

M. Barbara Reeves
Queen's University
reevesb@queensu.ca

M. Barbara Reeves

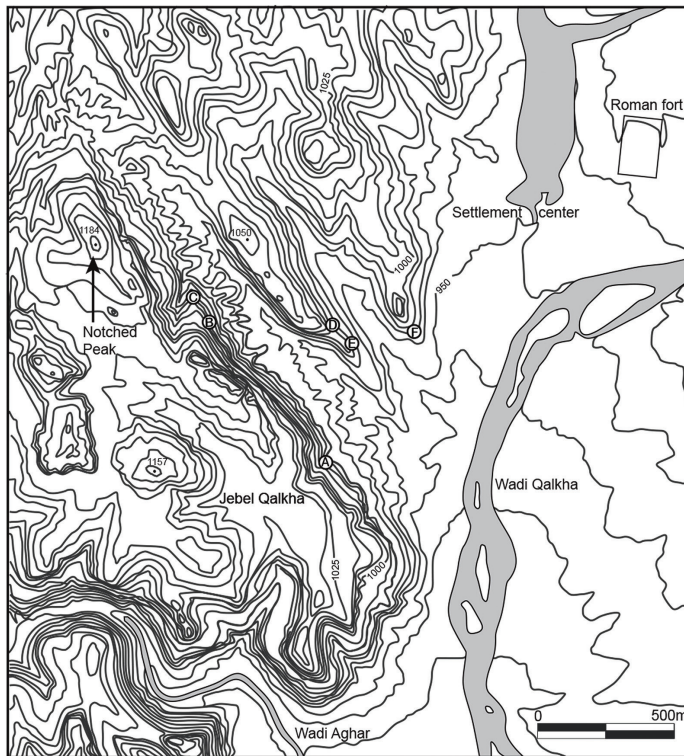
Pictorial Graffiti Associated with the Soldiers and Civilians of the Roman Garrisoned Town of Haurra

Introduction

Ancient graffiti have been the subject of great attention in recent years for their ability to inform us about the interests and beliefs of past inhabitants of archaeological sites (Langner 2001; Baird and Taylor 2011; Keegan 2014). At the site of al-Ḥumayma (Roman Haurra; Nabataean Ḥawara) in southern Jordan, ancient graffiti have been found at various locations inside the ancient settlement and on the adjacent hills and ridges. Further analysis has resulted in some of these graffiti being assigned to specific chronological periods in the site's history. The goal of this paper is to examine pictorial graffiti visible when this Nabataean-founded town was garrisoned by Roman soldiers to see what they reveal about the lives of Haurra's military and civilian populace. The paper will begin by defining terminology and explaining how the graffiti can be related to the site's chronological periods. The focus will then

shift to an examination of four particular archaeological contexts where graffiti were visible (i.e., created or pre-existing) at the time of the Roman garrison. Finally, commonalities and differences in the graffiti will be examined across the site in order to address graffiti's significance to understanding Haurra's military and civilian inhabitants.

The archaeological site of al-Ḥumayma is located in the Hisma desert of southern Jordan about halfway between Petra and Aqaba. The site is located on the western side of the Hisma's desert plain where it meets a row of sandstone hills (FIG. 1). Most of the buildings of the ancient settlements (including the Nabataean-early Islamic communities and the Roman fort) were located on the desert plain. Other activity areas (including quarries, tombs, rock shelters, and religious sites) were located on the adjacent hills (Jebel Qalkha and Jebel al-Ḥumayma) and on two sandstone



1. Topographic map of al-Ḥumayma showing the Roman fort and settlement center on the plain, Jebel Qalkha with its notched peak, and the two intervening ridges. A: Servant of Ḥawara Site; B-C: Cascading Plateau Site; D: Commemoration Cliff; E: Flat Top Activity Area (A. Walsh, J.P. Oleson, M.B. Reeves, C.A. Harvey).

ridges that lay between Jebel Qalkha and the town. Three decades of archaeological work (summarized in Oleson *et al.* 2015) have resulted in five primary occupational phases being identified at this site: 1) temporary Palaeolithic and Neolithic activity areas on the hills and ridges, 2) the Nabataean town (1st c. BC to early 2nd c. AD), 3) the Roman-Byzantine town (early 2nd to mid-6th century) and fort (early 2nd to 4th century), 4) an early Islamic estate (mid-6th to mid-8th century), and 5) sporadic occupation up to present day.

This paper will focus on the graffiti contemporary with the Roman and Byzantine garrisons in the 2nd to 4th centuries. For simplicity, this period will henceforth be referred to as “Roman.” As to the identity of these troops, inscriptions from the fort and *vicus* record the presence of legionary detachments from the Legio III Cyrenaica and possibly the Legio VI Ferrata in the 2nd

and 3rd centuries (Oleson *et al.* 2002). The *Notitia Dignatum* reports that an indigenous mounted unit (*equites sagittarii indigenae*) was stationed here in the 4th century (*Oriens* 34.25; Oleson 2010: 54).

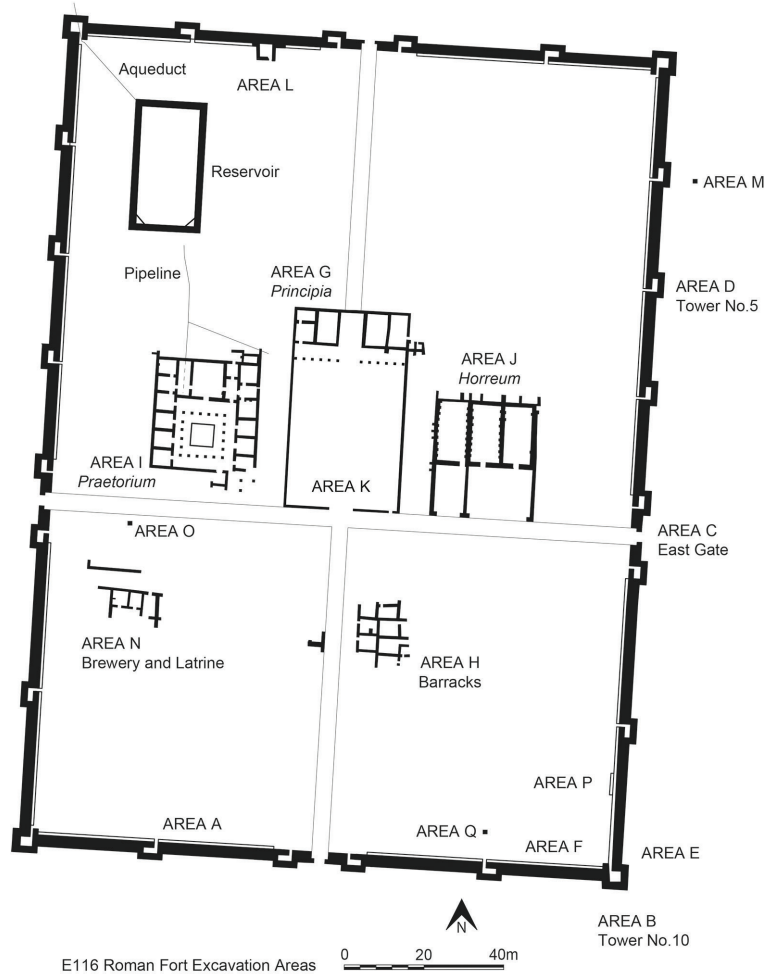
At al-Ḥumayma graffiti have been found both in the buildings of the ancient settlements and on rock surfaces in the hills and ridges. Following recent academic conceptualizations, graffiti are defined for the purposes of this paper as images, texts, or symbols added to a surface that was not originally intended to receive them (cf. Langner 2001: 12; Chanitois 2011: 193; Baird and Taylor 2016: 18). The surface can be manufactured or natural, and the graffiti can be added on top (by ink, paint, charcoal, etc.) or cut into the surface (by scratching or abrading). Pictorial graffiti are the non-textual subset of graffiti that include images on manufactured and natural surfaces that have also been referred to as rock art,

petroglyphs, pictograms, pictographs, and dipinti. They can range from simple symbols (e.g., a Christian cross or a tribal marker) to complex narrative scenes. For the purposes of this paper, only the graffiti likely produced or seen by the site's Nabataean and Roman populations will be discussed.

