



CENTER FOR
NEAR EASTERN
ARCHAEOLOGY
LA SIERRA UNIVERSITY

La Sierra Digs

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The 2019 Season at Khirbat al-Balu'a

Khirbat al-Balu'a is a multi-period site in central Jordan, north of Karak. The Balu'a Regional Archaeological Project (BRAP) has renewed excavations at this important site, identifying three main areas of excavation in a pilot season in 2017. The most extensive period of occupation at Balu'a dates to the Iron II period (1000–550 B.C.), when the city expanded to include a large, walled lower settlement. The Iron II settlement is impressive, with building walls preserved to over 6 feet in height and doorways with stone lintels still intact. The site is located in what is traditionally known as the Moabite region of Jordan.

The three areas of focus for the 2019 season include: an Iron II domestic structure, preserved by a destruction event; a section of the Iron II defense system, which in 2017 included a case-mate room containing over 40 loom weights; and the monumental structure, the Qasr, that dominates the center of the site. The 2019 season will continue work in these key areas as well as in a Middle Islamic village. We will investigate everyday life, the society and economy, of the Iron Age by expanding our excavations of the Iron II house and fortification system. We will work to establish the founding date of the Qasr and clarify its use over the centuries as an Iron Age and later Nabataean structure. Focusing on larger aspects of trade and ancient climate will situate Balu'a in its larger social and environmental context over the millennia.

BRAP Directors: Kent Bramlett, Friedbert Ninow, Monique Vincent

20 June to 2 August
(half-season dates available)

Security Form Absolute Deadline: 1 March 2019

<https://www.madabaplains.org/umayri/balua-security-form.htm>

All potential participants must submit a security form by this deadline!

Application Deadline: 1 April 2019

<https://www.madabaplains.org/umayri/balua-application-form.htm>

Participant Cost: \$2,500 for the full season (does not include airfare)

For more information visit www.madabaplains.org/balua

For updates, photos, and newsletters from previous seasons visit

www.facebook.com/BRAPJordan

<https://www.madabaplains.org/umayri/balua-newsletter.htm>



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Tholos: Ancient Architectural Feature

Dawn Acevedo

A tholos (θόλος) is a circular construction with a domed or conical roof. Today, it is common to see tholoi (plural) in the form of a belvedere on a capital building or as a sort of pavilion similar to a gazebo. However, the tholos was around long before its well-known Greco-Roman form.

In the Bronze Age (ca. 3000–1250 BC), the Minoan and Mycenaean people groups made use of a tholos form for their tombs. The most famous example is the so-called “Treasury of Atreus” at Mycenae. These monumental “beehive” tombs and their smaller Minoan predecessors were built into vaulted domes created by rows of corbelled stones and frequently contained multiple burials—some remaining in use for up to 1000 years!

Into the Dark and Archaic ages, some of the tombs continued in use, while others became locations for ancestral or cult worship. Their circular shape and domed ceilings likely helped to inspire the round temples that developed in the following centuries.

As the Greek orders developed along with construction techniques and technology, elaborate tholos temples emerged honoring various gods and goddesses among the Greek pantheon. The Classical and Hellenistic ages gave birth to temples dedicated to Athena, Asclepius, and Hermes and Maia. Other tholoi served to honor athletes, provide a meeting hall for the Athenian prytaneis (executives of ancient Greek councils), or to commemorate King Philip of Macedon.

The Romans took these examples and adapted their own versions of the tholos in unique ways, such as the Pantheon of

Rome, famous for its concrete domed ceiling and oculus. There was, however, one Roman who made particularly creative use of the form on numerous occasions: Herod the Great.

Herod was—and is—renowned for his cutting-edge architecture including the Northern Palace at Masada and his man-made mountain-palace-fortress, Herodium. And just as daring as his locales were his stylistic choices! Masada’s three-tiered cliffhanger of a palace included a tholos reception hall. Here his guests could enjoy the breathtaking view of the surrounding desert and sea. Similarly, Herodium’s tholos-shaped eastern wing rising above the fortress walls provided an equally spectacular view, as well as a lookout for Herod’s watchmen. The lower palace included a tholos pavilion in the midst of its massive boating and swimming pool. And finally, on the northeastern slope of Herodium’s mount, Herod’s own mausoleum stood three stories tall, crowned by a white limestone tholos with a concave conical roof and decorative urns.

