

THE STATE MUSEUM OF ORIENTAL ART
INSTITUTE OF ORIENTAL STUDIES RUSSIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

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NEW RESEARCH IN ARCHAEOLOGY AND EPIGRAPHY OF SOUTH ARABIA AND ITS NEIGHBORS

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE “RENCONTRES SABÉENNES 15” HELD
IN MOSCOW, MAY 25TH – 27TH, 2011**

Edited by Alexander SEDOV

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- A+nombre – inscriptions from the University Museum of Şan‘ā’
AAE – “Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy”
ABADY – “Archäologische Berichte aus dem Yemen”
AfO – “Archiv für Orientforschung”
AION – “Annali dell’istituto universitario orientale di Napoli”
AM – Aden Museum
AOAT – “Alter Orient und Altes Testament”
BA – “Biblical Archaeologist”
BASOR – “Bulletin of the American Society of Oriental Studies”
B-Int – inscriptions from Barāqish-Intérieur
B-M – inscriptions from Barāqish-Muraille
BSA – “Annual of the British School at Athens”
CEPOA – Centre d’étude du Proche-Orient ancien
CIAS – “Corpus des Inscriptions et des Antiquités Sud-arabes”
CIH – “Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum ab Academia Inscriptionum et Litterarum Humaniorum conditum atque digestum, IV, Inscriptiones Ḥimyariticas et Sabaeas continens”
CRAI – “Comptes Rendus de L’Academie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres”
CSAI – Alessandra Avanzini (éd.), “Corpus of South Arabian Inscriptions”
EVO – “Egitto e Vicino Oriente”
Fa – Fakhry, Ahmed
FB – Bron, François
Gl – Glaser, Eduard
GOAM – General Organisation of Antiquities and Museums
HK – Hajar Kuḥlān
HSM – “Harvard Semitic Studies”
Ir – Iryānī, Muṭahhar al-
IsMEO – Istituto Italiano per il Medio e Estremo Oriente

Ja – Jamme, Albert
JAOS – “Journal of the American Oriental Society”
JBL – “Journal of Biblical Literature”
JCS – “Journal of Cuneiform Studies”
JNES – “Journal of the Near Eastern Studies”
JRA – “Journal of Roman Studies”
JRAS – “Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society”
 JRy – Ryckmans, Jacques
JSOT – “Journal for the Study of Old Testament”
KTU – “Die Keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit”
 LuBM – Lundin, Avraam; British Museum
 M – [Giovanni Garbini] “Iscrizioni sudarabiche, Vol. 1 Iscrizioni minee”
 MAFRAY – Mission archéologique française en République arabe du Yémen
MARI – “Mari, Annales de Recherches Interdisciplinaires”
 MM – Military Museum
 MQ – Mission Qatabān
 MuB – Musée de Bayhān
 NNSQ – Khalīl Yahyā Nāmī, “Nashr Nuqūsh sāmiyya qadīma”
OBO – “Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis”
PPiPIKNV – “Pis’mennie pamyatniki i problemi istorii kul’turi narodov Vostoka”
PSAS – “Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies”
 RES – “Répertoire d’épigraphie sémitique”
 RAI – Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale
RE – “Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft”
RIA – “Reallexikon der Assyriologie”
RSO – “Rivista degli Studi Orientali”
 Ry – Ryckmans, Gonzague
 Sab – “Sabaeica”
 SEG – Sammlung Eduard Glaser
SJOT SS – “Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament, Supplement Series”
UF – “Ugarit-Forschungen”
VT – “Vetus Testamentum”
 Y.90.B.A – Y[emen].90.B[arāqish],[chantier]A
 Y.92.B.A – Y[emen].92.B[arāqish],[chantier]A
 YICAR – Yemeni-Italian Centre for Archaeological Research
 YM – Yemen Museum
 ZM – Zafār Museum

PREFACE

International conference “Rencontres sabéennes 15”, held in Moscow between May 25th and May 27th, 2011, was organized by the State Museum of Oriental Art Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation and the Institute of Oriental Studies Russian Academy of Sciences under the title “New Research in Archaeology and Epigraphy of South Arabia and Its Neighbors”. More than 40 scholars from Russia, Austria, Germany, France, Italy, USA and Yemen participated in the conference delivering papers and taking part in the discussions. The first day of the conference was hosted by the Institute of Oriental Studies Russian Academy of Sciences (Rozhdestvenka str., 12), and two other working days were held at the State Museum of Oriental Art (Nikitsky Boulevard, 12a).

At the opening ceremony of the conference there were greetings from Prof. *Vitaliy Naumkin*, the corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, the director of the Institute of Oriental Studies Russian Academy of Sciences, and from Prof. *Alexander Sedov*, the director-general of the State Museum of Oriental Art. The opening session of the conference was dedicated to the memory of Prof. *Alessandro de Maigret* (Italy) and Prof.-Dr. *Jürgen Schmidt* (Germany), who passed away in early 2011 and late 2010. Prof. *Christian J. Robin* (France), the member of the Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, Prof. *Yūsuf M. ‘Abdallāh* (Yemen) and Dr. *I. Gerlach* (Germany) delivered their speeches in memory of these outstanding specialists in archaeology, ancient history and architecture of South Arabia.

Three papers were presented at the first working session in the morning May 25th (chair *Alexander Sedov*): *Sabina Antonini* (Italy), *A Preliminary Survey at Ghaymān (December 2010)*; *Vittoria Buffa* (Italy), *Shape Versus Ware – Which Typology for South Arabian Pottery?* and *Julien Charbonnier* (France), *Irrigation Systems from the Air: A Collection of Aerial Photographs from Ḥaḍramawt and Wādī Bayḥān*. The afternoon session on May 25th (chair *Sabina Antonini*) was occupied with five papers: *Holger Hitgen* (Germany), *Tan ‘im – A Sabaeen Center in the Khawlān*; *Sarah Japp* (Germany), *Ḥimyaritic Tan ‘im (Khawlān) in the Highlands of Yemen*; *Iris Gerlach* (Germany), *Culture Contacts Between South Arabia and Di ‘amat (Ethiopia/Tigray)*; *Mike Schnelle* (Germany), *Towards a Reconstruction of the Great Temple of Yeha (Ethiopia)*; *Pawel Wolf* (Germany), *Almaqah temple Wuqro / Tigray*.

