



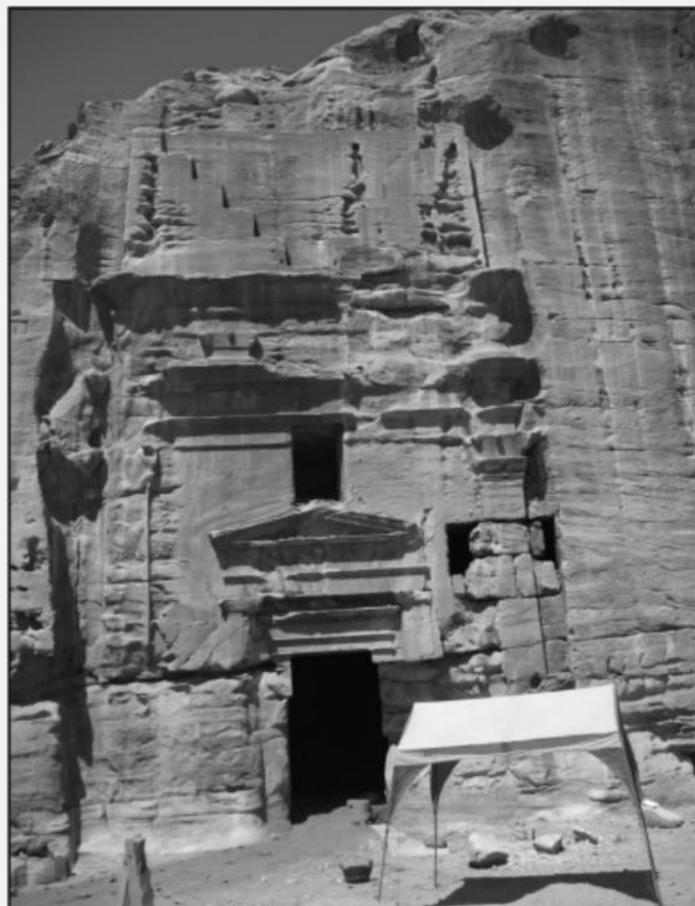
Paleopathology Report for Excavations at Wadi Mataha

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Overview

The Nabataeans are well known for the construction of their stone-carved city of Petra, located in the modern state of Jordan. This magnificent city reached its peak from about 300 BCE to 300 CE. Unfortunately, the stories of the individuals are often lost under the majesty of their city. This study takes a more personal approach to the Nabataeans in studying the paleopathologies present in Nabataean tombs at the site of Wadi Mataha which dates to about 100 CE. This approach allows us to take a step into the lives of the individuals of ancient Petra.



Tomb facade Site 15, Wadi Mataha (Johnson et al. 2017:642).



Individual with tuberculosis and resulting kyphosis of the spine. (Photo by Author).

Objectives

The goal of this study was to create a comprehensive report of the paleopathologies documented and observed in the skeletal remains excavated from the site of Wadi Mataha in Petra, Jordan in the 1999-2019 archaeological seasons. This was done in an effort to gain a deeper understanding of the lives of the individuals who occupied Petra at this time.



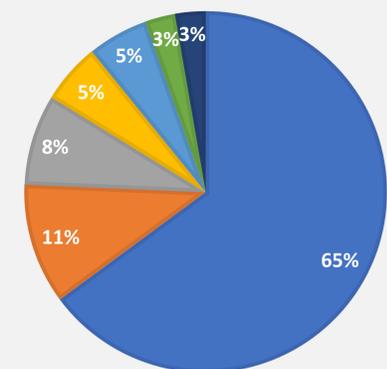
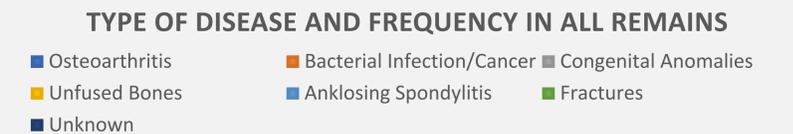
Methods

This study was based on two main data sets:

1. My personal visual examination of the skeletal remains housed at Brigham Young University.
2. The published works and field reports of Dr. David Johnson and his associates for the excavations carried out at Wadi Mataha.

Results

There was an obvious domination of osteoarthritis in the data, however, this information is somewhat skewed due to the fact that osteoarthritis is one of the easiest pathologies identified in the field and, without physical access to remains in the field reports, it is difficult to determine if any other paleopathologies were present.



Conclusion

Through the examination of the pathologies found at Wadi Mataha it is not only evident that, like modern peoples, the ancient Nabataeans had to fight and struggle against disease and its deadly consequences, but we also gain a window into the past that allows us to see and understand the individuals of the ancient record. Many of the afflicted individuals had to heavily rely on the people around them for protection, resources, and support. Many of these individuals survived into adulthood, which suggests the Nabataeans were a caring society that valued life. The future study of pathology at Petra is vital and it will continue to advance our knowledge of the individual and the important roles each one had to play in their society.