Dating graffiti is often challenging. In the case of the graffiti to be discussed here, there are, fortunately, clues provided by some graffiti's location, associated texts, relative darkness of patina, spatial overlap, and content. For example, graffiti found on internal wall plaster in the Roman fort should date to the time of the fort's occupation or, at least, to when its walls were still standing. As for content, a graffito showing a Roman standard bearer probably dates to the time of the Roman garrison and an image of a pagan god most likely pre-dates the dominance of Christianity and Islam at this site. Other imagery is more difficult to date so individual contexts must be considered. As will be discussed below, two particular sites in al-Ḥumayma's hills seem to contain concentrations of Nabataean and Roman graffiti. One is a vertical rock face where Nabataean and Greek texts surround a standard bearer's graffito. The other graffiti concentration appears on a horizontal panel carved into a homogenous stratum of whitish sandstone. One last site to be discussed here is hypothesized to have both Nabataean and Roman graffiti based on its subject matter.

The rationale for considering the Nabataean and Roman graffiti together is that these are the graffiti that would have been seen by the residents and visitors of Haurra's 2nd to 4th century garrisoned community. This perspective also allows us to examine other garrisoned communities in the Near East and Egypt for comparable imagery. There are several garrisoned communities in this region where pictorial graffiti have been found including Dura-Europos (Syria), Mons Claudianus (Egypt), 'Ayn Gharandal (Jordan), and Hegra (Saudi

Arabia). Due to the unusual circumstances of Dura-Europos' burial and abandonment, its graffiti corpus of 1,400 texts and images is one of the largest and best known from the Roman Empire and the largest for any Roman garrisoned community (Goldman 1999; Baird 2011). Most of it dates to the time of the Roman garrison (Baird 2011: 54) and was in places used or guarded by soldiers, including military offices, living spaces, towers, and the main gate. Although the 1920s-1930s excavators only recorded 124 examples of the pictorial graffiti they encountered, this corpus is rich and diverse (Goldman 1999). Notable themes include gods and goddesses, religious offerings, cities, shrines, temples, altars, standing humans with weapons and standards, horse-mounted archers and lancers, horse- and camel-riders, hunting scenes, standing, reclining, and dancing figures, wild and domesticated animals, birds, snakes, and ships. Most of it was found on interior walls. A much smaller corpus of pictorial graffiti was found at Mons Claudianus (a 1st to mid-3rd century quarry site administered by the Roman army) inscribed and incised onto pottery sherds (Tomber 2006). Again, the themes are similar: riders on horses, a camel, gods and people, altars, and wild animals. Charcoal graffiti found on the interior walls of the 4th century garrison's bathhouse at 'Ayn Gharandal (Jordan) include images of camels, a boat, and humans (Darby and Darby 2015: 462, 465-6). The excavator of the main gate at Hegra suggests that Greek graffiti on the gate's interior walls were written by soldiers (Villeneuve 2015: 40-2); by extension, the pictorial graffiti carved into its threshold stone were likely either carved or seen by soldiers on guard duty. The imagery here includes two right footprints, a stylized palm leaf, and a possible game board (Villeneuve 2015: 42, 74 fig. 43). As will be discussed below, the graffiti dating to the time of Haurra's Roman garrisoned community display similar themes.



2. Plan of Roman fort (courtesy of J.P. Oleson).

Although graffiti have been found at many locations at al-Ḥumayma (e.g., Oleson 2010: 145–7, 157–61; Reeves 2015; 2019b: 145–7; Reeves *et al.* 2018), only four sites have been selected for the present study. These are the sites where the evidence most strongly suggests that graffiti there would have been visible at the time of the Roman garrisoned town. They are the Roman Fort, the Commemoration Cliff, the Cascading Plateau Site, and the Servant of Ḥawara Site. Each will now be discussed in turn.

Graffiti in Hauarra's Fort

Ancient graffiti (both pictorial and textual) have been found in several locations

inside Hauarra's fort (FIG. 2): on fallen wall plaster in offices at the back of the *principia* (headquarters building, Area G), on wall plaster and a paving stone in the *praetorium* (commanding officer's house, Area I), on ceramic sherds in the barracks (Area H), on wall plaster and ceramic sherds from the brewery and latrine (Area N), and on stones in the fort's perimeter wall. These graffiti were created by drawing onto plaster in black and red, incising into plaster with a sharp point, and pecking or abrading into stone surfaces. The only languages used are Greek and Latin, as seems typical for official spaces in an eastern Roman fort (cf. Baird 2011: 60). All of these graffiti will be fully



3. Graffito of rider on wall plaster from the fort's *principia* (courtesy of J.P. Oleson).



4. Graffito pecked into a floor slab from the fort's *praetorium* (M.B. Reeves).

discussed and illustrated in the forthcoming final report on Hauarra's fort (Oleson *et al.* in preparation), which contains reports on the pictorial graffiti prepared by J.P. Oleson

and M.B. Reeves. The following overview contains information from those reports.

Pictorial graffiti have been found in the fort's *principia*, *praetorium*, brewery and latrine, and on the perimeter wall. The largest concentration comes from two offices at the rear (north end) of the *principia*. Approximately 250 fragments of displaced wall plaster found here retain markings done in black charcoal or possibly ink. Given their fragmentary state and the presence of only single lines on most pieces, Oleson has been able to posit interpretations for just under 20 of these. Yet, even with this small sample, it is still possible to see themes common in other eastern garrisoned communities: a rider on a quadruped (likely a horse given the position of the rider's legs; FIG. 3), a camel's head, a soldier with a round shield and weapon, a human head, a human hand, trees, shrubs, and vegetal motifs, an ostrich or snake's head, and a sailing vessel. Another possible ship appears on a wall plaster fragment from a dump in the brewery and latrine. A pecked graffito in a displaced floor slab in the *praetorium* is more enigmatic (FIG. 4). The image has an enclosed curved "top" with two lines radiating beneath its center. It could be interpreted as one of the standards surrounding Emesa's sacred stone on Roman coins (e.g., RIC IV Elagabalus 195-6) or as a jellyfish or an unfinished game board. Support for the Emesene cult interpretation comes from a fragmentary graffito on the fort wall that resembles the coin imagery of Emesa's sacred stone travelling by chariot across the Roman Empire (Reeves 2019a). Unfortunately, that graffito is on a block reused in a 20th century shed. Another block on the fort wall also has an uncertain context as it was not found until after the fort wall had been consolidated by the Department of Antiquities in the early 21st century. The graffito does, however, have an old patina and its subject matter, a bare right foot (FIG. 5), is consistent with graffiti found on the



5. Graffito of a bare right foot pecked into a stone on the fort's perimeter wall (E. de Bruijn).

threshold of the garrisoned gate at Hegra (Villeneuve 2015: 74, fig. 43). Foot imagery is also common in al-Ḥumayma's hills (Reeves *et al.* 2018). As will be discussed below, some of it is contemporary with the Roman garrison, including a pair of feet possibly carved by a Roman officer.

