

THE PETRA HINTERLAND TOMBS PROJECT (PHTP): PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE 2012 SEASON

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Acknowledgements

The first field season of the Petra Hinterland Tombs Project (PHTP) took place between November 5th and November 15th, 2012. The project was directed by both Dr. Fawzi Abudanah and Dr. Lucy Wadeson and was supported by al-Hussein Bin Talal University and the University of Oxford. Lindsay Holman (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill) was responsible for the preliminary study of the pottery collected during the survey. We would like to thank the former Director General of the Department of Antiquities of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Faris al-Hmood, for granting the survey permit and the Department of Antiquities representative, Riyadh al-Majali. We are also very grateful to the American Center of Oriental Research (ACOR) – in particular Christopher Tuttle and Elena Ronza – for providing accommodation and equipment, and to the following individuals for their assistance with the project: Ahmad Hasanat, Youssef Nasarat, Abu Emjed, Abu Rama, Abu Elias and his brother Mohammad Nuimat.

Introduction

During his previous surveys in the areas to the north-east, east and south-east of Petra (*e.g.* Abudanah 2004: 51-69; 2006), F. Abudanah noted several ancient tombs which he believed belonged to the late Nabataean – early Roman period (1st-2nd centuries AD) according to the architecture and associated pottery sherds. These tombs, which had not been recorded or studied before, had been recently robbed and faced the threat of ongoing illegal excavation

and looting. For this reason, the Petra Hinterland Tombs Project (PHTP) was set up for their urgent documentation and study, with the following specific aims:

- To record crucial data before the tombs are further disturbed or robbed and to subsequently assess whether any conservation is required for their future preservation;
- To establish the date of the tombs through a typological study and analysis of the ceramics;
- To determine the relationship between the tombs inside Petra and those in its hinterland through exploring factors such as urban versus rural settings, socio-economic status and tomb type, and the effect of the natural environment on funerary architecture and practices¹;
- To enhance knowledge of ancient funerary architecture and burial customs in the south of Jordan;
- To shed light on life and society in Petra's hinterland during the Nabataean and Roman periods.

The potential importance of these tombs was suggested by the discovery and subsequent excavation of the isolated, monumental tomb at KHirbat Sabūr (near At Tayyibah) by Abudanah in collaboration with the Department of Antiquities in 2007 (Abudanah *et al.* 2011: 1-10). This underground, vaulted tomb, located in the centre of an enclosure and linked to an

1. The study of these tombs provides valuable comparative material for understanding the tombs inside Petra that have been the focus of much scholarship (for example, see Wadeson 2012: 99-125; 2013: 18-24).

ancient road by a monumental approach, was intended for the burial of one individual – clearly one of significant importance given the monumentality and prominent location. The excavators believe this tomb should most likely be dated to the Nabataean period and proposed that the enclosure demarcated the sanctity of the space which was dedicated to activities related to ancestor worship (Abudanah *et al.* 2011: 7-8). Its unique layout and structure, but obvious links to Nabataean funerary customs, such as demarcating sacred space and providing a monumental approach (Wadeson 2011: 5-8), provides us with a wealth of new information on funerary traditions in rural areas of the Nabataean kingdom (or the later Provincia Arabia, depending on the dating).

Methodology and Fieldwork Strategy

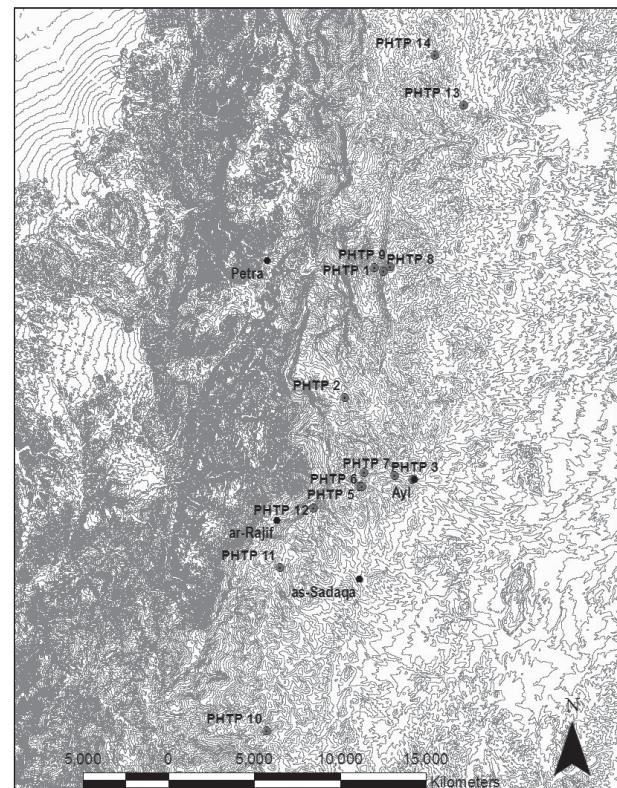
The first fieldwork season of the project, which took place over eleven days in November 2012, involved locating and recording the tombs previously seen by Abudanah and seeking potential new tombs through the aid of Google Earth and local knowledge. It ought to be noted that, ironically, it was the modern disturbance and looting of the tombs that in fact made them more visible in the landscape and thus brought them to our attention. During the eleven days, we managed to locate and record eleven previously unstudied ancient tombs in the area between Ash SHawbak in the north, Petra in the east and Rās An Naqab in the south, along the Jibāl Ash Sharāh ridge (**Fig. 1**). A further three ‘possible’ tombs were recorded, the situation of which was unclear due to them being less disturbed than the other structures.

The study area belongs to the Jibāl Ash Sharāh range. It comprises contiguous rocky hills, often intersected by small valley systems and occasionally by great ravines extending north-south. On the hilltops the elevation ranges from 1500 to 1700 metres above sea level. However, it gradually decreases from west to east.

