

LATE ISLAMIC VILLAGES IN THE GREATER PETRA REGION AND MEDIEVAL "HORMUZ"

by

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Introduction

During excavations at ash-Shawbak (1986) and al-Wu'ayra (1987), Robin M. Brown obtained pottery types specific to 12th (and early 13th) century occupations, covering the historically documented Crusader and Early Ayyubid periods (Brown 1987: 287; 1988: 232). It seems that during that time, denominated "Late Islamic" or "Medieval" in this context, in addition to a locally produced, hand-made, undecorated ware, decorations of simple linear, followed by criss-cross and eventually geometrical patterns were developed. Of the geometrically decorated later "Mamluk style", only a few were recorded at ash-Shawbak and al-Wu'ayra (Brown 1987: 284; 1989: 629). Vannini and Desideri confirmed Brown's results concerning the pottery finds of al-Wu'ayra, i.e. a sequence of a plain to (an additional) painted coarse ware during the 12th (and early 13th) century, all of which was produced by barely specialized craftsmen in the neighbourhood of al-Wu'ayra (Vannini and Desideri 1995: 535-8)¹.

Ash-Shawbak and al-Wu'ayra were not the only settlements in the Greater Petra region during this respective time. Therefore, during exploratory surveys in the Petra region by teams of Naturhistorische Gesellschaft Nürnberg (NHG), directed by the author, several "village" sites previously disregarded or unknown, have been examined together with their surface pottery since 1991 (Fig.1). Where and how the villages were built and what kind of pottery was used by the peasants, may improve the archaeological map of the Petra region and,

additionally, shed some light on the political, social and economic situation of "Archaeologically one of the least known periods of Transjordan" (Brown 1987), "a crucial gap in our knowledge of Transjordan" (Vannini and Tonghini 1997).

THE VILLAGES

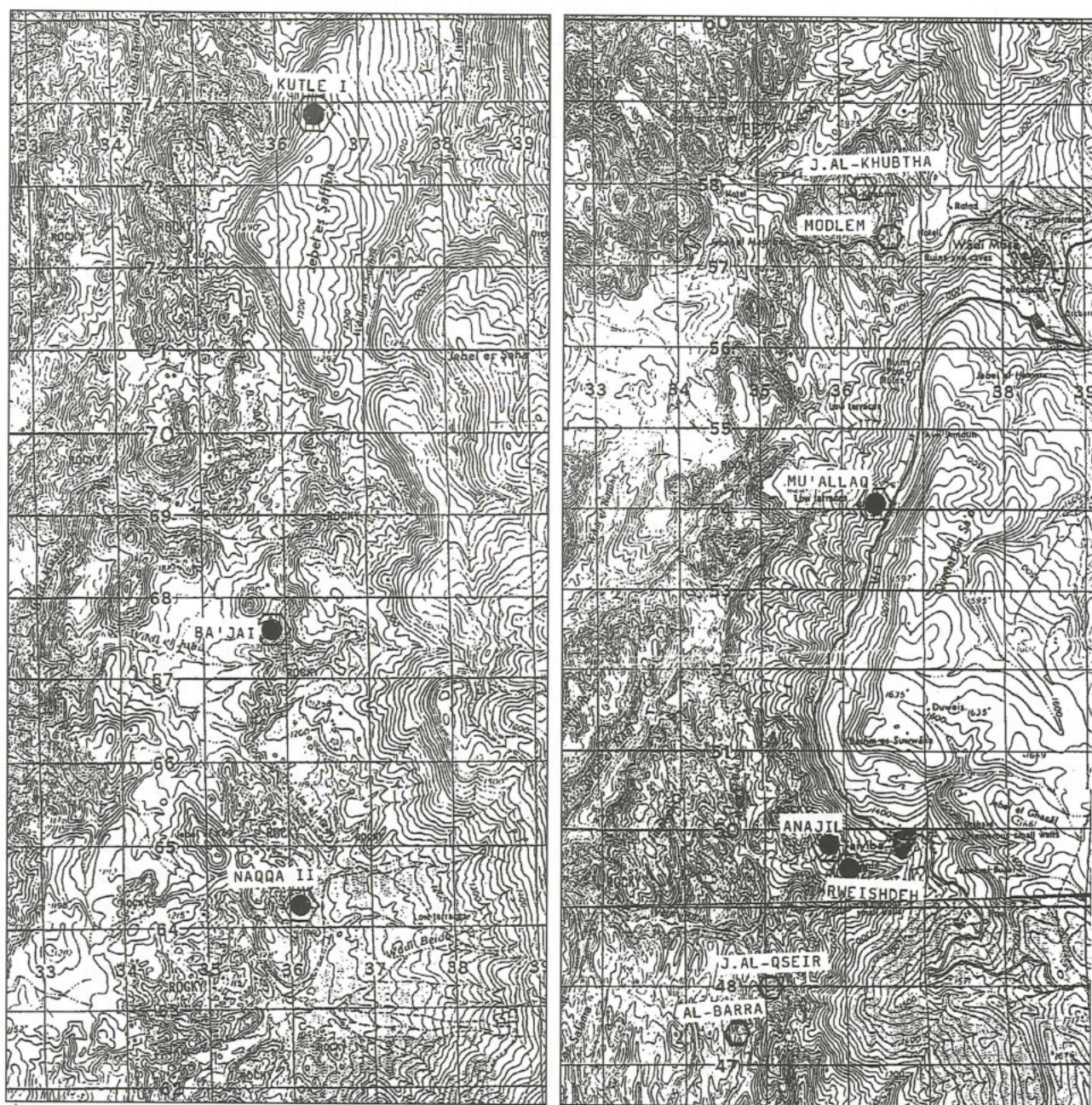
1. Khirbat al-Mu'allaq: On Top of an Edomite Fortress.

A small-scale excavation (1991-1995) was carried out by the Naturhistorische Gesellschaft Nürnberg under the author's direction in Khirbat al-Mu'allaq, which is a ruin field of 60 x 48 m between Wādi Mūsā and aṭ-Ṭayyiba at 1335 m (YU 364 544) (Fig. 2). This excavation revealed a Late Islamic village built on top of an Iron II (Edomite) fortress guarding a commercial route on the shoulder of Jibāl ash-Sharā (Lindner, Knauf and Zeitler 1996 and Fig. 3). Remnants of the Edomite border wall were restacked and most of the building stones were reused for erecting double walls of houses that are partly attached to the bordering wall (Fig. 4). The village was destroyed by earthquakes attested by a thick layer of building stones tumbled over the living space. Much later, round shafts and "cellars" were built by a pastoralist or partly sedentary population. According to information from a bedouin, stones from the ruin field used to be taken to Wādi Mūsā. A "voussoir" with chipped surface treatment, shows that stones were worked on site.

The "pseudo-prehistoric" hole-mouth cooking pots with ledge handles, sometimes evolving from a "taenia", as well as numer-

1. After new excavations at al-Wu'ayra, Vannini and Tonghini (1997: 38) were not able to confirm

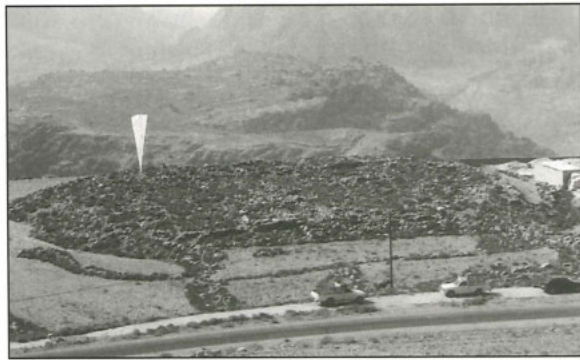
Brown's hypothesis of an evolution from plain to painted pottery anymore.



A. B. I. A/B. Location of several Late Islamic villages and occupations in the Greater Petra Region (Palestine map 1: 50 000. Sheet 3050 series K737.

ous bowls of various forms and sizes, and some lids, were reminiscent of Brown's Phase 1 pottery of the 12th century. Of the painted pottery, one pot was daubed white, and another black, while only one sherd with criss-cross lines was found. Explicit geometrical patterns were missing (Fig. 5). Another dating evidence of the food preparing zone excavated at Khirbat al-Mu'allaq, is the result of a C14 analysis of charcoal closely

associated with the pottery of a *ṭābūn*, that was "calibrated AD 785-1015". An imported wheel-thrown juglet from the excavation could have been a third dating evidence if it were possible to find dated parallels from Syria, Gaza or elsewhere. However, it might be designated to the Early Islamic period. In any case, the pottery of Khirbat al-Mu'allaq has to be preliminary dated to the Phase I of Brown's excavations. The excellent quality



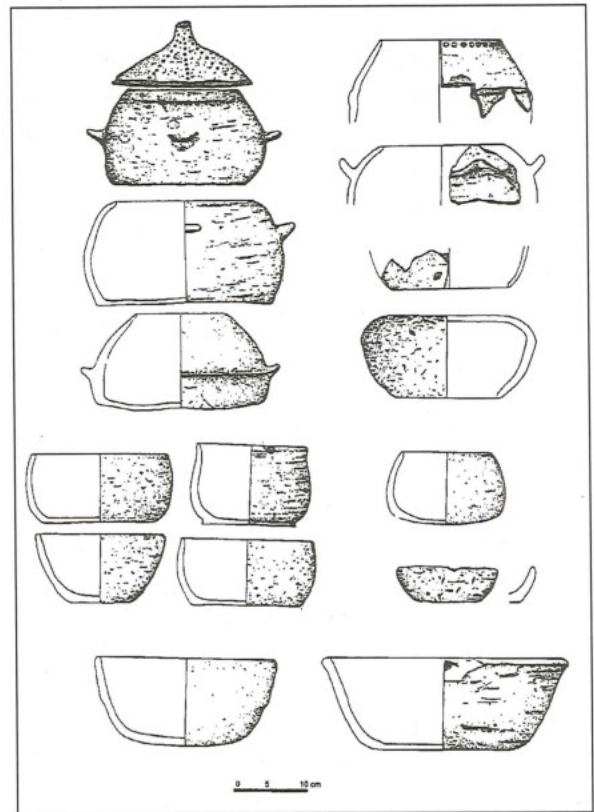
2. Khirbat al-Mu'allaq: The ruin field seen toward Jabal Hārūn.



