

PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THE SIXTH ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND EPIGRAPHICAL SURVEY AT WĀDĪ RAMM/IRAM

Saba Farès-Drappeau and Fawzi Zayadine

The sixth archaeological and epigraphical survey at Wādī Ramm (Iram) was held from the November 7 to 24, 2001, under the direction of Saba Farès-Drappeau and Fawzi Zayadine. Khaled al-Jbour was the representative of the Department of Antiquities. From the Directorate of Antiquities and Museums in Saudi Arabia, Hussein Abu al-Hassan and Abdallah al-Saoud took part in the survey. The French team consisted of Sabine Sorin (archaeologist and draughtsman), Bertrand Moulin (geographer of CNRS), Hervé Tronchère (student in geography) and Eric Frénée (archaeologist from INRAP), The National Institute for Research and Preventive Archaeology. The fieldwork, as it was the case in the previous campaign, was facilitated, thanks to the assistance from the al-Zalabiyah and al-Zawaydah families. The Committee of Excavations (French Ministry for Foreign Affairs) financed the mission, as in the previous years. We are grateful to the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature in Jordan who provided part of the financial support and the accommodations in the village. The program of this campaign, which was presented to the Department of Antiquities and approved by the Director General, Dr. Fawwaz al-Khraysheh included the continuation of the recording of the inscriptions in Wadis Ramān (رمان, Šābiṭ (صابط), Ruways Salīm (رويس سليم), Umm Saḥm (أم سحم), Ḥafir (حفير) and Rābiḡ (رابيع). It was planned to undertake a sounding at the cairn of Abu Nukhayla (أبو نخيلة), at the caravan-station of al-Kharaza (الخرزة), at Wādī Šābiṭ and at Ruways Salīm in order to determine the periods of occupation of these sites.

Objectives and Methods

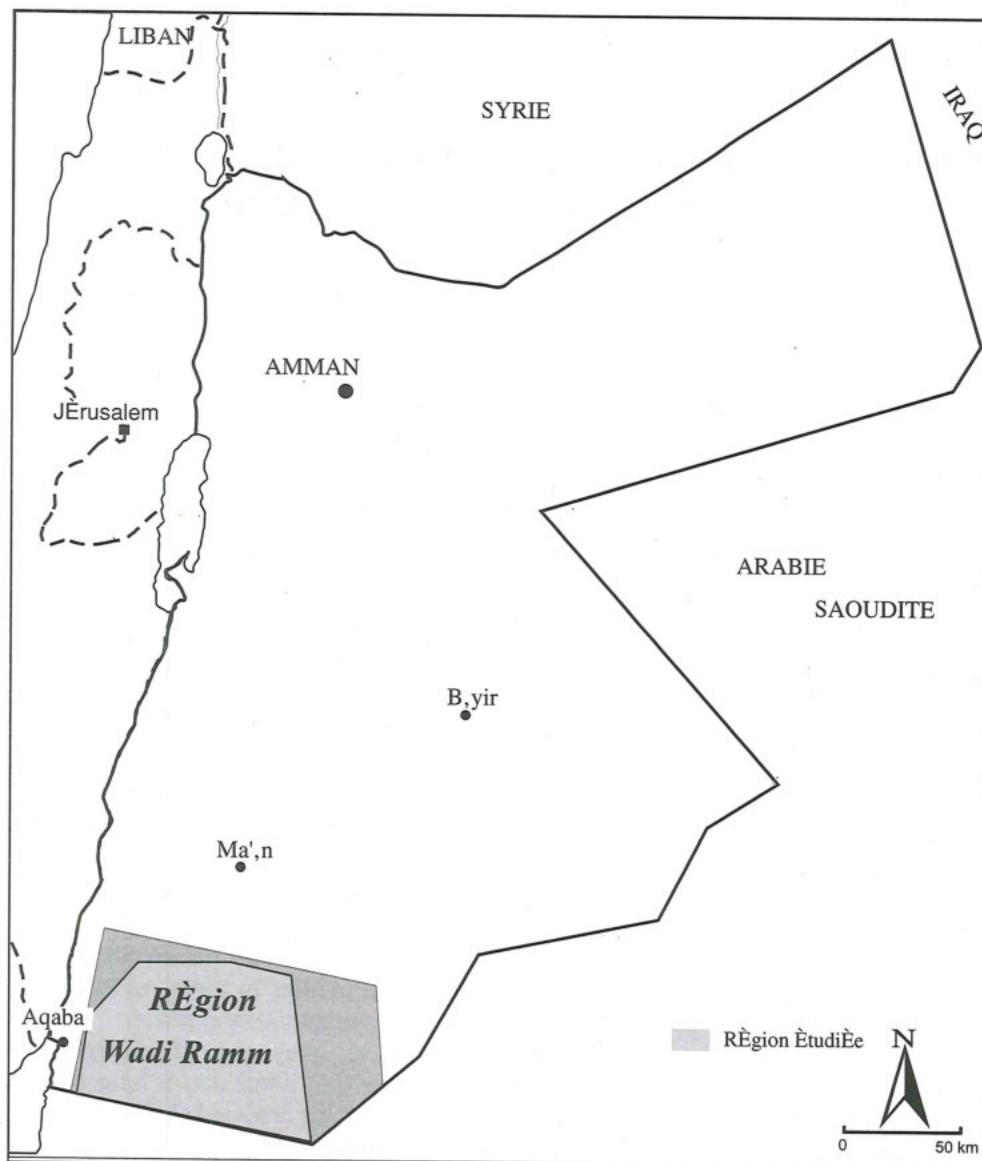
The main objective of this project is to study the history of the Arabs in the first millennium before the rise of Islam, focusing on epigraphy. In order to understand the process of the occupation of the space, our work was enlarged to include the study of human occupation. In this case, the aim of our

project is to investigate “the Archaeology of the Nomads”, in chronological and spatial continuity. Thus, without forgetting that our first objective is the epigraphy, we tried to study the different natures of the sites: domestic occupation, cultic, funeral remains and hydraulic-systems. In order to obtain a general view of the organization of the sites, and a better understanding of this complex study, we undertook an elaborate geographical-archaeological database System (GIS) to integrate all sites.

Our method was double fold: “horizontal” and “vertical”. The first consisted of registering the sites after a quick examination of surface material: ceramics, flints, structures (domestic-structure, tombs and enclosures), rock-arts and rock-inscriptions. This enabled us to obtain an overall vision of the function of sites in time and to record the chronological occupation of the place.

