



ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION- VERTICAL, HORIZONTAL, GRID, TRENCH



Archaeological excavation is the process by which archaeologist retrieve, uncover, identify and record archaeological remains. The past activities leave numerous traces that help in the reconstruction of the past culture and archeological excavation involves the removal of soil, sediment, or rock that covers artifacts or other evidence of human activity. The survival of these strata varies and depends on the type of location and geology of the area. Survival and visibility also depend on how far the remains of the past have already decayed or been disturbed by later activities, such as cultivation or building. These site formation processes give a site its modern character, and this has a strong influence on the excavation method that is used. But, before the

excavation process begins the site must be located and one must carefully examine the site that the natural habitat and artifacts surrounding it are persevered throughout the excavation. Drawings of the site to be excavated are also another step to mark the size and depth of the site. Once these two important steps have been taken, the excavation work can begin.

Different processes are used for excavation and each process requires unique techniques, tools and machinery. Early excavation techniques involved destructive random digging and removal of objects with little or no location data recorded. Modern excavations often involve slow, careful extraction of sediments in very thin layers, detailed sifting of sediment samples, and exacting measurement and recording of artifact location. Photography of the site, ongoing work and cataloging of the objects excavated is also very important part of the excavation. Some of the different processes/strategies involved during excavation are-

Grid excavation- the archaeological site is divided into square boxes in a given size. Each of the squares is numbered and then excavated leaving a wall called baulk in between. Each baulk provides a vertical report of the layers that has been dug through and these layers are called strata where each one is labeled with everything found in them.

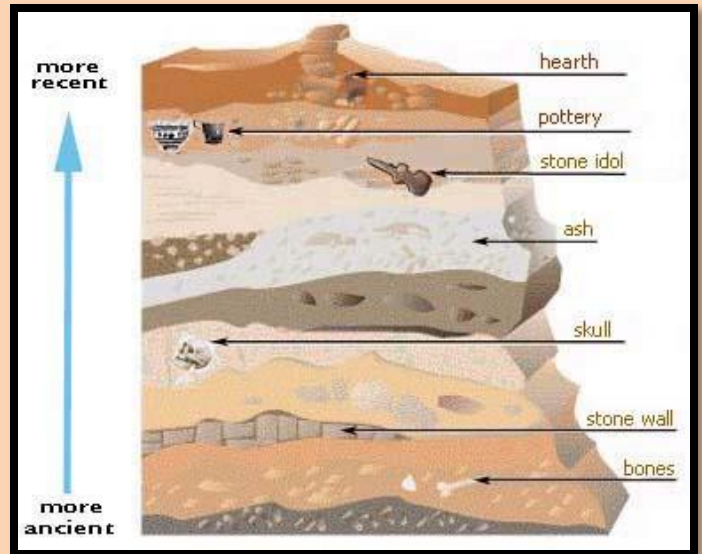


Trench excavation- It is a type of excavation that is generally narrow compared with its length that is used for excavating ancient ruins. It allows the archaeologist to dig into strata of sedimented ruins and view the deposits in a chronological order. This method is considered a safe



approach to excavate as it destroys only a small part of the site but at the same time it also reveals only some part of the ancient ruins.

Vertical excavation – this method of excavation exposes the record of sequence of ancient ruins or artifacts. The analysis of the order and position of layers of archaeological remains is called stratigraphy. Excavation is done on loose or wet soils- unconsolidated formations where the banks must be supported by shoring or sheathing. The information yield during the excavation is about the cultural history of the site. The changes in soil colour or texture helps in identifying the various strata.



Horizontal excavation – It is done in a broad area in order to expose the remains of a single point in time. Horizontal excavation aimed at recovering synchronic information and the way the site was used. In this type of excavation, the archaeologist may plow strips along the surface of the site to expose any objects lying near the surface and layer by layer, the foundations of the site are uncovered.

Activity-

1. What is the purpose of excavation? Why is excavation important?

2. Name one archaeological site located in your area or close to your area? Find out some interesting facts about the place.

3. What is the difference between fossil and artifacts?

Reference-

https://fac.ksu.edu.sa/sites/default/files/Archaeology_Coursebook.pdf

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