Fall 2010

# Fall 2010 DigSight Newsletter

Southern Adventist University

DIG SIGHT NEWSLETTER

INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY
Southern Adventist University

# SOUTHERN SURVEYS KHIRBET SHUWEIKEH-TEL SOCOH

In October 2010 the Institutes of Archaeology at Southern Adventist University, and The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, conducted an intensive archaeological survey of Khirbet Shuweikeh–Tel Socoh under the direction of Michael G. Hasel and Yosef Garfinkel. A total of 57 ten-by-ten meter squares were surveyed in a simple random survey (SRS) across the site. Michael Dant, professor of computing at Southern and Daniel Perez, a graduate student specializing in Anthropology and GPS technology at Northern Arizona University, operated Southern's GPS equipment that provided precision mapping of the site. Nine archaeology students from the Hebrew University assisted.

Surveys are generally conducted to collect pottery, artifacts, slag, and other objects that are found on the surface area in a random distribution. The goals are: (1) to determine the occupational history of the site, since the pottery on the surface is often representative of the different periods that people lived on the site; (2) to explore architecture, cisterns, wine presses, and other agricultural installations that may be visible from the surface; and (3) to identify strategic areas worth exploring in actual excavations. Digging is not part of the survey work; instead samples are gathered from the surface that will guide future research. The timing of this survey could not have been better. Last summer, two accidental fires burned off much of the vegetation on the surface allowing increased visibility and accessibility to small finds on the surface.

Aerial photograph of the acropolis of Khirbet Shuweikeh–Tel Socoh (foreground) taken last summer. Notice the brownish grey color of the ground due to burning. Tel Azekah is visible straight ahead on the horizon.

Architecture. Aerial photographs of Khirbet Shuweikeh showed that there were several very large buildings on the eastern acropolis of the site. Some walls were more than two meters thick. From the pottery gathered around these walls, it appears these structures belong to the Hellenistic–Roman periods and were built during a later phase of the site. On the southeastern edge, significant amounts of pottery was found along what appeared to be a kind of terrace support by a wall dated to the ninth century BC and would indicate occupation in the early history of Judah. On the opposite, northeastern edge, a monumental wall may belong to the Iron Age and shows promise for future excavations. On the extreme western edge of the site are the remains of an Arab village now in ruins. The pottery in this area dated to the Arabic periods and point to a thriving village from the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries. A nearby well was also in use during this period.

IN THIS ISSUE

Director Michael Hasel collecting pottery from the base of the walls.

**Installations and Features.** Numerous installations and features covered the site, particularly in the central area below the acropolis where bedrock lies exposed in most areas. Here a number of cistern openings were visible, wine presses had been carved into the bedrock, and there appeared to be some openings to cave or tunnel systems. These installations are very difficult to date since they lie on the surface, but they testify to an active agricultural system.

**Pottery Results.** During the survey over 70 buckets of pottery were collected. Preliminary analysis suggests that a number of periods were represented, but conspicuously absent was pottery from the Middle and Late Bronze Ages. Pottery from the Iron Age was predominant, especially the ninth and eighth centuries BC; later Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine period pottery was also found. The Islamic pottery was confined to the western edge of the site where the Arab village once stood.

**Small Finds.** One of the exciting discoveries was the number of royal jar handles that were discovered, some without any impressions, one with a royal impression, one with a private seal impression, and one with an unclear incision, or impression. Today it is well known that these royal jars were part of a centralized administrative system developed in Judah during the eighth century BC. Those incised with *LMLK* ("[belonging] to the king") are further defined by four cities: Hebron, Ziph, Memshet, and Socoh. (Many scholars believe that it is the site of Khirbet Shuweikeh where the Socoh jars originate.) In the last decade, further studies clarified that the royal jars without seal impressions already existed in the ninth century and have been called pre-*LMLK*.

The upper part of a handle with a private seal impression was found on the northwest slope of the site. There are five letters on the upper register of the seal and four letters in the lower register. The preservation is poor and some of the letters cannot be read very well. This may be the result of two factors: (1) the original seal was not well impressed, and (2) the handle was found on the surface of the mound and may have been exposed for several years. Based on the visible letters and the known parallels from other sites, the inscription can be read as "Belonging to Zaphan [son of] Abima'az." This is the sixth impression of this type found in Israel. Comparisons with the other known impressions confirm that all six impressions were made with the same seal.

