

# DIG

# SIGHT NEWSLETTER



## A WORLD IN MINIATURE: CREATION, COSMOS, AND ECOLOGY ON SEALS FROM BIBLICAL TIMES

On September 12, 2016, the Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum at Southern Adventist University opened a new temporary exhibit on ancient seals.

After the highly acclaimed “Battle over King David” exhibit was taken down in May of 2014 and the artifacts from the Khirbet Qeiyafa (the biblical Shaaraim) had been returned to Israel, the museum embarked on designing a new exhibit that would tell the story of creation, cosmos, and ecology through the lens of one of the most fascinating – yet smallest – artifacts to be found in archaeological excavations, namely, ancient seals. On a space not much bigger than a human thumbnail (and sometimes even smaller), ancient craftsmen and artists were able to recreate a world in miniature that is loaded with political, economic, and religious meaning. More than 10,000 stamp seals from legal excavations in Palestine/Israel have been unearthed, not including about 500 cylinder seals, unnumbered seals in private collections, over half a million clay tablets (many of them bearing seal impressions), and seal impressions on jar handles, so that an estimated total of 100,000 seals can be associated with the lands of the Bible.

The 56 cylinders, scarabs, stamp seals, coinoids, and scaraboids that are currently on display in the museum have been graciously loaned to Southern Adventist University by the Yale Babylonian Collection at Yale University, Badè Museum of Biblical Archaeology at the Pacific School of Religion, and the Siegfried H. Horn Museum at Andrews

University. In order to bridge the enormous chronological gap between a 21st-century audience and artifacts that date from 3000 to 400 B.C., the Institute staff introduced an interactive element into the museum

experience, using touchscreens throughout the exhibit that allow visitors to explore and study each object in its most minute details, as well as a seal workshop where seal impressions can be made from replicas and taken home. Professor Benjamin Foster, curator of the Yale Babylonian Collection at Yale University and a special guest speaker on the opening night of the new exhibit, said in his remarks: “This is the finest exhibition on ancient seals in terms of presentation, approachability, and scholarly input that I have ever seen.” (Photo 1)

The exhibit is divided into three spaces: A seal workshop introduces museum visitors to the wide variety of forms and shapes of ancient seals, as well as their geographical and chronological distribution throughout the ancient Near East. They further learn about the intricate craftsmanship of seal manufacture and exit this area by rolling and stamping their own seal impressions. Next, visitors enter the museum’s atrium, where the main themes of creation, cosmos, and ecology are developed. Mesopotamian and Egyptian cosmologies are contrasted with the biblical worldview, and the big questions of life are viewed through ancient eyes: Where do we come from? How does



Photo 1: Professor Martin Klingbeil, associate director of the Institute of Archaeology at Southern Adventist University, explains the underlying ideas of the new exhibit to Professor Benjamin Foster, curator of the Yale Babylonian Collection at Yale University, while freshman Hannah Klingbeil listens. Photo Credit: Gerald Klingbeil

### IN THIS ISSUE

1–2 Seal Exhibit

2–3 Ushna Seal at Southern

3–4 Museum Lectures

6 Director’s Letter

7 Recent Sightings

8 Upcoming Events

this world work? How can we interact with an environment that is progressively threatened? These are questions a millennial could have asked – and yet they were also questions that moved people living in the ancient Near East in biblical times. The final cases of the exhibit illustrate how seals were used in daily ancient life and how documents were sealed, property secured, and authority transferred. (Photo 2)

Some of the many highlights of the exhibit include: a beautiful rock crystal cylinder seal from Akkad, an ancient Mesopotamian



Photo 2: Replica of a boundary stone, or kudurru, from Susa (ca. 1200 BC), displaying a threefold worldview of ancient Mesopotamia. Photo Credit: Terry Henson

empire (ca. 2300 BC) showing an intricate animal combat scene that portrays the subduing of the wild through both human and divine intervention (Photo 3); a red glazed scarab that bears the throne-name of Thutmose III (1504–1450 BC) who can possibly be identified with the pharaoh of the Exodus from Egypt; and a scaraboid made from orange carnelian that bears the inscription “belonging to Ushna, servant of Ahaz,” making it the only seal currently on display in the United States which refers to the name of a Judean king, Ahaz (735–716 BC) mentioned in the Bible. And there is lots more to discover!



