

# DIG

# SIGHT NEWSLETTER



## EXCAVATING LACHISH 2013

*The Fourth Expedition to Lachish* was launched this summer, July 15-29, 2013, as a joint project between the Institutes of Archaeology of Southern Adventist University and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

For nearly four years Southern has been looking at ways to expand beyond Khirbet Qeiyafa. While there is much new data on the early tenth century B.C., less is known about the second half of this century. The Kingdom of Judah existed for about 450 years (c. 1030–586 B.C.). Its capital was Jerusalem, in the hill country. The second most important city in the Kingdom was Lachish, in the Shephelah, a two-day walk from Jerusalem. Thus, investigations of Lachish should provide clear answers regarding the early development of the Kingdom of Judah. The site is mentioned in the biblical narratives 24 times. The glory of Lachish is well-known at the time of King Hezekiah, at the end

of the eighth century B.C., when it was under Assyrian siege and destroyed in the year 701 B.C. This well-known event is mentioned in three different biblical books (2 Kings 18; Isaiah 36–37; 2 Chronicles 32), documented in Assyrian annals, and depicted on a monumental relief from Sennacherib’s palace at Nineveh. The reliefs are now on exhibit in London’s British Museum.

The main targets of the new expedition to Lachish are Levels IV and V, which date to the early establishment of the Kingdom. The expedition will try to answer questions like these: When was Lachish inhabited

for the first time in the Iron Age? When was Lachish first fortified in the Iron Age? How did the economy, administration, international connections, writing, cult, and art develop in the first 200 years of the Kingdom of Judah? It will also be important to examine the connection between archaeology and the Bible during the tenth and ninth centuries B.C. Was there a fortified city in Lachish relating to 2 Chronicles 11:5–12, which recounts Rehoboam’s rebuilding of the city? These are the principal questions that bring us back to Lachish, the most important city of Judah after Jerusalem.

Where would be the best place to excavate so that these layers will be found? Although the central and southern areas at Lachish have been extensively examined, no substantial remains were uncovered from Levels IV and V. The great city of Level III covered an area of nearly 20 acres. The earlier cities were probably much smaller and may have



Professor David Ussishkin of Tel Aviv University (left), director of the previous expedition to Lachish, greeted by co-directors Professor Yosef Garfinkel of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Professor Michael Hasel of Southern Adventist University.

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been spread only over an area measuring approximately five or six acres. When Yohanan Aharoni excavated in the northeast part of the site, he found some impressive architecture and some rich finds from Levels IV and V. On this basis it was determined to examine the northeast quarter of the site.

This summer three spots were probed in the northeast part of the site with an expedition of about 30 people. After clearing the topsoil, Level II was exposed, with a rich conglomeration of destruction material from Nebuchadnezzar's campaign (586 B.C.). In a limited area a group of complete pottery vessels was found, including a rare type of jug decorated with red paint.

Further to the north, inside a large circular depression, one probe was excavated down to a little more than seven feet. No architecture or floor levels were found, only two layers of fill. In the upper fill we recovered relatively large quantities of pottery sherds, while only a few sherds were found in the lower part of the fill. The character of the human activity in this area is unclear. It may have been a water system in antiquity. It may be advantageous to conduct a geophysical survey, which might reveal more about this enigmatic location at Tel Lachish.

At the northeast corner of Lachish, adjacent to the deep well, the fortification systems on the slope were excavated. This part of the site is closest to the river and features a path leading to the top of the Tel. This is an ideal location for a city gate. In the 1930s the British expedition excavated this slope and uncovered some massive walls. However, the results of this operation were never published. The vegetation was cleaned and a number of massive stone walls were re-exposed. The area exhibits a complex history of building and rebuilding. Over the next three seasons, the area will be enlarged and further excavated to get a complete sequence of the Iron Age history of the site from Level II to Level V.

In the summer of 2014, a full six-week season is being planned involving a large number of staff and volunteers that will work to supply answers to some of these questions. Please join the project, as the results from Lachish, together with the results from Khirbet Qeiyafa, will enable us to obtain a clearer and more complete picture of the early history of the Kingdom of Judah in the tenth and ninth centuries B.C. ✍️



Professor Martin Klingbeil of Southern Adventist University, co-director of *The Fourth Expedition to Lachish*, holding an oil lamp found at the end of the short season.