Commemoration Cliff

The Commemoration Cliff is a ca. 10 m long natural vertical cliff face covered in graffiti in the midst of a Nabataean quarry (FIGS. 1:D, 6; Reeves *et al.* 2018: 146-7). The cliff and quarry are situated in an elevated sandstone outcrop near the southern end of Ridge 2, a dendritic ridge that parallels the eastern face of Jebel

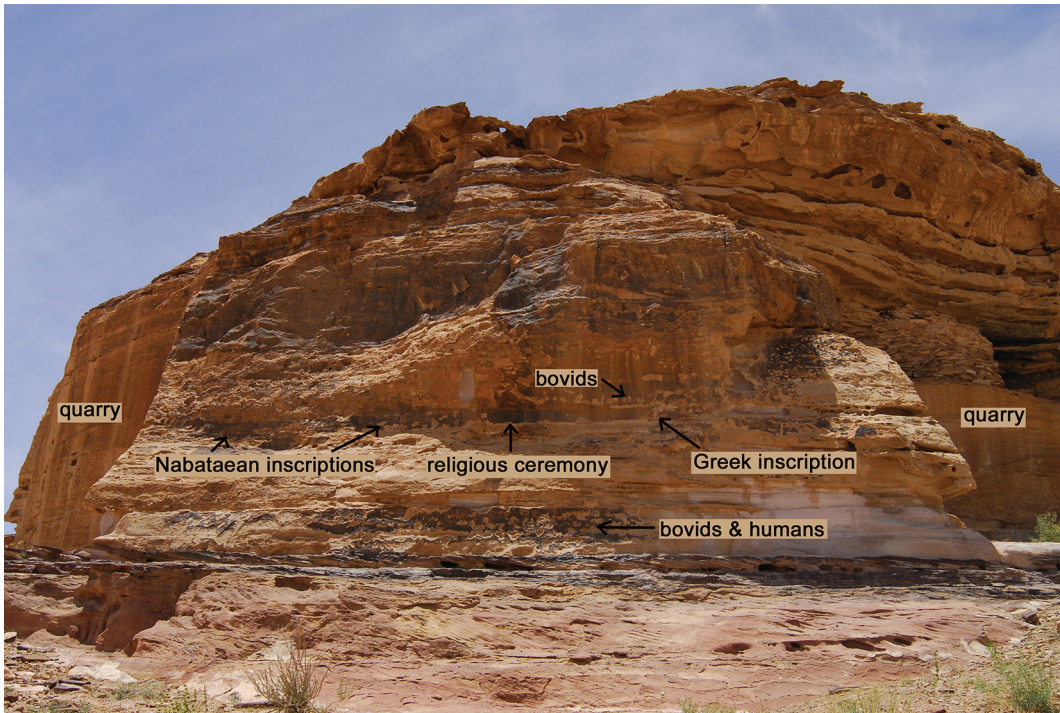
Qalkha and is separated from it by the Wādī al-Ḥumayma; another wādī separates Ridge 2 from the easternmost Ridge 1, whose other face borders the town. Immediately in front of the Commemoration Cliff is the Flat Top Activity Area (Reeves *et al.* 2018: 145-6), a large flat horizontal sandstone surface (ca. 115 m long by 35 m wide) with excellent views of the surrounding terrain, including three wādīs, Jebel Qalkha, and the southern route of the *Via Nova Traiana* into town. This large elevated surface could have been used for ceremonies, including the religious ceremony depicted at the center of the Commemoration Cliff.

Although the Commemoration Cliff has been heavily eroded, incised graffiti are still visible on patches of dark desert varnish near its middle. In the center of the extant graffiti, near the actual center of the cliff is an elaborate depiction of a Roman officer's religious ceremony. On either side of it are personal invocations for peace (in Nabataean) and remembrance (in Greek). Above the Greek inscription is an image of two wild bovids (ibexes?) butting horns. Further down the cliff is a horizontal band containing many images including a cluster of three humans with arms raised as if praying (in the orant pose) or dancing (FIG. 7), and three discrete images of wild horned bovids.

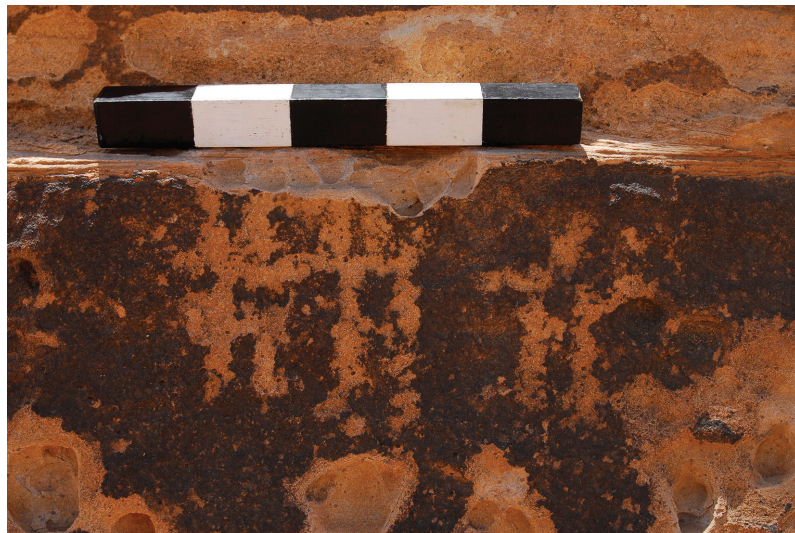
Of all the graffiti on this cliff, the most important for understanding the nature of relations between Roman soldiers and Nabataean civilians in this garrisoned town is the religious ceremony graffito (FIG. 8). This small but detailed graffito depicts a religious ceremony in three registers. As the graffito has been previously published with an extensive analysis (Reeves 2015; 2016: 167-8; 2019b: 145-6), only a summary of the imagery will be provided here.

The top register shows a person offering a branch at an altar or betyl set up on a platform. A huge anthropomorphic god rises from the stone to receive the offering

PICTORIAL GRAFFITI ASSOCIATED WITH THE SOLDIERS AND CIVILIANS



6. Commemoration Cliff with graffiti locations marked (M.B. Reeves).



7. Graffiti of people with arms raised in prayer or dance on the Commemoration Cliff (C.A. Harvey).



8. Religious ceremony graffito from the Commemoration Cliff (M. Fergusson).

while a large wild bovid watches from behind. The middle register shows a camel wearing the North Arabian saddle seated with its legs tucked beneath. The bottom register shows the location of the ceremony in relation to the local topography. More specifically it shows, from left to right, Jebel Qalkha's high notched peak (a focus of Nabataean and Roman cult: Reeves 2016), Wādī al-Ḥumayma, and Ridge 2, where the Commemoration Cliff is located (for a photograph of the terrain, see Reeves 2015: fig 3).

The person making the offering can be identified as a representative of the Roman troops based on the military standard he is holding. The god is identifiable as Jupiter-Ammon-Serapis (also known as Sarapammon or Jupiter Hammon), the legionary deity of the Legio III Cyrenaica (Stoll 2003), a unit of which was stationed at Hauarra in the 2nd and/or 3rd century (Oleson 2019: 395; Reeves 2019b: 142). The animal is not the ram, the sacred animal of that regimental god as represented by a

ram's head amulet in Hauarra's community shrine (Reeves 2019b: 143-4) and as seen on a Roman coin from Neapolis showing the god, his ram, and military standards in front of that town's sacred peak (RPC IX 2174; Roman Provincial Coinage Online, <https://rpc.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/coins/9/2174>). Instead, the Hauarra graffito shows a local wild bovid, probably a gazelle, although shown here much larger than the actual gazelles that roamed this landscape. Quite likely this supernaturally sized local animal, whose placement in the composition balances that of the garrison's god, is meant to represent a local god, or at least, to provide a link to local religion. Like many other sites in the region, wild horned bovids are the most prevalent subject of rock carvings at al-Ḥumayma (Reeves *et al.* 2018), including at the two sites discussed below. Based on their prevalence in regional rock carvings, terracotta images, and faunal evidence from shrines, many scholars have posited that both gazelles and ibexes had significance in Nabataean religion (e.g., el-

Khouri 2002: 30, 218; Studer 2007: 267; Avner *et al.* 2016).

