DIG SIGHT NEWSLETTER



SOUTHERN RETURNS FOR IDALION-CYPRUS EXCAVATIONS

This past summer, archaeology students from Southern Adventist University visited Athens, Greece, and excavated at the ancient site of Idalion in Cyprus from May 27-June 22.



Cyprus is the third largest island in the Mediterranean. The ancient site of Idalion, one of its major kingdoms, was involved in the copper trade that originated in the Troodos Mountains to the west. The site was first excavated by Lawrence Stager and Anita Walker of Harvard University in 1971. Pamela Gaber, PhD, began working at the site as a Harvard student that same year, and since 1987 has been the director of excavations at Idalion. This marks the longest excavation project in Cyprus to date.

"The COVID-19 shutdown, followed almost immediately by several years of war in Israel and the wider Middle East, caused us to have to postpone plans for a new excavation project for students who needed to fulfill requirements," says Michael G. Hasel, PhD, director of Southern's Institute of Archaeology. "We had excavated at Idalion in 2003, when the Iraq War started, and our team was very happy to return to the venue, a member of the European Union."

The excavation experience began on June 1 with a tour of the site and the museum housing many of the artifacts found there over the years. The following day, students showed up to the site at 5:30 a.m. and worked until 11:30, cleaning one of the earlier areas that had been excavated in 2012 for photogrammetry. This recent technological technique would preserve each excavation area in a 3-D digital format for future publications. During the cleanup phase, a number of unique artifacts were found, including fragments of human and animal statues—such as a human hand, pedestaled feet, the head of a goat, and the torso of a small female votive. The cultic materials suggested a temple or sacred precinct nearby.

During the second week, students moved to the Eastern Terrace of the site where they conducted proper excavation of the area, including the baulks between the squares that had been left behind. This was important to unite all of the excavated areas and provide a unified perspective. (CONTINUED ON PG. 2)

INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY
Southern Adventist University

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After morning excavations, tools were cleaned up and the team went to the dig house to wash uncovered pottery. After lunch and a siesta, work resumed in the afternoons with lectures and dating and classifying pottery. After three weeks, many of the goals of the excavation were accomplished.

On the weekends, students were guided on tours by Professor Hasel, to sites around Athens and across Cyprus where Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark set out on the first missionary journey to spread the gospel. Sites included Kolossi Castle, Kourion, and Paphos on the first weekend, and then the Troodos mountains and Nicosia on the second. The successful season was filled with experiences and memories that will last a lifetime.

STUDENT REFLECTIONS ON THE IDALION EXCAVATION

Spending three weeks at Idalion changed my life academically, socially, and spiritually. I'd struggled earlier that year with questions about God's plan in my life—questions that I think God used two of Idalion's co-directors to answer. I spent a lot of time with my friends, hearing stories about what God had done in their lives. God even used my time there to teach me a lesson in faith, and I hope I will remember it for the rest of my life. I would not have traded those three weeks for the world.

RHYS SHARPE
Archaeology – Near Eastern Studies and Computer Science
graduate

Over the course of three weeks, we accomplished what most would consider a very small amount, as is the way with archaeology. We endured hard labor only to unearth the topmost portion of a stone wall in my square. Most may have found this unsatisfying, and I'll admit that at first I felt anxious for more results. Yet that peculiar labor and slow, tedious work, I returned to the field one last time to prepare the site for photogrammetry. The distinct orange citrus Cypriot sun lit the old, cracked walls in an amber glow, and I realized how important our work was. Our efforts over the past weeks were contributing to knowledge and discovery, even if they seemed minuscule. At the very least, our work was the outpouring of thousands of years of humanity's insatiable curiosity, and I felt privileged to have taken part in our shared learning and inquisition and to have contributed to the diligent stewardship of the past.

AFTON LOGAN
Archaeology – Classical Studies
major

The archaeological dig to the sight of Idalion, Cyprus, was a formative experience for me. I learned hands-on skills that I would never have gotten in a classroom alone. Part of the dig, I was able to work with the registrar and assisted in cataloging artifacts and adding them to the online database. Since I am both an archaeology and museum studies major, this opened a new point of view for how I can combine both of my interests. Finding historical objects is important, as is how they are cared for and handled afterward. This is a key factor in helping others learn and appreciate history and its importance. Seeing and handling history firsthand gave me a new appreciation for archaeology, especially in how it can relate to and provide evidence for the Bible.

