



CENTER FOR  
NEAR EASTERN  
ARCHAEOLOGY  
LA SIERRA UNIVERSITY

# La Sierra Digs

Newsletter of the Center for Near Eastern Archaeology | HMS Richards Divinity School | La Sierra University | Vol. 9:1 Winter 2021

## Kershaw Library Donation

Douglas R. Clark

Long-time friend and supporter of CNEA, Norma Kershaw of Mission Viejo, CA, passed away in September. With warm admiration and affection, we dedicated November's Archaeology Discovery Weekend (ADW) to her memory. In December, her two daughters, Barbara Rosenthal and Janet McLennan, decided that CNEA would provide a suitable home for Norma's library of mostly art history volumes, along with religious books. The 600 volumes have been packed and transported to La Sierra by Larry Geraty, Dawn Acevedo, and Doug Clark, where they await inventorying and placement (see all 39 boxes in the CNEA hallway in the photo below). Space is limited at CNEA, but this collection of some of the best art history resources available by a well-known and respected art history teacher and specialist has already earned its place in our library collection. It will also occupy a prominent place in the library of the new museum when it is completed.

As this issue of *La Sierra Digs* is nearly ready for publication, we just learned that Barbara and Janet have also decided to donate Norma's massive collection of spectacular slides, again mostly art history, to CNEA. While we will have more to say in the future regarding both collections as we learn more about them, we want to express our gratitude for this additional part of Norma's library. We are now more than ever motivated to develop our capacity to archive this and other slide collections, following best practices, for onsite and online use.



## La Sierra's "Giving Day" Supports CNEA

Lawrence T. Geraty

La Sierra University's first "Giving Day" took place on December 9, 2020. Other institutions and non-profit organizations have found this type of campus-wide program to be a highly effective way of bringing together students, alumni, faculty, staff, parents, and friends to support their institution and build a strong base of donors. During events like these, participants can engage in hours of activities and actions that bring them closer as a community and encourage each other to support the future of their institution. So, Kristine Barker of La Sierra's Advancement Office, together with several of her colleagues, organized such an event for La Sierra. They set a fundraising goal of \$400,000 across nine different departments. Donors could participate in nearly 20 virtual events while giving to their favorite project, department, or cause (to see ours, click on Ask an Archaeologist).

The result? In addition to a host of participants having a "blast," 403 donors contributed \$407,455 to the university! You'll be happy to know that 66 donors contributed (or pledged) almost \$60,000 to the Center for Near Eastern Archaeology! Mostly from California, these donors also came from many different states, including ID, IL, NY, OH, OR, TN, UT, VA, and WA. A HUGE thank you for your generous support! And thank you for continuing to give at [Donate to CNEA!](#)

LA SIERRA UNIVERSITY  
giving day

Archaeology

\$59,445.97 Total Raised

\$60,000 Goal

Donors Fundraiser

Make a Gift

Join This Team

Event Fundraisers Donors Comments

**CENTER FOR NEAR EASTERN ARCHAEOLOGY**

In order to keep operating, the Center for Near Eastern Archaeology's annual \$100,000 budget relies entirely on contributions. With this support, the department can pay the part-time director and curator, maintain the center, host the annual Archaeology Discovery Weekend, and facilitate Archaeology Adventures for hundreds of elementary and middle-school students each year.

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## Archaeology Discovery Weekend 2020

*Douglas R. Clark*

Archaeology Discovery Weekend 2020 was like no other. Because of COVID, the normally two-day, in-person weekend event was shortened to a three-hour, entirely virtual and continuous series of presentations on “A Passion for Preserving the Past: Showcasing Archaeology at La Sierra University.” The result of this pivot from onsite to online meant the absence of our normal, socially engaging, on-campus activities (Middle Eastern banquet, in-person illustrated lectures, Kids Dig, Bedouin tent hospitality, artifact displays), but it also meant the discovery of useful new broadcast technology tools as well as a globally accessible audience otherwise unable to “attend.”

Fun facts:

- The combined PowerPoint presentation consisted of 205 slides (many with embedded videos) and took up 3.13 GB of memory, all of which translated into a continuous recorded video of the program of 100 GB. Registrations numbered around 220, these coming from six continents, including participants in the US, Canada, Europe, and Australia, as well as distant places like Brazil and Jordan.

