

Excavations at Petra (1973 - 1974)

by

Fawzi Zayadine

A short campaign of excavations at Petra was financed by the Naturhistorische Gesellschaft of Nurnberg, thanks to the initiative of its President, Dr. Dr. Manfred Lindner and to the generosity of its members, especially of Mr. G. Kerscher. This active society, involved in many archaeological researches in Germany, has sponsored the publication of a book on Petra and the Nabataeans. ¹

The excavation was directed by the author, assisted by Mr. Bassim Rihani and Mr. Muhammed Murshed from the Department of Antiquities. Members of the German Society supervised some of the excavated areas and Elisabeth Gunsam and Toni Schmid from Austria were responsible for the drawings.

The field selected for the dig was the western slope of the Khubtha cliff, carved with some of the largest tombs of Petra, usually described as the "Royal Nabataean Necropolis" ² (Pl. LVII). The main object of the campaign was to improve our knowledge of the sequence of occupation in that area and to secure new dating evidence for some of the carved tombs.

Work started in April 14 to April 28th, with a labor force of 20 men from the Bedul tribe. Another season was initiated in October 1974 but was concentrated on tomb 813 (see below). Though very short, this campaign proved to be fruitful in revealing a lot

of material, dating from the 1st century B.C., up to the beginning of the Byzantine period and especially in identifying tomb 813. Four sites were investigated :

Area A : (Figs. 1 - 2 and Pl. LVIII).

A small cave situated at the start of the modern stairway leading up to the Urn Tomb and almost buried by wind-blown sand and rain-wash, attracted our attention. It was decided to dig it in two operations : 1) the courtyard; 2) the cave.

A 4 by 4m trench was first plotted in the courtyard, extended later to six metres to the south-west. The dump which covered the area was sloping westwards and consisted of 5 layers (Fig. 1): when the surface soil was removed, a hard yellowish clay appeared. This clay was called *samaga* by the Bedouins and was said to have been brought from the limey hills north of Petra. They pretended it was used to make pottery and cover roofs. In the same layer were found tumbled stones, a fragment of a basalt mortar (No. 12, Pl. LX) and fragments of white plaster. Sherds were Nabataean, Roman and Byzantine. Layer 2 was a greyish soil over wall 3 which was built on the south-eastern side of the courtyard. In the reddish sand of layer 4 were found three stones dressed for a door-jamb built at the cave's entrance. Below the reddish and tumbled stones was the red-brown layer 5 in which appeared

(1) *Petra und das Königreich der Nabatäer*. München, 1974.

(2) J. Starcky, "Pétra et la Nabatène", in *Dict. de la Bible*, Sup. VII col. 962ff.

