

RECENT EXCAVATIONS AND RESTORATIONS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ANTIQUITIES (1979-80)

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Archaeological discoveries have been stimulated during the last two years by the urban and agricultural development in Amman and its environs, which prompted many salvage excavations. The responsibilities faced by the Department of Antiquities became so heavy that it was decided during the meeting of the Concept Group on Jordanian Archaeology in Amman in April 1981 to give priority to the endangered sites, and that foreign archaeological institutions should help in the rescue operations. On the other hand, the Petra-Jerash Tourism Project conducted many excavations and restorations at both sites.

Amman: *Jebel el Hussein:*

A rock cut tomb was discovered on *Jebel el Hussein*, opposite the Police Post, during the work of the Water and Sewage Authority. The rectangular funeral chamber, which was entered from the east, was provided with 9 loculi (Fig. 1 a, b). The side loculi were homogeneous in shape and measured 2.30m. in depth, by 0.60m in width and 0.90m. in height, while the corner loculi were of larger size (2.30 by 1.30 by 0.90m.). The excavation, which was supervised by Mr. Wael Rashdan, produced many pottery objects deposited with fragmentary bones in the loculi or the central hall, and can be dated by the so-called Herodian lamps and juglets to the 2nd half of the 1st century A.D.

1. B. Van Elderen, *ADAJ*, XV (1970) p. 25-27.

Swafiyyeh

A wine press was discovered at *Swafiyyeh*, 5km West of Amman, in a building cut. The complex consisted of two vats, hewn in solid rock measuring 6.60 by 4.50m and separated by a partition wall (Fig. 2). The two vats were surrounded by 12 small basins connected with the vats by drains, and paved with white tesserae. There was a rectangular mortise hole in the northern vat, probably used to support a screw pole. A basin was cut in the southern vat and a cistern was dug outside the two vats. It was unfortunately impossible, because of the high price of land, to preserve this interesting discovery which was soon covered by a modern house. The proximity to the church of *Swafiyyeh*,¹ and the large amount of Byzantine pottery suggest a date in the 6th century A.D.

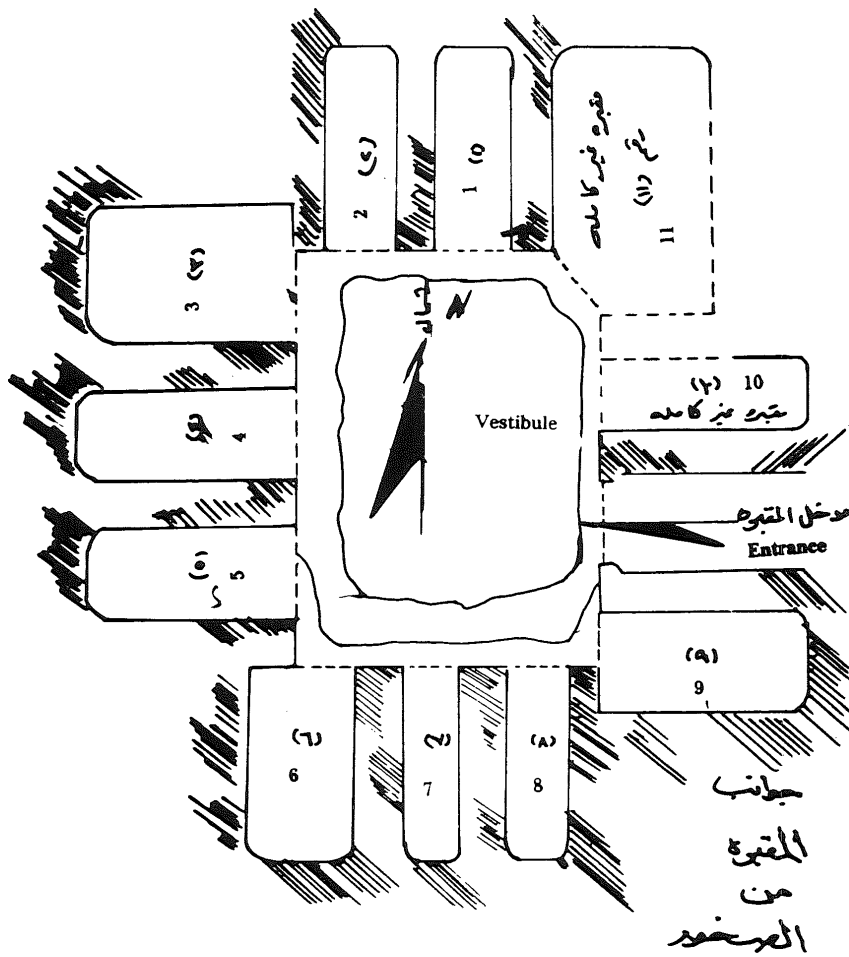
Umm es-Summaq:

Agricultural activities at *Umm es-Summaq*, about 35km southwest of Amman and north-east of *Umm el Kundum*, led to the discovery of a structure built of ashlar stones, on top of a hill overlooking *Wadi el Mashur*. A salvage campaign was conducted by the Department of Antiquities in May 1980 under the supervision of Mr. Wael Rashdan and Mrs. Khawla Gousous. The monument proved to be a farm establishment which consisted of a storage hall and a wine press. The hall, which was entered from

