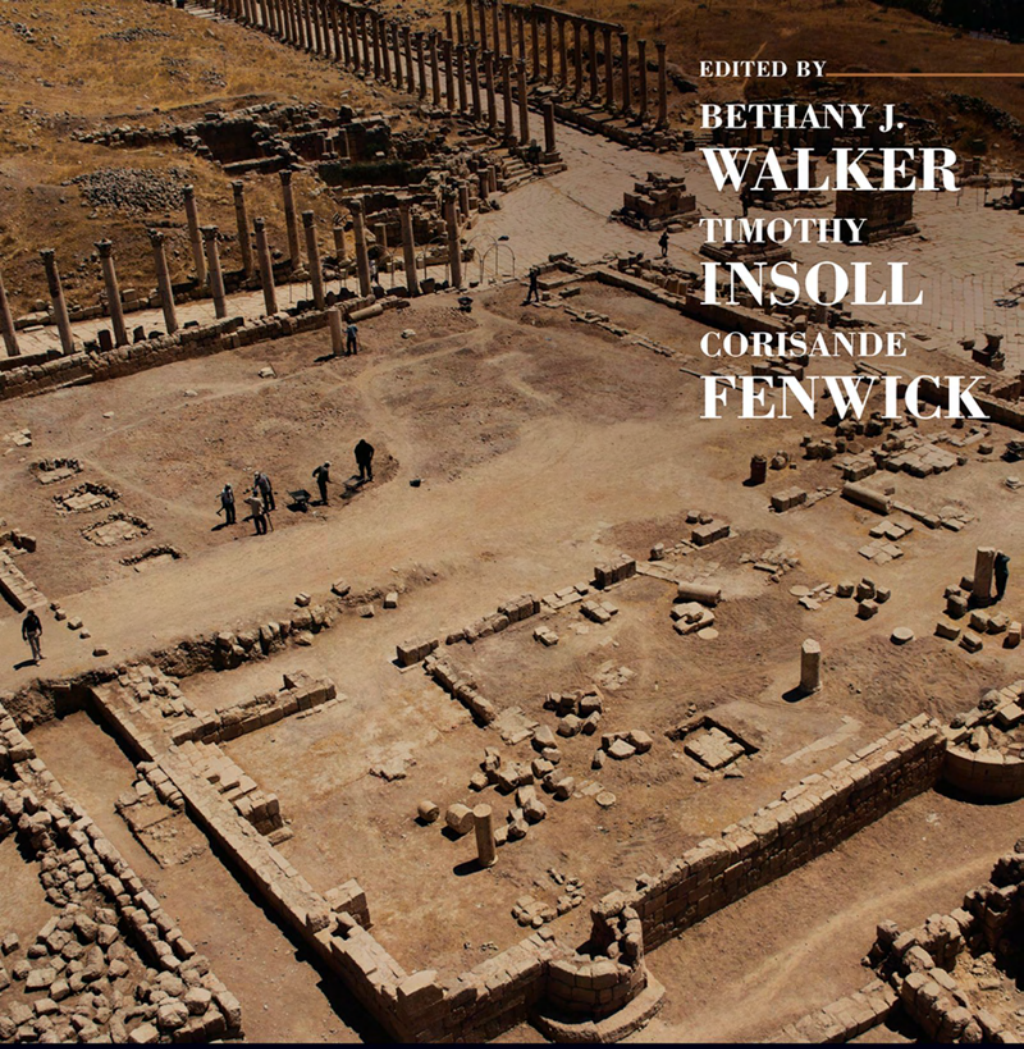

EDITED BY

BETHANY J. WALKER

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The Oxford Handbook *of* ISLAMIC ARCHAEOLOGY

THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF

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Edited by

BETHANY J. WALKER,
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and
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SECTION I

EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

Although its roots can be traced to the work of Classical, Biblical, and Near Eastern archaeologists and Islamic art historians of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, as an independent academic discipline Islamic archaeology is quite young. The occasional university course in Europe and North America began to be offered in archaeology, history, area studies, and art history departments only gradually from the 1980s, and specialized graduate programs appeared only from the 1990s. The establishment of institutions and research centers dedicated to Islamic archaeology—of which there are only a handful worldwide—is an even later development.

As the archaeological study of Muslim societies, polities, and communities, Islamic archaeology is by default concerned with a relatively recent period of human history, which extends to the Modern era.[1] The "Early Modern era" is generally not covered by the antiquities laws of most modern Muslim countries, relegating their study to the field of ethnography and removing sites of this period from legal protection. This is particularly true in Greater Syria (Bilād al-Shām), which has some of the oldest departments of antiquities in the world and a long history of archaeological study of Islamic societies. The Jordanian Law of Antiquities No. 21[1988], which was amended by Law No. 23 [2004], covers "any movable or immovable object which was made, written, inscribed,

[1] This is the definition also adopted by the *Journal of Islamic Archaeology* (https://journals.equinoxpub.com/index.php/JIA).

built, discovered or modified by a human being before the year AD 1750."[2] In Mandate-era Palestine, an "antiquity" was defined as any building or product of human activity dating before 1700. In Israel today, according to its 1978 Antiquities Law, an "antiquity" is defined as "any object, which was made by man before 1700 CE, or any zoological or botanical remains from before the year 1300 CE."[3] These laws are slowly changing, however, reflecting a growing appreciation for the cultural heritage of the later historical periods. For example, Decree Law no. 11 on Tangible Cultural Heritage in Palestine, passed by the Palestinian Authority in June 2018, expands the timeframe of heritage protection to all structures built before 1917 CE and including all material heritage of cultural, economic, or natural value.[4] In Bahrain, the Antiquities laws are even more inclusive: "anything descended from civilizations or left over by previous generations explored or discovered . . . or daily life or public events or anything that is at least 50 years of age that has an artistic or historical value is considered a monument."[5] This Handbook devotes its final section to cultural heritage management, with a particular focus on the later centuries and best practices in cultural heritage management (CHM). Islamic archaeology, as it practiced today in many countries, is committed to safeguarding cultural heritage, including the manmade and natural worlds of the relatively modern periods.

What is essentially "Islamic" in this heritage is loosely defined and regionally specific. "Islamic archaeology" in this sense does not serve the same function as "Biblical" archaeology in the Holy Land. Research has never been directed at illustrating or investigating events, peoples/places, or the societies described in the Qur'an.[6] Nor does it focus solely on religious architecture or artifacts in the same way as "Christian archaeology" has often done in Europe and the Mediterranean. "Islamic" here describes, in a very general sense, a political geography: it is those regions that are under Muslim control in a particular period (the "Islamic world," as it existed at a certain time) or in which Muslims lived, not necessarily under Muslim control. It does not necessarily mean that the majority of the population at that place and time were Muslim or that the culture was dominated by Islamic norms, although that generally tends to be the case. Islamic archaeology is as much concerned with non-Muslim societies under the control of Muslim powers (whatever the institutional configuration). The geographical focus, of course, changes over time, as the center of the Islamic world shifted with the dissolution of old imperial systems and the emergence of new ones.[7]

[2] https://www.unodc.org/res/cld/document/law-of-antiquities_html/Law_of_Antiquities-1-_jordan.pdf (accessed August 24, 2018)

[3] http://www.antiquities.org.il/Article_list_eng.aspx?sub_menu=2&section_id=42&Module_id=6 (accessed August 24, 2018)

[4] http://www.unesco.org/new/en/ramallah/about-this-office/single-view/news/joint_statement_the_palestinian_ministry_of_tourism_and_anti/ (accessed August 24, 2018)

[5] Article 2 of Decree Law No. 11. Regarding the Protection of Antiquities, Ministry of Cabinet Affairs and Information, Directorate of Heritage and Museums, State of Bahrain, June 25, 1995.

[6] The recent movement in "Qur'anic archaeology" essentially serves that purpose and has not yet entered the mainstream of world archaeology.

[7] To see the shifting global centers of the Islamic world over time, compare the following maps: 2.1.1, 2.2.1, 2.3.1, 2.5.1, 3.1.1, 3.2.1, 3.3.1, 3.4.1, 3.5.1, 4.1.1, 4.2.1, 4.3.1, 4.4.1, 4.5.1, 5.1.9, 5.2.1, 5.3.1, and 5.4.1.

Some parts of the world entered Dar al-Islam later than others: the earliest known Islamic Kingdoms of Southeast Asia, for example, were established only in the 13th century CE (see Chapter 5.5); by contrast, in Egypt the process began with the Islamic conquests of the 7th century (see Chapter 2.4). The chronological coverage of this volume reflects the diverse regional histories of Islamic conquest, conversion, and trade. It is roughly "medieval-to-modern," beginning with the 7th century CE (the "Islamic conquest" in the Levant) and ending with the 21st century (during which time the making of cultural heritage policy and "community archaeology" gain the greatest significance).

Perhaps more than any other factor, it is geography and language that offer the greatest challenge to assembling a Handbook such as this. Most scholarship in English has focused on the "Arab heartland" and specifically the Levant. Other regions of the pre-modern Islamic world—al-Andalus and the Maghreb, Africa, and Asia—have their own rich histories of scholarship in the field.[8] They are less well known to the Anglophone world, however, because of linguistic issues and limited distribution of local journals and publications. Russian publications on Central Asia are rarely read by or available to scholars outside the region, and ongoing research on China-Indian Ocean trade, Muslim-Buddhist-Hindu relations, and the culturally and religiously hybrid societies of southeast Asia are practically terra incognito due to the scarcity of reports in Western languages. Linguistic issues are not restricted to non-European languages: troublingly, even French, Spanish, and Italian publications on the Western Islamic world are not so familiar to Anglophone scholars. The results of such scholarship, however, open up new lines of inquiry and reveal cultural and socio-economic patterns that provide valuable contrasts with those of the Levant, the traditional heartland of Islamic archaeology. Regionalism is a key characteristic of pre-modern Islamic material culture, and it is certainly a phenomenon with which we must reckon when reconstructing "culture" from the local archaeological record.

This volume is not the first English-language survey of the field. It has been preceded by several important works, the sequence of which tracks the ways that Islamic archaeology has developed institutionally since the 1990s. Several have become required reading for university students (Insoll 1999; Milwright 2010; Rosen-Ayalon 2006) and adopt different methodological approaches: phenomenological, cultural-historical, art historical. Baram and Carroll's conference volume *A Historical Archaeology of the Ottoman Empire: Breaking New Ground* is considered by many to have officially launched Ottoman archaeology. More recent regional studies (Sutton 2000, Zarinebaf et al 2005, and Davies and Davis 2007 on Ottoman Greece; Insoll 2003 on sub-Saharan Africa;

[8] For some surveys in English, see Insoll 1999, 2003 (for sub-Saharan Africa); Fenwick 2013, 2019 (for the Maghreb); SPAFA 1984 and Ali 1994 (for southeast Asia); and Priestman 2016 (for East Asia). The *SPAFA Digest*—the journal published by the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization (SAMEO) Regional Center in Archaeology and Fine Arts—provides convenient summaries in English of local archaeological research on the later historical periods and maritime trade. (It is, however, of limited distribution.) Special issues of the *Journal of Islamic Archaeology* deal with the archaeology of African Islam.

Walmsley 2007 on Syria; Walker 2011 on Jordan; Power 2012 on the Red Sea; Avni 2014 on Palestine; Cooper 2014 on the medieval Nile basin; Valor and Gutiérrez 2015 on Spain; Fenwick 2019 on North Africa) consciously combine textual and archaeological methods to differing degrees.

This Handbook is distinguished from these important contributions, however, by its global coverage and inclusion of very contemporary issues, such as engagement with local communities and best practices in CHM. The contributors have the highest reputations today in their geographical areas of expertise, yet represent different stages of the academic career as well as diverse international backgrounds. Because a wide range of languages are represented in this global scholarship, many contributions have been translated into English (namely from French, Spanish, and Italian). Global coverage also means that a range of methods, archaeological traditions, and research priorities are represented in this volume. Even so, the Handbook is not intended to be an encyclopedic compendium but to provide an introduction into the different regional trajectories of Islamic archaeology. Reflections on the many disciplinary roots of Islamic archaeology and its vast geographical and complex chronological scope complete this Foreword.

Islamic Archaeology and Islamic Art History: The Special Relationship

Islamic archaeology has an intimate but fraught relationship with art history. In Europe, Islamic archaeology began as a methodological specialization within Islamic art history, and, until the latter part of the 20th century, most field practitioners were formally trained as art (or architectural) historians. Today, in contrast, Islamic archaeology is far closer to history and anthropology, and there is limited interdisciplinary dialogue with art history, despite their shared focus on material culture. This is not the place to delve into a detailed genealogy of the historiography of Islamic archaeology, which is still to be written (see Rogers 1974; Vernoit 1997 for brief overviews), but a few remarks on the complex legacy of this relationship are necessary.

In the 18th and early 19th centuries, the accounts of explorers, diplomats, and missionaries, as well as a growing Orientalist interest in Arabic languages, spurred European scholarly interest in Islamic art and architecture in Spain, the Middle East, and North Africa (Vernoit 2000). These antiquarian efforts gained momentum with growing European and Russian interest in North Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia and the imposition of colonial rule; indeed, the earliest excavations of Islamic sites took place in the immediate aftermath of annexation, as was the case, for example, for the Russians at Samarqand and Merv in the 1870s and 1880s and the French at the Qala'a of the Beni Hammad in Algeria in 1898. These and other early excavations at Samarra (Iraq), Madinat al-Zahra (Spain), Fustat (Egypt), and the often-overlooked Ottoman work at Raqqa (Syria) established the focus of Islamic archaeology: the study of monumental

urban and palatial architecture (especially palaces, gardens, mosques, fortifications), the analysis of architectural décor (capitals, stucco, woodwork), and the study of high-quality objects (glazed ceramics, metalwork, glass) (Vernoit 1997). Accordingly, archaeologists devoted their energies to early Islamic palatial and urban sites such as Samarra or the desert castles of Jordan, where rich architecture and decorative items (which could then be displayed in museums) were to be located. The emphasis on museum-quality artifacts had many unfortunate tendencies: only whole vessels tended to be recorded (and often kept), and contextual information was rarely recorded. But excavations were not sufficient to meet the rising demands for Islamic artifacts, and many sites were looted to provide artifacts for museums and collectors.

Archaeology's close relationship with art history in this formative period also established the geographic focus of the field: the so-called *central Islamic lands*: the Levant, Egypt, Iraq, Iran (and Anatolia for the Ottoman period) which were the heartlands of the great Islamic empires. Central Asia remained disconnected from mainstream scholarship on Islamic art and architecture, as did India, China, Mongolia, and Africa and even the Islamic West (North Africa and al-Andalus). These regions were regarded as provincial and interpreted through core–periphery models which depicted artistic and architectural production as inferior to or derivative of developments in the heartlands. So powerful were these colonial models that, even today, Islamic art survey books rarely include material from these regions except in passing. Of course, archaeological and art historical research on the Islamic period was not neglected in these "peripheral" regions—each has its own complex scholarly traditions—but the result was a fragmented discipline divided into regional schools of research that rarely communicated with one another.

In the post-World War II period, the continued close relationship of the two disciplines was acknowledged in the first state-of-the-field articles written by Richard Ettinghausen (1951) and Oleg Grabar (1976), both of which were tellingly titled "Islamic Art and Archaeology." Both identified archaeology as pivotal in shaping the research agendas of art historical scholarship, with its focus on the early and middle Islamic periods, architecture and the "Islamic city," and the central Arab lands. Their understanding of what archaeology was, what it could offer (a technique, a method), and its relationship to art history (a supporting, secondary methodology) was quite different from today. For Grabar, for example, archaeology's main function was to catalogue, locate, date, and describe objects, buildings, and construction/manufacturing techniques, rather than to interpret or build theories about past societies. The potentially transformative impact of archaeology on the broader discipline was hindered by a widespread failure to publish the results of these earlier digs (some of which still remain unpublished to this day), a problem that both Ettinghausen and Grabar complained about in their reviews of the field.

In the 1980s, art history distanced itself from archaeology, and Grabar's (1983) essay "Reflections on the Study of Islamic Art" in the inaugural volume of *Muqarnas* dropped archaeology from the name of the field in a reflection of the increasing dominance of art historical approaches as well as a growing frustration with the poor publication record

of archaeologists and the appearance of new "abstruse and overly abstract" theoretical models in archaeology (1983: 4). This separation came at a pivotal point for Islamic archaeology. The methodologies and theoretical models of New Archaeology and post-processual archaeology, together with the increasing maturity of medieval European archaeology as a discipline, heavily impacted the practice of archaeology in the Middle East from the 1970s. The spread of open-area excavation techniques, stratigraphic analysis, diachronic field surveys, and the increasing use of radiocarbon dating for chronological precision started to shed light on the later phases of biblical and Classical sites. In Jordan, an important turning point was the work of Jim Sauer in the 1970s in distinguishing Islamic-era ceramics from that of Late Antiquity; his seriation of Islamic pottery at Tall Ḥisbān in many ways laid the foundations for the field in Jordan. Beyond the Middle East, excavations began to rapidly increase, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, with for example, fieldwork at Kilwa, Manda, and Shanga shedding light on Islamization and Indian Ocean trade in East Africa and work at Gao, Tegdaost, and Timbuktu on trans-Saharan sites (see Insoll 2003 for an overview). With the publication of Insoll's (1999) *The Archaeology of Islam*, it was clear that Islamic archaeology was a field of research distinctly different from, although still overlapping to some degree with and often heavily influenced by, Islamic art history.

No field of research stays the same, nor should it. Many of the circumstances that pushed Insoll to express his concern about the marginalization of the field vis-à-vis Islamic art history are no longer issues today (Insoll 1999: 3–7). Islamic archaeology is now in the mainstream of world archaeology—technologically, conceptually, methodologically. The scale of analysis is now larger and the questions broader. Our view of the Islamic world is being de-centered from Syria-Palestine and Iraq by new work by archaeologists on the edges—in Spain, Central Asia, East Africa, and beyond. Rather than privileging the mosque, *ribat*, or palace, archaeologists now excavate houses, shops, and craft quarters to understand the spaces of everyday life. Excavation now goes beyond establishing architectural phases and floor plans of monuments and extends to understanding their role in the larger built (urban landscapes, settlements) and natural (rural landscapes) setting. This, in turn, has generated interest in rural society, their socialized landscapes, and a wide range of environmental and economic issues. Likewise, the study of the artifact has turned from typo-chronologies to that of the assemblage and its social context in order to understand the household, labor history, and even gender roles (Walker 2010). At the same time, Islamic archaeology is increasingly concerned with its responsibilities to local, living communities, which has resulted in efforts in heritage management, community development, and an expressed commitment to sustainability (agricultural, environmental, social, economic).

