

SALVAGE EXCAVATION AND DOCUMENTATION OF SITES AT NAHAL GOV – 2004

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This report concerns a series of features surveyed, plotted and excavated in the Negev. Their date is uncertain. The excavation was directed by the author in November 2005 on behalf of Y.G. Contract Archaeology Ltd under the academic sponsorship of Hebrew Union College (Excavation Permit B-292/2004).

Introduction

In an archaeological survey carried out in February 2004 by Dr. Tali Erickson-Gini (Southern Negev Supervisor, Israel Antiquities Authority [IAA]) at the request of Rotem Emprat Negev Corporation Ltd, forty-three potential archaeological sites were located in the area of Sde Gov. After further research, on October 17, 2004 the IAA reduced this number to fifteen (Table 1). These sites were excavated under the direction of Y.G. Contract Archaeology executive Yehuda Govrin in mid-November 2004 (Fig. 1).

Before excavations commenced, Yehuda Govrin and Tali Erickson-Gini surveyed the area in order to confirm the sites and their locations, and to establish what would be the satisfactory extent of excavations and recording. Altogether twelve sites were marked for excavation, and three for documenting.

Below is a table (Table 1) showing the sites, their types and the IAA excavation and recording demands of each. Site 5, initially defined as a pile of stones, was subsequently cancelled from the list, while Sites 34, 35, 43, 46 and 50 were deemed outside the client's proposed mining impact area, thus eliminating the need to investigate them.

The Sites

Site 1 (identified in the survey as a grave)

Location: 162340–033350, altitude: 43.0m ASL.

Description (Fig. 2): A cluster of stones on a slope. Fieldstones of various sizes were concentrated as a pile within a 1.3m diameter. The stone cluster

rests on *hamada* soil whose surface is covered with small stones and natural brown flint fragments.

Excavation (Fig. 3): A 2.0 x 2.0m square was excavated to a depth of 0.15m, down to the natural soil. No finds were recovered during the excavation.

Conclusion: There is no certainty that this site was man-made since no architecture or finds were recovered. It is possible that this site was a natural cluster of local limestone.

Site 2 (identified in the survey as a grave)

Location: 162345–033341, altitude: 32.0m ASL.

Description (Figs. 4, 5): A large rock broken into seven parts was found on this extended slope. The rock is brown and stands out above the ground to a



Fig. 1. Location map of the archaeological investigation area (plan no: 272/03/10 – Sde Gov).

Table 1.

Site no.	Site	Location	Requirements	Total
1.	Grave	162360–1033340	Excavation (2.0 x 2.5m)	5.0m ²
2.	Grave	162356–1033345	Excavation (2.0 x 1.0m)	2.0m ²
3.	Grave	162171–1033516	Excavation (1.0 x 2.0m)	2.0m ²
4.	Campsite	162170–1033479	Test excavation (2.0 x 2m)	4.0m ²
5.	Rogem	162788–1033536	Excavation (2.0 x 3.0m)	6.0m ²
6.	Structure	162177–1033546	Excavation (2.0 x 3.0m)	6.0m ²
8.	Stone line	162224–1033350	Recording	
9.	Stone line	162221–1033350	Recording	
10.	Grave	162251–1033371	Excavation (2.0 x 2.0m)	4.0m ²
11.	Installation	162275–1033374	Excavation (1.0 x 1.5m)	1.5m ²
12.	Grave	162308–1033381	Excavation (1.0 x 1.5m)	1.5m ²
13.	Two graves	162361–1033437	Excavation (2.0 x 2.0m)	4.0m ²
14.	Campsite	162361–1033425	Excavation (2.0 x 2.0m)	4.0m ²
34.	Grave	162411–1033419	Excavation (2.0 x 2.5m)	5.0m ²
35.	Rogem	162392–1033432	Excavation (4.0 x 4.0m)	16.0m ²
36.	Square structure	162352–1033432	Excavation (2.0 x 2.0m)	4.0m ²
43.	Structure	162493–1033909	Excavation (1.0 x 1.5m)	1.5m ²
46.	Structure	162196–1033700	Excavation (5.0 x 5.0m)	25.0m ²
50.	<i>Shiniyot</i>	162562–1033027	Recording	



Fig. 2. Nahal Gov 1, general view before excavation.



Fig. 3. Nahal Gov 1, general view after excavation.

