

CONSERVATION: *The Citadel and the Minaret*

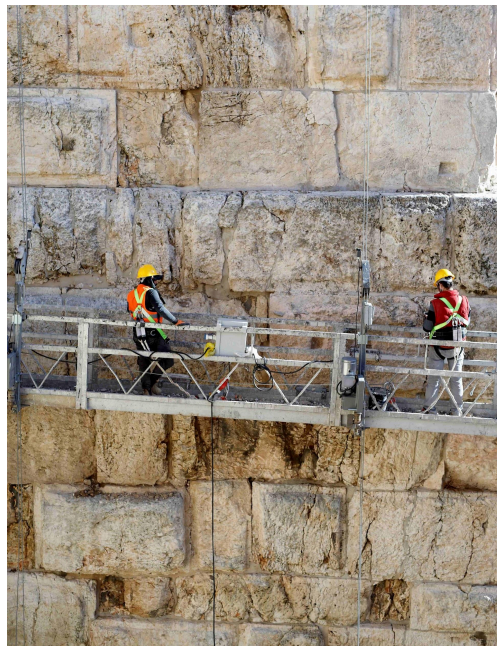
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Conservation at the Tower of David Museum

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The Tower of David is one of the most important structures in Israel, both in terms of its history and location. The last conservation project at the Tower of David was carried out in the 1980's. Since then, the citadel has been in desperate need of conservation. Drainage and waterproofing need to be improved; internal and external surfaces require conservation, including stone work, rendering and plastering; and the entire site needs engineering stabilization. The citadel was constructed during a number of historical periods and each section needs to be conserved in a different manner. The current project has focused on conservation of Herod's Second Temple tower, the Crusader period hall, the Ottoman fortifications, and cracks in different areas of the walls of the citadel complex.

In conservation of this kind, traditional materials such as lime plaster and traditional techniques such as stone carving are used in conjunction with high-tech solutions. Conservation engineering techniques including reinforcement, lime plastering and rendering, lime pointing, mortar injection, traditional stonework, stabilization, and temporary reinforcement.



Conservation on King Herod's Phasaël Tower. Credit Ricky Rachman



The minaret of the Tower of David, built in 1635, illuminates the Jerusalem skyline and has been the iconic symbol of the city for centuries. During the conservation of the citadel, the iconic minaret underwent a thorough conservation plan as, after almost 400 years of watching over Jerusalem, the structure itself was in urgent need of preservation. The beautiful winding staircase inside the minaret tower leads to the highest lookout point in Jerusalem's Old City, affording a breathtaking view of both the Old and New cities of Jerusalem, was no longer accessible as six large cracks were discovered in the structure.

Israel sits along the friction point of some of the most active tectonic plates in the world and minor earthquakes occur with frightening regularity. The last major earthquake occurred in 1927 and major quakes tend to reoccur approximately every 100 years. An earthquake, even a small tremor, can endanger the foundations of the minaret.

The Tower of David Museum, together with the Conservation Department of the Israel Antiquities Authority enlisted the help of the top experts and technologies in order to preserve and stabilize the minaret.

Eli Eskozido, Director of the Israel Antiquities Authority: The Israel Antiquities Authority is a governmental body that maintains the highest professional standards to preserve cultural heritage assets of all the peoples and cultures that have inhabited the land for thousands of years. The Conservation Department of the Israel Antiquities Authority has worked to preserve and stabilize the minaret with all the professional tools at its disposal, in consultation with top conservationists, engineers and architects.



Cracks in the top of the minaret. Credit Ricky Rachman





Yossi Vaknin, Israel Antiquities Authority: The conservation of minaret required a high degree of skill, knowledge and a deep understanding of early building techniques. Before beginning preservation work on the minaret, the project conducted thorough research and investigations to ensure the stability of the archaeological remains and the minaret for many years to come. We are very proud of the complex conservation work that was carried out and now, eight months later, we are excited to see the minaret standing once again now that the scaffolding is down and the work is complete.