Photo 3: Rock crystal cylinder seal portraying the subduing of the wild. Photo Credit: Tal Rogovski

“A World in Miniature” will continue to be on exhibit at the Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum until May 2018. The months since its opening have seen an increase in numbers of visitors, reflecting the interest that these unique objects, as well as the other themes on display, generate. High time to plan a visit! 🍷

## THE “USHNA SERVANT OF AHAZ” SEAL AT SOUTHERN

The new exhibit, “A World in Miniature: Creation, Cosmos, and Ecology on Seals of the Biblical World,” on display in the Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum presents an amazing assortment of seals spanning the ancient Near East geographically and moving through time historically. However, one of the objects is extraordinary. It is the only seal naming an ancient Judean king found in any museum in North America and is currently on loan from the Yale Babylonian Collection at Yale University. The seal is made out of the dark



Orange carnelian scaraboid with the name of King Ahaz (735–716 BC). Photo Credit: Terry Henson

orange semi-precious stone carnelian. It is meticulously carved and it contains the

inscription “(Belonging to) Ushna, Servant of Ahaz.”

Ahaz (735-716 BC), also known as Jehoahaz, was the son of Jotham, king of Judah, and was a coregent with his father, Jotham (735-732 BC) before succeeding him as king. He is remembered primarily for his war against Rezin of Aram. He sought the aid of the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser III when he felt pressured to join a coalition against Assyria (2 Kgs 16:5-7). The City of David excavation. It parallels two of the previous ones found on the antiquities Tiglath-pileser claimed in his annals that he received tribute in 734 BC from “Jehoahaz of Judah,” a lengthened form of Ahaz, which means

“Yahweh has possessed.” Several seal impressions (or bullae) also bear his name, including some found on the antiquities market, which contain the inscription, “(Belonging to) Hezekiah, (son of) Ahaz, king of Judah.” In 2009 an identical impression was discovered by Eilat Mazar in market. The new 2009 impression confirms the two discovered on the antiquities market and, together with the inscription of Tiglath-pileser III, is undoubtedly authentic. So we have Ahaz also mentioned on his son Hezekiah’s seal.

The Bible states, “Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem; and he did not do what was right in the sight of the Lord his God, as his father David had done. But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel; indeed he made his son pass through the fire, according to the abominations of the nations whom the Lord had cast out from before the children of Israel. And he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places, on the hills, and under every green tree” (2 Kgs 16:2-4).

The “Ushna, servant of Ahaz” seal displays several artistic motifs that are unusual for a Judahite seal. Above the names the seal depicts Egyptian pagan symbols of the sun with two serpents, or uraei, emanating from either side. These serpents represented the protective power of Ra, the Egyptian sun god. Could the Egyptian symbols on

the seal of “Ushna, the servant of Ahaz” reflect the syncretistic cultic practices of its king? It is interesting that the seals of an individual reflect the characteristic of his faith and his religion.

It is a fascinating event of history that the son of Ahaz, Hezekiah, broke with the ways of his father. Hezekiah enacted far-reaching reforms that changed the course of Israel’s history. Through the influence of Isaiah the prophet, Hezekiah tore down the altars and the high places that his father, Ahaz, constructed to worship. His reformation extended throughout the land of Israel, so that it is recorded of him, “there was none like him among all the kings of Judah after him, nor among those before him” (2 Kgs. 18:5).

The seal of “Ushna, servant of Ahaz” is descriptive of a chapter in the life of the ancient nation of Judah. Fortunately, the story of Judah’s religious practices did not end with Ahaz. The reformation experienced under Hezekiah, his son, opened a new chapter for Judah and ultimately resulted in the deliverance of Jerusalem from the hands of the Assyrians. This was a tremendous lesson for ancient Judah. Its reverberations continue down to us today who live in this generation, as we gaze upon an ancient carnelian seal perhaps once worn in the palace in Jerusalem. 🖋️

## WINTER SEMESTER MUSEUM LECTURES

### “SEALS AND SEALINGS FROM TEL LACHISH: IMPRESSIONS OF ROYAL POWER”

On March 27, Martin G. Klingbeil, associate director of the Institute of Archaeology and professor of biblical studies and archaeology at Southern Adventist University, presented on “Seals and Sealings from Tel Lachish: Impressions of Royal Power” for the 2016-2017 Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum Lecture Series. Dr. Klingbeil’s lecture focused specifically on the four bullae, or sealings, that were found by the Southern Adventist University team during the 2014 season at Lachish. Analyzing the bullae alongside potential



