

*Early Islamic Metalwork in Jordan*

by

Michelle D. Smith  
B.A., University of Victoria, 2003

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the  
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In the Department of History in Art

Michelle D. Smith, 2007  
University of Victoria

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Supervisory Committee

Dr. Marcus Milwright (Department of History in Art)  
Supervisor

Dr. Kathlyn Liscomb (Department of History in Art)  
Departmental Member

Professor John P. Oleson (Department of Greek and Roman Studies)  
Outside Member

**Supervisory Committee**

Supervisor: Dr. Marcus Milwright  
Departmental Member: Dr. Kathlyn Liscomb  
Outside Member: Dr. John P. Oleson

**ABSTRACT**

This thesis is an analysis of the decoration of a collection of metalwork artefacts excavated in Jordan, dating to the Early Islamic Period (661-900). I have compiled a catalogue of these metal objects which contains a thorough visual description of each item. These objects have then been organized into three groups of study: animate decoration, inanimate decoration, and the Mafraq brazier. The animate section contains animal and human forms; the inanimate is comprised of vegetal, architectonic, geometric, and epigraphic elements; and the Mafraq brazier is analysed alone due to its complex combination of decoration. Through the analysis of this catalogue of metalwork, I have shown that in the Early Islamic period the Umayyads were utilizing the existing forms of decoration common in the Late Antique period in new combinations and context which resulted in new meanings. This thesis also shows that it is likely that Christian, particularly Coptic, artisans were producing objects for the new Islamic elite.

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## 1. Introduction

This thesis is an analysis of extant metalwork dating to the Umayyad/Early Islamic period (661-900 CE) and excavated within the boundaries of modern-day Jordan. A catalogue of these metalwork objects (Appendix 1) has been compiled, and it is on this body of artefacts that I will focus my analysis. The objects in the catalogue fall into three distinct groups: censers for the burning of charcoal, and/or incense, jugs, and moulds. There is also a ring. Most of the artefacts are functional in nature and, with the exception of the silver finger ring, are for household use. Some of the items especially the Mafraq/al-Fudayn hoard (Catalogue 7-11) are highly decorative and therefore have served as luxury objects. The bulk of the objects are made of bronze. Although Umayyad objects made of silver and silver-gilt have been found,<sup>1</sup> most of the surviving Jordanian metalwork is made of relatively humbler material. However, bronze was considered an elite material. The 12<sup>th</sup>-century Armenian author Mehitars Gosh states "...the bronze worker was available for only a small number of people, while the iron worker was employed by everyone."<sup>2</sup> Bronze was an expensive material, and it is likely that the emirs or even the caliph would commission luxury objects such as the Mafraq brazier (Catalogue 9) as a gift to an

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<sup>1</sup> Examples include a silver stand with four eagles at the Freer Gallery of Art (accession #53.92) and a dish with silver gilt in the British Museum (accession #1963.12-10.3); both items were made in Iran. Esin Atil, et al., *Islamic Metalwork in the Freer Gallery of Art* (Washington, D.C.: The Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, 1985), pp. 55-57, and Rachel Ward, *Islamic Metalwork* (London: British Museum Press, 1993), p. 45, respectively. Objects made from gold and silver, while not unknown, are rare in Jordan.

<sup>2</sup> Josef Orbeli, *A Survey of Persian Art: from Prehistoric Times to the Present*, Vol. II, ed. by Arthur Upham Pope (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 763.

administrator.<sup>3</sup> Objects such as these must have served as statements of wealth and power for the elite.

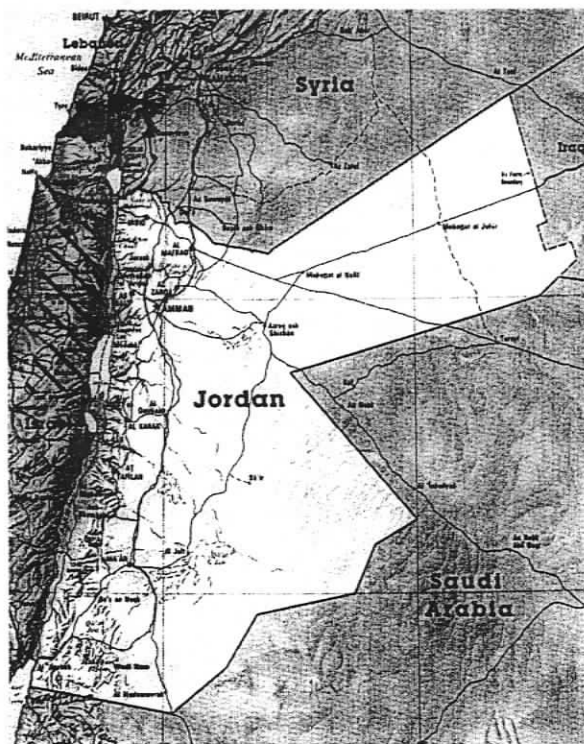
The catalogue contains several important and unique objects; one of the most remarkable finds is a section from the above mentioned brazier with an elaborate decorative program (Catalogue 9). This magnificent brazier is unparalleled in Byzantine, Coptic, Islamic, Late Classical or Sasanian metalwork discovered to date. A surprising absence from the catalogue is bronze lamps or lamp stands. Such artefacts are commonly found in Christian and Late Antique excavations in this area. Late Antique examples from Karak and Jarash also exist.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> In the Umayyad period, there is a distinct lack of identifiably royal portable art commissions. The boundaries of modern day Jordan, especially south of 'Amman, were the outlying areas of the Umayyad Empire. Consequently, the surviving artefacts, although beautiful, bear a provincial quality when compared to works from the high medieval period. In addition, it is only in the recent past that Islamic scholarship of material culture has expanded to consider these provincial or "everyday" objects as worthy of analysis. For an example of a "common" use censer, made of unglazed terracotta with several crudely made piercings, see *Umayyads: the Rise of Islamic Art* ('Amman: Ministry of Tourism, Department of Antiquities; Vienna: Museum With No Frontiers, 2000), p. 152.

<sup>4</sup> For examples see: Graham Philip, 'Art and Technology,' in *The Art of Jordan*, ed. by Piotr Bienkowski (United Kingdom: Alan Sutton Publishing Ltd, 1991), p. 97.

### 1.1.a: Geographic Boundaries



(fig. 1)

All of the objects contained within the catalogue were excavated within the boundaries of modern-day Jordan (see map, fig. 1). However, in the Early Islamic period Jordan was part of a much larger area administered by Damascus and often known as Bilad al-Sham. This region included modern-day Syria, the Palestine Authority, Lebanon, Israel, and Jordan. My historical and comparative analysis of the objects in the catalogue will always begin with the area of modern Jordan. When discussing the broader geographic region I will use the term Bilad al-Sham and focus comparative materials to this area.

The emphasis of the historical section (Chapter 2) centres on archaeological sites from which the objects in the catalogue were excavated. These locations are highlighted on the map of Jordan (fig.1). The artefacts were

excavated at sites located across Jordan: in the north at Mafraq, in the south at Humayma, and in the environs of 'Amman, including the 'Amman citadel and Umm al-Walid. Therefore the catalogue contains material from various locations across Jordan, lending an interesting geographic perspective to the collection as a whole. The significance of these sites in the Umayyad period will be discussed in detail in the historical background section of this thesis.

### *1.1.b: Metals in the Catalogue*

All of the objects in the catalogue are metal. There is one silver finger-ring and the rest of the objects are made of bronze. In her book *Islamic Metalwork*, Rachel Ward states that bronze metalwork is absent from the Islamic period except for some specialized types of objects, such as mirrors. She states that commonly metalwork objects were made with leaded brass because it was less expensive to make than bronze, easier to pour, and the resulting object had a substantial weight that was desirable.<sup>5</sup> However, the catalogues and archaeological reports that form the basis of my research indicate that all of these items (with the exception of the silver finger-ring) are made of metal that is either bronze or leaded bronze. Using Ward's theory regarding Early Islamic metalwork specifically, one could conclude that none of these items was made by Islamic craftsmen, a suggestion which is feasible, or that this theory does not apply to this earliest stage of Umayyad/Early Islamic metalwork. This offers another possibility. (See discussion in Chapter 5 and Conclusion).

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<sup>5</sup> Ward, *Islamic Metalwork*, pp. 29-30.

For the sake of convenience, in this thesis the term bronze is used to refer to all types of copper alloy, with the exception of brass.<sup>6</sup> Bronze is a metal alloy made of copper with up to 20% tin. Small amounts of other metals, such as lead, are often added. For example, the addition of lead facilitates the casting process of an ornate object. A few of the items in the catalogue, such as the zoomorphic kettle (Catalogue 4) and the footed censer (Catalogue 5), which are both from Umm al-Walid, are fabricated with leaded bronze. The objects in the catalogue, therefore, may cover a whole range of metallurgical compositions that include various copper-based alloys are included in this analysis. The point of this thesis is not a metallurgical study, but rather the analysis of a distinct group of metal objects from a specific region and time. Moreover, whether the objects are made of brass or bronze, either medium would have been costly and thus constituted an elite item.

### *1.1.c: Use of the Terms Umayyad and Early Islamic*

The period discussed will be referred to generally as "Umayyad," but will encompass a slightly wider time-period than this term traditionally indicates (661-750 CE). This is due to several important objects in the catalogue where the dating may extend beyond the limits of that period.<sup>7</sup> For example, the dating of the Humayma handle (Catalogue 1) straddles the late Umayyad/early Abbasid phases (750-1258). The Humayma handle does not easily fit into a discussion of Abbasid metalwork (e.g. metalwork produced after 750). After the Abbasids took

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<sup>6</sup> There are no items identified as brass in this thesis.

<sup>7</sup> The Mafraq/al-Fudayn hoard dating may be later than the 749 date offered by Humbert. (See Chapter 2, pp. 33-34).

control, the centre of power shifted from Damascus to Baghdad. The metalwork from this subsequent period shows more influence from the eastern Islamic realm (Iran and Central Asia),<sup>8</sup> whereas the Humayma object is related to the Jordanian Early Islamic period, as revealed in this study.

There are two ways of distinguishing between the various Islamic periods: archaeological periodization and dynastic identification. Archaeological periodization, proposed by Donald Whitcomb, uses neutral terms, such as Early Islamic I, that are based on century dating.<sup>9</sup> Consequently, Early Islamic periods I and II range from 630-1000 CE. The impetus for archaeological periodization arose from the perceived limitations of dynastic identification. Dynastic identification is based on the names of the ruling dynasties of Islam and is widely accepted in Islamic art history.<sup>10</sup> This type of identification would be especially difficult in this thesis, which involves a combination of art history and archaeology. Robert Schick states the issue adroitly: "...political terms for archaeological periods obscure the continuities in everyday material culture that remain unaffected by political events."<sup>11</sup> This thesis will utilise the terms Umayyad and Early Islamic interchangeably as a type of hybrid of the

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<sup>8</sup> There is a compelling field of study lead by Géza Fehérvári, which is examining the influence of temple designs on incense burners. Some of his examples of this influence include the well-known, ornate Freer Gallery incense burner dating to the 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> century, which bears the hallmarks of Buddhist (stupa) architectonic elements. See: Géza Fehérvári, 'Islamic Incense-burners and the Influence of Buddhist Art' in *The Iconography of Islamic Art: Studies in Honour of Robert Hillenbrand*, ed. by Bernard O'Kane (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), pp. 127-141.

<sup>9</sup> Donald Whitcomb, 'Reassessing the Archaeology of Jordan in the Abbasid Period,' *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan* 4 (1992), pp. 385-390 (p. 386).

<sup>10</sup> Robert Schick, 'Palestine in the Early Islamic Period: Luxuriant Legacy,' *Near Eastern Archaeology* 61 (1998), pp. 74-108 (p. 80). The author notes that scholars are divided in regards to Whitcomb's archaeological periodization.

<sup>11</sup> Schick, 'Palestine,' p. 80.

archaeological periodization and dynastic identification, with the modified period covering 661-900 CE.

### *1.2: Statement of intent of analysis*

Having established the geographic boundaries, medium, and dating used in the catalogue, I propose to analyse the metalwork artefacts through an examination of the decorative elements found within the objects. I will then place these results into the context of the production of metalwork in the Late Antique and Early Islamic periods. Through the evaluation and assessment of portable objects of the Umayyad period, using comparative materials from Jordan and Bilad al-Sham, I will establish artistic connections between the extant cultures of the region and the Umayyads. In addition, I will show that the Umayyads were working within the available cultural milieu of which they were members (thus the look also into Late Antique material). In addition, the occasional inscription on objects highlights the important role of writing in Arabic in this early phase of Islamic art.

### *1.3: Understanding the term "Umayyad Art"*

The analysis of Umayyad art demands a great deal from the student of this period. The Umayyads arose from within the cultural milieu of which they were part and saw themselves as the inheritors of not only the regions they controlled, but also of the artistic vocabulary used within these regions. Consequently, not only does one need to have a knowledge of the cultural context of Jordan, the population of which was primarily Christian (Byzantine and Non-Chalcedonian

sects),<sup>12</sup> but also of the influences of Sasanian, Roman, and Nabataean art and architecture. Were it not for archaeological excavations that are able to confirm the identification of a site as Umayyad through the analysis of material remains, the vast majority of objects, confirmed to the Umayyad period, would be indistinguishable from objects made from other cultures and periods. This is because the process of forming a coherent and singular iconography was just beginning during the Umayyad period.

It has been well established that the Umayyads were able to utilize well-established aesthetic and iconographic motifs, understood by a diverse population in the conquered areas of the Byzantine and Sasanian empires, to create and project a new visual statement of power. The Umayyads' rise to power occurred within a cultural context infused with centuries of the classical tradition in architecture, sculpture, and the portable arts. The art and architecture of the early Christian period adapted these classical elements, translating them into a form meaningful to those within a community as well as to outsiders. Although the majority of the population of Jordan was Christian until well into the 7<sup>th</sup> century, the pagan religions persisted in small areas, keeping their traditions alive.

Moreover, because the Umayyad elite were merchants, their economic contacts extended not only across the Middle East and the Mediterranean, but east

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<sup>12</sup> Non-Chalcedonian churches include sects with a monophysite-based doctrine. Monophysites believe in a single, divine nature of Christ. These churches include, Coptic, Jacobian, Nestorian, Armenian, and Assyrian groups. After the Council of Chalcedon in 451 CE, the Byzantine church determined the dual nature of Christ (both human and divine) as doctrine and recognised monophysite based sects as heretical. Consequently, numerous non-Chalcedonian sects dispersed into the less populated regions, like Jordan, to practice their faith without persecution. See: Garth Fowden, 'Varieties of Religious Communities,' in *Interpreting Late Antiquity: Essays on the Postclassical World*, ed by G.W. Bowersock et al., (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Belknap Press, 2001), pp.82-106.

as well, across the Silk Road. Thus, trading resulted in contact with Persian, Central Asian, Indian and Chinese cultures, and their art and architecture. The area of modern-day Jordan, although on the periphery of the Early Islamic seat of power to the north, was extremely important in the transfer of goods and military personnel, as well as the spread of ideas.<sup>13</sup> The Umayyads were able to draw from this diverse, ancient, and substantial vocabulary and turn it into a new visual declaration of authority. However, Umayyad artistic innovation did not stop with the utilization of well-established iconographic elements.

An additional and specifically Arab component became a key element of the Umayyad visual repertoire: the incorporation of epigraphy.<sup>14</sup> A striking example is evident in the numismatic and governmental reforms undertaken by 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan (r. 685-705). Early Umayyad coinage was initially based on modified Byzantine and Sasanian prototypes. In the 690s, 'Abd al-Malik began experimenting with different and, more specifically, Islamic iconographic elements on coinage: the *mihrab al 'anza*; the "standing caliph;" and a modified cross were motifs that appeared at that time. After 696-697, epigraphy became the standard on coins (see Appendix II, coins).<sup>15</sup> By the end of the 7<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Gerald L. Mattingly, 'The King's Highway, the Desert Highway and Central Jordan's Kerak Plateau,' *ARAM* 8 (1996), pp. 89-99.

<sup>14</sup> Nasser Rabbat, 'The dialogic dimension of Umayyad art,' *Res* 43 (2003), p. 93. The main theme of Rabbat's article supports the argument put forth initially by Erica Dodd in her article 'The Image of the Word,' *Berytus* XVIII (1969), pp.35-69. The earliest example of epigraphy is in the Dome of the Rock (691/692), within the aisles surrounding the central dome. Dodd supported that the Dome of the Rock utilizes late Hellenistic, Byzantine, and Sasanian iconographic decoration found in contemporary and earlier Christian monuments.

<sup>15</sup> Stephen Album and Tony Goodwin, *Sylloge of Islamic Coins in the Ashmolean Vol. 1: the Pre-Reformation Coinage of the Early Islamic Period* (Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 2002); Finbarr Barry Flood, *The Great Mosque of Damascus: Studies on the Makings of an Umayyad Visual Culture* (Leiden, Boston, Koln: Brill, 2001), pp. 185-186; Garth Fowden, *Qusayr 'Amra: Art and the Umayyad Elite in Late Antique Syria* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2004), pp. 294-295; Schick, *Christian Communities Palestine from Byzantium to*

century, coinage, the most widely circulated artistic medium, was entirely focused on the word. Examples of inscriptions in other media from the Umayyad period survive, such as the mosaic inscription bands in the Dome of the Rock, the silver finger-ring (Catalogue 12), ceramics,<sup>16</sup> textiles,<sup>17</sup> and carved stone.<sup>18</sup>

One of the most challenging aspects of studying Umayyad metalwork is a direct result of their utilization of established iconographic elements; the Umayyads followed earlier traditions so closely that it is frequently difficult to date objects based on style or iconography. The Umayyad Empire ranged from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic on the west, and to Central Asia and the Indus valley on the east, including modern-day Iran and Iraq. This vast geographic area contained numerous and divergent groups of people with a huge range of

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*Islamic Rule*, (New Jersey: The Darwin Press, 1995), pp. 98-100, 166. Moreover, it was at this time that Arabic began to replace Greek which as the administrative language.

<sup>16</sup> Ina Kehrberg, 'Jordan Archaeological Museum,' *Umayyads*, p. 68. There is a pottery jug from Dayr 'Ayn 'Abata (the Church of Saint Lot), Jordan, that has a band of roll-stamped Kufic inscription, dating to the late Umayyad or early Abbasid period.

Wijdan Ali, *The Arab Contribution to Islamic Art* (Jordan: Royal Society of Fine Arts, Cairo; American University Press, 1999), p. 45. Ali notes the Kufic inscription on a ceramic vessel, making this the "first application of calligraphy as a decorative element to functional utensils." However, the author does not offer a specific date.

<sup>17</sup> Ali, *Arab Contribution*, p. 45. Ali cites the existence of a silk textile fragment, which has embroidered Kufic inscriptions bearing the name of Marwan I (684-685), identifying it as a product of an imperial textile workshop. Another fragment has *Ifriqiya* (North Africa) embroidered on it, stating the place of manufacture.

<sup>18</sup> Mohammad al-Asad, 'Al-Badiya,' *Umayyads: the Rise of Islamic Art* ('Amman: Ministry of Tourism, Department of Antiquities; Vienna: Museum With No Frontiers, 2000), p. 118. There is an inscribed capital from the water reservoir at al-Muwaqqar, Jordan, bearing the date 720-724. This capital, along with seventeen others, was discovered a few hundred meters from the ruins of the palace complex. This capital is an important example of the Umayyad translation of Late Antique elements transformed into something completely Islamic.

In addition, there is a stone with a Kufic inscription of the 'Ayat al-Kursi (the Throne Verse, Sura 2:255), dating to the Umayyad period (Aida Naghawy, <[www.discoverislamicart.org](http://www.discoverislamicart.org)>). Naghawy suggests that this stone functioned as a talisman against the evil eye. The dating of this object is somewhat suspect. It was discovered during an "emergency excavation" in the centre of 'Amman in 1958, by the Department of Antiquities. Dating was established through stylistic analysis of the script and pottery sherds in the archaeological strata "close by." The bibliographic source is only written in Arabic.

decorative styles and iconographic conventions from which the Umayyads could draw.

Umayyad material culture can sometimes be indistinguishable from what was produced within Sasanian, Christian (Byzantine and Non-Chalcedonian), and pagan cultures during this period.<sup>19</sup> The fact that such items were produced during the Umayyad period clearly points out that, regardless of the ruling dynasty, in the lives of people living in or travelling through Jordan, these metal objects were slow to reflect political changes. The Umayyad era was a period of absorption and development resulting in a uniquely Islamic aesthetic derived from within the cultural context of Bilad al-Sham. The Jordanian metalwork studied in the following pages illustrates both these phases.

#### *1.4: Literature Review*

To date, this is the first detailed examination of Jordanian metalwork from the Umayyad period. Numerous surveys of Islamic metalwork exist; however, they tend to focus on objects dating from the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup> centuries. Not only has this later period been designated as the "classical" phase, but it also has the largest corpus of objects.<sup>20</sup> Within these publications there are usually slim

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<sup>19</sup> Eva Baer, *Metalwork in Medieval Islamic Art* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983), p. 284 (Sasanian influence); Erica Cruikshank Dodd, 'Book Review: *The Art and Architecture of Islam 650-1250*, by Oleg Grabar and Richard Ettinghausen' *The Art Bulletin* 57 (1975), pp. 267-270. Dodd states that long before the Islamic conquest Sasanian influence was well established in Syria (p. 268). For classical influence, see Rabbat, 'Dialogic Dimension,' pp. 79-94. For Sasanian and classical influence, see Richard Ettinghausen, *From Byzantine to Sasanian Iran and the Islamic World* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1972), pp. 3, 21. Moreover, these types of influences raise the question of potentially misidentified objects as Late Classical, Byzantine, and Coptic, when they may, instead, be of Islamic commission.

<sup>20</sup> Examples of major Islamic metalwork surveys include:

sections on the early Islamic period. Even with this area attention is generally weighted towards the 'Abbasid period (750-1258), with relatively little mention of the Umayyad phase.

This challenge of studying Umayyad metalwork is reflected in the majority of general surveys of this topic and period. There are only a handful of artefacts securely dated to the Early Islamic period and these generally appear in every book. Such publications begin with objects dating to the Sasanian period (224-642), then move to the Marwan ewer (ca. 750),<sup>21</sup> the Hermitage eagle aquamanile (ca. 796-797); sometimes the Freer incense burner (8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> century) is also included. In effect, the Umayyad portion of the Early Islamic period is completely passed over. This is not surprising considering the difficulty in distinguishing between the Umayyad and other metalwork-producing cultures during this period. This issue is further compounded by the fact that few artefacts in any media have survived from the Umayyad period.

The foremost book on the subject of early Islamic metalwork is Eva Baer's *Metalwork in Medieval Islamic Art* (1983). This book has proved to be an essential resource for studying Islamic metalwork and understanding the legacy of the Umayyads. Each of the exhibition catalogues, *The Umayyads: the Rise of*

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James W. Allan, *Islamic Metalwork: the Nuhad Es-Said Collection* (London: Sotheby's, 1982) and *Metalwork of the Islamic World: the Aron Collection* (London: Sotheby's, 1986). Esin Atil, et al., *Islamic Metalwork in the Freer Gallery of Art* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1985); Géza Fehérvári, *Islamic Metalwork of the eighth to the fifteenth centuries in the Keir Collection* (London: Farber and Farber, 1976); L. A. Mayer, *Islamic Metalworkers and their works* (Geneva: A. Kundig, 1959); Rachel Ward, *Islamic Metalwork* (London: British Museum Press, 1993).

<sup>21</sup> The Marwan ewer was excavated at Abu Sir, Egypt, near the mausoleum of the last Umayyad caliph, Marwan II, suggesting that the object was made for the defeated caliph and consequently dated not later than his death in 750.

*Islamic Art* (2000)<sup>22</sup> and *Jordanie: sur les pas des archéologues* (1997),<sup>23</sup> contains information regarding the archaeological context of the early Islamic era. *The Umayyads* focuses specifically on the Umayyad period in Jordan and *Jordanie* on the archaeological legacy of more than 6000-year old legacy of Jordan. These texts provided necessary information on objects in the catalogue, such as: where they were discovered; material composition; how the artefacts are fit within the pre-Islamic era and within Umayyad art, in general; and, by extension, their influence on Islamic art as a whole.

*The Christian Communities of Palestine from Byzantine to Islamic Rule* (1995),<sup>24</sup> *The Great Mosque of Damascus: Studies on the Making of an Umayyad Visual Culture* (2001),<sup>25</sup> *Qusayr 'Amra: Art and the Umayyad Elite in Late Antique Syria* (2004),<sup>26</sup> and *The Image of the Word* (1981)<sup>27</sup> provided invaluable historical and aesthetic insights into the development and contributions of Umayyad art. There are several outstanding articles written on Umayyad aesthetic development. "Vine Ornament and Pomegranates as Palace Decoration in 'Anjar," by Barbara Finster (2005),<sup>28</sup> "The dialogic dimension of Umayyad

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<sup>22</sup> *The Umayyads: the Rise of Islamic Art* ('Amman: Ministry of Tourism, Department of Antiquities; Vienna: Museum With No Frontiers, 2000).

<sup>23</sup> *Jordanie: sur les pas des archéologues*, exhibition catalogue (Paris: Institut du Monde Arabe, 1997).

<sup>24</sup> Schick, *Christian Communities*.

<sup>25</sup> Flood, *Great Mosque*.

<sup>26</sup> Fowden, *Qusayr 'Amra*.

<sup>27</sup> Erica Cruikshank Dodd and Shereen Khairallah, *The Image of the Word: A Study of Quranic Verses in Islamic Architecture* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1981).

<sup>28</sup> Barbara Finster, 'Vine Ornament and Pomegranates as Palace Decoration in 'Anjar,' in *The Iconography of Islamic Art: Studies in Honour of Robert Hillenbrand*, ed. by Bernard O'Kane (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), pp. 143-158.

art," by Nasser Rabbat (2003),<sup>29</sup> and "Palestine in the Early Islamic Period," by Robert Schick (1998),<sup>30</sup> are all valuable examples.

An additional outstanding resource is the website, [www.discoverislamicart.org](http://www.discoverislamicart.org), launched in September 2005 and developed by the Museum with No Frontiers Foundation, which is based in Belgium.<sup>31</sup> The website is an indispensable source of digital images of objects and specific locales from nineteen countries in the Middle East and Europe.<sup>32</sup> It contains artefacts that are not always included in articles, exhibition publications, or in museums. This web resource has been a crucial source of specific information for my catalogue of Jordanian metalwork (e.g. measurements, comparative material in different media). In some cases, previously unpublished objects or not yet displayed in museum collections have been included in this website. In addition, several comparative items are found in it.

The archaeological reports from the various sites provide another important resource.<sup>33</sup> These types of primary evidence were invaluable in gaining a more complete understanding of the context in which the artefacts were discovered. The archaeological material can offer insights that, sometimes, historical texts cannot. Further assisting my understanding of these publications was my participation on the Humayma Excavation Project under the direction of Professor John P. Oleson, of the Department of Greek and Roman Studies,

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<sup>29</sup> Rabbat, 'Dialogic Dimension,' pp. 79-84.

<sup>30</sup> Schick 'Palestine,' pp. 74-108.

<sup>31</sup> Not only is the MWNF foundation responsible for publishing *The Umayyads: the Rise of Islamic Art*, but they have established informative signboards at Jordanian Umayyad sites which are discussed in the thesis.

<sup>32</sup> The section on Jordan is especially good as it contains numerous Umayyad sites and objects.

<sup>33</sup> For a complete listing of archaeological reports, see Bibliography: archaeological report section.

University of Victoria. Seeing how artefacts are excavated and recovered, as well as working with specialists in the field, was a tremendous benefit towards understanding the context in which the objects were found and the process and complications of dating these finds.

The other challenge to understanding the Umayyad period is the lack of surviving historical documents and the biased examination of this period in texts written during the rule of subsequent dynasties.<sup>34</sup> In addition, some of the analyses of Umayyad material culture define the art of this dynasty narrowly. The Umayyad period is an exciting and challenging period to study, and using the broadest range of publications enables the student to distil the significant information.

### *1.5: Outline of Chapters and the Catalogue*

The thesis is comprised of six chapters and a catalogue. The chapters include the historical background (Chapter 2); animate imagery (Chapter 3); inanimate imagery (Chapter 4); the Mafraq brazier (Chapter 5); and the conclusion (Chapter 6). The chapter on the historical background focuses on the individual sites where the artefacts were found. Source materials generally focus on archaeological excavation reports, and any gaps are filled through research in scholarly materials on the individual sites. This approach offers the reader a clearer understanding of the context in which the objects were found.

Chapters 2, 3, and 4 comprise the analysis of the Catalogue. Due to the type of decorative elements found on the various items in the catalogue, I have

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<sup>34</sup> Robert Hoyland, *Arabia and the Arabs* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001).

divided the analysis into three groups. The categories on animate and inanimate ornamentation each contain an examination of the relevant motifs, with an introductory section on the historical background of this type of decoration in Jordan and the surrounding region.<sup>35</sup> This is followed by an analysis of each of the decorative elements distinguished within the animate or inanimate group. A conclusion is provided at the end of each chapter.

It became apparent that the Mafraq brazier (Catalogue 9) would require separate analysis. This is due to the extraordinary and complex decorative program of this large object, which has not yet been thoroughly analysed in any publication. The analysis of the brazier and its decoration follows a pattern similar to those in the animate and inanimate chapters (Chapters 3 and 4). First is a section on the history of braziers in Jordan and the surrounding region, and then a study of each of the decorative elements followed by a conclusion.

Appendix I contains the catalogue of metalwork of the Umayyad period. Each entry is numbered, and a photograph and line drawing are included. Following this are the specific details of the objects, including some of the following: material, identification of object (function), dating, measurements, locale and the year of excavation, and how the object was produced (manufacture). This is followed with a detailed visual analysis of the objects, the majority of which I was able to examine directly while in Jordan. The subsequent section establishes the provenance of the item, which is usually taken directly from the archaeological report concerned with the excavation (documentation).

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<sup>35</sup> Chapter 2, Animate Decoration, also includes a brief section on Byzantine Iconoclasm and the so-called Edict of Yazid II.

Next is a listing of known publications citing the object and, finally, comparative material. The catalogue is meant to serve as a resource for the reader to understand the context the use in which the object was found, the use the object served, the detailed form and decoration of the artefact, and to highlight the particular item in the context of similar material in decoration and use. Appendix II contains images of such comparative material.

There are 25 objects in the catalogue; of these, 12 are included in the analysis. The other 13 are omitted because these items do not possess decoration or are of a completely utilitarian design (Catalogue 14-25). They are included in the catalogue in an effort to provide the reader with a picture of the widest possible range of metalwork from Jordan dating to the Umayyad period. There is little doubt that this collection of metalwork has missed objects, as archaeological efforts are ongoing in the region and not all earlier projects have been fully published. One important item has come to my attention recently, but has not been included in the catalogue. This is a bronze jug with applied decoration, in the holdings of the Spanish Mission in 'Amman, Jordan. The jug has been dated to the first half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century and was excavated on the Citadel of 'Amman. I have chosen not to include this object as it is currently unpublished; however, the item can be viewed at the Museum with no Frontiers website.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Aida Naghaway, <[http://www.discoverislamicart.org/database\\_item.php?id=object:ISL:jo:Mus01\\_H:34:en](http://www.discoverislamicart.org/database_item.php?id=object:ISL:jo:Mus01_H:34:en)>  
25 August 2006.

*1.6: A Note on Transliteration*

I have followed a simplified version of the transliteration specified in the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* throughout this study. Words such as Qur'an and hadith, which have entered into common English usage have not been italicised

## 2. Historical Background

### 2.1: Introduction

Jordan has been the focus of numerous historical and archaeological studies. Consequently, this thesis will not attempt to repeat the existing scholarship of specialists in this field. Instead, I will pursue a line of historical analysis that is specific to the excavation sites where the Umayyad metalwork objects were discovered. It is my hope that in using this approach, the reader will attain a discrete portrait of the specific context in which the artefacts were found. In the following historical section, I will first present a condensed overview of Jordanian history leading up to the Umayyad period (section 2.2); following this is a section on Umayyad history (section 2.2.a). This is succeeded by a history of the specific excavation sites: Humayma, Mafraq (al-Fudayn), Umm al-Walid, the citadel of 'Amman, and Qasr 'Ayn al-Sil (sections 2.2.1-2.2.5).<sup>36</sup> The examples from Pella and 'Aqaba (Ayla) are included in the Catalogue, but these objects contain little decoration. Given that these artefacts are not discussed in the analysis of chapters 3 and 4, it was felt that an examination of the historical development of these sites was superfluous.

