

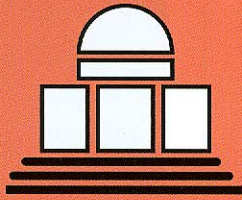
UN MOT DU PRÉSIDENT

Nous apprenons avec tristesse le décès, le 8 janvier 2011 à Princeton (New Jersey), du professeur Oleg Grabar. En 1985, le professeur Denis van Berchem, qui venait d'être nommé au Conseil de la Fondation, a insisté pour que cette dernière se dote d'un comité scientifique qui puisse la guider dans son action. Lors de deux séances en octobre 1985 (en présence des professeurs Nikita Elisséeff, Ludvik Kalus, Michael Meinecke, Basil Robinson et Michel Terrasse) et en janvier 1986 (avec le professeur Oleg Grabar), Denis van Berchem, Charles Genequand et Alain Dufour ont déterminé la ligne des activités auxquelles la Fondation est toujours restée fidèle, dans la tradition de Max van Berchem : prospections, inventaires et publications de monuments ou de textes. Oleg Grabar a fait partie du Comité scientifique de notre Fondation jusqu'en 2000 : au cours de toutes ces années, il a très fidèlement fait le déplacement à Genève chaque année et il a marqué les débats de sa personnalité rayonnante, de son humour et de ses très vastes connaissances. Nous adressons nos condoléances émues à sa famille.

La région de prédilection de Max van Berchem était le Proche-Orient, et ce présent Bulletin y est consacré avec des articles d'Alexander Asa Eger sur un fort de la province de Hatay (Turquie), de Katia Burke sur la céramique islamique de Jaffa (Israël) et de Benjamin Porter sur un site d'une zone désertique de Jordanie.

Costin van Berchem, Président

FONDATION MAX VAN BERCHEM



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BULLETIN

ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS OF THE FRONTIER SETTLEMENT OF HİSN AL-TİNAT, TURKEY

The Tüpraş Field Archaeological Project began in 2006 after a substantial scatter of Early Islamic ceramics was detected from a walking survey around the Bronze, Iron Age, and Hellenistic port of Kinet Höyük in 2005. The site, known as the Tüpraş Field, is a low mounded site completely covered by cultivated fields located 800 meters north of Kinet. The site is in the province of Hatay in Turkey, in the northern part of the Bay of Iskenderun and at the foot of the western side of the tall Amanus Mountains near Antakya (classical Antioch). Geographically and topographically, the site is part of the Plain of Issos, the easternmost extent of the broad Cilician Plain. Located near the Syrian Gates, this narrow coastal plain was a corridor that connected Anatolia (via Cilicia) with Syria (via the Amuq Plain) and was known as a key area for the harvesting of timber from the mountains. Archaeological investigations at Tüpraş Field in 2006, 2008, and 2010 revealed an eighth to twelfth century settlement dominated by a small fortified enclosure with surrounding buildings. The site is to be identified with the frontier settlement of Hişn al-Tīnāt, previously unlocated but known from the tenth century geographical sources of Ibn Ḥawqal and Muqaddasī as a military garrison and depot and port for the gathering and redistribution of timber to Syria, Egypt and other parts of the frontier.

Very little is known about the Islamic-Byzantine frontier or *al-thughūr* in the Early Islamic period (mid-seventh to mid-tenth centuries) and even less is known from the subsequent period of Byzantine reconquest (c. 963 to the end of the eleventh century). What little is known comes from historical accounts from either Muslim or Christian sources that are imbued with a strong sense of religious and political propaganda. New archaeological work is filling in our understanding that the frontier was a settled region, well-connected with both Byzantine and Islamic central lands, with an economy comprised of local industry and long-distance trade. Early Islamic settlement on the coasts of the Byzantine-Islamic frontier, itself another frontier, has remained elusive. Yet, historical accounts of sea-borne Islamic invasions as far as Constantinople and archaeological evidence of both (eastern) Islamic material culture in the

Tüpraş field (Hisn al-Tinat) seen from sea (M.-H. Gates)



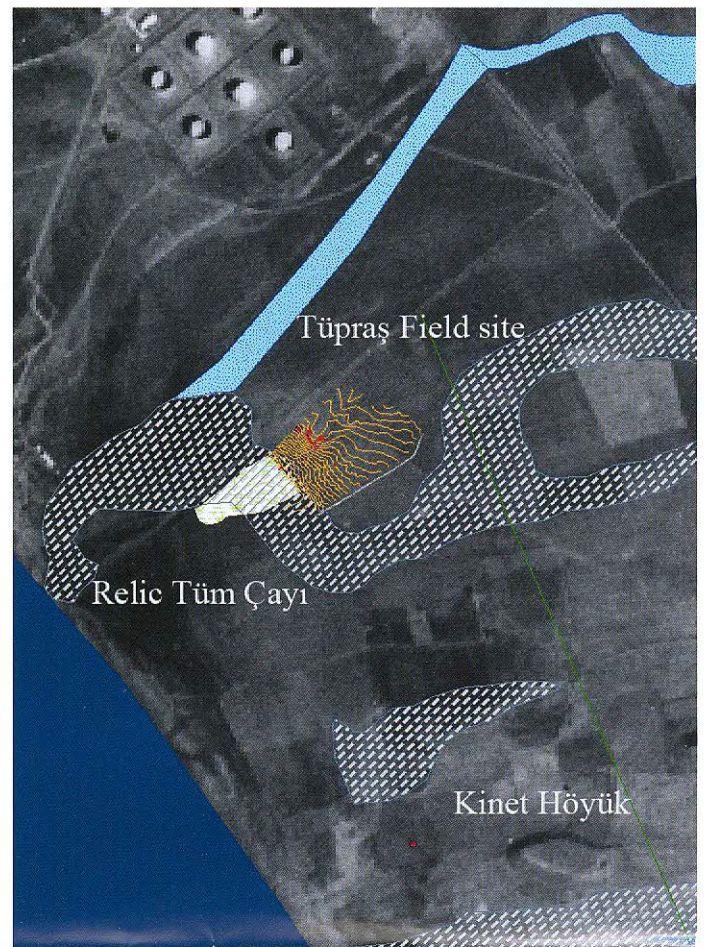
west and non-Islamic material culture in eastern sites around the Mediterranean attest at the very least to Islamic presence and involvement in port sites, trade, and shipping. At the intersection of two frontiers, the site of Ḥiṣn al-Tīnāt in the Plain of Issos is well situated to closely examine a frontier settlement and its role.

