



2019 Tel Akko Field School Photo Diary

By Bryn Hudson

Monday July 1, 2019

The Old City of Akko/Acre is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the best preserved Crusader (and Ottoman) site in the world.



Tuesday July 2, 2019

On March 20, 1799, Napoleon and his army besieged Akko. Having successfully conquered the Levant, he was confident that the harbor city would fall. The Ottomans rallied together to defend it and Napoleon was forced to admit defeat on May 20, 1799. Tel Akko, where the Tel Akko Total Archaeology Program (ATP) excavates, is called Napoleon's Hill by the locals, but Napoleon never visited, resided, or fought on it. The name and the statue are a misnomer.



Wednesday, July 3, 2019

During my sweep of the “Cut”, an area dating to the Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age, I discovered this Cypriot sherd. It’s considered a diagnostic because of the painted red details and white background. Diagnostics are rims, necks, handles, or feet of pottery vessels and/or painted pottery sherds.



Thursday, July 4, 2019

Typically, wheel barrows are used to transport sand, dirt, or tools, but today I learned that they're also excellent chairs. Thank you Tammy (CGU)!



Friday, July 5, 2019

A lavalier/dumpy level allows one to measure the heights of artefacts, rocks, walls, pits, floors, etc within a locus. Such information helps to track the excavation's progress and to separate loci by date.



Saturday, July 6, 2019

Venus, the Roman goddess of love and prosperity, is depicted on this triclinium's (a Roman dining room) mosaic floor in the Villa of Dionysus at Sepphoris. She's known as the Mona Lisa of the Galilee for a reason. Every detail, including the shadows and blush, is stunningly rendered.



Sunday, July 7, 2019

During the Crusaders, the Hospitaller Knights were centered in Akko. In the Hall of Pillars, the order would have dined and congregated. The double vaulted ceiling and parallel halls are an excellent example of the period's architecture.



Monday, July 8, 2019

Every bucket of dirt excavated from a square is sifted to check for missed artefacts and to collect dirt to fill sandbags with.



Tuesday, July 9, 2019

After excavating every day from 5:30 am-12:30 pm, everyone is exhausted. It's important to drink plenty of water and take a nap to rejuvenate before pottery washing from 4-6 pm and a lecture from 6-7 pm. As you can see, today I practiced this form of self-care.



Wednesday, July 10, 2019

ATP and the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) partnered together to conserve an Ottoman Period Aqueduct. It once brought fresh water to Akko, but now resides unused in a local park. In this picture, Tess and I are mixing dirt, lime, and water to create mortar which we applied to the aqueduct in order to preserve it.



Thursday, July 11, 2019

Akko has more to offer than a tel to excavate. It also has delicious food. This is an octopus leg from the delicious Abu Christo Restaurant.



Friday, July 12, 2019

In order to determine the extent of ancient inhabitation and Dothan's excavations, we survey the tel. Every five meters, a 40 by 40 by 40 cm pit is dug into the ground and the artefacts collected.



Saturday, July 13, 2019

Around 10 BCE, King Herod the Great of Judah completed construction of Caesarea Maritima (below). At the time, it was the largest artificial harbor every built. But it's also an excellent example of propaganda. During Caesar's Civil War, Herod had supported Marc Antony and Cleopatra. When Octavian (who was later renamed Augustus), defeated Marc Antony and became the first Roman Emperor, Herod built this harbor to appease Augustus and express his gratitude to him.



Sunday, July 14, 2019

As part of ATP's total archaeology program, arch-zoology is practiced. As such, we excavate and sift for animal bones at the tel. This is a carved bone needle from my first day of cleaning them.



Monday, July 15, 2019

The Israeli Government classifies Akko as a mixed city. Both Arabs and Jews inhabit it. Although the Old City is mostly inhabited by Arabs and the New City by Jews, the two ethnic groups live in relative harmony. This khan (public square) reflects the city's beautiful Arabic night life.



Tuesday, July 16, 2019

While excavating our squares, we bag shell, bone, slag, plaster, metal, etc. However, the smaller artefacts are easily missed. As such, we sift all of it. While doing so today, I discovered a bullet casing from the 1940s Israeli War for Independence.



Wednesday, July 17, 2019

Cats roam all over the streets of Israel. Technically, they're feral and homeless, but many tourists and locals feed them. The staff thinks this practice originated with the Egyptians who considered cats sacred. This one lives near the pottery cage and watched us while we washed pottery and bones every day.



Thursday, July 18, 2019

After the bones have been washed, they're taken to the arch-zoology lab where their species is identified and they're sorted by the square they were recovered from.



Friday, July 19, 2019

Typically, while surveying we collect pottery sherds, shells, bones, and rocks. On this particular day, I discovered a tabun oven and a glass bead.



Saturday, July 20, 2019

As part of our field trip to Jerusalem, we visited the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. According to Christian tradition, this is where Jesus was crucified and entombed before ascending to Heaven. The crucifixion of Christ is depicted below in one of the church's Byzantine mosaics.