Four contributions were presented at the morning session on May 26th (chair *Iris Gerlach*): *Michel Mouton* (France), *New Excavations at Mleiha, U.A.E.*; *Romolo Loreto* (Italy), *The Italo-French-Saudi Archaeological Mission in Saudi Arabia (Second Campaign): The First Relative Chronology Sequence for Dūmat al-Jandal (Ancient Adummatu)*; *Alexia Pavan* (Italy), *The Urban Shrine at Sumhūram: Ḥaḍrami Elements and Local Tradition*; *Eleonora Kormysheva, Svetlana Malykh* (Russia), *GPR Investigations and Excavations at Abu Erteila (Sudan)*. Five presentations were delivered at the afternoon session on May 26th (chair *Alessandra Avanzini*): *Vitaliy Naumkin, Leonid Kogan* (Russia), *Soqotri Lexical Archive: The 2010 Field Season*; *Mikhail Boukharin* (Russia), *Inscriptions in Greek Script from Socotra*; *Alessia Prioletta* (Italy), *Some Reflections on Ḥaḍramitic Documentation*; *Mounir Arbach* (France), *Sam'ī: un royaume des Haute-Terres (Nord de Ṣan'ā') au VII^e s. av. J.-C.*; *Sergey Frantsouzoff* (Russia), *Du nouveau sur l'interprétation du term sabéen 'ḥll(m)*.

Four papers were presented at the morning session on May 27th (chair *Christian Robin*): *Mohammed Maraqtan* (Germany), *Thanks for Success in a Lawsuit: A Study of Recently Discovered Sabaeen Inscription at the Awām-Temple/Maḥram Bilqīs, Ma'rib, Yemen*; *Ekaterina Gushchina* (Russia), *Quelques notes sur les inscriptions du Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum (CIH) provenant des temples sudarabiques*; *Irene Rossi* (Italy), *Reconsideration of Some Theonyms and Divine Epithets in the Minaic Corpus*; *Alessio Agostini* (Italy), *Minaean Expiatory Texts: New Data From Barāqish*. The closing afternoon session on May 27th (chair *Yūsuf 'Abdallāh*) was dedicated to the final discussion and conclusive remarks.

The present volume of the *Proceedings* of the international conference, which was supplemented with papers not presented at the symposium, is dedicated to the memory of Prof. Alessandro de Maigret, the head of the Italian Archaeological Mission to the Republic of Yemen and one of the founders of *Rencontres sabéenes*, which first session was organized in September 1993 in Aix-en-Provence (France).

Alexander SEDOV

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THE SAUDI-ITALIAN-FRENCH ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT AT DÛMAT AL-JANDAL: 2010 SEASON

In memory of Alessandro de Maigret

This paper attempts to summarize current knowledge on Dûmat al-Jandal (or Dûma¹) and to provide a starting-point for the activities of the Saudi-Italian-French Archaeological Project. In the following pages, we will recapitulate the historical development of the oasis and show the most significant archaeological and architectural evidences still standing at Dûma, as well as the results of the 2010 season.

The archaeological project

In June 2008 after the approval of an “Italian proposal for research at Dûmat al-Jandal” by the Research Committee of the Saudi General Organization for Tourism and Antiquities (GOTA), the Supreme Commission of Tourism in Riyâdh invited Alessandro de Maigret to carry out an archaeological survey on the site of Dûmat al-Jandal, in the Saudi province of al-Jawf. In 2009 GOTA in Riyâdh, under the direction of ‘Alî I. al-Ghabbân, granted Alessandro de Maigret permission to undertake archaeological excavations on the site, under the patronage of the Italian Institute for Africa and Orient in Rome. A formal Joint Cooperative Agreement for a period of five years was signed at Riyâdh on May 5 in the presence of HH. Prince Sultân bin Salmân bin ‘Abdulazîz and the Italian Ambassador Eugenio D’Auria. For the first time an

¹ In this paper we adopt a simplified transliteration system detailed in Charloux, Loreto forthcoming: 317.

Italian team was allowed to conduct archaeological activities in one of the most impressive sites of the Kingdom. The campaign was carried out between April 23 and May 7 2009² (fig. 1).

In 2010 the cooperation agreement between Italian and Saudi institutions was extended to a partnership involving the French Archaeological Project in Saudi Arabia, represented by Christian J. Robin and Guillaume Charloux. The excavations carried out from 30 September to 7 November 2010 (second campaign) were conducted by the new Saudi-Italian-French Archaeological Project³.

The project worked under the aegis of following scientific institutions: Italian Institute for Africa and Orient, University of Naples “*L’Orientale*”, French National Center for Scientific Research (UMR 8167, *Orient et Méditerranée*), Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities. Financing for the 2010 project was provided by Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities in Riyâdh, French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (MAEE), French Embassy in Riyâdh, *Service de coopération et d’action culturel* (SCAC), French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS) UMR 8167, *Orient & Méditerranée*, “*Composante Mondes sémitiques*”, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE/DGSP), Italian Institute for Africa and Orient of Rome.

The project is currently directed by Dr. Guillaume Charloux (archaeologist, CNRS/UMR 8167) and Dr. Romolo Loreto (archaeologist, University of Naples “*L’Orientale*”). The following specialists took part in the project in 2010: Prof. Khalil I. al-Mu‘ayqil (Jawf deputy, Majliss ash-Shura), ‘Abd al-Hâdî K. al-Tirâd (director of the al-Jawf antiquities, SCTA); Ahmad ‘A. al-Qa‘îd (director of the al-Jawf museum, SCTA); Thâmir ‘A. al-Mâlikî (historian-archaeologist, SCTA), ‘Abd al-‘Azîz I. al-Dâyil (historian-archaeologist, SCTA), Dar‘ân M. al-Qahtânî (historian-archaeologist, SCTA), Mansûr H. al-Qahtânî (historian-archaeologist, SCTA); Dr. Andrea Marcolongo (architect, CNR); Quentin Morel (land surveyor, topographer), Prof. Christian Robin (historian, CNRS/UMR 8167), Dr. Jérémie Schiettecatte (archaeologist, CNRS/UMR 8167) and Dr. Pierre Siméon (ceramologist-archaeologist, CNRS/UMR 8167).

