

# DIG

# SIGHT NEWSLETTER



## THE FOURTH EXPEDITION TO LACHISH, 2015

The Institute of Archaeology at Southern Adventist University joined The Hebrew University of Jerusalem to co-direct excavations at Tel Lachish in southern Israel this past June and July.

After the capital Jerusalem, Lachish was the most prominent city of Judah. "This season was incredibly rich with finds especially from the time of the late Judean monarchy and in the period of the judges or the Late Bronze Age," said Michael G. Hasel, Institute of Archaeology director and co-director of the project.

"We have added a great deal to the corpus of material known from Lachish and it has furthered our understanding of these biblical periods tremendously."

This past summer marked the third season of *The Fourth Expedition to Lachish*. Excavations began in 2013 with a survey of the site and one week of excavation.

"In the 2014 season we discovered two massive destructions dating to the reigns of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, who invaded Judah in 586 B.C. and an earlier one attributed to Sennacherib, king of Assyria in 701 B.C." said Martin G. Klingbeil, Institute of Archaeology associate director and co-director of the project. "The floors under the destruction debris were covered with many whole vessels, storage jars, and special finds." These special finds included three Judean-Pillar Figurines,

America, Europe, Asia, and Africa. Participants came from The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Southern Adventist University as well as a number of consortium institutions such as the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (AIAS) in the Philippines, Oakland University (Michigan), Universidad Adventista de Bolivia, and Virginia Commonwealth University. The total number of participants made this effort the largest excavation project in Israel this past summer.

### Area AA.

The goal was to return to and expand the area in order to give a wider exposure of the Level II Babylonian destruction and the Level III building dating to the eighth century B.C.

In the northwestern part of Area

AA, the earlier 701 B.C. destruction of Sennacherib, the king of Assyria, was uncovered (2 Kings 18; Isaiah 36-37). Known from previous excavations as Level III, the houses of this period were located immediately outside the palace courtyard and were built on terraces descending toward the northeastern portion of the



The Fourth Expedition to Lachish team, staff and volunteers, at Tel Lachish this past summer. Photo credit: Nick Lindsay/The Fourth Expedition to Lachish.

which many scholars have identified with the ancient fertility goddess Asherah. One of the most unique finds were several seal impressions from the eighth century B.C., bearing personal names.

All of the excavation areas were expanded in 2015 by over 115 staff and volunteers from South America, North

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site. The destruction of this level was dated by several LMLK jars found on the surface during the 2014 and 2015 seasons. In previous expeditions, over 400 LMLK storage jar handles were uncovered at Lachish—many dating specifically to the time of King Hezekiah. The term LMLK in Hebrew means “for the king.” Two plausible theories for the function of these storage jars exist: (1) they were used to collect government taxes for the king; and (2) they contained emergency military rations during the short time leading to the sieges of Sennacherib, King of Assyria. An additional room was found containing over 160 loom weights and several stone weights, used as scales.

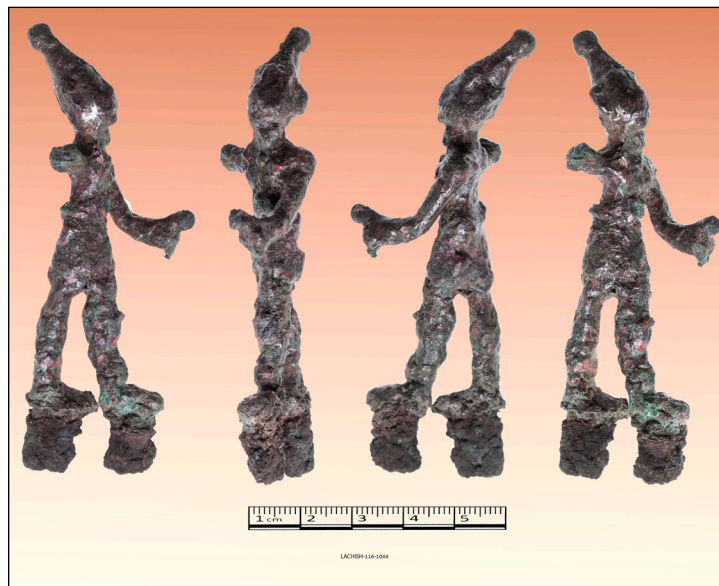
In the eastern part of Area AA, three squares contained remains of the massive Babylonian destruction preserved to a depth of almost two meters. Rows of storage jars, loom weights, lamps, dipper juglets, and other pottery were found throughout these squares. A unique ceramic funnel was also discovered. This funnel might have been used to facilitate the transfer of liquids into the storage jars found in immediate proximity. These houses along the northern edge of the palace courtyard give a vivid example of elite living and household archaeology at the end of the Iron Age. Their orientation in relation to the palace courtyard wall indicates that the palace was in use during the end of the Judean monarchy, before Nebuchadnezzar’s campaign in 586 B.C.