Sunday, July 21, 2019

During the Ottoman Period, Sultan Al-Jazaar ruled his kingdom from Akko. While in power, he increased the Galilean economy and constructed many buildings, including this mosque which is an important site for Islamic pilgrims.



Monday, July 22, 2019

In order to measure elevations, one looks through the scope of a lavalier/dumpy level and counts the black and red tick marks/letters on the stadia rod (which I am holding below).



Tuesday, July 23, 2019

A total station is used to determine the geographic position of a survey pit before it is dug and the width and depth of it afterwards. It uses a laser and a prism to calculate such information.



Wednesday, July 24, 2019

Every morning the entire archaeological site is photographed. Afterwards the photographs are used to create 3D models of the squares in the Agisoft PhotoScan Program. This process of photogrammetry allows archaeologists to easily and cost effectively track and present the excavation's progress.



Thursday, July 25, 2019

Below is an orthophoto, a 3D map, of the LL1 Square. It's an example of the models Agisoft can produce.



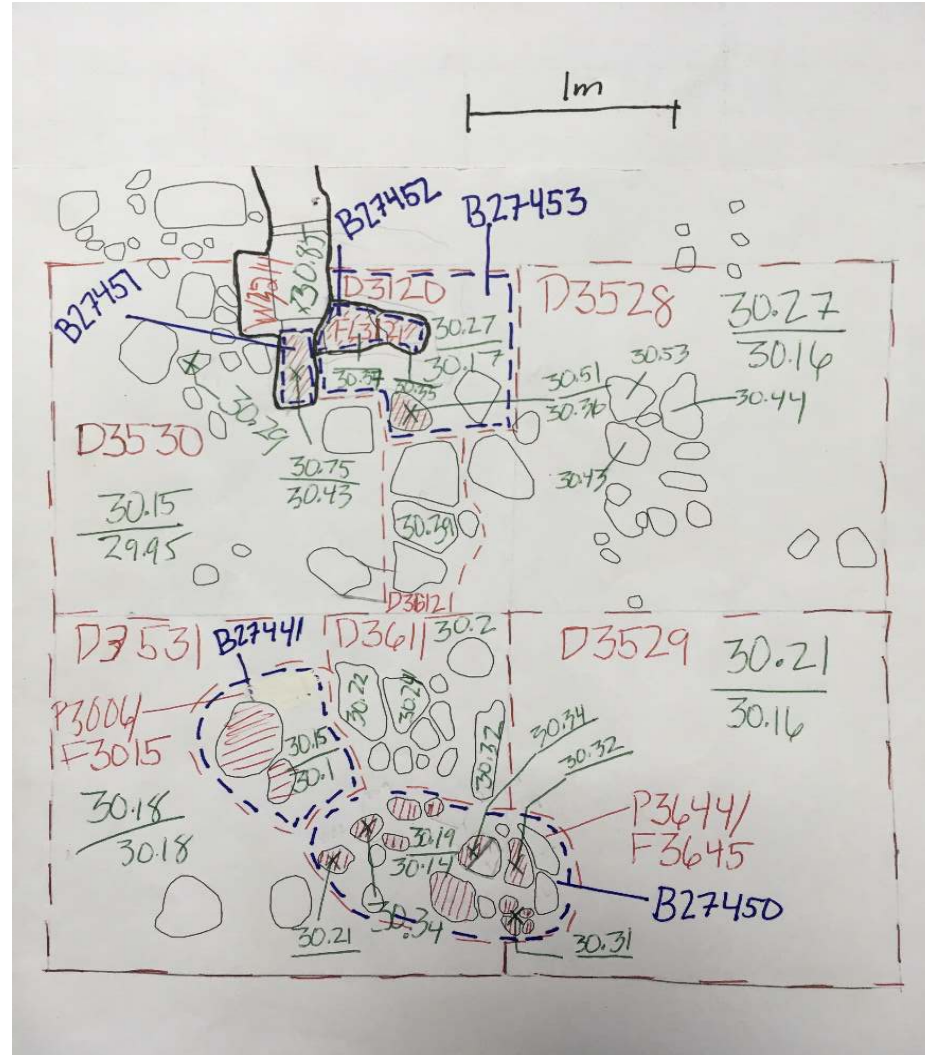
Friday, July 26, 2019

Besides excavating as part of ATP, I also participated in photogrammetry, GIS, arch-zoology, and survey. Below, Sugarman, Brett, John Michael, Iraise, and I pose with our survey tools (pick axes and tareas) to celebrate the ending of the survey season. We dug over 250 pits!



Saturday, July 27, 2019

Square and area supervisors record the contents, locations, and heights of every bucket excavated from the tel. Using this and the day's Agisoft model, they can create a top plan (below). It's a written record of all of the architectural and material features of a square.



Sunday, July 28, 2019

In order to protect the excavated squares from animal infestation, human looting, erosion, flash floods, etc we sandbag the entire tel. It's an exhausting and dirty process as Bambi (a Penn State student) models below.

