



IN THE VALLEY OF ELAH:

Excavations at Khirbet Qeiyafa, Israel

Michael Pytlik and Richard Stamps

Introduction

In 2009, nine Oakland University students and two faculty members, Associate Professor Richard Stamps and Special Instructor Michael Pytlik, participated in an excavation at the small site of Khirbet Qeiyafa, also known as biblical *Sha'arayim*, Israel. In 2010, thirteen students returned with these faculty members, to the same site for further excavations, and to learn in a more developed field school. Participating in conjunction with Hebrew University in Jerusalem, which holds the permits and leads the expedition, this Oakland University group has excavated in this small site exciting finds from the Iron Age II period (c. 1000 BCE), and details of the earliest indications of the Israelite monarchy, including clues about the extent and complexity of the kingdom of King David, around which still swirls considerable debate.

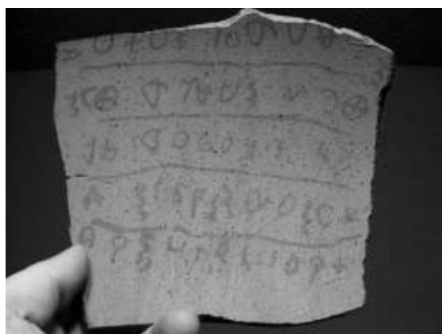
Significance of Khirbet Qeiyafa

*Khirbet Qeiyafa*¹ made worldwide news in 2008 when, in the last days of that excavation season, an ancient inscription was



2010 Group photo (from left to right): Sarale Gur Lavy (Israel), Maria Ciavattone, Clayton Saunders, Aaron Forgash, Mike Denyes, David Resowski, Trevor Pike, Mike Henson, Emily Tissot, Danielle Ager, Mike Pytlik, Alex Konieczny, Nathan Collins, Kalae Atwell, Austin Eighmey, Dr. Richard Stamps.

found on a piece of pottery in a house near the city gate. Such writing on pottery is called an *ostracon*. The ostracon consisted



of only five lines of proto-Canaanite script. The faded letters were restored to a legible state with the use of complex photographic methods using various light sources and multiple exposures. In November 2009, several articles appeared in

English and Hebrew that proclaimed the writing to be the earliest Hebrew language text thus far known.² The characters were written in proto-Canaanite, yet the words were Hebrew. An ostracon is a piece of pottery with writing on it. So far, “king”, “lord”/possibly “God”, “slave”, “don’t do . . .” and other words have been identified on the *Qeiyafa* shard. Some

scholars have translated the entire ostrakon, yet debate continues over those translations. The news of the inscription reached the United States the day Pytlik returned from Israel. Pytlik and Stamps quickly collaborated to plan an excavation trip to Israel for the 2009 season. This would be followed by another excavation trip in 2010.

Khirbet Qeiyafa, situated some 23km southwest of Jerusalem, and just 5km south of the ancient and modern town of Beth Shemesh, is in the Elah Valley, near the lower foothills of the Judean mountain range. These foothills descend from a spine of higher mountains in the center of the country toward the coastal plain along the Mediterranean Sea. The site, only about sixty acres, rests on one of the lower foothills, a range called the Judean *Shephelah*. The site overlooks the Elah Valley on two sides. In ancient and modern times, the site overlooked important trade and travel routes. In the Iron Age *Khirbet Qeiyafa* and other neighboring sites may have served as military centers or outposts. Circa 1200 BCE, the Philistines, a group of the so-called “Sea Peoples,” controlled the adjacent coastal-plain sites of Ekron, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Gaza and Gath. Biblical Gath, or modern Tell es-Safi, is only some 12km from *Khirbet Qeiyafa*, and shares a part of the same Elah Valley. Gath was one of the larger Philistine cities, and the Bible states it was the home of the legendary Philistine hero, Goliath.³ *Qeiyafa* offers important data for understanding of the Iron Age settlement patterns and the ancient Philistine/Israelite border. Archaeology can help explain the settlement patterns, urban makeup, architecture, and more subtle issues of ethnicity, as well as the emergence of the Israelites and more about the kingdom of David. To this point, the kingdom of David exists only in the



biblical texts, although one extra-biblical reference to the “house of David” was found on the Tell Dan stele.⁴ The Oakland University expedition was not looking for King David; rather, its aim was to locate evidence of the earliest phases of the united monarchy in Israel. The dating of Israel’s archaeology and history, listed below, provides further historical context for the details of the excavations that will follow:

