

DIG



SIGHT NEWSLETTER



SPECIAL EXHIBITION OPENING

The story of David and Goliath is one of the most memorable in the Bible. The setting for this legendary battle is the Valley of Elah in the Judean foothills.

Today the Elah valley has become a battleground for a new controversy, this time concerning the historical accuracy of the Bible.

Archaeological discoveries from biblical Sha'arayim, known as Khirbet Qeiyafa or the "Fortress of Elah," are challenging skeptical scholars' claims that there is no evidence for biblical David and his Kingdom. For the first time outside of the country of Israel, a sampling of these important artifacts is on display at Southern Adventist University's Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum.

On November 7, 2012, the special exhibition, "The Battle Over King David: Excavating the Fortress of Elah," debuted at Southern. The exhibition showcases ceramic, stone, and metal objects uncovered at the Khirbet Qeiyafa excavations from 2007 to 2011. Many of these pieces were uncovered by Southern Adventist University's own excavation team who, in partnership with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, has been excavating the remains of this fortress-city since 2009. The objects are on loan from the collection of the

THE BATTLE OVER KING DAVID
EXCAVATING THE FORTRESS OF ELAH

Special Exhibition Open
November 7, 2012 - April 30, 2014

LYNN H. WOOD
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
MUSEUM
Southern Adventist University

were little more than tribal leaders who ruled a small chiefdom in the highlands of Judah. The biblical description of their kingdom is an exaggerated version of history invented by writers with a political agenda. In the last century, the so-called Solomonic gates were discovered at the biblical sites of Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer. The Bible (1 Kings 9:15) credits Solomon with rebuilding the fortifications of these three cities. Now new fortifications uncovered at the Fortress of Elah have provided evidence of a kingdom in Judah during the reigns of Saul and David (c. 1020-980 BC).

The exhibition opening was the culmination of a yearlong process to create the first museum exhibition to display the finds of the Khirbet Qeiyafa Archaeological Project. The project, which was started by professor Yosef Garkinkel (Hebrew University of Jerusalem) and Saar Ganor (Israel Antiquities Authority) in 2007, has received extensive media coverage since the oldest Hebrew inscription was found at the site in 2008. Documentary crews from National Geographic and the BBC visited the site in 2010 and major news outlets like CNN, Fox News, The New York Times, and the Huffington Post have released various stories as recently as this year. "We have the unique distinction to be the first museum in the world to share these important archaeological finds," remarked Dr. Michael G. Hasel, curator. "The discoveries at Khirbet Qeiyafa have revolutionized our understanding of the biblical kingdom of Judah and now we have the privilege to share them with our community and the

National Treasures of Israel, courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority.

The theme of the exhibition highlights the scholarly controversy over the historicity of the United Monarchy of Israel. According to some scholars, Saul, David, and Solomon

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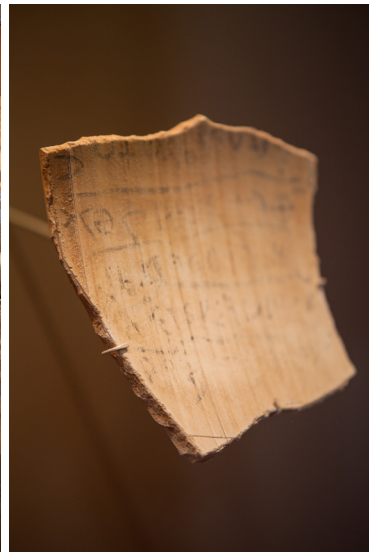
Seventh-day Adventist church.”

Exhibition highlights include a collection of stamped and finger-impressed jar handles, stamp and scarab seals, and bronze and silver coins from the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman periods. Famous artifacts like the potsherd with the Hebrew inscription (Qeiyafa Ostrakon) and a portable stone shrine found in 2011, that were not available for loan, have been replicated for the exhibit. Also on display is a scaled model of one of the two gates that give the city its name (Sha'arayim means “two gates” in Hebrew).

The evening event drew hundreds of visitors who were treated to an opening lecture by Hasel, who is also associate director of the Khirbet Qeiyafa Archaeological Project. He spoke on the debate over the historicity of David and Solomon’s kingdom and the

attempts by critical scholars to erase any trace of archaeological evidence of their building activities. Following the lecture attendees were invited to tour the exhibition galleries. Another exhibition themed lecture, “**Sanctuaries and Cult at Khirbet Qeiyafa,**” is planned for the evening of February 12, when co-director Dr. Yosef Garfinkel from The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, will be visiting the Southern Adventist University.