### 2.2: Brief overview of the history of Jordan

Until 1918, Jordan was part of a much larger region known as Bilad al-Sham (Greater Syria). This region included modern-day Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Palestine Authority, and part of Turkey, and the Umayyads established

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<sup>36</sup> Some of the sites examined in this thesis have seen continuous excavation and numerous published reports. Others sites have received minimal excavation and, consequently, little material is available. For this reason, the section on Humayma, led by Professor John P. Oleson, who has worked on the site for twenty years and has consistently published important information on it, will contain a great deal more information than Qasr 'Ayn al-Sil.

their capital in Damascus. At the pinnacle of Umayyad expansion, the borders spanned from Portugal in the west to Pakistan in the east, and north into Uzbekistan.<sup>37</sup> Consequently, the discussion of Jordan in this thesis refers to only a small portion of that larger realm.

In terms of physical geography, Jordan is divided into five zones: limestone desert, steppe, uplands, the Jordan valley, and the Hisma.<sup>38</sup> The limestone desert begins east of 'Amman and is part of the Syrian Desert (Badiyat al-Sham). This is a hardpan desert with a major oasis, Azraq.<sup>39</sup> It is in this region that Qasr 'Ayn al-Sil is located. The inland desert steppe begins southwest of 'Amman, near Madaba. It runs north past 'Amman and includes the Hawran. The southeast section of the desert is crossed by the Dead Sea. Although this is desert steppe, rainfall is around 355mm per year in the region of Madaba.<sup>40</sup> In northwest Jordan are the uplands, an elevated plateau (max. elevation 113m) located between 'Amman and Irbid in the north and 'Ajlun and al-Salt to the south. Rainfall ranges from 378mm west of 'Amman and 655mm at al-Salt.<sup>41</sup> The 'Amman citadel, Mafraq/al-Fudayn, and Umm al-Walid are located in this region. The Jordan Valley is part of a huge geological feature, the Rift Valley, which ranges from northern Syria to the Red Sea. Lake Tiberias, the River

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<sup>37</sup> Rebecca Foote, 'How to be Elite without Being Umayyad: Expressions of Abbasid identity at Humayma in the Early Eighth Century CE Context,' to be published in *Crossing Jordan-North American Contributions to the Archaeology of Jordan*, ed. by Thomas E. Levy, P.M. Michèle Daviau, Randall W. Younker, and May Shaer (London: Equinox Publishing Ltd, 2007), 15 pages, p. 1. A draft of this manuscript was kindly provided by Professor Oleson.

<sup>38</sup> Alastair Northedge, 'Physical Topography of 'Amman,' *Studies on Roman and Islamic 'Amman: the Excavations of Mrs. C-M Bennett and Other Investigations* (Oxford: University Press, 1992) p. 19.

<sup>39</sup> David Kennedy and Robert Bewley, *Ancient Jordan from the Air* (London: Council for British Research in the Levant, 2004), p. 237. The Azraq oasis was finally drained in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. This oasis was the second largest after Palmyra in Syria.

<sup>40</sup> Northedge, 'Physical Topography,' p. 19.

<sup>41</sup> Northedge, p. 20.

Jordan, and the Dead Sea serve as a natural boundary between Jordan to the east, and the Palestine Authority and Israel to the west. Southern Jordan contains an area known as the Hisma, a hardpan hyper-arid desert, which receives 80-100mm of rainfall annually.<sup>42</sup> It is here that Humayma is located (2.2.1). Punctuating the Hisma is a huge escarpment called al-Shara or the Dead Sea rift, which drops nearly 500 metres into the desert floor.<sup>43</sup> This region contains a mountainous zone, including Wadi Rum, through which the desert meanders.

Jordan has an ancient and diverse history. Archaeologists have ascertained there was hominid inhabitation of the region in 200,000 BCE.<sup>44</sup> Numerous powerful empires such as the Nabataean, Sasanian, Roman, and Byzantine have left their mark on this geographically and agriculturally important country. These successive cultures constructed buildings and created objects, adding their preferred architectural styles to the Jordanian landscape. The annexation in 106 CE of *Provincia Arabia* during the reign of Trajan (r. 98-117 CE) brought great changes to the region. Not only did the Romans install a series of garrisons along the newly paved north-south trade route, which they had also renamed as *Via Nova Traiana*, but they also defeated the once powerful trading empire of the Nabataeans (ca. 400 BCE – 108 CE), who had made their capital at

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<sup>42</sup> John P. Oleson, 'The Origins and Design of Nabataean Water-Supply Systems,' *SHAJ V* (2005), pp. 707-719 (p. 707); J.P. Oleson, 'From Nabataean King to Abbasid Caliph: The Enduring Attraction of Hawara/Humayma, a Multi-Cultural Site in Arabia Petraea,' to be published in *Crossing Jordan-North American contributions to the Archaeology of Jordan*, ed. by Thomas E. Levy, P.M. Michèle Daviau, Randall W. Younker, and May Shaer (London: Equinox Publishing Ltd, 2007), 13 pages (p. 2-3).

<sup>43</sup> John P. Oleson, 'King, Emperor, Priest and Caliph: Cultural Change at Hawar (Ancient al-Humayma) in the First Millennium AD,' *SHAJ VII* (2001), pp. 569-580 (p. 571). Oleson, *SHAJ V*, p. 710.

<sup>44</sup> Piotr Bienkowski, *The Art of Jordan* (United Kingdom: Alan Sutton Publishing Ltd., 1991), p. 87. Remains of flint tools have been found near Azraq dating to the Palaeolithic period, ca. 200,000 BCE.

Petra. During the continuing Roman domination of the region, Constantine (r. 324-337) transferred the capital of his empire in 330 to the Greek city formerly known as Byzantium and renamed Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul, Turkey). Historians identify the eastern Roman empire as the Byzantine empire from 330 until its defeat by the Ottomans in 1453.

The earliest Christian community in Jordan dates to 66 CE, when refugees arrived in Pella after fleeing the Jewish revolt in Jerusalem.<sup>45</sup> Christianity continued to grow and there was a significant surge in church building activity during the reign of Justinian (r. 527-565). Many of these churches still exist today.<sup>46</sup> Various Christian sects populated the region and those opposed to Byzantine doctrine found freedom to worship in their own way. In the 6th century, a powerful group of Christianized Arabs, the Ghassanids, formed strong alliances with the Byzantine Empire and served as a regional authority, and a intermediary between the Byzantines and Sasanians. Throughout all of these changes, many Arabs remained independent and viewed traditional familial loyalty as the ultimate authority.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Bienkowski, *The Art of Jordan*, p. 24.

<sup>46</sup> A few well-known examples include the *diakonikon* mosaic in the Basilica of Moses, at Siyagha [Mt. Nebo], dating to 531; the Church of the Map and the Church of the Apostles, both dated to 578, and the Church of the Virgin with its geometric mosaic, from ca. 595, all in Madaba.

<sup>47</sup> Brendt D. Shaw, 'War and Violence,' in *Interpreting Late Antiquity: Essays on the Postclassical World*, ed. by G.W. Bowersock et al., (Cambridge Massachusetts and London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001), pp.162-163. Some Arab rulers were recognized by the Romans and given the title *phylarchs* (meaning tribal chief). They were used as a means of controlling the imperial border areas and generally keeping the enemies of Byzantium at bay. There is no doubt that they had some sort of contact with the Quraysh. In addition, the Ghassanids built castles and palaces with distinctly regional flair.

Hugh Kennedy, 'Islam,' in *Interpreting Late Antiquity*, 219-237 (p. 221). Stories of the Ghassanid kingdom survived in literature and possibly served as an inspiration for the Umayyad Empire.

Rina Talgam, *The Stylistic Origins of Umayyad Sculpture and Architectural Decoration. Part I: Text* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2004), p. 114. Talgam notes that the plan of Qasr al-Hayr West was based on the Ghassanid model.

Although Christians and Jews formed the majority of the population of Jordan, Islamic armies took control of the region with relative ease. The *dhimmi* (Christian and Jews)<sup>48</sup> were permitted to practise their religion as long as they paid their taxes to the Muslim authority.<sup>49</sup> The fact that new churches were built and established churches maintained during the Umayyad period attests to this relative freedom. The best examples are at Madaba and Umm er-Rasas.<sup>50</sup> The process of conversion to Islam was progressive and not necessarily immediate.

### 2.2.a: Umayyad History

The Umayyads were the first dynasty of Islam. The founder, Mu'awiya (661-680), came from the "rich-merchant princes" of Mecca, the Quraysh.<sup>51</sup> The Quraysh were a family of powerful aristocratic traders who travelled and traded across the vast expanse of the Middle East and beyond. The Umayyads did not arise out of a cultural void, nor were they a pastoral/nomadic people.<sup>52</sup> They were from the region and saw themselves as the inheritors of the cultural milieu they now commanded.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Arabic for "protected people."

<sup>49</sup>H. Kennedy, 'Islam,' p. 222; Robert Schick, 'Palestine,' pp. 74-108 (p. 86). There is evidence of the continuation of church building and improvements after the Islamic conquest, such as the second-phase mosaic pavement (with dedicatory inscription) of the church of Saint Varus at Rujm Uthman/Khilda, in the northwest area of 'Amman, dated to 687. The Cave of Saint Lot was repaved with mosaics in 691 and occupation continued well into the Abbasid period. Mosaics in the lower church of el-Quwaysmah (southeast of 'Amman) date to 717-718. The mosaic at the Acropolis Church at Ma'in dates to 719-720; Bienkowski, *Art of Jordan*, p. 128. At the Church of Saint Stephen at Umm er-Rasas, dated to 756, the mosaicist is identified as Staurachios of Hesban.

<sup>50</sup> Zbigniew T. Fiema, 'Historical Conclusions,' in *The Petra Church*, ed. by Patricia Maynor Bikai ('Amman, Jordan: American Centre of Oriental Research, 2001) pp. 425-436 (p. 431, footnote 108).

<sup>51</sup> Bertold Spuler, *The Muslim World: A Historical Survey: Part I, Age of the Caliphates*, Translation by F.R.C. Bagley (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960), p. 35.

<sup>52</sup> Rabbat, 'Dialogic Dimension,' pp. 79-94 (p. 80).

<sup>53</sup> Rabbat, p. 81.

To understand better the sites examined in this study, the reader needs to be cognizant of why these sites were established. Unfortunately, with the exception of the citadel of 'Amman, the dates of initial construction phases can be problematic, as Umayyad buildings are often located on the sites of earlier structures. That the Umayyads chose to build on established sites indicates either a possible scarcity of building material and/or the strong probability that locations were situated on or near established trade routes. As arbitrary as the placement of a site may appear in the modern context, in the Umayyad period such sites must have served specific purposes.

Historically, Jordan has functioned as a conduit for the transportation of products, merchants, troops, pilgrims, and by extension, the dissemination of ideas.<sup>54</sup> Merchants, troops, and pilgrims were moving through a series of north-south and east-west trade routes. The major north-south routes are the King's Highway<sup>55</sup> and the *Via Nova Traiana*, which run from the Red Sea in the south to 'Amman and Damascus in the north. These routes also served *hajj* pilgrims from the north during the Islamic period. The east-west trade route, following the Wadi Sirhan, ran east from 'Amman. The Wadi Sirhan was an attractive route for the Romans, Muslim armies, and the Umayyads as there were numerous watering sites. The western section of the Wadi Sirhan ran from 'Amman to Tayma, there

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<sup>54</sup> Mattingly, 'King's Highway,' pp. 89-99 (pp. 91, 95).

<sup>55</sup> The modern Desert Highway runs parallel to the ancient King's Highway, however, it detours around the deep canyons of Mujib and Hesa, resulting in a more direct route northwards. Mattingly, 'King's Highway,' pp. 93-95.

joining the road to Madina.<sup>56</sup> For centuries both of these routes provided important conduits of communication and goods, and access to religious sites.

When the Umayyads took control of the area, these routes continued to be maintained and utilised. Specifically, during the Marwanid period (684-744) of the Umayyad caliphate, a series of *qusur* were constructed.<sup>57</sup> The term *qusur*, plural of *qasr*, identifies a complex of buildings, once known by the term, "desert castle."<sup>58</sup> There are two types of *qusur*: one which contains a mosque and a *dar al-'imara* (residence of the ruler), and the other a *qasr* with bath, mosque, and mansion.<sup>59</sup> The Marwanids built *qusur* at specific sites associated with trade and pilgrimage across the north-south and east-west trade routes across Jordan and Bilad al-Sham. The placement of the *qusur* does not correlate with the *junds* (administrative districts) of the Umayyad period, indicating that they served another purpose. Jere Bacharach has identified sub-units of these areas assigned to the sons of 'Abd al-Malik. Each of these members of the Marwanid family constructed well-known *qusur* such as Qasr Hallabat and Hammam Sarah (attributed to Caliph Hisham bin 'Abd al-Malik) and Qusayr 'Amra (attributed to

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<sup>56</sup> G.R.D. King, 'The distribution of sites and routes in the Jordanian and Syrian deserts in the early Islamic period,' in Proceedings of the *Twentieth Seminar for Arabian Studies held in London on 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> July 1986* (London: Institute of Archaeology, 1987), pp. 91-104 (p. 92.)

<sup>57</sup> The Marwanid branch of the Umayyad period refers to descendants of Marwan (r. 684-685). These include 'Abd al-Malik (r. 685-705); al-Walid I (r. 705-715); Yazid II (r. 720-724); Hisham (r. 724-743); and al-Walid II (r. 743-744). Jere L. Bacharach, 'Marwanid Umayyad Building Activities: Speculations on Patronage,' *Muqarnas* 13, (1996), pp. 27-44.

<sup>58</sup> The term 'desert castle' is a western convention, established in the 19<sup>th</sup> and used by art historians up to the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Initially, this term derived from the difficulty in translating the Arabic word, *qusur*, which has several meanings, from palace to mansion. Because early investigators of the *qusur* did not have the information subsequent studies have revealed to contextualise the placement of these structures, they were considered the pleasure palaces of decadent Islamic rulers, used for drinking and other wanton acts. As this was not the primary function of these sites, the term will not be used in this study, but replaced by *qusur* or *qasr*.

<sup>59</sup> Bacharach, 'Marwanid,' p. 30.

al-Walid I).<sup>60</sup> The availability of water, agriculture, and game for hunting is an important element of many of these sites.<sup>61</sup>

These *qusur*, placed in specific sites across the major trade routes, served as a political anchor for the region, by acting as a place for the amir (prince) or caliph to meet with local Bedouin groups. They also provided water for merchants and pilgrims, and assisted in stabilising, utilising, and protecting this expansive region. It is likely that these sites served as sources of income, through taxation imposed on people moving through the region. Accordingly, the *qusur* worked in relation to the smaller, rural urban settlements, such as Qasr 'Ayn al-Sil (2.2.5), providing political stability and fostering the flow of commerce.<sup>62</sup>

The defeat of the Umayyads by the Abbasids was the result of the interaction of numerous political factors. However, an unforeseen natural event, the earthquake of 749, must have assisted the Abbasids in their *coup*. This massive event ravaged most of Bilad al-Sham and is referred to in Christian, Jewish, and Muslim sources. Cities such as Bet Shean, now in Israel, were destroyed. In fact, it was through archaeological excavations at this site that the date of 749 was secured for this occurrence.<sup>63</sup> There can be little doubt that the chaos that followed this cataclysmic event facilitated the Abbasid defeat of the Umayyads.

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<sup>60</sup> Bacharach, pp. 32-33.

<sup>61</sup> For example, Qasr al-Hair esh-Gharbi (in Syria) was once surrounded by farmland.

<sup>62</sup> G.R.D. King, 'The Umayyad Qusur and Related Settlements in Jordan,' in *The History of Bilad al-Sham during the Umayyad Period (Fourth International Conference: 24-29 October 1987: Amman): Proceedings of the Third Symposium/Bilad al-Sham History Committee*, ed. by Muhammad Adnan Bakhit and Robert Schick ('Amman: The Committee, 1989), pp. 71-80 (p. 71).

<sup>63</sup> Yoram Tsafrir and Gideon Foerster, 'The Dating of the 'Earthquake of the Sabbatical Year' of 749 CE in Palestine,' *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 55 (1992), pp. 230-235 (p. 234).

2.2.1: *Humayma*  
(Catalogue 1)



(fig. 2) *Humayma*<sup>64</sup>

Humayma is located in the Wadi Hisma, a hyper-arid desert zone, north of the mountains bordering the Red Sea. The site is 80km south of Petra, the Nabataean capital, and 80km north of 'Aqaba (ancient Ayla).<sup>65</sup> Humayma is on the King's Highway, which is the most important north-south trade route of the

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<sup>64</sup> Kennedy and Bewley, *Ancient Jordan*, p.180.

<sup>65</sup> Oleson, 'From Nabataean King,' p. 1.

region. The King's Highway runs from 'Aqaba (ancient Ayla) in the south, through 'Amman, and culminates in Damascus. This site has been inhabited by numerous cultures over the centuries: Bedouin, Nabataean, Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic. Initially established by the Nabataean ruler Aretas III (r. 84-62/59 BCE) early in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE, the site was called Hawara. Apart from nomadic Bedouin, Hawara was the first permanent settlement established at the site.<sup>66</sup> The reasons for Aretas III's choice of this location for a new settlement are not entirely clear; however, the Greek sources state that Aretas' father consulted an oracle, which described the location for the establishment of this site. Several Nabataean sites are associated with the pronouncements of oracles.<sup>67</sup> What is clear is that Hawara was one of the few locales in the Hisma, positioned near the King's Highway, to which water could be brought by aqueduct from the escarpment springs and was topographically suited to the collection of run-off water. A steady supply of water encouraged sedentarization of nomadic Nabataeans and provided a resource for merchants and travellers on the King's Highway.<sup>68</sup> Further supporting settlement and support of merchants and travellers are evidence of wheat and barley cultivation in various areas around Hawara.<sup>69</sup>

The Nabataeans, a powerful group of wealthy merchants, controlled the territory from Mada'in Salih (in Saudi Arabia) to Busra (in Syria) for nearly 300

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<sup>66</sup> Oleson, *SHAJ* VII, pp. 569-570; Oleson, 'Nabataean Water Supply Systems: Appropriateness, Design, and Evolution,' to appear in *SHAJ* 9 (2007), 15 pages, p. 2.

<sup>67</sup> Palmyra (Syria), Baalbeck (Lebanon), Sidon (Lebanon), as well as Kos and Delos (Greece), all contain Nabataean remains. Oleson, *SHAJ* VII, pp. 570-571.

<sup>68</sup> Oleson, *SHAJ* VII, p. 571; Oleson *SHAJ* 9, p. 6.

<sup>69</sup> Oleson, 'From Nabataean King,' p. 7.

years.<sup>70</sup> The geographic scope of their trading was truly formidable, ranging across Bilad al-Sham and Egypt to Greece, Rome, India, and into China.<sup>71</sup> Their capital was located in Petra less than 50km north of Humayma.<sup>72</sup> In addition to their adroit skills as merchants, they were masters in the conservation of desert water. They established a series of ingenious cisterns and hydraulic systems at Humayma that were functional well past the Roman occupation of the site.<sup>73</sup>

The Romans annexed the Nabataean kingdom in 106 CE and installed the earliest, large imperial fort in Provincia Arabia at Humayma.<sup>74</sup> Excavations have revealed several important structures within the fort. These include *horrea* (granary), a latrine, barracks, a workshop, *principia* (headquarters building), and *praetorium* (commander's building), which contains numerous floor mosaics, and a fountain.<sup>75</sup> In addition, between 111 and 114 CE the Romans built the *Via Nova Traiana*, another north-south road, which runs parallel to the King's Highway. This road, punctuated with a series of imperial fortresses, ensured the

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<sup>70</sup> Taylor, *Petra*, p. 219. Nabataean rule begins in 168 BCE and ends with the annexation of Arabia in 106 CE.

<sup>71</sup> Bienkowski, *Art of Jordan*, p. 17.

<sup>72</sup> Robert Schick, 'Ecclesiastical History of Petra,' in *The Petra Church* ('Amman: American Centre of Oriental Research, 2001), pp. 1-6, (pp. 1-3). After the defeat of the Nabataeans in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, Petra became a Christian stronghold. By the beginning of the 4<sup>th</sup> century, Petra was the capital of the province of *Palaestina Tertia* and the seat of a bishop; it remained the see of the metropolitan bishop until the 7<sup>th</sup> century. Several Christian structures and Christian renovated buildings exist at the site, including three smaller churches (Urn Tomb Church, al-Katute Church and the Ridge Church), as well as the Petra Church with its fantastic mosaic pavement. Other structures include the monastery (el-Deir), as well as a hermitage and monk's cells. Moreover, there is the site of Jebel Haroun, where a monastery of Saints Aaron and Moses was established and in use until the Crusader period. This site, located on a mountain above Petra is still venerated by Muslims and Christians, is known as the Tomb of Aaron.

<sup>73</sup> John P. Oleson, *SHAJ V*, p. 714; *SHAJ 9*, p. 4; Oleson, 'From Nabataean King,' p. 2.

<sup>74</sup> Oleson, 'From Nabataean King,' p. 7; David Kennedy, *The Roman Army in Jordan* (London: Centre for British Research in the Levant, 2000), p. 182.

<sup>75</sup> Oleson, 'From Nabataean King,' p. 8.

continuation of trade.<sup>76</sup> Occupation at the site continued into the Roman Tetrarchate/Byzantine period, when numerous churches were built.<sup>77</sup> Byzantine control of the area ended some time after the decisive Muslim victory at the battle at Yarmuk in 636.<sup>78</sup> The fate of the Christians who had been occupying the site is unknown; however, excavations of the lower church (C101) indicate that this structure was peacefully abandoned.<sup>79</sup>

During the Umayyad period, Humayma became the residence of the Abbasids, an important elite family. The Abbasids (749/50-1250) became the second caliphate of the Islamic empire and Humayma is their earliest confirmed residence.<sup>80</sup> The site was purchased by 'Ali al-'Abbas, between 687/8-705, during the reign of Umayyad caliph 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan (r. 685-705).<sup>81</sup> 'Ali is the son of 'Abd Allah Abbas, head of the Abbasid family and the son of the paternal uncle of the Prophet Muhammad. 'Ali built a *qasr* and a *masjid*. His planting of 500 olive trees indicates that water was more plentiful during this period.<sup>82</sup> 'Ali was caught attempting to overthrow Walid I (r. 705-715) and was exiled to Humayma.<sup>83</sup> In time, the site became the base of the Abbasid revolt of

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<sup>76</sup> D. Kennedy, *The Roman Army*, p. 36. There were a series of forts constructed along the *Via Nova* to protect trade against Bedouin interference.

<sup>77</sup> Robert Schick, 'Field B126: Byzantine Church,' in "Preliminary Report of the Al-Humayma Excavation Project, 1995, 1996, 1998", *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan XLIII* (1999), pp. 411-450 (pp. 430-432). To date, excavations have revealed five Byzantine churches in Humayma.

<sup>78</sup> D. Kennedy, *The Roman Army*, p. 38.

<sup>79</sup> Schick, *Christian Communities*, p. 312.

<sup>80</sup> Foote, 'How to be Elite,' p. 3. The author further states that the Abbasid architectural remains at Humayma are the earliest example of non-Umayyad building patronage.

<sup>81</sup> Foote, 'How to be Elite,' p. 3; Schick, *Christian Communities*, p. 313.

<sup>82</sup> Foote, 'How to be Elite,' p.3; Schick, *Christian Communities*, p. 313.

<sup>83</sup> Rebecca Foote, 'Field F103: The Caravanserai,' in 'The Humeima Excavation Project Preliminary Report on the 1991-1992 Seasons' in *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan XXXVII* (1993), pp. 461-501 (pp. 484-487); Ralph Pinder-Wilson, 'Ivory Working in the Umayyad and Abbasid Period,' *Journal of the David Collection* 2,1 (2005), pp. 12-23.

749. The brothers of 'Ali ibn 'Abd Allah ibn al-'Abbas would eventually plan the successful overthrow of the Umayyad Empire. Excavations at the *qasr* and the mosque have indicated evidence of a comfortable way of life, with wall frescoes and elaborately carved ivory panels (perhaps from a throne), as well as other items.<sup>84</sup>

This well-appointed lifestyle was supported through the family's success as merchants trading across the region of Bilad al-Sham and further east. In addition, Humayma was near the pilgrimage route and many travellers visited the site.<sup>85</sup> Eastern influences are found in the figural imagery of the ivory panels. Two depict soldiers and another a full-faced male, which are without regional antecedent. Rather, they reflect a Central Asian, Persianate or Indian provenance.<sup>86</sup> Contact with people from across the region was a common occurrence at the Abbasid residence in Humayma, as they regularly received visitors from Syria and the Hijaz.<sup>87</sup>

The Abbasids left Humayma in the late 740s for Baghdad.<sup>88</sup> Humayma continued to be inhabited by various local groups, into the Ottoman period (1517-1918).<sup>89</sup> Although there is no longer a settlement at Humayma, another settlement, New Humayma, is located on the King's Highway just a short distance

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<sup>84</sup> Rebecca Foote, 'Frescoes and carved ivory from the Abbasid family homestead at Humeima,' *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 12 (1996), pp. 423-428 (pp. 425-426); Pinder-Wilson, "Ivory Working," p. 16.

Al-Asad, 'Al-Humayma,' p. 195. In addition, an ostrich eggshell painted red, iron handles, leather fragments and an Umayyad coin dating to 733-734 were found here.

<sup>85</sup> Schick, *Christian Communities*, p. 312.

<sup>86</sup> Foote, 'Frescoes and carved ivory,' p. 426.

<sup>87</sup> Foote, 'How to be Elite,' p. 4; Al-Asad, 'Al-Humayma,' p. 195.

<sup>88</sup> Foote, 'How to be Elite,' p. 4.

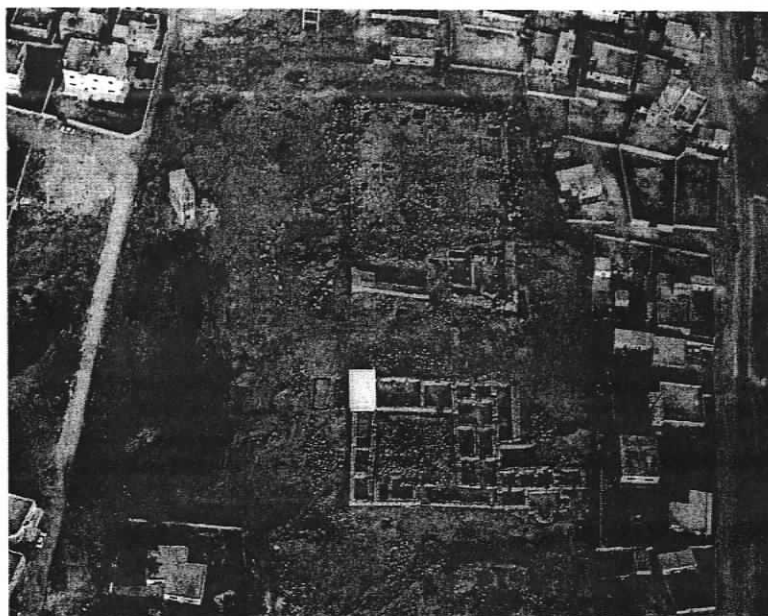
<sup>89</sup> Al-Asad, p. 196.

from the ancient site.<sup>90</sup> New Humayma is a place where travellers can stop for fuel, food, and beverages, functioning much like the older site. Humayma has a history of divergent cultures occupying this area. Nabataean, Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic people have left their marks on this important site.

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<sup>90</sup> Humayma now has a visitors' centre due to the efforts of Professor J.P. Oleson, and funding from the Canada Fund in Jordan in collaboration with the Friends of Archaeology. Oleson, 'From Nabataean King,' p. 4.

2.2.2: *Mafraq (al-Fudayn)*  
(Catalogue 7 - 11)



(fig. 3) *Mafraq/al-Fudayn*<sup>91</sup>

Mafraq is located at the edge of the fertile region of northern Jordan, 70km northeast of 'Amman. The ancient site of al-Fudayn is located within the modern-day city of Mafraq. *Fadan* is an Aramaic word meaning high wall or elevated building, and is associated with a fortress built here in the 9<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Mafraq is located just a few kilometres west of the *Via Nova Traiana*. A possible spur road ran toward this settlement, continuing on to Jerash.<sup>92</sup> This site was occupied during the Byzantine period, and a non-Chalcedonian monastery was erected early in the reign of Justin II (r. 565-578).<sup>93</sup>

<sup>91</sup> Kennedy and Bewley, *Ancient Jordan*, p. 234.

<sup>92</sup> Kennedy and Bewley, p. 234.

<sup>93</sup> Ghazi Bisheh, <[http://www.discoverislimicart.org/database\\_item.php?id=monument;ISL:jo;Mon01;6;en](http://www.discoverislimicart.org/database_item.php?id=monument;ISL:jo;Mon01;6;en)>, 20 August 2006.

During the Umayyad period, the site was purchased by the extremely wealthy Sa'id ibn Khalid ibn 'Amr ibn 'Uthman who, as his name indicates, was the great-grandson of 'Uthman Ibn 'Affan (r. 644-656), the third of the Rashidun caliphs. Sa'id built what was known as a *day'a*, an agricultural estate. The site included a series of structures within the ancient fortification walls, including a bathhouse, a mosque, and a palatial residence which had been converted from a monastery.<sup>94</sup>

Members of the Umayyad dynasty appear to have been regular visitors at this site, as three of Sa'id's daughters were married into the ruling family. One daughter married the Caliph Hisham ibn 'Abd al-Malik (r. 724-743). Another daughter, Sa'da, married al-Walid II (r. 743-744), though she died before al-Walid II became caliph. After the death of Sa'da, al-Walid married her sister, Salma.<sup>95</sup> These connections through marriage to the ruling dynasty indicate the high status of Sa'id and his family. Moreover, Khalid's own lineage, which connected him to 'Uthman, the third Rashidun caliph, establishes his significant connection to the Prophet Muhammad. Based on this information, it is likely that Sa'id, while not the ruling caliph himself, was a distinguished member of the Umayyad elite and close to those in power.

It is unknown how this family, with its close ties to the ruling Umayyad family, initially survived their downfall at the hands of the Abbasids. However, the excavation of the Mafraq brazier possibly offers some insight into conditions

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<sup>94</sup> Ghazi Bisheh, 'Al-Fudayn (Mafraq),' *The Umayyads: the Rise of Islamic Art* ('Amman: Ministry of Tourism, Department of Antiquities; Vienna: Museum With No Frontiers, 2000), pp. 133-135 (p. 133).

<sup>95</sup> Bisheh, 'Al-Fudayn (Mafraq),' pp. 134-135.

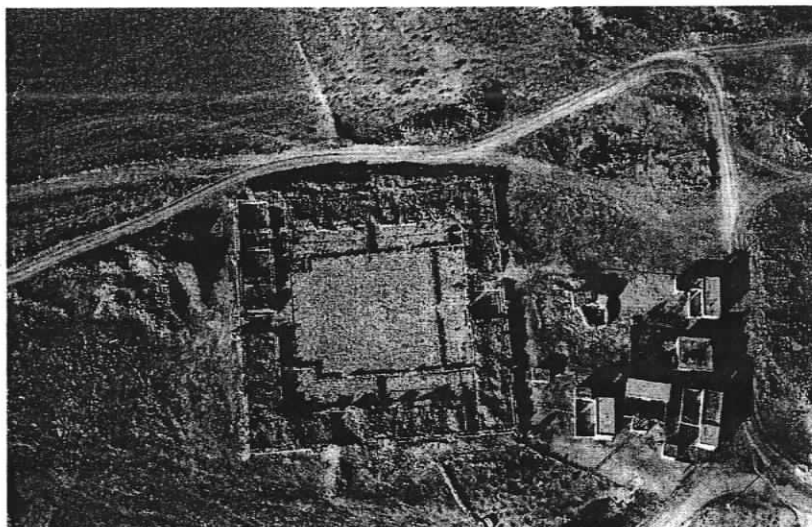
in 749-750, the period of the Abbasid revolution and a cataclysmic earthquake. When the eponymously named brazier was discovered at this site, it was wrapped in the remnants of a mat or basket. The presence of the mat/basket suggests that these precious items were being moved, or possibly removed from the *day'a*, when something occurred to prevent that person from completing their task.<sup>96</sup> This suggests that the *day'a* was either being abandoned or robbed. However, the *day'a* remained in the Sa'id family until ca. 775-825. Alternatively, it is possible that these items were moved during this later time. Sa'id al-Fudayni led an initially successful, but short-lived revolt against the Abbasid Caliph al-Ma'mun (r. 813-833).<sup>97</sup> Sa'id al-Fudayni escaped, but the *qasr* at al-Fudayn was destroyed.

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<sup>96</sup> Ghazi Bisheh, <[http://discoverislamicart.org/database\\_item.php?id=monument;ISL:jo;Mon01;6;en](http://discoverislamicart.org/database_item.php?id=monument;ISL:jo;Mon01;6;en)>, 20 July 2006.

