



CENTER FOR
NEAR EASTERN
ARCHAEOLOGY
LA SIERRA UNIVERSITY

La Sierra Digs

Newsletter of the Center for Near Eastern Archaeology | HMS Richards Divinity School | La Sierra University | Vol. 12:3 Autumn 2024

16th Annual Archaeology Discovery Weekend • November 16-17, 2024

Petra: Ancient World of Wonder

featuring:

FADI BALA'AWI

(Director General, DOA Jordan)

LEIGH-ANN BEDAL

(Penn State Behrend)

KENT BRAMLETT

(La Sierra University)

GLENN CORBETT

(Editor, *Biblical Archaeology Review*)

CYNTHIA FINLAYSON

(Brigham Young University)

MEGAN PERRY

(East Carolina University)

schedule:

SATURDAY, 16 NOV

Illustrated presentations and discussions, artifact displays and open house, CNEA as "Little Jordan" Reception, and more!

SUNDAY, 17 NOV

Illustrated presentations and discussions, Kids Dig, artifact displays, hands-on activities, authentic Bedouin hospitality tent, and more!

In-person & Online
Find out more at:

lasierra.edu/archaeology

Photograph: Al-Khazneh (The Treasury) peeks through the end of the

What to Watch for at ADW 2024

Douglas Clark, Kaitlyn Satelmayer, and Dawn Acevedo

We at CNEA are honored to team up with a wide range of partners from around the world to bring to La Sierra an engaging weekend of illustrated presentations on Petra, one of the "New Seven Wonders of the World," and several special features. Thanks to the generous support of the Versacare Foundation and co-sponsors, we have been able to expand our reach geographically and in terms of publicity. Along with the usual high-quality lectures by specialists in their field—including the Director General of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan—the displays at CNEA, the family-friendly activities on Sunday, the Bedouin hospitality tent, and an archaeology book sale, there will be a special reception Saturday evening in the ZSB Atrium celebrating CNEA as "Little Jordan." This event will feature great Jordanian refreshments, special international VIP guests, and artifacts and large displays with directors of all five CNEA-affiliated projects on hand for Q&A.

For more information on Archaeology Discovery Weekend 2024 and the registration link, visit: <https://lasierra.edu/cnea/discovery-weekend/>.



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| | |
|--------------------|-----|
| Dolmens | 2 |
| Cornforth Plaque | 2 |
| Grad 2024 | 2 |
| Giving Day | 3 |
| Display Case | 3 |
| Digging Updates | 4-5 |
| Museum Update | 5 |
| Recent Discoveries | 6 |



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Ancient Dolmen Lecture and Workshop

The Madaba Plains Project excavations at Tall al-'Umayri, Jordan (primary sponsor CNEA) have been graced by scores of historically and scientifically significant discoveries from around 3000 to 500 BC, some associated with biblical narratives. Among these was the uncovering in 1994 of a dolmen burial structure, an above-ground box made up of massive stone slabs to protect those buried inside. Of the thousands of dolmens in the ancient world, only a handful can boast the remains of humans who once occupied the space. The dolmen at 'Umayri was among the most impressive of those, containing the skeletal remains of 25–28 people and numerous artifacts which helped us date and interpret the burial installation.

In order to take advantage of having several scholars on campus for Archaeology Discovery Weekend, CNEA has invited additional specialists to a workshop on dolmens in preparation for the official publication on the 'Umayri dolmen, including specialists in ceramics, physical anthropology, ancient DNA, 14C dating, ancient pathologies and mortuary practices, various types of isotope analysis, facial reconstruction, even evidence of violence, etc. Hopefully, the itinerant dolmen pottery sherds now in Poland (see the spring 2024 issue of *La Sierra Digs* on "Following the Potsherds to Krakow, Poland" at: <https://lasierra.edu/fileadmin/documents/cnea/newsletter/cnea-newsletter-spring-2024.pdf>) will arrive at CNEA in time for this workshop.