The second phase consisted of undertaking soundings at the sites that witnessed a long period of occupation and which presented different types of archaeological remains. The materials found in the excavation determined the chronology of the area by comparison with other excavated sites. Before presenting the results of the 2001 campaign, a summary of our previous work is provided:

In 1996, an epigraphical survey was conducted in Wādī Ramm, with private funds, following the suggestion of Fawzi Zayadine, at that time Deputy-Director of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan. Our target was to study North Arabian graffiti (known as Thamudic), in order to supply the *Corpus* of North Arabian inscriptions in Jordan. When we realized the epigraphic importance of the area, a new campaign was organized under the scientific support of IFPO (Institut Français du Proche-Orient). The objective was always to study North Arabian graffiti, in Wādī Ramm and Wādī Umm Saḥm. This preliminary epigraphical survey was carried-out during two years, 1997 and 1998. It was immediately noticed that the epigraphical



1. The research area.

work is not enough to understand the human occupation of the site. We then started a study of the different traces of occupation on the ground: flint, ceramics, structures and rock-art.

In 1999-2000 a cartographical program was initiated: a "horizontal" study, by fixing all of the sites on a geographical map. This work of locating sites was carried out at the same time as the epigraphical survey. Furthermore, a first hydraulic study of the water resources was carried out by Olivier Barge and a sociological study was carried out by Geraldine Chatelard.

In 2001, the first sounding campaign was undertaken at six sites, at the same time as conducting the land survey. The topographical work on the en-

closure at the south exit of Wādī Ramm, provided evidence of a cultic function. This was confirmed by the central standing stone that was found oriented to the east. The sounding in this same unit also confirmed this function, by the absence of daily-life material in the stratigraphical layers. The sounding at the other sites (Ruways Salīm, Wādī Şābiṭ) confirmed that the remains were not those of modern Nomads, but as a result of successive occupation, from the Neolithic period until the Iron Age¹.

THE EPIGRAPHICAL SURVEY 2001 Thamudic Inscriptions

The epigraphical survey of 2001 was con-

1. This conclusion was reached after the initial analysis of the ceramic material by Dr. Zeidan Kafafi (Yarmouk University).

centrated in Wādī Ḥafīr². However, we partially surveyed two new Wadis: Wādī Rābigh and Wādī Ramān³. The total sites recorded this season were 84 and they yielded many inscriptions: prayers, epitaphs or simple genealogical lists. Rock drawing representing persons in an adoration position, hunters, feet, ibexes and camels. These texts suffered from weathering, a fact that makes their reading

difficult. The onomasticon is essentially Arabian, such as Ḥamza حمزه, 'Ali علي and Sārī ساري. Below are some inscriptions found at two sites, al-Qaṭṭār القطار of Wādī Ḥafīr and al-Kharaza.

Site n° 02/01, al-Qaṭṭār (Wādī Ḥafīr)

Al-Qaṭṭār lies to the north of Wādī Ḥafīr (Fig. 2), on the slope which borders the western bank of



2. Map of the survey area.

2. Wādī Ḥafīr and Wādī Rābigh were intensively surveyed during 10 years by the late W. Jobling. Preliminary reports

were published in *ADAJ* between 1982-1992.
3. Wādī Ramān was visited by Musil (1908: 228, 248).

the wadi, in the middle of the ascent. Here, there is a spring and water collects in a deep basin (Fig. 3). This place was used since a remote period, because of a number of carved basins along the foot of the rock (Fig. 4).

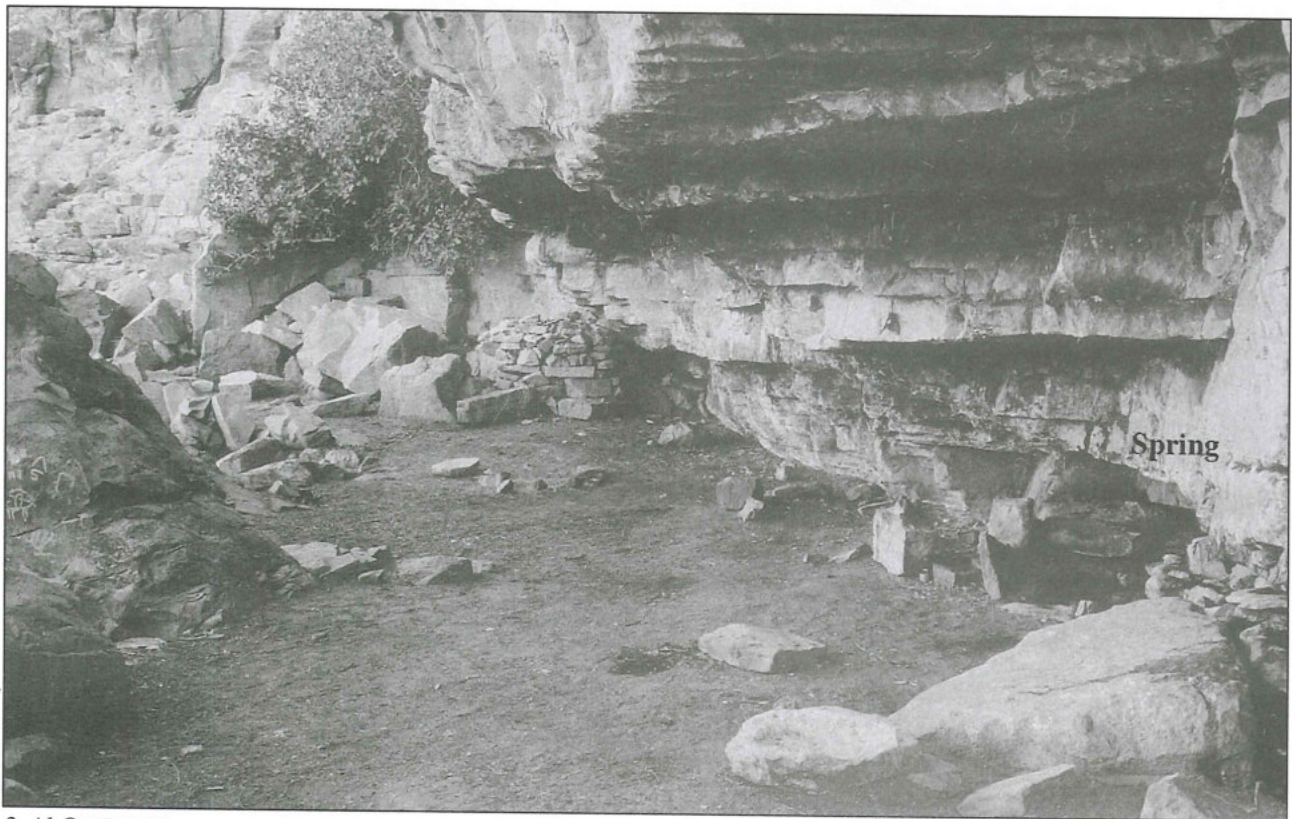
Huge rocks, which are incised with North Arabian inscriptions and rock art of persons in orant position with feet and hands (Fig. 5), protect this shelter. Near the North Arabian inscriptions, there is a rock drawing representing persons holding a rifle and in a combat position. This representation indicates that the place was occupied in modern period and was probably the field of an unspecified conflict (Fig. 6).