- Attendee comments: “Impressive!!!” content and flow; “... this was marvelously presented”; “... I took several pages of notes”; “Thanks I really enjoyed the webcast”; “I just wanted to say congrats on a job very well done with the first virtual archaeology weekend! It moved right along like clockwork from my vantage point as an attendee today, with really interesting presentations—excellent work!”

- The team: President Joy Fehr; Provost April Summitt; publicist Darla Martin-Tucker; CNEA curatorial assistant Dawn Acevedo; coordinator Jennifer Helbley, assisted by Carolyn Waldron; Physical Plant and Custodial, Marketing, and Advancement departments; our IT team—David Hunter, Christian Liang, and Greg Jimenez; presenters Larry Herr, Kent Bramlett, Monique Vincent, Chang Ho Ji, Suzanne Richard, Dawn Acevedo, Terri Shaw, Doug Clark, and Larry Geraty; and long-standing co-sponsors.

- Equipment: a lab counter full of sophisticated equipment with three video cameras, two light trees, several monitors, and computers galore.



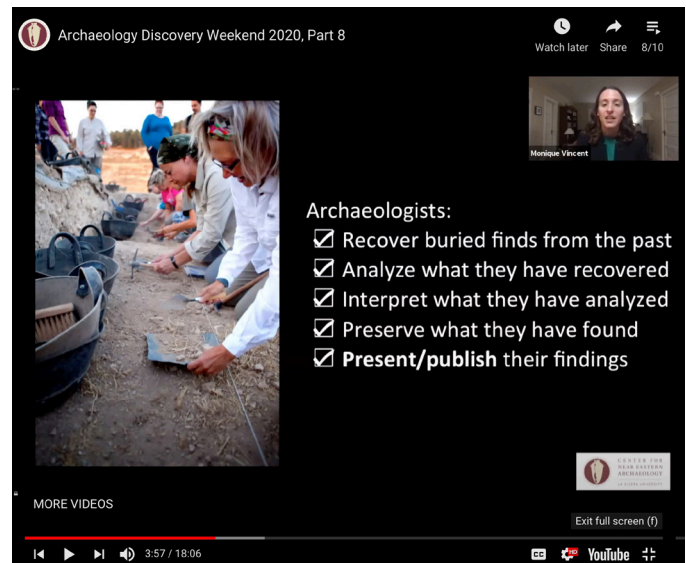
While adjusting to new dynamics in new environments with new requirements, presenters rose to the challenge. Most of us were at CNEA and faced adjustments of our own, but those who co-presented from remote locations experienced other issues. Some of us could not see our co-presenters, which made it interesting to know when to stop or start speaking without a visual signal on our faces. In the end, however, the conversations seemed to go well. We hope that the focus on foreign field excavations as well as home-grown research, all connected to CNEA, spoke well of our commitments to preserving the past with passion, including the biblical past.

For the full “printed” program, visit: [ADW 2020 Program](#).

For video recordings of the entire program (with closed captioning available), visit [HERE](#).

And for a very nice illustrated report of the event laced with personal stories and reflections, read the online press release by Darla Martin-Tucker. She begins:

“RIVERSIDE, Calif. – It was midnight in Germany when an archaeology event highlighting ancient discoveries began streaming live from 6,000 miles away at La Sierra University. But Evanthia Hatziminaoglou, an astrophysicist with the European Southern Observatory in Garching bei München, decided to view as much of it as energy levels would allow....” See the full report here: [Martin-Tucker report](#).



## Website Upgrades

*Dawn Acevedo*

We are happy to announce a few changes to our website (<https://lasierra.edu/archaeology>) designed to bring you more content and connect you to the various projects happening through the Center for Near Eastern Archaeology!

First, information for [Archaeology Discovery Weekend 2021](#) is already being posted as preparations are underway for our biggest event of the year!

Second, check out the updated “[Projects/Excavations](#)” page which lists the various endeavors in which CNEA is engaged. Follow the links to visit the website for each project or dig that interests you.



Third, we've revamped our "[Galleries](#)" page to include our virtual tours and 3D artifacts; videos, among which you'll find recordings from ADW 2020 (now with closed captioning!); and photos from past study tours.

And be sure to keep an eye out for future website additions as we continue to add visual content, interactive elements, and opportunities to engage with the past both at home and abroad.

