

Preface

It is with utmost pleasure that we offer this gift of friendship, gratitude and admiration to our great friend, colleague, teacher and *mensch*, Jeffrey R. Chadwick, on the occasion of his 66th birthday. When the idea came up of putting together this volume in honor of Jeff (as he is known by everyone), from the very beginning, all potential contributors that we approached reacted with excited willingness to take part in this labor of love and joy. This in itself reflects how everyone who knows Jeff relates to him.

Jeff combines several outstanding qualities, which are apparent to all his acquaintances. Whether in the classroom or the field, he is a consummate teacher whose clear, catchy and well-organized lessons are lapped up by students. He is an exceptional leader, well exemplified as Jeff directs an excavation area. The excavation is conducted at an exceedingly high standard, the participants enjoy every moment of it, and all come out enriched by the experience, and many young students became seasoned archaeologists under his wings. As a friend, rarely can one find a more loyal, consistent and go to person – he is simply the best! Jeff is a master of social interactions, knowing what to say and how to say it in just about any situation. If there were ever a dig participant who had difficulty getting along with others, Jeff's area was the place to go, and all social problems would dissolve. Finally, Jeff's sense of humor, which at times requires people to get used to, is something that all who have spent time with Jeff, whether at work or at play, appreciate so much!

The title of this volume includes the biblical passage “*to Explore the Land of Canaan*” (Deut 13:2), which so nicely encapsulates Jeff's relationship with the Holy Land. Combining a deep love, a thirstless interest and deep knowledge, as well as a gifted teacher about all aspects relating to the land.

All this and more was why all the participants were so eager to contribute to the volume in Jeff's honor. Many of the contributors participated in the excavations at Tell eṣ-Şâfi/Gath, in which Jeff has been a central figure (directing excavations in Areas F and D East) for more than 20 years. Others are colleagues and friends from various stages of his career at excavations such as Tel Miqne-Ekron, at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, or at the Brigham Young University Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies, on Mt. Scopus in Jerusalem.

We would like to thank all contributors for their papers, Rebecca Prete and Aaron Ostler of the Faculty Editing Service at Brigham Young University for copy-editing the papers, Haim Goldfus, co-editor (with Aren Maeir) of the “Archaeology of the Biblical Worlds” series, for agreeing to include this book in the series, and to those at de Gruyter publishers, particularly Aaron Sandborn-Overby, for publishing this volume.

In closing, all of us, editors and contributors, can but wish our dear friend Jeff, many more years of friendship, camaraderie, archaeology, laughter and enrichment!

Ad meah ve-esrim!

Aren M. Maeir and George A. Pierce

