



CENTER FOR
NEAR EASTERN
ARCHAEOLOGY
LA SIERRA UNIVERSITY

La Sierra Digs

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La Sierra-connected Participation at the Annual Meeting of the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR) in Boston



Madaba Plains Project-Umayri veterans at ASOR reception

Monique Vincent

La Sierra University archaeologists were especially busy during last November's annual meeting of ASOR, due in large part to the Madaba Plains Project @ 50 sessions and receptions. For the entire program online, see: <http://www.asor.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/ASOR-Program-2017-online.pdf> Participants listed alphabetically below:

Lecture Presentations:

- Kent Bramlett, "Contextualizing MPP at Tall al-'Umayri: The Late Bronze Age"
- Douglas Clark, "Contextualizing MPP at Tall al-'Umayri: The Early Iron Age"
- Suzanne Richard, Marta D'Andrea, Douglas Clark, Andrea Polcaro, "Community Engagement to Protect Cultural Heritage in Jordan: The Madaba Regional Archaeological Museum Project (MRAMP)"
- Lawrence Geraty, "Contextualizing the Quest for Biblical Heshbon at Tall Hisban"
- Friedbert Ninow, Monique Vincent, Kent Bramlett, "The 2017 Season of Excavation at Khirbat al-Balu'a—In Search of Patterns of Settlement"

Monique Vincent, "Households, Communities, and Dimensions of Social Identity in the Early Iron Age at Tall al-'Umayri, Jordan"

Session Chairs:

- Øystein LaBianca & Lawrence Geraty—MPP at 50: Tall Hisban
- Douglas Clark & Larry Herr—MPP at 50: Tall al-'Umayri

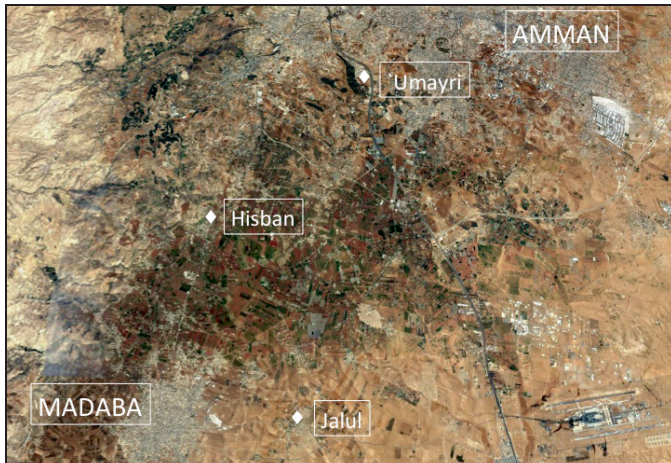
Business Meetings and Special Events:

- Douglas Clark and Kent Bramlett—Madaba Plains Project-'Umayri and Khirbat Balu'a Workshop
- Douglas Clark, Suzanne Richard, Andrea Polcaro, Marta D'Andrea—Madaba Regional Archaeological Museum Project (MRAMP) Workshop
- Lawrence Geraty, Øystein LaBianca, Larry Herr, Douglas Clark, Larry Herr—Madaba Plains Project Reception

Posters:

- Dawn Acevedo
- Douglas Clark
- Lawrence Geraty
- Kristina Reed

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MPP@50—Celebrating the Success of a Major Archaeological Project

Douglas Clark

Turning 50 has its benefits. With five decades of archaeological research in Jordan behind the Madaba Plains Project (1967/8–2017/8), directors and veterans can look back on lessons learned and ahead to future potential (see the ACOR Newsletter summer 2017 issue at: <https://www.acorjordan.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/ACOR-Newsletter-Vol.-29.1-1.pdf>). 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, some past history and some future promise:

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 (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. Three full lecture sessions (15 lectures) focused on Tall Hisban, Tall al-‘Umayri, and Tall Jalul. Three receptions occupied MPP veterans and friends—one at the conference, one at the Harvard Semitic Museum, and one at the home of Ron and Sheila Geraty in Marblehead. Read about the sessions and lecture abstracts at: <http://www.asor.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/ASOR-Program-2017-online.pdf> (See pp. 22 [1H–Hisban], 24 [2H–‘Umayri], 27 [3H–Jalul]; abstracts: pp. 87-88, 96, 106).

26–29 April 2018: Alumni Homecoming Weekend at Walla Walla University, an MPP–‘Umayri consortium institution for 30 years, will feature, among other events, a Friday afternoon seminar presentation by Doug Clark, Kent Bramlett, and Monique Vincent of these past 50 years and a presentation/discussion during Sabbath Seminar by Kent Bramlett, Monique Vincent, and Jody Washburn on the reinvention of biblical archaeology (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. Contact CNEA for further information: archaeology@lasierra.edu.