Initial excavations in Area A in the northeast section of the Tel. Left to right: Professor Martin Klingbeil, staff member Clay Perez, and Professor Jesse Rademacher.



Staff member Clay Perez cleaning the jug found on the last day of excavations.



# KHIRBET QEYAF A FINAL CELEBRATION

This past July signaled the seventh and final season at Khirbet Qeiyafa, as the transition was made to *The Fourth Expedition to Lachish*.

The 2013 season at Khirbet Qeiyafa ended with a final celebration of the project. This party was attended by dignitaries, archaeologists, donors, and journalists including Uzi Dahari (Deputy Director of the Israel Antiquities Authority) and other Israel Antiquities Authority constituents. In addition, a mix of past staff members and volunteers from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Southern Adventist University, Virginia Commonwealth University, Oakland University, and many other guests from around the world were in attendance. Co-Directors Yosef Garfinkel (Hebrew University of Jerusalem) and Saar Ganor (Israel Antiquities Authority) presided over the gathering and guided visitors around the highlights of the site.

The seven excavation seasons at Khirbet Qeiyafa, with Southern Adventist University's intensive involvement in the middle of the expedition from 2009 to 2011, injected new life into the on-going debate concerning the historicity of King David and the United Monarchy during the Iron Age IIA period. Findings such as the "Qeiyafa Ostrakon," containing one of the oldest Hebrew texts in the world, two four-chambered gates and the double-casemate wall, thousands of Iron Age IIA vessels, seals, iron weapons, and hundreds of stone tools have revolutionized

our understanding of the early history of Judah.

The major discovery of the last season was found in Area A, where an imposing building from the Byzantine period, 1,400 years later than the time of King David, was found. But in the course of excavation, it was discovered that the builders of this Byzantine structure had destroyed a large part of another building that had previously existed exactly on this spot from the Iron IIA period, the time of Saul and David. This earlier building covered more than 10,000 square feet. Its walls were two or three times the thickness of the walls of other buildings at the site. And it occupied the highest and most important location—at the center of the site, overlooking the entire city and the surrounding countryside, as far as Jerusalem and the Hebron mountains to the east and Ashdod to the west. This huge structure was both a prominent and a potent point of the city. It reflects power and authority over the city as well as the region. We believe it was an administrative center of the Judean kingdom, from where the city and the region were controlled. As the major administrative center on the western edge of the Kingdom, it could have been a palatial building.

During the final celebration, it was announced that Khirbet Qeiyafa is being considered to be included as a national park by the government of Israel. This will encourage many visitors to experience the importance of this relatively small garrison on the border of Philistia. 🍷



Sunset over the Elah Valley, marking the end of a seven-year expedition at Khirbet Qeiyafa.

## PEREZ BECOMES NEW MUSEUM COORDINATOR

The Institute of Archaeology welcomes Daniel Perez, a native of southern California, who began in August as the new museum coordinator of the Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum.

Justo Morales, who served nearly six years as museum coordinator, left a major mark on Southern. His diligent work over the years for the museum, the cataloguing of the William G. Dever Research Library, and many other aspects of the Institute of Archaeology provided significant contributions. His oversight of two major museum exhibits won the highest awards from the Tennessee Association of Museums. His judicious leadership left us in excellent shape to apply for accreditation in the future.

Perez brings a wealth of experience to his new position. After he studied anthropology and archaeology at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona and received his B.S., he completed an M.A. degree in anthropological archaeology at Northern Arizona University. His field experience led him to Israel, where he has worked with Southern at Hazor, Khirbet Qeiyafa (three seasons), and Lachish. He also worked in Uzbekistan and has done fieldwork among Native American groups in Arizona and California. He will continue to provide training and will work as an archaeological surveyor for *The Fourth Expedition to Lachish*. ✍️



Daniel Perez, Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum Coordinator.