## New Museum Software Adopted

*Kent Bramlett*

An online museum experience is in the works! La Sierra University Advancement together with the Center for Near Eastern Archaeology and the World Museum of Natural History has contracted with Lucidea (<https://lucidea.com>) to implement their museum collections management software called Argus. Argus is a versatile and powerful web-based management suite that will allow us to associate all of our data for each of our thousands of objects in the collections and to record, track, and store all of that information with full search and display capabilities via web browsers, museum kiosks, and personal devices such as smart phones.

Argus provides options for integration into the La Sierra University website as a museum portal through which our collections can be studied and enjoyed by the general public. Full control of the settings allows us to determine which information, photo resolutions, etc. are made available to the public.

(continued on page 4)

## Display Case

*Dawn Acevedo*

Recently, CNEA had the privilege of showcasing a very important artifact on the sets of our virtual Archaeology Discovery Weekend (November 2020) and Doug Clark's online lecture with the American Center of Research in Amman, Jordan (January 2021). What artifact might that be? Why, none other than one of the seventy-plus collared pithoi (large storage jars) that were excavated from the four-room house at Tall al-'Umayri, Jordan!

These jars, quintessential pieces of Iron Age ceramic technology, are best known for their iconic neck and rim profiles (see photo). They were used mostly for storing grains and probably liquids, and because of this, archaeologists have been able to glean from them valuable information about diet in the ancient world. While the fabric of the clay varies, it is usually poorly levigated with large mineral and straw inclusions, typical of chunkier Iron Age pottery. Furthermore, the jars were usually not well-fired, leaving a dark core between the baked inner and outer walls of the vessels.

The 'Umayri corpus, however, may reveal a lengthi-

er-than-normal time span for these jars. According to an upcoming article from Dr. Larry Herr (Burman University), while

the type seems relatively short-lived in areas west of the Jordan River, usually confined to the Iron Age I period, 'Umayri and other sites in central Jordan exhibit collared jars ranging from the 13th to the 5th centuries BC, as late as the early Persian period. As for our virtual co-star, this collared jar dates to approximately 1200 BC, during the transition between the Late Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age.



(continued from page 3) Selections can be created for classroom lectures or online assignments, or sets created and saved by visiting scholars or interested visitors. In the near future, La Sierra will be able to present a virtual museum as planning moves forward on the physical museum construction. Several of us are currently indexing and working with the deployment team at Argus to bring this live in the next few months.

### Banner Year for the Madaba Regional Archaeological Museum Project (MRAMP)

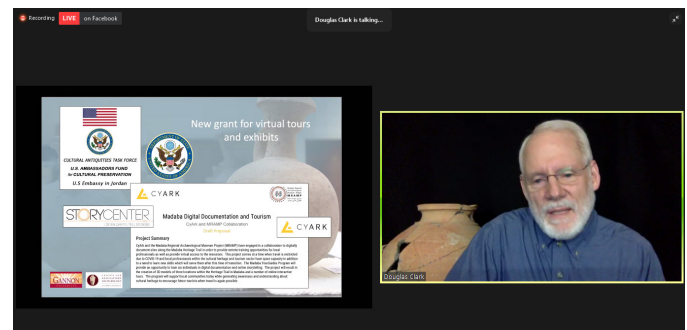
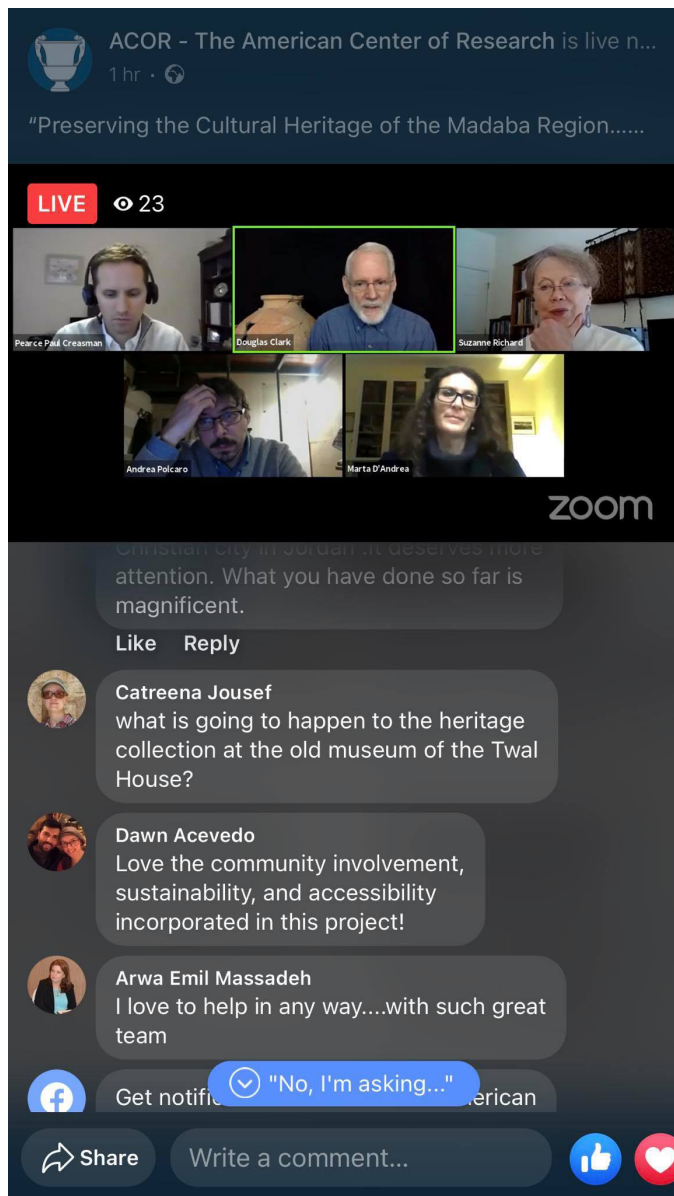
*Douglas R. Clark*

