



CENTER FOR
NEAR EASTERN
ARCHAEOLOGY
LA SIERRA UNIVERSITY

La Sierra Digs

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9th Annual Archaeology Discovery Weekend • Nov 11-12 2017

HEROD *the* GREAT

Scoundrel, Survivor, Genius

lasierra.edu/archaeology

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Lecture Topics

Herod the Great as a complicated, ruthless ruler who governed by means of tyrannical brutality; as a politically savvy survivor and connoisseur of great taste; as an ingenious architect and monumental builder at places like first-century Jerusalem, Caesarea Maritima, the Herodium, Masada, Machaerus (where John the Baptist was beheaded). Speakers include Jodi Magness (U. North Carolina), Andrea Berlin (Boston U.), Kenneth Holm (U. Maryland), David Mevorah (Israel Museum), Barbara Burrell (U. Cincinnati), Győző Vörös (Hungarian Academy of Arts), Dawn Acevedo (La Sierra U.)

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Lessons Learned from J&J Summer Study Tour

Douglas Clark, Beverly Beem, Kendra Haloviak Valentine

The Jesus & Judges study tour to Israel/Palestine and Jordan 2–25 July this past summer involved three teachers, nine La Sierra students (graduate and undergraduate), and six long-time friends. Travels took the group to places connected to stories of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark and stories of the Judges. Visits to scores of archaeological sites and a few museums, class meetings for discussion nearly every evening, an unforgettable boat ride on the Sea of Galilee, Middle Eastern food of all kinds, cross-cultural experiences, daily devotions themed around “The Gospel According to the Land” – these and other exercises all enlarged and enriched our understanding of the biblical stories. Lots of lessons learned by all tour participants, including the teachers:

Lesson learned by Douglas Clark

One can never ever underestimate the potential of serious, creative students not only to learn biblical history, archaeology, anthropology, literary analysis, devotional applications, etc., but to translate what they have studied into insightful, perceptive, transformative projects that carry life-changing consequences.

Lesson learned by Kendra Haloviak Valentine

It’s always exciting to see the Bible come alive in new ways as we walk the ground of its stories. Breathing the air of the Bible lands helps us experience it in powerful ways. The people currently living in these places also help us better understand the wonders of Scripture.

Lesson learned by Beverly Beem

There’s nothing that makes the stories of the Judges come alive like discussing the stories right where they took place: Telling the story of the diplomatic assassin Ehud at Jericho, where Eglon sat in his palace, or examining the story of Jephthah at Tall al-’Umayri where a typical four-room house showed how his daughter could emerge to welcome her victorious father home, or standing on Mt. Tabor where Deborah and Barak rallied the troops to fight the Canaanites’ iron chariots in the plain of Megiddo below. As the stories come alive in our imagination, our reading of Scripture is enriched, our hearts are turned to worship, and a study tour becomes a pilgrimage.

Balu’a 2017 Summer Excavations

Monique Vincent, Kent Bramlett, Friedbert Ninow

This August the Balu’a Regional Archaeological Project (BRAP) excavated at Khirbat al-Balu’a. Balu’a is a large, multi-period site perched on the edge of a wadi, once overseeing a major trade route in the Iron Age. In the Iron II period (1000-550 BC) Balu’a grew to its largest expanse with an immense lower town ringed by a defensive casemate wall. The walls and doorways of the Iron Age houses still stand today, their uppermost courses and lintels visible above millennia of debris. The focus of our work this summer was on three spots at the site: an Iron Age house, the Iron Age casemate wall between the upper and lower towns, and the foundations of the *qasr*.

Excavation of the Iron Age house continued from the 2012 season, exposing a larger area and determining three main phases of occupation constructed on bedrock. The last phase was preserved by earthquake destruction, revealing a large room with storage jars, stone bins, and grinding stones. Dates from pottery and charred seeds will clarify the dating of the Iron Age occupations at Balu’a.

