



CENTER FOR
NEAR EASTERN
ARCHAEOLOGY
LA SIERRA UNIVERSITY

La Sierra Digs

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Third Annual Winter Archaeology Lecture



THE CENTER FOR NEAR
EASTERN ARCHAEOLOGY
- 02.14.24, 7:00PM PST -
IN PERSON: ZAPARA SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
OR ONLINE: WWW.LASIERRA.EDU/CNEA



w/ Dr. Thomas E. Levy
University of California
San Diego

A Desert Chiefdom & the Metal Revolution (4500–3600 BCE):

New Insights from the Negev Desert

**3rd ANNUAL
WINTER ARCHAEOLOGY LECTURE**

A Desert Chiefdom and the Metal Revolution (4500–3600 BCE): New Insights from the Negev Desert, by Tom Levy, Distinguished Professor, University of California San Diego.

Around 4500 to 3600 BCE, the first metal producing societies evolved in the southern Levant (Israel, the Palestinian territories, Lebanon, southern Syria and the Sinai Peninsula). How did the control of metal and other resources lead to the abandonment of hunting and gathering ways of life that had been so successful for thousands and thousands of years of human subsistence in the region? Based on Tom's excavations at the site of Shiqmim, his new book, *Shiqmim II: The phase II excavations at a Chalcolithic settlement center in the northern Negev desert, Israel (1987–1993)*, helps explain this enigma that has puzzled researchers for over 100 years.

In-person and online options are available on Wednesday 14 February at 7:00–8:30 PM in the Zapara School of Business (room to be announced) and lasierra.edu/cnea. Reception following.

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Philanthropic Impulses toward CNEA

Douglas Clark and Kaitlyn Satelmayer

As is typically true at this time of the year, we at CNEA know that we can count on many generous donors to contribute to the health and well-being of the Center. Our very existence depends on the philanthropic impulses of our good friends! Thank you sincerely. Most donations come to CNEA in November through January, but we can extend the season of giving as needed! If you have visited the university Giving Day website ([Giving Day](#)), you will find that there have been a couple of glitches on some of the pages, but it also shows that, because of your generosity, CNEA has exceeded its goal of \$50,000 by \$7,000.

Whereas in the past this figure represented half of our annual budget, our expanded operations with the totally restructured library system and numerous library donations, along with continued work on the massive collection of research material from southern Jordan, now peg this number at about a third of our budget. We are excited to grow in our programs for the benefit of the university and the public, and we celebrate our partnership with you in achieving our objectives.

To make a contribution, please feel free to go online ([Donate to CNEA](#)), write a check (to La Sierra University/CNEA), or direct some of the required minimum distribution from your retirement account in this direction.



Archaeology Team

\$56,709.90 Total Raised

\$50,000 Goal

27 Donors 1 Fundraiser

Make a Donation

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Info Fundraisers Donors

CENTER FOR NEAR EASTERN ARCHAEOLOGY

William Broughton Library Donation, Transfer, and Curation

Douglas Clark and Shaun Eccles

In a process that began many, many months ago, the library of the Rev. William Broughton has found its way to CNEA. An Anglican minister and experienced excavation volunteer, Broughton lived in Jerusalem for a number of years and amassed a large library consisting of resources for ministers as well as archaeological volumes. He rubbed shoulders with some of the archaeology giants and collected numerous important volumes. The fifth of December witnessed a 20-foot UHaul rental

truck headed for a storage unit in Chula Vista, CA. With a team of four men and in coordination with Broughton’s niece, Kathy Magliolo, books were removed from shelves, boxed in more than 100 banker’s boxes, loaded onto the truck along with several of the bookcases in the unit, driven back to La Sierra and unloaded in both La Sierra Hall and CNEA, a process that took 12 hours.

The staff and volunteers of CNEA are working to create inventories for all the contributed books, with those relating to ministry being housed in La Sierra Hall, home of the HMS Richards Divinity School. The others now grace one of the halls at CNEA, awaiting inventorying and relocation.

At this point, because CNEA has benefitted from several large library donations—in particular, those of Larry Geraty, Norma Kershaw, Brian Byrd, Tom Levy, Burton MacDonald, William Broughton, and Larry Herr (once we try again to bring his library and research material from Canada)—we have come to the bursting point for space. In fact, through a process of triage, the most important books will end up in the library and numerous volumes will be archived, but still remain accessible. Duplicates will be given to students or sold.

It has been a major goal of CNEA to process the donated libraries in the Library of Congress system and listing them on the university library website; among the thousands of volumes, less than 100 are now completely ready for the CNEA library shelves. As archaeologists, we already know what long time periods look like, but we hope to finish the library transition within a much shorter time span. The books will not be checked out of the building, but people who need the resources will be able to access them at CNEA.

