

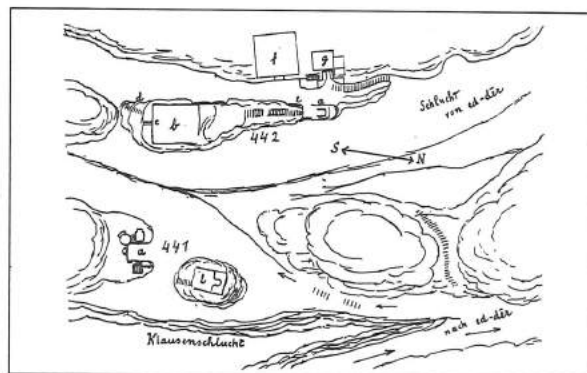
## OBSERVATIONS AND INVESTIGATIONS IN THE UPPER VALLEY OF THE HERMITAGE NEAR AD-DAYR, PETRA

by

Herbert Donner and Ellen Sieg

Climbing up the usual ascent from the basin of Petra to ad-Dayr, visitors pass a narrow rock terrace from which the steep, impassable gorge of Sadd Khurayrib 'Iyāl 'Awda<sup>1</sup> descends in a southeasterly direction to the Wādī as-Siyyagh. This rock terrace is just before the high plateau. On the right side of the ascent, steps at a prominent rock lead up to a Christian hermitage (Dalman No. 424; Brünnow and Domaszewski 1904: No. 460). This led G. Dalman to call the whole area, including the Sadd Khurayrib, "Klausenschlucht" (Valley of the Hermitage; Dalman 1908: 23. 250f.). On the left side, going back at an acute angle and passing a rock, there is an unnamed<sup>2</sup> flat hollow from which a small, short gorge leads off almost exactly to the south and is closed off by a huge boulder. This hollow is marked on the Tourist Map (1992: B 2) as Hermitage south-east below the plateau of ad-Dayr and approximately 250 m away from it. From the north-west the Wādī ad-Dayr comes down, offering the opportunity to quickly and easily climb up to ad-Dayr. To the south-east the hollow and its southerly gorge are drained in winter by the Sadd Khurayrib 'Iyāl 'Awda. Most visitors do not notice this place, passing and overlooking it on their way to ad-Dayr (Fig. 1).<sup>3</sup>

There has been little scholarly interest in this hollow and its small gorge until now.



1. First and Second Sanctuary of the Valley of the Hermitage, Nos. 441 and 442 (Dalman 1908: Abb. 196).

Many books and papers do not even mention it (e.g. Brünnow and Domaszewski 1904; Browning 1982). Others confine themselves to short references or incomplete descriptions, such as Robinson (1930:148-150), Lindner (1985:35f.), Scheck (1985: 423) and Wenning (1987: 263). It is true that the descriptions given by Musil (1907: 137-139) and by the Horsfields (1938: 24-26) are short and incomplete, but they nonetheless contain observations and points of view worth considering. The only careful, detailed and basically reliable description with sketchmaps was written by Dalman (1908: 255-262 and 1912: 30f.).

This article has been written in honour of G. Dalman and his work in Petra about 90 years ago. Some observations and con-

1. "Barrier of the little carob trees of the Bedouin clan 'Iyāl 'Awda"; cf. Dalman 1908: 215.
2. Musil 1907: 137 speaks of the "kesselförmige Ebene (that is basin-shaped valley) umm Zeytune". Dalman's objection to this description is produced by an error, as if Musil had meant the gorge coming down from the plateau of ad-Dayr. The expression "kesselförmig", however, is not really applicable to the hollow, and we could not

verify the name Umm Zaytūna on the spot, just as little as Dalman could. In this respect Musil himself was wrong, for the name is fixed at the Jabal Umm Zaytūna about half a kilometre south-east of the upper hermitage.

3. In fact it is difficult to see from the ascent to ad-Dayr. We only saw it from the roof of the façade of ad-Dayr, that is from above.

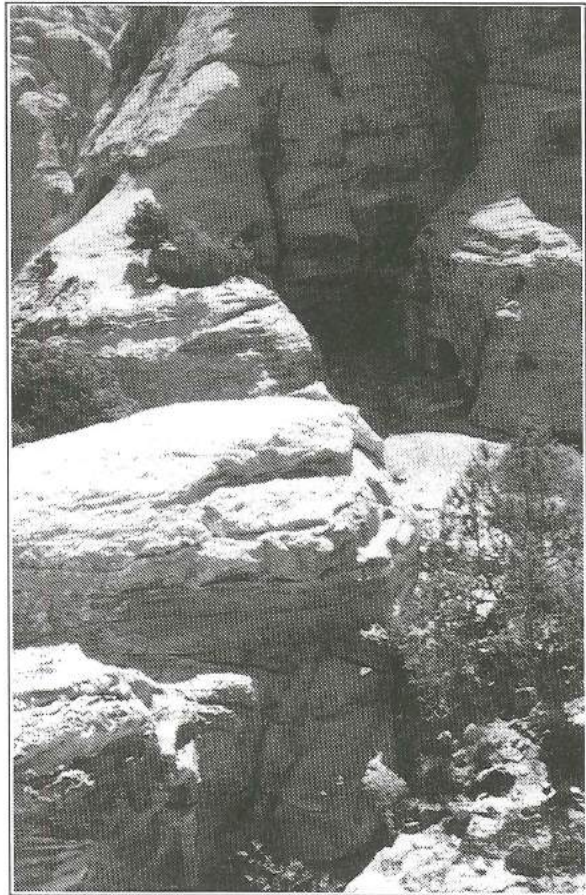


siderations are added to Dalman's work and sketches (see Figs. 1,2,5,7,8). Furthermore, some new sketches were drawn by E. Sieg and are added here.

The ancient monuments form three groups: 1. Dalman No. 441 on the south-east side of the hollow; 2. Dalman No. 442 on its west side and 3. Dalman No. 442<sup>1</sup> on the west side of the small southern gorge. Two other features are added: a first short report on newly discovered water installations on the east side of the small gorge and a brief discussion on a small sculpture fragment.

