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Ceramics in Context: Middle Islamic Evidence from The Danish-German Jarash Northwest Quarter Project

Scholars researching the urban history of Jarash have typically focused on settlement patterns along its main street and/or on the city's development during antiquity. This paper discusses how the excavations of the *Danish-German Jarash Northwest Quarter Project*¹ over the last five years have contributed to the understanding of the Middle Islamic period, which in this area is much better represented than previously thought. Nested within this larger research initiative researching the northwest quarter, the *Ceramics in Context*² project was created in 2015 to investigate the ceramic material of the site throughout its long settlement history spanning from antiquity to the middle ages. This paper outlines the preliminary results and future research plans on the analysis of the latter pottery documented in the Middle Islamic settlement. As such, this project is still very much a work in progress. Due to the early stage of the present research project, below I will aim to provide an overview of the excavation

of the Middle Islamic domestic complex in the Northwest Quarter of Jarash, followed by a discussion on the ceramic material found thus far and some of my preliminary observations. Once an overview of the site has been examined, the aims and objectives for continuing research, and potential avenues of approach, can then be discussed in conclusion. By presenting the ceramic material from the excavations, and analyzing them contextually, the results impact the overall understanding of settlement history in the Northwest Quarter during a period of Jordan that is less well understood.

The Danish-German Northwest Quarter Project

The *Danish-German Northwest Quarter Project* began in 2011 as a joint archaeological project between Aarhus University and Ruhr University Bochum. Prior to 2011, fieldwork in the Northwest Quarter had been conducted by Yale University's excavations of the Synagogue

1. The *Danish German Northwest Quarter Project* is funded by the Carlsberg Foundation, H.P. Hjerl Hansens Mindefondet for Dansk Palæstinaforskning and the German Research Foundation (DFG). For the project website see (<http://projects.au.dk/InternationalJerashexcavation/>). Project is directed by Rubina Raja and Achim Lichtenberger.

2. Ceramics in Context research funded by the Danish National Research Foundation (DNRF119) and Carlsberg Foundation, CF14-0467. Directed by Rubina Raja and Achim Lichtenberger. I would like to express my gratitude the directors of the project and funding bodies which make this project possible.

Church, published in 1938³, and two trial trenches by V.A. Clark and J. Bowsher in 1986. The Northwest Quarter of Jarash is located at the highest point within the walls of the ancient city, a prominent location with a view of the city, wadi, and valley. The aim of the project is to examine the settlement history of the largely unexplored Northwest Quarter of Jarash⁴. Located in the northwest of Jordan, Jarash was an important urban center and one of the cities of the Roman Decapolis⁵. Well known for its impressive Roman ruins and well preserved city walls, the modern landscape of Jarash is dominated by the remains of its colonnaded streets, hippodrome, roman theaters, and the temples of Zeus and Artemis. The early

research focused on the city's history during antiquity and only recently has civic life in the Islamic periods become an object of study⁶. Notwithstanding some Decapolis city decline, it is now clear that Jarash remained an important urban center with a peak in population both during antiquity and the Early Islamic period. The flowering periods are evident both through signs of economic prosperity within urban areas in the 8th century⁷ and the archaeological impact on the urban landscape through the construction of churches and mosques⁸. This peak of civic life in Jarash seemingly comes to an end in the northwest quarter during the devastating earthquake of the Umayyad period in 749 AD⁹. However, evidence for settlement

3. See Carl Kraeling, (ed.), *Gerasa. City of the Decapolis* (New Haven: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1938), 234-241.