These Greek and Roman tholoi went on to inspire their Neoclassical and Greek Revival counterparts in Europe and North America during the 18th and 19th centuries. And while their beauty and influence is undeniable, the endurance of this feature of Bronze Age tombs to today remains a true testimony to the architectural prowess of their early builders.

New CNEA Assistant

Douglas Clark

The Center for Near Eastern Archaeology is proud to announce the official arrival of Dawn Acevedo as its new Curatorial Assistant, effective January. Dawn, a candidate in our MA in Near Eastern Archaeology program with only her thesis to complete, brings a good deal of archaeological and research experience to this position, and has already made professional presentations on her work (see her articles in *La Sierra Digs*) at Archaeology Discovery Weekend (November 2017) and the American Schools of Oriental Research (November 2018) in Denver.



Ancient Cosmetic Palettes

Betty Adams

Since the nineteenth-century excavations throughout the southern Levant (Israel, Palestine, Jordan) have been turning up “cosmetic palettes,” designated as such by the early archaeologists who presumed these small objects were appropriate for this use. They date from the 9th century BC to the Byzantine period in the 5th and 6th centuries AD.

Various excavators identify the artifacts as cosmetic palettes, compartmented palettes, simple palettes, cosmetic bowls, and cosmetic mortars. Sixty excavation sites across the Levant published palette finds. (This number regularly increases with the on-going publication of various excavation reports.) Primarily circular, the palettes range in size from 4 to 12 cm in



Photos by the author, clockwise from top left: Treasury of Atreus, corbelled vault of Treasury of Atreus, Temple of Hercules Victor in the Forum Boarium of Rome, concrete dome and oculus of Roman Pantheon.



diameter, with a circular depression of 0.50–2.0 cm and a base on the bottom.

Scholars suggest the cosmetics were blended in the depression of the palettes which were manufactured primarily of limestone with some made of glass, alabaster, basalt, sandstone and faience. The palettes were finely crafted, and frequently have incised and drilled designs on the rims. Several appear to feature handles, and some archaeologists suggest they may have had lids. There is no consensus on how the palettes were manufactured but archaeologists believe they were created locally in the Levant.

Palettes excavated in Mesopotamia and Egypt date as early as 4,000 BC. The dating of the palettes in the southern Levant falls primarily in the Iron II and Iron III (1000–550 BC) periods, raising the question of when cosmetic adornment began there. Cosmetic container residue tested from Egypt and Mesopotamia demonstrates sophisticated “wet” chemistry in the pigments recovered and analyzed. We are just beginning residue analysis on palettes from the southern Levant, so we do not know if the Iron Age inhabitants of the Levant practiced the same cosmetic techniques.

Examination of Biblical and Rabbinic texts corroborates the use of cosmetics in the southern Levant. The Old Testament books of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, 2 Kings, Proverbs, Ruth, Esther, and Job all mention cosmetics. Job 42:14 details that Job named his third daughter (following the destruction of his first family) “Keren-Happuch” which translates to “horn of antimony”—a documented ingredient for the black cosmetic eye kohl in ancient times. The Babylon Moed Kattan 9b and Babylon Sabbath 95a illuminate specific prohibitions and uses of cosmetics.

La Sierra University has a collection of cosmetic palettes,

cosmetic mortars, cosmetic implements and fragments from Tall al-'Umayri that date from Early Iron II to the Persian period (1000–325 BC). The Center for Near Eastern Archaeology is currently engaged in residue analysis of palettes in our collection, with the goal of illuminating the use of these beautiful artifacts.