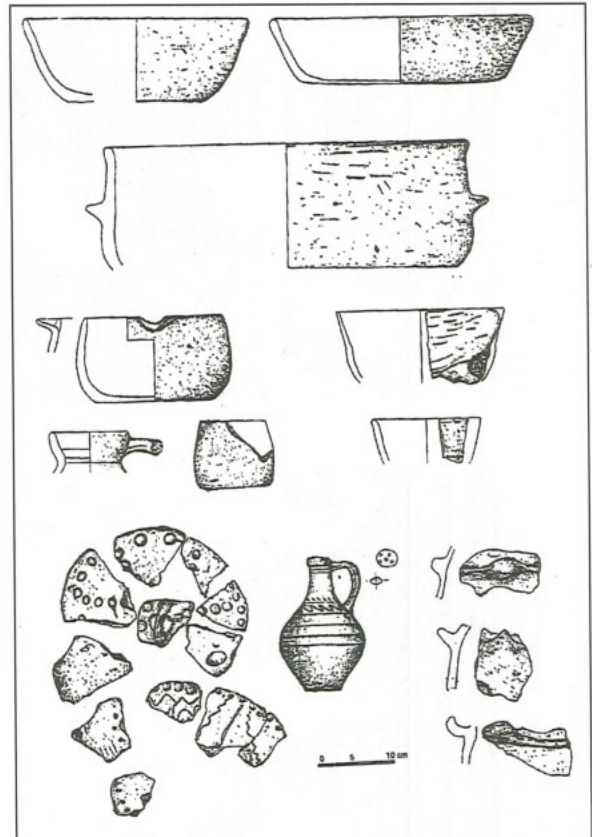
3. Foundation of the Late Islamic house on top of a foundation of compressed alluvial limestone gravel.



4. Wall I of the excavated courtyard with the road to at-Tayyiba in the far background (upper right).



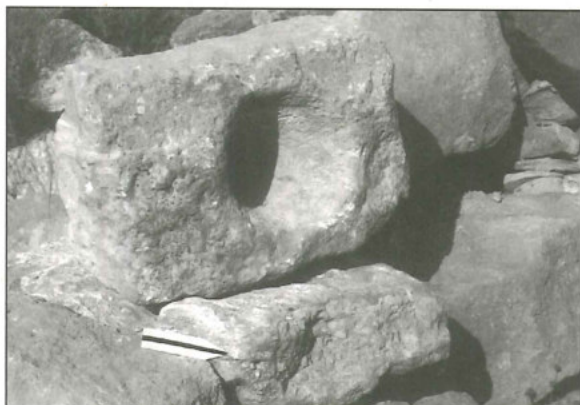
A.



B.

5. A/B. Selected pottery from Khirbat al-Mu'allaq

of some vessels, though being hand-made, recalls a pre-Islamic tradition of wheel-made pottery. Perhaps due to the small part of the excavated ruin field (ca. 50 m²), no water reservoir was found except for an ashlar with a circular hole in the center possibly belonging to a cistern (Fig. 6). Of course, 'Ayn al-Mu'allaq, the spring at the slope of Jibāl ash-Sharā might have produced more water than observed during the dig. There were no traces of a conduit down to the ruin field. Corroborating Musil's report on remnants of olive trees still existing in 1898 (Musil 1907: 283), the lower part of an olive press was noticed in 1991 (Fig. 7). That the inhabitants of the site lived fairly well at times is attested by the presence of bone remains of cattle, by the number of millstones, by the discovery of grape vines, fig and apricot trees around the spring and by the rapid growth of an extended irrigated garden, adjoining the ruins.



6. Ashlar with a hole in its centre from Khirbat al-Mu'allaq, perhaps belonging to an (undiscovered) cistern.



7. Lower part of an olive press from the ruin field.

It needs to be stressed, however, that (Khirbat) al-Mu'allaq was neither remote, nor hidden, but accessible through the commercial route mentioned above and surrounded by reused parts of the old Edomite walls.

2. Khirbat Anajil: A Fortified Village

Khirbat Anajil is located west of at-Ṭayyiba, above a wadi of the same name (YU 358 498). Consisting of three levels, Anajil I is the ground level that is now sand-filled, open toward and approachable from the modern at-Ṭayyiba-Batha road at 1100 m (Fig. 8). Surrounded by vertical rock walls, the site is protected from winds and was presumably well supplied with water in wintertime. There are actually traces of a waterfall at the right rock wall, and a gigantic cleft not far from it might have conducted water from above. From here, there is no path to go further up. Only an inclined, steep and narrow ledge in the rock wall has been provided with holes, to be used as a stairway or a ladder. A rock shelter opposite with a Nabataean-style basin and three pick-axe strokes in front was inhabited at some unknown time.

Anajil II, the second level at 1150 m to the north, could formerly be reached from the steep incline with holes, but not from the at-Ṭayyiba-Batha road. Even by climbing across steep sandstone slopes, with meter-sized limestone boulders threatening to roll

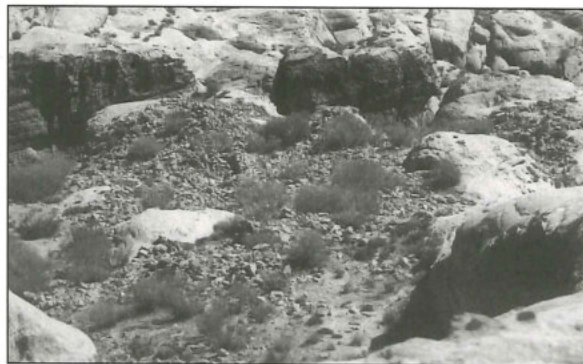


8. Anajil I, a large rock courtyard with a "staircase" of rock-cut holes originally leading to Anajil II.

down at any time, the site can be seen but not entered (Fig. 9). The actual access runs through a series of narrow gorges - rather canyons - clefts and gullies, easy to bar and to defend. Eventually, at the top of a final water-worn ravine, the village could be entered. By means of inserting beams in rock holes, this entrance, too, was defensible.

The village proper of Anajil II which is of ca. 60 x 30 m perimeter size, consisted of ca. 20 houses built on projecting hillocks or huddled together in order to protect themselves. Toward Anajil I, the cliff drops vertically but could be reached through the previously described incline. Many beam holes in the walls of a shady gorge as well as in a large boulder at the rim belonged to lean-to houses. No cistern was found, but water might have been collected in one of the gorges leading to the village. A level area somewhat hollowed out, right in the centre of the village, might have been a reservoir. As in the other villages, a millstone with two holes was found, in addition to a seemingly older fragment of an oval quern.

Further to the north of Anajil II, the third level Anajil III at ca. 1185 m can only be reached by climbing over very steep and dangerously smooth sandstone slopes. With a rock shelter and a stout masonry wall, it was a last point of resistance and refuge in case of an attack (Fig. 10). From Anajil III, by negotiating almost impassable gorges and walking on tiny ledges, Rās Batha, Şabra and Wādī Mūsā could be reached. On



9. Anajil II seen from a point from where a complicated detour has to be taken to reach the village.



10. Stout wall of Anajil III.

the way from Rās Batha to Anajil, I. Künne succeeded in discovering *Origanum jordanicum*, a new botanic species from Jordan (Danin and Künne 1996).

