

MU'TAH UNIVERSITY EXCAVATIONS AT SHUQAYRA AL-GHARBIYYA: PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE 2005 SEASON

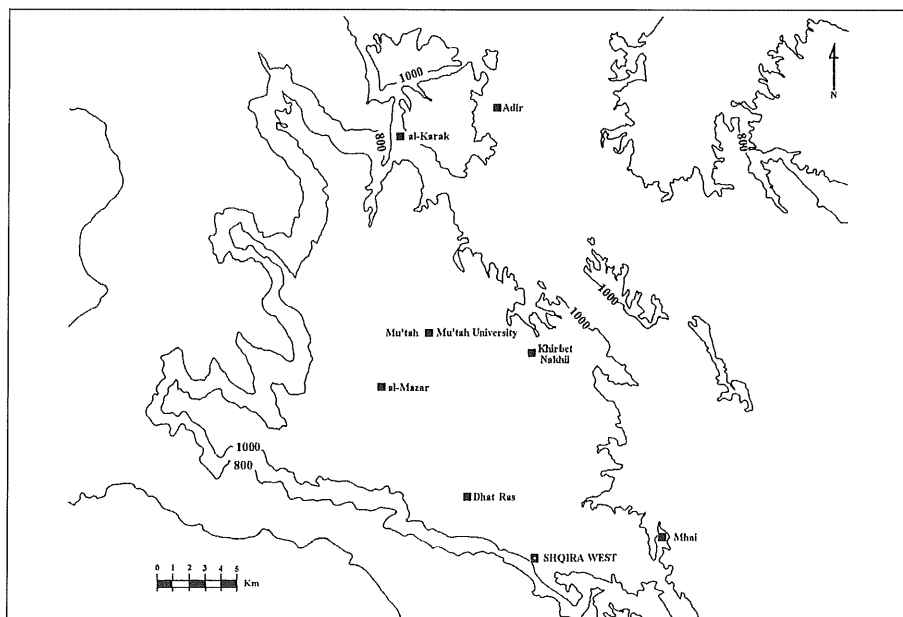
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Introduction

The 2005 season of Mu'tah University excavation at the site of Shuqayra al-Gharbiyya was in the field from July, 10th till August, 23rd 2005. The excavation was part of the summer field school of the Department of Archaeology and was undertaken under the supervision of Khalaf Tarawneh and Younis Shdaifat. The Department of Archaeology at Mu'tah University selected the site of Shuqayra al-Gharbiyya¹ in the vicinity of Dhāt Rās to conduct its summer field school. The site is located ca. 15km south-southeast of Mu'ta, and ca. 25km south-southeast of al-Karak (PGC 224.600 E, 043.500 N, at an elevation of ca. 1122m above sea level) (Fig. 1). Shuqayra al-Gharbiyya is in the western half of the modern village of Shuqayra, the

other half is known as Shuqayra ash-Sharqiyya. Administratively, the modern village of Shuqayra belongs to the Municipality of New Moab.

The Archaeological Survey of the Karak Plateau (ASKP) indicates that three ancient places are within the boundaries of the modern village of Shuqayra: Khirbat al-Quşba (Qusubah), Khirbat ash-Shuqayra and Shuqayra (Miller 1991: 161-163). The site under investigation used to be known as Khirbat al-Quşba. No excavation had been conducted at the site before Mu'tah University started to investigate it in 2002². Shuqayra al-Gharbiyya was visited by several explorers including Musil (1989: 80, 321), Glueck (1934: 63, 79-80) and Miller (1991: 161), all of whom referred to the site as (Khirbet al-Qusubah or Naqb al-Qusubah). These toponymies



1. Contour map of the al-Karak Plateau showing the location of Shuqayra al-Gharbiyya.

1. Jordan Antiquities Database and Information System site number 2204.045, defined as Khirbat al-Qaşaba (Palumbo 1994).

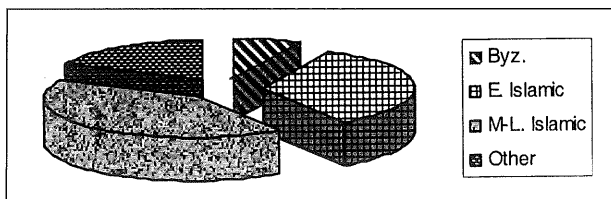
2. The 2002-2004 excavations at the site were supervised by the Late Dr. Tayiseer Atyat who investigated the southern part of the site, mainly Area C.A report on

are no longer used and the site is conventionally known as Shuqayra al-Gharbiyya. The site does not appear in the Arab chronicles or the Ottoman Tax Registrars (*daftar*s) under any of these names (al-Khudaimi 2005; Hütteroth and Abdulfattah 1977: 171-172).

The ancient remains of Shuqayra al-Gharbiyya perch on a protrusion of the southern rim of the Karak Plateau. To the west, north and east the landscape is almost level, while to the south, the site commands a view of Wādī al-Ḥasā, and the terrain slopes sharply. The area is agriculturally productive, characterized by the Mediterranean red soil that resulted from chemical and mechanical weathering factors that took place during the Holocene Period (el-Eisawi 1985: 50; al-Buhairi 1997: 64; Green 2004: 195). This red Mediterranean soil has a high clay content and is always associated with areas of annual rainfall higher than 250mm. This type of soil is opaque and usually stores a lot of moisture. It is also rich in potassium, ideal for cultivating cereals (Burdon 1959: 20-21; Bender 1974: 187). Cretaceous limestone sedimentary rocks are common in and around Shuqayra, this type of rock was used in preference to other types of rock in construction at the site (Bender 1974: 173). A Mediterranean climate, with long winters and summers and short springs and autumns characterizes the region. This part of the plateau receives precipitation ranging between 325-350mm annually

Archaeological surveys conducted here (e.g., ASKP) indicated that the site's architectural features are associated with pottery dating from the early through the late Islamic Period (Fig. 2).