MRAMP Workshop and Presentation at the 2018 Annual ASOR Meeting

Marta D'Andrea, Sapienza University of Rome, Italy

The Madaba Regional Archaeological Museum Project (MRAMP) is an American-Italian-Jordanian collaborative endeavor for the construction of a new museum to display the finds from the Madaba region and to encourage visitors to explore archaeological and heritage sites and monuments in Madaba and its district through directional maps and itineraries. The project is directed by Douglas R. Clark (La Sierra University), Marta D'Andrea (Sapienza University of Rome), Andrea Polcaro (Perugia University), and Suzanne Richard (Gannon University); Bassem Mahamid, director of the Madaba Office of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan, is the on-site coordinator.

The MRAMP project centers on archaeologically preparing an endangered urban area in downtown Madaba – the Archaeological Park West – in the location of the proposed new museum. The results of the third field season in May 2018, financially supported by USAID–SCHEP and MAECI, were presented at the MRAMP Workshop and in the Cultural Heritage Management Session during the 2018 ASOR Annual Meeting in Denver. Fieldwork in 2018 focused successfully on three major objectives:

1. To advance the redevelopment and conservation of the Madaba Archaeological Park West, through cleaning and clearing operations and stone walls consolidation.
2. To improve the planning process of the envisioned museum through exploratory probes and surveying and mapping by the architects and structural engineer.
3. To continue public engagement using MRAMP's activities for capacity building and training of local students, workers and specialists, and developing a strong base of stakeholders in the community.

Display Case

Dawn Acevedo

In the ancient world, fibulae were an essential part of everyday life. These proto-safety pins served as garment fasteners before buttons and button holes were developed. Fibulae originated in the Bronze Age and continued in use to the Middle Ages. They were made of bronze, iron, or precious metals, and in later times were decorated with a variety of inlays and served as brooches. The excavations at Tall al-'Umayri alone have yielded as many as 32 of these fasteners. Similarly designed to our modern safety pins, a fibula included the thicker, oftentimes decorative, body (called a bow or plate depending on the style), a hinge or coiled spring, and the pointed pin which would hook through the fabric and be secured in the body. Pictured here is U98 6569 (top), a partial bronze fibula from 'Umayri, and LSU005549 (bottom), a bronze fibula featuring decorative metal work from the CNEA collections.





Archaeology Discovery Weekend 2018

Douglas Clark

The tenth annual Archaeology Discovery Weekend at La Sierra provided a grand opportunity to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Madaba Plains Project in Jordan (a MAJOR feat in anybody’s book!) and to explore how “biblical” archaeology has transformed over those five decades (see the program at: <https://lasierra.edu/fileadmin/documents/cnea/discovery-weekend/adw-2018-program.pdf>).

Saturday 10 November was dedicated to the Madaba Plains Project, sponsored in large part by La Sierra University, through several excavation site presentations and panel discussions by world-class archaeologists in front of 175 attendees. This was followed by a reception in our Madaba, Jordan-made Bedouin goat-hair tent, a genuine Jordanian banquet, and a reunion reception for MPP veterans and friends.

On Sunday the 11th the focus changed to the at times seismic shifts that have occurred over the past half century among archaeologists attempting to understand how their discipline and the Bible complement or conflict with each other and the reasons for new and emerging dynamics in the relationship between the two. The program took two directions: (1) recounting the history of biblical archaeology and (2) mapping out how we might proceed from here.



One major player in the discussions, debates, and knock-down, drag-out battles has been William Dever who, with others, shook up the world of biblical archaeology in the 1960s and 1970s, recommending a more scientifically based approach. Over the years this has worked itself out in a new volume

by Dever on the history of ancient Israel, based primarily on archaeological results.

The second day ended with a kids dig for 6–12 year olds and several interactive lab activities for families.

Events like Archaeology Discovery Weekend often bring with them surprises. This event was no exception. Here are some examples:

1. It is surprising that scholars can get along on one project for any longer than a few short years, let alone 50!
2. It has been a pleasant surprise that MPP veterans are capable of celebrating MPP@50 at parties and events for over a year—September 2017 through November 2018!
3. The weather surprised us this year, high Santa Ana winds kicking up and taking down our Bedouin tent on Sunday, even though I anchored it well. I was told by one of the weekend participants that my Bedouin tent credentials were being revoked.