Hellenistic Period: 332–63 BCE	ushered in by Alexander the Great
Persian Period: 515–332 BCE	follows Babylonian period; some Jews return to Palestine
Iron Age IIB: c 965–586 BCE	begins with Solomon, then divided monarchies Israel/Judeah
Iron Age IIA: c 1025–965 BCE	beginning of statehood under David
Iron Age I: 1200–1025/1000 BCE	collapse of Canaan, emerging Israelites, period of Judges
Late Bronze Age: 1550–1200 BCE	International era, Egypt ruled Canaan, Exodus period.

Small Hilltop Site and Its History

Khirbet Qeiyafa’s director, Dr. Yosef Garfinkel, visited Oakland University in early 2010 and gave a lecture about the site, also meeting with Oakland staff and administration. Having done much of his work in the earlier periods of Israel’s history, the Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods (c 7000–3000 BCE), Garfinkel and his excavation partner, Saar Ganor, an investigator for the Israeli Antiquities Authority, began to look for a small Iron Age site near Jerusalem to excavate. In the process of Ganor’s daily work investigating antiquities, forgeries and the illegal looting of Israel’s ancient sites, he looks after a number of existing excavations and surveys new ones. Despite over one hundred years of excavations in Israel by American, European and Israeli archaeologists, less than ten percent of the known ancient sites in Israel have been excavated. Ganor found the small hilltop site during his survey work in the

Judean foothills in 2005. He noticed what previous explorers in the 1880's saw at *Khirbet Qeiyafa*, that is, an oval-shaped wall surrounding the site.⁵ A site survey indicated that Iron Age II (c 1000 BCE) pottery as well as Persian (c 500–332 BCE) and Hellenistic/Roman (c 332 BCE–300 CE) littered the site. Site surveys are useful when excavators consider which sites to dig. Pottery analysis and chronology remain significant factors in assigning dates to archaeological strata in the Middle East. Pottery changes over time, with each period or culture producing its own pottery styles and shapes. Further, Ganor saw that the Hellenistic walls were still visible at the site and that they rested on different, larger and much older stones that appeared to be from the Iron Age. The picture (right) shows the larger Iron Age building stones beneath the smaller Hellenistic wall.



The Iron Age is split between the early period, Iron Age I (c. 1200–1000 BCE), and Iron Age II (c. 1000–586 BCE). Iron I is the period of the biblical Judges and the emergence of the Israelites as a distinct entity. In Iron II, (c1000–586 BCE) Israel was a state under Saul, David and Solomon (and subsequent kings). Iron IIA is the very beginning of this period, to which *Khirbet Qeiyafa*'s Iron Age settlement belongs. However, some scholars place the *Khirbet Qeiyafa* slightly back in time to the beginning of Iron Age IIA to about 1025 BCE, but others disagree.⁶ Nonetheless, the site appears to be a fortress or outpost settlement that sat at the border between Israel and Philistia. A main reason for digging at *Khirbet Qeiyafa* is to “examine the process of state formation in the biblical kingdom of Judea” (Garfinkel and Ganor, 2009, 19).

Garfinkel and Ganor found what they thought were significant Iron Age fortifications under the Hellenistic walls that extend for about 700 meters. It was common in the ancient near East for civilizations to build on previous settlements.

Over time, massive mounds, called *tells*, which consist of successive settlements built on top of each other, began to accumulate. This accumulation transformed the settlement into the high artificial mounds that we see today. At some sites dozens of layers, or strata, of different civilizations began to pile up. *Khirbet Qeiyafa* was an Iron Age settlement for about twenty-five years and then destroyed. The site was unoccupied for several hundred years until a Hellenistic settlement (named for the Greek period after the conquests of Alexander the Great) was established on the same line of walls as the Iron Age city. Ganor reported to Garfinkel that the small site was



worth excavating in order to determine if the Iron Age presence was as significant as he first thought. In 2007, a small team from Hebrew University excavated at the location of the Iron Age

gate. The gate was attributed to the Iron Age II based on construction techniques and associated pottery at the level of the gate. Constructed of massive limestone blocks, some weighing six tons or more—the gate may have been built by an ancient state.⁷ The gate featured two opposing rows of walls with two chambers on each side. The chambers probably housed soldiers to guard the gate area, or for other official purposes. Called a four-chambered gate, this type of construction is typical for the Iron Age II period, although *Qeiyafa's* is an early example of this construction. The gate had one or more rows of wooden doors that could be closed and a threshold of nearly nine feet wide held the doors in place.⁸ A drainage channel passed through the gate area and directed rainwater and waste outside the city walls. The Iron Age channel, sealed with stones, was opened in 2009. Olive pits were extracted and then were analyzed using carbon 14 dating methods: the dates of