The first category of inscriptions is registered on the southwestern face of the rock. Representation of feet and camels accompanied these graffiti. The letters are slightly damaged (Fig. 7).

1. L- ŠKM'N, *Personal name*. Maybe this is a substantive as the paradigm of *فعلان*. ŠKM *شكم* means "(to) remunerate, to offer a present", and provides the composite personal name (ŠKMLH, ŠKM'LHY, etc). This personal name is common in Safaitic inscriptions (Caskel, Index), in Thamudic (King, II: 563) and in Nabataean ŠKM', ŠKM' (Cantineau 1930: 150).
2. L-NŠRLH BN ĠDR For NŠRLH son of



4. Carved basins at al-Qaṭṭār.



3. Al-Qaṭṭār area.



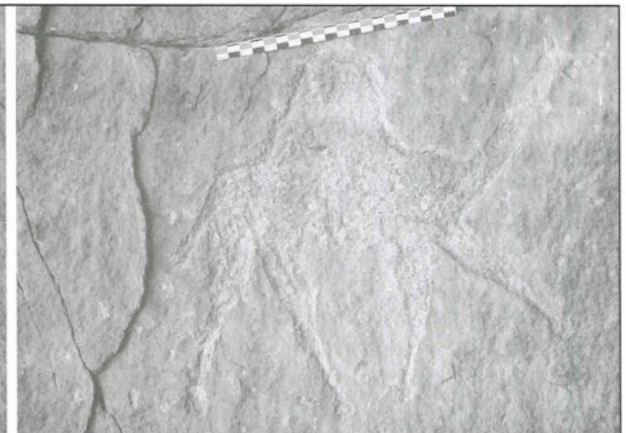
5. Persons in orant position with feet and hands.

ĠDR نصر الله بن غضر

NŞRLH, *Genitive compound* "Help of Lāh". Arabic *Naşir-Allāh*. The first element NŞR, Arabic نصر "to aid; to supply support", provides the personal names. For parallels see: Nabataean NŞR'LH (Cantineau 1930: 122).

ĠDR, *Personal name*. In Arabic, the root ĠDR غضر, means "to be prosperous, to flourish".

3. L-S'D'L For S'D'L لسعدال *Genitive Com-*



6. Representation of a camel, and persons holding a rifle and in a position of combat or hunting.

pound "Luck from God". For parallels in Nabataean, see Cantineau (1930, II: 153); in Palmyraean inscriptions see J. K. Starck (1971: 115); in South Arabian inscriptions see Ryckmans (1934, I: 239-240). The element S'D provides several composite names, see: S'DLT, S'DLH.

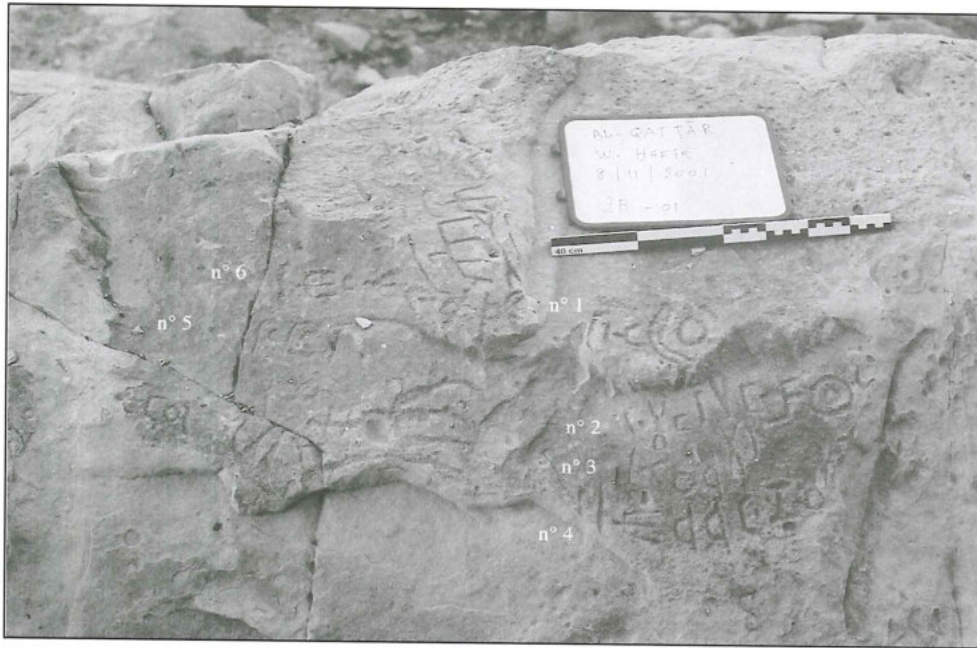
4. L-ḤDD BN Z'... For ḤDD son of Z'... لحدد بن زع ...

ḤDD, *Personal name*, known in Aramaic inscriptions. It is related to the god ḤDD, the god of storm, rain and thunder. The South Arabian ḤDD's means "to sacralize". For parallels see Ryckmans (1934, I: 88) and Branden (1966: 59).

5. L-RML, *Personal name*. In Arabic رمل "fast walking" and it is known as a personal name.

6. L-ḤRS BN QDM

ḤRS, *Personal name*. Arabic حرس "eternity" or حرس "to guard". This name is attested in Arabic as a personal name and as a tribal name (see al-Sam'āni 1988:



7. Northarabian inscriptions at al-Qaṭṭār.

(وحرس بطن من طيء قال ابن حبيب: في طيء حرس بن جندب بن خارجة بن سعد بن فطرة بن طيء. قال: وفي لخم حرس بن أريش بن ارأش بن جزيلة بن لخم).

It is common in Thamudic inscriptions (al-Dheeb, 1999: n° 77; King 1990, II: 517), and is also known in Nabataean (Cantineau 1930: 100) and in Liḥyanite (Jaussen and Savignac 1914, II, n° 377: 531). In South Arabian, this word occurs as a verb “to perform a military service” (Sabaic Dictionary 1982).

- QDM, *Patronymic*, in Arabic قَدَم، قَدَم “to advance”. “Banī Qedem: men of the East” (Job I: 3). It occurs in our bilingual Nabataean-Southarabian inscriptions found in 1998 at Sahl aṣ-Ṣuwwān (Farès-Drappeau and Zayadine 2001: 212). This personal name is known in Thamudic inscriptions (see Jaussen and Savignac 1914, t. II: 598; al-Dheeb 1999, n° 30) and in Safaitic inscriptions (Caskel, *Index*). In Nabataean it is a preposition meaning “in front of” (Cantineau 1930: 141), and as a personal name *Qdmu* (Cantineau, 1930: 114). In Arabic historiography the names *بنو القدام* and *بنو قديم* are known (Ibn Durayd 1979: 419-420). It is well known in Southarabian as a verb “to be in charge of a job, confront, send” and as a substantive meaning “leader, commander”. *Qudm* قُدَم is known in Yemen as a place name that provided a clan name.