Given that sources mention that the site was not only a garrison but depended local natural resources (timber) as a depot and port, the project incorporated both an archaeological and an environmental investigation of the site in relation to its surroundings. Soundings in 2006, archaeological and geomorphological excavations with geophysical prospection in 2008, and material culture analysis and geomorphological survey investigating the site's watershed in 2010 were conducted by myself and geomorphologist Dr. Timothy Beach (Georgetown University) under the auspices of the director of the Kinet Höyük project, Dr. Marie-Henriette Gates of Bilkent University (Ankara, Turkey) with funding from the Fondation Max van Berchem.

Archaeological excavation revealed that the site had two major phases and an intervening secondary phase and was founded in the mid-8th century and destroyed and abandoned sometime in the early 12th century when settlement during the Crusader period was taken up once more on the high mound of Kinet. The earliest phase of the site (mid-8th century to tenth), was only revealed in small areas and suggest a wide cobblestone and ashlar fortification wall with smaller interior walls perpendicular to the enclosure walls. Parts of a room with a stone pavement and a patch of tile floor were excavated and associated with this structure, likely the original Ḥiṣn al-Tīnāt known from primary source descriptions. South of the enclosure, a domestic building was excavated with several rooms around a possible courtyard with a main threshold flanked to either side by low square ashlar supporting plastered colonettes. The walls of the building contained *spolia* from a nearby Late Roman settlement. Part of a stone pavement in a room off of the courtyard was found utilizing a basalt grave stela with a crude Greek inscription. Grain bins in the courtyard indicated a domestic function. The Early Islamic assemblage associated with the lower enclosure and its floors and the domestic building included glazed wares mainly produced locally on the frontier at cities such as Raqqa and Anṭākiya, as well as some wares produced farther south in central Islamic lands and Iraq (such as lusterware). Brittleware cooking pots were locally produced on the frontier and buffwares, including the thin-walled mold relief pitchers mainly from the ninth century, were locally produced or similarly from Iraq and the Jordan Valley. An early 'Abbāsid copper coin (767/768-816/817 C.E.) from an Iraqi mint was found in the domestic building. The material culture shows both local frontier manufacture and long distance imports, mainly with 'Abbāsid central lands during the eighth - tenth centuries, implying that the fron-



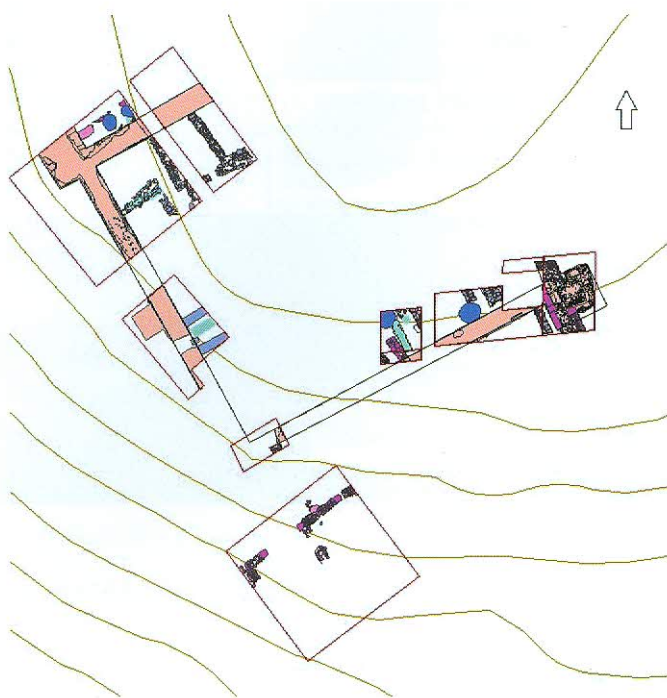
View of the fortified enclosure from the west (M-H. Gates)



General view of Tüpraş field and surrounding area (A. Eger)

tier, beyond a military no man's land, was part of an interconnected economic trade network.

Following an intermediate phase or rebuilding, a large well preserved and articulated fortified structure was constructed and inhabited in the last two phases of occupation. The structure measured 25 x 25 m with corner square towers and tower buttresses arrayed along the midpoints of the massive fortification wall. The building was built directly over the Early Islamic enclosure. Internal walls created rooms about 3.4 m to a side and were built above earlier leveled walls. A thin black floor surface with many large sized ceramic sherds was the living surface of the structure which was subsequently destroyed by fire, evident from thick layers of burning within the building in the uppermost phases. This was corroborated by geophysical evidence of burning only in the area of the fortified structure and nowhere else on the site itself. The structure belongs to the period of Byzantine reconquest of the region or the Middle Byzantine period. Unlike the Early Islamic period of occupation, no other structures were found on the site during this period but the well-built fortified enclosure. In contrast to the Early Islamic phases, preliminary faunal analysis showed a significant and majority presence of pig, many bones of which were juvenile with butchery marks, suggesting that pigs were bred for meat production from this phase of the enclosure. Pottery ranged from the tenth to early twelfth and constituted a predominately less local and more Levantine and Egyptian coastally connected assemblage. The presence of many metal and industrial objects and weaving related objects suggests that some rooms were used as workshops or stables or other livestock areas. Some may have had purposeful usage, for example one room revealed at least four clay pestles while another room had none. The discovery of horseshoes and nails in great amounts from the excavations suggests the importance in manufacture and/or trade in iron.



