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Montfort Castle Project: Developments and Future Objectives

Since 2006 a team from the University of Haifa (Zinman Institute of Archaeology) has been involved in a pilot project at Montfort Castle, a major 13th century Crusader castle built by the Teutonic Order in the early thirteenth century in the western Galilee. The aim of this project which is financed by the Israel Science Foundation for a period of three years, is to study the chronological development of the castle and to prepare for this purpose a detailed plan of all parts of the castle and its related buildings. This phase of the project includes a study of masonry techniques, drawing of architectural elements, a survey of all material finds from the castle, a survey of all written material (contemporary material and later descriptions) and of previous work carried out, most notably the 1926 expedition of the Metropolitan Museum of New York. A major part of the project is the preparation of a paper of proposals for conservation of the site and its natural surroundings. Also underway is the preparation of a master plan for the development of the site taking into account the need for a careful balance between conservation, site development and management. Proposals are being prepared for future excavations, restoration work and for the integration of requirements for improved access, nature preservation and community involvement in the project. The long term aims of the Montfort Research Project are to carry out excavations, conservation, restorations and development according to the recommendations now being prepared.