N-S SECTION, M:10

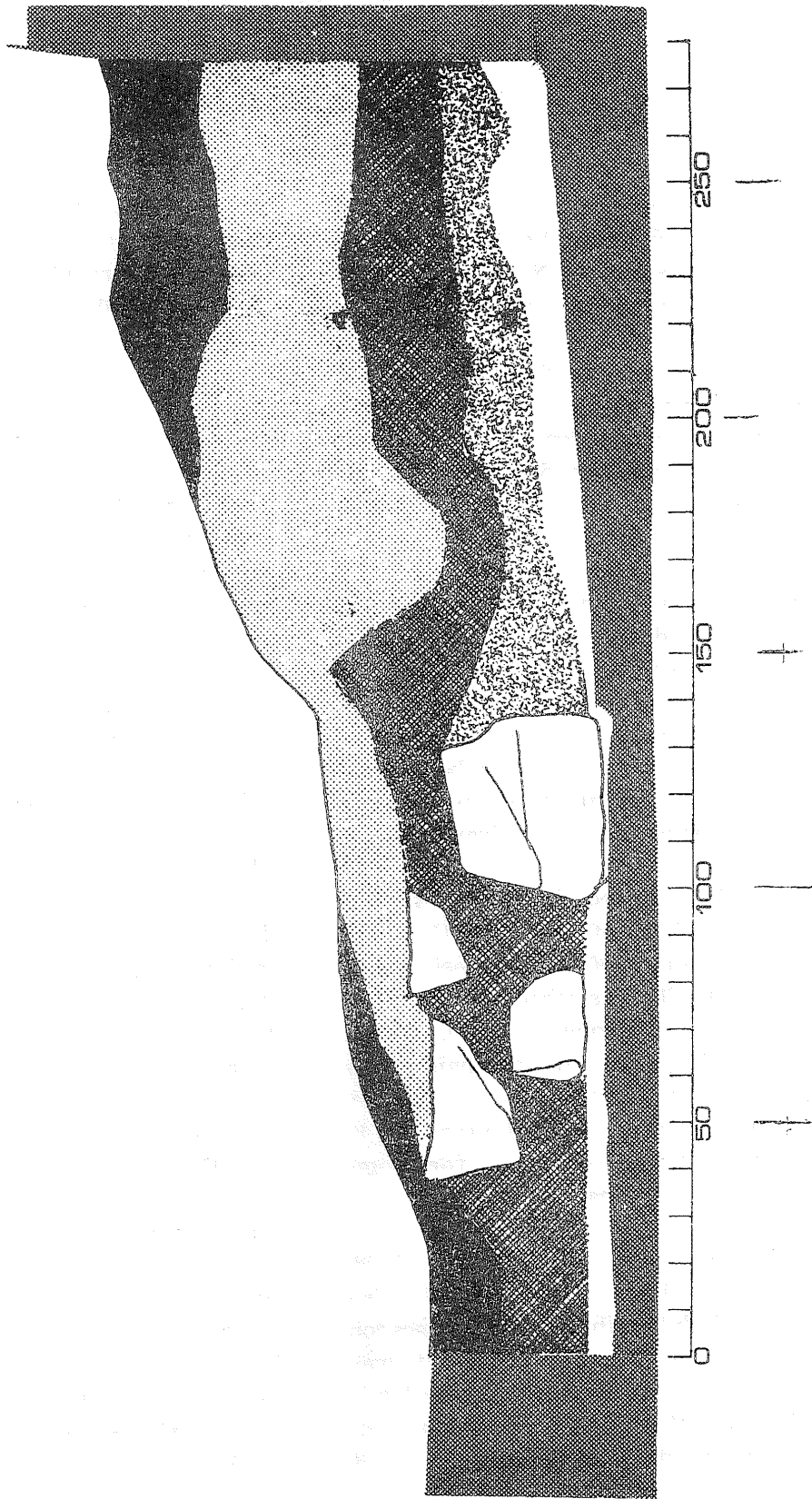


Fig. 1 : Area A. Courtyard; N-S section

the alabaster idol (No. 3, Pl. LIX, 1), decorated with a schematic human figure. The last layer (6) consisted of dark soil mixed with reddish sand, probably the remains of burned wood or reed. Fragments of tiles were also recovered from the same layer. When this last layer was removed, bedrock was met, smoothed and slightly sloping to the south-west.

To the south-east, the courtyard was limited by the hewn rock, but since it was not high enough, it was built over by a wall of roughly dressed stones, except for one which was dressed in the oblique Nabataean way and which was obviously reused. The wall was about 0,60m wide, with a preserved height of about 0,90m. Parallel to this wall, a stairway about 0,80m wide was cut in the rock, leading up to the cave's roof. Five worn steps were still visible, but the start of the stairway was built with roughly squared stones. The courtyard terminated with two steps hewn in the rock. At about 0,65m from its end, a dressed stone was fixed at the base of wall 3, suggesting that a partition wall or a doorway was standing at that place (Pl. LVIII, 1).

On the north-western side of the courtyard, there was a wall which fell down in the courtyard, but part of it was fitted into an incision made in the rocky facade of the cave. A niche was also carved on the same side and it is probable that the alabaster idol (Pl. LIX, 1) was originally exhibited in it.

The cave: (Fig. 1, 2 and Pl. LVIII).

Except for 25cm, the mouth of the cave was filled with washed sand and mud mixed with tumbled stones. On the south-eastern side of the entrance,

a doorjamb, one metre high, was *in situ*, leaning inward and gouged with two socket-holes and a double hole for a tethering cord. The north-western jamb of the door was built with dressed stones, which tumbled down in the courtyard.

It was decided to clean out the cave into two halves, so that the layers could be easily observed and drawn. These consisted of wind-blown sand, separated by thin layers of mud. Many Byzantine pot-sherds were collected from the 8 layers. When the whole chamber was cleaned out, it appeared that the cave was roughly rectangular, measuring about 1,50 by 1,80m with a height of about 1,75m. The cave's ceiling slopes down from the entrance to the back. Traces of the metal picks are distinguishable, but no doubt the walls were covered with plaster as remains are still visible. A tethering hole was cut in the centre of the ceiling, probably to hold a lantern.

On the bed-rock, which was covered with a thin layer of plaster, were scattered many household objects. These included a big complete wine jar two broken jugs, two lamps, one of them being fragmentary; a decorated small mortar with its basalt pestle, a smashed glass bottle and a round stone with a central shallow hole (Pl. LVIII, 2) (see below). All of them belong to the beginning of the Byzantine period (4th century A.D.).

The household objects discovered on the cave's floor suggest that it was abandoned hastily, probably at the approach of a catastrophe which may have been an earthquake as indicated by the way the door-jamb tumbled in and out to the cave.³

(3) An earthquake rocked Palestine and Trans-Jordan in A.D. 365, *IEJ*, 1 (1950-51) p. 225.

At any rate, the alabaster idol clearly means that Christianity was slow in penetrating the capital of the Nabataeans. Such a conclusion is supported by the biography of a Syrian monk called Barsauma who visited Petra in the 5th century A.D. and attempted to christianize the pagan inhabitants by producing a miraculous rain over the thirsty city.⁴

The other conclusion which could be drawn is that the western slope of the Khubtha was converted to a dwelling area in the 4th century A.D. But this was not the case over the long history of the site. Our excavations in area B and C proved that a necropolis existed in the same area, in earlier times.

Dwelling caves are well known at Petra. In 1937 M.A. Murray and J. Ellis⁵ excavated caves and shaft tombs in the area overlooking Wadi Abu-Ollegah. Other dwelling caves were cleaned and planned by G. and A. Horsfield⁶ at the entrance of Wadi es-Siyagh, but they are not well dated.

Area B: (Pl. LXII).

North-west of area B is a flat rocky area, overlooking the Wadi Musa, where traces of walls sticking out from the ground attracted our attention. A square 5 by 5 m was plotted in that spot. Little work revealed a room, 3 by 2,70m whose walls were preserved to the height of 0,70m. The building material was poor indeed, for it consisted of roughly squared stones fixed with mortar. But they were covered, at least from the inside with a coloured plaster. The thickness of the walls was not homogeneous, the eastern wall being

0,60m thick, while the northern one was only 0,40m thick. But the latter was probably a partition wall, for traces of other walls are visible to the north. A doorway, without doorjambs, and about 1m wide was opened through it. As the cave in area A, the chamber utilized bed-rock as floor, covered with a thin layer of plaster.

