

A Newly Described Nabataean Temple Near Petra: The "Pond Temple"

The surroundings of Petra still yield new discoveries every year. The reasons why some areas in Jordan are only occasionally included in scientific surveys, and others not at all, are obvious. Modern explorers wish to avoid the dangers connected with climbing mountains and camping that former explorers like de Laborde, Musil, Glueck, and others had to face. Scientifically laudable self restraint leads scholars to overlook or exclude observations outside their own specialty. The local inhabitants know many sites not yet known to scholars, but they do not always know what is of interest to whom, and for many reasons they are prone to keep their knowledge for themselves. The research and discoveries described in this article, however, were helped considerably by local bedouins who showed comradeship and reliability in difficult situations.

Since 1984, the region of Slaysil (FIG. 1) has been investigated several times by an Austrian group of the Naturhistorische Gesellschaft Nürnberg under the direction of E. Gunsam. The experienced mountain climbing team was well equipped for hiking and climbing in the precarious terrain. Tracks and pathways not only from Bayḍa but also from the ad-Dayr plateau to Slaysil were explored. When F. Zayadine reported on the area of Slaysil during the Fourth International Conference on the History and Archaeology of Jordan in Lyon in 1989, he mentioned ruins, one and a half hours' walk from Bayḍa and "une colline rocheuse, et-Tahuneh". From there, according to Zayadine, "une piste construit en colimaçon" runs down "les falaises de Jibâl es-Sumra" (1992: 223).

The Discovery

Where Kirkbride had only seen a small platform with a flight of steps leading down to it and beyond to the drop to Wādī 'Arabah (1961: 448-451), the beginning of an ancient road running down from Slaysil had been noted in 1978 (Lindner 1978: 93).¹ The rock face, however, seemed too steep to be climbed. In 1984, the Austrian

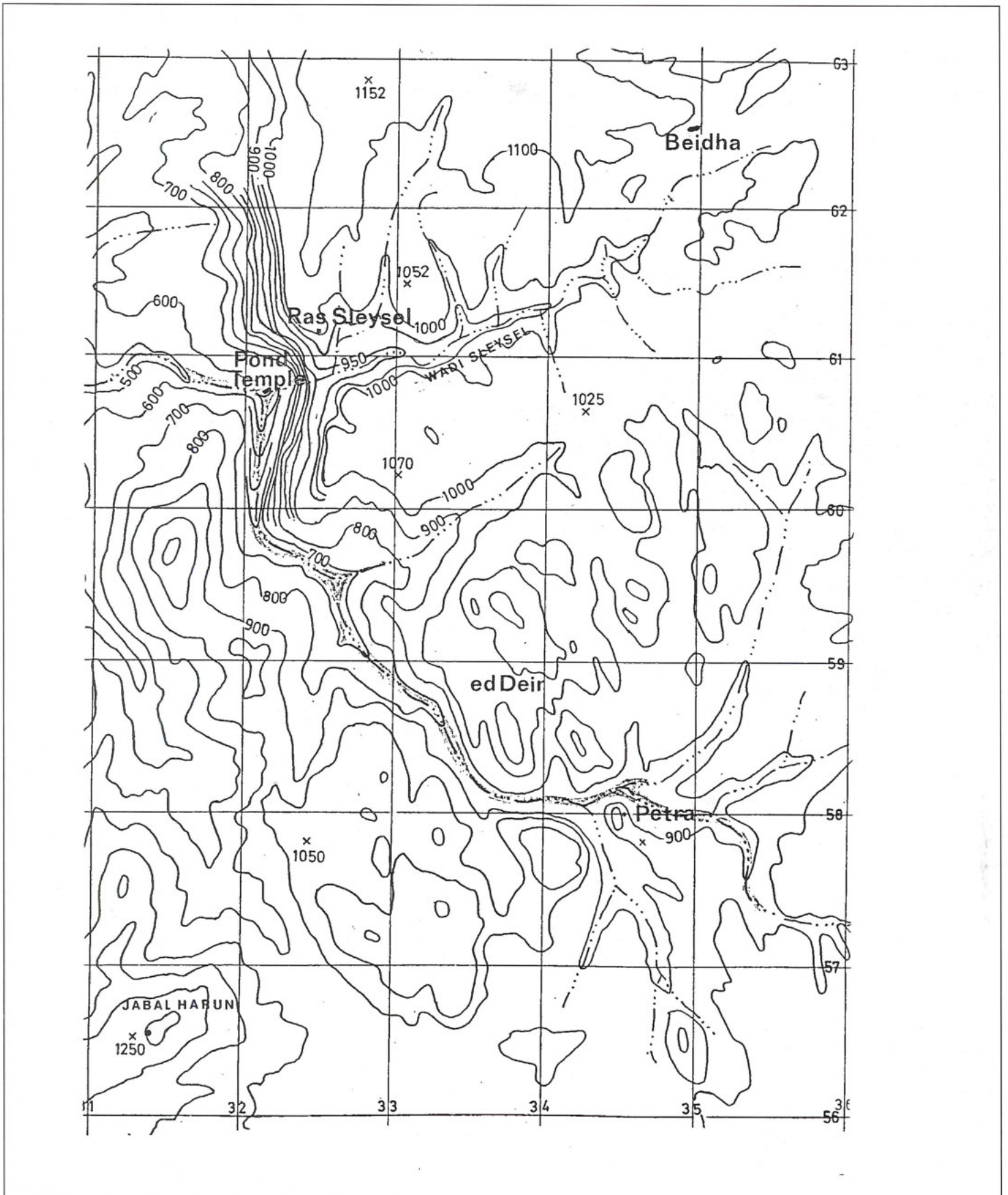
team of the Naturhistorische Gesellschaft Nürnberg under the direction of E. Gunsam investigated the road more closely. They observed and walked along a well-built road that begins about 65 m north from Rās Slaysil, and then runs down in steep serpentine toward the west (FIG. 2). The road, about 2-3 m wide is paved with massive slabs of durable igneous stone. The substructures of hewn and unhewn stones of the same material are up to 2 m high and built or inserted into the cliff. Perhaps too steep for heavily loaded camels, the road was certainly suited for horses, donkeys, goats, sheep, and, of course, for men on foot.

After 100 m, the road was broken off, and a gap of more than 15 m was absolutely impassable. In 1989, by climbing down toward the southwest across narrow ledges and almost intractable sections of the rock wall, the Austrian team managed to by-pass the gap. Eventually, they reached a scree slope with a 45° incline and a difference of altitude of 300 m (850 to 550 m) which falls in a north-south direction, and is obviously the result of a gigantic rockslide. At the foot of the scree, they entered a ruin field of boulders, tumbled ashlar, and architectural pieces and fragments. The site was explored by Gunsam's team in 1989 and 1990, and by Lindner's team in 1991, who benefited from the exploratory work done in 1989 and 1990. An abnormally strong flash flood in March 1991 that wrought havoc in Wādī Mūsa and Petra also raced through Wādī aṣ-Ṣiyyagh taking rocks, trees, and even scaffolding timber from Petra with it and hit the site together with water coming from Slaysil and from the other surrounding heights. The following description takes into account the changes in the ruins caused by the flood (Lindner 1991: 53).

The Site of Saḥīr al-Baqar (FIG. 3)

The bedouins of Petra gave different names for the place but Saḥīr al-Baqar ("troughs of the cows") seems to be the most common one. The site is bound by a pond to the

¹ The visit to Slaysil was part of an archaeological exploratory project of the Naturhistorische Gesellschaft Nürnberg, which was initiated by M. Lindner in 1970 and continues to this day.



1. Sketch map of the Petra - Slaysil area (E. Gunsam).



2. The sanctuary on Rās Slaysil and the beginning of the road down to the Pond Temple.

east; by a large boulder to the southwest; by the foot of the scree to the north, and by the outlet of the pond to the south. There are two concentrations of finds, one to the southwest and one to the northwest, seemingly connected by a flight of steps. During the last inspection of the site, we could see more ashlar coming out on the slope around. Thus the site is probably more extensive than is described here. An estimated altitude difference of 40 m (580-620 m) indicates the particularity of the terrain as far as it was built on.