The special exhibition is free of charge and open to the public during regular museum hours (see our website for hours, directions, and other information). The exhibition will be on display through April 2014. ✍



FALL SCHOLARLY MEETINGS

This November the Khirbet Qeiyafa Archaeological Project, a joint project of Southern Adventist University and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, was once again featured in the annual academic meetings of two North American scholarly societies.

From November 14 to 17, the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR), the premier organization for the study of Near Eastern archaeology, held its annual meeting in the city of Chicago. There were 925 attendees and more than 450 academic papers delivered in 90 sessions. One of those sessions was dedicated to “Khirbet Qeiyafa: The Sanctuaries and Early Judean Art and Cult.”

The four presentations highlighted the cultic finds uncovered at Khirbet Qeiyafa between the 2009 and 2011 excavation seasons. Professor Yosef Garfinkel (Hebrew University of Jerusalem), director, presented the first paper, “**Three Cultic Sanctuaries at Khirbet Qeiyafa.**” Between the 2010 and 2011 season, the Khirbet Qeiyafa excavation staff discovered three cultic sanctuaries, dated radiometrically to



Portable stone shrine from Khirbet Qeiyafa. Note the recessed opening and the decorative three-plank (triglyph) ‘roof beams.’ The opening is twice as tall as it is wide.

c. 1020-980 BC. The presentation focused on the archaeological context, architectural features, and the cultic paraphernalia uncovered in these rooms. The cultic objects include five standing stones, two basalt altars, two pottery libation vessels, and two portable shrines, one made of pottery and the other of stone. The box-shaped shrines are architectural models of temples and may provide a clue to what Solomon’s Temple in Jerusalem looked like.

The second presentation, “**The History of Recessed Openings,**” related to the stone shrine’s most notable feature, the recessed opening. Dr. Madeleine Mumcuoglu (Hebrew University of Jerusalem) studied the use of recessed (stepped) doorjambs or window frames in temples and palaces (and their representations in art) from prehistoric times down to the modern era. Mumcuoglu believes that the recessed decoration on the Qeiyafa shrine is a clear indication that divine dwellings in Judah used this architectural motif and that recessed openings “corresponds to the Biblical description of the Solomonic Temple entrances.”

Dr. Michael G. Hasel (Southern Adventist University) presented the third lecture titled “**Weapons in Cultic Contexts at Khirbet Qeiyafa.**” In or next to the cultic sanctuaries in Khirbet Qeiyafa, excavators found several iron blades, including three curved swords that were uncovered next to a “bench” structure and a libation vessel. The curvature of the blades makes their identification as swords tentative, since the majority of curved blades found are sickles and not weapons. The Qeiyafa swords, however, are too long to be sickles. There are few examples of curved swords in Judah/Israel in the pictographic and archaeological record.

The fourth and last presentation of the session, “**Seals and Scarabs from Khirbet Qeiyafa,**” was given by Dr. Martin G. Klingbeil (Southern



Drs. Michael Hasel and Madeleine Mumcuoglu at the 2012 ASOR annual meeting. [Photo by ASOR staff]

Adventist University). From 2009 to 2012, a group of 14 seals, the majority scarabs, were found in areas C and D. The images of these seals have a clear connection to the Egyptian royal iconographic repertoire. Of special interest is stamp seal D4483 whose date coincides with the radiometric dating for Khirbet Qeiyafa, reinforcing the dating of the city to the reign of Saul and David.

The last speaker and respondent for the session was Dr. William G. Dever (University of Arizona, emeritus). Dever congratulated the Khirbet Qeiyafa Archaeological Project for taking up the challenge of investigating the archaeological evidence for kingdom of Judah during Saul and David’s reign. He predicted that the Qeiyafa project would be one of the key sites in firmly establishing the core of Judah’s early history.

The Khirbet Qeiyafa excavations were also featured at another scholarly conference taking place in Chicago. From November 17 to 20, the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL), the oldest and largest biblical scholarship society, held its annual meeting. It is the largest gathering of biblical scholars in the world. The session “Biblical Lands and Peoples in Archaeology and Text” featured the same presentations by Garfinkel and Mumcuoglu, and another by Hasel titled “**Recent Excavations at Khirbet Qeiyafa: A Fortified City from the Time of King David.**” Klingbeil presented his paper on the Khirbet Qeiyafa seals at a separate session on “Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Bible.”