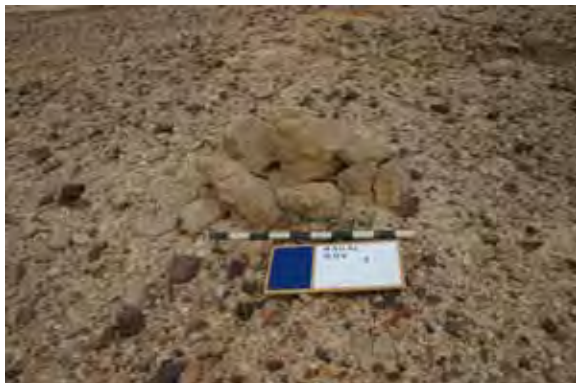


Fig. 4. Nahal Gov 2, the broken rock, general view (looking west).

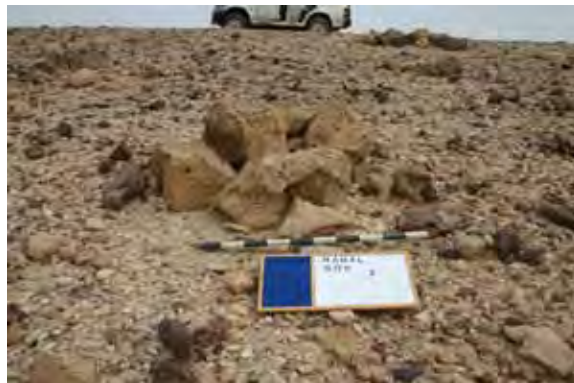


Fig. 5. Nahal Gov 2, general view of the broken rock (looking east).

height of 0.4m. The site was not excavated; it was identified as a natural rock broken into a number of fragments with no associated artifacts.

Site 3 (identified in the survey as a grave)

Location: 162186–033527, altitude: 45.0m ASL.

Description (Fig. 6): An elliptical feature oriented east-west and measuring ca. 2.9m long and ca. 1.8m wide. The feature rests on *hamada* sediment mixed with small and medium-sized stones.

Excavation (Figs. 7, 8): A 4.0 x 4.0m square was excavated to a depth of ca. 0.5m, reaching sterile gravel subsoil. We uncovered a course of large and medium-sized stones placed on a course of small and medium-sized stones.

Conclusions: No pottery or lithics were found in the excavation. Despite this the impression is that this is a man-made structure, its purpose and date unknown.

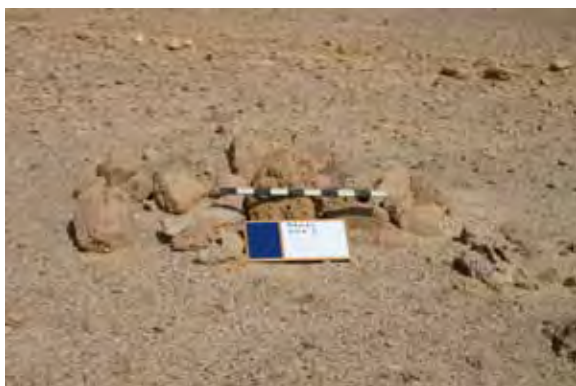


Fig. 6. Nahal Gov 3, general view before excavation.

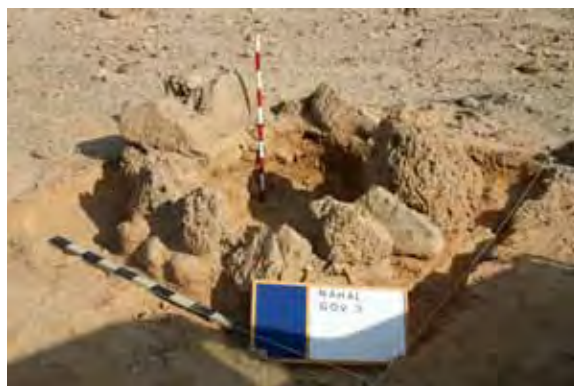


Fig. 7. Nahal Gov 3, general view after excavation.

Site 4 (defined in the survey as a campsite)

Location: 162149–033470, altitude: 46.0m ASL.

Description (Fig. 9): The remains of a stone circle preserved only in its northern section, to a height of ca. 0.25m. The circle was built from medium-sized brown flint stones set on *hamada* soil mixed with small brown-black flint stones.

Excavation (Fig. 10): An area of 2.5 x 4.0m was excavated and a section of the one-course stone circle was exposed. No finds were recovered. The soil was sterile under the layer of gravel, and its color yellowish-white.