When the house was demolished, a channel was built through its southern side, cutting the eastern and western walls. This was about 15cm wide with its sides being lined with rectangular slabs (Pl. LXII, 1) and running into a rock-cut reservoir which is no longer serviceable since its western wall has been broken away. A group of complete cooking-pots and plates were found on the southern side of the channel (Pl. LXII,2).

A shaft tomb:

When the debris from inside the chamber was removed, a rectangular shaft, 2,50 by 0,72m, appeared with a depressed ledge about 20cm wide. It was clear that this was the entrance for a shaft tomb, originally covered by large slabs which rested on the depressed rim, but not one of them was *in situ*. Judging from the potsherds inside the shaft, one may conclude that the burial was plundered in the Byzantine period.

On each long side of the shaft, to the north, were four teo-holes to help descend and ascend in and out of the tomb. The shaft led to a large rectangular chamber. We excavated only half of it since time was lacking.

Two graves, measuring 2,25 by 0,60 situated on the western side of the

(4) F. Nau, *Revue des Etudes Juives*, LXXXIII (1972) p. 188ff.

(5) *A Street in Petra*, London (1940) p. 3ff.

(6) *QDAP*, VII (1938) p. 15ff.

cave were investigated, but both of them have been looted and two covering slabs out of six were missing. Over the remaining slabs of the grave lay a decayed skeleton, of which only few long bones, and a smashed skull were recognisable. Near the skull lay 6 bronze bells, two gold ear-rings and a silver drachma of king Obodas II (30-9 B.C.) (Pl. LXIV, 2). The traces of a decayed bronze object was also noticed but it was impossible to restore it.

The presence of the skeletal remains over the grave's covering slabs is puzzling. One could imagine that the corpse was extracted from the tomb before its desintegration. But a tomb robber, who was able to pull out a corpse would not likely forget to steal the gold objects. It is more probable that the skeleton was a later burial at a time when no room was found inside the grave.

In this grave, which was about 1,10m deep, a femur and a pelvis fragment were found along with two bells, iron nails and many fragments of coloured plaster. It was obvious that the plaster was brought in, from the fore mentioned structure, when the tomb was robbed.

The second grave had the same dimensions as the first one. No bones were discovered or were possibly completely disintegrated. A small cooking-pot, an unguentarium and an alabaster pixis with some iron nails and green beads were collected.

Dating:

At least three main phases are distinguished in area B: the earliest one was the shaft tomb. The coin of Obodas II with fragments of decorated

Nabataean plates prove that the first burial was put in the second half of the first century B.C. This burial was laid over a grave which was earlier. Objects from grave 2 suggest that the original tomb was dug in the beginning of the 1st century B.C.

The second phase is represented by the superimposed house. A coin of Aretas IV, found close to the floor level is good evidence that the house was in use in the 1st century A.D.; it was abandoned in the late 2d or early 3d century A.D. as indicated by the pottery deposited in a destruction layer, above the floor. The last phase was the channel construction through the walls of the house. This phase dates to the Byzantine period (4th or 5th century A.D.) as indicated by a bronze coin, unfortunately corroded, but related to the Byzantine mint. More excavations in the area may confirm or alter these conclusions.

Area C (Pl. LXVIII, 1 and Fig. 3-4).

About 50m south-east of area B, a shaft tomb was excavated. The shaft, which was previously opened, led to a rectangular chamber, measuring 2,60m by 3,53m. In the floor of the chamber were cut four graves, measuring 0,60-0,65m in width and 2,10m in length. Each grave was covered by five slabs, all of them in situ. The graves contained desintegrated human bones. In grave 1, were uncovered the remains of two skeletons and two skulls, one of them deposited to the east and the other to the west. Only a fragmentary spindle bottle was recovered which dates the burial to the 1st century B.C. With the finds of the area B shaft tomb, we may conclude that the occupation of the western slopes of Khubtha goes back to the 1st century B.C.