With the aid of carefully designed documentation sheets, we catalogued each tomb according to a new numbering system (*e.g.* PHTP Tomb 1, PHTP Tomb 2 *etc.*) and recorded the following information: the location and surroundings of the tomb (including details of the landscape, orientation, related structures

and features, such as roads, settlements *etc.*), the UTM coordinates through use of a hand-held GPS (Garmin *etrex* with an accuracy of 3-4m) and the measurements (where possible) of the burial chamber and any visible monument above-ground. We also documented the tombs thoroughly by making sketch-plans, drawings and photographs. We collected visible pottery sherds that were either inside the tomb or in its immediate surroundings (though not exhaustively), which have undergone a preliminary study by ceramicist Lindsay Holman. Furthermore, the coordinates of all tomb sites were cross-checked against sites recorded in previous intensive surveys of this area (for *e.g.* Tholbecq 2001: 399-405; 2013: 295-312; MacDonald *et al.* 2011; 2012). Only one tomb (PHTP Tomb 13) was within an area previously recorded by MacDonald as a cemetery (Site 245, Al Qulayb Al GHarbī) (MacDonald *et al.* 2011: 369, table 2).

In some cases, sites which we initially expected to be tombs, turned out to be other features, such as walls, houses or simple caves. We noted this information on our documentation sheets and took the GPS points of any structures that were



1. Map showing location of tombs documented by the PHTP (F. Abudanah).

particularly significant (again cross-checking with sites previously surveyed by Tholbecq and MacDonald). It must be noted that the survey of the areas was not exhaustive – instead we only visited each site that was potentially a tomb, as observed either through Google Earth, or communicated by local inhabitants in the areas. For comparative purposes we also visited previously published Nabataean-Roman tombs at Aṣ Sadaqah (Kurdi 1972: 85-87) and Sabūr (Abudanah *et al.* 2011: 1-10), a Nabataean cemetery (JSS 80) recorded to the east of ‘Ayn Mūsā (Tholbecq 2001: 399-405) and a recently robbed cemetery at Al Qaranah in the Rās An Naqab area (Musil 1908: 229-230; Glueck 1935: 62; Kennedy 2004: 188-190).

List of Tombs Recorded

The tombs recorded in our survey are listed in **Table 1**, which includes the following information: their assigned number, location, UTM coordinates, elevation, tomb type and indication whether a surface structure was visible. As previously mentioned, all the tombs had been disturbed and robbed to varying degrees, meaning that the floors of accessible chambers were often blocked with rubble and large stones (potentially blocking lower levels of burials). Nevertheless, human remains and

ceramics were still visible in many cases. A brief description of each tomb is provided below, together with a short summary of results from the preliminary study of the ceramics [The ceramics report was prepared by Lindsay Holman]. A discussion then follows on the typology of the tombs, their general characteristics, and possible date.

PHTP Tomb 1

UTM coordinates: 0741121/3357327

Elevation: 1447m

Tomb 1 is located approximately 1.5km east of ‘Ayn Mūsā, on top of a ridge enclosed by valleys that has a clear view towards the mountains of Petra. An ancient wall running east-west is clearly visible just to the south of the tomb (**Fig. 2**). There is no visible settlement associated with this tomb, but agricultural fields exist in the vicinity and a cave is situated at a higher point on the ridge to the east. This tomb may be the same tomb (JSS 159) visited by Laurent Tholbecq and Hani Falahat during Tholbecq’s survey of the Jibāl Ash SHarāh (2001: 404, fig. 7), according to the published photo. However, the location of the tombs does not correspond exactly and since the tomb has not been properly documented before, it is difficult to verify.

Table 1: Tombs recorded in PHTP Season 1.

Tomb No.	Location	UTM Coordinates	Elevation	Tomb Type	Visible Surface Structure
PHTP 1	East of ‘Ayn Mūsā	0741121; 3357327	1447 m	<i>Hypogeum</i> with built <i>loculi</i>	Yes
PHTP 2	East of At Tayyibah	0739395; 3349737	1711 m	<i>Hypogeum</i> with built <i>loculi</i>	Yes
PHTP 3	KHirbat Ayl	0743340; 3344981	1462 m	Rock-cut (subterranean) with cist graves	No
PHTP 4	West of Ayl	0740514; 3345365	1544 m	Rock-cut (subterranean) with <i>dromos</i>	No
PHTP 5	West of Ayl	0740239; 3344536	1631 m	Rock-cut with carved <i>loculi</i>	No
PHTP 6	West of Ayl	0740391; 3344568	1639 m	Unknown	Yes
PHTP 7	West of Ayl	0742303; 3345191	1497 m	Rock-cut with carved <i>loculi</i>	No
PHTP 8	East of ‘Ayn Mūsā	0741662; 3357125	1555 m	Rock-cut (subterranean)	No
PHTP 9	East of ‘Ayn Mūsā	0742047; 3357387	1575 m	Unknown	Yes
PHTP 10	Northwest of Rās An Naqab	0734832; 3330296	1691 m	<i>Hypogeum</i> with built <i>loculi</i>	Yes
PHTP 11	Southeast of Ar Rajīf	0735613; 3339813	1703 m	<i>Hypogeum</i> with carved and built <i>loculi</i>	Yes
PHTP 12	Northeast of Ar Rajīf	0737555; 3343300	1677 m	<i>Hypogeum</i> with built <i>loculi</i>	Yes
PHTP 13	Northwest of Al Manshiyyah	0746344; 3366816	1436 m	Rock-cut with built entrance	No
PHTP 14	Southeast of Bīr Ikhdād	0744639; 3369732	1576 m	Unknown	Yes

The tomb consists of an underground chamber constructed of irregularly sized limestone ashlars. The chamber is almost square (2.57×2.42m) and originally had a vaulted ceiling as demonstrated by the remains of springers of two arches spanning the north and south walls (**Fig. 3**). Twelve square-shaped (0.50×0.50m; depth: *ca.* 2.20m) *loculi* for burial are visible in the west wall of the chamber, arranged in three rows, while one larger, rectangular *loculus* is visible in the opposite east wall (**Fig. 4**). The *loculi* are constructed of limestone slabs with small stones filling the gaps. The floor of the chamber is blocked by rubble and large stones displaced when the tomb was looted, but it is possible to see that the original floor level is considerably lower, as the bottom row of *loculi* in the west wall is partly blocked and the south-east corner contains deep holes between the rubble. Much of the tomb's construction material is scattered on the surface as a result of its looting. The size of

some of the blocks suggests that they may have formed a surface structure or monumental marker for the tomb.