<sup>97</sup> Alastair Northedge, 'The Abbasid Revolution and After,' in *Studies on Roman and Islamic 'Amman*, Vol. I. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 52-55 (p. 53).

2.2.3: *Umm al-Walid*  
(Catalogue 3-6)



(fig. 4) *Umm al-Walid*, east qasr<sup>98</sup>

Umm al-Walid is located 25km south of ‘Amman, at the junction of two ancient roads between the *Via Nova Traiana* and the desert road. Umm al-Walid is also 2km from a pair of dams that were used for irrigation.<sup>99</sup> The settlement is also near Ziza, a well-known stop for hajj pilgrims, indicating that numerous travellers were passing near the site, if not through it.<sup>100</sup> The site covers a moderately large area and is in ruins. However, the foundations and some of the walls remain intact. Umm al-Walid experienced a gradual decline as the seat of Islamic power shifted from Damascus to Baghdad after the defeat of the Umayyads. The site is now somewhat isolated. However, during the Umayyad period, there was a thriving Christian community of farmers who were well

<sup>98</sup> Kennedy and Bewley, *Ancient Jordan*, back cover image.

<sup>99</sup> Kennedy and Bewley, p. 230.

<sup>100</sup> King, 'Distribution of Sites,' pp. 91-104 (p. 98).

established at the time of Muslim control.<sup>101</sup> As with the majority of sites in Jordan, Umm al-Walid had successive layers of human inhabitation. Although there is evidence of Bronze Age settlement and two Roman temples have been excavated, archaeologists have concentrated their efforts on the remains dating to the Umayyad period.

The site features a small mosque, and three *qasr* structures in the eastern, central, and western areas of the site. Archaeologists have ascertained through analysis of construction materials and building techniques that the eastern *qasr* and the mosque date to the Umayyad period. Interestingly, archaeologists have discovered that the mosque was built upon an earlier, smaller mosque that predates the 8<sup>th</sup> century *qasr*. This finding indicates that there was a long-established Muslim community at Umm al-Walid.<sup>102</sup> In addition, Umm al-Walid was located in the midst of primarily Christian villages.<sup>103</sup> The lack of fortification walls clearly indicates that Muslims and Christians were peacefully trading and co-existing with one another. The small size of the mosque also suggests that there were not enough Muslims in the surrounding area to require the building of a congregational mosque.<sup>104</sup> There is no information about the history of the site after the Abbasid coup; however, there seems little reason to believe that pilgrimage routes would have been too affected. Trade in agricultural products would likewise have continued as long as the demand was there. Today,

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<sup>101</sup> King, 'Umayyad Qusur,' p. 78.

<sup>102</sup> Lara Tohme, 'Umm al-Walid,' in *The Umayyads: the Rise of Islamic Art* ('Amman: Al-Faris Publishing and Distribution Co., 2000), pp. 91-92.

<sup>103</sup> <<http://www.discoverislamicart.org>> 20 August 2006. In addition to the brazier, the basket contained a bronze saucepan, two pieces of ivory, a pyxis, and a palette. All of the both have incised decoration.

<sup>104</sup> King, 'Umayyad Qusur,' p. 77.

a new city has grown up around the ancient site and the area is still productive agriculturally.

2.2.4: 'Amman Citadel  
(Catalogue 2)



(fig. 5) 'Amman Citadel<sup>105</sup>

The citadel stands atop the highest of the numerous hills of 'Amman and has been fortified by successive groups dominating the area.<sup>106</sup> Archaeological excavations at the site reveal that the citadel of 'Amman has had a long history of occupation. The earliest findings date to the Neolithic period around 8500 BCE and was first "properly" established by the Ammonite tribes, mentioned in the Old

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<sup>105</sup> Kennedy and Bewley, *Ancient Jordan*, p. 152.

<sup>106</sup> Jason Wood, 'The Fortifications of Amman Citadel, Jordan,' *Fortress* 16 (1993), pp. 3-15 (p. 3).

Testament (Judges 11:12-33), when the city was called Rabbath Bani 'Ammon.<sup>107</sup> During the Hellenistic period the city was renamed Philadelphia under the rule of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (282-246 BCE).<sup>108</sup> When the Ptolemaic rulers were defeated by the Seleucid regime after the Fourth Syrian War in 200 BCE, the Nabataeans, who had supported the Seleucids, governed the city.<sup>109</sup> Hyrcanus, a powerful descendant of the Tobiad family who had built the magnificent 'Araq al-Amir near 'Amman, re-established rule at this site from 187-175 BCE.

Initial Roman occupation of northern Jordan began in 63 BCE, and Philadelphia/'Amman was made part of the Decapolis under general Pompey (106-48 BCE).<sup>110</sup> After Roman annexation of the rest of Jordan in 106 CE, the citadel was established as a *temenos* (sanctuary) and the impressive Temple of Hercules was constructed. The Romans further fortified the site and expanded the citadel, as well as constructed a ceremonial gateway.<sup>111</sup> The city of 'Amman is located at a fork where the *Via Nova Traiana* and the King's Highway diverge.<sup>112</sup>

In the Islamic period, the Umayyads designated the citadel as the governor's headquarters shortly after the establishment of Damascus as permanent capital of the empire. In addition, 'Amman was one of the main stopping points for hajj pilgrims travelling between Damascus and

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<sup>107</sup> Fawzi Zayadine, 'Amman, the Governor's Headquarters,' in *The Umayyads: the Rise of Islamic Art* ('Amman: Al-Faris, 2000), pp. 59-67 (p. 60).

<sup>108</sup> Zayadine, 'Amman,' pp. 60-61.

<sup>109</sup> Henry Innes MacAdam, 'The History of Philadelphia in the Classical Period,' in *Studies on Roman and Islamic 'Amman*, Vol. I, ed. by Alastair Northedge (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 27-47 (p. 27).

<sup>110</sup> MacAdam, 'History,' p. 33.

<sup>111</sup> Wood, 'Fortifications,' p. 5. The structures were built circa 161-166 CE.

<sup>112</sup> Kennedy and Bewley, *Ancient Jordan*, p. 153.

Mecca/Medina. This activity conferred additional importance to the city.<sup>113</sup> Further adding to the prestige of the city was the installation of an Umayyad mint, which issued coins of the 'standing caliph' type in the 690s.<sup>114</sup> The Umayyads reorganized the upper terrace of the citadel, dividing it into three enclosed areas. They built a monumental gateway, an audience hall, bath complex, cistern, *qasr*, and a mosque, as well as apartments, storage rooms, and kitchens. In addition, there was an area for merchant shops and a market was established.<sup>115</sup> During the construction of the Jordan Archaeological Museum, located on the citadel, the remains of a large house built during the early Umayyad period were discovered. Other similar structures may have existed on the site. After the defeat of the Umayyads, the Abbasids established their capital in Baghdad; however, the city retained some of its status, and the citadel remained the seat of the governor.

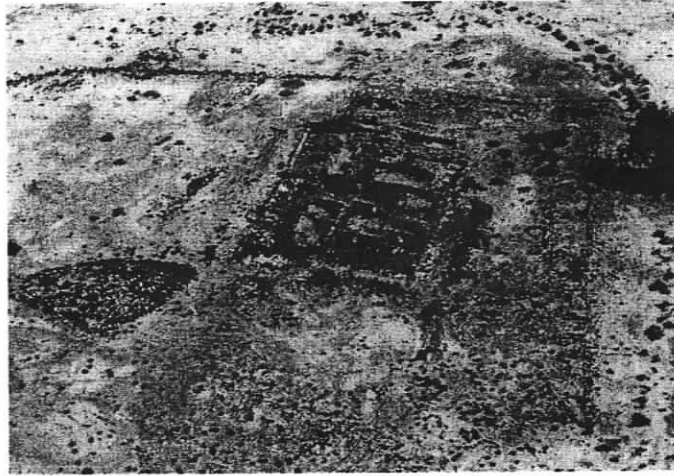
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<sup>113</sup> Zayadine, 'Amman,' p. 62.

<sup>114</sup> Northedge, 'History of 'Amman,' p. 49. Stephen Album and Tony Goodwin, *Sylloge of Islamic Coins in the Ashmolean Vol. 1: the Pre-Reformation Coinage of the Early Islamic Period* (Oxford: Ashmolean Museum, 2002), p. 97 and plate 46.

<sup>115</sup> Zayadine, 'Amman,' pp. 62-67.

2.2.5: *Qasr 'Ayn al-Sil*  
(Catalogue 12)



(fig. 6) Qasr 'Ayn al-Sil <sup>116</sup>

Qasr 'Ayn al-Sil is located less than 2km from the well-known castle at Azraq, which is 110km east of 'Amman.<sup>117</sup> Situated on the edge of the Wadi al-Sirhan, Azraq was once the site of the largest oasis in the Jordanian desert. The name of the site includes the Arabic word for spring (as in water source), 'ayn, and indeed the settlement is located beside a spring.<sup>118</sup> During the Roman period, a series of fortresses was established in order to secure access to the precious water resources at Azraq.<sup>119</sup> Roman occupation near the site has led archaeologist David Kennedy to identify Qasr 'Ayn al-Sil as a fortlet which was re-occupied during the Umayyad period.<sup>120</sup> The site contains a fortification wall that encloses

<sup>116</sup> Kennedy and Bewley, *Ancient Jordan*, p. 237.

<sup>117</sup> The Azraq castle served as headquarters for T.E. Lawrence and Sharif Hussein of Mecca during the Arab Revolt during WWI.

<sup>118</sup> Kennedy and Bewley, *Ancient Jordan*, p. 237.

<sup>119</sup> <<http://archnet.org>>, 19 January 2007.

<sup>120</sup> Ghazi Bisheh, 'Qasr Mshash and Qasr 'Ayn al-Sil: Two Umayyad Sites in Jordan,' in *The History of Bilad al-Sham During the Umayyad Period (Fourth International Conference : 24-29 October 1987: 'Amman): Proceedings of the Third Symposium/Bilad al-Sham History Committee,*

seven separate rooms built around a central courtyard. One of the rooms contains two clay *tabuns* (ovens), indicating this was the kitchen area. Another of the rooms contained an olive press that used a recycled Roman milestone as a central pivot.<sup>121</sup> An additional olive press was located in another room, in the northwest area of the structure. Abutting the western wall is a three-room Roman-style bath, comprising a *frigidarium* and two *caldaria*. A few metres from the qasr is a well. All of these architectural features indicate that this was a small agricultural estate used by a family rather than a large plantation.<sup>122</sup> The remains of two olive presses indicate that the site was likely an olive farm.

The silver finger-ring (Catalogue 13) was discovered somewhere within these structures, although it is not indicated exactly where. The fact that the ring is made of silver suggests wealth, as silver and gold are usually the metals chosen by royalty and the elite. It is interesting that this ring was discovered here, at a provincial farm-style estate, and not at a site with more royal connections, such as Mafraq. The proximity of this farmhouse to the once-rich water source at Azraq suggests that the site would have been inhabited into the Abbasid period. However, there is little published information on this site.

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ed. by Robert Schick ('Amman: The Committee, 1989), pp. 81-103 (p.90). Kennedy states that the main structure was a fortlet or a well-built farmhouse. Due to the presence of other forts in the area, a Roman identification of this structure seems likely.

<sup>121</sup> Bisheh, 'Qasr Mshash,' p. 91. The Roman mile-marker dates to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE; Kennedy and Bewley, *Ancient Jordan*, p. 237. A Roman road, which is probably the source of this milestone, runs to the west of the site. In an interesting parallel, 'Abd al-Malik also installed milestones across Bilad al-Sham; Sheila S. Blair, 'What is the Date of the Dome of the Rock,' in Bayt al-Maqdis: 'Adb al-Malik's Jerusalem Pt. 1, *Oxford Studies in Islamic Art* 9.1, ed. by Julian Raby and Jeremy Johns (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 59-87 (p. 67).

<sup>122</sup> Ghazi Bisheh, 'Qasr Mshash,' p. 92.

### 2.3: Conclusions

Historically, the area discussed forms a diverse group of excavated sites. There are three main groups: those with political connections (Humayma and Mafraq), aristocratic sites (Umm al-Walid and Qasr 'Ayn al-Sil), and the central regional administrative centre ('Amman citadel). Humayma and Mafraq both had direct connections to the Umayyads. In addition, both sites have produced numerous luxury items, indicating the wealth of their inhabitants. In the case of Humayma, it is likely that this area was gifted to al-'Abbas in order to contain the family and place it as far as possible from those who would wish it to lead the Islamic empire. Mafraq had political connections to the ruling powers through a series of marriages. The inhabitants of Humayma and Mafraq contained wealthy elite families with connections to the Umayyad dynasty.

Qasr 'Ayn al-Sil was the site of a wealthy gentleman farmer who was producing olive oil products. Umm al-Walid, which was situated in the midst of Christian farmland and in proximity to the hajj route, likely served as a caravanserai for pilgrims. Umm al-Walid has provided numerous artefacts attesting to the wealth and prosperity of the persons living there, whereas Qasr 'Ayn al-Sil, so far, has not yielded much more than a large amount of coarse pottery sherds and a silver finger ring. However, the use of silver, an elite material, suggests wealth and possibly important, political connections. The citadel of 'Amman served as the seat of the governor. The citadel was usually a summer residence for the caliph, as the temperatures in 'Amman are cooler due to the elevation of the city.

## Chapter 3: Animate Decoration

### *3.1 Introductory comments*

Figural decoration is the most commonly misunderstood aspect of Islamic art. The fact that the Jordanian metalwork catalogue contains more examples of animate than inanimate ornamentation may come as a surprise to the reader and this simple observation raises several important questions. What was the status of figural imagery during the first dynasty of Islam? What had been the status of figural imagery in the period before the arrival of Islam? Was there a differentiation in Islam between the religious and the secular spheres regarding decoration? I will address these questions in the following pages and begin with a brief historical contextualization of the Islamic religion during the period before and into the founding of the Umayyad caliphate.

This chapter is an analysis of the decorative elements found within the catalogue of Jordanian metalwork. The collection divides into two basic groups of motifs: animate (Chapter 3) and inanimate (Chapter 4) imagery. Animate decoration is composed of animal and human representations. Inanimate ornamentation contains the vegetal, geometric, architectural, and epigraphic elements. The chapter is subdivided into discussions of each motif with an additional section devoted to the historical background. Due to the complexity of its decorative elements, the analysis of the Mafraq brazier (Catalogue 9) has been placed into a separate chapter (Chapter 5).

In this thesis, my methodology consists of three components: typology, comparisons, and iconography. In the descriptions of the ornament types, comparable examples are sought with emphasis placed on artefacts that are

closest geographically and chronologically. Finally, where appropriate, iconography will be explored in terms of the variety of possible interpretations. It is acknowledged at the outset that some of the sections, such as geometric decoration, are usually considered "neutral" in terms of iconography.

The aims of this analysis are to add to the body of information on Early Islamic design elements, specifically during the Umayyad era, and to further the understanding of the nature of Umayyad visual culture in Jordan. Lastly, I will question what possible meaning these various motifs had in the Umayyad context.

## **3.2 Animate Decoration**

### *3.2.1 Introductory comments*

This section is concerned with the analysis of the animate decorative elements of Umayyad Jordan metalwork. The term "animate decoration" covers the use of animal or human forms, in whole or in part, as decorative devices.<sup>113</sup> The animals found on the various objects include: elephant, ram, lion, griffin, camel, and rooster. All of these animals are also part of the Coptic, Byzantine, Sasanian, and Nabataean decorative vocabulary of the Late Antique period. All of the animals from the catalogue can also be found in mosaics within Bilad al-Sham. With the exception of the griffin and the rooster, all of these animals were involved with hunting, either as the pursuer or the pursued.

Section 3.2.2, the historical background of animate decoration, will focus on archaeological remains. Through such finds the section will examine the

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<sup>113</sup> The only human ornamentation is found on the Mafraq brazier (Catalogue 9).

status of human and animal ornamentation within the Greco-Roman, Nabataean, Sasanian, Judeo-Christian, and Islamic cultures across Jordan and the surrounding regions. Following this, special emphasis will be devoted to the effects of Byzantine Iconoclasm on existing and new artistic output in the region. In addition, during the Umayyad period, Islamic resistance towards the utilization of animate imagery was evolving. The impact on existing and developing ornamentation will be considered. Sections 3.3.1 - 3.3.4 will analyse the specific animal elements: elephant, ram, lion, and camel, providing antecedents from the surrounding geographic area and similar chronological period, where possible. Potential iconographic interpretations will be presented and possible meanings will be offered, where applicable.

### *3.2.2: Animate-Historical Background*

Within the boundaries of modern day Jordan a plethora of different peoples have lived, all leaving their particular imprint on the country. Nabataeans, Romans, Copts, Byzantines, and Sasanians all contributed to the artistic environment inherited by the Umayyad dynasty. This section concerns how these various cultures utilised animate imagery through an examination of extant examples found in Jordan. The main questions are: was animate imagery a prevalent mode of decoration in Jordan? What did the Umayyads absorb? Did the iconographic meanings shift once assimilated into the Islamic context? This last question is difficult to determine with certainty; however, I will attempt to

offer suggestions where possible. The aims of this section are to establish what types of animate decoration were in existence before Umayyad control of the region and which elements of ornamentation that dynasty used, in an effort to arrive at a better understanding of Umayyad artistic output and its impact on subsequent phases of Islamic artistic production.

When Muslim or Christian animate decoration created in the Early Islamic period is discussed, the question of Byzantine Iconoclasm (726-843 CE) often arises. The impact of this doctrine of the Byzantine church, based in Constantinople, must have been limited in the provincial region of Jordan. In addition, the first period of Iconoclasm occurs near the end of the Umayyad period. However, this issue will be discussed in the following section (3.2.1a), and the impact of the iconoclast controversy will be examined.

My analysis of Umayyad animate ornamentation contains a brief contextualisation of the variety of approaches toward figural imagery in Greco-Roman, Nabataean, Jewish, and Sasanian cultures occurring in or in close proximity to Jordan. This examination reveals that there was a tradition of incorporating decorative elements from other societies—cross-culturally, with Hellenistic and Sasanian playing the dominant roles. The Umayyads continued this tradition through the employment of many of the same decorative elements. Although chronologically the Nabataean period (312 BCE - ca. 107 CE) predates the Roman annexation of the region of modern-day Jordan (106 CE), the influence of ornamentation of Hellenistic style is very pronounced in Nabataean art forms. I will, therefore, begin with the analysis of Greco-Roman decoration,

and then move into Jewish and Sasanian figural art forms. In addition, the historical analysis is not limited to artefacts from the secular realm. Due to the lack of surviving secular artefacts, religious decoration is included in this examination.

During the Hellenistic (323-63 BCE) and Roman (ca. 64 BCE-ca. 634 CE) periods, images of humans and of real and imaginary animals were widespread across the religious and secular spheres. Despite the acceptance of Christianity as the official state religion by the Roman emperor Constantine in 313 CE and the subsequent transformation of the Roman into the Byzantine Empire, traditional forms of worship continued in the Mediterranean and Middle East well into the 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>114</sup> However, Greco-Roman iconography was not limited to images of pagan deities. Images of the hunt were also an exceedingly popular genre and were often found in bath houses.<sup>115</sup> Deeply ingrained over the centuries, Greco-Roman iconography was influential well into the Christian era and elements can be identified in Nabataean, Christian and Judaic ornamentation, which are discussed later in this section.

A striking example of the persistence of Greco-Roman pagan themes is found on a mid-6<sup>th</sup> century pavement known as the Hippolytus Hall mosaic in Madaba, Jordan (Appendix II.T.2-3). This large and unfortunately fragmented

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<sup>114</sup> Elizabeth Riefstahl, 'Egyptian Textiles of the Graeco-Roman and Early Christian Period,' in *Pagan and Christian Egypt*, ed. by John D. Cooney (Brooklyn, New York: Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences, 1941), p. 46. The author is specifically citing Egyptian examples, however there is little reason to believe that the pagan religions were vanishing more quickly in Jordan. It stands to say that change in the provinces would have been slower than in the more densely populated cities.

<sup>115</sup> Fowden, *Qusayr 'Amra*, p. 89.

mosaic was originally in a private house.<sup>116</sup> It was discovered by archaeologists while excavating at the Church of the Virgin (which was built on top of the ancient site).<sup>117</sup> The Hippolytus mosaic depicts a scene from the story of Phaedra and Hippolytus by the Greek author Euripides. Aphrodite, Adonis, several cupids, as well as the Three Graces are shown with their names, in Greek, above their heads. The four seasons in the form of the *tyche* of Rome, Gregoria, and Madaba are also included.<sup>118</sup> The survival of this mosaic pavement is due to the building of a Christian church, which covered it.<sup>119</sup>

The Nabataeans, with their capital in Petra embraced a wide array of figural representations: from the Greco-Roman tradition, to highly abstracted representations of the face of a god or goddess, to totally aniconic renderings, which symbolise a fusion of the god and his/her dwelling place. Numerous examples of figural representation in the Greco-Roman tradition have been excavated from various Nabataean sites: in the temple structure at Khirbat et-Tannur, is a relief carving of the goddess *Tyche* [Fortune] surrounded by signs of the zodiac;<sup>120</sup> from the Qasr al-Bint Temple in Petra comes a relief carving of the Greek god Helios;<sup>121</sup> a relief carving of Ares also survives.<sup>122</sup> In addition, the facade of the *Khazneh* or "Treasury" located at the end of the Petra *suq* shows the

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<sup>116</sup> Lara Tohme, 'Madaba,' in *The Umayyads*, p. 86.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> Examples of Hellenic sculpture can be found in the Archaeological Museum in 'Amman, such as the copy of a ca. 300 BCE *Tyche* of Philadelphia ['Amman], dating to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE. *The Art of Jordan*, p. 54, fig. 58.

<sup>119</sup> Robert Schick, *Christian Communities*, p. 205.

<sup>120</sup> <<http://www.cincinnatiartmuseum.org/search/CollectionsResultsItemDetail.aspx?OID=67327>>, 9 October 2006, and Bienkowski, *The Art of Jordan*, p. 53, fig. 55.

<sup>121</sup> Taylor, *Petra*, p. 125.

<sup>122</sup> *Jordanie*, p. 126.

influence of the Hellenistic tradition, with the inclusion of several Hellenistic-style gods and goddesses within the architectural facade.<sup>123</sup>

Synagogues, intact or fragmentary, are rare in Jordan, even though Judaism was a significant religion in the area of Bilad al-Sham for centuries.<sup>124</sup> Archaeological excavations have discovered numerous sites with figural and non-figural decoration, mostly in the region of modern-day Israel and Syria. One example exists in Jerash, Jordan, where the remains of a synagogue mosaic pavement, dating to the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE, contains a variety of geometric patterning and a roundel with a depiction of the Torah ark.<sup>125</sup> Dura Europos, Syria (3<sup>rd</sup> century CE), contains the most complete body of Jewish figural art excavated to date.<sup>126</sup> Although the style of painting at Dura Europos has a provincial quality, it also follows the Greco-Roman tradition of naturalism. Although the frescoes of the Dura Europos synagogue are much earlier than the Umayyad period, several later examples of mosaic pavements do exist.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Taylor, *Petra*, p. 90. The Khazneh received its name due to stories circulated about the existence of gold coins held within the large urn at the top of the facade. However, the structure was more likely a tomb or temple, or combination of both.

<sup>124</sup> Bienkowski, *Art of Jordan*, pp. 1-30 (p. 13). Circa 1000 BCE, a united kingdom of Israel was formed, led by kings Saul and David. This kingdom extended into modern day Jordan.

<sup>125</sup> Lee I. Levine, 'Figural Art in Ancient Judaism,' *Ars Judaica* Vol. 1 (2005), pp. 9-26 (pp. 24-25, fig. 4).

<sup>126</sup> Eric M. Meyers, 'Ancient Synagogues: An Archaeological Introduction,' in *Sacred Realm: the Emergence of the Synagogue in the Ancient World*, ed. by Steven Fine (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press and Yeshiva University Museum, 1996), p.12. Within the remains of a private home, a sacred space was discovered that held an extraordinary group of frescoes. These depict numerous scenes from the Old Testament. *Sacred Realm*, p. 81, plate XV a. In an interesting side note, the young, nude woman in the scene depicting the finding of Moses, is positioned frontally and appears to have a necklace and arm banding reminiscent of the Maфраq female finials.

<sup>127</sup> *Sacred Realm*, pp. 18, 71, and 124-125. These are all in the form of mosaic pavements and reflect a Jewish utilization and interpretation of commonly used Greco-Roman decorative motifs. In a 4<sup>th</sup> century floor mosaic from Sepphoris, Israel, there is a wheel of the zodiac with both Greco-Roman astrological symbols as well as the inclusion of specifically Jewish ones. Birds and animals in inhabited scrolls appear at Hamman Lif (Naro), Tunisia and in Maon, both dating to the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> centuries. These examples bear a strong resemblance to Christian mosaic pavements of

Zoroastrianism was the state religion of the Sasanian Empire (ca. 224 BCE-642 CE). It was from the Zoroastrian priestly class that kings arose who created a fusion of church and state. The scholar of Sasanian art, Prudence Harper, sees the impact of this state religion as deeply embedded in Sasanian cultural creations. The established Zoroastrian religious artistic expression focused on balance and order and there were no depictions of the divine in sculpture in the round.<sup>128</sup> While few sculptural examples have been discovered, numerous examples of portable arts have survived and human and animal imagery is prevalent. Interestingly, no images of Zoroastrian deities or rituals exist in the Sasanian controlled lands west of Iran.<sup>129</sup> However, it is apparent that figural representations (animals and humans, as well as the images of the king) were permissible in the secular realm and at certain sacred sites, such as the 7<sup>th</sup> century site of Taq-i Bustan.

Representations of kingship, usually investiture scenes, formalized during the Parthian rule (155 BCE-ca. 225 CE), were continued and expanded upon during the Sasanian period.<sup>130</sup> Aspects of Achaemenid, Parthian, and Roman-Byzantine decorative motifs can be seen across a wide array of media and materials.<sup>131</sup> Occasionally, certain Greco-Roman gods such as, Dionysus, appear. Through the majority of the Sasanian period, figural imagery was prolific and found on portable objects such as plates, ewers, and bowls, as well as on relief

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the same time. Floor mosaics of confronting lions and representations of abstracted humans are at Beth Alpha, Israel and date to the sixth century.

<sup>128</sup> Prudence O. Harper, *In Search of a Cultural Identity: Monuments and Artifacts of the Sasanian Near East, 3<sup>rd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> Century A.D.* (New York: Bibliotheca Press, 2006), pp. x-xi.

<sup>129</sup> Harper, *In Search of*, p. 131. However, examples of rituals do appear in Eastern Iran and Sogdiana.

<sup>130</sup> Harper, *In Search of*, pp. 165 and 72. For example, the great iwan at Taq-i Bustan.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 70-73.

carvings. These portable objects have been discovered across the Middle East, eastern Mediterranean, China, Central Asia, and South Asia. This widespread distribution of Sasanian goods indicates that these objects were highly desirable and traded along the trade routes. In addition, these objects could have arrived in these areas as diplomatic gifts. In many areas Sasanian art was arguably as influential as the Greco-Roman style.

Imagery of royalty in the Sasanian realm includes investiture scenes,<sup>132</sup> hunting, and the pleasures of the court,<sup>133</sup> dancing girls,<sup>134</sup> and drinking scenes.<sup>135</sup> Scenes of hunting where the Sasanian king is the sole or dominant hunter can be seen on portable objects, especially silver plates, or in a massive relief carving on the left-hand wall of the large grotto at Taq-i-Bustan.<sup>136</sup>

The essence of this Sasanian tradition is continued into the Umayyad period and the employment of Sasanian motifs is strong, especially at Qusayr 'Amra.<sup>137</sup> Within the frescoes at Qusayr 'Amra, hunting scenes cover large portions of every wall of the main hall.<sup>138</sup> In addition, there is the well-known

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<sup>132</sup> Pope, *Persian Art* Vol. VII, pp. 9, 230, a.

<sup>133</sup> Pope, Vol. VII, p. 230, b.

<sup>134</sup> Note images in Mafraq brazier.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 205-6, 209-14, 217-8, 229, a and b.

<sup>136</sup> Harper, *In Search of*, p. 128. Prudence O. Harper and Pieter Meyers, *Silver Vessels of the Sasanian Period Vol. I: Royal Imagery* (New York, New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1981), pp. 209-233. Images of the king hunting were not simply meant to show the king engaged in an enjoyable pastime, rather the "heroic hunter" is one of the attributes of the "best king" within the Zoroastrian-Sasanian context. The act of hunting served as a metaphor of a strong ruler overpowering his foes, keeping his people safe. Guitty Azarpay, 'Sasanian Art beyond the Persian World,' in *Mesopotamia and Iran in the Parthian and Sasanian Periods*, ed. by John Curtis (London: British Museum Press, 2000), pp. 67-75 (p. 74). Fowden, *Qusayr 'Amra*, p. 108.

<sup>137</sup> The theme of the hunt is also prevalent in Greco-Roman decoration.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 93-102. In chapter three 'The Hunt', Fowden gives a detailed examination of the various hunting scenes found on the walls of Qusayr 'Amra. These images are located on the east aisle, south wall; east wall; west wall; and the east aisle, north wall.

hunting scene fresco from Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi in Syria, and a splendid hunting mosaic at the Busra Castle, also in Syria,<sup>139</sup> both dating to the Umayyad period.<sup>140</sup>

Not all scenes with animals concern hunting. Animals form a significant motif in the Christian context across media. Animals are important components in biblical stories, such as Noah and the Ark (Genesis 6-9) and the Sacrifice of Abraham (Hebrews 11), stories that are common to both Christians and Muslims. In addition, animal forms represent the apostles, for example Saint Mark as the lion. Further, in the early decades of the Christian church, Christ was symbolically represented as a lamb (San Vitale, Ravenna). Animal motifs also abound on mosaic pavements in Jordan.

Both Christians and Muslims utilize animal representations to identify scenes of paradise, the peaceful kingdom or the earthly realm. Numerous examples of animals paired with a fruiting tree exist in mosaic pavements of the Christian churches in Jordan. In a mosaic pavement at the Baptistery Chapel in the Memorial of Moses at Mount Nebo/Siyagha (597 CE), trees bearing pomegranates divide what appear to be gazelles who are nibbling at the leaves of the trees (Appendix II.L.1).<sup>141</sup> In the Presbytery of the Church of the Lions at Umm er-Rasas/Kastron Mefaa (late 6<sup>th</sup> century), a pair of lions flanks a pomegranate tree (Appendix II.L.3).

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<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 94-95.

<sup>140</sup> Edward J. Keall, 'Forerunners of Umayyad Art: Sculptural Stone from the Hadramawt,' *Muqarnas* XII (1995), pp. 11-23 (p. 12, fn. 9). Further to the south, a series of carved capitals from the Hadramawt in Yemen, depict various animals and humans in hunting and pastoral scenes in a fashion similar to those in Bilad al-Sham. Keall cites a lecture by the late Dr. Meinecke who noted the similarities of window grilles from Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi to Yemeni architrave fragments, thus connecting Yemeni decoration to that of Bilad al-Sham.

<sup>141</sup> Michele Piccirillo, *I Mosaici di Giordania* (Roma: Edizioni Quasar, 1986), p. 66.

This iconography is repeated in the Umayyad context, in the floor mosaics from Qasr al-Hallabat where pairs of confronting animals are divided by vegetation, trees, or shrubs (Appendix II.L.2).<sup>142</sup> One of the most famous examples of confronting animals in the Umayyad context is from the *diwan* mosaic at the palace at Khirbat al-Mafjar (744) where two pairs of animals flank a fruiting tree as a representation of the benefits of the caliph's protection, *Dar al-Islam* (Appendix II.L.4).<sup>143</sup> The walls in the apodyterium at Qusayr 'Amra transform a traditional mosaic pavement into a wall fresco where a variety of animals are depicted within a grid pattern. Some of the animals are represented in a naturalistic fashion, engaged in activities such as grazing; others perform miraculous feats, such as the bear playing a musical instrument (Appendix II.E.1).<sup>144</sup> The Umayyad utilization of animals spans the fierce (hunting) to the whimsical.

Two examples of pagan imagery created during the Umayyad period exist, one excavated from the reservoir at Azraq, Jordan, and the other, a few kilometres away at the bath/reception hall complex at Qusayr 'Amra. The Azraq reservoir artefact consists of a basalt relief carving bearing the image of the winged horse, Pegasus, and is dated through archaeological context to the Umayyad period (Appendix II.T.1).<sup>145</sup> Due to the difficulty of carving basalt and the nature of the other carvings, the commissioner must have been an elite to afford one.

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<sup>142</sup> Piccirillo, *I Mosaici*, p. 131.

