

DIG

SIGHT NEWSLETTER

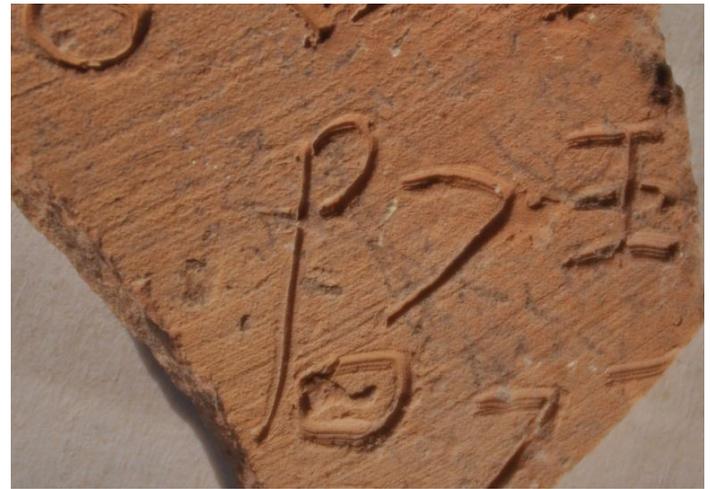


SOUTHERN EXCAVATIONS AMONG TOP TEN BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY DISCOVERIES OF 2015

On December 30, 2015, *Christianity Today*, the leading evangelical Christian magazine in the United States, published “Biblical Archaeology’s Top Ten Discoveries of 2015.” Two of the listed finds came from excavations sponsored by the Institutes of Archaeology, Southern Adventist University and The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Number 5 is the *Eshba’al* inscription found in 2012 at Khirbet Qeiyafa, located in the Elah Valley in southern Israel. The inscription dates back to the days of Saul and David and mentions a man by the name of *Eshba’al*, or *Ishba’al*, the same name as one of King Saul’s sons (1 Chron. 8:33; 9:39). The

publication of the inscription made international headlines in June 2015 and prompted a meeting between the excavation directors and Israel’s prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu. This name only occurs in tenth-century B.C. contexts in the Bible, which means that the biblical text fits very well with the archaeological data relating to Judah. This also confirms, along with the other inscriptions found at the site, that Hebrew writing was well estab-



The Canaanite ostracon from Tel Lachish. Photo credit: Yossi Garfinkel, The Hebrew University.

lished in Judah by the early tenth century B.C. Khirbet Qeiyafa has become the focal point of the ongoing debate about the early history of Judah. New data from the site, including this inscription, has established an early date for the monarchies of Saul and David—a period that some scholars wish to dismiss from history. For more details, click [here](#) to read the story on this inscription in the previ-

ous issue of DigSight.

Number 4 is the Canaanite ostracon found at Tel Lachish. This is the first time that a proto-Canaanite inscription has been found in the last 30 years of archaeology in Israel, although more proto-Canaanite inscriptions come from Lachish than from any other site in Israel. The inscription was found in a Late Bronze Age Canaanite temple context at Tel Lachish, one of the most important cities of Canaan during the period of the Judges. The fragmentary inscription is very difficult to read, but provides important information about the development of the proto-Canaanite alphabet as it progressed from Hebrew to Greek, and then Latin.

The Institute of Archaeology, Southern Adventist University is a co-sponsor with The Hebrew University of Jerusalem of the



The *Eshba’al*/*Ishba’al* inscription from Khirbet Qeiyafa. Photo credit: Gali Tibbon/AFP - Getty Images.

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Recent Sightings/Upcoming Events

expeditions to Khirbet Qeiyafa and Lachish. The Khirbet Qeiyafa excavation phase concluded in 2013 and is now working on final publications. *The Fourth Expedition to Lachish* began its investigations at the second most important biblical site in Judah in 2013 and has become the one of the largest excavations in the Middle East, with between 110 and 115 staff and volunteers in the field every year. This figure range includes an international consortium of Adventist institutions that has joined Southern every year, includ-

ing the Adventist International Institute of Advanced Studies (Philippines), Adventist University of Bolivia, and Helderberg College (South Africa).