The pottery sherds collected from this tomb site were mostly found in the debris scattered on the surface, with a primary date range of between the late 1st through 3rd centuries AD. One body sherd of a possible Iron Age vessel was recovered. The fabric is much cruder than the typical Nabataean and Roman period coarse wares, with many organic voids and quartz inclusions. For the diagnostic Nabataean and Roman vessels, jugs and jars dominated the assemblage (**Fig. 5**). Among the Nabataean fine wares were two carinated bowls of the 1st century AD (Schmid 2000: figs. 44-56) and one *unguentarium* base. Coarse ware cooking vessels were also recovered, including one 2nd/3rd century AD cooking pot with a deeply grooved rim.



2. PHTP Tomb 1, with wall and view towards Petra in the background (L. Wadeson).



4. Loculus in east wall of PHTP Tomb 1 (L. Wadeson).



3. Loculi in west wall of PHTP Tomb 1 (L. Wadeson).



5. Diagnostic sherds from PHTP Tomb 1 (L. Wadeson).

PHTP Tomb 2

UTM coordinates: 0739395/3349737

Elevation: 1711m

Tomb 2 is situated approximately 2km east of Taybeh (south-east of Petra) on a flat but relatively high ridge that commands views in all directions. There is an irregular enclosure around the site of the tomb and an ancient settlement 350m to the east, along which runs an ancient road. The area is surrounded by agricultural fields. This tomb is similar to



6. View down into PHTP Tomb 2 (looters' hole) (L. Wadeson).



7. Loculi in west wall of PHTP Tomb 2 and surviving arch (L. Wadeson).

Tomb 1, in that it consists of a subterranean vaulted chamber with built walls and *loculi* (Figs. 6-7). However, the chamber is much smaller (2.5×1.5m) and the east and north walls are partly rock-cut and partly built, displaying an effective use of mixed construction. There are six visible *loculi* built in the west wall, and eight in the south wall, arranged in three rows. On average they are approximately 0.55m wide, 0.85m tall and 2.30m deep. The bottom rows of *loculi* are blocked by rubble and large stones displaced when the tomb was looted, and it is clear that the original chamber floor is much lower. The *loculi* are constructed from large slabs of limestone and the gaps between the slabs are sealed with small stones and mud.

The looters disturbed this tomb by cutting a hole down in the east end, right through the roofing system (Fig. 6). Thus, the west side of the roofing system remains intact and it is possible to observe layers of irregularly sized stones and earth supported by an arch that is still *in situ* (Fig. 8). The well built arch extends between the middle of the south and north walls. When viewed from within the chamber, a neat line of well-cut ashlar can be seen lying directly across the arch. This offers a valuable insight into the construction of the tomb.

On the surface, four walls constructed of large, irregular ashlar form a square structure (ca. 5×5m) above the tomb (Fig. 9). Three courses of the one-metre thick walls survive (best preserved on the west side with an external height of 0.75m) and the mound of scattered blocks suggests that they supported some type of funerary monument (Fig. 10).



8. Section of roofing of PHTP Tomb 2 (facing west) (L. Wadeson).

The area around Tomb 2 yielded pottery primarily of the late 1st century AD. None of the sherds recovered have production periods that begin later than the 1st century AD. Nearly half of the sherds recovered (24 of 49) belong to Nabataean fine ware fabrics, including one Nabataean painted fine ware sherd from Phase 3b (70/80-106AD) (Schmid 1996: 207, fig. 701). Among the Nabataean fine ware sherds there are seven carinated bowl fragments and one possible unguentarium neck. Of the twenty-five coarse ware sherds recovered, seventeen are unidentifiable body sherds. Three triangular rim cooking pots of the mid-1st to mid-2nd centuries AD (Gerber 1994: pl. 16: B, E; 2008: 336, fig. 22:1) and one rounded cooking pot base were found. The remaining diagnostic coarse ware sherds were jar forms of the 1st century AD. From the enclosure around Tomb 2, three coarse ware sherds were found. Two are 'strap' jar handles and the remaining sherd is



9. Remains of walls of surface structure, PHTP Tomb 2 (facing west) (L. Wadeson).



10. Scattered remains of surface structure of PHTP Tomb 2 (L. Wadeson).

an unidentifiable closed form body sherd. This material also dates to the 1st and 2nd centuries AD. The ceramics collected from the settlement associated with Tomb 2 are not as diagnostic as the sherds from the tomb, but are of a similar date (1st to 2nd centuries AD). Three Nabataean fine ware ring bases (two bowls and one jar) and one coarse ware ring bowl base were identified.

PHTP Tomb 3

UTM coordinates: 0743340/3344981

Elevation: 1462m

Tomb 3 is located at Khirbat Ayl and associated with the ancient settlement that lies under the modern village. It is accessed through an opening in a limestone threshing floor and appears to have been a large, natural cave that was modified to become a burial chamber (**Fig. 11**). Access to this tomb was difficult as the opening and the chamber were heavily blocked with debris and rubbish. Measurements were therefore impossible to take. Evidently the tomb was reused for various domestic and agricultural purposes over the centuries, and the walls have begun to be quarried, giving the chamber an irregular shape. A variety of unidentifiable features are carved in the floor and walls. However, three pit graves are visible in the back left corner, two of which have been re-cut and connected by channels to serve another function. Other dips in the blocked floor could signify further graves. It is of course possible that the cave/chamber served another function before being used as a tomb. No pottery was collected from this tomb.