### Dalman No. 441 (Al-Ḥammām)

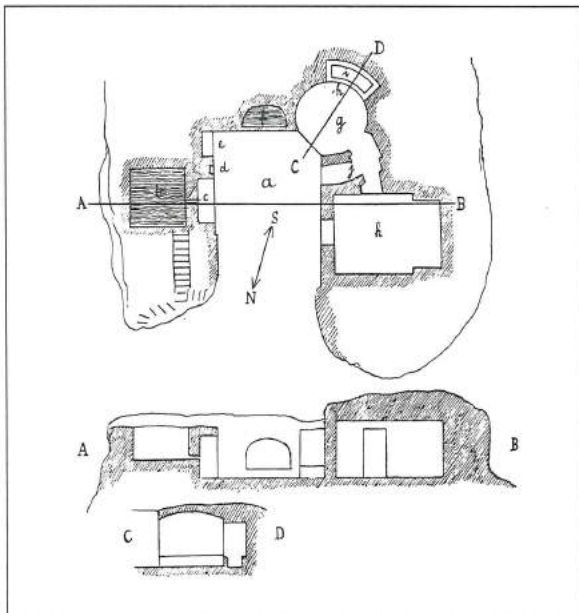
Referring to Dalman's survey his description of this rock monument (1908: 256-259; see Figs. 2-4) translates as "unique and enigmatic" (Dalman 1908: 258 "ist einzigartig und hat etwas Rätselhaftes"). In the centre is an open area carved out of the rock.<sup>4</sup> It is open at the front, extending from north-north-west to south-south-east, surrounded by some installations that are rather difficult to interpret. The quarried rock



3. View of Dalman No. 441 from the north-west (in the foreground the *stibadium* rock).



4. View of Dalman No. 441 from the north-west (in the middle, on the left of the *stibadium* rock, the upper part of the "Klausenschlucht" (Sadd Khurayrib 'Iyāl 'Awda).



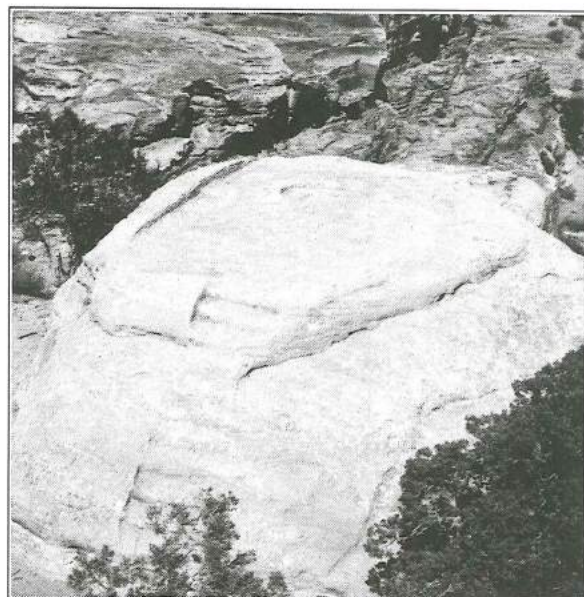
2. First Sanctuary of the Valley of the Hermitage, No. 441 a-k. Ground plan and cross-sections (Dalman 1908: Abb. 197).

wall on the left side shows three niches of different height (*c-e*), one of them (*c*) getting water from an upper cistern (*b*) by a rock-cut channel. This cistern is the reason why the whole installation is called al-

4. Dalman 1908: 256 "hofartiger Raum" (that is a room like a yard), but it seems to be real yard.



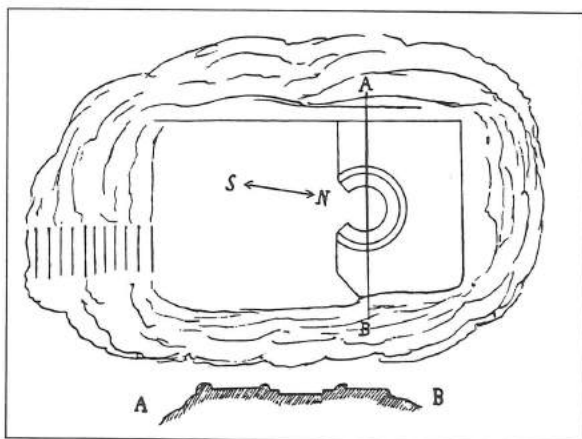
Ḥammām. The set-up can hardly be explained in any other way than by assuming a kind of faucet regulating the water supply from above. At the back is a niche-basin (f), apparently without any connection with the cistern. At the right far corner of the open yard area, the relatively wide entrance to a *rotunda* (g) is visible. This *rotunda*, 2.40 m in diameter, has at its back a niche (h) with a curved trough (i) of 1.49 x 0.56 m and 0.50 m deep. All rooms and installations are hewn out of the rock, as is the room on the right side of the yard (k). This room has a niche in its back wall and a passage (j) to the *rotunda* as well as to the yard. North-north-east of the yard an isolated knoll of rock rises above the ground, accessible by steps from the south, having an artificially levelled place at the top. In its northern area is one of those round installations called *stibadium* (cooking range) by Dalman (Figs. 5 and 6).<sup>5</sup> It is known that such *stibadia* frequently occur in Petra, but it is very difficult to understand and explain their function. A *stibadion*, also called *sigma* or *accubitum*, is a semicircular Roman dining installation ei-



6. View of the *stibadium* rock (Dalman No. 441 I) from the south-east.

ther in *triclinia* instead of the usual three *lecti* (stone benches) or outdoors.<sup>6</sup> If this is the case in Petra too, then the *stibadia* served for meals cooked on the flat area mentioned before. Not many people, however, could take part in such meals because of the small size of the *stibadia*: in this case not more than three to five participants at best.

No. 441 is very difficult to interpret; all interpretations are uncertain. Dalman took it to be a tomb, though not without some reservation.<sup>7</sup> In this case the *stibadium* served for meals for the obsequies, for feasts for the dead. Or was the isolated rock regarded as a sacred rock with “sacrificial slaughters” in front of the *stibadium*? (Dalman 1908: 259). Musil, giving a somewhat confusing description, considered the installation as the dwelling of a Christian hermit, the *stibadium* being a sacrificial altar.<sup>8</sup> According to Robinson (1930: 148) Nos. 441 and 442 belonged together and were



5. *Stibadium* No. 441 I. Ground plan and cross-section (Dalman 1908: Abb. 200).

5. See Dalman 1908: 91 an incomplete collection.  
 6. Cf. Poland, *RE* 2 III 2 (1929) Sp. 2481 s.v. *Stibadion*; Rodenwaldt, *RE* II A 2 (1923) Sp. 2323f. s.v. *Sigma*; Gross, *Der Kleine Pauly* 5 (1979) Sp. 182 s.v. *Sigma*.  
 7. Dalman 1908: 257 “ein Trog ..., der doch wohl trotz seiner gebogenen Form ein Grab bedeutet” (i.e. a trough ... probably being a grave in spite of

its curved shape).