The excavations at Lachish have also uncovered massive destructions from the Babylonian campaign of Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. (2 Kgs. 25), where hundreds of whole vessels have been found, and the earlier 701 B.C. destruction of Sennacherib, the king of Assyria (2 Kgs. 18; Isa. 36 and 37). The Assyrian destruction level contained several

LMLK (meaning “for the king” in Hebrew) jars found on the floor surfaces. In previous expeditions, over 400 *LMLK* storage jar handles were uncovered at Lachish—many dating specifically to King Hezekiah.

Next summer the project will continue from June 18 to July 21, 2017, as more buried secrets are uncovered from the ancient city of Lachish. For information on how you can participate, visit the official website of *The Fourth Expedition to Lachish* [here](#). 🍷

KHIRBET QEYAF A AND LACHISH IN SOUTH AFRICA

In December 2015, Martin Klingbeil, associate director of the Institute of Archaeology and professor of archaeology at Southern Adventist University, presented three archaeology lectures at Silverleaf Seventh-day Adventist Church, the Helderberg College campus church, in Somerset West, South Africa.



Panorama shot of the Helderberg College campus with the slave bell tower in the center, now a historical monument. Photo credit: Unknown.

The first lecture, “Discovering King David:

Excavating a Tenth-century B.C. Judean Fortress,” examined the final outcomes of the Khirbet Qeiyafa excavations. The other two lectures discussed Southern’s current excavation project at the biblical site of Lachish, dealing with the Assyrian and Babylonian destructions, titled “Excavating Ancient Wars at Tel Lachish I: The Assyrian Destruction of 701 B.C.” and “Excavating Ancient Wars at Tel Lachish II: The Babylonian Destruction of 586 B.C.,” respectively. The local Seventh-day Adventist community-wide promotional effort ahead of the event, in the local newspapers and on social media, resulted in excellent attendance throughout the series. Local community members and even some European vacationers visiting Cape Town attended the presentations, in addition to a number of professors

from nearby Stellenbosch University, where Klingbeil completed his doctoral studies in 1995 and where he also currently serves as a research associate.

The lectures spanned approximately two hours and included an

intermission, during which Klingbeil’s wife, Thandi (South African by birth), talked about the typical daily dig activities, combined with some personal experiences by Southern Adventist University students that have participated with her in previous excavation seasons. An extended question-and-answer session followed the presentations, which included some interesting questions as well as personal anecdotes.

One such anecdote involved a professor emeritus from Stellenbosch University sharing his experience reading cuneiform tablets from Nimrud together with D. J. Wiseman, the famous British Assyriologist and Orientalist and one of the excavators of ancient Nimrud. There was yet another anecdote of two community members who participated in the excavations at Tel Dan in 1991, under the direction of the late Israeli archaeologist Avraham Biran—just two years before the amazing discovery of the Tel Dan stele in 1993, containing the phrase “the house of David.” Reflecting upon the series, Klingbeil said, “It was wonderful to see the widespread interest in biblical archaeology the lectures sparked at the southernmost point of the African continent.” 🍷

FALL AND WINTER SEMESTER MUSEUM LECTURES

EXCAVATING THE JUDEAN CITY OF LACHISH, 2015

On October 12, 2015, Michael Hasel, professor of Near Eastern Studies and archae-

ology at Southern Adventist University, presented on the 2015 season of *The Fourth Expedition to Lachish*. Hasel, one of three co-directors for the project, focused his presentation on Southern Adventist

University’s efforts in Area AA—located in the northeastern area of the site, Tel Lachish in Israel.

One of the largest excavations per capita in the Middle East, comprising 110 to 115 staff and volunteers this past season, *The Fourth Expedition to Lachish* is an exciting and

dynamic excavation project. In his lecture, Hasel briefly recapitulated the excavation efforts of the 2013 and 2014 seasons, in which two distinct destruction layers were found. The first destruction—Level III of the archaeological strata at Tel Lachish—dates to the 701 B.C. campaign of Sennacherib, king of Babylon, against the city of Lachish; and the second destruction—or Level II—demonstrates the 586 B.C. siege of Lachish by Nebuchadnezzar II, king of Babylon. During the 2015 season, a team led by Southern Adventist University excavated beyond the Iron Age levels in Area AA and reached the Late Bronze stratum in most of the area—leaving a few five-by-five excavation units in the eastern end of the area pertaining to Level III, the Assyrian destruction of the city by Sennacherib.