In the final week of the excavation, an exciting development occurred. Level IV

or V was reached in Area AA, indicated by the presence of red slipped, irregular hand burnished pottery. The excavation of these levels at Lachish is been the primary goal of The Fourth Expedition to Lachish. Next season, Area AA will be expanded to the east by Southern Adventist University, allowing further investigation of Levels IV and V.

**Area BB** is situated along the northeastern slope of the site where a series of fortifications were found, spanning the Middle Bronze through the Iron Ages. In the western part of the area, a massive destruction from Level VI dating to the Late Bronze Age was uncovered. Additionally, the remains of a large Canaanite temple was also uncovered. This temple contained several foundation deposits, two smiting god figurines, and many other special finds. The location of the temple near the fortifications may indicate the presence of a city gate during the Late Bronze Age. This possibility will have to be explored in future seasons. In 2014, grain found inside storage jars were sent to Oxford University for radiocarbon dating. The dates obtained from these samples will help establish a more precise date for this level.

The Late Bronze Age is well attested from earlier excavations at Tel Lachish. During the British excavations in the 1930s, the Fosse temple was found at the base of the site; and Tel Aviv University discovered another temple north of the Judean Palace-Fort. These buildings date to the early period of the judges, before Israel had a king. In 2016, the second half of this Late



Different views of one of the smiting god figurines found in Area BB. Photo credit: Tal Rogovki/The Fourth Expedition to Lachish.

Bronze Age temple will be excavated.

**Area CC** is situated along the northern edge of the site on the steep embankment leading down into the valley and Lachish River. In this area, a series of fortifications were uncovered from Levels II, III, and VI. The presence of city walls suggests a continuous period of fortification. In the last week of excavation, Level V may have been discovered adjacent to a city wall. The area will be expanded in 2016 to expose more of this wall system and the surfaces abutting it.

The major question posed by The Fourth Expedition to Lachish is, What happened after the establishment of kingship in Judah which earlier excavators suggested were represented by Levels IV and V? Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, is said to have refortified the city of Lachish (2 Chron. 11:5-12). Levels IV and V remain largely unknown except for a few small exposed areas. “Our hope will be to expand the areas where Levels IV and V are best preserved so that a larger exposure will give us the missing link to the earlier history of Judah in the region,” said Hasel.

This next summer, the project will continue from June 16 through July 24, 2016, as more buried secrets beneath the sands of time are uncovered from this ancient city. *The Fourth Expedition to Lachish* invites you to join a growing number of individuals and institutions that, in mutual teamwork, are trying to uncover the answers to some of these research questions. For more information, see our website: [southern.edu/lachish](http://southern.edu/lachish). 🏹



Students William Timm and Danielle Schafer holding juglets founds in Area AA. Photo credit: Nick Lindsay/The Fourth Expedition to Lachish.

## STUDENT PERSPECTIVES: LACHISH 2015

Mornings came for us long before sunrise. By 4 a.m. we were pulling on our dusty work clothes and shoes, then getting on the bus that shuttled us to Tel Lachish, where we would dig for the day. After walking to the top of Lachish and collecting the necessary tools, we would climb into our ever-deepening squares. Every day seemed the same, yet different. The same, due to the routine, but different because we always found something new. In my square we found a good-sized wall and lots of different pottery. There were larger vessels that may have been storage jars for grain or water, as well as smaller juglets, a funnel, and even a ring. I truly enjoyed even the longest days because of the people I could be with and the purpose of what we were doing, namely, uncovering new evidence to validate the Bible. However, digging made up only a part of the experience. During the week we attended lectures by different archaeological specialists, and on our weekend travels, Dr. Hasel would thoroughly explain each site, making what we saw have so much more meaning and significance. In six weeks I learned much more than I could have spending a semester in the classroom. Another great part of the experience was being to travel and learn with my friends. Experiences like snorkeling in the Red Sea or riding camels through Petra were that much more special because of the company they were shared with. I found that I was able to grow close to my roommates, square workers, and the staff. But the best part of the trip was being able to see Jesus and His time on earth come alive through the places He had actually been. The trip really made me see how close God came to this sinful earth and that even though His presence on earth was 2000 years ago, He can still be as tangibly close to you and me today. All in all, my experience in Israel has been unparalleled. 🍷



Photo credit: Nick Lindsay/The Fourth Expedition to Lachish.