Conclusions: This feature was probably a stone circle, the southern section of which was carried away by a shallow wadi.

Site 6 (defined in the survey as a structure)

Location: 162179–033536, altitude: 43.0m ASL.

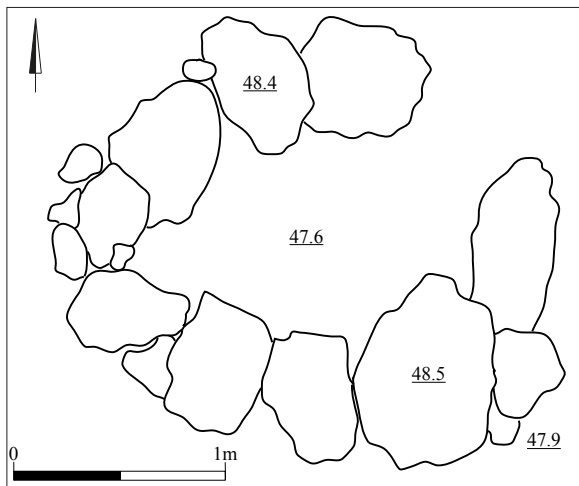


Fig. 8. Plan of Nahal Gov 3.



Fig. 9. Nahal Gov 4, general view before excavation.

Description (Fig. 11): An irregular concentration of large and medium-sized stones found resting on an area of *hamada* soil close to a wadi.

Excavation (Fig. 12): A 3.0 x 2.5m rectangle, oriented east-west was excavated. Two rows of one course of large stones were found, forming an ellipse filled with stones. The double wall's width was 0.8m, the inner diameter ca. 1.0m and the depth 0.3m. No finds were recovered.

Conclusions: This was probably a man-made feature, but without datable or indicative finds we did not venture a detailed interpretation.

Site 8 (defined in the survey as a line of stones)

Location: 162223–033344, altitude: 56.0m ASL.

Description (Figs. 13, 14): A line of stones 30.0m from and parallel to the Nahal Gov cliff, with a



Fig. 10. Nahal Gov 4, general view after excavation (looking north).



Fig. 11. Nahal Gov 6, general view before excavation.

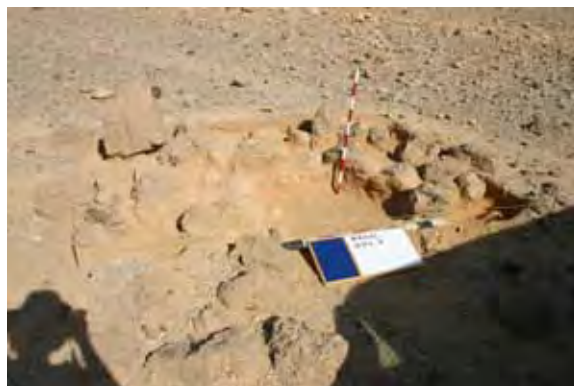


Fig. 12. Nahal Gov 6, general view after excavation (looking north).

general north-south orientation, pointing to the next line of stones (Site 9) which lie perpendicularly oriented, 25.0m southeast of Site 8.

Documentation: This line of stones was built from large and medium-sized stones, one course wide and high, and is badly preserved. The feature is



Fig. 13. Nahal Gov 8, general view (looking west).



Fig. 15. Nahal Gov 9, general views (looking west).



Fig. 14. Nahal Gov 8, general view (looking south).

comprised mainly of dark-colored stones which stand out against the white surface on which the feature was built.

Conclusions: From its position and association with the topography and a nearby line of stones (Site 9) this feature was probably used as a road marking or other navigation aid. There were no associated artifacts found, so we cannot postulate a date.

Site 9 (defined as a line of stones in the survey)

Location: 162226–033365, altitude: 54.0m ASL.

Description (Figs. 15, 16): A line of stones oriented southeast-northwest. This feature is built of one course of stones, arranged in a straight line.

Documentation: The line is built from twenty brown-black, medium-sized stones, on a white lime soil surface. The wall's length is about 4.0m. The feature's orientation is approximated towards the Nahal Gov wadi, located ca. 50.0m from the line of stones.



Fig. 16. Nahal Gov 9, general views (looking south).

Conclusions: This linear feature was probably used as an ancient road marking, associable with Nahal Gov 8. The period is unknown since no artifacts were retrieved.

Site 10 (defined in the survey as a grave)

Location: 162250–033374, altitude: 52.0m ASL.