Al-Karak, as part of the southern Levant, is close to Islamic religious centers of Arabia, Makkah and Madinah, and to Palestine where the first *Qiblah* (al-Quds) is. Also, in the southern part of the al-Karak plateau, near the site, is the site of the famous battle between the Muslims and the Byzantine Empire, which occurred



2. Percentage of pottery sherds collected at Shuqayra al-Gharbiyya by period (based on Miller 1991: 161).

in Mu'ta during the time of Prophet Muhammad (8AH\629AD) (al-Tabari 1997: 152-160). Based on these facts one would assume that the area has had a certain importance during this time period. Excavations at Shuqayra al-Gharbiyya are aimed at reconstructing the nature of Islamic presence in this part of the country, which has largely been considered a *terra incognita* during the concerned periods.

Excavation was concentrated on the central and east part of the site, in Areas A and D. Sixteen squares were excavated employing the Wheeler-Kenyon digging method.

Area A

Eleven squares were opened in Area A (A D1, A E2, A E3, A F2, A G1, A G2, A G3, A G4, A H1, A H2 and A H4). Parts of a large building were uncovered in these squares and was called Building A (Fig. 3). Four main phases were identified: Nabataean (first century AD), Early Islamic (first-second centuries AH\ eight century AD), Middle-Late Islamic (15th – 18th centuries AD), and modern (20th Century).

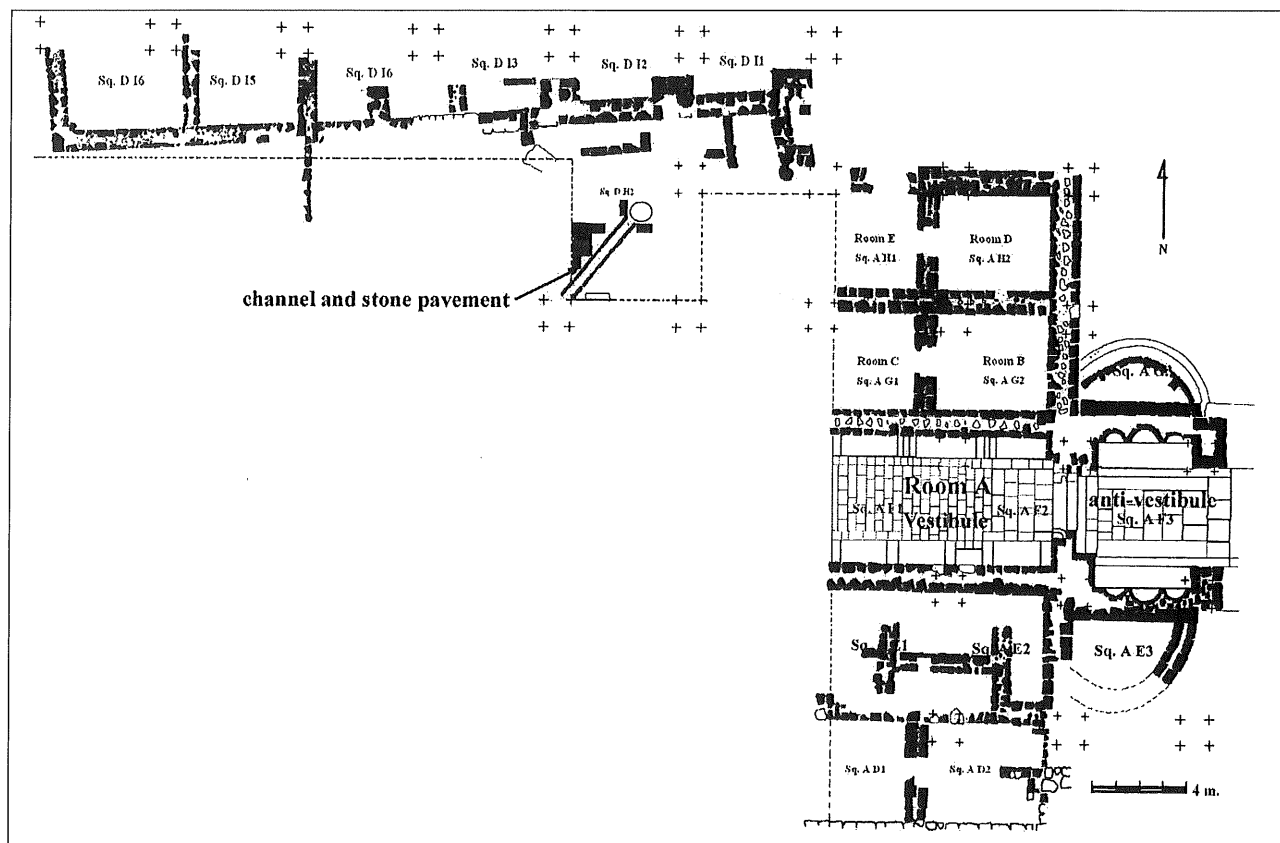
Phase I (Nabataean)

Excavations in Square A G2 reached Nabataean levels in Loci 11 and 19-21, which were pits and earth layers filled with ash. Stratigraphically, Loc. 11 and Loc. 17 (an Early Islamic stone pavement) are at the same elevation, while Loci 19-21 were discovered below Loc. 17. Elsewhere at the site, a good Nabataean presence is indicated by several horned-capitals, of which one was reused in a bench found in square A H1.

Phase II: Early Islamic

The main phase of occupation in Area A is during the Early Islamic period. Of the retrieved pottery, 78% is assigned to this phase. There seems to be an eighth century structure, designated Building A.

Building A: The features thus far clarified in Building A include a protruding anti-vestibule entrance delineated with hemispherical towers, part of a vestibule (Room A) and a system of interconnected rooms (Rooms B, C, D, and E). Ceramic and numismatic evidence collected to date suggest an Umayyad date for the building.



3. Building A; top plan of Phase III (Early Islamic remains).

The towered-entrance: The entire building was built of ashlar limestone blocks. The entrance, located along the east wall, is 3.5m wide, with a square anti-vestibule measuring 4.20 x 4.20m, reached by two descending stone steps. On either side of the anti-vestibule are bench-like features below niche-like installations at a height of ca. 1.70m. The side-benches were plastered. On the north side of the entrance there are three recesses, roughly 1.60m high, a big one flanked by two smaller ones. Having suffered only some erosion, all are in a good state of preservation. The south side has witnessed some erosion, but is presumed to have been identical to the north one. The preserved height of the anti-vestibule walls varies from 1.70 to 2.10m. The floor of the anti-vestibule was paved with tightly aligned flagstones (average dimension 0.30 x 0.40m).