For a more comprehensive and illustrated online report, see Darla Martin Tucker’s piece at: <https://lasierra.edu/article/archaeologists-culminate-50-year-jordan-project-celebrations-at-la-sierra/>



Invitation to Homecoming

The Center for Near Eastern Archaeology extends a warm invitation to all to La Sierra’s Alumni Homecoming Weekend on 26–28 April, 2019, for archaeological presentations and displays, hospitality in the center’s Bedouin goat-hair tent, and the honoring of two recipients of the inaugural CNEA Archaeology Awards. Here is the schedule:

Alumni Homecoming Weekend 2019 Events:

CNEA Program – Saturday 27 April

1:00–5:00 PM

Open House: CNEA and Bedouin Hospitality Tent

3:30–5:00 PM

In Pursuit of Ancient Moabites: La Sierra Digs at Ataruz and Balu’a, Jordan

Chang Ho Ji, Kent Bramlett, and Friedbert Ninow

CNEA Archaeology Award Recipients

Dr. Randal Wisbey and Dr. Audrey Shaffer

CNEA/MPP–Connected Presentations at ASOR in Denver, November 2018

Larry Geraty

La Sierra University archaeologists from CNEA were very involved in giving scholarly papers at the most recent annual meeting of the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR) held in Denver from November 14 to 17, 2018. They included:



- Richards Divinity School Dean Friedbert Ninow (with Craig Tyson from D'Youville College), "A Basalt Volute Capital Fragment from Khirbat al-Balu'a."
- School of Education Department Chair Chang-Ho Ji (with Aaron Schade from Brigham Young University), "The Khirbat Ataruz Project (2016–2017): Excavations of the Acropolis and Southeastern Slope."
- CNEA Director Doug Clark (with several others), "The Madaba Regional Archaeological Museum Project: Community Archaeology in Its Third Season (2018)."
- Richards Divinity School Visiting Professor M. Isaac, "Negotiating Refugee Identity in Judah: Israelite Tribal Names in Judean Inscriptions in the Wake of Assyrian Invasions."
- CNEA Curatorial Assistant and M.A. Candidate, Dawn Acevedo, "Death, Delight, and Decor: Herod the Great's Use of the Tholos."
- CNEA M.A. Graduate, Betty Adams (with Professor Kent Bramlett), "Iron Age Cosmetics: The Proof Is in the Palette, Everyone Is an Esthetician."

Other archaeologists, mostly from our sister institution, Andrews University, which has been involved through the years with La Sierra through what we call The Madaba Plains Project (MPP), were also active in giving papers, including:

- Øystein LaBianca (with students), "Ground-Truthing of Animated Renderings of the Historical Landscape of Hisban and Vicinity."
- Paul Gregor, "Khirbat Safra: Military Installation or Regular Settlement?"
- Robert Bates (with Bethany Walker of the University of Bonn), "Living the Domestic Life: A Preliminary Report of the Medieval Village at Tall Hisban from the 2016–2018 Excavation Seasons"; plus Bethany Walker's own, "Pottery for the General Staff: What Was the Function of Mamluk 'Barracks Wares'?"
- Maria Elena Ronza, "Community Archaeology in Jordan—A White Paper."

In addition to others, 17 total papers (3.5%) of the 500 papers given at the annual archaeology meetings in Denver in 2018 were given by CNEA- and MPP-related scholars. So, yes indeed, we are making a contribution to the archaeology of the ancient Near East.

La Sierra Represented at the 14th Triennial Conference on the History and Archaeology of Jordan (ICHAJ) in Florence, Italy

Douglas Clark

Initiated and sponsored by HRH Prince Hassan bin Talal of the royal family of Jordan, the International Conference on the History and Archaeology of Jordan (ICHAJ) was first opened at Oxford University in the UK in 1980, and has been held every three years since then in various venues around the world. La Sierra archaeologists have participated from the beginning, Larry Geraty attending in 1980 and several afterward. Doug Clark first participated in 1995 (ICHAJ 6 in Torino, Italy) and has attended every one since, even co-organizing ICHAJ 10 in Washington, D.C., with Barbara Porter, Director of ACOR in Amman, Jordan. Kent Bramlett, Friedbert Ninow, Chang Ho Ji, and Monique Vincent have also made presentations at ICHAJ conferences over the years.