Noteworthy as a “community archaeology” success story, the Madaba Regional Archaeological Museum Project (MRAMP) recently reported to a global audience on its progress over the past several years, with special attention given to the last few months. The report, the first virtual presentation of 2021 in the ACOR Lecture Series (American Center of Research in Amman, Jordan), provided a comprehensive treatment of the project,

co-sponsored since its inception by CNEA, along with Gannon University in Erie, PA; Perugia University in Perugia, Italy; Sapienza University of Rome, Italy, and the Department of Antiquities of Jordan. The illustrated presentation by MRAMP co-directors, along with online discussion and Q&A, can be viewed in its entirety by visiting the [CNEA video page](#) and clicking on “Preserving the Cultural Heritage of the Madaba Region of Jordan ... Together: The Madaba Regional Archaeological Museum Project (MRAMP) and Community Archaeology.”

The seminal importance of this report rests in several factors:

- 1) The report captures comprehensively the ethos, history, and contributions of MRAMP from its inception through January 2021.
  - 2) It acknowledges, with gratitude, the whole range of resources and support systems making MRAMP possible, especially the US Department of State and Italy’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.
  - 3) It salutes the wide and diverse range of international, national, regional, and local stakeholders, partners in an immense shared endeavor.
  - 4) It lays out illustratively the entire compendium of accomplishments and contributions of MRAMP a) to the preservation of the region’s incredibly rich cultural heritage, b) to the enhancement of economic opportunity tied to cultural heritage, and c) to the quest for sustainable preservation through community engagement.
  - 5) It reports on three major locations of ONSITE progress: the Madaba Archaeological Park West with the Martyrs Church and Burnt Palace, the city of Madaba in general, and the current museum.
  - 6) It covers three major ONLINE contributions: the virtual museum (a short must-see [3D video](#) of the architectural concept design of the proposed new museum); virtual tours of three major archaeological locations in historic downtown Madaba (the Hippolytus Hall/Church of the Virgin Mary, the Burnt Palace, and St. George’s map church, complete with 3D video imagery [ground – and drone-captured] and embedded with comments from tour guides and local storytellers); and the new bi-lingual MRAMP website ([madabamuseum.org](http://madabamuseum.org)).
  - 7) The report also lays out both ONSITE and ONLINE plans, hopes, and dreams for 2021 and beyond.
- The best way to capture MRAMP to this point in its history, development, and aspirations for the future? View the [ACOR lecture here](#).





## From Jordan Excavation to La Sierra Study Season

*Monique Vincent and Kent Bramlett*

Given the tenuous situation surrounding COVID, the Balu'a Regional Archaeological Project (BRAP) directors have decided to postpone the full 2021 dig season to 2022 and will instead conduct a study season at La Sierra University this summer. So that graduate and undergraduate students can still complete their requirements, BRAP will offer credits they need, focusing on processing and analyzing the finds and data in order to prepare publications. Toward these objectives, the program will offer fieldwork courses concentrating on post-excavation aspects of the project.