Plan of Early Islamic and Middle Byzantine phases around the fortified enclosure. (A. Eger)

The material culture of the period of Byzantine reconquest on the frontier implies more connection and exchange with Islamic lands than suggested by historical sources which paint a picture of instability and holy war. The fortified enclosure of the latest phase seems of similar size and orientation to the Early Islamic one below and as such, can be used to hypothesize what the Early Islamic structure represented. This type of structure, based on its small size, *qusūr* type of arrangement, mid to late eighth century date, and open location along major frontier roads corresponds with the category of the fortified waystation, seen throughout the frontier, and part of a network of sites built in the early 'Abbāsīd period. Geophysical survey

indicated that there are more extramural buildings like the domestic structure, between the fortified enclosure and the coast. This raises the possibility whether there was continual settlement down to the sea not relegated within the confines of a fortification questioning the idea militarized frontier and garrison under constant threat.

Key to the project was an environmental investigation whose aims were to locate the elements of a timber industry. In a geomorphological trench excavated at the coastal faultline, a buried peat layer contained many well-preserved pieces of wood laying along parallel lines outside of a building with a tile and plaster floor and two Early Islamic large buff amphora fragments and an Early Islamic eighth to tenth century brittleware holemouth cooking pot. Remote sensing using CORONA satellite imagery shows a relic stream, the Tūm Çay, coming down off the Amanus Mountains and opening up into a lagoonal delta west of the site. The lagoon would presumably have also functioned as the harbor anchorage. Geomorphological survey into the Tūm Çay watershed at the foot of the mountains showed one other significant Early Islamic site on the streambed which would have facilitated the transportation of timber. Southeast of the site, near Kinet Höyük, we excavated patches of a Roman/Late Roman coastal road used in the medieval periods in 2005. These elements – the excavated wood, coastline, anchorage/harbor, river, coastal road, and a contemporary site on the same river – build a picture of the environmental landscape of the site and the site's connection to its immediate natural resources, its role in the procuring and shipping timber, and the site's wider connections.

The frontier site of Early Islamic/Middle Byzantine Hışn al-Tīnāt alludes to the complex symbiotic yet stable relationship of a militarized and economic resource-based frontier for an otherwise turbulent period of history generally thought to be characterized by one of general decline, abandonment, or conquest by Islamic (including later Saljuq), Byzantine, and Crusader groups. Future work in 2011 will target the Early Islamic enclosure, port, and area in between, examine the capacity for timber trade with geomorphological excavation and coring of the streambed and coastline, and finish analysis of the material culture to gain a better understanding of the scale of these short and long distance networks on the frontier.

Alexander Asa Eger

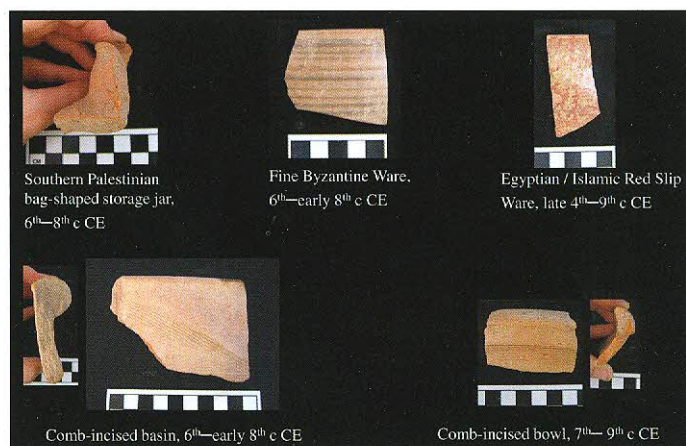
RECENT RESEARCH ON EARLY ISLAMIC AND CRUSADER CERAMICS FROM JAFFA

Jaffa (Ar. *Yafa*, Heb. *Yafo*), now in the southern part of Tel Aviv, has been an important Mediterranean port for nearly all of its long history. Archaeological work at Jaffa reveals that the site has been inhabited from at least the Middle Bronze Age (ca. 1900 BCE) to the present, and for much of that time served as the port of Jerusalem, which is 60 km to its southeast. The tell itself sits on a sandstone kurkar ridge overlooking the Mediterranean Sea, with a lower town to the north, east, and south of the tell that was inhabited in periods of prosperity.

Although the site has been excavated nearly continuously for the past fifty years, by various institutions, little of these excavations has been published. A new research initiative aims to remedy this, by synthesizing results of excavations by Jacob Kaplan, who excavated in Jaffa on behalf of the Tel Aviv municipality from 1955 to 1982, with those from more recent excavations by the Israel Antiquities Authority, and new research excavations. The new research excavations and the publication project are joint undertakings by the Jaffa

Cultural Heritage Project, a partnership between the Cotsen Institute of Archaeology at the University of California, Los Angeles, and the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA).

