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Abu El-Daraj

Roman station on the west coast of the Gulf of Suez

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Introduction

The archaeological site of Abu El-Daraj is located within the area known generally, as Abu El-Daraj, which is an area that is located about 68km south of Suez, directly on the western Coast of the Gulf of Suez.

The area was known by this name in relation to St. John Climacus, The author of the book “The Ladder of Heaven”, he was supervising a group of Monks who inhabited this area. Although development projects in the Abu El-Daraj area have radically changed the main features of the site, they have shed light on the archaeological site and its historical importance.



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The historical background of the Abu El-Daraj site



General view of the archaeological site, <https://www.ifao.egnet.net/bases/publications/bec23/>

The first mention of the Abu El-Daraj was a map of Thebes deserts by Sicard in 1717, Wilkinson who write some notes without publishing, and in 1900, Fortu gave a description of the site. Then the site received the attention of many scientists, as Fontaine, A. L., Martine, M., and Jarry, J., after it had been neglected for a long time.

Excavation missions at Abu El-Daraj site;

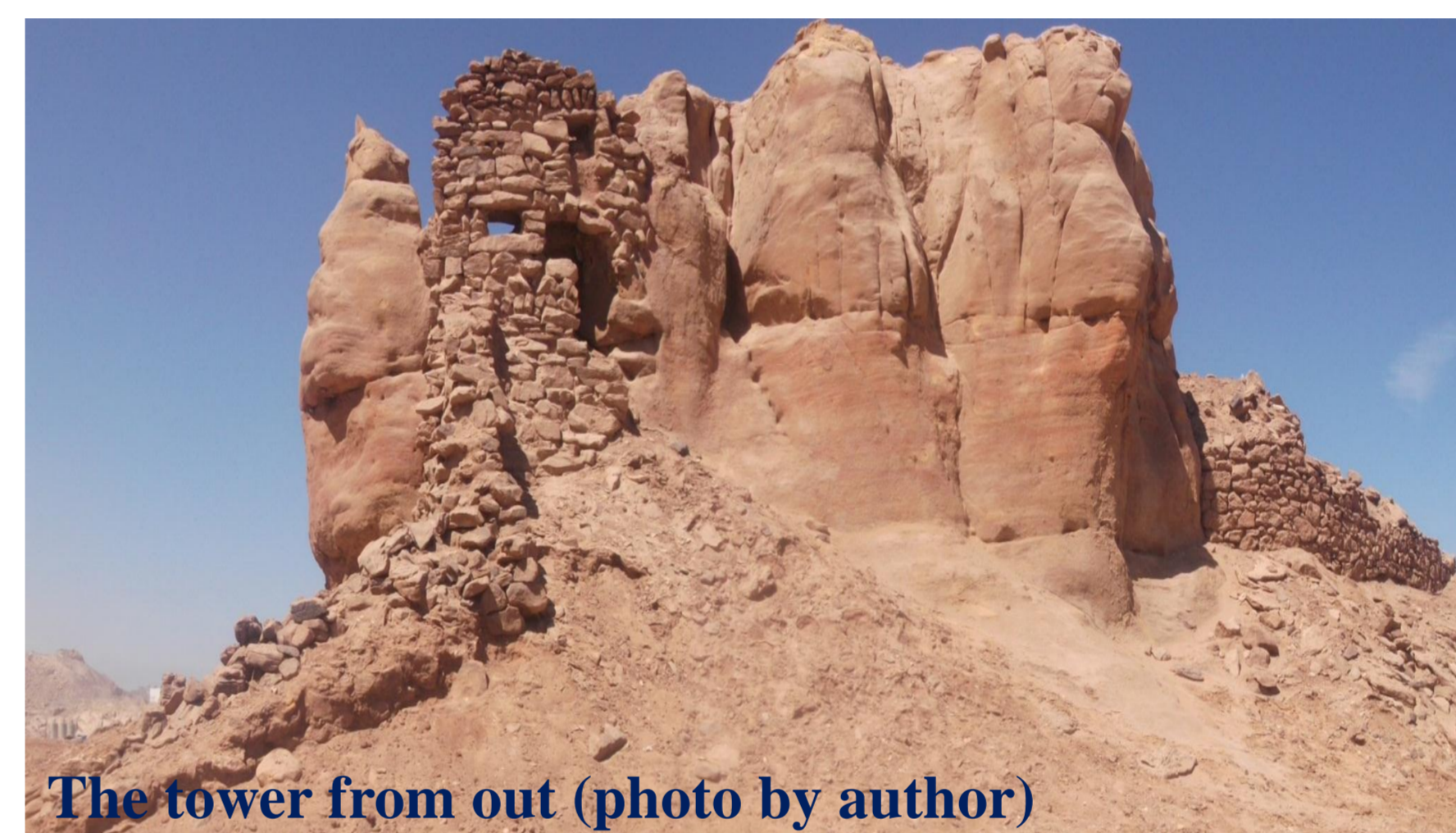
In 2003, the site was visited by the archaeological excavation mission by (IFAO), the mainly archaeological materials such as writings on the surfaces, and pottery, which dating back to the Roman period.



