

BRAP BEAT

Results of Week 4



Team Qasr (L to R): Andressa Leitzke, Mary Boyd, Ma'an, Amer, Vera Kopecky, Craig Tyson, Kevin Burrell, and Benjamin Bahr

The Qasr

By Craig Tyson, Area Supervisor

In the last issue of *BRAP Beat*, Team Qasr was still working toward its ultimate goal of finding the founding level of the Qasr. In the intervening days we located some interesting and perplexing items. The first was what appears to be burnt textile fibers that came up in a layer just above a cobbled floor. We took samples of the fibers for analysis and will wait to see what those results are. Having removed that layer we came down on a cobble floor associated with the Iron Age II wall running through our probe. We documented this feature before removing it. In the process of removing it and an



associated earth layer, Melanie Bahr found a small faience or frit figurine of Egyptian style. Initial analysis suggests it is a Pataikos figurine dating to the early part of the Iron Age II. Great find, Melanie! The latter part of this week was taken up with dismantling the very large stones of the Iron Age II wall. With the help of our students Ian Swartz and Benjamin Bahr, as well as workers Hamad, Yassar, Ma'am, and 'Amr, we removed many of the stones, and moved the ones we couldn't get out of our probe to one side so we now have a clear space to work up against the Qasr. After the removal of the wall we very quickly hit bedrock, which means the founding of the Qasr is not much earlier than the Iron Age II wall. Analysis of the pottery next week will help clarify that date. Team Qasr is excited to finally have reached its goal and can now move on to the next level of questions about the Qasr: Why was it built? What was it used for? How long was it used? Stay tuned for more updates!



Team House (L to R): Youssef, Majed, Lorraine Abagatnan, Nicole Castanon, Jonathan Cashion, Carolyn Waldron, Alexis Martinez, Stephanie Selover, Hamid, Nayef, Bahaa, Melanie Bahr, Alondra Rodriguez, Joshua Harder, Jan Sigvartsen, Adam Schneider

The House

By Stephanie Selover, Area Supervisor

Our continuing excavations in House A have been quite productive these last two weeks. Throughout the northern set of rooms of the House a total of four new divisional stone and mudbrick walls have been discovered, creating four smaller rooms out of the long structure that currently forms the center of House A. In two of those rooms we have now excavated down to the floor, finding a hard-packed clay floor in the western half of Room 1 and a well-formed plaster floor in the eastern half of Room 3. In the next and final week of excavations, we hope to excavate down to the floor in all of the rooms. Finds in Rooms 1 and 3 have included figurine fragments, carnelian beads, a basalt bowl, a seal impression on a ceramic handle, and a large number

of basalt grinding stones. We have not found any built installations in these rooms, but we shall see what the next week brings.

In Room 4 to the south of the doorway, work has been more difficult. In this room we have been excavating a very large locus of rubble, with surprisingly high amounts of medium to large boulders, set within an incredibly soft and light fill that gave our excavators the sensation of trying to uncover boulders through flour. The fill was full of pottery from a variety of time periods as well as a number of carnelian and stone beads, figurine fragments, ceramic stoppers, and more basalt grinders. This locus was found to be more than 1.5 meters thick, and it was only on Friday of Week 4 that we finally came down upon the bottom of this rubble layer. We assume that this locus was the result of structure collapse with wind-swept fill, resulting in the situation described above. After removing the locus we are now on a hard-packed clay earthen locus that may be a new surface. Next week will tell us more.

Finally, in news we all were quite excited about, we were finally able to excavate to the base of the intact doorway and lintel that connects Rooms 3 and 4. The door is now tall enough for the shortest of our crew to walk through, with a very well built stone threshold at the bottom of the open doorway.



The doorway and lintel looking south



Team Wall (L to R): Jaime Bennett, Wernfried Rieckmann, Awwad, Sierra Collins, Marlène Iten Graf, Betty Adams, Regine Hunziker-Rodewald, Ian Swartz, Yasser, Dawn Acevedo

