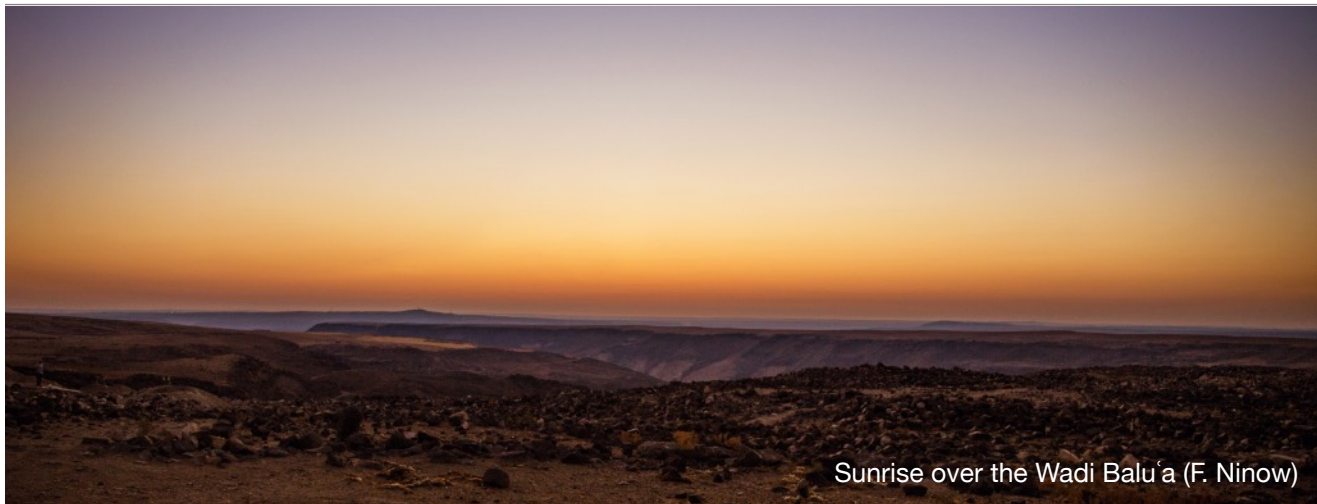


BRAP BEAT



Sunrise over the Wadi Balu'a (F. Ninow)

Results of Week 5

By Monique Vincent

This has been the week of surfaces and bedrock. The teams were finished excavating topsoil and rubble layers and were starting to reach primary contexts, whether that was at the base of the Qasr, the surfaces and features of the Iron II house, or the inside of the casemate room and the inner face of the fortifications at the wall. A GPS survey of looting pits revealed the full extent of damage to the site, including new disturbances since the last survey in 2012. Back in the lab staff have been busily registering and photographing finds, floating botanical samples, and writing grants for future paleoenvironmental research. The season is wrapping up and we are excited to have met many of our objectives for 2019. This week's results section includes a

brief summary with images of the finds in each area, to be followed next week by more detailed summaries from each of the area and research supervisors after our work for the season is complete.

The major objective for **Team Qasr** was to excavate to the bottom of the monumental Qasr structure and date it, as previous probes and researchers have all disagreed on its date. As Area Supervisor Craig Tyson has written, this process included excavation and then removal of two major walls before a large enough area could be cleared to reach the bottom. Last



The basalt mortar under the Qasr (M. Vincent)



The base of the Qasr on bedrock (F. Ninow)



One last probe (M. Vincent)

week when the team hit bedrock we knew we had achieved our goal. While we are still fine tuning our understanding of the structure's origin, it likely that the earliest phase was constructed in the Iron II period. This week the team worked on clearing more of the bedrock in front of the Qasr, including a series of naturally-occurring holes in the limestone bedrock. A thick earth layer under the Qasr also appeared under other features in the area and was either debris from earlier occupation or an intentional fill layer to level the lumpy bedrock before constructing the Qasr. The team cleared more of this layer while studying the founding stones of the Qasr, and then opened a new additional probe to the east to answer a few more questions about how the Qasr relates to a large stone surface and wall. The pottery from these layers will be our most exciting find this season, though the discovery on Thursday of a large basalt mortar embedded in the surface under the Qasr was also quite thrilling.