WEAPONS IN CULTIC CONTEXTS AT KHIRBET QEYAF A

On July 19, 2010, three long iron blades were discovered in Area D at Khirbet Qeiyafa. The blades, which are curved, were not found intact but broken in several pieces. The edge of the three blades is on the inner side of the curve. After careful restoration at the Hebrew University's Institute of Archaeology, it was determined that the longest blade was 56.3 cm in length, and that the other two blades were preserved at 37.9 and 46.8 cm. The tips of all three blades are preserved. Two blades had hooked tangs—a narrow extension at the base that would have slipped into a separate piece of material comprising the hilt.

The three long Qeiyafa blades (other shorter blades have also been found) were discovered in an Iron Age IIA (early tenth century BC) building located immediately south of the piazza (open area) that separated the building from the western gate. The building was made up of a series of rooms abutting the city wall. Indications that part of this building was cultic in nature include: (1) a "bench," a feature that is often found in temples and shrines; (2) a standing stone; and (3) a libation vessel found not far from the bench. These features/objects were also found in a shrine uncovered in Area C in 2010.

Although the Late Persian–Early Hellenistic (late fourth century BC) people built a large olive press over this room, it did not destroy the bench and footings of the Iron Age wall. At the base of the bench was the Iron Age floor, which was dated to the Iron IIA occupation with pottery from the destruction of the Iron Age city. These finds raise several questions. Were the long Qeiyafa blades

actually swords kept in this cultic area or were they agricultural tools? How could the context help us discover their function? Does their shape help us identify them?

JUDEAN PARALLELS

Closer parallels in form and shape come from curved iron blades with a sharp inner edge called sickle blades. There are four common elements between these blades and the Qeiyafa blades: (1) they are all made of iron; (2) they are curved, although the Qeiyafa blades have a much more gradual curve; (3) they all have an interior edge in relationship to the curve; and (4) the handle was attached with a hooked tang.

"IF THESE CURVED BLADES ARE INDEED SWORDS FROM THE REGION OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL, THEN THE QEYAF A BLADES REPRESENT THE EARLIEST INDICATION OF THIS TYPE OF SWORD IN THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD."

However, all of the sickle blades found at Iron Age sites in Judah and Israel differ from the Qeiyafa blades in at least one way—their size. The largest sickle blade from Hazor is only 28 cm and most of them average around 18–21 cm in size, less than half the smallest Qeiyafa blade. The longest Qeiyafa blade is three times longer than this average. Are these blades simply large sickles? If so, they would be unparalleled among later Judean and Israelite cities. In



Cache of iron weapons and tools discovered at Khirbet Qeiyafa between 2009 and 2012. Note the three long blades in the center that may be early examples of Judean/Israelite curved swords.

his study *Swords and Daggers in Late Bronze Age Canaan* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2004), Sarel Shalev states that swords are defined as measuring "no less than 50 cm." Were the three long Qeiyafa blades actually swords fashioned in the typical style of shorter blades found in other Iron Age contexts?

This interpretation may be supported by other sources showing the use of curved swords by the people of Judah and Israel. At least one other curved iron sword has been found in Judah. Uncovered in a cistern at Tell Beit Mirsim, W. F. Albright (*The Excavation of Tell Beit Mirsim, Vol. 3: The Iron Age*. New Haven: ASOR, 1943) describes the sword as "62.5 cm long, complete in five pieces with a maximum width of 4.8 cm. It was single edged and slightly curved, with five rivets for the attachment of the handle." Albright dates it to the final siege of the city in c. 589 BC. The

sword differs from the Qeiyafa swords in the nature of the rivet handle. We also do not know whether the sword has an interior or exterior edge from Albright's description.

ASSYRIAN PARALLELS

Assyrian reliefs consistently depict the use of a straight sword by the king and the Assyrian armies in war and lion hunts. The sword is worn at the waist and held in place by a shoulder strap as can be seen in the

ninth century BC reliefs of Aššurnasirpal (R.D. Barnett and M. Falkner. *The Sculptures of Ašš-nasir-apli II (883-859 BC) Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727 BC) Esarhaddon (681-669 B.C.) from the Central and South-West Palaces at Nimrud*. London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1962). The sword is long when measured in proportion with the body of the king. The depiction is repeated in the reliefs of Tiglath-Pileser III, Sargon II, and Sennacherib.

