

# DIG SIGHT NEWSLETTER



## NEW MUSEUM EXHIBIT: PEACE AND WAR

The new exhibit “Peace and War: The Assyrian Conquest of Lachish” opened on January 30 in the Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum on Southern Adventist University’s campus. The exhibit features nearly 90 artifacts and objects from the Fourth Expedition to Lachish, excavations that took place from 2013 to 2017 in the royal city, which only in size and importance was second to Jerusalem in ancient Judah. Over 250 staff and students from Southern Adventist University excavated Lachish, together with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and other consortium institutions, in what was one of the largest excavation projects in the Middle East. Objects are on display from the Israel Antiquities Authority and the Yale Babylonian Collection, Peabody Museum at Yale University. The objects from the Israel Antiquities Authority represent over five years of reconstruction work and analysis of these artifacts.

The exhibit tells the story of one of the crucial tipping points in biblical history that would determine the survival of ancient Israel, its kings, and the covenant promise of the Messiah. The Assyrian empire had already conquered the northern kingdom of Israel, and only Jerusalem and Judah stood between one of the most aggressive military regimes of history and its goal of defeating ancient Egypt. The exhibit also focuses on the history of the search for Lachish, which began in 1849 with the earliest archaeological discovery of Nineveh, and documents Austen Henry Layard’s excavations at the site. Layard discovered the palace of the Assyrian king Sennacherib and his throne room, which depicts his victory over the city of Lachish. Subsequently, three expeditions focused on this Canaanite and Judean city: (1) the British expedition led by James Lesley Starkey (1932-38), (2) the Tel Aviv University expedition led by Yohanan Aharoni, and (3) the Tel Aviv University excavations by David Ussishkin (1974-94). After providing an overview of the various expeditions, the exhibit portrays a domestic life of tranquility in the elite houses of the city, highlighting artifacts used in everyday activities such as textile production, cooking and food preparation, trade, and commerce. Their peace and tranquility is disrupted by preparations for war with



Sennacherib, the Assyrian ruler who threatens the existence of Lachish and Jerusalem. Highlights include the seal impressions of Hezekiah, Eliakim, Shebna, and Isaiah the prophet, which were found at these sites. Hezekiah prepares the country with provisions distributed through a central economic system that includes hundreds of storage jars marked with the official stamps LMLK (“for the king”). Material evidence of the idolatry of Israel and the reforms of Hezekiah are presented from the houses and gate of Lachish. Sennacherib’s campaign is recorded in Kings, Chronicles, and Isaiah and in Sennacherib’s own annals, as well as on the 12 panels that depict his campaign against Lachish. A reconstruction models the Assyrian army’s engagement against ancient Lachish, the siege ramp, and the attack against the city. Sling stones, arrowheads, and mail armor, together with the Assyrian annals, provide various perspectives on this event. Together, these

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# IVORY COMB DISCOVERY MAKES INTERNATIONAL HEADLINES

The Canaanite alphabet developed around 1800 BC was used by the Canaanites and later by most other languages in the world. Until recently, no meaningful Canaanite inscriptions had been discovered, except only two or three words here and there. Now an amazing discovery presents an entire sentence in alphabetic Canaanite, dating to about 1700 BC. It is engraved on a small ivory comb and includes a wish against lice.

“The find cannot be overestimated. The invention of the alphabet was the most important contribution to communication in the last four millennia. Before this time, complicated systems of writing in Egypt and Mesopotamia limited literacy. Today most of the world constructs sentences using the alphabet found on this comb 3,700 years ago. Here we have the first verbal sentence using the alphabet in Canaan,” wrote Michael G. Hasel, professor of archaeology at Southern Adventist University and co-director of the Lachish excavations with Yosef Garfinkel and Martin G. Klingbeil.



The Ivory Comb  
Credit: Dafna Gazit, Israel Antiquities Authority

The ivory comb is small, measuring roughly 3.5 by 2.5 cm, and had teeth on both sides. Although their bases are still visible, the comb teeth themselves were broken in antiquity. The central part of the comb is somewhat eroded, possibly



Michael Hasel and Katherine Hesler excavate in area where comb was found in 2016  
Photo credit: Zachary Kast, Fourth Expedition to Lachish

by the pressure of fingers holding the comb during hair care or removal of lice from the head or beard. The side of the comb with six thick teeth was used to untangle knots in the hair, while the other side, with 14 fine teeth, was used to remove lice and their eggs, much like the modern-day two-sided lice combs sold in stores today.

