

If you are seeking a conservator

to consult or assist on an archaeological project, one useful resource is the American Institute for Conservation's "Find a Conservator" online feature: www.conservation-us.org/findaconservator

You may also contact AIC's Archaeological Discussion Group for further assistance: info@conservation-us.org

Other Resources

The AIC website includes information to guide individuals through the process of choosing a conservator. See the "Resource Center" link at: www.conservation-us.org/resources

The Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA) website hosts "Conservation FAQs and Facts," a guide for archaeologists looking for more information about collections care and conservation: www.sha.org/research_resources/conservation_faqs



Conservators in Tel Kedesh, Israel

The American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC) is the national membership organization of conservation professionals, scientists, students, archivists, art historians, and other conservation enthusiasts in over twenty countries around the world. AIC has established a *Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Practice* for professional conservators. The organization plays a crucial role in establishing and upholding professional standards, promoting research and publications, providing educational opportunities, and fostering the exchange of knowledge among conservators, allied professionals, and the public. www.conservation-us.org

The Archaeological Discussion Group (ADG) is a working group within AIC's Objects Specialty Group. Members of the ADG are professional conservators who work with, or are interested in, the conservation of archaeological material. www.conservation-us.org/archaeology

This brochure was created by the Archaeological Discussion Group of the American Institute for Conservation.



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ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONSERVATION

Conservator in Gordion, Turkey

Archaeological Conservation is the profession devoted to the preservation of objects and structures that constitute the archaeological record.

The moment archaeological materials are uncovered, they are at risk of rapid and irreversible deterioration. Archaeological conservators work to ensure the long-term preservation of these materials for future study and research.

Archaeological conservators stabilize finds and structures in two important ways: with treatment procedures that slow deterioration and with preventive care activities, such as providing adequate storage environments or physical protection.



Conservators at Kaman-Kalehöyük, Turkey
© Japanese Institute of Anatolian Archaeology
photo by Colleen Healey



Conservator at the Mariner's Museum, Virginia, USA
Image courtesy of the Mariner's Museum

Archaeological Conservators have extensive theoretical and practical training in the field of conservation. They also specialize in dealing with archaeological materials from both terrestrial and underwater sites.

Conservators of archaeological material may work for museums or other cultural institutions, teach in academic programs, work on archaeological or historical sites, or work in private practice. Many conservators undertake a combination of these responsibilities, both in the United States and abroad.



Conservator at Poggio-Colla, Italy



Conservator at Athienou-Malloura, Cyprus

Conservation in the field may include the following activities: lifting fragile artifacts from the ground or from an underwater context, providing first-aid for freshly excavated artifacts and architectural features, cleaning and reconstructing artifacts, providing overall site preservation, collaborating with archaeologists and other team members on research goals, and liaising with local archaeological and conservation authorities.

Artifacts and sites are unique and may require different conservation approaches. Selecting a conservator with the appropriate experience is important. For example, a shipwreck site might benefit from a conservator specializing in waterlogged organic material.