

# INTRODUCTION

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The first edition of the "Archaeology in Jordan" Newsletter appeared in the *American Journal of Archaeology* in 1991 with the intention of presenting recent fieldwork conducted in Jordan to a broad academic audience. The series was initiated by the then ACOR director, Bert de Vries. From that time, the newsletter was published annually (1991–2008) and bi-annually (2010–2016) resulting in 22 editions published within the *AJA*, all of which are available as open content online. Subsequent editors after de Vries also came from ACOR or were closely affiliated. *AJA*'s regional newsletters are an integral part of its history, coming to an end in 2016. To continue this important tradition the *Archaeology in Jordan Newsletter*, or *AIJ* for short, is relaunched here as an open-access online publication through ACOR. It is intended to serve as a platform for recent archaeological and cultural heritage management projects. Official and complete reports from project directors continue to be published in the *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan (ADAJ)*.

This edition presents reports on projects that took place in Jordan between January 2016 and December 2017. As in prior editions, reports are generally organized from north to south by region (map on p. 1). In all, there are 50 projects with a wide range of periods and regions represented, and 89 listed contributors. There is a strong cohort of projects focused on prehistory in the Eastern Desert region of Jordan, the Early Bronze Age in various parts of the country, and numerous projects in the Petra region focusing on the Nabataean/Roman through the Islamic eras. While the number of projects being undertaken in Jordan has not changed much over the past decade, there has been a trend in recent years towards shortened or alternating seasons within smaller areas of excavation. This can be related in many cases to the financial and logistical challenges faced by project directors due to the combined impact of rising expenses and cuts in funding for research and grants. Nevertheless, major achievements continue to be made. Some key discoveries presented in this edition include the unusual Chalcolithic tailed ossuaries at Harrat Juhayra as reported by Sumio

Fujii, the discovery of marble statuary on the Petra North Ridge by Tom Parker and Megan Perry, and the report on the elaborate Roman era painted chamber at Bayt Ras by Jehad Haron and Claude Vibert-Guige (cover image). Notable also is the first report on maritime archaeology in the *AJAJ*, with the presentation of findings from the early Islamic harbor at ancient Ayla by Ehab Eid, Sawsan Al Fakhri, and Islam Sleim.

The editors recognize that all authors acknowledge the support and partnership of the Department of Antiquities (DOA) of Jordan. Due to the short length of these entries, many expressions of thanks and acknowledgment are omitted for the sake of brevity. During the time these field projects were undertaken, the Director-General was H.E. Dr. Monther Jamhawi, to whom all contributors expressed their thanks. Not all specific funding agencies mentioned by project directors are acknowledged for the sake of being concise. Of course every project relies on funding and support, often from their own institutions as well as from other sources. It is appropriate here to thank all who support these endeavors.

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For further information on *AIJ* and links to past newsletters, please visit: <https://www.acorjordan.org/archaeology-jordan-aij/>