As for meaning, the graffito is interpreted as showing a Roman standard bearer making an offering that is being received by the garrison's god. This is a moment of religious epiphany, and, if the bovid is also a god, this is the moment of a double epiphany, when the gods of the garrison and town appear together to receive the standard bearer's offering. This mirrors the theme of concord between the town and garrison that is also proclaimed at the center of Hauarra's community shrine, where a Nabataean betyl (representing a local god) and a Roman legionary altar (dedicated to Jupiter-Ammon) stand side-by-side (Reeves 2019b). The same theme appears also on coins from the Arabian provincial capital (Bostra), where Jupiter Ammon and the town's goddess shake hands beneath the legend *CONCORDIA BOSTRENORVM* ("The Harmony of the Bostreans;" Kindler 1983: nos. 48, 56). At Dura-Europos the same theme is repeated in a wall painting from the Temple of the Palmyrene Gods showing the tribune, standard bearer, and men of a Roman unit making an offering in front of the city goddesses of Dura-Europos and Palmyra (where the unit was recruited; James 2004: 39-42).

Parallels to other elements of Hauarra's graffito can be seen in graffiti from Dura-Europos. For example, several soldiers, including a standard bearer, are depicted making offerings to a god associated with their regiment (Iarhibol) on the walls of offices used by military scribes (Goldman 1999: 67-9 no. F.2; Reeves 2004: 148). In this scene two soldiers stand before incense altars, another rides in on a horse, and another offers a palm frond. Two images hammered into a tower wall show camel-riders stopping before altars (Goldman 1999: 68, 71-2 no. F.7). Finally, there are graffiti at Dura-Europos showing topographical features including a temple

and exterior views of walled cities, possibly Dura-Europos (Goldman 1999: 68-74 nos. F.3, F.5, G.1, G.2)

Returning to the Hauarra graffito, it is significant what elements of the local landscape its creator chose to reinforce: not the manmade landscape as in the examples from Dura-Europos, but the natural landscape, specifically Ridge 2 and Jebel Qalkha. Their inclusion in a religious narrative graffito emphasizes their significance in Hauarra's religious landscape. A good parallel for this is the wide range of civic coins from Neapolis in Samaria that showed that town's sacred peak paired with Roman religious and imperial imagery (Evans 2011: 177-81). Ridge 2's religious significance is confirmed by the presence of the Commemoration Cliff (with commemorative imagery and Greek and Nabataean invocations) and the adjacent Flat Top Activity Area that could have been used for ceremonies (as depicted in this graffito and by the graffito of dancing or worshipping humans below it). As for Jebel Qalkha, evidence from across al-Ḥumayma shows that its highest peak was a focus for local cult and civic identity in the Nabataean and Roman periods (Reeves 2016). Beneath this peak was the Cascading Plateau Site, the next site to be discussed.

Cascading Plateau Site

The Cascading Plateau Site (Reeves *et al.* 2018: 153-7) retains the highest concentration of graffiti discovered anywhere at al-Ḥumayma. The site is situated on the eastern flank of Jebel Qalkha with a commanding view of the jebel's highest peak and its distinctive bifurcated top (FIG. 9). As noted above, this notched peak seems to have been a focus of cult and identity in Humayma's Nabataean and Roman periods (Reeves 2016). The plateau, itself, is composed of a series of bedrock panels that cascade down from south to north (FIGS. 1:B-C, 10). It has a



9. View down the Cascading Plateau Site towards people standing on Panel 2; Jebel Qalkha's notched peak above (M.B. Reeves).



10. Northern tip of the Cascading Plateau Site with six panels and the four quadrants of Panel 2 marked (labelled image created by M.B. Reeves from APAAME_20171001_ REB-0814. Photographer: Rebecca Banks. Courtesy of APAAME).

triangular shape bordered on the east by the Wādī al-Ḥumayma and on the west by the Wādī Rakaba as-Samra. The runoff from these two wādīs converges below the lowest tip of the plateau. The Wādī Rakaba as-Samra and its runoff also stood between the triangular plateau and the notched peak which towered over the site's cascading panels. From the plateau there are excellent views of the surrounding terrain, and from its highest elevations it is possible to look over the intervening ridges to the ancient settlement and Roman fort.

Given the exposed nature of the Cascading Plateau Site it is likely that any graffiti on its bedrock panels and other indications of ancient human activity have been greatly impacted by runoff pouring down the hill and across the panels. The effects of this are visible today by the buildup of sediment and rocks obscuring some surfaces (e.g., FIG. 10, Panels 1 and 4) and erosion channels cutting through others (e.g., FIG. 10, Panels 2 and 3). It is unclear whether this erosion is a recent development caused by a change in the runoff's route or if it existed also in ancient times. In spite of this erosion, over a hundred graffiti have been documented on the site's bedrock panels. They are all located on the front ends of Panels 2, 3, 5, and 6, closest to the convergence of the wādīs.

As noted above, the dating of rock-cut graffiti can be challenging. At this site the presence of some Greek, Nabataean, and Thamudic inscriptions show that people were adding graffiti here during the Nabataean and Roman periods. In addition, the specific nature of Quadrant 2 on Panel 2, which is composed of a homogeneous honeycomb stratum of the Umm Ishrin sandstone coated in a thin desert varnish, has allowed us to identify three main phases in the carvings made there (Reeves and Harvey 2021). Phase 1 images (the darkest on the panel) are hypothesized to predate the foundation of the Nabataean town by

a considerable time. Phase 2 images and texts (with medium dark patinas) are likely contemporaneous with the Nabataean through early Islamic occupation of the ancient settlement in the 1st c. BC through 8th c. AD. Phase 3 images and texts (the lightest on the panel) are the most recent.

In addition to the aforementioned Greek, Nabataean, and Thamudic inscriptions, the carvings from Phase 2 include images of footprints, wild bovids (ibexes and gazelles), humans on camels and horses, canines hunting bovids, an anthropomorphic figure in the orant position, and abstract symbols. Many of these were likely either created or visible for interpretation during the time of the Roman garrisoned town. Phase 1 graffiti, including footprints and wild bovids, would also have remained visible during that later period.

Of the pictorial graffiti found here several types have connections to Nabataean and Roman religious activities, supporting the theory that this dramatic location above the wādīs and under the town's distinctive peak had a cultic significance. The first is an orant figure with arms half-raised in prayer (FIG. 11). The second type consists of numerous footprints, both bare and shod, carved as single feet, as pairs, and in groups. One of these is accompanied by a Thamudic E text that Graf (2018) has suggested may have been made by an officer in Haurra's 4th century unit of *equites sagittarii indigenae* (FIG. 12). Another pair of footprints has a line tying it to a Nabataean inscription (not yet published) and a wild horned bovid standing on its right foot (FIG. 13). A line extends out from the left foot and shows a camel on it, as if on a road. The inclusion here of a camel and wild bovid has a parallel to the Roman officer's religious ceremony graffito on the Commemoration Cliff and supports the idea that both wild bovids and camels played a role in Haurra's Nabataean and Roman cult. There are numerous contemporary graffiti across this same panel showing wild horned