8. “50 paces south of this offering-place, a staircase cut out of the rock leads to a hermitage. Some paces south-east of the staircase is a tripartite hermitage with three crosses and a Nabataean inscription” (Musil 1907: 137f.; transl. from German). Nothing of that can be seen on the spot. Obviously Musil’s notes got mixed up.



just a "sanctuary", No. 441 being a special "mortuary chapel". Finally, the Horsfields (1938: 25 n. 3) simply thought of it as "a house". These are the interpretations up-to-date and, at most, one can make some comments on the various solutions.

As far as we can ascertain, rock-cut monuments in Petra serve three main functions: as tombs, as dwellings (the special case of Christian hermitage included) and as sanctuaries:

- a) A tomb can almost certainly be excluded. The *rotunda* (g) in connection with the curved trough (i) contradicts this use as this would be a completely new combination in sepulchral architecture. The curved 'trough' is too short for a burial plot.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, there is neither an example nor is it imaginable that people in Petra buried their dead in a curved position, lying on the side. A *triclinium* does not exist here. It is difficult to consider the *stibadium* on top of the isolated rock as a kind of substitute for it because only few persons could meet there.
- b) A dwelling is highly improbable. It would have been insufficient for a family, for the only habitable room is the chamber (k) with a floor area of 8.8 m<sup>2</sup>, the niche in the back wall not included. Contrary to Musil's view, there are no traces of a hermitage. Which function could the *rotunda* (g) have had with the round trough in a dwelling? Finally, the rock with the *stibadium* would have to be separated from the dwelling, although its staircase and the *stibadium* opening to the south show that both are clearly related to each other.
- c) As far as sanctuaries are concerned, Dalman described their functions perhaps not completely but in the main correctly: "I thought the term 'sanctuary' would be applicable only in cases where

several sacred objects seemed to form a group. Such objects are holy stones, niches with idol blocks, sacred cells, circular holes, water basins for ablutions, places for offerings and sacred meals" (1908: 67f. transl. from German). Almost all of these feature exist in No. 441. We have niches (c-e), even though without idols (*baityloi*) which might have been transportable; we have a water basin (f) for ablutions, a cistern (b) with enough water for cultic purification, a *rotunda* (g) which could have served as a sacred cell to keep some cultic object, and the rock *stiba* as a place for offerings and sacred meals. Only holy stones and circular holes are lacking. Was No. 441 a sanctuary? If so, one would have to add - a very small sanctuary. Speculations begin here because not much is known about Nabataean religion and cults. Presumably it was some kind of 'private' cult practised by a very small group of people. The strange positioning of the *rotunda* (g) could support this assumption, giving the impression that the *rotunda* was the first and oldest part of the monument and all other niches, rooms, and basins were related to it. But another supposition is possible as well: a place for keeping and venerating a sacred object that belonged to one of the sanctuaries on the plateau of ad-Dayr and, if need be, could be carried up in procession. Possibly a guardian, a custodian, or what is called in the Old Testament a "Levite" could have lived in chamber (k). Other interpretations remain possible. Was the sacred object kept in the rounded trough (i)? We do not know, just as we do not know the date of No. 441.

#### Dalman No. 442

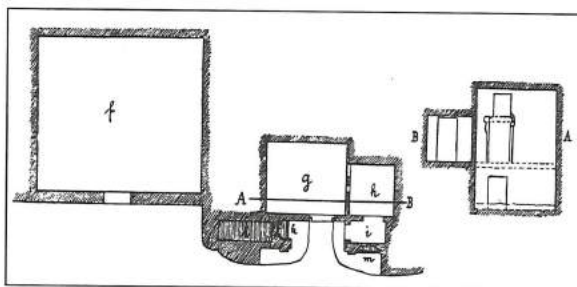
Once more we refer to Dalman's survey

9 The simple rectangular pits where the dead were buried used to be about 2 m long.



and description (1908: 259-262), in addition to that of the Horsfields (1938: 24-26). No. 442 is a unit consisting of four rooms (see Fig. 7).

1. A spacious square rock chamber (*f*) of 7 x 7 m, accessible through a tall door. Above the door was a window, separated from the door through an inserted lintel. This room may have been a *triclinium*, but no traces of benches are visible.
2. A smaller room (*g*) of 3.50 x 3.53 m with a basement; the floor between the two storeys is lost. The ceiling of this room "is divided into panels in a chequer-board design ... differentiated by the horizontal and vertical parallel incised lines in alternate panels, imitating one of wood" (Horsfields 1938: 25).<sup>10</sup> On the right side of the door which is similar to that of the main chamber (*g*), is a cross with a small base and two cross-beams, a so-called patriarchal cross,<sup>11</sup> and a small niche to the left of it.
3. An adjoining room (*h*) without a basement, connected with (*g*) by a door, and a window above it. On the left side of this door another simple cross is visible.
4. An anteroom (*i*), connected by doors with (*h*) and with the forecourt. On the left side of the door to (*h*) is a third cross. On the left side of the forecourt in front of room (*g*) is an open water basin (*l*) and a niche-basin (*k*), another one (*m*) on the



7. Group of chambers, No. 442 f-i. Ground plan and cross-section, with entrance wall (Dalman 1908: Abb. 204).

10. Not in the room *f*, as Wenning 1987: 263 states.  
 11. Sachs - Badstübner - Neumann 218f. The Horsfields call it a "Nestorian cross".

right side of the forecourt. The complex is separated by a narrow passageway from a high isolated knoll of rock stretching from north-west to south-east, accessible by stairs and having at the top an artificial rectangular level (*b*) of 6.00 x 7.60 m, but no *stibadium*. At the bottom of the staircase, opposite to the space between rooms (*f*) and (*g*), is a niche with an idol block in relief (*e*) (Fig. 8) and a small vaulted niche above it.<sup>12</sup> Lengthening the staircase to the north-west, another open basin is visible (*a*).

We may add to this description some new observations. Neither Dalman nor the Horsfields seem to have noticed that a simple cross is incised on the *baitylos* (*e*): here a Christian hermit exorcized the power of the pagan idol by the holy cross, expressing that he, indeed, had an idea of the meaning of such Petra *baityloi*. Annulments like this are attested elsewhere in Petra, for example at the so-called "Tropfheiligtum" of Qattār ad-Dayr.<sup>13</sup>

The adjoining room (*h*) shows in its back wall and on the right side of the door to the anteroom (*i*) two holes in the rock which are similar to handles, often occurring in Petra. Their function is unclear and perhaps not always the same: were they for votive gifts, wreaths or coats to be hung here? Or were animals tethered at the lower ones? Furthermore, in the back part of the right wall of room (*h*) is a small niche, probably for a lamp. Finally, a water channel at the north-east corner of the levelled place (*b*) on the rock has to be mentioned.