Martin G. Klingbeil, D.Litt.: Photo Credit: Seth Shaffer



David Klingbeil (Left) and Erin Treitl (Right) during the 2014 season at Tel Lachish: Photo Credit: Edward A. Appollis

iconographic counterparts within the ancient Near East, Klingbeil gave a detailed description of both the epigraphic material and the imagery on the bullae. Klingbeil shared possible significances for the biblical texts by sharing potential similarities between descriptions in the Bible and personal names and images found on the Lachish bullae. Distinctively, Klingbeil analyzed the grazing gazelle or doe motif that appears on the bullae as a representation of the image’s significance and pervasiveness during the Iron Age IIB period. Klingbeil closed his lecture by suggesting that the bullae’s grazing doe image may be indicative of an intentional strategy to solidify a unique religion and identify through the distribution of the image. 🖋️

# WINTER MUSEUM LECTURES

## “THE SEARCH FOR YHWH’S IMAGE IN LIGHT OF SEALS FROM BIBLICAL TIMES”

The 2016-2017 Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum Lecture Series continued on February 7 with a joint lecture by Drs. Brent Strawn and Joel

LeMon. Pictured below, Brent Strawn (Ph.D. 2001, Princeton Theological Seminary) is a professor of Old Testament and director of the Doctor of Ministry degree at Emory University. Strawn conducts research in ancient Near Eastern iconography, the Dead Sea Scrolls, Israelite religion, legal traditions of the Old Testament, and Old Testament theology. Pictured right, Joel LeMon (Ph.D. 2007, Emory University) is an associate professor of Old Testament at Emory University. LeMon’s research focuses on the Psalms, Hebrew and Ugaritic poetry, and ancient Near Eastern history, literature, and art.



Brent A. Strawn, Ph.D.: Photo Credit: Seth Shaffer

This joint presentation was offered in conjunction with the current World in Miniature exhibit on display at the Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum. The lecture was titled “The Search for YHWH’s Image in Light of Seals from Biblical Times,” and Professors Strawn and LeMon carefully analyzed traditional representations of YHWH in ancient motifs.

Divided into two sections, Brent Strawn’s section looked particularly at what images existed in antiquity despite the Old Testament’s ban on images. Strawn’s study focused on specific representations that scholars suggest are emblematic of YHWH. Strawn explained that while the identity of the deities depicted in many places remains unclear, there are undoubtedly depictions of YHWH himself in ancient pictorial representations. Of potential images of YHWH, Strawn put forth the possibility of a two-figured throne as one potential representation, and a coin that depicts a figure seated on a mobile throne with a bird in it’s hand as another potential representation.

Transitioning into the second part of the lecture, Joel LeMon

asked the audience to consider how YHWH may have been seen to the nation of Israel. To answer this question, LeMon shared the discovery of an important archaeological discovery of a bulla that bears the inscription “belonging to Hezekiah [son of] Ahaz king of Judah.” The bulla was found through the direction of Dr. Eilat Mazar at the Ophel excavations in Jerusalem. LeMon argues that the seal provides key insight into the social and political climate of the 8th century and informs our reading of the biblical text. LeMon examined arguments that suggest that the winged form depicted on the Hezekiah bulla is YHWH. He tied this possible depiction to descriptions of YHWH as a winged form in six different psalms. From there he positioned it in conjunction with other archaeological finds bearing similar scenes, contending that there are a number of illustrations all over the ancient Near East of winged deities ready for battle. Going further, LeMon suggested that the image of YHWH has a huge relation to the winged sun disc, arguing that the winged sun disc lies in the background of all six psalms. Ultimately, LeMon suggests that the sun disk is an image of a solarized god, represented as recipient of the winged deity’s life-giving power and protection. LeMon sees this depiction as consistent with the winged God found in Psalms 61 and 63, who hears the cries of those who are far away and offers salvation to the king.



Joel M. LeMon, Ph.D.: Photo Credit: Seth Shaffer

To close the lecture, Strawn introduced a motif known as the “Lord of the Ostriches.” Strawn stated that this depiction of a god is the most prominent, indigenous deity found in the iconography of Iron Age IIA. Strawn suggested that the “Lord of the Ostriches” motif found on many seals correlates to identifications of YHWH in the biblical book of Job. Strawn contends that the “Lord of the Ostriches” is quite likely an image of YHWH. Ultimately, Strawn suggested that these seal images shed light on YHWH and assist modern readers in understanding biblical material.