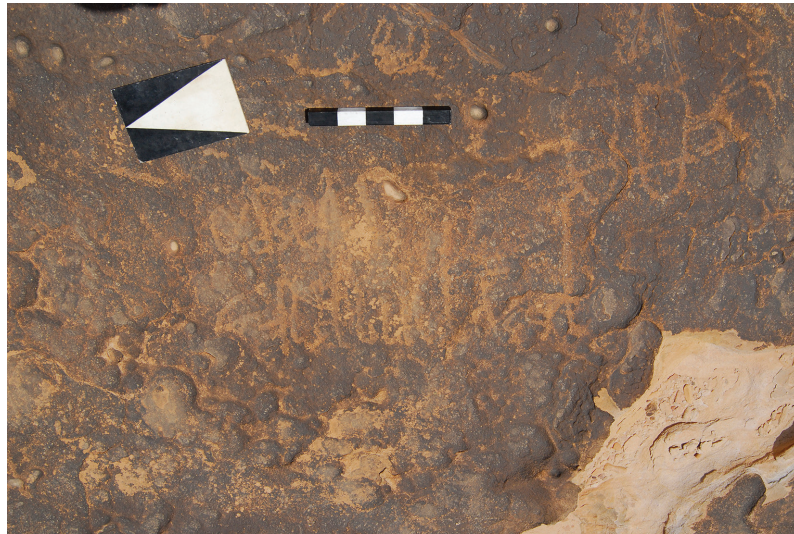
11. Phase 2 orant figure with other Phase 2 and 3 graffiti (C.A. Harvey).



12. Footprints and Thamudic E text possibly made by a 4th century officer in the midst of other Phase 2 and 3 graffiti (C.A. Harvey).

bovids. Additionally, the solitary camel on a road may be related to Ḥawara's foundation myth in which a Nabataean prince followed a divine camel-riding figure to a hill firmly rooted in the earth, perhaps this very peak (Reeves 2016: 167-9).

Panel 2 also contains almost 20 footprint carvings dating to Phase 2. A full catalogue and analysis of these footprints and the others found in various locations across al-Ḥumayma will be the subject of a forthcoming paper (Reeves in preparation).



13. A Nabataean textual graffito linked to a pair of footprints, a wild horned bovid, and a camel walking on a possible road (C.A. Harvey).

For the present paper, however, a consideration of how members of Hauarra's Roman garrison might interpret footprint graffiti is important. Footprint images have been created from prehistoric times until the present day in all parts of the world including Jordan (Inglis 1988; Khan 2008). There are many different theories regarding their creators' intentions (e.g., Dunbabin 1990). In the case of the pair of feet accompanied by a Thumudic E inscription mentioned above, the creator tells us his name and his rank but not why he created the graffito. Similarly, none of the footprint graffiti at al-Ḥumayma explicitly says why they were created. This left it up to subsequent viewers (archaeologists and Roman soldiers alike) to interpret their meaning. In the context of Hauarra's troops from the Legio III Cyrenaica, whose regimental deity was Jupiter-Ammon-Serapis, it is important to note that Serapis, Isis, and other Egyptian gods were the most common recipients of inscribed footprint votives in the Roman Empire (Dunbabin 1990: 86; Takács

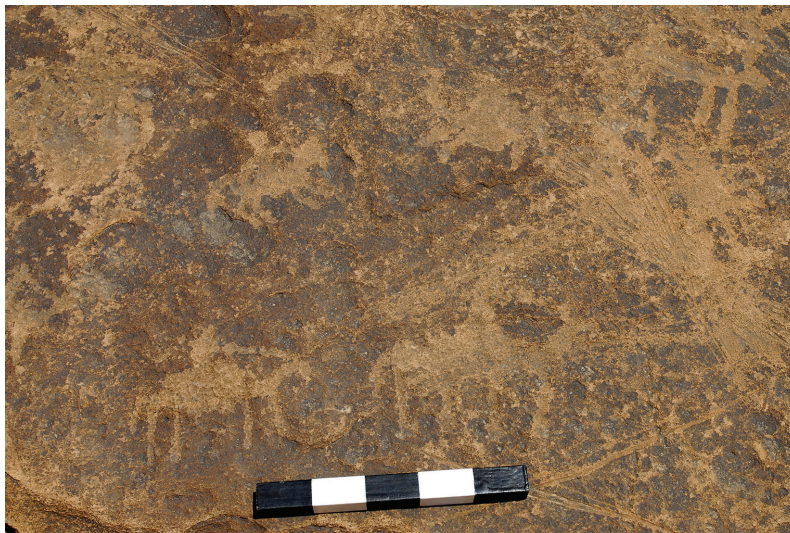
2005; Puccio 2010). In Egypt and Nubia this practice of carving footprint votives at temples and religious sites dates back to the New Kingdom (Puccio 2010) and would have been seen by Roman soldiers who garrisoned and patrolled the region (e.g., at Qasr Ibrim where an oracle of Amun—i.e., Ammon—and incised feet existed at the time of the Roman garrison, Rose 1996). In addition, the Foot of Serapis and the Foot of Isis were cult objects in their own right as shown in votive objects and on Roman coins, including those from towns with Roman garrisons (e.g., Alexandria and 'Akko-Ptolemais; Bricault 2006: 129 Pl. 19.15; Caesarea Maritima: Gersht 2008: 513–5). At al-Ḥumayma, it is therefore likely that any pre-existing footprints would have been interpreted in terms of the Roman soldiers' expectations for cultic practices. For a garrison that had as its patron deity Jupiter-Ammon-Serapis, this suggests the soldiers would have interpreted footprint graffiti in terms of the cult of their regimental god and his consort, Isis. The

same interpretation may have encouraged them to add new footprint images at this site and elsewhere at Hauarra, including in the fort.

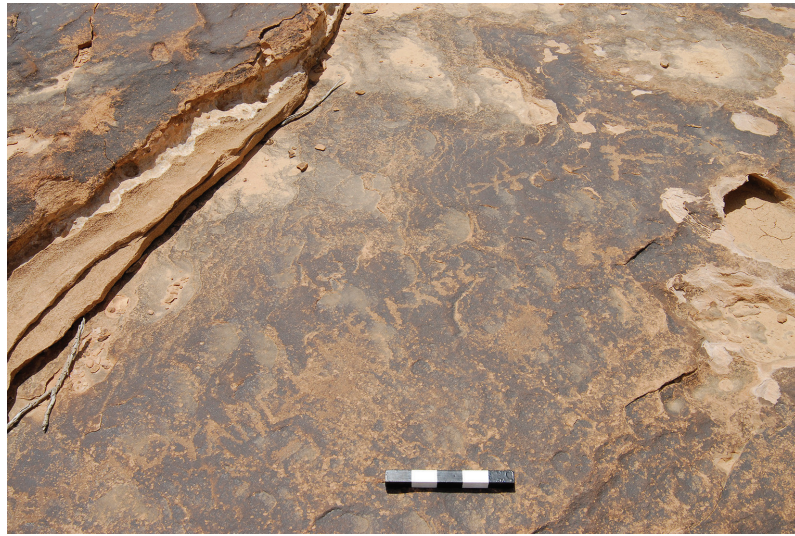
Another type of pictorial graffiti on Panel 2 that likely relates to soldiers and civilians in the Nabataean and Roman community shows riders on horses and camels. These are mostly clustered together at the front of Panel 2 where several camels with riders appear to be walking in a line with riders on horses and perhaps camels scattered above (FIG. 14). Beyond showing that camels and horses were ridden during Phase 2, the meaning of these carvings is now difficult to interpret. For example, it is unclear both whether the riders are armed and if they are soldiers or civilians. The difficulty in interpretation is largely due to deliberate damage resulting from sections of the scene being scratched out later in Phase 2 (i.e., anytime up to the early Islamic period). Some of these scratched erasures are over the top of written names or labels; other erasures have obfuscated the figures. Such erasures remind us that graffiti, once

created, have a meaning to later viewers. In this case, their meaning was subsequently censured by scratching out older texts and images. Today the patinas of the initial graffiti and overlying scratches are very similar. At the time of their creation, in contrast, the erasures would have been a noticeably lighter symbol of someone's censorship.