- Esther Ferraz, Music and Nursing double major at Southern Adventist University



Photo credit: Nick Lindsay/The Fourth Expedition to Lachish.

There were many unique and interesting finds this past summer, but the most exciting for me personally occurred near the end of our excavating time. After the first several strenuous weeks of digging, the rocks in our square finally began to take on a more ordered form and shape until there stood a wall in our square. Not only did this find give us a clearer context for the area we were working in, but with the unearthing of this wall came many exciting questions: Was this someone's house? Who lived here? How did they live? Am I standing where someone stood in the ancient past? The opportunity for such real, hands-on connection with the artifacts of the biblical world provided an experience of life-filled learning and a relatable encounter with the stories of the Bible. I also loved being part of a team of people from all over the world who were working together to accomplish a common goal. I especially appreciated the couple of people with whom I shared my square. I so enjoyed the aspects and skills that each brought to our square and hearing their stories as we uncovered the story of the past together. 🍷

- Katherine Hesler, Archaeology (Near Eastern Studies) and Biology double major at Southern Adventist University

## STUDENT PERSPECTIVES: LACHISH 2015, cont'd.

The most exciting artifact or thing that I found this past summer at Tel Lachish was what appeared to be a dagger. It had the shape of a big knife, and it was most certainly used for warfare. It was quite thrilling to find a metal object because they were rare, at least in the square in which I was working in this summer. We would find countless amounts of pottery sherds every day, but finding a metal object was a special event, especially one that size!

I truly believe that my experience in Israel this past summer was a blessing. I learned a lot, not only about the field of biblical archaeology but also about the world of the Bible, the history of modern Israel, the anthropology and sociology of Palestine, and also about teamwork while in extreme conditions. I, along with all the other volunteers, was so privileged to be working on an archaeological excavation with The Hebrew

University of Jerusalem and with professionals and scholars of the field of biblical archaeology. I would also like to point out how much one learns from people and their work ethic while doing manual work with them. I definitely made friends for life at the excavation. I would go back and do it all again without hesitation. The knowledge and experience that I gained were priceless. The Bible comes much more alive when you see the geography, feel the climate, and touch the artifacts that are part of it. ✍️



Photo credit: Nick Lindsay/The Fourth Expedition to Lachish.

- **Josué Loyola-Roncal, Global Policy & Service Studies and International Studies (French) double major at Southern Adventist University**



Photo credit: Nick Lindsay/The Fourth Expedition to Lachish.

culture of the Near East. I also understood, to a greater extent, the importance of friendship evangelism as a way to witness in countries where proselytizing is not permitted. Academically, I learned hands-on archaeological concepts in the company of peers and friends. This experience was more than an adventure—it was an opportunity to grow academically and spiritually. ✍️

Last summer I found three small juglets, one each day for three days in a row. While this was not a cache of gold and silver, it was an exciting find, particularly because of the frequency—one day after the next, three in a row. After hearing about the impressive finds of the previous season at Tel Lachish, I too wished to find something rare and extraordinary. In addition, my square partners and I found a hoard of ballistae (or sling stones). This was exciting because it was found in a layer congruent with Sennacherib's campaign against Judah in 701 B.C. These small juglets and hoard of ballistae—that were thousands of years old and could give insight to the location we excavated—were just as thrilling as hidden treasure. Being part of an excavation was an enriching experience. Spiritually, I gained biblical insights from travel to places like Jordan, Jerusalem, the Sea of Galilee, the Red Sea, and many more. Familiar Bible stories were revived as I experienced the geography and

- **Judit Manchay, Theology (Ministerial) and Archaeology (Near Eastern Studies) double major at Southern Adventist University**

# THE 'IŠBA'AL INSCRIPTION FROM KHIRBET QEYAFÁ

The amount of object data that the by-now famous site of Khirbet Qeiyafa, which was recently announced as becoming a national park in Israel, has produced and is still producing, even two years after the official excavations have been concluded, remains **astonishing**. As pottery and other objects are being processed, restored, and analyzed in the lab, scholarly articles are written that serve as the primary publications for these objects. A recent article in the *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, one of the leading archaeological scholarly journals worldwide, discusses a large storage jar (pithos) with an inscription containing a personal name hitherto known only from the Bible.