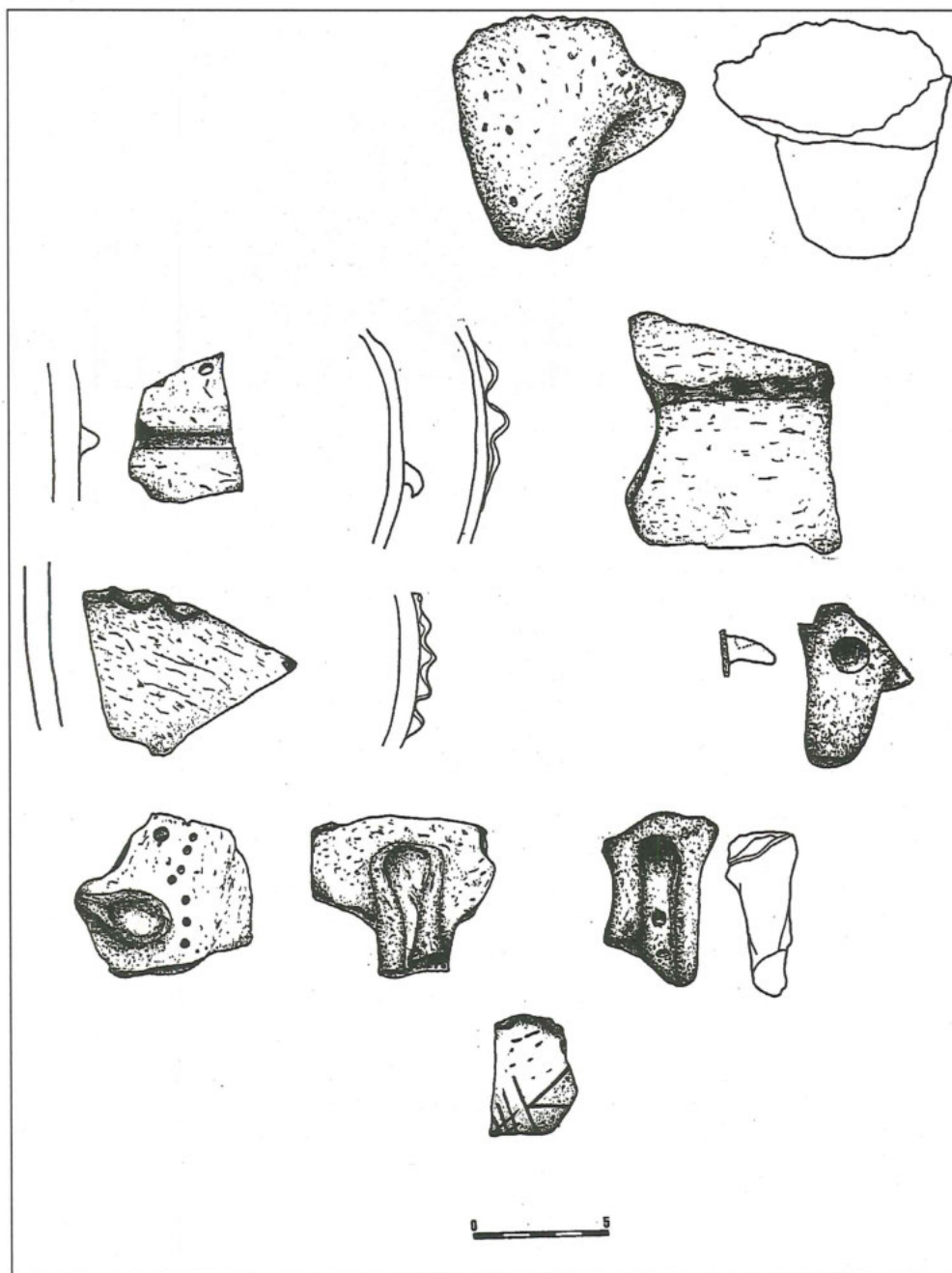
Generally, Anajil was a hidden and extremely defensible village. Even a gorge still higher up was closed by a stout wall. The place might thus be called a rural fortified refuge.

The pottery of Anajil II (Fig. 11)

Of 45 collected sherds there were 9 Nabataean-Roman-Byzantine, the rest being Late Islamic with one painted body sherd (criss-cross pattern), fragments of large storage jars, and cooking pots with ledge handles, some evolving from a "taenia" circling the whole circumference. The large handles are equipped with round holes near the shoulder of the vessel and/or deeply cut rills (to prevent breaking during the firing). Corresponding to heavier vessels there are large ledge handles of the "swollen tongue" type, one with prick-holes underneath. Finger- and implement-indented ledge handles are more a result of decoration than necessity. The color of the clay ranges from yellowish-brown to red-brown and grey. Mineral and organic grits can be observed.

3. Khirbat ar-Ruwayshid: Medieval at-Ṭayyiba

The ruin field of ar-Ruwayshid to the SW of at-Ṭayyiba of ca. 80 x 80 m at 1060-1080m, is located on a sloping spur of Jibāl

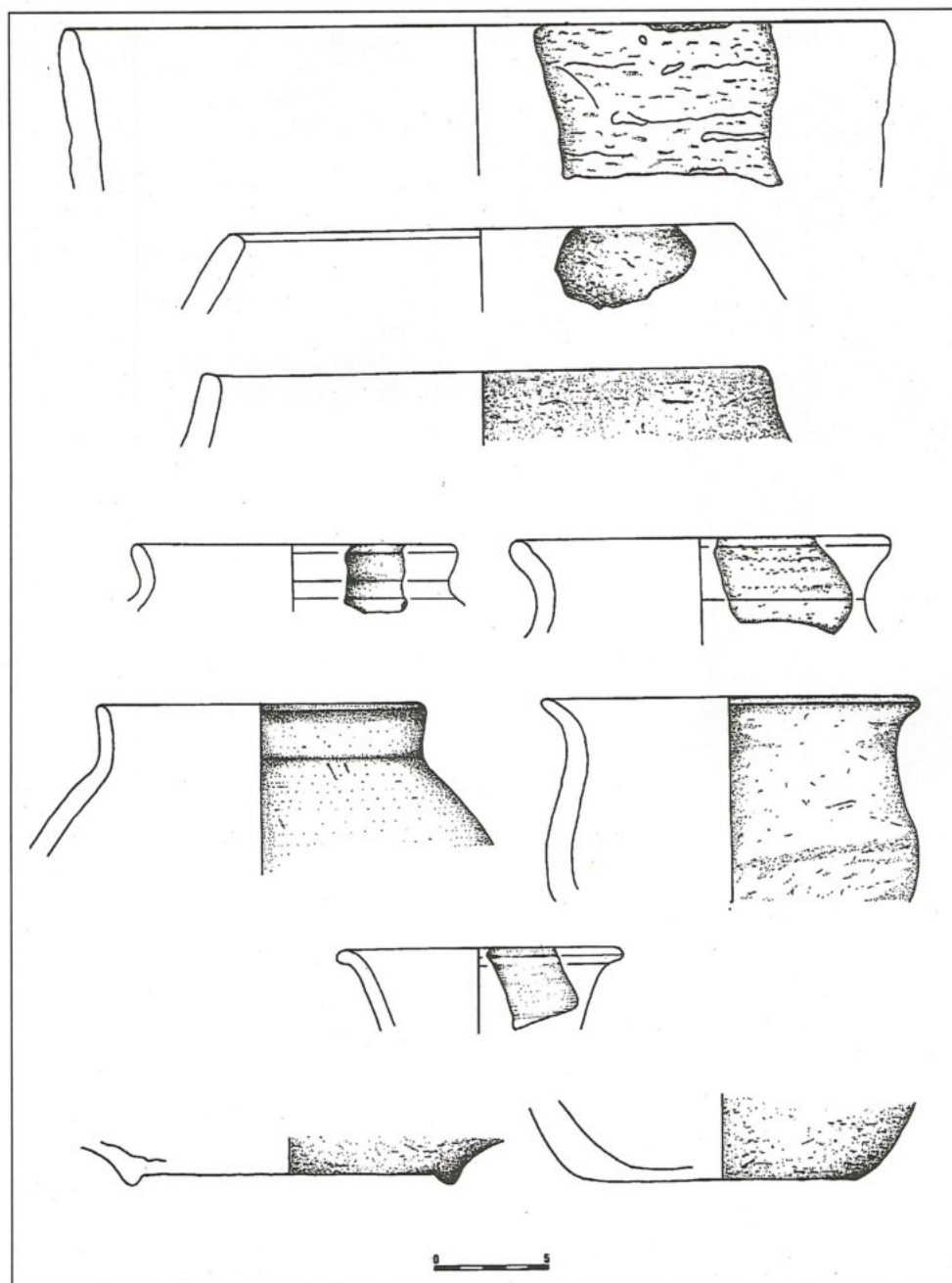


11A. Pottery from Anajil II.

ash-Sharā between Wādī aṭ-Ṭayyiba and Wādī ar-Ruwayshid (YU 361 495). Whereas the former wadi passes through treacherous alluvial limestone, the latter bores its way through impassable gorges with easy access only from the north and from a spot to the north-west. The *khirbat* preceded “old aṭ-Ṭayyiba”, a typical Ottoman village, built ca. 120 years ago at a time when people still lived in tents most of the year. More or less preserving the village style, it was lately

turned into a hotel which in its present configuration still demonstrates its location on a defensible spur (Fakhoury and Sweiss 1995: 368-9).