The Pond

At the foot of the scree, c. 480 m below the sanctuary of Slaysil, a pond of roughly 10 x 6 m is fed from a presumably perennial spring, the water of which falls about 100 m through four or five basins at the rock wall of Jabal Slaysil. More water comes down out of Wādī Slaysil when it rains. Running toward the west, the outlet of the pond reaches Wādī aṣ-Ṣiyyagh, which as seen from Rās

Slaysil continues after its sharp bend towards the west. Around the pond and its outlet, as well as in Wādī aṣ-Ṣiyyagh, trees and shrubs grow so thick that it was impossible to decide whether the basin was natural or artificial. Two basins that we were able to reach, however, were washed free of their vegetation during the March disaster, and at the upper one of the two (at c. 590 m), an empty niche may be assumed. As in Wādī aṣ-Ṣiyyagh, live crabs were seen in the pond.² Red and blue dragon flies buzzed over the water, and birds were seen around the upper basins.

Mrs. Künne who was with the 1991 team examined the plant life in the temple area. Around the pond at 590m on sandy surface above Precambrian quartz porphyry and porphyrite, she found a hydrophilous, non-halophilous plant community: *Salix acmophylla*, *Ficus pseudosycomorus*, *Tamarix* spec., *Nerium oleander*, *Atriplex halimus*, *Arundo donax*, *Phragmites australis*, *Imperata cylindrica*, *Typha domingensis*, *Juncus arabicus*, *Salsola aegyptiaca*, *Mesembryanthemum nodiflorum*.

Some halophilous plants appear only marginally: *Salsola aegyptiaca*, *Mesembryanthemum nodiflorum*.

On the moist rock a plant community, dominated by the fern *Adiantum capillus-veneris*, appears: *Adiantum capillus-veneris*, *Sonchus maritimus*, *Samolus valerandi*, and mosses div. spec.

At the sunny temple slope at 580 to 620 m on quartz porphyry and porphyrite, a plant community with a relatively high percentage of nubo-sindian plants is growing:

Trees: *Ficus pseudosycomorus*, *Juniperus phoenicea*, *Phoenix dactylifera*.

Shrubs: *Atriplex halimus*, *Retama raetam*, *Ochradenus baccatus*, *Periploca aphylla*.

Halfshrubs and dwarf shrubs: *Anabasis articulata*, *Anabasis setifera*, *Hammada salicornia*, *Zygophyllum dumosum*, *Agathophora alopecuroides*, *Salsola aegyptiaca*, *Reaumuria hirtella*, *Fagonia* spec., *Farsetia aegyptiaca*, *Salvia aegyptiaca*, *Lavandula pubescens*, *Chiliadenus montanus*.

Perennial: *Cucumis prophetarum*.

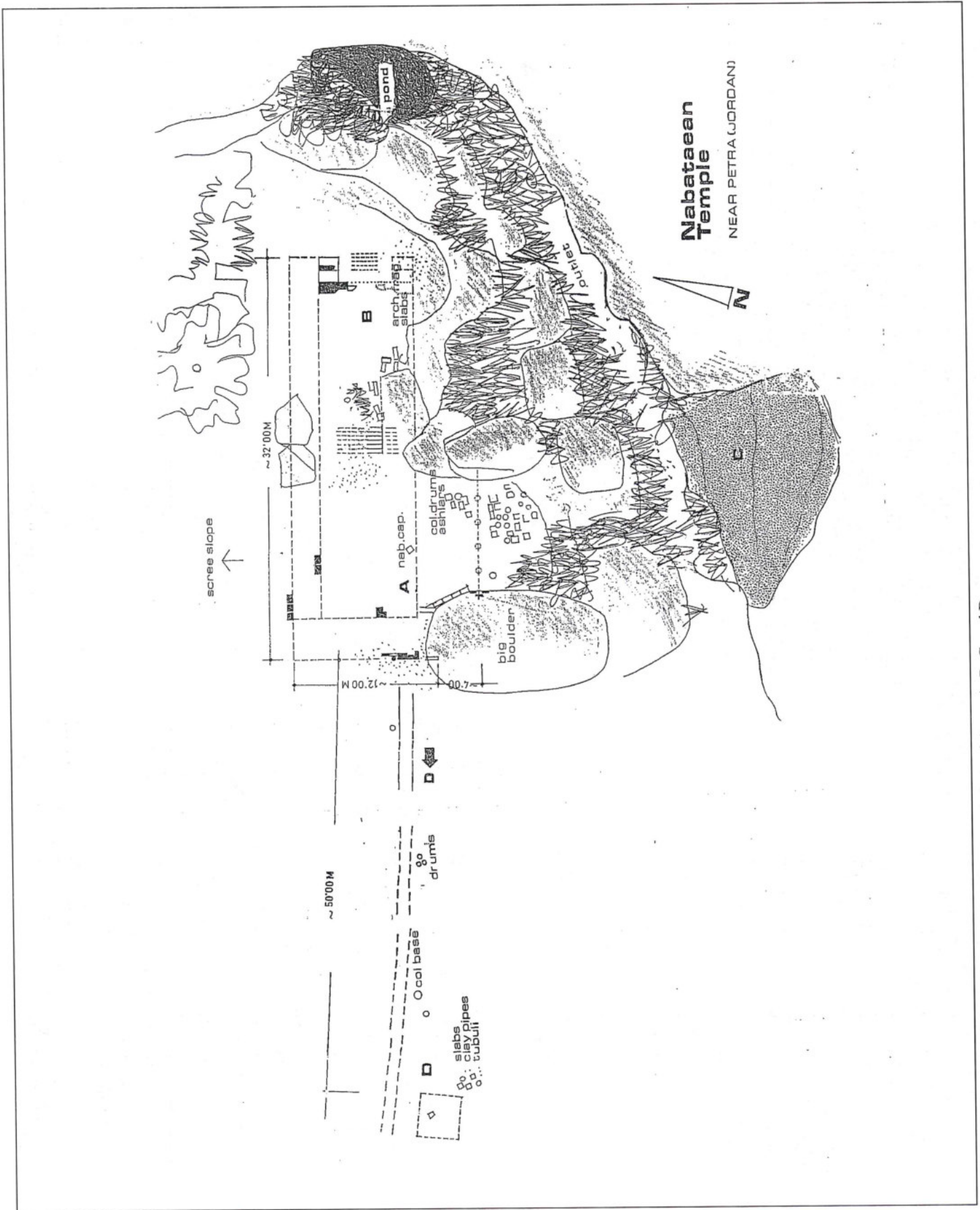
Annuals: *Caylusea hexagyna*, *Salsola volkensii*.

Because she was there in autumn, the plant list is not complete.

Area A to the Southwest

The main feature of Area A is an enormous boulder 14 x 6 m and 6.50 m high. Three cuts 0.60 m long on its east face might have anchored arches but more probably a wall (FIG. 4). Ashlars lying *in situ* around the boulder are the remnants of a structure connecting the boulder with a second smaller one, 9 m to the east, and thus forming a

² Similar crabs were noted in another pond-like rivulet coming from 'Ayn az-Zāwi (Lindner 1986: 175).



3. Sketch map of the Pond Temple site with tentative boundaries and Areas A, B, C, and D.

supporting wall and/or a stout foundation for another structure built upon it. Around the boulder, but obviously fallen from higher up, one of the two concentrations of finds was noted (FIG. 5). To the north of Area A, a col-

umn 1.20 m high with a diameter of 0.44 m and a hole in its face was found set (secondarily?) within a west boundary wall still 4 m long and 1 m high, perhaps the remnants of a gate or a (later?) door opening (FIGS. 6 and 7).



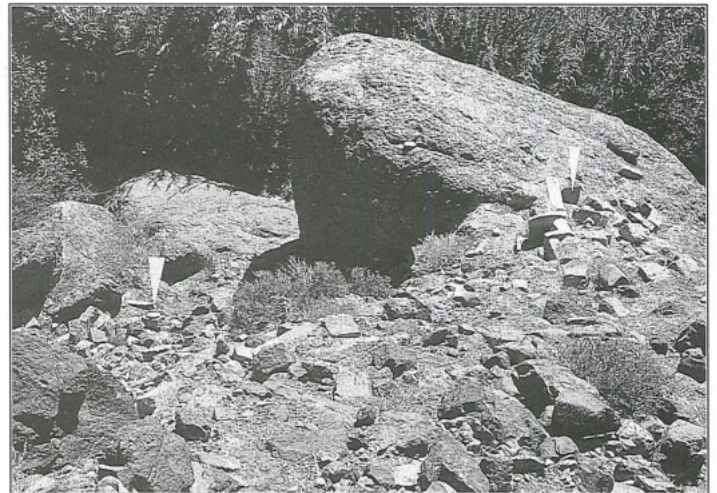
4. Large boulder of Area A with cuts and remnants of an adjoining wall *in situ*.