Aside from the excavation activity, Hasel highlighted many other aspects of this past summer’s tour itinerary, comprising the “Middle East Study Tour” aspect of the overall trip. After inviting a few students to the stage to share their experiences this past summer on the excavation and touring aspects of the trip, Hasel closed with an invitation to the 2016 excavation season at Tel Lachish.

Excavations continued in 2016. For more information on *The Fourth Expedition to Lachish* and further details on the 2017 season, please visit www.southern.edu/lachish.



Michael Hasel. Photo credit: Seth Shaffer.

“LET THERE BE LIGHT!": IMAGES OF LIGHT FROM THE BIBLICAL WORLD”

On November 17, 2015, Thomas Staubli, professor of ancient Near Eastern studies

and iconography at the University of Fribourg (Switzerland), presented a lecture titled, “Let There Be Light!: Images of Light from the Biblical World.” Ancient Near Eastern depictions and representations of light, a relatively understudied topic within ancient Near Eastern and biblical scholarship, was presented in a chronological format, where Staubli’s preliminary research on the topic provided the various ways in which light was presented in antiquity.

Beginning with ancient Egypt and continuing chronologically into iconographic depictions of light in the history of Canaan through depictions found in the respective theologies of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, Staubli concluded that the



Thomas Staubli. Photo credit: Seth Shaffer.

concept of light, understood to be among a very important—if not the most important—concepts depicted in antiquity, is best understood in the context of the original text of each respective religion.

KHIRBET SUMMEILY: EXCAVATIONS ON THE PHILISTINE BORDER

The final museum lecture of the academic year was given on March 28, 2016, by James Hardin, assistant professor at Mississippi State University. In his lecture, titled “Khirbet Summeily: Excavations on the Philistine Border,” Hardin spoke on his current excavation project at a



Three of the seals found at Khirbet Summeily. Photo credit: N. E. Greene, University of Wisconsin-Madison / B. J. Hartzell.

site called Khirbet Summeily.

Located along the border between Philistia and Judah in southern Israel, excavations at Khirbet Summeily have yielded important findings relating to the ongoing debate regarding the historicity of the United Monarchy of David Solomon as depicted in the biblical account. Most notable, among other findings, has been the discovery of six ancient stamp seals dating to the tenth century B.C.—the precise century in which David’s and Solomon’s respective kingdoms took place.

In addition to the recent contributions to the ongoing tenth-century B.C. debate from other sites in Israel—including Khirbet Qeiyafa—the work at Khirbet Summeily appears



James Hardin. Photo credit: Seth Shaffer.

to have rekindled this scholarly debate, while also challenging preconceived ideas of the extent of Philistia and Judah in the tenth century B.C.

INSTITUTE PARTNERS WITH *IT IS WRITTEN*

Over the next several years the Institute of Archaeology, Southern Adventist University has partnered with It Is Written television to produce a series of quality television documentaries on various themes relating to archaeology and biblical history. The documentaries are intended to highlight the contributions of modern archaeological research to questions that have been raised about the Bible and to provide the public with new discoveries that can build their confidence in Scripture.

In 2015, two programs were filmed with John Bradshaw, speaker/director of It Is Written and Michael G. Hasel, director of the Institute of Archaeology entitled "Digging up the Truth." The programs were aired for the first time in November, 2015 on 3ABN, Hope Channel, Trinity Broadcasting Network, and the Discovery Channel. "The response was quite overwhelming, particularly on the Discovery Channel," according to Fred Knopper, Television and Creative director at It Is Written. "This topic is finding wide reception as the ratings and responses indicate. We believe this is an area that needs to be developed further."

Hasel agrees: "I believe that one of our tasks as a university archaeology program is to disseminate the important contributions that our discipline makes to the wider public. It is great to sponsor excavations, publish scientific reports, and write for professional journals,



Photo credit: Seth Shaffer.

but it is equally important to break information down in a relevant way that can impact everyone."

In May 2016, four more programs were filmed at the Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum on topics that included the Patriarchs, Everyday Life in Ancient Israel, Solomon's Building Activities, and the Historical Jesus. In 2017, a trip to Israel is planned with a film crew on site for a number of additional programs. Sites to be visited will include Jericho, Lachish, Khirbet Qeiyafa, Jerusalem, Hazor,



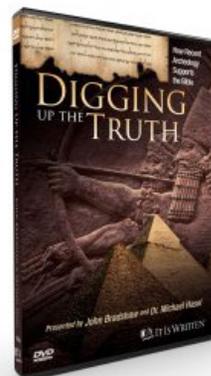
Photo credit: Seth Shaffer.