These shifts toward the social and economic in the past and present have widened the gap between archaeologists and art historians who rarely talk to one another despite a shared emphasis on material culture. No longer are Islamic archaeologists trained in art history departments, but in archaeology, anthropology, or history departments, and it is far more common for archaeologists to collaborate with historians, cultural heritage specialists, and (less frequently) anthropologists in conferences,

publications, and even fieldwork. All the same, in recent years, the "social turn" in the humanities and social sciences has the potential to bring about a renewed convergence between Islamic art and archaeology. Just as many archaeologists have moved away from the typo-chronology of object or monument, so, too, some art historians are moving away from the traditional approaches which privileged the visual and aesthetic properties of objects and buildings in the central Islamic lands before 1800 and toward post-colonial, anthropological, and socio-historical approaches with a greater chronological and geographical scope (e.g., Flood and Necipoğlu 2017). One promising avenue for interdisciplinary dialogue is the move toward considering the materiality of things (whether the art historian's "object," or the archaeologist's "artifact"), which allows one to speak at the same time about a thing as an expression of beauty, a marker of class and ethnicity, symbol of the household, function of political-economic networks, and proof of social and political encounters and exchanges across imaginary borders (for the latter, see Flood 2009).

The museum is becoming a new arena for conflict, with increasingly oppositional stances taken by archaeologists and art historians. Since the 2000s, a number of significant museum collections of Islamic art have been established in Kuwait, Sharjah, Doha, Abu Dhabi, and Toronto, and major museums in Paris, London, New York, Cairo, and Copenhagen (to name a few) have reorganized their galleries (Junod et al. 2013). These new collections have spectacular objects, many with dubious provenances. This new interest in Islamic art has reopened debates about the problematic choices made in collecting and displaying objects from the Islamic world and the close ties between curators, collectors, academics, and the auction houses. Ongoing conflict in the Middle East-North Africa (MENA) region and the corresponding increase in looting, destruction of heritage (for a myriad of reasons), and the boom of illicit objects entering the art and antiquities markets raises a whole host of contentious issues for protection, repatriation, conservation, and reconstruction that archaeologists, art historians, and heritage officials, local and international alike, need to grapple with together rather than in isolation.

Islamic Archaeology and Islamization

The extent to which Islamization has been explored through archaeological evidence differs regionally. Debates over the timing and process of Islamization have driven much archaeological work in the last decade in the Central Lands, and particularly Greater Syria, keeping pace with currents in Islamic history. How to methodologically distinguish between religious conversion and acculturation and the role of demographic change and migration in all of this has been an area of heated debate. Archaeologists are now looking beyond the 7th-century conquests for triggers of meaningful and lasting religious and cultural change, arguing for long-term developments and even different "spurts" in Islamization taking place at different periods in different regions and under quite local conditions. This topic is dealt with extensively in each of the chapters of Section II.

Likewise, archaeological studies of Islamization have been quite comprehensive in many areas of sub-Saharan Africa and South-East Asia (e.g., Lape 2000; Insoll 2017). Here, influential formative studies of religious conversion were developed by historians, anthropologists, and religious studies specialists involving phased conversion (e.g., Trimingham 1968; Fisher 1973, 1985) or tiers of religious beliefs that had to be overcome for Islam (and Christianity) to succeed (e.g., Horton 1971, 1975, 1993). Occasionally, elements of these models can help in archaeological interpretation of conversion and to a lesser extent Islamization, but they are also problematic in being too all-encompassing and universal to explain such diverse and complex phenomena (Insoll 2017: 246). In other parts of the same regions, on the other hand, this topic is rarely a focus of study, if at all, thus reflecting a paucity of research and comparative data as well as different methodological and theoretical approaches and influences (cf. Peacock 2017).

More useful are models which acknowledge local cultural adaptations, staggered chronologies, and gradual religious change, such as that proposed by Eaton (1993) to explain Islamization in Bengal, with its important concepts of "inclusion," "identification," and "displacement," and which could be successfully employed outside of the African and South Asian contexts where it has thus far been used (Insoll 2017: 247; Peacock 2017: 9).

Islamic Archaeology as "Historical Archaeology" in the Middle East

In the Middle East, where textual sources are more readily available, the academic discipline of Islamic archaeology has had an ambivalent relationship with the textual record. Although the later medieval periods, in particular, are richly endowed with texts in Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Western languages, archaeologists of the Islamic world have been more hesitant to use the written record than their colleagues in other "historical" archaeologies, such as that of the New World and medieval Europe. This is, in part, a legacy of the "New Archaeology" and post-processual movements of the later 20th century, which had the effect in this field of discouraging archaeologists from being overly dependent on the historical record for project design, interpretation, and narrative-building. It was also a reaction against the reliance on Latin and Greek texts that long molded the archaeology of the classical world, Byzantium, and medieval Europe. As Islamic archaeology has gravitated toward anthropological approaches in the Middle East and away from the textual-historical, however, we risk losing valuable information directly relevant to archaeological inquiry, such as land use, social and political structures, and economic life.

Today a balance between the two approaches is being achieved. The academic training of Islamic archaeologists is increasingly retooling scholars for historically savvy research, bringing Islamic archaeology into the mainstream of Middle Eastern studies.

The emphasis on advanced Arabic-language training in Middle East studies programs in North America (or Islamic studies in Germany, for example) for archaeology students reflects this reorientation. Islamic archaeology in Bilād al-Shām, Egypt, the Maghrib, and Andalusia has been radically transformed in recent decades as a result, with multidisciplinary and theory-rich research on urbanism, rural life, farming, natural resource management, and environmental history (Wordworth and McPhillips 2016; Cooper 2014; Cressier 1998; Ennahid 2002; Ettahiri et al. 2013; Walker 2011, 2017; Walker et al. 2017; Éychenne et al. 2018). Advances in the kinds of questions we can ask about the archaeological record in the Middle East and Islamic West have resulted through the analysis of documentary sources such as tax and court registers, *waqfiyyāt* (endowment deeds), *fatwa* manuals, and water and agrarian treatises, which are largely available to us only in manuscript form. These have yielded abundant information on land tenure and use, management of water, daily life in local communities, and relations between these communities and the state. Document-informed archaeology, moreover, has revolutionized the archaeological study of the Ottoman period in Greece and Cyprus and has become a foundation for landscape studies there (Given 2000, Given and Hadjianastasis 2010, and literature discussed earlier). Rather than blindly lead the interpretation of archaeological data, when read as historical documents by historically trained scholars, they enrich the archaeological record.[9] As for the kinds of narrative sources traditionally used by archaeologists for chronological and spatial information—chronicles, geographies, and travelers' accounts—many studies today of individual archaeological sites, monuments, and ceramic assemblages and ceramic exchange continue to make use of them but in a more comprehensive way and with an increasingly critical eye than ever before (François 2013; Milwright 1999, 2008, and 2009; and Cytryn-Silvermann 2010, for example, for Bilād al-Shām).

Problems of Periodization

Chronological terminology and periodization remain a contested arena.[10] This, of course, has always been the archaeologist's dilemma: chronological terminology is either site- or region-specific, which raises challenges for interregional comparison. All the same, periodization is key if we wish to explore difference and diversity across space and time rather than risk falling into the trap of an ahistorical approach. Should we use dynastic periodizations, such as Umayyad, Fatimid, or Mamluk, to frame material culture and sites, as many art historians and historians continue to do? Or should we use broader categories, such as "early," "middle," and "late" Islamic, each with its own starting and ending points in different regions? Is "Islamic" synonymous with

[9] For debates on how to combine textual analysis with interpretation of the archaeological record for the Islamic periods, see Talmon-Heller and Cytryn-Silvermann (2015) and Walker (2013, 2015).

[10] See the special issue of *Der Islam* (2014).

"medieval"? Or does the scope of Islamic archaeology include the early modern and contemporary moments?

Part of the problem stems from the fact that the Muslim conquests in the 7th century are often seen as one of the ternary points in global history: in the vision of Henri Pirenne (1939), they meant the end of Mediterranean unity and the classical world and marked a decisive rupture between West (Europe) and East (the Orient) that continues today. This highly negative view of the Muslim conquests is, of course, closely linked to Western colonialism and Orientalism in the 19th and 20th centuries and has been comprehensively overturned by archaeologists, historians, and art historians in the past four decades who have demonstrated both that the Muslim conquests were not catastrophic for daily life and that Islam and early Muslim rule were strongly shaped by earlier Arabian, Byzantine, and Sassanian traditions. Where, then, should we place the formative period of Islam? Is it more productive to consider it within the remit of the late antique world or do the revelations to the Prophet, the journey to Medina, or the Muslim conquests mark the start of a discrete period in its own right?

Recently, some scholars have begun toying with the idea of an "Islamic Late Antiquity" to get around these problems. Peter Brown in *The World of Late Antiquity: AD 150–750* (1971) was the first to integrate Muhammad and the Umayyad dynasty into the reach of late antiquity, a chronological expansion into the 8th century that was matched with a geographic expansion of coverage to include Western Asia and the Arabian Peninsula. The year 750 and the movement of the caliphal capital from Mediterranean Damascus to Baghdad is frequently taken as an end-point for late antiquity, firmly putting the formative period of Islam and the Umayyad caliphate in the world of late antiquity. More recently, however, scholars have been arguing for a much longer late antiquity: Garth Fowden (2014: 18–47), for example, argues that the first millennium is a more effective periodization. There are some benefits of moving away from seeing the Arab conquest as a ternary point in world history, and these resonate particularly well with archaeology. Inspired by Hugh Kennedy's (1985) *Polis to Madina* article, archaeologists have demonstrated that the 7th century does not equate to a rupture in urbanism, the countryside, religion, and technology: the scale and timing of these changes varies at the regional and site levels. Seductive though the notion of a long late antiquity may be, in practice, if not intent, it privileges scholarship on the Mediterranean and the endurance of a Romano-Byzantine heritage. Far more troubling, however, is that it overemphasizes continuity and underplays the dramatic changes brought about by the imposition of Muslim rule on the former Byzantine and Sasanian realms and those regions beyond their borders.

Other scholars employ the term "medieval" as an alternative in reference to the Islamic world. The term "medieval," of course, has been adopted in Europe in reference to the chronological period following the collapse of the western Roman Empire. This period is neither "ancient" nor "modern," but somewhere in between, and it represents an era of cultural co-existence, confrontation, and symbiosis between Muslim and Christian societies. It is also the term most frequently bantered when scholars of premodern societies in Europe and in the Middle East meet for conferences. It is the term

often adopted in Spain (al-Andalus), Sicily, North Africa, Cyprus, central Europe (the Ottoman's "Rumelia"), and Central Asia but far less frequently in the Middle East. There is no "Middle Ages," however, from a Middle Eastern, Islamic perspective as the chronological and cultural points of reference are uniquely Western. The combined terminology "medieval Islam" is a frequent compromise, referring to Muslim societies in the pre-modern era.

Similar problems of applicability exist in relation to using the term "medieval" in South East Asia or sub-Saharan Africa. In the latter, for example, Islamic archaeology forms part of what is generally referred to as Iron Age archaeology: the period, varying regionally, after which iron was commonly in use (cf. Phillipson 2005: 214–216). This in itself means something quite different from "Iron Age" in European archaeological chronology, which generally refers to the pre-Roman period (e.g., Collis 1984). However, "medieval" is now routinely employed in sub-Saharan African contexts (Insoll 2018) because, though inappropriate to African chronology, it is commonly understood, and as such, in the words of de Moraes Farias (2003: xxiii), has become a "dead metaphor" and thus can be used outside its "original frame of reference."

If these shifts are intended to bring the Islamic world into conversation with developments in Europe and Asia as part of the new emphasis on global history, we still need to grapple with how to break down these very large periods into meaningful chunks of time that can be compared with one another. The traditional solution has been a dynastic periodization which follows the general precepts of Islamic history, beginning with the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties that governed vast "universal" empires and concluding with regional dynasties, such as the Safavids, the Ottomans, and the Mughals (the modern period tends to be divided along nationalist lines). The Mongol sack of Baghdad in 1258, and with it the collapse of the Abbasid caliphate, is widely agreed to mark both a watershed in Islamic history and in the development of Islamic art and architecture, and it continues to be used as a dividing point, particularly in art historical surveys (e.g., Ettinghausen et al. 2001; Blair and Bloom 1995). Such periodizations sit uneasily with archaeological evidence that rarely, if ever, maps neatly onto dynastic history (people do not begin to cook in different pots because a new caliph or sultan is on the throne) or reveals ruptures in the material record that relate to conquests or regime change. Similarly, they do not allow sufficiently for regional diversity, particularly after the collapse of the Fatimid caliphate, and, as a result, many areas are left out.

Another way out of the quandary is to adopt a periodization that reflects general socio-cultural changes relevant on a regional level. For Islamic historians working in the Middle East and Egypt, the division of time into the Classical Period, Age of the Sultanates, and Age of the Gunpowder Empires are convenient reference points, representing the interplay between political institutions and cultural forms (Hodgson 1975).[11] Even this broad characterization of Islamic political history assumes that political

[11] Hodgson's Age of the Sultanates was problematized by a group of historians, archaeologists, and art historians by the French and American institutes in Cairo and Amman in a series of conferences (Walker and Salles 2008; Denoix and Bierman 2012).

institutions are created the same way at the same time in different regions; the institutionalization of sultanates, for example, was not contemporary in the Levant and Egypt. Alternatively, one can adopt a cultural periodization that emerges from the archaeological record itself, such as the Early Islamic (630–1055), Middle Islamic (1055–1500), Late Islamic (1500–1750) scheme proposed by Whitcomb (2000), which has come to be adopted by most archaeologists working on, for instance, Islamic Syria or Bahrain, but not in the Islamic West or Central Asia. Such schema rarely include the Modern period, and, in practice, it remains difficult to incorporate the period 1800–1950 into archaeological narratives: so little archaeology has been conducted on this period outside the Arabian Gulf (see, e.g., Eddisford and Carter 2017). Art historians have grappled far more intensively with this problem than archaeologists in recent years. Flood and Necipoğlu's (2017) *Companion to Islamic Art and Architecture* effectively proposes a new eight-phase chronology for the Islamic world stretching from 650 to the present that may prove useful to archaeologists seeking to make transregional comparisons.[12] Like them, our vision of an "Islamic archaeology" is far more inclusive than exclusive—we include here the material culture of Muslim communities and those living under Muslim rule from the 7th century to the present day. However, we found it more useful to organize the Handbook geographically by region rather than to divide it chronologically into periods: each chapter can thus define the chronology used in its particular region, explain the historiography behind it, and outline the key chronological gaps and holes in archaeological knowledge which differ markedly from region to region.

Organization of the Volume and Final Note

Because of its global coverage and because of the issues related to periodization, this Handbook is organized geographically, with sections devoted to the Central Islamic Lands, the Islamic West, sub-Saharan Africa, and Asia. Each section is further subdivided into chapters on specific regions, an organization that best reflects the development of Islamic archaeology in that region and adopts regionally acceptable chronologies. Each section begins with a brief introduction to the region and its general historiography. The contributors were asked to address as much as was relevant to their region from a range of topics: historiography and chronology; survey of main sites; rural and urban landscapes; health, diet, and climate; archaeology of religion; gender; labor; and new

[12] They divide their chronology as follows: (I) The Early Caliphates, Umayyads, and the End of Late Antiquity (650–750); (II) Abbasids and the Universal Caliphate (750–900); (III) Fragmentation and the Rival Caliphates (900–1050); (IV) "City States" and the Later Baghdad Caliphate (1050–1250); (V) "Global" Empires and the World System (1250–1450); (VI) Early Modern Empires and Their Neighbors (1450–1700); (VII) Modernity, Empire, Colony, and Nation (1700–1950); (VIII) Islam, Art, and the Contemporary (1950–Present).

(unpublished) research. The volume's final section is rather unique for the Oxford series of archaeology Handbooks because it is dedicated to heritage management and community development, highlighting the very special responsibility of practitioners in the field of Islamic archaeology toward local communities.

The production of this Handbook was a group effort. We (the co-editors) want, first, to thank the contributors for their enormous efforts in producing chapters that reflect not only the state of the field but also visions for the future. We also are indebted to the many individuals who helped with editing at different stages at the University of Bonn: Felicitas Weber, Greg Williams, and Britta Wagner. To our Series Editor, Stefan Vranka, and the entire University of Oxford Press staff we also owe a debt of gratitude.

A final word should be said about spelling and dating formulae. While there has been an effort to standardize to some degree transliteration of Arabic terms and phrases (adopting the guidelines used by the University of Chicago for *Mamluk Studies Review*), for site names local traditions of spelling (reflecting local Arabic dialect) have priority. Diacritics appear only when a technical term in Arabic is used; diacritics are not used for persons, places, and terms that are generally known in Western scholarship by their Arabic names. The authors had the choice to use Gregorian or Hijri calendars, which are differentiated in the texts with CE and H; unless otherwise noted, the date follows the Christian calendar.

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SECTION II

CENTRAL ISLAMIC LANDS

BETHANY J. WALKER

This volume begins, appropriately, with the central Islamic lands: the "Arab heartland" (Bilād al-Shām, Egypt, Iraq, the Arabian Peninsula), Persia, and the western lands of the Ottoman Empire (Anatolia and Rumelia). The "Central Lands" is a familiar concept in Islamic studies, emphasizing the important legacy of this region for the religious, cultural, and political development of the Islamic world. The region gave birth to Islam as a religion and as a socio-political system, laid the parameters for Islamic law, and formulated the basic templates of "Islamic art" and material culture. Though there were early explorations of medieval Islamic-era sites and monuments in other parts of the world, the earliest systematic, scientific archaeological studies of the Islamic periods, which gave rise to the discipline as it is practiced today, were in the Central Lands. Growing out of the Biblical and ancient Near Eastern archaeologies of the 19th and early 20th centuries, the modern discipline of Islamic archaeology was impacted by the priorities of the pioneers working in the "Holy Land." Islamic archaeology, as a discipline of its own, was born here and, in the past several decades, has developed into a mature field of research. Fieldwork in the region continues to impact the discipline globally in terms of research questions, development of new methods and multidisciplinary approaches, and theoretical and conceptual precision.