Ar-Ruwayshid or “medieval aṭ-Ṭayyiba” was called en-Nefei‘at by Glueck (1935:80), who described it as “a small Arabic site” with a few Arabic sherds. Previously, Musil (1907: 282) had seen “das zerstörte Dorf h. en-Nf‘at”. Comparing the explorers’ notes, it is evident that Glueck followed the exact



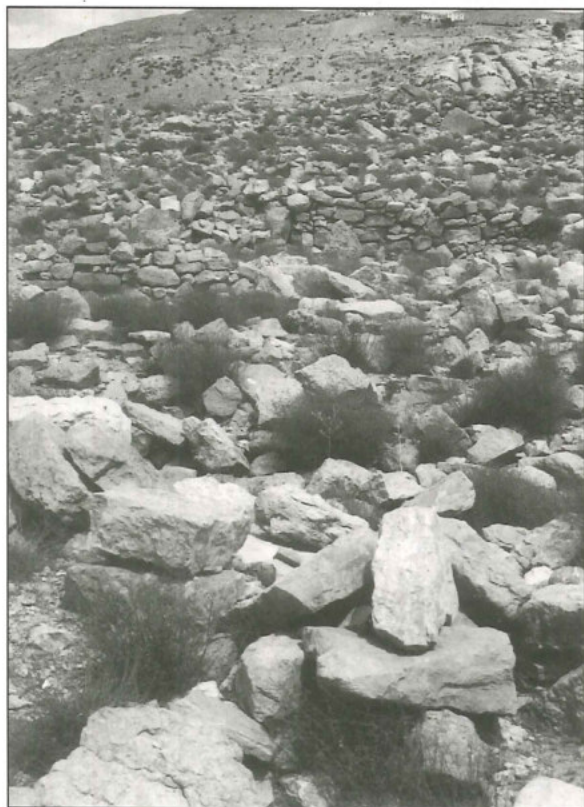
11B. Pottery from Anajil II.

itinerary of Musil. However, the “small Arabic site” consists of at least 20 ruins of houses up to sizes of 8 x 6 m circumference and built of massive limestone ashlars and slabs, of which a good number of them, especially the cornerstones are still standing. The dry-stone walls were destroyed by earthquakes and subsequent stone robbing. Ar-Ruwayshid, too, extended to the end of a spur (Fig. 12). The slopes in the vicinity are terraced. Beside the building stones and a

curved stone of unknown function, no architectural pieces were observed. Millstones with an eccentric hole were found to be in use (Fig. 13).

The Pottery of Khirbat ar-Ruwayshid (Fig. 14)

Of 85 sherds that were collected - preferably without body fragments - from the surface, one is of an Iron II storage jar and 5 are of Nabataean-Roman origin. Of the 79

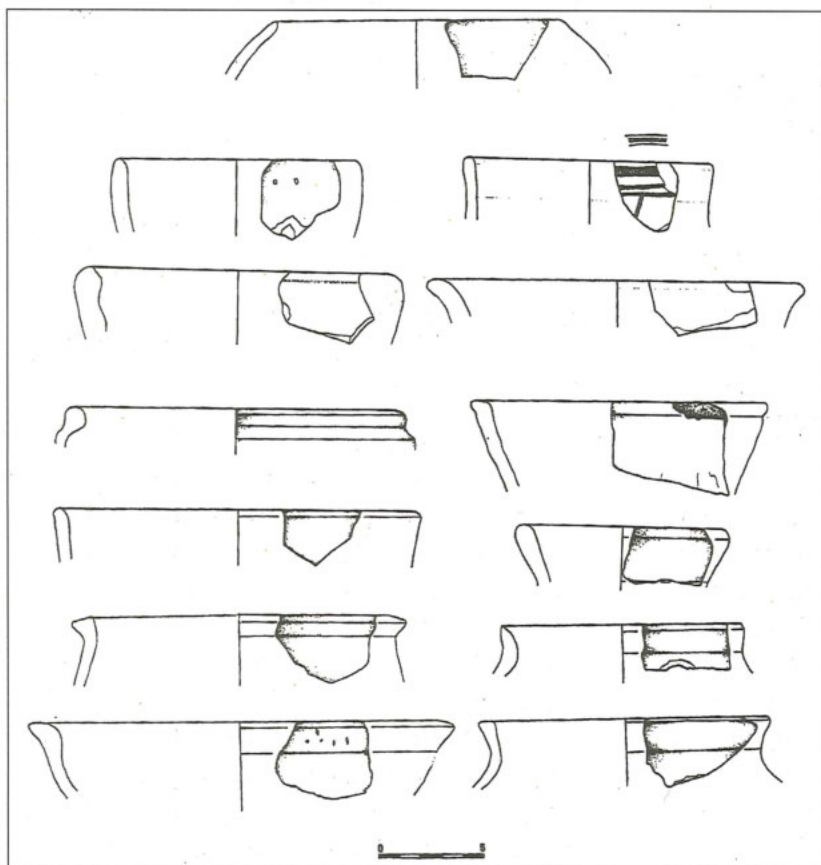


12. Khirbat ar-Ruwayshid toward N with houses of modern at-Tayyiba at top of photo.



13. Millstone from ar-Ruwayshid.

Late Islamic sherds, the clay is generally red-brown, with a reddish slip, which is more often found at Khirbat ar-Ruwayshid than at Khirbat al-Mu'allaq. Two fragments of grey color, thin and light, are decorated with an implement-indented band, respectively with a coarsely indented ledge handle. Other decorations are scarce, there is only one fragment with a line of prick-holes and another with finger indentations along the rim of a vessel. The inventory displays

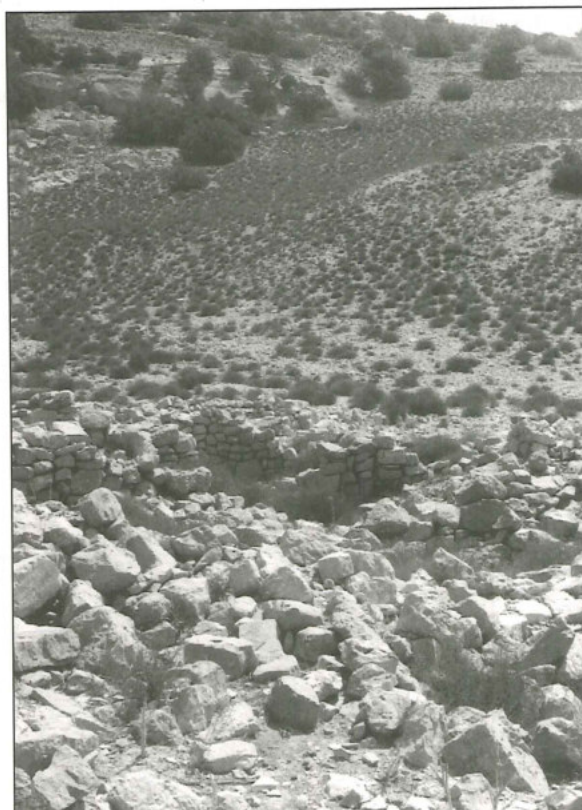


14. Selected pottery from ar-Ruwayshid.

extreme thick and coarse cooking pots and bowls, to which large ledge handles belong. Their shape is either reminiscent of a badly swollen or a forked tongue, or a grotesque spout. There are less "taeniae" and less fine ledge handles than at Khirbat al-Mu'allaq, but they occur nevertheless. A few rims with a red slip belong to relatively thin juglets. Of 10 painted body sherds, a few of which come from broken handles, one is decorated with a broad red band, the others with single or criss-cross lines in black or red. Explicitly geometrical decoration is lacking.

4. Kutle I (YU 365 737)

Kutle I is located at the western rim of Jabal aş-Şuffāḥa at 1140 m, ca. 16 km north of Petra (Fig. 15). The village built of limestone ashlar of different sizes and of varying quality, covers ca. 80 x 30 m. One of the houses measures 5.0 x 3.5 m on the inside. The gap between the double walls is filled with rubble. Walls are still standing up to 2 m (Fig. 16). By its southern house walls, built together on a rocky embankment, it dominates a wellspring, an old pathway from the south and an original *han* recognizable by its foundation stones. Any



16. Detail of the ruin field.

person approaching from the south and coming to the spring, was in stone-throw or arrow-shot distance from the walls. A steep embankment protected Kutle I from the east. The plateau on its top may have been used in summer as dwelling places and tree gar-