11. Entrance to PHTP Tomb 3 (L. Wadeson).

PHTP Tomb 4

UTM coordinates: 0740514/3345365

Elevation: 1544m

Tomb 4 is located almost three kilometres to the west of Tomb 3, also in a flat limestone platform that was used as a threshing floor. The site is on a low ridge, bound by valleys to the north and south and surrounded by high hills. There is a small ancient settlement *ca.* 300m to the north-east and a spring approximately one kilometre to the north-west. Immediately to the south-east of the tomb are the remains of architectural structures, including a massive wall of three courses built near a natural cave.

The tomb has been cut down vertically into the limestone floor and is accessed from the north end by a *dromos* (l. 2.90m; w. 0.90m) with at least four carved steps (**Fig. 12**). The chamber is large and deep (l. 6m; w. 2.5m) with irregular, curved walls, suggesting that it may have originally been a natural cave (**Fig. 13**). There are no features carved in the walls, and the floor is blocked with debris. Despite the lack of evident burial installations, the size, location and form of the chamber suggests that it is a tomb. Furthermore, F. Abudanah had seen human remains in the chamber on a previous visit.

On the surface, a few metres to the south of the tomb opening, a rectangular receptacle (l. 0.60m; w. 0.16m; d. 0.13m) is carved in the limestone floor (**Fig. 12**). Since this is on the same orientation as the chamber of the tomb (SW–NE), we considered that it may have been a marker for the tomb's location. Otherwise, it may have held a funerary stele. There are two more such receptacles to the north-west of the tomb – perhaps suggesting that more (blocked) tombs lie in this area. This seems likely given that next to one of them are the beginnings of a blocked hole. In that case we would be dealing with a cemetery, rather than an isolated tomb. Carved cup-holes are also visible in the limestone platform in association with the tomb(s), indicating ritual activities aboveground.

Most of the pottery recovered from Tomb 4 came from the surface and surroundings. There was a notable concentration of Nabataean painted fine ware sherds around the architectural structures south-east of the tomb. Overall, the

material collected is primarily dated from the 1st through 4th centuries AD. However, five sherds are of a cruder fabric with many organic voids, and are thus thought to be produced during the Iron Age. These have been retained for further study. Eight Nabataean painted fine ware sherds were recovered, two of which are Phase 3c (Schmid 1996: 209, figs. 702-704) and the remaining six are Phase 3b. One sherd of a Nabataean fine ware carinated bowl was also recovered. Among the coarse wares, one fragment of a triangular rim cooking pot was identified. The latest dated sherd is of a cooking pot with a slight groove on the rim produced from the late 1st through 4th centuries AD (Fellmann Brogli 1996: 244, figs. 734-735; Erickson-Gini 2010: 115, fig. 2.65). Several jar and jug forms were also identified among the corpus, but are awaiting further analysis.



12. Entrance to PHTP Tomb 4 and receptacle to the south (L. Wadeson).



13. Rock-cut chamber of PHTP Tomb 4 (L. Wadeson).

PHTP Tomb 5

UTM coordinates: 0740239/3344536

Elevation: 1631m

Tomb 5, also to the west of Ayl, is a rock-cut tomb carved into the slope of a ridge, overlooking a valley (**Fig. 14**). There are ancient settlement sites and a spring nearby, a military site to the east (Abudanah 2006, Site No. 264) and ancient roads to the west and south-west. The entrance to the tomb is partly blocked by large fallen boulders, thus access is somewhat difficult. The tomb has a t-shaped plan, with three large *loculi* (l. 2.20-2.80m; w. 0.90m; h. 1.10-1.25m) opening from the sides of a small vestibule (l. 1.20m; w. 1.30m) (**Fig. 15**). The floor is blocked by rubble and looters have even cut into the chalky rock, destroying part of the floor and the western *loculus*. No human remains or potsherds were visible. The tomb was originally accessed by a door, as indicated by the recessed space for a lintel in the north-eastern corner of the entrance.



14. Semi-blocked entrance of PHTP Tomb 5 (L. Wadeson).



15. View into PHTP Tomb 5 towards loculus in back wall (L. Wadeson).

In a previous visit to this tomb, F. Abudanah noted a sketch of its plan on a nearby rock. However, we were unable to locate this again. It is possible that more tombs are carved along the same ridge, but are not visible due to fallen rocks and boulders. Cup-holes carved on a small platform to the north-east of the tomb suggest that it was an area for funerary activities.

PHTP Tomb (?) 6

UTM coordinates: 0740391/3344568

Elevation: 1639m

Approximately 130m to the east of Tomb 5, on a high, flat ridge, is a mound scattered with ashlar blocks. A looters hole is visible on the top of the mound, but it is blocked with stones (**Fig. 16**). Given the similarities in appearance to the surface structures of PHTP Tombs 1 and 2, it is possible that this structure is also a tomb that has not been as heavily disturbed inside. Only excavation would confirm this hypothesis. The structure also seems to be surrounded by a stone enclosure and has a commanding view of the area like the other tombs recorded. Only three sherds of pottery were recovered from the surrounding area – all of which are undiagnostic body sherds. The quality of the fabric suggests that they are most likely dated to the 1st through 3rd centuries AD.

PHTP Tomb 7

UTM coordinates: 0742303/3345191

Elevation: 1497m

This tomb is approximately two kilometres to the north-west of Ayl, and one kilometre to the north-west of PHTP Tomb 3. It is a rock-cut tomb in the side of a small ridge, prominently located just above the modern road which follows the line of Wādī Ayl. It appears to be a natural cave that has been modified for use as a tomb. In front of the entrance to the tomb is an open area, which perhaps functioned as a small courtyard (**Fig. 17**).