قبر بيتا جبل الحسين

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TOMB PLAN



مقياس الرسم

Scale 1:5 ٥:١

قلاع اقصي للمقبرة

Fig. 1a. Jebel Hussein Tomb

JEBEL el. HUSSEIN
TOMB

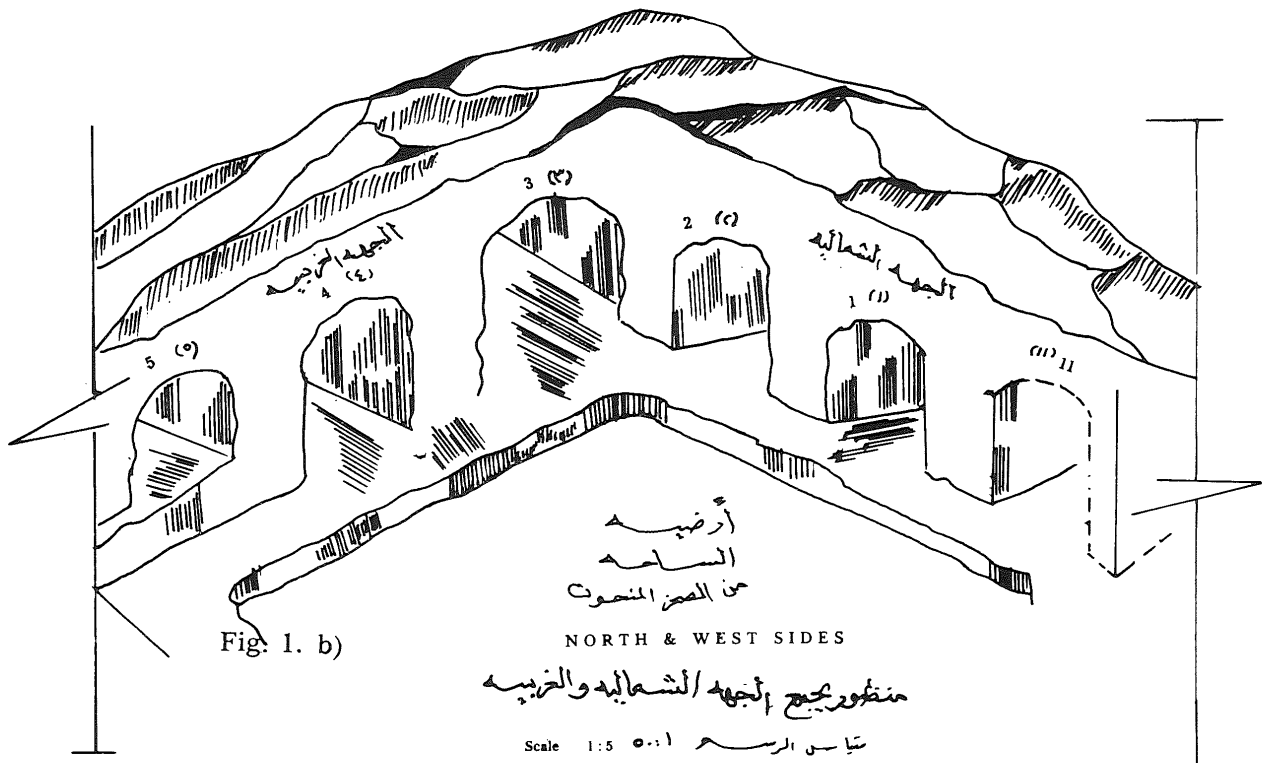
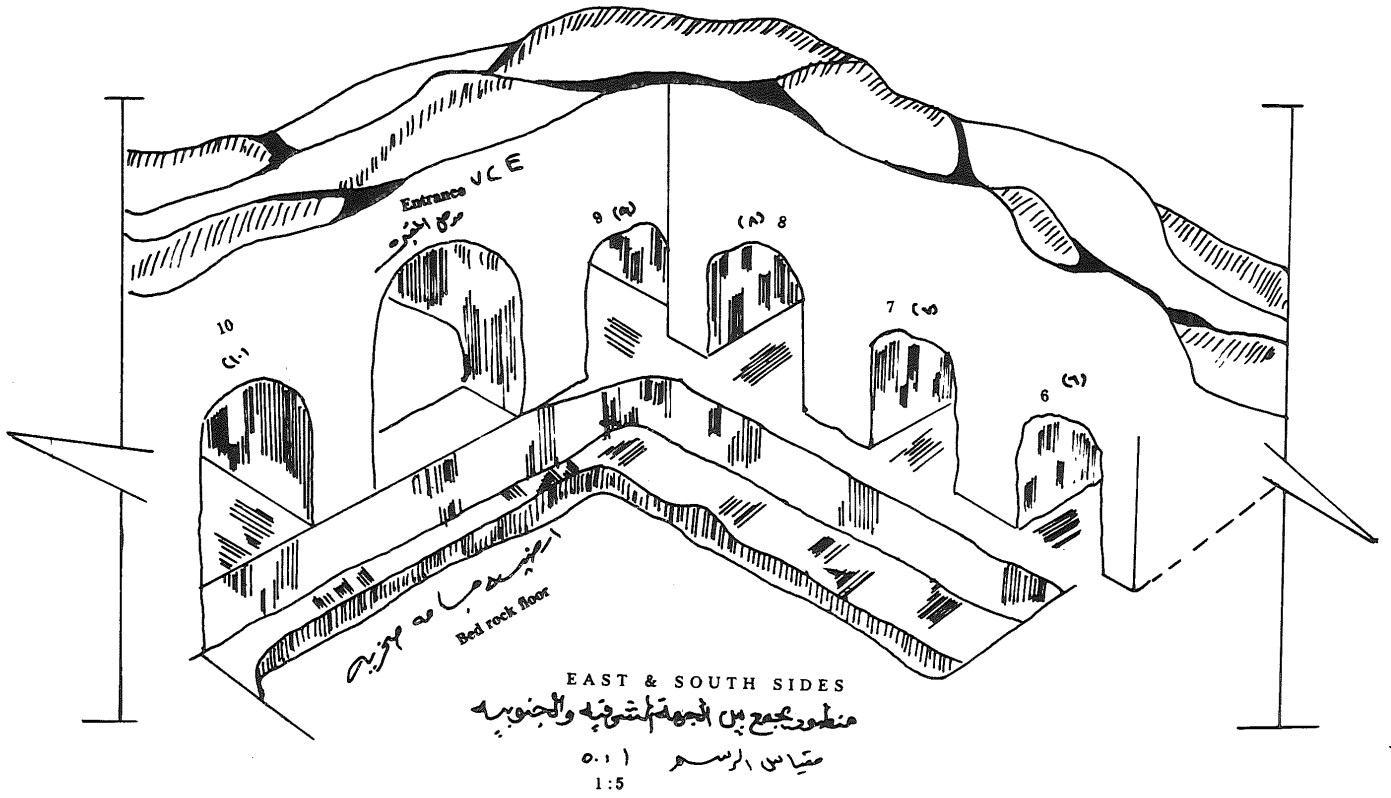


Fig. 1. b)

the east, measured 4.20m. by 2.18m. and was roofed by means of two transverse arches. Some of the blocks were coated with white plaster, and incised with kufic graffiti. Many plain tesserae were discovered in the fill inside the hall, and suggest that a second storey had once existed. Two skeletons of adults were found in the tumble in an unnatural position, and they indicate that the hall was demolished by a sudden catastrophe. Many complete vessels of the Umayyad period, together with agricultural equipment including a hoe (*majrafeh*), a sledge hammer and a sickle were left on the bed-rock floor.