**Biblical Significance.** Khirbet Shuweikeh–Tel Socoh is a key site situated on the line of east-west hills that form the southern border of the Elah Valley. The site is oval in shape with an acropolis rising 20 meters above the rest of the hill to the west. There are steep embankments with terraces on the south, west, and north sides of the hill upon which the site is located. The site constitutes an important part of the series of fortifications guarding the valleys leading to the central hill country and Jerusalem. For this reason Khirbet Shuweikeh–Tel Socoh would have served as a key fortified defensive city at the crucial border between Judah and Philistia, as well as against other polities (Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia) who regularly employed the coastal highway for trade or military campaigns.

The critical role played by these cities is reflected in several accounts describing major conflicts in the region between Israel and the Amorite kings (Josh 10:10-12), Israel and Philistia (1 Sam 17), Israel and Egypt (Shishak, 2 Chr 12), Judah and Assyria (Sargon II and Sennacherib), and Judah and Babylonia (Nebuchadnezzar, Jer 34:7). In the story of David and Goliath (1 Sam 17) the Philistines are said to have camped between Socoh and Azekah. If Khirbet Shuweikeh is to be identified with Socoh, important results await future exploration and excavation at this significant site.

Important survey finds: a jar handle with a private seal impression (left) and a royal *LMLK* jar handle with partial impression (right).

# KHIRBET QEIYAFA AT ASOR ANNUAL MEETING

From November 17 to 20, the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR), the premier academic organization for the study of Near Eastern archaeology in North America, held its annual meeting in the city of Atlanta. Hundreds of scholars from around the world come together every year to share and discuss the latest archaeological discoveries in the Eastern Mediterranean world. For a second consecutive year, ASOR highlighted the excavations at Khirbet Qeiyafa in a two hour-long academic session.

The session, titled "Khirbet Qeiyafa: A Fortified City in Judah from the Time of King David," was chaired by Yosef Garfinkel (Hebrew University of Jerusalem) and Michael G. Hasel (Southern Adventist University) and featured four speakers. In the first presentation, "Khirbet Qeiyafa after Four Seasons of Excavations," Garfinkel summarized the results of four seasons and the contributions this site has made to our understanding of the Iron Age in Israel.

Khirbet Qeiyafa's fortifications provide evidence of fortified cities in Judah in the tenth century BC. Qeiyafa's pattern of city walls abutted by domestic housing exemplifies the typical Judean urban planning in the Iron Age. Moreover, the absence of pig bones and presence of pottery baking trays argues for Judahite habitation. If this is indeed a Judahite city, the discovery of the Qeiyafa Ostracon, the earliest example of Hebrew writing, is even more significant. Early evidence of writing implies that historical data could have been recorded and used to craft the biblical narrative later on.

During the 2010 season, a small sanctuary was unearthed near the Southern Gate. It is "the earliest Judean cultic building uncovered so far by modern research." This discovery promises to fill "a gap in our knowledge about the cult in the earliest days of state formation in Judah."

Hoo–Goo Kang (Hebrew University of Jerusalem) presented the second paper, "Finger-Impressed Jar Handles Found at Khirbet Qeiyafa: A Symbol of Administration in the Early 10th century B.C.E." The discovery of hundreds of finger-impressed jars, a rare pottery type, led Garfinkel and co-director Saar Ganor to hypothesize this was an administrative ware unique to the region, akin to the royal Judean stamped jars. Kang's analysis of the finger-impressed handles from Qeiyafa supports this theory.

Kang was able to identify five types: (1) jars with one impression, (2) jars with two impressions, (3) jars with three impressions, (4) jars with one impression in two separate handles, and (5) jars with different numbered impressions in different handles. The majority of examples (95%) are of the first type. While finger-impressed jar handles have been found at other sites, Qeiyafa has so far produced the largest amount.

The strategic location of the sites where these jars are found, together with the regularity of their distribution, argues for a link to the later royal stamped jars. If there was a centralized government in the tenth century, it stands to reason that eighth-century *LMLK* jars had an earlier precursor.

The third paper of the session, "Numismatic and Other Small Finds from Khirbet Qeiyafa: A Glimpse into the Late Persian-Early Hellenistic Period," was presented by Yoav Farhi (Hebrew University of Jerusalem). Farhi is the official numismatic expert for the project. Since 2007 he has helped unearthed 270 bronze and silver coins, dates ranging from the late fourth century BC to the seventh century AD.

The earliest specimens are Archaic period (c. 500–460 BC) silver coins from Cyprus and Greece. Because only small scraps remain, Farhi believes the coins were intentionally cut and brought to the site as bullion. The late Persian–early Hellenistic (c. 350–280 BC) coins are key to providing a better understanding of the second phase of occupation at Qeiyafa. Persian coins of this period were minted in three regions in Palestine: Judaea, Philistia, and Edom.

