb at Natanya, north of Tel Aviv, and the first excavator was Yaacov Ory. The tomb was found when a sewage pit was dug for a house. Dr Y. Rosenbusch notified the IDAM about it in early September. There were many finds, and the excavation was finished before the one at Tell Qasile even started (*Ha'aretz* 1948; cf. GL44864/14, 7.10.48). On 27 September 1948 the manager of the Public Works Department suggested mounting an exhibition of the finds at Natanya (GL44864/14). Ory reported the results (GL44864/14, report 31.12.48), and the findings were published in detail later by Reich (1978).

The second salvage excavation was made by Amiran at Tiv'on: a large tomb with clay coffins, damaged during development by the Keret Company and dated

to the Roman period. Entrance to another, nearby tomb was blocked by cement to prevent damage. Amiran probably started to excavate on 29 September 1948 (GL44864/14, report 31.12.48; GL44875/9, report 15.11.48; preliminary publication in *Alon* 1 (1949): 9).

Finally, a third excavation started just a few days after that of Tell Qasile; this was not a salvage excavation but an "initiated" one. It was carried out by Guy in Jaffa in 1948 (see Fig. 7, p. 54). A letter from Yeivin of 9 September 1948 asked the Minister of Education to provide the budget for this excavation from item 41 of the IDAM's budget, relating to excavations and surveys (GL44883/8 no. 958). Guy chose two areas clear of buildings (for Jaffa in 1948 see Ch. 2). One area was near the British Customs House north of the port, the other near the top of the Tell, close to the Latin Church. Excavation was scheduled to begin on 10 October 1948 (GL44864/14; GL44864/14, report 31.12.48) but was delayed because of the conditions at the site until 1 November 1948 (from data based on the IAA excavation file studied by Martin Peilstöcker). It continued until December (GL44864/14) and was stopped for lack of funding. There are scanty published preliminary reports (*Alon* 1 (1949): 2-3; 2 (1950) 24). Unfortunately Guy died in 1952, so details of the excavation remain unpublished.