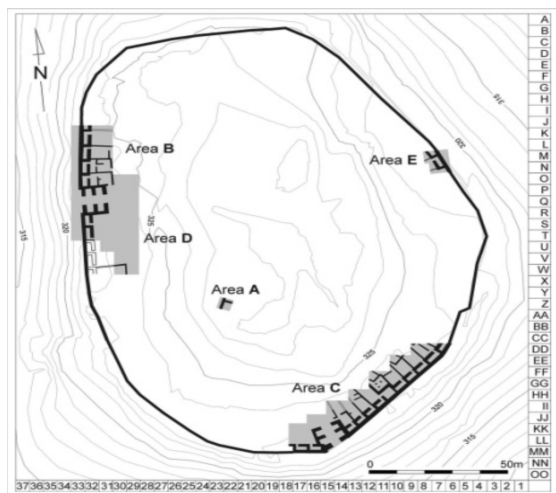
the pits ranged from 1025–965 BCE (Garfinkel and Ganor, 2009, 35–37). Similar results came from other olive pits found in other areas of the site. Plans were made for a larger excavation in 2008.

In 2008, the gate area in Area B was fully exposed and partially restored. Several domestic units were found next to the city gate. The ancient city plan was oval to circular in shape. Scholars now know that domestic units were attached to the city wall inside the city, and it appears that they continue all around the city (see excavation plan, below). The dwellings' back walls were attached to the city wall, and each contained a unique Israelite innovation in architecture—the casemate wall.

The “L” shaped internal house wall connected to the city wall (several houses and the casemate wall are shown at left). This construction prepared a narrow rectangular space at



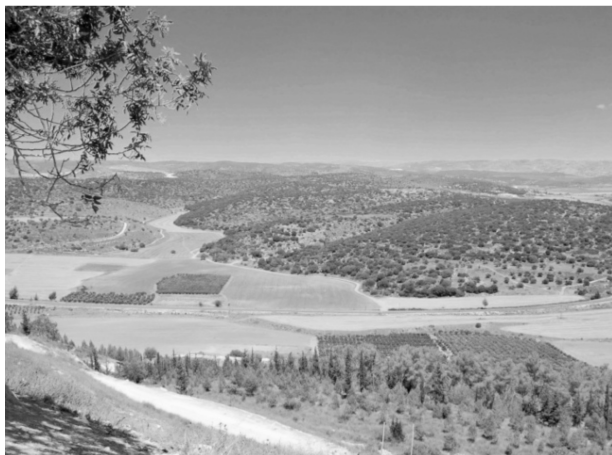
the back of the house, which was probably used for storage or for defensive purposes; the purpose of this space, however, is still not completely determined. However, in later Israelite sites, numerous large storage jars were found in this extended space. If current calculations are correct, the domestic units number about 110 units or so for the site. Therefore, it is estimated that some 500–600 people could have lived at this site. In 2008, the now-famous *Khirbet Qeiyafa* ostrakon was found in a house near the city gate. The excavations in 2008 showed that a significant Hellenistic layer lay on top of the Iron Age levels, but the Hellenistic accumulation was rather minimal in comparison to the Iron Age materials. In some locations, the Iron Age levels were only a few feet under the surface. The Hellenistic occupation at this site dates to the very earliest phases of that period; in fact, the Persian-to-Hellenistic transi-



tion is little known from excavated sites in Israel. Thus far, more Persian period coins have been found at this site than have yet been found at all other known and excavated Persian sites in Israel. A lack of information about

the Persian period results from very few Persian-era sites having been located or excavated. In the Persian period, some Jews returned from exile in Babylon with the permission of the Persian king Cyrus II (The Great). The Persians promoted local rule and allowed their subjects to worship their own gods and maintain their own cultures. The Persians also presided over one of the most economically prosperous periods in ancient Israel, partially due to the political stability they brought to the region. The strong economy was based on olive oil and wine production, and coinage was introduced to the region for the first time. The campaigns of Alexander the Great ushered in the Hellenistic period (c 332 BCE), although little changed in the culture and the economy continued to be strong. *Khirbet Qeiyafa*, a town of some importance in this little-known Persian/Hellenistic period, has drawn international attention through its association to the kingdom of David, the story of David and Goliath, and the recent unearthing of the ostrakon.