5. Concentration of finds at the northeast face of the large boulder with the Nabataean capital and metope (arrows).

Finds of Area A: Among the two boulders and together with many ashlars, the following architectural pieces were noted:

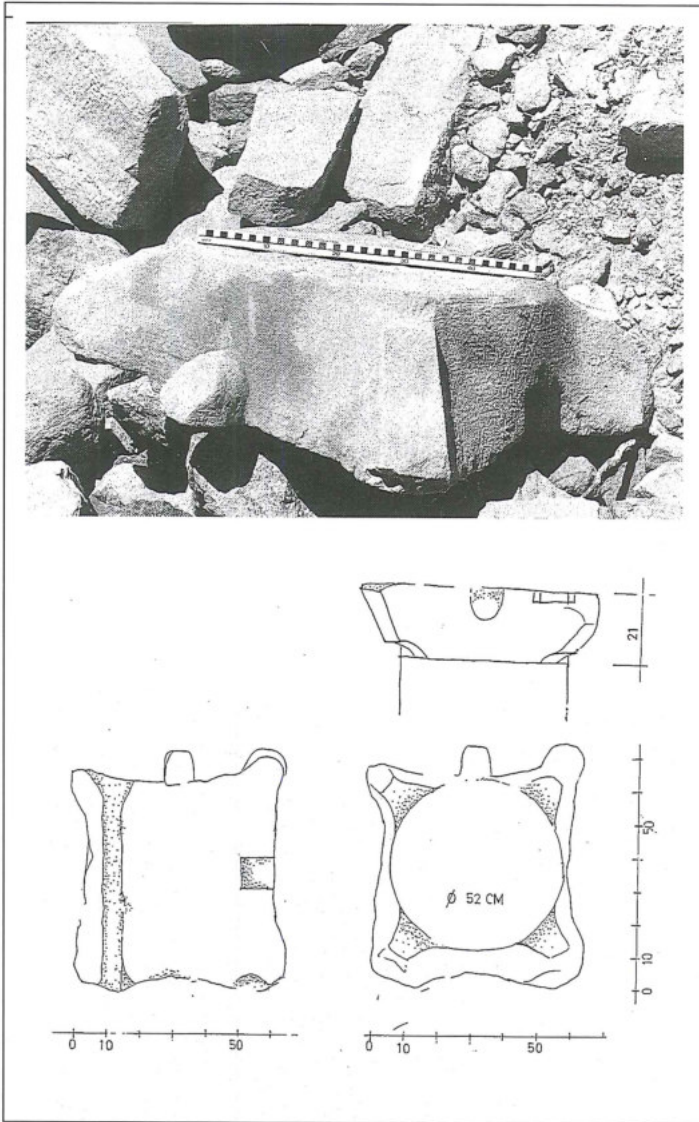
- A Nabataean horned ("Hörner") capital (Type 1 according to McKenzie 1990: 190) of sandstone, 0.64 m square with a lower diameter of 0.52 m comparable with the originally free-standing capitals in the theatre of Petra (Hammond 1965: 45, PL. 34.4) (FIG. 8). A groove, 6 cm wide and 4 cm deep, is cut out of one side.
- Column base, Attic type, 0.55 m lower diameter, 0.44 m upper diameter, 0.30 m high, with a round hole (FIG. 9).
- Ashlar 0.30 m high with disc metope, comparable to a similar one found at Šabra in 1990.
- Triglyph, c. 0.30 m high.



6. The supposed gate in the west wall (arrow) with the large boulder behind it. Metope (arrow) to the left.



7. The supposed gate in the west wall with the inserted column and triglyph.



8. Nabataean horned capital from Area A.

Six column drums, of 0.35 to 0.40 m and 0.25 to 0.26 m diameter, sandstone.

- Conical column drum, 0.32 x 0.18 x 0.21 m with a hole in its lower surface.
- Ashlar, 0.50 x 0.18 x 0.21 m with brown-red painted stucco.
- Seven ashlar, ranging between 0.33 x 0.30 to 0.60 x 0.25 m, 0.21 to 0.27 m high, four of them diagonally trimmed, one with a smoothed rim of 1.5 cm.
- Paving stone of limestone near the large boulder, carefully ground and polished.

Area B to the Northeast

Area B was most affected by the rockslide and again by the flood of 1991. Rocks and boulders are scattered all over. Well-preserved wall sections 2.50 m long, 1.80 m high, and 1 m wide are the remnants of two walls constructed with diagonally trimmed ashlar up to 0.60 x



9. Column base from Area A.



10. Stonework, remnants of two walls, at the northeast corner of Area B with diagonally trimmed ashlars. A gate or door can be seen in the far end between the two walls.

0.40 x 0.30 m (FIG. 10). At the south end of the stonework, a flight of steps led down to the pond in an east direction. Several fragments of slabs that have slipped off are lying about. A moulded sandstone base broken in two pieces, together 0.75 m long, 0.35 m wide, and 0.20 m high, bounded the west part of the two walls. It might have belonged to a (secondary?) gate or door 0.95 m wide (FIG. 11). The numerous ashlars in this part of Area B indicate a larger extension of the west wall towards the south. The ashlars to the south and east, however, have slipped off, and the second wall paralleling the first one

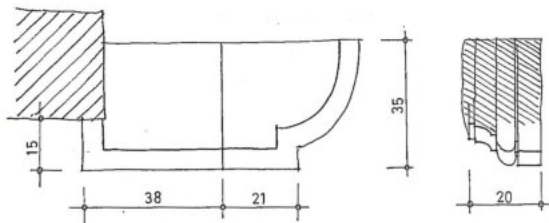
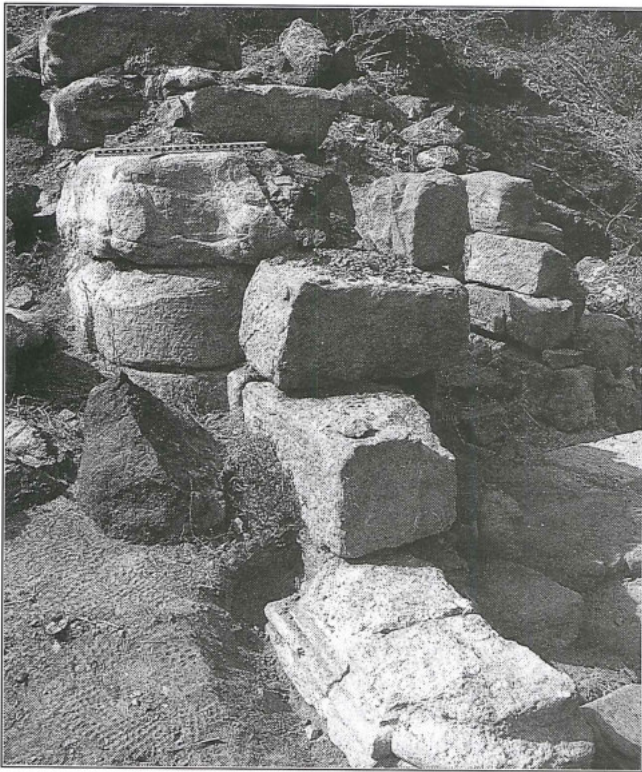
apparently closed the compound. Below the described walls to the west, south, and east, carefully worked architectural pieces and fragments, partly made of a fossil-rich limestone, were found in 1989. The same shell-limestone material is to be found at Petra and Şabra, and was described on the north terrace of Umm al-Biyāra (Lindner 1989: 300) but no quarry has been detected so far.