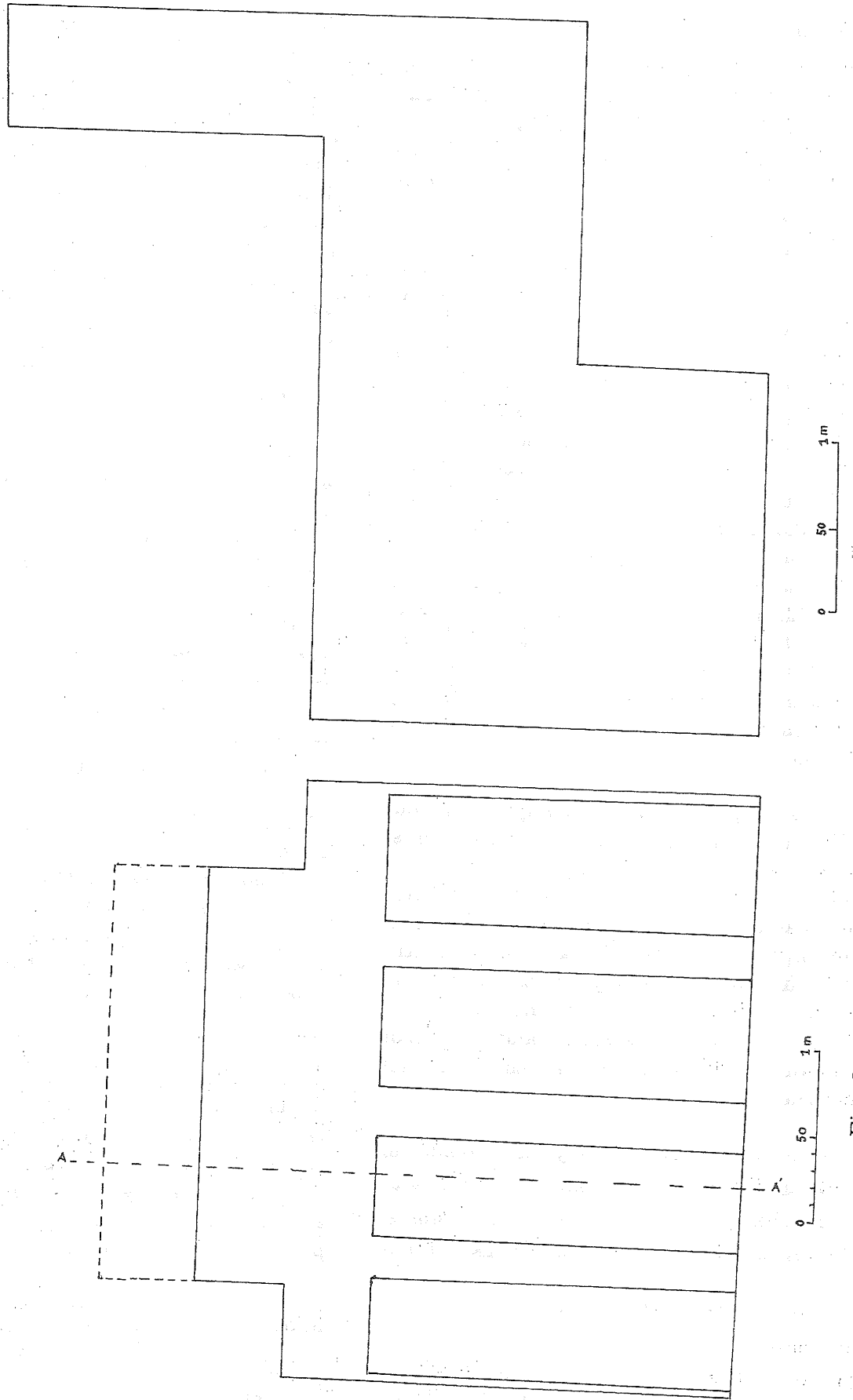


Fig. 3 - 4 : Area C; shaft tomb. Plan and section

Tomb 813: (Uneishu Tomb)

In the western facade of the Khubtha cliff, at the end of the Siq, exist many Nabataean tombs, standing in two superimposed rows and decorated with two bands of crow-steps or half crow-steps, Egyptian cavetto cornice and pilasters (Hegra type). Tomb 813, which is one of the most noticeable monument, in the upper row, faces the theater and exhibits a relatively well preserved architectural decoration of the Hegra type (Pl. LXV, 1, 2). The doorway, badly drawn by Brunnow and von Domaszewski⁷ is adorned with two frames: the outer one consists of two pilasters, doubled by half columns and surmounted by Nabataean capitals supporting a Greek pediment; the inner frame consists of pilasters, spanned by an architrave and a frieze (Pl. LXV, 2). The actual height of the monument is about 20 metres and its maximum width is 12 metres, a proportion rarely reached at Petra for this type of tomb.

A large stairway, partly hewn out of the rock and partly built with dressed stones, was leading to the monument, starting near tomb 824. It terminates in a platform, from which a ramp cut in the rock slopes southwards to the courtyard of the tomb. On the eastern side of the ramp, are cut a water reservoir and a small chamber in which are carved small idol niches.

A rectangular courtyard extends in front of the tomb, limited on its southern side by a portico of four columns, originally resting on square bases fitted

(7) *Provincia Arabia*, I, fig. 167.

(8) *Ibid.* fig. 223 and 444.

(9) At least three triclinia of Petra contain graves or loculi for burial. These are: the

in the hewn rock. Only one drum of column was in situ. Though no capitals were found, it is almost certain that the portico was of the Doric style similar to the portico of tomb No. 4 (The Rest House) and of the Urn Tomb.⁸ On the northern side of the courtyard, there are traces of two bases, for the rest of the space is occupied by a rock-cut triclinium, measuring 9,90 by 6,90 m. Its rear wall is carved with three loculi for burial, a feature which is common in the funeral triclinia of Petra.⁹

The funeral chamber of Tomb 813 is well carved and is almost square (7,90 by 7,60m) (Plan Fig. 5). Into the southern and northern walls are cut four loculi, but only three of them are dug in the rear wall, facing the entrance. Most of the loculi measure 1,30 by 2,90m and in each of them is dug a grave about 2m by 0,90m and about 1,20m deep, covered with slabs and a thick layer of mortar (Pl. LVX, 3 and Fig. 5).