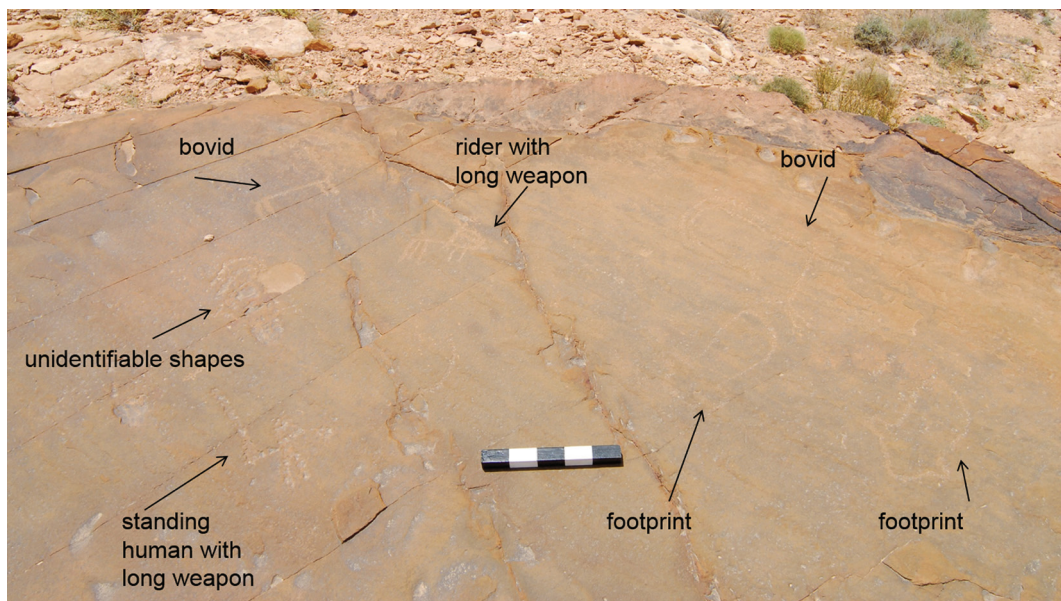
The graffiti on the other panels at the Cascading Plateau are not as numerous, but a few showing people with weapons are worthy of attention for their possible connection to Hauarra's Roman garrison. For example, two soldiers with horizontally held swords and round shields appear on the front of Panel 6 next to a name carved in Greek (FIG. 15). As Greek was the common language of Hauarra's garrison, the adjacent images were quite likely made by members of that garrison. Two weapon-carrying figures at the front of Panel 3 might be members of the garrison as well, although there are no inscriptions to aid interpretation (FIG. 16). One standing figure holds a long weapon vertically and another appears ready to



14. Horse and camel riders and erasures at the front of Panel 2 (M.B. Reeves).



15. Humans with swords and round shields to the right of a Greek inscription on Panel 6 (C.A. Harvey).



16. Graffiti at the front of Panel 3 (M.B. Reeves with labels by E. Welsh).

throw a spear from horseback. Another horseman appears on Panel 5 spearing a large feline (FIG. 17). Although not necessarily Roman, this last image is similar to graffiti inside the military offices at Dura-

Europos showing Roman soldiers hunting lions and boars from horseback (Goldman 1999: 35-7). A graffito from the al-Jawf region of Arabia, showing a horseman pursuing an ostrich with a spear, may also

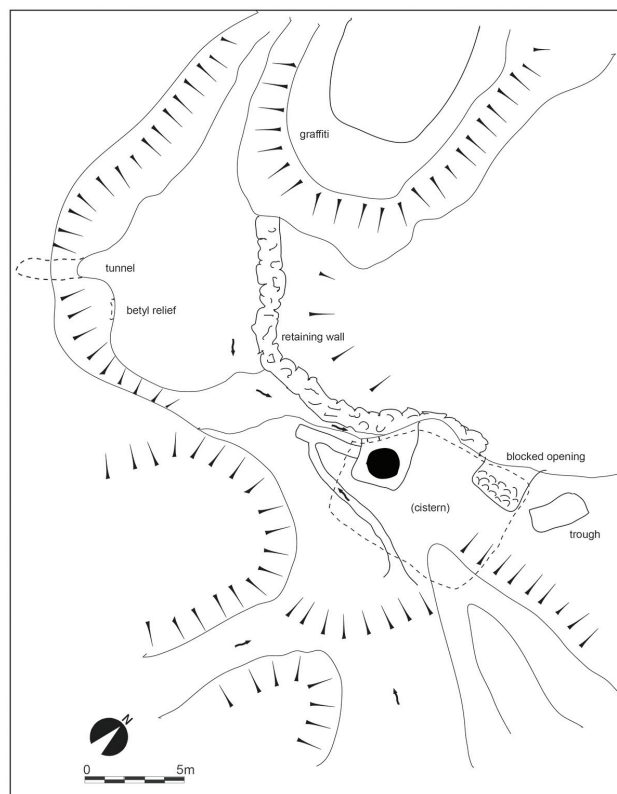


17. Horseman spearing a large feline on Panel 5 (M.B. Reeves).

depict a Roman soldier as it is next to a Nabataean text carved by a cavalryman serving in the Roman army (Nehmé 2017: 133-4, 143-4, 148 fig. 13). Another Roman cavalryman, who is about to throw a lance, appears in a graffito from Mons Claudianus (Tomber 2006: 301-2 no. 55). Graffiti depicting standing soldiers holding spears (and standards) appear also at Dura-Europos (Goldman 1999: 57-8 no. D.16). Finally, what is thought to be a Sasanian graffito from Dura-Europos shows a lancer spearing a Roman soldier armed with a sword and round shield (James 2004: 42).

Servant of Ḥawara Site

The last site to be discussed here is the Servant of Ḥawara site, named after a Nabataean graffito requesting peace for a “servant of *’l-ḥwr*” (Graf 1992: 70; Oleson 2010: 53; Reeves 2016: 172). This site is located in an elevated



18. Plan of the Servant of Ḥawara Site (courtesy of J.P. Oleson).

hollow in the eastern flank of Jebel Qalkha, about 500 m north of its southern tip (FIG. 1:A; Oleson 2010: 144–7). Figure 18 shows a plan of the site with the primary features marked: a Nabataean cistern with a horned altar or betyl carved above its circular opening (Reeves 2009: 330 fig. 6); a relief carving of an aedicula niche containing either three betyls or a betyl flanked by two altars (Reeves 2009: 330 fig. 6); an adjacent tunnel that could have been used for storage, dedications, or shade; a retaining wall (mostly modern); and a graffiti panel facing the aedicula and tunnel. It should also be pointed out that there may have been other graffiti panels here in the past but, if so, they have eroded as result of runoff streaming down the cliffs.

The combination of a cultic niche, betyls, water, cave, and graffiti, especially the “servant of *’l-ḥwr*” graffito, has led previous scholars to posit that this area might have functioned as an open-air shrine (Graf 1992: 69; Oleson 2010: 409). This is certainly true, but the site’s location overlooking the southern edge of the settlement also seems

very significant. This elevated nook with its own cistern would have provided an extremely useful vantage point to monitor the *Via Nova Traiana*’s route in and out of town, which is hypothesized to have run between Jebel Qalkha and the Wādī Qalkha (Reeves 2019c: 129). The site also provided clear views of the fort, the town, and the activity areas at the southern end of the two ridges (Reeves 2019c: 125). Altogether the combination of an elevated viewpoint with water and divine protection would have made this site an excellent base for soldiers or civic officials to monitor travellers leaving or entering the settlement in both the Roman and Nabataean periods. Some of these monitors may be responsible for the site’s graffiti.