Delineating the protruding walls of the anti-vestibule are two hemispherical towers built of well-dressed lime stone blocks. The northern tower is preserved to a height of 1.50m and consists of five courses (Loc. 02 in Sq. A G3). Only two courses of the southern tower are still *in situ*

(Locus 04 in Sq. A E3).

The Vestibule: Only parts of what appears to be a vestibule west of the anti-vestibule have been exposed. This is separated from the anti-vestibule by a wall (1m wide), and includes a 1.80m-wide door. The vestibule is rectangular in plan and the excavated area measures 8.40 x 4.50m. The vestibule (Room A) has 0.60m high benches along its north and south sides. The bench along the north side was divided into three parts by stone pillows. The southern bench was divided in the same way, but into four parts. The floor is flagstones slabs, resembling, in terms of size and alignment, those of the anti-vestibule.

Room B: Room B is located to the north of the vestibule, and separated from it by a 1m thick wall. It is rectangular in plan measuring 4.50 x 2.35m. The western wall (Loc. 06), which includes a door, and the out (eastern) face row of the eastern wall (Loc. 03) were built of limestone ashlar. While the inner (western) face of the eastern wall was built of roughly worked

boulders and chips. The northern wall (Loc. 04) and southern wall (Loc. 02) were built of only roughly worked boulders and chips, some of which were well dressed, an indication that builders may have used stones originating in another older structure. Excavations uncovered two stone bins (Loci 14 and 16) along the southern wall, yet there was no identifiable deposit. Along the western wall, in front of the door (Loc. 22) connecting this room with Room C, was a terrace (Loc. 13), made up mainly of hard mud outlined with semi-dressed boulders. The eastern part of Room B is paved with rough stones. This pavement (Loc. 18) seems to have once covered the whole room, yet partial destruction occurred, probably produced by a cut during the late Islamic period. Parts of the walls were covered with stucco bearing incised chevron designs executed in various orientations. Two amorphous shallow pits (Loci 19 and 20), with pottery dating mainly from the first-second centuries AD, were exposed beneath a destruction in the paving stones.

Room C: West of Room B lies Room C, and the two are connected by an 0.80m wide door. The western wall of room C has not yet been exposed. The floor is stone-paved (Loc. 11). A square stone bin (0.50m long) was uncovered in the northeastern corner.

Room D: North of Room B lies Room D, which is connected to Room E (see below) by a door (0.98m wide, 2.00m high). Room D measures 3.20 x 4.50m. Parts of the walls were covered with a chevron incised plaster. The floor is plastered, mostly degenerated, except in the north-western corner (Loc. 16). Along the south and west walls the lower parts of this plaster is covered by a stone bin and a bench (Loci 10 and 19). Room D has a stone pavement of medium-sized, flattened stones (Loc. 26). The north-western corner was plaster-coated (Loc. 16). The occupational layer just above the stone pavement (Loc. 25) yielded an Umayyad filigree, which, along with the ceramic evidence, dates this layer to the eighth century AD.

Room E: West of Room D lies Room E and connects to it through a door. Room E is identical to Room C and shows evidence of later reuse as

does Room D.

A foundation trench is planned along the eastern wall of Building A in the 2006 field season, which will help establish the initial phase of construction of this building.

Phase III: Middle-to-Late Islamic

Occupation at Shuqayra al-Gharbiyya seems to have dwindled during the mid-late Islamic Period, at least, this is what was noted during the 2005 season. Only 11% of the retrieved diagnostic pottery sherds are attributed to this phase. In architectural terms, features assignable to this phase consist mainly of some stone bins and roughly built benches along the bases of rooms dating from the early Islamic period. Phase II is well represented in Sq. A H1 "Room E" and Sq. A H2 "Room D". In Room E, a stone bin (Loc. 03, 60 x 65cm), which is composed of three stones, was built against the eastern wall. This bench is bonded to Loc. 14, a stone bench (2.20 x 1.40m) roughly built of undressed stones along the southern wall. One of the stones used in the bench is a Nabataean horned-capital. Loci 03 and 14 abut the eastern and southern walls and consequently they covered lower parts of the plaster that covered the walls of Building A during the early Islamic period. In the eastern corner of Room D a stone bench was constructed (Locus 10) that is plastered in some areas. Only a few pottery sherds were associated with these installations. In the stone bins what appears to be straw was found, probably an indication that these installations functioned as troughs. One important find is a layer of burning detected throughout the excavated squares. The level at which this layer was found varied from one square to another. The date of this fire is still unclear.

Phase IV Modern

Residents of Shuqayra had been living on top of the site of Shuqayra al-Gharbiyya until the early 1970s. The upper levels of almost all excavated squares belong to this phase. Cement pavements separate 20th century use of the site from earlier levels. In some areas, modern walls follow old ones, and in other places old walls were integrated into modern houses and were covered with a cement layer. Generally speaking, walls belonging to this phase were roughly built with

stones taken from older structures on the site. In most squares remains of the 20th century use of the site were removed (e.g., Loc. 05 in A G2, a wall stretching north-south) to expose ancient ones. Architectural remains found on the upper levels of Squares A E1 and A E2 (e.g., Loc. 03 in A E2, a wall running east-west), however, were left in place. During this time, indeed until now, part of the population of Shuqayra al-Gharbiyya was practicing some sort of transhumance, mainly nomads practicing part time agriculture (personal observations). During this phase, earlier remains suffered much destruction; noted almost in all squares. People dug through lower levels and their garbage can sometimes be found close to the floor of Building A.

Area D

Eight squares were opened in Area D in the northwestern part of the site (Sqs. D I1-D I7 and D H2). Squares A I1 and D H1 will be excavated in a future season to establish the relation between buildings uncovered in Area A and Area D.

Phase III

Area D yielded architecture remains dating, based on the ceramic evidence, to Phase III, the Early Islamic period. Yet, the architecture here seems to have undergone three construction phases, all of which most likely occurred during the eighth century.

