

Balu'a Regional Archaeological Project

Monique Roddy
La Sierra University; Walla Walla
University
mroddy@lasierra.edu

Kent Bramlett
La Sierra University
kbramlett@lasierra.edu

Friedbert Ninow
La Sierra University
fninow@lasierra.edu



Fig. 1. Members of the 2021 study season team with the Iron Age II pithos they reconstructed at the Center for Near Eastern Archaeology at La Sierra University: Paul Richards, Shaun Eccles, Ryan Lopez, Kent Bramlett, Ryan Li, Joseph Rutkin, Kacey Garcia, Monique Roddy, and Maggie Apffel. (Photo courtesy of BRAP.)

With COVID-19 postponing our planned 2021 excavation season, the directors of the Balu'a Regional Archaeological Project (BRAP) decided to “pivot” (that dreaded term after two years of pandemic adjustments) and organize a study season at the Center for Near Eastern Archaeology at La Sierra University in Riverside, California. The CNEA houses material on short- and long-term loan from the Department of Antiquities of Jordan excavated from the 2012, 2017, and 2019 seasons at Khirbat al-Balu'a. Our primary purpose for this stateside season was to engage students who needed academic credit for their programs in the research side of archaeology. Students from La Sierra University and Walla Walla University traveled to campus and, with COVID-19 safety measures in place, took part in an intensive two-week study season in June 2021. Students enrolled for our “fieldwork” course worked hands-on with material from Khirbat al-Balu'a, including reconstructing a pithos, assisting with the recording process for artifacts from previous seasons, and sorting and researching potsherds for publication. Students also had the option to enroll in a seminar on household archaeology where they researched and analyzed artifacts and features from the





Fig. 2. Kacey Garcia, ASOR scholarship recipient, scanning pottery from the 2017 and 2019 excavation seasons at Khirbat al-Balu'a. (Photo courtesy of BRAP.)

Iron Age II domestic contexts at Balu'a alongside their readings. Students also attended mini workshops, including on preserving cultural heritage with Douglas Clark and managing geo-spatial information with Susan Penacho.

Working with excavated pottery was one of the highlights of the study season for everyone. Two undergraduate students particularly enjoyed their efforts reconstructing an Iron Age II pithos excavated along with several other in-situ pithoi from the domestic structure at Balu'a in 2017 (Fig. 1). One undergraduate student, Kacey Garcia, was the recipient of the American Society of Overseas Research's 2021 summer stipend award, funded by the Shirlee Meyers-G. Ernest Wright Scholarship Fund. She focused her time, in addition to her classes, on scanning pottery for publication (Fig. 2). Some of her scans were used in our presentation at the American Society of Overseas Research (ASOR) annual meeting in November 2021 on stratified ceramics from Balu'a. Finally, students worked to organize the diagnostic sherds

AIJ 3
Balu'a Regional Archaeological Project



Fig. 3. Graduate students Shaun Eccles and Paul Richards researching pottery rim profiles from Balu'a to assist with publication efforts. (Photo courtesy of BRAP.)

and research parallels in the well-stocked library at the CNEA (Fig. 3).

In addition to student activity, volunteers and staff gathered to carry out their own research or assist with data collection. Jaime Bennett continued her efforts preserving and piecing together the fragmented clay loom weights found in the Iron Age II fortification system at Balu'a, Carolyn Waldron worked on updating the artifact database from the 2012 test season at Balu'a, and all three directors worked on reassessing stratigraphy and phasing while the pottery and excavation records were easily accessible for review. We appreciated in particular the assistance and accommodation of the CNEA staff, Dawn Acevedo and Douglas Clark, who made our visit possible from registering our participants with campus authorities to reorganizing lab spaces to make room for our pottery sherds.

Project website: brapjordan.org

publications.acorjordan.org/aij