

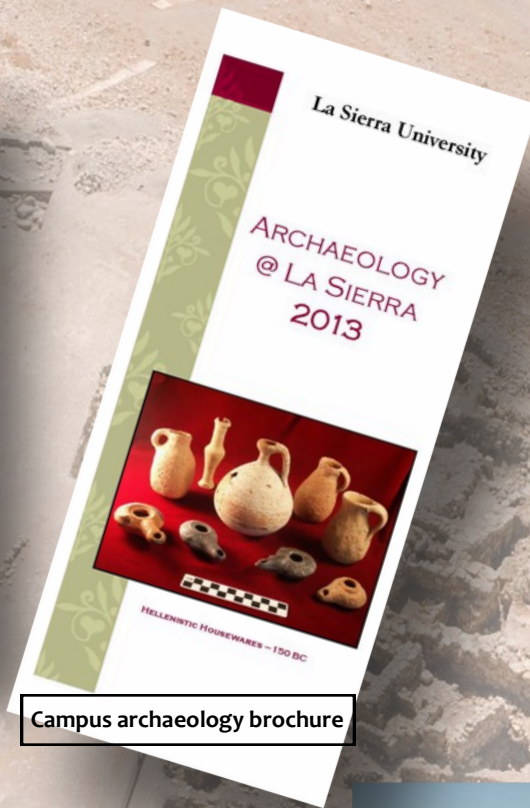
La Sierra University

La Sierra Digs

Newsletter of the Center for Near Eastern Archaeology | HMS Richards Divinity School | La Sierra University | Vol 1:1 Spring 2013



Kids' dig brochure



Campus archaeology brochure



Rendition of future muesum



Andressa Pujol in `Umayri lab



3D NexCAVE at UCSD—model for La Sierra



Line of sifts at Tall al-`Umayri, Jordan

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Birth of a New Archaeology Center

The Center for Near Eastern Archaeology at La Sierra University was officially born on 1 July 2012. Its arrival signals something bold, something grand, something entirely new for the campus. In a move intended to ensure a future for the past, especially the biblical past, La Sierra archaeologists, in collaboration with the administration of the HMS Richards Divinity School and the university, created a home for the varied archaeological activities and holdings at La Sierra. The new Center is located on the south side of campus on Raley Drive in sprightly renovated quarters of what used to be the Agriculture Department and then a child development center.

What marks the establishment of this new campus center as significant?

- Features include a long and distinguished trajectory of **faculty and student involvement in the archaeology of the ancient Near East**, which has brought to the university international recognition and admiration. This is regularly witnessed in conferences like the Annual Meeting of the American Schools of Oriental Research every November; the World Archaeological Congress held in January at the Dead Sea, Jordan; the triennial International Conference on the History and Archaeology of Jordan (ICHAJ, held in May 2013 in Berlin, Germany), where La Sierra and affiliated Madaba Plains Project scholars deliver lectures and where references regularly arise about our work in session after session. Archaeology faculty include: (from the past) Kenneth Vine and Robert Bates, and (currently) Larry Geraty, Douglas Clark, Kent Bramlett, Chang Ho Ji, Bailey Gillespie, Warren Trenchard.
- Also under the umbrella of the new Center are **tours to various parts of the Middle East**, and support for an **academic major and minor in archaeology**, with a Master of Arts degree on the drawing board.

Recent Discoveries

Assembled by Monique Vincent

Feeding the Pyramid Builders

From early beliefs that they were Joseph's granaries or were built by Hebrew slaves, the Pyramids of Giza have inspired curiosity and imagination through time. Today excavations focus on the pyramids in their context, as Pharaoh's funerary monuments during Egypt's Old Kingdom. Recent research has turned to the details of the lives of the true pyramid builders, revealing where they slept and ate, and who got to eat choice morsels. Read more at <http://www.livescience.com/28961-ancient-giza-pyramid-builders-camp-unearted.html>

Golden Shoes

This article describes the discovery of a rare piece of apparel - leather shoes worn by a Jewish woman thousands of years ago. The shoes are decorated with gold, providing evidence of the wealth and high social status of the woman who slipped the sandals on her feet. Apparently this discovery of luxury shoes is unique in the Holy Land, with only common leather shoes found before. Read more at <http://www.haaretz.com/culture/the-israelite-who-wore-diamonds-on-the-soles-of-her-shoes.premium-1.525066>

The Gabriel Stone

A "Dead Sea Scroll written on stone" found 13 years ago is making news again as the center piece of an exhibit in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem. The stone mentions the angel Gabriel and is probably from the same time period as the Dead Sea Scrolls and, like the Scrolls, provides a "portal into the religious ideas circulating in the Holy Land in the era when Jesus was born." Read more at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/30/gabriel-stone-jerusalem-unveils-mysterious-hebrew-tablet_n_3184953.html

- In addition, and certainly the tangible part of La Sierra's commitment to archaeology are the **extensive collections** now in its care. The `Umayri artifacts number around 8,000 pieces (scores of thousands of pieces if we count all the broken sherds). A collection from Jerusalem of whole vessels occupies most of a large conservation lab and includes ca. 12,000 pieces. Other collections add to this total.