Setting of the site

Dûmat al-Jandal lies on the borders of the wâdî al-Sirhân, linking southern Syria to northern Arabia, nowadays named “al-Jawf” province, bounded on the north-west by Jordan, on the east by the “Northern Frontiers” and in the south by the provinces of Tabûk and Hâ’il. In view of its location at the intersection of caravan trails the oasis constitutes a natural port of trade among the major routes linking the Arabo-Persian Gulf and the southern Levant (fig. 2).

Bordered to the north by the steppe-like limestone plateau of Hammad and to the south by the arid desert of Nafûd, Dûmat al-Jandal stands at the northern edge of Saudi Najd, surrounded by sandstone mountains known as “al-Gal”⁴, which define a wide depression (“al-Jawf” in Arabic) where the ancient core of the site is located with its palm groves and crops.

The toponym of the ancient and medieval oasis “Dûmat al-Jandal” derives from Assyrian name “Adummatu” and its prefix “al-Jandal” derives from an ancient attribute, which according to Yâqût referred to the local stone used to build the monuments and dwellings in the oasis⁵.

² de Maigret 2010: 67-83.

³ Charloux in press; Loreto in press.

⁴ “Gâl-Algawf” in Wallin 1854: 138; “al-‘edîlîje” in Musil 1927: 467.

⁵ Yâqût al-Hamawî 1995: 487.

Historical overview

Dûmat al-Jandal and “al-Jawf” region in pre- and proto-historical periods. Although our knowledge of the region is still preliminary, it is clear that Dûmat al-Jandal and the whole “al-Jawf” appears as one of the most rich region in history as well as pre- and proto-history of Arabian Peninsula.

The first archaeological era, dating back to the Lower Paleolithic is testified by the site of Shuwayhitîyah, located on terraces bordering a tributary stream of wâdî “ash-Shuwayhitîyah”, in the northern corner of the Sakâkâ basin, ca. 50 km east from Dûmat al-Jandal (fig. 3). A number of large pebble tools, handaxes and large flakes made of local siliceous quartz testified of a Lower Acheulean or pre-Acheulean era⁶. Some middle Paleolithic (Mousterian) tools were recorded by Nayîm in the south-east corner of the Sakâkâ basin⁷. No definitive evidence of Upper Paleolithic and Epi-Paleolithic phases came from al-Jawf.

Sites referred to the Neolithic period are very few in the northern parts of the Kingdom. Parr *et al.* refer of tools (prismatic blades, denticulates, burins, punches, bi-polar cores and hoes) found in the wâdî ‘Ar‘ar, north-east of Sakâkâ⁸. Nayîm refers of some petroglyphs related to the Neolithic era from the Sakâkâ vicinities. In particular the famous “dancing girls” form the Burnus hill near Qasr Za‘bal⁹ (fig. 4).

Evidences of the Bronze Age came abundantly from the megalithic site of ar-Rajâjîl, 10 km south-east of Sakâkâ (fig. 5), and maybe from Dûmat al-Jandal itself. In both cases there are a lot of burials: a megalithic complex made of at least 15 multi-burials from ar-Rajâjîl and stone circle burials from Dûmat al-Jandal (fig. 6).

However, no previous archaeological excavations related to pre and proto-historical period were conducted in the al-Jawf region, as well as geo-morphological studies connected to the Quaternary period. The given dates of the previous sites need for this reason further research and scientific arguments.

The 1st millennium BC. As a matter of fact the early Iron Age as well as the whole 1st millennium BC is still a *terra incognita* for the North of the Arabian Peninsula. The only traces to outline a broad timeline of the history of Dûmat al-Jandal during this period lie in the external sources of the Neo-Assyrian annals.

The most direct written source, the VA 3310 inscription, describes a military campaign led by Sennacherib against Telkhu “queen of the Arabs in the middle of the desert”, in an unspecified place, after which the Assyrian armies chased the fleeing Arabs up to the site of Adummatu, defined as “Adumu which is located in the desert”. The campaign took place in 688 BC¹⁰. Afterwards, the annals of king Esarhaddon and the ones of king Assurbanipal record that during Sennacherib’s time Telkhu, queen of “Adumu the Arab fortress”, was led to Ninive for having betrayed the Assyrian king with the Dûma’s divinity and her daughter Tabu’a, the future queen. The queen’s return (?) to Dûma, with the deported gods, by order of Esarhaddon¹¹.

Between the 8th and 5th century BC the region of Dûmat al-Jandal was in all likelihood one of the centers of the tribal confederation of Qedar¹². These two names (Adummatu/Qedar) are

⁶ Nayîm 1990: 41.

⁷ Nayîm 1990: 46.

⁸ Parr *et al.*: 36.

⁹ Nayîm 1990: 101.

¹⁰ Eph‘al 1982: 20-59, 74-165; Luckenbill 1927.

¹¹ Wiseman 1958: 4; Musil 1927: 480; Smith 1878: 138 (K3087 and K3405).

¹² Eph‘al 1982: 225; Robin 1991a: 49; 1991b: 10; 2010: 98-99.

found in association not only in the Assyrian annals but also in biblical texts. What is more, the Qedarites venerated the god ‘Atarshamein which belongs to the groups of divinities brought by Sennacherib when he captured Adummatu. This divinity is also mentioned in the Thamoudic or Safaitic graffiti found in the Jawf region, together with two other divinities Rudâ and Nuhai, also mentioned by Essarhaddon¹³.

The Nabataean and Roman periods: from 1st to 4th cent. AD. The name “Dûmat” appears for the first time in a Nabataean inscription from Jawf in the 5th year of king Malichos II (45 AD)¹⁴. The inscription mentions the construction and restoration of a sanctuary at Dûma, dedicated to the great god Dûshara. Mention of a sanctuary dedicated to Dûshara, the supreme god of the Nabataeans, indicates both a rupture with the pantheon mentioned in the Assyrian and Thamoudic inscriptions from the neighborhood or the evidence of the cohabitation of several entities in the same region.

Concerning the trade routes of Arabia, various classical authors mention Dûma in this period, which must have been a time of prosperity for the oasis: “Domatha” in Pliny the Elder’s *Natural History*¹⁵ and “Dumaetha” in Ptolemy’s *Geography* in the 2nd century AD¹⁶, featuring as a large city in Arabia.

