

La Sierra University

La Sierra Digs

Newsletter of the Center for Near Eastern Archaeology | HMS Richards Divinity School | La Sierra University | Vol 3:2 Autumn 2015

7th Annual Archaeology Discovery Weekend • Nov 14-15 2015

SYRIA

Immense archaeological wealth
Heritage under siege

Find out more at
lasierra.edu/archaeology

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LECTURE TOPICS

Syria's contributions to human history and culture, illicit use of artifacts to fund Syria's civil war, and technology to prevent the destruction of archaeological sites. Lectures by scholars from Syria, Europe, Canada, and the U.S.

SCHEDULE

Saturday, **November 14**

Illustrated presentations (Syria's treasures), Teacher Feature (part 1), Bedouin Hospitality Tent, Middle Eastern Banquet, and more!

Sunday, **November 15**

Illustrated presentations (Threats to Syria's archaeology), Teacher Feature (part 2), Kids Dig, and more!

LOCATIONS

Center for Near Eastern Archaeology & Zapara School of Business
at La Sierra University
4500 Riverwalk Parkway
Riverside CA, 92505

William Dever on Campus for Month of June

This summer we were honored to welcome renowned professor Dr. William Dever to La Sierra University. Dr. Dever spent four weeks at the CNEA, teaching classes and analyzing pottery. He taught an undergraduate class which focused on the archaeology of ordinary people in ancient Israel, and a graduate class based on proofs of his upcoming book, *The Archaeological History of Ancient Israel*, to delve into the physical evidence of biblical Israel. In addition to teaching, Dr. Dever worked daily in the lab with Dr. Kent Bramlett and graduate student Kristina Reed, reading and sorting pottery from the Early Bronze Age through the Iron Age. Together they organized chronological sequences of vessels, identified unusual or rare pieces, and enjoyed wonderful dialogue about the possible provenance of pieces in the collection. Dr. Dever also gave a public lecture, "How to Write an Archaeological History of Ancient Israel," in which he outlined some of the key points in his new book and regaled the audience with stories from the field.



CNEA Welcomes New Dean



The CNEA feels most fortunate to introduce as its new Dean (of the HMS Richards Divinity School) Dr. Friedbert Ninow who arrived on campus for his new job in July, 2015. Most recently he served as the president of the denomination's seminary (Theologischen Hochschule der Freikirche der Siebenten-Tags-Adventisten) in Friedensau bei Magdeburg, Germany.

Dean Ninow is an especially good fit to support the CNEA because, in addition to receiving his PhD from Andrews University in Old Testament/Near Eastern Archaeology, he has also worked as a field archaeologist in Jordan for nearly thirty years—now as the director of the Balu'a Regional Archaeological Project where he has been digging arguably the largest and most important archaeological site on the Moabite plateau, Khirbat al-Balu'a. In fact, his arrival in his new position makes possible LSU's joint research of the history and archaeology of both the Ammonites and Moabites, funded in part by Versacare Foundation. Dr. Ninow is married to Bernina, who volunteers in the CNEA, and they have two sons in Germany, Johannes and Marco.

Dr. Kent Bramlett Cited in New York Times Article

In response to a request from a *New York Times* journalist, who was writing a timely piece on Jerusalem's central sacred site (is it the Jewish Temple Mount or the Islamic Noble Sanctuary?), Kent Bramlett was involved in a 30-minute phone interview. The results: being cited in the article (<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/09/world/middleeast/historical-certainty-proves-elusive-at-jeruselems-holiest-place.html>).



Quoting a number of luminaries in the world of Jerusalem archaeology, the author saved Dr. Bramlett's comments until the end, as a kind of summary of current thinking: "Kent Bramlett, a professor of archaeology and history of antiquity at La Sierra University in Riverside, Calif., said historical records of the destruction committed by the Romans, just by themselves, are 'pretty overwhelming' in supporting the existence of the second temple in the immediate vicinity of the Dome of the Rock. Still, he said, 'I think one has to be careful about saying it stood where the Dome of the Rock stood.'"

Rami Khouri Lectures on ISIS in Syria and Iraq

Rami Khouri, internationally known and respected Middle Eastern journalist based in Beirut, delivered an exceptional lecture at the Troesh Auditorium in the Zapara School of Business, 13 October, entitled "Syria-Iraq and the ISIS Threat: How We Got Here and How We Get Out." The event was sponsored by CNEA and co-sponsored by the World Affairs Council of Inland Southern California and the Riverside Society of the Archaeological Institute of America, and drew more than 200 people. The lecture will be available online: check www.lasierra.edu/archaeology.

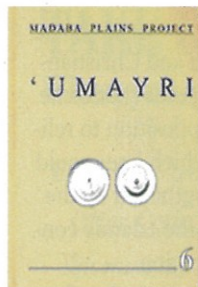


Best Scholarly Book on Archaeology

Madaba Plains Project 6

The 1996 and 1998 Seasons at Tall al-'Umayri and Subsequent Studies

Edited by Larry G. Herr, Douglas R. Clark, Lawrence T. Geraty, Randall W. Younker, Øystein S. LaBianca (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews Univ. Press, 2014)



Not only is this volume a paradigm for excavation reports, the treatment of the four-room house and the related Iron I settlement and defense systems will make this final excavation report a "must" reference for any article or book treating the early Israelites or other Iron Age I peoples (including the Ammonites). Although other periods are discussed exhaustively in this volume, this book is crucial for all Biblical historians and BAR readers. [Note: Judge Larry Herr recused himself from the selection of this volume.]