This is a scholarly workshop on 13–14 November, limited to specialist participants from Israel, Jordan, Canada, the UK, and the US, but there will be a public presentation about dolmens on Wednesday evening 13 November in ZSB 244 at 7:00 PM, open to all. The presenter, one of the workshop participants and co-editor of the final report, is Dr. James Fraser who worked for several years at the British Museum and wrote his PhD dissertation at University College London on dolmens, prominently featuring the 'Umayri dolmen. He is currently Director of the Albright Institute of Archaeological Research in Jerusalem.



Public Presentation on Ancient Dolmens

"The Visible Dead: Dolmens and the Landscape in the Southern Levant in the 4th Millennium B.C."

Dr. James Fraser

7:00–8:00 PM

Wednesday 13 November

ZSB 244

Commemorative Plaque Honoring Fred Cornforth

As readers of the Spring 2024 issue of *La Sierra Digs* have noticed (<https://lasierra.edu/fileadmin/documents/cnea/newsletter/cnea-newsletter-spring-2024.pdf>), CNEA's long-time friend and benefactor, C. Fred Cornforth, former CEO of Community Development Inc. of Garden City, Idaho, sadly and prematurely passed away due to glioblastoma last spring. As a condition of his generous donations and large endowment pledge to CNEA, he named CNEA the Lawrence T. Geraty and Douglas R. Clark Center for Near Eastern Archaeology. To honor him for his commitment to CNEA and archaeology at La Sierra, the Center is mounting a bronze commemorative plaque inside the entry hallway for all to see.



Graduation 2024

Kent Bramlett

Graduation in June saw four MA in Near Eastern Archaeology students receive recognition for working through their programs. Pictured are Zamani Moyo, Raul Zanatta, and Kaitlyn Satelmayer, along with Dr. Kent Bramlett. Joseph Rutkin was unable to attend. He has been working as a CRM (Cultural Resources Management) archaeologist. Recent projects include work near Bakersfield during the heat spell of September; work in Lost Hills, CA for an incoming solar field; and currently he is on a new project in Ontario, CA where he is monitoring the construction of a new sports facility.



Giving Day – 11 December 2024

An annual rite of passage for CNEA, Giving Day provides a special opportunity for the Center to outline particular projects and seek funding to support them. For 2024, our focus, we are happy to announce, is on archaeological research happening at and through CNEA. While sometimes engaging and exotic, research is more often time-consuming and can be quite tedious. But it is always important and among the top priorities of archaeologists!

Responsible archaeological research forms one of the bedrock pillars of the mission of the Center for Near Eastern Archaeology. It affects everything we do as an educational institution: excavations, analysis of finds, preservation of cultural heritage, presentation of finds to scholars and the public, and the official publication of what our work means to the human experience. We plan to use the funds generated through Giv-

ing Day 2024 to support research by the students, faculty, and staff of CNEA at home and abroad. Understanding our common past facilitates the expansion of knowledge and a shared vision of humankind for the future and how we can change our world. Supporting CNEA Giving Day 2024 initiatives will add to the impressive record of CNEA’s accomplishments and potential. We have set a goal of \$50,000--join us and help support our many research endeavors in the year ahead!

Support CNEA this Giving Day!
Text givingtogether1 to 71777.

<https://www.lasierra.edu/givingday>

11 December 2024

Display Case – Nabataean Painted Fine Ware

Kaitlyn Satelmayer

Nabataean painted fine ware is one of the most remarkable forms of ancient pottery, recognized for its delicate craftsmanship and elegant designs. Created by the Nabataeans, this pottery reached its peak during the late Hellenistic and early Roman periods (ca. the late 4th century BC to the early 2nd century AD), around the time when the city of Petra was thriving. What makes Nabataean fine ware stand out is the incredible thinness of the pottery. So finely made, these vessels are often compared to eggshells because of their fragile nature. Once formed, the pottery was covered with a glossy slip that gave it a smooth, shiny surface, further enhancing its beauty. The decoration is equally impressive, with painted

designs in red and black, often featuring beautiful floral patterns, and flowing geometric shapes. These designs reveal a blend of local Nabataean artistry, influenced by Greek and Roman art, reflecting the cultural crossroads in which Petra was located.



