

Facts about the field of study

- Jerash is a city located in Northern Jordan and notable for being part of the Roman Decapolis.
- The city continued to be occupied throughout the Byzantine and Early Islamic periods, when it continued to expand economically and demographically. After a devastating earthquake in 749 AD, parts of the city were abandoned and settlement declined.
- In the Northwest Quarter, the area was not reoccupied until the 13th century, or Middle Islamic period.
- Excavations of the Northwest Quarter took place from 2011 to 2016, conducted by the Danish-German Northwest Quarter Project, directed by Prof. Dr. Rubina Raja and Prof. Dr. Achim Lichtenberger.

About Alex Hunter Peterson

Alex Peterson is an Archaeologist, he produced his PhD dissertation at the Department of Culture and Society at Aarhus University, where he has been part of the Ceramics in Context research project. His research focus is on the history and archaeology of Middle Islamic Jordan.



Ceramics in Context (Semper Ardens project), Carlsberg Foundation, grant holder: professor dr. Rubina Raja. Urbnet, Centre for Urban Network Evolutions (Director: Rubina Raja).

Time and place for the defence

2 April 2019, 13:15

Venue: iNANO auditorium (1593-012), Gustav Wieds Vej 14, 8000 Aarhus C

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CERAMICS IN CONTEXT: THE HISTORY AND POT- TERY OF A MIDDLE ISLA- MIC SETTLEMENT IN THE NORTHWEST QUARTER OF JERASH

PhD dissertation by Alex Hunter Peterson



AARHUS UNIVERSITET

CERAMICS IN CONTEXT: THE HISTORY AND POT- TERY OF A MIDDLE ISLA- MIC SETTLEMENT IN THE NORTHWEST QUARTER OF JERASH

Summary of the main points of PhD dissertation *Ceramics in Context: The History and Pottery of a Middle Islamic Settlement in the Northwest Quarter of Jerash* by Alex Peterson, Department of Culture and Society, Aarhus University.

The dissertation aims to refine the chronology and typology of the pottery from a site located in the Northwest Quarter of Jerash, using a comprehensive approach to the pottery in order to develop a revised synthesis of Middle Islamic settlement history, and the economic and social structures of a rural community in Northern Jordan.

Exploring Middle Islamic Jerash

In the past research has had a tendency to focus on the history of Jerash and other sites in Jordan during antiquity. Often material from the medieval period was poorly documented or removed in order to investigate the Roman archaeological remains. In particular, hand-made geometric painted pottery (HMGP) tends to be overlooked in the existing research despite their ubiquity. By combining both the empirical analysis of ceramics and the deeper meanings of pottery use, their social and economic implications will be understood in a way which can take research on this topic much further

Utilizing a Contextual Approach

In general, research on Islamic pottery in Jordan and the Levant remains at an early stage of development and many studies do not fully quantify their ceramic material. Therefore, this dissertation aims to fully quantify and contextually analyse the ceramic material, while also taking into account historical sources, in order to interpret the material in more meaningful ways and refine the chronology of both the site and its pottery.

Revising the Chronology

The pottery from the site was chronologically separated and classified in order to create a new typology for a corpus of pottery that has received little systematic treatment in the past. Observations of the pottery and its site-based development identified several developments over three building phases, which allowed for the development of an open typology that can be used as a tool for further research. The occupational phases identified from the Northwest Quarter parallel regional trends in settlement in land use elsewhere in Jordan: A 13th Century reoccupation of Early Islamic ruins, 14th century economic expansions, and a 16th century dispersal of many settlements.

Socio-Cultural Processes

The ceramic material from the Northwest Quarter is also related to the socio-cultural processes, such as consumption, production networks, and the economic background of the settlement and its inhabitants. This study thereby offers a new picture of rural settlement in the Middle Islamic period of Jerash and the surrounding region, a part of Jordan which has received little attention by researchers for this period.

Conclusion

In sum, the present study is an example of how a comprehensive approach to the pottery aids in reconstructing a new synthesis of Middle Islamic settlement history, and the economic and social structures of a rural community in northern Jordan. Therefore, further studies of even small groups of well-contextualized archaeological material from the Middle Islamic period may also in the future add substantially to our insight into the societal structures of this period.