It is in these last two depictions that curved swords

can be seen carried away as spoils by the Assyrians and worn by the defenders of the cities (A. M. Maeir. "The Judahite Swords from the Lachish Reliefs of Sennacherib." *Eretz-Israel* 25:210–14, 1996). Following the battle against Lachish, the spoils are taken away by the Assyrians to be presented before the king. In Segment IV of the reliefs (D. Ussishkin. *The Conquest of Lachish by Sennacherib*. Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1982), weapons and implements of war are being carried from Lachish. Two soldiers pull a chariot while another holds a stack of spears over his shoulder. Behind the chariot another Assyrian carries shields in both hands. Behind him and last in the procession is an Assyrian balancing a stack of curved swords on his left shoulder. The swords appear to be tied together. The curve is angling down towards the shoulder with the tips facing the rear. The soldier holds one hilt in the left hand and balances the rest of the swords behind him with his right. The swords are presumably sheathed.

In earlier reliefs from Sargon II's palace at Dur-Sharrukin (P.E. Botta and M.E. Flandin. *Monument de Ninive*. Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1849), depictions of battles depict the Assyrians again with straight swords, but the enemy is shown carrying curved swords at their sides. Franklin ("A Room with a View: Images from Room V at Khorsabad, Samaria, Nubians, and the Brook of Egypt and Ashdod." In A. Mazar (ed.) *Studies in the Archaeology of the Iron Age in Israel and Jordan*. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 2001) has argued that these scenes depict the siege and battle against Samaria citing the parallel curved swords in Sennacherib's reliefs as well as the fact that chariots were one of the major elements of that battle. If these curved blades are indeed swords from the region of Judah and Israel, then the Qeiyafa blades represent the earliest indication of this type of sword in the archaeological record.



Scene from Assyrian palace wall reliefs depicting the enemy (possibly Israelites) carrying curved swords.

WEAPONS IN CULTIC CONTEXTS

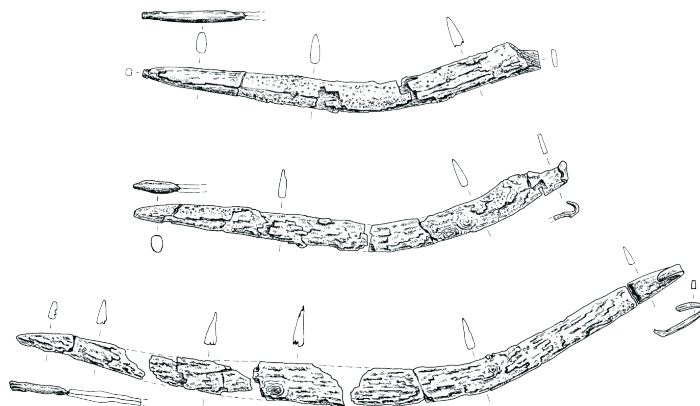
What other references do we have to swords appearing in cultic contexts? Two other examples of swords found in cultic contexts can be given from earlier contexts in the Levant. A sickle sword was found by the Pennsylvania expedition to Beth Shan in 1928 in a temple of Stratum. The sword now in the Rockefeller Museum was discovered in the temple of Level IX. In the Amman temple another sickle sword dated to the end of the 14th century BC was discovered. Finally, mention should be made of the ivory handle knife that was found at Tel Miqne-Ekron in a Philistine temple dated to the eleventh/tenth century

BC. This curved blade is also made of iron and has an interior edge.

Two biblical references to swords in a cultic context are presented in the narratives of Saul and David. Following the battle between David and Goliath in which David slays Goliath with his sword, the sword apparently was kept in the sanctuary behind the ephod wrapped in a cloth (1 Sam 21:9; 22:10). David requests the use of Goliath's sword from Abimelech the priest for he had left his weapons behind. Also, when Saul dies in the battle against the Philistines at Jezreel, 1 Sam 31:10 recounts that "They put his weapons in the temple of Ashtoreth, and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth Shan."