Paul Richards: MA Completion

Kent Bramlett

Having marched at Commencement in June, Paul Richards completed his thesis on ancient corvée labor, receiving his MA:NEA diploma in September ([see here](#) [page 2] for a brief description of his research). Congratulations to Paul as he continues his study in the School of Education at La Sierra University.



Tracking the Madaba Museum Project in Central Jordan

Douglas Clark

The Madaba Regional Archaeological Museum Project (MRAMP) continues to progress, even if too slowly for our taste, toward the establishment of a new regional museum in historic downtown Madaba, Jordan. Four notes of importance:

First, October witnessed the initiation of a survey by Barbara Anglisz, MRAMP consultant and cultural-heritage advocate, among a fairly large group of museum stakeholders. The goal of the interviews, some taking two or more hours each, was to explore in a scientific manner what stakeholders and partners actually wanted to see in this proposed museum. We have held stakeholder meetings, especially through the MRAMP Advisory Council, for several years to report on progress and get feedback. But the present survey was particularly well-designed to capture all kinds of information, observations, and expectations. Collected tape recordings of all the interviews are presently being collated and will be presented in the coming months.

While funded by a grant through the American Center of Research in Amman (ACOR), this is only the first stage. We are currently exploring additional grant opportunities to expand the surveys to include scores of citizens in Madaba and the region, a process that will further anchor final museum plans in the expectations of the people who live on and around the region's archaeological treasures.

Second, MRAMP was just awarded a grant of \$20,000 from the US Embassy in Amman, channeled through the American Center of Research in the ambitious plan to inventory ALL artifacts deriving from Jordan in a national database. Because of the advanced state of the records in the current Madaba museum, supported by several grants from the US Department of State and based on an application submitted late last year, it was chosen to receive some of the initial funding for this massive endeavor. The grant will allow the MRAMP staff to complete their work with regional artifact records and to learn how to enter artifact data directly into the national inventory. Plans then call for expanding the process and training to other archaeological museums in the country. Ultimately, the inventory project will reach internationally to incorporate Jordanian artifacts stored and/or displayed anywhere in the world, including CNEA.

Third, in a recent news release from the American Society of Overseas Research (ASOR), one can read the report of MRAMP's use of the 2023 ASOR/L.T. Geraty endowment for protecting cultural heritage in Jordan. The funds supported a dynamic children's educational initiative in cooperation with the Petra National Trust, as well as our archaeological park caretaker, Mr. Albara of Madaba. See the illustrated report [here](#).

And finally, in a look to the immediate future, all MRAMP co-directors (Suzanne Richard of Gannon University in Erie, PA; Andrea Polcaro of Perugia University in Italy; Marta D'Andrea of Sapienza University of Rome; Doug Clark of CNEA; and Basem Mahamid of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan) along with our Italian architects, and our Jordanian engineers and contractors and consultants will meet on 12 and 13 March in Madaba to provide some heft to the process and continue working toward its completion. As always, money is the big issue, and we are looking at raising \$7 million, an overarching cost that includes a substantial endowment for ongoing operations. So, the stakes are huge!



Barbara with shop vendor Razan



Barbara and Doug surrounding Madaba representative to Parliament, Majdi Al Yacoub, at the Mt. Nebo church

UNEARTHING THE PAST SINCE 1929

ASOR

ABOUT INITIATIVES & PROJECTS ANNUAL MEETING MEMBERSHIP FELLOWSHIPS & GRANTS PUBLICATIONS & RESOURCES NEWS & EVENTS

NEWS@ASOR E-NEWSLETTER
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PAST ASOR NEWS, MONTH BY MONTH
ASOR LEGACY CIRCLE MEMBERS
LIFETIME HONOR ROLL OF DONORS
FY23 HONOR ROLL OF DONORS
ASOR ANNUAL MEETING

Cultural Heritage Education and Site Conservation in Madaba, Jordan (2023): An Update on the Lawrence T. Geraty Community Archaeology Endowment

By Douglas R. Clark, Suzanne Richard, Andrea Polcaro, Marta D'Andrea, and Basem Mahamid



In Memoriam: A Tribute to Dr. Denise Herr

Douglas Clark

(to be adapted for oral delivery at Denise’s memorial service in March by Larry Geraty)

We are saddened to report that Denise Herr, wife of Larry Herr (accomplished specialist in Middle Eastern archaeology, ceramic typology, and inscriptions, among other things, with particular attention to Tall al-‘Umayri, Jordan), passed away on New Year’s Eve. Denise was an English teacher and university administrator for much of her career at Burman University in Lacombe, Alberta, Canada. But her claim to fame with hundreds of archaeology buffs, students, specialists, and dig staff was an infectious sense of humor, an impeccable control of the English language, and an intrepid tenacity for helping scores and scores of square supervisors stay on task with their notebooks.

