

La Sierra Digs

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Calendar of Events — 2014-2015

- Mondays & (some) Tuesdays — Labs open for volunteers
- 15-16 November — 6th annual Archaeology Discovery Weekend — Maritime Archaeology — www.lasierra.edu/archaeology
- 19-22 November — Annual Meeting of the American Schools of Oriental Research in San Diego
- 18 April — Homecoming CNEA Open House

OCCASIONALLY

- Archaeology Adventures
- Archaeology Lectures
- Visit www.lasierra.edu/cnea for updates and future program details

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 “Archaeology” at <https://www.lasierraconnect.org/give-now>

Recent Discoveries

Assembled by Monique Vincent

Ancient Charm from Egypt Throws Light on Early Christian Daily Life
A papyrus “charm,” written on the back of a tax receipt, was worn by an Egyptian Christian around 1,500 years ago, containing a mixture of biblical texts meant to protect the wearer. The practice of wearing amulets came into Christianity from a long-standing Egyptian practice. Christians replaced the prayers to the old deities with passages from the Bible. One passage equates the Old Testament *manna* with the New Testament’s Last Supper. “This is an incredibly rare example of Christianity and the Bible becoming meaningful to ordinary people – not just priests and the elite,” Dr. Roberta Mazza emphasizes. Read more at <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-manchester-29028009>

“Our Daily Bread”

Two recent videos on traditional bread making in modern Jordan provide insight into the labor-intensive process of making bread. Researched and produced by archaeologist Dr. Jennie Ebeling, the videos provide fascinating footage and narration on bread making from stirring the dough to baking it in a small oven called a *tabun*. These ovens are similar to those found in houses dating throughout the ages, including those used by the Iron Age Israelites and first-century Christians in Roman Palestine. To find out what it took to make “daily bread,” watch the videos at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=up7nC_bVD3M&list=UUgJbz12PdpnH227034n8f8w&index=2

La Sierra University

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6th Annual Archaeology Discovery Weekend

Ancient Maritime Archaeology

NOVEMBER 15-16 2014

p: 951 785-2632 (CNEA)
f: 951 785-2199
e: archaeology@lasierra.edu
w: lasierra.edu/archaeology
Live-streaming: www.lasierra.edu/watchlive

The Center for Near Eastern Archaeology
The Troesh Auditorium, Zapara School of Business

Join us for ADW 2014!

- Sat 15 Nov 3:00-8:00 pm
Free Lectures and Reception (3:00-6:30 pm)
Mediterranean Banquet (\$50 / 6:30-8:30 pm)
- Sun 16 Nov 10:00 am—6:00 pm
Teachers Workshop (\$25 / 10:00 am—6:00 pm)
Archaeology Advisory Council (11:00 am—1:00 pm)
Free Lectures (1:00-5:15 pm) | Kids (and Parents) Dig (\$5 / 2:00-5:00 pm)
Free Hands-on Lab Adventures (5:00-6:00 pm)
Mediterranean food for sale (5:00-6:00 pm)

Presentations by world-renowned archaeologists and primary investigators on ancient seafaring/shipwrecks/harbors/deep-water finds around the eastern Mediterranean — Turkey | Cyprus | The Galilee | Caesarea Maritima | Jaffa Ashkelon | The Dead Sea | Carthage

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**High-Tech Innovations and Old-fashioned Explorations
Special Report on 2014 Excavations**

Douglas R. Clark
 Director of the Center for Near Eastern Archaeology
 Director of the Madaba Plains Project Excavations at Tall al-'Umayri
 Kent V. Bramlett
 Associate Director of the Center
 Co-director and Chief Archaeologist of the 'Umayri Excavations

The 17th excavation season at Tall al-'Umayri, Jordan, a part of the Madaba Plains Project, has come and gone, running from 25 June through 30 July, 2014. Sponsored by La Sierra University with support from a consortium of North American universities and Versacare Foundation grants, in addition to student and volunteer fees, the dig continues to make its mark in the world of ancient Near Eastern archaeology.

Three main objectives characterized the 2014 season: 1) to step up the use of high-tech photographic and recording technologies for greater accuracy, efficiency, and visual utility; 2) to expose more 5,000-year-old tombs, the southern defense system of the site, and rock-cut features of a remote, hinterland farmstead; and 3) to keep working to resolve land-ownership issues at the site.