“When we found the comb on the first day of excavation in 2016, the inscription was not seen due to the encrustation of dirt,” says Katherine Hesler, a graduate of Southern Adventist University, in whose area the find was made. Ancient combs were made from wood, bone, or ivory. Ivory was a very expensive material and likely an imported luxury object. Although some elephants have been documented in Syria during the Bronze Age, the ivory tusk comb could likely have come from nearby Egypt, factors indicating that even people of high social status suffered from head lice.

Partners from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem analyzed the comb itself for the presence of lice

under a microscope, and photographs were taken of both sides. Remains of one head louse, 0.5–0.6 mm in size, was found on the second tooth. The climate conditions of Lachish, however, did not allow preservation of whole head lice, but only those of the outer chitin membrane of the nymph stage head louse.

The discovery of writing on the comb was made in early 2022 as Madeleine Mumcuoglu was photographing the object under a certain light. The inscription was deciphered by semitic epigraphist Dr. Daniel Vainstub at Ben Gurion University. The findings by the joint expedition between the Hebrew University and Southern Adventist University were published in the [Jerusalem Journal of Archaeology](https://www.journalofarchaeology.com/).<sup>1</sup>

The 17 Canaanite letters on the comb are archaic, originating from the first stage of the development of the alphabet script. They form seven words in Canaanite, reading, “May this tusk root out the lice of the hair and the beard.”

<sup>1</sup> [Jerusalem Journal of Archaeology](https://www.journalofarchaeology.com/) [https://www.journalofarchaeology.com/default/files/jjar/files/jjar2\\_art4\\_lachish\\_p76-119\\_2022-10-12\\_01.pdf](https://www.journalofarchaeology.com/default/files/jjar/files/jjar2_art4_lachish_p76-119_2022-10-12_01.pdf)

Despite its small size, the inscription on the comb from Lachish has very special features, some of which are unique and fill in gaps and lacunas in our knowledge of many aspects of the culture of Canaan in the Bronze Age. First, we now have an entire verbal sentence written in the dialect spoken by the Canaanite inhabitants of Lachish, enabling us to compare this language in all aspects with the other sources for it.

Second, the inscription on the comb sheds light on some hitherto poorly attested aspects of everyday life of the time, hair care, and dealing with lice.

Third, this is the first discovery in the region of an inscription referring to the purpose of the object on which it was written, as opposed to dedicatory or ownership inscriptions on objects.

Finally, the engraver's skill in successfully executing such tiny letters (1–3 mm wide) is a fact that from now on should be taken into account in any attempt to summarize and draw

conclusions on literacy in Canaan in the Bronze Age.

The Canaanite alphabet is the same as that used in the written Hebrew of the first books of the Bible. The comb inscription dates the alphabet before the biblical writers existed and confirms that the alphabetic script was in everyday use in cities that were later occupied by the Israelites.

The discovery made headlines in November 2022, including major articles distributed by *The New York Times*, *Smithsonian*, *BBC*, *CNN*, and other news outlets around the world just before it was presented to the professional meetings of the American Society of Overseas Research (ASOR) in Boston by Mumcuoglu and Hasel.

Lachish was a major Canaanite city state in the second millennium BC and the second most important city in the biblical kingdom of Judah. In January 2025, Southern Adventist University will acquire the ivory comb from Israel to display with

its exhibit “Peace and War: The Assyrian Conquest of Lachish,” highlighting important discoveries from the 2013–2017 excavations sponsored at Lachish

CITATION: Daniel Vainstub, Madeleine Mumcuoglu, Michael G. Hasel, Katherine M. Hesler, Miriam Lavi, Rivka Rabinovich, Yuval Goren, and Yosef Garfinkel, 2022. “A Canaanite’s Wish to Eradicate Lice on an Inscribed Ivory Comb from Lachish.” *Jerusalem Journal of Archaeology* 2: 76–119. ISSN: 2788-8819; <https://doi.org/10.52486/01.00002.4>; [https://jjar.huji.ac.il/sites/default/files/jjar/files/jjar2\\_art4\\_lachish\\_p76-119\\_2022-10-12\\_01.pdf](https://jjar.huji.ac.il/sites/default/files/jjar/files/jjar2_art4_lachish_p76-119_2022-10-12_01.pdf)