Here too, it is difficult to interpret No. 442. Thus much, however, is certain: Christian hermits lived here, at the earliest in the fourth century, that is evident from the crosses. We cannot exclude Christians who had any relations to the plateau of ad-Dayr, although we do not know precisely to what

12. Dalman 1908: 261, Fig. 203.

13. Dalman 1908: 253, Fig. 193.



extent the ancient Nabataean monuments were used by Christians. There is no archaeological evidence unless the name ad-Dayr, "the monastery", might be an indication, but this name could also have been given on other grounds. The question which arises is, what was No. 442 in earlier Nabataean times? Two possible functions should be taken into consideration:

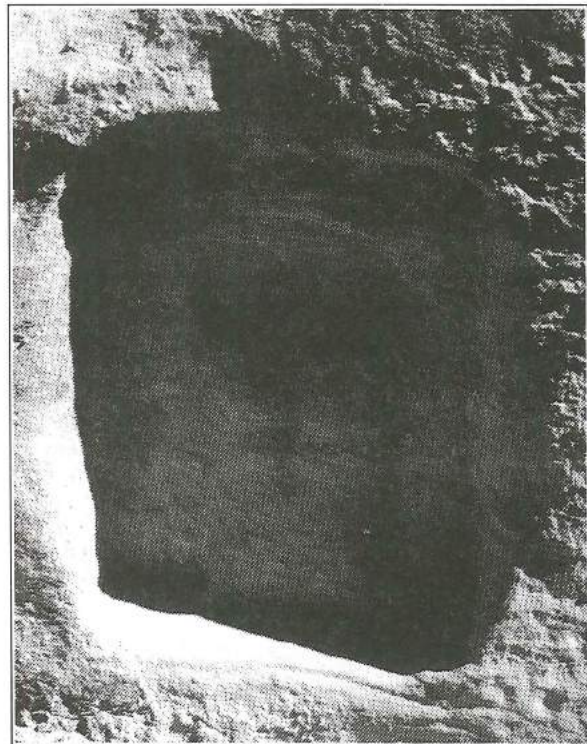
a) Dalman discussed the complex under the title "Second sanctuary of the Valley of the Hermitage". But he meant a sanctuary for the veneration of a deity just as little as in the case of No. 441. He meant a rock tomb, assuming "that the burial was in the basement of room (*h*) while all other rooms served as rooms for sacrificial celebrations" (Dalman 1908: 262; transl. from German). If this is the case, the isolated knoll of rock had at its top "the offering place of the sanctuary" (Dalman 1908: 259). This interpretation, however, may be questioned. Room (*h*), according to Dalman's own description and sketch (see Fig. 7), had no basement; (*h*) seems to have been mistaken for (*g*). Traces of burials in the basement of room (*g*) have not been recognized until now. Dalman's opinion does not offer explanations as to the function of the adjoining rooms (*h*) and (*i*) connected with each other, and with room (*g*) by doors. A *triclinium* does not seem to have existed - or was hall (*f*) a *triclinium* indeed though no benches are visible? Its extension would fit well. The relation of the "offering place" on top of the rock to the burial place remains unclear.

b) The Horsfields (1938: 24-26) interpreted No. 442 as "a well-preserved house of several rooms ... of the free-standing type", that is a dwelling. Their examples for such houses (1938: 24) are not always quite convincing, and the problem of rock dwellings in Petra is not yet solved. The imitation of a wooden coffered ceiling would fit well with the

Horsfields' interpretation. But what about the three or four water basins near a dwelling? Such installations seem to have been used for cultic ablutions. The Horsfields took the place on top of the isolated rock (*b*) for "an outdoor *triclinium*" - but how does a *triclinium* fit here if the complex was a dwelling? Or is No. 442 a sanctuary after all, as Robinson (1930: 148) thought?

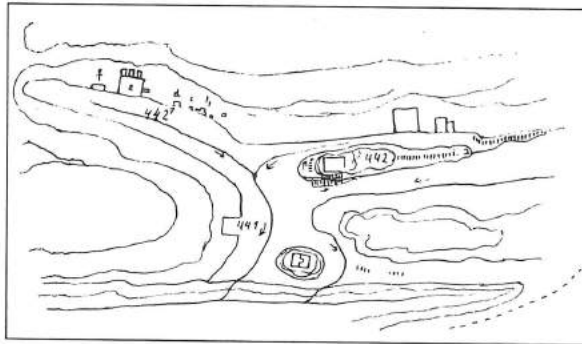
#### Dalman No. 442<sup>1</sup>

Musil's description (1907: 139), led Dalman to investigate at least six installations in the back part of the small southern gorge (Fig. 9), cut out of the western cliff face. Unfortunately, his report is very short (Dalman 1912: 30f.). He supplemented and corrected his own original sketch-map (see Fig. 1). As to the gorge, he confined himself to the following: "At first there is a niche with an idol block in relief (*a*) (Fig. 9), then a larger empty niche (*b*), a small niche (*c*) in the middle of which a smaller niche is visible for an idol to be put in, a niche-basin



8. Idol niche with block idol in relief and incised cross (Dalman No. 442 e).





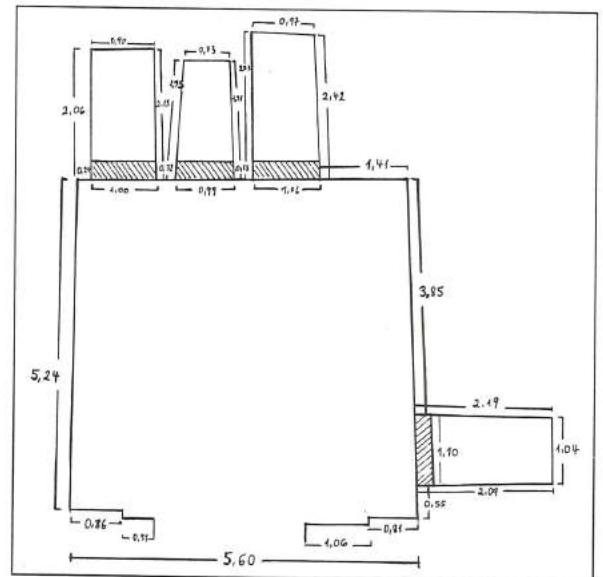
9. The sanctuaries of the Valley of the Hermitage (Dalman 1912: Abb. 18).