One aspect of the publication project has focused on the ceramics from the Early Islamic and Crusader occupations of the site. The



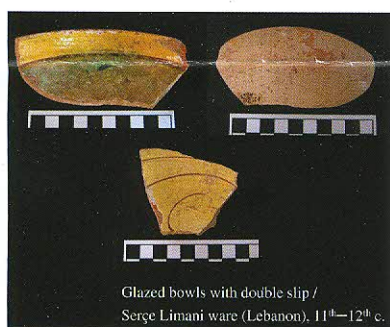
Burke - Figure 1

end goal is a full typology of the pottery from these periods and beyond, but the work has begun with comprehensive publications of the Early Islamic and Crusader ceramics from recent IAA excavations, thanks to funding from the Fondation Max von Berchem. To date these excavations have produced very little Early Islamic material, a plethora of Crusader era material, and little Mamluk material. The Early Islamic ceramic assemblage can nevertheless be characterized as similar to other Early Islamic ceramic assemblages in the region, as will be elaborated on below. Any statistical analysis of this assemblage will have to wait for a larger dataset, however.



Burke - Figure 2

Most of the excavations to date reveal that Early Islamic and Crusader occupation have taken place within the area that was the lower town, so our picture of Jaffa in the medieval periods is from the periphery rather than the center. This means that our understanding of the city in these periods is incomplete, and may be somewhat distorted. The lower town was normally occupied in periods of prosperity. This is also the reason that we have little Mamluk material, as according to the textual record in this period the town had contracted, and we should expect to find remains either immediately adjacent to the port, or perhaps on the tell.



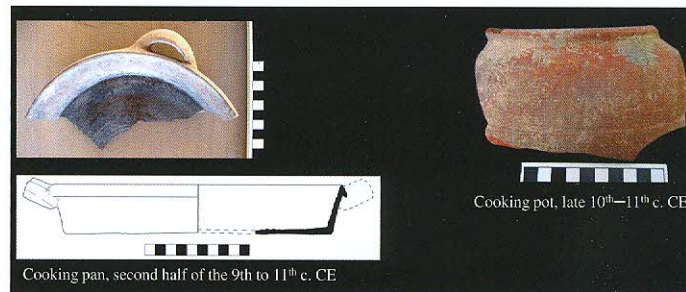
Burke - Figure 3

into the beginning part of the Early Islamic period. Other Transitional and Early Islamic period installations in the lower town of an industrial nature are metal smelting installations and an installation used for either cloth dyeing or leather tanning.

On the eve of the Muslim conquest in 634 CE, Jaffa was the seat of a Bishopric and an increasingly important port of Christian pilgrimage. Soon after the conquest Jaffa was likely fortified, as were the major Syrian ports, by the second and third caliphs 'Umar and 'Uthman. These fortifications have not yet been identified archaeologically. The ceramics from the Transitional period in the 7th century are comparable to those from Jaffa's neighbors in the region such as Caesarea, Yoque'am, Bet Shean, Tiberias, and Pella. Byzantine pottery types are still in use, such as Gaza ware storage jars, southern Palestinian bag-shaped jars, northern Palestinian bag-shaped jars, fine Byzantine ware, Egyptian red slip, and various bowls and basins with or without comb-incising (figure 1).¹

The first Islamic pottery types appear in the late 7th or early 8th century. In this period, that is after 714 CE, Jaffa became the port of Ramla, the newly founded capital of the *jund* (military district) of *Filastin*. According to the geographer al-Muqaddasi (writing in the late 10th century) at this time Jaffa was also a *ribat* of

Ramla, a fortified site at which warriors would assemble to fight off Byzantine ships. As with the Transitional period, these ceramic types are familiar from the region of Palestine and Jordan, including white-painted ware jars (figure 2), creamware pilgrim flasks, monochrome glazed bowls, painted and glazed bowls, "Coptic" glazed ware, and ribbed cooking pans and pots with cut rims and horizontal handles.²



Burke - Figure 4

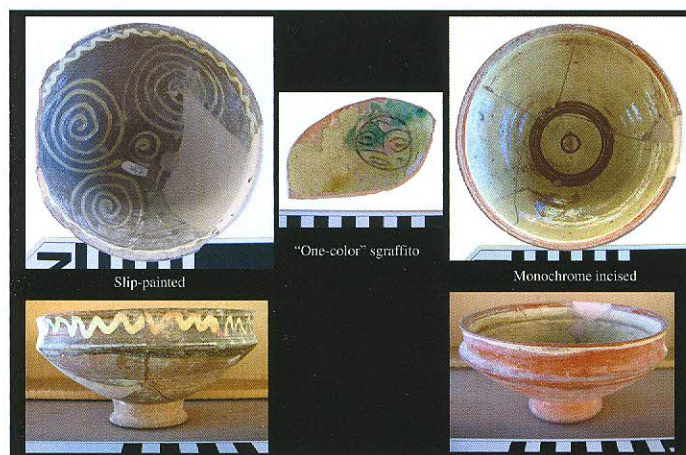
The ceramic types of the Early Islamic period, as well as the few remains of installations and architecture, do not reflect the turmoil of the period that is suggested by the textual accounts regarding southern Palestine. In 750 CE the region fell under the control of the 'Abbasids, but throughout the 9th and 10th centuries was periodically conquered and re-conquered by forces from Egypt (Tulunids, Ikhshids, and eventually Fatimids). At this time (in the late 10th century) al-Muqaddasi describes Jaffa as "a small town, although the emporium of Palestine and the port of Ar Ramlah. It is protected by an impregnable fortress, with iron gates; and the sea-gates also are of iron. The mosque is pleasant to the eye, and overlooks the sea. The harbor is excellent". The Fatimids then struggled to keep the region out of the hands of Qarmati forces, Bedouin raiders, and eventually (and unsuccessfully), Seljuk armies.