4. For the research on this new project in the NW quarter see: G. Kalaitzoglou, A. Lichtenberger, R. Raja, D. Pilz, and R. Kniess, "Report on a geophysical prospection of the Northwest Quarter of Gerasa/Jarash 2011," *ADAJ* 56 (2012); Achim Lichtenberger and Rubina Raja, "Preliminary Report of the first season of the Danish-German Northwest Quarter Project," *ADAJ* 56 (2012); G. Kalaitzoglou, A. Lichtenberger, R. Raja, "Preliminary Report of the Second Season of the Danish-German Northwest Quarter Project 2012," *ADAJ* 57 (2013); A. Lichtenberger, R. Raja, and A. H. Sørensen, "Preliminary Registration Report of the Second Season of the Danish-German Jarash Northwest Quarter Project 2012," *ADAJ* 57 (2013); G. Kalaitzoglou, A. Lichtenberger, R. Raja, "The Danish-German Jarash Northwest Quarter Project 2013: Preliminary Field Report" *ADAJ* 58 (2017: 11-37); A. Lichtenberger, R. Raja, and A. H. Sørensen, "The Danish-German Jarash Northwest Quarter Project 2013: Preliminary Registration Report" *ADAJ* 58 (2017: 39-103); G. Kalaitzoglou, A. Lichtenberger, R. Raja, "Preliminary Report of the Fourth Season of the Danish-German Jarash Northwest Quarter Project 2014," *ADAJ* 59 (2018: 11-43); A. Lichtenberger, R. Raja, and A. H. Sørensen, "Preliminary Registration Report of the Fourth Season of the Danish-German Jarash Northwest Quarter Project 2014," *ADAJ* 59 (2018: 45-131); A. Lichtenberger and R. Raja, "Jarash Northwest Quarter Project," *American Journal of Archaeology* 118, no. 4 (2014), 643.

5. For an overview on the history and archaeology of Jarash (Gerasa) during antiquity see Kraeling, *Gerasa*; Fawzi Zayadine (ed.), *Jarash Archaeological Project*, Vol. 1 (Amman: Department of Antiquities of Jordan, 1986); N.J. Andrade, *Syrian Identity in the Greco-Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 160-169. In addition, for more recent research on the urban development of Roman Jarash in a publication associated with the *Danish-German Northwest Quarter Project*, see Achim Lichtenberger and Rubina Raja, "New Archaeological Research in the Northwest Quarter of Jarash and Its Implications for the Urban Development of Roman Gerasa," *American Journal of Archaeology* 119, No. 4 (2015): 483-500.

6. Early accounts of the excavations in the 1930s can be found in Chester McCown, "Archaeology in Palestine in 1930," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 41 (1931): 11-12; Chester McCown, "The Yale University: American School Excavation at Jarash, Autumn, 1930," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Ori-*

ental Research 43 (1931): 13-19; Clarence S. Fisher, "The Campaign at Jarash in September and October 1931," *The annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 11 (1931): 131-169; Nelson Glueck, "Jarash in the Spring of 1933. Preliminary Report of the Joint Expedition of the School in Jerusalem and Yale University," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 53 (1934): 2-13.

7. For some references to Jarash economic development during Early Islamic/Umayyad period, see Fanny Bessard, "The Urban Economy in Southern Inland Greater Syria from the Seventh Century to the End of the Umayyads," *Late Antique Archaeology* 10, no. 1 (2013): 377-421; Fanny Bessard, "Foundations of Umayyad Economy: Jarash, a Case Study," *Al-'Usur Al-Wusta* 19, no. 1 (2007): 1-10; Zayadine, *Jarash Archaeological Project*, 107-136; Milwright, *An Introduction*, 145; Ian Simpson, "Market Buildings at Jarash: Commercial Transformations at the Tetrakionion in the 6th to 9th Centuries CE," in *Residences, Castles, Settlements*, (ed.) By K. Bartl and A. Moaz (Rahden/Westf: VML, 2008), 115-124; Alexandra Uscatescu and Martin-Bueno Manuel, "The Macellum of Gerasa (Jarash, Jordan): From a Market Place to an Industrial Area," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 307 (1997): 67-88.

8. For research on the churches and mosques in Jarash during Late Antiquity and Early Islamic periods, see Kraeling, *Gerasa*, 171-262; Barnes *et al.*, "From Guard House to Congregational Mosque: Recent Discoveries on the Urban History of Islamic Jarash," *ADAJ* 50 (2006): 285-314; Brizzi *et al.*, "Italian Excavations at Jarash 2002-2009: The Area of the East Propylaeum of the Sanctuary of Artemis and the 'Propylaea Church' Complex," *ADAJ* 54 (2010): 345-369; Kristoffer Damgaard, "Sheltering the faithful: Visualising the Umayyad Mosque in Jarash," *ARAM* 23 (2011): 191-210; A. Walmsley and K. Damgaard, "The Umayyad Congregational Mosque of Jarash in Jordan and its Relation to Early Mosques," *Antiquity* 79 (2005): 362-378; Alan Walmsley, "A Mosque, Shops and Bath in Central Jarash: The 2007 season of the Islamic Jarash Project," *ADAJ* 52 (2008): 109-137; Charles March, *Spatial and Religious Transformations in the Late Antique Polis. A multidisciplinary analysis with a case-study of the city of Gerasa* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2009). Also see the chapters discussing excavated churches in Zayadine, *Jarash Archaeological Project*.