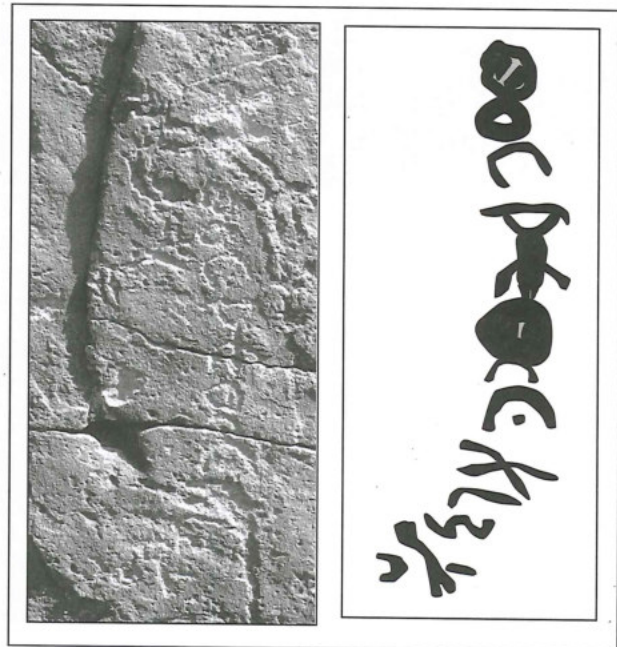
Site n° 24/01, Wādī Ramān (Sharāyif Ramān) شرايف رمان

To locate the site, see Fig. 2. The inscriptions are engraved on a huge rock, opposite the mountain, on the same rock, a very big ibex was also

carved.

7. W-‘BDḤWR BN ḤLFNṢR و عبد حور بن خلف نصر (Fig. 8)

‘BDḤWR, *Genitive compound* “servant of ḤWR”. This theophoric name was attested in three spots in the Ḥismā of southern Jordan. King (1988: 307-317) recorded the first evidence in Wādī Judayyid. This wadi is below Ras an-Naqab escarpment, about 13km east/southeast of al-Ḥumayma (Graf 1992: 70). The Thamudic graffiti reads “L ‘BD ḤWR” in favour of ‘BD ḤWR. King men-



8. Inscriptions from Sharāyif Ramān

tions the names: 'HWR, ḤWR, WHB'HWR, 'BDḤWR, TM 'HWR, in various graffiti of Jordan (1988: 312-313, and note 10).

In his survey of epigraphical material of Jabal Kalkha, west of al-Ḥumayma, Graf (1992: 67-76), registered the Nabataean graffito 'ŠLM BR-TLM 'BD 'LḤWR: Peace BRTLM servant of 'BD 'LḤWR.

The theophoric names prefixed with 'BD are very common in the Northarabian onomasticon, and ḤWR called for several interpretations. The most common is that ḤWR, 'LḤWR represents the first star that is next to the body of three stars in the tail of "Ursa Major". This tail is called بنات نعش in Arabic astronomy (Mujāhid 1979: 65). 'LḤWR designates Jupiter or al-Mushtarī in Arabic astrology.

ḤWR occurs in the Thamudic inscription as a personal name (al-Dheeb 1999: n° 161): and occurs in Nabataean as ḤWRW (Cantineau 1930: 94-95). See Harding (1971) for the Safaitic and further Thamudic occurrence. For Milik (1958: 237-238) ḤWR must be connected with the toponym ḤWRW, which occurs with *Qaws* at Khirbat at-Tannūr (Central Jordan): QWS 'LH ḤWRW' (for more parallels see King 1990, I: 129 and note 14,

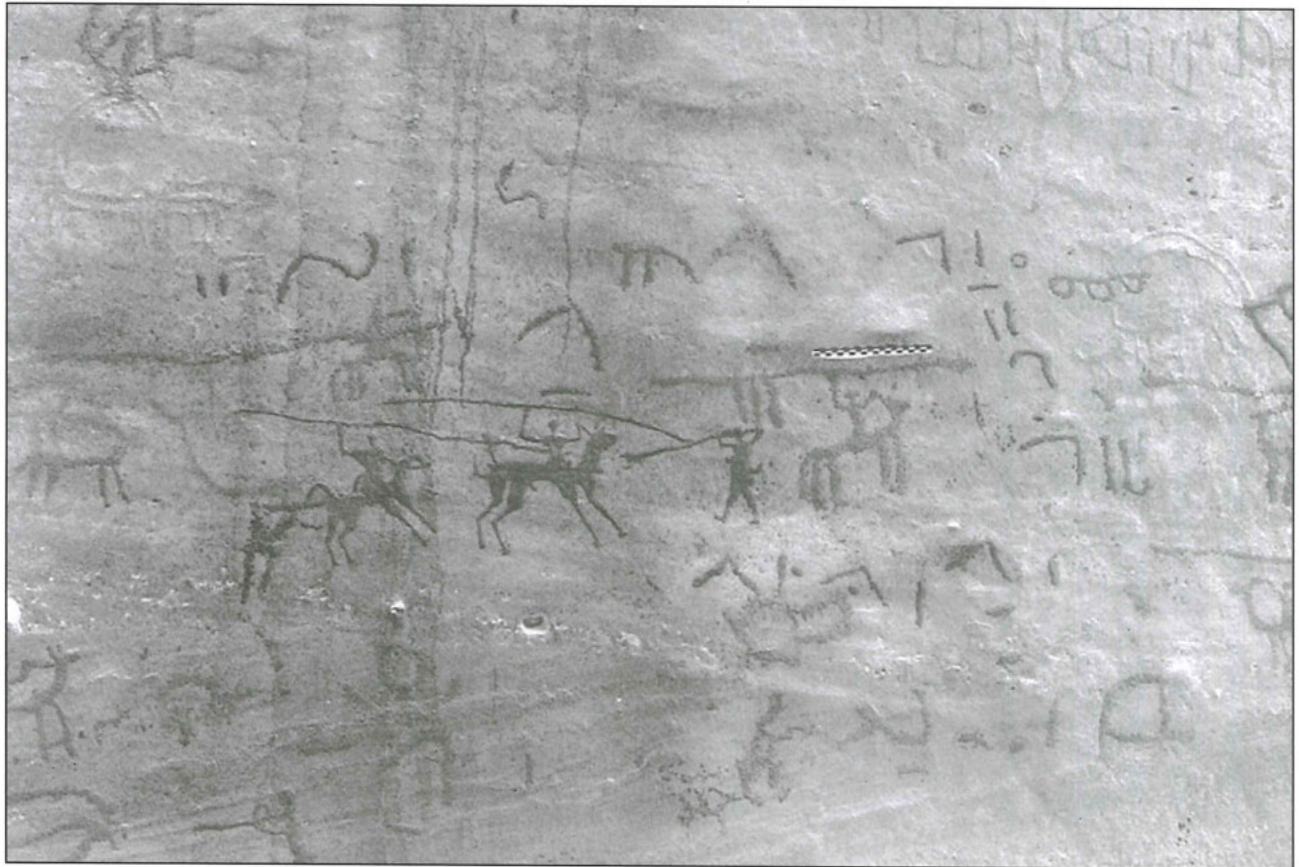
15).

