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## **Education Is the First Step of Protection before Archaeological Excavation: KHuraybat As Sūq Site as a Challenge Example**

Until recently, archaeological excavations in Jordan focused on well-known sites, publishing and producing magnificent articles especially about Greco-Roman cities (*e.g.*, Jerash). KHuraybat As Sūq has one of the fastest growing populations in the southeast part of Amman. It is impossible for archaeologists to keep up with newly exposed sites under this pressure. In some cases, nothing was done after excavations and the sites turned into unclean areas. Local authorities, including the Department of Antiquities, cannot ignore this major problem. They must work with the local people to solve it within its social and environmental context, or “sociosphere” (the daily life of the population, their roads, buildings and rubbish materials, human-made threats, developments, the ecosphere and the environment).

People used to build right on the top of the ancient remains, exposing them so that they became damaged.

Increasing risk led to the need to protect these forgotten monuments and their archaeological/architectural remains. Today, some Roman architecture has been transferred from its site (*e.g.*, the KHuraybat As Sūq Mausoleum).

UNESCO, ICOM, the ICOMOS Council of Europe, and other international organizations have adopted conventions for cultural heritage preservation that set the common rules and standards of the member states to address these issues. Debates concerning archaeological research, heritage preservation, and heritage management have increased in recent years, often because of such organizations and their rules and standards. After decades of such processes, it is time for evaluation of their implementation.

It is necessary to achieve a new national strategy for the protection of these sites before they disappear. This strategy should be a condition of work

implemented in the first two weeks of any archaeological project. The socio-sphere is one of the major elements of outreach in this field. This message might be the first attention drawn to the importance of heritage to those who sleep near the site each night and see it daily. This should raise awareness between the inhabitants, neighbors town, pupils, and local authorities.

A requirement to preserve and restore the architectural elements is necessary too. My goal is to create more awareness among the public regarding their heritage, including a field workshop at this archaeological site, that will also examine their traditional way of education about history and ecology.

#### Participants in the Field Workshop:

1. Schools, teachers, students of all ages, local authorities, society, the department of the local mayor, and representatives of Ministry of Education in this region.
2. Women's parties, social society's folklore representative (sociosphere).
3. Neighbors of the site, nearby shops; the market, Mukhtar, and any local associations (families).

In this way, archaeological studies, excavations, and surveys can contribute to the local community. During our fieldwork, we still need to create capacity building as the backbone for future purposes. This team consisted of the Department of Antiquities cooperating with municipalities, civil social organizations, the Ministry of Education, cultural heritage centers, and foreign cultural centers. In one case, a new archaeologist who graduated from this village wanted to look after their own heritage as a volunteer. They came to the Amman antiquities office with a

proposal to clean the site and expose it for the residents and nearby people, and also to acquire more training in their special study area.

Education and training may be done together in such cases as an opportunity to create capacity building teams (with local people) so as to integrate together on this central issue. Education is the channel leading to capacity building especially among pupils and site neighbors. The fieldwork contributes to everyone's interest. This will achieve the best result between the people around the site and the researchers. Conservation of architecture and the building materials required create this need to build concrete cooperative courses in training, heritage education, laws, and with site neighbors. This is still a big challenge.

The experts and technical teams from the Department of Antiquities must have good training and be up to date with the new tools of technological programs to integrate these ideas into the civil community; more cooperation is still needed.

The teams that work on traditional architecture might in the future create a new technology to rebuild homes using regional materials in some buildings, and these buildings would become impressive examples of the city's heritage.

Part of our new purpose is to spotlight the beauty of structural elements at the church: capitals, designs of columns, columns fallen inside the nave of the church because of earthquakes, and one re-erected fallen column (FIG. 1.2). This happened decades after the first excavation in 1974, after which the site was neglected and ignored. No one referred to the particular importance of the ancestors' place of worship, so all together had to respond on this issue.

### Architectural Elements of the Byzantine Church

This church is situated on the south-east part of the artificial Tall Khuribah, which is smaller than Kherbah in size. It was fully damaged or even destroyed by more recent construction; its architectural elements were reused in houses, courts, stores and animal pens. The houses in the village were formed from the old blocks and they reused many of the stones spread throughout the main core of the old site of the traditional village. Therefore, continuous occupation of the location of the site through the ages made this all a challenge (FIG. 1).