9. Yoram Tsafrir and Gideon Foerster, "The Dating of the 'Earthquake of the Sabbatical Year' of 749 CE in Palestine," *Bulletin of the Schools of Oriental and African Studies* 55(2) (1992): 231-235.

continuity into the Abbasid period has been documented in the southern area of the city, but at a much smaller scale than in earlier periods¹⁰. The Arab geographer al-Ya‘qubi writes in 891 AD that Jarash was still inhabited after the earthquake and consisted of a mix of Arabs and Greeks¹¹. Although it is now clear that settlement continued in Jarash after the earthquake, parts of the urban landscape did not recover, such as in the northwest quarter where no new structures are built until much later during the Middle Islamic period.

After the Abbasid period, archaeological evidence of continuing occupation is much harder to detect. Despite this, our understanding of Jarash after the Early Islamic period has begun to evolve as new evidence for Middle Islamic activity has come to light. Middle Islamic material has been documented at several areas of the city. For example, Laurent Tholbecq’s publication on material excavated at the temple of Zeus where a substantial node of Middle Islamic settlement was uncovered¹². Other Middle Islamic finds appear sporadically across the ancient city, as is illustrated in figure 3 (FIG. 1). In light of these discoveries and the ongoing excavation of a Middle Islamic settlement by the *Danish-German Northwest Quarter Project*, it is clear that civic life at Jarash continued into the later Islamic periods. Therefore, this new evidence indicates that northwest quarter of Jarash was not completely abandoned after the earthquake of 749 AD, rather there appears to be only a gap in occupation or a decline

in activity. Still, the nature and extent of the Middle Islamic settlement history in Jarash is not yet fully understood and research remains at an early stage. Thus, through the contextual analysis of the ceramic material, the *Ceramics in Context* project aims to better understand the urban development of Jarash during these later periods that are less clear, specifically within the Northwest Quarter. Before discussing the ceramic material further, and my current project, a description of the layout and a summary of Middle Islamic activity located in the Northwest Quarter should be given first.

Middle Islamic Courtyard House and Domestic Complex in the NW Quarter of Jarash

The Middle Islamic structures in the Northwest Quarter were built upon, and adjacent to, older structures dating from Late Antiquity through the Early Islamic period. Excavations made clear that the entire Northwest Quarter was densely settled during earlier periods; however, buildings attributed to the Middle Islamic period appear to be restricted to the top of the hill, towards the north summit. Past campaigns, particular in 2011, 2012, and 2013, have resulted in many insights into the nature of the Middle Islamic (Ayyubid-Mamluk) hamlet on top of the hill. It is within this area that Middle Islamic builders razed the ground to the bedrock where possible, flattening the surface prior to constructing a substantial settlement complex.

10. Blanke, Lorient, and Rattenborg, “Changing Cityscapes in Central Jarash-Between Late Antiquity and the Abbasid Period,” *ADAJ* 54 (2010): 318-326; Walmsley, “A Mosque, Shops, and Bath,” 133.
11. See translated excerpts from Al-Ya‘qubi in Guy Le Strange, *Palestine under the Moslems. A Description of Syria and the Holy Land from AD 650-1500* (London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1890), 462.

12. For an overview of Mamluk evidence identifying a node of Ayyubid-Mamluk settlement within the southern portion of Jarash, by the Sanctuary of Zeus and the Oval Piazza, see Laurent Tholbecq, “Une Installation D’époque Islamique dans le Sanctuaire de Zeus de Jarash,” *ARAM* 9-10 (1997-1998): 153-179. For the temple of Artemis see Brizzi, “Italian Excavations,” 365. For the North Theatre see Clark, Bowsher, and Stewart, “The Jarash North Theatre Architecture and Archaeology 1982-1983,” in Fawzi Zayadine (ed.), *Jarash Archaeological Project 1981-1983*, Amman: Department of