(d), a burial chamber (e) with the imitation of square stone blocks framing both sides of the entrance which seems to be unusual in Petra (therefore Musil called it a Roman tomb), finally an open grotto (f)” (transl. from German). The installations are “read” from the right to the left, and the whole got the inconvenient number 442<sup>1</sup> because Dalman’s sequence of numbers was already set. Dalman did not give any details about the proportions. Other publications do not seem to exist.

In the following, we shall give some information and several sketches as the result of our own survey. We retained the number 442<sup>1</sup>, but we prefer to “read” the installations the other way round, that is from left to right, in order to put the largest and most important installations at the beginning.

a) A grotto (Dalman f). The façade is so weathered that it is impossible to see whether it had a real entrance or was simply open at the front. Inside it is weathered as well, but traces of plaster and three niches, most likely for lamps, are visible. The ‘floor’ is covered to a large extent with debris and stone boulders but according to its extension, the ground level corresponds approximately to the next burial chamber (b). This is so badly preserved that we have not even tried to survey it. Such a grotto could have been anything, originally even a *triclinium* judging by the neighbouring burial chamber.

b) A large burial chamber (Dalman e), carefully carved out of the rock, of different measurements (Fig. 10): left side wall 5.24 m, back wall 5.35m, right side wall 5.50 m, front 5.60 m - taking an average length of 5.42 m as a basis=29.38 m<sup>2</sup>. The average height of the chamber is 3.50 m. In the back wall are three deep grave niches and space enough for a fourth (Fig. 11). In the right side wall there is only one burial niche with space for three additional ones. This adds up to four grave niches of sixteen possible ones (the left wall has no niches). It appears that the burial chamber was abandoned at an early stage. All the niches have at least, two graves one on top of the other, perhaps three if we assume a



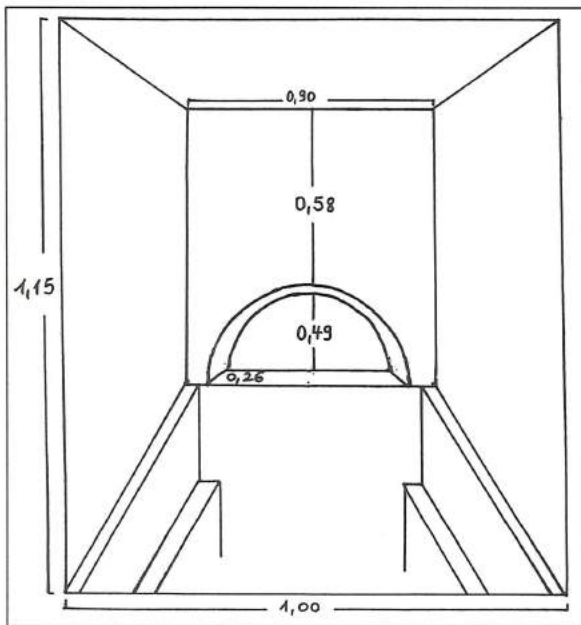
10. Ground plan of burial chamber, No. 442<sup>1</sup> b.



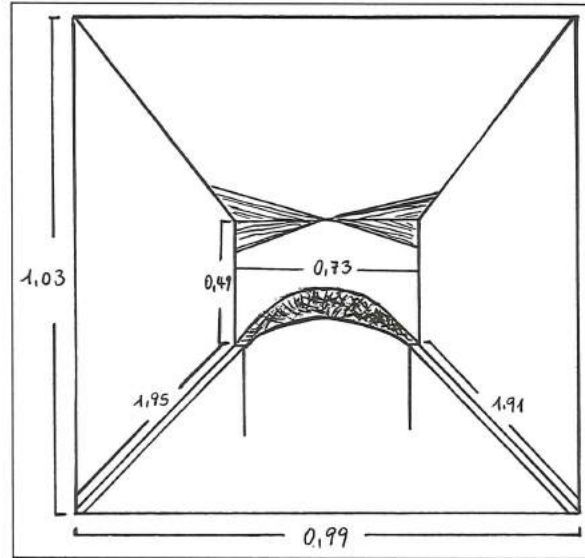
11. Dalman No. 442<sup>1</sup> (b): Burial chamber with the grave niches (1)-(3).

burial at the level of the niche entrance. The graves are separated from each other by heavy stone slabs, some preserved completely, some in pieces. The slabs were put on ledges of different width: mostly about 8 cm, in (3) 19 cm, in (4) up to 21 cm. The height of each tomb is 0.84 (3) to 1.30 m (1, middle grave). All is preserved relatively well. Further details of the grave niches and graves:

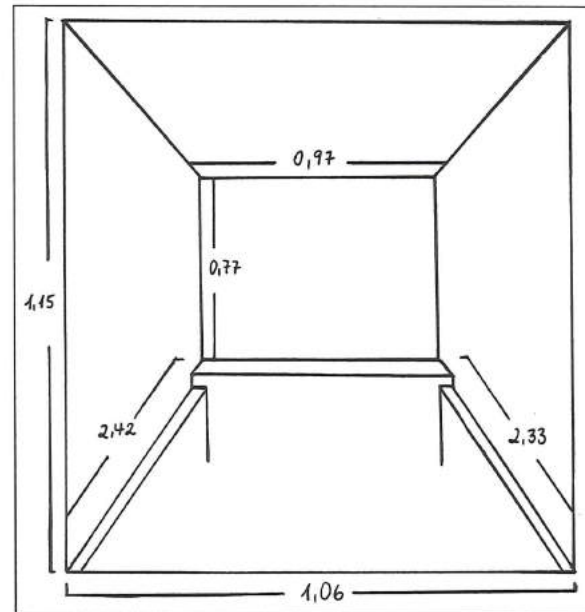
- (1) In the back wall a vaulted niche is visible (Fig. 12), perhaps indicating that there were only two graves below. The lowest grave is filled with sand and debris. Some pieces of stone slabs are at the front of the grave niche.
- (2) The back wall is vaulted and arched, at the top shaped like a v (to increase the place to lie?). The ceiling of this grave niche falls gently away to the back (Fig. 13). The middle grave is filled with a sort of mortar layer.
- (3) In this niche (Fig. 14) we have some stone slabs secondarily piled up upon the lowest one.
- (4) Approximately one-third of the lowest grave is filled with debris, the middle grave with a mortar-like mixture as in (2) (Fig. 15). We do not know anything



