

Joseph Naveh (1928) — Professor of West Semitic Epigraphy and Palaeography — studied Bible Studies, Ancient Jewish History and Archaeology at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Between 1955 and 1971 he was employed in the Israel Department of Antiquities. At the beginning he did some archaeological surveys, as e.g. in Engedi and Kh. al-Muqanna[Ⓢ] (Tel Migne). He proposed the identification of the latter site with biblical Ekron (*Israel Exploration Journal* 8 [1958], pp. 87-100; 165-170). From 1958 until 1971 he served as District Archaeologist. In 1960 he carried out an archaeological excavation at a formerly unknown site — later called Me'ad [Ⓢ]ashavyahu — on the sea shore between Jaffa and Ashdod. Here were unearthed the remains of a Judahite fortress and Hebrew ostraca from the time of Josiah king of Judah (*IEJ* 10 [1960], pp. 129-139; 12 [1962], pp. 27-32; 89-113; 14 [1964], pp. 158-159).

From the early sixties onwards Naveh deals with Ancient West Semitic Epigraphy and Palaeography. Since 1971 until his retirement in 1997 he taught at the Hebrew University in the Department of Ancient Semitic Languages.

In addition to the actual decipherment of various Aramaic, Phoenician and Old Hebrew inscriptions and manuscripts, Naveh's research concentrates mainly on the comparative study of the inscriptions and scripts as they reflect the respective cultures of peoples and societies in differing geopolitical backgrounds.