ḤLF, *Patronymic*, is well known in Nabataean inscriptions (Cantineau 1930; Farès-Drappeau and Zayadine 2001: 213).

Site n° 67/01, al-Kharaza-'Umayyid

A few hundred meters to the north of al-Kharaza post (see Fig. 2), at al-'Umayyid, we discovered a rock panel (about 140m wide and over than 150m high). It consisted of whitish sandstone, and is covered with drawings of huge camels, fighting scenes (Fig. 9) and Nabataean and Northarabian graffiti (Thamudic). At the foot of this rock-wall, flint tools of the Neolithic or Chalcolithic period were found scattered, together with basalt mortars. They are witness of prehistoric occupation. In the same place, sherds of the Nabataean and Roman periods were found. The attraction of the wall lies in the Nabataean and Northarabian inscriptions.

Three huge camels are engraved on this rock face (Fig. 10). Some of them have inscriptions engraved inside the body of the animal. The inscriptions are of an archaic epigraphical script and are written according to the same model: to X (*belongs*) the camels (Fig. 11).



9. Drawings of camels and fighting scenes at al-Kharaza-'Umayyid.

1- L-ḤT̄M H-GML to ḤT̄M belong this camel
 لختم هذا الجمل
 ḤT̄M, *personal name*, Arabic ختم “to have a flat nose”. It is known in the Arabic onomasticon (al-Sam‘āni, 1988):

”الختمي: بضم الخاء المعجمة وفتح التاء المثناة في آخرها الميم هذه النسبة إلى ختم وهو اسم لجد حمد بن مالك بن ختم الختمي“.

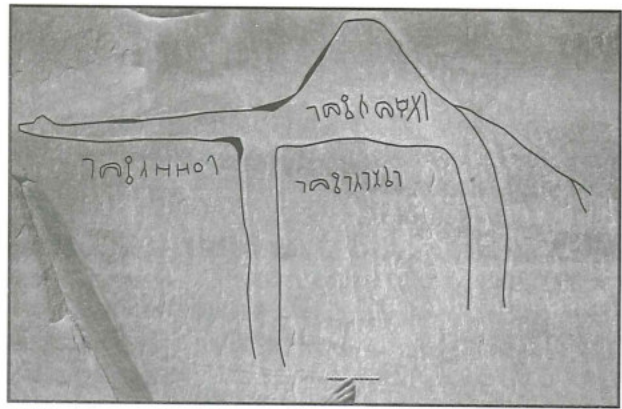
H-GML, the first element *h-* is the definite article in Thamudic and Safaitic inscriptions. As in all Semitic languages, the definite article is also used as a demonstrative⁴.

2- L-‘ZZ H-GML to ‘ZZ belong this camel
 لعز هذا الجمل

‘ZZ, *personal name*, Arabic عَزَّ “to be strong, powerful”. Well known in Nabataean inscriptions (Cantineau 1930: 129). In old Aramaic, it is used as a substantive (Jean-Hoftijzer 1965). In Arabic, ‘Izz Allāh عز الله, it occurs in composite names.

3- L-Y’L HL-GML

Y’L, *personal name*, unknown in the *Index* of Caskel.



11. Large camels and inscriptions at al-Kharaza-Umayyid.

The interest in this text is the definite article. It is composed of the demonstrative *h-* and the Arabic definite article (*al-*). Here *h-* is demonstrative, equivalent to Arabic *ha-dha* هذا, while the definite article is (*al-*) as in Arabic. The demonstrative and the article are contracted HL, like in the colloquial Arabic HL BL for الإبل هذه.

4- L-‘QRB BN MRḤMT لعقرب بن مرخمة (Fig. 12)
 ‘QRB, *personal name*, Arabic عقرب “scorpion”,



10. Large engraved camels at al-Kharaza-Umayyid.

4. This is also the case in all of the Semitic dialects.

known in Nabataean personal names (Cantineau 1930, II: 134) and is known in Arabic personal names (Ibn Durayd 1932, s.v.). It is also common in Safaitic (20 times WH 106, 175, 243, 662, etc. and see Cairn of Hanī) (Harding 1951 and *Index*). It is attested in Liḥyanite inscriptions (JSlih 75/1: 342) and in Thamudic inscriptions (al-Dheeb 1999, n° 78: 152, 181).

MRḤMT, *personal name*, unknown in Arabic personal names. The word marḥimat مَرْحِمَة means in Arabic “The marble cutter”. Raḥīm in Arabic means “a gentle voice”.

5- L-ḤFD for ḤFD لحد (Fig. 13)

ḤFD, *personal name* unknown in Arabic but is attested in Minaean inscriptions from al-‘Ulā (JSmin n° 186, 1914, II, p. 354 ; JSmin n° 194, 1914: 356) and in Southarabian inscriptions (Arabach 2001). also See Hartmann 1909: 252. In Southarabian ḤFD means “Tower, a projecting element of a wall, bastion” (Sabaic Dictionary).

Nabataean Inscriptions

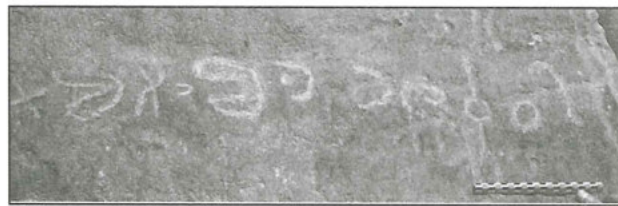
The Nabataean inscriptions were mainly registered this year at al-Kharaza, at the site called al-‘Umayyid المميد, they were engraved among Thamudic inscriptions.

1. BLY ṢLM RB’L BR NKR’ Yes, hello RB’L son of NKR’ (Fig. 14)

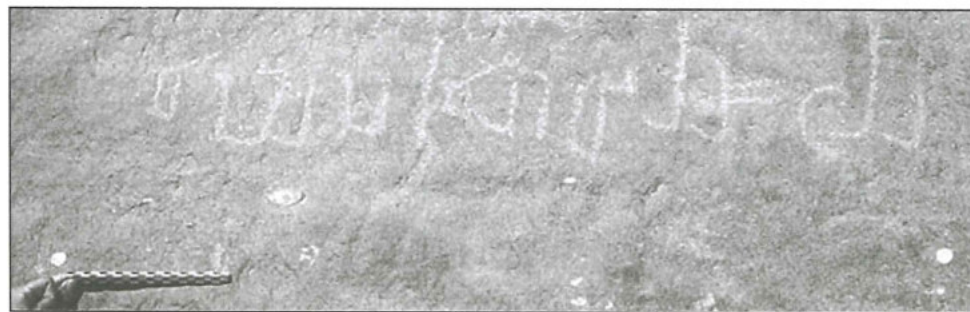
BLY, to compare with Arabic bala بلى, meaning “undoubtedly, certainly”. The interpretation of Savignac B’LHY, by “god” is not impossible, but difficult to demonstrate.