Hellenistic coins at Qeiyafa can be categorized into Macedonian (posthumous

Silver tetradrachm of Alexander the Great found in Area D at Khirbet Qeiyafa.

Alexander the Great issues) and Ptolemaic, minted under Ptolemy I and Ptolemy II. The silver tetradrachms of Alexander and Ptolemy I are perhaps the finest numismatic finds uncovered thus far. Later period coins were not discussed, but they include Hasmonean, Herodian, Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic currency.

In the last lecture of the session, Hasel presented a report on "Area D: Excavations South of the Western Gate" for the 2010 season. In 2009 the Southern Adventist University team, led by Hasel, uncovered two casemates, a Hellenistic period floor outside the casemates, and an Iron Age floor inside one of the casemates. The research goal for the 2010 season was to discover what kind of architecture lay east of the Western Gate.

From the start of the season, it became apparent that a large building had been built parallel to the city wall. Thus much of the work in Area D was dedicated to uncovering the structure. The resulting exposure unearthed a large (27 x 18 m) rectangular-shaped structure, which was divided into two main rooms. The numismatic evidence secures the date of this structure to the late Persian–early Hellenistic period.

Perhaps the most fascinating discovery of the season was the unearthing of a man-made cave in Area D. Preliminary finds confirm that the cave was in use until the Islamic periods, although it is still unclear when it was first made. Only the area near the opening has been fully excavated but Hasel believes the cave extends several meters to the north and east, with more chambers still to be excavated.

# FALL MUSEUM LECTURES

As part of the Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum Lecture series, the museum hosted two academic lectures this fall on October 28 and November 16.

## UNCOVERING THE PAST: 50 YEARS OF BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

"Few scholars are able to contribute to shaping a field of scholarship and to influence a generation of scholars as much as William G. Dever has for the past 40 years," so concludes the editor's preface of the 2006 book *Confronting the Past: Archaeological and Historical Essays in Ancient Israel in Honor of William G. Dever* (Seymour Gitin, J. Edward Wright, and J. P Dessel, eds.). On October 28, professor Dever was a guest lecturer for the museum lecture series. In this interview-style presentation, Michael Hasel, Institute of Archaeology director, dialogued with Dever over the past, present, and future of a discipline he has helped shape.

Commenting on how much things have changed since 1966 (the year he finished his PhD degree), Dever remarks, "If you knew six or eight sites that had been excavated, you knew everything. Today you'd have to know 150." In the 1970s Dever became well-known for challenging the way biblical archaeology was practiced at the time. Biblical archaeology was, for the most part, an amateur discipline practiced by biblical scholars who were not trained as field archaeologists. "Biblical archaeology was parochial," he explains, "an aspect of biblical studies, not an independent discipline."

Dever's excavations at Gezer (1964–1974) helped change much of that. There, archaeology became interdisciplinary, borrowing from various scientific disciplines. Also, instead of hiring local laborers to do the work, Gezer became a field school, training the new generation of archaeologists. Beginning with the Gezer generation, archaeology became a full-time independent discipline. Pre-1960s "biblical archaeology gradually died a natural death," quips Dever, "to be replaced by a much more sophisticated and demanding kind of archaeology."

The lecture was very well attended, drawing hundreds of visitors from the community as well as from the University's faculty and student body. The last time Dever lectured at Southern was in the spring of 2007, when his topic was "The Age of David and Solomon: Myth or Reality." In recent years Dever has been very critical of revisionists (or biblical minimalists), who deny the historicity of ancient Israel's United Monarchy. Archaeological evidence, he counters, confirms the existence of a centralized state in tenth-century Israel.

Hasel (left) and professor Dever (right) taking questions from the audience at museum lecture.


Coin expert Yoav Farhi lecturing at Southern.

## ANCIENT COINS OF KHIRBET QEIYAFA: A STRONGHOLD ON THE ROAD TO JERUSALEM

Khirbet Qeiyafa's numismatic (coin) expert, Yoav Farhi, a PhD candidate at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, lectured at Southern on November 16. Farhi has analyzed every coin, jewelry, or metal object unearthed in the excavations. The lecture dealt mainly with the numismatic finds, most of which were discovered through the aid of a metal detector, a very effective technique not often used in regular excavations.

The coins belong to three occupational phases following the Iron Age: late Persian–early Hellenistic (late fourth to early third century BC), Early Roman period (first century BC to first century AD), and Late Roman period (fourth to late fifth century AD). Archaeologically speaking, the first occupational phase is the most important, due to the paucity of finds at other sites from this time period. The coins also allow us to estimate dates of occupation for the latter phases, for which very little architectural evidence remains. Farhi also noted that the majority of coins were found in Area D, the field worked by the Southern Adventist University team. Last season the Southern team uncovered a large late Persian–early Hellenistic building, whose date has now been secured by the numismatic finds.

