



Fig. 79. Google Earth image showing location of excavations in 2012, 2014, 2016

PETRA NORTH RIDGE PROJECT

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The third season on the North Ridge, which defines the northern edge of the city center (Fig. 79), was conducted in May and June 2016. The 2016 season continued excavation of 1st through 4th century domestic structures and tombs dating from the 1st century B.C. to the 1st century A.D. The discovery of two marble statues of Aphrodite led to a short 2017 study season to document and begin their conservation.

Three tombs were selected for excavation in 2016: Tomb B.9, connected to Tomb B.7 excavated in 2014 (Parker and Perry 2017), and two tombs were located outside of the northern city wall, F.1 and F.2. Two of the tombs excavated in 2016 had never been used for burial. Construction of B.7 was halted and the extant bottom contained channels cut into the chamber floor, evidence of the "trench and wedge" quarrying technique identified elsewhere in Petra. Tomb F.2's chamber was complete, but no receptacles for interment of the deceased were carved into the floor or walls.

Tomb F.1 contained two areas for disposal of human bodies: a rectangular floor shaft in the main chamber and two floor shaft graves in the back chamber. The former contained successive layers of the commingled remains of at least 10 individuals intermixed with jewelry, lamps, and a ceramic camel vessel. There were two shaft graves in the back, and the eastern floor shaft contained commingled remains of at least 4 individuals. The western floor shaft contained three successive articulated burials of a child and two adults. This tomb was used in the 1st century A.D.

Excavation in Area C continued the horizontal exposure of a domestic complex dating to the early 2nd century A.D., which was first explored in 2014. The complex was entered through a doorway in the southern wall that opened into a central corridor (C.2). Doorways in the west and east walls of the corridor gave access to rooms C.1 and C.3, respectively. The smaller C.1 room was originally roofed by a single arch springer; the larger C.3 room was once spanned by four arch springers and contained storage installations, an oven, and further evidence of domestic occupation. The complex went out of use after suffering significant damage, presumably in the A.D. 363 earthquake.

Three trenches (E.1–3) were established in Area E to explore the occupational sequence outside of the northern city wall. Excavation revealed an architectural complex of non-elite function (*villa urbana?*), including a bath with a hypocaust system and adjacent circular structure (*laconicum*, or dry sweating room?) dating to the 1st century A.D. The complex was abandoned in the early 2nd century, perhaps due to the construction of the adjacent city wall. In the early 4th century the complex was reoccupied until the A.D. 363 earthquake, and then witnessed extensive dumping, including two fragmentary (but largely restorable) marble statues of Aphrodite (Fig. 80).

In summer 2017, Mark Abbe of the University of Georgia began documenting the Aphrodite statues, which were housed in the conservation laboratory at ACOR. The statues still contain traces of pigments. UV, VIL imaging, and pXRF were used to explore polychromy and the elemental composition of the marble. The statues also have multiple ancient repairs, and the iron and bronze pins used for these reconstructions were assessed for future conservation, which will take place in 2018 and 2019 by Michael Morris.

REFERENCES:

Parker, S. Thomas and Megan A. Perry. 2017. "Petra North Ridge Project: The 2014 Season. *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 58: 287–302.



Fig. 80. Two fragmentary marble statues of Aphrodite in situ recovered from Trench E.3. View to west.