ISABEL WILLIAMS
Archaeology – Near Eastern Studies
major

My experience at Idalion was a dream come true. I learned to excavate stratigraphically. I found many artifacts and learned to date them by style, including one circa 500 BC. The most interesting thing I found out about artifacts while digging is that they are pretty durable. I always thought most would be extremely fragile. Another interesting thing I learned was that if you doubted an object was pottery, you could lick it to see whether or not it would stick to your tongue. Pottery is highly porous, so it sticks to anything moist. I will admit for the first time excavating, I licked a lot of pottery, and I would repeat 100 times more if I had the opportunity to go back.

ALEJANDRO CRUZ
Archaeology – Near Eastern Studies
major



NEW CAMPUS EXHIBIT PLANNED FOR 2028–BABYLON RISING: INNOVATION, CONQUEST, AND DESTINY







In April 2025, Southern's special exhibit "Peace and War: Assyria's Conquest of Lachish" together with the "Ivory Comb" exhibit was returned to the country of Israel, where the objects loaned to us originated. During the final three months of the comb exhibit, the museum witnessed its largest number of visitors in any single year in its 25-year history. The question over the last 18 months has been, "What should we focus on next?"

In 2025, while an National Endowment for the Humanities Fellow at the W. F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research, Michael G. Hasel, PhD, who directs Southern's Institute of Archaeology, became acquainted with James Fraser, PhD. Fraser in Israel is the current director of the Albright Institute and a former curator of the British Museum. He suggested that Hasel be introduced to the curators of the British Museum for two reasons: (1) Since Hasel was a current co-director of excavations at Tel Lachish in Israel, it would be important to connect with the institution that held most of the artifacts excavated by the British at Lachish in the 1920-30s. (2) Those connections might facilitate future collaborations.

A meeting with the keeper of the Middle East collections at the British Museum, Paul Collins, PhD, was arranged. Collins is an Assyriologist who supervises all of the Middle East collections. During their meeting, inquiries were made about a future exhibit focusing on ancient Babylon and its conquest of Judah and specifically Lachish. Collins was very open to the idea of a loan to Southern, which led to the development of a plan to host a new special exhibit entitled "Babylon Rising: Innovation, Conquest, and Destiny."

In July 2026, Hasel visited Yale University's Peabody Museum in Conneticut, which houses the Babylonian Collection. Several previous exhibits at Southern featured objects from Yale. Hasel worked with Yale professor Klaus Wagensonner, PhD, to select 35 objects from the Yale Babylonian collection now approved for loan to Southern. The new exhibit, if approved by all institutions, will open in January 2028.

"This new exhibit will potentially bring some of the most important objects from two of the World's largest collections of Mesopotamian history to our museum in 2028. We are very excited to host it on our campus."

—Michael G. Hasel, director of Southern's Institute of Archaeology and Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum.

MUSEUM LECTURE: ANN KILLEBREW

On October 5, Ann Killebrew, PhD, professor of the Archaeology of the Levant at Pennsylvania State University, presented the first 2026-2027 Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum lecture. Her topic was "In Search of the Philistines and Other 'Sea Peoples.'" The search for the Philistines, best known as one of ancient Israel's most storied enemies, has long intrigued both scholars and the public. Recent archaeological and textual evidence, examined in its broader eastern Mediterranean context, reveals that the Philistines, together with other related groups from Egyptian New Kingdom texts, played a transformative role in the development of new ethnic groups and polities that emerged from the ruins of the Late Bronze Age empires. Killebrew's lecture reassessed the origins, identity, material culture, and impact of the Philistines and other sea peoples on the Iron Age cultures and eastern Mediterranean.

Her extensive publications include *The Philistines and Other Sea Peoples in Text and Archaeology* (co-edited with G. Lehmann, Society of Biblical Literature, 2013); *Biblical Peoples and Ethnicity: An Archaeological Study of Canaanites, Egyptians, Philistines, and Israelites 1300-1100 BCE* (Society of Biblical Literature, 2005); *Jerusalem in the Bible and Archaeology* (co-edited with A. Vaughn); and *Interpreting the Past: Presenting Archaeological Sites to the Public* (co-edited with D. Callebaut, N.A. Silberman, and A. Ervynck, Brussels, 2004). She has directed excavations in Israel, including at the Philistine sites of Tel Miqne-Ekron, Tel Beth Shean, Megiddo, and Qasrin. She is currently co-director of the Tel Akko "Total Archaeology" project.



To view recorded lecture: southern.edu/archaeologylectures .