By the end of the Early Islamic period, that is in the 11th century, ceramic types reflect connections with southern Lebanon, as seen particularly in glazed and sometimes incised redware bowls made famous by the Serçe Limani shipwreck (Figure 3). Other types possibly made in southern Lebanon are cooking pots, of both the shallow pan shape and the deep globular variety, usually with brown glaze in the interior of the base (Figure 4). By this time documents found in the Cairo Geniza indicate that Jaffa was engaged in exporting the olive oil of Ramla, and also sat on a minor trade route that ran between Alexandria and Constantinople.

In 1099 Frankish armies took Jaffa and it became the port of Jerusalem, the capital of the Latin Kingdom. Jaffa became the seat of the County of Jaffa (to become the County of Jaffa and Ascalon after the latter fell in 1153). Various entities owned portions of the city, such as the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, the Pisans, and the Templars and Hospitallers. Despite the violence of the transfer of power, and indeed the violence of the preceding century, the theme once again visible in the archaeology of Jaffa is that of continuity. Certain elements of the town plan and infrastructure remained the same for long periods of time, such as streets. Other installations also had a long history, although function may have changed over time. For example, the aforementioned wine press built in the Byzantine period and used into the Early Islamic period functioned as a storage facility from the later Early Islamic through the entire Crusader period. Some houses in the lower town were used from the end

¹ The working photographs shown in this and all subsequent figures are shown courtesy of the excavators, Yoav Arbel and Martin Peilstöcker.

² As minimal references are provided here, further references for these and all subsequent pottery types mentioned can be found in Burke and Stern (Forthcoming).



Burke - Figure 5

of the Byzantine period to end of Crusader era. Nevertheless there are also detectable changes, as the lower town was walled for the first time, and in some parts of it Early Islamic remains were razed to make room for new structures.

The ceramics of the Crusader Era at Jaffa, like those at Acre, can be divided into early and later assemblages, mainly based upon imported types, the dates of which are known from excavations outside of southern Palestine. The early assemblage at Jaffa, which dates from the beginning of the 12th to the early 13th century, has been recovered from few contexts, the nature of which is not always clear. At the beginning of this period Jaffa was still the port of Jerusalem, but after the latter's fall to Salah al-Din in 1187, the port of Acre became the capital of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, having already surpassed Jaffa in importance to Mediterranean trade and the trade of the Latin Kingdom some time in the 12th century, due to its much better harbor. As we know it so far, the early assemblage at Jaffa is comprised of 70% ceramics of regional origin (none has yet been identified as having been manufactured in Jaffa) and 30% imports, the latter of which are almost all comprised of table wares made in the Aegean region, with a minority of pottery types—all amphorae—originating in the Black Sea area. Both regions were under the control of the Byzantine Empire at the time. Of the regionally-made ceramics, 85% demonstrate continuity with the Early Islamic assemblage, as they most likely have an origin in southern Lebanon.

LOCATING MIDDLE ISLAMIC DHIBAN ON THE MAMLUK IMPERIAL PERIPHERY

The Dhiban Excavation and Development Project, the DEDP hereafter, investigates how a Middle Islamic community managed the economic and political pressures of Mamluk imperial rule and expanding "global" trade in a resource scarce, semi-arid environment. Tall Dhiban is the largest settlement on the Dhiban Plateau, a narrow slice of west-central Jordan confined by the Wadi al-Walla, the Wadi al-Mujib, the Jordan Valley and the Arabian Desert (Fig. 1). The site is positioned 64 km south of 'Amman on the so-called King's Highway, which connected the site with important Mamluk towns like Hisban, 'Amman, and Karak. Dhiban receives between 250 and 400 millimeters of annual precipitation, making sustainable rain-fed agricultural just possible. A topographic survey has determined that the entire site is just over 12 hectares in area and 41 meters high on the north side, and made up of at least three major terraces (Fig. 2). The extent of the Middle Islamic settlement, however, appears limited to the central portion of the site, running east-west in an elongated and

The later Crusader ceramic assemblage at Jaffa dates from the early to mid-13th century. Of the regional types (still 70% of the assemblage), now 89% originate in southern Lebanon.

By the 13th century trade among the Crusader states, Byzantium, Egypt, and other parts of the Mediterranean world was well established, and the imported types reflect Jaffa's participation in local, regional, and long-distance trade. The proportion of imports is still 30%, but now includes types known from Syria, Cyprus (figure 5), Italy, France, Spain or North Africa, and Egypt, in addition to Aegean and Black Sea types. The Byzantine world is reflected in well-known types such as Zeuxippus ware and Port St. Symeon ware. Trade with the western Mediterranean is seen, for example, in Proto-Maiolica from Italy and Cobalt and Manganese ware from North Africa.

The transition from Frankish to Mamluk rule in Jaffa according to the archaeological evidence so far shows that the lower town was primarily used as a burial ground. Mamluk occupation may be expected closer to the center of the site, on top of the tell, or near the port. Depending on the nature of future excavations, the ceramic picture of early Mamluk Jaffa will most likely continue to show continuity in the regionally-made cooking wares, and a picture of Mediterranean trade that shows initial diminution but subsequent steady revival throughout the period.

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irregular elliptic shape. At present Middle Islamic Dhiban is estimated to have been approximately 5 hectares in area on the tall proper, with an additional "suburb" of some 1-2 hectares on the southern ridge next to the modern town.