The extant graffiti panel (FIG. 19) shows signs of erosion, especially around its edges. The textual graffiti are in Nabataean and Thamudic and include the aforementioned text asking for peace for “BR-TLM, servant of *’l-ḥwr*.” This late 1st c. AD graffito is the only Nabataean text from the site containing the name of the Nabataean town (Ḥawara)



19. Detail of graffiti on the Servant of Ḥawara Site showing archers, ibexes, and a horseman executing the ‘Parthian shot’ (C.A. Harvey).

and possibly, by extension, the name of the town's god. Why exactly BR-TLM chose this location for his graffito is not specified, but it could be related to the nearby aedicula or with the site's location overlooking the southern entrance to the town. The pictorial graffiti surrounding this text are lighter suggesting that they may have been made at a later date. The imagery shows four archers hunting bovids with long curved horns (likely ibexes). One of the archers, mounted on what appears to be a horse (based on proportions), is shooting backwards in the saddle, a manoeuvre known as the 'Parthian shot,' but used also by Roman soldiers (Rostovtzeff 1943; James 2004: 197-8). A Thamudic text appears in the midst of the hunting scene.

Bovid hunting scenes, often accompanied by Thamudic texts, are common in desert graffiti found throughout the region (Corbett 2012). What is special about these images, however, is that they are the only images found at any of the graffiti sites at al-Ḥumayma that depict bowmen. This is strange as the *Notitia Dignitatum* records that there was a unit of mounted indigenous bowmen (*equites sagittarii indigenae*) stationed at Hauarra in the 4th century. As discussed above, an officer from this unit may have carved footprints and his name in Thamudic at the Cascading Plateau Site. As regards the Servant of Ḥawara Site, it is likely that this elevated well-watered vantage point was used by the military bowmen to monitor the southern route into town. If so, these protectors of the town could have added imagery reflecting their skills alongside the earlier Nabataean graffito. These soldiers would be using hunting imagery to display their skills just as graffiti from Dura-Europos show Roman soldiers hunting lions and wild boars (Goldman 1999: 35-7). Moreover, the addition of bowmen imagery beside a Nabataean text would parallel the imagery seen at other local graffiti sites and in the town's community shrine where the interests

of civilians and soldiers appear side-by-side. Alternatively, these hunters could be civilians who chose to add their imagery alongside the servant of Ḥawara's inscription.

Commonalities, Differences, and Significance

In the body of this paper four different sites were examined where graffiti existed during the 2nd to 4th c. AD when a Roman garrison had been installed next to the Nabataean founded town. The themes of the graffiti across these four sites will now briefly be examined to explore commonalities and differences across the site and what these suggest about the interests and beliefs of Hauarra's Roman period inhabitants.

One commonality in the graffiti across all the sites discussed are depictions of soldiers with weapons or military standards. Although relatively small in overall numbers, such images would have been impactful in a Roman garrisoned town. For the creators these images would have had a personal significance that we can sometimes determine by other imagery or texts. In other cases, when no clues were given, the presence of a garrison provided a context for interpreting such images as reminders that Hauarra was under military protection.

Depictions of horses and camels with riders (or a saddle indicating a rider) are also present in all four locations. Many of these riders are armed with bows or spears/lances or carry a military standard. Again, such imagery would likely be interpreted in the Roman period as connected with the military garrison. Strangely, there is only one depiction of a mounted bowman, shown on a horse at the Servant of Ḥawara Site. As noted above, the *Notitia Dignitatum* reports that an indigenous mounted unit garrisoned Hauarra in the 4th century. As imagery of mounted archers is common at Dura-Europos, similar imagery would be expected here. It may, however, be that such graffiti at al-Ḥumayma have been lost to

erosion or remain undiscovered in the hills or in unexcavated parts of the fort.

Another theme that appears only once at these four sites is a religious ceremony in progress (on the Commemoration Cliff). Fortunately, the one example we do have is very informative about a particular god (or gods), the role of a local animal in Hauarra's cult, the shared interests of soldiers and civilians, and specific locations in the natural environment with a religious significance. This is, of course, a very detailed image of a religious ceremony and other graffiti showing orant figures (from the Commemoration Cliff and Cascading Plateau Site) and footprints (from the Cascading Plateau Site and Roman fort) may relate to religious ceremonies as well. Some of the images of wild bovids that appear on natural surfaces throughout the hills and ridges may also have a cultic significance. Some of these are accompanied by inscriptions that are still being analyzed by David Graf (e.g., the Nabataean inscription accompanying a bovid, feet, and a camel). Once his work is complete, more will be understood about such images' local significance. Finally, it should be noted that although textual graffiti from the fort were not included in this paper, a Latin graffito from the *praetorium* with a date corresponding to the Isia Festival suggests that this festival honouring Isis and Serapis may have been one of the religious events celebrated in this Roman garrisoned town (Reeves 2019b: 146–7).

As was discussed above, Isis and Serapis were two of the most common recipients of inscribed footprint votives in the Roman Empire. Their cult would have provided a filter for soldiers interpreting footprints carved or seen at Hauarra in the Roman period. Of the four sites discussed, such footprints have only been found on the Cascading Plateau Site and in the Roman fort. They have, however, been documented on other horizontal bedrock surfaces exposed on Hauarra's sandstone ridges

(Reeves *et al.* 2018). It is quite possible that footprint carvings also exist on horizontal surfaces beneath the fill at the Servant of Hawara Site and the Commemoration Cliff, but excavation would be needed to test this possibility.

To conclude, the pictorial graffiti from Hauarra's Roman fort and three sites in the adjacent hills and ridges demonstrate themes comparable to other Roman garrisoned communities. These themes of armed men standing or riding horses and camels, religious imagery relating to particular gods, wild animals, and the town's typography provide us with clues as to the interests and beliefs of Hauarra's military and civilian populations. The imagery present also allows us to speculate how different sites were used. When differences in the imagery appear between sites it is not clear, however, if such differences are meaningful in terms of ancient uses or are a consequence of which graffiti have survived and been discovered.

Acknowledgments

The sites discussed in this paper were excavated or surveyed by the Humayma Excavation Project, which is accredited by the Archaeological Standards Committee of the American Schools of Oriental Research (now the American Society of Overseas Research) and licensed by the Department of Antiquities of the Kingdom of Jordan. Funding related to the sites discussed was provided by grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Taggart Foundation, and the Senate Advisory Research Committee of Queen's University. All images were created by members of the Humayma Excavation Project unless otherwise indicated. The author is grateful to J.P. Oleson for permission to refer to his graffiti analyses that will appear in the forthcoming final report on the fort.