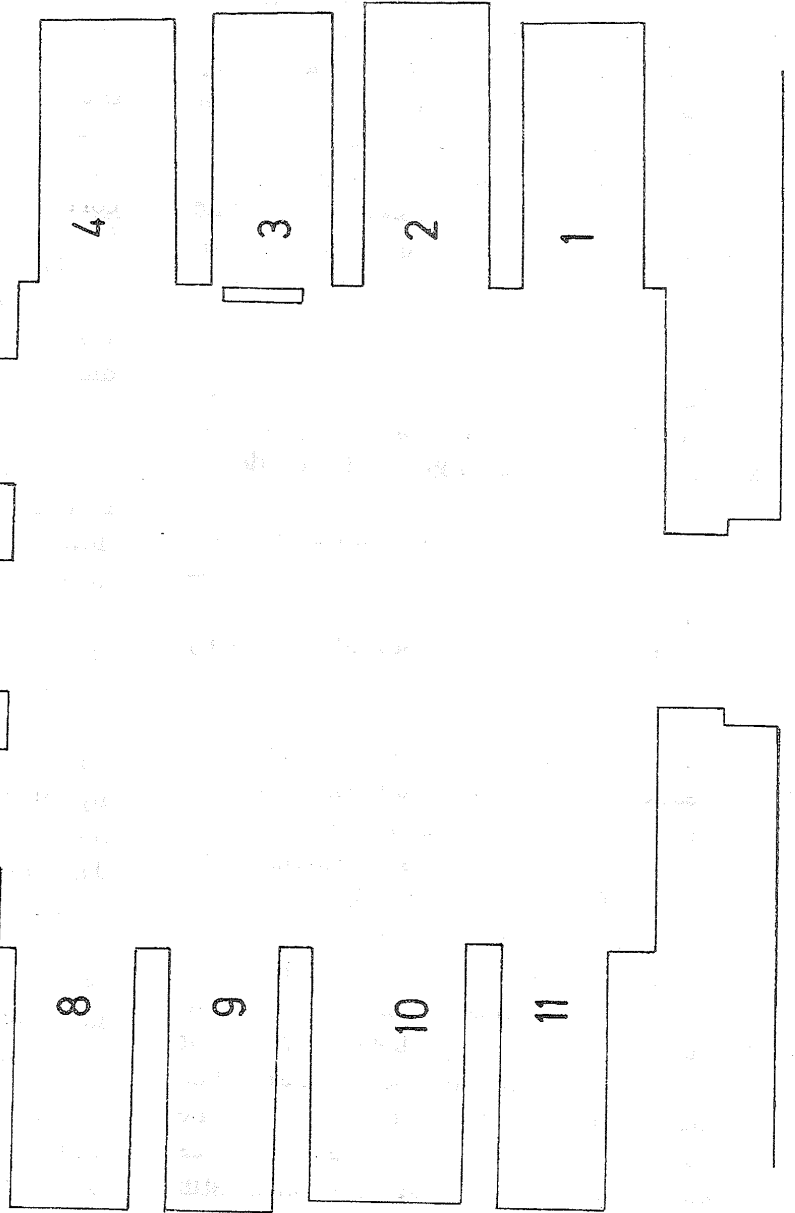
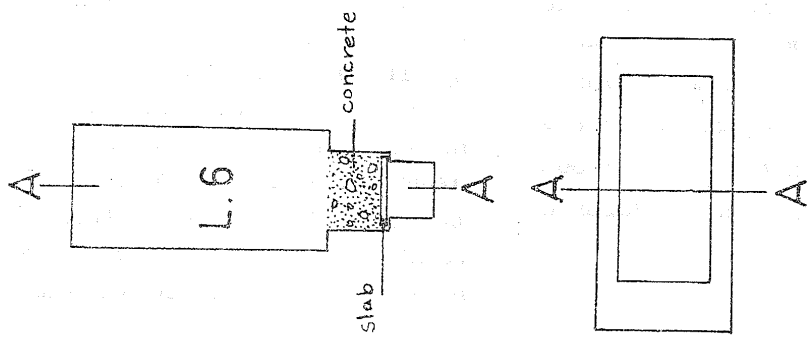
As a result of our investigations, it could be proved that Tomb 813, and not 808 as stated by Brunnow and von Domaszewski, was the find-spot of the Uneishu inscription which was discovered by Gray Hill¹⁰ in April 1896. Here is his report:

"In a tomb in the east cliff of the main valley, just at the point where it first widens out, after debouching from the Sik, and about 100 feet below the bottom, I found a stone with half-obliterated writing on it. This tomb has a very high facade, plain, but with pilasters at the corners and cornices.

triclinium of the Obelisks Tomb (*Provincia Arabia*, Fig. 197), the triclinium of Tomb 813 (see below) and the one in wadi Khurrubat, on the way to the Deir (Nr. 455).

(10) *PEFQS* (1897) p. 136.

PETRA TOMB 813



Handwritten signature or initials.

Within, opposite the door, and on each side are rock-cut recesses opening out of the main hall. The floor of one recess opposite the door had very recently been opened, and 28 inches of concrete (which was however, not very hard) had been broken through ... The tombs in the other recesses which had not been disturbed will probably be found to contain similar stones with writing”.

The inscription, engraved on a slab of 0,78 by 0,48m was later copied by Musil and P. Lagrange.¹¹ It reads:

“Uneishu, brother of Shuqailat, son of (space)”. Originally, the slab was a grave cover, since concrete was stuck to its back, as stated by Gray Hill.

From Strabo's report on the Nabataeans,¹² we learn that the minister of the king was called his brother. In this case, Uneishu was probably the minister of Shuqailat II who ruled the Nabataean kingdom from 71 to 76 A.D., during the minority of her son Rabel II. The inscription is not unfinished as one may believe since it was continued on an other slab. The loculus facing the entrance of the tomb (No. 6 of plan Fig. 5) was lacking three slabs and the ones still in situ are almost of the same dimensions of the inscribed stone. It is now obvious that Brunnow visited none of the two tombs (808 and 813) since the drawing of the doorways is faulty. At any rate, the description of Gray Hill fits very well tomb 813 and not 808 whose funeral chamber is unfinished and whose loculi have no graves covered with slabs and concrete.

In April 1973, when we started the excavation of the tomb, all of the loculi were robbed and some of their slabs removed. But I had the conviction that tomb robbers did not care about inscriptions and that they left some objects. This conviction proved to be correct.

The tomb cleaning was entrusted to Dr. Erich Wieters and Dr. Manfred Lindner. The first day, Dr. Lindner discovered the fragmentary inscription (Pl. LXVI, 2) in the tomb.