To the north of the storage hall, two plastered vats, paved with white tesserae were connected by a drain. These were the treading basins. In the lowest vat, a block carved with a mortise hole supported the screw pole as shown on a mosaic floor of the 6th century A.D. at Mukhayyat near Mount Nebo.² A plastered depression at the southeastern corner worked as a sump.

The pottery and a bronze coin dated to 124H (727 A.D.) indicate that the farm was probably demolished by the 746 A.D. earthquake in the Umayyad period.

Murabba'at Musa

A hoard of 29 Ptolemaic tetradrachmas came to light in a bulldozer cut at Murabba'at Musa, some 10km west of Amman, on September 25th, 1979. The coins are dated to Ptolemy I Soter (304-282 B.C.) and Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246); most of the drachmas (23)

belong to the reign of Ptolemy II and the collection was minted in the following cities: Alexandria, Joppa, Ptolemais, Tyre and Sidon. Mr. H. Haddad, who conducted a sounding on the spot, found no structure or objects except for a few sherds of a pot in which the coins had probably been hidden. A nearby *khirbet* produced no sherds of the Hellenistic period, but a stratigraphic dig would almost certainly reveal some features relating to the cache.

- Jerash:

An impressive tourism development programme has been adopted in Jerash with a World Bank loan. It includes the restoration of some ancient monuments, a sound and light performance, and the construction of a new restaurant near the visitors' centre. Before the beginning of this work, the poor siting of this restaurant was pointed out to the responsible architects, for its position impinges on the ancient city planning by separating the Hadrian arched entrance from the southern gate. (Pl. XCVI, 1). Besides this, ancient rock-cut tombs which appeared during the excavations were removed. For example, a collection of Iron I pottery, a period so far unknown at Jerash, was salvaged from a bulldozer cut and must have belonged to a burial.

1. *Zeus Temple*: East of this main temple, a paved temenos of 80 by 35 m. has been partly cleared and reconstructed by Pr. H. Kalayan, the architect-in-charge of the Project. Plans and sections of the excavated area were drawn up in November 1980 by architect Mr. J. Rougetet of the French Archaeological Institute. This sacred platform, which was enclosed by a wall

2. Sallers & Bagatti, *The Town of Nebo*, Jerusalem,

1949, p. 60 and Pl. 18, 1. See also Sallers and Testa, *the Shrine of Bethphage*, Jerusalem, 1961, p. 27-41.

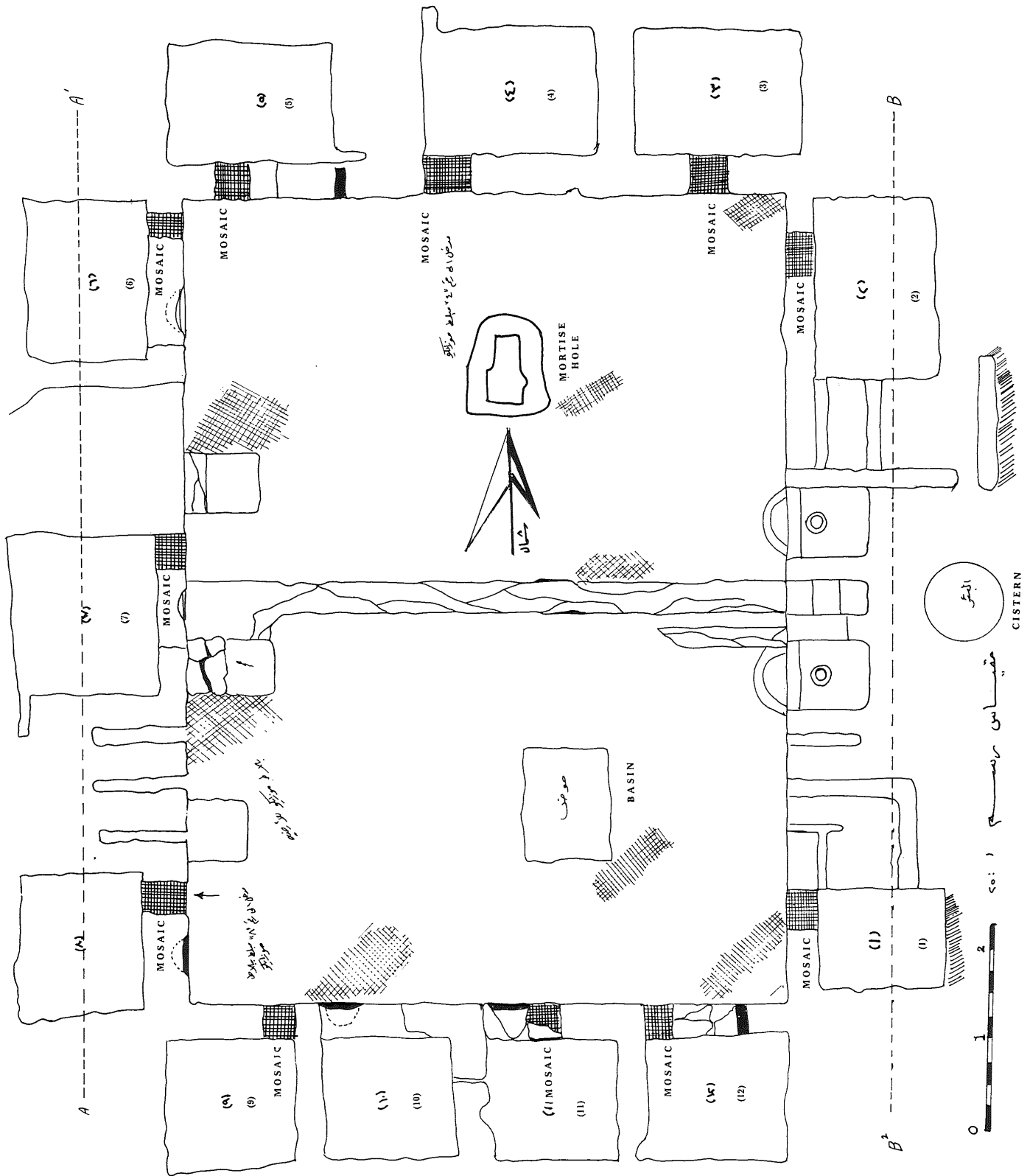


Fig. 2. SWAIFIYYEH
Wine Press:Top plan
الصويفية - مسقط افقي للمعصرة

decorated with engaged Ionic columns, had a vaulted entrance from the south. A door jamb, still *in situ* from the north, indicates the position of another gate. The southern flank of the temenos wall was incorporated into the early Byzantine defensive wall in 390 A.D., according to a Greek inscription. This dedication is now built into the sill of the doorway which was probably reshaped during the Umayyad period. The eastern segment of the temenos, opposite the Zeus temple, has been partly rebuilt by H. Kalayan. Plate XCVI, 2 shows alternating blind and open doorways framed by Ionic columns, while the eastern side consists of a vaulted corridor. The entablature of the eastern temenos wall included a carved frieze but no architrave was found as was normal. However, the above-mentioned southern segment of the wall shows two plain string courses at the level of the capital (Pl. XCVII, 1) which could play the role of an architrave under the frieze. However, this hypothesis needs to be confirmed by the removal of the later Byzantine wall.