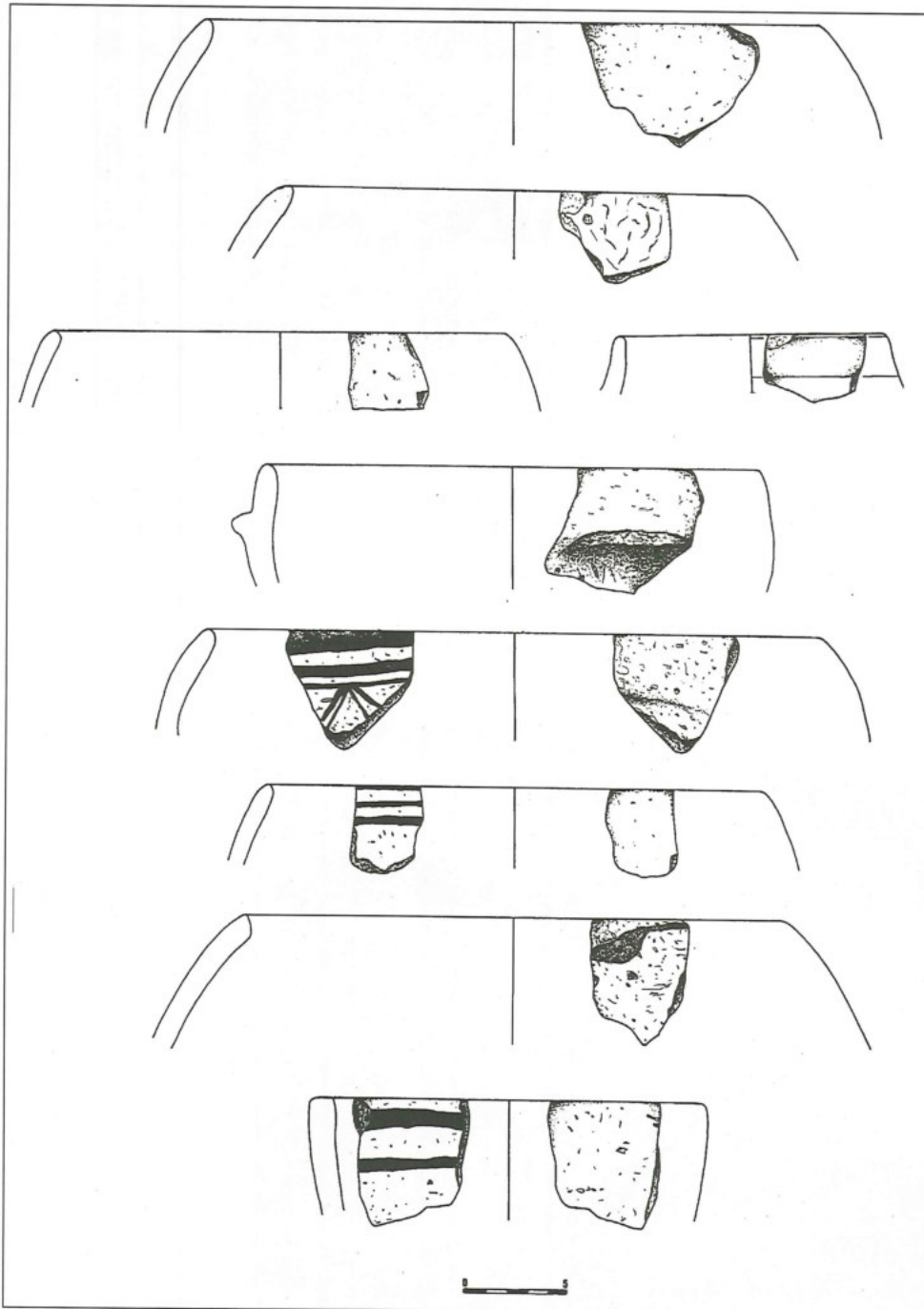
15. Aerial photograph of the Late Islamic village of Kutle I.

dens (arabic: *al-Ḥaūṭa*). Attackers from the north would have been at a loss how to cross unobserved the aṣ-Ṣuffāḥa ridge or to climb steeply up from the northwest without being observed by the inhabitants of Kutle I.

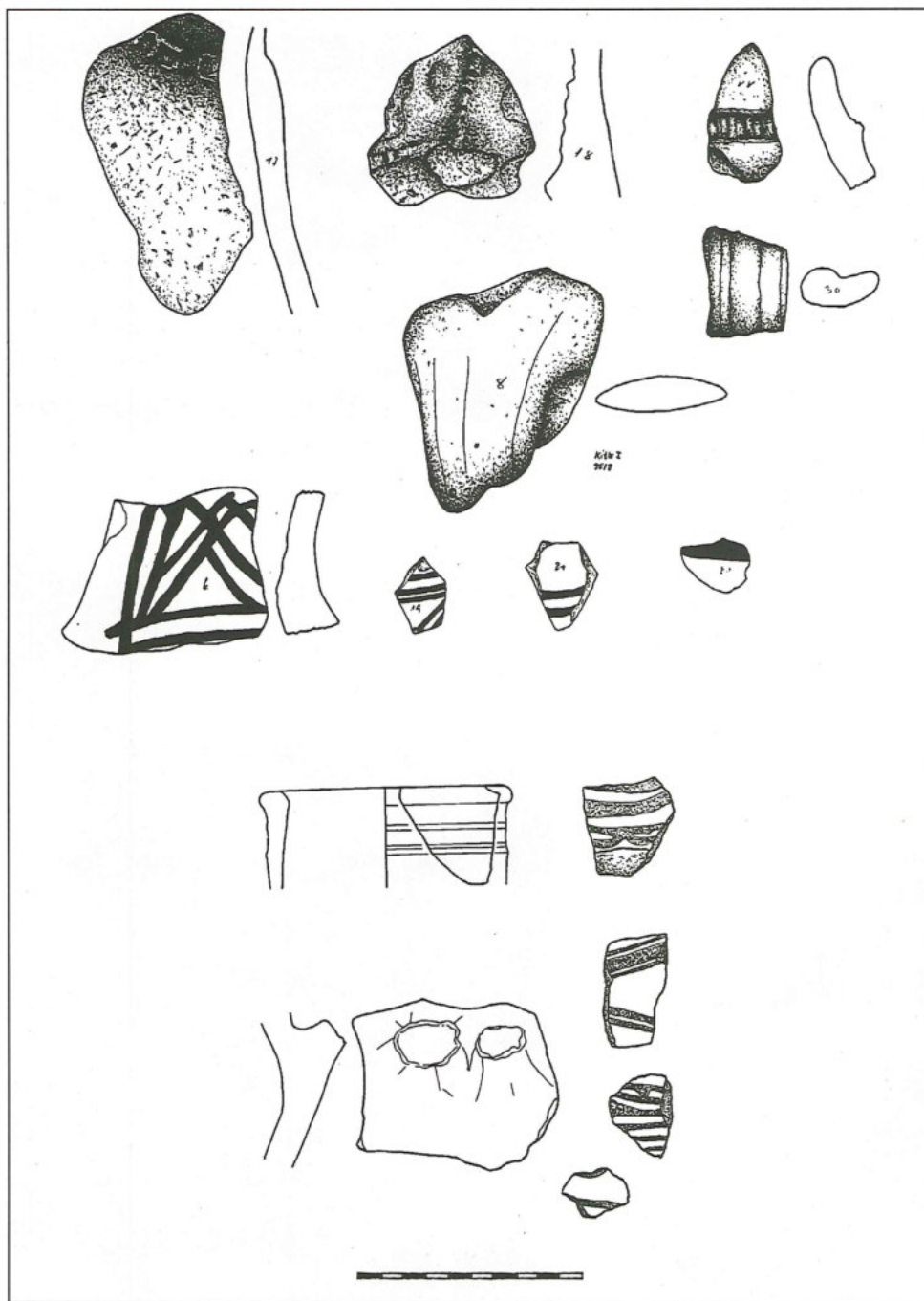
The Pottery of Kutle I (Fig. 17 A/B)

Of 38 sherds, there are 5 that belong to Iron II, 4 Nabataean-Roman and one piece

of modern China. The rest includes different types within the Late Islamic. Four wheel-thrown Ayyubid fine ware sherds may indicate an occupation in the 12th/13th centuries AD. Most of the sherds belong to the hand-made coarse village ware without decoration, and only a small portion displays linear and criss-cross painted decoration. Despite seemingly tentative beginnings, not



17A. Selected pottery from Kutle I.



17B. Selected pottery from Kutle I.

a single explicitly geometrically painted "Mamluk style" sherd was found.

5. Ba'ja I: Reoccupied in the Late Islamic Period

At the foot of the Jabal Ba'ja massif ca. 10 km north of Petra, a ruin field of ca. 80 x 80 m was originally mentioned by D. Kirkbride (1961: 255) and later described by the author (Lindner 1986: 116; 1996: 249-255).

In view of the discovery of a PPNB settlement halfway up the mountainside (Ba'ja II) and of an Iron II (Edomite) stronghold on top (Ba'ja III), both discovered by teams of NHG (Lindner 1986: 121-130; 1996: 255-273; Lindner and Farajat 1987: 175-185), the ruined village was called Ba'ja I (YU 358 677).

A lot of the built structures of Ba'ja I have collapsed from a natural terrace and a

ground plan is difficult to establish. Standing in the centre of the village one has the impression of a recently bombed site. From the air, more than 20 houses can be seen arranged in a certain order (Fig. 18). Built against the rock wall on a natural terrace with the wadi to the south, the village was remote and defensible at the same time. The extent of destruction tends to conceal the Nabataean past of the multi-phase village, but not the Late Islamic phase of re-occupation.