Antiquities, 1986, 239-241, 243, 247, and 315. Also see Mamluk glass from theater in Carol Meyer, “Glass from the North Theater Byzantine Church, and Soundings at Jarash, Jordan, 1982-1983,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 25 (1988): 175, 215-216. The Church of Bishop Isaiah Vincent Clark, “The Church of Bishop Isaiah at Jarash,” in Fawzi Zayadine (ed.), *Jarash Archaeological Project 1981-1983*, Amman: Department of Antiquities, 1986, 315. For the Hippodrome see Bert De Vries and Pierre Bikai, “Archaeology in Jordan” *American Journal of Archaeology* 97, no. 3 (1993): 499; Antoni Ostrasz, “The Hippodrome of Gerasa: A Report on Excavations and Research,” *Syria* 66 (1) (1989); Antoni Ostrasz, “The Excavation and Restoration of the Hippodrome at Jarash, a Synopsis,” *ADAJ* 35 (1991): 242-243. For the Oval Piazza see Gerald Lankester Harding, *The Antiquities of Jordan* (London: Lutterworth, 1967), 81-82.



1. Map showing locations of Middle Islamic finds in Jarash (After Thomas Lepaon, Created by Dr. Georg Kalaitzoglou).

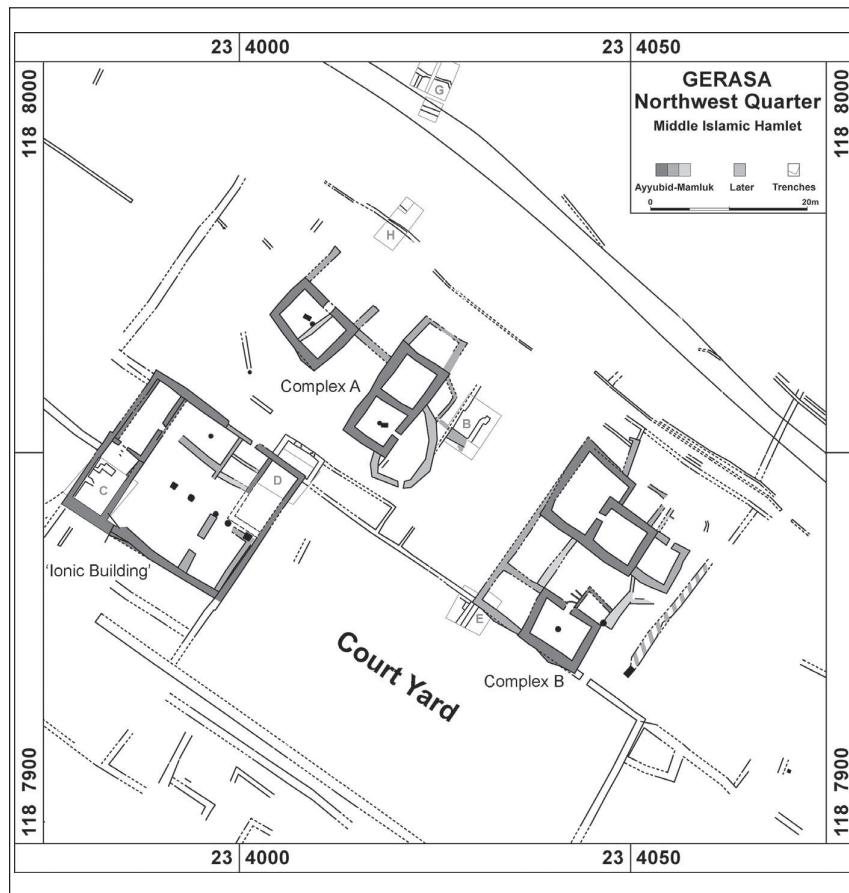
The hamlet consisted of three building complexes situated alongside a terrace extending further to the east. A larger, monumental, and more representative courtyard house, the so-called “Ionic Building”, was located centrally on the hill and measured approximately 23.40x19-20 meters¹³. “Respectively to the north (complex A) and the north-east (complex B) two other complexes are situated (FIG. 2), consisting of several rooms and at least in the case of the B complex organized around a courtyard. The ‘Ionic Building’ consisted of

several rooms and a paved area in the southern corner with a row of columns. This might have been a courtyard or a large open reception hall.”¹⁴ Further excavations at the eastern and western corners of the “Ionic Building” revealed that older Umayyad walls were reused for the building’s construction. Around the building, many areas were razed to the ground prior to construction and a cistern was dug out and backfilled. As such, it demonstrates the invasive nature of the Ayyubid-Mamluk building project, as earlier layers were removed and

13. Lichtenberger and Raja “Jarash in the Middle Islamic Period. Connecting Texts and Archaeology through New Evidence from the Northwest Quarter,” in *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palastina-Vereins*

132/1 (2016): 63-81.

