



Fig. 76a (left). Area of excavation at Site 15.

Fig. 76b (right). Unguentarium (RI 10) found in chamber loculus 15L5. Ht. ca. 17 cm

## PETRA: WADI MATAHA

**David Johnson**

Brigham Young University

The Wadi Mataha Project's 14th season took place in 2016. Two loculi, L4 and L5 within Site 15 (Tomb BD 676), located on the west side of the Wadi Mataha, were excavated. Chamber 15L4 is a rectangular chamber measuring 2.7 m (h) x 1.2 m (w) x 2.7 m (d), with a burial loculus cut into the floor measuring 2.3 m (l) x .7 m (w) x 1.2 m (d). The loculus had a lip for cover stones at a depth of 68 cm. This cover is approximately 70 cm in thickness and extends from the top of the loculus to just below the lip in the back. Human skeletal remains included an adult talus, cuboid, 2 phalanges, a metacarpal and fragments of tibia and vertebrae. No diagnostic bones to determine sex were found. Material remains included lithics, dark red Nabataean fine painted ware in both the soil and used as grog in the cement, a white stone carved head, an iron needle, a silver amulet, two shell beads, and a sandstone pounder.

Chamber loculus 15L5, measuring 3.02 m (h) x 1.24 m (w) x 2.68 m (d), also had in its floor a burial loculus measuring 2.10 m (l) x 60 cm (w) x 1.18 m (d). Human osteological material found inside included a calcaneous bone, a talus, 8 phalanges, 22 parietal fragments, 8 vertebrae fragments, three incisors, two canines, three premolars, and three molars with very little cusp wear, indicating an age between 25 and 30 years. One fragment of the ischium with part of a broad sciatic notch may indicate that the individual was female. The bottom layer of dark brown soil contained 1,763 pottery sherds as well as a complete unguentarium (RI 10) which was found on the bedrock bottom sitting upright against the west wall (Fig. 76a). Minimum vessel analysis indicates that these sherds came from at least 162 different vessels with no more than two sherds from the same vessel. This would indicate that the material was placed in the grave as votive offerings of sherds rather than as whole vessels. The pottery came from bowls, plates, cups, jars, juglets, unguentaria (e.g. Fig. 76b), store jars, and cooking pots. Nabataean fine dark red painted wares indicate a late 1st century A.D. date for the burial.