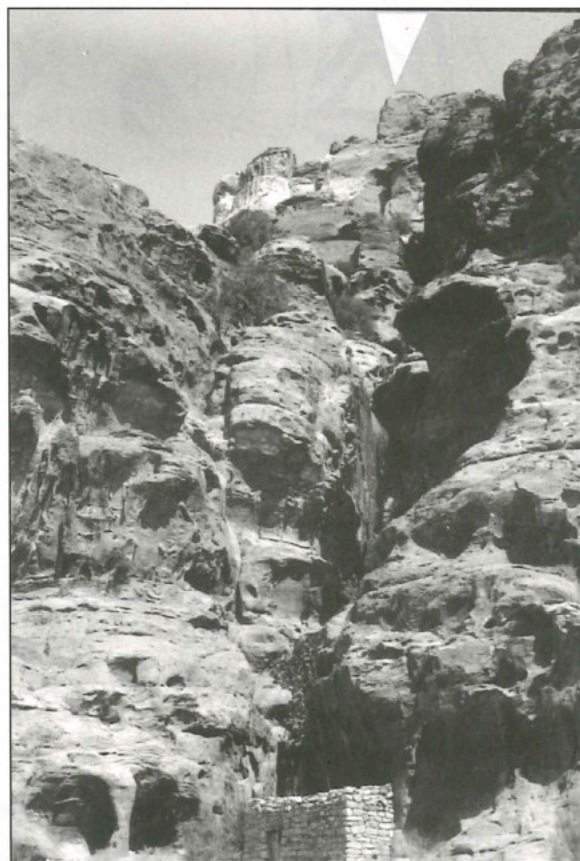
Already during the first surveys (Lindner 1986: 116), pottery fragments of the Ayyubid-Mamluk periods were taken from the surface (Fig. 19). During later surveys, a large rock cistern of Nabataean-Roman origin with an Arabic inscription to the right of its entrance was detected. 'Amārin bedouins who had built two houses at the foot of the massif (Figs. 20 and 21), cleaned the reservoir several years ago, and found fine geometrically painted Mamluk pottery² similar,



18. Aerial view of Ba'ja I.



19. Surface finds in the ruin field of Ba'ja I (1983): Edomite to Mamluk pottery and quern fragments.



20. Al-'Amārin house at the foot of the Ba'ja massif with a view (arrow) to Edomite Ba'ja III.

to sherds found on al-Ḥabīs above the basin of Petra in 1978 (Lindner 1978: 89-90). The pottery spectrum of Ba'ja I comprises surface finds of the whole Late Islamic, as the period is called in this treatise.

2. The few geometrically painted Mamluk sherds taken out of the material excavated from the large

cistern of Ba'ja I point to a transient use of the site rather than to an occupation.



21. Arch made from spoils in the al-'Amārin house of Ba'ja I.

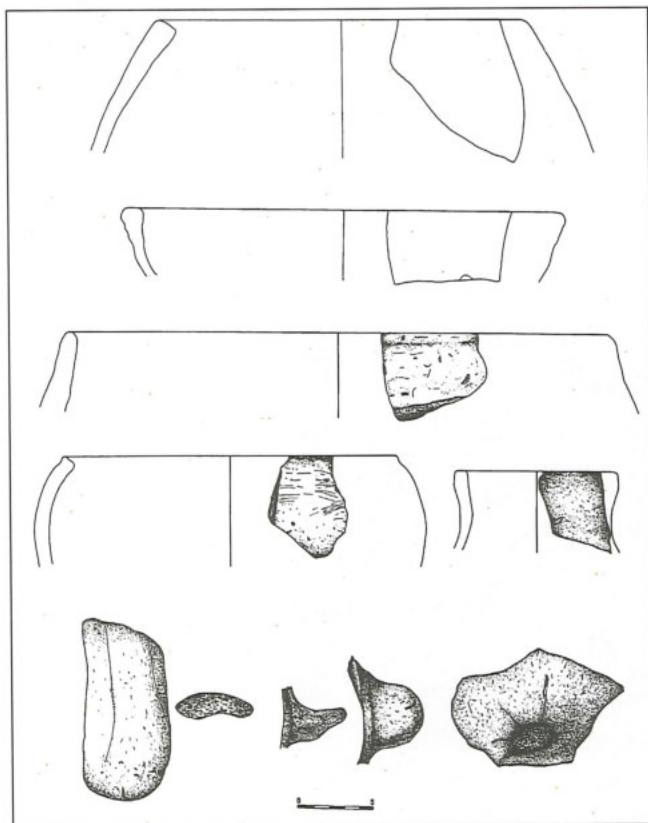
The pottery of Ba'ja I (Fig. 22A/B)

Of 60 sherds collected from the surface, eight are Iron II (possibly washed down from the Edomite stronghold Ba'ja III); 5 Nabataean-Roman; 47 Late Islamic, of which 5 are painted (4 Mamluk with geometrical decoration from juglets, 1 linear decoration). Fragments of large bowls, cooking pots with small ledge handles, loop handles with a hole near the shoulder of the vessel, large tongue-like handles, and one implement-indented decoration are to be noted. The colour ranges from grey-brown to brown-red, and a few have a red slip on the interior and exterior.

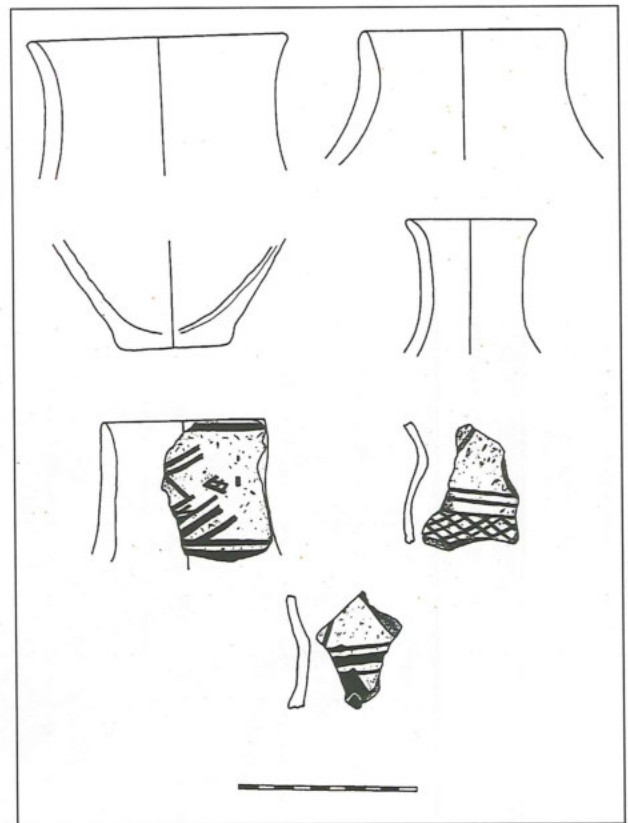
Other finds: 1 chipped lithic (hand-axe ?), 1 oval quern.

6. An-Naq'a II above the Wādī Mūsā - an-Nemala Route

Where the modern road (and ancient route) from Petra-Wādī Mūsā to Naqab Ne-



A.
22 A/B. Selected pottery from Ba'ja I.



B.

mala passes a sandy plain, 4 or 5 houses were built by the 'Amārin on a rocky outcrop around 20 years ago. The place an-Naq'a was inspected and described before by Musil as h.Hurmuz (II,2: 220).

The houses on top of the described rise are used as storage rooms today. They are entirely constructed of spolia, obviously from previous structures that were present at the same spot. In one place, iron rails were used instead of roof beams. A few building stones in an open house are diagonally dressed in the Nabataean fashion. The surface ceramics contain a few Late Islamic and Nabataean-Roman sherds. At the foot of the hill, a nicely made wine press is reminiscent of the Nabataean-Roman occupation of the site.

From an-Naq'a I, as the place is called here, another ruin field was seen through binoculars about 50 m up on the mountainside to the west (YU 362 643) (Fig. 23). Easily defensible and almost unapproachable from the foot of the mountain, it was reached from behind through a steep-sided gorge with remnants of walls barring the entrance. Directly behind the entrance and on two terraces at 1080 m, ca. 20 houses of ca. 3 x 4m were built abutting each other in a space of ca. 80 m in the north-south, and 30 m in the east-west direction (Fig. 24). Local brown

sandstone and almost white ad-Dīsi sandstone that could be easily broken in slabs were used. The foremost structure toward Jibāl ash-Sharā, 'Atnub (Etnub, at-Tnub) and an-Naq'a I was erected directly on a spur of the mountainside. The origin of one Nabataean fine ware fragment (first-second centuries AD) was later explained by the discovery of a preceding ancient site behind and above an-Naq'a II. There, a Nabataean-Roman cistern that is still in use today, may have provided the inhabitants of the Late Islamic Period with water.