Phase IIIa

Wall traces running east-west protruded above the surface and were easy to follow before excavations started. The part of this long wall exposed in Squares D I1 (Loc. 01), D I2 (Loc.01) and D I3 (Loc.01) is built of medium-to-large-sized, roughly-dressed facing blocks (0.25-0.75m long). The wall, which is of 2m average height, had several windows, two of them easy to recognize. Locus 09 in Square D I2 yielded a remarkable find, an ostracum inscribed with Kufic letters, which are part of a large text, probably a letter. The style of the calligraphy indicates a date late within the eighth century (Shdaifat, in preparation).

Phase IIIb

A series of what appear to be three arch spring-

ers (Loc. 02 in A D1, Loc. 04 and Loc. 09 in D I2) made of well-dressed, medium-sized limestone blocks was unearthed against the northern side of the wall exposed in Squares D I1, D I2 and D I3. Unlike the wall, however, the three features were built according to the ashlar-fit technique. The fact that they are abutting the wall and of such a different construction style, indicates that they may represent a latter addition, yet, most probably during the eighth century. These features could have functioned as springers for an arched room that was added to Building A. The windows of the wall were blocked, something which could have coincided with the construction of this room in order to give the wall greater strength. Excavations stopped here before foundations of any of these springers were reached but the lowest levels were yielding only eighth century pottery. Excavations in the area north of these features will help establish the nature, function and date of these features as well as their relation to Building A.

Phase IIIc

In Squares D I5 (Loc. 01) and D I6 (Loc. 01) the wall continues but is built of smaller boulders. No springers were exposed here; rather, parts of three north-south walls were unearthed (Loc. 02 in D I4, Loc. 02 in D I5 and Loc. 04 in D I6). Each of these walls is 0.45m wide and built of rough medium-to-small-sized stones. The walls abut the above-mentioned long east-west wall. The lowest levels along the walls yielded only sheer eighth century pottery. Excavations stopped before foundations of these features were reached. Further investigation is needed to establish the temporal and spatial relationships between these features. A canal (Loc. 01) running diagonally, associated with a stone pavement (Loc.04) was uncovered in Square D H2. This channel terminates in a pit (Loc. 05), probably a cistern. These features are also associated with eighth century pottery. Tentatively, one can argue that they were mainly in use during this period, yet, further field work is necessary to identify the date of the foundation.

Pottery

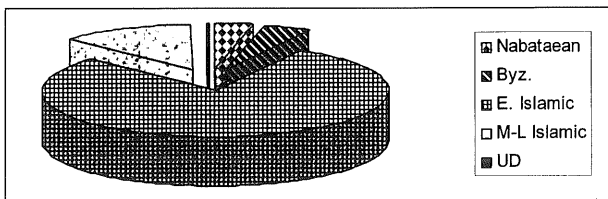
The chronology of the excavated features at Shuqayra was established by ceramic evidence. Eighteen squares, with an average depth of

2.5m, opened during the 2005 season yielded a total of 1513 sherds of which 465 were saved as indicators. The density of sherds varies from one square to another. Some squares produced only a single sherd (Squares A F2 and A G1). Squares A G2, A H2 and D I1 exposed more loci and they yielded almost 52% of the diagnostic sherds unearthed during this season. Preliminary analysis indicates that the collected pottery belongs mainly to three cultural phases: the first century AD “Nabataean”, the eighth century AD “Umayyad-Abbasid”, and the twelfth-seventeenth centuries AD “Ayyubid-Mamluk-Ottoman”. The intensity of pottery representing these phases varied dramatically (see Fig. 4). Of the pottery, 79.50% was assigned as Umayyad, Umayyad-Abbasid or Abbasid. 8.30% indicated pre-Umayyad occupation, mostly from the Nabataean (3.53%) and Byzantine eras (4.5%). Yet, the few Byzantine sherds were found out of context, and they could not be associated with architectural features. The late Islamic period (Ayyubid-through Ottoman periods) is represented by 12.27% of the pottery.

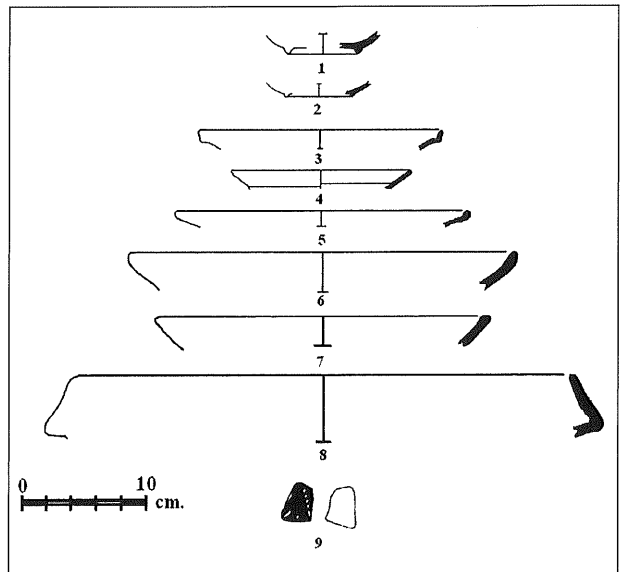
Nabataean Pottery (Fig. 5)

Only 16 potsherds were identified as Nabataean (3.53 % of the whole diagnostic sample). Twelve sherds, mostly rims and bases of bowls, came from Loci 11 and 19-21 in Square A G2. The sample fits well with typical Nabataean pottery documented in the area of south Jordan. Sherds attributed to this phase are well levigated, with predominating fine grit, and evenly fired.