In 2009, the expedition continued to focus on the areas around the city gate and excavations expanded to a new location on the other side of the site, the new Area C. This area was chosen because similar architectural remains, matching those from the Iron Age level in Area B, could be seen under the Hellenistic walls. It appeared that a second city gate existed in



The Elah Valley

Area C; if this turned out to be true, it would be a first for any Iron Age city in Israel to date. A single gate is a hallmark of all Iron Age cities so far known in Israel, and even those villages and cities that are much bigger than *Khirbet Qeiyafa* feature one gate.

The 2009 Oakland University Expedition

In 2009, Pytlik and Stampes travelled to Israel with students Valerie Cischke, Danielle Ager, Benjamin Dacin, Mike Denyes, Austin Eighmey, Trevor Pike, Clayton Saunders, Laura Webber, and Tiffany McCardell. The new area C was still untouched land, but Oakland eagerly volunteered for work in Area C in hope of helping to solve the important second city gate question. In only one week, and after significant effort, the Oakland team, together with Israeli volunteers and staff, found the second city gate. The Oakland University team's stay was too short, yet in that time it helped to confirm that a second city gate existed in this area of the site. Additional domestic units were uncovered after the OU team left the site. As always, an abundance of pottery was found in each of the houses.

Some of the pots found on the Iron Age floor levels were restorable vessels, indicating that the pottery was smashed in place, probably due to some kind of natural or man-made disaster. This situation was repeated in all areas of the site, meaning that the site suffered a rather quick destruction by warfare or perhaps an earthquake, although no noticeable cracks in bedrock have been found thus far. If the site suffered destruction by warfare, the aggressor has not yet been discovered. Oakland University students were involved in detailed excavation methods, were included in daily pottery analysis meetings, and some learned specific skills like wet and dry sieving and screening of debris. Further, each student maintained field notes, made drawings of their excavation squares and drew sections of the walls of their areas. The interaction OU students experienced with Hebrew University staff and students was invaluable. Oakland's hard work at the site resulted in an invitation to return for the 2010 season. At the end of the 2009



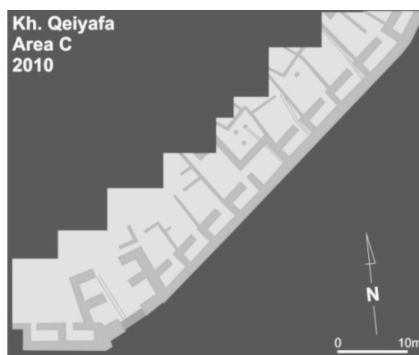
season television crews from the BBC as well as a joint project led by *Nova/National Geographic* filmed at the site. A television program about Solomon's mines and David's kingdom was aired

in November 2010, and the December 2010 issue of *National Geographic* featured the site.

The OU Team Returns: 2010 Season

Stamps and Pytlik recognized the great opportunity for their students at this site. In the 2010 season, the team's stay was expanded to three weeks, and a more formal excavation field

school was established. The team continued to work in Area C, and in other areas of the site and with other field supervisors. The excavations in Area C expanded to the east from the second city gate where additional ancient houses were uncovered. A rich supply of pottery was found that confirmed that the site had two main occupation layers, Iron and Hellenistic. More interesting finds in 2010 included animal figurines that were attached to pottery; a rare Egyptian-style scarab, found by OU student, Alex Konieczny; numerous finger or stylus impressed large jar handles;⁹ coins from later periods; architecture, and Iron-Age floors filled with restorable pottery. The site is certainly rich in artifacts despite its rather short period of occupation in the Iron Age IIA period. These students who went on the 2009 excavation returned in 2010 season: Danielle Ager, Austin Eighmey, Mike Denyes, Trevor Pike, and Clayton Saunders. These returning students helped teach the new students who came to the site, and their participation facilitated a deeper association with the site and allowed students to build on their previous year's experiences. New students in 2010 included: Emily Tissot, Maria Ciavattone, Kalae Atwell, David Resowski, Nathan Collins, Alexander Konieczny, Aaron Forgash and Mike Henson. The excavation season lasts six weeks, but the OU team was able to stay for only three of those weeks, and in the last three weeks of the 2010 season, excavators found one of the most fascinating aspects of this site to date—a fascinating room in Area C. It appears that the room was once part of a house—or it was converted from a house to its new function as a cultic center or ritual space (the seventh house from the city gate in the plan, left). A single line of stones along one wall acted as a bench where people sat. A basalt basin and special ritual pottery were found in the room. Basalt is not rare in northern Israel, but it is in