- **Displays of La Sierra artifacts** on campus and elsewhere demonstrate the value of these collections to the process of illuminating the ancient Near East, and in particular the Bible. Not only are there regular exhibits at the new Center on campus, but also at other schools and the Western Science Center in Hemet, CA.

- **Affiliations** with other institutions include the **Madaba Plains Project** (three major sites in Jordan), especially the excavations at **Tall al-`Umayri** (sponsored by La Sierra University, in consortium with other universities in the U.S. and Canada); the **Western Science Center**; the **Getty Villa** (conservation protocols); and the **University of California, San Diego** (the latest in 3D digital visualization and data acquisition, storage, and open-source availability).

- In addition, the new Center sponsors a campus-wide, interdisciplinary colloquium of faculty and students (**Archaeology Across the Campus**), and real "dig" opportunities for elementary school students in Southern California (**Archaeology Adventures**). Public outreach is accomplished through regular lectures and the annual **Archaeology Discovery Weekend** every mid-November, the 2013 version focusing on Jerusalem.

- Finally, the Center has taken important steps along the way toward a full-fledged **new archaeology museum** which will grace the entrance of the university.



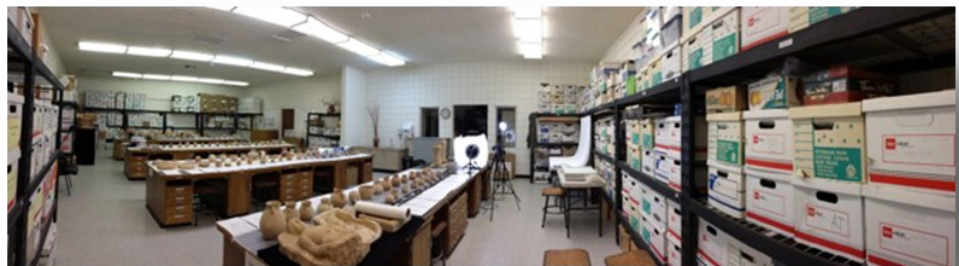
Hew Murdoch working on model shrine



Archaeology Adventures with 7th graders



3D Laser scanner



Collections lab, largest room in the new center

Center Labs

By Monique Vincent

Registration of objects has moved from the Early Bronze Age into the Middle Bronze Age here at the CNEA's Collections Lab! Volunteer Supervisor, Audrey Shaffer and regular volunteers like Marilyn Tolson and Layla Thomas enjoy watching the transition in the ceramic vessels over time and learning about the various types of handles and decoration types used on pottery from the 3rd and 2nd millennia BC. We have also enjoyed guest appearances by veteran excavators Carolyn Waldron and Nora Cano, eager to help with the work. We appreciate these volunteers as they work on measuring, weighing, describing, photographing, and storing thousands of objects. We will hit 3000 registered objects before the end of this month!

Vera Kopecky, Collections Lab photographer, has been lending a hand by photographing artifact assemblages from La Sierra University's excavations at Tall al-'Umayri, Jordan. Several artifacts excavated from the 2010 and 2012 seasons in Jordan will be returned this summer, and we need a series of "glamor" shots of the objects in groups. From the acquisition of new

camera lenses to the ad hoc construction of backgrounds, Vera makes photography work at CNEA for both the donated collections and the excavated material!

The 'Umayri Lab has been alive with volunteers this month, with two religion classes requiring hours spent in worthy pursuits. Matthew (Hew) Murdoch, archaeology major and Honors student at La Sierra, has been working on reconstructing shattered fragments of model shrines, or architectural models, used in ancient rituals at Tall al-'Umayri. Picking up the broken pieces of these models, puzzled over since their original owners laid them in the ground over three thousand years ago, Hew has been successful in visualizing the pieces and gluing them back together into their original structures.

Andressa Pujol, also an archaeology major, with the help of students April Sapigao, Anderson Neto de Scuza, and Charles Nettles, has been working on recording the details of artifacts excavated during the 2002 season of excavation at 'Umayri. These stone mortars, glass beads, and ceramic textile artifacts will soon be published and the volunteers have been essential in hastening the completion of this project.

La Sierra Digs

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New archaeology center

Calendar of Events

- **Summer in Jordan**
Douglas Clark and David Wuchenich working on subsurface mapping at Tall al-'Umayri
- **Archaeology Discovery Weekend**
16-17 November 2013
JERUSALEM + Grand Opening Gala
- **Annual Meeting of the American Schools of Oriental Research — Baltimore — 20-23 November 2013**
- **Archaeology Across the Campus**
- **Archaeology Adventures**
- **Archaeology Lectures**

To support the work of the Center for Near Eastern Archaeology, contact the Office of University Advancement at 951 785-2500 or email at nyergen@lasierra.edu or go online at <https://www.lasierraconnect.org/>



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