One sherd (part of a plate) of the Nabataean insignia egg-shell ware was found. It has brown-painted geometric designs on a red background. Petra is thought to be the production center of this late first century AD type of ware (Homes-Fredericq and Franken 1986: 191). The Shuqayra sample has several sherds of the plain ware from shallow undecorated plates with vertical or sloping rims and rounded lips. Plain Nabataean



4. Percentage of pottery uncovered in Shuqayra al-Gharbiyya by periods.



5. Nabataean pottery from level I.

- 5.1. Square A G2; locus 11
F. bowl: Des. Ring base, C: light reddish-brown (5YR. 3/6), ST. burnished, tempered with tiny lime grits, MT. wheel made
- 5.2. Square A G2; locus 11
F. bowl: Des. Ring base, C: reddish-brown (2.5 YR. 4/4) ST. burnished, tempered with sand grits, MT. wheel made.
- 5.3. Square A G2; locus 11
F. bowl: Des. Rim, C: red (2.5.YR.4/6) ST. slip, tempered with sand grits, MT. wheel made
- 5.4. Square A G2; locus 11
F. bowl: Des. Rim, C: Reddish brown (2.5 YR. 5/4); ST. slip, tempered with fine quartz grits, MT. wheel made.
- 5.5. Square A G2; locus 11
F. bowl: Des. Rim, C: Red (2.5 YR 5/8); ST. red painted fruits on interior, tempered with very fine grits, MT. wheel made.
- 5.6. Square A H2
F. bowl: Des. Rim, C: Pink (5YR.7/3) ST. slip, tempered with very fine grits, MT. wheel made.
- 5.7. Square A G2; Loc. 21
F. bowl: Des. Rim, C: Pink (5YR.7/3) ST. slip, tempered with calcite grits, MT. wheel made.
- 5.8. Square A G2; Loc. 21
F. bowl: Des. Rim, C: Pinkish gray (7.5YR. 7/2) ST. slip, tempered with quartz grits, MT. wheel made.
- 5.9. Square A G2; Loc. 21
F. bowl: Des. Rim, C: Light reddish brown (2.5YR.6/4) ST. slip, painted fruits in dark reddish-brown; tempered with fine grits, MT. wheel made.

pottery is dated from the first and early second centuries AD. A few sherds of Terra Sigillata, mainly bases of what are probably drinking bowls, were found in Loc. 11 in Square A G2. They were lightly burnished, probably an indication that they belong to the eastern Terra Sigillata A of the first century AD. The Shuqayra Terra Sigillata examples are well levigated, with fine grit, and well fired.

Early Islamic (Umayyad-Abbasid) Late Seventh-Eighth Century

Nearly 80 % of pottery excavated in Shuqayra 2005 is dated to the eighth century. From a historical point of view, Jordan was ruled by two Muslim dynasties during this century, the Umayyads with their capital in Damascus during the first half and the Abbasids with their capital in Baghdad during the second half. At this stage of research on Shuqayra is difficult to isolate Umayyad from Abbasid remains because we have not excavated a sealed context. Approximately 33.9 % of the diagnostic sherds saved from this season were assigned Abbasid, an indication that the Abbasid presence on the al-Karak Plateau was well attested. Mention has been made of the architectural modifications that took place in Area D. We hope that future field work in this area will help elucidate a correlation between the cultural and political activities.

Umayyad pottery (Fig. 6)

Umayyad pottery represents 43.2 % of the excavated pottery and comprises a narrow range of domestic forms including tableware, cooking pots and jars. Generally speaking, the repertoire fits well with the corpora of Umayyad pottery known from other sites in Jordan.

Tableware at Shuqayra al-Gharbiyya consists mainly of bowls. Wheel-made deep bowls with straight sides and rounded or flattened rims are common. Temper consists mainly of calcite and basalt. Firing is even and decoration consists of wavy or horizontal light red designs on a white background. Self slip occurs infrequently. Fine ware bowls from Shuqayra are well levigated and fired, pink-to-buff in color and bear a decoration consisting of red-painted geometric (spiral, wavy...etc) lines.

Red-ware pottery with white-painted multiple wavy lines, swirling circles and angles typical of the late seventh century is well attested in the Shuqayra collection. This ware shows shallow ribbing particularly on the lower part of the vessels. Most forms are jars and juglets. Jars are mostly hand made of fine clay. Buff is the common color, and the vessels are well-fired, and although sometimes a vessel might be 1.5cm thick, core is rare. Shallow ribbing appears on the upper half of the vessel, on the neck above the loop handle. Quartz and calcite are the most

frequent temper. Straw is rare in Umayyad pottery. An intact Umayyad lamp was found in Loc. 04, Sq. D I5. The lamp is mould made and it carries geometric designs of straight lines and herringbone-like motives on both sides.

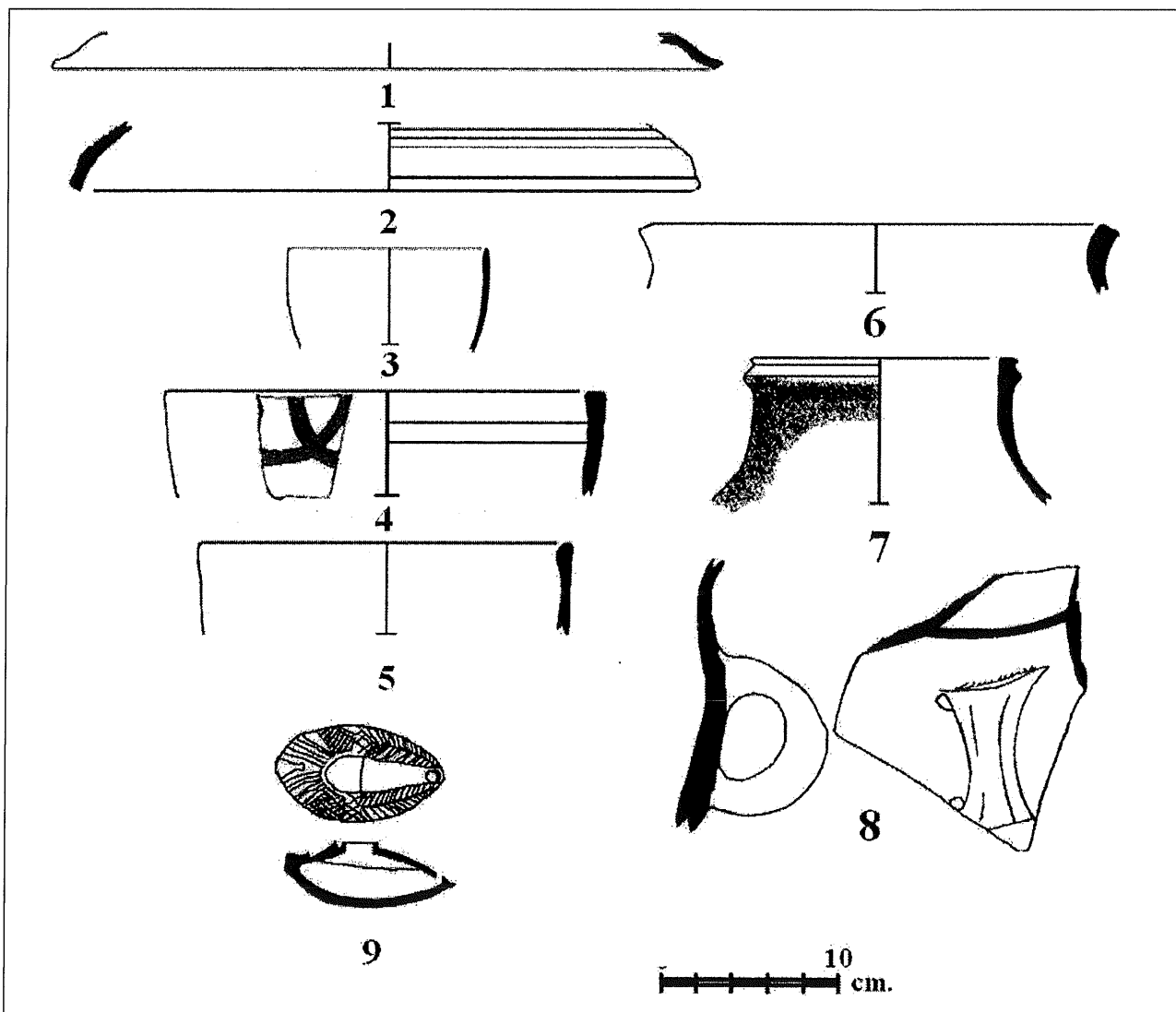
Kitchenware included cooking pots (casseroles). These vessels are dark gray in color and their temper consists of quartz and calcite. In profile, casseroles have a sloping side and grooved rim in order for the lid to rest. Horizontal push-up loop handles are set on the upper extremity of the vessel, rising above the rim. Cooking pots with out-turned rim and nearly square stance do also occur. The upper part of the vessels may carry a shallow ribbing. Ribbing is clearer on the lower parts of the lid that usually have tarbush-like (domed) handle.

