

La Sierra Digs

Newsletter of the Center for Near Eastern Archaeology | HMS Richards Divinity School | La Sierra University | Vol 4:1 Winter

You are cordially invited to:



Umayri
Madaba Plains Project

Dig Jordan this Summer!
22 June-27 July 2016
madabaplains.org/umayri

**SECURITY FORM
ABSOLUTE DEADLINE
1 MARCH 2016**

CENTER FOR
NEAR EASTERN
ARCHAEOLOGY
LA SIERRA UNIVERSITY



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MPP@50

Douglas Clark

On 15 July 1968, excavations began at Tall Hisban, Jordan, the first archaeological site of what came to be known as the Madaba Plains Project (MPP). The 50th anniversary of one of the longest-lived, continuously running archaeological excavation projects in the Middle East is only two years away, the MPP sites including Tall Hisban (begun in 1968), Tall al-'Umayri (opened in 1984), and Tall Jalul (started in 1992). Based on discussions by a lively consultation of MPP staff members at a recent conference, long-time directors Larry Geraty and Doug Clark (La Sierra), Larry Herr (Burman University), and Østein LaBianca and Randy Younker (Andrews University) – are working to coordinate anniversary events.



To celebrate this achievement, MPP plans to roll out a series of events and publications. In addition to the obligatory hoopla of receptions and parties, planners hope to establish an endowment for student travel scholarships and excavation support; create a popular book, video, and presentations; and set up academic lecture series at several conferences, resulting in the publication of a volume on narratives of bridge-building based on lessons from the past.

Presentations at the Annual Meetings of the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR), the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL), and the Adventist Society for Religious Studies (ASRS)

Douglas Clark

Several CNEA types contributed presentations to conferences held in Atlanta 18-24 November 2015. These included:

- Madaba Plains Project-'Umayri Workshop, Douglas Clark and Kent Bramlett presiding (ASOR)
- Madaba Museum Workshop, Douglas Clark and Andrea Polcaro presiding (ASOR)
- Paleobiology at Two Sites in Bronze and Iron Age Jordan, by Christina N.K. Anderson, Meagan Miller, Ronald E. Nance, Karimah Richardson, Kristina S. Reed, Kent V. Bramlett, Sang-Hee Lee, Douglas R. Clark, Suzanne Richard, Lawrence Geraty, R.E. Taylor, Stephen Fratpietro, and Lee Greer (ASOR)
- The Human Remains in the Pillared House (a Bet Ab?) at Tall al-'Umayri: aDNA and Society, a terrific poster by Kristina Reed (ASOR)
- Madaba Plains Project Staff Consultation, Larry Geraty presiding (ASOR)
- New 14C Dates for Late Bronze and Iron I Strata from Tall al-'Umayri," by Kent Bramlett, Monique Vincent, E. R. Taylor (ASOR)
- Adventist Higher Education and the Public Square: Maintaining Our Identity as We Develop Relationships with the Community, by Larry Geraty (ASRS)
- The Gods Must Be Crazy: Iron Age Religion at Tall al-'Umayri, Jordan, by Douglas Clark (SBL)



University Museum Update

Lawrence Geraty

La Sierra University is the fortunate home of three "world-class" collections that enhance the quality of education offered on campus: 1) The ethnographic collection put together largely by Dr. John Elick from dona-



tions by missionaries and alumni over time, coming from exotic places around the world. The collection is now cared for by Dr. Charles Teel. 2) The "World Museum of Natural History," comprised of freeze-dried animal specimens lovingly collected and prepared by Dr. Billy Hankins, along with mineral specimens from around the globe curated largely by Dr. Virchel Wood. 3) The largest collection in the United States of everyday artifacts from the Jerusalem area (ceramic, glass, stone, bone, metal, etc.) covering the time period from the Stone Age down to Islamic times, now housed in the Center for Near Eastern Archaeology. The vision of La Sierra's master plan is to bring these three collections into three "pods" of the same University Museum. A new board of directors has just been appointed under the chairmanship of Dr. Floyd Murdoch and the auspices of the Vice President for Advancement, Norman Yergen; they will be meeting for the first time this winter in an endeavor to form a common vision, begin fundraising for a new facility, and plan for its exciting future.

"Excavating the Bible"

Lawrence Geraty

For several years Douglas Clark (Director of the Center for Near Eastern Archaeology) and Lawrence Geraty (La Sierra's President Emeritus), who excavated together in Jordan with the Madaba Plains Project for nearly 45 years, have been producing a half-hour weekly television program for Loma Linda Broadcasting Network called "Excavating the Bible." Through conversations, at times with noted archaeologists like Dr. Kent Bramlett or Dr. Robert Mullins (in photo with Geraty and Clark), PowerPoint slides, and artifacts from the Center for Near Eastern Archaeology (organized by Kristina Reed), they

are working their way through the entire Bible, book by book, focusing on discoveries that help provide historical, cultural, and theological context for the Bible. These programs can be seen every day on LLBN-TV by satellite or online by computer. Join the thousands of viewers worldwide.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CNEA publications office – A new initiative at the CNEA will see the establishment of a publications office. In order to ensure timely publication of seasonal scholarly volumes on excavations at Tall al-`Umayri, the Center has taken the bold step of setting up a quarter-time publications position. The MPP has long been respected internationally for its prompt publication schedule and the Center wants to see that reputation continue, especially since there are scores of major excavations from the past whose final results may never find their way into accessible publications due to the passing of time and, for some, the passing of the archaeologists.