## IVORY COMB ON EXHIBIT AT THE ISRAEL MUSEUM



A special exhibit featuring the new ivory comb found in 2016 at Tel Lachish by Southern Adventist University students and staff debuted at the Israel Museum, Israel's largest and most prestigious museum in Jerusalem. The display titled “The Power of Writing,” presents a Canaanite ivory comb with the first known alphabetic script. The event took place on Tuesday, May 23, 2023 following an international conference on epigraphy, the history of writing, with renowned scholars including André Lemaire (Sorbonne), Stefan Jacob Wimmer (Munich), William Dever (Arizona), Haggai Misgav (Jerusalem) Christopher Rollston (Washington, DC), and Esther Eshel (Jerusalem), among other scholars.

Over 160 people attended the opening at the Israel Museum, where Yosef Garfinkel provided a short tour of some of the museum's archaeological highlights. After a short reception, museum director Denis Weil welcomed the guests. Several short presentations were given during the program by curator Pirchia Eyell, followed by “Identifying the Inscription” by Madeleine Mumcuoglu, “Deciphering the Inscription,” by Daniel Weinstub, and “The Inscription's Importance for the Origin of the Alphabet,” by Orly Goldwasser. Southern Adventist University's role in discovering the ivory comb containing the inscription was highlighted during the opening. Michael G. Hasel, co-director of the Fourth Expedition to Lachish, remarked: “What a privilege to be involved with a team of scholars who all shared in the incredible discovery of such a special find. This is what archaeological research is all about: to advance our knowledge of the most fundamental elements of writing, the invention of the alphabet and its earliest texts.”

The ivory comb will journey from Israel to the Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum in 2025 where it will be on special display from January through May with the current exhibit, “Peace and War: The Assyrian Conquest of Lachish.” We are thankful to the Israel Museum and the Israel Antiquities Authority for this privilege before it returns to its permanent home in the Israel Museum.

# RECENT FINDS



[READ MORE HERE](#)



## ARCHAEOLOGISTS STILL HOPING TO UNEARTH LAODICEA TEMPLE

Photo credit: TERHAN TIMES

It was the seventh archaeological season headed by archaeologist Mohsen Khanjan aimed to find the ruins of the Seleucid temple in Nahavand's Dokhaharan neighborhood. If the needed budget is provided for the eighth season, we will continue digging other trial trenches in search of the temple, Khanjan said. The team previously uncovered some capital column heads, their associated shafts and bases, as well as striking pieces of engraved pottery estimated to date back to the Seleucid era.



[READ MORE HERE](#)

## RESEARCHERS USE AI TO READ SCROLL BURNED BY VESUVIUS



Photo credit: University of Kentucky

When the blast from the eruption of Mount Vesuvius reached Herculaneum in AD 79, it burned hundreds of ancient scrolls to a crisp in the library of a luxury villa and buried the Roman town in ash and pumice. The disaster appeared to have destroyed the scrolls for good, but nearly 2,000 years later, researchers have extracted the first word from one of the texts, using artificial intelligence to peer deep inside the delicate, charred remains.

# RECENT FINDS

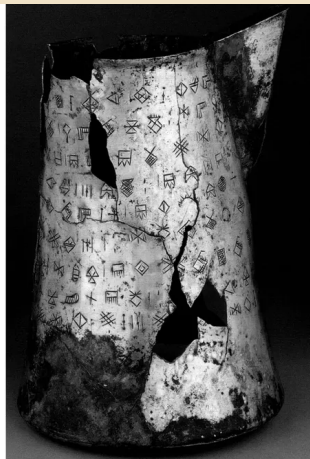
[READ MORE HERE](#)

## HITTITE HIEROGLYPHS IDENTIFY ANCIENT TUNNEL MAKER



Photo credit: Andalou Agency

Some of the 3,500-year-old hieroglyphs discovered last year in the Yerkapı Tunnel in northern Turkey's Çorum province have been deciphered. They are not religious inscriptions, as previously hypothesized, but rather a “made by” signature. The 249 hieroglyphs were found on the massive stones of the tunnel in the ancient Hittite capital of Hattusa.