10–11 November 2018: The tenth annual Archaeology Discovery Weekend at the Center for Near Eastern Archaeology at La Sierra University will focus 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 of these celebrations, especially those near where they live.

Bringing Campus Museum Plans To The People

Anastasia Thrift-Johnson and Kristine Barker (adapted)

As progress continues toward the University’s new museum, campus and community members were tapped for feedback on finalizing plans. It’s one more example of how this building truly will welcome visitors to campus.

The planned La Sierra University Museum, which will combine the assets and programming of World Museum of Natural History, Stahl Center for World Service, Center for Near Eastern Archaeology, and a Welcome Center, would be situated at the entry to campus and be one of the first places to greet visitors.

Dr. Doug Clark, Director of the CNEA, and Dr. Larry Geraty, President Emeritus, recently provided updates on how the endeavor is proceeding. They report that a few important steps have taken place in the planning process—research, interviews and workshops.

Consultant Thomas Hartman of IQ Magic conducted interviews over three days involving campus, community and church participants. Following that, they held three days of workshops for students, faculty, administrators, and the community.

The workshops built on the energy and information gleaned from the interviews. They were used to help envision what a campus museum at La Sierra can and should be. A goal was to move toward mission and vision statements for the museum.

Consultants also took an inventory of all three collections in terms of necessary space for display, storage, research, and administration. They now will create a planning study, the next step in the process, requiring financial commitment.

“We want it to be breathtaking. We want the building to be grand,” Dr. Clark said. “For every letter of GRAND, you pay a lot.”

Dr. Clark, Dr. Geraty, and others involved with the planning of the museum have visited various other institutions to study how these facilities function in their settings. Some of the plac-

**ISRAEL &
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July 2-15, 2018

Join archaeologists Dr. Larry Geraty and Dr. Larry Herr on a two-week tour of the Holy Lands to Israel and Jordan!



es from which they took inspiration include the Fowler Museum at UCLA, the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia, and the San Diego Museum of Man.

This facility is expected to house classroom meetings, lab spaces, and an amphitheater. “We want the museum to be a teaching tool,” Dr. Clark said. He wants to bring the classroom to the museum, and use it for hands-on learning. “We want the campus and the museum to interface at all levels.”

With the focus on working with the community, and creating a place where visitors will be able to experience it hands-on, the museum looks to become a place that truly will welcome guests at all levels.

Upcoming La Sierra Excavations

Kent Bramlett

Archaeology professors at La Sierra University will be carrying out various archaeological activities this spring and summer. Douglas Clark, in collaboration with American, Italian, and Jordanian co-directors and a team of 20 participants, will be in Madaba for the third season of the Madaba Regional Archaeological Museum Project (MRAMP) on 7–25 May.

Friedbert Ninow and Kent Bramlett will be leading several tours of pastors from California to the Holy Land throughout June, July, and August. In July, Friedbert and Kent will spend a week in Jordan making arrangements for the upcoming 2019 Balu’a Regional Archaeological Project (BRAP) expedition. They will visit contacts in Amman and in the area of the Moab Plateau sorting out the logistics of fielding a large team in June–July of 2019. Anticipation is building for an ambitious season that will address a number of important research questions.

In addition, Larry Geraty, along with Larry Herr of Burman University, is directing a 50th-anniversary MPP tour of Israel and Jordan through the first half of July, part of which includes a major celebration on 11 July at Tall Hisban where it all began (for information, email archaeology@lasierra.edu). Several La Sierra professors plan to be part of this milestone event.

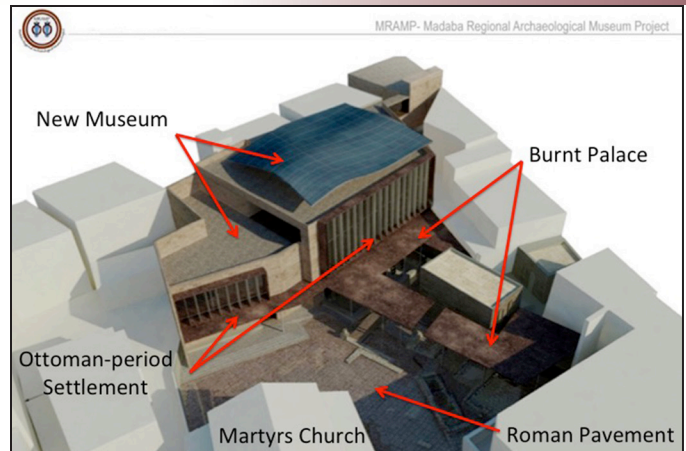
Display Case

Kristina Reed

The Parthian Empire ruled from 247 BC to AD 228 in ancient Persia (modern Iran). They defeated Alexander the Great’s successors, fought the Seleucids, and controlled the Silk Road, building Parthia into a superpower. It was the eastern counterbalance to Rome’s hegemony in the west and at its height the empire occupied territory from Babylonia and Media to Armenia and India. Arsaces I (247–211 BC) was the first king of the Parthian Empire and his name became an honorific title (like “Caesar”) for all subsequent Parthian kings. The Parthians were known for their horsemanship, archery, and military power. Increasing unrest by the peasant population, internal disagreements, and nobles refusing to pay levies resulted in the overthrow of Artabanus IV (AD 216–224) and the establishment of the Sassanians.