<sup>143</sup> Robert Hillenbrand, *Islamic Art and Architecture* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999), p. 31. The term *Dar al-Islam* is discussed in section 3.2.5 (the lion).

<sup>144</sup> Fowden, *Qusayr 'Amra*, p. 67. Another reading of this image is that it is a musician dressed in a bear costume. From a conversation with Marcus Milwright.

<sup>145</sup> Bisheh, *Umayyads*, p. 163.

The caldarium dome in Qusayr 'Amra contains paintings in fresco of the zodiac and astronomical representations.<sup>146</sup> In these highly fragmentary frescoes, the viewer can still discern various astrological representations, such as the personification of Sagittarius. It is significant that this fresco was not only created during the Umayyad period, but also for a Muslim client (most probably Caliph al-Walid II) for an audience that most likely would have included the caliph, amirs, and their immediate entourage.

Returning to the mosaic pavements within the Church of the Virgin in Madaba, one can witness a visual metaphor of the layers of artistic influence in Jordan (Appendix II.T.2).<sup>147</sup> Here one can see how the images of the ancient religion were repaved using the Christian idiom. Although the new mosaic is without figural representation and epigraphy is the central focus of the pavement, there is a sense of continuity between the two floors. The Christian artisans are literally building on and over the ancient tradition, creating something unique, which is what the inheritors of the region, the Umayyads, further enlarge upon.

### 3.2.1a: *The Edict of Yazid II and Byzantine Iconoclasm*

Iconoclasm has received more attention from scholars than almost any other period in the history of the Byzantine Empire.<sup>148</sup> The issues of the

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<sup>146</sup> This is the earliest known example of stellar representations on a semi-circular surface. <<http://www.archnet.org/library/sites/one-site.tcl?site-id=4667>>, 9 October 2006.

In addition, the painting on the interior of the dome is known to have been copied from a Greek model of a dome in an astronomical manuscript. Fowden, *Qusayr 'Amra*, p. 43. Due to the advanced state of decay of this mosaic, I have been unable to find a clear image of this fresco.

<sup>147</sup> Piccirillo, *I Mosaici*, p. 50.

<sup>148</sup> Cyril Mango, 'Historical Introduction,' in *Iconoclasm: Papers given at the Ninth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, University of Birmingham, March 1975*, ed. by Anthony Bryer and Judith Herrin (Birmingham: John Goodman and Sons Ltd., 1975), pp. 1-7 (p. 7).

implementation of this doctrine are complex and the impact of this ideology arrives near the end of the Umayyad era. However, preceding the Byzantine doctrine of Iconoclasm (726-843) was the Edict of Yazid II (720, r. 720-724). These two official decrees, occurring only a few years apart, raise two important questions for this study of Umayyad Jordan. How deeply were the effects of Iconoclasm felt in Jordan and what effects did the Edict of Yazid II have on figural representations in the artistic productions of Christians and Muslims in the Islamic regions?

During the transition from the Late Antique to Early Medieval period, there was a general shift away from the use of figural imagery within the sacred space. A widespread misperception of Judaism is that it has always rejected animate ornamentation. This could be due to the lack of surviving synagogues, lesser-known scholarship, and the current state of non-figural decoration in synagogues today. The Second Commandment of the Old Testament further reinforces this, clearly stating that an image of any living thing (in heaven, earth or in the sea) that is bowed down to constitutes an idol. The worship of this idol before the one God is profoundly unacceptable (Exodus 20:2-4). However, there have been struggles between iconic and aniconic representation within Jewish sacred spaces. The movement between figural and non-figural decoration was often precipitated by persecution of Jews by the ruling power, and these shifts were often seen as reactionary.<sup>149</sup> However, issues concerning the legitimacy of figural representations were entrenched well before the advent of Islam.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Levine, 'Figural Art,' p. 12.

<sup>150</sup> Levine, pp. 9-26 (pp. 23-24).

The rejection of figural imagery reached its apogee within the Byzantine Church in the form of Iconoclasm. Iconoclast is a Greek word meaning "to break images" and Iconoclasm refers to a government doctrine instituted by the Byzantine state in 726 or 730. Until its rescission in 843, this law prohibited the creation and veneration of icons.<sup>151</sup> The head of the Byzantine church was located in Constantinople; and Jordan, while under Byzantine control, was definitely a provincial area. Constantinople is a considerable distance from Jordan, and the area of modern-day Jordan was already full of various Christian Non-Chalcedonian sects, which had philosophical and doctrinal differences with the Byzantine church. However, what is of greatest relevance is that in 726 Jordan was not part of the Byzantine empire.

While there is evidence of aniconic decoration within several of the Christian churches in Jordan, many of these date as far back as the 5<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>152</sup> King sites the example of the Church of Saints Cosmas and Damian in Jerash (535), where the donor portraits are smaller and moved away from the altar, which contains a large inscription. This early date indicates that there were disputes within the Christian church long before Islam, occurring between various Christian sects regarding the reduction of figural imagery (in size as well as frequency of inclusion) and the favouring of inscription panels.<sup>153</sup> Schick notes several mosaic pavements laid following the Islamic conquest, at Ma'in, el-

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<sup>151</sup> Schick, *Christian Communities*, pp. 211-212.

<sup>152</sup> G.R.D. King, 'Islam, Iconoclasm and the Declaration of Doctrine,' *Bulletin of the Schools of Oriental and African Studies* 48 (1985) pp. 267-277 (pp. 275-276). These are: Kfayr Abu Sarbut, near Madaba, Jordan (6<sup>th</sup> century), Dayr Church, Ma'in, Jordan (6<sup>th</sup> century) and Rihab, Jordan (6<sup>th</sup> century).

<sup>153</sup> King, 'Islam, Iconoclasm,' p. 276.

Quweisma and Umm er-Rasas, which contained human and animal imagery.<sup>154</sup> In addition, rededicatory inscriptions dating to the period following the fall of the Umayyads in 750 indicate that new church floors were being installed with animate decoration.<sup>155</sup> Iconoclasm in Jordan appears to have been a localized phenomenon rather than an overarching policy affecting all of the churches in the region.<sup>156</sup>

There is little evidence to suggest that there were significant disputes between the iconic or figural modes of Christian worship with their Muslim rulers.<sup>157</sup> As long as their taxes were paid,<sup>158</sup> the *dhimmi* (protected peoples, i.e. Christians and Jews) were secure to practice their religion.<sup>159</sup> For decades scholars believed Caliph Yazid II (r. 720-724), an Umayyad ruler, was so opposed to figural imagery that he issued this decree demanding the destruction of all effigies. Consequently, he is said to have implemented a governmental policy against the production of figural imagery and is held responsible for the intermittent destruction seen in Christian churches.<sup>160</sup> Schick points out that the

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<sup>154</sup> Schick, *Christian Communities*, p. 182.

<sup>155</sup> Bisheh, *Umayyads*, pp. 100-101. In addition, Bisheh notes two well-known examples of post-Umayyad dating, at the Church of Saint Stephen, Umm al-Rasas, 756, and the church of 'Ayn al-Kaniseh on Mount Nebo, 762; Michele Piccirillo, 'The Umayyad Churches of Jordan,' *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan XXVIII* (1984), pp. 333-341. Piccirillo notes evidence of post-iconoclasm mosaic restoration at the Church on the Acropolis in Ma'in (717-720).

<sup>156</sup> For a complete listing of churches with and without iconoclast damage see Schick, *Christian Communities*, Tables seven, ten, and eleven, pp. 184-185, 190-192. In addition, the iconoclastic damage in Bilad al-Sham was much broader than the edict issued by the Byzantine state. In Jordan and surrounding areas evidence of animal and human images were defaced as well as icons, p. 213.

<sup>157</sup> See footnote 59.

<sup>158</sup> Schick, *Christian Communities*, p. 222. This tax was a form of social discrimination.

<sup>159</sup> Hugh Kennedy, 'Islam,' pp. 119-237 (p. 222).

<sup>160</sup> Schick, *Christian Communities*, pp. 203-204. Damage occurred in synagogues as well, and in much the same fashion. At Na'arah a pair of gazelles was transformed into cubes, however two birds were left unmolested. At the same site, signs of the zodiac were defaced, while animals included in the image were left intact. This site was thriving during the Sasanian period of

majority of reports of Islamic-inspired iconoclasm appear in Christian sources.<sup>161</sup> Compounding the problem, King notes that Yazid did not destroy the figural imagery at Qusayr 'Amra, only 50km from his residence at al-Muwaqqar.<sup>162</sup> Further, Schick notes that the type of destruction, generally of mosaic decoration in churches, was often done with great care. There are many examples of the tesserae having been methodically rearranged as to blur or completely change the image (e.g. changing a gazelle into a pomegranate tree, Appendix II.M.1), but not destroy the entire mosaic.<sup>163</sup> This attention to detail led Schick to conclude that the Christian themselves were involved with the disfiguring transformations.<sup>164</sup> In addition, a great deal of the damage to images was done after the churches were abandoned, indicating random acts of vandalism rather than governmental policy.<sup>165</sup>

Islam was born about a century before the introduction of Byzantine Iconoclasm. However, within Islam, struggles occurred, albeit briefly, regarding the issue of the decoration of sacred space. Within Islam, there is nothing specific in the Qur'an regarding the decoration of the sacred space. However, *sura* 14:35 of the Qur'an tells of an exchange between Allah and Abraham in which the latter is instructed to turn "my sons" away from worshipping idols and to "Purify my house" (by removing idols in the Ka'ba) to which the sons of Abraham were

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occupation and the damage may have occurred during this period in the early seventh century. The issue of iconoclasm directed at Judaism is complex, as much of the destruction may have been directed at the religion rather than at the images themselves.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 212-213.

<sup>162</sup> King, 'Islam, Iconoclasm,' p. 276.

<sup>163</sup> Schick, *Christian Communities*, p. 195. Examples of mosaic pavements showing this type of rearranging can be found at Madaba (Map church and cathedral) and Umm al-Rasas (Bishop Sergius and Saint Stephen Church). At these examples the original tesserae were used.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 223.

<sup>165</sup> Schick, *Christian Communities*, p. 196.

bowing down.<sup>166</sup> This *sura*, in effect, signals the future of aniconic worship in Islam. Allah relates his displeasure at the worship of idols and foreshadows the actions of the Prophet Muhammad upon his triumphal return to Mecca where, after the defeat of the Quraysh, Muhammad enters the Ka'ba and instructs his followers to remove all idols with the exception of a painting of Jesus and Mary.<sup>167</sup>

It is only in the writings of the *hadith*, the sayings of the Prophet, that one encounters direct references to the appropriateness of imagery in the sacred context. In the early period, this meant the location of prayer in the home. The *hadith* was not written down until ninth century, and in the Umayyad period existed as an oral tradition. Within Islam is an objection to images of beings possessing *ruh*, or the "breath of life," in the prayer space. It was seen as blasphemous to imitate that which only God can create.<sup>168</sup> In the traditions of the *hadith*, the Prophet states that figural imagery (humans and animals) kept the supplicant conscious of the Earthly realm and not focused on the spiritual.<sup>169</sup> The Dome of the Rock, the earliest extant Islamic architectural structure, built by the Umayyad caliph 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan in 691/692, bears no figural imagery although the interior of the structure is highly decorated. Vases, jewels, crowns, wings, a variety of vegetal patterns, and a band of epigraphy comprise the ornament within this sacred space.

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<sup>166</sup> Daan van Reenen, 'The Bilderverbot, a new survey,' *Der Islam* 67 (1990), p. 41.

<sup>167</sup> Dodd and Khairallah, *Image of the Word* Vol. I, p. 15. This story is not from the *Qur'an*, but comes from the biography of the Prophet, the *Sunnah*.

<sup>168</sup> Schick, *Christian Communities*, p. 213.

<sup>169</sup> Reenen, 'Bilderverbot,' pp. 42-43. This is in reference to the story of A'isa and the curtains or piece of cloth, with images on it.

The Christian cross was the one inanimate image unacceptable to the Prophet.<sup>170</sup> The cross, symbol of Christ martyrdom to the Christians, was seen as the emblem of the human and divine nature of Christ and consequently was highly offensive to Muslims. Within Islam, Christ is seen as a great prophet, entirely human, although divinely inspired. He is not God embodied in human form on earth and certainly not the Son of God. In addition, the cross was utilized as the emblem of the Byzantine state, conferring political and religious significance to this symbol.<sup>171</sup> The cross served as a lightning rod for Sasanians, Muslims, Jews and pagans and consequently was attacked by these groups.<sup>172</sup> Evidence of cross defacing dating to the end of the Umayyad period can be found on the narthex tombs at the church of Beth Guvrin.<sup>173</sup>

Although Muslims do not include animate imagery in their sacred places, this form of decoration is acceptable elsewhere. With this information, it is possible to state that it is unlikely that any of the objects found within the Jordanian catalogue were used within the Islamic sacred space, rather, they were in the secular sphere.

### 3.3.1 Animate Decoration: Elephant

The elephant mould from Mafraq (Catalogue 10) represents an Asian elephant, identifiable by its small ears. The excavation director at Mafraq has

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<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49. There are accounts of the Prophet tearing apart fabrics with crosses depicted on them in *hadith* literature.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50

<sup>172</sup> King, 'Islam, Iconoclasm,' pp. 273. Schick sees a less severe Muslim reaction to the cross, and although he agrees that cross defacement did occur, there was not a governmental policy against this symbol. Schick, *Christian Communities*, p. 166.

<sup>173</sup> Schick, *Christian Communities*, p. 197. There was also fresco damage at Deir el-Mukelik and Khirbat el-Mird, but these examples date to well after the early Islamic period, p. 201.

determined that this is a bread or cake mould.<sup>174</sup> In addition, this item is made of bronze, not cast iron, indicating the highest quality. What is the significance of baked goods in the shape of an elephant? Is there iconographic meaning attached to the elephant or is this simply an exotic animal whose image is meant to astound and entertain? What antecedents of moulds or elephants exist in Jordan? The Mafraq moulds<sup>175</sup> appear to be unique; there are no other examples of this type of artefact in Jordan or the surrounding geographic region. Elephant iconography is also rare, however they do appear in some unexpected contexts.

An unforeseen resource for information on elephants comes from the Qur'an, *sura* 105, entitled "The Elephant."<sup>176</sup> In this short *sura*, there is an account of an attack upon Mecca, by the Abyssinian governor Abraha Ashram, in 570 CE. Ashram used elephants as part of his assault against the outnumbered Quraysh, the ruling tribe of Mecca. However, Allah saved the Quraysh from annihilation by causing flocks of birds to throw stones and baked clay at the elephants and the invading attackers, thus saving the extended family of Muhammad and the site of the temple of Abraham, the Ka'ba.<sup>177</sup> This *sura* potentially offers an explanation as to the function of the elephant mould. Perhaps these moulds were used to create clay elephants, or elephant-shaped cakes as part of a celebration of the miraculous event that took place in the year that Muslim tradition asserts is the year when the Prophet Muhammad was

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<sup>174</sup> J.B. Humbert, 'Deux moules zoomorphes trouvés à Mafraq,' *Jordanie: sur les pas des archéologues* (Paris: Institut du Monde Arabe, 1997), p. 166.

<sup>175</sup> Catalogue items 10 and 11.

<sup>176</sup> An 8<sup>th</sup> century ostrakon discovered at Petra has an inscription of *sura* 105; see section 3.4.3, pp. 8-9.

<sup>177</sup> *The Holy Qur'an*, Revised and Edited by the Presidents of Islamic Researches, IFTA, p. 2012-2013.

born.<sup>178</sup> In addition, the account suggests that Asian elephants were still in existence well into the 6<sup>th</sup> century. In earlier periods, Asian elephants, also known as Syrian elephants, ranged from Bilad al-Sham through Iraq and into China.<sup>179</sup> Moreover, Hellenistic and Roman military forces in the Near East used this species of elephant as part of their attack force.<sup>180</sup>

Within Jordan, there is only one antecedent of Asian elephant iconography, found at Petra, the Nabataean capital city.<sup>181</sup> Brown University excavations of the lower terrace of the Great or South Temple, dating to the late 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE to the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE, have uncovered the remnants of several columns with Asian elephant capitals (Appendix II.Q.1). These limestone capitals adorned the columns of the lower *temenos*, which surrounded one of the most sacred buildings in Petra. The elephants are rendered in a naturalistic fashion and convey an emotional quality even in their fragmentary shape. These columns show the Nabataean amalgamation of classical Hellenistic columnar elements, specifically from Alexandria, Egypt, and the animal protomes popular in Persianate architecture.<sup>182</sup> More importantly, the elephants are associated with a sacred site.

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<sup>178</sup> Humbert, 'Deux moules,' p. 166. Humbert, head of excavations at Mafraq, suggests that this is a cake mould and points to a fresco discovered at Samarqand, dating to the same period, which depicts a festive celebration where the diners are eating elephant shaped cakes. This further reinforces the idea of a celebratory event surrounding the use of this mould.

<sup>179</sup> [http://www.honolulu zoo.org/Indian\\_elephant.htm](http://www.honolulu zoo.org/Indian_elephant.htm), 10 September 2006.

<sup>180</sup> Martha Sharp Joukowsky et al., *Petra Great Temple Vol. I: Brown University Excavations 1993-1997* (Providence, R.I., 1998) pp. 197-198.

<sup>181</sup> There is an elephant on the mosaic pavement at the Petra Church, dating to the Byzantine period, however it is of the African variety.

<sup>182</sup> Judith S. McKenzie, 'Keys from Egypt and the East: Observations on Nabataean Culture in the Light of Recent Discoveries,' *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 324 (Nov. 2001), pp. 97-112 (p. 102).

Asian elephants appear on the relief carvings of Taq-i-Bustan, the coronation site of Sasanian kings. Carved into the living rock are investiture and hunting scenes. As in the Petra example, these elephants are rendered in a naturalistic manner, with great attention to detail. In one of these hunting scenes, there is a series of saddled elephants carrying regal figures with attendants, into the hunting zone (Appendix II.Q.2).<sup>183</sup> These persons and elephants are all supporters of the central character of the hunt, the king. Consequently, the proximity of the elephant to royalty confers the highest status to the animal, and is reinforced by its depiction within this revered site. In addition, there is an image of an elephant on an undated Sasanian silver plate, where an elephant is part of the support team of the king. Not only is the elephant depicted on a silver plate, this material being used for royal commissions, but also the status of this animal is confirmed again through proximity to the king (Appendix II.Q.3).<sup>184</sup>

Other than the elephant capitals in Petra, elephant imagery is not a pervasive decorative element in the Jordanian context, making the Mafraq elephant mould even more special. The only other example of an Asian elephant appears on a beautiful 6<sup>th</sup> century Byzantine mosaic from Caesarea, Israel (Appendix II.Q.4).<sup>185</sup> In this depiction, the animal is somewhat distorted, suggesting that the artisan might have been working from oral description, rather than seeing the animal for himself. What then is the significance of this creature? This powerful animal was used for war and hunting in Greco-Roman and

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<sup>183</sup> Pope, *Persian Art*, p. 165 (Image A).

<sup>184</sup> Charles H. Sawyer, *Sasanian Silver: Late Antique and Early Medieval Arts of Luxury from Iran*, exhib. cat. (Detroit: University of Michigan Museum of Art, 1967), p. 94.

<sup>185</sup> Image from Erica Dodd.

Sasanian cultures. Moreover, it was important enough to be included as a decorative element on the Great Temple of the Nabataeans, which suggests it carried significant, yet unknown iconographic meaning. In the Greco-Roman/Sasanian context, warriors and rulers could control the elephant and make it do their bidding. However, *sura* 105 indicates that although the elephant is powerful, perhaps the most powerful of animals that could be tamed enough to be ridden by humans, it was not as powerful as Allah. Combining this information with the Umayyad mould of the elephant suggests that the product of the mould most likely served a ceremonial function.

### 3.3.2 *Animate Decoration: Ram*

There are two examples of the ram in the Jordan catalogue, the censer from the 'Amman citadel (Catalogue 2), and the ram-shaped mould from Mafrag (Catalogue 11). These objects utilise the ram motif in different ways, the mould is in the shape of a ram, whereas the handle features only the head of the animal. However, both representations of this animal are more caricature than a naturalistic depiction. The ram on the 'Amman citadel censer is so rudimentary that the original excavator identified it as a lion, and initially I too thought it was a lion.<sup>186</sup> The handle of the 'Amman censer bears a striking resemblance to the Humayma censer handle (Catalogue 1). Carved in low relief, the portrayal of the animal on both handles, bears a crude, provincial quality. A 6<sup>th</sup> century censer from the Malcove Collection at the University of Toronto (Appendix II.A.1)

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<sup>186</sup> See catalogue 2, footnote 12.

shows a Byzantine antecedent of the ram headed handle.<sup>187</sup> These examples and numerous other variations on single animal heads, suggest that this form of terminus decoration of handles was potentially widespread.<sup>188</sup>

However, moulds used to create three-dimensional objects, such as the Mafraq ram mould and the Mafraq elephant mould (discussed above) are rare. This reinforces the uniqueness of the Mafraq ram mould. The Mafraq ram shaped mould served the same purpose as the elephant mould, likely producing ceremonial baked goods. However, the ram is a more prevalent iconographic and decorative element than the elephant. At the most basic level, the ram has been used for thousands of years as a potent symbol of masculinity, embodying strength, courage, and procreative force. The ram has its roots in the ancient Egyptian fertility-god, Amun, evolving into Jupiter-Amon<sup>189</sup> in the Greek context.<sup>190</sup> For example, there are numerous representations, produced after the death of Alexander the Great, where he is depicted wearing the horns of Ammon.<sup>191</sup>

In the astrological context, the ram represents the sign of Aries and is a well-known image in the vocabulary of Sasanian iconography, frequently found

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<sup>187</sup> Sheila D. Campbell, *Malcove Collection: A Catalogue of the Objects in the Lillian Malcove Collection of the University of Toronto* (Toronto, Buffalo, and London: University of Toronto Press, 1985), p. 84.

<sup>188</sup> It is highly likely that the handle currently on the 'Amman citadel censer was added later, and could be considered separately from the main body of the object.

<sup>189</sup> Variant spellings: Amun and Ammon.

<sup>190</sup> A.B. Bosworth, *Conquest and Empire: The Reign of Alexander the Great* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 282-283. Ammon was the oracular deity of Siwah in Egypt. Alexander made a special journey to this sacred place and ever after regarded Ammon as the Egyptian version of Zeus. In time, Alexander came to identify Ammon/Zeus as his father, seeing himself as a "modern day" Heracles.

<sup>191</sup> Bosworth, *Conquest and Empire*, p. 287. These include, the Alexander Sarcophagus, ca. 320 BCE [Archaeological Museum, Istanbul] and the coinage [tetra drachms] of Lysimachus, 306-281 BCE [British Museum].

on stucco carvings and metalwork. Arthur Upham Pope suggests that the ram holds a special position in Sasanian Iran, as Damghan and Kish, sites of Sasanian palace structures, "especially under the sign of Ares."<sup>192</sup> In metalwork depictions, the ram is often portrayed as the object of the royal pastime of hunting. In stucco and metalwork, the ram bears the same fluttering ribbons seen on the king's crown (Appendix II.J.4).<sup>193</sup>

In the Christian context, the ram transforms into a variant symbol of the Lamb of God and is linked to leadership and the sacrifice of Christ.<sup>194</sup> The ram is often found depicted near or tied to a tree in images of the Old Testament story of the Sacrifice of Abraham. The ram serves as a precursor of the coming sacrifice of Jesus in the New Testament. This story figures prominently in Christian, Jewish, and Islamic teachings. The image of the ram appears in the decoration of several Byzantine mosaic pavements in Jordan. At the Petra Church (5<sup>th</sup> century), a pair of rams flanks a kylix vessel (Appendix II.J.6).<sup>195</sup> Reinforcing the importance of the ram is their proximity to the vessel, often representing the Virgin, and the location of this section of the mosaic near the apse of the church. More examples of mosaics with rams are found in 6<sup>th</sup> century churches at Atwal (Appendix II.J.1) and Massuh.<sup>196</sup> The ram depictions are nearly identical; the

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<sup>192</sup> Pope, *Persian Art*, Vol. II, pp. 639-640.

<sup>193</sup> Example in: Talgam, *Stylistic Origins*, p. 66. The same ram can be seen on a silver dish located at the Detroit Institute of Arts in: Sawyer, *Sasanian Silver*, p. 125 and again in stucco, p. 148. More silver dishes with hunting scenes of rams in: Harper and Meyers, *Silver Vessels*, pp. 228 and 229. Fluttering ribbon iconography is not limited to depictions of the king or rams, these same ribbons can be found on ducks as well as horses.

<sup>194</sup> E.P. Evans, *Animal Symbolism in Ecclesiastical Architecture* (Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1969), p. 76.

<sup>195</sup> Waliszewski, 'Mosaics,' *Petra Church*, p. 241.

<sup>196</sup> Piccirillo, *I Mosaici*, pp. 57 and 76. Atwal mosaic is located in the Archaeological Museum at Madaba, and the Massuh mosaic is in the Archaeology Museum in Madaba.

ram, framed within a geometrically patterned roundel, is in front of a tree. Both images are reminiscent of the story concerning the sacrifice of Abraham. In the Christian context, the ram is clearly associated with Christ.

In the Umayyad context the ram appears in two examples, as a sculpture on the façade of the bathhouse at Khirbat al-Mafjar, in the Palestine Authority (Appendix II.J.2-3),<sup>197</sup> and on a mosaic pavement from Qasr Hallabat, Jordan.<sup>198</sup> At Khirbat al-Mafjar, the entrance façade of the bathhouse has three registers, with the decoration becoming more ornate approaching the uppermost. At the centre of the wall, directly above the doorway, is a statue of the caliph. Resting at the bottom of this upper register is a pair of rams in repose flanking the ruler. Other than the lions that support the throne on which the caliph stands, no other animals appear.<sup>199</sup> Here, as in the Christian context, proximity to the figure of power suggests the importance of the ram motif.

The ram on the floor mosaic in room 11 at Qasr Hallabat is part of a scene motif commonly found in Byzantine churches (Appendix II.L.2). For example at Mt. Nebo, a similar example exists in the 6<sup>th</sup> century Baptistery Chapel mosaic (Appendix II.L.1). Although the Qasr Hallabat example is artistically less refined and markedly provincial, the comparison is clearly visible. However, what is remarkable is that this is located in a secular space, not in the more typical religious context.<sup>200</sup> In this example, the Umayyad patron has taken a Christian

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<sup>197</sup> Flood, *Great Mosque*, fig. 83.

<sup>198</sup> Michele Piccirillo, *Mosaics of Jordan* (Amman: American Center of Oriental Research, 1993), fig. 776.

<sup>199</sup> This is a reconstruction drawing and more animals might have been included in the frieze.

<sup>200</sup> Ghazi Bisheh, 'From Castellum to Palatium: Umayyad Mosaic Pavements from Qasr al-Hallabat in Jordan,' *Muqarnas* 10 (1993), pp. 49-56 (pp. 51-54).

motif full of religious meaning and transposed it into his palatial home. In the Islamic context, the meaning is transformed into an image of *Dar al-Islam*, which literally translates into “the House of Islam.” The best-known example of this motif is seen in the bathhouse mosaic at Khirbat al-Mafjar (Appendix II.L.3).<sup>201</sup>

In Umayyad Jordan, the ram contains status high enough to be included in the façade of a royal structure (Khirbat al-Mafjar) in close proximity to the caliph. The ram is also one of the animals included in the motif of the *Dar al-Islam*, a design that has roots in Christianity and has been transformed in the Islamic context. Moreover, the depiction of the ram is essentially similar to the Byzantine mosaics from Atwal and Massuh, with its proximity to a tree and passive stance. The ram mould from Mafraq must have significant iconographic implications, if only felt on a subconscious level while enjoying a bit of cake.

### 3.3.3 Animate Decoration: Lion

Images of lions, like those of rams, are a decorative motif deeply rooted in Jordan and the wider geographic area, although male lions are more frequently depicted than the lioness. The Asian lion, *panthera leo persica*, once roamed from southeast Europe, North Africa, the Middle East and into India. At present, these lions have been reduced to a small area of India within the Gir Forest.<sup>202</sup> In addition, Leo is one of the symbols of the astrological table, representing the sun. There is one example of a lion in the Umayyad catalogue, it is the Humayma handle (Catalogue 1), and is the head of a female lion.

<sup>201</sup> Ettinghausen, *From Byzantium*, pp. 45-46.

<sup>202</sup> <<http://www.nature.ca/notebooks/english/asialion.htm>> Lions can still be found in eastern-central, and southern Africa.

Within the boundaries of modern day Jordan, female lions are not as common as the male lion in ornamentation, however, a few examples have survived. Two images, carved in stone survive from the Seleucid (ca. 198-63 BCE) and Nabataean periods. A rare survival from the Hellenistic period is located a few miles south of 'Amman. This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE Seleucid site of Iraq el-Amir. Numerous relief carving of lions adorn the façade of Qasr al-'Abd, the 'Castle of the Slave,' owned by the Tobiad family.<sup>203</sup> Amongst these animals is a magnificent lioness nursing her young.<sup>204</sup> The feline is carved in high relief and has a fierce look on her face, not at all like the placid lioness of the Humayma handle. In the Nabataean realm, lions are not a commonly found image. The only examples I could find of lions are associated with one theme, the signs of the zodiac. For example, from Khirbat al-Tannur there is a sculpture of Tyche (Fortune), which is framed by astrological signs, including the symbol of Leo.<sup>205</sup> However, as is the case here, Leo is generally a male lion.

The lion is a popular image in Sasanian metalwork. Several lions appear on silver plates and it can be difficult to distinguish a female lion from other felines, such as leopards.<sup>206</sup> One image of a female lion nursing her young appears on a silver dish from the Hermitage, however, the dating on this plate suggests that it is from the post-Sasanian period (e.g. Early Islamic). Numerous

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<sup>203</sup> Bienkowski, *Art of Jordan*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*, p.17.

<sup>205</sup> Taylor, *Petra*, p. 145.

<sup>206</sup> This difficulty in identifying animals holds true in the Christian realm as well. Within the Baptistery Chapel of the Memorial of Moses mosaic floor at Mt. Nebo/Siyagha, numerous animals appear. In the lower right hand corner is what appears to be a spotted camel. This is not a camel rather it is a giraffe. This suggests that the artisan was not creating from a working knowledge of the creature, but from descriptions.

lions are represented as the conquest of the hunting king (Appendix II.R.2).<sup>207</sup> An image of the lion rampant appears on a bronze repoussé tray, also from the Hermitage, dating to the Sasanian period (Appendix II.R.3). A mounted warrior (the king?) is in the central roundel surrounded by two concentric rings of figural and vegetal motifs. Directly below the central image is a depiction of a lion rampant. It is unclear as to the specific meaning associated with some of these images, for example, the nursing lioness. However, it is likely that the lion as prey is representative of the fierce enemy subdued by the powerful ruler. In effect, a strong leader leads his people to peace. This motif, of the "peaceful kingdom" is transformed into *Dar al-Islam* (peace under Islam) and *Dar al-Harb* (the world outside of Islam that needs to be brought into *Dar al-Islam*) by Umayyad rulers and appears in the *diwan* mosaic at the palace of Khirbat al-Mafjar (ca. 740).<sup>208</sup>

In the Christian context, the lion is associated with rebirth, this *topos* is especially popular in the Medieval period, however, the text it is from is of a much earlier date.<sup>209</sup> In addition, the lion is the emblem of the apostle Saint Mark. Lions appear in numerous Christian churches in Jordan. The lioness in particular, appears on several mosaic pavements: the Baptistery Chapel of the Memorial of Moses (531 CE), at Mount Nebo/Siyagha; the presbytery floor mosaic in the

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<sup>207</sup> Pope, *Persian Art Vol. III*, lioness or other feline, pp. 204, 205; nursing lioness, p. 232 b; lions as prey, pp. 208 b, 210, 217, 218.

<sup>208</sup> Ettinghausen, *From Byzantium*, p. 45-46; Bisheh, 'From Castellum,' p. 54.

<sup>209</sup> Evans, *Animal Symbolism*, pp. 80-94. The writings of the Physiologus, compiled by an Alexandrian Greek from a variety of sources in the early Christian period, were embraced during the Medieval period (p. 54).

Church of the Lions (ca. 575-589 CE), Umm al-Rasas/Kastron Mefaa,<sup>210</sup> on the mosaic pavements in the Petra Church (6<sup>th</sup> century);<sup>211</sup> and at the Chapel of Father John, Khirbat el-Mukhayyat (6<sup>th</sup> century).<sup>212</sup> The lions are generally in profile and appear fierce. The lions at Mt. Nebo and Khirbat al-Mukhayyat are attacking a hunter. There is a similar symmetry to some of the lion examples, such as the pair from Umm al-Rasas/Kastron Mefaa. Here a male and female lion flank a fruiting tree, which is a visual metaphor for *Dar al-Islam* in the Umayyad period.