LE inscription : Z



[READ MORE HERE](#)

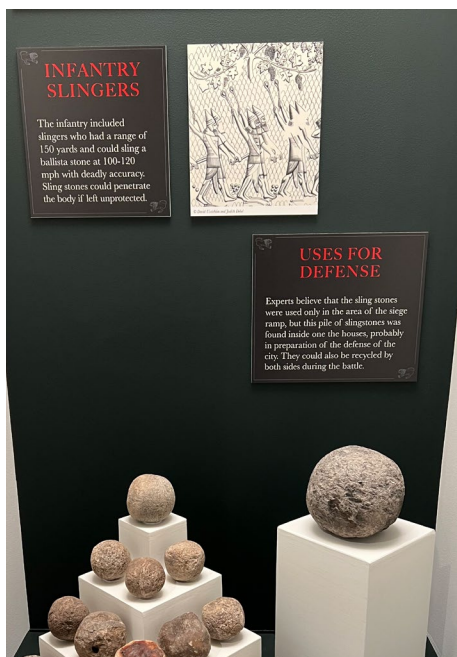


## HAVE SCHOLARS FINALLY DECIPHERED A MYSTERIOUS ANCIENT SCRIPT?

Linear Elamite inscriptions on a silver vessel  
Desset / Iran, 2018

Scholars led by Francois Desset claim to have deciphered Linear Elamite, an ancient Iranian script, based on inscriptions from 2000 BCE. The breakthrough, though debated, could reshape our understanding of writing system evolution and illuminate a little-known ancient society between Mesopotamia and the Indus River Valley.

## NEW MUSEUM EXHIBIT: PEACE AND WAR (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)



accounts tell the incredible story of conquest and deliverance, peace and war, compromise and faithfulness, despair and hope.

The exhibit was inaugurated with a celebratory opening banquet, in



Photo credit: Seth Shaffer

the University Dining Hall featuring presentations by William G. Dever, Pamela Gaber of Lycoming College, and Orit Shamir from the Israel Antiquities Authority. Director and curator Michael G. Hasel gave an overview of the excavations conducted by Southern

Adventist University and thanked the many staff involved in designing the new exhibit, which will be open from January 2023 through May 2025. All visitors are invited to relive this moment in history that determined the destiny of Israel's future. ✍

## SUMMER 2023 STUDY TOURS TO EGYPT AND ISRAEL



The Institute of Archaeology joined with Hope Channel International to conduct two summer study tours to Egypt and Israel. Each group of 50 tour participants included 15 students from Southern Adventist University, most of whom study in the archaeology program. The tour fulfilled one of the important requirements for their

degrees in archaeology or museum studies. The tours were co-lem by Michael G. Hasel, director of the Institute of Archaeology, and Giselle S. Hasel from the School of Visual Art and Design at Southern Adventist University.

The Egypt study tour, from May 10-21, covered the entire length of Egypt from Cairo in the Nile delta to

Aswan and Abu Simbel in the south. Highlights of the tour included riding camels around the Giza pyramids; climbing into the Serapeum at Saqqara, where the Apis bulls were mummified and buried, and visiting the ancient capital of Memphis. After visiting the magnificent Karnak and Luxor temples, we admired the Valley of the Kings and the mortuary temples of Hatshepsut and Ramesses III.

"Visiting the artisans' tombs at Deir el-Medina was one of the most impactful moments for me," said Rhys Sharpe, a sophomore archaeology and computer science student at Southern. "Those tombs gave me a chance to feel like an explorer. Getting to climb down narrow staircases into tiny burial chambers and discover they were filled with brilliant paintings, preserved in absolutely stunning condition even after thousands of years, was something



Photo credits:  
Michael Hasel



I hope I never forget.” Participants embarked on a four-night Nile cruise to Aswan, making stops to visit temples along the way. The magnificent temple of Abu Simbel built by Ramesses II is found on the shores of Lake Nasser, where it was moved when the Aswan High Dam was built. The temple displays the incredible scenes of the war against the Hittites, who are mentioned in the Bible. This was followed by a boat ride to a Nubian village and past Elephantine, the island where Aramaic texts were found that mention some of the important events and people described during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah.