The 14th edition of ICHAJ was convened in Florence, Italy, the birthplace of the Renaissance, a city filled to overflowing with artistic and architectural works by Michelangelo, Da Vinci, Dante, and Brunelleschi. A number of Madaba Plains Project archaeologists made presentations in Florence, and the CNEA was represented by Chang Ho Ji, in a presentation on his site of Ataruz, and by Doug Clark as lead presenter in two jointly authored papers on the Madaba Regional Archaeological Museum Project (MRAMP), a contributing author in another presentation on MRAMP, and a secondary author on a paper comparing the disciplines of astronomy and archaeology.

For more information on the entire program and presentation abstracts see: www.ichaj.org.



Opening ceremonies in the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence with HRH Prince Hassan in the center (G. Deir)



Opening ceremonies in the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence (G. Deir)



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Calendar of Events 2019–2020 www.lasierra.edu/archaeology

26 – 28 April 2019

La Sierra Homecoming with archaeological events at the CNEA!

20 June – 2 August 2019

BRAP Excavations at Khirbat al-Balu'a

21 June – 7 July 2019

Excavations at Ataruz

16 – 17 November 2019

Archaeology Discovery Weekend – Ancient Synagogues and Churches in the Region of the Galilee

URGENT REQUEST FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT!

The Center for Near Eastern Archaeology is on the move! But we are entirely dependent on donations to carry out our programs and support students. The 2018–2019 fiscal year shows significant financial stress and now is when we need your help – URGENTLY! Please go online at <https://lasierra.edu/donate> and click on “Center for Near Eastern Archaeology” to make your contribution. Or contact the Office of University Advancement at (951) 785-2500.

Thank you!

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Recent Discoveries

Assembled by Monique Vincent

Learning from the Crusades

Two articles on *The Fihrist* emphasize the unexpected impact of the educated and enlightened Muslim world on the pre-Renaissance Christian world during the period of the Crusades. *The Fihrist* is a 10th century catalogue of centuries of learning compiled by a scholar from Baghdad, including not only Islamic scholarship but Greek and Roman literature as well. As one article states, “The Christians set out to conquer the ‘infidel,’ but the ‘infidel’ ended up educating the Christians.” Find more at https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-topics/post-biblical-period/an-unexpected-consequence-of-the-christian-crusades/?mqsc=E4007935&utm_source=WhatCountsEmail&utm_medium=BHD-Week%20in%20Review%20Newsletter&utm_campaign=ZE8ANXZ80

Community Archaeology

The Sustainable Cultural Heritage through Engagement of Local Communities Project (SCHEP), established by the American Center of Oriental Research in Amman, Jordan, is featured in a recent article on the project’s goals and presentations at the International Conference on the History and Archaeology of Jordan (ICHAJ), held in Florence, Italy, this January 2019. The article emphasizes the importance of involvement with local communities to the success of long-term preservation and presentation of an archaeological site. On a side note, one of the SCHEP projects is the Madaba Regional Archaeological Museum Project, sponsored in part by the CNEA. Read more at <https://www.al-fanar-media.org/2019/01/in-jordan-antiquities-sites-enlist-nearby-communities-as-partners/>

King Nabonidus in Sela, Jordan

Archaeologists working in Sela (in southern Jordan north of Petra) enlisted the help of professional climbers to document inscriptions cut into monumental rock. One of these was a hard-to-access inscription, nearly 300 feet up the face of the rock, of the Neo-Babylonian king Nabonidus, who campaigned in the Edomite area in 552 BC. Read more at <http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/archaeologists-explore-history-mysterious-mountain-stronghold-'sela'-southwest-jordan>

Bogus Archaeology in the Media

This must-read article discusses some of the recent popular media about archaeology, such as “Ancient Aliens” and “Legends of the Lost,” and describes how they have wound together “real archaeology” with “psuedoarchaeological” claims to create unfounded and confusing conclusions about the past. Read more about how fact and myth are tied dangerously together at https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2018/12/28/how-tv-shows-use-serious-archaeology-promote-bogus-history/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.33076fe5ae52