If you are interested in watching this lecture in full, it can be found online at the Institute of Archaeology’s webpage at [http://www.southern.edu/administration/archaeology/lecture\\_series](http://www.southern.edu/administration/archaeology/lecture_series)

# MARK FINLEY'S REVIEW OF *JERUSALEM: AN ILLUSTRATED ARCHAEOLOGICAL GUIDE AND JOURNAL*

The book *Jerusalem: An Illustrated Archaeological Guide and Journal* was organized as a Master of Fine Arts thesis by

Giselle Sarli Hasel at the Savannah College of Arts and Design in 2014 and has been expanded for this present publication. The book was co-written by Michael and Giselle Hasel and is divided into five sections in fifty-nine information-packed pages with an addition

The book provides archaeological information about Jerusalem and Judah, but it is more than an archeological guide: it is a travel journal where one can jot down ideas and observations as he or she visits the ancient city. Throughout the book there are illustrations that beautifully pinpoint key historical sites and people connected with Jerusalem throughout its long history. The book begins with a summary of the history of Jerusalem through time, outlining the rulers and their nations who attacked the city. The city has experienced 118 conflicts over four millennia and has been captured or recaptured forty-four times.

In the next four chapters of the book some of the main characters in Jerusalem's long and varied history are briefly depicted: David, Herod the Great, Jesus, and Muhammad. The historical timeline on pages 4 and 5 outlining the major events in Jerusalem's history is extremely helpful. It is a quick and easy reference to see the significant dates that

shaped the city's destiny. Michael Hasel is a respected archaeologist who connects the history of Jerusalem and Judah (Bethlehem, Masada, Herodium, Khirbet Qeiyafa, and Lachish) with recent significant archaeological discoveries and points out their relevance for biblical faith.

The descriptions of the House of David inscription on page 11 and the Ophel inscription on page 12 are fascinating. While there are the David Stele fragments discovery in 1993-1994, the recent discovery of the Ophel inscription in 2013 is the earliest reference to Hebrew as a written language. The account of the excavations of Khirbet Qeiyafa on page 15 give evidence of an Israeli outpost city from which David left to slay Goliath. The skillful artwork by Giselle Hasel brings the history and the magnificent buildings of this ancient city to life and makes the content accessible to the non-specialist.

A valuable resource of some important archaeological findings, this book draws repeated parallels to spiritual insights where the reader can learn from history. Perhaps the high point of the archaeological guide is the chapter on Jesus of Nazareth. Focusing on the life of Christ is certainly the highlight of any tour to Israel. What impressed me most about this chapter is its succinct focus on Christ's ministry and the final days of Christ's life. The chapter provides a biblical backdrop and the historical context that enables the reader to understand much better the life and times of Jesus. The chapter concludes on pages 50 and 51 with a discus-



sion of the Garden Tomb and first-century tombs, noting that it is difficult to point with precision to the exact location of Jesus' burial place.

The last chapter on Muhammad is the shortest in the book. The discussion of the history of the Dome of the Rock effectively condenses almost one thousand years of history into a few short paragraphs. In my opinion this is one of the strengths of the entire book. The authors have taken a wealth of material, condensed it, put it in readable language, illustrated it well, documented the archeological and historical facts, and given us a guide to Jerusalem that is invaluable. The extra pages for journaling are an excellent resource for notetaking and spiritual reflection. ✍️

## ORDER *JERUSALEM: AN ILLUSTRATED ARCHAEOLOGICAL GUIDE AND JOURNAL*

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## DIRECTOR'S LETTER: THE IMPORTANCE OF HISTORY



The postmodern world owes its philosophical foundation to a man who became famous for his declaration, “God is dead!” Friedrich Nietzsche did not make that declaration out of a sense of triumph but, rather, out of a sense of lament and even anguish. The young

thinker was reflecting on the result of the Age of Enlightenment, which had found its climax in the French Revolution. How, he wondered, would there be any future if society had determined that God as that suprasensory reality no longer existed? What basis would there be for morality if there was no longer a Divine Being to orient oneself to? The result, Nietzsche determined, would be pluralism, the simultaneous claim of many truths without any foundations to anchor truth. He realized that truth no longer existed the way it had in a society and culture based on the Bible. But what drove Nietzsche to reject God and become an atheist?