The Israel study tour, from May 22-June 1, began in Tel Aviv with a visit to ancient Joppa, the port city

that Jonah left from in his attempt to escape his fate in Nineveh. From there the group headed to Bethlehem and the Dead Sea region, visiting Qumran and Masada along the way. Jerusalem sites included the City of David with the newly excavated Pool of Siloam, the Mount of Olives, and the Via Dolorosa, together with the Israel Museum and the Shrine of the Book. In the north, their itinerary included a memorable boat ride on the Sea of Galilee from Capernaum, then visits to the northern cities of Hazor, Dan, and Caesarea Philippi. Finally, there was an overnight in Nazareth before heading to Megiddo, Mount Carmel, and the port city of Herod the Great, where Paul

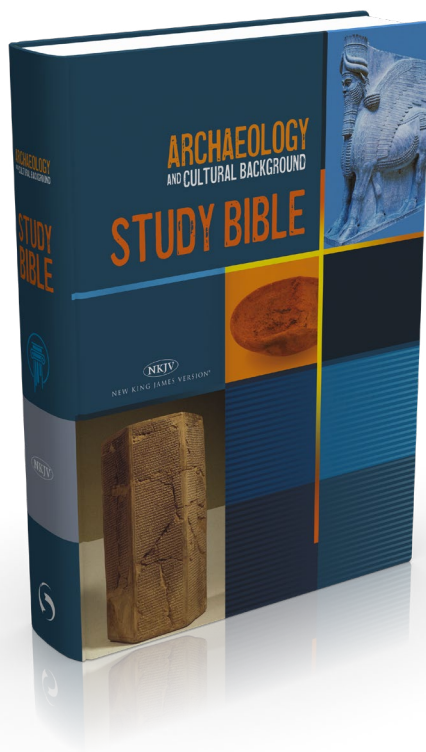
was imprisoned at Caesarea Maritima. Summer Nichols, a sophomore music and pre-dentistry student at Southern, reflected: “My favorite location on the study tour was the gate of Tel Dan in Canaanite times Lachish. Seeing the archaeological remains throughout the trip was amazing. However, the gate at Lachish that Abraham may have walked through was especially inspiring for me. Its age, in combination with its intact and life-size appearance, brought the Bible to life in a tangible way.”

# NEW ARCHAEOLOGY STUDY BIBLE PUBLISHED

The Archaeology and Cultural Background Study Bible (NKJV) was published this year after a long period of development. In 2006 Mario Martinelli, then vice president of the Review and Herald Publishing Association, proposed the idea to Michael G. Hasel, director of the Institute of Archaeology, at a teacher's convention in Nashville. Other projects of the Institute, including the co-direction of a series of excavations at Khirbet Qeiyafa, Socoh, and Tel Lachish in Israel, made it difficult to focus on the study Bible project at that time. But in 2009, lists of articles for such a project were compiled and sent to Martinelli, along with a number of written articles on the subject. Although Review and Herald Publishing closed its doors in 2014, Martinelli kept the idea alive, eventually purchasing the rights to the Bible project and its articles as he assumed leadership of Safeliz Press in Spain. Hasel continued to write articles intermittently as the years went on, eventually writing nearly 100 articles for the study Bible.

Today 80 archaeologists and theologians from around the world have contributed a total of nearly 700 articles. These articles focus on people

of the Bible, biblical sites that have been excavated, ancient texts that have relevance to biblical backgrounds, cultural and geographical insights, and specific artifacts that add to biblical understanding. The articles are illustrated by hundreds of photos, maps, illustrations, charts, and spreads,



which can be found together with indices. In addition, 130 videos may be viewed by scanning QR codes found on the pages of the Bible; however, most of these are in Spanish. During the summer of 2023, Hasel accompanied Safeliz Press to Israel, where many new videos for the Bible project were filmed in English at strategic locations documented in the study Bible.