At Umayyad era sites, the lion appears numerous times in a variety of media, including stucco, mosaic, and fresco. As previously mentioned, a lion appears on the *diwan* mosaic at Khirbat al-Mafjar (Appendix II.L.3). An additional image from Khirbat al-Mafjar is the stucco remains of a standing caliph. His feet rest on a platform held by two lions. This sculpture was from the entrance façade of the bathhouse (Appendix II.R.4).<sup>213</sup> This sculptural arrangement immediately conjures images of the Throne of Solomon, and its associations with the wise and just ruler.<sup>214</sup> Qasr al-Mshatta, the unfinished palace outside of 'Amman contains facing lions in Triangle H of the ornately carved stone façade, however, these appear to be male lions.<sup>215</sup> The mosaic pavement at Qasr Hallabat contains a fierce looking lioness that is facing a fruiting tree (Appendix II.L.2).<sup>216</sup> On the other side of the tree is a bull with its head down.

<sup>210</sup> Bisheh, *Umayyads*, p. 97.

<sup>211</sup> Waliszewski, 'Mosaics,' *Petra Church*, p. 249.

<sup>212</sup> Piccirillo, *I Mosaici*, p. 171.

<sup>213</sup> Talgam, *Stylistic Origins*, p. 22.

<sup>214</sup> The position of the caliph, frontal stance with splayed feet firmly planted and holding a sword, shows a direct connection to Sasanian images of kingship. See Pope, *Persian Art* Vol. II, p. 239 a, plate from the Hermitage.

<sup>215</sup> Talgam, *Stylistic Origins*, p. 34.

<sup>216</sup> Piccirillo, *Mosaics*, image 776.

This image is again reminiscent of the "peaceful kingdom" motif adopted in the period. Finally, although it is difficult to see, there was a full representation of the signs of the zodiac in caldarium dome at Qusayr 'Amra.<sup>217</sup>

Lions, more than the lioness, appear in numerous Umayyad sites and across media. The symbol of the lion carries strength and power, which can serve both as a metaphor for the ruler or the fierce enemy depending on the composition. The inclusion of the head of a lioness on the Humayma handle acts as a signifier of these concepts to the viewer.

#### *3.3.4 Animate Decoration: Camel*

There is no other animal so immediately associated with the Middle East as the camel. To the westerner, the camel conjures romantic imagery of the desert and is superficially associated with the "freedom" of the nomadic people inhabiting the region. Camels are commonly seen in Jordan and the now predominantly settled Bedouin still prize and cultivate these animals.<sup>218</sup> Camels are representative of the status and wealth of the owner and by extension the tribe. However, camels are pack animals and no other creature is better suited for the arduous work of carrying goods and people across the desert. Although there is some camel imagery in Jordan, it is not as abundant as one would expect. In the Jordanian catalogue, there is one example of a camel, the zoomorphic camel kettle (Catalogue 4).

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<sup>217</sup> Fowden, *Qusayr 'Amra*, p. 43.

<sup>218</sup> Camels in the Bedouin context are primarily used in the tourist trade in Jordan and serve as photo ops and transportation into places such as Wadi Rum for holidaymakers.

Beginning around the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE, the camel, being well suited to desert terrain, became the common method of transportation of the trading peoples travelling the King's Highway.<sup>219</sup> The popularity of the camel over wheeled vehicles occurred simultaneously with the invention of the North Arabian saddle, which bore both merchants and mounted warriors. The saddle allowed warriors to use camels to control the important north-south trade on the King's Highway. In the 6<sup>th</sup> century CE, the commercial power of the camel shifted from the inhabitants of the region of the King's Highway in Jordan, to Mecca. Here, the Quraysh battled with the Fijar (an important neighbouring tribe, whom they defeated), in order to control and organise the camel-breeding tribes. These groups were then encouraged to supply transport animals rather than to raid caravans. The result of this effort made the Quraysh immensely wealthy.<sup>220</sup> The camel was emblematic of wealth and power, an idea that continues into the present day.

The zoomorphic shape of the Umm al-Walid kettle comes from an ancient tradition of animal-shaped vessels. In Jordan, there are two examples of zoomorphic vessels that have survived. An ancient bird-shaped jug from Jericho, dating to the Bronze Age II (ca. 1800-1550 BCE) and a 5<sup>th</sup> century CE ibex from Muhayy, Jordan.<sup>221</sup> Both examples are made of clay. Although the bird jug from Jericho is ancient, it does indicate the longevity of this form of vessel.

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<sup>219</sup> R. Bulliet, *The Camel and the Wheel* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1975), p. 90.

<sup>220</sup> Bulliet, *The Camel*, p. 106.

<sup>221</sup> Bienkowski, *Art of Jordan*, pp. 74 and 82.

The Nabataean empire dominated a vast trade area and the camel was the backbone of these desert merchants. However, few examples of camel imagery have survived. Carved into the sandstone wall of the *siq* leading into Petra, there are the remains of a cameleer leading his camel (Appendix II.N.7).<sup>222</sup> The *siq* was the ceremonial entrance into the Nabataean capital, and the appearance of the camel must have stood as a symbolic representation of the numerous caravans that had entered the city. In addition, camels mounted with North Arabian saddles appear on various Nabataean coins minted between 58 and 54 BCE.<sup>223</sup> The majority of surviving figural imagery from this culture is of humans, however, perhaps the ubiquitous nature of the camel, such as the automobile of today, limited the depiction of these important creatures.

Depictions of camels, like elephants, are rare in the Sasanian realm. The majority of surviving Sasanian imagery centres around the mounted king, usually on a horse. However, there is one image, on a silver plate, which shows the king “Bahram Gur” hunting from the back of a camel (Appendix II.N.8).<sup>224</sup> This is a depiction of one of the stories of the Persian national epic the *Shahnama*, or Book of Kings.

In Byzantine Jordan, there are few images of camels. Confusing the matter is the depiction of the giraffe, which appears as the dromedary with spots. A camel appears on the 6<sup>th</sup> century mosaic pavement in the Petra Church

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<sup>222</sup> Taylor, *Petra*, p. 87.

<sup>223</sup> Bulliet, *The Camel*, p. 91. Camels with North Arabian saddles also appear on numerous Roman coins minted in *Provincia Arabia* during the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE.

<sup>224</sup> Sawyer, *Sasanian Silver*, p. 92.

(Appendix II.N.6).<sup>225</sup> This fine depiction is of a camel rising-up with a palm tree trunk on its back. A great deal of care has been given to the rendering of the camel; the mouth is open, no doubt uttering the distinctive sound of a camel. An Umayyad era representation of a camel caravan is present on the mosaic pavement at the church in Dayr al-'Adas, south of Damascus, Syria (Appendix II.N.3).<sup>226</sup> In addition, camels are associated with Saint Menas, an important regional saint, who often is depicted on pilgrimage jugs.

Aside from the camel kettle from Umm al-Walid, the only other Umayyad representation of the camel is at Qusayr 'Amra (II.N.4). Within the vault of the east aisle, there is a large fresco, sectioned into thirty-two panels, in eight rows. The resulting fresco appears much like a modern day cartoon. Each of these images has symbolic representations of the different craftsmen involved with the construction of the site.<sup>227</sup> A camel, portrayed with a load of material for the site, appears in profile. One final example is an 8<sup>th</sup> century bronze ewer from Transoxiana (Soghdia). Although geographically removed from Bilad al-Sham, this zoomorphic kettle from Transoxiana, in the shape of a bull, is strikingly similar to the one from Umm al-Walid (Appendix II.N.5).<sup>228</sup>

Camels, the most important animal in this desert region, are depicted only slightly more than the elephant. This suggests that the survival of the Umm al-Walid jug is an anomaly. This is somewhat surprising as the camel is known for its power of internal water conservation and the vessel is meant to hold liquid.

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<sup>225</sup> Bikai, *The Petra Church*, p. 252.

<sup>226</sup> Fowden, *Qusayr 'Amra*, pp. 94-95, 252 fn 7.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 252.

<sup>228</sup> Géza Fehérvári et al., *Art of the Eastern World* (London: Hadji Baba Ancient Art, 1996), pp. 196-197.

The combination of these two elements strikes me as a clever and whimsical artistic production. However, the lack of camel depictions is not entirely surprising, even though these creatures were emblematic of wealth, ultimately, this was a beast of burden, a useful creature, and not an exotic one.

### 3.4: Conclusions

The depiction of living beings that are endowed with *ruh* (spirit), were unacceptable in the prayer space, be that in the home or in the mosque. This standard was established at the time of the writing of the *Hadith* beginning in the 8<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>229</sup> The sayings of the Prophet were orally transmitted before this; however, Van Reenan has suggested that specific implementations of these traditions cannot be traced to earlier than this time.<sup>230</sup> Yet, examples of inanimate decorative programs can be seen at the Umayyad structures, such as the Dome of the Rock and the Great Mosque of Damascus, which include no figural imagery. However, in Jordan there are numerous figural representations with the apogee being Qusayr 'Amra. By extension, one can conclude that this was an opulent secular structure and not in the main a prayer space.

The Jordanian metalwork catalogue contains more figural imagery than non-figural imagery. This means that these items were for secular rather than religious use. In addition, these various motifs, the elephant, ram, lion, and camel, were at one time native to the region. Antecedents of these animal shapes can be found across media from the Late Antique, Byzantine, Sasanian,

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<sup>229</sup> Schick, *Christian Communities*, p. 214.

<sup>230</sup> Reenen, *Bilderverbot*, p. 64.

Nabataean, and Christian communities inhabiting the region. The Umayyad interpretation of these motifs was absorbed and reinterpreted during this period. Meaning shifted along with the context.

## ***4: Inanimate decoration***

### *4.1 Introductory Comments*

This section of the thesis covers an examination of the various inanimate decorative elements found within the Jordanian Umayyad metalwork catalogue. Inanimate decoration is defined as all forms of ornamentation that are non-figural. In this context, there are four categories of ornamentation: epigraph, vegetal designs, geometric patterning, and architectonic elements. This section is subdivided into examinations of each motif, with an additional portion dedicated to the historical background. As in the preceding sections, comparative examples are examined with emphasis directed toward regional decorative traditions extant before and during the Umayyad period. Initially, comparative material from within the modern-day boundaries of Jordan will be examined, then expanding into the broader geographic area of Bilad al-Sham. Iconographic identification is explored where applicable, though it is acknowledged that many of the decorative motifs in this section are usually considered "neutral" in terms of iconographic content, and serve as purely decorative devices.

This portion of the analysis is much smaller than I initially believed it would be. Like many others, I considered non-figural decoration the dominant mode of ornamentation from the onset of the Islamic religion. However, when examined in its entirety, I found that the catalogue contains a greater number of animal and human representations than purely inanimate designs. Although the catalogue is limited to a specific place (Jordan), period (Early Islamic), and medium (metalwork), it does suggest that animate decoration was favoured over

purely geometric, vegetal, or architectural elements, at least within the limits of this analysis. All of the decorative elements within the catalogue follow the Late Antique tradition common to the region.

#### *4.2: Historical Background*

Art-historical texts on the history of inanimate decoration are not widespread, although increasingly, a few specific ones do exist.<sup>234</sup> There are articles that focus on this subject, but overall there is a gap in the scholarship in this segment of art history, and perhaps with good reason as the topic is almost too expansive to consider fully.<sup>235</sup> Consequently, writing a detailed historical background on each of the inanimate decorative elements found within this catalogue would be an undertaking that is well beyond the scope of this thesis. However, I will offer in broad strokes a general historical overview of these various modes of ornamentation using existing scholarship and my own analysis. I will focus this analysis to the specific objects and use local (Jordan) and regional (Bilad al-Sham) artefacts as much as possible.

##### *4.3.1: Epigraphy*

The silver seal ring (Catalogue 12) is the only Umayyad metalwork object from Jordan that falls within the broad term, epigraphy. Generally, this term evokes images of the monumental statements of power found on Roman triumphal arches rather than an inscription on a small finger ring. However,

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<sup>234</sup> Talgam, *Stylistic Origins*. Erica Dodd, *The Image of the Word*

<sup>235</sup> Finster, 'Vine Ornament,' pp. 143-158.

epigraphy comes in a variety of forms: as an inscription on a building, statue, ostraca, coinage, graffiti, or in this case a piece of jewellery. What sets Islamic decoration apart from the other "People of the Book" (Christians and Jews), has been the consistent focus on the word and rejection of figural imagery, in the religious context.<sup>236</sup> Judaism, in the 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries, as today, consistently rejects animate decoration. Although there are strong examples of this style of decoration, in the Dome of the Rock (691-692) for example, this mode does not come to complete fruition until after the Umayyad period. Further, it is highly unlikely that any of the objects in the catalogue were used in the religious sphere due to figural decoration. What were the dominant forms of epigraphy in secular and religious contexts in Jordan? What was the status of epigraphy in Jordan before Islam?

In the Roman era inscriptions became prominent and monumental. One needs only consider the Pantheon in Rome (125-128 CE) and its massive façade and interior dedicatory inscriptions. In addition, inscriptions become an integral part of the triumphal arches that appear across the vast territories of the Roman Empire. The ancient site of Jerash in Jordan has a massive triumphal arch bearing an inscription honouring the Emperor Hadrian.<sup>237</sup>

Inscriptions are a common decorative element on both church and synagogue mosaic pavements of the Late Antique period. Only one ancient synagogue exists within the boundaries of modern-day Jordan, in Jerash. Another example is at Naaran, near Jericho, in the Palestine Authority. These mosaic

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<sup>236</sup> Dodd and Khairallah, *Image of the Word*, Vol. I.

<sup>237</sup> Mohsen M. Ulama, *Jordan: History, Arts, and Ruins* ('Amman: Al-Ulama Publishing, 2000), p. 30.

floors contain epigraphy in Greek and Aramaic, which is incorporated with figural and non-figural designs.<sup>238</sup> Generally, the inscriptions with Byzantine church pavements are in Greek. The best-known example in Jordan is the Madaba Map located in the Church of the Map (6<sup>th</sup> century). The shift towards aniconic modes of ornamentation is discussed in the previous section.

In the Nabataean context, inscriptions do not share the monumentality of the Roman period. However there are surviving inscriptions associated with tombs and tomb stele. In addition, written statements at the base of representations of deities provide their identity.<sup>239</sup> The Sasanian period reveals no monumental inscriptions incorporated into the quasi-religious structures at Taq-i Bustan or the ruins of the palace at Ctesiphon. Numerous examples of Sasanian portable objects have survived, especially ewers and plates, yet, none bear inscriptions. However, numerous examples of coins and seals bearing brief epigraphy do exist.<sup>240</sup> What can be inferred from this lack of inscriptions? Were these cultures using decorative modes that were infused with meaning, well known and understood by a broad range of society? Any conclusions are highly speculative as this topic is greater than the bounds of the present study. However, there does not appear to be the need to convey meaning through the written word in these societies.

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<sup>238</sup> Steven Fine, 'From Meeting House to Sacred Realm,' in *Sacred Realm*, ed. by Steven Fine (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press and Yeshiva University Press, 1996), pp. 21-46 (p. 34-35). Inscriptions in both Greek and Aramaic appear at Kefar Hananyah in Western Galilee, Hammath Tiberias, Beth Shean and Naaran near Jericho, at Jerash, in Gaza and Ashkelon. There is additionally an Aramaic inscribed ceiling tile from Dura Europos, Syria (p. 85).

<sup>239</sup> *Jordanie: sur les pas*, pp. 116-119. Taylor, *Petra*, pp.152, 162.

<sup>240</sup> Pope, *Persian Art* Vol. VII, pp. 251-256.

One of the most compelling features of the Jordanian catalogue is the lack of inscriptions.<sup>241</sup> This silver ring is the single metalwork example (excluding coins) in the entire catalogue and only one of a small handful of examples across media from the Umayyad period in Jordan that bears writing. In general terms, the form of the Umayyad ring follows closely the Late Antique and Sasanian traditions of seal rings. The inscription is legible and reads: "God is the helper of the compassionate."<sup>242</sup>

The style of font used in this inscription bears a close resemblance to those found on Islamic coinage produced during the reformations undertaken during the reign of 'Abd al-Malik ibn Marwan (r. 685-705) and continuing into the reign of Walid I (705-715).<sup>243</sup> These caliphs shifted coinage from the utilisation of Byzantine and Sasanian prototypes in favour of epigraphy, choosing to use Arabic (II.C.1). Thus, the most prevalent form of public art, coins, was the first example of a shift from the image to the word. The lettering of the ring is simple Kufic, the same style as that on coins.<sup>244</sup> However, the sentiments on coinage are statements of faith, such as the *shahadah*, an obvious choice, as the caliph is the political and religious head of Islam.<sup>245</sup> It also serves to set Islamic rule apart from its various predecessors, through a complete break with the figural mode. In

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<sup>241</sup> For a listing of the present body of epigraphy across media with Umayyad dating see: Robert Hoyland, *Seeing Islam as Others Saw It: A Survey and Evaluation of Christian, Jewish, and Zoroastrian Writings on Early Islam* (Princeton, New Jersey: Darwin Press, Inc.), Excursus F, pp. 687-703.

<sup>242</sup> Bisheh, 'Qasr Mshash,' pp. 81-93 (p. 93).

<sup>243</sup> For examples see: *Umayyads*, p. 145.

<sup>244</sup> "Simple Kufic" sounds like an oxymoron, as Kufic is difficult to read due to the highly stylised form of the letters and lack of diacritical marking. The term "simple Kufic" is used in this context to differentiate it from ornate or foliate Kufic, which can be even more challenging to decipher.

<sup>245</sup> The *shahadah* states: There is no God but God and Muhammad is the Prophet of God. Qur'an *sura* 112.

the Islamic era, the word of God takes precedence over an image of a temporal ruler. The fact that coinage reforms are occurring toward the end of the 7<sup>th</sup> century illustrates the development of an evolving Islamic identity. What about other examples of inscriptions in Umayyad Jordan?

Jordan contains the largest concentration of extant Umayyad architecture.<sup>246</sup> Although many are in ruins, a few have survived the ravages of time. The majority of these buildings fit into the category of *qasr*. These complexes served a variety of functions: from rest stations for pilgrims and merchants, to provincial palaces for the Umayyad royalty, to defensive sites. General features may contain residential compounds, agricultural outbuildings, palace structures, fortifications, and often a Roman style bathhouse.<sup>247</sup> An element common to all of these buildings, aside from Umayyad period dating, is the overall scarcity of epigraphy. The majority of the surviving inscriptions are labels, graffiti, or recycled building material, however, there are exceptions.<sup>248</sup> The most striking example of this is at Qasr Burqu.<sup>249</sup> Here an existing dedicatory inscription has been moved from its original location to provide the

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<sup>246</sup> The most notable of these buildings include: Qasr Kharana, ca. 710, al-Muwaqqar, ca. 723, 'Amman Citadel structure, ca. 724-743, Qusayr 'Amra, ca. 740, Mshatta ca. 744, and al-Qastal, ca. 744.

<sup>247</sup> Bacharach, 'Marwanid,' p. 27.

<sup>248</sup> In the "Throne Room" of the royal residence on the 'Amman citadel, an inscribed block has been reused to build the wall of this structure, it bears an inscription in Greek in honour of a Roman emperor and dates to the second century. The room was originally stuccoed, so the writing would not have been visible. *Umayyads*, p. 67.

<sup>249</sup> Qasr Burqu is located 205km northeast of 'Amman in the Basalt Desert. Kennedy and Bewley, *Ancient Jordan*, pp. 192-193. Additionally, Qasr Burqu is situated along one of the main Arabia-Syria trade routes; Heinz Gaube, 'An Examination of the Ruins of Qasr Burqu,' *ADAJ* 19 (1974), pp. 93-100 (p. 99).

lintel of a doorway.<sup>250</sup> The inscription connects the site to an amir and eventual ruler of the Umayyad dynasty, al-Walid I (r. 705-715). This inscription is carved into stone and although it was not originally on the exterior façade of the building, it was intended to be read by the person entering the structure from the courtyard.

Several painted graffito were discovered inside Qasr Kharana, the largest has supplied archaeologists with a *terminus ante quem* for construction of the first phase of construction.<sup>251</sup> This painted graffito falls somewhere between a dedicatory statement and prayer for the builder of the structure. Numerous examples of Greek and Arabic labels, as well as text in Arabic are found on the frescoes of Qusayr 'Amra (ca. 705-715). Here Greek labels, appear on the fresco of *Philosophy, History and Poetry*, on the *Dynastic Icon* fresco, and the *Greek Captive* fresco.<sup>252</sup> Legible Arabic appears in two texts located below the *Enthroned Amir* fresco and the *Dynastic Icon*.<sup>253</sup> The text of the *Enthroned Amir*, although fragmentary, bears a similar sentiment to the large Qasr Kharana

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<sup>250</sup> Gaube, 'An Examination,' pp. 93, 97. The inscription reads: "O God! Bismallah. This is what the Amir al-Walid, son of the commander of the Faithful, built: these rooms. In the year 81." This is referring to Walid I (r. 705-715).

<sup>251</sup> Stephen K. Urice, *Qasr Kharana in the Transjordan* (Durham, North Carolina: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1987), p. 7. The inscription from room 51 reads: "Oh my God have mercy on 'Abd al-Malik ibn 'Umar and forgive him his faults, those that are passed and those to come, those that are hidden and those that are manifest. No one of himself draws night unto thee but that thou forgivest him and hast mercy upon him if he believes. I believe in my Lord. Therefore bestow thou on me thy benefits for thou are the Merciful. Oh my God, I beg of thee to accept from him his prayer and his veneration. Amen, oh Lord of the worlds! Lord of Moses and Aaron! May god have mercy on him who reads it then says, Amen! Amen! Oh Lord of the worlds, the Mighty, the Wise! 'Abd Allah ibn 'Umar wrote (it) on Monday three (nights) remaining from Muharram of the year two and ninety. Witnessed by Lan ibn Harun. And lead us so we meet with my prophet and his prophet in this world and the next."

<sup>252</sup> Fowden, *Qusayr 'Amra*, pp. 87, 177, and 191.

<sup>253</sup> Fowden, p. 178, 126.

graffito.<sup>254</sup> Both Greek and Arabic labels appear on the fresco depicting the *Brotherhood of Kings*.<sup>255</sup>

There are only a few Umayyad structures that contain monumental Arabic inscriptions and both of these are outside of Jordan; the best-known is the Dome of the Rock (691-692).<sup>256</sup> In addition, medieval sources state that the Great Mosque of Damascus originally had Arabic inscriptions on the *qibla* wall and along the interior or the south wall.<sup>257</sup> These inscriptions are now unfortunately lost through renovations and the damaging fire of 1893. However, one surviving artefact associated with architecture in Jordan does bear epigraphy. This is a carved limestone capital from the site of the royal reservoir at al-Muwaqqar (Appendix II.G.3).

Within the entire corpus of artefacts dating to the Umayyad period in Jordan, there are only a small handful of extant examples of inscriptions, the silver finger ring, a stone tablet engraved with a Qur'anic verse (Appendix II.G.1),<sup>258</sup> a carved limestone capital (Appendix II.G.3),<sup>259</sup> a ceramic jug

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<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126. The text reads: "O God forgive the heir apparent (?) of the Muslim men and women...well-being from God and Mercy."

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 203.

<sup>256</sup> However, in this structure, the placement of the inscription band at the top of the wall makes it extremely difficult to be seen, much less read by the viewer.

<sup>257</sup> Flood, *Great Mosque*, see appendix, pp. 247-254.

<sup>258</sup> Adia Naghwy, <<http://www.discoverislamicart.org/database-item.php?id=object:ISL:jo:Mus01ob4>>,

23 November 2006. The inscription is the 'Ayat al-Kursi (the Throne Verse), Sura 2 (al-Baqara), verse 25. It reads: "God! There is no God but he, the living, the self-subsisting: neither slumber nor sleep seizeth him. To him belong what so ever is in heaven and on earth. Who is he that can intercede with him, but through his good pleasure? He knows that which is past, and that which is it come unto them, and they shall not comprehend anything of his knowledge, but so far as he pleaseth. His throne is extended over heaven and earth, and preservation of both is no burden unto him. He is the high, the mighty."

<sup>259</sup> *Umayyads*, p. 118 and *Jordanie*, p. 174. The inscription reads: "In the name of the most merciful God. Has ordered the building of this pool the servant of God, Yazid Commander of the Faithful, may God favour him and prolong his life and happiness and bestow upon him blessings and bounties in this world and the next. It has been built by the care of Abdullah the son of Sulaym."

(Appendix II.G.2),<sup>260</sup> and an ostracon.<sup>261</sup> With the exception of the ostracon, all of these examples share the simple Kufic lettering found on the ring, however, only the capitals connect to a royal site, the water reservoir at Al-Muwaqqar, Jordan.<sup>262</sup> These items form a somewhat diverse collection of objects bearing epigraphy; the finger ring, tablet, jug, and even the ostraca, are associated with the household, whereas the capital is from a royally commissioned site. The tablet contains a verse from the Qur'an and was used as a talisman to ward off the 'evil eye.'<sup>263</sup> The capital contains a dedicatory statement that identifies the reservoir as a royal commission, in a broadly similar way as the Romans did on their triumphal arches. One can only speculate on the inscription of the jug, however, it seems likely be something similar to the ring inscription. Finally, an ostracon, discovered at Petra, is inscribed with *Sura* 105 (the Elephant). This is an interesting coincidence, as the elephant head capitals, although of Nabataean dating, are from the same site.<sup>264</sup>

The scarcity of inscriptions in the Jordanian catalogue suggests that this form of decoration was developing in importance during the latter part of the Umayyad period. It is from the Abbasid period (749/750-1258 CE) onward that inscriptions become fully incorporated into Islamic religious decoration. To some

<<http://www.discoverislimicart.org/database-item.php?id=object;ISL:jo;Mus01;3;en>>, Museum with no Frontiers.

<sup>260</sup> *Umayyads*, pp. 58, 118, and 68. The jug is potentially the earliest example of Islamic epigraphy. Unfortunately, I have not been able to find a translation of the Kufic inscription.

<sup>261</sup> Adia Naghwy, <<http://www.discoverislimicart.org/database-item.php?id=object;ISL:jo;Mus01;41;en>>, 28 January 2007. A student likely used it to memorise the *sura*. The writing on the ostraca, is in a loose, everyday script.

<sup>262</sup> Adia Naghwy, <<http://www.discoverislimicart.org/database-item.php?id=object;ISL:jo;Mus01;3;e>>, 12 February 2007.

<sup>263</sup> Adia Naghwy, <<http://www.discoverislimicart.org/database-item.php?id=object;ISL:jo;Mus01ob4>>, 15 October 2006. According to this website, this type of talisman is still used in Jordan today. Two other inscriptions also exist, one from Qasr al-Burqu' and a graffito from Qasr al-Kharana.

<sup>264</sup> See section 3.2.3: Animate decoration: the Elephant, for further information.

extent the dearth of inscriptions in the Jordanian context could be due to the ravages of time or defacement of these structures by subsequent ruling dynasties of the region. In addition, Arabic was primarily a spoken language and it was not until well into the 7<sup>th</sup> century and the creation of numerous Qur'ans that Arabic in a written form became well known. The near absence of monumental epigraphy during the Umayyad period, a burgeoning hallmark of Islamic decoration, indicates that inscriptions were late coming to Jordan.

#### *4.3.2: Vegetal Elements*

The popularity of vegetal decoration is due not only to the inherent beauty of the natural world, but also to its versatility and adaptability as a decorative element. Plants can embellish the lines of an object or provide a backdrop, creating a three-dimensional effect. Throughout the Middle East as elsewhere, the natural world has served as a source of inspiration for ornamentation. Representations of nature, whether naturalistically or abstractly rendered, are often imbued with meaning. The symbolic implications of vegetal ornamentation can differ depending on the culture. In addition, vegetal motifs can simply be decorative.

In this catalogue, a vegetal element is defined as any decorative component resembling plant forms derived from the natural world. Three distinct categories of vegetal design elements can be identified within this group, they are, vine scroll (3.4.3a), leaves/flowers (3.4.3b) and fruit (3.3.7). There are five items in the Jordanian catalogue that contain vegetal elements: the Humayma handle

(Catalogue 1), the 'Amman Citadel censer (Catalogue 2), the Umm al-Walid censer dome (Catalogue 6), the Mafrag censer base (Catalogue 8), and the Mafrag brazier (Catalogue 9).<sup>265</sup> However, there is not a single vegetal element common to all five artefacts.

Establishing conclusive iconographic meaning in this group of artefacts is problematic due to several factors. Although the Jordanian objects are secured to the Early Islamic period dating through archaeological context, the time of manufacture could pre-date this era. In addition, establishing where the object was manufactured and who commissioned the artefact can be highly speculative. With these limitations in mind, I will suggest possible readings of the designs where applicable.

#### 4.3.2a: *The vine scroll*

There are no more ubiquitous decorative motifs found across the Mediterranean and Middle East than vine scrolls. Vine scrolls have been prevalent since the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE. The motif ranged across the Mediterranean, the Middle East, and into Pakistan where its use during the Kushan Empire (2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century CE) was common.<sup>266</sup> In addition, vine scroll examples are found in Yemen.<sup>267</sup> During the Late Antique period, naturalistic representations gave way to progressively stylized, abstracted, and geometrically based vegetal forms.

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<sup>265</sup> The Mafrag brazier has been examined in the previous section and will not be re-examined here. In addition, it is the only object that bears an example of fruit, the pomegranate.

<sup>266</sup> Claudine Dauphin, 'The Development of the "Inhabited Scroll" in Architectural Sculpture and Mosaic Art from Late Imperial Times to the Seventh Century A.D.,' *Levant*, Vol. XIX (1987), pp. 183-197 (p. 183).

<sup>267</sup> Talgam, *Stylistic Origins*, pp. 94-95.

One could argue that underlying all forms of decoration is geometry, however, in the more naturalistic Hellenistic and Roman Imperial expression, geometry is subdued and the viewer is encouraged to accept the illusionistic and idealistic rendering of vegetation, rather than examining the underlying geometric structure that the artwork is based upon. This illusionistic surface is reduced during the latter part of the Roman Empire and naturalism is abandoned in favour of abstracted forms of vegetation by the 6<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>268</sup> This trend continues to evolve and becomes entrenched in the Abbasid period, reflected in the well-known stucco carvings of Samarra, where vegetation becomes almost totally abstracted.<sup>269</sup> In this study, however, vegetation is still identifiable. One can distinguish between individual plants such as the grape vine (Catalogue 2 and 8) the anthemion (Catalogue 2), or the palm capitals and pomegranates from the Mafraq brazier (Catalogue 9). All of the vegetal forms within the Jordanian catalogue conform to the Late Antique tradition of ornamentation.

The plant forms within the Jordanian catalogue cover a broad range, from the quasi-naturalistic to the highly abstracted and from the refined to the rudimentary. The chased anthemion design on the sides and dome of the 'Amman citadel censer (Catalogue 2), is represented in a symmetrical, repeated form, reducing the vegetation to pattern, much like modern-day wallpaper. The vine scroll on the Humayma handle (Catalogue 1) is a highly abstracted and minimal representation. However, none of the plant forms are naturalistic, they are more pattern than botanical rendering. For example, on the Humayma handle, the vine

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<sup>268</sup> Dauphin, 'The Development,' p.190. The author sees this as a degeneration of form and allows the artisan more flexibility and imagination when constructing plant forms.

<sup>269</sup> Hillenbrand, *Islamic Art*, p. 42.

curls in on itself with a trefoil forming the central decorative element. A similar example in the geometric realm is on the footed censer from Umm al-Walid (Catalogue 5). Here a series of four circles create a cross, which could read as a highly abstracted flower. The censer dome from Umm al-Walid uses the same four circles and fuses them into a shape that is floral or could be perceived as a Greek cross.

Both the Humayma handle and the Mafraq censer contain vine scrolls. On these objects, the vines serve a dual function: decoration, and structural support.<sup>270</sup> The vines are non-naturalistic, appearing highly regimented and stylized. The locus of design on the artefact can provide further insight about the use of vine scrolls. As stated previously, on both the Humayma handle and the Mafraq censer the vine scroll provides structural support for the object. On the Humayma artefact, the vine scroll is heavy and dense, easily lending itself to the formation of the handle. On the Mafraq censer, the vine scroll acts as both screen and framing device. The design surrounds the bowl of the censer disguising the potentially less attractive functional aspect of the object. In addition, the vine scroll provides a structural backdrop for the animal form. What iconographic meaning can be understood using the vine scroll on these objects?