The annexation of Arabia Petraea into the Roman Province of Arabia in 106 AD meant that Rome was encroaching on the borders of Nabataea. However, there are few written attestations of a Roman presence at Dûmat al-Jandal. The first is an undated stone stela found in the oasis, apparently from the 3rd century AD, dedicated by the centurion of the III Cyrenaic legion Flavius Dionysius¹⁷. According to Livingstone, the god Sulmus in the Latin inscription is to be linked with the Arab cult of the god *slm* also present at Taymâ¹⁸.

Finally the “*Praetensio*” stela of Qasr Azraq records work on the Roman road between Bosra and Dûma, involving several squads of the Roman legions. Considering the date of the inscription, Christol and Lenoir prefer to regard as the term “*praetensio*” applying to a military action designed to restore Roman authority during the reign of Aurelian (270 to 275), over an itinerary and territories that had been lost following the Palmyrenian conquest of Zenobia¹⁹.

The rise of Islam. Few notes are available in order to define the historical evolution of the last centuries before the Muslim conquest. Dûmat al-Jandal is mentioned in the fifth year of the Hijra. Al-Wâqidî reports on the presence of a Christian sovereign, Ukhaydir ibn ‘Abd al Malîk, of the Kinda tribe, allied of Byzantium²⁰. It appears that the oasis of Dûmat al-Jandal held out for a long time against Islam, and thereafter constituted both a place of refuge and a seat of arbitration²¹. It took no less than four campaigns by the companions of the Prophet until the independence of the oasis was finally subjugated. In the first years of the Islam conquest the so-called ‘Umar bin al-Khattâb mosque was built in the core of the village. During the Omayyad reign Dûmat al-Jandal rises as an important caravan centre, in which once a year one of the

¹³ Rabinowitz 1956; 1959; Dumbrell 1971; Lemaire 1974.

¹⁴ Savignac, Starcky 1957: 196.

¹⁵ Pliny 1848: lib. VI.XXXII.14: 824.

¹⁶ Ptolemy 1838: lib. V.C.18: 382.

¹⁷ al-Jâsir 1981: 135-138; Bowersock 1983: pl. 14; Speidel 1987: 213-221.

¹⁸ Livingstone 1989: 103.

¹⁹ Christol, Lenoir 2001: 176.

²⁰ al-Wâqidî 1989: 402.

²¹ Veccia Vaglieri 2010.

biggest market of north Arabia took place²². Its new importance as commercial and trade center dues to the link between al-Jawf and the new capital of the empire, Damascus.

We have few textual references for the medieval period up until the XIX century. Dûma gradually lost its status at the intersection of major caravan trails as the commercial trails changed to follow the pilgrim routes to Makka.

Archaeological and architectural evidences

The survey carried out in 2010 has produced an initial detailed overview of the archaeological remains in the oasis (fig. 7). According to the long and rich history of the site the variety of structures is considerable. Since 2009 the project aims equally to create a map of the archaeological remains, to contribute to protect the monuments and to develop the tourism at the site (fig. 8).

The ‘Umar bin al-Khattâb Mosque. The so-called ‘Umar Bin al-Khattâb mosque (fig. 9) is one of the main monument at Dûma. Dating back to the Umayyad period, it has roughly rectangular plan (32.5 x 18 m) (fig. 10). According to al-Sudairî and al-Mu‘ayqil, the plan of the mosque is similar to that of the Prophet’s house in Medina, although smaller. The minaret, unusual in that it does not form an integral part of the monument and because it is not in the *qibla* wall, would have been built later and its orientation could be explained by the axis of the adjacent streets and neighbourhood. The orientation and shape of the minaret led Wallin, then King to suggest that it was the bell tower of an ancient church transformed for Muslim worship. al-Mu‘ayqil however also considers the possibility that the mosque was built on the remains of an older monument, testified by a well dressed pillar reused to built the northern external wall of the building²³.

The fortresses. As Seetzen, then Musil a century later explained, the rivalry between villages and wars between clans were numerous during the XIX century at Dûmat al-Jandal. Many structures, particularly defensive ones were built in the palm groves during this period, some on top of older buildings²⁴. In 1883, Huber wrote about the existence of three fortresses at Dûmat al-Jandal. He located from the south-west to the north-west “Qasr Jawhar, Qasr Mârid, Qasr Farha et Rigm el-Burq”²⁵. The first one corresponds to the palace of the Ibn Rashîd (fig. 11), the second is well known and still stands today in the heart of the oasis (fig. 12), while Qasr Farha is more enigmatic. The last place mentioned, “Rigm el-Burq” (Rijm al-Burj), indicates the location of the ancient western fortifications of Dûmat al-Jandal. Wallin also mentioned the existence of “Alkuseir” (al-Qusayr), a small castle built to the south of Qasr Mârid²⁶.

Qasr Mârid was founded in the centre of the oasis on a limestone hill, which dominates the surrounding palm groves. In the XIII century, Yâqût reports the words of Abu Sa‘ad as-Sakûnî who tells of the existence of a castle at Dûmat, known as “Mârid”, which would have belonged to the ruler Ukaydir²⁷. The castle consists of two parts: 1) the main building, oval in shape (42 x 28 m) with four round towers; an entrance in the south-west leads to a large interior courtyard and to a long corridor on the south-east side protected by a wall and leading to a well and a sec-

²² al-Wâqidi 1989: 403.

²³ Wallin 1854: 141-144; King 1978; al-Mu‘ayqil 1994a; al-Mu‘ayqil 1994b: 108-117.

²⁴ Seetzen 1808: 387; Musil 1927: 162-163.

²⁵ Huber 1891: 49.

²⁶ Wallin 1854: 143.

²⁷ Yâqût 1995: 487.

ond entrance (fig. 13); 2) a more recent annex to the south comprising a courtyard and mosque, dominated by a round tower to the south situated on a rocky outcrop (fig. 14). Another tower protects a well on the north-west side. The results of previous small archaeological soundings are still very imprecise, and although we know that an unnamed fort was established at Dûma during the Nabataean Period, it cannot be related to it at this stage of our research. A complete architectural and archaeological study will need to be carried out on this monument in order to separate and date the various stages of its construction.