Work started in loculus 10. In this loculus a rectangular grave is cut down to the depth of 1,25m. At 0,75m deep, a ridge about 7cm wide project out on the two long sides to support the covering slabs. Four of them, measuring between 0,69 and 0,79m long were still in situ. Over the slabs there was a thick layer of rubble covered by 0,25m of concrete in which were included fragments of Nabataean plates. The debris inside the grave were separated into 3 layers; the first one included a dressed stone and a drum of column. The second layer was a greenish fine soil followed by a white gray soil (3d layer).

Loculus 3, carved in the southern wall, was partly opened by tomb robbers. Over the slabs and the thick layer of concrete was about 0,65m of quicklime mixed with gravel. At 0,40m, calcinated human bones appeared. A similar burial with quicklime was found by Horsfield in the “Triple Dushara” tomb.¹³ What was striking is that the burial was deposited over the grave itself which means it was intended to be isolated from the other dead. The reason for such treatment remains a mystery. Horsfield states that burning

(11) *Corpus Insc. Semit.* II No. 351.

(12) *Geography*, XVI, 21. See also Clermont-

Ganneau, *RAO*, II, p. 380.

(13) *QDAP*, VIII (1939) p. 108ff

into lime was used in Moab as could be deduced from Amos II, 1 which he translates: "... he burnt the bones of the King of Edom into lime".¹⁴ But the Bible of Jerusalem translates the verse: "because they have burnt the bones of the king of Edom for lime".¹⁵ The Hebrew text is confusing and a burning by quicklime is not well attested in ancient times. One could suggest that an epidemic disease like plague or leprosy necessitated burning by lime as it is done in modern times.

From inside the grave which was partly covered by slabs and concrete, no objects were recovered, but in front of the loculus, about 10cm above the floor level, two fragments of plaster bearing inscriptions in a red-brown ink were collected (Pl. LXVI, 3) (see below p. 148). In the chamber's floor, a trough 85 by 0,20m and about 0,25m deep, was dug out in front of the loculus' opening (see plan Fig. 5). Its function remains obscure unless it is the foundation trench of a wall blocking the loculus; but no traces of mortar were found in it.

In October 1974 four more loculi were excavated. In loculus 6, a fragmentary skull was discovered with few beads and small gold jewelry (Pl. LVII, 1). One of them represents a scorpion, while the other is crescent shaped. The scorpion is well attested as an apotropaic amulet¹⁶ in the ancient world and the crescent as a divine symbol which occurs many times at Petra,

(14) *Ibid.* p. 110.

(15) The Hebrew text reads: **LSD** (for lime) and not **BSD** (with lime).

especially in the gorge called Sid el-Ma'agen¹⁷ and near the High Place of Djebal el-Madhbah.

In loculus 9 a fragmentary inscription painted on stucco with a red-brown ink was found at the bottom of the grave (Pl. LXVI, 1) (see p. 148). These fragments, with the ones from loculus 3, suggest that there was a wall blocking the loculi and covered with inscribed stucco. An illegible bronze coin was also in the grave with fragmentary bones.

Conclusions

Our limited excavations at Petra demonstrate that important informations could be gained from tomb clearances when it is undertaken carefully. The result of the dig could be summarized as follows:

In the 1st century B.C. shaft tombs were dug in the western slopes of Khubtha but they were covered by houses in the first century A.D. The area continued to be occupied in the Byzantine period as demonstrated by the cave of area A. On the other hand, it is well known that the nearby Urn Tomb was converted into a church by Bishop Jasonos of Petra in A.D. 447.

Tomb 813, facing the theater, is probably the burial of Uneishu, minister of queen Shuqailat II and his family, as demonstrated by the inscription discovered by Gray Hill in 1896 and confirmed by our investigations.

(16) See for example: D. Levi, *Antioch III* (1941) p. 220 and Fig. 101, a II, pl. IV, c.

(17) Dalman, *Petra*, Leipzig (1908) fig. 259.

The Finds

Nabataean Period (1st century B.C.)

The finds dating to the first century B.C. came out from the shaft tombs of area B and C. In area B, a silver drachma of Obodas II (30-9 B.C.) which was found with a skeleton overlying grave loc. 21, is a good evidence for an early date of this grave.

The cooking-pot No. 18 deposited in the grave loc. 21 has thin reddish ware, a straight neck and a bevelled rim; the lower attach of the handle is thumb pressed. The best parallel to it was discovered at Qumran¹⁸ and dated 50-31 B.C. The cooking-pot No. 19, though found in a disturbed layer (loc. 14), inside the shaft tomb of area B, belongs to the same type, except for a groove below the neck. The painted Nabataean sherd No. 32 is richly decorated with a floral and geometric design of brown colour on a red-orange background: it shows a central palmette, treillis, and lozanges with dots. The small unguentarium was found in grave loc. 21 with the cooking-pot No. 18; its body is irregular with a flat base, which is rather uncommon but occurs at Petra.¹⁹ From the same locus came the alabaster pixis No. 26 which is unparalleled at Petra.

The silver drachma of Obodes II²⁰ is badly corroded but the heads of king and queen are recognisable. Obodas II was king of Petra at the time of the expedition of Aelius Gallus to

Southern Arabia. He was described as an inefficient ruler by Strabo²¹ when compared with his ambitious minister Syllaeus. The coin, which appeared mixed with the skeletal remains was probably a viaticum. The gold crescent shaped ear-rings from the same deposit (Nos. 23-24) are a common type in the Nabataean world as proved by the finds of Mampsis.²²

Nabataean Period: 1st century A.D.