this southern region of the country. Basalt stone in this context indicates that it was a highly prized item. The stone was shaped as if it were used as a kind of offering table or an altar. Inscribed on the sides of the altar are images of palm branches, which in a ritual context can indicate a feminine fertility symbol, sometimes associated with Asherah—a Canaanite and early Israelite fertility goddess. A strange double-bulbous libation vessel was also found in the room. A vessel of this type was used to store liquids of some sort, usually oil or wine, which were perhaps poured out into the basin during the ritual. Fully restorable, this vessel thus far has very few parallels. Apparently the items were used in a fertility ritual of some kind, but this is uncertain for now.¹⁰ Scholars continue to search for ritual items of a similar nature and from sites of the same period that might help identify their purpose and context. Cultic vessels of this type seem to continue the local Canaanite traditions, which is not surprising for early Israelite contexts. In any event, this small site has continued to offer a number of unique finds for this period in Israelite history.

Archaeology, Anthropology, History, and the Bible

The emergence of the Israelites and the beginnings of the monarchy in Israel continue to be significant yet controversial topics in the archaeology of Israel. These topics and the site of *Khirbet Qeiyafa* converge at the intersection of biblical studies and archaeology. Also relevant for this site is the question of how certain ethnic groups can be identified by the archaeological record. Thus far, we have identified the site of *Khirbet Qeiyafa* as an early Israelite site that represented the very first stages of the monarchy, specifically of David's kingdom. We have dated the site to the Iron Age IIA (c. 1000 BCE), and because of this chronology, we can narrow down the possibilities for the ethnic groups who were active in the region at the time. The Egyptians ruled in the preceding Late Bronze Age (c 1550–1200 BCE), but they pulled out of Canaan by about

1220 BCE, partially due to the threats they faced at home from the Philistines. We have no Egyptian artifacts or architecture at *Khirbet Qeiyafa*, and the distinctive Egyptian-style artifacts are virtually unknown in the early Iron II period in Israel. The Philistines began to arrive on the coast of Canaan late in the thirteenth century BCE, and they eventually established five main cities noted above. Their material culture consisted of pottery forms that had no indigenous parallels in Canaan. Many of the motifs on their distinctive decorated pottery have origins in Cyprus and Mycenae, among other locations. Their pottery decorations differ so greatly from the simple and undecorated Canaanite and Israelite forms that they represent an ethnic marker of the Philistines. Faunal remains are also important factors at Philistine and Israelite sites. The biblical texts state that Israelites were to refrain from eating certain animals, including pigs. The Philistines did eat pork and we can confirm this from archaeology. On average, known Philistine sites yield from 18–23% pork remains, and some Canaanite sites show similar or somewhat smaller percentages.¹¹ Sites that are associated with early Israelites have thus far produced either insignificant percentages (<1%), or a complete lack of pig remains. Thus far, no pork bones have been retrieved from *Khirbet Qeiyafa*, nor has any distinctive Philistine pottery emerged except a few early Philistine forms that indicate that a limited number of pots came to the site by way of trade.