Finds of Area B: The following architectural elements were found in Area B:

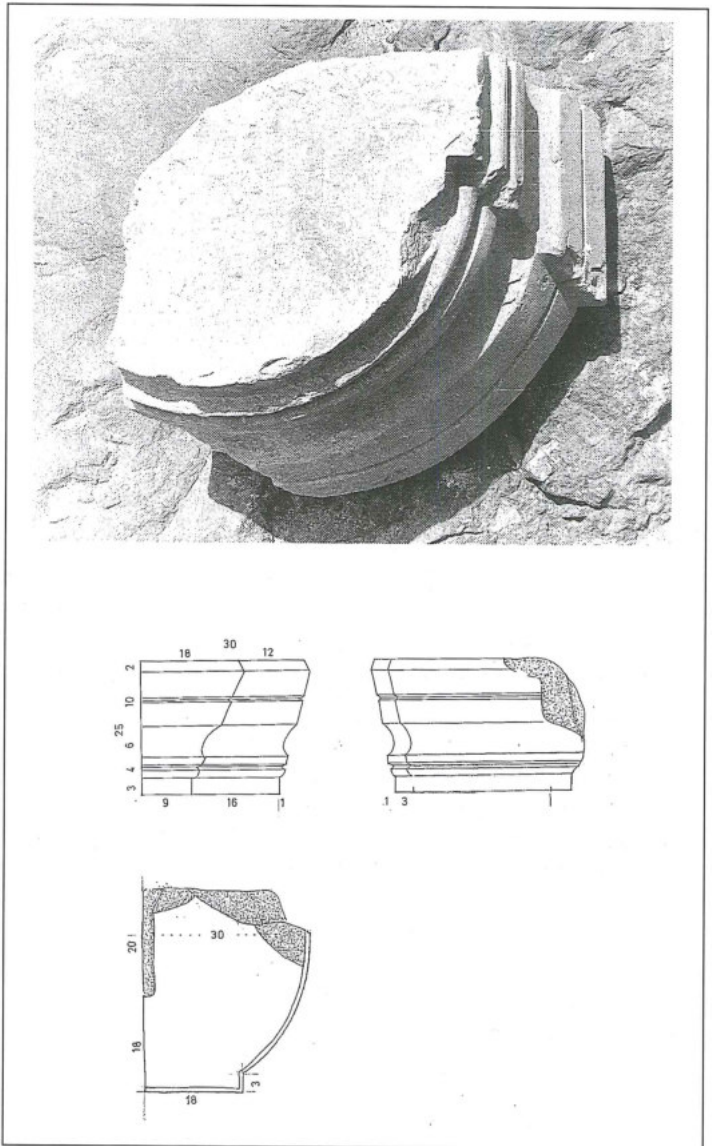
- Echinus of a Nabataean capital, 0.30 x 0.25 x 0.38 m, comparable with the capitals of the upper order of the ad-Dayr temple (according to Schmidt-Colinet 1980: 224-226 and pers. comm.) and with capitals of other Petraean tombs (FIG. 12).
- Lateral fragment of a pediment, made of limestone, 0.44 x 0.42 m (FIG. 13).
- Floral decoration in relief, c. 0.80 x 0.20 m, comparable

with finds in Petra and Sabra (Schmidt-Colinet 1980: 190; Lindner 1986: 160) (FIG. 14).

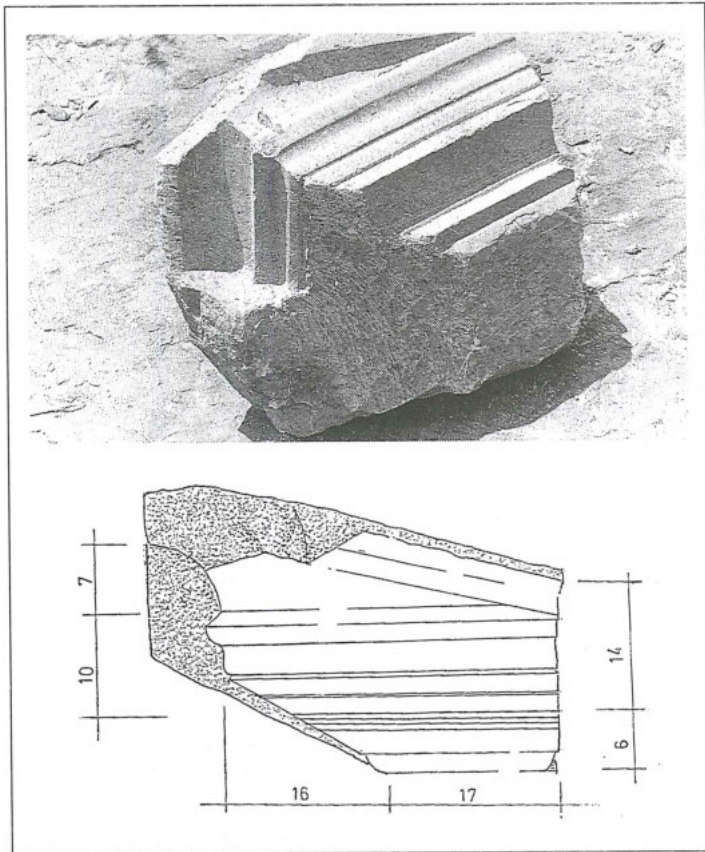
- Pillar capital, 0.30 x 0.25 m, comparable with a similar one found and described on the ad-Dayr plateau opposite the rock-cut temple (Lindner 1984: 170, PL. 25.2).
- Slab of fossil-rich limestone, 0.20 x 0.12 m, 16-22 mm thick, polished on three sides.
- Two fragments of white marble slabs, c. 16-18 mm thick.
- Brown sandstone fragment, 110 x 80 x 50 mm, diagonally trimmed with a smoothed rim.
- Moulded wall or pillar base, probably part of a gate or door (see above).
- Sandstone fragment, 0.55 x 0.40 m, possibly a weathered medallion in relief or a damaged metope (FIG. 15).



11. Moulded and rounded sandstone base at a gate or door in Area B.



12. Echinus, lower part of a Nabataean capital (fossil-rich limestone).



13. Fragment of a pediment from Area B.

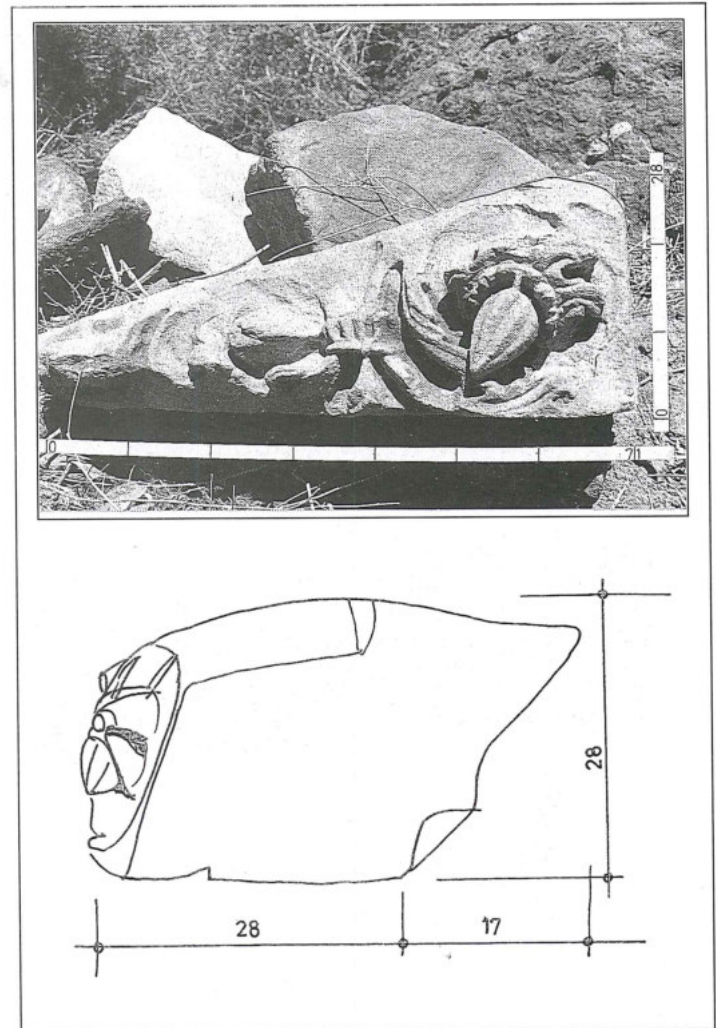
Area C Above the Pond

South of the pond outlet, on an inclined rock platform of about 70 x 30 m, roughly 15 m above ground and located near the track to Petra, numerous pottery fragments were collected from the surface.

