

# 3D Scan of Himyarite Relief Sculpture in Zafar (Yemen)



## Heidelberg University Zafar Expedition 2010

Reliefs such as these have never come to light before, and in situ! The uncertain preservation situation and great importance of the finds required very exact recording. The excavated 15 m long relief wall of Himyarite date in the Stone Building at Zafar complemented sketches, drawings and photos. Four horizontal rows comprise rosettes and leaf-crosses, paradisiacal scenes, alternating grape leaves and grapes as well as frontal bucrania.

More interesting at the southern end a 1.70 m high relief occurred of a frontally posed crowned man with a cross-staff in his left hand and a bundle of branches in his right. This is taken to be the sole surviving example of Christian art in South Arabia. By virtue of the find situation and Byzantine comparisons, it is taken to date from 525 to c. 541 CE.

Including the setup, we required 18 hours of recording time. The Konica-Minolta Vivid 910 recorded three wall sections by means of 370 individual recordings, 16.000.000 tessellations, and for the crowned figure with a further 6,000,000. This comprised in all 113,664.000 measuring points with a speed of 20480/second. The software thins out the data, since one does not always require high resolution. After the different scans are joined to one another, then one can cover the tessellations with a photographic 'skin'.



Greatest challenge: getting the scanner in and out of the country!

Literature: <http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/propylaeumdok/volltexte/2009/303/>

Heidelberg University  
Dept. of the Languages and Cultures of the Near East  
[paul.yule@t-online.de](mailto:paul.yule@t-online.de)  
[kontakt@lindensoft.de](mailto:kontakt@lindensoft.de)