



Fig. 50. Trench 3 (right) and Trench 4 (left) with features (picture is slightly distorted and pointing south)

MURAYGHAT

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The central knoll of Murayghat (Area 1) was intensively surveyed in 2016 and 2017. During that process 105 squares (10,500 m² or just over 1 ha) have now been surveyed, documenting the visible bedrock in 1:100 plans; while cup-marks and any other surface structures were documented in more detail. Over 40 cup-holes have been documented. There is a concentration of them along the edge of Wadi Murayghat, where in some cases groups of four and six have been found. They are usually around 15 to 20 cm in diameter and of widely differing depths.

The systematic survey of areas around Area 1 concentrated on Area 4 (Fig. 51), but included features in other parts of the site. Seven rock terraces form the slope up to the hilltop of Area 4. The fields of archaeological investigation are arranged along these geographical formations. The dolmens are situated along the terraces. The dolmens found in Area 4 consist of one floor slab, one or two side stones/orthostats at the long sides, one end stone at each short side (often missing) and a capstone. Most slabs (side, floor, and roof) are better smoothed on the inside of the dolmen, while the outside is weathered. The floor-slab as well as the blocking slabs at the entrances are much smaller than the orthostats and the capstones. Six small ancient quarries have been documented in Area 4, which are usually in the direct vicinity of a dolmen and indicate by their shape that the dolmen

slabs might come directly from them. On top of Area 8, structures have been recorded, including a tower. The tower most likely dates to the Late Antique period.

In Area 7 to the east, three collapsed dolmens and surrounding structures have been recorded. The dolmen L.7008 is one of the largest found so far at the site, with the side stones being 3.2 x 0.45 x 0.95 m (length, width, height) and 3.3 x 0.3 x 1.25 m. The inside chamber is 2.2 x 1.45 x 0.95 m and filled with soil and rubble. Close to the dolmen runs a wall of 8.5 m length, 0.85 m width and 1.7 m height, forming a large terrace for it. Two tracks run from Area 7 on the plateau down to Wadi Ma'in. These might have been ancient pathways running more or less parallel to the modern Ma'in road that replaced them. One of them leads close to the Early Bronze Age site WZM 01 in the Ma'in valley.

Trenches 3/3.2/3.3 had an excavated area of 65 m² and Trenches 4/4.2/4.3 had an excavated area of 64 m² (Fig. 50). The long, badly made Wall 7 was excavated in both trenches. Wall 7 is joined by curved Wall 11 in Trench 3 and runs over a large pit in both trenches. In Trench 3 other late, unsubstantial walls of the Middle Bronze Age, without connected surfaces were excavated, documented, and removed. The stone-lined pit, already excavated in 2014, is roughly contemporary with these MBA walls. The MBA walls were all above a surface (L.1701), which sealed the larger, more substantial Wall 14, which might date into the Early Bronze Age. This wall ends at a line of large, toppled orthostats (L.1723), which have not been completely excavated. In Trench 4, some late, very badly made walls joined Wall 7. Several double-faced, large walls (1, 15, 19) were further excavated, which seem to frame a large platform made from irregular boulders. All of these walls in Trench 4 were covered by at least one flooding event, which left particularly in the east of the trench a deep alluvium layer. Below Wall 1 a huge limestone block (with cup-mark and posthole) and a curved line of stones were excavated, which undoubtedly date to the Early Bronze Age.

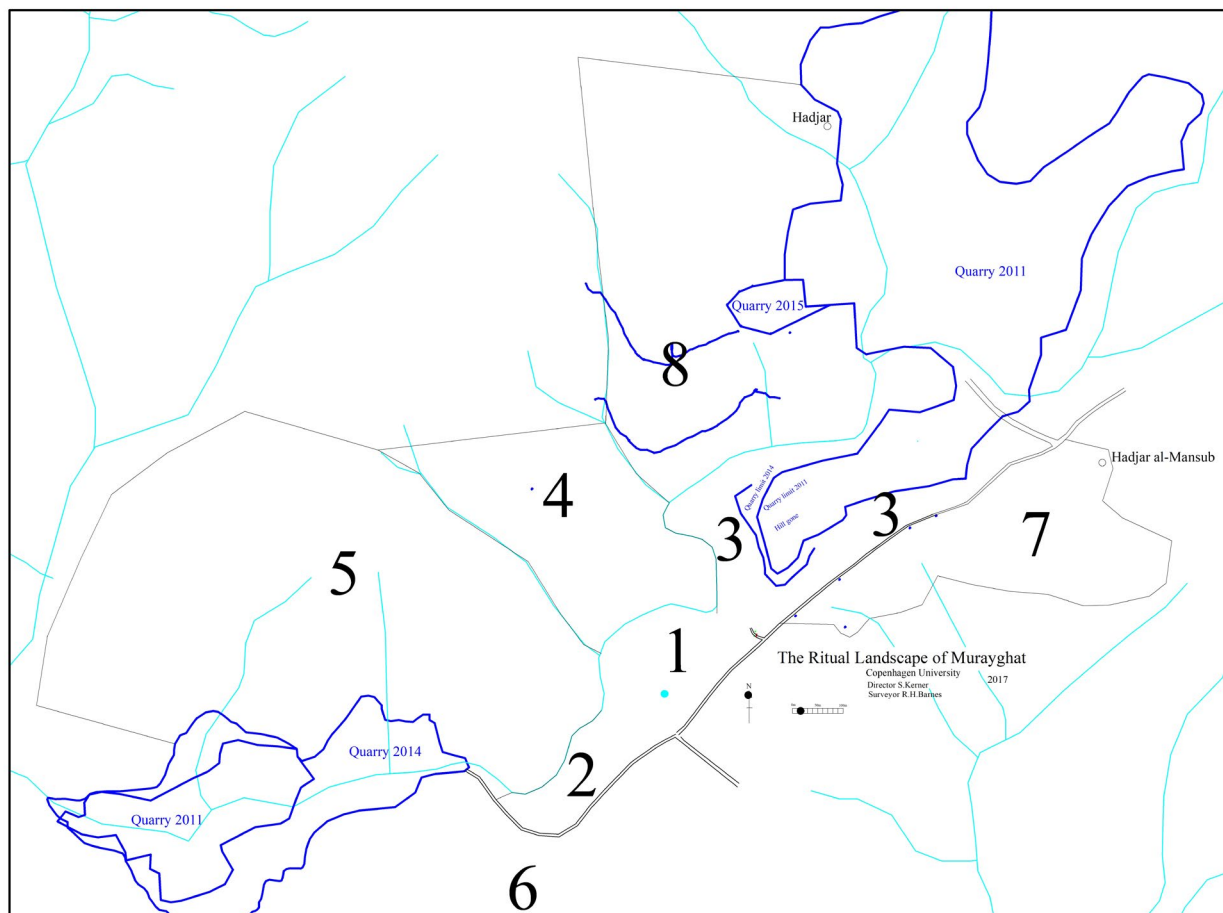


Fig. 51. Map showing investigated areas and locations of modern quarries at Murayghat