Abbasid Pottery (Fig. 7)

Abbasid pottery comprises 33.8 % of the assemblage, which is second after the Umayyad in the Shuqayra collection. The corpus includes tableware, medium-sized jars, storage jars and a group of lamps. Abbasid pottery was made of well prepared fine paste with inclusions hard to identify optically, thrown on a wheel. Core is almost absent in Abbasid ware which is thinner than the Umayyad. Light-colored ware is dominant. The vessels are evenly fired, and colors include white, yellow-white, tan, and black.

Abbasid wheel-made bowls have vertical sides with flattened and thickened rim stance. Colors range from pinkish to white. These vessels are mostly calcite-tempered. Decoration includes wavy incision on the exterior of the vessel below the rim and sometimes interior ribbing-like straight lines. Craters, gray in color, with flattened rim-stance have dotted decoration restricted in triangles just below the rim. Casserole lids have a turban-like handle in this period.

Diagnostic sherds belonging to jars are the most frequent in the Abbasid pottery corpus. Large pithoi are of white color, and tempered with large grit. Decorations include a band of thumb impressions on the outer side of the inverted-thickened rim. This group includes juglets with ring base and medium-sized opened forms with simple out-turned rim and bowl-shaped neck. Some types of jars bear combed or painted decoration of wavy and braided lines on



6. Umayyad pottery from Level II (early Islamic).

- 6.1. Square A H2; Loc. 5.

F. lid: Des. C: Grayish brown (10YR. 5/2), ST, tempered with coarse grits, MT. wheel made.

- 6.2. Square D I1; Loc. 21

F. lid: Des. C: Reddish brown (5YR. 4/4), tempered with straw and quartz grits, MT. wheel made.

- 6.3. Square D I5; Loc. 8.

F. bowl: Des. Slightly rounded rim, C: Light gray (5YR. 7/1), ST. self slip, tempered few basalt and calcite grits, MT. wheel made.

- 6.4. Square D I2; Loc. 7.

F. bowl: Des. Flat-thickened rim, C: Pink (7.5YR. 8/4), ST. red-painted lines, Tempered with basalt grits, MT. wheel made.

- 6.5. Square A H2; Loc. 10.

F. bowl: Des. thickened rim, C: pinkish gray (7.5YR.6.2); ST. red-painted geometric patterns, Tempered with quartz grits, MT. wheel made.

- 6.6. Square D I3.

F. jar: Des. Wide-mouth jar, C: Dark gray (5YR. 4/1), Tempered with quartz grits, MT. hand made.

- 6.7. Square D I2; Loc. 19.