The next museum lecture will take place on March 16, 2011. Dr. Bryant G. Wood (Associates for Biblical Research) will speak on "The Search for Joshua's Ai." For more information or to watch past lectures, visit: http://www.southern.edu/archaeology/lectureseries/Pages/lectureseriesprogram.aspx

# THE BATTLE OVER DAVID AND SOLOMON

**The battle over the historicity of King David's kingdom and the early history of Judah rages on.** Last year the results of the first three seasons of excavation at Khirbet Qeiyafa and the translation of the Qeiyafa Ostracon dominated the American Schools of Oriental Research meetings in New Orleans. This year, in Atlanta, Israel Finkelstein and Tel Aviv University rallied in their response to our challenge of their "low chronology," which drastically seeks to diminish the kingdoms of David and Solomon. Strategically placing former students and colleagues in many sessions, all with a clear revisionist agenda for the early history of Israel, and conducting a two-hour plenary session Finkelstein was the "800-pound gorilla" in the room. At the Society of Biblical Literature meetings that same weekend, David Ussishkin, Finkelstein's Tel Aviv University colleague, suggested that the interpretations of the evidence from Khirbet Qeiyafa were gross exaggerations.

On the popular front, the December 2010 *National Geographic* cover story, "The Search for King David" (***click here***), gives two parts to the story. Eilat Mazar, director of the City of David excavations in Jerusalem, states emphatically, "This is the end of the Finkelstein school" (p. 75). But Finkelstein and his colleagues are certainly far from throwing in the towel. Despite the fact that Khirbet Qeiyafa received a major National Geographic grant in 2009, Finkelstein receives a much more sympathetic voice as an "intellectually appealing middle ground between biblical literalists and minimalists" (p. 85). As for Solomon, Finkelstein quips with a sigh, "I think I destroyed Solomon, so to speak–sorry for that."

What are the criticisms by Finkelstein and his colleagues? Here they are with a brief response:

1. *The lack of pig bones does not equal Judean habitation for the site.* It may not if taken as the only piece of evidence. The fact is, however, that this is only one element among several that, when combined, argue for a Judean site. The site's location is within the traditional boundaries described in the Bible for Judah, not Philistia (Josh 15:36). The fortifications and casemate wall are typical of Judahite cities and are never found in Philistia or Canaanite cities of the period (see Gezer, Tel Beit Mirsim, Beersheva, and Tell en-Nasbeh). A potsherd was found which contained Hebrew vocabulary. The locally made ceramics have parallels in Judah and are not found at neighboring Philistine sites.

2. *Less than 5% on the site has been excavated. It is too early to interpret the data concerning this site.* The fact is that in only the first three seasons, over 5% of the site was excavated. Relatively speaking, this is a lot. It is more than most excavations are able to do in 25 years. After last season almost 10% of Khirbet Qeiyafa will have been excavated, and by the end of the 2011 season, it will be close to 15%, more than any other Judean site. Finkelstein has probably not excavated more at Megiddo in the past 15 years. Moreover, all the data from the first two seasons has been published, making it available to any scholars willing to scrutinize the evidence.

3. *The dating is based on four radiocarbon dates, a statistical base two small to say anything.* Even so, these dates come only after the first two seasons of excavation. Every season more samples are sent in from floor contexts, and in a few years it is hoped that there will be a larger statistical base. But, again, this deflects the real issue of dating. The main source for dating the major fortifications, gates, houses, and other buildings to the early tenth century is the pottery. There are now over a hundred restorable vessels that come directly from the floors of these buildings. They have been published, and it is the pottery, not the radiocarbon dates, which provide the main source for dating. Even Finkelstein has to admit that this corpus of material dates before the ninth century, which means there was monumental architecture in existence.

4. *The excavators of Khirbet Qeiyafa are ambitious and have an*

Aerial view of Khirbet Qeiyafa at the end of its fourth season. Notice the two gates and massive fortifications surrounding the city. They are a strong argument for an organized state in Judah during the time of King David.

*agenda*. Talk about the pot calling the kettle black. In the 1980s Finkelstein was already arguing for the redating of the Solomonic gates at Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer before he ever began excavating Megiddo. He went to Megiddo specifically to prove his theory. He continues to be vigorously opposed by the data from the earlier University of Chicago excavations and by the University of Arizona expedition to Gezer in 1990. On the contrary, the Khirbet Qeiyafa excavations were initiated because there appeared to be architecture underneath later fortifications. It looked like a promising site. No one knew that the gates, fortifications, and houses would provide such dramatic evidence from the early tenth century. New sites need to be explored and excavated before the conclusions of surveys are accepted as the final word on reconstructing settlement patterns.