12. No. 442<sup>1</sup> (b): Grave niche (1)



13. No. 442<sup>1</sup> (b): Grave niche (2).

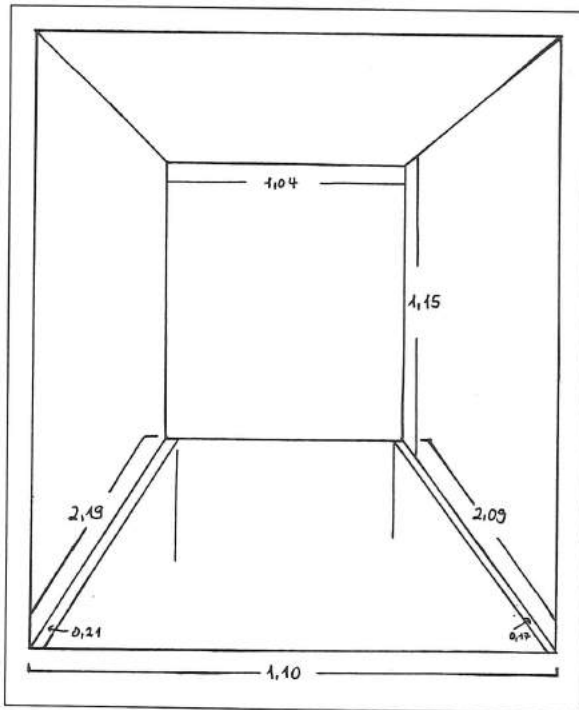


14. No. 442<sup>1</sup> (b): Grave niche (3).

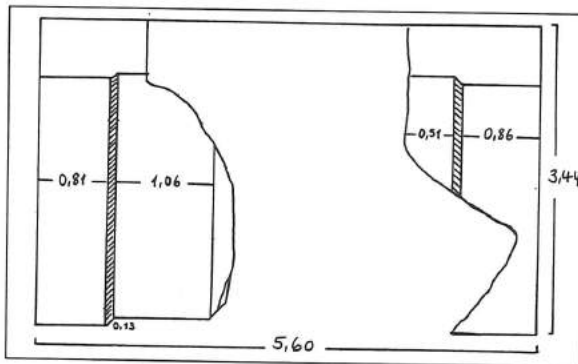
about the function of these layers of mortar which are possibly original.

In the burial chamber (*b*) are many little holes at varying distance on all four walls directly underneath the ceiling. Did they serve for suspension of wall hangings, blankets or something similar? The front had a door which cannot be reconstructed exactly because of the weathering, the brittleness of the rock, and other damage. Inside (Fig. 16) traces of plaster are visible. Outside (Fig. 17) square stone blocks are imitated, perhaps on both sides of the entrance, but only

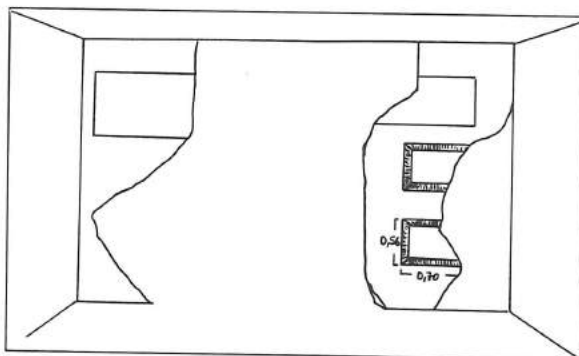




15. No. 442<sup>1</sup> (b): Grave niche (4).



16. No. 442<sup>1</sup> (b): Interior of the front.



17. No. 442<sup>1</sup> (b): Exterior of the front.

the right side is preserved, the left is weathered and broken. Other examples for such a kind of imitation are: at the front of the

14. Cf. Wenning 1987: 244.

15. Brünnow and Domszewski 1904: 414, No. 849;

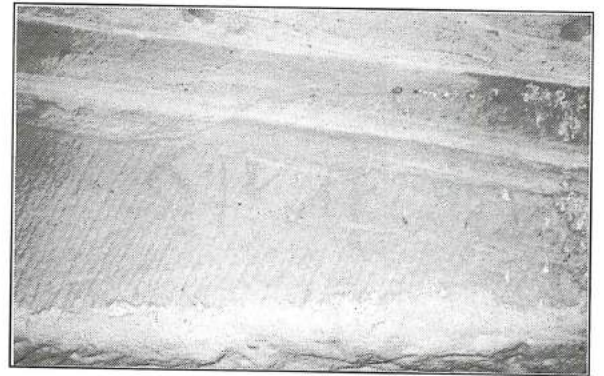
main temple Qaṣr Bint Fir'awn above the pilasters in stucco<sup>14</sup>, and inside the so-called "Painted House" in the Siq al-Bārid near Baydā<sup>15</sup>, in the latter case painted with red lines on grey stucco. All in all, the burial chamber was well equipped and decorated rather luxuriously.

Finally, there are two badly preserved Nabataean inscriptions above the grave niches (1) and (4), which are of special interest. Musil (1907: 139) mentioned them, and Dalman (1912: 92 No. 72) published one of them - the one above niche (4) - in his collection of Petra inscriptions.

1. A one-line inscription above the grave niche (4), incised on a chiselled surface (Fig. 18), hardly legible (Fig. 19). Dalman (No. 72) only presents the last two letters: ? K'. According to the traces, however, about 8 to 10 letters are to be presumed. The penultimate one could also be a B, and then backwards perhaps an S and the ligature 'L - more or less like this:

..... 'L S K/B'<sup>16</sup>

This inscription can scarcely be reconstructed. Regarding only the last two let-



18. Dalman No. 442<sup>1</sup> (b): Inscription No. 1 above the grave niche (4).



19. No. 442<sup>1</sup> (b): Drawing of the inscription No. 1 above the grave niche (4).

cf. Wenning 1987: 90.

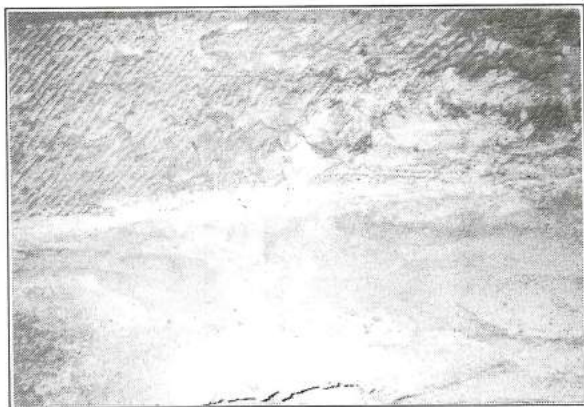
16. 'not as a final letter.