14. Ibid. 9. Also see preliminary excavation reports cited earlier, particularly for campaign years 2012 and 2013.



2. Layout of the Mamluk Hamlet in the Northwest Quarter. (Courtesy of the Danish-German Northwest Quarter Project).

the ground was leveled prior to construction¹⁵. Due to both the buildings central location on the hill and the discovery of traces of elaborate wall paintings, Lichtenberger and Raja suggestion that the building may have had an official or representational function is a strong possibility¹⁶. East of the “Ionic Building” is a larger rectangular terrace, bordered by a wall on the northern side, which the “Ionic Building” was situated on. This wall connected to the southern wall of complex B on top of the terrace further to the east. Excavations with the area attested to several phases of construction, as it seems that the complex originally developed from two independent complexes.

After the initial leveling and construction process took place, closer analysis of the architectural features revealed modifications and construction over a period of three phases (FIG. 3). Therefore, the excavations at the

Middle Islamic complex indicate a significant construction effort took place over a period of several generations. Along with this, it is clear that in addition to building an extensive residential complex, isolated houses were also constructed in the Northwest Quarter of Jarash during the Middle Islamic period. The architectural layout of complex A, together with complex B and the “Ionic Building”, reveals that it must have been the product of a sizable community. The length of time between each phase of the settlements construction remains unclear, it is hoped that further research of the ceramic material will be able to better ascertain the chronological development of the hamlet. Pottery found on the surface and in relation to the buildings demonstrated the hamlet’s Middle Islamic provenance. Both handmade geometric painted ware (HMGP) and undecorated handmade wares were prevalent, a ceramic style

15. Ibid. 9-10.

16. Ibid. 10.



3. Plan of "Ionic Building," Complex A, and Complex B illustrating the three phases of Middle Islamic activity. (Courtesy of the Danish-German Northwest Quarter Project).

typically associated with the Ayyubid-Mamluk period¹⁷. In sum, the Middle Islamic material and structures were much better represented in the Northwest Quarter than previously thought, particularly HMGP ware.

Ceramics in Context

The discovery of both Middle Islamic pottery and a substantial node of Middle Islamic settlement is what laid the foundations for the

Ceramics in Context project, my research aims to examine the ceramic material of the Middle Islamic complex contextually in order to better understand the settlement history across the hilltop of the Northwest Quarter of Jarash. In the past, ceramic studies have often been typological in nature and pottery is typically treated as an isolated group of material. On the other hand, *Ceramics in Context* will examine ceramic contexts related to selected finds in

17. For more on HMGP and its Chronology see Bethany Walker, "Production and Distribution of Hand-Made Geometric-Painted (HGMP) and Plain Hand-Made Wares of the Mamluk Period: A Case Study from Northern Israel, Jerusalem and Tall Ḥisbān," *Journal of Islamic Archaeology* 1, no.2 (2014): 192-230; Bethany Walker, "From Ceramics to Social Theory: Reflections on Mamluk Archaeology Today," *Mamluk Studies Review* 14 (2010): 109-155; Walker B. and LaBianca O., "The Islamic *quṣūr* of Tall Ḥisbān: Preliminary Report on the 1988 and 2001 Seasons," *ADAJ* 47 (2003):443-471; Edna Stern, "The Crusader, Mamluk and Early Ottoman-Period Pottery from Khirbat Din'ila: Typology, Chronology, Production and Consumption Trends," *Atiqot* 78 (2014): 71-104; Sauer and Magness, "Ceramics"; Marcus Milwright. *An Introduction to Islamic Archaeology*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 155-156; Jeremy Johns, "The Rise of Middle Islamic Hand-Made Geometrically Painted Ware in Bilad al-Sham (11th – 13th centuries AD)," in Roland-Pierre Gayraud (ed.), *Colloque international d'archéologie islamique*. (Paris:Publications de l'IFAO, 1998), 65-93; Also see the following for systematic work offering methodological example for future work on ceramics, Robin Brown. "Summary Report of the 1986 Excavations Late Islamic Shobak." *ADAJ* 32 (1988):225-245.