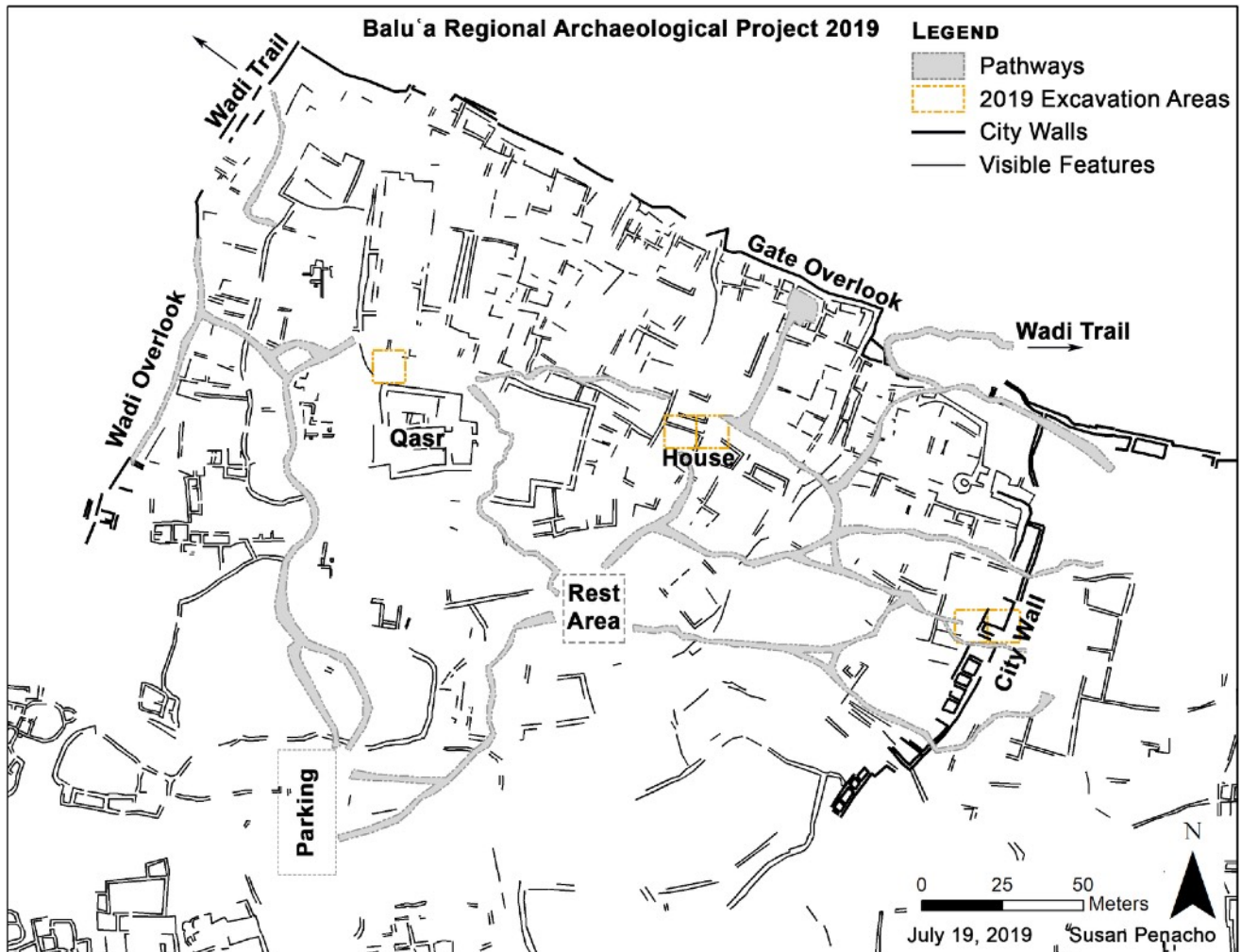
The Wall

By Dawn Acevedo, Area Supervisor

Week four proved to be as interesting as we had hoped! In the eastern square, excavations in the casemate room further clarified the Late Iron II Phases 1 and Phase 2 as we happened upon a beaten earth surface. This likely served as the floor of the room during the Phase 1 period and had ashy patches above it alerting us to its upcoming debut. After the removal of the surface, we came across a very dark ashy layer followed by yet another beaten earth layer.



On the western side of our fortification wall, our seeming three-wall room instead proved to be a larger room, the doorway of which likely extends beyond our probe this season. We can now see four courses of the north and south walls of this room, while the fortification wall is seven courses tall and growing on this western side. Interesting finds from this square include a ceramic loom weight, a bronze ring, and a small basalt quern.



Survey

By Susan Penacho, Geospatial Manager

In previous seasons, the rocky terrain at Balu'a made it difficult for excavators and workmen to traverse the site. During this season Dr. Douglas Clark and two workmen, Hasan and Achmed, forged new pathways across the site connecting the current excavation areas. These pathways have been a great help in facilitating the movement of people and equipment. Over the course of three weeks they created multiple pathways measuring over 1.4 km in total length. In addition to connecting our excavation areas, these also aide people in visiting the best overlooks of the Wadi Balu'a and the City Gate. These pathways and other major features of the 2019 season have now been mapped (see above). Now on to mapping possible cisterns and evidence of looting and disturbance, a continuing problem at this remote site.