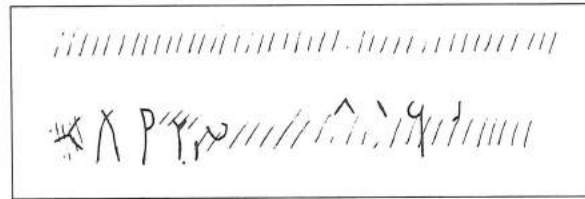
ters as certain and taking them as one word, one could think of the local adverb K' "here"<sup>17</sup>, perhaps in the sense of "[NN lies ] here". This formula, however, does not seem to be attested in Nabataean epigraphy and the adverb K' does not occur in Nabataean script more than once.<sup>18</sup> One could take into consideration personal names with -K' or -B', titles or parts of a date. Personal names: BRK' (Al-Kraysheh 50; cf. Cantineau 1987: 75 and Negev No. 201f.), (?) MK' (Cantineau 1987: 113f., Al-Kraysheh 1986: 106, Negev 1991: No. 632), 'B' (Cantineau 1987: 55, Al-Kraysheh 1986: 24, Negev 1991: No. 2), GLB' (= Galba?) (Cantineau 1987: 78), WHB' (Al-Kraysheh 1986: 67; cf. Negev 1991: No. 335), RB' (Cantineau 1987: 145, Negev 1991: No. 1048), KLB' (Cantineau 1987: 107, Al-Kraysheh 1986: 100, Negev 1991: No. 560).<sup>19</sup> Titles: MLK' "the king", HPRK' (*hyparchos*) "the governor", KLYRK' (*chiliarchos*) "the general". But none of these words agree with the visible traces of letters.

2. A probably two-lined inscription above the grave niche (1), incised on a chiselled surface (Fig. 20), line 1 illegible, the traces of letters in line 2 gone over with red colour, perhaps just recently (Fig. 21):

l.1: length of the line and number of



20. Dalman No. 442<sup>1</sup> (b): Inscription No. 2 above the grave niche (1).



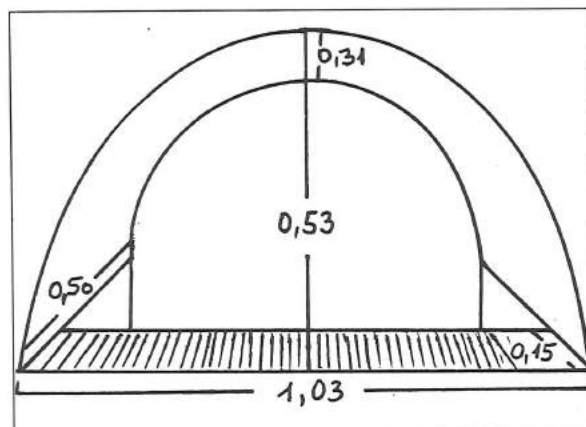
21. No. 442<sup>1</sup> (b): Drawing of the inscription No. 2 above the grave niche (1).

letters unknown

l.2: K/B ..... N/W/D . Q ..

No letter can be recognized exactly. This inscription remains totally unclear.

- c) A small niche-basin (Dalman *d*) of 1.03 x 0.53 m (Fig. 22) without any water channel leading to it.
- d) A small rectangular idol niche (Dalman *c*) of 0.35 breadth and 0.58 height (Fig. 23). In its back side is an even smaller vaulted niche of 0.36 m height for a transportable idol (*baitylos*). Idol niches near graves are so common and widespread that there is no need to give examples.
- e) A large idol niche (Dalman *b*) in the style of a temple, carved out of the rock (Figs. 24 and 25), the cella of which is 1.21 m wide, 2.37 m high and 0.32 m deep. The total height cannot be determined because of the weathering in the upper part. A probably transportable *baitylos* stood in the cella like in the case of *d*. The image is completed by two small niches on



22. No. 442<sup>1</sup> (c): Niche basin.

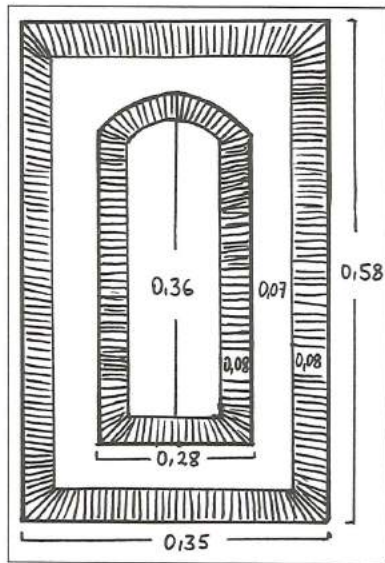
17. Cantineau 1987: I 99; II 105.

18. Cf. Janssen and Savignac, *RB* 1904: 403f.

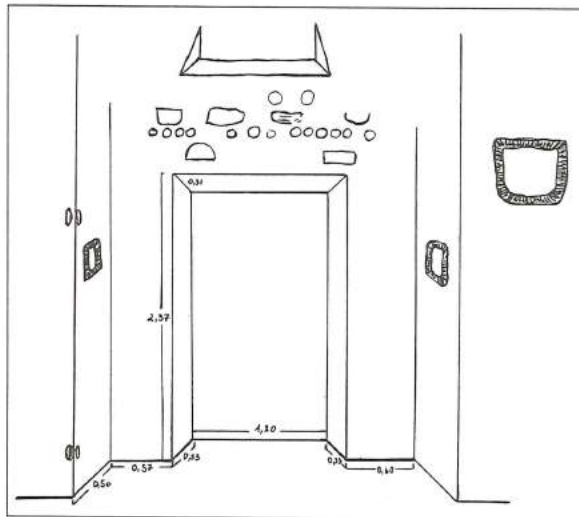
19. The following personal names are also attested in

Palmyrenian: BR[K/P]', 'B', WHB', KLB', RB'; cf. J.K. Stark, *Personal Names in Palmyrene Inscriptions* (1971).





23. No. 442<sup>1</sup> (d):  
Idol niche.



24. No. 442<sup>1</sup> (e): Idol niche.

both sides, two holes on the left in order to tie something, and numerous holes and niches above the cella. All this makes highly probable that a kind of worship was held in front of this idol niche. There are traces of chisel-work around it. On the right side of the installation a small niche is visible, perhaps for a lamp.

f) An idol niche (Dalman *a* ?) which is badly eroded, mainly on its left side (Fig. 26). It has a cella of 0.70 m height.