Wallin wrote about the existence of a castle known as “Alkuseir” (al-Qusayr), built later than Qasr Mârid, it stands a short distance away from it, “to the right” on the same outcrop. Wallin says that it was built of mud brick by a clan opposed to that of Qasr Mârid. Euting tells us that the small castle “Kseir” was in ruins in 1883²⁸. It seems that the stone foundations of this monument are still visible today to the north-east of the al-Jawf museum of archaeology and ethnology (fig. 15).

The enclosures. In the XIII century, Abu Sa‘ad as-Sakûnî, whose remarks were reported by Yâqût, mentioned the presence of a “fortified enclosure, and inside it, the Qasr Mârid” in Dûma²⁹. Later, in the XIX and early XX centuries, Wallin, Guarmani, Musil and Philby again described a rampart surrounding the whole oasis³⁰.

Following his field work, al-Mu‘ayqil has brought some additional details to the earlier observations; he suggests that there are two enclosures, an outer one around the oasis, and an inner one surrounding the historical area³¹. The survey carried out in 2010 reveals an even less precise picture: the existence of several unconnected sections of rampart (fig. 16) still located in and around the core of the village and the so-called “western enclosure wall”.

The western enclosure wall is in an area 3 km to the west of the historical centre (fig. 7). The site is a large bottle-neck about 340 m wide and 2.5 km long, representing the mouth of a branch of the wâdî al-Sirhân (fig. 17). The corridor is lined to the north by a plateau and to the south by an impressive orangey outcrop, which dominates the area, 70 m above the structures in the valley. The rampart is first mentioned by Wallin: made of mud brick, it was probably built by “Alukeidir”, hence its name at that time “Amara el-Okeidir”³². The itinerary used by Huber to reach the fortifications and his description corresponds to those of Euting. The latter noted that the rampart was built of stone and that there was a narrow doorway. The site was visited in 1976 by the Mc. Adams team (site numbered 201–18)³³. The pottery collected by the Saudi expedition in 1985-1986 dated to the Nabataean period³⁴.

The high sandstone outcrop to the south is called Rijm el-Burj, the “ruins of the tower” (fig. 18). Logically one can assume the presence of such an edifice on the rocky outcrop. The initial survey of the area in 2010 did indeed note the presence of wide stone walls belonging to a large structure on the edge of the outcrop, it will be excavated during 2011 season.

The hydraulic structures. Both in ancient and modern times the gardens and palm groves in the oasis were irrigated by a dense network of hydraulic features. A superficial survey of

²⁸ Euting 1896: 126–127.

²⁹ Yâqût 1995: 487.

³⁰ Wallin 1854: 145, 153; Guarmani 1866: 131; Musil 1927: 150–160; Philby 1923: 252.

³¹ al-Mu‘ayqil 1994b: 305–306.

³² Huber 1886: 48.

³³ Mc. Adams *et al.* 1977: 38, pl. 9.

³⁴ al-Dâyil, al-Shadûkhî 1986; al-Dâyil 1988.

the centre of the oasis in 2010 found 25 wells in an area of 25 hectares. These wells generally measure between 3 and 6 m in diameter, even though they are not all perfectly round. Some have the interesting attribute of a staircase integrated into their masonry, which led to openings at regular heights that provided access for cleaning, necessary repairs and probably for the *qanât* (fig. 19).

These wells indeed belong to a system of *qanât*, of which there are many in the Middle East. Wallin, who visited the oasis in 1845, described the presence of very well-built underground aqueducts of stonework, big enough for a man to stand up in³⁵. At that time they extended into areas devoid of cultivation or settlements. The aerial photograph taken in 1964 indeed shows many *qanât* and wells today not more in use or covered by modern houses and gardens (fig. 20).

The necropolises. A funerary Nabataean inscription (incorporated into a wall in the neighbouring village and stolen in 2010) was transcribed by Winnett & Reed. The text mentions the construction by Shulaitû son of Shalitû of a tomb for himself and his family in the year 35 of the reign of Aretas IV³⁶.

Only one pre-Islamic necropolis was found at Dûma during the excavations in 1985–1986 in the al-Sunamiyât quarter³⁷. It will be necessary to question the choice of this location between the historical area and the western enclosure, since the Nabataeans, like the Romans, established their cemeteries *extra muros*.

The activities of the Saudi-Italian-French archaeological project

The program of the second campaign has been structured in order to carry on with what was accomplished in 2009 and implement the Project's activity thanks to the collaboration with the French team. The points of the program are as follows:

1. Carrying on with the creation of an archaeological map of the site including Mârid Castle, the neighbouring medieval villages and the western enclosure located 3 km to the west (fig. 8);
2. Surveying of the western enclosure wall area (sector C) and opening excavation trenches (fig. 17, 21);
3. Extending of the excavation trench opened in 2009 (sector A) in order to get a wider view of the stone structures at the foot of Mârid Castle and to identify clearly the chronological phases of the Pre-Islamic period (fig. 26-29).

The western enclosure wall. Research begun in 2010 by the Saudi-Italian-French project in the western enclosure area (sector C) has revealed a wall more than 2 km long, in places preserved to more than 4.5 m high, which closes off the bottom of the valley and goes up onto the adjacent plateaux (fig. 21).

Three soundings were carried out in 2010. The first one was opened near the fortification wall, just at the limit of the modern canal, which cut the ancient fortification (fig. 22). Under the soil relate to the enclosure wall we found layers of aeolian sand, which cover a previous quadrangular structure, probably a small house or a tower, built directly on the virgin soil of the valley.

The second sounding (SD2) was conducted west of sounding 1, at the exterior of the enclosure, where stands a long stone wall perpendicular to the valley (fig. 23). It could well be a kind of retention structure protecting the enclosure from the wâdî floods.

³⁵ Wallin 1854: 145.

³⁶ Winnett, Reed 1970: 144–145.

³⁷ al-Dâyil, al-Shadûkhî 1986: 74–76; al-Dâyil 1988: 37–40.

The third sounding (SD3) was opened inside the perimeter of the western fortification wall (fig. 24). Its location was chosen according to investigate an area currently under construction of modern houses. Two levels of occupation were defined: the upper level showed the existence of a nice garden, with a wide stone paved basin, water channels, cultivation pits and walls. A more ancient level shows a wide wall 1.50 m high. Although little pottery was found related to it, it should be dated very close to the previous level (I-IV cent. AD).