Excavation of the Iron Age casemate system defined the outer face as standing over ten feet high. The two parallel walls of the casemate together are 23 feet wide. This was a substantial system of defense! A narrow room excavated between the two walls contained 45 clay loom weights tumbled when the room’s structures collapsed. Fallen grinding stones further point to a domestic or economic use of this intramural space.

The *qasr* is the defining feature of Balu’a, standing more than 20 feet high and constructed of massive limestone and basalt stones. The date of this structure has been the center of debate, but the fallen building blocks have prevented stratigraphic excavation of its foundations. With the assistance of the local municipality and large equipment, a space was cleared against one face of the structure to allow us to begin excavating a small probe. We were able to determine that the *qasr*’s foundations date at least to the Iron Age.

Though the team was small and the time flew by, the dedication and hard work of every participant allowed us to answer key questions about the history and use of Iron Age Balu’a.

Newsletters with photos of the team’s progress can be found at <https://lasierra.edu/cnea/la-sierra-digs/>.





On Track: A New Museum in Madaba, Jordan

Douglas Clark

With funding from USAID in Jordan, channeled through SCHEP (Sustainable Cultural Heritage through Engagement of Local Communities Project) under the umbrella of ACOR (The American Center of Oriental Research), the Madaba Regional Archaeological Museum Project (MRAMP) is making progress. This multitude of acronyms aside, MRAMP has been at work in central Madaba, Jordan for nearly two years cleaning and clearing a late-19th-century stone-house settlement which will become the ground floor of a new regional archaeological museum.

The past several months have seen capacity-building workshops on mosaic conservation and stone-wall consolidation, as well as the discovery and clearance of three subterranean cisterns used for water collection during the rainy season. Next steps include the use of georesistivitymeter technology to locate other cavities beneath the surface and laser-scanning of the interior of the cisterns. In December the project's Italian architects will meet with and mentor 18 architecture students from three Jordanian universities: University of Jordan, Hashemite University, and the American University of Madaba.

Display Case

Kristina Reed

Herodian lamps date from 37 BC to AD 70 and span a time frame greater than the reign of their namesake, Herod the Great (37–4 BC). These lamps are thought to have been used primarily by Jews in the Roman Era and are found mostly in the areas of ancient Jerusalem, Judea, and Galilee.

The design of these clay lamps is referred to as “pared or scraped” due to the use of a knife at several stages of production. A closed-form lamp, the round body was made on a fast wheel with a flared, knife-shaped nozzle formed separately and attached. Having no slip, Herodian lamps come in shades of buff, red, and black. Most are small, fitting nicely in one’s hand, but a few are large and sport a single loop handle and double spouts. Unlike their Roman counterparts from the same period, the majority of Herodian lamps lack ornamentation, likely due to the strict observance of Jewish laws. Decorated Herodian lamps have geometric designs such as incised lines, dots, and circles.

In the New Testament parable of the “Ten Maidens” Jesus likely had Herodian lamps in mind when illustrating the need to be prepared. In this parable, the five maidens who bring extra oil are wise and the five who did not are foolish because the wait time for the bridegroom was unknown and the maiden’s lamps may not last. Experimental archaeologists have tested the burn time of reproduction Herodian lamps and found that they last around 4–5 hours. If you didn’t know how long you would be out at night, it was indeed wise to bring a juglet of extra oil!



With luck and good planning, the MRAMP team, co-directed by Americans from La Sierra University and Gannon University, Italians from Perugia University and Sapienza University, and the director of the Department of Antiquities office in Madaba, is in search of \$5.7 million to complete the museum project, hopefully by 2020–21.

New La Sierra University Museum – An Update

Larry Geraty

The administration of La Sierra University has decided it is time to move on its plan to build a University Museum (and Visitor Center) on the plot of ground reserved for it on the campus master plan, opposite the Zapara School of Business, across the main entrance road in front of the Alumni Pavilion. The museum will provide exhibit space primarily for the three unique collections currently housed elsewhere on campus: The Museum of Natural History in Cossentine Hall, the Stahl Center Collection in La Sierra Hall, and the Archaeology Collection in the Center for Near Eastern Archaeology. Ultimately, this move will free up academic space for several departments.