This group of objects dating to the second half of the 1st century A.D. came from tomb 813. In the loculi, no significant pottery objects were found but jewelry and fragmentary inscriptions were collected. The gold scorpion (No. 41) is not known from other Nabataean sites but its apotropaic value is well attested as I noticed above (p. 145). A red plate fragment, decorated with a cross,²³ appeared in loculus 5 (No. 38) which suggests that the tomb was occupied in the Byzantine period. The rest of the objects were discovered in the portico, in front of the chamber. In the south-eastern corner of the portico, an accumulation of debris yielded fragmentary and complete pots. These came probably from the chamber or the loculi and were cleared out in the Byzantine period. A bronze coin of Rabel II, the last king of Petra (No. 45), was found in the dump on the North-western side of the portico but was not related to any clear stratification.

(18) P. Lapp, *Palestine Ceramic Chronology*, p. 187 No. 1.

(19) M. Murray, *A Street at Petra*, Pl. XXX, No. 112 (74 M3); *QDAP*, IX (1940-41) Pl. XXI, 155 (1st century B.C. - A.D.).

(20) J. Starcky, *Petra in: Dic. de la Bible*, Sup. VII, fig. 695, 5.

(21) *Geography*, 16, 4, 24.

(22) *Die Nabatäer* (München Exhibition). München, 1970, Pls. 17, a, c; 18, d.

(23) Similar plates have been found at Cafarnaum, Lofreda, *Cafarnao*, Jerusalem, 1974, Fig. 26 and Foto 21-22.

A decorated bone spoon (No. 37) ²⁴ and the pot (No. 40) appeared in a disturbed layer on the south-eastern corner of the portico. The pot is known from Petra ²⁵ and Amman environs. ²⁶ The upper part of the lamp (No. 45) from the same layer is very common at Petra and elsewhere and should be dated to the 1st century A.D. Painted sherds (Pl. LXVII, 3) show a dark brown design on a red-orange background, except for sherd (No. 57) which has a pinkish design on a light creamy background and may be dated to the 1st century B.C. ²⁷

The second century A.D.

Three of the cooking-pots (No. 16, 17, 33) were found in area B and belong to the phase of abandonment of the house. The ware is clearly different from that of the cooking-pots recovered from the shaft tomb (No. 18 and 19); it is thick, of buff colour with a ridge under the rim ²⁸ With the same group was the decorated plate No. 21. Its ware is thick and gritty and the floral design is black on a red-brown background. This type is described as the beginning of the decline of the fine painted Nabataean pottery. ²⁹ A fragment of lamp decorated with two gladiators (No. 15)

(24) See a similar bone spoon from Petra in *QDAP*, IX (1940-41) Pl. XVI, 116.

(25) Murray, *A Street*, Pl. XXVII, No. 50; *QDAP*, IX (1940-41) Pl. XXI, 156.

(26) *ADAJ*, XVIII (1973) Pl. XXI, 156.

(27) For a classification of painted Nabataean pottery see K. Schmitt-Korte, *ADAJ*, XVI, (1971) p. 53; P. Parr, *A Sequence of Pottery from Petra*, in *Near Eastern Archaeology in the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Sanders (1970) p. 348-381.

(28) see P. Parr, *A Sequence*, fig. 7, 104, 106, 116 (Phase X-XII) 1st century A.D.

came from area C and may be attributed to the same period. Fragment 15a was found by a Bedouin of Petra. Lamps of the same type have been recovered from the site, ³⁰ and should be related to a Roman prototype.

The Early Byzantine Period

Byzantine pottery of Petra is badly documented though the city was heavily occupied at that period. This pottery group, which came from one place in area A is homogeneous. The most significant objects for dating purposes are the two lamps (Nos. 6 and 7). They belong to a type very common in Palestine and Transjordan ³¹ in the 4th and 5th century A.D. The jar (No. 13) has a good parallel from Ain Yabrud ³² dated to the 4th century. The jug (No. 10) is comparable to a pot discovered at New Testament Jericho ³³ (Early Byzantine) and to another one from a tomb in Amman ³⁴ (Late Roman). The lid (No. 4) is similar to one published by P. Parr ³⁵ but of earlier date. It probably belonged to jar (No. 13) though it was found in the courtyard, in front of the cave.

The alabaster figurine (No. 3) depicts a schematic human face with square eyes and a rectangular nose.

(29) Parr, *A Sequence*, Fig. 7, 107-113.

(30) *QDAP*, IX Pl. XLVI, 433.

(31) *QDAP*, III (1934) p. 86, fig. 12 (4th c.A.D.); VI (1937), Pls. VII, 11, VII, 9; *ADAJ*, XVIII (1972) Pl. XLII, 2.

(32) *QDAP*, VI (1937) Pl. IV, 16.

(33) *AASOR* 29-30, Pl. 27, 1.

(34) *QDAP*, XIV (1950) Pl. XXVI, 162.

(35) Parr, *A Sequence*, Fig. 1, 22. (Phase V, 100 B.C.).

(36) J. Starcky, *Pétra*, *Dict. de la Bible*, Sup. VII, Fig. 705, 4.

This type of idol belongs to the Nabataean period as indicated by a bas-relief carved on the rocks of Medain Salih (Hegra) ³⁶ and representing the goddess al-Uzza, one of the main goddesses of the Nabataeans and Pre-Islamic Arabia. Other figurines of the same type were recovered from Petra.³⁷

The Inscriptions :

No. 1 (Pl. LXVI, 2). This is a fragmentary inscription discovered inside tomb 813. The stone was probably part of a slab, covering one of the 11 graves of the chamber (see above p. 144ff). In line 1, one can read a *mem* but the other letters are difficult to interpret since they are badly worn. The stems of three letters are engraved and I suggested (ADAJ, XVIII, p. 81) that this word is to be read as MNKU. Thus the whole inscription may be completed: (BŠNT LMNKU MLK' MLK NBTU): in the year... of Malichos, the king, king of the Nabataeans. But there is no traces of a *lamed* before the *mem*. In the second line the word NBT is clear, but the letters are larger than those of the first line, a feature uncommon in Nabataean inscriptions. At any rate, the inscription seems to be an official dedication, terminating with a royal name, since NBTU appears most frequently with the name of a king or queen of Petra. It is the first Nabataean inscription to be uncovered in a tomb since the inscription published by Gray Hill.