Nietzsche was born in October 1844 into a devout Lutheran family. His father was a Lutheran minister, and young Friedrich was raised to love God and respect His Word. At a young age, his father became very ill, and Nietzsche was forced to watch his father suffer great pain and a long debilitating struggle that led to his death. He wrestled with the question of how God could allow his father, who was one of the most faithful people Nietzsche knew, to suffer so greatly. What kind of just God would punish the righteous in this way? As a young man, Nietzsche decided that he would follow in his father's footsteps and study to become a minister. He matriculated at the University of Bonn. There, for the first time, he was exposed to the historical-critical method. His professors taught that there was little in the Bible that could be accepted as historical. The creation, the patriarchs, the exodus, and even many of the gospel stories were myth, written without any reference to historical reality. The events never took place. Nietzsche had no tools to combat this modern philosophy. His doubts about God's justice were now exacerbated by deep questions about the reliability and thus authority of the Bible. The foundation for Nietzsche's worldview was pulled out from under him, like a Persian carpet. He felt completely lost. At the end of his first year in university, Nietzsche dropped out of the theology program and abandoned Christianity.

The profound impact of Nietzsche's subsequent philosophical work cannot be underestimated. His was a relentless quest to provide an answer to the meaning of life in a world that had lost all meaning. In his book *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche presents his answer—the Übermensch, a kind of Superman, or one who transcends and overcomes his environment. This could take place through arts and music, the aesthetic aims of life. If the Übermensch acts to create new values within the moral vacuum of nihilism, there would be nothing that this creative act would not justify. All human life would be given

meaning by how it advanced a new generation of human beings.

It is no wonder that Nietzsche, who died in 1900, became the greatest philosophical father to socialism and communism. The Bolshevik revolution took place less than two decades after the death of Nietzsche, and in Stalin's Russia, 50 to 75 million would die. Almost simultaneously in Germany, Hitler and many of the Nazi leaders cited Nietzsche's work as programmatic for their new reign of terror that resulted in genocide. The purpose? To create a new super race through eugenics and mass extermination.

One is forced to ask the question, How would things have been different in the 20th century if a young man had been taught something more faith-affirming in the 19th century? Or stated differently, if Nietzsche had been taught that the Bible was a reliable and authoritative basis for history, would we be in a different place today? Would the country of Germany, that birthed the Reformation after Luther's 95 Theses were pounded onto the wooden door at Wittenberg, have caused the suffering and devastation of World War II?

History does matter to faith in tangible ways. This is the reason why we embarked to Israel on another excavation project with 100 staff and volunteers. This is why we sweat in the July heat to uncover the ancient ruins of a civilization that existed 3,000 years ago. This is the reason why we spend our energies during the year to produce publications, television programs, and lectures at universities around the world. This is the reason why we train a future generation of students with the skills necessary to undertake scientific work in inhospitable places like the Middle East. This is the reason why we bring exhibits to the Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum from Yale University.

Students and people of all ages today are still impacted by the enormous questions the world faced in the 19th century. Today they are incessantly blaring from every media outlet in a darkening secular world. And yet today, unlike in the 1860s, there are solid historical foundations for the Bible that exist. In fact, the last 150 years of archaeological research has brought more knowledge of the world of the Bible than ever before. That brings an enormous responsibility, and it also raises an intriguing question. If Nietzsche had been a student at our university today, studying theology in classrooms surrounding an archaeological museum that is designed to illuminate the history of the biblical world, would his journey have taken a different path? We all have choices, but more importantly, we have a responsibility to use every means possible to lift up the living Word of God.

Thank you for your continued support of the Institute of Archaeology here at Southern Adventist University. Let us continue to move forward, constantly seeking truth and never settling for less than what God has in store for us. ✍

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael G. Hasel". The signature is written in a cursive style.

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

## RECENT SIGHTINGS

### BRITISH MUSEUM UPLOADS 3D MODEL OF THE ROSETTA STONE *(HyperAllergic)*

We now have unprecedented open access to the Rosetta Stone thanks to the digital technicians at the British Museum, who last week uploaded the very first 3D model of the stone slab. Residing on Sketchfab, the model allows you to examine the gray stela from all angles and zoom in to study its inscribed characters and varying textures from up close. One of the museum's most famous objects, the stone is typically kept in a glass case that allows you to view it from all sides...

[Click here to read more](#)



Photo Credit: British Museum.

### EVIDENCE OF BABYLONIAN DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM UNEARTHED IN THE CITY OF DAVID *(The Jerusalem Post)*

Less than a week before Tisha Be'av, the Antiquities Authority presented further evidence of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians unearthed during excavations at the Jerusalem Walls-City of David National Park.

[Click here to read more](#)



Photo Credit: The Jerusalem Post.

