

## **Defining the patterns of transition between the Early and Middle Islamic periods in southern Transjordan**

Until relatively recently, it has been commonly believed that the period between the mid-8<sup>th</sup> century until the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century was a time of evident settlement crisis in southern Transjordan. This assumption does not necessarily coincide with the factual situation but is rather an effect of the common inability to identify archaeological material dated to the Abbasid and Fatimid periods. Recent research has indicated that in fact Umayyad ceramic traditions developed continuously for much longer than initially assumed, and plain and painted handmade wares that were usually associated with the period between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries are now being attributed to the 11<sup>th</sup> or even mid-10<sup>th</sup> century. While archaeologists are beginning to fill the gaps in the settlement history of the region, one can easily observe that there is still a significant quantitative and qualitative disproportion between the identified sites of the Abbasid-Fatimid and the Ayyubid-Mamluk periods.

This project aims to elaborate unpublished materials from five archaeological sites in the Wādī al-Hasā and Tafilah-Gharandal regions. This area probably functioned as a separate administrative unit (al-Jibāl) during the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. In so far as material culture is concerned, it is clearly of a transitional nature representing the features of both north and south Transjordanian ceramic traditions.

The study of this material purposes to provide a better understanding of the character of the settlement of the region from the earthquake in 749 until the arrival of the Crusaders to the southern Levant. This period witnessed significant changes in material culture which regrettably have not been sufficiently examined so far. Among them one can distinguish the successive replacement of pottery still originating in Late Antique tradition by new classes of pottery, such as 'Islamic Cream Ware' or 'Mahesh Ware', and the simultaneous introduction of polychrome glazed wares. The further disappearance of wares from the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries forms the context of another important change in the field of material culture, which, at least in the territory of southern Transjordan, relates to the first appearance of both plain and painted handmade wares from the Islamic periods.

The proposed project aims to illustrate the nature of these changes at sites representing different settlement types. It is also important to distinguish local models of production and distribution of various types of pottery. To achieve this goal, various complementary methods - including quantitative, chrono-typological, socio-cultural, and archaeometric analyses of chemical and mineralogical compositions - will be used in this study. Finally, the project also aims to look at the available records from a broader point of view to present a new and updated picture of settlement development in central and southern Transjordan between the mid-8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries. During the implementation of the project, the present author intends to conduct limited field work at Ruwāth and participate in the archaeological mission of the Jagiellonian University at at-Tuwāna.