Why did that happen? Because of the importance of the location. It was situated on the old road to the south part of Jordan, before the Roman Road (*Via Nova Traiana*, AD 106–111) (Ibach 1993: 65–67) (FIG. 2) (Marling and Garaty 1993). This site was the main commercial gate of Philadelphia to Petra, and it may have collected tax fees. Moreover, there were three mausoleums still standing in this location as memorials of some Roman leaders. Conder (1940) mentioned that there was a Roman station on the *Via Nova Traiana* trade route situated 10km south of Philadelphia. Mausoleums used to stand at the entrance of Roman cities. In Ephesus, there was a good example of mausoleums standing just behind the main gate. Moreover, just to the northeast there is the main Roman cemetery including the Seven Sleepers Cave (it is a part of the so-called Roman-Byzantine cemetery).

One of the early Roman settlements, Ahl Al Kahef (the Muslim traditional name), was close to the cemetery Er-rajeeb or Er-raqeeb. The remains of this site were destroyed by looters and the owners of the land more than fifty years ago. These Roman towns south

of Philadelphia used to be the major production centers.

A little more than seventy years ago, the KHuraybat As Sūq area was a sheep and goat market. The old men from the village and the peasants around called it Sooq el-Jawaher, the Jewelry Market.

Roman architectural elements were also reused in the Byzantine church, which is easily noticeable, e.g., capitals and friezes from the pediment above the façade of the Roman temple, were reused as the border of a press, a grinding place instead of the church apse, and were also reused in the Mamlouk vaults. The Roman temple was established during the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. Patches of mosaic floor are still preserved in the aisle, the nave has a stone pavement like Roman temples, with dressed cut stones. The Roman and Byzantine style was reused on the exterior walls of the church including with the early Islamic buildings. The earlier church was reconstructed and reused in the early Islamic period until the 9<sup>th</sup> century AD as a church. Then, the narthex of the structure was rebuilt as a stable for horses in the Mamlouk period (13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> century AD). This vault reconstruction was the horse stable; it could have been a Mamlouk army station used during the struggle with crusaders. After that the structure was abandoned until the late Ottoman period (late 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century AD) when the villagers inhabited the remains of these buildings, reusing the stones to rebuild their houses or the traditional village (FIG. 3) (Abu Shmais 2007).

Between 1974 and 1975 the Department of Antiquities excavated the site as part of a cooperative mission with the University of Jordan to recover the exterior wall of the complex in preparation for excavating and protecting the old structure (Moawiyah Ibrahim

mentioned in 1975, *ADAJ* 20; and Zayadine 1982, *ADAJ* 26). It was excavated again and five architectural phases were discovered. In addition, it was found in the nave that the Roman tiles of the street oriented toward the east instead of toward the apse. Zayadine later published a book in 2004 entitled *Great Amman (Athar W Hadarah* in Arabic). He added that the mosaics were destroyed at the time of the Iconoclast, as in the church of the Apostles in Madaba, dated to AD 587.

During my responsibility as a director of Amman's archaeological sites from 2000–2009, I found that we must do something in such cases. So, in 2004 the general director of the Department of Antiquities accepted the proposal presented by Mohammad Sarhan and Mohammad Saqer Mobarak to prepare, protect, and clean this site. The team from the department office included Mr. M. Sarhan, Miss H. Sabba, Miss Dajeh Ena'am Dajeh, Mr. M. Saqer as archaeologist, and Mr. J. Safi as surveyor and drawer. First, Miss Sabba visited the families in the village, especially site neighbors, and encouraged them to visit the site and to help in cleaning the garbage during our exploration of the whole village. The Mukhtar (like a mayor) was on the head team. The workers included owners of the lands around the site and people in the society of the village. In addition, we received aid from the municipality of Jwaydeh.

First, we tried to help and raise awareness among the residents of the local society, especially neighbors of the archaeological site:

- a. The best practice of visiting the site; when perceptions of their behavior towards relics changes; individuals, families, teachers, and the local NGOs. This goal was achieved by:

1. Preparing boys from childhood, what actions were well known from the historical stories, references to the religion and the antiquities themselves (the site evidence). We have to manage the connection between the story and the ruins to understand the nature around (ecosphere).
  2. The Ministry of Education must have a schedule for students to visit museums and sites each year.
  3. The Department of Antiquities did impact assessment studies in such cases.
- b. Less educated people have to understand their habits and what not to do:
    1. Deface and writing on the archaeological elements
    2. Soliciting antiquities or purchasing objects.
    3. Moving archaeological elements from its site or reusing them.
    4. Any new construction (roads, buildings, factories, and urban developments).
  - c. Result: The Importance of Antiquities
    1. National heritage
    2. Research and students
    3. Tourism
    4. The sharing and reuse of certain sites for social activities, *e.g.*, concerts, theater productions, weddings, and any national days.

People can share life and space with antiquities through visiting the developed places around the archaeological sites or using them, such as with Roman theaters. The major point is to learn from other societies.