My Summer in Iraq

Luke Poutre

This summer, I had the incredible opportunity to participate in the Kurd Qaburstan Archaeological Project in the Kurdish region of Northern Iraq. I worked with a team of archaeologists from Johns Hopkins University as well as the University of Central Florida as we excavated this Middle Bronze Age site. During the first month of this project, I was working with the Geophysics team as we collected magnetometry data using cutting-edge sensor equipment to produce maps of the sub-surface layers of the site. After the Geophysics team left for the U.S., I was placed in a trench with the excavation team where I learned valuable archaeological skills such as cutting and drawing sections, screening, soil identification, artifact (ceramic and lithic) analysis, as well as artifact articulation. This was an amazing experience, and I hope to be able to implement these skills on an upcoming project with La Sierra University.



Archaeology Adventures Program

Kaitlyn Satelmayer

Archaeology Adventures is a hands-on educational program hosted at the Lawrence T. Geraty and Douglas R. Clark Center for Near Eastern Archaeology (CNEA), designed to fully immerse students in the world of archaeology. Through this program, students have the opportunity to “think like archaeologists” in an engaging, hands-on environment that fosters learning and the discovery of the past. The program has attracted students from elementary through high school, and its rapid expansion during the 2023–2024 school year—successfully running five sessions—reflects its growing popularity. This fall, we have five additional programs scheduled, with three more lined up for the spring quarter. Archaeology Adventures is led by myself, with the invaluable teaching assistance of Maribel Carmona Torres, an anthropologist, and Luke Poutre, an MA student in Near Eastern Archaeology at La Sierra. Together, we work to create a dynamic and educational experience that introduces students to the fascinating world of archaeology.

What sets Archaeology Adventures apart is its hands-on approach. Students not only learn about archaeology but also develop essential skills in critical thinking, teamwork, and problem-solving. A key highlight is their chance to engage in real archaeological work in our mock excavation site, modeled after CNEA’s past research at Tall al-Umaryi, a transitional Bronze to Iron Age site in Jordan. This realistic setting allows students to experience firsthand how archaeologists study the past, from the excavation



process to artifact analysis; it allows for the students an understanding of how these findings connect to the people who once inhabited the region of Iron Age Jordan. Working in small teams, students handle replica artifacts, record their findings, and discuss the interpretation of their discoveries—all under the guidance of trained archaeologists and anthropologists. Looking ahead, we're thrilled to continue expanding Archaeology Adventures, providing even more students with a unique opportunity to explore the past through the lens of hands-on learning. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of our team, this program has become an integral part of the CNEA, and we are honored to inspire a love for archaeology in the next generation.

Archaeology in Jordan – Balu'a, Ataruz, MRAMP

Douglas Clark and Kent Bramlett

Every two years the American Center of Research (ACOR) in Amman, Jordan publishes a small but nicely illustrated volume of brief archaeological reports on research for the previous two seasons; it provides a quick and easily accessible overview of the latest archaeological research in the country. The latest issue was published recently, covering archaeology in Jordan

2022–2023. Of the many reports (all published open source at <https://publications.acorjordan.org/volumes/archaeology-in-jordan-4/>), three were written by CNEA faculty and staff: Khirbat al-Balu'a by Monique Roddy, Kent Bramlett, and Friedbert Ninow; Khirbat Ataruz by Chang Ho Ji and colleague; and the Madaba Regional Archaeological Museum Project by Doug Clark and colleagues.

Campus Museum Update

Larry Geraty

A University Museum & Visitor Center update was given to assembled faculty, staff, students, and interested visitors as part of the University Colloquium week at a September 19, 2024, luncheon event in the Dining Commons Cactus Room. It started with an illustrated overview of the project as designed by DLR, the architectural firm employed to picture the much-anticipated building that will be the first one visitors to campus come to when they enter the university entrance and come up Yaeger Drive.