In his life sketch, Larry Herr highlights Denise’s participation with him in excavations in the Middle East, primarily at Tall al-‘Umayri, Jordan, just south of Amman: “Never one to sit around, Denise filled many roles on the excavations, from object registrar to pottery registrar, square supervisor, and documentation quality control.” She was also instrumental in training future object and pottery registrars, including Carmen Clark, Suha Huffaker, Audrey Shaffer, and Ruth Kent. Among CNEA-connected staff and volunteers over the years, several knew, learned from, and depended on Denise: Larry and Gillian Geraty; Doug and Carmen Clark; Kent, Summer, Sanford, and Nathaniel Bramlett; Chang Ho Ji; Monique Roddy; Matt Vincent; Carolyn Waldron; Gary and Suha Huffaker; and Audrey Shaffer.

During her 11 seasons at ‘Umayri (1987, 1989, 1992, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008), as well as time spent at places like Ekron in Israel, she developed and enhanced well-honed organizational and quality-control skills. It is hard to imagine the kind of success the ‘Umayri excavations have



enjoyed over several decades without the measured, structured, unassuming role of Denise in keeping the internal recording gears running smoothly. She also introduced new terminology into often technical and stuffy dig-related conversations, the most memorable of which was an Arabic-English



command to get rid of something no longer necessary: Yalla Bye Bye! For goodness’ sake (a euphemism), toss the thing!

But Denise brought more than administrative skills to the ‘Umayri excavations. She loved visiting archaeological sites (some who have seen one ancient occupation mound feel they have seen them all!), especially the ancient site of Petra in southern Jordan. Given the site’s size, there were a number of excavations underway pretty much all dig season, thus providing new experiences every time our team visited.

Denise also loved a good story. Her classes at Burman University included Biblical Literature for which she not only had a strong academic background in literary analysis, but also the hands-on reality of ancient material culture coming through her objects lab every day of an excavation season. In the process of reading a then recently published article on the wannabe-king Abimelech (Judges 9), Denise disagreed with the author’s assertion that the woman of Thebez mentioned in verses 50–54, who climbed atop the Tower of Thebez and dropped a milling stone on Abimelech’s head, putting an end to his assault and ultimately his life, could not have pulled this off. The author felt that women would not be able to carry to the top of a tower and discharge from it something as heavy as a milling stone. Denise and colleague Mary Boyd had seen, analyzed, weighed, and catalogued enough millstones to take on the article, refuting its position on women’s roles in the use of these household implements. They mounted a tower of sorts themselves and invited all the women on the ‘Umayri dig to join them atop the partially restored four-room house in Field B, bringing stones with them to toss down upon an ill-fated watermelon named Abimelech. This tradition was carried on for several seasons.

We conclude this tribute to Denise Herr with a few partial lines from the final paragraph of Larry’s life sketch, in response to his own question—Who was Denise?—along with the last verse of a poem about another woman mentioned in the book of Judges:

Larry calls Denise a woman of great variety, celebrating “being a mom, a wife, a grandmother, while being fun, mischievous, scholarly, ... spiritual in an upbeat kind of way, tolerant of people with differences, a lover of elegant language ... a world traveler sensitive to other cultures,” In his words, Denise “was a marvelous achievement of human DNA, nurtured by a wonderful background of great intellectual curiosity, immense talents of creativity, and a high tradition of family values.”

Finally, in her exquisitely illustrated book of biblical poems (The God of Sarah, Rebekah & Rachel), Barbara Keener Shenk concludes her poem about Jephthah’s daughter (Judges 11) as follows:

“I hope God has a meadow in the sky
For us who leave the earth too young to die”



Edom Lowlands Regional Archaeology Project—Tons of Research Material

Shaun Eccles

[The following article is a progress report on the storage and care of a massive donation of artifacts from southern Jordan by Dr. Tom Levy of the University of California, San Diego. For background, visit: [Significance of UCSD Donation.](#)]

Saying that we have tons of stuff is often hyperbole, but when one considers the weight of copper slag alone, “tons” becomes an accurate descriptor for our collection of material from the Wadi Faynan in southern Jordan. This large amount of material has caused us to fill the online database we are



using to record the material much earlier than anticipated! In cataloguing research material such as ore and slag, as well as pottery sherds and stone tools, and historical objects such as cartridges and a bayonet, we have covered tremendous time periods spanning the Middle Paleolithic to the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and we are not yet halfway through!