A monumental altar, which was approached through a prostyle and a monumental stairway, was exposed at the western end of the temenos. It was certainly an important cult high-place in the Oriental tradition at the beginning of the Roman period since the temenos was built in 114 of the Decapolis era (50-51 A. D.) and before the rebuilding of the Zeus temple in 160 A. D. Similar altars were common in religious Nabataean architecture³ and are widespread in the Mount Lebanon.⁴ They are generally dated to the same Early Roman period.

3. J. Texidor, *The Pagan God*, Princeton, 1977, 85-87.

4. H. Kalayan, *Bull. Musée Bey.*, XVII (1964) p. 105-

2. The South Theatre:

This comparatively well preserved monument in the vicinity of the Zeus temple is dated by three Greek inscriptions, recently revealed from 90 to 92 A. D.⁵ In order to restore the north wall of the back stage, excavations were conducted under the supervision of Pr. Kalayan. It appeared that the wall, which was knocked down by an earthquake, was "lying down in order" (H. Kalayn, private report) but, unfortunately, no plotting was prepared. Because the inner face of the wall was robbed, the original width of this wall was reduced by 0.50 m. On the other hand, the lintel and door jambs of the rebuilt north gate are missing and the restoration is somewhat incomplete. In the same wall, a group of voussoirs are believed by H. Kalayan to form the top of a niche. However, no impost or recessed blocks have been found. Since the original wall was shortened by 0.50m, the voussoirs project without actual support.

3. A Late Roman Tomb: Cf. p11. and Pls. I-VI of the arabic section).

In digging a sewage drain in the city of Jerash, to the east of the Municipality park and outside the ancient defensive walls, the workers broke open a rock-cut tomb which was excavated by Mr. Faisal Qudāt, Inspector of Antiquities. The tomb consisted of a vestibule and two chambers (cf. plan Fig. 1, p. 12). It appeared that the main entrance, which was located on the eastern side, was blocked by a limestone swinging door of 1.40 by 1m. From the door, a flight of four steps led down to the vestibule where three sunken graves of 2.25 by 0.60, covered by slabs, were dug. They contained no bones

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5. J. Pouilloux, *Liber Annuus*, XXVII (1977) p. 246-54 and XXIX (1979) p. 276-78.

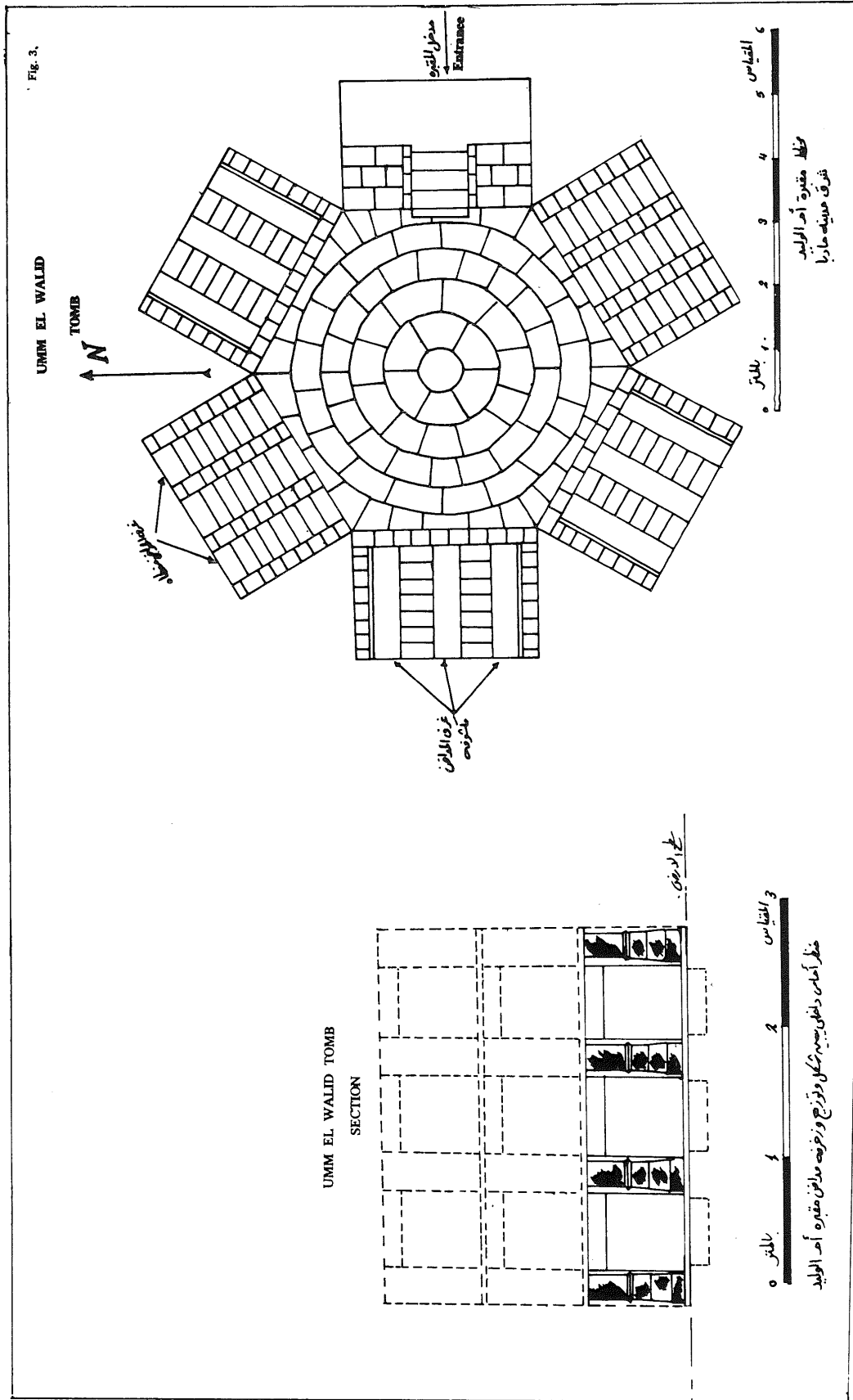


Fig. 3.

or objects, but a broken amphora (Pl. III, 3, N° 15) and three lamps were scattered on the bedrock floor (Pl. III, 2 and VI).