ICHAJ – 13th International Conference on the History and Archaeology of Jordan – Held every three years in various locations around the world, ICHAJ has become THE destination conference for those working in Jordan and those wanting to learn more about the archaeology of Jordan. This year's conference, ICHAJ 13, is scheduled for 22-26 May 2016 in Amman, under the theme of "Ethics in Archaeology." A number of MPP and CNEA leaders will attend and will give presentations. For more information about the conference or about attending it, visit www.ichaj.org.



Homecoming Weekend (15-17 April) – Archaeology will be well represented throughout La Sierra University's Homecoming Weekend in mid-April, with a lecture on archaeology and the Bible (Friday, the 15th), the normally scheduled and always popular open house at CNEA with its new displays of artifacts and hi-tech "cyber-archaeology" tools for the trade, and our

genuine goat-hair Bedouin hospitality tent (Saturday), and the semi-annual Archaeology Advisory Council meeting on Sunday. Please join us over the weekend.

MRAMP (the Madaba Regional Archaeological Museum Project) – For two weeks this May, a couple of archaeologists from La Sierra will join others from Gannon University in Pennsylvania and Perugia University in Italy for the very beginning of a major project to create a new archaeological museum in Madaba, Jordan. The site (Madaba Archaeological Park West) is just one block from the famous Madaba "Map" Church which virtually all tourists visit while in the country. Douglas Clark and Hew Murdoch (the latter, La Sierra's first student to graduate with an archaeology major) will represent CNEA in what promises to be a significant collaborative effort with excavation directors in the Madaba region, local and national governmental bodies, Madaba's residents, and others, to protect, preserve, and present to the public this part of Jordan's cultural heritage.

Archaeology Discovery Weekend 2016 – The 8th annual Archaeology Discovery Weekend, scheduled for 12-13 November 2016, will maintain its long tradition of offering programs and events for people of all ages. The main focal point for the presentations is "Women in Archaeology": women who are part of the archaeological record (we are working on something about Egypt's famous females like Nefertiti, Hatshepsut, Cleopatra), bold women travelers to the Middle East (especially in the past two centuries, women like Gertrude Bell), and women currently involved in intriguing archaeological endeavors. Major presentations will cover the women of Qumran (of Dead Sea Scrolls fame), women's household activities in ancient Israel and their roles at regional shrines, goddesses from the Old Testament and New Testament worlds, and lots more. Save this date!

Display Case

By Kristina Reed

Carinated Bowls

During the Early Bronze Age (ca. 3300-2200 BCE) pottery was hand-formed by pinch and coil methods, but by the Middle Bronze Age (MB) (ca. 2200-1550 BCE) the widespread use of the fast potter's wheel was responsible for the technical advances in pottery making and refined forms characteristic of this age. Wheel-throwing gave the potter the ability to create artistic, delicate, and precise vessels with an elegance not seen previously.

Carinated bowls first appeared in MB IIA and were produced into the Late Bronze Age (ca. 1550-1200 BCE). They were wheel-made using fine clay, resulting in inclusion-free fabric and thin walls that, when fired at a high temperature, made a strong vessel. The body is angular, having either a sharp or gentle carination, and the bowls have disc or ring bases, although a few have trumpet bases. Many bowls have wheel marks on the finished vessel, visible as concentric rings on the inside and outside. Decoration is simple, consisting of a cream or white slip or an occasional residual burnished red slip. Painted decoration is rare and usually monochrome with simple geometric motifs.



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Calendar of Events — Win/Spr 2016

- Mondays & (some) Tuesdays — Labs open for volunteers
- 15-17 April — Homecoming Weekend
 - 15th — Lecture on Archaeology and the Bible
 - 16th — CNEA Open House and Bedouin Tent
 - 17th — CNEA Archaeology Advisory Council
- 22-26 May — ICHAJ conference in Amman
- 22 June-27 July — Jordan Excavations
- 12-13 November — 8th annual Archaeology Discovery Weekend — Women in Archaeology

OCCASIONALLY/OFTEN

- *Archaeology Adventures* — elementary and middle school students' dig at CNEA
- 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

Royal Wings

Archaeologists working in Jerusalem recently made public their discovery of a seal impression bearing the name of Hezekiah, king of Judah. This impression, made on a bulla, or piece of clay used to seal documents, depicts a winged sun, and states: “Belonging to Hezekiah [son of] Ahaz king of Judah.” This bulla is particularly important because it is the first royal seal impression of Judah or Israel to be discovered as part of a proper “scientific archaeological excavation.” The bulla was found in a refuse dump associated with a royal building used for storing foodstuffs near the City of David and the Temple Mount. Finding the bulla in its archaeological context provides insight into everyday life in the administration of the royal city during King Hezekiah’s time.

The seal impression, made by a signet ring, reveals the royal symbols in use likely later in Hezekiah’s life. These include a change from using the winged scarab beetle to the winged sun (both symbols of royalty in the Ancient Near East), and the inclusion of the *ankh* sign (meaning life). These symbols have been tied into Hezekiah’s status as a vassal to Assyria. Hezekiah’s relationships with the powers outside of Judah are known not only from biblical sources but also from the famous prism commissioned by Sennacherib, king of Assyria.

This new seal impression, at less than half an inch in size, is a very small, but very important, addition to the written sources that help us better understand the life and times of King Hezekiah. To see an image of the impression and read more, go to: <http://new.huji.ac.il/en/article/28173> and <http://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-sites-places/jerusalem/king-hezekiah-in-the-bible-royal-seal-of-hezekiah-comes-to-light/>