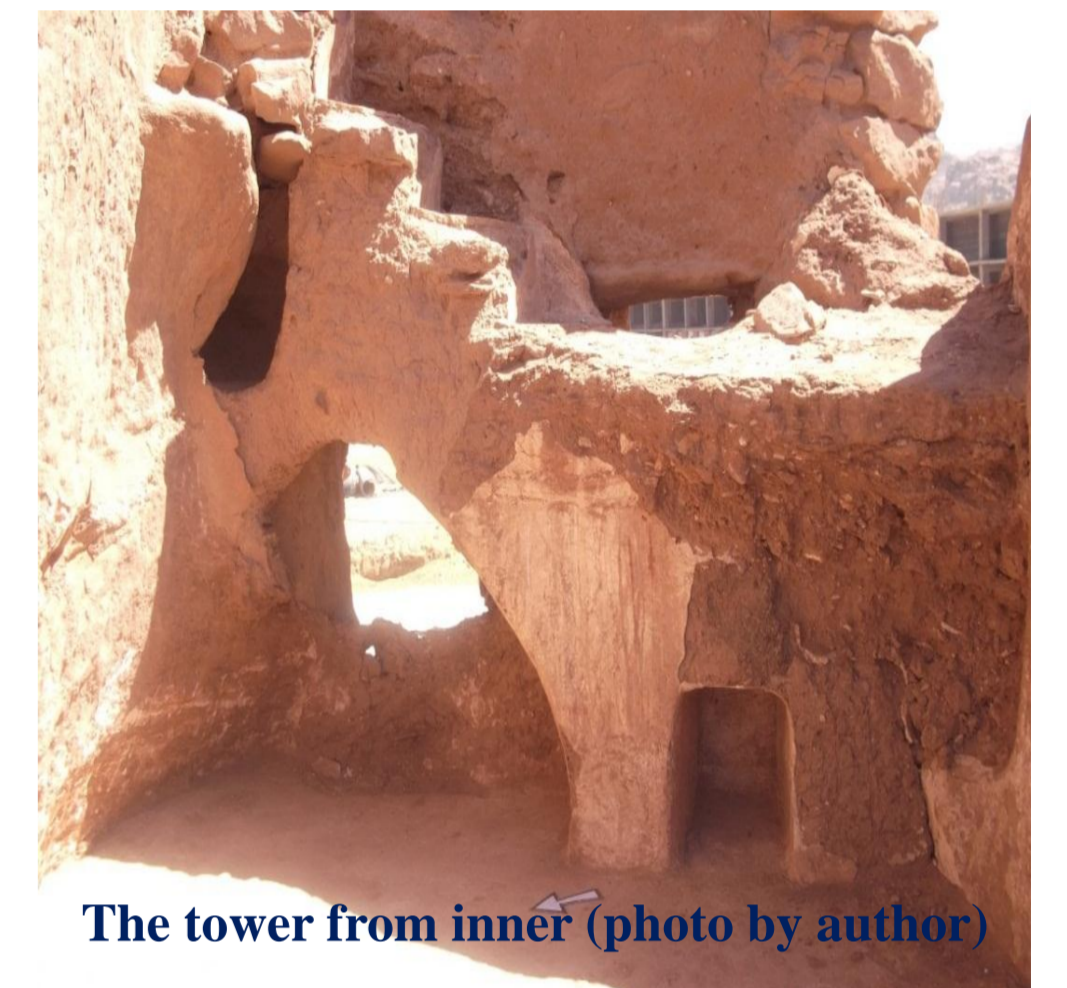
Pottery dating to Roman period(BIFAO 108 2008)