The entrance of chamber I, situated on the north-western side, was flanked by two imported Ionic columns and its walls reinforced by roughly shaped stones. Irregular flagstones, into which was built a rounded millstone, covered the floor. Along the walls, three sarcophagi decorated with garlands and Amazone's shields were deposited. They were covered by lids fixed by rivets but were already visited by robbers. Nevertheless, in the northern sarcophagus, a glass unguentarium (Pl. III, 3 and V) and a bronze coin of Licinius (309-324 A.D.) were found. Two glass beads only (Pl. IV, 1) were recovered in the western sarcophagus.

A fragmentary column supported the roof of chamber II while the rock cave was reinforced by a stone wall. One sunken grave, half covered by slabs was uncovered; it was empty but two pottery bottles with two juglets (Pl. III, 1) were deposited around. A three-handled storage jar of light brown colour (Pl. II, 2) was embedded in a roughly rounded structure, coated with stucco.

Dating: Good parallels to this pottery group were discovered at Jerash in a domestic complex,⁶ situated west of St. Theodore's Church and south of the Artemis Temple. The

wine amphora (Pl. II, 3) is identical to the amphora discovered in Room 5, (AASOR, XI, Pl. 11 and Fig. 3). The juglet (Pl. II, N° 2) is similar to Pl. 12, 20. The objects discovered in Room 5 were dated to the second half of the second century A.D.⁷ This date can be accepted for the wine amphora, the bottles and the two lamps (Pl. III, 5 and 7). But the storage jar (Pl. II, 2) and the pear shaped lamp (Pl. III, N° 8) indicate the use of the burial in the early fourth century A. D. This date is corroborated by the Licinius coin.

Umm el Walid:

A family mausoleum, built with finely dressed stones, was uncovered at Umm el Walid, 13 km east of Madaba and excavated in May 1979 by Mr. Omar Yunes. The funeral chamber which is hexagonal in plan is approached from the east by a flight of three steps (Pl. XCVII, 2) and was covered by a dome. Its inner diameter is 5.20m and each side measures 3m. Three loculi, flanked by engaged pilasters 0.75 m high average 1.80 m in length and 0.58 m in width and are built in three superimposed stories (Fig. 3, a, b), the lowest one being a cist of 0.25m, in depth. The floor is paved with concentric flagstones.

6. C. S. Fisher & Ch. McCown, Jerash-Gerasa, 1930
AASOR, XI (1929-30) p. 131-149.

7. *Ibid.* p. 32.

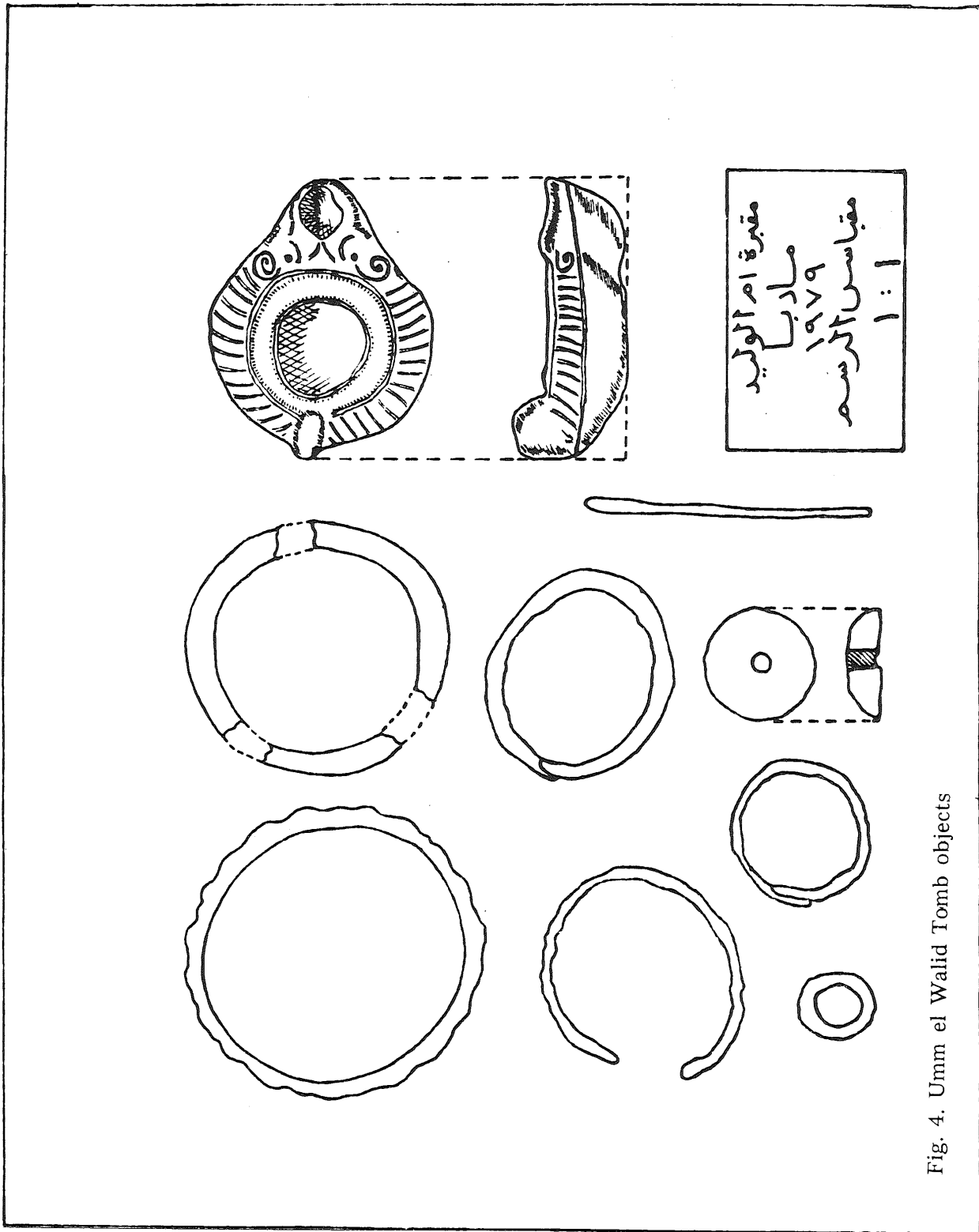


Fig. 4. Umm el Walid Tomb objects

The Finds:

Few objects were recovered from the monument for it was plundered in ancient and modern times. A Late Roman lamp was discovered inside the chamber, together with glass



Fig. 5. Umm el Walid funeral stele

bracelets and beads. (Fig. 4). However, the most interesting discovery is a Greek epitaph which was found at the south-western corner of the entrance. It is 0.55m high by 0.35m wide with a base about 0.20m thick (Fig. 5). It reads:

Ἡράκλειος,	ζήσασα ἐ-
Ἡρανή,	τῶν
οὐδὲς ἀ-	λε'
θάνατος,	

be strong *Eranè*, for no one is immortal. Lived 15 years. The last line is difficult to interpret for the inscription is corrupted *itôn* for *etôn*. At any rate, the monument is of the Late Roman period, probably the third century A.D.

I - Wadi Musa:

1. A Nabataean inscription of six lines was revealed in October 1979 in the stable of Khaled Tweisy at the village of Wadi Musa, near the mosque. It was brought to the attention of Mr Nabil Qadi, the Petra Inspector, and of Dr Nabil Khairy of the Jordan University who is going to report the discovery in the 1981 issue of *PEQ*. On a visit to Petra in November 1979, Father J. Starcky and the writer photographed and made a hand copy of the text. J. Starcky was able to decipher the first line which was the most difficult to interpret and also the most interesting of the whole inscription: "This is the sanctuary which was erected for Ba'alshamin, the god of Maliku..." The text is dated at the latest to the 34th year of Aretas IV (36 AD) and is evidence of the presence at Wadi Musa (ancient Gaia) of a temple to the Syro-Phoenician god Ba'alshamin, A year ago, the building of a school adjacent to the mosque brought to light many architectural fragments, including the medallion of a god (Pl. CIII, 1) to be published later by Mr Mujahid Muheisin who supervised the excavation.

2. A Potter's Kiln: (Fig. 6).

Although a large amount of pottery had

been discovered at Petra, no attempt was made to locate a potter's workshop on the site. It was only by accident that a kiln was discovered in November 1979 when a new road, connecting the Resthouse area with the new housing project of the Bdul in Dhra' Umm es-Sahun to the north of the Petra Basin, was being built. The road was diverted and a rescue campaign was initiated by the Inspector of Petra, Mr. Nabil el Qadi and continued later by the writer. Work is still in progress.

The first season exposed two kilns: the main kiln, which is oval in shape, averages 2.95m in diameter and its gabled entrance is preserved to a height of 1.80m. The fire box is constructed of brick and its dome was supported by four arches (Fig. 6 and Pl. XCVIII, 1). A storage passageway, about 1.15m. wide and built with field stones, extends to the north of the kiln and is approached by a flight of six steps.

To the east of the main kiln is a smaller one, about 0.90m in diameter and preserved to about 0.75m in height.

North of the kilns, a complex of three rooms was uncovered. The main hall, constructed of field stones, was roofed by means of three transverse arches and measures 2.15m by 6m. It was accessible by a flight of six steps and coated with a thick gray plaster. Many wasters were uncovered on the floor, of the same type of pottery already collected in the kilns. It is most probable that these buildings belong to the potter's workshop.

From the large amount of ash and brick in the area, it is clear that we have found the industrial area of Gaia (Wadi Musa) and Petra. From the coins and the large amount of pottery lamps and vessels, it is evident that the last phase of the complex dates to the Late Roman and Early Byzantine periods, characterised by coarse pottery painted with black motifs on an orange background. However in one square (6) a large amount of fine Nabataean of the early 1st century A. D. ware was collected. As yet we have not found a kiln dating to the Nabataean period but the pottery finds suggest that there was a kiln of this period in the vicinity.

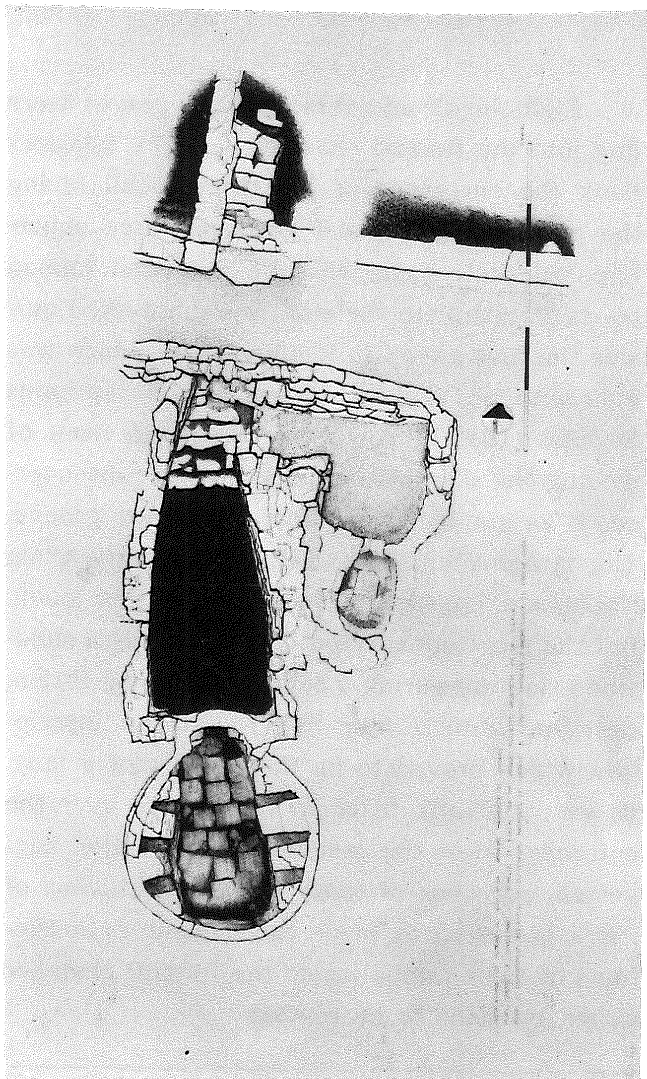


Fig. 6. Petra - Potter's Kiln

II - Petra:

1. *Siq clearance*: The removal of accumulated debris in the Siq bed since 1979 uncovered substantial segments of the pavement (Pl. XCIX, 1) which were immediately restored by Mr Muhammed Murshed, the project's supervisor. The water channel, carved in the rock along the left side of the cliff, can be examined *in situ* for a substantial distance. About four hundred metres from the Khazneh, a Greek dedication of Sabinus,⁸ son of Alexander, *panegyriarches* of Adr'aa (Der'a in the Hauran) is now visible under the relief of a god, standing on two lions. The semispherical betyle of the city, (Pl. XCIX, 2) represented on its coins has been exposed.