Presenters included DLR Principals Dan Clevenger and Dennis Bree whose presentation seemed to rejuvenate those in attendance. News to the group was celebrated that the museum building design received an award--the 2023 American Architecture Award: Honorable Mention from the Chicago Athenaeum: Museum of Architecture and Design and the European Centre for Architecture Art Design and Urban Studies. Shorter affirming presentations were made by Vice President for Student Life Marjorie Robinson on the importance of the Commuter Student Center, the natural history collection by Professor Jesse Grismer, the archaeology collection by Professor Kent Bramlett, and CNEA Director Doug Clark on La Sierra's international relations. Nicholas Adcock, CEO of the Greater Riverside Chamber of Commerce, spoke of the importance of this project to the Riverside area community. We all look forward to the donor commitments that will make this important campus addition a reality!



La Sierra Digs

Editors: Douglas Clark, Kaitlyn Satelmayer,
Dawn Acevedo

Photographs: The Department of Antiquities of Jordan, the Madaba Plains Project, Kaitlyn Satelmayer, Douglas Clark, Luke Poutre, DLRGroup

La Sierra University
4500 Riverwalk Parkway
(951) 785-2632 (CNEA)
archaeology@lasierra.edu
www.lasierra.edu/archaeology
www.facebook.com/lasierracnea
www.instagram.com/lasierra_cnea
www.x.com/lasierra_cnea
www.youtube.com/@lasierra_cnea
www.linkedin.com/groups/14302248

La Sierra University
Center for Near Eastern Archaeology
4500 Riverwalk Parkway
Riverside, CA 92505



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2024 – 2025 Calendar of Events

- 13 Nov Lecture on Dolmens by Dr. James A. Fraser of the Albright Institute in Jerusalem.
- 16–17 Nov ADW 2024 – Petra
- 11 Dec Giving Day, including archaeology presentation
- 11 Feb Winter Archaeology Lecture
- 26 Apr Homecoming Archaeology Lecture

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!

Recent Discoveries

Assembled by Dawn Acevedo

Neolithic Engineering and the Menga Dolmen

A “multi-institutional team” of specialists has a new theory about the mind-boggling construction of the megalithic Menga dolmen located roughly 120 miles northeast of the Strait of Gibraltar. To learn more about the complex prehistoric engineering involved in creating this impressive tomb, go to <https://phys.org/news/2024-08-theory-menga-dolmen-built.html>.

Precious Bronze Age Fabric Found Near Dead Sea

A recent study of textile fragments found in the “Cave of the Skulls” along cliffs in the Nahal Ze’elim Valley west of the Dead Sea in 2016 has revealed the use of “scarlet-red dye” produced from female scale insects which were gathered during only one month of the year. These Middle Bronze Age samples are the earliest known examples of this dyeing technique. Learn more here: <https://www.newsweek.com/precious-ancient-red-insect-dye-revealed-textile-found-cave-skulls-1929819>

A Bronze Age Shipwreck Near Northern Israel

The remains of a ship carrying Canaanite amphorae dating to the 14th century BC was found “some 56 miles off the coast of northern Israel.” The location of the vessel over such deep waters challenges what researchers previously assumed concerning “ancient mariner navigational skills.” Read more: <https://archaeology.org/news/2024/06/24/rare-bronze-age-shipwreck-found-in-the-mediterranean-sea/>

A Monumental Roman Garden for Emperor Caligula

A few blocks from Vatican City, overlooking the bank of the Tiber River, construction workers happened upon the remains of a travertine wall, portico, and a lead pipe bearing the name of the Roman emperor Caligula (r. AD 37–41) as well as other evidence linked to his family members. Such a garden was mentioned by Philo of Alexandria (On the Embassy to Gaius, XXVIII.181). See: <https://www.wantedinrome.com/news/ancient-rome-vatican-garden-jubilee.html>