

La Sierra University

# La Sierra Digs

Newsletter of the Center for Near Eastern Archaeology | HMS Richards Divinity School | La Sierra University | Vol 1:2 Autumn 2013

## JERUSALEM

Archaeology Discovery Weekend 2013  
November 16-17

### FEATURING INTERNATIONALLY KNOWN SPECIALISTS:

Dr. Dan Bahat (Israel) | Dr. Mahmoud Hawari (West Bank) | Dr. Jane Cahill West (Houston) | Dr. Robert Mullins (Azusa Pacific) | Dr. Larry Herr (Canadian University College) | Dr. Lawrence Geraty and Dr. Kent Bramlett (La Sierra University)

PLUS — **Grand Opening Gala** of the Center

[See entire schedule at [www.lasierra.edu/archaeology](http://www.lasierra.edu/archaeology)]

### Co-sponsors

The American Schools of Oriental Research | The Orange County Society of The Archaeological Institute of America | The Riverside Society of The Archaeological Institute of America | The Los Angeles Chapter of the Biblical Archaeology Society | The Western Science Center | The Zapara School of Business | Green Olive Grill

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## Recent Discoveries

Assembled by Monique Vincent

### Ancient Names

A 2700 year-old inscription was recently found during archaeological excavations in the City of David by the Israel Antiquities Authority. The inscription includes a name similar to that mentioned for the father of Zechariah in 2 Chronicles 20:14. Read more and see pictures at [http://www.antiquities.org.il/about\\_eng.asp?Modul\\_id=14](http://www.antiquities.org.il/about_eng.asp?Modul_id=14)

### Jesus' Neighborhood

Archaeologists working in Galilee, just north of Nazareth, have unearthed a Jewish village from the time of Jesus. The village contained a synagogue, houses, and a lively pottery industry that included lamps. The excavations at Shikhin promise to shed more light on the way of life in villages like the one in which Jesus would have grown up. Read more at [http://www.al.com/living/index.ssf/2013/08/samford\\_archaeological\\_dig\\_in.html](http://www.al.com/living/index.ssf/2013/08/samford_archaeological_dig_in.html)

### Elisha's House?

An unusual house at Tel Rehov in Israel has stirred up excitement after the excavation team found a pottery sherd possibly inscribed with the name of Elisha. Many years of work unearthing this house have identified several intriguing features, including miniature shrines, incense altars, figurines, and a nearby apiary with another inscription identifying the family name of Jehu: "Nimshi". For a recent article see <http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-sites-places/biblical-archaeology-sites/tel-rehov-house-associated-with-the-biblical-prophet-elisha/> as well as the July/August 2008 article "To What God?" in *Biblical Archaeology Review* for more detail about the house and its contents.

## Center Labs

By Monique Vincent

Volunteers in the Collections Lab have been especially busy over the summer. The volunteers have completed registering Middle Bronze Age pottery and are now experiencing the Dr. Seuss-like world of Late Bronze Age pottery. The colorful and oddly-shaped vessels spark lively conversations on the uses of ancient pottery, from perfume and oil juglets to the giant storage jars that held grains and other staples. The volunteers use a set of books to help fill out the registration sheets, including Ruth Amiran's classic *Ancient Pottery of the Holy Land*, which helps distinguish between Middle and Late Bronze Age jars. They also use *Ancient Pottery of Transjordan* to select technical descriptions for the rims, handles, and bases of each vessel. Finally, they use the best friend of every archaeologist for identifying the color of everything from excavation dirt to the clay of a bowl: *Munsell Soil Color Chart*. Reaching registration number 3500 by the end of August, the volunteers look forward to finding the next oddity hidden in a box of Late Bronze Age pottery, and recording that oddity for the database that will one day be accessible to public perusal.

The 'Umayri Lab is not completely empty in the absence of the student volunteers enjoying their summer break. I have worked on gluing together two stone vessels broken in antiquity: an alabaster jar and a finely-carved basalt bowl. Both were found in the Four-Room House at 'Umayri, dating to the Early Iron Age. Matthew Vincent, anthropology graduate student at the University of California San Diego, has brought in crates full of pottery from his excavations at Khirbat al-Balu'a

in Jordan. Taking advantage of the large comparative collection next door in the Collections Lab, Matthew has been spreading out his sherds and identifying the pottery under the tutelage of CNEA's Dr. Kent Bramlett.

Two new volunteers have arrived to try their hand at puzzling together pottery (see photo below). Cay and Carissa Paw are the first members of a new project to start restoring the broken pottery in the Collections Lab. Carefully cleaning and then gluing the broken pieces of a jar together requires steady hands and a great deal of patience. They are undergoing training at the moment but look forward to restoring their first ancient pottery. There are many tasks around the labs that need a helping hand, and new volunteers are always welcome!



## Summer Adventures in Jordan

By Douglas Clark



Loma Linda University Church group on tour at Tall al-'Umayri



Huda Kilani, Bilal Khrisat, and David Wuchenich doing Ground-penetrating Radar at Tall al-'Umayri



Gary, Danielle, and David Wuchenich in Petra



Ahmad, Cesar, Abad, and Doug wrestling two large ceramic jars into a truck for transport

For a complete report on the summer, visit: <http://www.madabaplains.org/umayri/weekly-reports.htm?y=2013>

## Display Case

By Monique Vincent

Late Bronze Age “*Bilbil*” Jug – small and large versions. This type of jug was an extremely popular import to the southern Levant from Cyprus during the Late Bronze Age (1550-1200 BC). The raised decoration and unique shape make this vessel immediately identifiable. Archaeologists suggest that the shape originates from an attempt to copy nature’s poppy seedpod, and have thus theorized that the smaller juglets were used to hold opium, a sedative and painkiller. Local potters in the southern Levant, eager to join in the craze, made their own versions

of these popular vessels, and even the Egyptians copied the shape in stone (or wood!). The finely handmade Cypriot *bilbils* have a distinctive lean to the neck, which the Levantine imitations, made on a wheel, did not. Adapting the vessel’s shape for stone also changed the neck and rim in the Egyptian versions made in serpentine or alabaster. The stone vessel featured in the Center Labs article from the ‘Umayri Lab is a good example of an Egyptian imitation carved in calcite alabaster, which then made its way through trade or diplomacy to a rural village in the highlands of Transjordan in the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC. Everybody, it seems, was eager to have their own *bilbil*!



### *La Sierra Digs*

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LA SIERRA UNIVERSITY

New CNEA logo

### *Calendar of Events*

- Mondays & Tuesdays — Labs open for volunteers
- 3 November — Center Open House for the Riverside and the Orange County societies of the Archaeological Institute of America
- 16-17 November Archaeology Discovery Weekend  
JERUSALEM + Grand Opening Gala
- 20-23 November — Annual Meeting of the American Schools of Oriental Research in Baltimore
- 25 June-30 July — Excavations in Jordan

#### OCCASIONALLY

- *Archaeology Adventures*
- *Archaeology Lectures*
- *Archaeology Across the Campus*

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](mailto:nyergen@lasierra.edu) or go online at <https://www.lasierraconnect.org/>

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