The Archaeology and Cultural Background Study Bible (NKJV) highlights one of the elements that makes the Bible absolutely unique—the Bible is constituted in history. This means that the historical contexts of God's intervention in human history can be uniquely understood and enhanced through careful study of the places, people, and events of that history. The hundreds of geographical locations and historical documentation of archaeological discoveries make this study Bible a treasure trove of information to the Bible student. The Bible may be purchased in North America at the [Adventist Book Center](#) or in other locations by contacting [Safeliz Press](#). ✍️



## MUSEUM LECTURE: KLAUS WAGENSONNER

On October 23, 2023, Klaus Wagensonner, PhD lecturer and associate research scholar in Assyriology at Yale University, presented a lecture on “Between Doom and Glory: The Treatment of Babylon by the Last Assyrian Kings.” Wagensonner focused on the last century of the Assyrian empire, which led eventually to their demise at the hand of the Babylonians. He began by giving a background on the four capital cities and how they were transferred between different Assyrian kings mentioned in the

Bible, including Tiglath-pileser III, Sargon II, Sennacherib, and Esarhaddon. Babylon was mentioned over 600 times in texts during this period, often as part of the title of the Assyrian ruler. A text preserved by Sargon II, who is mentioned in Isaiah 20:1, gives an order by the king to use cuneiform on clay tablets for all official records. Thanks to this order, we have an enormous amount of tablets providing important comparative information on events taking place during this period. These included royal annals, letters, and diplomatic records that each give different perspectives and correctives to the dynamics during each king's reign.

Utilizing the newest data from



the Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (CDLI), the digitization of 35,000 tablets from the Yale Babylonian Collection now available on the Peabody Museum Search Portal, and other online repositories, Wagensohnner shared new insights into the diplomatic relationships between the final Assyrian kings and ancient Babylon. Special focus was given to the Royal Library of Ashurbanipal, found in the Southwest

Palace of Sennacherib. Ashurbanipal had collected texts from Babylon, had scribes copy them, and boasted of becoming a sort of scholar himself after he mastered both Akkadian and Sumerian. He even claimed to have been able to read letters from before the Flood. One of the texts belonging to the Royal Library, the famous Epic of Gilgamesh was discovered in the British Museum in 1872 by George Smith.

Thanks to the intensive collecting initiatives of Ashurbanipal, many of the most important texts are available for study today, including the Prism of Sennacherib, boasting of his campaign against the Judean king Hezekiah in 701 BC, the focus of the Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum exhibit. ✍

## MUSEUM LECTURE: MICHAEL G. HASEL

On November 6, 2023, Michael G. Hasel, professor of Near Eastern Studies and Archaeology and director of the Institute of Archaeology, presented the second Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum lecture of the 2023-2024 academic year. The title of the lecture was “Destruction in the Gate: New Excavations at Tel Hazor, Israel.” Hasel focused on the 2019 excavation, which he co-directed with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the University of Haifa at the site of Hazor in northern Israel, the largest Canaanite city in Old Testament times.

Hasel began by stating that it had been a long-time goal to excavate in the Lower City of Hazor – a dream that he pursued in 2004-2007 when he excavated Hazor with professor Amnon-Ben-Tor. His focus then shifted to the territory of Judah, but in 2019 he and others were invited to conduct a pilot excavation season to ascertain the feasibility of a future major project at the 180-acre site. The team consisted of about 40 staff from several universities, and in the course of only

two weeks, they focused on excavating the western half of the northern gate leading into the city. Nearly 60 years earlier, the eastern half of the gate had been excavated by Yigael Yadin, the pioneering Israeli archaeologist who trained an entire generation of Israeli excavators at the site. Beginning with the removal of 60 years of erosion, they finally came down to the original pebble-stone pavement of the gate, which dated back to the Late Bronze Age—biblically the time of the conquest and the early settlement of Israel. The lower city had been completely abandoned after a major conflagration and destruction. The big question remains, “Who destroyed the city, and what were their reasons?”