order to both investigate the history of settlement in Jarash and to better understand overall issues of urban lifestyle in the Eastern Mediterranean. The project aims to examine closed contexts, adopting an approach that ascribes first priority to empirical data, and thus provide a reference for future complete typologies of ceramics. Throughout the project, a more holistic and interdisciplinary approach is taken, integrating perspectives from the humanities and the methodologies from natural science. Currently, this project is still a work in progress. For this reason, only some preliminary observations and an overview of the material finds thus far can be presented below.

During the past campaigns, several trenches have been laid out to explore the Middle Islamic hamlet described above. The bulk of the finds have come from three trenches in particular, Trench C, D, and E. Due to recent disturbances, many of the excavated contexts have been disturbed, but several contexts offer fruitful avenues of approach for further research. As an example, two contexts in particular are worth mentioning in greater detail. HMGP pottery sherds found in evidence 9, of trench D, joined with sherds from evidence 17 in trench E (FIG. 4). Put short, the “Ionic Building” was not only found to be architecturally linked to the Middle Islamic structures to the east through a shared east-west running wall (ev.5), but also through the pottery. The corresponding evidence proves that the house in trench D is related to the structures in trench E.

Sherd links can occur from many different circumstances. A link between contexts could result from the same context running across more than one excavated area. This is not the case here, as both the soil and character of the two evidences differ. Sherd links may attest to a sequence of closely spaced actions. Sherds may also be disturbed or redeposited at higher levels (*i.e.* residual sherds) or parts of the same vessel may reappear, signifying a reuse of an object in a new way. With that in mind, I think it is

reasonable to suggest that the sherd link between trench D and E resulted from a sequence of closely spaced actions. Evidence 9 from trench D contains very large sherds, whereas evidence 17 in trench E is mainly characterized by very small sherds. The small size of the sherds is typical for a fill where pottery has been moved around frequently. Stratigraphically, both contexts have been interpreted as collapse. For trench E, evidence 17 is the soil on and within the collapse. It does not appear to be a fill taken from D for construction in E, as the other data and architecture shows the buildings to be contemporary to each other. For this reason, it is probable that when the complex went out of use and/or the structures had collapsed, soil was spread across the area over the collapsed Middle Islamic complex. Some of the soil material in D may have moved across the site during this process, which explains why the sherds in E are much smaller than in D as a result of this movement. At the same time, the joining sherd in E does stand out by being larger than the other sherds within evidence 17. Therefore, it may be an intrusion from the lower collapse attesting to chronologically close relationship between the activities in both trenches. In both cases, it is



4. Joined sherds found in the “Ionic Building” and complex B. (Courtesy of the Danish-German Northwest Quarter Project).

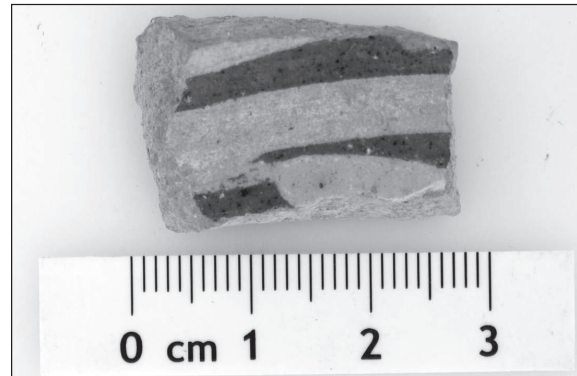
clear that the Middle Islamic structures are part of a larger complex.