In order to “do it right,” the University has hired as a consultant Thomas Hartman of IQ Magic from Santa Monica, CA, a noted museum designer who was chosen after an extensive search and interviews with other consultants. He has led the Museum Board in visits to other museums, conducted interviews with many faculty and staff on campus, and taken time to carefully review the holdings in all three collections. In November he’ll conduct workshops with personnel from both on and off campus, ultimately rendering a report for how best to utilize and exhibit these priceless treasures.

In the meantime, Advancement has been working with donors to achieve the funding for this project, mostly donors who would not be giving to other projects on campus. So far it looks as though sufficient funding will be in place for at least half the amount for building and endowing the project, though all the details will become much clearer after the first of the year in January, 2018, when IQ Magic’s report will be rendered.

La Sierra Digs

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Calendar of Events

Archaeology Discovery Weekend
HEROD THE GREAT
www.lasierra.edu/archaeology

Saturday, November 11

3:00–5:30 pm—Illustrated Presentations, 1
5:30 pm—Bedouin Hospitality Tent
6:30 pm—“Ancient” Roman Banquet

Sunday, November 12

1:00–3:00 pm—Illustrated Presentations, 2
3:15–5:15 pm—Illustrated Presentations, 3
2:00–5:00 pm—Kids Dig!
4:00–6:00 pm—Bedouin Hospitality Tent
5:00–6:00 pm—Hands-on Lab Activities

Venues – La Sierra University Campus
Center for Near Eastern Archaeology
(Bedouin tent, Kids Dig, Hands-on)
Zapara School of Business
Troesh Auditorium (Lectures)
Atrium (Banquet)

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/>.

MPP@50 – Let the Parties Begin!

The Madaba Plains Project is 50 years old. And MPPites are wasting no time getting into the spirit of celebration. Over the course of more than a year, MPP veterans will have several occasions to eat, drink, and remember. Here is a tentative schedule of 50th anniversary parties (see: <http://multi.madabaplains.org/madaba-plains-project-50th-anniversary/>):

28–30 September 2017 – Andrews University for Alumni Homecoming. Two lecture events, one group discussion about redefining biblical archaeology, a tour of the remodeled Horn Archaeological Museum, and two receptions later, MPP directors and veterans enjoyed memories and good food (visit: https://alumni.andrews.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/homecoming_program_2017_FINAL.pdf).

15–19 November 2017 – Annual meeting of the American Schools of Oriental Research in Boston (<http://www.asor.org/am/schedule/>). Three full lecture sessions (15 lectures) will focus on Tall Hisban, Tall al-'Umayri, and Tall Jalul. Three receptions will occupy MPP veterans and friends—one at the conference, one at the Harvard Semitic Museum, and one in Marblehead.

26–29 April 2018 – Alumni Homecoming Weekend at Walla Walla University, an MPP-'Umayri consortium institution for 30 years. Events still being planned (watch for updates at: <https://www.wallawalla.edu/alumni/events/homecoming/>).

2–15 July 2018 – MPP-sponsored tour of Israel and Jordan, hosted by Larry Geraty and Larry Herr, featuring a 50th-anniversary celebration on the evening of 11 July on the acropolis of Tall Hisban (<http://multi.madabaplains.org/madaba-plains-project-50th-anniversary/mpp50-tour-of-israel-and-jordan/>).

10–11 November 2018 – The tenth annual Archaeology Discovery Weekend at the Center for Near Eastern Archaeology at La Sierra University will be focused entirely on MPP@50 (watch for updates at: <https://lasierra.edu/cnea/discovery-weekend/>). Senior MPP directors and invited specialists will mix it up over issues involving archaeology and the Bible.

Veterans and friends of MPP should feel free to attend any or all of these celebrations, especially those events near where they live.