Finally, a 80 m long segment of the western part of the surrounding wall, almost fully recovered by sand although al-Dâyil sounding in 1986, has also been clean (fig. 21, 25). This cleaning, the archaeological soundings and the full survey of the area show that the monumental enclosure is composed of two abutting walls, apparently contemporaneous, one of dressed stone and the other of mud brick above stone foundations. The enclosure seems to have been built in sections, according to a technique well known in the Arabian Peninsula. Seven quadrangular bastions and about fifty buttresses, which complete the defensive system, were surveyed in 2010. Only pre-Islamic pottery items were found in surface and during the excavation. Moreover, the construction techniques and the masonry allow us to date this area to a late Nabataean-Roman period.

The excavation of sector A. After the 2009 campaign we defined a very preliminary sequence of occupation in sector A, in a deep trench located at the foot of the Qasr Mârid (fig. 26). We recognized a long Islamic period during which different structures were built one above the other and, at least, a late pre-Islamic phase related to pre-Islamic pottery³⁸. After the 2010 campaign, thanks to the enlargement of the trench and the opportunity to remove the more recent structure, we were able to define different phases of the Islamic occupation of Hayy ad-Dira' village.

The first identified archaeological period may be associated with a Late Islamic era (XVIII century). It corresponds to the construction of ephemeral structures built on the surface of the hill on top of a level of aeolian sand (*level 2*) (fig. 27).

The second identified archaeological period is visible in a small oval building named L6 (3 x 4 m wide). A level of aeolian sand (*level 2*, 1.60 m thick) has gathered during the time, depositing against and on top of its walls (fig. 27). From this level of aeolian sand various objects have emerged: in particular two small stony pipes manufactured according to the Ottoman tradition, both dated to the XV-XVIII centuries AD.

Considering the large quantity of aeolian sand gathered up to the point of covering the entire L6 structure, a rather long period must have passed from the time it was in use. Building L6, therefore, might be associated with a Middle Islamic period relative to the medieval phase, middle or late, of the villages, not yet precisely dated between the VIII and the XV century AD. Building L6 is built on top of an irregular discarded stones level which extend over the whole surface of the trench, covering all ancient structures (fig. 28).

The third archaeological phase is attested by the structures laying immediately below *level 3*, which might be referred to an Ancient Islamic period. This period is strictly connected to a fourth and earlier phase ascribable Late Nabataean-Roman, whose relative structures (Building A) were reused several times during the Ancient Islamic period (fig. 28).

The so-called Building A, the most impressive structure identified up to now, appears as an imposing construction, built along the eastern flank of the hill, apparently at the foot of the

³⁸ de Maigret 2010.

“acropolis”. The building, oriented along a north-south axis, has a maximum length of 12 m and a width of 10 m (only its western side has been identified; the north, east and south sides correspond to the extent of the excavation trench). The distinctive feature of the building consists in the presence of a central area (*L8*), which appears to have been open to the sky delimited to the west by a portico (*L7*) (fig. 29).

The system of foundation reveals a preparatory level of small stones and scrap pottery with materials dated to the 1st century AD (fig. 30). The finding of Roman, Byzantine and Early Islamic (Umayyad) material compacted in the building’s ground floor suggests that Building A dates back from around the 2nd century AD and went through various periods of reuse up until its destruction in Early Islamic times.

Conclusion

The oldest occupations of al-Jawf region are testified by sporadic pre-historical evidences and proto-historical architectural elements. Although Paleolithic and Neolithic remains are still rare, the Bronze Age seems to be attested by the impressive stone complex of ar-Rajâjîl and, for example, by the tumulus necropolis west of Dûmat al-Jandal. These sites need however to be studied in detail to get a clearer understanding.

The name Adummatu appears in the Assyrian textual sources during the Iron Age. Nevertheless, from an archaeological point of view the most ancient identified period in Dûma could be attested by the presence of a Hellenistic (?) alabaster bowl from sector A dating back to the 2nd-1st cent. BC – although no structures related to it were identified –, but more surely by luxury Nabataean pottery, fragments of eastern *sigillata* A and *terra sigillata africana* coming back from the 1st century AD. The ceramic ware found here suggests links between the southern areas of the peninsula with the northern regions gravitating on Petra and the whole Mediterranean basin. It allows us to emphasize the importance of this ancient commercial centre during the first centuries AD.

From this time on, the oasis seems to have been continuously occupied till nowadays – late-Roman, Byzantine (?) and Islamic periods –, as the stratigraphic sequence showed. It will be the task of next seasons of the Saudi-Italian-French archaeological project to recognize and better understand the nature of these still unknown occupations.

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Fig. 1. Alessandro de Maigret during the 2009 campaign

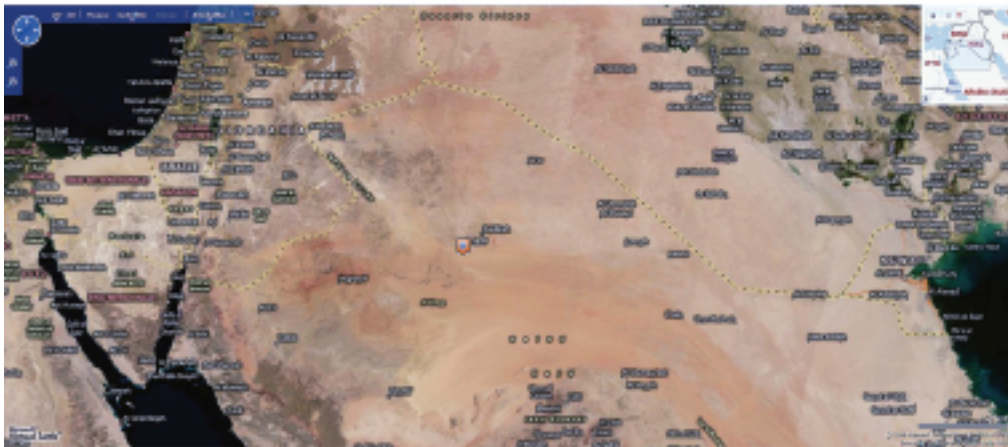


Fig. 2. Location of Dumat al-Jandal along the wadi al-Sirhan



Fig. 3. The Sakakâ basin, east – north-east of Dumat al-Jandal



Fig 4. Petroglyphs on the Burnus hill near Qasr Za'bal (Sakâkâ)