Now, the site owned by the Ministry of Antiquities, which includes all the archaeological evidence in the area about 4 acres, where archaeological site took place two excavations missions during the years 2018 and 2019, the most important of which are the following:

- The work at the tower showed that it was built with bricks on high rock, inside stairs leading to the top, and holes allow watching the road, covered inside with a layer of mortar.

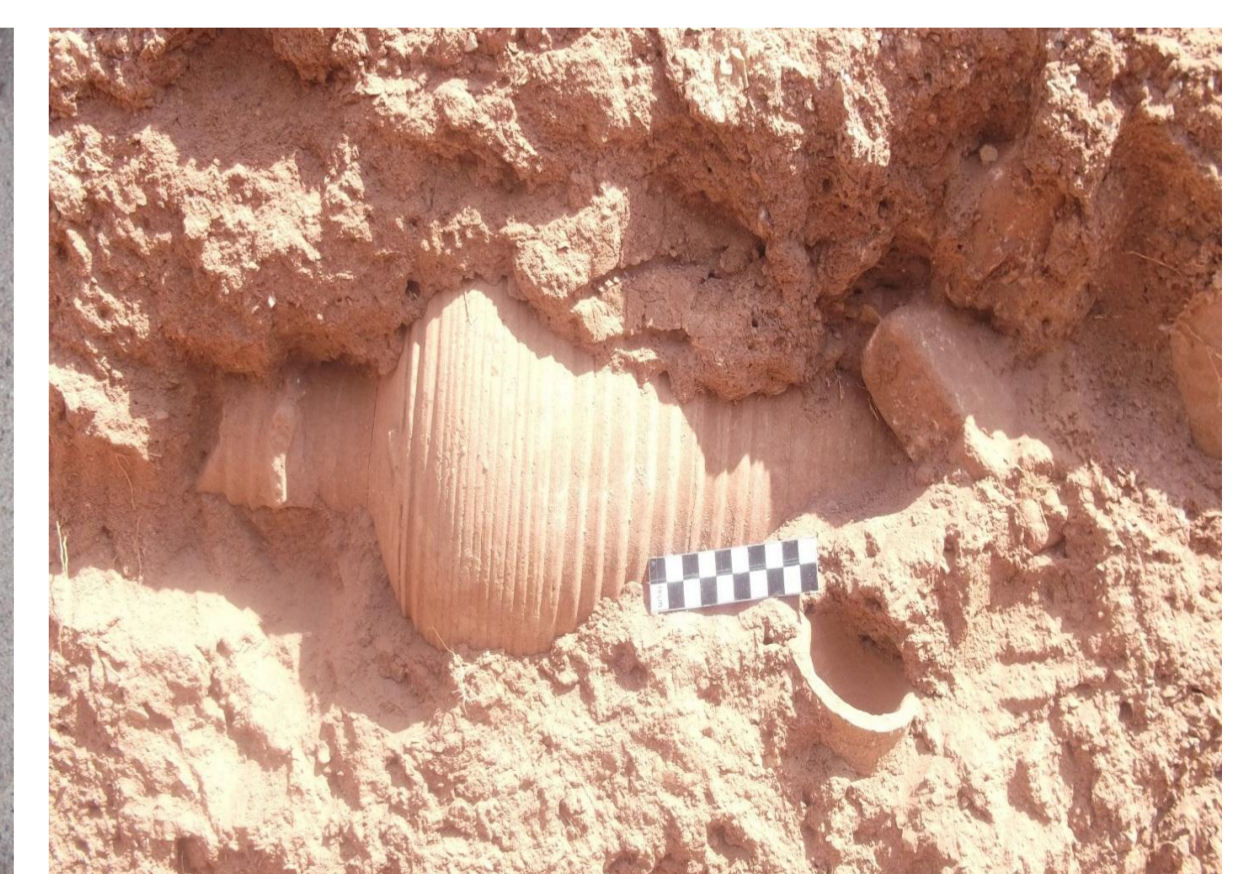
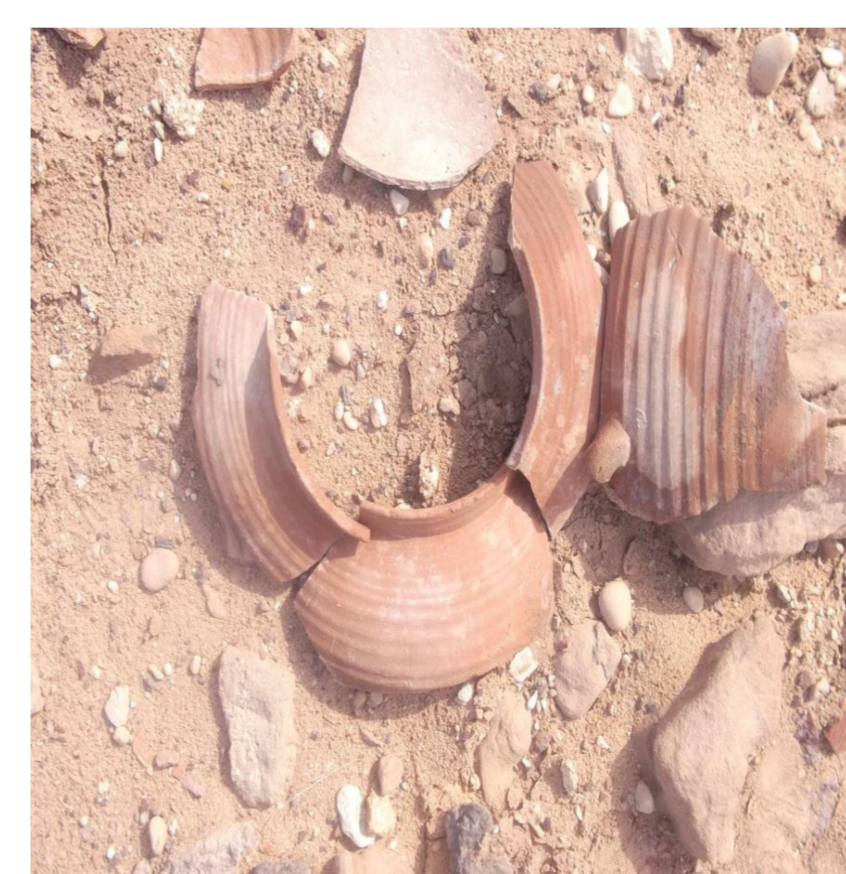


The tower from out (photo by author)



The tower from inner (photo by author)

- Well discovered in the southwest side as well as the west well
- Many rooms next to each other on the western, northern and eastern sides, where discovered inside of which many pottery fragments of different uses, where excavations at room on the far northwest side, discovered mud bricks in its construction
- Pottery scattered throughout the site, some of which are locally made, and other from abroad, the most pottery widespread dates back to the late Roman period, and also discovered parts dating back to the Ptolemaic and New Kingdom period



Pottery from the site (photo by author)

Results:

Abu El-Daraj one of the commercial stations located on west gulf of Suez to complement the commercial stations discovered along the Red Sea route, where greatly exploited during the Roman era, which the trade movement was active during this period in these trade routes, which is evidenced by the finding of many Nabataean inscriptions along the road, whom they were responsible for leading camels and guarding caravans

References;

Fontaine, A. L., *BSES* 6, 1955-1956, p. 55-83, Ghica, V., all., *BIFAO* 108 (2008), p. 115-163., Martine, M., *BSAC* 18, 1965-1966, p. 139-145, Id., *BIFAO* 70 (1970), p. 173-189, GIS & Report of Abu El-Daraj site 2018-2019, Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, Egypt