Participants numbered nearly 40 people from around North America and Europe, including dig administrators, Department of Antiquities representatives (Jihad Haroun, also a graduate student in archaeology and biblical studies at La Sierra, and Abdelrahim Al-Dwikat), scholars, specialists, several La Sierra and other students, and volunteers. Among team members were Prince Tareq Judeh of the royal family of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and student at the University of Edin-

burgh, as well as an officer from the US Embassy in Amman. As always, the village of Bunayat supplied workers (15 this season) who labored alongside us, some of them since the excavations began here in 1984, others children of the original crew members – soon it will be their grandchildren.

Also in Jordan and on site for a week were senior administrators from La Sierra and other consortium schools, including President and Mrs. Randal Wisbey, Provost and Mrs. Steve Pawluk, and former President Lawrence Geraty. We try to schedule these institutional visits occasionally in order to update our sponsoring university leaders on progress, facilitate meetings with government and academic leaders so that they can better understand our work, and communicate concerns.

The 2014 season's results:

1) This summer marked another step deeper into cyber-archaeology for La Sierra's primary archaeological project: the use of new digital and computer technologies that have helped turn archaeology from record-keeping with the old paper notes, locus sheets, and scaled drawings to electronic everything. Almost entirely paperless now, our project records, stores, and shares data about artifacts and architecture from discovery to analysis to interpretation to preservation – all of this digitally.



Douglas Clark, Tareq Judeh, Jihad Haroun, Abdelrahim Al-Dwikat



La Sierra-connected administrators, dig staff, students, and volunteers

With the use of iPods, iPads, and all kinds of computers, we record all the data we uncover, making possible an online database available to scholars almost instantaneously. With a ProMark 3 GPS system, we place every single earth layer, wall, and artifact three-dimensionally on a GIS platform so that we can reconstruct any part of it on demand. With ground-penetrating radar, we search for ancient tombs. With 3D videos and still photographs shot from tripods (we can now peel back daily 3D models of our excavation progress at any place we work on the site), a steadicam (for hand-held 3D recording), and a new octicopter UAV or drone, we can reconstruct the entire landscape and anything on it in 3D models for research and display.

2) Our excavations did not result in more 5,000-year-old tombs, as we had hoped, near another “dolmen” tomb from that period, but we did find archaeological connections and a complete human lower mandible for research. The earthen ramparts we sought began to emerge with layers of packed soil down over the top of the southern slope, one layer dating to the important time period of around 1200 BC, the time of the Judges.



This period is well represented on the rest of the tell. Artifacts from the ramparts are mostly of the type the ancient in-

habitants tossed over the city wall because they didn't want them anymore. How true that one person's trash has become another's treasure! And exploration of the remote farmstead revealed dozens of agricultural features – wine presses, storage facilities, water cisterns – carved into the exposed bedrock.

3) Issues involving land ownership of the site have been around since the project began in the mid-1980s, but have intensified in the past few years. Steps taken both to preserve Jordan's cultural heritage at the site and, at the same time, to protect the rights of our friends who own the land have slowed some, in spite of conversations with all the stakeholders in Jordan and abroad.

All in all, it was a productive season. We worked hard (especially the students!), we grappled with major issues, we made important discoveries, we learned a lot about dedication as the entire month of Ramadan fell within our field season, we celebrated as the seeds were sown for a new student Archaeology Club on campus, and we came away with a greater appreciation for the wide and wonderful world of which we are a part.



Matt Vincent and our new UAV

Display Case

By Monique Vincent

The “Canaanite Storage Jar” is characterized by its piriform (pear-like) shape and two large handles. From the earliest Canaanite storage jars found in Pre-Dynastic Egyptian tombs, Canaanite goods were on the move in these sturdy, mobile vessels. By the Late Bronze Age (1550-1200 BC), Canaanite storage jars were traded across the Mediterranean in the thousands, keeping the ancient potters busy! Residue analysis performed on these jars indicates that they carried olive oil and wines, as well as tree resins, incense, and honey. But it was not just the contents that were important to the sea-faring merchants and their customers. The vessel form itself was copied outside of Canaan, a sure indication of its popularity. Made both on the wheel and by hand, the jars were large, but still small enough to facilitate transport, holding around 30 liters (or 8 gallons). A handful of these Late Bronze Age storage jars are housed at the CNEA, including this vessel, which was lovingly restored just this fall.