From these two accounts it is worth noting that in the biblical narrative there is a memory of both the Judeans and Philistines placing the weapons of the deceased king or hero into the temples or sanctuaries of their respective gods. In conclusion, if the long Qeiyafa blades found in an Iron Age cultic context are swords, they may be the earliest examples of the Judean curved swords depicted in Assyrian reliefs. They also would provide further evidence of the practice of placing swords in cultic contexts, a practice reflected in the biblical accounts set in the context of the late eleventh/early tenth century, which is precisely the date of the Iron Age occupation of Khirbet Qeiyafa (biblical Sha'arayim). ✍

Michael G. Hasel, PhD.



DIRECTOR'S LETTER: DAVID AND THE SON OF DAVID



It was in a little village south of Jerusalem that David, the son of Jesse, was anointed king by Samuel. He was the least promising among his brothers, young and innocent.

A shepherd boy, who preferred sitting out in the hills with his father's flocks rather than engage in the day to day affairs of Bethlehem. Who would have guessed that it would be David who would be chosen by Samuel that day? But later it was the faith of David that would lead to the defeat of Goliath before his brothers and the Israelite army. It was David the Shepherd who would lead the Israelites into nationhood. It was David the musician who would compose some of the most eloquent liturgy for worship. It was David the defender of sheep who would conquer Jerusalem and make it a new capitol. It was David the king who would bring the ark up to Jerusalem. It was David to whom God would reveal the plans of His dwelling place—the Temple.

Over one thousand years later a new king is born in the same small village south of Jerusalem. Who would have guessed that the tiny babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a dirty manger would be the Messiah. It was the shepherds who were the first to hear the news and came to that lowly place. Jesus, the son of David, had come to save all people. It would be this tiny babe that would defeat the goliath powers of evil before the hosts of the universe. It would be this tiny babe who would communicate the most profound message that would change the course of history. It would be this tiny babe who would lead a people into the kingdom of God. It would be by this tiny babe, the King of kings who would establish the New Jerusalem as His capitol for eternity and establish his throne there forever. It was this same Jesus who later sent his angel "to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star" (Rev 22:15).

This season, as we celebrate His birth, we are reminded that these two defining moments of history are inextricably bound together. The certainty of the first event is tied to the reality of the second.

As the new museum exhibit on David is now open, we invite you to come and see the discoveries of the Institute of Archaeology, Southern Adventist University together with its partners over the past four years at Khirbet Qeiyafa. We have especially extended our hours during the holiday season (open every day except Dec 23-29 and Jan 1). A special thanks to all of our generous donors who have made this exhibit possible.

We are delighted to have in conjunction with the new exhibit a special lecture by our partner at Khirbet Qeiyafa, director Dr. Yosef Garfinkel, Yigael Yadin Professor of Biblical Archaeology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He will be speaking on the topic of cult and religion at Khirbet Qeiyafa on February 12 at 7:00 pm in Lynn Wood Hall Auditorium, highlighting the recent evidence for worship practices found at the site during the 2010-2012 seasons. In March Dr. Bryant Wood will be here to discuss his excavations at the site of Khirbet el-Maqatir a suggested site for the location of biblical Ai. Both of these lectures will highlight the importance of archaeological research in questions of biblical history. We hope you can join us!

May each of you enjoy this season as we reflect on the past, knowing that because of it, our present and future is filled with promise. 🍷



Illustration *David and Goliath* by Ted Henninger.

A SEASON OF GIVING

As the end of the year approaches, we are reminded of the many things we are grateful for. Our new exhibition, "The Battle Over David: Excavating the Fortress of Elah," has had a tremendous impact. The opening was packed with standing room only in Lynn Wood Hall Auditorium. More than 350 people attended the evening event. Since then we have had hundreds of visitors come to the museum to learn about the archaeological discoveries from the "Fortress of Elah," a biblical site we have excavated with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem for the past four years. We are also working on producing the final reports on the 2009-2012 seasons.

All of this has been possible thanks to generous gifts from friends like you who believe in the mission of the Institute of Archaeology: to conduct quality scientific research that illuminates and enriches our understanding of the Bible and the biblical world. But this is only the beginning. The special exhibition will be open for nearly two years and will be a blessing to many. Of the \$55,000 budgeted for the exhibit, we have raised \$42,000 to date. We need your help to reach our fundraising goals for the 2012-2013 fiscal year. No tuition revenue is allocated to fund these projects. We are most grateful and dependent on people like you who make these educational resources available. Times may be difficult but there is no better time in earth's history to support the message and it's proclamation in all venues of the work. ✍️



Director Michael Hasel welcoming visitors to the museum.