As we find a solution to our database problem (a good one to have, as it reflects tremendous progress) we are also happy to report that though less than half of the material has been catalogued, more than half of it has now made its way out of the shipping containers where it has been stored and found its way to its permanent home in the soon-to-be-enclosed patio at CNEA, and the rest of it will soon follow! Having all of this material catalogued and in the same place will ensure that CNEA will continue to be a hub for ongoing research far into the future. This comes just in time for a new era in archaeology where serious conversations are being held by our counterparts across the southern Levant about whether or not to stop digging and focus on analyzing what we already have. In this context, CNEA is uniquely prepared for a development in this direction.

What Happens in the Library ...

Terri Shaw

Staff and volunteers continue the arduous work of processing our extensive collection of donated books, following a plan we created with the assistance of Christina Viramontes from La Sierra’s main campus library. Our first step has been to create a spreadsheet inventory of all books from a donor. Then books are reviewed in two ways. One determines if the book is already in the university catalog. CNEA staff can independently register this group into the catalog using software installed by Ms. Viramontes on the library computer. If a book is not in the university system Ms. Viramontes will create a new record for it.

A second type of sorting sets aside books that cover topics closest to CNEA’s interest in promoting awareness and appreciation for the ancient cultures of the Near East. We want this group of books to be the first placed on our shelves. As our processing moves along, we will add books from related fields. Another accomplishment has been to process the journals included in the donated collections. Over several months they were collated, duplicates set aside, and complete sets assembled. These journal sets are now stored in the new Library Office (formerly Larry Geraty’s research office). Staff Kaitlyn Satelmayer and Shaun Eccles and my volunteer cohort of Howard Bunte, Carolyn Waldron, and Luke Poutre are invaluable to this project. Other assistance has been provided by former curatorial assistants Dawn Acevedo and Rory Slattery (when they were on campus), as well as Maribel Carmona Torres and Raul Zanatta.



The Artifacts in the Cohen Family Collection

Shaun Eccles

The relationship between CNEA and the Cohen family is strong and continues to flourish. In the past few months CNEA has been the proud recipient of eight new (to us) items including a beautiful Byzantine mosaic panel.

Previously we had received many bankers boxes filled with artifacts that include Roman glass and Lorestan Bronzes among more typically Levantine forms with more on the way. Particular pieces dating to the Hellenistic period have already seen our students at work analyzing them and their place in Art History, in the classification of certain artistic motifs. One student concluded that at least one piece must date to “the time of Homer ... about 700 BC.” We are so appreciative and proud that its odyssey has led it to us for continued display and study. In the coming year we will continue to receive from the Cohen Family Collection as well as transition our point of contact from Dr. H. Harvey Cohen himself to his son Joe, who has a strong connection to Riverside and a desire to further our shared mission of education and research.

We look forward to maintaining and enhancing our relationship with the Cohen family and are discussing ways in which the family can continue to be involved at CNEA (see the article in this issue on Homecoming) and in the new campus museum.



New arrivals from the Cohen collection with Raul Zanatta, Kent Bramlett, and Luke Poutre



Archaeological Event for 2024 Alumni Homecoming

Following a tradition practiced almost since the beginning of CNEA 12 years ago, the Center will host an archaeological event during [Alumni Homecoming Weekend](#) (20 April this year), incorporating an interactive presentation, themed displays (static and dynamic), the presentation of CNEA archaeology awards, and, of course, refreshments in the warm and welcoming hospitality of CNEA’s genuine goat-hair Bedouin tent.

Last year we initiated a new series of programs specifically slated for Homecoming weekends: illustrated presentations and guided discussions about various groupings of artifacts, mostly from Israel/Palestine. These come from the Cohen Family collection which is incrementally and gradually making its way to CNEA from La Mesa, near San Diego. In 2023 Dr. Cohen, Dr. Kent Bramlett, and MA candidate in the La Sierra program, Shaun Eccles, interactively presented artifacts from Egypt and provided historical and archaeological context for them. The program took place at CNEA for in-person and online audiences. It was attended and received so well that we are planning a similar kind of program with a different set of artifacts for the 2024 event, ancient inscriptions. More details coming soon.

Digging Things up this Summer

Collated by Kaitlyn Satelmayer

Mark your calendars and join us as two CNEA-connected digs will be in the field this summer, 2024!