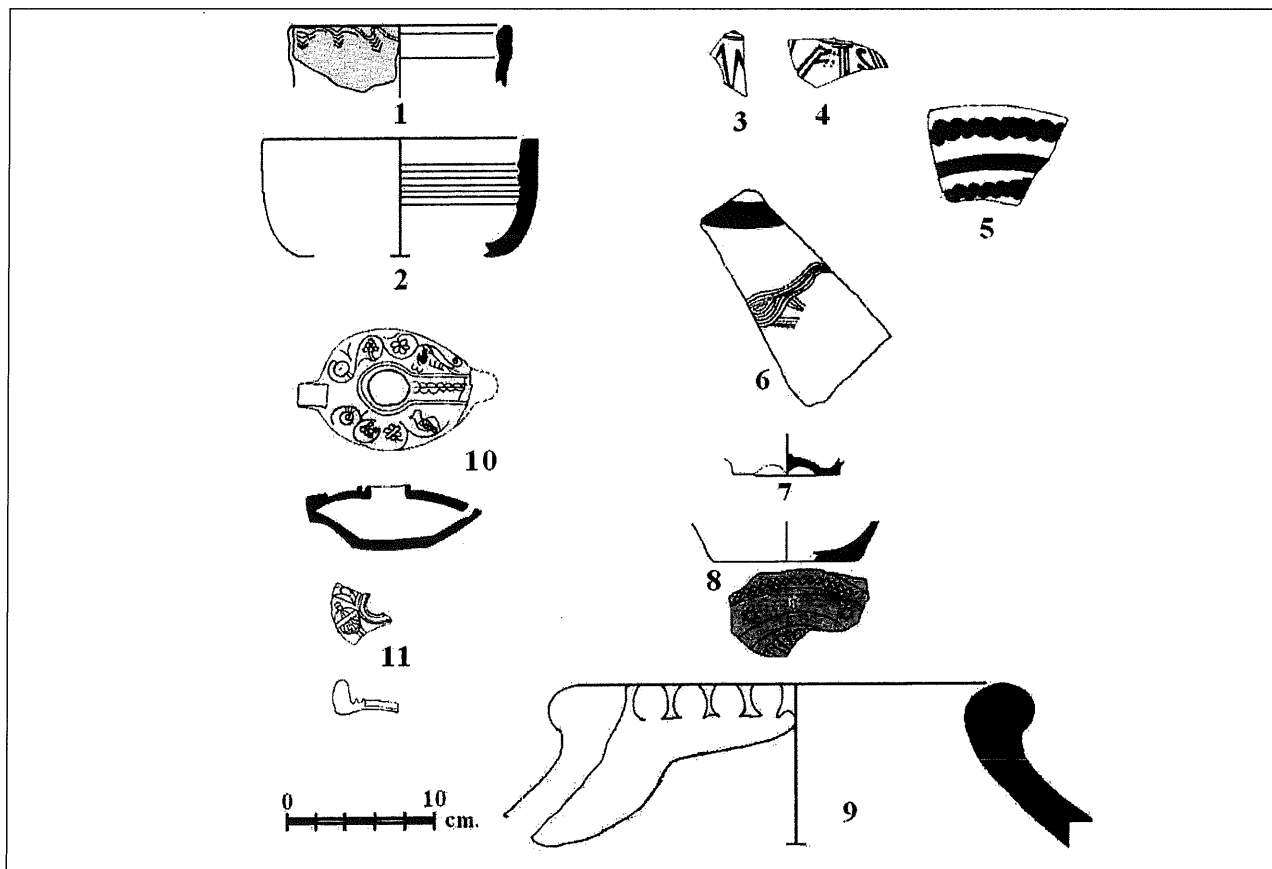
F. jar: Des. Thick-flattened rim, C: Brown (7.5YR. 5/2); Tempered with quartz grits, Ridge below rim. MT. hand made.

- 6.8. Square D I3.

F. jar: Des. Loop handle on shoulder, C: Gray (7.5YR. 5/2); strip of red paint on neck; Tempered with calcite and straw grits, MT. hand made.

- 6.9. Square D I5; Loc. 4

lamp, 60mm. wide, 98mm. long, perforated filling hole 21mm wide, wick hole 6mm wide, sooty wick hole, applied decoration of herring bone design on both sides. light red (2.5YR 6/8). Tempered with basalt and calcite grits. Mould made.



7. Abbasid pottery from Level II.

- 7.1. Square A H2; locus 8.

F. bowl: Des. Thickened rim, C: Pinkish white (5YR.82), wavy incision on exterior below rim; tempered with quartz grits, MT. wheel made.

- 7.2. Square D I2; locus 8.

F. bowl: Des. Flattened straight rim C: Pinkish gray Hue (5 YR. 62) ribbing-like on interior; tempered with calcite grits, MT. wheel made.

- 7.3. Square A H3; locus 8.

F. jar: Des. Decorated body sherd; C: Pinkish white (7.5.YR. 82); red painted wavy lines; tempered with quartz and basalt grits, MT. wheel made.

- 7.4. Square. Square A E3.

F. jar: Des. Decorated body sherd C: Pink (5YR. 74); Painted lines and dots (pinkish gray 5YR.5) on cream background; tempered with calcite grits, MT. wheel made.

- 7.5. Square. Square A H2. Locus 5.

F. jar: Des. Decorated body sherd C: Pinkish white (5 YR. 82); red-to-light brownish (5YR. 64) wavy and straight lines on cream background; tempered with calcite grits, MT. handmade.

- 7.6. Square. Square D I2. Locus 8.

F. jar: Des. Decorated body sherd C: Pink (7.5 YR.74); wavy incision; tempered with quartz grits, MT. handmade.

- 7.7. Square D. I7. Locus 1.

F. jar: Des. Ring-concaved base; C: Pink (7.5 YR. 8/4); tempered with calcite grits, MT. handmade.

- 7.8. Square A H2. Locus 5.

F. jar: Des. Flat base; C: White (10 YR.82); tempered with calcite grits, applied decoration of floral and geometric designs; MT. handmade.

- 7.9. Square D II; Locus 11.

F. jar: Des. Out-turned, thickened rim; C: Light gray (10YR.2/7): tempered with quartz grits, band of thumb impression on the rim; MT. handmade.

- 7.10. Square D I2; Locus 14.

F. Lamp: Des. Intact; light gray (7.5YR.7/7); 62 wide, and 87 long. Filling hole 18mm wide, wick hole broken, sooty traces on the front part, birds and flower motifs on both sides, channel surrounds filing hole and descends to wick hole. Almond-like base; tempered with calcite grits, band of thumb impression on the rim MT. Mould made.

- 7.11. Square D I3.

F. Lamp: Des. broken, C. Pinkish (5YR. 74); floral decoration, channel surrounds filing hole. Tempered with calcite; tongue handle. MT: mould made.

a cream ware. One unique sherd, a jar base, with applied floral and geometric motives, is dated from the late eighth century.

A whole Abbasid period lamp and 8 lamp fragments were found in course of the 2005 excavation at Shuqayra al-Gharbiyya. Preliminary investigation shows that they belong to the same ware family. All are mould made, white-to-buff in color and decorated with floral designs of grape clusters. The intact example bears a bird, probably a dove on the shoulder. These vessels have almond-shaped bases and are provided with tongue-handles.