MUSEUM LECTURE: IGOR KREIMERMAN



On November 16, Igor Kreimerman, PhD, senior lecturer in the Department of Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, will lecture on the topic "Hazor: From 'The Head of All Those Kingdoms' (Joshua 11:10) to the Building Projects of King Solomon." The speaker will survey the history of Hazor from the decades preceding the destruction of the Canaanite metropolis to the construction of the early Israelite city, offering a fresh look at old data alongside new evidence uncovered during recent excavation seasons. Particular emphasis will be placed on two of the most contested questions surrounding Hazor: Who destroyed the Canaanite city and why? And was it really King Solomon who built the early Israelite city?

Tel Hazor is the largest multi-period archaeological mound in Israel. During the Middle and Late Bronze Ages (ca. 1800–1200 BCE), it was home to a large and densely populated urban center that maintained direct contacts with the great cities of Mesopotamia and, during the Late Bronze Age, had close ties with Egypt. Following the destruction of the Canaanite city and a brief occupational gap, an ephemeral settlement was established among its ruins during the Early Iron Age. A few decades later, a more substantial transformation took place, when a new, small city of approximately 3.5 hectares was constructed on the western part of the Upper Mound. Characterized by a six-chambered gate and a casemate wall, the city is traditionally attributed to King Solomon. This lecture is open to the public and will take place in Lynn Wood Hall Chapel at 7 p.m.

ANNUAL SESSION TO HONOR LEGENDARY ARCHAEOLOGIST YOSEF GARFINKEL

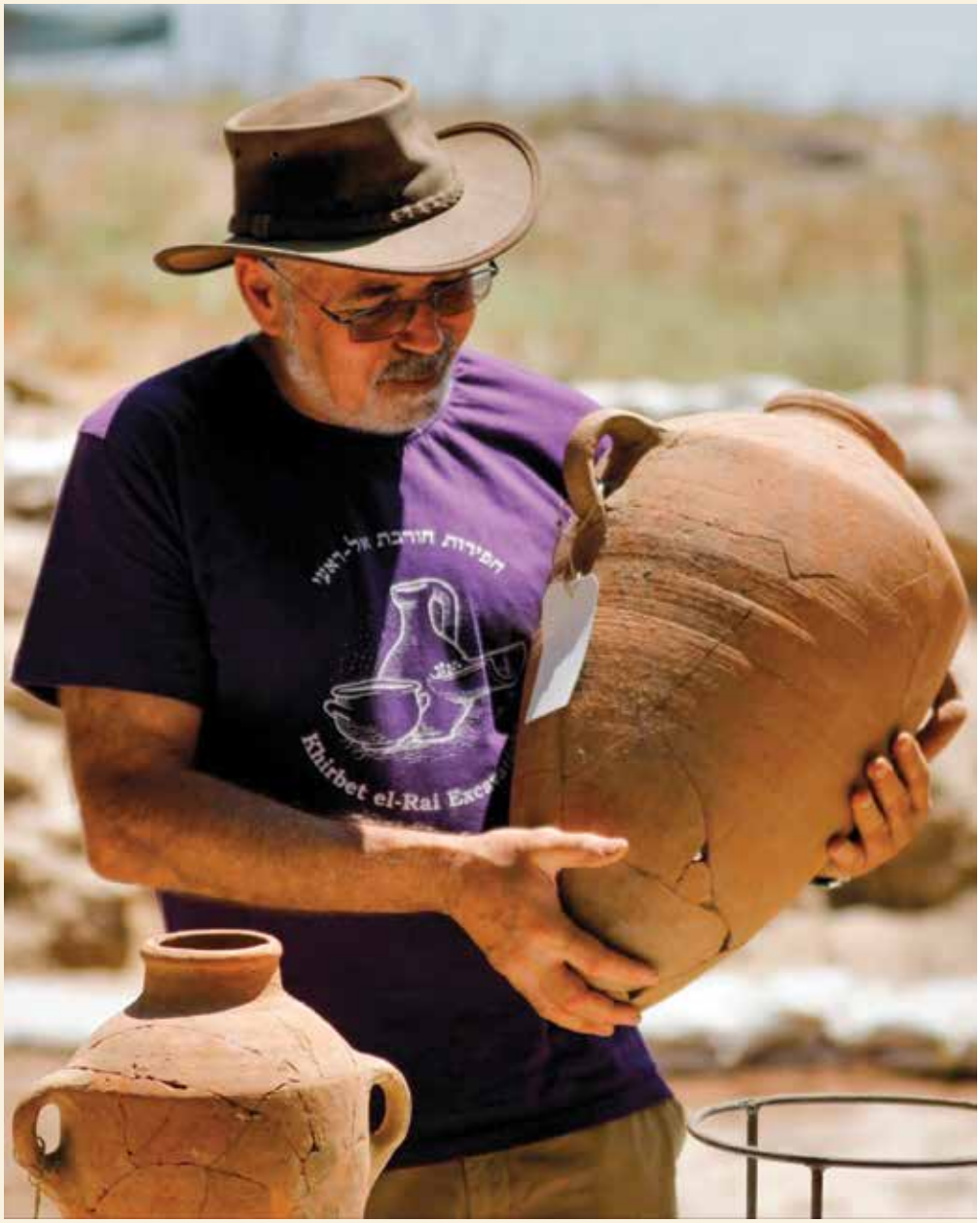
Yosef Garfinkel is the foremost Israeli archaeologist of the past 50 years, having excavated the most sites in Israel including proto-historic Yiftehel, Gesher, Tel Ali, Shaar Hagolan, Neolithic Ashkelon, and Tel Tzaf.