The preoccupation with urban sites and urban monuments, first cultivated by the "pioneers," is gradually giving way in this region to a concern with rural societies, land

use and landscapes, and regional surveys. As a result, environmental and palaebotanical analyses have become regular and expected components of project design. The "rural turn" has also ensured study of local, small-scale communities and the related topics of social and ethnic identity and identity-making. The focus of a previous generation on the Islamic conquests and their impact on the Late Antique city has developed into more nuanced explorations of the timing and process of Islamization and material expressions of religious and cultural identity. Collaborations with natural scientists, ethnographers, and historians are rapidly transforming the ways that Islamic archaeology in the Central Lands is practiced and the kinds of questions that are being asked.

In spite of forty years of conceptual and scientific progress and sustained interest in the later historical periods, Islamic archaeology here remains hampered by several common challenges. The inability to date coarse wares—and overcome, in the process, the problem of the strong regionalisms in material culture—is one of the greatest hurdles as the field diverges even further from its roots in classical Islamic art history (and its obsession with glazed wares). More excavation of small-scale, rural sites is needed, with proper and timely publication of the results. The complex, and ambivalent, relationship with contemporary written sources has created three camps of archaeologists working in the region: those who embrace a critical reading of Arabic, Turkish, and Persian texts as important sources of data ("historical archaeologists"); those who favor anthropological approaches, casting a distrustful glance to texts and textual approaches as a thing of the past ("anthropological archaeologists"); and those who combine anthropological theory with some degree of textual analysis. The battle over the written word is an important one, particularly in a region so rich in archaeologically relevant primary sources and archives. Finally, as is true for the archaeological work described in other chapters of this volume, while archaeologists working in each country tend to follow one another's scholarship closely and collaborate on many projects, there is less communication across international borders. Islamic archaeology in Europe, for example, is generally unfamiliar territory to those working in the eastern Mediterranean. As reflected in this volume, scientific developments in the Gulf, Africa, and Asia are less known to the "mainstream" represented in the major international conferences on Islamic archaeology in North America and Europe. As the discipline grows, its global reach pushes our current academic networks to their limits. The sections in this volume aim to address this problem.

The following section is organized geographically and historiographically, in a way to best survey developments and present debates in the field. Bilād al-Shām (Greater Syria) is divided into two chapters: Northern and Southern Syria. Scholars of all disciplines readily acknowledge the regionalisms in material culture, exchange networks, and societies that have created distinctive socio-cultural histories for the lands north and south of Damascus. The chapter on Northern Syria geographically covers southeastern Anatolia, southern Iraq, the northern Syrian plain, and the lands south to Damascus. The region of Damascus south to the Gulf of Aqaba and the Mediterranean to the modern Iraqi border is covered in the chapter on Southern Syria. Culturally and historically forming coherent units, Egypt, the lands of modern Iraq, and Persia (modern Iran)

constitute individual chapters. The Anatolian Plateau and what is today central and western Turkey is covered in two chapters on Medieval and Ottoman Anatolia, a division that is justified by different historiographies, professional networks, and research questions. The chapter on Arabia and the Gulf presents for the first time a regional picture of the dynamic developments in recent years in the field of Islamic archaeology in the Arabian Peninsula. This section then closes with a co-authored chapter on Ottoman Europe (Rumelia), which surveys the very diverse cultural and historical landscape of the Empire's westernmost lands, critiquing the legacy of the Ottoman period in the historiography of the modern nation states.

CHAPTER 2.1

NORTHERN SYRIA

MARIE-ODILE ROUSSET

In this chapter we consider the material sources for reconstructing the history of Northern Syria from the 7th century. It will cover the area limited to the north by the modern border with Turkey, to the east by the Khabur Valley, and to the south by a line from Palmyra to Beirut (Figure 2.1.1). This region, between the Mediterranean coast and Mesopotamia, comprises several large geographical regions. To the north, a large plateau extends as far as the Jazira, with large cereal plains intersected by the valleys of the Euphrates and its tributaries (the Khabur and Balikh). The Limestone Massif is made up of three groups of hills, 550 meters high on average, spreading from Aleppo to Antioch. The western coastal mountains reach more than 3,000 meters in Lebanon and can only be crossed through the region of Homs. They form a significant barrier between the Mediterranean and the marshy areas of the Bekaa, the Ghab, and the Amuq in which the Orontes flows. In the central zone, the steppe is increasingly arid toward the southeast. It is cut by low reliefs which follow a line from Damascus to Dayr al-Zor through Palmyra. It is the domain of nomadic tribes. Depending on the region, the geological situation influences the architectural tradition. Clay bricks, usually sundried and only rarely fired, were the building material of choice throughout the Jazira, the valley of the Euphrates, and the steppe. Masonry construction dominates in the hills and western mountains.

The Islamic conquest of Syria began in 634 CE. Syria (with its capital in Damascus) was the seat of the power of the Umayyad dynasty (660–750) and the architecture of this period is still clearly visible in the present landscape. With the relocation of power to Baghdad (founded in 762), the Abbasids (750–1055) rather concentrated their efforts in the valleys of the Euphrates and its tributaries. Political disturbances during the 10th century divided Syria between Byzantine control to the northwest, the Hamdanids (947–1015) to the north and east, and the Fatimids (969–1076) to the south. This period was followed by incursions by the Seljuqs (1055–1127). The architectural traces and patronage during these periods are less well known than that of the earlier era. From the beginning of the 12th century, the Zenguids (1127–1174) and the Ayyubids (1174–1258) controlled various territories while a number of Crusader states settled west of the

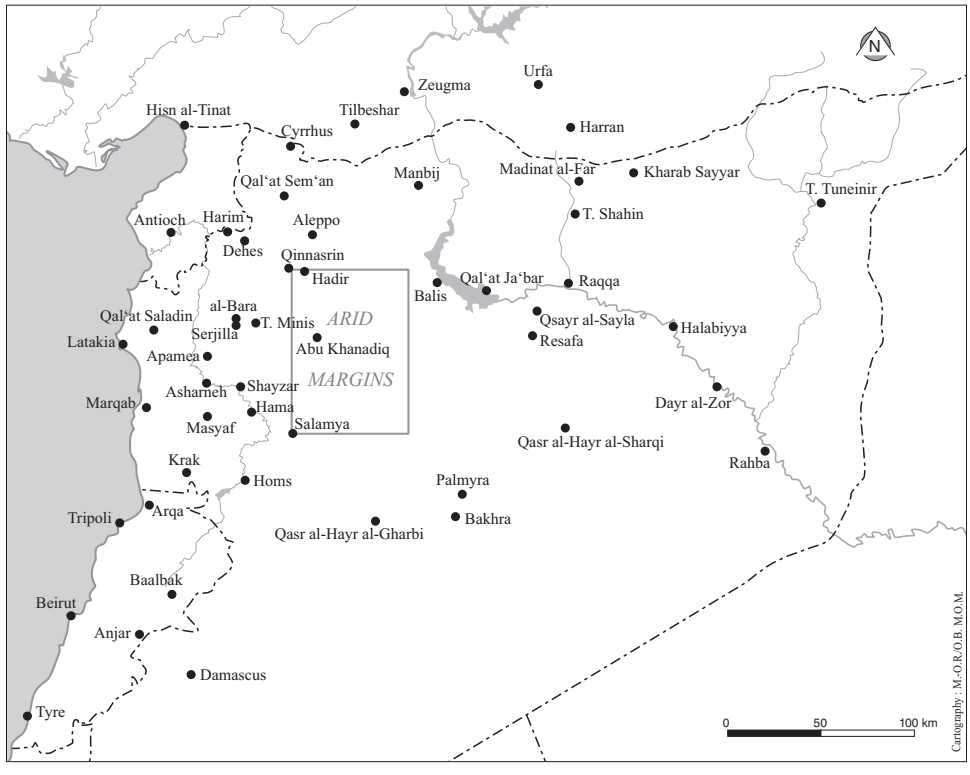

FIGURE 2.1.1 Map of Northern Syria with places mentioned in the text. Courtesy of M.-O. Rousset and O. Barge.

Orontes River basin from 1098. They asserted their power and the unity of the Islamic religion by a strong edilitary activity, especially in the cities. A desire to defend the territory spurred the construction and restoration of fortifications, including fortresses to defend against Crusaders and the reinforcement of city walls. This activity continued into the Mamluk period (1258–1512).

Historiography and Chronology

The first studies in the Islamic archaeology of Northern Syria originated in travelers' descriptions of monumental architecture, studies of historical topography, and the recording of inscriptions in the late 18th century. A topic that has attracted much research by orientalists from the mid-19th century is that of Crusader fortifications, with the aim of showing the greatness of this period. From the beginning of the 20th century, the first important inventories were carried out specifically on the Islamic

monuments of Syria by F. Sarre and H. Herzfeld (1911–1920) in the Euphrates valley and by M. van Berchem and E. Fatio (1914–1915) for the region west of the steppe.

In 1929–1931, the first earnest excavations of an Islamic site in Syria began at Balis-Meskéné (by G. Salles, E. de Lorey, and L. Cavro). Excavations there consisted of four long trenches across the site and the clearing of a mosque whose stucco decorations are now on display at Damascus museum. The results of this work have remained largely unpublished. The 1930s saw the rise of Islamic archaeology in Syria. It was sometimes incorporated as part of the larger studies on ancient settlements, such as the excavations and research on Hama by the Danish Carlsberg Foundation between 1931 and 1938 (Riis and Poulsen 1957; Ploug et al. 1969; Pentz 1997). Studies also developed on strictly Islamic subjects, such as the Umayyad *qusur* (Seyrig 1931, 1934 on Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi and its gardens; Schlumberger 1986 on his excavations at Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi in 1936–1938). However, the study of the latter was based mainly on the architectural remains (for example the stucco decoration of the main door has been reconstructed in the archaeological Museum of Damascus), and no attention has been paid to the finds of the excavations. The true founder of Islamic archaeology in Syria was J. Sauvaget (1901–1950). He covered diverse fields of research including architecture (palaces, madrasas, mosques, and caravanserais), town planning (Aleppo, Latakia, and Damascus), Islamic decorative arts (ceramics and metalwork), epigraphy, and the editing and translation of Arabic texts. His work on Aleppo (1941) was one of the first syntheses on an Arab city.

Excavations of the early Islamic palaces of Raqqa began in 1944 (M. Dunand on palace A). They were continued by the Syrian Department of Antiquities between 1950 and 1958 and focused mainly on the architectural plans and decorations (Saliby 2004). Work on Umayyad Resafa in Syria, or ʿAnjar in Lebanon since 1953, were unfortunately conducted in the same way (Otto-Dorn 1957; Chehab 1993). The positive contribution of these studies was a better knowledge of early Islamic architecture which allowed K. A. C. Creswell to revise and expand his volume on *Early Muslim Architecture* (1932 and 1940, revised 1969).

Gradually, Islamic archaeology incorporated more rigorous and systematic methods of excavation and documentation of material finds. Archaeological investigation began in Harran's citadel in 1950 (Lloyd and Brice 1951: 97–108; Rice 1952). The excavations of Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi, carried out by O. Grabar between 1964 and 1972, were published only a few years later (Grabar et al. 1978). Those of Balis-Meskéné were taken over by L. Golvin, A. Raymond, and J.-L. Paillet from 1969 to 1974 as part of the rescue excavations in anticipation of the flooding of the Euphrates valley upstream of the great al-Thawra dam. Balis was founded in the Byzantine period and occupied until the Mongol invasion of 1260. Excavations there uncovered a domestic quarter with a *suq* and an Ayyubid period mosque. The minaret of the great mosque, dated by an inscription from 1210–1211, was relocated and renovated. An unfinished fortification, dating to the beginning of the Mamluk period, was also excavated along with roughly forty pottery kilns outside the ramparts of the city. Unfortunately, only the numismatics and

parts of the domestic quarter have been published to date (Raymond and Paillet 1995). Princeton University, in 1996 and 1998, excavated other houses and an Umayad castle on a hill overlooking the city (Leisten 1999–2000).

Since the late 1980s, Islamic archeology has benefited from an acceptance of other disciplines such as geography and geomorphology. The primary contribution of these disciplines has been the analysis of landscape evolution and regional development. This is the methodology used in the study of rural settlement in the Middle Euphrates Valley during the Islamic period carried out by S. Berthier and B. Geyer from 1987 to 1990 (Berthier 2001). From 1982 until 1994, the German Archaeological Institute conducted rescue excavations under the direction of M. Meinecke in the southeastern section of the palace area of Raqqa (Siegel 2017), which led to a better understanding of the city.

Since 1995, with the evolution of measurement technology, architectural and topographic plans have become increasingly more precise. The first years of the 21st century have seen more systematic use of methods such as photogrammetry applied to the study of buildings, for example at Shayzar, Krac des Chevaliers, and Urfa (Tonghini 2012; Zimmer et al. 2013; Tonghini 2016) or geophysical survey for urban mapping of Kharab Sayyar, excavated since 1998 (Meyer 2008) ans Resafa (Sack et al. 2004). But the whole range of possible studies are not yet completely integrated to excavation projects. Studies of artifacts, such as glass finds (Foy 2000, 2012; Dussart 2017) or archaeobotanical and archaeozoological studies, are still too infrequent to allow for the proper investigation of topics such as diet or agriculture (Loyet 2000; Genequand et al. 2006: 188–200; Genequand et al. 2008: 168–171; Studer et al. 2013; Ramsay and Eger 2015).

Chronological considerations in archaeology rely heavily on ceramic studies. Unfortunately, the recording of excavated pottery finds was not considered important until the late 1970s. In addition, publications concerning Islamic pottery have traditionally been confined to art historical studies of glazed ceramics, which has led to a strong imbalance in the knowledge of this material. As the oldest archaeological works have concentrated on the best preserved buildings, knowledge of the ceramics of each subperiod of the Islamic period is inversely proportional to that of architecture. Numerous excavations at Umayyad *qusur* have hardly provided properly studied and published material. We do have a better knowledge of the pottery of the pre and early Islamic period since the studies of Dehes pottery by D. Orssaud (Sodini et al. 1980: 234–266), Zeugma (Kenrick 2013), Halabiyya (Haidar-Vela 2017), Qsayr al-Sayla (Konrad 2001), and al-Hadir (Rousset 2012: 73–118) where well stratified assemblages have been published. They show both continuity with Byzantine ceramics but also the appearance of new forms in the Umayyad period, such as certain types of amphorae or cooking vessels (Vokaer 2011). Recent advances in research on ceramics have shown that it is no longer possible to link the beginning of the Abbasid period and the appearance of polychrome glazes: Raqqa palaces (Saliby 2004), al-Hadir (Rousset 2012), and Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi (Genequand 2012) have provided examples of early Abbasid levels without polychrome glazed pottery. They corroborate the dating of the development, under the influence of Far Eastern imports, of the first polychrome glazed wares from the reign of al-Mu'tasim (833–842). "Classical" Abbasid horizons (9th–10th century) have been excavated and

the material has been published at Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi (Grabar et al. 1978), Rahba (Rousset 1997), Raqqa (Miglus 1999), and Kharab Sayyar, which has been dated from the second half of the 9th century (Falb 2012; unfortunately the study is only about unglazed wares). Too often, however, their typological classification makes it difficult for the reader to distinguish a chronological evolution of pottery from the stratigraphic study and to determine the archaeological context of the ceramic assemblages.

Until the 1980s, pottery of the 11th century remained unrecognized because no excavations specifically focused on the Fatimid and Seljuk periods in Syria. Indeed, in this region, these periods are hardly represented in terms of monumental architecture. Only sites located in the Euphrates Valley have produced pottery of this period. The study of the material of several sites in the Balikh and Euphrates Valleys, Qalʿat Jaʿbar (Tonghini 1998), Raqqa/Tall al-Fakhar (Tonghini and Henderson 1998), Tell Shahin (Tonghini 1995), and Rahba (Rousset 2017) highlighted the presence of several production workshops of glazed earthernwares, decorated with *sgraffiato*, slip-painted, or painted in green and brown. They find parallels in the northeastern regions of Iran and may have been strongly influenced by patterns emerging with the arrival of the Seljuqs in Syria. Another characteristic marker is the appearance of the first *stonepaste wares* in Syria at the end of the 11th century. These are white synthetic wares, which were often engraved, underglaze painted, or lustre painted. They were produced, for a century and a half, in different workshops, the oldest being that of Tell Minis (Porter and Watson 1987). Others were highlighted in Beirut (Waksman 2011), Aleppo (Gonnella 1999), and Qalʿat Jaʿbar (Tonghini 1998). But the most important production center is Raqqa, which would have developed during the reign of Ayyubid Prince al-Malik al-Ashraf Musa between 1201 and 1228 (Jenkins-Madina 2006; see also for a synthesis Mason 2004). The productions of Raqqa are characterized by figural or vegetal designs in black or dark blue under a transparent colorless or turquoise glaze, luster on turquoise or purple glazes, or colored designs under a colorless glaze. Again, glazed pottery was studied more frequently than the entire ceramic assemblage.

Common or domestic wares are known only from a handful of sites in the Euphrates valley: Qalʿat Jaʿbar (Tonghini 1998), Resafa (Logar 1991, 1992, 1995, 1996; Knötzele 2006), and Rahba (Rousset 1997). A chronology for molded ware has been assessed at Balis (Mulder 2014, to be completed with the stratified assemblages cited earlier). A kind of ware specific to Northern Syria is the cooking *brittle ware,* which was produced from the Roman to the Mamluk period in different workshops (Vokaer 2011). The typical ceramic assemblage of the Mamluk period is well known on the coast and in the middle Orontes Valley, at the sites of Arqa, Masyaf, Apamea, and Shayzar (Hakimian and Salamé-Sarkis 1988; Shaddoud 2015; Vezzoli 2016). At that time, stonepaste had almost disappeared from places outside the main towns, and there is little development in the decorations and shapes of common wares during these centuries. The most numerous in the Orontes River basin but totally absent from the coast, "handmade geometrical painted ware," is known from the late 12th century until the Ottoman period. Finally, it is regrettable that the castles, with phases of construction often dated by inscriptions, did not give rise to more comprehensive excavations producing reliable ceramic typologies.