Hasel focused on the destruction correlates found in the gate, including the use of new scientific tools for analyzing the data from a micro-archaeological basis that included Fourier-transform infrared (FTIR) spectroscopy to analyze sediment samples with the goal of (1) studying the site formation processes of the gate



based on micro-residues; (2) identifying occupational surfaces within the gate; and (3) re-examining previous interpretations of the history of the gate and Hazor in light of the micro-archaeological record. The lecture concluded with suggestions for the destruction of the gate and the final demise of the Lower City of Hazor, which was no longer occupied in subsequent centuries. ✍

# INSTITUTE MILESTONES AND TRANSITIONS

On June 31, 2023, the Institute of Archaeology bade farewell to one of its stalwart employees, Susan Brown, who retired after serving for 22 years as the office manager and docent coordinator for the Institute of Archaeology and the Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum. During the early establishment of the Institute of Archaeology, Brown assisted in every way. When the new museum opened in November 2004, the design team that implemented the museum opening moved on to other responsibilities and projects, leaving the daunting task of the day-to-day scheduling of museum hours for the university and community. Brown stepped up to the plate and began overseeing the docent volunteer program that included both archaeology students and community volunteers. “This was one of the first major volunteer initiatives at Southern Adventist University, which later developed into the Lights Volunteer Program, now managed by the Advancement Office,” said Cheryl Torres, coordinator of the Lights Volunteer Program. For nearly 20 years, almost 100 volunteers have served to keep the museum open seven days a week.

Brown also ministered to students and helped direct their talents. “Susan was always available to talk with students and encourage their journey through their respective programs, whether undergraduate or graduate,” said Angela Edwards, who graduated with degrees in both archaeology and museum studies and now serves as museum coordinator. In addition, Brown coordinated travel plans for the excavation projects and tours for up to 55 staff and students each season. She also assisted with museum exhibit openings, lectures, and other special events. She coordinated trips for the Evangelistic Resource Center, where she facilitated 1,777 volunteers to go out to and preach the gospel, directly contributing to over 37,000 baptisms in meetings around the world. In April 2023 at a special convocation at the



Susan Brown

Collegedale Church, over 150 students surrounded the sanctuary as they were dedicated for mission service around the world. Brown was honored for her work in coordinating the efforts of the ERC and Pierson Institute of Evangelism and World Missions. The night before, she had spent hours making sure that the 150 electric candles those missionaries would hold had functioning batteries to light up the sanctuary. “And that is a good metaphor to who Susan has been for all of us,” said Michael G. Hasel, director of the Institute of Archaeology. “She has kept the light burning when we were overseas, conducting this meeting or that excavation. She kept the light burning in her office to facilitate others to become the people God called them to be. Without her, none of it would have been possible, but through her dedicated effort, God was glorified again and again.” Her impact will be felt beyond her retirement, for years to come, in the thousands of students she impacted over the years.

The Institute of Archaeology welcomed Kerre Conerly, who began her work as office manager and docent coordinator in June after transitioning from many years of serving as registrar at Collegedale Academy in Tennessee and Fletcher Academy in North Carolina. Conerly has an educational

background in history and English and has already made a number of important contributions to the educational resources available for tours in the Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum.

In May 2023, Angela Edwards, museum coordinator for the Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum, completed an MA in Cultural Heritage Management at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland. Her degree focused on community engagement and heritage management at global and local levels. A museum coordinator preserves and makes heritage accessible for all, from intangible elements such as music, food, dance, and dress to tangible elements ranging from natural habitats to the built environment, such as historic buildings, monuments, and cities. She took the classes Heritage Interpretation: Approaches to Interpretation and Outreach, Marketing in Museums, and Museum Education. “Angela is the first museum coordinator with a graduate degree in Cultural Heritage Management and museum studies,” said Hasel. “This training is invaluable to our future work in maintaining our current collections and designing future exhibits. We are delighted with her success!”



Kerre Conerly

# DIRECTOR'S LETTER



For the past 20 years, we have been in the field excavating almost every summer (Idalion, Cyprus—2003; Israel, Hazor—2004-2007; Khirbet Qeiyafa—2009-2011; Socoh—2010; Lachish—2013-2017; Hazor, Lower City—2019; and Khirbet Safra—2022), interrupted only by COVID and three publication study seasons. The two years away from excavations during the pandemic allowed focused work on preliminary

reports for the Fourth Expedition to Lachish in several leading journals, including the *American Journal of Archaeology*, *Journal of ASOR*, *Jerusalem Archaeological Journal*, *Journal of Archaeological Science Reports*, *Levant*, and *Radiocarbon*, among others. Intensive work on the Lachish publication project took place in Jerusalem on both ceramic analysis of the Iron Age pottery by Sang-Yeup Chang and ceramic reconstruction over the last four years. We are now about one-third of the way through our final publication goals for Lachish.