The entrance is 4.20 metres wide, but this size is due to extensive erosion. The chamber is large (l. 7m; w. 5.10m; h. 2.20m) and almost square but not particularly well-carved. There is one *loculus* carved in the left part of the back wall and two carved in the right wall (**Fig. 18**). The *loculi* were impossible to measure as they were blocked with sand and debris. The floor of

the chamber is also blocked, but there are many holes that have been dug by looters. We were informed by locals of Ayl that pit graves are indeed carved in the floor, hence the attempts made by the looters. The ceiling of the tomb is blackened from fire, indicating reuse of the chamber for habitation.



16. PHTP Tomb (?) 6 facing south-west (L. Wadeson).



17. Entrance to PHTP Tomb 7 (L. Wadeson).



18. Burial chamber of PHTP Tomb 7 – view towards back wall (L. Wadeson).

In terms of the ceramics, Tomb 7 yielded limited diagnostic sherds; yet, based on the forms of the diagnostic pieces and the fabric of the eight coarse ware body sherds collected, the material dates from the 1st through 3rd centuries AD. Two Nabataean fine ware sherds were collected, including one ring bowl base with rouletting along the interior of the ring. A coarse ware rounded rim jar was also identified.

PHTP Tomb 8

UTM coordinates: 0741662/3357125

Elevation: 1555 m

Tomb 8 is located on a ridge to the east of ‘Ayn Mūsā and *ca.* 600 metres to the east of PHTP Tomb 1. There is an ancient wall to the west of the tomb and a cave to the south-west. The ridge is flat and elongated and slopes down to the west, with a clear view towards Petra. The tomb is a shaft tomb, entered via a small hole in the bedrock (**Fig. 19**). Access was difficult (no measurements possible), but we could see that the tomb consisted of a short corridor leading to a small, circular chamber. Deposits of stones and earth are visible around the entrance, on the surface, as a result of the looting of the tomb. However, no large blocks are visible that might suggest a built structure above the tomb. A short distance to the north-west of the tomb, cup-holes are carved on rock platforms.

All the pottery collected from Tomb 8 came from outside the tomb. The material primarily consisted of jug forms. Two 1st century AD jug rims and two jug handles were recovered. One possible *unguentarium* neck was also identified. There was one flat jug base of an



19. Entrance to PHTP Tomb 8 (L. Wadeson).

unknown period recovered. One triangular rim cooking pot was recovered. One ring bowl base with rouletting on the interior of the ring was the only sherd of Nabataean fine ware collected from the area. All the material, except for the unidentifiable jug base, had production periods dated from the 1st through 3rd centuries AD.

PHTP Tomb (?) 9

UTM coordinates: 0742047/3357387

Elevation: 1575 m

Almost 500 metres to the north-east of PHTP Tomb 8, on a higher ridge, is a prominent mound with scattered ashlar and lines of walls. In the middle is a looters' hole that is blocked with well-cut ashlar (**Fig. 20**). Similar to the situation for PHTP Tomb 6, we suggest that this may also be an underground tomb topped with a monument, especially since the possible roofing system bears remarkable similarities to PHTP Tomb 2. However, only excavation could



20. PHTP Tomb (?) 9 (L. Wadeson).



21. General view towards PHTP Tomb 10 with wall on the left (facing south) (L. Wadeson).

confirm this. Other structures are visible in the vicinity, for example the walls to the south-east. The site yielded ceramic material of the 1st through 3rd centuries AD. One *tegula* was also recovered. Of the diagnostic pottery recovered there was one flattened rim cooking pot, as well as two coarse ware jugs and one wide-mouthed coarse jar.

PHTP Tomb 10

UTM coordinates: 0734832/3330296

Elevation: 1691m

Tomb 10 is located *ca.* 14km north-west of Rās An Naqab, by the modern road that runs between Petra and Al 'Aqabah. It is situated on a slope that has a commanding view over the landscape to the south, where there are two ancient settlements. An ancient road is visible to the west of the tomb. Immediately to the south-west of the tomb is a rock outcrop, while a possibly ancient wall runs along the east side of the tomb towards the top of the slope in the north (**Fig. 21**).

The tomb is of the same form and construction as PHTP Tombs 1 and 2, consisting of a subterranean chamber with *loculi*. The chamber is almost square (2.60×2.55m) and the layout is symmetrical, with four *loculi* (two rows of two *loculi*) in each wall (**Fig. 22**). The average size of each *loculus* is 2.50 m in depth, 0.60m in width and 0.55m in height. The floor is blocked with looters' rubble, thus it is not clear if there are further rows of *loculi* or cist graves below. Some of the *loculi* are built with large ashlar and small stones filling the gaps, while others have walls that are only constructed with small



22. PHTP Tomb 10 with rock outcrop to the south-west (L. Wadeson).

stones. The *loculus* in the top left corner of the south wall exhibits both techniques in its walls. Large amounts of plaster remain on the chamber walls, particularly on the east wall (Fig. 23). In addition, human remains can still be found inside several of the *loculi*.

An arch springer is visible in the middle of the western wall, suggesting the roof was vaulted like the other examples. The roof itself seems to have been constructed of irregular stones and packed earth. Many blocks are scattered on the surface, perhaps from a superstructure. The few diagnostic sherds that were collected from Tomb 10 date from the 1st through 3rd centuries AD. One Nabataean painted fine ware Phase 3b sherd was identified. Also collected were one coarse ware storage jar handle, one coarse ware jar, and one coarse ware ring bowl base.