During the 2012 excavation season, fragments of a large pottery storage jar were found in Area C, Building C11, at Khirbet Qeiyafa, a Judean border fortress in the Shephelah, which, based on two radiometric projects, has been dated to the Iron Age IIA period, whose occupation came to an end somewhere between 1020 and 980 B.C. Still in the field, it was established that there was an inscription, which had been incised on the jar before firing, so, consequently, all surrounding sediment was sifted and even the



Professor Yossef Garfinkel (right) with Saar Ganor of the Israel Antiquities Authority (center) showing the 'Išba'al inscription to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Photo credit: Unknown.

smallest piece of pottery was collected. In the lab, the pottery was painstakingly restored, resulting in the following text that reads “Išba'al son of Beda.” The inscription is written from right to left in the Canaanite script, and the shape of the letters corresponds to those found on the Khirbet Qeiyafa ostrakon, discovered in 2008, which is now housed in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem.

This is the first mention of the personal name Ish-Baal or Esh-Baal outside the Bible. The name occurs twice in the Book of Chronicles as the name for one of the sons of Saul (1 Chr. 8:33; 9:39), and its meaning could be translated as “man of Baal.” Biblical names often contain divine parts, called theophoric elements, and in this case, this would be a reference to the Canaanite god Baal. Interestingly, the Book of Samuel changes the name of Saul's son to Ishbosheth (2 Sam. 2:8, 10, 12; 3:8; etc.), meaning “man of shame,” representing an intentional change to avoid the name of the Canaanite god. Similar changes can be observed in other personal names from the time of David (e.g., Beeliada in 1 Chr. to Eliada in 2 Sam. 5:16). However, the Ish-Baal/Esh-Baal of the new inscription from Khirbet Qeiyafa is identified as the “son of Beda” and not the “son of Saul.” Beda is an otherwise unknown name in both biblical and extra-biblical sources.

This newly published find adds another inscription to the growing corpus of recently discovered inscriptions from the tenth century B.C. using the Canaanite script (three from Khirbet Qeiyafa, one of them not being deciphered yet, as well as one from Tell es-Sāfi, Beth Shemesh, and Jerusalem, respectively) attesting to the hitherto questioned prevalence of literacy during the Davidic period. ✍

<sup>1</sup>Full citation: Garfinkel, Mitka R. Golub, Haggai Misgav, and Saar Ganor. 2015. “The Išba'al inscription from Khirbet Qeiyafa.” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 373: 217-233.



BASOR cover article featuring the new Khirbet Qeiyafa inscription. Image credit: The American Schools of Oriental Research.

## DIRECTOR'S LETTER



Upon arriving in Israel this past summer, the driver asked an expected question, “So, what brings you to Israel?”

I responded as I normally do, that I was an archaeologist with a group spending two months digging. “An archaeologist? I just heard something about

archaeology in the news this week. Something about an ancient inscription mentioning a name from early Judah.” I smiled. “Yes, that was the 'Išba'al inscription found at Khirbet Qeiyafa. It dates to the time of Saul and David. This is a site we have been excavating for a number of years. You know, Saul had a son named 'Išba'al.” A long conversation about the Bible and archaeology then ensued. What I did not tell him was that my colleague, Professor Yosef Garfinkel, received a surprise phone call from the Prime Minister’s office earlier that week, requesting a meeting with Mr. Netanyahu—with 10 minutes notice! The reason? The Prime Minister wanted to see this new inscription.

This is the second Hebrew inscription from Khirbet Qeiyafa, biblical Sha'arayim, and currently represents one of the oldest Hebrew inscriptions. Over the last four years, we have been diligently working to publish the results from Khirbet Qeiyafa as we transitioned to excavate Tel Lachish. In 2016 we hope to publish two more excavation volumes—of the six total pending volumes.

This coming summer will mark the fourth season of *The*

*Fourth Expedition to Lachish*. This past season, we mounted 115 to 120 staff and volunteers in the field— the summer’s largest archaeological expedition in the Middle East. A project of this type, however, is enormously expensive. Room and board, equipment, and transportation this coming summer will cost the Institute of Archaeology nearly \$150,000 for the six-week dig season. These expenses do not include all of the necessary post-processing (e.g., analyses, publication costs) once the dig is over. We average about \$60,000 a year on these kinds of expenses. None of this would have been possible without your generous support.