## BATTLE OVER DAVID IN SOUTH AFRICA

While on vacation and research leave in South Africa, Dr. Martin Klingbeil, associate director of the Institute of Archaeology was spontaneously invited by the campus church of Helderberg College, an Adventist higher education institution at the southern tip of Africa near Cape Town, to present a public lecture on the excavations at Khirbet Qeiyafa and “The Battle Over King David” exhibit at the Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum.

Advertising was done for only ten days through newspapers and the communication channels of Stellenbosch University, South Africa’s top university at which Klingbeil was recently appointed as a research associate. To the surprise of the organizers, about 450 visitors attended the lecture, of which between 65 and 75% were not members of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The lecture was very well received, with an extended discussion period at the end. Good contacts were made that provide opportunities for future evangelistic meetings. Some attendees are even planning to join the 2014 Lachish excavations. ✍️



Dr. Klingbeil listening to questions at the end of the public lecture in South Africa.

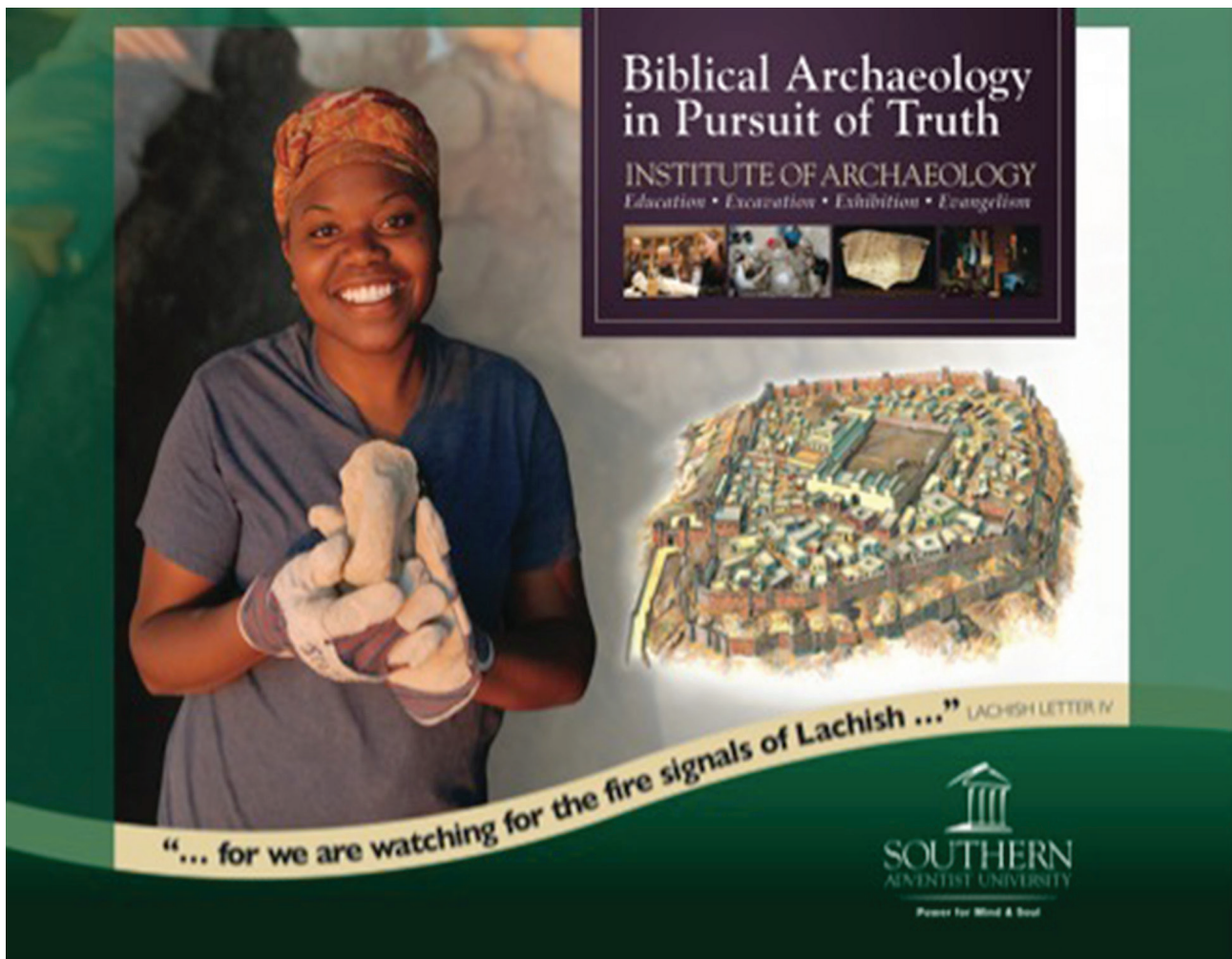


# INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AT ASI

From August 7 to 10, 2013, the directors of the Institute of Archaeology, Southern Adventist University attended the 2013 ASI International Convention in Orlando, FL.

The Institute has a long-standing relationship with ASI and has received financial support from its members for a number of its excavation and evangelistic projects. Dr. Michael Hasel, director of the Institute, presented one of the key seminars during the convention with the title "Archaeology, History, and Prophecy: Signs of Time," which highlighted the interconnected relationship between history and prophecy. It also demonstrated how archaeology can support the historicist interpretation of prophecy by providing lessons of fulfilled prophecy as signs of time given by the God who acts in history. The seminar was well attended and provided excellent opportunities for further discussions on the topic of archaeology which took place in the hallways and the exhibit areas while attendees were visiting the Institute of Archaeology booth.

One of our purposes for attending the convention was to showcase the new excavation project at Lachish, the second most important city (after Jerusalem) during much of the Old Testament time period. A completely new booth had been designed in collaboration with the Marketing and University Relations Department at Southern Adventist University. The booth shows an artist's drawing of ancient Lachish and a quote from the famous Lachish Letters, also featuring Joliann Penn, a graduate of Southern who participated in the 2011 excavations at Khirbet Qeiyafa and whose photo encapsulates the joy of discovery that archaeological excavations provide. (As a side note, Joliann's mother attended the convention from the British Virgin