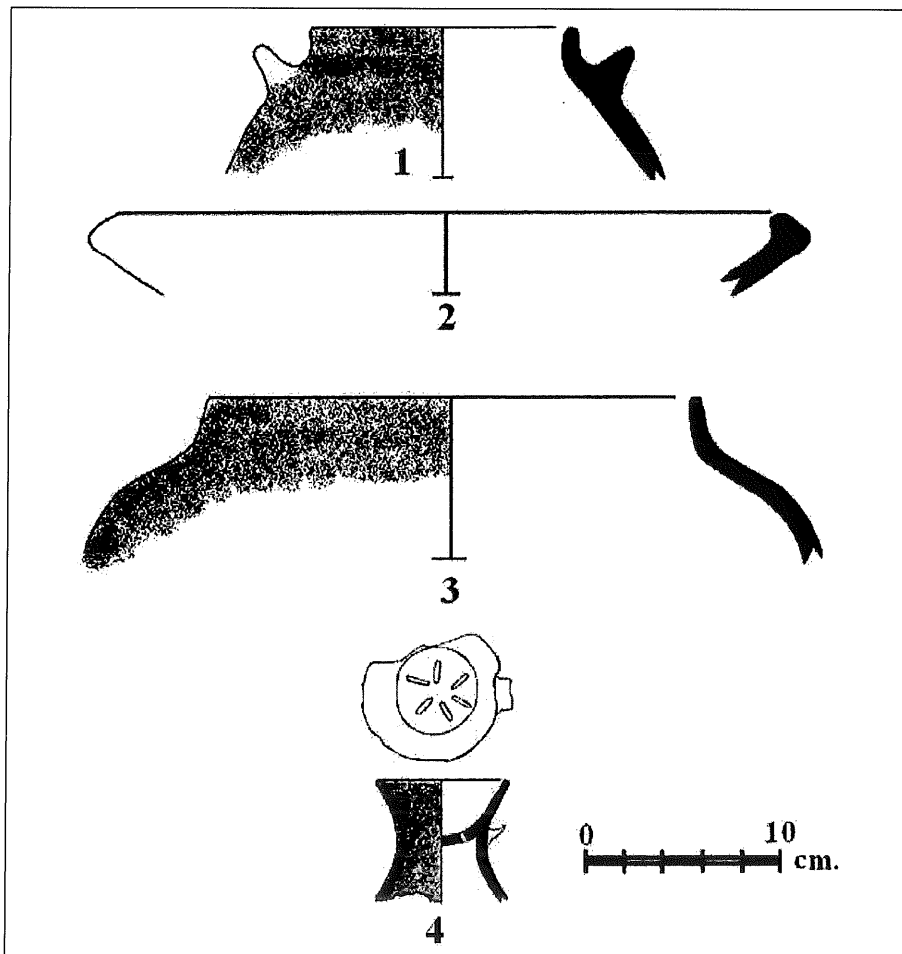
Middle-Late Islamic (Ayyubid/Mamluk-Ottoman) Pottery (Fig. 8)

The Middle-Late Islamic period is represented by nearly 12 % of the pottery assemblage. Sherds were found usually in the upper levels of the site. As noted, occupation of Shuqayra during this time period seems to be ephemeral. The pottery, utilitarian in function, is mostly hand-

made, mottled due to uneven firing and sand or chaff-tempered. Forms range from basins with in-turned thickened rims to medium-sized jars with simple rims and straight necks and cooking pots with a band of knob handles on the shoulder. The known Mamluk handmade geometric painted ware of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is conspicuously absent. Most of the Ottoman pottery sherds belong to the village-ware category. The shapes include cooking pots and juglets provided with strainers. These vessels have thick bodies and are slightly fired.

Other Finds

Non ceramic finds were scant in the 2005 excavation at Shuqayra al-Gharbiyya. The collection consists of marble, glass and steatite fragments, some metal objects and a few beads all dated by context to Phase III (Early Islamic). A pilaster of marble was uncovered in Loc. 10 within Square A G2. Clearly it was in a secondary archaeological context, and it must have



8. Middle to Late Islamic pottery from Level III.
 - 8.1. Square A G2; locus 11.
 F. Crater: Des. Simple-rounded rim, and a band of knobs on shoulder; C: Pale red (2.5YR.6.2), tempered with chaff and calcite, MT. handmade.
 - 8.2. Square D I3.
 F. Plate: Des. In-turned, thickened rim, C: Pinkish gray (7.5 YR.7.2), Glazed green paint mainly inside and it stretches to the outside. Tempered with calcite grit, MT. wheel made.
 - 8.3. Square A H2; locus 14.
 F. Crater: Des. Simple rounded and vertical rim; C. Pale brown (10YR. 7/4) tempered with chaff and calcite, MT. handmade.
 - 8.4. Square A G2.
 F. Spout of a juglet. Des. Spout with strainer. C. Pinkish gray (7.5YR.7.2); tempered with coarse calcite grits. MT: handmade.

been brought from elsewhere at the site. The plaster seems to have belonged to a church. Other marble fragments are all plain, i.e., they carried no decoration. Marble is a relatively precious stone and its existence indicates that parts of the building were decorated with this stone.

Metal objects consisted mainly of corroded nails. These items were mostly found near doors, probably indicating that they had been used in door fittings. One find of special importance is a lamp-like copper object found in Loc. 07 in Square D I3. The object consists of a basin with a vertical plate, on one side probably part of a handle, and a channel-like spout on the opposite side. Glass fragments are too small to reconstruct their forms and function. Three beads were recovered, including one carnelian. Only three fragmentary steatite objects were retrieved.

Concluding Remarks

The site of Shuqayra al-Gharbiyya has imposing architecture remains dating from the Early Islamic period. Some architectural features exposed in Phase III of Building A suggest a comparison with the Early Islamic *quṣūr* in the region. For examples, the protruding gate delineated by semi-circular towers is known at the palace of Minya on Lake Tiberias and Qaṣr al-Kharāna in the Jordan Bādiya (Creswell 1989: 92-97). Almost all known *quṣūr* are laid on a *bayt* system. Vestibules with benches are known in the Qaṣr of Khirbat al-Mafjar in the northern Jordan Valley (Hamilton 1959) and in the Umayyad palace complex at the 'Amman Citadel (Almagro and Olavarri 1982). Chevron-incised plaster is documented in the Qaṣr al-Muwwaqar, southeast of 'Ammān, and at al-Hallābāt, northeast of az-Zarqā', which is dated to the Umayyad/Abbasid period (Bisheh 1989; Waheeb 1993). Although it might have been built on top of earlier, probably Nabataean, remains, the uncovered structure may have belonged to a public building. Further excavations should clarify the function and precise date of these remains.

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