Finds of Area C (FIGS. 16-18): Fragments of painted and unpainted pottery, mostly of plates and bowls, but including a few lamps may be dated to a period from the first century BC to the third-fourth century AD, with a significant preponderance of the first-second century AD. An almost intact oil lamp with two cornucopiae, a symbol of abundance (in FIG. 18), parallels a lamp found at Petra (Horsfield and Horsfield 1941: 197) but the type may also be seen at other (Roman) sites, e.g. at Augusta Treverorum (Trier Museum). A small lamp fragment belongs to the Nabataean "standard type", well-described by Khairy (1986: 66-67). More pottery fragments were collected during Lindner's visit to Sahir al-Baqar in 1991, but there was nothing in it to change the dating.

Area D to the Northwest

From the remnants of the supposed gate to the northwest of the compound, a pathway, visible in 1990 but no longer in 1991 after having been covered with fallen ashlar from above, was originally 1.20 m wide and constructed

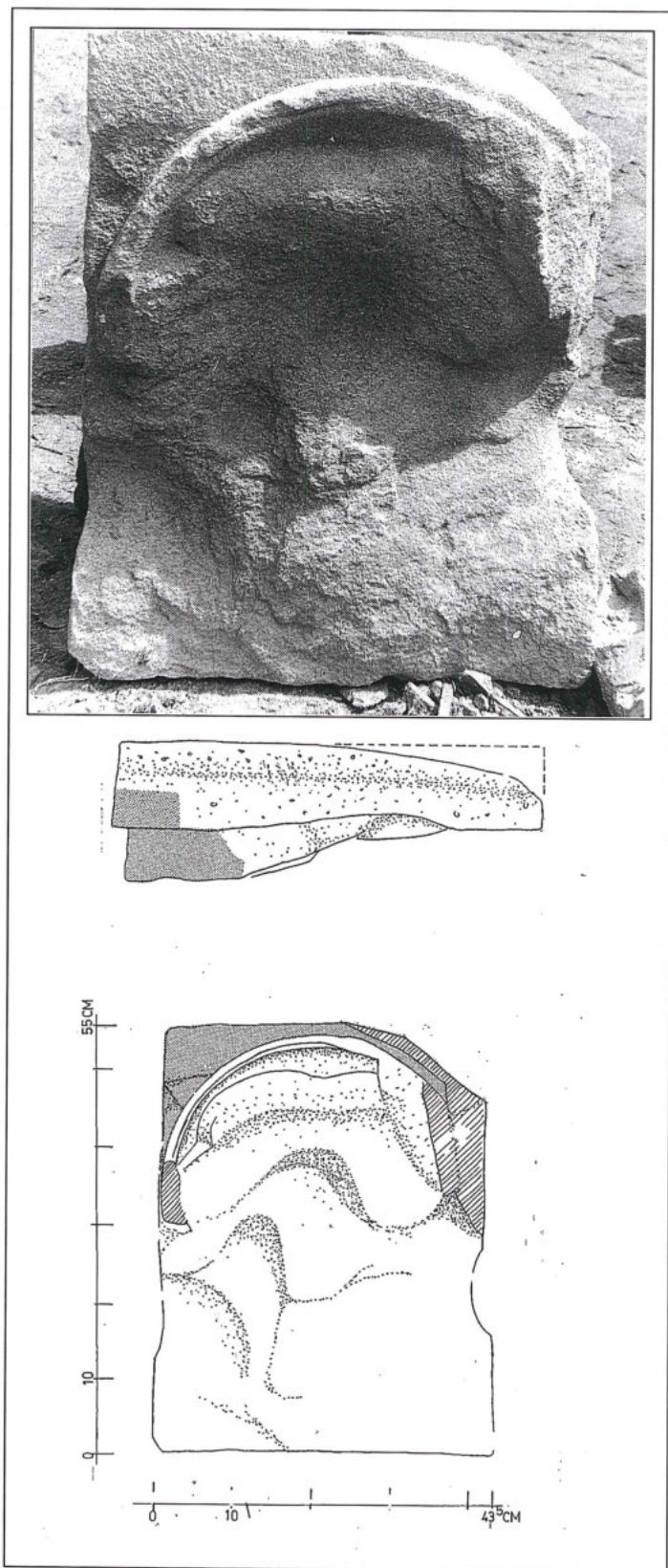


14. Floral decoration in relief from Area B.

of sandstone slabs, measuring 0.40 m square. It paralleled the wadi toward the west and ended after c. 50 m with a house ruin, 3.50 m square. One of the ashlar was diagonally trimmed.

Finds of Area D: The following items were found in Area D:

- Trapezoid keystone, 0.50 x 0.28 x 0.16 m.
- Three column drums, 0.31 m diameter, 0.20 m high, another 0.40 m diameter.
- Column base, 0.59 m lower diameter. Drums and base were found between the mentioned house ruin and the compound proper, and were probably not *in situ*.
- In the immediate vicinity of the house ruin, remnants of a Roman-type *thermae* (FIG. 19):³
- Two small fragments of worked white marble, 1.5 cm thick.
- Two sandstone slabs, 0.20 m square, 3 cm thick.
- Fragments of tubuli, 13-17 cm wide, 3 cm thick.
- Two brick slabs, 0.26 m square, 2 cm thick.
- Half of a round clay tile, 0.22 m thick.



15. Sandstone slab from Area B. Relief medallion?

³ The authors have to thank Mrs. A. Schmidt for detecting the significant pieces and suggesting their function, and Prof. Dr. E. Ruprechtsberger (Linz, Austria) for verifying the supposition.

- Many small fragments of clay tiles.
- Many small fragments of clay pipes.

Finds not belonging to a particular area: Two conduit blocks of the usual ashlar size were found in the centre and in the northwest corner of the compound. Others were seen about 50 m higher up where an ancient conduit had been restored by bedouins twenty years ago but neglected later on.

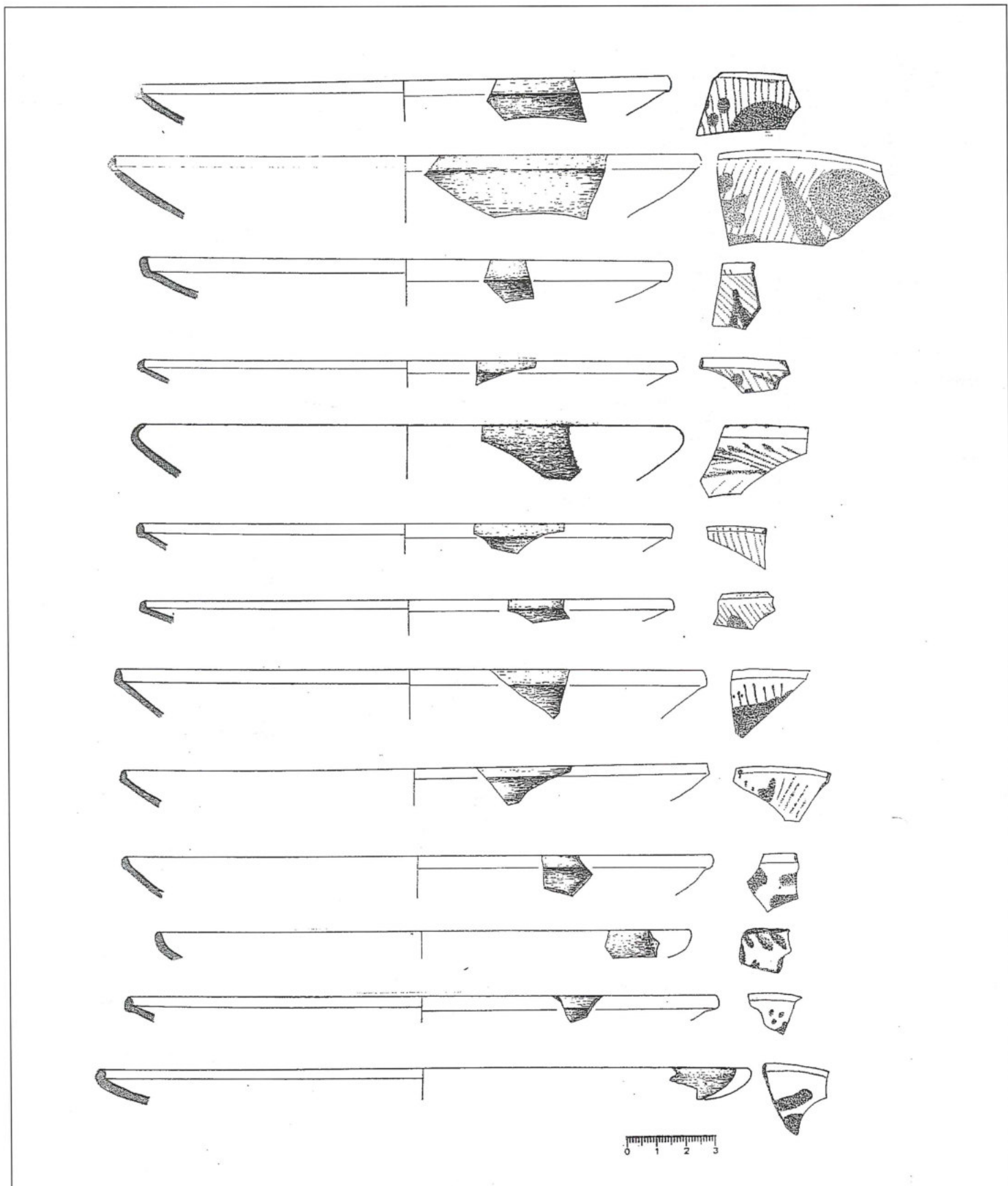
Conclusions Derived from Location, Architecture, and Finds