No. 2 (Pl. LXVI, 1). These inscribed plaster fragments were recovered from loculus 9 of tomb 813. On the upper fragment the faint traces of a *mem* are recognizable. The second fragment 15 x 10cm is the end of an inscription as indicated by the edges. In the first line is a *tet*; in the second one is a *shin* and *qof* whose triangular head is visible in the upper fragment. The word would be restored as Shuqailat, a queen of Petra who reigned from 70 to 76 A.D. The Uneishu inscription (p. 144) mentions the name of the queen and our fragmentary inscription might be conclusive for the identification of the burial and its dating.

No. 3: (Pl. LXVI, 3). These fragments were found in front of loculus 3 of the tomb. A *resh* and *tet* are painted in dark brown on the plaster fragment to the right. A *lamed* is probably painted on the second fragment.

The plaster inscriptions probably covered stones or slabs closing the loculi. It is also probable that the whole tomb was covered with painted plaster. With the Uneishu inscription, they represent an interesting evidence for the dating of the tomb in the second half of the 1st century A.D. This date may also be deduced from the architectural decoration of the tomb whose door is adorned with two frames (Pl. LXV, 2).

(37) N. Glueck, *Deities and Dolphins* (1966) Pl. 199, c.

Description of finds

Nabataean: 1st century B.C.

No.	Provenance	Description	Plate
14	C, 1, 4 (grave)	Unguentarium. Neck missing. Rosy clay.	LXVIII
18	B, 1, 21 (grave)	Cooking-pot, globular body, bevelled rim, thin reddish to gray ware. Restored.	LXVIII LXIII
19	B, 1, 14	Cooking-pot, globular body bevelled rim. Reddish thin ware. Lime deposit on base.	LXIII
22	B, 1, 21	Small unguentarium. Flat disk base. Irregular oval body. Brownish ware, lime deposit.	LXIII LXVIII
23-24	B, 1, 17	Two gold ear-rings.	
25	B, 1, 17	Silver drachma of Obodas II; ob. Head of Obodas II and queen; rev. Head of Obodas II.	LXIV, 2
26	B, 1, 22 (grave)	Small alabaster pixis.	
32	B, 1, 15	Fragment of a fine decorated plate. Brown on red-orange ware.	LXIV, 1

Nabataean: 1st century A.D.

37	T. 813 (Portico)	Decorated bone spoon.	LXI, 4
39	T. 813 (Portico)	Plate. Gray ware.	LXIX LXIX
40	T. 813 (Portico)	Small pot. Light creamy ware.	LXI, 3
41	T. 813 L. 5	Gold scorpion.	LXVII, 1
42	T. 813 L. 5	Gold crescent.	LXVII, 1
43	T. 813 L. 5	Two cornaline beads.	LXVII, 1
44	T. 813 (Portico)	Upper part of a moulded lamp. Red brown ware.	LXVII, 3
45	T. 813 (Portico)	Bronze coin of Rabel II; ob. Head of king Rabel and Gamulat. rev. Cornucopia and inscription: RB 'L GMLT	LXVII, 2

No.	Provenance	Description	Plate
15	C (Dump)	Fragment of a lamp decorated with two gladiators.	LXIII
15a	Not stratified	Fragment of a lamp; same decoration.	LXIII
16	B, 1, 1	Cooking-pot. Buff gritty ware.	LXVIII LXIII
17	B, 1, 1	Cooking-pot. Same type than 16.	LXIII, LXVIII
20	B, 1, 1	Plate. Light orange ware. Restored.	LXIII
21	B, 1, 1	Painted plate. Black on reddish gritty ware.	LXIII LXIV, 3
30	B, 1, 2	Lion's foreleg. Yellow sand stone.	LXIII
33	B, 1, 1	Cooking-pot. Same type than 16.	LXIII

Early Byzantine Period:

3	A, 1, 5	Fragment of an alabaster idol decorated with schematic figure.	LIX, 1 LXIII
4	A, 1, 5	Pottery lid. Tan ware.	LIX, 2 LX
6	A, 2 (Cave floor)	Moulded lamp. Grayish clay	LIX, 2 LX
7	A, 2 (Cave floor)	Fragment of a moulded lamp.	LX
8	A, 2 (Cave floor)	Jug. Handle and base missing. Grayish clay outside, red-brown inside.	LX, LIX, 3
9	A, 2 (Cave floor)	Decorated mortar. Yellowish sand stone.	LX LXI, 1
10	A, 2 (Cave floor)	Jug. Buff ware. Base missing.	LIX, 3 LX
11	A, 2 (Cave floor)	Basalt pistol.	LX, LXI, 1
12	A, 2 (Cave floor)	Spouted basalt mortar.	LX
13	A, 2 (Cave floor)	Jar with a pointed base Creamy ware.	LXIII LXVIII
35	Tomb 813	Foot of a stone mortar.	LIX, 3 LX
38	T. 813, L. 5	Fragment of a plate. Pinkish ware red slip.	LXI, 2; LXIX

Fawzi Zayadine

The Department of Antiquities