Tentative dates for this summer intensive session are June 16–30. More information on registering for these courses is coming soon.

Course offerings will include:

Undergraduate:

- ARCH/RELB 494 Fieldwork in Ancient Near Eastern/Middle Eastern Archaeology (1–8)
- ARCH 495 Topics in Archaeology: Household Archaeology (4)

Graduate:

- ARCH/RELB 594 Fieldwork in Ancient Near Eastern/Middle Eastern Archaeology (1–8)
- ARCH 695 Topics in Archaeology: Household Archaeology (4)

Instructors:

Kent Bramlett (Ph.D. University of Toronto)

Monique Vincent (Ph.D. University of Chicago)

Students interested in participating in this field school should contact the co-directors at [mvincent@lasierra.edu](mailto:mvincent@lasierra.edu).

For more information about the project, visit [here](#).



## Archaeology Discovery Weekend 2021

Based on lessons learned last November, Archaeology Discovery Weekend 2021 will be held 13–14 November on campus AND online. Of course, the in-person option will occur only if our global virus situation has improved sufficiently to protect the wellbeing and safety of all. The focus: “Southwest Turkey: Famous Cities, Churches, and Synagogues.” For more information, stay close to the ADW 2021 webpage at: [ADW 2021](#).

## Khirbat Ataruz, 2021

*Chang Ho Ji*

Khirbat Ataruz is a biblical cultic site in central Jordan. It is also mentioned in the Mesha Inscription, as a city built by Omri for the Gadites. The research team, under the direction of Chang-ho Ji (La Sierra University) and Aaron Schade (Brigham Young University), is planning to conduct a two-week excavation and study season at the site from July 5 to July 19, mostly focusing on the eastern terrace of the acropolis (Field E) and the southeastern slope of the site (Field F). Also, a group of geologists from Brigham Young University will join the project for ground-penetrating radar (GPR). They will attempt to identify and image underlying archaeological features of unexcavated areas.

Dates of the Dig: July 5–19, 2021

Application Due: February 20, 2021

Accommodations: The accommodation is at the Mariam Hotel in Madaba. The rooms are clean and simple. Each room has air conditioning; it accommodates two people and has a toilet and shower attached. We offer full board (4 meals a day, including late breakfast in the field). Vegetarian meals are available. Transport to the site and the excursions are included.

For more information: [www.ataruz.org](http://www.ataruz.org)



13<sup>th</sup> Annual Archaeology Discovery Weekend

# Southwest Turkey

Famous Cities, Churches, and Synagogues

Find out more at [lasierra.edu/archaeology](http://lasierra.edu/archaeology)

November  
13-14  
2021

La Sierra University  
Center for Near Eastern Archaeology

In Person and Online



**Excavating the Bible: The Broadcasts that Keep on Playing**

*Douglas R. Clark*

The opening lines of each of the 165 Excavating the Bible broadcast episodes: "... a program dedicated to exploring the contributions of Middle Eastern archaeology to our understanding of and appreciation for the Bible." Taped and aired by the Loma Linda Broadcast Network (LLBN), Excavating the Bible was developed and recorded over a period of more than three years, producing a new episode every single week over this timeframe. The program was co-hosted by Doug Clark and Larry Geraty and often featured Kent Bramlett, as well as other La Sierra specialists and those from places around the US and Canada. Kristina Reed, an MA student and CNEA assistant at the time, was responsible for packaging and sending with us to recording sessions all the varied artifacts we displayed each week.

Of the 165 episodes, 25 cover archaeological sites; 15 deal with archaeological themes; six are tied to archaeological finds; and, the vast majority of 119 (72% of all episodes) relate directly to archaeology and the Bible, book by book.

While LLBN continues to play episodes of Excavating the Bible, they are also now available on the LLBN YouTube channel and can be accessed through CNEA by clicking [HERE](#).