Based on the masonry and architectural pieces that were found, as well as the pottery fragments, which, however, were collected from outside the compound, it is assumed that the ruined compound at the pond 450 m below Rās Slaysil was a Nabataean temple at the crossroads of caravan routes. There were several structures, especially in Areas A and B. Without excavation, however, not enough foundations can be made out to produce a ground plan. The lines in FIG. 3 mark only tentatively the borders of the compound. The rich variety of column and ashlar sizes, of architrave fragments with metope and triglyph together with their delicate mouldings, and the parts of Nabataean capitals demonstrate the former existence of no minor shrine. At Saḥīr al-Baqar there was once an important compound of buildings, peristyles, stairs, and a Roman-type house with hypocausts, all ingeniously adapted to the extremely complicated ground with a risk of natural catastrophes. As a name for the compound the authors suggest "Pond Temple" in English, and "Teichtempel" in German because, in addition to other ponds or basins higher up in the rock wall of Jabal Slaysil, the pond at the foot of the precipice seems to have been both an integral part of the temple and its reason for being.⁴

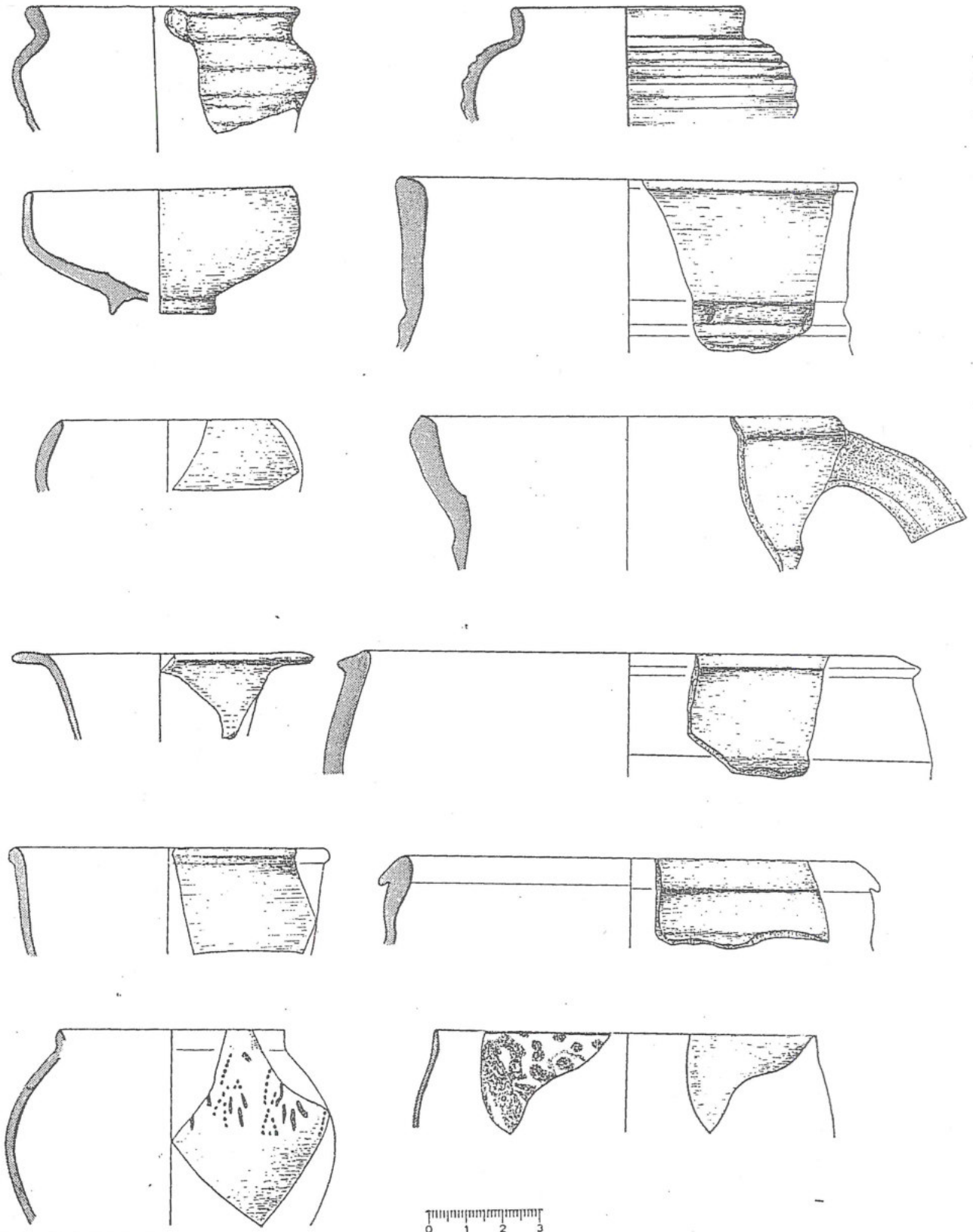
Chronology of the Pond Temple

Because no inscription has been found so far, the chronology of the Pond Temple must be based on surface finds. The most spectacular find is the well-preserved upper part of a Nabataean sandstone capital with the typical horns. It is the same type as the upper order of columns at the ad-Dayr Temple not more than a few hours away, which to be sure were carefully sculpted rather than rock-cut (Brünnow and Domaszewski 1904: 186, FIG. 220). Schmidt-Colinet (1983: 307) called it "eigenwilliger Typus des nabatäischen Normalkapitells", for J. McKenzie (1990: 190) it is the "Nabataean capital Type 1". Contrary to the rock-cut version of ad-Dayr, the echinus of Area B (not necessarily belonging to the upper part of the capital from Area A) is made of a fos-