Islands and had a pleasant surprise as she turned a corner in the exhibit area and suddenly looked at the smiling face of her daughter). The booth provided numerous opportunities to share the mission of the Institute in the areas of education, excavation, exhibition, and evangelism and to create awareness about the excavation project which places Southern Adventist University at the forefront of archaeological discoveries in one of the most important sites currently being excavated in Israel. ✍️



Newly designed booth for the Institute of Archaeology.

# DIRECTOR'S LETTER: PARTNER WITH US



As you can see from the front page of this issue of *DigSight*, we are thrilled about the launch of our new project at Lachish. After just a few days of excavation, we have come down to the Level II

destruction of Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of the site in 586 B.C. Our goal in 2014 is to expand the area and have a large exposure of this destruction in order to get a plan for the northwest quadrant of the city at the end of the Kingdom of Judah. In subsequent seasons we will meticulously work down through Level III in order to reach our goal of Levels IV and V. Arrangements have already been made with airlines, accommodations, and tour companies for weekend travel experiences through Israel and Jordan to create an unforgettable experience for students and volunteers. We believe that this will be a tremendous opportunity for our worldwide church as we partner with consortium institutions to excavate this incredible biblical site in southern Judah.

An excavation project of this magnitude requires major funding. The most expensive part is simply the airfare needed to get there. Next year we are planning to take between 60 and 70 people from Southern. At \$1,830 for each ticket, that is over \$120,000. While many of the students will cover much of their own airfare, we would like to provide assistantships to help defray the costs. In addition, the staff who are not taking it for academic credit also need their travel expenses covered. This is only one aspect of the costs involved. I am pleased to inform you that one of our Institute of Archaeology Advisory Board members has committed to match dollar for dollar up to \$250,000 of contributions to our excavation fund to support *The Fourth Expedition to Lachish*. To accomplish this project over the next 10-12 years (five years of excavation followed by at least that many years for publication), we will need to raise \$150,000 a year. The matching fund would give us an immediate boost towards that goal for a total of \$500,000. As we come to the close of this year, would you help us accomplish this goal? Remember that your donation will be worth twice the amount you are giving, and every donation will provide funding for student assistantships, excavation equipment, computers, artifact processing, and funding staff, including world-renowned experts who will analyze various finds that are discovered during the course of the excavation for final publication.