Honorary Doctorate Awarded to Mustafa al-Barari

Graduation weekend (12-14 June 2015) witnessed the award of an honorary doctorate (Honorary Doctor of Laws) by President Randal Wisbey to long-time friend of archaeology at the university and 2003 MBA alumnus, Mustafa al-Barari. In the words of Dr. Wisbey: "It is a privilege to welcome Mustafa al-Barari, President of the Audit Bureau of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, to receive the University's highest honor... Mr. al-Barari's connection to La Sierra University began in the summer of 1968 when his father worked for Dr. Larry Geraty, LSU President Emeritus... Mr. al-Barari, we want you to know how proud we are of your many achievements, your stalwart character, and your ethical and transparent leadership. Your alma mater is indeed honored today to bestow on you this Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*."



In prepared remarks for the occasion, (now) Dr. al-Barari said: "Since that time [at the completion of the MBA at La Sierra in 2003], La Sierra University, represented by your Excellency and distinguished professors, its professional, educational, and ethical values have always been my vision and my valuable key for any success I could have accomplished... The valuable academic and professional knowledge, which I have acquired from you, has always been, and will continue to be, the strengths of my capabilities and commitment to serving the academic and professional welfare of my country and the world... Finally, I would like to express my true commitment to dedicate my educational and professional knowledge and experiences to serving the academic and professional values of La Sierra University, and to the world."

UMAYRI

Madaba Plains Project



Dig Jordan this Summer!

22 June-27 July 2016

madabaplains.org/umayri



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SECURITY FORM
ABSOLUTE DEADLINE
1 MARCH 2016

Display Case

By Kristina Reed

Spindle bottles were part of the Red Lustrous Wheel-made Ware tradition of the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1500 – 1200 BCE). The northern coast of Cyprus was likely the main production area, but with a large number also found in northern Syria, it is possible there was a manufacturing center there as well (clay analyses have been inconclusive). Local imitations nearly identical to the imports were manufactured concurrently and were possibly made by Cypriot artisans living in Syria. Spindle bottles are easily recognizable for their graceful, elongated, tapered bodies. Style variations, from broad shouldered with a wide base and rim to a slender body with equal base and rim are found in Cyprus and the Levant, while other variations are only found on Cyprus. The fabric of spindle bottles varies from fine and inclusion-free to coarse, depending on where the bottles were manufactured. Fired at around 900° C (ca. 1600° F), the surface is burnished smooth and varies in color from red to orange. Over a quarter of known spindle bottles have pre-firing incised potter's marks on the bottom ranging from simple lines and swirls to script-like symbols; the meaning of the marks is still unclear. Residue analyses of spindle bottles have yielded traces of honey, beeswax, bitumen, reducing sugar, resin, and unguents, perhaps the secret recipe for an exotic, expensive perfume! Spindle bottles have been found throughout the Mediterranean, from Cyprus and Anatolia, to Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. Levantine sites include Ashkelon, Ugarit, Alalakh, Tyre, and Lachish. Primarily found in tombs, spindle bottles are often associated with the simple burials of infants and adolescents (with or without adults) that often contain multiple spindle bottles but little other burial goods such as metal objects, jewelry, or items of high intrinsic value. In Egypt, spindle bottles are not only found in tombs but may also be depicted on tomb walls, such as in the tomb of Rekhmire, an 18th Dynasty noble. Three of these beautiful spindle bottles are part of the collection at CNEA and will be on display during Archaeology Discovery Weekend, 14-15 November.



La Sierra Digs

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Calendar of Events — Autumn 2015

- Mondays & (some) Tuesdays — Labs open for volunteers
- 11 October — Mummies at the NHMLA
- 13 October — Rami Khouri on Syria & ISIS
- 23-24 October — Biblical Archaeology for 21st Century, Green Lake Church, Seattle
- 14-15 November — 7th annual Archaeology Discovery Weekend — Syria's Cultural Heritage at Risk
- 18-21 November — ASOR Conference in Atlanta with several CNEA presenters

OCCASIONALLY/OFTEN

- Archaeology Adventures
- Student Archaeology Club meetings
- Visit www.lasierra.edu/cnea for updates

SUPPORT CNEA!

If you would like to support the work of the Center for Near Eastern Archaeology — ongoing operations, student travel scholarships, the new Museum, etc. — contact the Office of University Advancement at 951 785-2500 or click on “Center for Near Eastern Archaeology” at <https://lasierra.edu/donate/>.

Recent Discoveries

Assembled by Monique Vincent

The Gate of Gath –

This summer the gates and fortifications of Philistine Gath were unearthed by a team of archaeologists working at Tell es-Safi. The impressively large gate attests to the importance and status of the city of Gath, known biblically as a Philistine refuge for David in his interactions with King Saul. Other excavated finds in the city illustrate Philistine daily life and material culture evidence for interactions with their neighbors.

See more at: <http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-sites-places/biblical-archaeology-places/iron-age-gate-and-fortifications-uncovered-in-philistine-gath/>

1,500-year-old copy of Leviticus identified through technology –

A burnt scroll excavated from a synagogue at Ein Gedi, Israel, was finally deciphered over 40 years later after a “virtual unwrapping” achieved by teamwork. The fragile scroll was scanned by a sophisticated x-ray process that left the scroll intact and unharmed. The research team was able to make out the first eight verses of the Book of Leviticus after “flattening” the digital scan and reading the charred ink of “the most ancient scroll” from the Pentateuch since the Dead Sea Scrolls. More at: <http://uknow.uky.edu/content/seales-research-team-reveals-biblical-text-damaged-scroll>