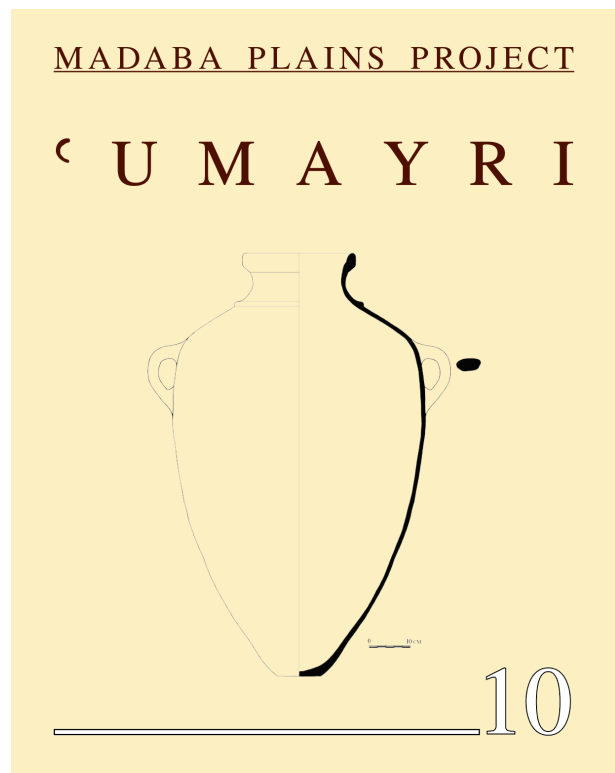


**Homecoming Weekend – CNEA Presentations and Awards**

La Sierra’s Homecoming Weekend this year will be entirely online, as will our annual CNEA Homecoming presentation and awards session. The program will take place at 3:00–4:30 PM on Saturday 17 April 2021 and is titled: “CNEA Presents: Ancient Coins, Recent Initiatives, and Award Presentations.” Please plan to join us for a presentation by Theresa Shaw, a retired attorney and CNEA lab volunteer, along with Kent Bramlett, Professor of Archaeology and the History of Antiquity, who will “show and tell” some of the 1,100 ancient coins in the CNEA collection in a presentation called: “Shifting Images on Ancient Coins: Progression from Roman Paganism to Byzantine Christians.” We will also provide updates on some of the CNEA projects currently underway at home, in the Middle East, and online, and will conclude with CNEA Archaeology Awards. Recipients include Dr. and Mrs. Gary and Suha Huffaker, long-time volunteers in excavation and CNEA activities, and Vera Kopecky, also an excavator with our projects in Jordan and our

expert lab photographer.

For more details as they become available, occasionally check our [website](#) or the [Alumni page](#) on the La Sierra website.



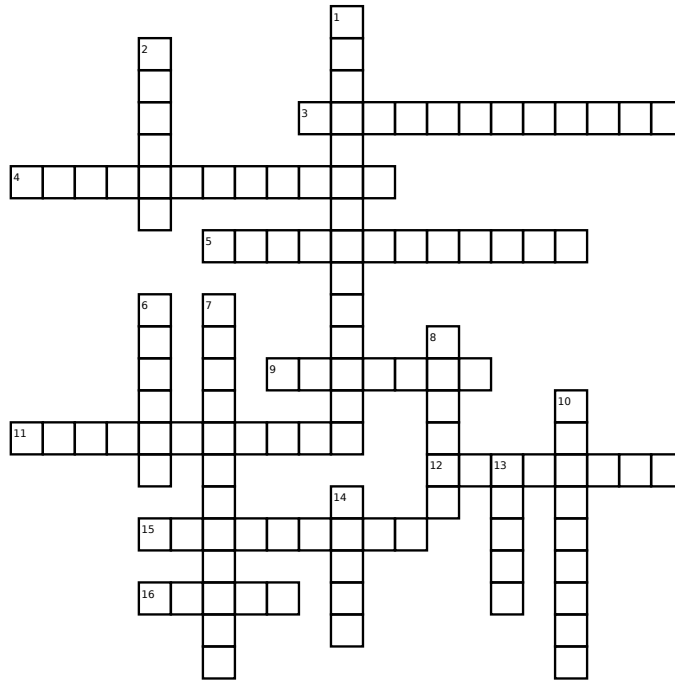
**Madaba Plains Project 10 - ‘Umayri**

The 10th volume of the Madaba Plains Project – Tall al-‘Umayri publication series covers the 2006 excavation season. This volume is heading into print and should be available this coming November, 2021. Edited by Larry Herr of Burman University, Douglas Clark and Lawrence Geraty of La Sierra University, and Monique Vincent of Walla Walla University, the volume covers field reports for Tall al-‘Umayri, Jordan: Fields A (The Western Perimeter Wall), B (The Northwestern Acropolis), H (The Southwestern Corner), and L (The Southern Edge). In addition, the pottery and artifacts received special treatment for what they can tell us about the daily life of ancient inhabitants of Ammonite lands. One of the best preserved archaeological sites in the region, ‘Umayri has produced essential information about its inhabitants from around 3000 BC through 500 BC.