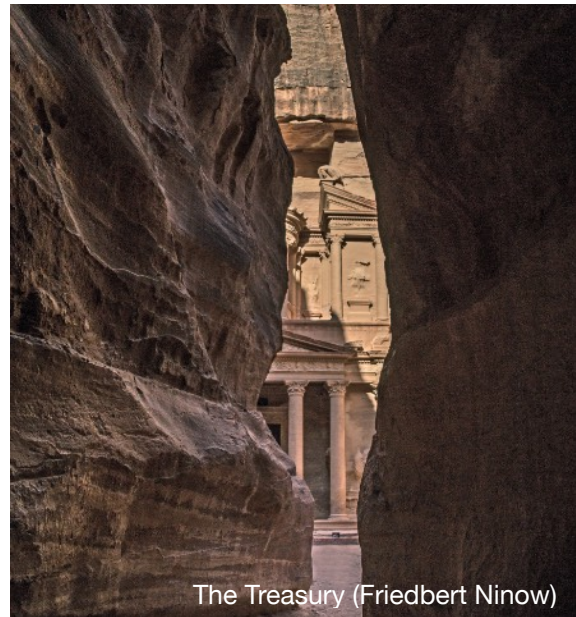


Petra Weekend

By Monique Vincent

The team enjoyed their mid-season holiday at the Petra Archaeological Park. This ancient Nabatean city (with Iron Age, Roman, Byzantine, and other periods' remains as well) is always a highlight for the entire team with its ornate tombs, temples, and theaters carved out of the colorful sandstone. This season participants experienced the newly completed Petra Museum, located just outside the park gates, with its interactive exhibits on life in ancient Petra throughout the ages.

Favorite spots inside Petra include the colorfully-named High Place of Sacrifice (a peak-top cultic area), Monastery (a tomb), and of course, the famous Treasury (also a tomb) that stands at the end of a long winding slot canyon ("The Siq"). The more energetic members of the team were able to make it to several of these spots in their one day inside the park, while others focused on making it to one or two features.





The Great Temple (Monique Vincent)



The Siq (Dawn Acevedo)



High Place of Sacrifice (Jaime Bennett)



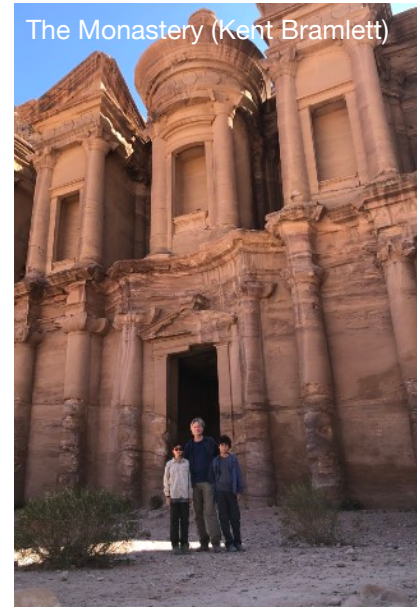
On the trail (Mary Boyd)



The Treasury (Benjamin Bahr)



Camel ride (Ian Swartz)



The Monastery (Kent Bramlett)



The Siq (Craig Tyson)

Camp Life

By Monique Vincent

A dig schedule is not for the faint of heart. With a 35 minute drive to site, we have to get up extra early each day to beat the sun to Balu'a. Breakfast starts at 4:15, so many people wake up at 3:45 or earlier. Pita bread, hummus, boiled eggs, yogurt, jam, and oatmeal along with the pervasive cucumber and tomato go down quickly before the bus leaves at 4:45. The bus arrives on site around 5:30, after picking up tools from a nearby tent which are then unloaded and carried to the various work areas. Falafel, hummus, and tabun bread break up the morning at 9:30 before work continues until 12:30 PM. The bus then returns to our hotel and we lunch at 1:45 PM and rest until work begins again at 3:30 PM. This work time is in the air conditioned lab or in the shade of the hotel and includes pottery washing, pottery reading (dating the pottery that has been excavated), recording, cleaning and photographing the objects that have been found, and otherwise processing the day's material, whether that's animal and botanical samples or geospatial data.

Dinner at 5:30 PM closes out the day, unless it's Tuesday or Thursday, when an evening lecture rounds out the educational experience. This week's lectures included Dr. Monique Vincent on household archaeology and Dr. Adam Schneider on paleoenvironmental research. We look forward to next week's lectures: Dr. Stephanie Selover on ancient warfare and bio archaeology and Geoffrey Hedges-Knyrim on botanical archaeology.