Urban and Rural Landscapes

The Early Islamic City in North Syria

The research on the urban history of the cities of north Syria at the beginning of the Islamic period is more closely associated to the history of architecture and traditional historical narratives than the archaeological evidence. In the large Classical cities, the Islamic monuments are often the result of refurbishment or are built into the preexisting urban form. For example the great mosque of Aleppo was built in 715 on the square next to the cathedral. Sauvaget's theory, elaborated from the analysis of the modern urban network of the cities of Damascus, Aleppo, and Lattakia (Sauvaget 1934, 1941) was that the Classical city (with its well-known characteristics: orthogonal and geometric plan, wide streets with colonnades, open spaces and public buildings, agora, theaters, and baths) gave way then to an "Islamic" city. This one would have been characterized by the anarchy of the plan, tortuous alleys, the absence of public spaces (having been gradually annexed by private constructions), and the importance of the market (*suq*), closed and covered. A rejection of the idea that there was a decline in urban areas as a result of the Islamic conquest and instead an evolution from the *polis* to the *madina* was developed thanks to Hugh Kennedy (1985), who considered that this process was the fruit of a long evolution, begun well before the Islamic conquest, and was due to a series of political, economic, social, and religious factors beyond just the conquest. Numerous researchers also explained the manufacturing of an "Islamic" city and tried to define its characteristics (e.g., Foss 1997 about Antioch, Apamea, Hama, and Bosra; Wirth 2000: 515–522; van Staëvel 2012).

Yet recent works on the cities of Syria have put in perspective these hypotheses. A. Eger (2013) showed that, in Antioch, the decline of the city was a subjective perception and that the city's urbanism, with minor fluctuations, remained more or less stable until the 12th century. It follows an orthogonal plan, incorporating differences in functionality and accessibility. The orthogonal grid of the Roman city remained in use, with the *cardo* as the main artery for transportation and market, although with shops and houses built on the colonnaded street. The great mosque and the governor's residence also held place along the same axis of the residential expanse. Areas beyond the commercial and industrial quarters were mainly agricultural fields and cemeteries.

At Chalcis/Qinnasrin, no obvious evidence of the foundation of a new town was found; most of the late antique city continued to be occupied, along with the Acropolis, the seat of power, and the *intra muros* city. But the early Islamic agglomeration also extends beyond the walls reconstructed in the middle of the 6th century: in a residential and artisanal suburb attached to the enclosure wall already partially occupied during late antiquity, in the fortress atop the mountain, and also in other neighboring settlements (Rousset 2020). The large hamlet of al-Hadir was just 4 kilometers from Qinnasrin, and the excavations showed that the site was established during immigration

to the region during the first decades after the conquest (Rousset 2012). Both sites were largely abandoned after the middle of the 10th century, when the city of Aleppo emerged as the regional center. During the 11th and early 12th centuries, the settlement of Qinnasrin was reduced to its tell and the previous acropolis, and some of the ruins were used as cemeteries.

At Resafa, which was one of the capitals of the caliph Hisham b. ʿAbd al-Malik (724–743), the occupation of the city was continuous until the Mongol invasions. Christian and Muslim communities coexisted there: the Umayyad mosque was installed just next to the great basilica (Sack 1996), and the *suq* developed nearby in the porticoes of colonnaded streets (the width of which was again reduced during the medieval period: Westphalen 2000; Sack 2008). The constructions extend well beyond the enclosure wall, particularly to the south. Residential areas, hydraulic structures, and agricultural and industrial installations extend up to 1.5 kilometers from the walled city, with occupied zones shifting from west to east from late antiquity to the 13th century (Sack et al. 2004; Gussone and Müller-Wiener 2012).

At Palmyra, like at Harran, Resafa, Raqqa, Damascus, Aleppo, Homs, Hama, and Baalbak a large mosque was erected in the center of the late antique city, near the Roman *tetrakonia* and the Umayyad *suq*. It testifies to the development and transformation of the city center around the religious and economic poles under the Marwanid caliphs (684–750). The city remained an important and relatively prosperous urban area with significant fortifications through the middle of the 9th century, under the Abbasids (Genequand 2012: 52–67). Settlement then became concentrated in and around the temple of Baal, which was fortified in 1132–1133. At that time, its *cella* was transformed into a mosque (Sauvaget 1931). After 1230, the defense of the city was completed by the building of the fortress which overlooked it from the northwest (Bylinski 1999).

Next to these antique cities, which continued to be occupied and benefited from a new monumental ornamentation ("organic cities"), princely cities were built in the Umayyad period on virgin soil, such as the complexes of ʿAnjar (Finster 2003, 2008) and Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi (Grabar et al. 1978; Genequand 2012: 95–159). They also exhibit prestigious architecture and the patronage of the Umayyad caliphs in large-scale urban programs. Thus, we cannot speak about decline, nor even about a unique model of evolution of cities after the Muslim conquest but much rather about a variety of situations of development which, besides the previously mentioned factors, seem connected to local contingencies.

New cities were also built in the Abbasid period, as regional centers from which the surrounding areas developed, in the Euphrates and Balikh Valleys (Heidemann 2008). The more famous of these is al-Rafiqa, founded in 772 near the preexisting city of Raqqa Gallinicum, as the military and administrative center of the Abbasid Empire. In a horseshoe-shaped plan of 1,300 meters in width, the city was enclosed by a mudbrick rampart, an advance wall, and a moat (Figure 2.1.2). Three axial entrances lead to the great mosque in the center. An extensive palatial quarter was built to the north of the twin cities, when caliph Harun al-Rashid settled there from 796 to 808. This area included about twenty large-scale complexes, of which several were partly excavated, some of them left

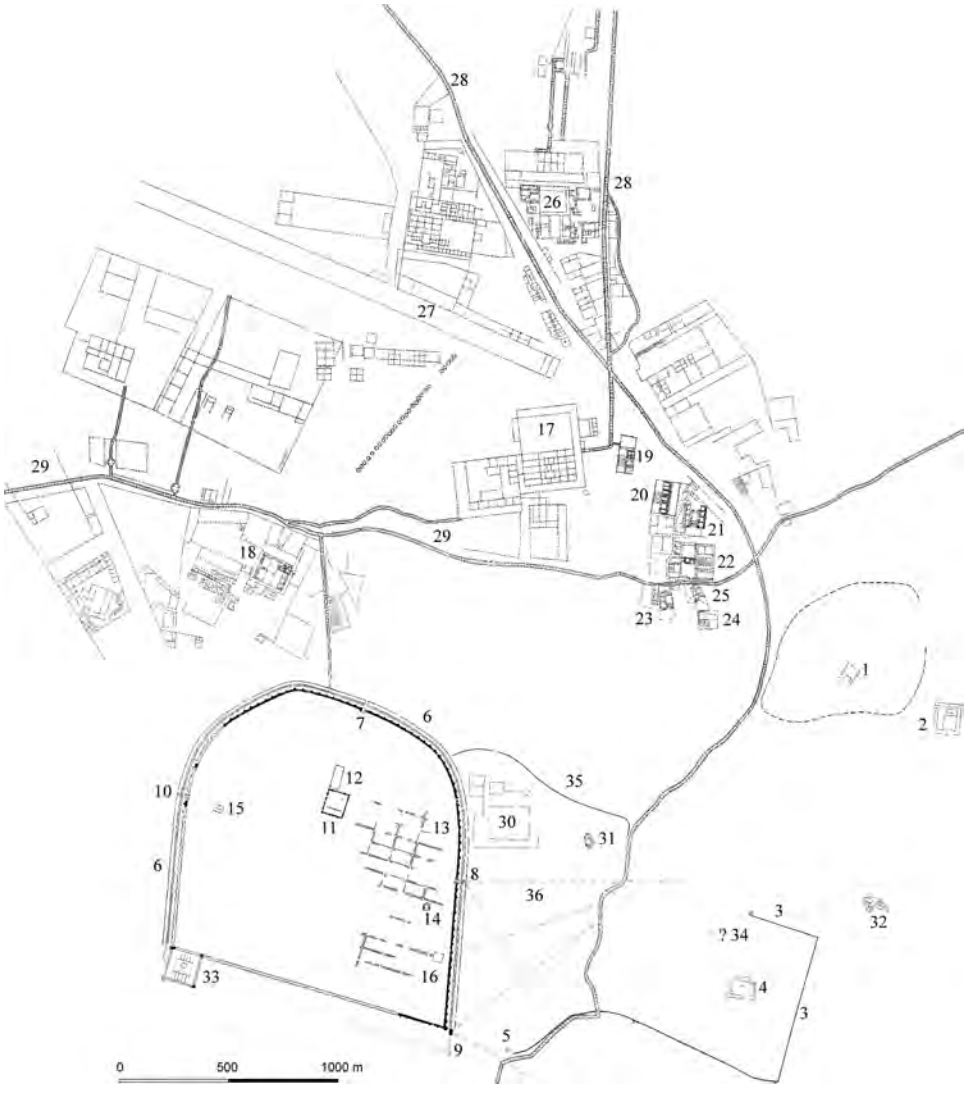

FIGURE 2.1.2 Map of al-Raqqa/al-Rafiqa. Courtesy German Archaeological Institute.

unfinished, others which were in use only intermittently (Daiber and Becker 2004; Siegel 2017). Many other buildings and complexes lay north of al-Rafiqa, like barracks for the soldiers, canals, and a hippodrome. Large-scale industrial activities were located between palatial and urban areas. Workshops for brick, pottery, and glass production have been excavated there (Miglus 1999; Heidemann and Becker 2003; Khalil and Henderson 2011; Heidemann 2006b). Around 815, this area was enclosed by a wall and became an urban entity on its own. Excavations reveal that potters were

brought from Iraq to satisfy the needs of the new capital under Harun al-Rashid. They were working in an organized area, with walls demarcating groups of kilns. Industrial production was carried out in Raqqa until the mid-13th century, and the luxurious stonepaste pottery was exported all over the Middle East (Jenkins-Madina 2006). Al-Raqqa and al-Rafiqa together formed the largest urban entity in early Abbasid Syria and northern Mesopotamia: 8 kilometers to the west of the city is the victory monument of Harun al-Rashid, Hiraqla, a 100-square-meter building surrounded by a circular enclosure wall of 500 meters in diameter (Toueir et al. 2004). The size of the inhabited city area became drastically diminished after the reign of Harun al-Rashid, and new structures were built up on top of the suburban area between the two cities. Political instability along with a fire in 944 in part of the city of al-Raqqa resulted in the gradual depopulation of the initial urban settlement at al-Rafiqa. The revival of al-Raqqa in the Zangid and Ayyubid periods is attested by the building of the Qasr al-Banat (Toueir 1985), the restoration of the great mosque (though smaller than the original Abbasid structure), and the construction of the Bab Baghdad main city gate in the southeastern corner of the Abbasid enclosure (Hillenbrand 1985). The citadel of Raqqa was built between 1192 and 1199. Located in the southwest corner of the city, it had a residential rather than military role, linked to the southern quarter of the city to which the Baghdad gate was oriented. This extension, between the inner wall and the outer enclosure, would be the precious garden of the Ayyubid Prince al-Malik al-Ashraf Musa (Heidemann 2006a). Al-Raqqa was depopulated after the Mongol invasions and was dismantled around 1265, at the beginning of the Mamluk period.

At Madinat al-Far, two construction phases are apparent in the urban enclosure. With a square plan of 330 meters in length, it is surrounded by a ditch and pierced by four doors with an almost trapezoid extension extending about 1,000 meters, which was also equipped with a rampart dated to the beginning of the Abbasid period (Haase 2006). Kharab Sayyar, the ancient city of al-Jarud, was founded after the 840s. The city features a square enclosure 650 meters in length and includes an ancient *tell* which was reused as a citadel. Its main settlement phase, corroborated by coins and stucco ornamentation styles, can be dated from the middle until the end of the 9th century. Within the central urban zone, which is not quite orthogonal, are streets and various buildings, including a mosque, *suq*, palatial complexes, a bathhouse with polychrome mural paintings, and large houses with stucco decoration (Würz 2014) and large cisterns. Square structures have also been discovered outside of the city to the north (Meyer 2008; Würz 2018). Rahba Mayadin (excavated from 1976 to 1981) was one of the most important towns of the Middle Euphrates Valley in the medieval period. Like Raqqa, the city was occupied until the mid-13th century. It had been founded at the time of al-Ma'mun (813–833) along the Euphrates River (Rousset 1997 and 2017) and featured a triangular urban layout.

Certain patterns in urban structure appear in northern Syria in the early Islamic period. There does not seem to have been an abrupt discontinuity with the Late Antique

world in the Umayyad period, an overall urban "decline." Nor is there a unique model of urban evolution after the Muslim conquest but rather diverse developments which, in addition to the previously discussed factors, seem connected to local contingencies. The new urban centers of the early Abbasid period, furthermore, represent a wide range of forms and functions. The archaeological record thus argues against an essentialist "Islamic city" and instead presents evidence of regional diversity and adaptability to local conditions.

The Settlements of the Umayyad Elites

In the Umayyad period, the caliphs invested in towns, but they also did so in the countryside, with the acquisition and foundation of large farm estates owned by the members of the ruling Umayyad family and the construction of "desert castles," a term generally understood as buildings built primarily (but not exclusively) in steppe-land areas. Over the course of the past century their dating and function have generated lively archaeological debates. Generally accepted for a long time were the original arguments put forth by Herzfeld about their dating (1921). More recently the ideas about their function have been challenged (see a discussion of these debates in Genequand 2012: 1–3; 379–396). These buildings, interpreted from the perspective of later Arabic sources which often painted the Umayyad period in a negative light, were considered for a long time as palaces made for hunting and to enjoy the pleasures of court life far from cities. J. Sauvaget was the first to consider this type of site from an archaeological perspective, showing that the palaces are generally accompanied by other domestic structures and hydraulic and agricultural installations. He confirmed the attribution to this period of some twenty monuments previously considered to be Roman or Byzantine works and proposed to interpret them as expressions of Umayyad sovereignty (Sauvaget 1939, 1967). Their economic role was sometimes questioned (Northedge 1993): they were attributed to a more tribal role, to maintain networks (Grabar et al. 1978: 155–156; Gaube 1979), and some were considered to be caravanserais (Grabar et al. 1978: 29–33) or fortresses (Creswell 1952). Nevertheless, the interpretation of Sauvaget is most widely accepted today.

D. Genequand compiled a systematic inventory of these settlements (around thirty), defined their components, and revised their previous interpretations by taking into account simultaneously the archaeological and historical sources (Genequand 2012). The vast majority of sites consist of a set of various buildings and structures around a main building, typically a palace or a residence with mosques, baths, service buildings, and houses; hydraulic installations, reservoirs, ponds, aqueducts, *qanat*, canals, cisterns, and other hydro-agricultural installations; industrial installations (olive and grape presses, water mills, infrastructure for wool production); and warehouses, stables, and industrial and artisanal installations. Genequand demonstrated the economic function of most of these settlements, which were a source of income for their owners. Other features

of these complexes would actually have served a political and diplomatic function as places of contact between the caliphal power and the local elites, in particular the leaders of the powerful tribe of Kalb. But these were aspects developed during the second half of the Umayyad and early Abbasid periods. Recent excavations in al-Bakhra showed the successive transformations of a Late Roman military fort which was turned into a civil establishment. Those of Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi established new interpretations for that site, with Genequand arguing that it became a new city (although of reduced size), caliphal or aristocratic, with the intention of being a self-sufficient entity (Genequand 2012: 95–160).

Growth of the rural economy was made possible with the digging of long irrigation canals. In Palmyrena, the arid climate requires the use of such installations to reach profitable outputs and allowed for quasi-autonomous establishments for Umayyad elites (Genequand 2012). The same phenomenon was recently observed in the arid margins of North Syria: impressive buildings, which we interpreted as palatial residences (due to fragments of decorative elements such as polychromatic mosaics, colored glazing, painted plasters, and marble panels) were built in the Umayyad period near the outlet of the irrigation canals set up in the proto-Byzantine period (see later discussion; Rousset 2010). They could be connected with the implementation of land tenure attributed to the Arab elite stemming from the conquest (Genequand and Rousset 2016).

The Evolution of Rural Settlement

Rural farming was not only an aspect of elite complexes. Adjacent to these complexes often subsisted more modest installations, the villages of farmers and breeders. Recent research suggests these activities often continued from the late Roman or Byzantine period into early Islamic times. Nevertheless, as in the case of cities, the idea of a decline of the Syro-Palestinian countryside after the Islamic conquest prevailed for a long time. In the region of the "dead cities" or Limestone Massif of North Syria, west of Aleppo, the late antique villages remained in a very good state of preservation. Thus they were some of the earliest sites to have inventories, records, and interpretations of the archaeological evidence. Settlement, and thus the economy of the campaigns of North Syria, would have relied heavily on the cultivation of olive groves and pastoralism. The settlements of this region were considered to be in a state of crisis or stagnation beginning in the middle of the 6th century (Tate 1992). This moment would have marked the beginning of an agricultural decline, up to the 10th century when military conflicts caused another shift in settlement patterns (a useful synthesis of studies on the Islamic period occupation can be found in Eddé and Sodini 2005).

The incorporation of archaeological methods in the Limestone Massif, at Dehes, led to the revision of these initial hypotheses and showed that this village was prosperous from the 7th to the 10th centuries (Sodini et al. 1980), with around thirty presses

working at that time and evidence of technological transformations which increased their production. The great majority of the presses produced wine- or grape juice–based products (Callot 2017). So the culture of the large-scale vineyard was still an important source of income for the inhabitants of the northern Massif in the beginning of the Umayyad period, where the olive tree was just one part of the arboriculture. The abandonment of the presses began during the Abbasid period. The early Islamic presence is also attested in al-Bara, where the archaeological works in the center of the largest late antique establishment of Jabal Zawiya produced a mosque, an Abbasid necropolis, and the transformation of a bathhouse into a *hammam* (Charpentier 2013). Several indications of an early Islamic occupation were also found at Serjilla, notably an unpublished bilingual Syriac/Arabic inscription and a mosque (Tate et al. 2013, vol. 1: 179 and 552–554). Rather than a slow degradation of the rural zones, these studies suggest changes in the types of settlements, with regional variations.

The situation is slightly different in the region of the arid margins of North Syria (east of Hama; see Figure 2.1.3) where sites, most of them built in mudbrick, had never been studied prior to the 1990s (Geyer and Rousset 2011). Geographical and archaeological surveys traced the evolution of the settlement in this region from the earliest human occupation and more specifically from the 5th to the 13th centuries. During the proto-Byzantine period, the region was subject to an overall development, with various sites associated with the specific resources of their local environments (429 sites; Geyer and Rousset 2001 ; Rivoal and Rousset 2019). The most fertile zones (i.e., the basaltic mesa) have been devoted to the cultivation of trees and cereals, especially wheat. Cultivation of wheat on the large central plain was enabled by a system of *qanats*, large hydraulic installations discussed earlier (Rousset 2010). Further east, large pasture lands allowed for herding (Rousset and Duvette 2005). Farms with property enclosures were installed in the eastern wadis, the most convenient place to cultivate barley (Geyer 2000). The pastoralists also benefited from state infrastructure: cisterns, which were essential for survival in such an arid environment (Geyer et al. 2016).