ṢLM, “hello” is often in the beginning of Nabataean graffiti.

RB’L, is a royal name, but it is used here as a



12. Thamudic inscription of ‘AQRB.



14. Nabataean inscriptions at al-Kharaza-‘Umayyid.



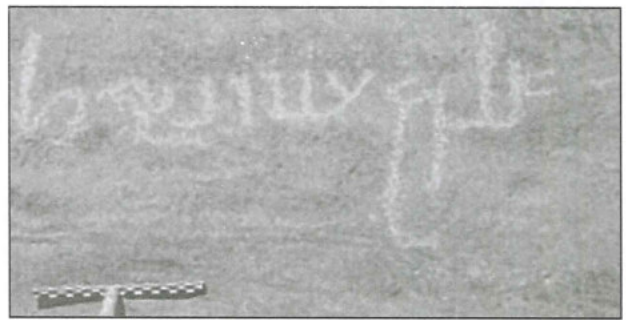
13. Thamudic inscription of ḤFD.

personal name.

NKR’, of Arabic *nkr* adjective “nakira”, means “intelligent, astute”. The verb NKR means “to be unaware of, to deny” (see Lane). As a proper name, “astute” is more appropriate.

2. ṢLM ‘BD RB’L Hello, ‘BD RB’L (Fig. 15)

The interest of this graffito is to provide a basileophore name: Rab’el. This royal name probably refers to Rabel I, who is believed to have reigned between 167 and 100 BC (Graf 1997, s.v., *Nab-*



15. Nabataean inscriptions at al-Kharaza-‘Umayyid.

ataeans). The type of *alif* with three branches is archaic and is found in the dedication of the Rabel I statue (CIS 349). It also appears on the inscription of the triclinium of *Aṣlah*, year 1 of 'Obodat, wife of Aretas (II) (96/95 BC). The present *graffito* would probably date from the second half of the first century BC.

3. 'BD 'MNW (Fig. 16)

'BD 'MNW, This name is frequent in the Ḥawrān (southern Syria) (Cantineau 1930, II: 132).

4. ŠLM BNYRW BR 'TMW BR ḤLFW Hello BNYRW, son of 'TMW, son of ḤLFW (Fig. 17)

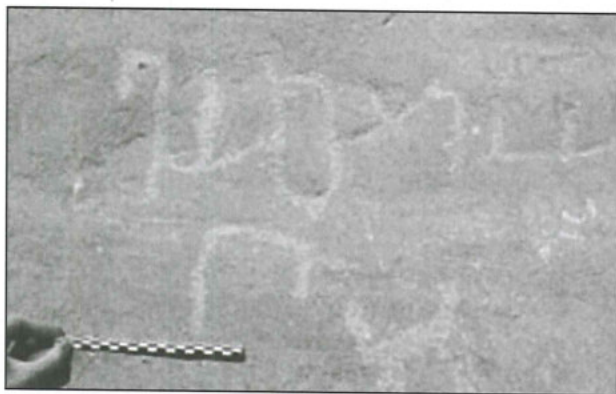
BNYRW is not frequent, and is probably of Greek origin Πανιερος meaning "fully sacred".

'TMW, appears in Nabataean inscriptions from Umm al-Quṣayr (Savignac 1932). It is also well known in Thamudic (Harding *Index*).

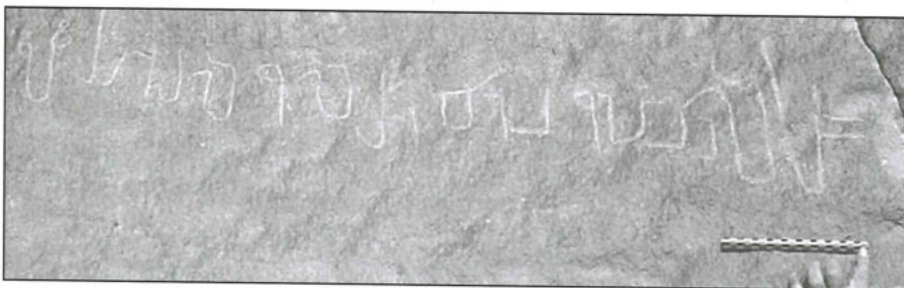
ḤLFW, occurs in Hegra/Madā'in Šāliḥ and in Wādī Šābiṭ (Farès-Drappeau and Zayadine 2001: 213).

The Survey of Enclosures in Wādī Ramm

Many square structures are visible in Wādī Ramm. We undertook a topographic plotting of the area. The first step of the research enabled us to better understand the architecture, the orientation and the space distribution of this type of structures in Wādī Ramm. We found this type of agglutinated



16. Nabataean inscriptions at al-Kharaza-'Umayyid.



17. Nabataean inscriptions at al-Kharaza-'Umayyid.

5. For the first observation, see S.F. Drappeau and F. Zayadine (2001:214).

structures, common in Wādī Ramm, to the north and the south of the village, at the foot of Jabal Ramm (area 38.00) and Jabal Umm 'Ishrin (area 44.00). The absolute regularity of the structures was observed in the beginning (Fig. 18).

