

# PRESS RELEASE

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## Southern Adventist University Archaeology Team Finds Ivory Comb With First Known Written Sentence

An archaeology team of students and employees from Southern Adventist University and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem uncovered a hair comb with linguistic significance. Discovered at Tel Lachish in Israel during a 2016 excavation, the comb features the first known complete, alphabetic sentence ever discovered. It was written in the Caananite language, which is the predecessor to all modern alphabets.

### Points of Interest

- Made of ivory, the comb dates to approximately 1700 BC.
- It was discovered in a square of the Lachish excavation under the supervision of Southern student Katherine Hesler, who graduated in 2019.
- Engraved in a shallow manner, the letters were not noticed until 2022.
- The inscription translates to: “May this tusk root out the lice of the hair and the beard.”
- It is rare to find an inscription referring to the purpose of the object on which it is written.
- The findings were published in *Jerusalem Journal of Archaeology*.
- Professor Yosef Garfinkel, PhD, from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Southern Adventist University professors Michael G. Hasel and Martin Klingbeil directed the Lachish excavation.
- On January 30, 2023, Southern’s Lynn H. Wood Archaeological Museum will open a new temporary exhibit featuring more materials uncovered in Lachish, specifically focused on the Assyrian conquest of Judah and the deliverance of Jerusalem.

### Interviews

Professor Michael G. Hasel, PhD, director of the Institute of Archaeology at Southern Adventist University and co-director of the expedition to Lachish, is available for interviews.

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