Caesarea Maritima, and Masada.

In 1998 Hasel filmed a series with Dr. Mark Finley for It Is Written. "Many of these sites were not even excavated then, and in the last 20 years many important new discoveries since that time warrant a fresh and new approach to the subject," commented Hasel. These discoveries as they relate to the Bible will be the focus of the programs.

"Archaeology is a unique tool that can take us back to biblical times and make the Bible stories relevant in the 21st century. It makes what is written tangible and real," commented Elder John Bradshaw, speaker/director of It Is Written.

Copies of the DVD programs will be available at the Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum's [website](#). Copies of the "Digging up the Truth," can be purchased online [here](#).



DIRECTOR'S LETTER: YALE BABYLONIAN ARTIFACTS ARRIVE



We are pleased to report that on May 12, 2016, sixty objects from the Yale Babylonian Collection at Yale University arrived at the Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum. The objects will be displayed this fall for a new

special exhibit. The exhibit will also include objects from the Horn Archaeological Museum, Andrews University; and the Badé Museum, Pacific School of Religion.

The new exhibit, "A World in Miniature: Creation, Cosmos, and Ecology on Seals from Biblical Times," will focus on an artifact category often neglected in archaeological studies, ancient Near Eastern seals. Seals were used in ancient times to legalize documents, identify ownership, secure areas and documents, and as important indicators of authority. In the Bible, Joseph was given a signet ring by the king of Egypt when he was elevated to second in command (Gen. 41:42). Jeremiah was asked by God to purchase property on the eve of the Babylonian destruction, and the deed was signed and sealed (Jer. 32:9-11). In the New Testament, the tomb of Jesus was sealed by the Romans (Matt. 27:66). Many believe this was an official seal. Finally, the metaphor of a seal is used to describe the believers in Jesus who will be sealed by the Holy Spirit (Eph 1:11-13; Rev. 7:13).

The seals chosen for this special exhibit have artistic themes that reflect ancient views on creation and the cosmos. Some of these views have similarities with the biblical description of creation, but many are also different as they depict a polytheistic worldview. The comparison between the ancient mythological images from the ancient Near

East and Egypt and the Bible reflect these similarities and stark differences. They highlight the importance of these concepts among the cultures of the ancient world.

The highlight of the exhibit is a special seal from Yale University containing the name of a king of Judah. The beautiful orange carnelian seal contains the words, "Ushna, servant of Hoshea." Hoshea was the last king of Judah, reigning from 732 to 723 B.C. This seal is one of many containing the actual name of a king mentioned in the Bible. It is the only seal in the United States with that distinction.



Yale Babylonian Collection.

We are privileged to host this special exhibit this coming year at the Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum, but we need your help. The cost for the design of this exhibit is \$38,000.00. This will include digital interfaces with touch screen monitors so that visitors can learn about each seal and a major symposium in November that will bring together scholars from all over the world to discuss the objects. Their papers will be published in an exhibit guide.

We ask that you consider making a gift to bring this important collection of seals highlighting the theme of creation to the southeastern United States. Your contribution will help to emphasize how the ancient world brings the Bible to life in a tangible way to students and community. Finally, we invite you to join us this coming fall as we open "A World in Miniature: Creation, Cosmos, and Ecology on Seals from Biblical Times."

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)
- Archaeological Excavations Fund
- Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum
- William G. Dever Research Library

First name		Last name	
Address			
City	State	Zip	
Email			

- Credit Card: Visa Mastercard Discover American Express

Card number	Amount
Expiration Date (MM/YY)	Security Code
Signature	

- Check (made payable to "Southern Adventist University")
- 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

MONUMENTAL PIERS FOUND IN SUNKEN HARBOR CITY OF CORINTH (Haaretz)

Underwater excavations of the ancient city of Corinth have uncovered monumental piers and evidence that the sunken port of Lechaion functioned as a booming trading hub for over a thousand years.

Ancient sources speak of Corinth as a wealthy . . .