I WOULD LIKE TO SUPPORT THE INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY, 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
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- Check (made out 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

FIT FOR A KING: LARGEST EGYPTIAN SARCOPHAGUS IDENTIFIED *(Yahoo News)*

The largest ancient Egyptian sarcophagus has been identified in a tomb in Egypt's Valley of the Kings, say archaeologists who are re-assembling the giant box that was reduced to fragments more than 3,000 years ago. Made of red granite, the royal sarcophagus was built for Merneptah, an Egyptian pharaoh who lived more than 3,200 years ago. A warrior king, he defeated the Libyans and a group called the "Sea Peoples" in a great battle. He also waged a campaign in the Levant . . .

[Click here to read more](#)



RESURRECTING THE PAST – ANCIENT LAODICEA *(Today's Zaman)*

Cranes, excavators, teams of workmen in hard-hats and foremen shouting into their mobile phones are a ubiquitous feature of today's Turkey, a country where, in spite of a global economic slowdown, new buildings continue to be erected at a staggering rate. Take a trip to Laodicea, however, and you'll see a "building site" with a twist. For here a long abandoned Greek-Roman city is being resurrected wholesalerom its ruins by . . . construction cranes and teams of workmen . . .

[Click here to read more](#)



ARCHAEOLOGISTS REVEAL A DESECRATED IRON AGE TEMPLE AT BETH-SHEMESH *(Biblical Archaeology Society)*

(Biblical Archaeology Society)

On Monday, November 12, 2012, Tel Aviv University archaeologists announced the discovery of an 11th-century B.C.E. sacred compound at Tel Beth-Shemesh. According to the American Friends of Tel Aviv University website, "The newly discovered sacred complex is comprised of an elevated, massive circular stone structure and an intricately constructed building characterized by a row of three flat, large round stones" . . .

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ANCIENT ROMAN GIANT FOUND *(National Geographic)*

At 6 feet, 8 inches (202 centimeters) tall, the man would have been a giant in third-century A.D. Rome, where men averaged about 5 and a half feet (167 centimeters) tall. By contrast, today's tallest man measures 8 feet, 3 inches (251 centimeters). Finding such skeletons is rare, because gigantism itself is extremely rare, today affecting about three people in a million worldwide. The condition begins in childhood, when a malfunctioning pituitary gland causes abnormal growth . . .

[Click here to read more](#)





UPCOMING EVENTS

LYNN H. WOOD ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM LECTURE SERIES

February 12, 2013, 7:30 p.m.

“Sanctuaries and Cult at Khirbet Qeiyafa,” by Yosef Garfinkel (Hebrew University of Jerusalem). Lynn Wood Auditorium, Lynn Wood Hall, Southern Adventist University

March 20, 2013, 7 p.m.

“In Search for Joshua’s Ai,” by Bryant Wood (Associates for Biblical Research). Lynn Wood Auditorium, Lynn Wood Hall, Southern Adventist University.

The museum lecture series is free and open to the public. For more information, visit our website at <http://www.southern.edu/archaeology>

THE BATTLE OVER KING DAVID

EXCAVATING THE FORTRESS OF ELAH

The image shows a book cover with a dark teal background. On the right side, there is a detailed sketch of King David, a man with long, curly hair and a beard, wearing a simple tunic. The title 'THE BATTLE OVER KING DAVID' is written in large, white, serif capital letters. Below the title, the subtitle 'EXCAVATING THE FORTRESS OF ELAH' is written in smaller, white, sans-serif capital letters. The background of the cover features a faint sketch of a stone fortress or city wall.

DIG SIGHT

Executive Editor: Michael G. Hasel Institute of Archaeology
Managing Editor: Justo E. Morales Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum
Photography Editor: Marcella J. Morales P.O. Box 370 Collegedale, TN 37315

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INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY
Southern Adventist University

The logo for the Institute of Archaeology at Southern Adventist University. It features a white line-art illustration of a classical building facade with three columns and a pediment, set against a dark green background. Below the illustration, the text 'INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY' is written in white, serif capital letters, and 'Southern Adventist University' is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font.