Some biblical texts help us to reconstruct some of the ancient landscape. Many biblical scholars accept that the bulk of the biblical texts were written well after the kingdom of David. They also maintain that there are certain biblical books and passages that recall much older memories of Israelite history. The book of *Judges*, for example, contains some details that archaeology can corroborate. *Judges* describes in the period before the Israelite monarchy when the Israelites began to coalesce into an ethnic entity and codified certain cultural norms, such as certain dietary regulations (refraining from pork) that were later included in biblical law. The Bible has a negative view of both Philistines and Canaanites, and it demands that

the Israelites avoid contact with these groups and not imitate their practices. One problem for the archeologists of Israel is how much to use the Bible in association with excavations and historical research. The Bible can lead to circular reasoning when it comes to reconstructing history. For example, *I Kings* 9:15 says that Solomon fortified certain royal cities in his kingdom, like Megiddo, Gezer and Hazor. Scholars have long debated over the similar strong city gates and walls found at those sites that date to Iron Age II levels. Many scholars warned that we cannot connect Solomon to these construction projects in order to support the biblical narrative, yet many have. Others, however, say that the Bible can be a tool to reconstruct some history, as long as it is used with care—the Bible is, after all, not a history book. Similar problems exist for the identification of *Khirbet Qeiyafa*.

The identifications of archaeological sites in Israel has been a difficult problem for explorers since Europeans and Americans first traveled to the region in the early nineteenth century. Many of those first explorers set out to identify biblical places. Ruined cities abounded, as well as mounds which contained many civilizations (*tells*), and smaller ruins (*khirbets*). In order to identify lost cities of the Bible, the early archaeologists relied on accounts by previous travelers, and contemporary Arabic and Hebrew place names that contained cognates of the ancient place names. It is the task of archaeology to confirm if an ancient city once existed in this location.

The Oakland University team believes that *Khirbet Qeiyafa* was a site that existed within the kingdom of David due to its location in the Elah Valley, the dating of its Iron Age ruins to the late 10th century and larger regional settlement patterns. Scholars also study those biblical texts, Jewish tradition, and extra-biblical references to David in order to make the previous statement. Biblical texts are also used to help anthropologists and others understand something of how Israel viewed its relationship with its neighbors, but the Bible is by no means the exclusive tool by which scholars attempt to reconstruct this period of Israel's history.

Further linguistic evidence for identifying the history of this site comes from the Hebrew words for *gate* and *gates*: in Hebrew, a gate is *sha'ar*, and its plural is *Sha'arayim*, which means two, or multiple gates. This language appears in the famous story of David and Goliath, set in the Elah Valley, (I Samuel 17). When the hero David killed the giant Philistine, Goliath, the Philistines escaped along the road that passed by *Sha'arayim*, all the way to the Philistine city of Gath. Gath's location is known, and excavators have identified only one site with two gates that sits on a lower hill overlooking the Valley of Elah where the Bible claims David and Goliath battled. The story of David and Goliath may well be a parable of how Israel viewed itself in comparison to the more advanced and more powerful Philistine society. Like many examples of folklore, this parable does not have to be literally true to carry great meaning. Scholars assume that the place names resonated in epic battle stories that originated from earlier periods in Israelite history. Some of the stories were eventually included in the biblical texts. Two other biblical references to *Sha'arayim* occur in Joshua 15:36 and I Chronicles 4:31–32.

These passages include *Sha'arayim* in a list of cities belonging to the tribe of Judah. These references indicate that Is-



*Philistines depicted on
Egyptian tomb reliefs*

rael considered the settlement as one of its own. The Canaanites were the last group that could have built or controlled *Khirbet Qeiyafa*. Although all of the (extensive) evidence cannot be covered in this essay, reasoning similar to that above, excludes the Canaanites as the occupants of the site. A more widely accepted theory today holds that the Israelites emerged out of indigenous Canaanite stock, although various outside groups added to their population. *Khirbet Qeiyafa* is included in a significant Israelite epic story, the battle between David and Goliath, and it is included in the list of cities belonging to the Israelites. Finally, one significant historical issue also makes the point.

The Canaanite society suffered at the hands of the dominant Egyptians in the Late Bronze Age that preceded the “Israelite period” (Iron Age I). Once proud and strong Canaanite cities fell into decline during the time when Israel began to emerge as a people in the central hill country of Canaan. It is not correct to suggest that the Canaanites disappeared from the land entirely. By the Iron II period (c 1000 onward BCE), the Philistines and Israelites vied for control of the land, and the Canaanites receded into the contemporary society. The Canaanites moved to northern parts of ancient Israel and southern Lebanon. The struggle to find evidence to support the early kingdom of Israel has continued for well over a hundred years. The biblical tradition tells us that Saul was the first king, although he was neither able to unify nor strengthen the country. Saul’s hometown was Gibeah, which has been located and excavated. The only public building found at the site was a small fortress dated to the late Iron Age I period. The remains at Gibeah did not support our image of a new united kingdom—and the biblical texts tell us this.