PHTP Tomb 11

UTM coordinates: 0735613/3339813

Elevation: 1703m

Tomb 11 is located almost 10 kilometres to the north of Tomb 10 and is south-east of the town of Ar Rajīf. It is situated on the high point of a flat ridge, directly to the east of an ancient road (running N-S) (Fig. 24). Further to the north (1.4km), along the same road, is an ancient settlement. Another ancient settlement lies just to the south (‘Ayn Jawāyizah east and west: Glueck 1935:72). The tomb has been constructed beside a rock outcrop, from where the building material was extracted.

This is another subterranean tomb with *loculi*, but it is larger than the previous examples. The chamber (4×3.30m) is blocked from the recent pillaging of the tomb, with much debris heaped up on the east side. The original floor is at a much deeper level than is visible. One row of *loculi* is visible, including three in the west wall, one in the south wall and two in the east wall, and it is likely that further rows exist below (Fig. 25). The construction technique of the chamber, like PHTP tombs 1, 2 and 10, is ashlar masonry, but notably the *loculi* are rock-cut at the back and built at the front. The *loculi* (h. 0.70-1.20m; w. 0.70-0.85m; d. 1.00-2.70m) in this tomb in fact present some other peculiarities. Firstly, the two *loculi* in the right part of the west wall appear to be unfinished since they are half as deep as the

others. Or it may be that they were used for the burial of children or served another purpose. Secondly, the *loculus* in the right part of the east wall, which is still half sealed at the bottom, has a small opening at the back in its right wall (Fig. 26). This opening leads to a small,



23. Remains of plaster on east wall of PHTP Tomb 10 (L. Wadeson).



24. PHTP Tomb 11 with ancient road in the distance (facing north) (L. Wadeson).



25. Loculi in west wall of PHTP Tomb 11 (L. Wadeson).

concealed side chamber (*ca.* 1.50×1.50m) that still contains human remains (**Fig. 27**). Apart from a built wall on the right side, the chamber is rock-cut. A similar arrangement may also exist in the south wall (**Fig. 25**). Although the *loculus* in the south wall is blocked with rubble and inaccessible, a similar opening is visible at the back of its left wall. This may explain why looters began to break the wall in the south-east corner of the chamber in order to reach these hidden rooms. It also explains why no *loculi* are carved in that part of the south wall. A large amount of human remains, including skull fragments, are visible in the *loculi*.

There are no *loculi* built in the north wall of the tomb, but there is an opening in the middle, which is now blocked with rubble (**Fig. 24**). We propose that this was the entrance to the chamber and probably contained a stairway leading down from the surface. The tomb is in fact oriented according to the cardinal points. Arch springers are still *in situ* in the south-



26. Loculi in east wall of PHTP Tomb 11 (L. Wadeson).



27. Entrance to concealed chamber inside loculus of PHTP Tomb 11 (L. Wadeson).

west and north-east corners of the chamber, indicating that arches spanned the east and west walls to support the roof. Massive stone blocks once covered this tomb and possibly formed a superstructure, according to the surviving sections of roofing and surface remains.

The pottery recovered from the area around Tomb 11 dates from the 1st through 3rd centuries AD. Among the 35 sherds collected, six are of Nabataean fine ware, including one carinated bowl rim and one jug rim. The remaining 29 coarse ware sherds include three jar handles, one ring jar base, one jug handle, and one folded rim jar all dating from the 1st through 3rd centuries AD. One neckless, everted rim cup with a vertical loop handle, which is manufactured between the 1st and 3rd centuries AD, was also recovered (Gerber 1994: pl. 16: Q; Schmid 2000: figs. 343-344; Negev and Siran 1977: 125, fig. 6.44).

PHTP Tomb 12

UTM coordinates: 0737555/3343300

Elevation: 1677m

Tomb 12 is situated north-east of Ar Rajīf and south-east of Petra, and is approximately four kilometres to the north-east of Tomb 11, to which it is connected by an ancient road. It takes a dominating position on a high ridge that has a direct view towards the mountains of Petra, in particular Jabal Hārūn to the north-west (**Fig. 28**). There are other structures in the surroundings of this tomb, such as a cave, walls and a rock platform with possible cup-holes.

The tomb consists of a square structure (6.45 × 6.45m) built with massive ashlars (**Fig. 28**).



28. PHTP Tomb 12 with Jabal Hārūn in the distance to the north-west (L. Wadeson).

The walls of the tomb are best preserved in the south-west and south-east corners. The inside of the tomb is heavily blocked with stones and rubble, thus it is difficult to determine the arrangement of the chamber. However, some sections of built *loculi* are visible on the west side beneath the rubble (**Fig. 29**). These are notably situated around ground level and not subterranean as the previous examples. Furthermore, if we reconstruct them to their typical depth, little space is left for the chamber itself, suggesting it was more like a corridor or shaft and thus different from the plan of the other *loculi* tombs we recorded. An outer wall or enclosure may have surrounded this tomb, as suggested by the line of ashlar just beyond the south-east corner.

Tomb 12 yielded sherds dated from the 1st through 3rd centuries AD. Among the diagnostic coarse ware sherds recovered there was one jar with a ribbed neck dating from the 1st to 3rd centuries AD (Gerber 2008: 336, fig.22.15), one



29: Built loculus inside PHTP Tomb 12 (L. Wadeson).



30. Looters' hole leading down to PHTP Tomb 13 (L. Wadeson).

jar with a folded rim, two jar ovular handles, and two jar ring bases. Two cooking pot forms were identified: one triangular rim cooking pot and one collared rim cooking pot produced from the mid-1st to the early 2nd century AD (Gerber 2008: 336, fig. 22:5). Among the Nabataean fine ware diagnostics identified, there were two carinated bowl rims and one hemispherical bowl (Schmid 2000: 9, fig. 60; Erickson-Gini 2010: 117:8).