The need for continued careful excavation at Khirbet Qeiyafa and the surrounding region is vital. While some may dismiss the revisionists and their claims, it is only with the addition of new data, as provided by excavations in Jerusalem, Khirbet Qeiyafa, and a Jordanian desert mining site, that the revisionits' arguments against David and Solomon will be challeged.

Excavations are expensive, and American involvement is an even larger investment. For the 2011 season at Khirbet Qeiyafa, the Southern Adventist University team alone will need $60,000 for the six-week season. This includes airfare, equipment, transportation, and room and board. It also includes some funds to provide assistantships for students to participate in the project. In the next two years as we move into the publication phase, another $50,000 will be needed to cover the processing of data and the final publication of the 2009-2011 seasons. Thank you for your gift in bringing the world of the Bible to life as we continue to conduct archaeological research and publication.

## 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 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

## DAVID AND SOLOMON, KINGS OF CONTROVERSY (*National Geographic*)

That narrative is familiar to any student of the Bible. A young shepherd named David from the tribe of Judah slays the giant Goliath . . . is elevated to king of Judah . . . conquers Jerusalem, unites the people of Judah with the disparate Israelite tribes to the north, and thereupon amasses a royal dynasty that continues with Solomon . . . But while the Bible says David and Solomon built the kingdom of Israel into a powerful and prestigious empire . . . there's a slight problem—namely, that despite decades of searching, archaeologists had found no solid evidence that David or Solomon ever built anything.

***Click here to read more***

## RESEARCHER USES NASA SATELLITE TO EXPLORE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE (*NASA*)

Steep cliffs surround the hot, brown valley that holds Khirbat en-Nahas, one of the largest copper mining and smelting sites of the ancient world . . . archeologists Stephen Savage and Tom Levy think it may be the site of an early organized state . . . Savage has never been to Khirbat en-Nahas, but he is revealing things about the site no archeologist has been able to see before. Instead of spending sweltering days in the desert, Savage logs in to a website, clicks on a map to select a location, and clicks "submit".

***Click here to read more***

## CHEMISTS HELP ARCHAEOLOGISTS TO PROBE BIBLICAL HISTORY (*Nature*)

Fabled as a site of biblical battles and spectacular palaces, Tel Megiddo today is a dusty mound overlooking Israel's Jezreel valley. It is also host to one of the hottest debates in archaeology—a controversy over the historical truth of the Bible's account . . . the biblical narrative is challenged by archaeologists such as Israel Finkelstein of Tel Aviv University, who believe that David and Solomon did not rule over an Iron Age empire.

***Click here to read more***

## GOOGLE BRINGING DEAD SEA SCROLLS ONLINE (*MSNBC*)

Israel Antiquities Authority and Google announced Tuesday that they are joining forces to bring the Dead Sea Scrolls online, allowing both scholars and the general public widespread access to the ancient manuscripts for the first time. The project will grant free, global access to the 2,000-year-old text . . . by uploading high-resolution images . . .

***Click here to read more***

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## LYNN H. WOOD ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM LECTURE SERIES

**March 16, 2011, 7 p.m.**
*In Search for Joshua's Ai*, by Bryant G. Wood (Associates for Biblical Research)

The museum lecture series is free and open to the public. All lectures are held in Lynn Wood Hall on the campus of Southern Adventist University. For driving directions and parking information, visit our website at http://www.southern.edu/archaeology

## SPEAKING SCHEDULE

**December 29, 2010-January 1, 2011**
Generation of Youth for Christ, Baltimore

**January 26-27, 2011**
Centerville SDA Church, Dayton, Ohio

**February 27, 2011**
American Jewish University, Los Angeles

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELDWORK AND MIDDLE EAST STUDY TOUR

**June 8-July 22, 2011**
Khirbet Qeiyafa, Israel


**$5,495** (6-weeks), **$4,195** (3-weeks). Includes international airfare, room & board, and touring. Spots still available! Contact Susan Brown at **sbrown@southern.edu** or **423.236.2977** for more information.


# DIG SIGHT

Executive Editor: Michael G. Hasel
Managing Editor: Justo E. Morales
Photography Editor: Marcella J. Morales

Institute of Archaeology
Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum
P.O. Box 370 Collegedale, TN 37315

To manage your *DigSight* subscription or for more information, visit **www.southern.edu/archaeology** or call 423.236.2027.


INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY
Southern Adventist University