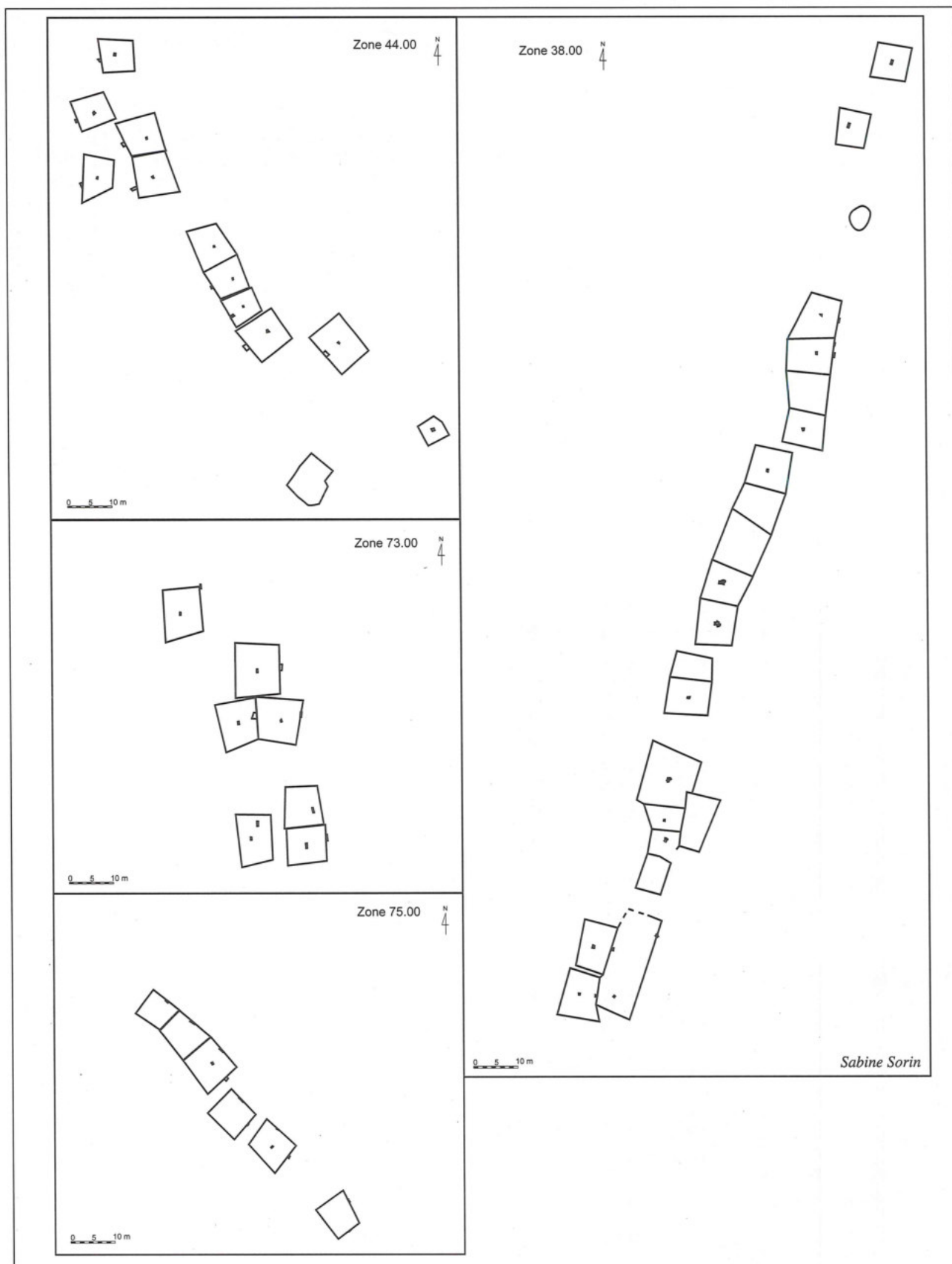
Accurate documentation of each stone was done by Sabine Sorin, helping us to understand the technique of construction. The walls have a shallow foundation trench. They are built with dry stones of regular shape without mortar. The structures constituted units of five to six aligned squares. In several examples, the floor is paved and contains a monolith block in the middle. A general plotting of the standing stones was undertaken in order to demonstrate their common characteristics. The stone blocks have a flat face, smoothed at the top and generally turned to the east.

A denser area of occupation can be found at the foot of Jabal Ramm (area 38.00). It includes a number of square structures, more regular than in the other sectors. Taking into consideration these characteristics and the time available, we focused our attention on area 38.00. Two soundings were dug and a detailed stone drawing was made.

Soundings

Six soundings were excavated at sites observed in previous surveys. The excavations were carried out by Eric Frenée and conducted in three wadis:

- Wādī Ramm, at approximately two kilometres from the village, there is about thirty quadrangular enclosures distributed on both sides of the wadi at the foot of the sandstone mountains of Ramm and Umm 'Ishrin. Two of them were the subjects of a sounding. We also placed a sounding on a tumulus close to the quadrangular enclosures (see below).
- Al-Kharaza, in the north of ad-Disa plain. The site consists of a stone building. It was the subject of a stratigraphic excavation.
- Wādī Šābiṭ, the site consists of rectangular and circular structures, at the foot of the mountain.
- Ruways Salim, the site consists of honeycombed cells⁵.



18. Square structures visible in Wādī Ramm.

The Quadrangular Enclosures of Wādī Ramm

This site is characterized by the presence of thirty square enclosures consisting of aligned stones. These enclosures are composed of three or more (up to 9) units orisolated. Each unit presents in its centre a monolithic standing stone (Figs. 19 and 20), three stones form a niche-like structure, oriented to the east, apparently the stones seem to be laid on the ground. However, the sounding revealed that the stones were deeply founded without foundation trenches. This means that the trenches were dug and then they were filled with earth. There was no material evidence of occupation in the trenches.

The Kharaza Station

The Kharaza station (Fig. 21) is located at the junction of tracks connecting al-Quwayra, ad-Dīsa and Ramm village. The sounding was carried out in the northeastern angle of the building, and it was observed that treasure hunters had already disturbed part of the stratigraphy. Thus, our sounding was undertaken in the still undisturbed part.

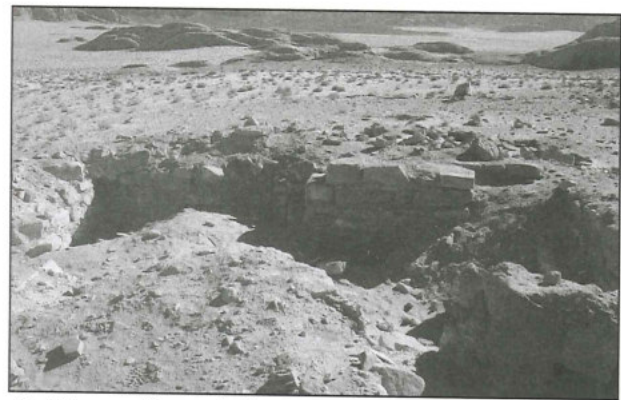
This building is square, consisting of a central



19. A monolithic standing stone inside the square enclosure.



20. The sounding at the base of the monolithic standing stone.



21. The sounding at al-Kharaza.

structure with an inner staircase at the northern side. A great number of sherds of Nabataean and Roman period ceramics cover the ground in a perimeter of approximately 50m around the building.

The sounding revealed a stratigraphy of 9 layers: layer 1 is formed from the tumble of building. Layers 2 to 5 correspond to the deposit after the abandonment of the building, while layer 6 is made of beaten earth of yellowish colour. Between layers 6 and 7 there is a charcoal layer corresponding to a burnt layer. Layer 9 composed of greyish sand containing chink of lime mortar representing the phase of construction.