Balu’a dates and links

June 20 – August 1, 2024

“BRAP (the Balu’a Regional Archaeological Project) 2024. We are looking forward to our field season June 20 - August 1 with anticipation of answering more questions about Balu’a’s history. Focus this season will be on the Iron Age domestic structure and administrative areas and the Islamic Village. Emphasis will continue on understanding the development of Moabite culture, ceramics, and chronology.” – Dr. Kent Bramlett, Co-Director of Balu’a Regional Archaeological Project.

<https://lasierra.edu/cnea/projects/balua-regional-archaeological-project-brap/> <https://www.brapjordan.org>



Ataruz dates and links

June 19 – July 12, 2024

“The Ataruz project is scheduled to conduct fieldwork for approximately four weeks, from June 19 to July 12, 2024. We will focus on Fields E and G, encompassing the acropolis area and the eastern slope, housing the Iron II temple and the monumental staircase. Additionally, we plan to conduct clean-up



activities around the newly discovered western city gate (Field D) identified in 2023. Also, conservation efforts will be carried out in collaboration with the [SELA](#) conservation team.” – Dr. Chang-Ho Ji, Director of the Khirbat Ataruz Project
<https://www.ataruz.org>

The Geraty Gala

As announced in the Fall 2023 issue of *La Sierra Digs*, 26 October welcomed a major Riverside gala event honoring Gillian and Larry Geraty with a Lifetime Achievement Award. Intended to raise funds for university student success, the Zapara School of Business established this award, and the event was spectacular. As accompanying photos show, the Riverside Convention Center was themed with archaeological decorations, displays, and engaging dramatic acts and dances and was filled with 700 guests. The first “act” in the program was archaeological in nature (at times more popular than academic), drawing on the lifetime experiences of both Gillian and Larry, and underwritten by friends of CNEA. Since other “acts” reflected the Geratys’ travels to various parts of the world, our name was changed temporarily to the Center for **Nearly** Eastern Archaeology. The table hosted by CNEA seated several members of the CNEA staff and friends, giving us a front-row seat to the entire program.

Larry and Gillian have been central players in the establishment and ongoing life of CNEA, recently renamed the Lawrence T. Geraty and Douglas R. Clark Center for Near Eastern Archaeology. Their lives, their commitments, their generosity have been game-changing for archaeology at La Sierra University.



CNEA Gala table with, from left, Kaitlyn Satelmayer, Shaun Eccles, and Raul Zanatta



Gillian and Larry Geraty at the gala

Display Case

Kaitlyn Satelmayer

Pre-dynastic Egypt, specifically the Naqada period, stands out predominantly for its distinctive pottery styles. Not only do they show a high level of craftsmanship (for being handmade), but they also show a brilliant level of artistic expression. These pieces, crafted from around 4400 BC to 3000 BC, showcase a unique blend of artistic design that illustrates the evolving artistic culture that would influence the following dynasties. Geometric patterns are seen flowing across the surface, with a display of people and animals offering a glimpse into what early Nile life would have looked like. These pre-dynastic jars provide a real link to the past by allowing for the visualization of an early civilization, which would set the foundation for the great dynasties of Egypt.



La Sierra Digs

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2024 Calendar of Events

14 February Winter Archaeology
Lecture

20 April Homecoming

16-17 November ADW 2024 - Petra

Recent Discoveries

Assembled by Dawn Acevedo

Fortifications for a 4,000 year-old Bronze Age oasis in Khaybar in the northwestern Arabian Desert have been discovered spanning roughly nine miles in length and enclosing an area of more than 2,700 acres. Find the original article here: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2352409X23005308>

Archaeologists from Japan and Egypt have uncovered a multi-period tomb in the Saqqara necropolis dating as far back as the 3rd millennium BC to as recently as the Ptolemaic period (323-30 BC). Learn more here: <https://english.ahram.org.eg/News/515101.aspx>

In the ancient Roman religious center of Doliche, Turkey, over 2,000 ceramic seal impressions were found in the city's archive building. These seals, which would have been used to imprint fastening seals on official documents, date to the 2nd-3rd centuries AD. Read more about the discovery here: <https://www.livescience.com/archaeology/romans/2000-ancient-clay-stamps-used-to-seal-official-roman-documents-discovered-in-turkey>

"An international team of researchers led by... Wichita State University" in Kansas has discovered a method of determining the date for inorganic, fired materials by using "archaeomagnetism." The method was established by measuring the various magnetic signatures of the iron oxide embedded in 32 fired Mesopotamian bricks, each inscribed with the name of one of 12 reigning kings, including Nebuchadnezzar II. Read about the study here: <https://cosmosmagazine.com/history/archaeology/bricks-magnetic-field-mesopotamia/>

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!