The vine scroll motif has deep ties in Late Antiquity. Among imagery associated with the cult of Dionysus, vines, especially grape vines, constitutes a

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<sup>270</sup> Across Bilad al-Sham, from the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE, Byzantine and into the Islamic period, vine scrolls, like the use of architectonic elements in ornamentation, have been used to define and organise the decorative space. Flood, *Great Mosque*, pp. 68-69.

major motif of the iconography.<sup>271</sup> This element was absorbed as a potent iconographic element in the Christian church (Appendix II.B.3-7). Because wine plays a central role in both the religious cult of Dionysus and within the Christian church, the vine scroll conjures images of sacred drinking and subsequent spiritual benefits. Within the dogma of the Christian church imbibing of wine is directly connected to life after death. Does this mean that both the Mafraq censer base and the Humayma handle are conveying a Christian message? This is highly unlikely, as these items were excavated within an Islamic context and it is more probable that this element served as a decorative rather than a didactic one.<sup>272</sup> Further, the vine scroll served as a way of organising space and adding structural support to the objects.

Finbarr Barry Flood provides a detailed analysis of the Umayyad utilisation of the vinescroll within the decoration of the Great Mosque of Damascus (706 CE).<sup>273</sup> Flood sees the Umayyad use of the vinescroll serving two purposes, practical and decorative. In this context, the vinescroll contributes to the definition of space and is imbued with semiotic meaning.<sup>274</sup> In the Umayyad period, the vinescroll transforms from its Late Antique utilisation as a background

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<sup>271</sup> Stephen L. Harris and Gloria Platzner, *Classical Mythology: Images and Insights*, third Edition (Mountain View California, London, and Toronto: Mayfield Publishing Company, 2001), pp. 230-231.

<sup>272</sup> I am not suggesting that this is the case for all depictions of vine scrolls in the Umayyad period. In many instances, the meaning is understood through the context. For example, at Khirbat al-Mafjar (near Jericho), the vine trellis is the elemental motif in the palace vestibule and the caliph's dressing room. Similarly, at Qusayr 'Amra, the two rooms flanking the fresco of the seated caliph are covered in vines and clusters of grapes. At another royal site, Mshatta, the carved stone façade is covered with vine scrolls. See Robert Hillenbrand, "La Dolce Vita in Early Islamic Syria: the Evidence of Later Umayyad Palaces," *Art History* 5 (1982), pp. 1-35 (pp. 13-14) and Flood, *Great Mosque*, pp. 56-68.

<sup>273</sup> Flood, pp. 57-113.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

element, into a major architectonic and iconographic feature.<sup>275</sup> His analysis shows that the vinescroll represents the Qur'anic and early Hadith idea of Paradise.<sup>276</sup> This analysis is applicable across royal Umayyad architectural sites, but does the same meaning transfer onto the portable arts?

Scholars have successfully demonstrated that portable arts associated with the elite were in high demand. For example, 12<sup>th</sup> century metalwork forms, usually jugs, were translated into ceramic copies. The number of surviving examples indicates that these were a popular form of decorative object.<sup>277</sup> It seems likely therefore, that the dominance of the vinescroll within publicly accessible loci such as the Great Mosque of Damascus and the Dome of the Rock, as well as numerous churches in Jordan and Bilad al-Sham, could create a demand for the production of this motif in portable objects. However, the Great Mosque of Damascus was constructed at the mid-point in the Umayyad period, one has to wonder how quickly demand for this newly inscribed motif would grow.

The use of vine scrolls abound in Umayyad Jordan and can be found across media. Vine scrolls form the structural framework of the carved stone façade at Mshatta (Appendix II.B.1-2)<sup>278</sup> and on another carved stone artefact, a lintel, from Qasr Tuba.<sup>279</sup> Both of these sites use an intense representation of this form of vegetation and appear to be from a similar school of stone carving. Vine scrolls, complete with grapes, are used in the borders of the fresco painting of the

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<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>277</sup> Yasser Tabbaa, 'Bronze Shapes in Iranian Ceramics of the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries,' *Muqarnas* 4 (1987), pp. 98-114.

<sup>278</sup> Talgam, *Stylistic Origins*, pp. 28-29.

<sup>279</sup> *Umayyads*, p.111.

personification of earth from Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi.<sup>280</sup> In yet another medium, this time a mosaic pavement from Qasr Hallabat, the same type of scrolling grape vine is used (Appendix II.L.2).<sup>281</sup> Moving outside of Jordan is the best known utilisation of the vine scroll, the interior mosaics in the Dome of the Rock, which bear connection to Late Classical, Byzantine and Sasanian antecedents.<sup>282</sup>

The vine scroll was a well-established motif in Jordan during the Umayyad period. The extant Christian mosaics of Jordan are full of vine scroll imagery, and there are numerous examples: the Churches of Saint Stephen (719) and Bishop Sergius (756), both at Umm al-Rasas; Church of al-Khadir (ca. 650-699), Madaba; Church of Deacon Thomas (ca. 600-650) Mount Nebo; and mosaic pavement at the Church of Saints Lot and Procopios (562), also at Mount Nebo; as well as at Khirbet es-Samra (ca. 690-730). In these mosaics, the vine scroll takes on the secondary characteristic of a framing device rather than the focus of the decoration. Depending on the context of the decoration, the Dome of the Rock, church mosaic pavements, or palace frescoes, the iconographic meaning could vary.

#### 4.3.2b: *Leaves and flowers*

The Humayma handle (Catalogue 1), Umm al-Walid censer (catalogue 6), and the 'Amman Citadel censer (Catalogue 2) all contain leaf elements. These three artefacts contain four different types of leaves: trefoil, quatrefoil, half-palmette or

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<sup>280</sup> Fowden, *Qusayr 'Amra*, p. 71.

<sup>281</sup> Bisheh, *I Mosaici*, p. 131.

<sup>282</sup> Dodd, *Image of the Word*, p.19.

anthemion,<sup>283</sup> and single eucalyptus-like leaves. Beginning with the Humayma handle, the leaf is comprised of three rounded lobes attached to the end of the vine, creating a trefoil or clover shape. This is the central feature and terminus of the curling vines. This trefoil shape could also be read as grapes, with the three circles creating a shorthand image of a cluster of grapes. The Umm al-Walid censer has four centrally located elliptical lobed leaves or petals, creating a quatrefoil or flower-like shape. These chased quatrefoils are created through the removal of metal in a regular pattern, across the dome of the censer

The 'Amman Citadel censer has an engraved pattern, which covers the surface of the cylindrical base of the censer bowl and the surface of the dome. Due to the patina covering the object, the design is not initially apparent. This motif, as on the Mafraq censer, has internal and external forms. The exterior is comprised of four single leaves, with upturned tips, much like eucalyptus. The four leaves join to form a lozenge shape, with a pearl at the confluence of each leaf. The internal element contains a single anthemion in the centre of each lozenge. This flower grows out of the leaf joints at the base of the design. Although the pattern is formal and regimented, the interplay of the leaf pattern, with upturned tips results in a light-hearted design. This arrangement of elements is similar to the design on the Umm al-Walid artefact; both share a pearl component and repeat pattern across the entire surface they adorn. Overall, the

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<sup>283</sup> Anthemion: a honeysuckle or palmette. Term first occurs in a report c. 409 BCE on the building of the Erechtheion. *Dictionary of Art* Vol. 2 (New York: Grove, 1996), p. 134. Seen in Egyptian, Assyrian, Aegean ([encyclopedia.com/html/al/anthemio.asp](http://encyclopedia.com/html/al/anthemio.asp)) and Byzantine decorative motifs.

aesthetic sense of the Umm al-Walid artefact is bold and stiff, whereas the design on the Citadel censer has a light, lyrical quality.

This pattern of a centrally inhabited lozenge decoration is found in the apodyterium vault fresco at Qusayr 'Amra (Appendix II.E.1).<sup>284</sup> In this mural painting, clusters of three leafs are arranged in a formal pattern that creates the frame in which a variety of different images are found, such as a bear playing a lute and a dancing woman. The inhabited lozenge pattern is used in the mosaic in the Hippolytus hall (Appendix II.E.2) and another is used in the Umayyad palace structure at Qastal.<sup>285</sup> Although the Hippolytus hall mosaic dates to the early 6<sup>th</sup> century and the Qastal mosaic to the mid-8<sup>th</sup> century, the two mosaics share a common decorative vocabulary, which has persisted over a two hundred year gap. This example indicates the continuity of decoration from the Late Antique to the Umayyad period in Jordan. Both of these mosaics were found in palatial residences.

The leaf patterning on the Humayma handle and the censers from the 'Amman Citadel and Umm al-Walid share a similar approach to the use of vegetal decoration. On all three objects, the leaf pattern covers the artefact and is the central element of the design. However, the ornamentation on the 'Amman citadel censer is exclusively decorative, whereas the trefoils and quatrefoils of the Humayma handle and Umm al-Walid censer dome are functional decoration.

As an iconographic component, the trefoil is a commonly found design element used throughout antiquity. However, this shape garnered specific

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<sup>284</sup> Fowden, *Qusayr 'Amra*, p. 67.

<sup>285</sup> Piccirillo, *I Mosaici*, p. 51 (Madaba example). For Qastal example: Piccirillo, *I Mosaici*, p. 29 and *Mosaics*, 'Umayyad Castles,' image 787.

meaning in the Christian era, linking the trefoil to the Holy Trinity. On the censer from Umm al-Walid there is a quatrefoil. Once again, the quatrefoil has been in existence since the earliest times; however, in the Christian era this four-pointed shape could represent the symbol of Christ's martyrdom, the cross. The meaning of the 'Amman Citadel censer leaf/palmette/anthemion design is more difficult to decipher. However, the anthemion or palmette was associated with ideas of skill and hard work through the character, Anthemion, father of Meno, in the work by Plato entitled *Meno*.<sup>286</sup> Whilst these are interesting historical notes, and the essence of this iconography may have affected, to some degree, the artisan's choice, I do not believe that these designs are anything other than the utilisation of the prevalent decorative modes of the time. These items are meant to be useful and pleasing to the eye, and so they are.

#### 4.3.4: Geometric

Geometric designs are one of the most ancient modes of ornamentation and common to nearly all peoples of the world. Jordan has a rich and ancient history of human inhabitation. Examples of geometric patterning dating to 3500 BCE on ceramics are extant in the Archaeological Museum in 'Amman.<sup>287</sup> In this context, geometric elements are comprised of triangles of various dimensions (equilateral, isosceles), squares, rectangles, simple straight lines, curved lines, and circles. This mode of ornamentation can be utilised in two basic ways: as decorative shapes in themselves or as an underlying structure or manner of

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<sup>286</sup> Definition of the character Anthemion <<http://www.classics.mit.edu/Plato/meno.html>> 25 September 2006.

<sup>287</sup> *Jordanie: sur les pas*, p. 54.

defining space in a regimented and formalised fashion. As mentioned in the previous section, an underlying geometry is increasingly apparent in the Late Antique expression of the natural world. Although symmetry and balance were prized in the Greco-Roman milieu, this mode of decoration became increasingly deconstructed in the Late Antique period with vegetal forms morphing into near-geometric images. There are three objects in the catalogue that contain primarily geometric decoration they are: the ablution jug (Catalogue 3), the footed censer (Catalogue 5) and the censer dome (Catalogue 6).

The ablution jug has the most basic geometric decoration, and this is the most elemental form of decoration in the catalogue. The chased short, straight uniform lines are in alternating angles to the right and the left where they cover the shoulder of the jug. Across the body of the object there is a regular series of short straight lines covering the surface, however, these lines may be the effect of corrosion and not intentionally added by the artisan.<sup>288</sup> The shoulder banding does not appear to be overtly decorative. This subtlety leads me to believe that these rings serve a primarily utilitarian function, the textured surface makes the vessel easier to grip. The fact that these lines are decorative is likely secondary to this primary function.

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<sup>288</sup> The jug was badly damaged on one side and there was a great deal of corrosion on the surface of the vessel. The conservators at the Max Van Berchem Foundation did a remarkable job in their restoration of the vessel. For details see: Bujard, 'Objets Découverts,' pp. 1-2; Bujard, 'Umm al-Walid et Khan az-Zabib, Deux Établissements Omeyyades en Limite du Desert Jordanien,' *Conquête de la Steppe: Travaux de la Maison de L'Orient Méditerranéen* No. 36. Sous la direction de Bernard Geyer (2001). Pp. 189-218; Bujard, 'Umm al-Walid et Khan Az-Zabib, deux Établissements Omeyyades en Limited du Desert Jordanien,' *Conquête de la Steppe: et appropriation des terres dur les marges arides du Croissant fertile*, ed. by Bernard Geyer (Lyon: Maison de l'Orient, 2001), pp. 189-201.

The footed censer (Catalogue 5) also utilises geometric decoration primarily in a functional manner that is also decorative. In this example the small circles and various triangular shapes that cover the surface in a uniform fashion allows the escape of fragrant smoke from the burning incense. The denticulation around the base of the dome and the top of the base is reminiscent of architectural ornamentation, however, this serves a primarily functional purpose, allowing the user to grip the smooth material in order to fill the base.

Alternatively, the censer dome (Catalogue 6), uses geometric patterning in both a functional and decorative fashion. In this example, the quatrefoils, comprised of a series of circles and the ring of circles around the finial, are punched through the surface of the dome allowing the smoke to escape. Incised onto the surface of the dome is a series of pearls that form a lozenge pattern, providing a structure that frames the quatrefoils. The protruding triangular feature that encompasses the base of the dome delineates the edge of the dome and allows the user easily in order to open the vessel to add more incense (Appendix II.E.3).

Overall, on these three vessels the geometric patterning is first functional and secondly decorative. Contrast this with a collection of 8<sup>th</sup> century steatite vessels excavated at Mafraq (Appendix II.E.4 and H.3). These cooking dishes bear non-functional geometric decoration, comprised of straight lines incised into the surface resulting in uniform bands of an 'x' pattern, both horizontal and vertical. This decoration is of a highest quality and the resulting patterning is elegantly rendered. This style of decoration is not originally from Bilad al-Sham. The origin of this type of adornment as well as the practice of steatite carving has

its roots in Yemen, located at the furthest tip of south Arabia.<sup>289</sup> These luxury items begin appearing in the Bilad al-Sham after the Umayyads took control of this area and then this form of patterning becomes diffused.<sup>290</sup>

Examples of traditional Jordanian geometric patterning exist on a mid-7<sup>th</sup> century ceramic jars excavated at Umm as Sammaq (Appendix II.E.5) and Umm Qais.<sup>291</sup> The unglazed vessels from Umm as Sammaq bear slip painted designs, ranging from slash marks to wavy and swirling lines. The storage jug from Umm Qais is divided into three registers, and a variety of lines, both curved and straight cover the surface. The geometric patterning on these three vessels is as much a reflection of the local traditions as of the broader geographic area of Bilad al-Sham. One example, the censer dome (Catalogue 6) does bear the pearl style of decoration synonymous with Sasanian decoration (Appendix II.J.4). Overall, the geometric patterning in the Jordanian catalogue is more functional than decorative, suggesting that the owner wanted a practical object that still had a bit of flare.

#### 3.4.5: *Architectonic Elements*

In this thesis, architectural elements include the use of arcades, columns, domes, and cupolas. Apart from the Mafraq brazier (Catalogue 9), discussed in the next section, the censer from the 'Amman citadel (Catalogue 2), is the only

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<sup>289</sup> Steatite, also known as soapstone, is a soft stone that can be carved and shaped with a sharp tool. Steatite is abundant in Yemen and evidence of carvings dating to the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BCE have been discovered. *Grove Dictionary of Art*,

<<http://www.groveart.com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/shared/views/article.html?section=art.003517.4.8>> 3 January 2007.

<sup>290</sup> Humbert, *Jordanie*, p. 168. The horde of ten-steatite vessels range in sizes from small to large, all have straight sides and simple flaring handles on either side of the vessel. Two of vessels even bear the signature, "Nuwar," further adding to the special nature of the objects. Image from *Umayyads*, p. 52.

<sup>291</sup> Adia Naghawy <[http://www.discoverislamicart.org/database\\_item.php?id=object;ISL:jo;Mus01\\_E:20;en](http://www.discoverislamicart.org/database_item.php?id=object;ISL:jo;Mus01_E:20;en)> 12 February 2007.

other object that fully utilises architectonic decoration. Whilst in the broadest sense one could state that the footed censer (Catalogue 5), the censer dome (Catalogue 6), and even the jug with long handle (Catalogue 7) structurally resemble a dome and cupola, this stretches the parameters of this category too far.

As discussed in the section on the Mafraq brazier, architectural decoration is deeply rooted in the Late Antique and Sasanian traditions. Arcades can serve to organise space and highlight what is within the space. In the 'Amman citadel censer, the artisan has ingeniously used an arcade to provide an area for the smoke to escape; this is surmounted by a dome and cupola. The artisan has shown considerable skill in the creation of a miniature arcade, complete with slim columns and rectangular capitals. Overall, the proportions of the arcade are evocative of Late Antique and Sasanian traditions.

As in the geometric examples, the decoration is functional as well as decorative, however, this example belongs to a different category of artistic production. This censer is of much higher quality than the other censer examples, especially in the attention to detail. Unfortunately, the quality is diminished by the addition of the present handle, which is not original to the object.<sup>292</sup> The coarser dimensions of this handle detract from the elegance of the censer body.

Several Umayyad-period examples of arcades exist. The most strikingly similar one is an 8<sup>th</sup> century steatite lamp from Mafraq (Appendix II.H.3). Like the steatite vessels discussed in the previous discussion on geometric patterning,

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<sup>292</sup> As noted in the visual description of the 'Amman censer in the catalogue, the handle is too heavy for the vessel and plasticine has been added by the museum to keep the censer upright. Moreover, the censer is similar to an early Islamic censer from Crikvine, which does not have a handle, rather is suspended from three rings. See catalogue page 8, footnote 14.

this object is from the same artistic tradition as the Yemeni vessels, however, in this example, in addition to the geometric shapes, the base is surrounded by an arcade. This arcade has squat columns similar to those found at the Great Mosque of San'a, and on the fragmentary pages of a monumental Qur'an (Appendix II.H.2).<sup>293</sup> As the Yemeni artefacts are of an 8<sup>th</sup> century manufacture and the 'Amman citadel censer is dated to the mid-7<sup>th</sup> century, there is little possibility of design influence coming from south Arabia. However, this does indicate the overarching appeal of the arcade over a vast geographic region.

Another object that utilises architectural features is a stone censer excavated on the 'Amman citadel (Appendix II.H.1). Although the arches do not rest on the columns as in the citadel censer, the column capitals appear to be a more abstracted version of the palm capitals on the Mafraq brazier (Catalogue 9). The capitals are formed by a pair of symmetrical wedge-shaped features that at first glance could be mistaken for the capitals on the Mafraq brazier.

There are several mid-to-late 7<sup>th</sup> century Sasanian examples using architectonic elements as ornamentation. These include a ceramic jug and several bronze trays.<sup>294</sup> Of these examples, the most compelling is a bronze tray in the Staatliche Museum in Berlin (Appendix II.H.4).<sup>295</sup> The chased decorative motif of the tray is entirely focused on architectonic elements. A central structure is surrounded by a radiating arcade, the interior of each of the arches of the arcade

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<sup>293</sup> Flood, *Great Mosque*, p. 64 and fn. 33. Flood notes that the provenance of this Qur'an is complex with suggestions ranging from Yemen to Syria to Egypt and dating to the early Islamic period. Flood sees Syria as the strongest contender due to the similarity of the Qur'an mosque to the Great Mosque of Damascus.

<sup>294</sup> Pope, *Persian Art*, pp. 192, 236, and 237.

<sup>295</sup> The dating of this object is not specific, Pope offers only a general Sasanian dating (224-642 CE).

are filled with highly stylised, ornate vegetation. This tray uses the architectonic features of the arcade to organise and segment the surface of the tray and leads the viewer's eye to the image in the central roundel.<sup>296</sup> The structure in the central roundel has an arcade that is consistent with the arcade on the 'Amman citadel. In addition, the chased surface decoration is similar to that of the 'Amman citadel censer.

#### *4.5: Conclusion*

The analysis of the inanimate decoration of the catalogue has shown that these elements served a dual purpose, decoration and functionality. That specialised forms of ornamentation were used speaks to the quality of these objects, both in terms of medium (costly bronze) and the quality of the workshops producing these artefacts. Decorative elements have been pulled from the popular vernacular of the Late Antique, Sasanian, Christian and Byzantine arenas and imbued with new meaning in the Umayyad context. Significantly, there is not a single vegetal element common to all five artefacts analysed in this section. In addition, the scarcity of inscriptions indicates that this decorative device was in its infancy and yet to attain its full importance in the provincial region of Jordan.

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<sup>296</sup> The architectural elements on this tray are similar to the Qur'an of the Great San'a Mosque.

## Chapter 5: The Mafraq Brazier

### 5.1: Introductory Comments

This section of the thesis is an analysis of the Mafraq brazier (Catalogue 9). Although this fascinating artefact has been published several times, it has only received cursory examinations.<sup>1</sup> This is the first detailed analysis of the ornamental elements of the brazier to date. A brief historical examination of braziers and brazier use in the Late Antique/Early Islamic period will be succeeded by an analysis of the individual decorative elements of the Mafraq brazier. For each of the decorative elements, various regional decorative traditions that were in existence before and during the Umayyad era will be considered. Finally, comparative decorative materials created during the Umayyad period will be offered: first from within the modern-day boundaries of Jordan and then from the broader geographic area.

The Mafraq brazier is the most intriguing portable object from the Umayyad period. On the façade is an arcade populated by couples in a variety of intriguing situations, some clearly erotic. Each arch is framed by unusual stepped-base columns with palm capitals and surrounded by pomegranates. Above the façade are finials in the shape of nude females, each carrying a bird. Fierce griffins stand watch below. Individually, these decorative elements – griffins, pomegranates, even the erotic scenes – are not without precedent, and

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<sup>1</sup> Bienkowski, *Art of Jordan*, p. 103; Bisheh, *Jordanie: sur les pas des archéologues*, exhib. cat. (Paris: Institut du Monde Arabe, 1997), pp. 160, 162, and 164; and Ghazi Bisheh et al., *The Umayyads*, p. 81; Fowden, *Qusayr 'Amra*, pp. 76-79; Humbert, 'El-Fedein Mafraq,' pp. 354-358; and 'Le surprenant brasero omeyyade trouvé à Mafraq,' *Jordanie: sur les pas des archéologues*, exhib. cat. (Paris: Institut du Monde Arabe, 1997), p. 161; Adia Naghaway, 'Brazier,' *Museums with no Frontiers*, <[http://www.discoverislamicart.org/database\\_item.php?id=object;ISL:jo;MUS01;6;en](http://www.discoverislamicart.org/database_item.php?id=object;ISL:jo;MUS01;6;en)>, 4 September 2006.

examples exist in Jordan. However, nowhere is this particular combination of elements found in Jordan or the surrounding region before or during the Umayyad period. The Mafraq brazier is unique for its decorative melange. In the Mafraq example, the façade elements transcend their "ordinary" status. The result is a curiously complex iconography which indicates that the brazier may have served as more than a portable heating unit and potentially had a talismanic function.

### 5.2: Historical Background

Winters in Jordan can be cold and snow is not uncommon. Braziers were used for heating across the Mediterranean and Middle East during the Late Antique/Early Islamic period. Hot coals were taken out of a fire and placed into the central area of the brazier, heating the metal as well as the air and offering warmth with a minimum of smoke. The façade and four finials are all that survive of the Mafraq brazier, which originally would have had four-sides and a thick metallic bottom.<sup>2</sup> Rollers on the base of the griffin finials allow the unit to be moved as necessary. There are no other metal brazier examples surviving from the early Islamic era. However, there are a few extant examples from the Roman period. Two ornate braziers are in the Royal Museum of Art and History in Brussels, Belgium (Appendix II.U.1)<sup>3</sup> and the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania,

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<sup>2</sup> Apparently, there are possibly more elements of the brazier that can be seen at École Biblique et Archéologique Française de Jérusalem: <<http://www.op.org/op/ebaf/brazier.jpg>>, this site shows the brazier facade, *four* griffins and *three* female finials. However, the image is small and exact identification is challenging.

<sup>3</sup> Roman brazier discovered at Chiusi, Italy. Now in the Royal Museum of Art and History, Brussels, Belgium. Image: Barbara McManus, 1998, <<http://www.vroma.org/~bmcmanus/kitchen.html>>, 2 October 2006.

respectively (Appendix II.U.2).<sup>4</sup> Metal braziers such as these were used in houses in Roman cities during the winters and could easily warm an entire room.<sup>5</sup> These highly ornate examples would be a dramatic addition to the décor of the Roman household in much the same way as the Mafraq brazier was in the Umayyad period.

The lack of surviving examples of braziers from the Umayyad period could be due to the great expense involved with creating a brazier of such substantial size. The amount of bronze in an object such as this could provide numerous metal artefacts of use to more people. Other similar examples may have been melted down and recycled. Braziers could, alternatively, commonly have been made of another material, such as stone, which is easier and less expensive to find in the desert regions of much of Jordan, although I am unaware of any surviving examples of stone braziers.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Roman brazier from the collection of the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, <<http://www.tcnj.edu/~anchouse/kitchen.html>>, 20 November 2006.

<sup>5</sup> Paul Veyne, 'The Roman Home,' *A History of Private Life: from Pagan Rome to Byzantium*, ed. by Philippe Ariès and Geroges Duby, translation by Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987), pp. 315-317 (p. 315).

<sup>6</sup> However, there is an example of a stone censer, also excavated at Mafraq, in the Archaeology museum in 'Amman. *The Umayyads*, p. 69.

### 5.3.1: Female Finials

*I am enchanted now by one among you, a young gazelle,  
Finely reared, plaintive of voice, dark-eyed, a noble girl, well rounded her thighs and  
slender of waist, while her anklets and bracelets nestle in her fleshiness.<sup>7</sup>*

Adorning the uppermost region of the Mafraq brazier is a pair of finials in the shape of nude young women, each with a rooster perched on her outstretched palm.<sup>8</sup> In the art of ancient Greece and Rome the nude female appears frequently and is nearly commonplace. Female nudity in the Umayyad context, nevertheless, is initially surprising. Consequently, these finials pose several intriguing questions, such as: are there other examples of female nudity; what is the meaning of a woman depicted with a bird; are there antecedents of her distinct facial type and body jewellery; and finally, who is this finial meant to depict? This section of the thesis will address these questions working from the near past toward examples from the Umayyad period in Jordan and the surrounding geographic areas. I will be focusing on Late Antique, Sasanian, and Christian examples from Jordan and the Middle East, dating from 4th to 7th centuries and then moving into the Umayyad period (661-750) examples.

Depictions of nude women from the Late Antique period exist in Jordan, but they are not commonplace. During this period, complete nudity appears to be reserved for goddesses from the Greco-Roman religions, but even they are not *always* depicted without clothing. In the Hippolytus Hall (6<sup>th</sup> century) mosaic

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<sup>7</sup> Fowden, *Qusayr 'Amra*, p. 81. An excerpt from the *Kitab al-aghani* by Ishaq al-Mawsili.

<sup>8</sup> I find it necessary to define the term "nude". In this thesis, nude, means that the woman is without any sort of cloth *on her body*. This becomes an issue when the Sasanian examples are examined as cloth is used in a particular manner that serves to reveal the women's bodies as much as it is meant to cover them.

pavement in Madaba, the goddess is seated, nude from the waist up and wearing a *wishah* or body chain, as well as arm and ankle bracelets (Appendix II.T.3).<sup>9</sup> Her body type and facial features essentially follow the Late Antique proportions, similar to the Mafraq finials.<sup>10</sup> In the Archaeological Museum of 'Amman there is a ceramic statuette, again of the goddess Aphrodite, where she is completely nude with the exception of the *wishah*, arm, and ankle bands.<sup>11</sup> However, this example bears little resemblance to the Late Antique tradition and is more inclined to the naturalism of the Hellenistic period. Another partial depiction of a nude woman, this time from the Byzantine context, is within the 6<sup>th</sup> century mosaic pavement at the Church of the Apostles in Madaba (Appendix II.K.1). In the central roundel is the female personification of the sea, Thalassa. She is nude from the waist up although one of her shoulders is covered by a piece of cloth.

Expanding the search geographically, it is evident that female nudity follows similar lines in the Sasanian context. Examples are found on silver objects and on floor mosaics at the Sasanian palace at Bishapur, Iran.<sup>12</sup> Further, these women do not appear to be earthly; rather, they seem to inhabit the shimmering realm of the goddess. Semi-nude women adorning silver vessels are a reasonably common motif in the Sasanian context. However, I have only been able to find one example of what may be complete nudity and this is of a goddess (Appendix

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<sup>9</sup> Piccirillo, *I Mosaici*, p. 78.

<sup>10</sup> Late Antique proportions include: head of disproportionate size to the body (large), focus on the eye, which are highlighted by dramatically shaped eyebrows, schematically rendered hair, thick lips, stumpy limbs and compressed torso.

<sup>11</sup> Fowden, *Qusayr 'Amra*, p. 231.

<sup>12</sup> Jugs, ewers, plates and bowls are most common.

II.K.12). In this case, it is the Zoroastrian goddess, Anahita.<sup>13</sup> The question of nudity arises due to the application of gilt to the surface of the dish. The gilt creates the impression that the goddess is wearing a skin-tight body stocking. Whether or not the woman is meant to be clothed or nude, the effect is the same; the impression on the viewer is that of a nude female.

Semi-nude women are more common within Sasanian portable arts and are found on a series of silver ewers (Appendix II.K.10-11).<sup>14</sup> On each of the vessels the women's torsos are exposed, but clothing or cloth is attached to the various figures in some manner. Clothing on these figures ranges from a scarf-like accoutrement, which encircles the nude form,<sup>15</sup> to a skirt with elongated straps that fit into the crook of the women's arms exposing the torso to below the hips, but covering the legs.<sup>16</sup> The final example is dressed in the same manner as the previously mentioned, however, there is an engraved patterning covering the torso of the woman's body.<sup>17</sup> As in the image of the goddess Anahita, the clothing serves to emphasise rather than conceal the form of the woman.

Several images of semi-nude women have survived from the Umayyad period, but only one of complete nudity. This is found in a fresco painting within the tepidarium lunette at Qusayr 'Amra (Appendix II.K.17).<sup>18</sup> This painting depicts a group of three nude women carrying buckets for a bath, and the central

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<sup>13</sup> Anahita's is the goddess of water and fertility. The silver/gilt plate is dated to the 5th-7th century CE. <<http://www.clemusart.com/explore/departmentWork.asp?deptgroup=1&recNo=322>>, 2 October, 2006.

<sup>14</sup> Ettinghausen, *From Byzantium*, plate no. III, images 8 and 9; plate no. VI, image 20; and plate no VI and VII, images 21 and 22. Depictions of semi-nude women adorn silver vessels, but are rarely found on other mediums.

<sup>15</sup> Ettinghausen, *From Byzantium*, Plate III, image 8.

<sup>16</sup> Ettinghausen, Plate VI, VII, images 21-22 (two views of the same vessel).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, Plate VI, image 20.

<sup>18</sup> Bisheh, *Umayyads*, p. 57.

figure is holding a child. The body type of these women is much fleshier than the youthful finial figure on the Mafraq brazier.<sup>19</sup> These are representations of childbearing women, hence the fleshier appearance.

Apart from the numerous depictions of semi-clad women at Qusayr 'Amra, a nearly nude depiction of the female form was excavated at the unfinished palace structure at Mshatta (Appendix II.K.8).<sup>20</sup> Although the sculpture is fragmentary, one can see how the treatment of the nude form is schematically rendered as on the female finials from Mafraq. However, there seems to be a sheer fabric covering the loins of this piece, which is knotted at the woman's left hip. This in turn bears a strong resemblance to a battered fresco of a semi-nude dancer adorning a soffit in the main hall of Qusayr 'Amra.<sup>21</sup> This woman also has a sheer cloth over her hips, which is knotted at her side. Another example of a semi-clad woman has survived from Khirbat al-Mafjar (Appendix II.K.7).<sup>22</sup> The pendentive sculpture is of a woman who is bare breasted, but wearing a type of Parthian trouser, belted at the waist.

The second unique element of the female finial is the inclusion of a rooster perched on her open palm. There is an antecedent from the Late Antique period in the Hippolytus Hall in Madaba, where there is the image of a man with a bird,

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<sup>19</sup> The shape of these women is more closely associated with the seated female on the Mafraq brazier facade. See Catalogue 9, B-1, B-6.

<sup>20</sup> Talgam, *Stylistic Origins*, p. 43, figure 61.

<sup>21</sup> Fowden, *Qusayr 'Amra*, p. 65, figure 17a. The fresco is in such damaged condition that the image is difficult to read, and does not scan well.