Five hundred metres from the Khazneh, facing a niche protecting ten betyles,⁹ a sandstone alter of 0.66m in height by 0.33m at its base is carved with a cup for incense burning. Pl. C.). Its face bears a Greek dedication to the "saint god, who listens [to prayers]", engraved by Victorinus, most probably a Roman soldier of the 2nd century A.D. The "saint god" is to be identified with Zeus-Dusares to whom a chapel was carved on the top of Umm el Biyara.¹⁰ Another altar, to the same divinity, was discovered by the Horsfields "on the flat top behind the north slope of the Wadi Musa... opposite Kasr el Bint".¹¹ It is dedicated to "Saint Zeus-Dusares, who listens" and is dated to the late 1st or 2nd century AD.

2. *Tomb 64*: It is a rock-cut tomb of the Hegra type, carved in the eastern Khubtha cliff, opposite the Khazneh, which was sealed by about 2.50m of wadi debris. The clearance of the entrance with the mechanical assistance of the Project's grader gave access to the funeral chamber which was then excavated. This was a long operation (from September 1979 to March 1980) which was successfully supervised by Mr Nabil Qadi.

Eight loculi and three sunken graves were dug into the funeral chamber (Fig. 7). Pilasters flank the entrances of the three loculi facing the entrance. Loculus 4 contains three superimposed shelves on which were found human bones. A complete skeleton was discovered outside the first grave. In loculus No. 5, which was built with two shelves, a silver coin of Septimius Severus (193-211 A.D.) was found. In front of loculus No. 6, a pyramidal stele was discovered. It originally stood in a depressed groove. The remains of these memorials, "nefesh" in Nabataean, appeared in front of the other loculi. But the most unexpected discovery was a sandstone slab measuring 0.38m by 0.45m by 0.12m, engraved with a four line Nabataean inscription which proved to be the epitaph of a lady. It was originally fitted in the groove over the entrance, from the inside. As the writer suggested, *a propos* of tomb 813,¹² the citizens of Petra preferred to place the dedicatory inscriptions of their tombs inside the funeral chamber either, on slabs or on plaster.

8. Dalman, *Petra und seine Felsheiligtümer*, Leipzig (1908) N°s 149-50, p. 145-46.

9. *Ibid* N° 147, p. 144-45.

10. See C-M. Bennett, in *ADAJ* XXIV, (1980) p. 205-212.

11. P-J. Parr, *PEQ*, 89 (1957) p. 13-14 and Pl. XV B.

12. *R.B.* 86 (1979) p. 134.

The excavated pottery clearly indicates that the monument was in use in the Roman period.

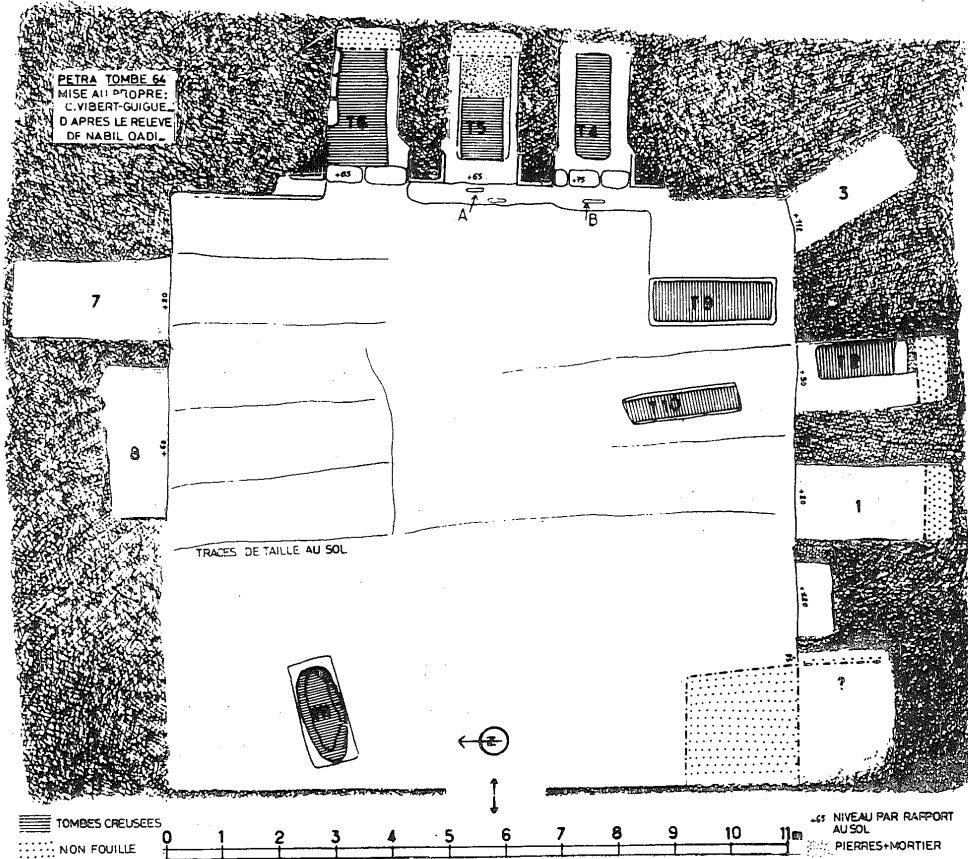


Fig. 7. Petra - Plan of Tomb 64

3. *The Monumental Gate*: This monumental entrance¹³ to the Qasr el Bint temenos, at the end of the paved street, was partly restored in 1968 by the Department of Antiquities, but without proper supervision. On the eastern façade, two of the four free standing columns were rebuilt and crowned by zoomorphic pseudoionic capitals (Pl. CI, 1 & Fig. 8). But it later became obvious that the reconstruction was erroneous; the columns' shafts were of a smaller size than the original ones, which can be examined *in situ* in front of the side arches. This failure was rectified in 1979 by dismantling the two under-

sized columns. It is not clear to what structure the capitals belong.¹⁴ According to the bedouins, they were discovered inside the doorway, east of the Gate. The engaged capitals of the western façade are of the Nabataean type and are 1.05m in diameter¹⁵ as demonstrated by a half capital still lying at the side of the street. It is reasonable to suppose that the eastern free-standing capitals were of the same type and size. Thus, the argument of Marguerite Lyttleton¹⁶ to date the Gate by the zoomorphic capital is not convincing.