With a larger team this season, **Team House** was able to expand considerably around the original small probe in the Iron II structure. This house was likely destroyed by an earthquake, which caused a fire to burn through the building before its upper story collapsed and sealed in the rooms' contents. A later layer of windblown debris was over a meter deep in places. All this meant that the new areas of excavation had over two meters of earth to remove before reaching the surfaces of the house. The first three weeks were a trudge



Western rooms (M. Vincent)



Southern Room (J. Logee)



Eastern Rooms (M. Vincent)

through all this earth, though by the end of the third week the tops of dividing walls were starting to show up and figurine fragments made sifting a bit more interesting. The doorway in the middle of the house was the most exciting feature to watch as the earth was removed from inside it, and then two new doorways appeared in the other two rooms! This week all three new excavation areas had reached surfaces and were happily sweeping around pottery sherds embedded in the floors and walking across floors that had been untouched for over two thousand years after the house's previous occupants had fled. One distinctive feature of

the house was the use of large basalt boulders/bedrock as the foundations of walls or as possible benches in the floor. Another interesting feature is the division of space inside the larger rooms by small, poorly built walls, as mentioned by area supervisor Stephanie Selover.

Team Wall had excavated the eastern, outer wall of the fortification system in 2017, revealing a face over 3 m high. This season the team has worked on the western, inner wall of the fortifications as well as continuing excavations inside the casemate room in between the two walls. The inner face of the wall stood nearly 3.5 m by the end of this week between the two walls mentioned previously by area supervisor Dawn Acevedo. The phasing of the fortification system finally started to crystalize this week. A series of surfaces



Casemate room (J. Logee)



Inner fortification wall (M. Vincent)



Casemate room probe for wall foundations (M. Vincent)

inside the casemate room show the order in which construction took place, revealing that an original single wall was later turned into a casemate wall system. This discovery was exhilarating to sort out in the final days of the week.

The next edition of *BRAP Beat* will bring more details about these areas of excavation after the excavation officially closes on Wednesday, July 31, and most of the team is on their way home (Friday, August 2)!



Khirbat al-Mudayna al-Aliya (S. Penacho)



Lejjun (M. Vincent)

Other News

Last Sunday the team took a short tour out to visit fortress sites. Our first stop was the Iron Age fortified settlement of Khirbat al-Mudayna al-Aliya, a small but impressive site atop an outcrop in the middle of a large wadi system. The difficult climb past the Iron Age moat was rewarded with a spectacular view out over different streams meandering through the wadi bottoms. We then moved on to the Roman fortress of Lejjun, which was founded under the emperor Diocletian. The corners of the outer walls enclosed rooms and doorways that still stand today, while streets and the remains of other buildings could still be seen throughout the fort. Finally, we headed to Mudaybi, another Iron Age fortress. This fortress, with a well-preserved chambered gate, commanded the trade routes passing through a large plain below.



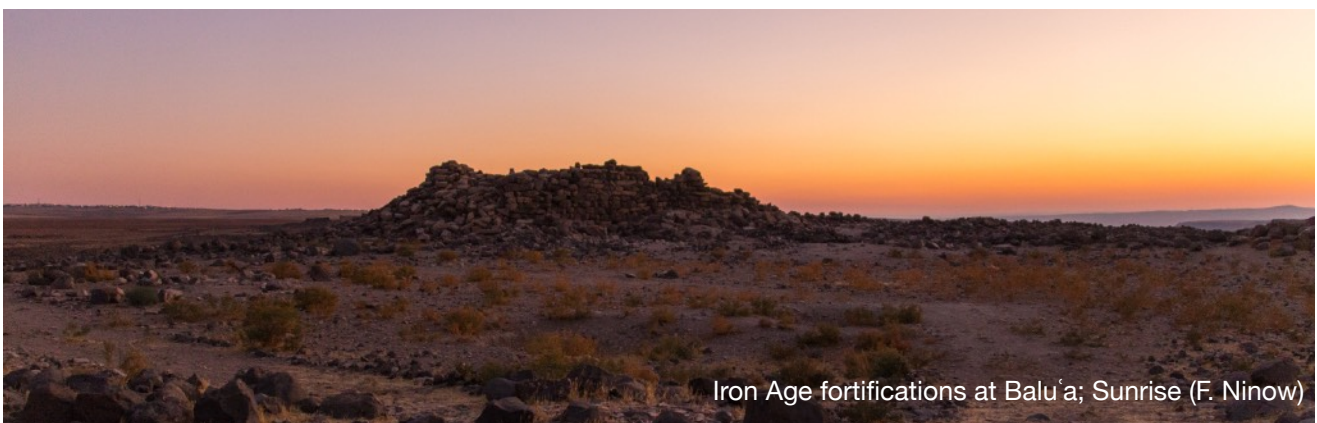
Mudaybi (C. Tyson)

The team celebrated the season together Friday night with a traditional *mansaf* dinner, to which we invited as our guests the Department of Antiquities staff and our site guard who have provided support and expertise to us throughout the season. *Mansaf* is a Jordanian dish that involves piling a large central platter high with rice and lamb and then drizzling a sheep yogurt sauce, *jameed*, over the top. Participants then stand around and eat with their right hands, rolling the rice and meat into small balls with the liquid's assistance to then pop in the mouth. We sweetened this treat with *khanafeh*, a sugared cheese dessert, at the end.