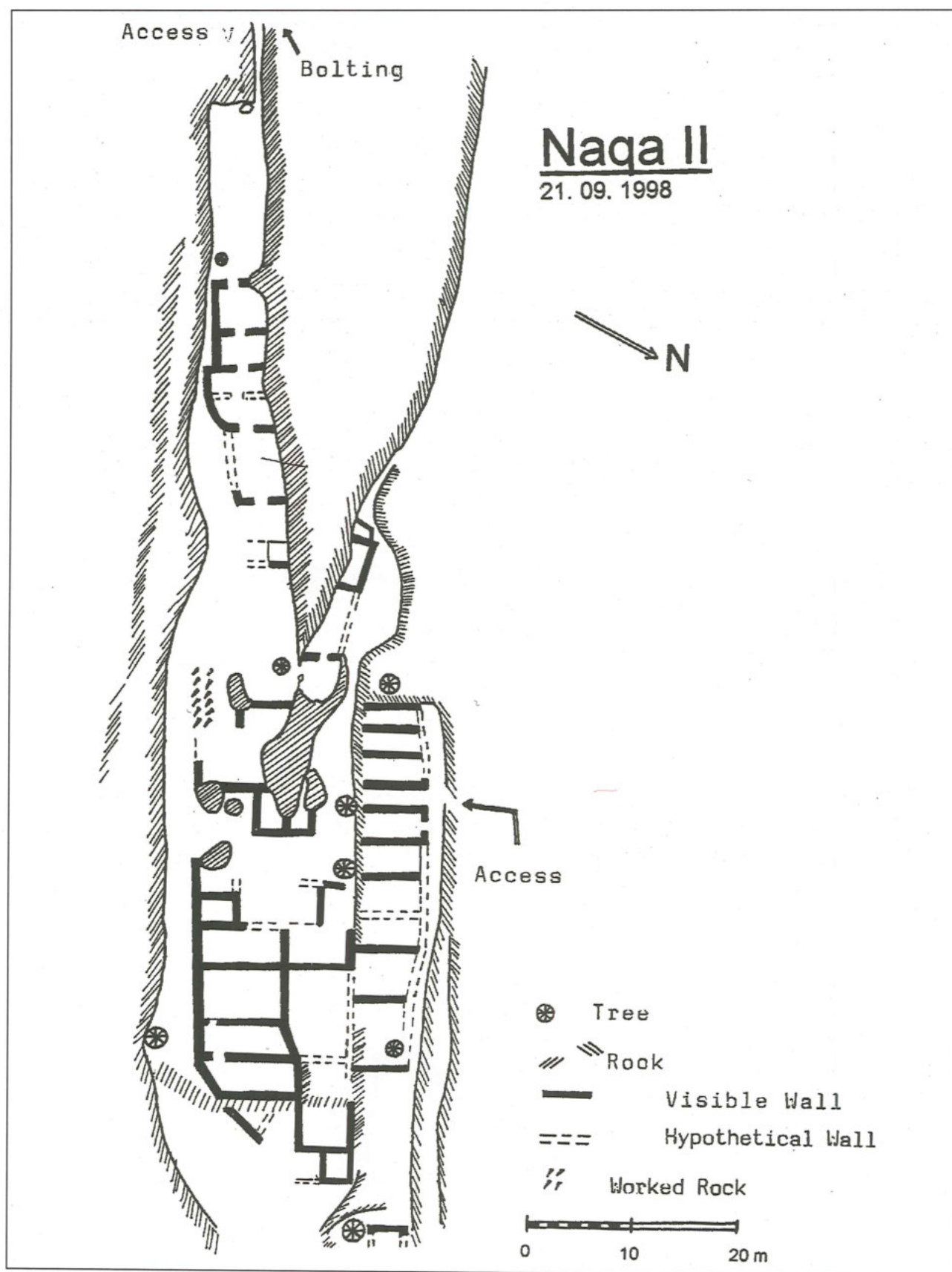
The name of an-Naq'a II was given to the village without an immediate implication that there might have been some kind of connection with Naq'a I. Fields and pastures for the people of an-Naq'a II were, of course, down in the plain. They may have lived on the mountain only seasonally or during dangerous periods.

The labour invested in constructing the place up on the mountainside and fortifying its access (even the almost vertical cliff toward the east, showed remnants of walls) may shed some light on the security needed by the people living in the area.

Since he visited an-Naq'a II in 1997, E.A.Knauf has been convinced that it should not be trivialized as a fortified village, but that it is in fact the long-sought



23. Ruin field (arrow) on the ledge of a rock wall above the plain of an-Naq'a (an-Naq'a II). (photo: U.Hübner).



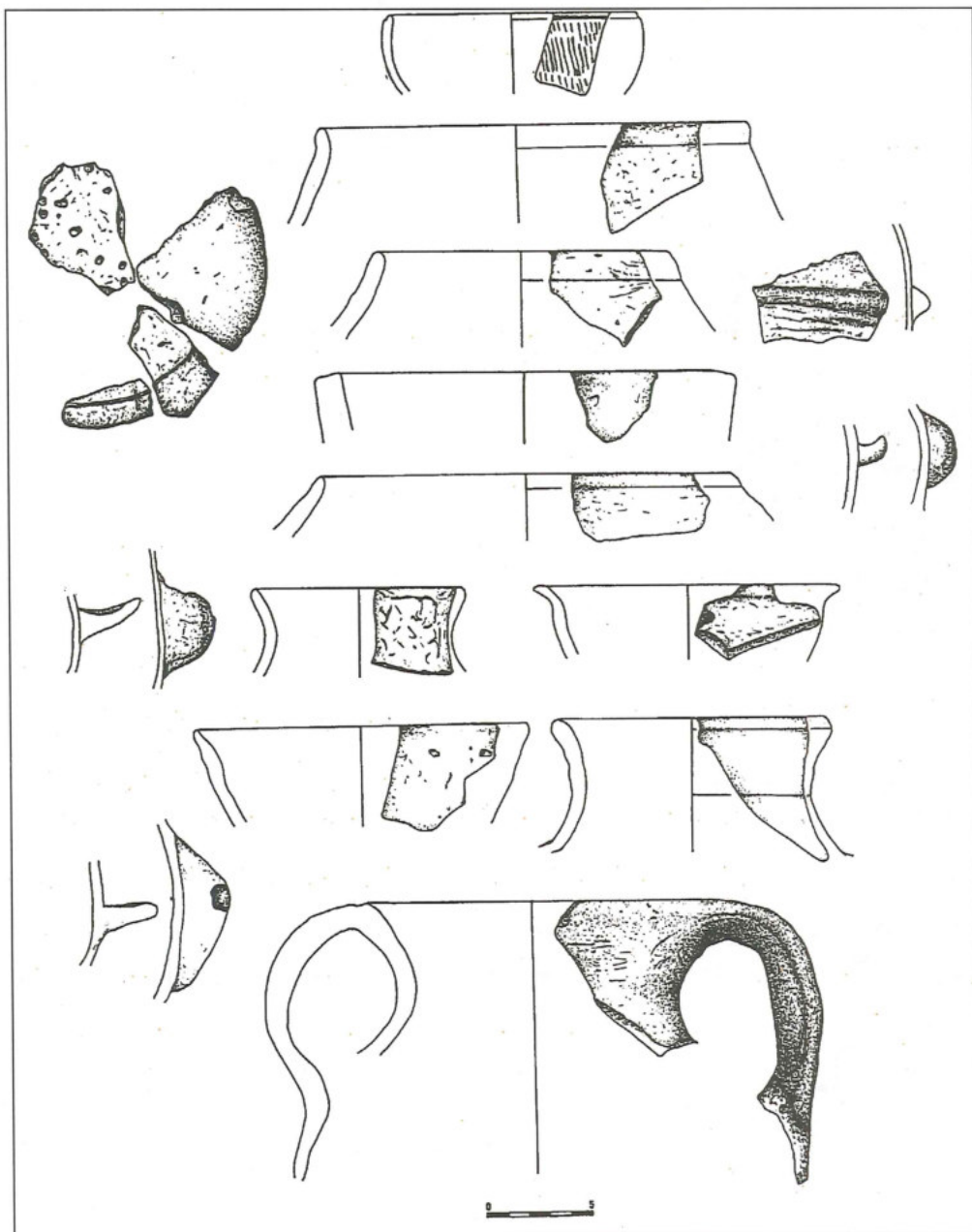
24. Sketch plan of an-Naq'a II (U.Hübner, I.Künne).

third Crusader fortress of the Petra region, Hormuz. The "houses" have to be regarded as casemates of the razed castle complex (Knauf pers. comm.). As the surface finds show, Late Islamic pottery was used before its destruction. It was assumed that the "occupational forces", Crusaders as well as indigenous personnel, used village-made pottery from the vicinity. Another small fortress, partly rock-cut, partly stone-built at 'Atnub not far away from an-Naq'a II, examined during previous archaeological cam-

paigns of NHG (publication pending) could not be identified as medieval Hormuz or another Crusader installation because of its Nabataean-Late Roman- Byzantine surface ceramics and the lack of Late Islamic pottery betrayed an earlier origin. Yet, the location at the ancient Nemala route proves the importance of later an-Naq'a II.