13. See W. Bachmann, in Th. Wiegand, *Petra*, Berlin-Leipzig (1921) p. 49-56; G.H. Wright, 'The arched Gate,

1959-60' *PEQ* (1961) p. 124ff; 'Structure et date de l'arc monumental de Pétra' *R.B.* 73 (1966) p. 404-419.

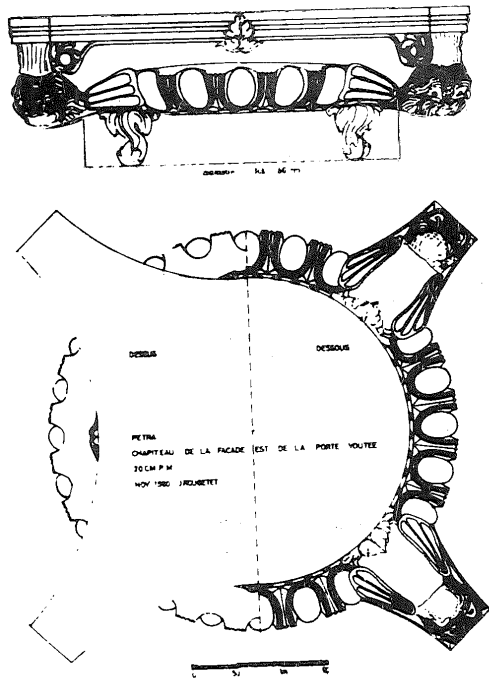


Fig. 8. Petra - Ionic capital

4. *The Qasr el Bint Temple*: Although the joint works of the Department of Antiquities and the British School of Archaeology had previously revealed evidence concerning the date of the main temple of Petra and its precinct, Mr. Peter J. Parr, who was in charge of the excavations, pointed out after the 1965 campaign "that many problems remain unsolved and many aspects of the area are uninvestigated".¹⁴ The resumption of the excavations by the Department of Antiquities had no such ambition in mind but aimed at the clearance of the southern flank and the adyton for the restoration and consolidation of the building. The first season of excavation was from December 1978 to the end of January 1979 under the

14. In her report on the paved Street, *ADAJ*, IV-V (1960) p. 117-124, D. Kirkbride made no mention of this capital a fact which means that the capital was discovered later.

supervision of the writer with the assistance of Miss Zahida Ismail and architect Mr. François Larché from the French Institute of Archaeology. Over many seasons, the latter has been able to draw up plans and architectural details of the whole structure. The present season has been in progress since October 1980.

a) Clearance of the pronaos of the temple in the northwest corner exposed a floor of sandstone flagstones of irregular shape which served as a bedding for the marble pavement, which has been stripped away except in front of the entrance. Here slabs of 56 by 54 cm were exposed below the artificial ramp which averages 1.80m in height and was built with column drums and other architectural fragments. Three marble steps, 10cm in height, are still *in situ* under the fill of the ramp, which was probably constructed in the Ayyubid-Mamluk periods.

b) More occupation of the same period was exposed on the monumental stairway, to the north, between the western *anta* and the first column. It consisted of a room built with irregular blocks and paved with flagstones. A circular lamp and many handmade pottery sherds came to light. A coin of al Malik al Adel, brother of Saladin was unfortunately a surface find. Nevertheless, the sherds indicate a date in that medieval period.

c) New marble steps were discovered on the monumental approach. (Pl. CII, 1). A sandstone block (Pl. CII, 2) engraved with a Naba-

15. Bachmann, in Wiegand, *op. cit.* p. 50.

16. *Baroque Architecture*, London, 1974, p. 64.

17. *ADAJ*, XII-XIII (1967-68) p. 6.

taean inscription reading, "Su'udat, daughter of Maliku" was discovered in the tumbled fragments. Other Nabataean inscriptions¹⁸ mention Su'udat as the daughter of King Maliku II (40-60 AD). It is probable, in this case, that the inscription was placed under the statue of the princess in the precinct area.

d) A 5 by 5m square was opened along the southern wall of the Qasr in an attempt to determine the presence of a podium. The appearance in the trench of large fallen blocks made the excavation difficult, especially in the absence of any mechanical means of removal. In the rubble, one stone was identified as part of a pediment. A fragment of the pilaster capital decorated with vegetal scrolls was also uncovered. A column drum, 70 cm in diam., suggests the existence of a podium, similar to the one uncovered lately by Dr. Ph. Hammond "along the eastern flank". But evidence of it did not show up before October 1980, when a floor paved with small regular flagstones appeared in a limited area. The floor extends apparently along the western wall of the Qasr.

It is hoped that more architectural and sculptural elements will come to light in the future to complete our knowledge of this unique free-standing monument, dated to the beginning of the 1st century A.D. or earlier.

5. An Architectural Fresco:

While exploring the Wadi es-Siyyagh caves, on the way to the spring, in January 1980, Mss Nabil Qadi and Claude Vibert of the French Archaeological Institute in Amman were surprised to discover a new fresco in an inaccessible rock-cut cave. It depicts doorways in large panels of red-brick, red-brown or ochre framed by blue and black bands (Pl. CIII, 2). In some cases, the doorways are topped by a gable with an eagle acroterion. The cave appeared to be part of a domestic complex already surveyed by the Horsfields¹⁹. Many rock-cut dwellings preserve traces of painted frescoes unfortunately blackened by smoke.

Thanks to Dr. Martin Almagro, Director of the National Museum of Madrid, two specialists were urged to start the cleaning and restoration of the frescoes in September of the same year.

It is still premature to venture a dating of the new discovery before exhaustive clearing and restoration. Nevertheless, it is going to shed light on the art and architecture of Petra with the possible connection of the architectural representation with both Alexandria and Pompeii.

Fawzi Zayadine

18. J. Cantineau, *Le Nabatéen*, II, Paris (1932) p. 6.

19. *QDAP*, II (1938) p. 16-17 and Pl. XLIV, 1-2. The

authors noticed the stucco decoration of the houses.

But were not able to reach the new cave.