David was the first king who was able to unify the northern and southern states (Judah and Israel), establish a capital city, and build a palace.¹² A few extra-biblical texts and the biblical texts themselves, taken together, indicate that David’s reign lasted from about 1000-965 BCE. The chronology at *Khirbet Qeiyafa*, based on carbon 14 dates and ceramic analysis, in-

dicates that the site active from about 1025–965 BCE. The excavators have suggested that the Iron IIA period, therefore, might be earlier than what has been previously accepted. That argument aside, we associate David as the monarch who reigned when *Qeiyafa* was in use in the Iron Age. The chronology does not allow the site to be associated with the time of Solomon, because the occupation there was too early for Solomon (his dates are c. 965–925 BCE). The excavators of the site do not discount the value of the biblical tradition as a tool for reconstructing some memories of ancient Israel’s experience.¹³ The biblical texts declare that the Philistines were a threat to Israel, and archaeology has confirmed that the two cultures battled for domination of the region. Israel also fought to create and then preserve its ethnic identification partially in reaction to the perceived Philistine threat, a fascinating development for the emerging nation. Israel partially codified some of its religious ideals based on the separation that it fought to maintain between itself and the Philistines and Canaanites, as Avraham Faust (2007) has brilliantly summarized.

Conclusion

Archaeology, history, biblical studies, anthropological models and other disciplines, all offer valid and crucial approaches to the study of ancient Israel. Oakland University’s students have and will continue to be closely involved in the multi-disciplinary approach to the study of this site. Pytlik’s doctoral dissertation focuses on this site, asking how archaeology can enhance biblical studies and how *Qeiyafa* figures into the emergence of the Israelite state. Stamps has embraced this opportunity to broaden his archaeological experience in a new geographic area and to expose Oakland’s students to the archaeology of Israel. Both professors are extremely proud of their students’ work at the site and continue to marvel at the wide variety of the students’ backgrounds. These bright and

adventurous students who travelled to Israel to excavate the ancient site of *Khirbet Qeiyafa* have led the way for future Oakland University students who want to engage in similar field-work. Stamps and Pytlik hope to take students to the site in 2011 (June–July), and to expand and refine their field school. The students and faculty wish to thank Oakland University administrative support staff, administration, and their Jewish community donors for their support of this project; without their hard work and support this exciting opportunity would not have been possible.

NOTES

¹ *Khirbet* means *ruin* in Arabic. *Qeiyafa* is a local place name for the site.

² This means that evidence for literacy in Israel dates at least to the late 11th century BCE, about 150 years earlier than our existing evidence allows. “BCE” means “before the common era,” or generally, “BC.”

³ Gath is currently excavated by Bar Ilan University in Israel.

⁴ *Stele* refers to “an upright stone or slab with an inscribed or sculptured surface, used as a monument or as a commemorative tablet” (“stele” in *Free Online Dictionary* <http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&source=hp&q=define+stele&aq=3b&aqi=g-slg-ms2g-bl&aql=&oq=stele+define>).

⁵ A more detailed background for the site is found in Garfinkel and Ganor, “*Khirbet Qeiyafa: Sha’arayim*”, *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures*, Vol 8, Article 22.

⁶ The debate over the Iron Age in Israel is a lively one. Two articles by Dagan and Singer-Avitz are included in the bibliography that represents the “minimalist” argument. Their position is that David and Solomon’s kingdom should be moved forward in time, not backward as we suggest. Israel Finkelstein is another champion of this school, also wrote several articles about the site.

⁷ Questions remain about the identity or make-up of the state that constructed this outpost.

⁸ Chapter 5 of the 2007–2008 excavation report details the gate construction.

⁹ The jar handles probably indicate a royal or official mark that identified the pottery and its contents as either belonging to the state, or that the contents were sent to the site from the state regime.

¹⁰ Photos cannot be included at this time until the excavation has published this material.

¹¹ Faust and Bunimovitz write about the ancient Israelite diet and its ethnic associations in their individual works. The statistics are from Faust. Also, see Bunimovitz and Lederman, 123.

¹² Eilat Mazar excavates in the oldest parts of Jerusalem since 2005 and claims she has found a monumental building from the time associated with David—see bibliography references.

¹³ David Adam's chapter (4) in the 2007–2008 excavation report details the biblical association and the site's identification.

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