PHTP Tomb 13

UTM coordinates: 0746344/3366816

Elevation: 1436 m

Tomb 13 is located north-west of the village of Al Manshiyyah, and south-west of the site known as Umm Kuwayz (MacDonald *et al.* 2011: 369, Table 2, Site 242), in the south slope of a small hill. Approximately 300 metres to the east of the hill is an ancient road and settlement. Several structures are visible on the summit of the hill, while at its base (to the south-west of the tomb) are massive scattered ashlar and two circular structures. This site seems to have been recorded by B. MacDonald during his survey in this area as Site 245/(Al Qulayb Al GHarbī), which is described as 'cemetery (?); enclosures; cistern (?)' (MacDonald *et al.* 2011: 369, table 2). However, we await a more detailed description in future publications to determine whether PHTP Tomb 13 was also noted.

The tomb we recorded is accessed via a looters' hole, which cuts through 2-metre deep layers of deposit in the slope of the hill (**Fig. 30**). It is a natural cave that has been modified with the addition of a built facade (w. 3.50m; d. 0.16m) and entrance (w. 0.75m) (**Fig. 31**). The chamber is heavily blocked with rubble and is



31. Built facade and entrance of PHTP Tomb 13 (L. Wadeson).

thus inaccessible. Despite the use of a torch at the entrance, we could not see the back wall of the chamber so we presume that it is relatively deep. The entrance to the tomb is only 0.90m high, bound by a built threshold and the top of the cave. Looters have dug holes in the built facade either side of the entrance. It is likely that more tombs exist in the slope of this hill, but are blocked by the deep deposits.

Pottery was abundant at this site (**Fig. 32**). Fourteen sherds of imported ware were recovered, but have been retained for further study. Of the pottery produced in Petra, the latest dated sherd is a cooking pot with a groove on the rim similar to the one found at PHTP Tomb 4. Six triangular rim cooking pots were also identified. One unidentifiable Nabataean painted fine ware sherd was recovered. The majority of the sherds recovered were coarse ware jar and jug forms. One Nabataean fine ware cup with a beaded rim was recovered (Erickson-Gini 2010: 119:25; Gerber 2008: 338, fig. 23: 21). The material identified has production periods dated from the 1st through 4th centuries AD.

PHTP Tomb (?) 14

UTM coordinates: 0744639/3369732

Elevation: 1576 m

Approximately 270 metres to the south-east of the village of Bīr Ikhdād is a large built square enclosure (32×32m). This lies 90 metres to the east of an ancient road and 1-2km to the north of two ancient settlements. This took our attention on Google Earth since there seemed to be a slightly off-centre structure with signs of disturbance. On the ground this turned out to be a mound with scattered ashlar and the beginnings of a robbers' hole in the centre, similar to the situation with the possible PHTP tombs 6 and 9 (**Fig. 33**). The presence of the well-cut ashlar, the enclosure and the position by an ancient road are factors that lead us to believe the structure may be a subterranean tomb. Remains of other structures are visible on the east side of the enclosure. Unfortunately due to extreme weather conditions at the time of our visit, we were unable to achieve a detailed documentation and study of this site and no ceramics were collected.



32. Diagnostic sherds from PHTP Tomb 13 (L. Wadeson).

Discussion

Typology

The tombs we recorded in the first field season of the PHTP primarily belong to two principal types. The first is the rock-cut tomb type, of which we have six examples. Rock-cut tombs are common throughout antiquity in this region, especially given the rocky and mountainous landscape that was available to exploit. In some cases natural caves were modified for use as tombs. Within this group we have two sub-types –tombs carved down into the bedrock, *i.e.* subterranean, (*e.g.* PHTP tombs 3, 4, 8) and tombs carved into the slope of a hill (*e.g.* PHTP tombs 5, 7, 13). The chambers of these tombs vary in size, and the typical sort of burial installations include *loculi* and cist graves. Apart from the built facade on Tomb 13, the rock-cut tombs recorded by the PHTP are simple, with no surviving traces of decoration, unlike the decorative, monumental examples at Petra.

The second type of tomb we recorded is a monumental, subterranean *loculi* tomb. These tombs typically have a square chamber built with irregular ashlar, and rows of built *loculi* in the walls. They also usually have vaulted ceilings that supported some type of superstructure or monumental tomb marker. We recorded five tombs of this type (PHTP tombs 1, 2, 10, 11, 12). Tomb 12 is slightly different as it seems to have higher rows of *loculi* and a narrow central space, rather than a chamber. Tomb 11 also presents some peculiarities in that its *loculi* are both rock-cut and built and are attached to concealed chambers. We also recorded three other possible tombs that may

be of this type (PHTP tombs (?) 6, 9, 14) due to their location and surface remains. However, without excavation this cannot be confirmed.

The same type of tomb has already been discovered in our survey area, but has not received much attention. During building works in Wādī Mūsā in 1998, Tomb WM 25 (“An Naqlah” cemetery) was discovered and excavated by the Department of Antiquities, and consequently built over (‘Amr *et al.* 1998: 526; ‘Amr and al-Momani 2001: 268). It is located on the eastern edge of Wādī Mūsā, above the site of KHirbat An Nawafrah. The report has not yet been published, but from available photos and the unpublished report on the skeletal remains, kindly provided by Megan Perry (Perry, n.d.), it is clear that we are dealing with the exact same type of tomb. The photo shows that after clearance, cist graves were evident in the chamber floor, which may very well be the case for some of the PHTP tombs.

The other example in the area is the tomb at Aṣ Sadaqah, 26km south-east of Petra. This was also excavated by the Department of Antiquities (Kurdi 1972: 85-87) and presents identical characteristics to PHTP Tomb 12. For example, it has a square superstructure of *ca.* 6×6m built of massive ashlar, and built *loculi* that are close to the surface and take up most of the central space. The Aṣ Sadaqah tomb in fact had a vertical shaft providing entrance to the *loculi*, which allows us to understand the plan of Tomb 12 and why there was no central chamber like the other tombs.