This model of settlement developed in the 7th–8th century with a general decrease in human occupation in the region (149 sites with Umayyad period pottery) and the eventual abandonment of the western agricultural zones. On the other hand, the exploitation of irrigated agricultural zones shifted from a state managed process to one managed by landowning elites, a process also seen in other parts of Bilad al-Sham (Genequand and Rousset 2016). During the Abbasid period, occupation continued to decrease (98 sites) and fundamentally changed in nature. Constructions attributed to this period of time feature new, fortified aspects, such as ditches dig around preexisting buildings (see later discussion). Until the middle of the 10th century and the near-complete abandonment of the region, the nomadic presence shrinks in the same proportion as that of the sedentary population. From the 11th century to the beginning of the 12th, only the caravan stations and fortified strongholds remain settled (10 sites). The populations return in great numbers in the Ayyubid period (230 sites) when agriculture and nomadic herding are once again apparent. It reflects both a certain continuity with earlier settlement patterns but also the development of marginal areas, such as the swampy regions of Amuq

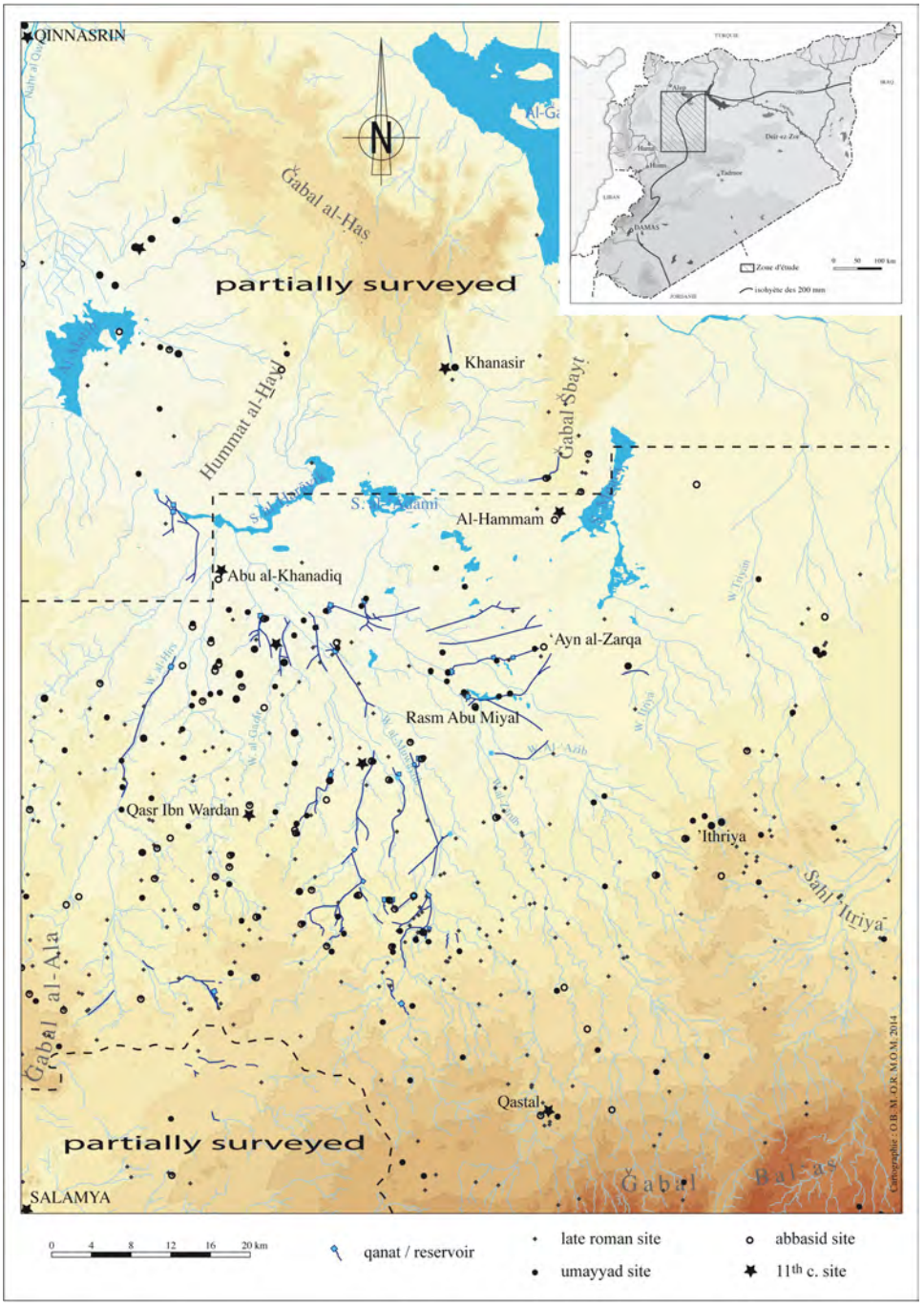

FIGURE 2.1.3 Map of the arid margin area, with late Roman (5th–6th centuries), Umayyad (7th–8th centuries), Abbassid (9th–10th centuries), and 11th-century settlements. With permission from Mission Marges Arides, O. Barge, and M.-O. Rousset.

and Ghab (Eger 2011). In spite of many important surveys in this region, the Orontes basin in the Islamic era still lacks archaeological visibility due to a lack of knowledge of the pottery from the beginning of the period and from the 14th century and due to the poor conservation of sites.

Agricultural development has also been explored in the region north of Raqqa (Bartl 1994) and in the middle Euphrates Valley where huge irrigation channels were built in the Abbasid period, for example the 16 kilometer-long Nahr al-Nil west of Raqqa (Toueir 1990). S. Berthier (2001) analyzed the agricultural development system of the valley of the Euphrates, in the Rahba region, from the irrigation provided by the Nahr Sa'id. This canal, 35 kilometers in length, was dug at the beginning of the Abbasid period and remained in operation until the Mamluk period.

Settlement in Northern Syria immediately before the Crusades is poorly known. Monuments or sites dating to the 11th century are very rare in that area. The best known example is the minaret of the Umayyad mosque of Aleppo, added by the Seljuqid Tutush between 1090 and 1092 and destroyed in 2013. We have previously discussed the case of Qinnasrin, where the settlement was reduced on the Acropolis (Rousset 2013a: 333) and that of its region, with only a dozen caravan station sites identified. In the area of the Balikh Valley, studies of written sources show the fortification of cities in the Seldjuk period as a result of changes in the military balance of power leading up to the Crusades (Heidemann 2005). Altogether, the period from the end of the 10th to the 12th century remains still widely unexplored by archaeology. The geopolitical conflicts between the Hamdanids, Byzantines, and Fatimids; the extensive construction activity associated with the increase in population observed everywhere in the Ayyubid period; and the limited number of surveyed sites from this period make it difficult for archaeological inquiry. The study of medieval settlement patterns of the Syrian coastal region in the 12th and 13th centuries mainly focus on Crusader territories (Major 2016). In the ʿAkkar plain area (Bartl 2008), as in the arid margins east of Hama, Mamluk settlement is difficult to evaluate for reasons we have mentioned. In the Orontes River basin, the rural economy was heavily dependent on hydraulic infrastructure for irrigation, such as the *norias* attested since the 5th century and water mills (McPhillips 2016). Mamluk occupation is better known in the major cities or fortifications, such as Damascus, Aleppo, Baalbak, Homs, Hama, Apamea-Qalʿat al-Mudiq, and Antioch (Meinecke 1992).

In spite of some recent advances (e.g., the study of the marginal regions), several aspects of rural settlement study still need further investigation. This includes but is not limited to the city–rural relationship, coastal occupation, and settlement in the mountainous regions. These topics have been examined only in rare case studies.

Archaeology of Religion

In Northern Syria, the archaeology of religion from the middle of the 7th century concerns mainly Islam and a single type of building: the mosque. Little is known about the earliest phases of urban mosques that are still in use because restorations and

reconstructions make it difficult to evaluate previous phases. This is the case, for example, of the so-called Umayyad mosques of Aleppo (Sauvaget 1941: 75–76; Allen 1983), Hama (Creswell 1959) or Harran (Creswell and Allan 1989: 218–221). Small mosques associated to the Umayyad princely residences are better known (Genequand 2012: 222–223). Several Umayyad congregational mosques have been excavated: at Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi (Grabar et al. 1978: 46–51), Resafa (Sack 1996), ʿAnjar (Finster 2003: 229–232), and Palmyra (Genequand 2012: 52–66). The irregular layout of the latter is due to the reuse of a Roman building and the need to have the *qibla* wall oriented toward Mecca. They all have a hypostyle prayer hall with three aisles and a courtyard with porticoes. In the cases of Resafa, ʿAnjar, and Palmyra, the mosques are situated near the *suq*.

Abbasid mosques in Northern Syria are characterized by their large dimensions and belong to a Mesopotamian tradition, as those of Samarra. The great mosque built in the center of the city of al-Rafiqa in 772 under Caliph al-Mansur measures 112 × 97 meters, and its exterior walls are strengthened by semi-circular buttresses. The prayer hall consisted of three aisles and fifteen naves, with cylindrical piers. Double porticos stand on the three other sides of the courtyard, each with three entrance doors to the mosque (Hagen et al. 2004). The Kharab Sayyar mosque, built in the middle of the 9th century, features a double-aisled prayer hall above cisterns and porticoes on three sides of the courtyard. It is also quite large as it measures about 50 meters in length. It has two entrances, and ablution areas are situated on either side of the eastern entrance (Meyer et al. 2010).

Under Nour al-Din (1146–1174) there was intense architectural activity in the region. Many fortifications were restored, and many buildings were erected or renovated to establish Sunni orthodoxy and for the teaching of the legal and religious sciences. These structures included mosques, madrasas, convents, and mausoleums (Elisseeff 1949–1951). These works are often commemorated by inscriptions, such as the restoration of the great mosque of Raqqa in 1165 (prayer hall façade) or the building of the baked brick minaret of Qalʿat Jaʿbar. However, very few buildings of this period have been studied archeologically. From the great mosque of Balis only the minaret remains, dated by an inscription to 1210. Apart from this still-unpublished mosque, a district mosque of the first half of the 13th century has been excavated. The first building, 9.25 × 5.50 meters, had two aisles and was then expanded to double its size (Raymond and Paillet 1995: 63–73).

The mosque of Rahba was excavated in the small town at the foot of the citadel (Figure 2.1.4). The original plan, from the beginning of the 13th century, measures 29 × 31 meters and has a rectangular prayer hall with two bays and seven naves, along with a *mihrab* lined with marble plates and a *minbar*. It opens on a courtyard with porticos on three of its sides (west, north, and east) and lateral entrances at their junction with the prayer hall. The minaret occupies the center of the north wall, and a basin is located in the courtyard. In the second half of the 13th century, the mosque was enlarged to the west, increasing its dimensions to 33 × 31 meters (Rousset 1998).

The medieval mosque of Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi is located between the two Umayyad enclosures, then connected by walls. It is a Friday mosque, in the central part of the

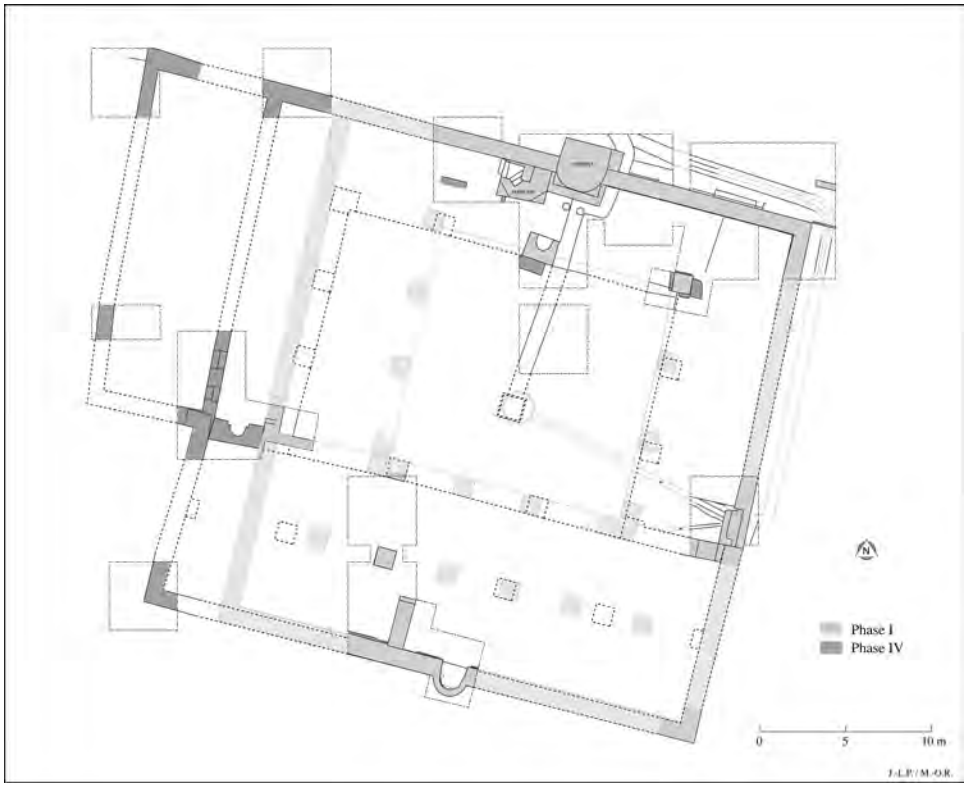

FIGURE 2.1.4 Mosque of Rahba. Courtesy of J.-L. Paillet and M.-O. Rousset.

small fortified town. The building, 21 meters long, has a prayer room with two bays and six naves, with an axial *mihrab* and a *minbar*. A square minaret is located in the northeast corner of the courtyard, and a small necropolis with a collective tomb occupies the eastern part. The building was dated to the second half of the 13th or 14th century (Genequand 2004–2005). There was a reduction of the scale of the Friday mosque between the early Islamic phase (48.5 × 38 meters) and the medieval one, as in al-Bara (Charpentier 2013), Palmyra (42.5 × 26 meters for the Umayyad phase and 20 × 10.5 meters for the medieval mosque dated 1132 inside Baal temple; Wiegand 1932, vol. 2: 83), and Resafa (58 × 41.5 meters for the early Islamic phase mosque and 14 × 8.5 meters for the Ayyubid phase mosque; Sack 1996).

Excavations of religious buildings other than mosques are very scarce. At Tell Tuneinir on the Khabur, the church of the monastery in Area 9 was built during the caliphate of Harun al-Rashid and remained in use until the Mongol invasions. The mud brick church in Area 3 was also in use until the same time. The site was inhabited by Syriac people, but there was also a small mosque (about 8 × 5 meters) associated with the Ayyubid khan in Area 4, which was decorated with stucco panels (Fuller and Fuller 1994; Fuller and Bastell Fuller 2011).

In the coastal region, the castles of the Crusader period all had at least one religious building. For example at Qal'at Saladin, a Byzantine chapel, a Crusader church, and a Mamluk mosque reflect the religious tendencies of the successive owners of the fortress (Michaudel and Haidar 2010). In cities taken by the Crusaders, the replacement of congregational mosques by cathedrals implies an evident will to show the supremacy of the Christian religion: at Tyre, in Lebanon, only the ablution room of the congregational mosque remained after its destruction by the Crusaders (Rousset 2016b). In the fortifications taken by the Crusaders, the preexisting religious buildings were adapted to the new inhabitants. In the same way as in Marqab during the Mamluk period, the chapel of the Krak des Chevaliers was transformed into a mosque by the addition of a *mihrab* in the eastern wall and by the concealment of mural paintings under monochrome coatings (Zimmer et al. 2013; Mesqui 2018).

For a long time, the funerary archeology of the medieval Middle East has remained synonymous with the study of epigraphic stelea and mausoleums. Rarely are the necropolises excavated; funerary archaeology is still in its infancy. In the medieval Islamic necropolis of Balis, seventy-four graves dated before the destruction of the city by the Mongols in 1260 have been studied (Sakal 2010). They bear witness to burial methods that are typically Muslim: tombs are in vertical pits with lateral chambers along the south side. The bodies rest on the right side, looking south. There are no funeral deposits (precious or rare objects), but there are elements that suggest the use of burial shrouds. Though the position of dorsal decubitus seems to be typical of Christian burials, it is sometimes observed in Muslim cemeteries, especially when the body has shifted from its original position. Three examples of dorsal or ventral decubitus were observed in the Muslim cemetery of the early Mamluk period of Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi (out of a total of thirteen skeletons). These were buried in wooden coffins, at least one of which was transportable (Genequand 2004–2005: 279–284). At Qinnasrin, the nine individuals of the small necropolis were obviously Christian, buried on their back in shrouds (Ali et al. 2020).

The Defense of the Territory

Because of its proximity to the Anatolian plateau and its location to the east of the Mediterranean Sea, Northern Syria was one of the regions of contact with the Byzantines and then with the Crusaders. Potential sites for the study of military architecture and the defense of the territory are thus more numerous there than elsewhere and are relevant for our understanding of that region.

Studies of the militarization of the settlements of North Syria from the Abbasid period are relatively new and developed out of several different fields of study. In the Limestone Massif, from the beginning of the 10th century, the agricultural function of villages seems to be superseded by a military function above all (Eddé and Sodini 2005: 467).

However, the vestiges which testify to this are often obliterated by later constructions, and few sites allow for a proper opportunity to investigate these questions. The convent of Qal'at Sem'an, the spiritual Mecca of the Limestone Massif, continued to be occupied, although in a diminished way, up to the 10th–11th century (Sodini and Morrisson 2011). Located not so far from Aleppo on a rocky spur, it was fortified in 966 then in 979/980 and was at the heart of the conflict between the Byzantines and Hamdanids. Its fortifications, contemporaneous to the restoration of the sanctuary and the church, must have had a more symbolic than functional role because they were not able to resist the attacks of 985 and 1017 (Biscop 2006). To the north of the Limestone Massif, the recommencement of the archaeological works at Cyrrhus/Qurus have already produced the discovery of a section of the wall of the citadel dated on the basis of ceramic finds to the beginning of the Islamic period. The wall, stone cut, rests directly on the Hellenistic ashlars (Abdul Massih 2019).