Mansaf feast (F. Ninow)

Our final weekend tour will be a trip down to the Dead Sea plain this afternoon. We will stop briefly at the Early Bronze Age cemetery at Bab edh-Dhra and then head on to Amman Beach where we can float in the salty waters and watch the sunset.



Iron Age fortifications at Balu'a; Sunrise (F. Ninow)

The 2019 BRAP Team

The contributions of each member of the team are essential to a great season. We want to take this opportunity to thank each participant and acknowledge their help in making the 2019 season a success!

DIRECTORS



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Monique Vincent

STAFF



Dawn Acevedo
Area Sup, Wall



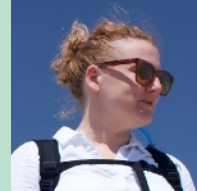
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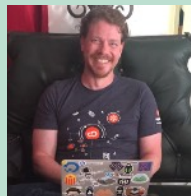
Adam Schneider
Paleoenviro. Sup.



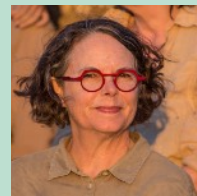
Stephanie Selover
Area Sup, House



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VOLUNTEERS



Lorraine Abagatnan
Team House



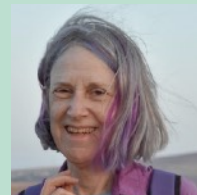
Benjamin Bahr
Team Qasr



Melanie Bahr
Team House



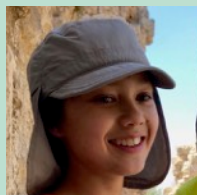
Jaime Bennett
Sq Sup, Wall



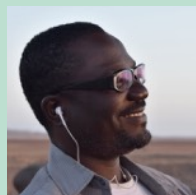
Mary Boyd
Team Qasr



Nathaniel Bramlett
Team Balua



Sanford Bramlett
Team Balua



Kevin Burrell
Sq Sup, Qasr



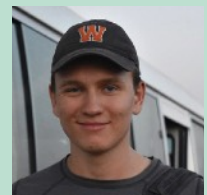
Jonathan Cashion
Sq Sup, House



Nicole Castanon
Sq Sup, House



Sierra Collins
Sq Sup, Wall



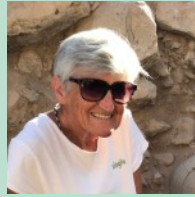
Joshua Harder
Team House



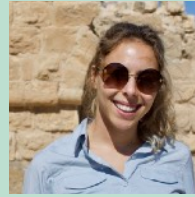
Regine Hunziker-
Rodewald
Team Wall



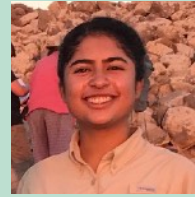
Marlène Iten Graf
Team Wall



Vera Kopecky
Team Qasr



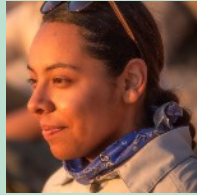
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Team Qasr



Alexis Martinez
Sq Sup, House



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Rieckmann
Team Wall



Alondra Rodriguez
Team House



Jan Sigvartsen
Team House



Kevin Sinats
Geospatial Ast.



Ian Swartz
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DoA Rep



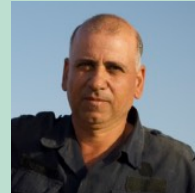
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DoA Rep



Wesal Ma'alta
DoA Rep



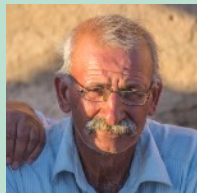
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Team Guard



Ahmad Suleman
Pathways



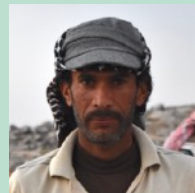
Amer Hijazeen
Team Qasr



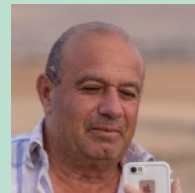
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Bahaa Sate
Team House



Hasan Salameh
Pathways



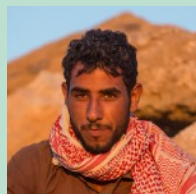
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Majed Salameh
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Hammad Salameh
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Naif Abu Dwas
Team House



Yassir Jmea'an
Team Wall