<sup>22</sup> Grabar and Ettinghausen, *The Art and Architecture of Islam: 650-1250* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 62, figure 37.

likely a falcon, perched on his hand (Appendix II.T.3).<sup>23</sup> For examples closer to the Mafraq finials we must go back to the Sasanian silver vessels. There are two silver ewers with partially clothed women similar to ones noted previously (Appendix II.K.10-11).<sup>24</sup> However, these women are clasping birds, one in her left hand and the other in her right. The pairing of women and birds is similar, yet on the Sasanian ewers the bird is clutched in the woman's hand, whereas on the Mafraq finials the bird is perched. In addition, the birds on the Sasanian objects are difficult to identify (e.g. rooster, dove, or falcon).

A depiction of a woman with a bird from the Umayyad period can be seen on a fragmentary sculpture from Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi (Appendix II.K.9). The fragment shows a female, possibly nude, holding a bird in her left hand in the same manner as the Sasanian examples. However, in this case the bird is perched on her cupped palm and is pulled into the body of the woman, and not extended away from the body.<sup>25</sup> Here again, secure identification of the bird species is difficult.

The finials bear a unique Late Antique facial type, comprised of heavy features, with emphasis on the eyes and full lips. Examples of this female prototype extend back to the Bronze Age in Jordan.<sup>26</sup> Several compelling antecedents come from Coptic Egypt (Appendix II.K.3-5). A fragmentary bronze bust in the Benaki Museum bears a striking resemblance to the female finials,

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<sup>23</sup> Piccirillo, *I Mosaici*, p. 120. An earlier, Late Antique example in the Hippolytus Hall, under the mosaic in the Church of the Virgin in Madaba, shows a scene from the Euripidean drama, where a man holds a bird (an eagle) in a manner similar to the female finial.

<sup>24</sup> Sawyer, *Sasanian Silver*, p. 105, image 18, and p. 106, image 19.

<sup>25</sup> Talgam, *Stylistic Origins*, p. 48, figure 70.

<sup>26</sup> Bienkowski, *Art of Jordan*, p. 96. A bronze caryatid censer was excavated from Umm Udhaina, located outside of 'Amman, and dates to the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE. She bears a similar headdress, frontal stance and has the same Egyptian feel to her posture.

from the headdress to the necklace and general composition of her facial features (Appendix II.K.6).<sup>27</sup> In addition, the intensity of her expression, especially the eyes, is akin to the Mafraq finials.<sup>28</sup> A very similar female appears on a Coptic textile dating to the same period (Appendix II.K.14 and II.K.2).<sup>29</sup> A comparable female form is on yet another fragment of Coptic textile (Appendix II. K.15); the figure is identified as Zoë, the personification of life who is associated with Aphrodite.<sup>30</sup>

A fragment from a wool and linen tapestry dating to the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE shows Dionysus in his typically languid pose in an arcade (Appendix II.O.2).<sup>31</sup> In the niche next to him stands Ariadne and it is her image which is of particular interest. She is nude, although she carries a cloak that serves as a backdrop, enhancing her form rather than disguising it. Moreover, she has earrings, a necklace, and head adornment that generally conform to those on the female finials. Additionally, her facial features are finer than those of the finials. The positioning of her arms is the same as on the finials, with the left arm crooked, and she holds what appears to be a pomegranate outstretched toward the viewer in a manner similar to the Mafraq finials.

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<sup>27</sup> Alexander Badawy, *Coptic Art and Archaeology* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1978), p. 334. No dating for the object is given.

<sup>28</sup> This same intensity of expression is found on the fragmentary bust of a woman holding a bird, from Qasr al-Hayr esh-Gharbi, mentioned above.

<sup>29</sup> <<http://www.copticismuseum.gov.eg/english/iinternal/gallery-z1.asp?piece-id=148&sectionID=6>>, 5 October 2006.

<sup>30</sup> John D. Cooney, *Pagan and Christian Egypt*. (Brooklyn, New York: Brooklyn Museum Press, 1941), pp. 69-70, image 217.

<sup>31</sup> Jas' Elsner, *Imperial Rome and Christian Triumph* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 194-195, figure 130. Dionysus and Ariadne often appear in Coptic textiles together, see II.K.2 for another example.

The pair of female finials flanking the upper register of the Mafraq brazier have been identified as "dancing girls."<sup>32</sup> In searching for an antecedent, I turned to several well-known Sasanian silver and silver gilt objects with images of dancing girls.<sup>33</sup> A series of silver ewers and a plate with female figures in dancing poses<sup>34</sup> are widely known. A musician<sup>35</sup> and a maenad<sup>36</sup> have been identified among them, while the remaining three figures have simply been recognised as female without further identification.<sup>37</sup>

Are the Mafraq finials depictions of dancing girls? A fresco painting in the apodyterium vault at Qusayr 'Amra clearly depicts a dancing woman; however it is significantly different from the Mafraq and Sasanian examples (Appendix II.K.16).<sup>38</sup> She is fully dressed in a full-length undergarment topped with a belted tunic. Her arms are bare and her upper arm, wrist and ankles are free of the banding seen on the Mafraq finials. As the swaying cloth of her skirt reveals her movements combined with her contrapposto stance, there is little question that this woman is dancing. An example of a dancing figure has survived from Khirbat al-Mafjar (Appendix II.K.7).<sup>39</sup> The pendentive sculpture shows a woman who is bare-breasted, but wearing a type of Parthian trousers, belted at the waist. Her uplifted arms and extended leg indicate the movement

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<sup>32</sup> Humbert, 'El-Fedein Mafraq,' p. 356.

<sup>33</sup> These women appear on silver vessels and on no other medium.

<sup>34</sup> Ettinghausen, *From Byzantium*, plate no. III, images 8 and 9; plate no. VI, image 20; and plate no VI and VII, images 21 and 22.

<sup>35</sup> Ettinghausen, *From Byzantium*, Plate III, image 9. Curiously, image 8, a nude playing a pipe is identified as a dancing maenad, whereas, image 9, a woman without as visible instrument is identified as a "musician."

<sup>36</sup> Ettinghausen, Plate III, image 9.

<sup>37</sup> Ettinghausen, Plate VI and VII, images 20, 21-22.

<sup>38</sup> Bisheh, *Umayyads*, p. 56.

<sup>39</sup> Grabar and Ettinghausen, *Art and Architecture*, p. 62, figure 37.

associated with dancing. The female finials from the Mafraq brazier contain none of these features of movement. Another dancer appears on a fragment of stucco carving from Varakhsha (Appendix II.K.13).<sup>40</sup> This woman is performing a scarf dance, as indicated by the cloth clasped in her right hand. Even in its fragmentary state, the viewer can ascertain that the figure is dancing, as there is energy of movement that has been captured by the artist.

Who is the female figure with rooster meant to depict? The female finials are nude except for jewellery and a rooster perched on their open hands. The connection of the female with a rooster could suggest an Attis/Cybele connection. This union represents mother earth, fertility, and the life-death-rebirth cycle, which is appropriate in the context in which this brazier would likely be utilized, namely the private quarters/bedroom. However, I have not found an antecedent depiction of Cybele nude.

Another potential identity is the ancient Persian goddess Anahita. Before the conquest of Roman Arabia by the Sasanian ruler Shapur I, the goddess was associated with bodies of water, fertility, and war, and was the patroness of women.<sup>41</sup> After the introduction of the cult of Dionysus to Persia following the defeat of Valerian, Anahita undergoes a transformation, whereas Dionysus remains relatively unchanged.<sup>42</sup> Anahita becomes fused with the Maenads associated with Dionysus. In spite of the connection of the often-nude depictions of Maenads, Anahita is not found without clothing. However, Anahita bears a

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<sup>40</sup> Talgam, *Stylistic Origins*, p. 73, figure 114.

<sup>41</sup> <<http://www.pantheon.org>>, July 15, 2006.

<sup>42</sup> Ettinghausen, *From Byzantium*, pp. 8-9. After defeating Valerian, 10,000 Roman prisoners, including craftsmen and artisans, were installed in various sites across Sasanian controlled lands, thus spreading their religious practices.

strong connection to the goddess Venus.<sup>43</sup> Venus, or Aphrodite, is the goddess of love, beauty, and sexual rapture.<sup>44</sup> From the late Hellenistic period on the goddess was usually depicted nude. Having the form of this goddess in the bedroom could function as an auspicious talisman.

The finials have been identified as dancers,<sup>45</sup> but when compared to the depiction of dancers in Qusayr 'Amra (Appendix II.K.16) and Khirbat al-Mafjar (Appendix II.K.7), where the women are depicted both semi-clothed (with bare breasts) and fully dressed, this seems an unlikely identification. These female finials are a conflation of several goddesses that share a common talismanic affect of conferring abundance, fertility, and good luck to the owner. In this context, the rooster reinforces the male fertility aspect of abundant procreation. The combination of the female and the rooster depict both aspects (male and female) necessary for reproduction. This is further reinforced by the welcoming gesture of the female and the rooster, both of which compel the viewer to join them. In addition, the placement of the finial, above the main register of the brazier, establishes proximity to the heavenly realm. This is not an earthly female and rooster, but a reference to the divine realm.

### 5.3.2: *Roosters*

As noted on the preceding pages, the depiction of a bird and a woman is not unusual. However, when that woman is nude and the bird is a crowing rooster perched on the open palm of the female finial, this becomes something different,

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<sup>43</sup> <<http://www.avesta.org/ka/yt5sbe.htm>>, July 15, 2006.

<sup>44</sup> <<http://www.pantheon.org>>, July 15, 2006

<sup>45</sup> Humbert, 'El-Fedein Mafraq,' pp. 354-358.

raising questions about the identity of the woman and the significance of the bird. Why a rooster? Why not an eagle or falcon, a bird with more regal connotations? The bird is immediately identifiable by its cockscomb and wattle; there is no mistaking it for a bird of prey. This domesticated bird is commonly found across the Middle East. The rooster, known for crowing at the dawn, is recognized cross-culturally as a solar symbol.<sup>46</sup> In addition, the bird has long been used for the sport of cockfighting due to his fierceness and tenacity, a perception which has deep roots in antiquity. The rooster is also well known for his sexual proclivity and the ability of a single male to maintain the needs of a henhouse. Thus, by extension, the rooster is also a potent symbol of male fertility.

Christians associate the crowing of the rooster with the denial of Christ by the Apostle Peter.<sup>47</sup> The symbol of the rooster is also a representation of Christ, as the rooster is associated with the dawn/sunrise, which connotes renewal or rebirth of the day/life, as well as of the Son of God/sun. Another symbolic association with the rooster was the god of growth and fertility, Attis. Worshipped across Asia Minor and peripherally in Greece, this god's personal attribute was the rooster.<sup>48</sup> His association with the rooster and the cycles of nature connoted the idea that Attis had risen from the dead.<sup>49</sup> Across the Mediterranean and Middle East the rooster has an association with life after death.

Several examples of roosters appear in the Christian context in Jordan, such as in the mosaic pavement in the Chapel of Father John in Khirbet al-

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<sup>46</sup> Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrant, *Dictionary of Symbols*, Translated from the French by John Buchanan-Brown (Toronto: Penguin Books, 1996), p. 209.

<sup>47</sup> Matt. 26:34-75, Mark. 14:30-72, Luke 22:34-61, John 13:38-18:27 (King James Version).

<sup>48</sup> <<http://www.pantheon.org/articles/a/attis.html>>, 15 July 2006.

<sup>49</sup> <<http://ww2.netitco.net>>, 15 July 2006.

Mukhayyat, Mount Nebo (6<sup>th</sup> century).<sup>50</sup> Another is found in the reconstruction drawing of the mosaic pavement in the Chapel of Elia, Mary, and Soreg in Jerash (6<sup>th</sup> century),<sup>51</sup> as well as a pair on the baptistery mosaic in Madaba (5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century).<sup>52</sup> The mosaic pavement in the Petra Church (5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century, Appendix II.B.2) also contains a rooster.<sup>53</sup> These mosaics are clearly roosters, yet they are represented in a sedate fashion and not in the animated manner of the Mafraq example.

A Coptic textile fragment from the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century shows a rooster within a roundel with outspread wings in a position strikingly similar to the rooster of the brazier (Appendix II.B.3).<sup>54</sup> Here the rooster is highly spirited, appearing to be mid-crow. The best-known Islamic example of rooster iconography dates to the end of the Umayyad period on the well-known Marwan ewer (Appendix II.B.1).<sup>55</sup> Although the Marwan rooster is more elaborate and ornamental, the two birds share a similar stance. Both creatures are leaning forward with outspread wings, conveying a real sense of energy. An additional example from the Umayyad period was discovered at Usais, Syria.<sup>56</sup> This is a small finial in the shape of a rooster, also with outspread wings (Appendix II.B.4), that bears a strong likeness to the Mafraq bird.

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<sup>50</sup> Piccirillo, *I Mosaici*, p. 171. The roosters flank either end of the temple at the uppermost end of the mosaic.

<sup>51</sup> Piccirillo, *I Mosaici*, p. 84 and a close-up on page 191.

<sup>52</sup> Piccirillo, *I Mosaici*, p. 29 (fig. 12) and p. 194.

<sup>53</sup> Tomasz Waliszewski, 'Mosaics,' in *The Petra Church*, ed. by Patricia Maynor Bikai, ('Amman: American Centre for Oriental Research, 2001), p. 237.

<sup>54</sup> <<http://www.copticmuseum.gov.eg/english/internal/gallery-z1.asp?piece-id=137&section-ID=6>>, 2 October, 2006. As a side note, the Coptic textile (fig.?) mentioned in the previous section, has a wide boarder, and at four points within the boarder there are chickens.

<sup>55</sup> Hillenbrand, *Islamic Art*, p. 73.

<sup>56</sup> Von Klaus Brisch, 'Das omayyadische Schlob in Usais (II),' *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts Abteilung Kairo* 20 (1965), pp. 140-177 (p. 160).

Examples of the evolution and recombining of decorative motifs in the early Islamic period can be seen further afield in the Sasanian context. A pair of ewers from the Museum of Islamic Art in Munich (7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> century) bears a strong similarity to the Marwan ewer and the positioning of the Mafraq rooster.<sup>57</sup> The shape of the ewers is nearly identical, except for a bird of prey residing in the rooster's position as the spout. Roosters make few appearances in the Sasanian materials I have been able to inspect. Birds of prey (eagles and falcons) dominate royal iconography. In the early Islamic context, on the other hand, the rooster is substituted for the bird of prey. The reason for the change is entirely speculative; perhaps there is a fusion between the Sasanian and Christian symbols that appealed to whoever commissioned the brazier. Further, the dominance of the rooster in the Christian context, combined with the connections discussed above of the female finial prototype, suggests that the artisan of the Mafraq brazier came from a Coptic background.

### 5.3.3: Arcade Figures

Across the façade of the brazier an inhabited arcade forms the main register. Depicting figures within an arcade is a decorative device that is deeply rooted in Roman and Iranian traditions.<sup>58</sup> Using architectural elements, especially an arch or arcade, allows the artisan to compartmentalise space in order to organize the area and highlight the contents. Sometimes this organization of space has a didactic purpose, which is revealed in the form of either a continuous

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<sup>57</sup> F. Sarre and F.R. Martin, *Die Ausstellung Von Meisterwerke Muhammedanischer Kunst in Munchen 1910* (London: Alexandria Press, 1984) plate 132.

<sup>58</sup> Fowden, *Qusayr 'Amra*, pp. 75-76.

narrative or serving as an indicator of a particularly memorable event, which in turn ignites the memory of the viewer to recall the rest of the story. These stories can reveal something about the owner of the object, such as on the 4<sup>th</sup> century sarcophagus of Junius Bassus. Through the depiction of scenes from the Old and New Testament, it is revealed that the owner of the sarcophagus is a Christian. Moreover, in the Roman context this device can signify a transitory place, such as moving from the Earthly realm to the heavenly, as in the case of the organisation of space on triumphal arches.

There are innumerable versions of the peopled arcade in Coptic art. Referring again to the example of Dionysus and Ariadne (Appendix II.O.2), the god and goddess are installed inside an archway. Other Coptic textile fragments depict individuals, both singly and in pairs, within the architectural framework. The first shows a band with dancing figures (Appendix II.O.3),<sup>59</sup> with one identified as a Maenad, again showing the association to Dionysus. The other shows shepherds with nymphs (Appendix II.O.4).<sup>60</sup> What is compelling about these figures is the emphasis on the eyes and the Late Antique proportions so evident in the forms within the arcade in the Mafray brazier. Coptic examples in other materials also exist. For example, a carved ivory inlay dating to the 7<sup>th</sup> century shows a ruler seated in the Sasanian fashion within an arcade (Appendix II.O.5),<sup>61</sup> which is like the fresco of the caliph seated within an arch in the hall alcove lunette at Qusayr 'Amra (Appendix II.O.6).<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Cooney, *Pagan and Christian*, p. 63, figure 191.

<sup>60</sup> Cooney, p. 67, figure 207.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37, figure 106.

<sup>62</sup> Fowden, *Qusayr 'Amra*, p. 116, figure 36.

In the Umayyad period the most compelling instance of the rendering of figures in an arcade is found at Qusayr 'Amra. The fresco painting on the soffit of the east arch has been analysed by Garth Fowden in his book, *Qusayr 'Amra*.<sup>63</sup> The fresco is comprised of a series of four registers with thirty-two panels, populated by one or two figures per arch as in the Mafraq arcade. Due to the highly disturbed condition of the painting, it is impossible to decipher what is occurring within the arcades, but Fowden was able to ascertain that several figures are nude and some are engaged in coitus.<sup>64</sup> The visual connection to the Mafraq brazier is extraordinary.

I will now shift my focus from an examination of the inhabited arcade to the depiction of clearly erotic imagery within the arcade. What examples of sexual union remain for us to examine? The most abundant source of information comes from the Roman city of Pompeii. Imagery that we might find surprising today, such as a carefully rendered phallus in the form of a lamp, were relatively commonplace in the Roman world. Numerous examples of ithyphallic males have been excavated in the ruins of Pompeii, Italy. They take a variety of shapes, for example, as a fountain in the courtyard of a fine home or painted on the wall at the entrance of the house, or even carved into the paving stones on the street.<sup>65</sup> In these examples, the grossly inflated and/or erect phallus, shown either disembodied with testicles or attached to a male, served a talismanic function: to ward off the "evil eye." These images were not considered erotic in the modern

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<sup>63</sup> Fowden, p. 75-76. Regrettably, this image is too difficult to see.

<sup>64</sup> Fowden, *Qusayr 'Amra*, p. 76.

<sup>65</sup> Michael Grant, *Eros in Pompeii: The Secret Rooms of the National Museum of Naples*, (New York: Bonanza Books, 1975), pp. 31, 50 and 53.

sense; rather, they served to ward off bad luck and the covetous glances of neighbours.

Nevertheless, there are numerous examples at Pompeii of couples engaged in coitus and there can be little doubt as to the intended eroticism of the imagery. Often found in brothels and bedrooms, these images likely served as inspiration or instruction to the viewer (Appendix II.O.1).<sup>66</sup> Interestingly, goddesses, gods, satyrs, and other divine beings populate the majority of images from Pompeii, with depictions of "average" or at least mortal Romans relegated to bordellos. It seems likely that the imagery on the Mafraq brazier is intended to convey a similar message. The director of the Mafraq excavation has identified the depictions within the arcade as scenes of a Dionysic ritual. Another interpretation of these scenes could be of courtship and sexual union.

The overall treatment of the human forms within the arcade and the finials reveals distinctly Late Antique proportions. The torso of the body is compressed, the head greatly enlarged, with emphasis on the eyes, and the limbs are short and stumpy. In addition, the hair is often cap-like, bearing little resemblance to natural hair. On the whole, the Late Antique form has become an abstraction of the naturalism of the earlier periods. The Coptic icon of Christ and Saint Menas from Egypt beautifully illustrates the Late Classical proportions of the figures as seen in the figures on the Mafraq brazier (Appendix II.O.7).<sup>67</sup> In addition, the surviving head of a Coptic sculpture clearly shows the similarity of facial proportions to those of the finials (Appendix II.O.8), with grossly oversized eyes

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<sup>66</sup> Grant, *Eros in Pompeii*, p. 154.

<sup>67</sup> Cormack, *Byzantine Art* (Oxford: University Press, 2000), p. 68.

and subdued expression.<sup>68</sup> These examples provide further evidence of strong Coptic influence in the decorative program of the Mafraq brazier.

The utilization of Late Antique proportions continues in the Umayyad period in terms of the treatment of the human form.<sup>69</sup> This could be due in large part to the availability of craftsmen. Examples can be seen on numerous sculptural fragments from Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi and Khirbat al-Mafjar, most of which have been examined in other sections. From Khirbat al-Mafjar is the well-known frieze consisting of a series of heads that bears a strong resemblance to the treatment of the heads on the Mafraq brazier arcade: there is schematic treatment of the hair, massive eyes, and an expression that is intense and neutral simultaneously (Appendix II.O.9 and Appendix II.O.10 for Coptic antecedent). The same style appears again in the dome of the diwan, consisting of six heads in a flower.<sup>70</sup>

#### 5.3.4: Griffin

At the base of the brazier is a pair of fierce griffins whose stance echoes that of the rooster and wings spread in either flight or warning. The griffin is a mythical animal in which the elements of earth (the lion) and sky (the eagle) are blended, resulting in a creature that is master of both these realms. In addition, the griffin can symbolise the dual nature of man. In the Hellenic world griffins were the guardians of the Hyperborean treasure and kept vigil over the wine of

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<sup>68</sup> Talgam, *Stylistic Origins*, p. 89, figure 142.

<sup>69</sup> A glaring exception is the afore mentioned painting in the tepidarium lunette at Qusayr 'Amra, which bears a more naturalistic, albeit provincial, treatment of the figures.

<sup>70</sup> Grabar and Ettinghausen, *Art and Architecture*, pp. 61 and 63. An additional example is in Cooney, *Pagan and Christian Egypt*, p. 76, image 238, where a fragment of Coptic textile shows the same sort of arrangement of heads in a variety of portraits of figures associated with Dionysus.

Dionysus. Moreover, the griffin is an iconographic element linked to Zoroastrianism, the state religion of the Sasanian Empire.<sup>71</sup> The closest antecedent to the Mafraq griffin finials is from the Sasanian realm. It is a bronze throne leg, of a frontally posed griffin, with pointy ears, large beak, and a lion's paw. Missing are the extended wings of the Mafraq example, but the parallel is striking (Appendix II.S.1).<sup>72</sup> The proximity of the griffin to the throne, as a supporting element, confers the highest status to the creature. There is another example of a griffin from the Sasanian empire in the British Museum.<sup>73</sup> This is a bronze figure whose original location is, nevertheless, unknown.

Further examples of the griffin as a decorative element are found across the region. A striking example occurs on a Coptic brazier that bears a strong resemblance to the censer base from Mafraq (Catalogue 8).<sup>74</sup> The Nabataeans also utilized the griffin. Examples of a pair of facing griffins appear on a relief carving on a tomb façade in the Hegra at Meda'in Saleh. The griffin was associated with the goddess Manat, one of the Nabataean divinities.<sup>75</sup> An example of a griffin can be found closer to the Umayyad domain, in Petra, where a relief carving of a griffin and Eros has been excavated.<sup>76</sup>

The best-known Umayyad depiction of the griffin is on the façade of the palace at Mshatta. In Triangle D of the façade a pair of facing griffins flanks a

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<sup>71</sup> Chevalier and Gheerbrant, *Symbols*, p. 458.

<sup>72</sup> Pope, *Persian Art*, p. 240.

<sup>73</sup> Pope, *Persian Art*, p. 720.

<sup>74</sup> Badawy, *Coptic Art*, p. 324 (fig. 5.5).

<sup>75</sup> June Taylor, *Petra*, p. 133.

<sup>76</sup> *Jordanie: sur les pas des archéologues*, exhib. cat. (Paris: Institut du Monde Arabe, 1997), p. 126. The animal is identified as a lion, but the creature clearly has wings and the head has been defaced, and the "lion" has pronounced claws, which leads me to believe that this is a griffin.

vase from which a sprouting vine scroll encircles them.<sup>77</sup> Another example is from Khirbat al-Mafjar. One of the fragments of stone-carved decoration from the bathhouse hall has a griffin in a roundel.<sup>78</sup> Even with the scant amount of surviving examples of griffins from the Umayyad period, it seems unlikely that it is coincidental that both of the extant examples are associated with royal structures. The positioning of the griffins on the façade of Mshatta and the interior of the bathhouse hall at Khirbat al-Mafjar indicates the significance and importance of the creatures' symbolic value.

### 5.3.5: *Pomegranates*

Pomegranates outline the façade of the Mafraq brazier. They adorn the uppermost area of the crenulation, outline the lunettes above the arcade, and flank the handle of the portable heater. It is one of only two types of vegetation on the brazier, and the other being palm trees. The pomegranate is a commonly found fruit throughout the Mediterranean and the Middle East. The significance of the pomegranate is deeply rooted in these cultures as a symbol of fertility, good fortune, and rebirth. This fruit is associated with divinity in the Late Antique tradition, as well as in the early Christian church.<sup>79</sup>

In Greco-Roman religions the pomegranate is a sacred fruit associated with Hera, the goddess of marriage, and Aphrodite, the goddess most closely

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<sup>77</sup> Talgam, *Stylistic Origins*, p. 33.

<sup>78</sup> Talgam, *Stylistic Origins*, p. 19. The Khirbat al-Mafjar griffin looks very much like a senmerv on a 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> century silver plate in the British Museum in: Pope, *Persian Art Vol. III*, p. 227.

<sup>79</sup> Chevalier and Gheerbrant, *Dictionary of Symbols*, p. 766.

linked to earthly love.<sup>80</sup> The fruit is a sign of fertility due to the vast number of seeds held within its skin and stands for the hope of numerous offspring. The pomegranate is also an integral element in the story of Demeter and Persephone. Their story represents a type of resurrection. When Persephone returns to the earth, so does spring, and the world is reborn.

The early Christian church absorbed this symbolism and transferred it to the newly established church. In this context, the seeds represent the faithful joined under the overarching "skin" of Christianity. Pomegranates abound in the Christian context and are especially prevalent in the mosaic pavements of Jordan: on the presbytery and nave mosaics at the Church of the Lions/Church of Saint Stephen at Umm al-Rasas/Kastron Mefaa (Appendix II.L.3),<sup>81</sup> on the Diaconicon-Baptistery floor at Mount Nebo (Appendix II.L.1),<sup>82</sup> in the Church of Saint John in Jerash,<sup>83</sup> and on the nave pavement in the Petra Church.<sup>84</sup> In all of these examples, the pomegranate is placed near the altar, the most sacred part of the church. The fruit is generally found in scenes suggesting heaven and often includes confronting lions with gazelles, as found at the Church of the Lions. As in the Sasanian arts, the Christian tradition carries over the association of the pomegranate with royalty. However, in this setting, heaven, the realm of Christ, is associated with the symbolic and sacred fruit.

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<sup>80</sup> Stephen L. Harris and Gloria Platzner, *Classical Mythology: Images and Insights*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Sacramento: California State University, 2001), p. 107-108.

<sup>81</sup> Bisheh, *The Umayyads*, p. 97 (presbytery mosaic) and Bienkowski, *The Art of Jordan*, p. 126-127 (nave mosaic).

<sup>82</sup> Bisheh, *The Umayyads*, p. 101.

<sup>83</sup> Flood, *Great Mosque*, figure 23.

<sup>84</sup> *The Petra Church*, pp. 240.

Examples of the pomegranate, the fruit of fertility and rebirth, has been found in the ruins of the Sasanian palace at Nizamabad in Iran.<sup>85</sup> In this fragment of carved stucco, the pomegranate is centrally positioned between ornate leaves that resemble the wings on the crown of the Sasanian kings. The pattern is repeated, creating an overpowering effect of fruit and leaves (Appendix II.P.1). Pomegranates appear in the decorations from the palace at Ctesiphon in another fragment of stucco carving.<sup>86</sup> In this example, pomegranates alternate with tulips radiating from a central rosette. This fruit also appears in metalwork. A single pomegranate appears on the handle of a Sasanian ewer, examined previously (Appendix II.K.10). The pomegranate is one of the fruits from an elaborate vine scroll emanating out of a beautiful vase. It is located in the register surrounding a mounted hunting caliph.<sup>87</sup> The final Sasanian example is on a royal seal that is remarkably like the pattern from the palace at Nizamabad.<sup>88</sup> Once again, the pomegranate is associated with royalty. These examples indicate that the pomegranate was associated with royal decoration and suggest a positive iconographic reading.

Use of pomegranates as a decorative element continues in the Umayyad period beginning with the first extant building of the period, the Dome of the Rock. The fruit along with other varieties adorns the mosaic decoration of a spandrel<sup>89</sup> and a metal tie beams in the octagonal arcade of the structure.<sup>90</sup> The

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<sup>85</sup> Pope, *Persian Art Vol. III*, p. 172, figure A.

<sup>86</sup> Pope, *Vol. III*, p. 173, figure B.

<sup>87</sup> Pope, *Vol. III*, p. 236.

<sup>88</sup> Pope, *Vol. III*, p. 256, figure J.

<sup>89</sup> Ettinghausen, *From Byzantium*, plate XXII, figure 74.

Umayyads use the pomegranate in several floor mosaics: at Qasr al-Hallabat,<sup>91</sup> in the famous niche mosaic at Khirbat al-Mafjar; and in the palace at Qastal, the fruit is the central image in a geometric roundel.<sup>92</sup> Pomegranates also appear in a relief carving from the reservoir at Azraq.<sup>93</sup>

The overarching meaning of the pomegranate concerns fertility and rebirth regardless of the context in which it is utilized, Sasanian, Christian, or the religions of the Late Antique period. This suggests that the pomegranate would have similar implications in the Umayyad period.

#### 5.4: Conclusion

The examples presented in the analysis of the Mafraq brazier lead me to the conclusion that this is an elite commissioned and owned object, manufactured by a Coptic artisan. A Coptic origin for the brazier is compelling due to several factors. The Copts were well known for their skills as artisans, especially in the portable arts. The close proximity of Egypt and the Sinai to Jordan suggests that artisans based in this region could easily travel to the larger urban centres now within the Umayyad domain. The utilisation of Late Antique proportions, distinctive facial treatments, and iconographic motifs can be seen across Umayyad artistic productions. This brazier was created using these iconographic symbols in a new and innovative manner, pleasing to the Umayyad elite.

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<sup>90</sup> Flood, *Great Mosque*, figure 48. The image of the pomegranate is a modified version of the Sasanian example from Nizamabad, fn 196.

<sup>91</sup> Bisheh, *The Umayyads*, p. 159.

<sup>92</sup> Piccirillo, *Mosaics*, image 780.

<sup>93</sup> Bisheh, *Umayyads*, p. 162.

I would argue that the brazier was commissioned by a member of the elite for the following reasons. First, the brazier contains a large quantity of bronze, which is an expensive medium. This object was valuable and a great deal of effort has gone into creating something visually compelling. A brazier could be fashioned in a much simpler manner. A high degree of craftsmanship was involved in the production of this brazier, not only in terms of the ornate façade with elaborate figural representations, but also with the creation of at least four removable finials, two of which have small rollers at the base. These elements indicate that this was an elite owned object, while the site of excavation (*qasr*) also supports this conclusion. Several of the decorative elements, griffins and pomegranates, have direct associations with royalty and, by extension, with the seat of power. There are iconographic connections to divinity in the forms of the female finials with roosters, the seated female located at either end of the façade, griffins, and the pomegranate. Moreover, there are the erotic elements of the façade. It is unlikely that this was a royal commission, due to the lack of gold and silver, usually connected to the highest echelons of power.

The brazier's function on an iconographic level is both didactic and rhetorical. This brazier is to be used in the private quarters of an elite individual. The various iconographic symbols support the stature and importance of the owner through the utilisation of royal elements. The arcade of the brazier represents the earthly realm, and is inhabited by a couple going through the stages of courtship; these events are flanked by an Earth goddess figure associated with a small child. These scenes are watched over by a pair of identical divine females

and males (in the form of a rooster) at the top of the brazier. The entire façade is supported by griffins at the base. Their locations establish them as removed physically from the events of the earthly realm, but their positions denote protection (griffins and roosters in the defensive stance) and blessing (the female holds her arm in an outstretched, welcoming gesture). Finally, the entire façade is enveloped in pomegranates, the fruit of fertility. To maintain power, the Umayyads would need elite supporters; the more supporters the better. This brazier was likely a wedding gift to a favourite of the Umayyad court, and it is meant to bring fruitfulness to the owner. It is known that three daughters of the owner of the *qasr* married Umayyad caliphs.

## 6: Conclusion

I will begin the conclusion with a restating of the general points made in the analysis of the catalogue and follow this with more specific conclusions. All of these objects in the catalogue are both functional and decorative. The ownership of such items would have been restricted to merchants, land owners, and members of the political elite. It is unlikely that any of these artefacts would have been used in the religious space, be it at home or the mosque.<sup>389</sup> This is because the bulk of the decoration in the catalogue contains animate imagery and there is a greater quantity of animate decoration than inanimate decoration.