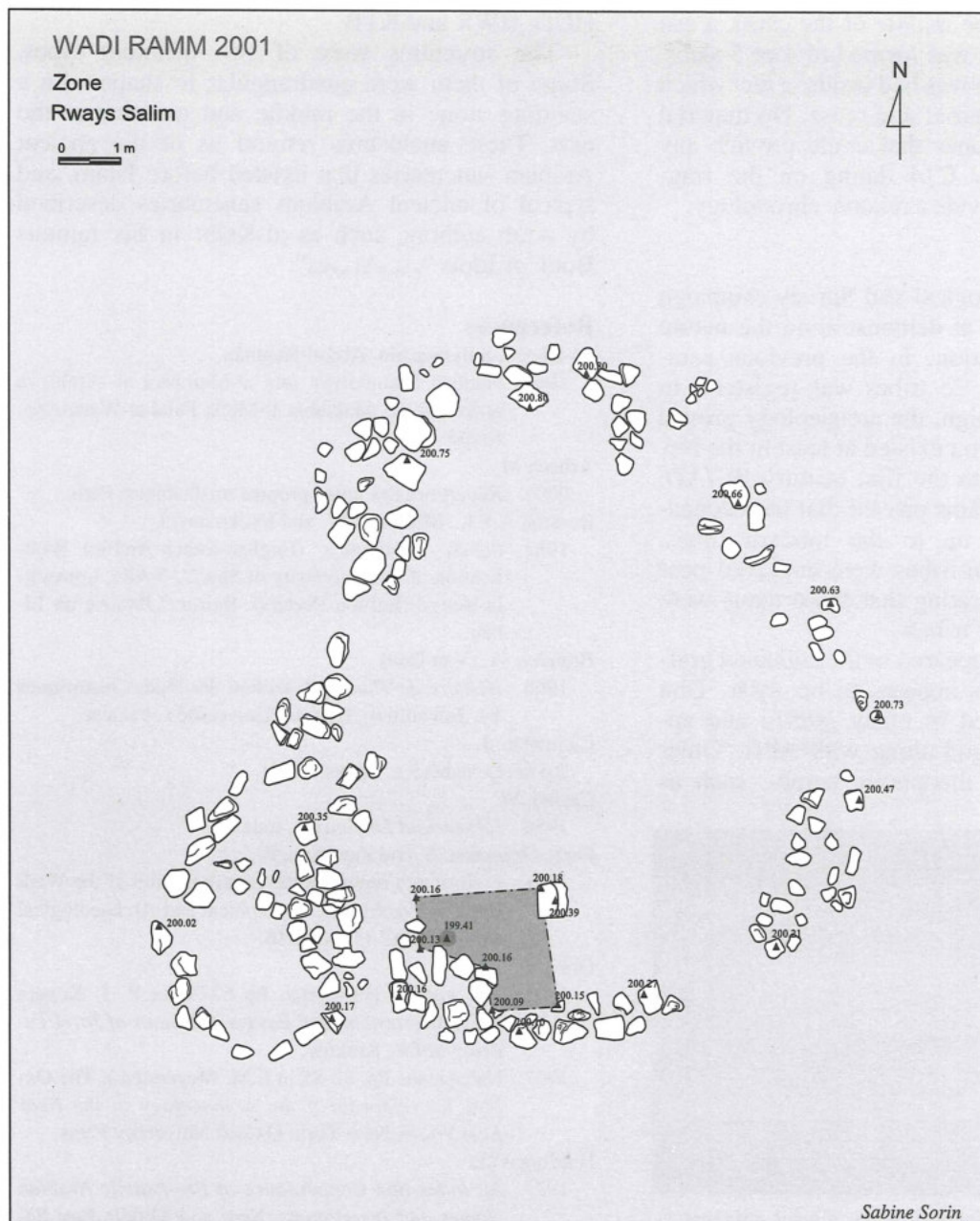
Layers of occupation 6 to 9 produced only three ceramics sherds, all of them dating to the Nabataean period. If it is difficult to determine the exact function of this building, but its location at the junction of three tracks suggests that it was a caravan station or watchtower.

Ruways Salīm

At Ruways Salīm, next to a cave containing Thamudic inscriptions, there were several rock caves. On the ground, there were irregular enclosures forming units of honeycombed cells (Fig. 22). We undertook a sounding (1m square approximately) in one of these enclosures. This revealed the occupation level, characterized by a gritty layer (about 20cm thick), and abundant ceramic material. Fragments of hard soil were found, probably the remainders of a floor. Fragmented animal bones and pottery sherds were discovered in this level. This discovery suggests that it was probably a domestic dwelling.

Huḍayb ar-Riḥ (Wādī Ṣābiṭ)

At Huḍayb ar-Riḥ (Wādī Ṣābiṭ), a sounding was carried out at the corner of a rectangular structure. The aim was primarily to determine the state of conservation of this unit, to date it and, of course, to try to establish its function. This site consisted



22. The honeycombed cells at Ruways Salim.

of several stone enclosures in addition to some tumuli.

The sounding revealed a well-preserved construction (Fig. 23). The stones forming the wall of the structure were consolidated from the inside by other larger stones, which formed a bench. It is difficult to confirm by this sounding whether the floor was paved or not because many stones were exposed but their irregular position made their interpretation difficult.

Some elements of ceramic furniture came from this area. However, a fragment of a grinding stone and two ceramic sherds were brought to light directly in the core of the wall. The ceramic sherds

are of fine light red clay with a lime inclusion. These were body fragments, one of them with a knob and the other with nail-pressed incisions.

The Cairns

In the different wadis prospected, we observed a large number of cairns, characterized by a heap of stones about 2m in height. Usually they are placed on visible spots, on a hill or along the wadi. In the Wādī Ramm, 11 such cairns were built on the slope of the mountain.

At 'Ayn Abū 'Uwayna, a cairn was excavated (Fig. 24). It consisted of a circular heap, about 4m in diameter. A circular wall enclosed the western

side of this cairn. In the middle of the cairn, a cist was constructed which was formed of 4 or 5 slabs. A fragmentary skeleton was laid inside, a fact which suggests a secondary burial and reuse. No material was found with the bones that could provide any dating evidence. Only C14 dating on the fragmentary bones will provide a relative chronology.

Conclusion

Our sixth Archaeological and Survey campaign at Wādī Ramm aimed at demonstrating the nature of the human occupation. In the previous campaigns, a list of about 25 tribes was registered. In the more recent campaign, the archaeology proved that sedentary occupation existed at least in the Neolithic period and up to the first century BC/AD. The large number of dams proved that the occupation was continuous up to the modern times. Names of Northarabian tribes were engraved near the ancient dams, indicating that those dams were the property of specific tribes.

Several gods also appeared in the collected graffiti. The main goddess appears to be Allāt. Dhū ash-Sharā was recorded in many graffiti and appears to be the main god along with Allāt. Other gods appeared in the theophoric names, such as



23. The sounding in the angle of a rectangular structure at Huḍayb ar-Riḥ (Wādī Šābit).



24. The cairn at 'Ayn Abū 'Uwayna.

HDD, HWR and KTB.

The structures were of two different types. Some of them were quadrangular in shape with a standing stone in the middle and oriented to the east. These enclosures remind us of the ancient Arabian sanctuaries that existed before Islam, and typical of ancient Arabians sanctuaries described by Arab authors, such as al-Kalbī in his famous Book of Idols "كتاب الأصنام".

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