From the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries CE Dhiban was a substantial village in the al-Balqa region of the Mamluk administrative district of Damascus (*Mamlakat Dimashq*), but very near to the boundary (Wadi al-Mujib) with the district of al-Karak (*Mamlakat al-Karak*). Hence, Dhiban is likely to have been of some strategic importance, given the political competition and fluctuating administrative boundaries that characterized Mamluk rule in Jordan. Archival work by Bethany Walker indicates that the lands of Dhiban constituted an *iqta'* bestowed in 659 AH/1261 CE by Sultan Baybars on al-'Aziz, the son of al-Mughith, an Ayyubid prince. Walker also notes that Dhiban had a mosque beside which was built a shrine, where two Mamluk amirs (Ibrahim ibn Manjak and his brother) were buried in the late fourteenth century CE. In other words, while not a major administrative center like Karak or Hisban, Dhiban was a prosperous town capable of providing both agricultural income and a desirable burial place for high ranking individuals during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries CE.

Some indication of these higher-level connections may be seen in a large Middle Islamic building recently excavated on the north-east side of the tall by Jordan's Department of Antiquities (Fig. 3). Built in the "piecemeal" style of the citadel (*qusur*) of Hisban, this irregular structure reused old building stones, columns and column bases extensively. The size and layout of the building suggests a non-domestic use, although, as the finds are still under study, it is difficult to say what this function might have been.

The DEDP's excavations on Dhiban's summit has revealed a complex of interconnected rooms and courtyards that share many features with Middle Islamic vernacular architecture excavated in earlier campaigns at Dhiban as well as at Khirbat Faris on the Karak Plateau to the south and Hisban to the north. In particular, the core of this unit is made up of barrel-vaulted rooms with walls over one meter thick supporting the arches. These thick walls are actually constituted by two walls arching in opposite directions abutting each other for support with a rubble fill in-between. As at Khirbat Faris, the barrel vaulted rooms are trapezoid with the doorway on the widest end. However, at Dhiban excavated rooms are larger than the average given for Khirbat Faris (ca. 12 meters²) measuring ca. 20 meters². Attached to these barrel-vaulted rooms are several communicating rooms that were roofed by sprung arches, although they do not have all the features of a classic "transverse arch house," such as grain bins built in-between the springers. The stone masonry in the rooms with sprung arches is quite different from that in the barrel-vaulted rooms, and may represent a Middle Islamic reuse of earlier structures, as is the case elsewhere at Dhiban as well as at Khirbat Faris.

To simplify what is a very complex stratigraphic record, at least two post-construction phases that predate the final abandonment of



Fig. 1. Tall Dhiban and contemporary Dhiban, looking south. (Photo Jamie Porter)

these structures have been identified. The uppermost, Phase 2a, consists of ephemeral hearths and installations with no prepared floors, as well as piecemeal wall repairs and reconfigurations. This indicates that the buildings on the summit were gradually, rather than suddenly, abandoned, with a marked reduction in the intensity and stability of settlement in the final phase of room use. A similar pattern of abandonment in stages has been documented for the large Middle Islamic building excavated by the Department of Antiquities.

The earlier Phase 2b is marked by well-prepared floors and associated tabuns and bins. A barrel-vaulted room has yielded the most securely stratified evidence for this phase. In Phase 2b, the room was subdivided by low walls and installations constructed of large blocks laid somewhat haphazardly directly on top of a well-prepared surface. High-resolution techniques were used to excavate this surface; including point proveniencing of all surface finds, water-flotation of all floor sediments, and the collection of micromorphological, soil chemistry and phytolith samples. This mass of data is only just beginning to be analyzed, but already several items have been found such as bracelets and imported pottery that seem at odds with the initial interpretation of this building as a stable. Brief exploration

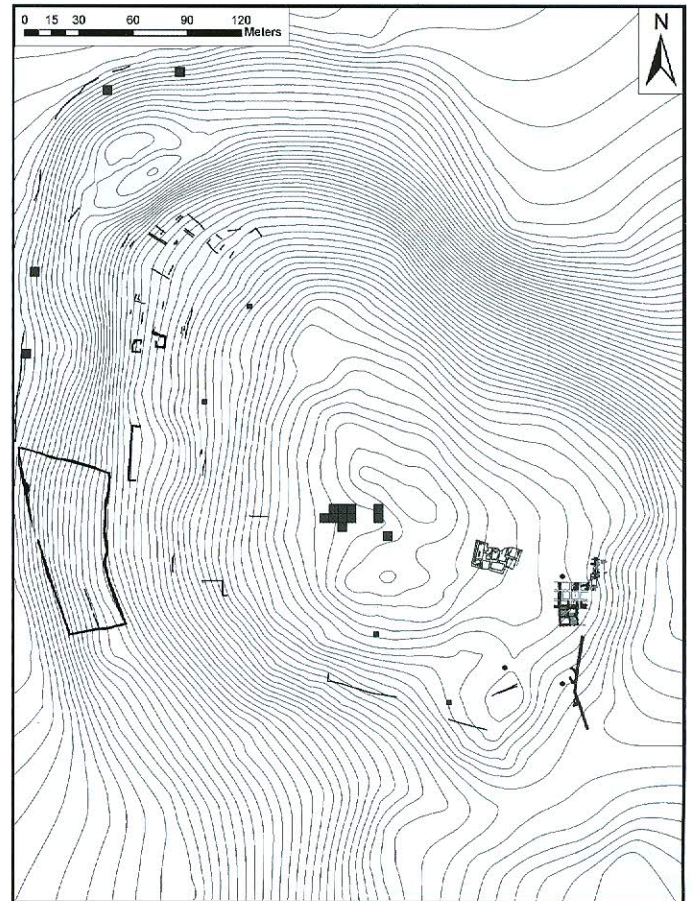


Fig. 2. Topographic map of Dhiban mainly emphasizing Middle and Late Islamic architecture. The gray squares represent excavation units. (Image by A. Wilson).

beneath the Phase 2b surfaces has shown that at least one earlier Middle Islamic phase is to be found beneath Phase 2b.