The team spent four weeks just cleaning the rubbish from the squares which were excavated during 1974–1975; more than 24 lorries carried the rubbish out from the site. Then we collected and sorted the dressed limestone in case the blocks would be needed in any future program of restoration. This church is located in the core of the village, which rebuilt on the remains of the ancient Tall Khurybah. Part of a structure still standing has two columns completely preserved *in situ*, on their bases made of cubic limestone. It is basilica-style, with a nave and two aisles and two east-west rows. Each row consisted of seven columns placed on stylobates made of limestone slabs, which is a Roman paving technique. The capitals of the columns show a variety of decorative motifs and clearly were taken from the earlier Roman temple. They were reused in the Byzantine church, the Umayyad/Abbasid period, and then in the Mamlouk building. Many drums and capitals were found scattered or broken to suit other functions. However, the nave ended in a small room or gate instead of the apse; the apse was changed into a domestic area. This door was constructed of carved stones reused from the friezes of the Roman temple (FIG. 4). The floors of the north and south aisles are paved with a mosaic, which was mostly robbed out or damaged.

There is a Greek type of Ionic capitals. Butler noted that in the Breikek temple there are plaster caps of Ionic order and mentioned that this is a Roman type. Larche mentioned the Bail temple at Tadmur and referred it to Hellenistic times (in Syro-Palestine dated to the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC). This was also used in an Umm Qays church and carved on the façade of Nuwyjeis and Ahl-elKahef facade.

The nave was paved with dressed blocks from limestone tiles. The exterior walls of the church were preserved to a height of 1.3m *in situ*, and the interior faces extensively preserved. The stones of this wall faced rubble fill and a modern white mortar. The atrium area was still occupied as a part of neighbors' houses. Some capitals, column drums, and other architectural elements were reused in the walls of the traditional building. The use of building blocks through the ages has caused them to deteriorate in shape. A top plan was made for the architectural remains of the structure as it is. This work was done by the surveyor Mr. Jamal Safi (FIG. 5). Mr. Sarhan's team helped to get more information from the local people, entering houses of relatives, and they tried to determine what their view was as the neighbors of antiquities, asking why they were using this site as a rubbish-disposal place and animal pen. In fact, just *Kherbah* in the Arabic language means "garbage place." The local community did not know that it had been a holy place, a church.

Our team and some teachers from the local schools made more than one visit to houses with the Mukhtar (a person the villagers will trust and with the respect of the local Governor). In addition, the servants of the Mosque preached lessons on awareness about protecting the site. Moreover, we visited the Mayor's office in the village (FIG. 6). Negotiations included how they can cooperate with us to prepare volunteers from their society and how we can solve this issue of the rubbish and the animals. A group of women worked hard with us in this field, and we met with ladies from NGOs more than once. There was respect for our discussion of this being a holy place, similar to their mosque.

After that, I think our mission succeeded in explaining the importance of

their heritage. However, this educational team must repeat these activities each year to achieve our target.

We also cleaned up and re-excavated squares. In Area A: Sq. C4, located in the north aisle, had been completely excavated during previous fieldwork as mentioned before. More than one course of the exterior wall of the Roman temple was visible, with the higher course added later to the Byzantine church. Above that was the first course of the Umayyad arch base, which was reused in the church of the later period (Byzantine/Umayyad). This type of building has been placed on Roman temples at more than one site of the same periods (in the Madaba area, the Virgin Mary Church is an example, and in Hesban, the Acropolis Church). In the exterior wall of the south aisle, the shaft of a Roman column was rebuilt as part of a course. One of the column bases was found *in situ*. Shafts of the columns fallen in one direction indicated that an earthquake happened during the Byzantine/Umayyad period. Potsherds from the dump were examined just to classify them; the results date the occupational levels in this building from the Roman period until the Mamlouk period (from *ca.* the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD to the 14<sup>th</sup> century AD). The collection of potsherds represented all these periods.

Area A: Sq. B4, east of Area A: Sq. C4, contains the extension of the exterior wall of the north aisle. A wall was inserted between the columns on the south face, built with reused dressed stones. A mosaic floor uncovered in bad condition was decorated with geometrical designs forming patches of a border, dating to the 6<sup>th</sup> century AD. Underneath that, early Roman pottery and Iron Age sherds were found (FIG. 7). In Area A: Sq. D4: 10, a typical Abbasid potsherd with a faint cursive Arabic inscription was found. It is a piece of cylindrical

bowl (Arabic dialect: *كاسة الطرية*, the rapture cup) (FIG. 8).