In addition to HMGP ware, a variety of other Middle Islamic pottery types have been documented across the site. For example, plain handmade wares are present as well. Secondary contexts, or deliberate depositions of plain handmade pottery within fills, contained large amounts of plain handmade pottery that may be useful for determining ceramic associations at the time of the construction of the site (FIG. 5). Wheel made buff/sandy ware, grey ware, and a large mix of plain wares have also been registered. Plain wheel made wares constitute the majority of the finds, but are largely older pottery forms set within the walls during the construction process and are often very small and fragmentary. Within the better contexts, such as the walk on levels and collapse layers, there are less finds; however, the finds are larger and more diagnostic. Glazed wares are also found, albeit much rarer. Most of the glazed finds are either typical Middle Islamic green glazed ware or slip painted types. The soil/collapse layers of Trench C, at the “Ionic Building”, contained an Islamic slip glazed sherd datable to the 13th



5. Plain handmade pottery finds found within construction fill of Middle Islamic hamlet. (Courtesy of the Danish-German Northwest Quarter Project).

century, or around the time of the Ayyubid/Early Mamluk period (FIG. 6)¹⁸. Finally, one body fragment of Kerbschnitt ware (molded pottery with hand-carved decorations) was documented. Past research typically attributed this pottery to the Abbasid period; however, recent studies have demonstrated that this style of pottery was produced in later periods as well. Evidence of finger smoothing, on the interior of the sherd, is a secure marker identifying the sherd as a post-Abbasid form likely dating to the 13th century¹⁹. For this reason, it should not be automatically treated as an Abbasid residual sherd and may be a useful chronological marker for the context. In sum, the preliminary dates above, in combination with HMGP sherds which are densely painted in geometric designs, appears to hint at an early Middle Islamic (Late Ayyubid/Early Mamluk) date for the construction of the hamlet. A large portion of the material remains to be analyzed and many questions remain regarding the function, lifestyle, and longevity of the complex, which will be discussed further below. As such, the material merits further research and offers an opportunity to better understand the settlement



6. Islamic glazed sherd found in the Northwest Quarter similar to finds in Pella and Dhībān dated to 13th century Jordan or Late Crusade/Early Mamluk periods. (Courtesy of the Danish-German Northwest Quarter Project).

18. Similar sherds were found in Jordan and dated to the 13th century at Pella and Dhībān, for Pella see Smith R. and Day, L., *Pella of the Decapolis Volume 2: Final Report on the College of Wooster Excavations in Area IX, The Civic Complex 1979-1985* (College of Wooster, 1989), 239 and 197, group C, #494; For Dhībān see Porter, B. et al. “The Dhībān Excavation and Development Project’s 2005

Season,” *ADAJ* 54 (2010): 20, fig. 10 and table 1 (no. 3).

19. Stephanie Mulder, “A Survey and Typology of Islamic Molded Ware (9th-13th centuries) Based on the Discovery of a Potter’s Workshop at Medieval Balis, Syria,” *Journal of Islamic Archaeology* 1, no. 2 (2014): 153.

history of Jarash during the Middle Islamic period.

Aims and Objectives for Future Research

What is less clear is the chronological framework for the three phases of construction following the foundation of the Middle Islamic hamlet. Although two distinct walk on levels were detected in the “Ionic Building,” diagnostic pottery was sparse within these layers, therefore detecting pottery changes over time remains problematic. For this reason, a new trench is planned for the upcoming 2016 campaign, within a part of the larger courtyard house which appears to be less disturbed by recent activity. Hopefully, the upcoming trench will shed light on the chronological changes of the ceramic material in the later phases. Along with this, I plan to compare the material from the Northwest Quarter with the material found near the temple of Zeus in order to determine if there was any possible relation between the two nodes of Middle Islamic settlement. It is also important to try and understand how pottery was actually used and how it can help inform us on urban lifestyle in the Middle Islamic period. For instance, considering the aspects of diet or food and eating trends is necessary to better understand and contextualize pottery.

As the project continues over the next couple of years and I begin to explore the questions above, I also aim to develop a more precise ceramic chronotypology for Jarash as an individual site. The large chronological and regional variation of Middle Islamic wares makes any broader typology or chronology untenable. Historical reality is likely much more complex and the ceramic repertoire of each site appears to vary during this period. As such, through empirical analysis of individual finds I will contextualize them within their contexts, the site, and the urban development of Jarash. After constructing a chronotypology and examining the pottery at a local level, it can then be placed in its regional context in order

to gain insight on the social history of a region, production and consumption, lines of trade, and cultural regionalism. By analyzing the ceramics both empirically and contextually, and in relation to the deeper social and economic meanings of pottery use, a better understanding of both the settlement history and urban lifestyle of this newly discovered Middle Islamic settlement in Jarash can be attained.

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