**Notes provided by Jane Evans, 2/11/21, from “In The Footsteps of King David: Revelations from an Ancient Biblical City”** by Yosef Garfinkel, Saar Ganor and Michael G. Hasel and from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khirbet\_Qeiyafa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khirbet_Qeiyafa%20) concerning archeological work that has been done at the Judean town Khirbet Qeiyafa.

Khirbet Qeiyafa lies at the Judean boarder on a summit above the road from the coast to the hill country, a day’s walk west of Jerusalem. Archeological findings at Khirbet Qeiyafa give us some insight into life in a Judean town during the reign of King David. The Khirbet Qeiyafa archeologists believe Khirbet Qeiyafa is the ancient city of Shaaraim (1 Samuel 17: 52).

Two valleys extend from the Judean highlands west to the coast. The two valleys meet near Ashdad before reaching the Mediterranean Sea. One of these, the Elah Valley, originates near Bethlehem. The Elah River flows west through the valley. Khirbet Qeiyafa sits on a summit on the north side of the Elah Valley, on the western boarder of Judah and 10 miles east of Gath. The Khirbet Qeiyafa site covers nearly 6 acres. Gath was the dominant Philistine center in the 10th – 9th century BCE.

Olive pits found at Khirbet Qeiyafa date the town to the end of the 11th – beginning of 10th century BCE. Nearly 6,500 sq. ft. of the Iron Age town have been unearthed. Khirbet Qeiyafa is not a tell with many layers of habitation over a long period of time. Many layers of habitation over a long period and modern habitation has made archeological investigation of many sites, including Jerusalem and Hebron, difficult. Khirbet Qeiyafa had a double casement wall surrounding the town (2,300 Ft long) with two gates. Dwellings built adjacent to the wall had a room between the two walls, an arrangement not found in Philistine, Canaanite or Kingdom of Israel cities. Tons of animal bones were found, but no pig bones, as were found at Canaanite and Philistine cities, including Gath. Many patterned vessels, locally made, were found, with finger impressions on one or more of the handles. Marking jar handles is a characteristic of the Kingdom of Judah. The inhabitants cooked food in a circular oven constructed of clay and covered on the outside with layers of pottery sherds. Convex baking trays made of clay were laid over the fire for baking. The surface of these trays was pitted to prevent food from sticking.

The Philistines cities at the time were Ashdad, Aehketron, and Gaza on the Mediterranean coast, that were 18 and ½ miles apart, and Gath and Ekron in the hills, that were 6 miles apart. These two competed for surrounding agricultural resources. Khirbet Qeiyafa was constructed at the beginning of the 10th century BCE. David conquered Jerusalem and established it as his capitol at this time. Judah then had three urban centers: Jerusalem, Hebron and Khirbet Qeiyafa.

About 100 families lived in Khirbet Qeiyafa. Large stones of 2 – 8 tons, in the outer city walls and gates, would have required recruiting men from around the kingdom for construction work. A large shred of pottery with four straight lines of writing that was unearthed is awaiting deciphering and indicates that at least some residents could read and write. The households of Khirbet Qeiyafa raised their own food (wheat, barley, lintels, chickpeas, peas and broad beans). Grapes, pomegranates and olives could be grown in fields and orchards in the fertile Elah valley. Productive fields would have been an economic factor and source of conflict between Judah and the Philistines. Each family kept a small flock of goats and sheep and perhaps a few cows. The citizens of Khirbet Qeiyafa also engaged in crafts, especially pottery and metalwork. Khirbet Qeiyafa engaged in some trade but there was probably no regular passage of trade caravans. A few goods from Cypress and Egypt have been found but they are rare.

Uniformity of sizes of homes reflects a lack of major class differences between families. There was no accumulation of wealth….this would develop later in Judah. Jerusalem grew to 10,000 inhabitants and enormous wealth accumulated there.

The military importance of Khirbet Qeiyafa is evident from its geographic location on the Judean border opposite Gath on the main road from the coast to Jerusalem. Khirbet Qeiyafa had massive fortifications and a large number of weapons. Some men there were organized as a military unit for rapid deployment when necessary but not as a sole function. These men would have engaged in agriculture as well. Several storage jars with marked jar handles were found in every house. Inhabitants as soldiers would have received regular food rations from the kingdom in the form of jars filled with wheat, lentils, oil and wine or other agricultural products. A large building from which the town’s administrative and military activities were conducted was built on the highest part of the site and in its center. This structure’s walls were three times thicker than those of the houses, indicating that it stood several stories tall. We know that in ancient times urgent messages were communicated over great distances using fire or torches. This building at Khirbet Qeiyafa would have been an idea place for sending and receiving such messages.

In the second half of the 10th century, Khirbet Qeiyafa was suddenly destroyed, probably by the Philistines of Gath. Other towns replaced it in importance. Khirbet Qeiyafa appears to have existed for a short period only, apparently no more than a single generation. The Khirbet Qeiyafa archeologists believe Khirbet Qeiyafa, with its double casement walls, was the earliest example of urban planning in David’s Kingdom. Later the cities of Beth Shemesh, Tell en-Nasbeh, Tel Beit Mirsim and Beersheba were constructed according to this plan.