Dating Phases 2a and 2b with precision is difficult, given current knowledge of artifact sequences in the Middle Islamic period. In 2005 a hoard of 30 copper coins was found in association with the foundation level of a Phase 2b cobble stone surface. These thirty copper coins have the fabric and size consistent with the copper coins (*fals*; pl. *fulus*) minted in areas of Egypt and greater Syria in the Ayyubid (567-648 AH/1171-1250 CE) and Mamluk (648-923 AH/1250-1517 CE) periods. They are not well preserved and only four definitive identifications have been made; all of them Ayyubid (three from al-Malik al-Kamil Muhammad [615-635 AH/1218-1237 CE] and one from al-Malik al-'Aziz 'Uthman [589-595 AH/1193-1198 CE]). Only one of the coins seems to be Mamluk, but has not yet been identified with a known Mamluk type. Because the material culture associated with this hoard is clearly late Middle Islamic in date (i.e. Mamluk), and the coins are very heavily worn, it is assumed that most of this hoard was in circulation for more than a century before its final curation.

The favourable shape of the calibration curve during the latter part of the Middle Islamic period means that radiocarbon dates have proven more useful than numismatic dates. At present the beginning of the final phase of building use, Phase 2a, is radiocarbon dated to the first half of the fifteenth century CE with a two-sigma range of 1409-1445 CE. The calibrated dates from Phase 2b are more dispersed, but clearly predate the fifteenth century CE. This evidence makes the Phase 2a "squatters" occupation contemporary with the well-known late fourteenth and early fifteenth century fiscal and political crises within the Mamluk Empire. Because piecemeal site abandonment was already underway in the first half of the fifteenth

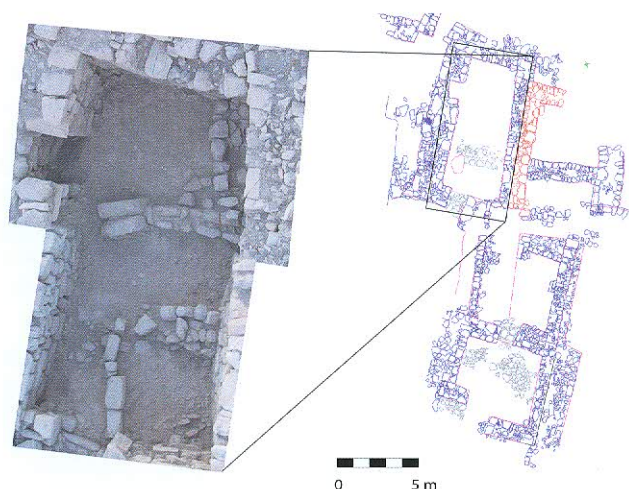


Fig. 3. Plan of the Middle Islamic excavated barrel vaulted building on Dhiban's summit. (Photo B. Porter).

century, it is presumed that Middle Islamic Dhiban was largely abandoned before the beginning of the sixteenth century. In this regard, it is interesting to note that Dhiban does not appear in the Ottoman tax registers (*defters*) of the sixteenth century CE.

As is typical of Middle Islamic sites in Jordan, green and yellow lead-glazed, hand-made geometric painted, and undecorated hand-made and wheel-made vessels dominate the ceramic assemblage. While petrographic analysis of this pottery is not yet complete, all of these wares appear to be of regional origin. More unusual is the abundance of relief-moulded lead glazed wares decorated with Quranic verses. These wares are thought to have been manufactured in the vicinity of Jerusalem, and are common at Karak and Hisban, but more rare further north in Jordan. Much less common, but still present, are examples of stonepaste wares (also called fritware/faience), generally presumed to be manufactured in the region of Damascus



Fig. 4. Decorated stone-paste wares from one surface in the barrel vaulted building. (Photo by C. Morgan).

and in central and northern Syria (Fig. 4). Small quantities of so-called "sugar pots" have also been excavated. However, their limited abundance and secondary find contexts do not allow much to be said regarding Dhiban's role in the sugar industry, which played such a large role in Jordan during Mamluk rule.

Overall, Dhiban fits the general pattern described by Bethany Walker of a "boom and bust" expansion of agricultural settlement in Jordan from the thirteenth through fifteenth centuries CE. Walker links this expansion and contraction of settlement with Mamluk investment in the cash-cropping of sugar cane in the Jordan Valley, as well as the use of *waqf* endowments to provide "tax sheltered" agricultural investments in Jordan for Mamluk elites. This period of investment came to an end during the fiscal and political crises of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century. As Walker notes, the local impact of these large-scale trends was quite variable, with areas that had been transformed into private *waqf* endowments often continuing to prosper through the transition to Ottoman rule in the sixteenth century. For many regions, however, the withdrawal of Mamluk state investment led to a marked decline in settlement. Dhiban would seem to fit into this later category. The town existed prior to the thirteenth century but expanded considerably under Mamluk administration. Between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries CE, Dhiban developed as a prosperous local centre with connections to regional and international trade networks, as well as imperial elites. Middle Islamic Dhiban also hosted some small-scale non-agricultural production. The evidence suggests that Dhiban was abandoned gradually after a period of marked decline in the first half of the fifteenth century.