Comparable, built *loculi* tombs are also known in other sites further afield, such as Jarash (Smadeh *et al.* 1992: 271), and Umm Al Jimāl (Cheyney *et al.* 2009). However, those examples have a much higher standard of construction and are more monumental, which is unsurprising given that they are located in urban centres.

General Characteristics

The PHTP tombs are all found in rural contexts, but tend to be located in prominent positions, such as by roads and on hill-tops, where they had a commanding view over the surrounding landscape and where they could also be seen from afar. When we observe their position on the map (see **Fig. 1**), it becomes clear that they



33. PHTP Tomb (?) 14 (L. Wadeson).

are situated roughly in a line along the top of the Sharāh ridge that extends north-south, to the east of the mountains of Petra. This location is significant as it is the highest point in the area and often has direct views towards Petra, as was noted especially for Tomb 1 and Tomb 12.

Apart from some of the rock-cut tombs (e.g. PHTP tombs 4, 5, 8, 13), which may belong to a necropolis, the remainder of the tombs we recorded are isolated. These tombs are often associated with a nearby small settlement – either a farmstead or hamlet. In some cases, they are situated by walls or within enclosures, such as tombs 1, 2 and 10. These factors suggest that the tombs may have also functioned as territorial markers of family-owned property. In particular, it ought to be remembered that the hypogea with *loculi* held multiple interments, and were thus likely intended for extended families or several generations of the same family.

The tombs with evidence for a superstructure would have been highly visible in the landscape. They served to display the status of the family buried in the tombs and the property owners. The idea of a monumental marker for a tomb, separate from the burial chamber, is common in Nabataean funerary architecture (Wadeson 2012: 107).

This concept is expressed in inscriptions (e.g. a Nabataean funerary inscription from Mādabā, CIS II 196; Healey 1993: 247-248), and well-known examples of such tombs include those at DHāt Rās and KHirbat Adh DHarīh (Zayadine 1970: 117-135; Lenoble *et al.* 2001: 85-191). The monumental part or *nephesh* (*npš*) of the tomb memorialised and commemorated the soul of the deceased (Wenning 2001: 87-88; Kühn 2005: 136-228), while the actual burial chamber held the physical remains.

It is at present unknown to what extent ritual activities took place around the site of the tombs we recorded. However, cup-holes were noted near several of the rock-cut tombs, such as tombs 4, 5 and 8. Clearance of the deposits around the surroundings of the tombs would shed light on this matter. In terms of the ceramics, jars and jugs represented the most common vessel form recovered at the sites. Cups were a rare form at the sites (with only two sherds identified among the diagnostics). The most frequently identified bowl form was the carinated bowl.

Date of the Tombs

Use of the ceramics in dating the tombs is of course limited at this stage of the project, given that all the sherds were unstratified and many were found outside the burial chambers in the looters' dumps. Nabataean coarse and fine wares dominated the assemblage, but this does not necessarily mean that the tombs are Nabataean. It does mean that there was activity at the site during the period in which Nabataean pottery was produced. According to the ceramics, the primary date range for all sites surveyed was the 1st through 3rd centuries AD, with only Tombs 1 and 4 possibly yielding earlier material. Tombs 4 and 13 also had a common cooking pot form that was produced from the late 1st through 4th centuries AD. Among the Nabataean painted fine ware, Phase 3b was the most frequent type recovered.

Nevertheless, the ceramics from the hypogea with built *loculi* were relatively consistent and Tomb 2 has a homogeneous corpus of 1st century AD material. A 1st century AD date for these tombs is likely because this was the date ascribed to the same types of tombs at Wādī Mūsā (WM 25, "An Naqlah"; 'Amr *et al.* 1998: 526; 'Amr and al-Momani 2001: 268) and Aṣ Sadaqah according to the excavated ceramics (Kurdi 1972: 87). Thus, these tombs coincide with the carving of the monumental Nabataean tombs inside Petra (Wadeson 2010: 48-69). The rock-cut tombs are more difficult to date, since this type of tomb is simple in design and common throughout antiquity. The presence of *loculi* does narrow the time frame down to the Greco-Roman period when we know they were in vogue. However, the PHTP rock-cut tombs without any characteristic burial structures, such as Tombs 4 and 8, could in fact have been carved in earlier periods and later reused. Future clearance and excavation of these tombs aims at establishing a more precise chronology for them.

Conclusions and Future Work

The first season of the PHTP has recorded previously unknown rock-cut and built tombs in the hinterland of Petra, particularly in the areas to the north-east, east and south-east of the city, along the Jibāl Ash SHarāh range. Among these tombs, a significant type has emerged which

consists of a monumental *hypogeum* with built *loculi* and possible superstructure, prominently positioned in the landscape. These tombs possibly date to the 1st century AD. Only two such tombs were previously noted in the area and have received little attention in scholarship. It may be that these tombs served as territorial markers in this rural landscape.

The tombs documented by the PHTP are a valuable source of information on life and society outside Petra during the Nabataean and Roman periods. Our results are at this stage preliminary, but through the analysis of our collected data and further field seasons, we hope to be able to date these tombs more securely, reconstruct their associated funerary practices, and establish their relationship to funerary architecture and customs in other parts of Jordan and neighbouring regions.

Our survey highlights the fact that these tombs need protection against further damage from robbers and illegal looting – especially the monumental built tombs which have suffered the most damage. In future seasons of the PHTP, we would like to clear and excavate several characteristic examples, such as Tombs 10 and 11, in order to preserve the human remains, seek further dating material and conserve the built architecture. The cleaning of these tombs would also make them excellent sites for tourists to visit on the voyage between Petra and Wādī Ramm/Al ‘Aqabah, providing them with a valuable insight into rural sites of this region in antiquity.

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