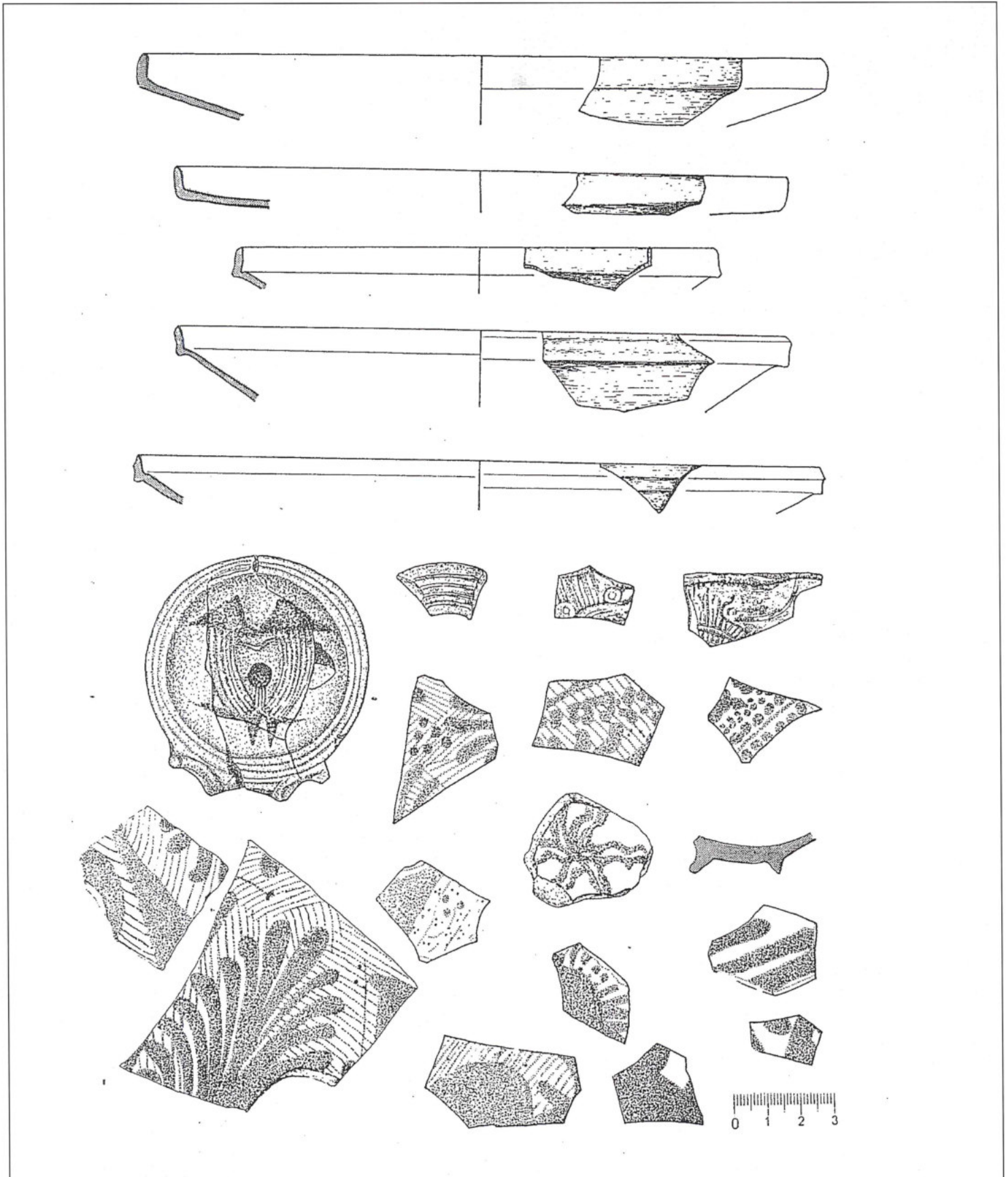
⁴ About "sacred pools connected with Nabataean temples" see also Glueck (1965: 391).



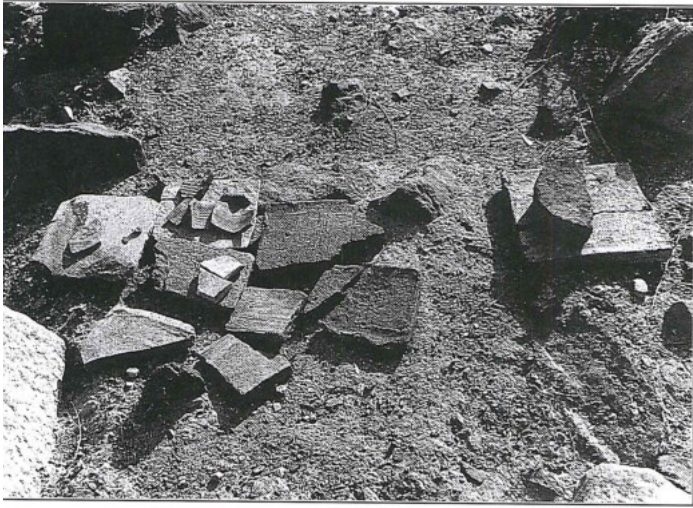
16. Surface pottery from Area C (Pond Temple site).



17. Surface pottery from Area C (Pond Temple site).



18. Surface pottery from Area C (Pond Temple site).



19. Remnants of a Roman-type thermae in Area D.

sil-rich limestone, just like a few other architectural elements of the ruin field. Unfortunately, given the formal similarity of the capitals, the same chronological problem arises as with the ad-Dayr Temple itself and with a group of other rock-cut tomb facades with Nabataean capitals — the Bāb as-Siḡ Triclinium, Unfinished Tomb, Jrn Tomb, Palace Tomb, Turkmāniya Tomb, Sextius Florentinus Tomb, among others.

Comparing these monuments with those tentatively dated by McKenzie (1990: 190), we know at least that the Pond Temple cannot belong to McKenzie's earliest group, which includes Qaṣr al-Bint with a *terminus post quem* in the beginning of the first century AD. The other rock-hewn tomb facades with "normal Nabataean capitals" may be dated from the early first century AD up to AD 129, the date of the Sextius Florentinus Tomb, and to the date of the ad-Dayr Temple, which has been definitely attributed to the era of King Rabel II by Schmidt-Colinet (1980: 22) and by Zayadine (1980: 224). Hammond (1965: 65) attributed the "pure Nabataean" capitals of the Main Theatre of Petra to its original Nabataean order in "Period I (a), possibly between 4 B.C. and A.D. 27". Horned capitals of a Nabataean temple at Oboda (Avdat), destroyed in AD 50, were reused in Late Roman times (Wenning 1987: 165). For Glueck the "pure Nabataean-type capital" of Khirbat at-Tannūr belongs to Period II, which he dates between the end of the first century BC to AD 106 (Glueck 1965: 125, 138, 385, PL. 73, a, b). One of the authors noted (unfinished?) Nabataean horned capitals on the artificial plateau opposite the ad-Dayr Temple (Lindner 1984: 166-168, PL. 21). They obviously belonged to a peristyle in front of a rock-cut sanctuary. Its contemporaneity with the ad-Dayr Temple was suggested. Much earlier, Butler in Si' described horned capitals that were, it is true, more elaborate than the capital of the Pond Temple, but had a similar echinus. The South Temple where the horned capital

was found reminded Butler of the early work at the site, and therefore seemed to belong to the period between 33 BC and AD 50 (Butler 1916). The Nabataean capitals that Butler noted at Buṣra had a more elaborate echinus, and were dated "probably in the early period of Bostrian history" (Butler 1914: 236-242).

Summarizing the small sample of tentative datings — which may need to be modified — of Nabataean horned capitals, the construction of the Pond Temple by its capital alone cannot be dated more precisely by the authors than in a period from the early first century AD to the early second century AD, unless finer differences between the rock-cut and the free-standing capitals, and between the latter themselves can be analysed. The column base of the Attic type found in Area A is usually part of the normal Nabataean capital, and therefore cannot contribute to the dating. Of course, additional elements such as the floral decoration and the pediment could be compared with those found at Petra, Ṣabra, and adh-Dhariḡ, but these analyses have to be left to more specialized researchers.

The pottery finds are relatively easy to date, but they are only a small sample of what may be hidden in the ruin field, and they were found outside the temple area proper. With a range from the end of the first century BC to the third-fourth century AD (according to Zeitler 1991: 104), and a preponderance from the first-(second?) century AD, they point to a construction date in the first century AD for the Pond Temple.

The architectural remnants of the bathing establishment to the northwest of the temple compound at least allow more chronological analysis. Hypocausts with round and square *suspensura* bricks were used since the first century BC, whereas the *tubulatio* was invented in the first century AD (according to Krause 1965: 3062). However, *tubuli* were used in the thermae that Herod the Great (40-4 BC) built at Masada (Yadin 1966: 74-85). Many influences from the Greek, Alexandrine, Herodian, and Roman world converged at Petra since the middle of the first century BC. Therefore it is not possible to rule out the origin of Roman-type thermae before the annexation by the Romans in AD 106. Whether they were constructed together with the temple or added later on, cannot be answered at present. Concerning the end of the Pond Temple, it is probable that together with the road leading to it from Rās Slaysil it was destroyed by an earthquake in the third or fourth century AD.

Necessities of Traffic and Topography of the *Numinosum*

One asks, of course, why the Pond Temple was constructed at its hidden spot below Rās Slaysil. A discovery in 1990 provided the answer. In that year, the Austrian team of the Naturhistorische Gesellschaft Nürnberg found and by laborious climbing reached the destroyed

road between the temple and the gap below Rās Slaysil (Lindner and Gunsam, forthcoming). This now definitely proves that the Pond Temple was located at an important road between Petra and Wādī ‘Arabah with connections to an-Naqab, the Mediterranean, the Arabian Peninsula, and Syria. Furthermore, a road high above Wādī aš-Šiyyagh connected Petra and the Pond Temple. Slaysil as a kind of junction could be reached from Bayḍa, from the ad-Dayr plateau, and from Jabal Qārūn with another shrine on its summit (Lindner 1986: 103-107).