Precisely how and why Middle Islamic Dhiban expanded and was abandoned are interesting questions that deserve further research. In contrast to Hisban, no evidence for earthquake damage at Dhiban has been identified, despite numerous quakes being documented in the wider region over the century between 1341 CE and 1458 CE. Dhiban's lack of a perennial water source and its reliance on cisterns would have made it more susceptible than most towns to periods of drought. Such droughts are certainly offered as causes of agrarian decline in Mamluk documentary sources. The impact of more intensive agro-pastoral production on soil erosion and fertility are also likely to have been severe at Dhiban. However, the relevant proxy data to examine these issues are still being collected, it would be premature to credit the site's abandonment to earthquakes, drought or soil degradation. The shifting of the regional capital of *al-Balqa* from Hisban further north to 'Amman in 757 AH/ 1356 CE may have impacted Dhiban. However, as of yet, there is no evidence for dependency between the two sites. Similarly, although the withdrawal of Mamluk state investment from Jordan coincides closely with the abandonment of Dhiban, it is not yet possible to show specific evidence for such investment and divestment in the archaeological record. Regarding the initial expansion of the site there is little that can be said at this time, as the earliest Middle Islamic phases are only now coming to light. In other words, much remains to be done in terms of both excavation and analysis. The preliminary results suggest that such effort will be worthwhile and that Dhiban will soon prove a key site in understanding the historical dynamics of agrarian expansion and "collapse" during the Mamluk administration of the Levant.

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References: see www.dhiban.org for DEDP publications and updates.

EN COURS

Cyrille Aillet, de l'Université Lumière Lyon 2, reprend l'étude du site de Sedrata et de la zone qui l'entoure, l'oued Mya (Ouargla, Algérie). Ce site avait fait l'objet de plusieurs saisons de fouille au début des années 1950 par Marguerite van Berchem, feue notre présidente et fondatrice.

*

En vue de 2011, année pendant laquelle Tlemcen sera la capitale culturelle du monde islamique, Agnès Charpentier et son équipe poursuivent leur travail à Tlemcen sur les sites du Meshouar et de la mosquée d'Agadir.

*

En parallèle avec leur recherche sur les manuscrits philosophiques des bibliothèques du Liban, Maroun Aouad et son équipe mènent une autre étude sur l'un des principaux philosophes syro-libanais chrétiens des XVII^e-XVIII^e siècles, Butrus al-Tûlâwî (1657-1746) en prospectant dans les fonds manuscrits au Liban, en Syrie, mais aussi dans des bibliothèques et des archives à Rome, ville dans laquelle al-Tûlâwî a fait ses études.

*

Katia Cytryn-Silverman continue ses fouilles dans le centre de Tibériade (Israël) : après avoir confirmé l'identification du bâtiment à piliers comme étant une mosquée, elle a mis au jour une mosaïque de la fin de la période byzantine-début de l'ère islamique, ouvert des sondages pour en retrouver les murs et fouillé une citerne souterraine.

*

Alison Gascoigne va poursuivre l'analyse de Tell Tinnis (lac Manzala, Egypte), site abandonné au début du XIII^e siècle; elle va continuer son relevé par magnétométrie, en le combinant avec une étude topographique détaillée pour relever les contours de murs enterrés dans le but d'obtenir des informations sur l'évolution de l'organisation interne et sur l'autosuffisance de la ville.

*

Stephen MacPhillips travaille sur deux moulins à eau de la vallée supérieure de l'Oronte (région de Homs, Syrie), de rares exemples de roues verticales, en activité de la fin de l'Antiquité jusqu'aux années 1970.

*

La Fondation va apporter son soutien au colloque «Les origines du Coran, le Coran des origines» qui se tiendra à Paris les 3 et 4 mars 2011, sous le patronage de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres et de l'Akademie der Wissenschaften de Berlin-Brandebourg; cette réunion fera le bilan d'un siècle et demi de recherches sur le Coran et envisagera les pistes de réflexion pour les années à venir.

Marie-Odile Rousset a repris la fouille de Qinnasrin, en Syrie du Nord, pour en étudier la formation et l'évolution, du VII^e au XII^e siècle. La question de l'adaptation du système défensif (fortification urbaine, enceinte refuge, habitat fortifié) face aux différentes menaces, tout comme celle des quartiers hors les murs (hadir-s), dans une région à la croisée des mondes nomade et sédentaire sont au cœur de cette recherche.

*

La Fondation van Berchem a apporté son soutien au 25^e Congrès international de papyrologie qui s'est tenu à l'Université de Genève du 16 au 21 août 2010.

*

Les actes du 13^e Congrès international d'art turc, préparés par Géza Dávid et Ibolya Gerelyes, ont été publiés par le Musée national hongrois de Budapest (Thirteenth International Congress of Turkish Art. Proceedings).

DEMANDES DE SUBVENTION

La Fondation Max van Berchem, dont le but de promouvoir l'étude de l'archéologie, de l'histoire, de la géographie, de l'histoire de l'art, de l'épigraphie, de la religion, de la littérature islamiques et arabes, accorde des subventions à des recherches menées dans ces domaines par des scientifiques titulaires d'un doctorat.

Les candidats doivent s'adresser à la Fondation pour obtenir un formulaire qu'ils devront compléter et lui renvoyer avec les annexes demandées.

Ces documents doivent être en possession de la Fondation le **31 mars 2011** au plus tard. Le Comité scientifique se réunit à Genève à fin juin et le Conseil de Fondation rend sa décision définitive en juillet.

Le Comité scientifique, présidé par le professeur Charles Genequand de l'Université de Genève, comprend les personnalités suivantes: les professeurs Giovanni Curatola, Université d'Udine, François Déroche, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes (IVe Section), Paris, Heinz Gaube, Université Eberhard Karls, Tübingen, Renata Holod, Université de Pennsylvanie, Ludvik Kalus, Université de Paris-Sorbonne (Paris IV), Hugh Kennedy, School of Oriental and African Studies, Londres, Michael J. Rogers, Nasser David Khalili Collection, Londres, Gregor Schoeler, Université de Bâle et Mme Louise Martin-van Berchem, membre du Conseil de la Fondation Max van Berchem.

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