### EGYPT'S ANTIQUITIES MINISTRY RESTORES COLOSSUS OF RAMSESS II AT KARNAK TEMPLES *(Ahram Online)*

Egypt's Ministry of Antiquities is conducting comprehensive restoration work on a colossus statue of king Ramses II that once decorated the façade of the first pylon of the Karnak Temple Complex.

[Click here to read more](#)



Photo Credit: Abdel Razek Ali.

### A 2000 YEAR OLD ROAD WAS EXPOSED AT BET SHEMESH *(Israel Antiquities Authority)*

A wide and impressive 2,000 year old road dating to the Roman period, in an extraordinary state of preservation, was revealed last February in archaeological excavations of the Israel Antiquities Authority near Highway 375. The excavation was conducted prior to laying a water pipeline to Jerusalem, at the initiative of, the Bet Shemesh water corporation "Mei Shemesh".

[Click here to read more](#)



Photo Credit: Israel Antiquities Authority.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### LYNN H. WOOD ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM LECTURE SERIES 2017 - 2018

Monday, October 2, 2017, 7:00 p.m.

“David and Solomon’s Legacy: Results of *The Fourth Expedition to Lachish* 2013-2017”

Michael G. Hasel, Ph.D. (Southern Adventist University)

Lynn Wood Hall Chapel

Monday, March 26, 2018, 7:00 p.m.

“Ancient Egyptian Tomb Painting and Identity”

Melinda Hartwig, Ph.D. (Emory University)

Lynn Wood Hall Chapel

Monday, February 12, 2018, 7:00 p.m.

“Seals Hidden and Seals Revealed: Seals in Ancient and Modern Display”

Agnete W. Lassen, Ph.D. (Yale University)

Lynn Wood Hall Chapel

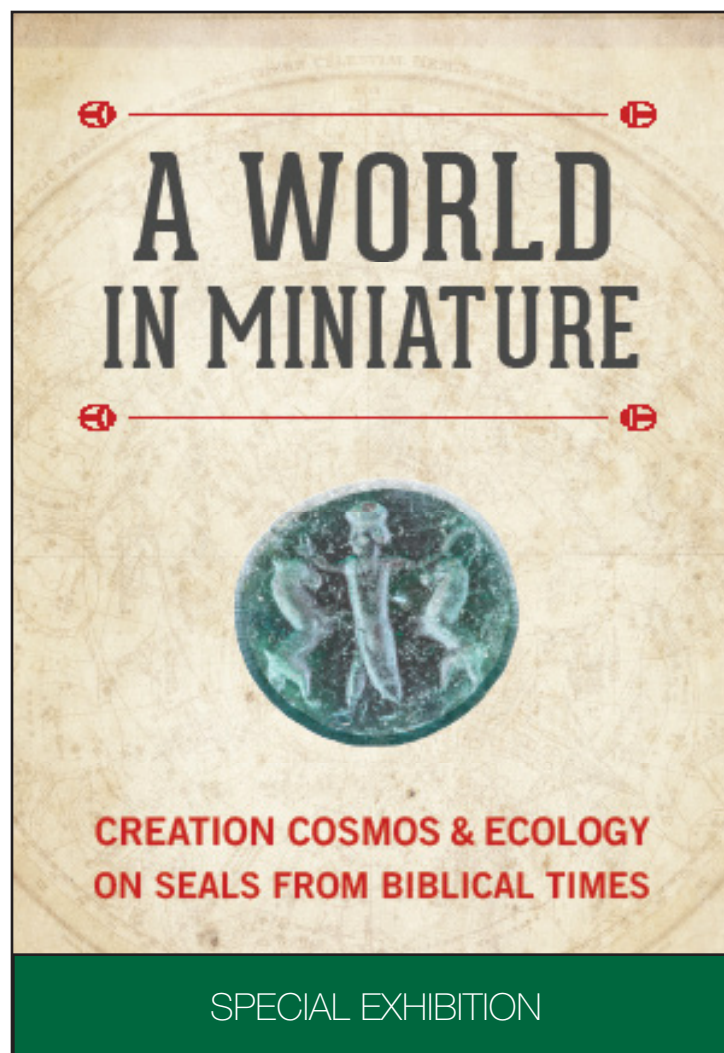
The museum lecture series is free and open to the public. For more information, or to view previous Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum Lecture Series presentations, visit [southern.edu/archaeologylectures](http://southern.edu/archaeologylectures)

### AMERICAN SCHOOLS OF ORIENTAL RESEARCH ANNUAL PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS

November 15–18, 2017

The Weston Boston Waterfront

Boston, Massachusetts



## DIG SIGHT

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

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