[Click here to read more](#)

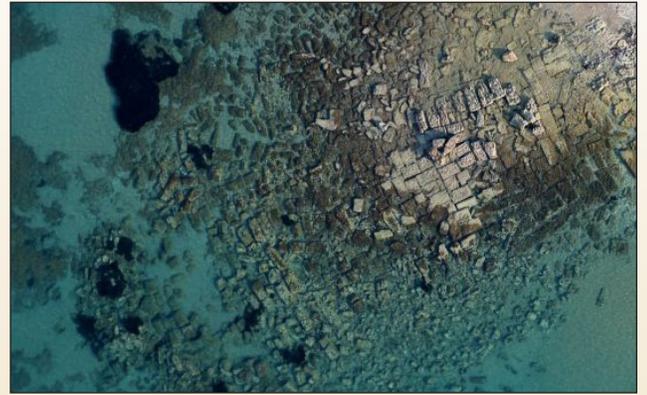


Photo credit: K. Xenikakis & S. Gesafidis.

THE TROUBLE WITH THE MAADANA (New Republic)

One July day in 1993, a senior curator at Israel's national museum in Jerusalem approached a glass display case accompanied by a security guard. It was off-hours, and the museum was empty. On a little stand inside the vitrine was a tiny object bathed in light: a brownish, scarab-shaped stone about the size of a fingernail. If you bent down in front of it and squinted, you could . . .

[Click here to read more](#)



Illustration credit: Nick Liefhebber.

KING TUT'S TOMB: '90%' CHANCE OF HIDDEN CHAMBERS (CNN)

It's a mystery that has evaded the best minds in archeology for decades: the unknown fate of a beautiful queen who ruled over ancient Egypt at the height of its power.

But Nefertiti may be hiding in plain sight, according to a recent theory that's set the Egyptology world buzzing. . . .

[Click here to read more](#)



Photo credit: Unknown.

3D IMAGES OF SYRIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TREASURES GO ONLINE (Hurriyet Daily News)

3D reconstructions of some of Syria's most spectacular archaeological sites went online on March 15 after a big push to digitalize the war-torn country's threatened heritage.

French digital surveyors have been working with Syrian archaeologists to map some of the country's most famous monuments after Islamic State of Iraq and . . .

[Click here to read more](#)

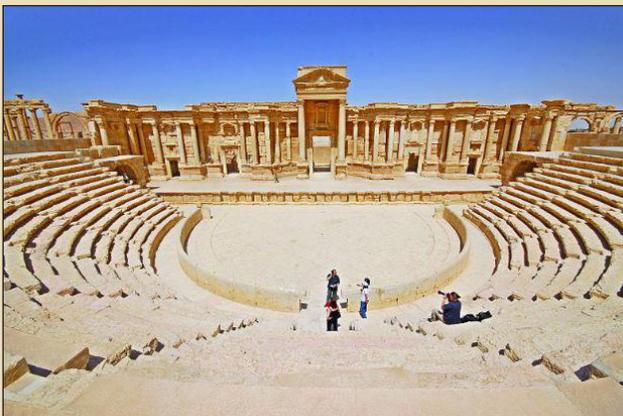


Photo credit: Reuters.



UPCOMING EVENTS

THE FOURTH EXPEDITION TO LACHISH, 2017

June 18 - July 21, 2017
Tel Lachish, Israel

For more information, visit southern.edu/lachish

LYNN H. WOOD ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM LECTURE SERIES 2016 - 2017

Monday, October 10, 2016, 7:30 p.m.
“The 2016 Season at Lachish - Excavating a Border City on the Road to Jerusalem”
Michael G. Hasel, Ph.D. (Southern Adventist University)
Lynn Wood Hall Chapel

Tuesday, November 15, 2016, 9 a.m. – 9 p.m.
“A World in Miniature: Creation, Cosmos, and Ecology on Ancient Near Eastern Seals and in the Hebrew Bible” (Symposium and Museum Lecture Series presentation)
Lynn Wood Hall Chapel

Monday, March 27, 2017, 7:30 p.m.
Title TBD
Martin G. Klingbeil, D.Litt. (Southern Adventist 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

**A WORLD
IN MINIATURE**

**CREATION COSMOS & ECOLOGY
ON SEALS FROM BIBLICAL TIMES**

SPECIAL EXHIBITION
Opening September 12, 2016

DIG SIGHT

Executive Editor: Michael G. Hasel Institute of Archaeology
Managing Editor: Daniel M. Perez Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum
Photography Editor: Daniel M. Perez P.O. Box 370, Collegedale, TN 37315

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