Fig. 5. The megalithic complex of ar-Rajâjîl



Fig. 6. Bronze age (?) stone circle burial from Dûmat al-Jandal

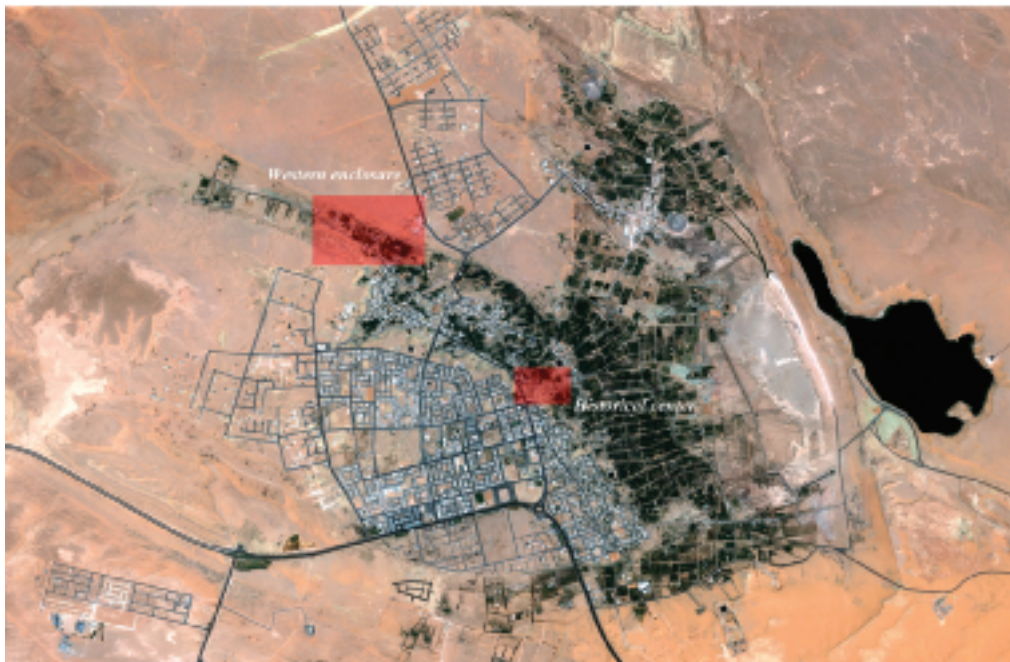


Fig. 7. The modern city of Dûmat al-Jandal with indication of two main archaeological areas, GeoEye-1 (© GeoEye, 2011; Distributed by e-GEOS for GE-1 and IKONOS)

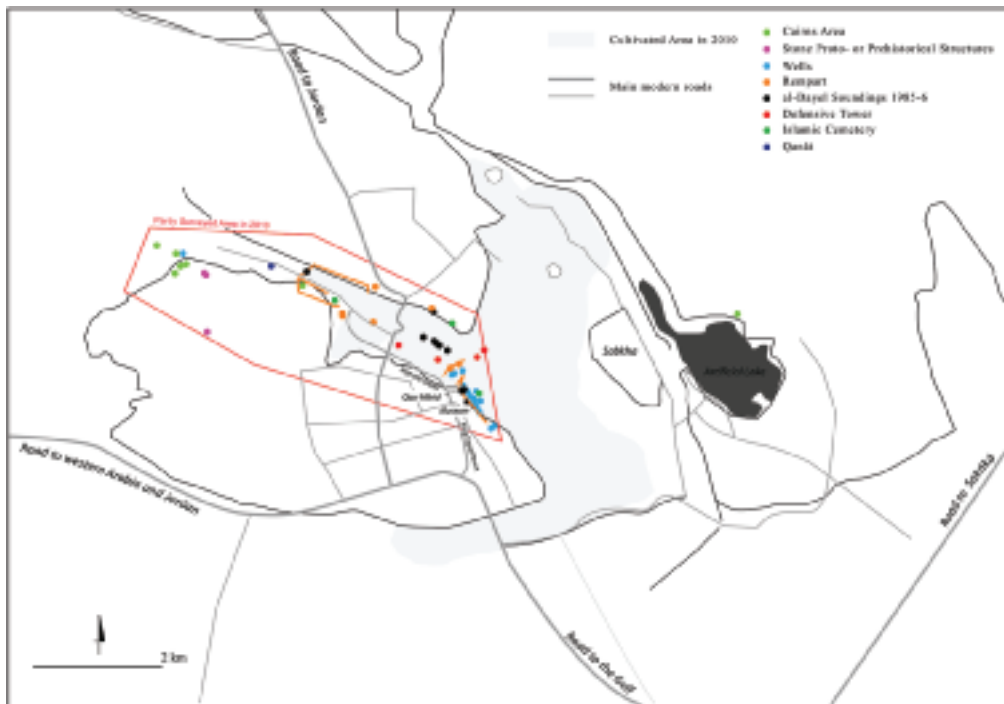


Fig. 8. The archaeological survey in 2010



Fig. 9. The so-called 'Umar bin al-Khattâb mosque, view from the Mârid Castle, looking north



Fig. 10. The central nave of the so-called 'Umar bin al-Khattâb mosque



Fig. 11. Entrance of Ibn Rashid palace (after drawing by Euting 1886: 126)



Fig. 12. Qasr Mârid, view from the north-east

Fig. 13. Qasr Mârid, view from the north-east



Fig. 14. Southern annexe of the Qasr Mârid, looking south





Fig. 15. Hypothetical location of al-Qusayr, GeoEye-1 (© GeoEye, 2011; Distributed by e-GEOS for GE-1 and IKONOS; © Dumat al-Jandal Archaeological Project)



Fig. 16. Supposed location of the enclosure in the historic centre of the oasis based on field data, aerial images and travellers' accounts (orange lines – observed on the field; green lines – still hypothetical), GeoEye-1 (© GeoEye, 2011; Distributed by e-GEOS for GE-1 and IKONOS; © Dumat al-Jandal Archaeological Project)



Fig. 17. Satellite view of the western enclosure, sector C, looking north, GeoEye-1
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Fig. 18. The sandstone outcrop called Rijm el-Burj to the south of the western enclosure, looking south



