



Fig. 1. Youth from King's Academy engaging with local scholar Professor Ibrahim Sadaqa at Ain Shallalah as part of their WRPA field experience. (Photo by K.M. Groom.)

## **Wadi Rum: Community- Based Rock Art and Epigraphic Recording**

Kaelin M. Groom  
Arizona State University  
[kaelin.groom@asu.edu](mailto:kaelin.groom@asu.edu)

George Bevan  
Queen's University  
[bevan@queensu.ca](mailto:bevan@queensu.ca)

Casey D. Allen  
The University of the West Indies  
Cave Hill  
[casey.allen@cavehill.uwi.edu](mailto:casey.allen@cavehill.uwi.edu)



Continuing prior community engagement programs in partnership with the Cultural Heritage Through Engagement of Local Communities Project (USAID SCHEP) in the Wadi Rum Protected Area (WRPA), the past two years have seen a variety of short-term projects and events designed to empower and enrich the local populations of the Rum region. One such event was an overnight fieldtrip of over three dozen middle school and high school students from King's Academy to the WRPA. Rock Art Ranger (RAR) graduates and locals who had participated in SCHEP activities served as guides and resources to teach these young Jordanians and international students about southern Jordan's cultural and natural resources. Since this event, many RAR guides have incorporated program materials into their tour experiences and continue to promote Wadi Rum heritage stewardship and responsible tour management.

Additionally, the Community-Based Rock Art and Epigraphic Recording (CBRAER) program was granted a short extension to continue field data collection of rock art and epigraphic stability assessments and mapping via smartphone geographic information system (GIS) (Groom et al. 2018). This extension allowed the core team to finish collecting data in all the primary tourism zones, as well as participate in a GIS workshop hosted in Amman. During this time, the online

rock art/engraving database was also refined and edited for ease of use and continuity so that the information gathered throughout the program will be more accessible for management decisions and future research programs. Alongside the extended data collection, Dr. Niccole Cerveny provided two basic graffiti removal kits and hosted a brief demonstration/workshop for removing charcoal, marker, and paint vandalism at the mouth of Khazali Canyon. Core team members participated in this workshop, as did some RAR graduates and local guides who had brought tourists to the famous site. Once the workshop was complete, the graffiti removal kits were left with WRPA staff for continued use and basic conservation.

The most prominent event of the 2018–2019 season, however, was the official closing ceremony held in May 2018, celebrating the completion of the initial grant period. Senior government and community representatives from the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA) and the surrounding villages were hosted in the conference room of the WRPA visitor center for presentations of the project's successes, exchanges of gifts and awards, and a discussion of future collaborations between SCHEP, ACOR, and the WRPA. Although this was clearly the closing of the initial CBRAER project, the alliances and partnerships established over the previous years have kept the potential for future work in Wadi Rum open and willing. With the extension of USAID SCHEP's funding for ACOR from 2018 to 2023, all parties involved are currently working towards continued programs in the Rum region and will hopefully begin renewed collaborations in the near future with the support of WRPA director Saleh al-Noaimat.

## Reference

Groom, Kaelin, George Bevan, and Casey Allen. 2018. "Wadi Rum: Community-based Rock Art and Epigraphic Recording Project." *Archaeology in Jordan* [1] 2016–2017: 96–97.

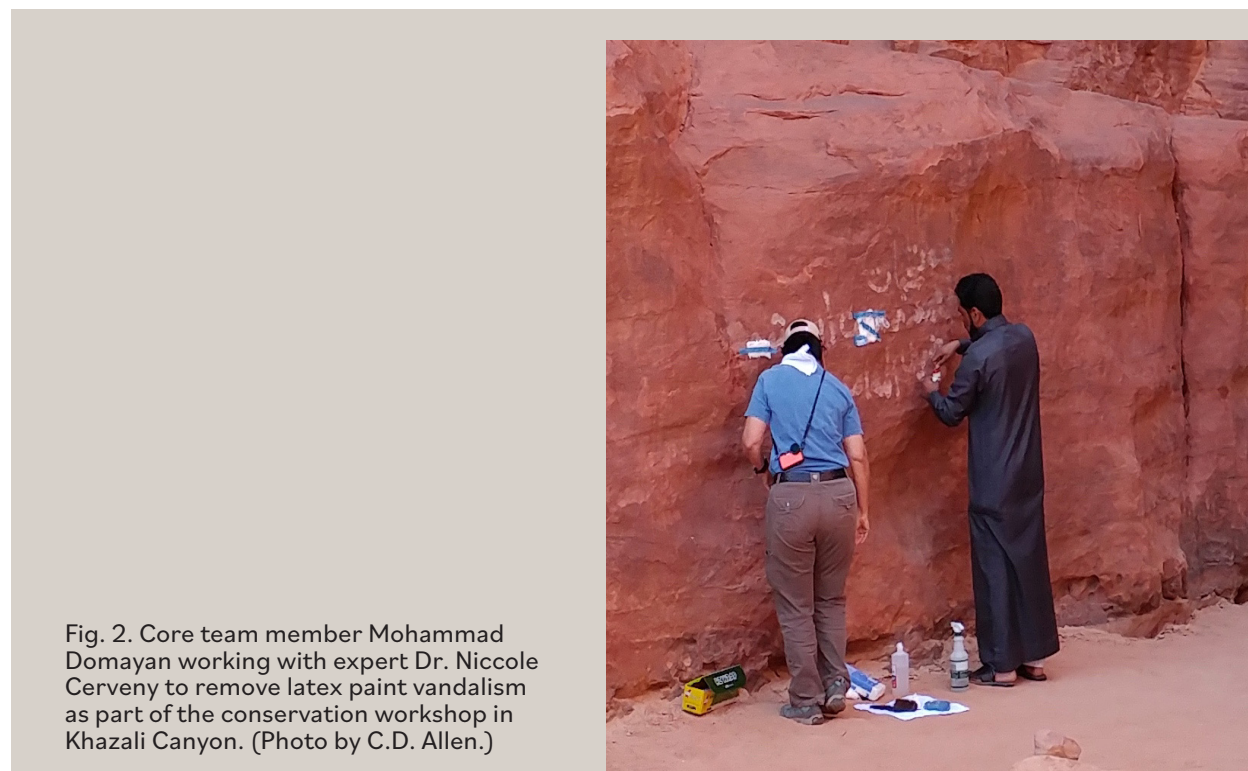


Fig. 2. Core team member Mohammad Domayan working with expert Dr. Niccole Cerveny to remove latex paint vandalism as part of the conservation workshop in Khazali Canyon. (Photo by C.D. Allen.)