**New! Interactive Elements in Digs**

Introducing our new interactive section of the La Sierra Digs newsletter. We hope these puzzles, jokes, stories, games, and more bring a smile to your face and help you get to know the Center for Near Eastern Archaeology a little better. Each volume of our newsletter will feature a new fun element for you - some may even involve prizes! This edition of Digs features our first-ever interactive element: a CNEA-themed crossword puzzle. Using the clues on page 7, fill in the boxes with the correct word or words. To access the puzzle answers, check our [website here](#).

# CNEA Crossword - Winter 2021



## Down:

1. A photographic technique that creates a 3D rendering of an area by overlapping images.
2. One of the Madaba Plains Project's dig sites.
6. The country in which CNEA is currently conducting all of its excavations.
7. The study of plant and animal fossils.
8. An archaeologist's number-one tool.
10. The city where CNEA is located.
13. Historic artifacts that can provide nearly-precise dating in context.
14. CNEA's newest excavation project.

## Across:

3. The visible layering of dirt and debris which reveals different occupation levels at a site.
4. The study of human societies, cultures, biology, behavior, and their development.
5. A fictitious figure who is more a treasure-hunter than an archaeologist.
9. One of the most easily datable artifacts according to its typology.
11. The study of human prehistory and history through excavation and analysis.
12. What an archaeologist does in the field.
15. A time period in the Near East spanning from about 3000 BC to 1200 BC.
16. A flying machine that can take pictures.



### *La Sierra Digs*

Editors: Douglas Clark & Dawn Acevedo

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APAAME

Center for Near Eastern Archaeology  
HMS Richards Divinity School  
La Sierra University  
4500 Riverwalk Parkway  
(951) 785-2632 (CNEA)  
archaeology@lasierra.edu  
www.lasierra.edu/archaeology  
www.facebook.com/lasierracnea

La Sierra University  
Center for Near Eastern Archaeology  
4500 Riverwalk Parkway  
Riverside, CA 92505



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#### 2021 Calendar of Events

16–17 April 2021

La Sierra Alumni Virtual Homecoming

16–30 June 2021

Balu'a Study Season at La Sierra U.

5–19 July 2021

Ataruz Excavations/Study Season in Jordan

13–14 November 2021

Archaeology Discovery Weekend 2021:  
Southwest Turkey: Famous Cities, Churches,  
and Synagogues

#### SUPPORT CNEA!

As this issue of *La Sierra Digs* makes clear, the Center for Near Eastern Archaeology at La Sierra University is on the move! And it needs your support for student travel scholarships, the new university museum, and ongoing operations. 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!

### Recent Discoveries

Assembled by Dawn Acevedo

#### Evidence for 5th-century Byzantine Church in Nazareth

A Greek dedicatory inscription, uncovered in secondary use during salvage excavations at Taibe, a small Arab village near modern Nazareth, includes the words "Christ born of Mary." It is the first evidence in the area for a Christian community during the 5th-century AD, and even mentions the known archbishop Theodosius of Beit She'an. Source: [Times of Israel](#)

#### The Color of the Kings

In January, researchers from the Israel Antiquities Authority announced the identification of "royal purple" textiles from the Timna Valley. Radiocarbon dating places the colored fabrics around 1000 BC, the time of the Davidic and Solomonic monarchies. The rich color, produced from mollusks, was reserved for nobility and priests and is believed to have been more costly than gold. Until now, there had not been physical evidence of purple fabric from the Iron Age, only evidence of production of the dye. Source: [Friends of IAA](#)

#### New "Treasures" Uncovered at Saqqara Necropolis

At least 50 New Kingdom wooden sarcophagi were found among 52 burial shafts in the Saqqara necropolis south of Cairo following the massive discovery of 40 gilded statues and more than 100 coffins, some including mummies, in the area last November. The recent finds may have belonged to cult-worshippers of King Teti given their proximity to his pyramid and the newly uncovered temple of his bride, Queen Nearit. Furthermore, a 13-foot-long scroll containing chapter 17 of the Book of the Dead was recovered from one of the burial shafts. Sources: The Guardian, [100 coffins](#) and [50 sarcophagi](#); Live Science on [Book of the Dead](#)