In 2020-2022, we were privileged to open a major new exhibit titled “From Script to Scripture: The History of the Bible,” which displayed a private collection of some of the rarest Bibles and original documents of the Protestant Reformation. These included the first French New Testament (1500), the first complete French Bible, the Olivétan (1535), Luther’s first edition of the 95 Theses (1517), and other Luther pamphlets. English Bibles included the Mathew Byble, Bishop’s Bible, and a first edition of the King James Version Bible (1611). This exhibit was the focus of several documentary programs for the Hope Channel and It Is Written television. In January 2023, we were privileged to open a new

exhibit, “Peace and War: The Assyrian Conquest of Lachish,” which focuses on our excavations at that site and, for the first time, exhibits the evidence of that famous battle by Sennacherib against Judah (see the cover story). We hope that you will visit our new exhibit, which will continue to be open during the next two years.

The publication endeavor and post-processing of hundreds of thousands of bits of data presents a whole new opportunity to take a close look at materials excavated by more than 350 volunteers and staff over the course of five years. It also brings surprises! On the first day of excavation in 2016, our Southern students and staff uncovered an ivory comb. In 2022, during microscopic analysis of the ivory comb for headlice, Madeleine Mumcuoglu discovered the oldest sentence ever found in Israel written in the proto-Canaanite alphabetic script. It is the first time a complete sentence with verb-subject-object was found in the country—a revolution in writing and communication. We announced the discovery at Southern Adventist University in November 2022 and presented the report at our annual meeting in Boston. On May 23, 2023, I attended the opening of a special exhibit on the comb at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, where it is now on display. We are pleased to announce that it will arrive for display at our Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum in January 2025.

Each year brings new discoveries that enhance and expand our understanding of the ancient biblical world. We want to thank you for your part in making this possible and hope that the encouraging articles contained here will lift your spirits in the coming season, when we can be thankful for so much. May you enjoy this holiday season and the blessings God brings! ✍️

Michael G. Hasel, PhD  
Director, Institute of Archaeology

## 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

- Credit Card:  Visa  MasterCard  Discover  American Express

Card Number

Amount

Expiration Date (MM/YY)

Security Code

Signature

First Name

Last Name

Address

City

State

Zip

Email

- 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.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

LYNN H. WOOD ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
MUSEUM LECTURE SERIES 2023-2024

### November 6

Museum Lecture: Michael G. Hasel, Southern Adventist University, "Destruction in the Gate: New Excavations at Tel Hazor, Israel."

### February 19

Museum Lecture: Mark Janzen, Lipscomb University, "From Miracles to Mt. Sinai: Recent Research on the Route of the Exodus."

### March 25

Museum Lecture: Constance E.C. Gane, Andrews University, "The Assyrian War Machine: Expansion and Conquest."

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 our web page.

[https://www.southern.edu/administration/archaeology/museum/lecture\\_series.html](https://www.southern.edu/administration/archaeology/museum/lecture_series.html)

## SYMPOSIA AND CONFERENCES

### November 14

"The Western Boundaries of Ancient Judah: Recent Archaeological Discoveries in the Foothills of Judah" Conference, Lipscomb University, Tennessee  
Keynote Speaker: Michael G. Hasel, "Peace and War: The Assyrian Conquest of Lachish." Including speakers: Steven M. Ortiz, Debi Cassuto, James Hardin, Kyle Keimer, Itzick Shai, Aharon Tavgar

### November 15-19

American Society of Overseas Research (ASOR) Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois

### January 20

"Amazing Discoveries in the Lands of the Bible" Symposium  
Peachtree Hills SDA Church, Newnan, Georgia

### January 26-27

"Paradigm Shift or Pitfalls: Does Biblical Archaeology Have a Future?" Conference  
Lanier Theological Library, Houston, Texas

### April 14

AIA Lecture: Michael G. Hasel, "Recent Archaeological Discoveries Relating to the Early Kings and Kingdom of Israel." Archaeological Institute of America, Los Angeles, California

# DIG SIGHT

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