In 2007, he shifted to the historical and biblical periods, inviting Southern's Institute of Archaeology director, Michael G. Hasel to join him as a senior partner. Together they co-directed excavations and surveys at Khirbet Qeiyafa (2007-2013), Socoh (2010), Tel Lachish (2013-2017), and Tel Hazor (2019) as a regional project searching for Judah's first kings. Garfinkel also directed and published excavations at Tel Miqne Ekron and Khirbet el-Rai and is currently directing excavations at the Ophel in Jerusalem. That's 13 sites total during his long and distinguished career.

Garfinkel recently retired as Yigael Yadin Chair in the Archaeology of Israel and Director of the Institute of Archaeology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He has served as visiting scholar at Harvard University, Yale University, the University of Cambridge, the British Museum, and the Sorbonne in Paris. His impressive scientific work has led to the publication of 37 written and edited volumes varying in scope archaeologically, chronologically, geographically, and thematically along with several hundred peer-reviewed articles in most of the leading journals in the field.

Over the years, his excavated materials from sites were exhibited at the Musee du Louvre (Paris), British Museum (London), Metropolitan Museum (New York), Museum of the Bible (Washington, DC), Israel Museum (Jerusalem), Bible Lands Museum (Jerusalem), Southern's Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum (Collegedale), and most recently the Hermitage (St. Petersburg).

A special double session at the annual meeting of the American Society of Overseas Research in Chicago this November has been organized to celebrate his magnum opus, *The Archaeology of the Kingdom of Judah* (SBL, 2025), which serves as a synthesis and state-of-the-art evaluation of the most current data on Judah. In this session, scholars and friends who have excavated in the region will examine, evaluate, and respond to this work reflecting on the selected subject from their own expertise and perspective.



Scheduled speakers include Oded Borowski (Emory University), Itamar Weissbein (Hebrew University of Jerusalem), Chris McKinny (Lipscomb University), Edward F. Maher (North Central College), Filip Vukosavovic (Israel Antiquities Authority), Michael Freikman (Israel Antiquities Authority), Hoo-Goo Kang (Seoul Jangsin University), and Southern's own Michael G. Hasel.

NEW SOUTHERN ARCHAEOLOGY GRADUATES



JOHN HARGY

Summa Cum Laude (December 2025)

biophysics, archaeology minor

Awards: Barry Goldwater Scholar 2024
Society of Physics Students Google Scholar 2026
Fulbright Fellow, Türkiye 2026-2027
National Science Foundation Scholarship 2027-2031

Next step: Pursue a doctorate in biology research at Massachusetts Institute of Technology



DAVID HOUSTON BECKWORTH

Cum Laude (August 2026)

archaeology–Near Eastern studies, biblical studies

Awards: Excellence in Scholarship Award
Publications: "The Background of Revelation 1-2," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* (2025)
"Satan's Imprisonment (Revelation 20) and Allusions to 1 Enoch 10, 54-57, and the Day of Atonement," *Journal of New Testament Studies* (2026)

Next step: Pursue a master's degree in biblical studies at Covenant Theological Seminary in Missouri



DAVID RHYS SHARPE

Summa Cum Laude (August 2026)

archaeology–Near Eastern studies, computer science

Awards: Outstanding Scholastic Achievement
Excellence in Scholarship
Excellence in Archaeology
Excellence in Hebrew

Next step: Pursue a master's degree in biblical studies and Near Eastern languages at Hebrew University of Jerusalem in Israel



