ABSTRACT

Literary and inscriptive evidence attest to the presence of the Bani ‘Amrat in and around Madaba for close to three centuries, from the mid-second century B.C. until the beginning of the second century A.D., or roughly the period of Nabataean hegemony in the region. Recent excavations on the west slope of the acropolis in Madaba have uncovered substantial archaeological remains spanning the Late Hellenistic and Early Roman periods, including large quantities of classic Nabataean painted wares (both imported and local imitations). The sequence indicates a distinct shift in the ceramic industry sometime in the late second century or early first century B.C., and suggests that Madaba’s cultural (and probably economic and political) focus shifted to the south during this period. These archaeological remains offer an opportunity to link the Bani ‘Amrat directly to developments in Madaba, and to assess the nature of their involvement within the broader Nabataean cultural realm.