We also had a chance to dig outside the church in Area C: Sq. B4. It is on private land and appears to be the dump area from the earlier excavations. After cleaning 1.3 m of accumulation, we found a foundation; one course of the structure floor was also rebuilt from the stones of the church, and the ruins represented five layers of cultural accumulation situated 1.70 m below the church floor level. Among the reused stones, which consisted of one course fixed with mortar, we found a turquoise faience figurine two centimeters long. This was originally associated with a pagan/cultic god. Also found was an amulet depicting a monk placed on top of a rectangular/cuboid pillar. The monk had a beard along with combed hair, and three permanent relief parts were placed in the penis area of the statue. There were holes for hanging behind the neck. His face is idealized, calm, and majestic. He may have been dedicated to protecting the city/the Roman temple (Arce 2009) (FIG. 9.1-2).

### Comments on the Excavation

In the main part of this structure we can see how the builders of the Byzantine church reused the Roman building stones and the colonnaded passage, so the exterior wall of the temple became the north wall of the basilica. The stones were placed using the Roman technique, constructed without mortar. The quantity of Roman potsherds dominated among the other sherds.

Two columns of the church are still standing, but the capitals are in more than one style: Ionic, Doric, stylized acanthus, and Corinthian. This confirms that they were reusing some of the Roman architectural elements in the Byzantine church. These styles are found in one of

the Umm Qays churches. Butler (1907: 105) assigned this style to the Roman period (dressed stones without mortar). Larche (1991) said that the architectural style could be late Hellenistic; the Baal temple in Tadmour has also this type. This style of architecture was used in the Nwayjes Mausoleum and in the Roman cemetery beside the Ahel El-Kahef site.

In Area B. Sq. B1, located at the southern end of the aisle on the exterior wall, there is a Mamlouk vault fallen directly on the mosaic floor. Patches of the paved border of this floor decorated

with geometrical designs, and part of these designs, are still preserved.

The surveyor and the engineer re-erected one of the columns after they studied the stable ones with accurate measuring and did a comparative study with the municipality engineering section (see FIG. 1.1, mentioned above). Part of the structure was rebuilt later during Umayyad/Abbasid period and again rebuilt for another purpose in Mamlouk period.



1.1



1.2

- 1.1 General view shows the situation of the site during a school trip (photo by A. Abushmais).  
1.2 Fallen missing part of column erected on its base *in situ* (photo by A. Abushmais).



2. *Via Nova Traiana* map, showing Philadelphia and the country yard of the south region/the site. Amman was called “Philadelphia” during the Roman period (drawing after Younker 1993, 56).



3. The excavation project revealed a vault rebuilt from Roman arch stones (photo by Osama Jabr/ Department of Antiquities).



4. Blocks and the decorated stones reused in the Early Islamic period (photos by Jamal Safi).

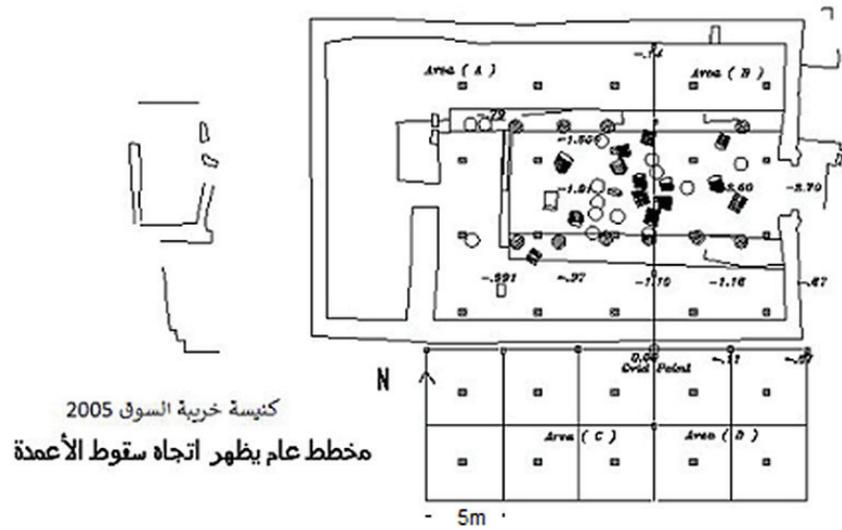


Fig. 4

5. General top plan of the Byzantine Church built above the ruins of the Roman temple (drawing by A. Abushmais).



6. Mokhtar, the Mayor, controlled the local community (photo by A. Abushmais).



7. Early Roman, late Hellenistic, and Iron Age sherds (Ammonite) (photo by A. Abushmais).

8. Pottery fragment from a cylindrical bowl, inscribed with faint cursive Arabic. Early Islamic II Abbasid Phase (photo by A. Abushmais).



9.1

9.1. Trial trench where the faience figurine was found (photo by A. Abushmais).

9.2. The faience figurine (photo by A. Abushmais).

9.2



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