Fig. 19. One of the wells from the ancient core of the medieval village

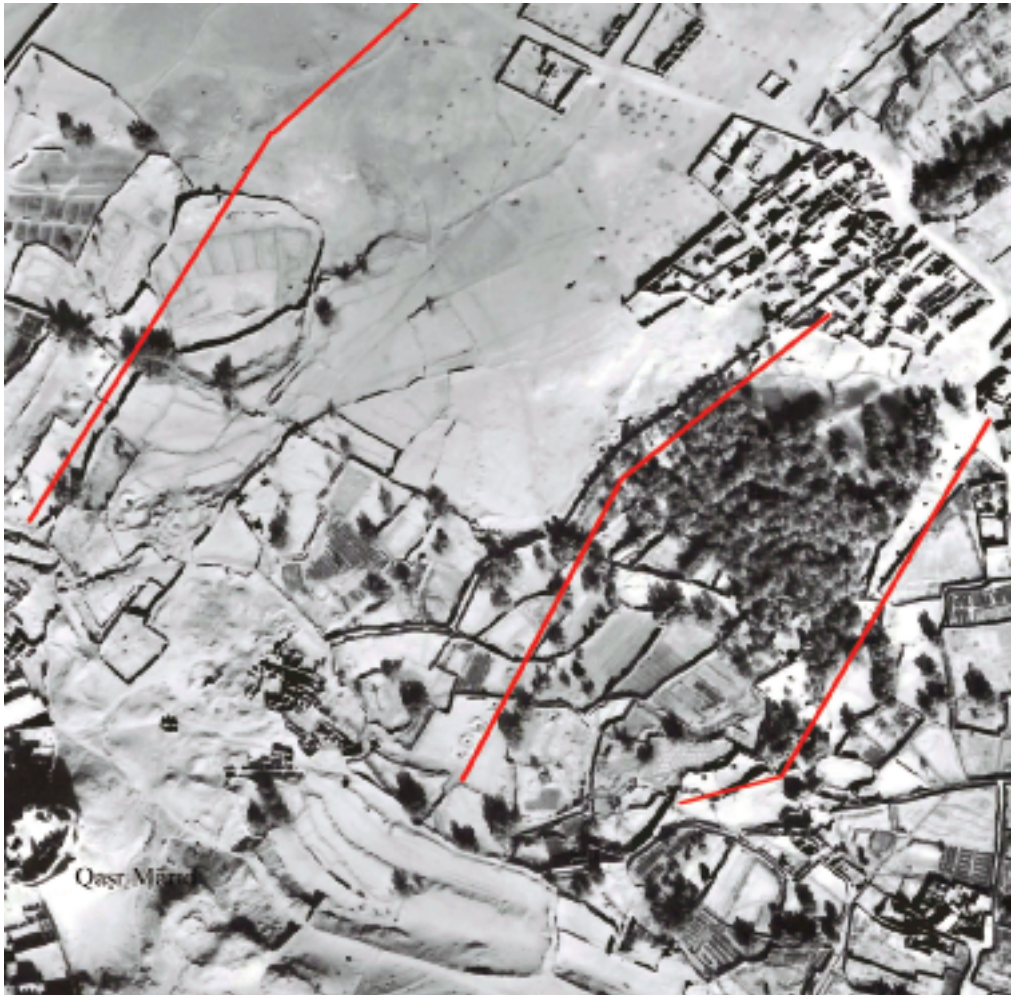


Fig. 20. Qanât (near red lines) located in the centre of Dūma oasis as seen on the 1964 aerial photograph (courtesy of Husayn al-Khalifā, director of the Tourism Office of Sakakā; © Dūmat al-Jandal Archaeological Project)

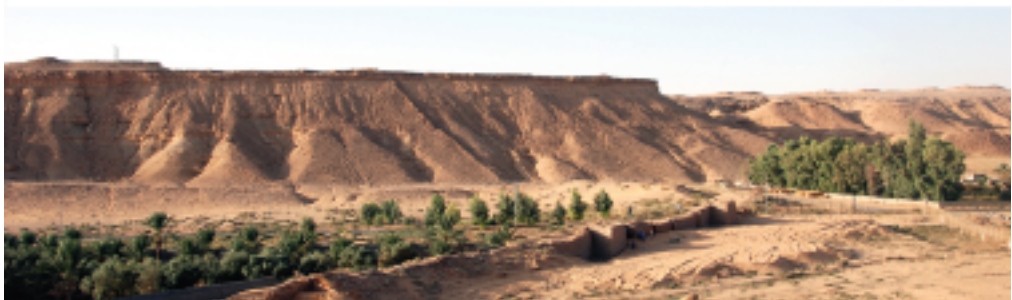


Fig. 21. Western enclosure (on the ground – the section, which runs along the valley; on the background – the section, which goes up on the Rijm al-Burj hill, looking south)



Fig. 22. Sounding 1, sector C, a “quadrangular structure” earlier than the fortification wall, looking south



Fig. 23. Retention wall (?) in sounding 2, sector C, looking north

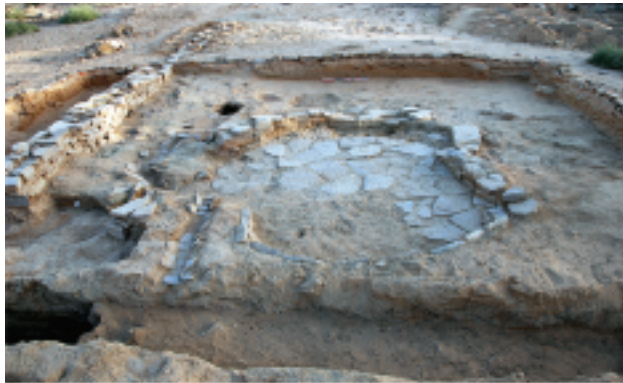


Fig. 24. Sounding 3, sector C, looking north



Fig. 25. The inner part of the western section of the enclosure, looking north



Fig. 26. Sector A at the foot of Qasr Mârid



Fig. 27. Building L6 covered by level 2



Fig. 28. Early Islamic and pre-Islamic structures covered by level 3



Fig. 29. Building A covered by early Islamic structures, view from the north



Fig. 30. Pre-Islamic pottery from the foundation level of Building A. 1-2 – Roman eastern sigillata; 3-7 – Nabataean pottery



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