In Cilicia, Asa Eger made a survey of the *thughurs*, early Islamic strongholds known from the texts and well identified on the ground (Eger 2012). He showed that the border must be envisaged as a whole, with a network of villages, and not only as a line of fortresses. The study of these establishments was completed by the excavation of a coastal fortress built in the middle of the 8th century, identified with Hisn al-Tinat (Eger 2010) and the survey of some others in the Amuq Valley (Gerritsen et al. 2008). Recently, the archaeological surveys in the region south of Aleppo led to the fortuitous discovery of two fortifications which may have been connected with the activity of local governors specifically assigned to the defense of the border area with the Byzantines in North Syria: Qinnasrin and Abu al-Khanadiq (Rousset 2020; Rousset 2013). At Qinnasrin, research on the morphology of the town showed that a fortress had been established on the strategic location seated above the region between Aleppo and Salamya. The use of this construction ended with the decline of the city in the 10th century. It then served as a quarry in the medieval period, which led to its almost total disappearance. All that remains is the filling of the interior of the ashlar walls, which were robbed out.

Abu al-Khanadiq was discovered during the "arid margin" survey (Rousset 2013: 80–87). The site is large (1,300 × 800 meters), fenced with a double line of ditches and mudbrick outer walls pierced by four doors. In the inside lays a stone fortress which protected about twenty cisterns, a residence built in mudbrick, and a village which was partially resettled in the Ayyubid period. Massive refuse dumps provide evidence of the temporary establishment of a large camp from the end of the 8th to the beginning of the 9th century. If we keep in mind the residence's strengthening at the same time and the presence of regularly spaced cisterns along routes (Geyer et al. 2016), we can suggest that the entire region was a militarized zone at this time.

At the time of the Crusades, western Syria was occupied by the Latin States (Principality of Antioch, County of Tripoli, and northern part of the Kingdom of Jerusalem). Castles have been analyzed as a testimony to foreign technology and culture, based primarily on an analysis of architectural forms. The main focus of the research was then to determine the respective contribution of the Crusaders and Muslims to the evolution of castle architecture and fighting techniques. The task is difficult since the buildings have been many times occupied, restored, and rebuilt (some

since the Byzantine period). But the analysis of the standing remains alone cannot be sufficient to solve the question of the transformation processes of these sites. The typological study of the constitutive elements of the fortifications, coupled with that of the masonry and inscriptions, has, since the 1980s, been supplemented by cleanings and archaeological excavations (Kennedy 2006; Yovitchitch 2011). Those of Qal'at Ja'bar (Tonghini 1998: 25–26) and Rahba citadel (Paillet 1983) are, alas, unpublished. Apart from Marqab (Major 2019) and Masyaf (Hasan 2008), excavated on large tracts, those of Harim (Gelichi 2006), Tell Asharneh (Mason and Dejardine 2006), and Qal'at Saladin (Michaudel and Haidar 2010) are more like soundings.

Though the archeology of fortifications still remains a traditional one, some works and methods have renewed research in this field. At Shayzar, settled from the 10th to the 13th century, the study of cutting techniques and placement of stones and mortars has been essential in establishing a precise chrono-typology of the masonry. Analysis of the materials and building techniques renewed and reinforced the historical and archaeological contributions. J.-C. Bessac (2012) estimated the time necessary to create the different types of bossed facings recorded in Shayzar and emphasized the aesthetic effect desired by the builders. His analysis of the masonry showed the great amount of reuse within the building. His observation of the cut loopholes suggests their prefabrication by a traveling team of specialists and their installation by a much less experienced local team. These conclusions show the value of such a methodological approach, with a practical and economic perspective.

Fortifications are generally divided between urban defenses and castles. But other types exist and appear in the archaeological record, such as towers or fortified caves (Major 2006, 2008). Fortresses associated with city walls are the largest category and show the longest duration of occupation. Some lasted until the Ottoman period in Aleppo, Homs, Hama, Masyaf, Baalbak and Tripoli (Gonnella 2006; King 2002; Pentz 1997; Hasan 2008; Lehmann 2015; Salamé-Sarkis 1960). Recently, several works have concluded that some of the castles were not simply fortifications but real towns, as at Shayzar (Tonghini 2012). Some of the strongholds with a fortress and a lower town have suburbs which expand well beyond the fortified enclosure, as at Marqab, where the nearby town of Valenia (modern-day Banyas) has been reestablished under the protection of the castle in a fortified suburb of about 10 hectares (Major 2019). Recent work at Sayhun has shown the same development on the other side of the ditch, east of the castle (Michaudel and Haidar 2010). In Tilbeshar, there were also two lower towns, not completely covering the entire surface of the Bronze Age walled town (Rousset 2016a).

Conclusion

Due to its position as a crossroads, northern Syria is marked by the amalgamation of the historical and geographical characteristics of its diverse regions through time. Archaeology is uniquely qualified to investigate this melting pot by combining the study of artifacts, architecture, landscapes, and societies in a broad and multidisciplinary approach.

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CHAPTER 2.2

SOUTHERN SYRIA

BETHANY J. WALKER

Introduction

Geography and Environment

A region that is in many ways a cultural and historical unit, Southern Syria (the southern portion of Bilād al-Shām) includes the city of Damascus (the cultural, economic, and political hub) and those regions south to the Gulf of Aqaba, Gaza, and the Egyptian border and from the Mediterranean in the west to the eastern steppe (*bādiyya*) and Iraqi border (Figure 2.2.1).[1] These are the modern political boundaries of southern Syria, modern Jordan and Israel, and the Palestinian territories. The climate of much of the region can be described as "Mediterranean," with evaporation rates well below that of semi-arid regions; the remainder consists of steppe (the *bādiyya*, the Negev) and desert (southern Jordan).

The natural environment is distinguished by its largely dry-farmed agricultural regime and its fractured landscape. Groundwater—the most reliable source of water in the region—is released through the springs which feed the small-scale, runoff irrigation systems upon which most local agriculture depends. Household cisterns, constructed and maintained locally, capture winter rains and have traditionally been the method of harvesting and storing water. In urban centers like Damascus and Abila, large urban irrigation systems have historically transported water to suburban gardens and fields, and subterranean aqueducts (*qanāt*s) constructed in the Roman, Byzantine, and Early Islamic periods channeled water from springs to the cities (Walker 2017; for the spread

[1] While the Syrian territories from Damascus south are included, this chapter will largely concentrate on Palestine and the Transjordan. The Syrian conflict, which began in 2011 in the border town of Darʿaa as a local expression of the Arab Spring protests, has put an end to most fieldwork in this area since then.

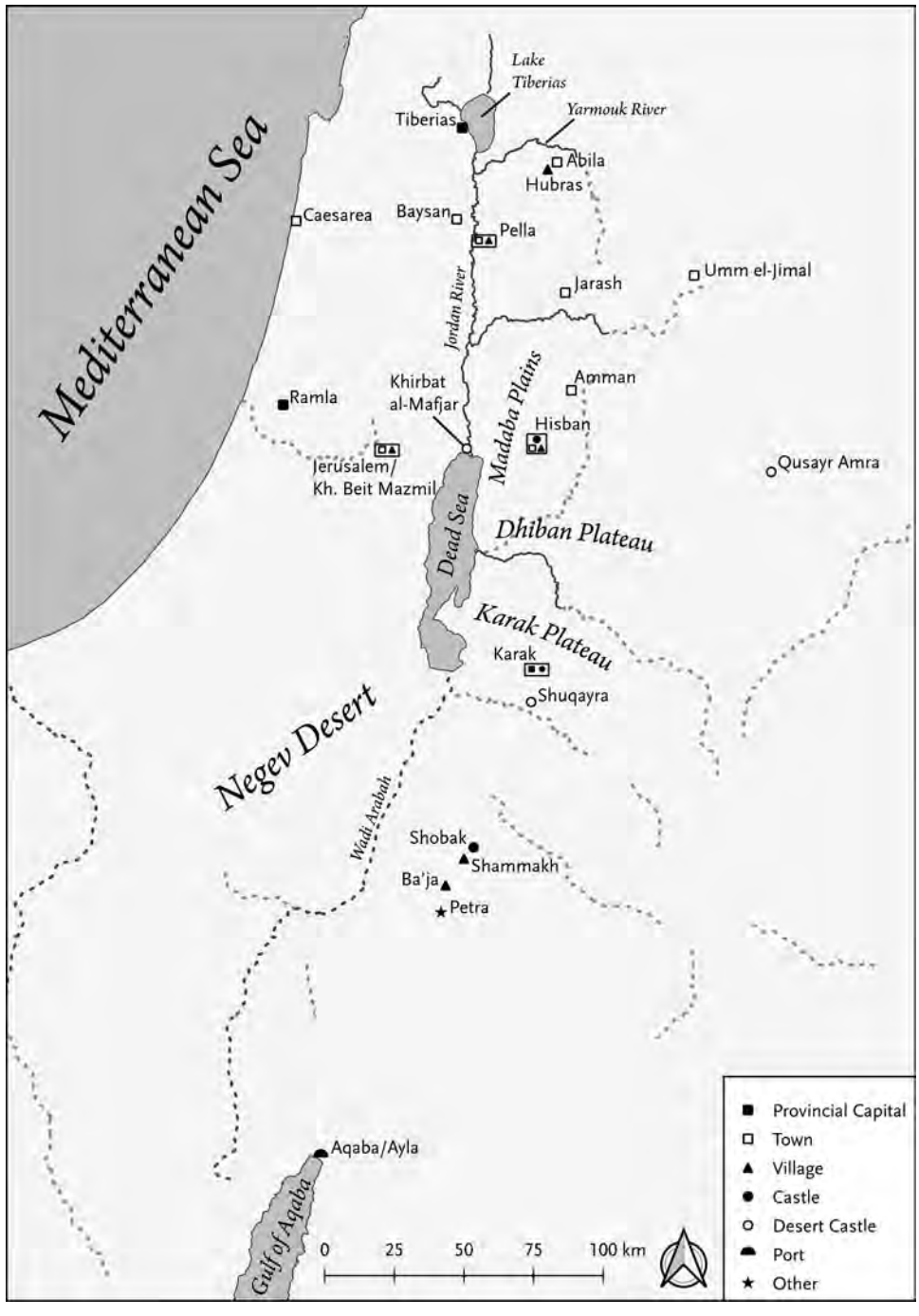

FIGURE 2.2.1 Map of sites mentioned in text, southern Syria.

Courtesy of Luigi Pinchetti, University of Bonn.

of the *qanāt* system in Early Islamic times, see Avni 2019). Water systems—sources, drainage, harvesting methods—could differ significantly from one region to another, as they do now. Because annual rainfall throughout many regions of Syria was, and is, unpredictable, agriculture here was, and continues to be, highly susceptible to drought, with an annual wheat risk in many areas of 50 percent.[2] The region is equally vulnerable to heavy rainfall, which leads to flooding and erosion.[3] Rainfall is highly variable from year to year and from one locality to the next, ranging from below the 200 millimeters needed annual for dry-fed agriculture (the threshold for wheat cultivation) to as high as 700 millimeters annually in mountainous areas. The result is a complex configuration of localized eco-zones, with significant differences in frequency, quantity, and quality of rainfall and in soil quality.

Southern Syria has some of the highest mountains in the Levant (Mount Hermon in the Golan Heights, at 2,236 meters above sea level) and is home to the lowest point on the earth (the Dead Sea, 432.65 meters below sea level). It is the unique landscape of this region—defined by canyons, hills, deserts, and lush highland plateaus, each with their own distinctive soils and water regimes—that is the single most important factor behind these localized eco-zones. The northern Rift Valley occupies the center of the region, creating the Jordan River and the series of wadis that flow into it. Uplift of the Rift Valley has created the series of mountains, and their canyons, that flank it. Tectonic activity in the region controls spring outflow and has left the region highly susceptible to earthquakes, which have, in turn, impacted settlements not only through destruction of the built environment but also by blocking springs and transforming watering and drainage systems. Associated with the movement of tectonic plates is volcanic activity, which has created the basaltic soils and rock formations along fault zones (such as the Wadi Hama in Jordan) and in the Hawran and southern Jordan. Basalt in these areas is used as building material (Umm al-Jamal in northeast Jordan is the best-known example of this) and appears as temper in the clay of locally made pottery (al-Sababha 2018). Soil erosion is marked in regions with the highest hills and deepest valleys, creating a complex mosaic of aeolian, alluvial, and colluvial sediments, reflecting, in Macumber's words, "fine-scale temporal instability" (Macumber 2008: 7). The region as a whole is well suited to agriculture when there is sufficient annual rainfall. The soils include the Mediterranean terra rossa that is common to the Levant and basaltic soils in ancient volcanic regions, which originate from the limestone and basalt source rock units that characterize the geology of southern Syria.

Topographically and ecologically the region is quite diverse, representing a wide range of hydrological and geological environments with varying agricultural potential. The northern Rift Valley (Lake Tiberias; the Jordan Valley, or Ghūr in Arabic; and the Wadi Arabah) is flanked by the heavily dissected mountainous highlands of the north,

[2] Grain harvests in present-day Jordan, for example, fail an average of once of every five years for lack of rainfall (Palmer 1998: 132). Jordan's limited water resources are notorious: its ranking as one of the most water-starved in the world is constantly adjusted by international agencies.

[3] Heavy rainfall events may have had a greater impact on landscape transformation than land use in this period (Lucke et al. 2008, 2012).

which gradually flatten into the central highland plateaus (the central Palestinian highlands to the west; the Madaba Plains and Dhiban and Karak plateaus to the east; and to the northeast the treeless, rock-strewn, volcanic plateau of the Hawran). These descend into lowlands (the Israeli Shephelah, the Petra Valley) before finally forming the coastal plain in the west and the eastern steppe (the *bādiyya* with its basalt and limestone plateaus), and the semi-arid lands and deserts of the south. The imperial administrative structures of the Islamic periods largely reflected these environment zones, and they were serviced economically by a network of local markets and the well-traveled trade routes that connected them.[4]

The distinctive regionalism of Syrian material culture is well known to archaeologists and art historians and is, in part, a cultural by-product of this landscape diversity. The regional differences in ceramic assemblages between northern and southern Jordan in the Early Islamic period, for example, stem from changes in trade routes after the Islamic conquest as well as the dominance of particular production centers (namely Jerash and Ayla/Aqabah) and regionalism in distribution (Watson 1992).

Historiography

Historical Palestine and the Transjordan are among the most heavily studied regions of the world by archaeologists. The region caught the early interest of archaeologists because of its association with the Bible Lands and its concentration of Classical and Late Antique ruins.

Since its founding in 1964, the Archaeological Survey of Israel has recorded as many as 23,000 sites (Avni 2014: 21). There are seventy-six foreign archaeological missions licensed to work in Jordan today, presenting a challenge to the Department of Antiquities in its attempts to monitor all of the sites.[5]

The origins of archaeological investigations of the Islamic periods here can be traced to the explorations by surveyors, scientists, pilgrims, and travelers of various ilk in the later 19th century.[6] The reforms (*Tanzimat*) of the Ottoman government made travel in its Arab lands more secure than it had been for centuries. While the Islamic centuries were never a focus of these investigations, many important Islamic sites were first recorded then. These include the Palestine Exploration Fund surveys of Palestine and Transjordan from 1872 to 1878 (which were concerned mainly with Biblical sites), the Survey of Western Palestine in 1871–1877, and the explorations of Rudolf Brünnow and

[4] For a detailed description of these geomorphological subregions, see Bender (1974, for Jordan) and Magness (2003: 75–78 and 130–131, for Israel, with a focus on the Negev).

[5] Address by Dr. Monther Jamhawi, former Director of the Department of Antiquities, to the North American project directors at the Annual Meeting of the American Schools of Oriental Research in November 2014. To address this challenge of site protection and maintenance, the Department issued a moratorium on new excavations in the country, with the exception of those focused on the Islamic periods.

[6] For a survey of early surveys and excavations, see Schick (1998: 80–84), Milwright (2010: 11–20), and Avni (2014: 17–23).

Alfred von Domaszewski in southern Syria and Transjordan in 1897–1898, with their focus on Roman sites, and of Alois Musil in the 1890s and early 1900s.[7] The Brünnow-von Domaszewski and Musil reports provided some of the earliest modern documentation of the so-called Early Islamic "desert castles." Systematic epigraphical study began with Max van Berchem's documentation of Arabic inscriptions in Jerusalem during his visits there in 1888, 1893–1894, and 1914.

Excavations in Palestine relevant to the Islamic periods began in earnest before World War I, with a real growth in archaeological fieldwork across the region by mid-century. The "desert castles" (Khirbet al-Mafjar in the 1930s and 1940s; Khirbet Minya in the 1930s) were an early target of investigation. Nelson Glueck's surveys of the first half of the 20th century and the work of the Archaeological Survey of Israel (which began in 1965) succeeded in documenting the Islamic phases of Biblical and Classical sites that would later become the focus of archaeological excavations. The first major "Islamic" excavation in Palestine was at Beth-Shean in the 1920s, and excavations of other major Early Islamic sites, such as Tiberias, Jarash, Caesarea, Ramla, and Jerusalem, would soon follow. Fieldwork in Syria in the interwar period—most notably Sarre's and Herzfeld's excavations of Raqqa, the Danish project at Hama's citadel, and research at Antioch—was largely concentrated in the north, beyond the limits of this chapter.

Islamic archaeology came of its own after World War II, with a surge in fieldwork in the 1970s and 1980s. Excavations of a wider range of sites made it possible to go beyond the study of monuments to exploration of larger settlements. These included citadels and castles in their larger setting (Amman, from the 1940s; Karak, in the 1980s), tell sites (Dhiban, from 1950; Hisban, from 1968), Classical and Late Antique towns with Islamic occupation (Pella, from 1967; Tiberias, in spurts from 1969; Abila, from 1980; Jarash, from the early 1980s; Beth-Shean, renewed excavations from 1986), and ports (Caesarea, from 1971; Aqaba/Ayla, from 1986). These were foundational years for Islamic archaeology in Greater Syria as they established the first sequences of Islamic pottery in the region (Sauer 1973, for Jordan), identified for the first time ceramic production sites (Gawlikowski 1986; Schaefer and Falkner 1986, the 8th/9th-c. kilns at Jarash), and provided the first publications of Fatimid strata (Northedge 1992, Amman Citadel; Whitcomb 1998, Aqaba/Ayla).