The doors have been opened for us to excavate the second most important city after Jerusalem in the Kingdom of Judah. We believe that this opportunity was nothing short of providential for this time in earth's history, and we invite you to be involved. ✍️

## 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

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

## MYSTERY SURROUNDS EGYPTIAN SPHINX UNEARTHED IN ISRAEL (CNN)

Tel Hazor in northern Israel has long been a treasure trove for archeologists, but a recent discovery of part of a 4,000-year-old Egyptian sphinx has been a most unexpected find. Inexplicably buried far from Egypt, the paws of a sphinx statue, resting on its base, have been unearthed with an inscription in hieroglyphs naming King Mycerinus. The pharaoh ruled in 2500 BC and oversaw the construction of one of the three Giza pyramids, where he was enshrined. . . .

[Click here to read more](#)



Photo credit: Mehahem Kahana/AFP

## TEL REHOV HOUSE ASSOCIATED WITH THE BIBLICAL PROPHET ELISHA (Biblical Archaeological Society)

The Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) reported the discovery of a building that “might have been the house of Elisha the prophet” at Tel Rehov in Israel. The sixteen-year-long excavations at Tel Rehov, directed by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem archaeologist Amihai Mazar, investigate the largest Canaanite and Israelite sites in the Beth-Shean Valley, located in one of the largest tells in the nation. . . .

[Click here to read more](#)



Photo credit: John Camp

## KING DAVID'S PALACE DISCOVERED? ARCHAEOLOGISTS FIND HUGE PALACE, STOREROOM AT KHIRBET QEYAFI SITE (Huffington Post)

After many years of searching, Israeli archaeologists announced Thursday the discovery of a large palace and storeroom believed to have once belonged to the Biblical monarch King David. “The ruins are the best example to date of the uncovered fortress city of King David,” lead researchers Yossi Garfinkel and Saar Ganor said, according to the Jerusalem Post. . . .

[Click here to read more](#)



Photo credit: Sky View/Israel Antiquities Authority

## INSCRIPTION DATES BACK TO KING DAVID – BUT WHAT DOES IT SAY? (NBC News)

Israeli archaeologists say a 3,000-year-old fragment of a ceramic jar found near Jerusalem’s Temple Mount, dating back to the days of King David and King Solomon, bears a mysterious inscription that ranks as the earliest alphabetical written text ever found in the city. The inscription is incised into the clay of a neckless ceramic jar found at Jerusalem’s Ophel excavation site. The text is in the Canaanite language, which predates Israelite rule and the prevalence of Hebrew script. From left to right, the letters translate to M, Q, P, H, N, possibly L, and N. . . .

[Click here to read more](#)



Photo credit: Eilat Mazar/Ourla Tadmor/Hebrew University of Jerusalem



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### AMERICAN SCHOOLS OF ORIENTAL RESEARCH MEETINGS

November 20-23, 2013

Baltimore, Maryland

### LYNN H. WOOD ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM LECTURE SERIES

September 24, 2013, 7 p.m.

"Newly Discovered Inscriptions from the Earliest Days of the Kingdom of Israel"

P. Kyle McCarter, PhD (Johns Hopkins University)

October 22, 2013, 7 p.m.

"Excavating Nebuchadnezzar's Destruction at Lachish"

Michael G. Hasel, PhD (Southern Adventist University)

February 11, 2014, 7 p.m.

"Tell Jalul: A Levitical City of Refuge in Jordan?"

Randall W. Younker, PhD (Andrews University)

March 11, 2014, 7 p.m.

"Ossuaries and the Burials of Jesus and James"

Jodi Magness, PhD (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill)

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

### SPECIAL EXHIBITION NOW OPEN

Call 423.236.2030 or email <[museum@southern.edu](mailto:museum@southern.edu)> to schedule your tour (appointment required during summer).

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