References

- Avner, U., L.K. Horwitz, and W. Horowitz. 2016. "Symbolism of the Ibex Motif in Negev Rock Art." *Journal of Arid Environments* 143:35–43.
- Baird, J.A. 2011. "The Graffiti of Dura-Europos: A Contextual Approach." In *Ancient Graffiti in Context*, edited by J.A. Baird and C. Taylor, 49–68. New York and London: Routledge.
- Baird, J.A., and C. Taylor, eds. 2011. *Ancient Graffiti in Context*. New York and London: Routledge.
- . 2016. "Ancient Graffiti." In *Routledge Handbook of Graffiti and Street Art*, edited by J.I. Ross, 17–26. London and New York: Routledge.
- Bricault, L. 2006. "Deities from Egypt on Coins of Southern Levant." *Israel Numismatic Research* 1:123–35.
- Chaniotis, A. 2011. "Graffiti in Aphrodisias: Images-Texts-Contexts." In *Ancient Graffiti in Context*, edited by J.A. Baird and C. Taylor, 191–207. New York and London: Routledge.
- Corbett, G.J. 2012. "Desert Traces: Tracking the Nabataeans in Jordan's Wadi Ramm." *NEA* 75:208–19.
- Darby, R., and E. Darby. 2015. "The Late Roman Fort at 'Ayn Gharandal, Jordan: Interim Report on the 2009–2014 Field Seasons." *JRA* 28:461–70.
- Dunbabin, K.M.D. 1990. "Ipsa Deae Vestigia... Footprints Divine and Human on Graeco-Roman Monuments." *JRA* 3:85–109.
- el-Khouri, L.S. 2002. *The Nabataean Terracotta Figurines*. Oxford: Archaeopress.
- Evans, J.D. 2011. "From Mountain to Icon: Mount Gerizim on Roman Provincial Coins from Neapolis, Samaria." *NEA* 74:170–82.
- Gersht, R. 2008. "Caesarean Sculpture in Context." In *The Sculptural Environment of the Roman Near East: Reflections on Culture, Ideology, and Power*, edited by Y.Z. Eliav, E.A. Friedland, and S. Herbert, 509–38. Leuven: Peeters.
- Goldman, B. 1999. "Pictorial Graffiti of Dura-Europos." *Parthica* 1:19–106.
- Graf, D.F. 1992. "The 'God' of Humayma." In *Intertestamental Essays in Honor of Józef Tadeusz Milik*, edited by Z.J. Kapera, 67–76. Kraków: The Enigma Press.
- . 2018. "A Thamudic Inscription by a 'Deputy' (Ḥlf) at Humayma." In *Near Eastern and Arabian Essays: Studies in Honour of John F. Healey*, edited by G.J. Brooke, A.H.W. Curtis, M. al-Hamad, and G.R. Smith, 133–44. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Inglis, B. 1988. "Incisioni di Piedi e Clazari sulle Rocce del Deserto della Giordania Meridionale." *Studi per l'Ecologia del Quaternario* 10:67–92.
- James, S. 2004. *The Excavations at Dura-Europos Conducted by Yale University and the French Academy of Inscriptions and Letters 1928 to 1937, Final Report VII: The Arms and Armour and Other Military Equipment*. London: The British Museum Press.
- Keegan, P. 2014. *Graffiti in Antiquity*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Khan, M. 2008. "Symbolism in The Rock Art of Saudi Arabia: Hand and Footprints." *Rock Art Research* 25:13–22.
- Kindler, A. 1983. *The Coinage of Bostra*. Warminster: Aris & Phillips.
- Langner, M. 2001. *Antike Graffitizeichnungen. Motive, Gestaltung und Bedeutung*. Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert.
- Nehmé, L. 2017. "New Dated Inscriptions (Nabataean and Pre-Islamic Arabic) From A Site Near Al-Jawf, Ancient Dūmah, Saudi Arabia." *Arabian Epigraphic Notes* 3:121–64.
- Oleson, J.P. 2010. *Humayma Excavation Project, I: Resources, History, and the Water-Supply System*. ASOR Archaeological Reports Series 15. Boston: American Schools of Oriental Research.
- . 2019. "The Trajanic Auxiliary Fort at Hawara (Modern Humayma), Jordan."

- SHAJ 13:395–406.
- Oleson, J.P., M.B. Reeves, and B.J. Fisher. 2002. “New Dedicatory Inscriptions from Humayma (Ancient Hawara), Jordan.” *ZPE* 140:103–21.
- Oleson, J.P., M.B. Reeves, and R.M. Foote. 2015. “The Nabataean, Roman, Byzantine, And Early Islamic Site of Humayma: A Look Back on Three Decades of Research.” *ACOR Newsletter* 27.1 (Summer):1–7.
- Oleson, J.P., E. de Bruijn, M.B. Reeves, A.N. Sherwood, C.A. Harvey, and M. Nikolic. In preparation. *Humayma Excavation Project, 3: The Roman Fort*.
- Puccio, L. 2010. “Pieds et Empreintes de Pieds dans les Cultes Isiaques. Pour une Meilleure Compréhension des Documents Hispaniques.” *Mélanges De La Casa De Velázquez* 40:137–55.
- Reeves, M.B. 2004. “The Feriale Duranum, Roman Military Religion, and Dura-Europos: A Reassessment.” Ph.D. diss., State University of New York at Buffalo.
- . 2009. “Landscapes of Divine Power at al-Humayma.” *SHAJ* 10:325–38.
- . 2015. “A Petroglyph of a Religious Ceremony at Humayma.” *JRA* 28:451–60.
- . 2016. “Humayma’s Notched Peak: A Focus of Nabataean and Roman Veneration and Civic Identity.” *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 27:166–75.
- . 2019a. “A Graffito of Sacred Stone in a Wheeled Vehicle from Humayma.” Paper read at the Annual Meeting of the American Schools of Oriental Research, November 2019, San Diego. Published abstract, 107–8. <http://www.asor.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/2019-ASOR-Program-and-Abstract-Book.pdf>.
- . 2019b. “A Nabataean and Roman Shrine with Civic and Military Gods at Humayma, Jordan.” *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 30:134–55.
- . 2019c. “The Nabataean and Roman Towns at al-Humayma: An Urban Design Perspective.” *SHAJ* 13:115–27.
- . In preparation. “Footprint Images in the Hills and Roman Fort at Humayma, Jordan: A Contextual Analysis.”
- Reeves, M.B., and C.A. Harvey. 2021. “Photogrammetric Documentation and Phasing of a Rock Carving Gallery at Humayma.” *ADAJ* 60:647–56.
- Reeves, M.B., C.A. Harvey, and B. Seymour. 2018. “Report on the Humayma Excavation Project’s 2014 Survey of Petroglyphs and Quarries.” *ADAJ* 59:141–59.
- Rose, P. 1996. *Qasr Ibrim: The Hinterland Survey*. London: Egypt Exploration Society.
- Rostovtzeff, M. 1943. “The Parthian Shot.” *AJA* 47:174–87.
- Stoll, O. 2003. “Der Gott der Arabischen Legion: Zeus Ammon-Sarapis Und Die Legio III Cyrenaica in Der Römischen Provinz Arabia.” In *Sprache Und Kultur in Der Kaiserlichen Provinz Arabia*, edited by L. Schumacher and O. Stoll, 70–109. St. Katharinen: Verlag.
- Studer, J. 2007. “Animal Exploitation in the Nabataean World.” In *The World of the Nabataeans: International Conference: The World of the Herods and the Nabataeans held at The British Museum 17–19 April 2001*, edited by K.D. Politis, 251–72. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag.
- Takács, S. 2005. “Divine and Human Feet: Records of Pilgrims Honouring Isis.” In *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman and Early Christian Antiquity: Seeing the Gods*, edited by J. Elsner and I. Rutherford, 353–70. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tomber, R. 2006. “Ceramic Objects, 4.4. Graffiti.” In *Survey and Excavation, Mons Claudianus, 1987–1993. Vol. III: Ceramic Vessels and Related Objects*, edited by V.A. Maxfield and D.P.S. Peacock, 301–6. Cairo: Institut Français D’archéologie Orientale.
- Villeneuve, F. 2015. “The Rampart and the

South-Eastern Gate (Area 35). Survey
and Excavation Seasons 2011 and 2014.”
In *Report on the Fifth Season (2014) of
the Madâ'in Sâlih Archaeological Project,*

edited by L.E.A. Nehmé, 17–75. Paris:
Orient & Méditerranée.