While the "archaeology of Islam" in southern Syria has long been devoted to the cities and "desert castles" of the Early Islamic period, fieldwork since the 1990s has shifted to rural sites and the later historical periods. Today salvage excavations in Israel and regional surveys in Jordan, many of which have been running for years, are rapidly identifying new sites of the Islamic periods, including the ephemeral remains of villages (Walker 2010).[8] Long-term excavations of Decapolis (Abila, Pella, Jerash), Classical (Caesarea), and Late Antique towns (Umm el-Jimal, Madaba, Yoqne'am, Jaffa) are documenting continuity of urban life well beyond the Islamic conquests. Ongoing excavations in

[7] A survey of all of the explorations of the period is beyond the scope of this chapter.

[8] Brief reports on IAA salvage excavations are published online in Hebrew and English in *Ḥadashot Arkheologiyot* (*Excavations and Surveys in Israel*) (http://www.hadashot-esi.org.il/). For a review of and bibliography of published reports on regional surveys in Jordan relevant to the Islamic periods, see Walker (2011: 213, note 310).

Jerusalem (and its hinterland), the Negev, Tiberias, Ramla, and Tall Ḥisban—important for the detailed information they are providing on daily life—will be discussed in detail later. Recent surveys and excavations in the Hawran, while primarily focused on the Roman and Byzantine eras, have identified Islamic sites and Islamic phases at sites of older foundation. The period of 1993–2000 was the "golden age" of Syrian archaeology, during which time large-scale and international excavations of threatened sites were prioritized.[9] During this time the joint French-Syrian archaeological mission at Damascus was established, running under the direction Sophie Berthier until the close of the project in 2006. One of the most important results has been in ceramic chronology: the stratigraphic separation of a long sequence of Islamic glazed wares (François 2008), including those of the elusive 11th and 12th centuries (McPhillips 2012). Epigraphical surveys in the *bādiyya* and Petra Valley are an exciting and relatively recent effort to record the wealth of medieval rock inscriptions in Arabic in the arid lands; these are described later.

Periodization

Changes in material culture do not happen concurrently political developments: objects for daily use do not immediately change or disappear because a new ruler has been installed or the dynastic capital has been transferred to a new locale. While there is no clear consensus on periodization by archaeologists working in southern Syria, for the Islamic periods, the chronological subdivision of the post-conquest era generally reflects the Early-Middle-Late Islamic sequence championed by Whitcomb for Jordan and embraced by many historians working in Greater Syria (Whitcomb 1988; Heidemann 2015). The Early Islamic period generally corresponds to the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphates (roughly 7th–11th centuries CE), the Middle Islamic period to the Ayyubid and Mamluk sultanates (12th–15th), and the Late Islamic to the Ottoman and Mandate eras (16th–early 20th centuries). The Fatimid horizon (11th and 12th centuries) is frequently lost in this system, which reflects the poor visibility of Fatimid ceramics and a general abatement of settlement in this period (as discussed later). Archaeological reports often include a combination of such cultural and dynastic (political) chronologies in order to represent smaller divisions of time. Periodization based on centuries is seldom adopted, though such a system would be more useful in communicating with historians. While this kind of cultural periodization, which is largely based on ceramics, is well suited to Bilād al-Shām, it is irrelevant to other regions of the Islamic world which do not share the same political history. It is an important lesson to learn: no single periodization works for everyone.[10]

[9] "Cultural Heritage in Syria in the Current Conflict: Heritage in Syria in Danger," https://hisd.tors.ku.dk/institutions/ (last accessed August 31, 2018)

[10] The observations of the historian Fred Donner are germane to this issue: there is no perfect periodization, and the historian should simply adopt what is best suited to addressing what he or she wants to better understand (Donner 2014).

Urban Spaces

Post-Conquest Urban Transformations

The impact of the Islamic conquests on the region in the 630s CE has generally been evaluated against the backdrop of the structural and functional changes in Late Antique cities (including the Decapolis cities) over the course of the 7th and 8th centuries.[11] Multicampaign excavations of such urban centers as Beth Shean (Baysan), Caesarea, Tiberias, Jarash, Ramla, and Jerusalem—and their assumed "decline" after the conquests—was a major factor in the development of Islamic archaeology in the region. The encroachment of private dwelling, shops, and workshops into the previously public spaces of the *cardo* is often cited as evidence of the economic decline of the Late Antique cities, though the origins of such developments may be sought in the Byzantine period (Kennedy 1985). Nonetheless, the privatization of public spaces and narrowing of main arteries through the cities were gradual developments and ones related more to the changing function of the urban centers (shifting away from religious and administrative hubs to commercial ones) and evidence of economic prosperity than decline (Walmsley 2012). Such changes may also reflect a slow demographic shift.

The processes of Islamization and urban development have thus been studied together as part of the same phenomenon. In this regard, the "shifting paradigms" (Avni 2014) of earlier scholarship, which emphasized ruptures in settlement and economic life during the Late Byzantine–Early Islamic transition, have generally been replaced with an acknowledgment that very little changed with the advent of Muslim rule (Schick 1995; Magness 2003; Walmsley 2012; Avni 2014). A re-dating of pottery from sites excavated years ago, such as Khirbet al-Mafjar, has made it possible to distinguish Umayyad and Abbasid phases of occupation and document with greater clarity post-conquest settlement histories (Whitcomb 1988; see also the later discussion of ceramics). On the basis of such revised ceramic typo-chronologies, it is clear that urban and rural life continued—there was no "decline" or destruction—and Christian institutions thrived. Over the course of Umayyad rule and beyond, in fact, many urban centers experienced growth; new cities were established (Ramla); new, rural settlements appeared (villages such as Yoqneʿam), buttressed by an expansion of a market-based agriculture in environmentally marginal areas (the Negev, ʿArabah, the Maʿān region of southern Jordan, and the Yavneh dune fields of the coastal plain from the 10th century); and the coasts were "militarized" through the construction of a network of ribats, walled settlements, and watch towers (Avni 2014; Taxel 2018; Taxel et al. 2018). Some urban centers did contract (Caesarea, Ṣaffūriyah/Sepphoris, Sīsiyah/Hippos); at others the center of the

[11] The Late Antique "polis" is only one urban form of the Early Islamic period. There is a rich literature on the garrisons (*amṣār*) and newly established cities (*madīnah*s), which is beyond the scope of this chapter. For further reading on Ayla-Aqaba, for example, see Whitcomb (1998) and Damgaard (2009) and the literature cited in their bibliographies.

settlement shifted to other parts of town or new neighborhoods were built (Tiberias). The settlement history of the region was far from uniform, and the process of change was quite slow: the transition to Islamic rule impacted local communities in different ways, and contraction and growth was cyclical.

In spite of the regional differences, a few general settlement trends for the period can be identified. A decrease in the volume of international trade and a shift to regional and local exchange was a factor in limited settlement abatement (not abandonment) at some sites in the 7th century. Long identified as a watershed event in the settlement history of the Early Islamic period, the earthquake of 749, while it did damage to urban structures, did not lead to wide-scale abandonment. In fact, careful study of architectural phasing at Tiberias and Jarash has documented the ability of local communities to adjust and reorient their local economies. More than the transfer of the imperial capital from Damascus to Baghdad (which was once identified as the catalyst for settlement and economic decline of southern Syria in the early Abbasid period), it was political instability that led to the contraction of settlement and the abandonment of some sites in the 9th and 10th centuries. Nonetheless, during this time, the number of rural settlements increased, suggesting migration out of urban centers and the development of a rural landscape that would characterize the later historical periods. Widespread abandonment of sites, both urban and rural, was a later phenomenon of the 11th century. The problems of identifying Fatimid-era pottery aside (see later discussion), the decline in agricultural production, abandonment of settlements (particularly pronounced in the region of Lake Tiberias and Golan, the Negev, and the central plains of Transjordan), and hoarding of jewelry, metalwork, and money (at Ramla, Tiberias, and Caesarea) allude to a crisis that spanned the entire region. It is likely that a combination of several factors combined to disrupt settlement: political turmoil (the Abbasid–Fatimid rivalry over Palestine), two major earthquakes (in 1033 and 1068), and years of drought (Ellenblum 2012).

Many of these urban, or urbanizing, centers across the region were reoccupied after a period of abandonment, in the Middle Islamic period. Economic growth, investment in infrastructure, and perhaps also migration (through both natural processes and very deliberate state-led population transfers and forced settlement; Walker 2011) combined to create a new map of settlement under the Mamluk Sultanate. Across the region, the ruins of houses built hundreds of years earlier were repaired, roofs replaced, and water systems put back into use, with wide-scale resettlement in the 13th and 14th centuries (for Tall Ḥisbān in Jordan, see later discussion; for examples from Palestine, see Walker 2010). Church buildings that had not been used for worship since the 8th and 9th centuries were converted to industrial centers and cemeteries (Tiberias, Cytryn-Silverman 2009: 46; Cytryn 2016: 239; Tall Ḥisbān's North Church, Lawlor 1980). As is common for archaeological ruins, some abandoned cities and towns, such as Jarash and Ḥisbān, were reoccupied in the Middle Islamic period. At these sites, neighborhoods were rebuilt as agglomerated housing units dispersed throughout the old urban fabric, and perhaps functioning as farmsteads (northwest quarter of Jarash, Lichtenberger and Raja 2016; the

flatlands below the tell at Ḥisbān, Walker et al. 2017a); the ruins of other buildings were converted to garden plots (southwest quarter of Jarash, Rattenborg and Blanke 2017: 329; the tall slopes at Ḥisbān, Walker 2014b).[12]

What do these patterns of abandonment, resettlement, and reuse tell us about the process of Islamization in the region? The phenomenon behind the massive cemetery at Ḥisbān North Church is a matter of debate. The original excavations of 1975, only partially published, recovered some eighty burials (Lawlor 1980). A handful of intact burials in the central nave, supplied with imported sgraffito bowls as burial goods, have led this author to identify at least some of them, on the basis of parallels with 14th-century burial customs in Cyprus, with a community of migrant Orthodox Christians (Walker 2013). Recent excavations of the church, conducted as part of efforts to present the site to the public, have exposed several more cist burials. On the eve of the Crusades, the majority of the population of Palestine remained overwhelmingly Christian (Avni 2014: 14). This may be true, as well, in parts of Transjordan, where Christian burials and pilgrims' graffiti (see later discussion) attest to the survival of sizeable Christian communities well into the Mamluk period (14th century).[13] Avni appropriately refers to the slow cultural changes of the Early Islamic period (the 7th–11th centuries) as a transition "from a Christian majority to a multicultural, dynamic society" (Avni 2014: 9). Two recent excavations of large and well-preserved Late Antique and Early Islamic cities in Palestine and Transjordan—Tiberias and Jarash—reveal important social and cultural changes behind the early stages of Islamization.

Tiberias: Growth and Accommodation

The city of Tiberias on the lake of the same name, which has been subject to excavation since the 1950s, is a perfect example of the demographic growth and religious accommodation that characterized the urban scene in the Early Islamic period. The growth of Tiberias over the course of the Umayyad period can in part be attributed to its replacement of Baysan as the provincial capital of Jund al-Urdunn. Instead of spatial contraction, the city grew beyond the limits of the original walls of the Late Antique period by the 9th century. The ongoing "New Tiberias Excavation Project," launched in 2009 to locate and uncover the city's original congregational mosque, has revealed fascinating patterns of demographic change and intercommunal relations from the Islamic conquest of the city in 635 CE to the 10th century (Cytryn-Silverman 2009, 2010). The Great Mosque, first identified as a Byzantine covered market in the 1950s, is, in fact, a smaller replica of the Great Mosque of Damascus. Its structural history can be reconstructed through a stratigraphically sound series of coin-dated floors: built in the 7th or early 8th

[12] Archaeological ruins are often converted to agricultural use, and their associated soils are nitrate-rich and fertile (Walker 2018a). On the extraction of soils from ruins for fertilizer, see Quickel and Williams (2016).

[13] In a similar vein, there is a general consensus today among historians that the conversion of Coptic Christians in Egypt was a very slow and gradual process, accelerated only with the establishment and spread of *madrasa*s (Islamic law schools) in the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods (Leiser 1985).

century, it continued to be used for worship until its structural damage in the 1068 earthquake. Two meters to the north of the mosque stood a five-aisled basilica (one of at least three churches serving the city), which continued to accommodate Christian worship until the late 10th century. Not only did the Muslim urban planners maintain the original Byzantine grid of the city, placing the congregational mosque at the city center, but Muslims and Christians continued to worship in the same neighborhood for more than 200 years. The same was true for Jarash in the same period.

Jarash: Commerce and Industry

The well-preserved Late Roman provincial town of Jarash is one of the most intensively studied cities of the Late Antique and Early Islamic periods in southern Bilād al-Shām. Subject to excavations since 1925, some 25 percent of the 85-hectare site has been investigated archaeologically (Rattenborg and Blanke 2017). Recent fieldwork by international projects in different parts of the city has documented varied patterns of urban renewal, economic diversification, and demographic transformation that parallel those of other urban centers, such as Tiberias. The projects include the Danish-Jordanian Islamic Jarash Project, which conducted excavations focused on the congregational mosque in the center-city from 2002 to 2010 (Simpson 2008; Walmsley et al. 2008; Walmsley 2012: 84–86); the Danish-German Jarash Northwest Quarter Project, launched in 2011 to investigate the highest area of the walled city (Lichtenberger and Raja 2016, 2017; Lichtenberger et al. 2016); the Late Antique Jarash Project, its fieldwork conducted in a residential area to the southwest of the Early Islamic congregational mosque (Blanke et al. 2010; Rattenborg and Blanke 2017: 321ff); and the Jarash Hinterland Survey, which led documentation efforts in an area of rapid development from 2005 to 2010 (Baker and Kennedy 2011). Together, they have identified patterns of settlement, commerce, and industrial activities that parallel those of other Early Islamic towns, such as Tiberias and Pella. There is very little evidence of any occupational (or stratigraphic) break between the Late Byzantine and Early Islamic periods. With the exception of the northwest quarter of town, occupation generally continued through the 9th and, in some cases, to the 10th centuries, with evidence of repairs and repurposing after the 749 earthquake. Many new buildings were constructed on collapse layers. Abatement of urban settlement at Jarash began at the turn of the 10th century, with most parts of town, including the congregational mosque, eventually abandoned. In the Middle Islamic period (12th–14th centuries), some parts of town (the northwest quarter and the vicinity of the ruins of the Temple of Zeus, for example) were resettled in what appear to have been farmsteads; other neighborhoods were converted to industrial use and trash disposal (inside and in the vicinity of the old congregational mosque) or developed as intramural gardens (the southwest quarter).

While many of these patterns were repeated at other urban centers throughout the region, what distinguished Jarash was its extensive commercial development over the course of the Umayyad and Abbasid periods and the transformation of its urban ruins

to farmsteads (or "hamlets," Lichtenberger and Raja 2016) in the Mamluk era. In the 7th and 8th centuries, a series of shops in the form of stalls were built along the east wall of the congregational mosque, in what was at the time "open" space "downtown," near the intersection of the *cardo* and *decamanus*. One shop yielded marble slabs inscribed in Arabic, recycled for use as commercial ledgers, with the names of patrons and amounts of money owed or credited to the shopkeeper (Simpson 2008). Although industrial spaces could be found in different quarters of the Late Antique city, their concentration in abandoned public spaces in the 8th century in workshops (ceramic, textile) attests to new modes of organization of production and industrial revival (Bessard 2007, 2013). The reoccupation of ruins in the northwest quarter hundreds of years later alludes to a different kind of process: the "ruralization" of the region in the 13th and 14th centuries. In a pattern repeated throughout Transjordan and Palestine, new domestic structures were either built on top of (or into) ruined structures of the Byzantine and Early Islamic period. In this quarter a large residential, courtyard complex was discovered, bordered by two smaller houses with plastered walls and all framing a central courtyard. One of the smaller houses sits above a cave, in which were installed several olive presses that were in use during this period.[14] Carbon-14 (C14) dates and ceramics suggest dates of occupation for this rural "hamlet" in the 13th–15th centuries.

Crusader and Post-Crusader Castles

The Middle Islamic era (13th–15th centuries CE) has become increasingly associated with the militarization of Islamic society, in the arts (heraldic blazons, monumental designs, and script) and in political and economic institutions (the sultanate, *iqṭaʿāt*). This should not be confused with "militancy"; rather it is more the visible and very public expressions of secular power based on a professional army.

The general investment in fortifications and the infrastructures to support them are very tangible evidence of this process. In Bilād al-Shām, the Fatimid, Crusader, and Mongol threats initially rationalized this concern for defense and control of the imperial frontiers. In the 11th and 12th centuries forts were constructed on both sides of the Jordan River, in the Golan Heights and Lake Tiberias, the highlands of northern Jordan, the Petra Valley, and the highlands south of Wadi Mujīb. A review of what we have learned from the extensive scholarship on the Crusader and Ayyubid-Mamluk castles

[14] Natural caves, with which the region is richly provided, were modified for a number of purposes in the Middle Islamic period, including industrial-scale production of olive oil and storage of grains. A cave complex similar to that in Jarash was identified as part of archaeological surveys in the village of Malka near Umm Qeis, where a series of large presses were installed in the cave walls (Walker et al. 2007).

and urban garrisons (Damascus Citadel) is beyond the scope of this chapter.[15] While the castles themselves have been thoroughly studied by architectural historians and archaeologists, the towns that supported them have been largely overlooked as the medieval sites are overlaid by modern settlement. One fortunate exception is the *madīnah* of Ḥisbān in central Jordan, which has been subject to American and joint American-German excavations for five decades.

Ḥisbān Citadel

The archaeological site of Tall Ḥisbān is located in central Jordan on the Madaba Plains, between Amman and Madaba. The site actually consists of two parts: the walled citadel on the summit of the tell and the ruins of the medieval settlement below it. Since the 1970s, the site has belonged to the Jordanian Department of Antiquities and is currently being developed as an archaeological park in conjunction with ongoing excavations.[16] Fifty years of intermittent excavations at the site have uncovered a 14th-century Mamluk garrison (fairly well preserved, with an intact storeroom) and its supporting village (or "town," *madīnah*, as contemporary Arabic sources called it for a short period). In this period, as we know from chronicles, it was a small administrative center—the capital of the rural Balqā District (in the southernmost portion of the Province of Damascus)—and hosted a very modest garrison. There is, however, no reference to the physical citadel in any of the narrative or documentary sources of the period. The defensive capabilities of the castle and the spatial distribution of ceramics and small finds suggest that the Citadel served more domestic and administrative, rather than defensive, functions.

