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Emek Shaveh

[An Israeli NGO working to prevent the politicization of archaeology in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict]

Professional and Ethical Principles that guide our work as Archaeologists and Heritage Professionals:

1. We believe that heritage sites can be used to promote understanding between members of different nations, cultures and groups, and should not be used as a means to claim ownership or historical rights over a given site.
2. Archaeology in general, and in Jerusalem in particular, reveals the rich and diverse fabric of human history, which has universal appeal.
3. Archaeology tells an independent story about human existence, culture and achievements. It is not selective nor is it subservient to sacred texts.
4. Each archaeological stratum contributes to the understanding of history. Archaeology does not rank cultures hierarchically.
5. An archaeological site is comprised not only of historical layers, but is significant in the present-day lives of people who live in or near it, and may form a central part of their culture and daily lives.
6. We are not interested in proving links between modern ethnic identities (e.g. Israeli, Palestinian, or European) and ancient peoples (e.g. Phoenician, Judean or Crusader).
7. Because archaeology offers an independent view of human and social origins, it is inherently critical of all historical narratives.
8. When the archaeological and textual narratives overlap, each serves to illuminate the other: both are interpretive and neither one represents an absolute truth.
9. As archaeologists expropriate public property, the use they make of this property must be justified, particularly to the public whose property was expropriated.