

The Ad-Deir Monument & Plateau Project Field School 2018: Report Cannon Fairbairn

As I pursued my bachelor's in Ancient Near Eastern Studies – Hebrew Bible with a minor in Anthropology, I knew that participating in a Field School, especially abroad, would be invaluable. As I looked forward to my Masters in Egyptian Art & Archaeology, I knew this sort of experience would be crucial. Luckily, I became acquainted with BYU professor Dr. Finlayson as I took her classes and she invited me to attend field school with her this summer. So, I joined the team of archaeologists and my fellow students on the 7-week adventure.

The project itself is unique, for it is both an archaeological project and a conservation effort. One of the primary goals of the project is to research and restore the ancient Nabatean water works in order to preserve the monuments and structures as they originally protected and interacted with, thereby paying respects to the ingenuity of these ancient people. Each area of excavation had been strategically chosen based

on the questions we had about the building complexes on top of the plateau and based on their role within the ancient water system. Due to the project's unique dual nature, we not only learned about the Ad-Deir complex, but also the Nabatean water works and how one can utilize ancient ingenuity to preserve their remains. I admired the conservative

nature of the dig and the way it paid tribute to the ancient people in its attempt to preserve the monuments of the Ad-Deir plateau. I really saw first-hand the genius of this ancient civilization in their waterworks. We didn't need to build anything new, they had protected their own monuments before and all we needed to do was restore their original systems. It has inspired in me a greater desire to conserve the remains of past peoples and cultures in order that they may be enjoyed and studied by later scholars and people.

I probably learned more on this



The Monastery or Ad-Deir Monument on the Ad-Deir Plateau, Petra, Jordan.



field school than I have in any of my other archaeology courses. I was able to work alongside

Tombs in Petra, Jordan.

Dr. Finlayson, work with her completing the field notebook, filling out records, analyzing and counting pottery fragments, documenting special finds, directing workers, and photographing the site. Such hands-on experience was invaluable and often I was entrusted with various tasks that required I push myself in many ways. In addition, I was given the opportunity to assist one of the students on the trip with her analysis in preparation for her Master's thesis. On our outings we would collect data, GPS coordinates, compass readings, and detailed descriptions for numerous tombs throughout Petra. Finally, I also was able to receive introductory training and experience working in archaeological GPS mapping as we mapped the archaeological features and ruins on the entire Ad-Deir plateau. With all these various experiences and learning opportunities, I was continually challenged in my writing skills, record keeping, leadership abilities, and determination to do my best work. I grew tremendously both intellectually and personally on this trip.

The funds awarded to me through the Jane C. Waldbaum Archaeological Field School Scholarship were invaluable in making it possible for me to attend this field school. The funds covered a great deal of the housing and food expenses of the field school. In regard to housing and food, the goal of the field school was to also build good relationships with the local people living around Petra and gain a greater understanding of them. So while there we lived in a Bedouin village, Um Sayoun, just outside of Petra itself. Um Sayoun is home to many of our workers and their families. A local woman came to the house to make us traditional food and we often ate with the various families in the village. It was a fantastic experience to be able to live in the village and get to know the local culture and people. I admired their hospitality and kindness



One of our outings collecting data on various tombs throughout Petra.
(Photo is of myself)



toward us and learned much about their way of life. It was more than a tourist experience, but a very personal interaction with those living in the area we worked in and I will forever be grateful for that.

In addition to working on the Ad-Deir Monument & Plateau project, we took weekend and day trips to breathtaking historical and natural sites in Jordan, such as Wadi Rum, Jebel Nebi Harun, Karak, and Madaba. On these outings we learned more about

Myself and our camel driver during a break on our camel ride through Wadi Rum.



the historical and cultural history of Nabatean sites outside of Petra allowing us to gain a greater context for their civilization we were working with so closely.

This trip means so much to me! It has given me greater perspective on where I want to go with my education and career. It taught me a great deal about ancient and modern cultures of the Petra region. It immersed me in both cultures, very different from my own. I have grown as an archaeologist, student, and person as a result of all I learned and experienced on this trip.

A portion of the daily hike up to the site each day. Some of which followed the ancient Nabatean staircases.