Limited written documents survive from Parthia itself, leaving much of what we know about Parthians to written records from sub-kingdoms and coinage. Parthian coins had only a few basic styles and virtually none were issued with the name of the portrayed king. The obverse depicts the bust of a ruler (often beardless) wearing a *bashlyk*, the soft felt cap of steppe horsemen. On the reverse is a seated archer holding a bow, the dynastic name Arsaces (ΑΡΣΑΚΟΥ), and Greek inscriptions and titles. Parthian coins were minted in silver drachms and a few bronze denominations, but never gold, which was reserved for jewelry. Unlike Roman Emperors, Parthian kings spelled everything without abbreviations. This resulted in the design of the coin not fitting the standard die. Coins were struck missing letters and words, making complete Parthian coins extremely rare.

A peculiar detail of Parthian coinage is the “royal wart,” a raised spot on the forehead of 18 rulers. Scholars believe it was a hereditary benign facial tumor regarded as a mark of royal blood since it was passed down the familial line.



Architectural Plans for New Madaba Museum

Douglas Clark

The Madaba Regional Archaeological Museum Project (MRAMP), with which the CNEA is involved, is making progress. This is an American-Italian-Jordanian endeavor to establish a new archaeological museum in downtown Madaba, Jordan, across the street from the Saint George Church, home of the famous sixth-century map of the Holy Land on its floor.

Several years in the making, this initiative has reached a crucial junction: MRAMP now has an architectural firm’s rendition of what we can expect the facility to look like. Studio Strati, a company in Rome, with input from university architecture students at the University of Jordan, Hashemite University, and the American University of Madaba, has produced a striking museum design, as illustrated above.

Set in the Madaba Archaeological Park West (with an extensive second-century Roman pavement and sixth-century Byzantine church [Martyrs Church] and palace [Burnt Palace]), the museum will rest atop and preserve a late 19th-century Ottoman-period settlement, while upper floors will display regional artifacts from the Stone Ages through modern times.



La Sierra Digs

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2018 Calendar of Events

MPP@50

www.lasierra.edu/archaeology

26–29 April

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2–15 July

MPP-sponsored tour of Israel and Jordan with Larry Geraty and Larry Herr <http://multi.madabaplains.org/madabaplains-project-50th-anniversary/mpp50-tour-of-israel-and-jordan/>

10–11 November

Tenth Annual Archaeology Discovery Weekend at the CNEA—MPP@50 focus! <https://lasierra.edu/cnea/discovery-week-end/>

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

Monique Vincent

A “Pyramid” in the Aegean

Archaeologists working off the island of Keros in the Greek Cyclades have determined that the naturally pyramid-shaped promontory of Dhaskalio was intentionally shaped by humans to rise gleaming above the sea. This “pyramid” was covered in imported white limestone and contains evidence of sophisticated drainage systems and metal-working as part of a settlement 4500 years ago. Across from Dhaskalio was an early, major regional sanctuary for the deposition of marble Cycladic sculptures. I excavated part of the entrance staircase during the first season in 2016! Read more at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jan/18/complex-engineering-and-metal-work-discovered-beneath-ancient-greek-pyramid>

The “Perfect” Calendar in the Dead Sea Scrolls

Researchers have deciphered a 364-day calendar used by the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) community, in contrast to the lunar calendar used by Judaism during the time of Jesus and today. This “perfect” calendar allows holidays to fall consistently on the same day each year, unlike the movement of holidays in a lunar calendar—a feature of both Jewish and Islamic holidays. This concern with perfection was a noted feature of the DSS community, who withdrew from Jerusalem to the desert where they could maintain their strictly ruled lifestyle. Read more at <http://www.jpost.com/Israel-News/Culture/University-of-Haifa-researchers-decipher-mysterious-Dead-Sea-Scroll-539357>

A Royal Spring and a Baptismal Pool?

A new park near Jerusalem recently opened that features a Byzantine-era (5th–6th centuries AD) estate with a series of pools filled from the second-largest spring in the Judean Hills. Finds at the site indicate it may have been a royal estate as early as the First Temple Period, with royal architectural elements such as a proto-Ionic capital. The site also features in early Christian history as the traditional site of the baptism of an Ethiopian eunuch described in Acts 8. Read more at <https://www.timesofisrael.com/first-temple-era-relics-of-possible-royal-estate-found-in-jerusalem-hills/>