Ultimately, we do this because we believe that new data about the world of the Bible will provide important new insights for this generation about the reality of the people, places, and events of biblical history. And why is this significant? Because it is that history that made us who we are today—it gives us purpose. In the end, this is about our identity and who we are. Whether we are Christians or Jews or simply part of the greater Western Tradition, we go about this task because the Bible matters and we have a whole new generation that need to discover this truth for themselves. What better way to do that than to uncover the world of the Bible on an archaeological excavation!

We once again thank you for your continued support of our work in this part of the world. Would you consider making a donation that will help a student take this trip of a lifetime? Would you consider being a sponsor of *The Fourth Expedition to Lachish*? We thank you and wish you an amazing New Year in 2016! ✍

Michael G. Hasel, Ph.D.  
Director, Institute of Archaeology

### I WOULD LIKE TO SUPPORT THE INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AT SOUTHERN ADVENTIST UNIVERSITY IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

Institute of Archaeology (donations will be applied to areas of greatest need)

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I’m not prepared to give at this time. However, I would like to commit to a financial gift in the area marked above. Please contact me for payment arrangements.

## RECENT SIGHTINGS

### INSCRIPTION OF NAME FROM BIBLE FOUND ON ANCIENT JAR IN ISRAEL *(CBC News)*

Israel's antiquities authority says archaeologists have discovered a rare 3,000-year-old inscription of a name mentioned in the Bible.

The name "Eshbaal Ben Beda" appears on a large ceramic jar. Eshbaal of the Bible was a son of King Saul. . . .

[Click here to read more](#)



Photo credit: Tal Rogovski/Israel Antiquities Authority/AP.



Photo credit: Marc Deville/Gamma-Rapho via Getty Images.

### ISIS EXECUTES ANTIQUITIES SCHOLAR IN SYRIAN CITY OF PALMYRA *(Biblical Archaeology Society)*

Militants of the Islamic State (known as ISIS, ISIL or Daesh) have executed antiquities scholar Khaled al-Asaad in the Syrian city of Palmyra, reports Maamoun Abdulkarim, the Director of the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums in Syria. . . .

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### ANTICIPATION GROWS AT POSSIBILITY OF TUTANKHAMUN TOMB'S HIDDEN CHAMBERS *(Ahram Online)*

Antiquities minister Mamdouh Eldamaty announced on Monday that the first examinations carried out by himself and British archeologist Nicholas Reeves in Luxor on Tutankhamun's tomb have revealed that the tomb's northern and western walls both hide chambers. . . .

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Photo credit: Nevine El-Aref.



Photo credit: Hilary Swift for The New York Times.

### TED PRIZE GOES TO ARCHAEOLOGIST WHO COMBATS LOOTING WITH SATELLITE TECHNOLOGY *(The New York Times)*

Her laptop brims with satellite images pitted with thousands of black dots, evidence of excavations across Egypt where looters have tunneled in search of mummies, jewelry and other valuables prized by collectors, advertised in auction catalogs and trafficked on eBay, a criminal global black market estimated . . .

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### LYNN H. WOOD ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM LECTURE SERIES 2015-2016

Monday, March 28, 2016, 7 p.m.

Khirbet Summeily: Excavations on the Philistine Border  
James W. Hardin, Ph.D. (Mississippi State University)  
Lynn Wood Hall Chapel

The museum lecture series is free and open to the public. For more information, or to view previous Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum Lecture Series presentations, visit [southern.edu/archaeologylectures](http://southern.edu/archaeologylectures)

### AMERICAN SCHOOLS OF ORIENTAL RESEARCH (ASOR) ANNUAL MEETING

November 18 - 21, 2015  
Atlanta, Georgia

### SOCIETY FOR BIBLICAL LITERATURE (SBL) ANNUAL MEETING

November 21 - 24, 2015  
Atlanta, Georgia

### ART APPRECIATION MUSEUM TOUR - NEW YORK CITY

November 22 - 30, 2015  
New York, New York

### GENERATION OF YOUTH FOR CHRIST

December 30, 2015 - January 2, 2016  
Louisville, Kentucky

### TENNESSEE ASSOCIATIONS OF MUSEUMS (TAM) ANNUAL MEETING

March 16 - 18, 2016  
Nashville, Tennessee

### SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGY (SAA) ANNUAL MEETING

April 6 - 10, 2016  
Orlando, Florida

### AMERICAN ALLIANCE OF MUSEUMS (AAM) ANNUAL MEETING AND MUSEUM EXPO

May 26 - 29, 2016  
Washington, D.C.

### THE FOURTH EXPEDITION TO LACHISH, 2016

June 16 - July 24, 2016  
Tel Lachish, Israel

## DIG SIGHT

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