HAYDEN KOBZA

Cum Laude (August 2026)

journalism, archaeology minor

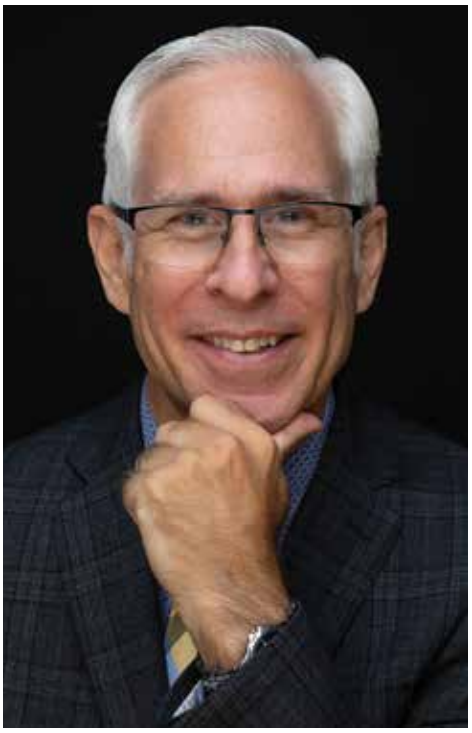
Achievement: Grew online viewership to 1.2 million as *Southern Accent* Editor 2025-2026.

Achievement: 1.2 million online viewership

Awards: 2025 Media Association Pinnacle

Next step: Serve as assistant to the president of the Guam Micronesia Mission of Seventh-day Adventists before applying to law school

DIRECTOR'S LETTER



This year was packed with many activities that took us to places around the country and the world. The Astonishing Discoveries seminars focusing on recent archaeological finds and the Bible were conducted over weekends at Gouther College in Baltimore, Maryland, with *It Is Written TV*, and at other venues in Linz, Austria, and California including Anaheim, Murietta, Sacramento, San Diego, and Weimar University. We also partnered with *Amazing Facts TV* for its His Story: Bible Archaeology Summit with Doug Batchelor and Connie Gane. These meetings brought hundreds of people with an enthusiasm to learn more about how history can make a difference in their lives.

In May, I returned to the British Museum to continue our discussions on a potential loan for our new museum exhibit "Babylon Rising." After a month of excavations at Idalion, Cyprus, with our archaeology students, I spent a week at the Peabody Museum at Yale University to continue planning for the exhibit and have subsequently received approval for a loan of 35 objects from the Yale Babylonian Collection. This will be Southern's most extensive exhibit yet.

In July, I returned to the W. F. Albright Institute in Jerusalem to resume my National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship, which was interrupted by last year's war in Iraq. It was good to be back working on the Lachish final reports. Matthew Bronson, MA, assistant professor of archaeology at Southern, and his wife, Lica, joined us at the Albright for two weeks to conduct dissertation research on Iron Age fortresses, and we were able to spend a day at Tel Lachish in Israel to see the results of the excavations that Yosef Garfinkel, Hoo-Goo Kang, and Itamar Weissbein have conducted there this year.

Our hearts have been filled with gratitude for these experiences that allow us to continue the dissemination of archaeological research in so many locations. Thank you for your support!



Michael G. Hasel, PhD
Director, Institute of Archaeology and
Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum.

I WOULD LIKE TO SUPPORT THE INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AT SOUTHERN ADVENTITST UNIVERSITY IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

- ❍ Institute of Archaeology (donations will be applied to areas of greatest need)
- ❍ Archaeological Excavations Fund
- ❍ Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum
- ❍ William G. Dever Research Library

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Email _____

- ❍ Credit Card: ❍ Visa ❍ MasterCard ❍ Discover ❍ American Express

Card Number _____ Amount _____

Expiration Date (MM/YY) _____ Security Code _____

Signature _____

- ❍ Check (made payable to "Southern Adventist University")
- ❍ I'm not prepared to give at this time. However, I would like to commit to a financial gift in the area marked above. Please contact me for payment arrangements.



UPCOMING EVENTS

MUSEUM LECTURES SERIES
LYNN WOOD HALL CHAPEL

Monday, November 16, 2026, 7 p.m.
Igor Kreimerman, PhD
Senior Lecturer
Department of Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Studies
Hazor: From "The Head of All Those Kingdoms" (Joshua 11:10) to the Building Projects of King Solomon

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
To watch lecture, visit southern.edu/archaeologylectures.

CONFERENCES

November 18-21, 2026
American Society of Overseas Research Annual Meeting
Chicago, Illinois

DIG SIGHT

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Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum
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