The Pottery from an-Naq'a II (Fig. 25)

Of 31 surface sherds one is of Nabataean fine ware, the rest are Late Islamic, be-



25. Selected pottery from an-Naq'a II.

longing to light cooking pots with taeniae and dainty ledge handles. One loop handle belongs to a grotesque jug, and another to a storage jar. There are four fragments of lids, one with a groove parallel to the rim, and another with pick holes. Two rims of jugs are rather thin, and one equipped with a ledge handle. The color of the clay is brown, mostly with self-slip, while two pieces are with red slip. All of them show a grey to black core, and there aren't any painted sherds. The ceramics belong more to household than to storage types.

The Pottery of the Villages and of Hormuz

Summarizing the pottery of the village sites and an-Naq'a II, described above together with their locations and characteristics, it has to be envisaged in the first place that (except for Khirbat al-Mu'allaq) we are dealing with surface finds of handmade, strictly utilitarian ceramics without any glazed ware. Concerning the amount of sherds, already from the surface more sherds pro square were collected at Khirbat al-Mu'allaq, Ba'ja and Khirbat ar-Ruwayshid, than at the other sites. As to quality, al-Mu'allaq has the highest and the most found through excavation. The poorest products come from an-Naq'a II and Ba'ja I, where only a rudimentary technology can be attested. Surprising is the relatively low number of medium and large-sized storage vessels. This might be due either to the lack of need or to the lost ability to manufacture them. After all, there was no regression of pottery in the villages, but rather a devolution since the time when people used Nabataean and Roman style pottery made by professional potters. Or, were the beginnings of their pottery poor imitations of wheel-thrown Early Islamic production? The better quality of part of the al-Mu'allaq ceramics and the finds of wheel-thrown Fatimid or Early Ayyubid sherds at Kutle I may point in that direction. As to decora-

tion, at al-Mu'allaq there was no substantial painted pottery, though there was decoration by finger- and implement indentation. Most painted (black or red lines to criss-cross at the exterior and/or interior) sherds were collected at Kutle I and ar-Ruwayshid, revealing either a longer span of existence or a later foundation of the settlement. If that is correct, then al-Mu'allaq must be considered as the earliest settlement, coinciding with the better (or the least devolved) quality of its ceramics. Apart from such differences, there is an astounding similarity in the use of ledge handles, though in different styles and sizes, from dainty specimens to the "large swollen tongue" type, obviously fitting smaller or larger vessels. Common to all sites, is the almost total lack of cups and the predominance of bowls and cooking pots, the latter to be expected. The lack of imported pottery in the villages and in an-Naq'a may be due to the absence of people having the means to afford them. Or was the painted pottery used (and ordered to be made) by persons of higher "rank" or wealth? In any case, the painting of pottery seems to either indicate a step to overcome the pure functionality of plain pots, or otherwise, we have to envisage neighbourly or foreign influences during the 12th-13th centuries.

Generally, the surface pottery finds in several villages, at an-Naq'a II in the Petra region and at reused sites (to be mentioned later on) can be linked to the material excavated and described by R. M. Brown at ash-Shawbak and al-Karak. The coarse and rustic material with lots of lithic grits and straw was manufactured in the villages, probably also for use at the fortresses. Apparently the potters had only a few traditions to follow, and it seems that the population increased numerically, but why one had to defend oneself is still to be discussed.

Two Different Scenarios

Looking back at the sites presented to-

gether with spectra of their surface ceramics, it is clear that they were - Khirbat al-Mu'allaq being the least - either remote or hidden, i.e. at any rate defensible. Khirbat al-Mu'allaq may have preceded the Crusader suzerainty. Given that we do not know how the people of the Petra area acted in the presence of the new overlords in the 12th century, two extremely contrasting, rough scenarios can be drawn up. In one scenario, there would have been constant tension and terror between the local people and the new government. After all, the Frankish rulers had to be able to control a subject people who had no allegiance to their rulers and who would willingly side with any opposition (Boas 1998: 154). According to historical reports, among other quarrels, during punitive expeditions, bedouins were smoked out of their caves and their stocks driven away. The fortress of al-Wu'ayra had to be recaptured after the moslems had taken it in 1141³. In order to protect themselves people fled to places where they were able to hide and if necessary to defend themselves.

In the second scenario, as sketchily drawn as the other one, the local people were not subjugated but, though being, at least *de jure*, "property" of the Palestinian aristocracy⁴, accepted like subjects who pledged allegiance to the new rulers. For them they had to produce food and beverage and the vessels for consumption. Proving a certain similarity of everyday life in all villages, round millstones with an excentric hole were used (see Fig. 13). It is likely that the indigenous people had to build fortress-

es and roads for the occupying power, menial tasks which need a lot of supervision, if done by slave labour. They might have been prevailed upon to build defensible villages partly from spoils instead of, or in addition to, living in tents and caves. Surrounded by such places, the defensive significance of al-Wu'ayra and al-Ḥabīs, the fortresses proper, and quite probably also of el-Gi (Wādī Mūsā), was increased. Building and manning of an-Naq'a II fits beautifully in this scenario, especially, if Mayer (1990: 189) is right about the meaning of *vallis Moysi*, i.e. that its significance for the Christian overlords was not the economic exploitation of the region but security and control (and taxation) of caravans.

Without trying to differentiate between truth and propaganda in the historical reports, both scenarios, even alternatingly, according to their pottery, allow defensible villages as dwellings and shelters to have come into existence during the 12th century. At the same time (generally with the same type of pottery), sites easy to defend like Jabal al-Qšeir, Jabal aš-Šuffāḥa, Jabal al-Khubtha, Rās Batha, al-Barra, Khirbat al-Mudhlim and others were reused⁵. Together with the fate of the Petra region, which soon "after the Crusaders and the brief Ayyubid occupation became a peripheral area" (Vannini and Tonghini 1997: 383), eventually all of them were relinquished, reused sometimes, but not inhabited again in the original way, i.e. in intact stone houses. This was either because there was no possibility for re-habitation (earthquakes!) or because there

3. See e.g. Fulcher von Chartres in P.C. Pernoud (ed.), *Die Kreuzzüge in Augenzeugenberichten*, Düsseldorf 1961; Runciman, St., *Geschichte der Kreuzzüge*, München 1968; Albertus Aquensis Hist. Hierosolymit. in: *Recueil d'Hist.d.Crois. (Hist.Occid.I)*, Paris 1879; Willermus Tyrensis, Hist. rerum in partibus transmarinis gest., *Rec. Hist.d.crois. (Hist.Occid.I)*, Paris 1841; Recently: Vannini and Tonghini 1997: 377.

4. Queen Melisandis enfeoffed the vicecount Ulrich von Nablus with al-Wu'ayra and the surrounding

country in 1150 (Mayer 1990: 189/90). "Villagers, howeverremained on the land with a near-serf status little changed from that which they had held under Muslim rule" (Boas 1988: 139).

5. As to Late Islamic pottery on Jabal al-Qšeir see Lindner *et al.* 1996: 148/9, on Jabal aš-Šuffāḥa see Lindner *et al.*, From Edomite to Late Islamic - Jabal aš-Šuffāḥa North of Petra (ADAJ 1998); on Jabal al-Khubtha, at al-Barra, in the al-Mudhlim settlement and at Rās Batha (unpublished observations and collections of pottery).

was no need (reduced population!) to live there anymore. The last villagers may have returned to their previous, more or less, nomadic life or concentrated perhaps in el-Gi (Wādī Mūsā) where new excavations are due to reveal further information⁶.

Conclusion

It can be proposed that according to the pottery and the political situation inferred from historical sources, the villages described as well as an-Naq'a II were all built and inhabited around the Crusader period in the 12th century, with Khirbat al-Mu'allaq as the least hidden and earliest. It seems that they were relinquished before the explicit geometrically painted Mamluk pottery of the 12th, 13th and 14th century AD had a chance to be introduced *en masse* to village life. Some of the villages survived for a while, perhaps even into Ottoman times, but none of them into the present. Stated otherwise, they were a "transient phenomenon" in relation with the Crusader occupation of the Petra region.

Appendix

Thanks are due to Dr Jeremy Johns of Oxford University who kindly allowed me to read his unpublished paper on "The Rise of Middle Islamic Hand-Made Geometrically-Painted Ware in Bilad-al-Sham (11th - 13th Centuries AD)". Except that he calls Middle Islamic what I call Late Islamic, the village pottery that is presented together with the architecture of the villages antedates the rise of HMGPW. Unfortunately, my paper was already finished, by the time I was able to study Dr John's profound and far-reaching treatise. Hope-

fully, I may still contribute some local observations to what Dr Fawzi Zayadine adequately calls "the medieval suburbs of Petra" (pers. comm.).

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6. I have to thank my friend Dr Fawzi Zayadine for suggesting that the political situation of the 12th century in the Petra region was more complex than indicated in this essay. I fully agree with the Jordanian archaeologist. Part of the complexity referred to should be the fate of the Christians

around Petra who might or should have cooperated with the Crusaders and suffered after their defeat. However, for the presentation of pottery and architecture from the villages, the rough description of the 12th century should suffice.

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