It appears that No. 442<sup>1</sup> is a rock monument with six single installations: a burial chamber, perhaps a *triclinium*, a niche-basin, and three idol niches. Similar monuments are widely seen in Petra and else-

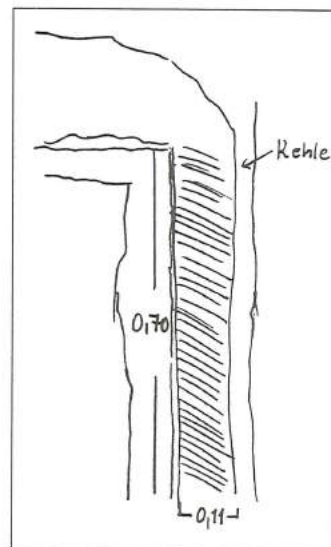


25. Dalman No. 442<sup>1</sup> (e): Idol niche.

where (Fig. 26).

### No. 442<sup>2</sup>

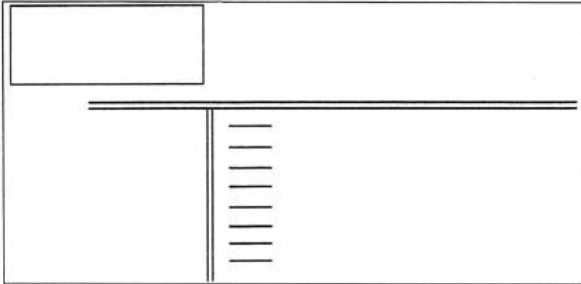
In view of further investigations, a brief account of some hydraulic installations, apparently not noticed before, is given here. They were discovered in the middle part of the small southern gorge, cut out of the east-



26. No. 442<sup>1</sup> Idol  
niche.



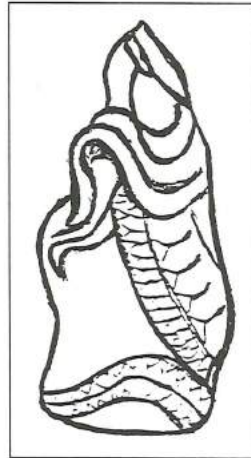
ern cliff face, opposite to the unit of No. 442<sup>1</sup>. At an altitude of about 3 m from the ground is a medium-sized rectangular water basin and below it a horizontal flat channel. Another channel branches off down to the ground, approximately at the south-west corner of the basin. On the right side of the latter channel stairs lead up to the basin. A sketch looks like this:



The purpose of these hydraulic installations is not quite clear. It does not seem to continue to the left, that is in a northerly direction. Therefore it can be assumed that the installations had nothing to do with No. 441, particularly as this small “sanctuary” had its own cistern for water. More probably the installations No. 442<sup>2</sup> belonged to Nr. 442<sup>1</sup>, for this rock tomb had only a single, astonishing small, niche-basin (c). When the water collected was not sufficient, people built No. 442<sup>2</sup> in order to get more water.

### A sculpture Fragment of Limestone

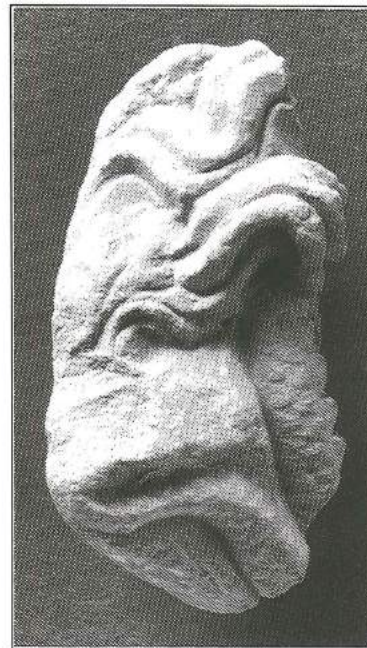
On the right side at the head of the “Klausenschlucht” (Sadd Khurayrib ‘Iyāl ‘Awda), halfway between the actual ascent to ad-Dayr and No. 441, Rev. M. Schade found a small sculpture fragment of pale limestone lying on the surface. It is difficult to measure because of its unevenness: maximum height is about 5.5 cm, maximum width about 2.9 cm. At first glance it cannot be recognized (Figs. 27 and 28), but closer scrutiny shows two locks of hair falling from the right to the left. Underneath the hair is a kind of bulge slightly curved from the left to the right, looking similar to the body of a snake. Further down, the end of a



27. Drawing of the Medusa fragment from the upper Valley of the Hermitage.



28a. Fragment of a Medusa from the upper Valley of the Hermitage.



28b. Fragment of a Medusa from the upper Valley of the Hermitage.



snake's body is clearly visible, shaped in the form of waves and tapering towards the end. Unruly streaming hair and two knotted serpents under the chin, disappearing under the hair or framing the face, belong to the characteristics of Hellenistic - Roman Medusas. Glueck (1965: 353-356) collected and discussed the material. The Nabataeans also knew the motif of Medusa (Gorgo). There are four examples from Petra: two on the front and on the back of a pillar capital (Glueck pl. 40), and two at both ends of the frieze of the so-called "Lion Triclinium" (Glueck pl. 38b). Two others are from Khirbat at-Tannūr: one without serpents (Glueck pl. 38a), another one with serpents from the *pectorale* of a sculpture fragment of Mars or Iupiter Dolichenus (Glueck pl. 39). All are similar to the so-called bronze goddess of Ostia (Glueck pl. 16a). Glueck described the Medusas on the pillar capital as follows: "A pair of wings is visible on top of each head, with two knotted serpents under each chin. The lines of the serpents' bodies that enclose the lower part of the face in each instance and then disappear underneath the outflaring separate locks of hair, framing most of each head, re-emerge together with

the outward-facing heads of the serpents above the temples of each Medusa. The damaged faces of these Medusas conform to the fixed Nabataean style of representation" (Glueck 1965: 354f.).

There cannot be any doubt: this is a piece of the left side of a Medusa, and judging by its appearance not from an architectural element, but more likely from the statue of a deity. Did the fragment belong to No. 441 or 442? It could have come to the spot where it was found from anywhere. It is easy to imagine that it was swept down by winterly spates from the plateau of ad-Dayr.

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*Postscript:* When we payed a short visit to the upper Hermitage in October 1997, we recognized some changes, some illicit excavations especially, in Nos. 441 g, 442 (h) and 442<sup>1</sup> (b).



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