There is little spatial division between the Citadel and the town/village: the houses creep up the slopes of the tell to the Citadel walls. There is, likewise, little to distinguish the ceramic and glass assemblages of the two parts of the site: common handmade geometrically painted ware bowls and jars are found in the Citadel storeroom; glazed bowls (mostly imports) are found in the farmhouses; and large sugar molasses transport/storage jars and enameled and lustred glass lamps, vials, and drinking vessels of Damascene manufacture have been recovered from both contexts. According to recent faunal analysis, the diet of soldiers serving at Ḥisbān was relatively indistinguishable from that of villagers, except for the consumption of game animals and generally better cuts of meat; in fact, there is evidence of sharing of meat and meat distribution between the Citadel and village (see Corbino in Walker et al. 2017c). It would appear, then, that very little separated the consumption patterns of the garrison from that of the civilian settlement.

[15] The Jordanian castles have been studied the most thoroughly. For excavation reports on Shobak Castle, see Brown (1988) and Vannini and Nucciotti (2009); for Karak Castle, Brown (1989, 2013); and Milwright (2008) for a summary of fieldwork there and a catalogue of pottery from local surveys. Walmsley (2001) also provides a good overview of literature on the fortifications of Middle Islamic Jordan.

[16] The excavations are under the direction of the author and are part of a larger archaeological and community development initiative, the "Hisban Cultural Heritage Project," led by Øystein LaBianca of Andrews University. For more information, on the CRM and community archaeology efforts of the project, see Chapter 6.1 in this volume LaBianca, Ronza, and Harris.

More surprising are the results of ongoing analysis of the vast complexes of cisterns and subterranean channels at the site, which indicate that the water (and drainage) systems of the Citadel and the village were interconnected, requiring collaboration in their maintenance. The garrison and village, then, appear to have lived in a symbiotic relationship with another.

Rural Spaces

Early Islamic "Desert Castles"

Exploration of the so-called Early Islamic "desert castles," which are neither located in the desert nor truly castles, is one of the longest chapters in the history of Islamic archaeology in Bilād al-Shām. The term covers a diverse body of palace-like structures and complexes built in the late Umayyad period (most in the early 8th century) and located in the semi-arid regions of Jordan, Israel, and the Palestinian territories and in northeastern Syria. Some thirty-eight monuments have been identified as desert castles, with the highest concentration in northeast Jordan at the border between cultivable land and the eastern steppe (the *bādiyya*). Several—located on hilltops, on lake shores, and close to wadis—may have been positioned for their scenic views (Ben Badhann 2009); others, flanking ancient trade routes, likely served more economic functions. Many are repurposings of Roman or Byzantine forts and fortified complexes. Collectively, they represent an important stage in the development of Islamic architecture and settlement in Umayyad Syria. Functionally, they belong to a larger group of Early Islamic settlements—the caliphal "estates" (*ḍiyāʾ al-khilāfah*)—which included the private villages and land grants (*qaṭaʾiʿ*) that helped to revive the "dead lands" (*mawāt*) on the agricultural periphery (Taxel 2018).

As discussed in Chapter 2.1, debate continues over the ultimate function of these structures. While explorations of the 19th and early 20th centuries focused on the architecture itself, current excavations, which aim at revisiting the chronology of the earlier expeditions, are providing a clearer, though more complex, picture of why they were built and how they changed over time. Important in this regard is recent fieldwork at Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi (located in the Syrian steppe, 110 kilometers northeast of Palmyra and covered in the previous chapter) and Khirbet al-Mafjar (on the edge of the fertile lands of Jericho).[17] An inscription in the Large Enclosure at Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi referring to a "*madinah*" (city) led Oleg Grabar in the 1970s to identify this single-walled complex, which is only part of the site, as a proto-urban form. Renewed excavations by a

[17] Although Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi falls outside the geographical coverage of this chapter, recent excavations there shed light on the development of the desert castles of southern Syria.

Swiss-Syrian team under the direction of Denis Genequand have provided evidence for the gradual urbanization of the entire site (Genequand 2012). Suggesting that the site as a whole served both political and economic functions, Genequand emphasizes its palatial aspects, which include a palace proper, congregational mosque, bath, service buildings, non-elite housing, hydro-agricultural and industrial installations, and something akin to suburbs (which developed later to the north of the site). The watermill, warehouses, stables, and oil presses speak to an agricultural complex, much like the "desert castles" in Jordan, with their elaborate water harvesting systems (dams, reservoirs, aqueducts, qanats), agricultural enclosures, and cultivated zones. The majority of the desert castles were organized in this way for agricultural production and redistribution. Joint Palestinian-American excavations at Khirbet al-Mafjar have suggested a similar pattern. Considered an "incipient city" by Whitcomb, the site is endowed with public buildings and the remains of an agricultural estate to the north of the palatial structure, as at Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi (Whitcomb 2012–2013; Whitcomb and Taha 2013).

For Genequand, the desert castles were primarily elite residences, built by caliphs and princes in places where they were allotted land grants (s. *qaṭīʿa*). They were purposively developed as agricultural estates in order to diversify economically beyond tax revenues and state salaries (Genequand 2012: 398). Some may have been planned as "settlement magnets" from the start to attract settlement and cultivation in undeveloped, abandoned, or agriculturally marginal areas. Over time they developed into cities, with a full complement of public services and suburbs. In this sense, Khirbet al-Mafjar was a palace-estate (*ḍayʿa*), which became a (short-lived) model of early Islamic settlement. The same has been argued for Shuqayra al-Gharbiyya on the Karak Plateau, which may have served as the summer residence of caliph Hisham, as Khirbet al-Mafjar was his winter residence (Ben Badhann 2009) (Figure 2.2.2).[18] The view from the belvedere of Shuqayra is striking: a broad span of the Wadi al-Hasa and its terraced slopes.

The desert castles continued to be occupied into the Abbasid period and then were abandoned, having lost their original functions in a state apparatus that was decentralized, mobile, and tied to local tribes (Genequand 2012: 398). Many of them, however, were reoccupied for a short period in the Middle Islamic period, a phenomenon that has only been fully appreciated as a result of recent excavations. At Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi, the ruins of the Umayyad and Abbasid complexes were reoccupied, and new housing complexes, a mosque, and a cemetery with mausoleum were built in the 12th and 13th centuries (dates confirmed by C14 analysis of the wooden coffins, Genequand 2005). The palace at Khirbet al-Mafjar was reoccupied, as well, circa 1100–1300. There is evidence of Middle Islamic reuse of other desert castles. Italian restorations of the famous frescoes of Qusayr Amra in Jordan have revealed a series of graffiti from various periods; the corpus of Mamluk-period inscriptions is under study by the Department of Antiquities (personal communication, Ahmad Lash). In this case, the ruins of the

[18] Ben Badhann originally attributed Shuqayra al-Gharbiyya to the patronage of al-Walid II, the successor of Hisham to the Umayyad caliphate.

FIGURE 2.2.2 Shuqayra al-Gharbiyya, southern Jordan.

Photo by author.

bathhouse were used as a kind of caravanserai, providing overnight shelter for travelers. What these visitors thought the building was originally is not indicated by the content of the graffiti.

Villages

Central Plateaus of Jordan: The Madaba Plains

While current salvage excavations in Israel are revealing the traces of rural settlements at a rapid pace, exposures are limited and architectural plans few. The most extensive information about rural society on the scale of the village is coming from Jordan, where long-term excavations of tell sites have uncovered the remains of complete housing complexes. Few rural sites are as well preserved or as thoroughly explored as that of Tall Ḥisbān, which has become a type site for rural archaeology of the Mamluk period. The citadel, described earlier in this chapter, is perched on the summit of an archaeological tell that overlooks a dense configuration of barrel-vaulted, single-roomed structures—the remains of the Early and Middle Islamic village of Ḥisbān. These multipurpose buildings, which in some cases preserve as many as ten courses of their walls and vault

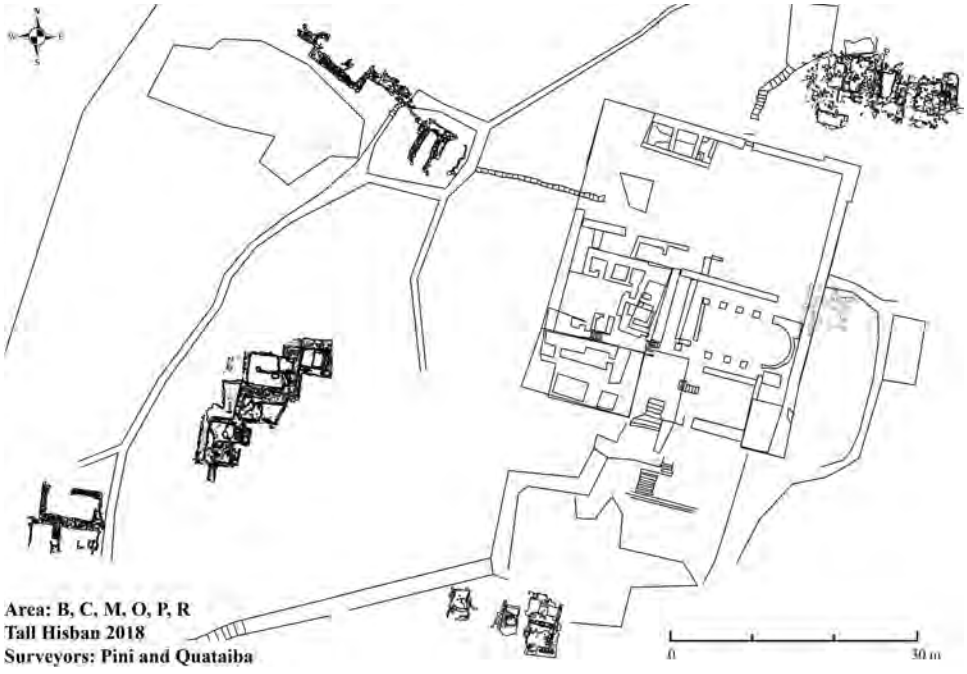

FIGURE 2.2.3 Floor plans of Mamluk-era farmhouses, Tall Ḥisbān, central Jordan.
Courtesy of Nicoló Pini, Research Unit of Islamic Archaeology, University of Bonn.

springers, are built against one another in a row, all facing a common courtyard and shared cistern (Figure 2.2.3). Their walls and floors were plastered in white gypsum; they had windows, benches, indoor plumbing, and lockable (apparently wooden) doors. They belong to a koïne of medieval vernacular architecture of the central highlands of the Transjordan and Palestine that spans the Islamic periods (see Walker 2014b for the Madaba Plains; see Nashef 2000; Nashef and Abd Rabu 2000; Abd Rabu 2000 for Khirbet Birzeit). Though they have been subject to excavation since the last 1970s, the Ḥisbān "farmhouses" have been the focus of archaeological investigations only since 2013. As in many village sites throughout southern Syria, these structures are largely refurbishings and reoccupations of Late Byzantine and Early Islamic domestic ruins, which were at the time hundreds of years old. Few buildings at the site were built anew in the Mamluk era.

It is not clear how large the medieval settlement was, how many people lived there, or where its Muslims residents were buried.[19] No pathways connecting "neighborhoods" have been identified. The house clusters have been interpreted as the housing compounds of extended families, which shared resources, including the traditional family

[19] In contrast to the Roman and Byzantine necropoli beyond the tell and the Late Ottoman mass "Bedouin" burials on the summit, the medieval Muslim cemetery has never been identified. The North Church burials, arguably of a Christian population, were discussed earlier.

cistern. Individual houses were added on to the cluster as the family grew. The village of Ḥisbān appears with regular frequency as a "*madīnah*" in contemporary Arabic sources in the 14th century, when the garrison and district governorship were moved to the summit of the tell and the village came to acquire urban amenities. The villagers were known by the *niṣbah* "Ḥisbānī," and the local pastoral nomadic tribes were the Banu Mahdi (for a review of textual sources, see Walker 2011). The villagers included peasants, state officials, clerics (with professional ties to Damascus), and businessmen.

There is a disconnect between the vernacular style of the houses and the pottery and glass recovered from them, which include imports (of some expense) from Damascus and Cairo. A hoard of more than sixty silver coins (dirhams) was hidden in a lamp recovered under the bench (*masṭabah*) of one house in the 1970s. From a stone outlined pit in another house were recovered complete glazed jars of Damascene manufacture (Walker et al. 2017b). The architecture and small finds together suggest a rural population that was in the process of urbanizing, for a short time, when Hisban had a garrison. Unlike the villages of northern Jordan, Ḥisbān was gradually abandoned over the course of the late 15th and early 16th centuries until it was reoccupied in the Tanzimat era and the center of the settlement shifted south.

The way the village of Ḥisbān developed over time mirrors that of the desert castles: Middle Islamic reoccupation of Early Islamic ruins and a brief period of urbanization. Rural Bilād al-Shām experienced a renaissance in the 14th century due to the stability of the Mamluk Sultanate and state investments in local infrastructure and agriculture. Complex patterns of rural migration, settlement (some through forced population transfers by imperial fiat, Walker 2011, 2014b), and natural demographic growth are expressed in these occupational cycles. These were localized patterns, however, with one region experiencing different degrees (and timing) of growth and abatement from another.

Negev and Petra Valley

The process of sedentarization and the factors behind the expansion of agriculture in the Early Islamic period are central themes in the archaeology of rural settlement in the Negev. They are also at the heart of debates on the impact of the Islamic conquests on settlement in marginal zones. The number of rural settlements and farms in the Negev grew in the 7th and 8th centuries. Debates center on the reasons why: either the decline of towns forced nomads to settle and engage in run-off farming (Avni 1996), or a strong Umayyad state enacted a policy of settlement (Haiman 1995), or, alternatively, under a strong Umayyad state, the circumstances were right for agricultural expansion into marginal zones under individual initiative (Rosen 2007). In fact, the towns of these southern zones prospered in the Early Islamic period, and rural settlements were simply pulled into their orbit. Growth in settlement and agricultural production throughout Palestine and Syria in the mid-6th to mid-7th centuries, in fact, continued unabated after the conquests. The structure of the settlements in this period, however, was quite different from that of other regions. Modular development of single-room housing clusters suggests a process of settlement by a segmented society (Magness 2004).

The settlement history of the Petra Valley in much later historical periods followed a different course. In recent years archaeologists have prioritized the history of post-Nabataean settlement in Petra and the Petra Valley, with careful study of the "medieval" (i.e., Crusader and Middle and Late Islamic-era) strata at Aaron's Tomb (Kouki and Laven 2013), among many other sites as yet unpublished, and new excavation of purely Middle and Late Islamic-era sites, such as Bayḍā (Sinibaldi and Tuttle 2011) and the large village of Baʿja (Lindner 1999; Bienert et al. 2000).[20] It is now becoming clear that the Petra region was periodically reoccupied in the Fatimid period (Makowski 2020) and continued to be settled long after the Crusader interlude in the region, its villages supported through the revitalization of ancient canals and dams. Unlike those of the central plains, these villages are "invisible" textually, not appearing in written sources of the period in spite of their size. The German excavations of Baʿja in 1999 identified as many as fifty houses and excavated one six-room structure built directly on bedrock. If this structure reflects the occupational history of the rest of the site, then the village of Baʿja was newly settled in the Middle Islamic (Mamluk) period, with a second phase of occupation in the Late Islamic (Ottoman) era. What the sites of this period in the Petra Valley share is an architectural and ceramic tradition distinguished from that of the central plains: stone-built houses, some with multiple rooms and roofed in timber beams and a largely handmade assemblage of handmade pottery with chaff inclusions and poorly oxidized and low-temperature firing (producing a dark core). Incomplete publication has hampered research in this area, but increased coordination among the many missions working there is promising for the future.

Highland Quṣūr and Khirāb

Small hilltop fortifications overlooking terraced fields were a familiar component of the landscape of the central Palestinian highlands in the Late Islamic (Ottoman) period. While the term "*qaṣr*" carries different meaning by region and period, in Ottoman Palestine it was a stone structure (or walled complex) with a view, which incorporated circular agricultural watch towers (*manāṭīr*- ʿĀmirī and Riḥāl 2003). Seasonal domestic use meant that such structures were "empty" for much of the year, leading travelers to call them *khirāb*, or "ruins" (Walker 2020). Such complexes often began as settlement offshoots of larger villages and over time grew into independent villages. Along with agricultural terraces, they transformed the landscapes of the central highlands.

They are also a rapidly disappearing component of Palestinian cultural heritage. Stratigraphic excavations of *manṭarah* complexes (*quṣūr*) are rare (Edelstein et al. 1998; Walker 2017). Begun in 2015, German-Israeli excavations of the *qaṣr* of Khirbet Beit Mazmil, sitting atop the highest hill of Jerusalem's immediate hinterland, have revealed a complex history of occupation and reuse tied to changes in land use and land tenure

[20] Baʿja I was first excavated by a German team in 1999. A small American-German team revisited the site in 2017 for survey and small probes in the "Islamic" field.

FIGURE 2.2.4 Late Ottoman *qaṣr* at Khirbet Beit Mazmil, Jerusalem.

Photo by author.

over the later Islamic centuries (Walker and Dolinka 2020). A Late Ottoman *manṭarah* complex, preserved to its roof, both overlays and incorporates the remains of a large Late Mamluk-era (14th and 15th centuries) farmstead that may have served as an amiral estate (Figure 2.2.4). Although today located in a heavily developed urban neighborhood, it was once surrounded by terraced fields and orchards. This single farmstead offers a glimpse into the history of an important settlement form in Late Islamic Palestine.

Habitation Caves

The domestic use of modified caves and shelters is a ubiquitous but less visible form of rural settlement in southern Syria. Over time, rainfall and wind have eroded the calcareous limestone hills of the region, producing caves and cavernous systems that were modified through the centuries by human hands for housing, stables, storage, cisterns, burials, and middens. Caves (*kuhūf*) are listed as amenities of villages in Mamluk-era endowment documents (for grain storage), thus serving an economic role; they continue to be used in many villages in Jordan today to store farm tools and equipment. They also represent an intermediary stage in the sedentarization process, in combination with tents (set up in front of cave entrances) and stone-built houses (erected above them) (Carroll et al. 2005) (Figure 2.2.5). The Christian village of Shammakh on the