The main north-south traffic routes, especially those for camel caravans followed either the Edomite upland or the lowlands of the ‘Arabah. Considering their technical level, connections between them must have been equally important. In fact, they were useful as shortcuts and at times when other routes were dangerous to take. There was also purely “local traffic”, e.g. sheep and goats being driven to pasture, to water, or to market.

There are other uses to consider. It is to Kirkbride’s credit that she observed outcrops of basalt and copper ore in the Slaysil area (1966: 53). In fact, mining and transporting ore might have been one of the reasons for

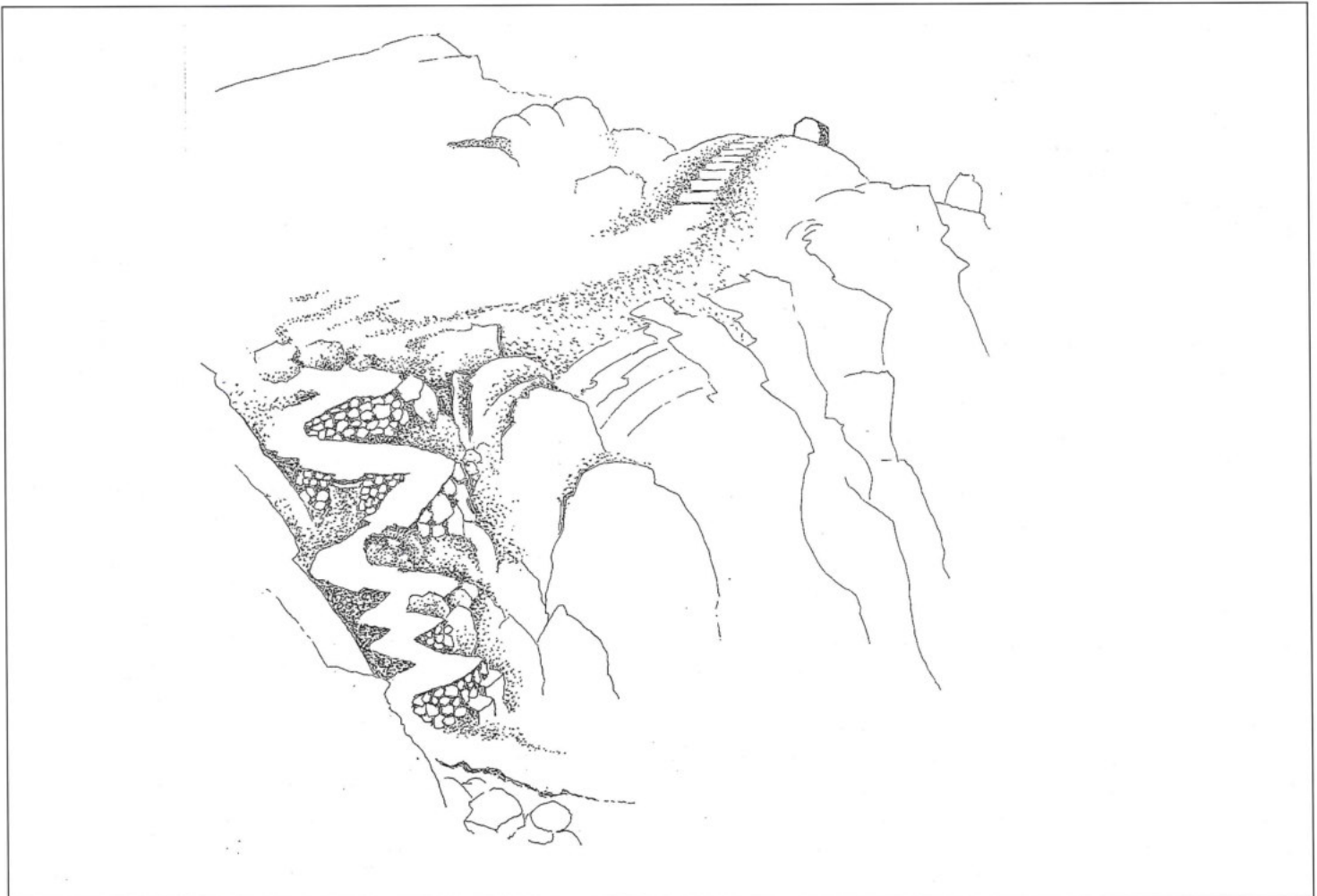
constructing a larger road network. As the stones chosen for special purposes in Petra, Şabra, and Saḥir al-Baqar show, suitable stones were transported over long distances.

The excellent water-supply at Saḥir al-Baqar was in and of itself an important motive for building the temple, but where water existed, the gods were revered as well. Many examples in Petra show that water that ran either perennially or seasonally confronted the Nabataean with the *Numinosum*, i.e. the divine presence.

Possible connection between the Slaysil sanctuary, a typical “high place”, and the Pond Temple and between the different deities revered in the two places can only be a matter for speculation (FIG. 20). The location of the Pond Temple in the deep and near running water points to a goddess of the Atargatis, al-‘Uzzá, Isis, Aphrodite type whereas Dushara might have been venerated on the high place of Slaysil.

Political Aims

The construction of the Pond Temple, like others in Nabataea, apparently realized a tendency among the kings



20. Artist’s interpretation of the connection between the high place of Slaysil and the road leading down to the Pond Temple.

f Petra during the first centuries BC and AD to speed up the development toward sedentarization and cultivated urbanization or at least to demonstrate those goals in order to compete with other kingdoms and the Roman empire.

Following Knauf (1986: 80) and Wenning (1990: 38), the initiative for such projects should be attributed to the specific Nabataean fraction of Nabataea and its court. The Nabataean kings were certainly moved by the resistible Hellenism of their time to build temples in the Hellenistic fashion and to have their gods portrayed in human form. But they also, as Wenning has advocated lately, intended by means of a variety of measures to show off themselves as a peaceful nation (1990: 438).

At the same time, the construction of the temples betrays political ambitions of the kings who wanted to throw out of the original tribal and elitist structure of their society into a genuine monarchy. It was the logical way to document and demonstrate the royal presence together with the presence of their and their peoples' gods in temples and shrines at important spots. It is easy to imagine that such projects were initiated and financed by the court and/or by well-to-do "dignitaries" or groups of rich people who acted as sponsors, who thereby impressed the gods, as well as their king and their people.

Closing Remarks

In the opinion of the authors, the destruction of the Slaysil sanctuary and the recent disturbance during the 1991 flood of the Pond Temple since its discovery, make it imperative to publish the finds now together with the history of their discovery, notwithstanding the fact that for obvious reasons no excavation was possible nor will be in the near future. The difficulty of access and the amount of destruction leave many questions unanswered. On the other hand, the finds presented here are significant and allow us to visualize what the temple compound might have looked like before its destruction. That this report includes personal experiences is in line with a recent laudable trend leading away from sterile texts to a more lively documentation of what was and is done in archaeology.

Acknowledgments

In the first place, the authors wish to thank the Directors General of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan who since 1973 either personally or through the regional Directors in Petra permitted and furthered the archaeological projects of the Naturhistorische Gesellschaft Nürnberg (Germany). Thanks are also due to Dr. Fawzi Zayadine and to the mentors, helpers, and guides of the *ayāthna*, Bdūl, and 'Ammārīn, and, of course, to the participants in the numerous excursions and explorations which eventually led to the investigation of Slaysil and

the discovery of the Pond Temple. Of special assistance in the scientific treatment of the discovery were A. Schmidt, I. Just, Dr. E. Wieters and F. Morgenstern who together with E. Gunsam formed the "Austrian Group" of the Naturhistorische Gesellschaft Nürnberg. For friendly advice and helpful suggestions Dr. F. Zayadine, Dr. R. Wenning, Dr. Andreas Schmidt-Colinet and Prof. Dr. E. M. Ruprechtsberger have to be thanked. The pottery fragments were drawn by E. Schreyer and G. Spiske. The English text was partly revised by Prof. Pittner, Oberasbach (Germany).

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