The catalogue contains a variety of objects: censers; vessels for holding liquids; receptacles associated with cooking; a brazier; jewellery; appliqués; an illumination device; and items used for weighing. All of these objects would be found in a well-appointed, elite household or, in the case of the weights, the personal effects of a merchant. Due to the variety of ornamentation and range of decorative motifs in the catalogue, it is unlikely that, with the exception of the Mafraq moulds (Catalogue 10 and 11), any of these objects were made by the same craftsmen, much less produced in the same workshop. However, all of the decorative motifs have antecedents in the Late Antique repertoire. This brings me to my first theme: the combination of continuity and transformation, where

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<sup>389</sup> However, the use of figural imagery in the sacred space was not without precedence. There is an account of the Umayyad Caliph Omar (717-720) using a censer with human figures in the mosque in Medina. Through this report one can conclude that the use of figural imagery was not unknown in the religious sphere, however, it seems unlikely that its use was commonplace. See: K.A.C. Creswell, 'The Lawfulness of Painting in Early Islam,' *Ars Islamica* 11-12 (1946), pp. 159-166) p. 160.

established decorative motifs are used to convey new meanings in the Early Islamic period.

### *Continuity and Change*

In metalwork of the Umayyad period numerous Late Antique decorative elements are utilized. New meanings are generated within this ornamental vocabulary through changes in context and novel combinations of motifs. The Mafraq brazier is the best example of this metamorphosis in the catalogue. Nothing remotely like this object has yet been discovered in Late Antique or Early Islamic metalwork. This thesis has only begun to identify the iconographic program of the Mafraq brazier and further analysis of the components is needed to reveal its message. However, other examples of continuity and change do exist in other media.

For a persuasive example of this process, I refer the reader to the mosaic floor at Qasr Hallabat, noted earlier in this study (Appendix II.L.2).<sup>390</sup> Qasr Hallabat is an Umayyad period *qasr*, 60km northeast of 'Amman and 12km east of the *Via Nova Traiana*.<sup>391</sup> 25 rooms of varying size, surround the two inner courtyards and the rooms along the north, south, and east walls contained floor mosaics.<sup>392</sup> A home with so many mosaics indicates the great wealth of the inhabitant. Within the mosaic pavement of room 11 are depictions of fruiting trees, vegetation, animals, a man, and birds. These individual elements are

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<sup>390</sup> See chapter 3, p. 69.

<sup>391</sup> Unfortunately a specific date has yet to be established for this structure, due to the lack of anything but Umayyad pottery sherds.

<sup>392</sup> Bisheh, 'From Castellum,' p. 49.

common decorative motifs found in Byzantine mosaic pavements in churches, chapels, and baptisteries. The mosaic pavement from the Baptistery Chapel of the Memorial of Moses at Mt. Nebo/Siyagha (Appendix II.L.1) is an outstanding example of this type of decoration and contains most of the same decorative elements as the Qasr Hallabat mosaic.<sup>393</sup> The baptistery mosaic is of high quality and located within an important pilgrimage site. A frame of geometric patterning binds the entire image. The composition is arranged in four horizontal registers, punctuated by fruiting trees, birds, men, and animals. The top two registers depict men, both on foot and mounted, hunting a variety of beasts. The third register shows a man existing peacefully with a variety of animals and the bottom level shows the domestication of an ostrich, zebra and giraffe.

In contrast, the pavement in the Umayyad period *qasr*, room 11, is rendered in a more provincial fashion, yet this would have been an expensive commission, indicated by the size and attention to detail. A double frame borders the image: one geometric, the other a vine scroll. There are lions, rams, a bull, a man leading a domesticated ostrich, and various types of vegetation separate these animals. The Umayyad mosaic contains all of the decorative elements found in the baptistery at Mount Nebo/Siyagha. Here, these elements are located in a private residence. However, the decoration is rearranged and the meaning is altered by context (a private, wealthy Muslim home), and the presentation of the components (vegetation, animals, men). The mosaic is divided down the middle by vegetal elements and a binary is created, with "good" or "positive" elements on

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<sup>393</sup> Mt. Nebo/Siyagha is 40 km southwest of 'Amman. These two sites, Qasr Hallabat and Mt. Nebo/Siyagha, are not that far removed from each other geographically.

the right (fruit bearing trees, a bull, ram, and birds) and "bad" or "negative" elements on the left (bare trees, lion, snake, and goat).<sup>394</sup>

While the mosaic commands the attention of the viewer when entering the room and is clearly meant to be understood as a unit, it is worth noting that this pavement adorns the floor of an Umayyad period *qasr*, and not a Christian church.<sup>395</sup> The utilization of these elements would be understood by anyone entering the room, be it Muslim or Christian. The format of the baptistery mosaic is in four horizontal registers; the Umayyad example creates a right/left binary. This format is parallel to the well-known mosaic of the bathhouse *diwan* of Khirbat al-Mafjar (Appendix II.L.4), discussed earlier in this study.<sup>396</sup> This latter mosaic is of the highest quality and is in the shape of a rug. A fruiting tree dividing the two sides, on the right a lion attacks a gazelle; on the left a pair of gazelles peacefully graze. The right-hand image is believed to represent the *Dar al-Islam*, the peace that comes under the rule of the Umayyad caliph. The owner and assumed commissioner of the mosaic pavement at Qasr Hallabat, most likely a member of the Umayyad family, judging by size of the structure and the luxurious decorative elements, has utilized the decorative elements of the region in a new and innovative fashion.<sup>397</sup> Although the Mt. Nebo/Siyagha and Qasr Hallabat pavements were created two hundred years apart, it seems reasonable that the baptistery pavement would have been well known to the (probably

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<sup>394</sup> "Good" and "bad" identification noted by Bisheh, 'From Castellum,' p. 52.

<sup>395</sup> Bisheh, 'From Castellum,' pp. 52-53; Bisheh, *I Mosaici*, p.129-134; Flood, *Great Mosque*, p. 20, fn. 30, 238, 241-2; Dodd, *Image of the Word*, p. 20, 26.

<sup>396</sup> See pp. 71-72.

<sup>397</sup> The site contains carved stucco decorations, frescoes, and several mosaic pavements. Bisheh, 'From Castellum,' p. 50.

Christian) mosaicists responsible for the ornamental floors of Umayyad *qusur* such as Qasr Hallabat and Qusayr 'Amra.

The Mafraq brazier is the best example of this process of creative synthesis in the catalogue of early Islamic metalwork from Jordan. In my analysis of this object I have identified numerous examples of Coptic female prototypes *in bronze*, which are strikingly similar to the finials on the brazier (Appendix II.K.3-6). In addition, this same female type can be seen on Coptic textiles (Appendix II.K.2, K.14-15). This strong Coptic connection is emphasised by the squat proportions of the nude figures in the arcade of the brazier. The meaning of the combination of the various components of the brazier, nude female finials, griffins, and erotic scenes of the facade are not directly associated with Jewish, Christian, or Muslim religious doctrine. However, the emphasis of the decorative program is on procreation, something that all of the "Peoples of the Book" would understand, embrace, and encourage within the bounds of their respective dogma.

The suggestion of a Coptic provenance for the Mafraq brazier raises an important question: if this brazier was made by a Coptic craftsman or person trained in the Coptic tradition, how did this object come to be excavated in Jordan? This brings me to my final theme: the impact of trade, and the movement of artisans during the Early Islamic period.

*Variety and Trade*

All of the locations providing artefacts for this study are located in proximity to important trade and/or pilgrimage routes.<sup>398</sup> Each of these sites is an elite residence, with the exception of the 'Amman citadel, which was the seat of the governor. Umayyad complexes such as Qasr al-Hayr East and Umm al-Walid incorporated substantial khans for the use of pilgrims and merchants and it seems likely that many travellers would have made use of the *qusur* of Jordan in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. In addition, nomadic and pastoral Bedouin would have frequented all of the sites, at least seasonally. Consequently, any of the objects in the catalogue could have been from almost anywhere across the region, either north-south (Sub-Saharan Africa, Arabia) or east-west (Europe, Greece, Egypt, Iran, Central Asia, India, China). For instance, a bull kettle from Soghdia (Appendix II.N.5) is the closest comparandum for the Umm al-Walid camel kettle (Catalogue 4). Were artisans from Transoxiana moving west in search of new clientele? Numerous written sources from the Roman to Ottoman period have provided evidence for the movement of skilled workmen to locations where their expertise were needed.<sup>399</sup> For example, it is known that the Byzantine emperor sent mosaics, gold, and labourers to work on the Great Mosque of Damascus and the Mosque of the Prophet.<sup>400</sup> In addition, Coptic artisans were used in the construction of the

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<sup>398</sup> Humayma, p. 26; Mafraq/al-Fudayn, p. 31; Umm al-Walid, p. 34; 'Amman citadel, p. 38; Qasr 'Ayn al-Sil, p.40.

<sup>399</sup> Milwright, Marcus, 'Fixtures and Fittings. The Role of Decoration in Abbasid Palace Design,' in *A Medieval Islamic City Reconsidered: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Samarra*, Oxford Studies in Islamic Art XIV, ed. by Chase F. Robinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 79-110 (p.88-90).

<sup>400</sup> Flood, *Great Mosque*, p. 20-21; Cormack, *Byzantine Art*, p. 79; Hamilton A.R. Gibb, 'Arab-Byzantine Relations,' *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 12 (1958), pp. 221-233 (p.225).

Aqsa Mosque.<sup>401</sup> Alternatively, new styles and motifs could arrive through the movement of artefacts. This process is seen in the example of the silk *tiraz* bearing the name of Caliph Marwan I (r. 684-685).<sup>402</sup> Although the cloth is now in fragments, the name of the caliph is legible and the location of manufacture, *Ifriqiya*, in North Africa can also be read. This object was discovered in a village near the Silk Road city of Bukhara, a huge distance from its original place of manufacture.

As all the items share a vocabulary of Late Antique decorative motifs, it seems unlikely that the surviving artefacts in this catalogue were made in Sub-Saharan Africa. Although there is evidence of Tang dynasty (618-906) trade with the Middle East in late Sasanian-early Umayyad period, there is not trace of Chinese influence in the metalwork from Jordan.<sup>403</sup> While these sources can be ruled out, the analysis of the early Islamic metalwork in Jordan does provide a valuable insight into the movement of artefacts and artisans in the late 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries. The Umayyad elite certainly had the resources to relocate artisans from their home regions-Transoxiana, Iran, Yemen, Egypt- to work in Damascus and Jerusalem, and the practice continued during the construction of the great Abbasid capitals of Baghdad and Samarra. In this context there should be little difficulty in accepting the possibility that an object such as the Mafraq brazier was manufactured by Coptic craftsmen (either in Egypt or in a workshop in Jerusalem, 'Amman, or Damascus).

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<sup>401</sup> Talgam, *Stylistic Origins*, p. 98.

<sup>402</sup> Hoyland, *Seeing Islam*, pp. 693.

<sup>403</sup> Harper, *In Search of*, p. 84 and pl. 53-54.

The metalwork contents of the Jordanian catalogue are as diverse as the buildings they were found in. The Early Islamic period was a time of significant iconographic expansion, where the old meanings were translated into a new visual statement of power. These influences were wide ranging, facilitated by the movement of merchants and pilgrims over the trade routes that cross Jordan. The Umayyads wanted to communicate their vision of Islam and utilized the existing language of the Late Antique period to do this.

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Jacques Bujard et François Schweizer, *Entre Byzance et L'Islam: Umm er-Rasas et Umm el-Walid Fouilles genevoises en Jordanie*, Octobre 1992 au 21 février 1993. Musée d'art et d'histoire, Genève. Fondation Max van Berchem.

John D. Cooney, *Pagan and Christian Egypt* (Brooklyn, New York: Brooklyn Museum Press, 1941).

*Jordanie: sur les pas des archéologues*, Exposition catalogue. Paris: Institut du Monde Arabe, 1997.

*L'art copte en Egypte: 2000 ans de christianisme: exposition présentée à l'Institut du monde arabe, Paris, du 15 mai au 3 septembre 2000 et au Musée de l'Éphèbe au Cap d'Agde, du 30 septembre 2000 au 7 janvier 2001* (Paris: Institut du monde arabe: Gallimard, 2000).

F. Sarre and F.R. Martin, *Die Ausstellung Von Meisterwerke Muhammedanischer Kunst in Munchen 1910* (London: Alexandria Press, 1984).

Charles H. Sawyer, *Sasanian Silver: Late Antique and Early Medieval Arts of Luxury from Iran* (Detroit: University of Michigan Museum of Art, 1967).

*The Umayyads: the Rise of Islamic Art* ('Amman: Ministry of Tourism, Department of Antiquities; Vienna: Museum With No Frontiers, 2000).

Websites:

Museums with no Frontiers: <http://www.discoverislamicart.org>

Coptic Museum: <http://www.copticmuseum.gov>

**Appendix I:**  
**Thesis Catalogue**

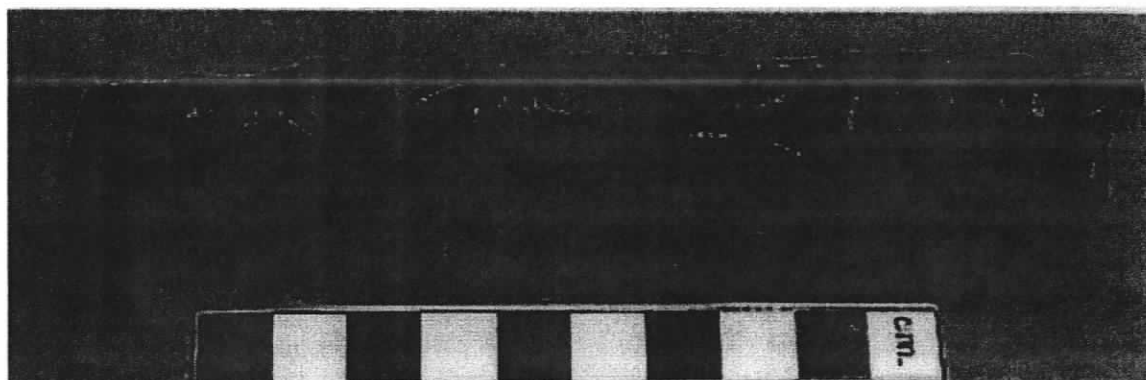
This catalogue is a collection of copper alloy metalwork and one silver artefact dating to the Early Islamic period (661-900), excavated within the modern-day boundaries of Jordan. In the catalogue, the term “bronze” is employed for the sake of convenience to refer to all types of copper alloy, with the exception of brass.<sup>1</sup> Although the number of objects in the catalogue is relatively few, they are significant pieces and their analysis will add to the body of research on the contribution of the Umayyads to the decorative and iconographic programs of Islamic art.

Because the focus of this thesis concerns the various decorative motifs utilized during the Umayyad period in Jordan, several of the items in the catalogue will not be included in the analysis (Catalogue 13-24). This is due to the fact that these objects are purely functional, unadorned and without inscriptions.

Comparative images are taken from Appendix II.

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<sup>1</sup> Bronze can be identified as a specific alloy comprised of copper and up to twenty percent tin, sometimes with small amounts of lead.

Catalogue 1Lion-head handle with trefoil and vinescroll decoration<sup>2</sup>

(Illustration 1)



**Material:** bronze

**Function:** handle from censer.

**Dating:** mid-8<sup>th</sup>- early 9<sup>th</sup> century CE

**Overall length:** tip to unbroken end: 14 cm; tip to broken end: 13 cm

**Width:** head with ears: 2 cm; top to bottom of head: 1.9 cm

**Additional measurements:** length of head: 2.9 cm; length of vegetal pattern sections: 4.52 cm (closest to head); 5.016 cm toward proximal end

**Weight:** 147.28 gr (+/- .04 grams)

**Locale and date of excavation:** Humayma, Jordan, 1992.

<sup>2</sup> Photograph courtesy of Prof. John P. Oleson, University of Victoria.

**Manufacture:** cast open-work, with evidence of cold-chisel work.<sup>3</sup>

**Form and decoration:** the overall shape is cylindrical and rectangular. The object fits nicely into the hand and is of substantial weight. Damage has occurred to the proximal end. The object has a hollow core, which extends into the head, however the tip is solid, and the interior crudely finished.

On the distal end is the stylized head of a female lion with symmetrical features. The flattened ears lie on a horizontal plane behind the eyes. They are highly schematic, egg shaped, with a depression/slit in the centre. The eyes are at the bridge of the snout. A triangular shape creates the orbital cavity. A crescent in the centre suggests the eyeball. The snout is on the top of the head bridging both sides. It is triangular, widening slightly at the end of the nose. The terminus of the nose is thicker and more bulbous than the rest of the snout. The mouth is also horizontal and comprised of a mere indentation running about one-third the length of the head and is low on the face.

The creature is without legs or paws, and the body of the handle, fashioned from curling vines with trefoils, grows directly out of the lion's head. The features of the lion are in low relief. There is just enough material removed to distinguish the physiognomy of the lion's head. Overall, the head of the lion grows organically out of the end of the handle. The sidewalls are fashioned in pierced cutwork with a repeat vegetal pattern of stylized vine scroll. The vines are symmetrical, turning onto themselves, and forming heart shaped designs. The vine ends with a central trefoil. A circumferential ferrule divides the artefact into two separate sections of

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<sup>3</sup> J.P. Oleson has suggested that the lost wax method was used in creation of the object. Judy Logan, of the Canadian Conservation Institute, noticed a great deal of cold chisel work on the object. From a conversation with J.P. Oleson and Ms Logan, July 2004.

repeat vegetal patterning. The underside of the head is unadorned; otherwise, the decoration is continuous.

Due to the medium, bronze, this item would have been costly. While a cast and cold-worked item of this nature would clearly have been of considerable value, it is worth noting that the finishing of the handle is not of the highest quality. The carving is coarse and the finishing is minimal, leaving the object covered with chisel marks, especially evident around the right profile ear. This cannot be attributed to corrosion, as the piece appears to be in good to excellent condition.<sup>4</sup>

**Documentation:**

Excavated at Humayma, Jordan, in area F102, phase three, trench 1, room Ab.<sup>5</sup> Area F102 contains a structure of unknown use that is associated with a Nabataean cistern. The bronze was found in Phase 3, dated to the Early Islamic period, early Abbasid, through analysis of pottery shards found with the handle.<sup>6</sup>

**Publication(s):**

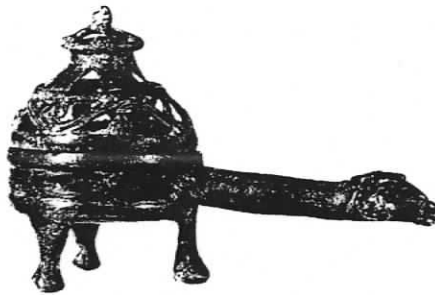
John P. Oleson et al., 'The Humeima Excavation Project: Preliminary Report of the 1991-1992 Seasons', *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan XXXVII* (1993), pp. 461-501.

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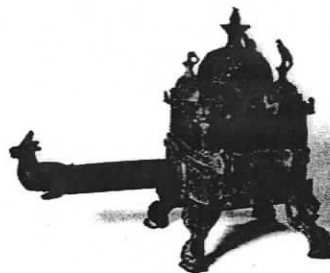
<sup>4</sup> Judy Logan, of the Canadian Conservation Institute in Ottawa, carried out initial and follow-up conservation on the artefact (July 2004).

<sup>5</sup> John P. Oleson et al., 'The Humeima Excavation Project: Preliminary Report of the 1991-1992 Seasons', *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan XXXVII* (1993), pp. 461-501 (p. 480).

<sup>6</sup> Oleson *et al.*, 'The Humeima Excavation Project: Preliminary Report of the 1991-1992 Seasons', p. 480.

**Comparanda:**

A1 6<sup>th</sup> century bronze incense burner.  
*Malcove Collection*, p. 84.



A2 Freer Gallery, 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> century brass censer.  
*Metalwork in Medieval Islamic Art*, p. 46.



B.1 Detail of Mshatta façade

<http://depts.washington.edu/wuch/silkroad/cities/jordan/mshatta/mshatta.html>

2 October 2004.



B.5-B.6 Left: Cylindrical Box (pyxis), carved ivory, from Egypt or Syria, 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> century  
 Right: Fragmentary Plaque, carved ivory, likely Egypt, 8<sup>th</sup> century.  
*The David Collection, p. 24 and 14.*



B.7 Bronze censer, 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century, possibly Syria  
*Malcove Collection, p. 85.*



R.1 Sasanian silver plate with carved and engraved design, Hermitage  
*Persian Art*, p. 204



R.2 Post-Sasanian silver plate with carved and engraved design, partial gilt, Hermitage  
*Persian Art*, p. 208



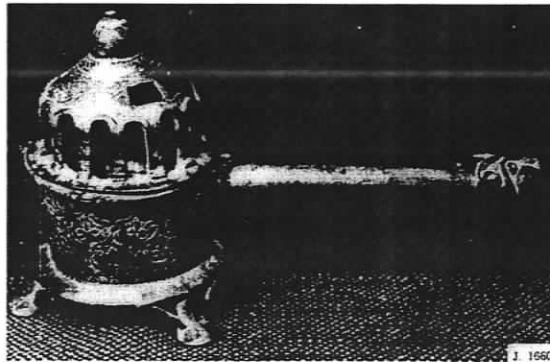
R.3 Sasanian bronze repoussé tray, lion rampant is directly below the central roundel  
*Persian Art*, p. 236



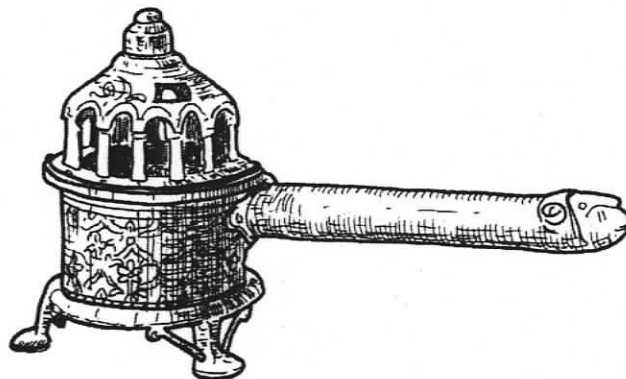
R.4 Stucco figure of the caliph standing on lions, bath house, Khirbat al-Mafjar  
*Stylistic Origins*, pl. 31

**Catalogue 2**

**Censer with arcade and ram-head handle**



(Illustration 2) <sup>7</sup>



**Material:** bronze

**Function:** censer

**Dating:** mid-7<sup>th</sup> century CE

**Measurements:** 11.5 cm high; 21 cm long

**Locale and date of excavation:** 'Amman Citadel, 'Amman, Jordan, 1949.

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<sup>7</sup> James W. Allan, *Metalwork of the Islamic World: the Aron Collection* (London: Sotheby's, 1986), p. 27. (Line drawing)

**Manufacture:** cast bronze, body, lid, and handle made separately.<sup>8</sup> Possibly from Syria.<sup>9</sup>

**Form and decoration:** The main body is cylindrical with a handle attached at mid-point. A dome with cupola and lantern forms the top of the censer, which rests on an arcade. The arcade is a series of twelve classicizing columns with connecting arches that open into the interior. The censer rests on three feet that vaguely resemble an animal paw, rounded at the foot with low relief paws. A thick central leg flanked by thin supports rises out of the foot creating the leg of the object. These attach underneath to a smooth, slightly projecting rim that encircles the base of the censer.

A rounded knob surmounts the dome, forming the cupola and lantern. Incised on the gently sloping dome is a repeat vegetal pattern, the design forms two distinct registers encircling the dome. The incised decoration continues to cover the surface of the main body of the object. The design is comprised of a diaper pattern that is made of vegetal/leaf-like forms with a central half-palmette. An unadorned band at the top of the decoration projects from the main body and forms part of the base for the dome. A rectangular hole has been made in the top, though its use is unclear.

A stylized ram's head forms the terminus of the handle. The ram's features are in low relief and fit organically onto the end of the rounded handle. Initially, the head appeared to resemble the lion on the Humayma handle, but further examination revealed a pair of outward curving horns springing from the centre of

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<sup>8</sup> Harding, 'Excavations on the Citadel', p. 9.

<sup>9</sup> Allan, *Metalwork of the Islamic World*, p. 27. This is Allan's speculation when compared to a similar style censer from Crikvine, Croatia.

the forehead and circling around the ears on either side of the head. The main body of the handle is a solid, rounded shaft without decoration. Earlier drawings<sup>10</sup> suggested that this was a female lion, however, my personal examination of the object in 'Amman revealed that it is the head of a ram and not a lion.

Around the base of the arcade are three rings, indicating that this item was originally designed to be hung rather than hand-held. Lankester Harding noted that "...the censer was cast of separate units: handle, body, and lid."<sup>11</sup> Further, Vera Tamari, a lecturer at Birzeit University, noted that the body of the censer and the handle are of different coloured materials.<sup>12</sup> Additionally, the main body of the censer is highly ornate, and the handle is without decoration excepting the ram's head. Moreover, the proportions of the handle are aesthetically and visually at variance with the body of the vessel. Further, the handle is not properly balanced with the body of the incense burner and throws the artefact off balance. This imbalance has been addressed by the museum with the addition of a pad of plasticine under the foot closest to the handle. These facts lead me to conclude that the handle was added at a later date.

**Documentation:** Excavated on the south side of the western (highest) area of the Amman Citadel by Lankester Harding in October – November 1949.<sup>13</sup> Harding states, "...this site contains Early Umayyad domestic structure(s) attributable to

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<sup>10</sup> Harding, 'Excavations on the Citadel', p. 9.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>12</sup> Allan, *Metalwork of the Islamic World*, p. 27.

<sup>13</sup> Harding, 'Excavations on the Citadel', pp. 7-16.

the 'ordinary man'."<sup>14</sup> The censer was found in room "D," which is located off a central courtyard; an Umayyad coin was discovered in room "J" in close proximity to room "D."<sup>15</sup>

**Publication(s):**

Lankester Harding, 'Excavations on the Citadel, Amman', *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* Vol. I (1951), pp. 7-18.

James W. Allan, *Metalwork of the Islamic World: the Aron Collection* (London: Sotheby's, 1986), p. 8.

Adia Naghawy, 'Incense burner', *Museums with no Frontiers*, 2005, <[http://www.discoverislamicart.org/database\\_item.php?id=object;ISL;jo;MUS01;9;en](http://www.discoverislamicart.org/database_item.php?id=object;ISL;jo;MUS01;9;en)>, 4 September 2006.

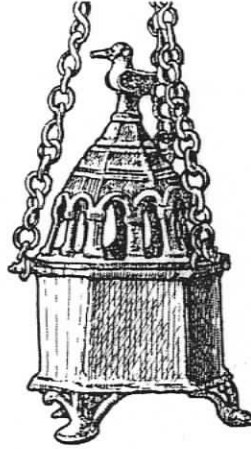
*Archaeology of Amman: 2000 Bc-750 AD.* An Exhibition Organized by the Department of Antiquities in Cooperation with the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany, 1975, pl. 24.

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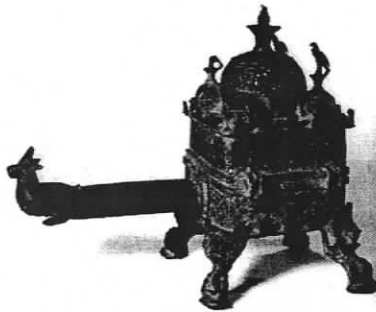
<sup>14</sup> Harding, 'Excavations on the Citadel', p. 7.

<sup>15</sup> Harding, 'Excavations on the Citadel', pp. 7-8. In this setting, I am interpreting "ordinary man" as meaning Umayyad elite rather than Umayyad ruling class, however, these two terms would have been synonymous during this period. The only people who could have built and maintained homes on the citadel would have had to be exceedingly wealthy, hence elite.

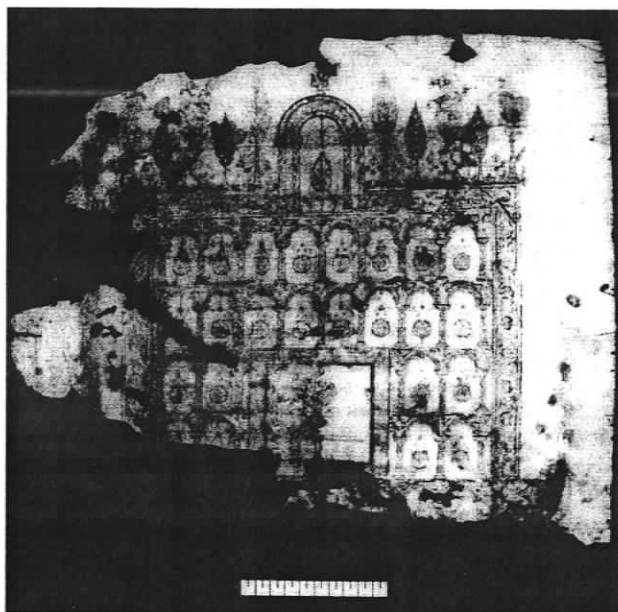
Comparanda:



Allan, *Metalwork of the Islamic World*, p. 27.



A2 Freer Gallery, 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> century brass censer.  
*Metalwork in Medieval Islamic Art*, p. 46.



H.2 Fragment of an illuminated Qur'an, from the Great Mosque of San'a, Yemen, 8<sup>th</sup> century  
*The Great Mosque of Damascus*, pl. 25



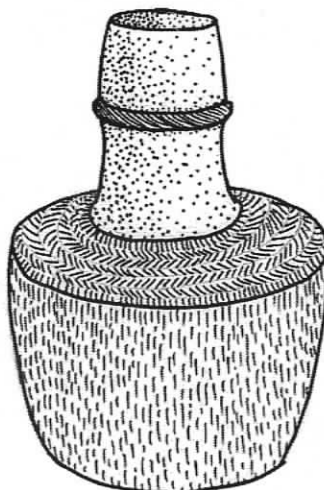
H.3 Lamp shade, steatite, 8<sup>th</sup> century, Mafraq  
*Jordanie*, p. 167



H.4 Sasanian bronze tray with architectural decoration, Staatliche Museum, Berlin  
*Persian Art*, p. 237

**Catalogue 3**Jug with geometric design<sup>16</sup>

(Illustration 3)



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<sup>16</sup> Jacques Bujard, 'Objects Découverts à Umm el-Walid et Umm er-Rasas (Jordanie)' *Max Van Berchem Bulletin* 5 (1991), pp. 1-2.

**Material:** bronze

**Function:** bottle, possibly an ablution jug.<sup>17</sup>

**Dating:** 8<sup>th</sup> century CE

**Height:** 41.8 cm

**Diameter:** 7 cm (neck)

**Weight:** 1900 gr

**Locale and date of excavation:** Umm al-Walid, Jordan, 1990.

**Manufacture:** open-face sheet casting, four-part construction (neck, shoulder, body and base) soldered after hammered into form, incised surface decoration.<sup>18</sup>

**Form and decoration:** The vessel was possibly used as an ablution jug. It is a bronze bottle with a neck attached in the centre of the body. The neck is three-quarters the length of the base and has a gentle, outwardly sloping upper lip, which is one-third the length of the entire form. There is a raised band with decoration at the separation of the lip from the neck. The decoration of the band is a series of left slanting slash marks that encompass the lip. The neck is smoothly soldered onto the body of the bottle.

There is a broad, horizontal collar-link between the neck and the body of the bottle. The area is decorated with concentric rings of alternating incised slash marks. The incised marks are perpendicular and encompass the base of the neck. The next ring is comprised of left slanting incised slash marks, whereas the following band contains right slanting incised marks. The rings alternate in the

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<sup>17</sup> Adia Naghawy, 'Ablution Jug', *Museum With No Frontiers*, 2005, <<http://www.discoverislamicart.org>>, 4 September 2006. In the Islamic context, vessels of this form were used for washing before prayer.

<sup>18</sup> Jacques Bujard and François Schweizer, *Entre Byzance et L'Islam: Umm er-Rasas et Umm el-Walid fouilles Genevoises en Jordanie*, exhib. cat. (Généve: Musée d'art et d'histoire, 1992), p. 30.

same fashion to the edge of the gently sloping shoulder. There are seven bands, including the one at the base of the neck.

The profile of the main body of the bottle shows slight entasis between the shoulder and base. The surface was in a highly corroded state when discovered and after restoration appears to have narrow bands of vertical marks around the circumference of the bottle. However, this could be a case of uniform scarification from the corrosion and not decorative.

**Documentation:** A horde of items including metalwork, ceramic, and glass vessels were discovered along the west wall of the *qasr* in 1990. The excavators suspect that the reason for the quantity of such precious and portable remains was due to an earthquake that struck the area in 749 CE.<sup>19</sup> The occupants would have fled, leaving behind these objects, subsequently buried by the debris of the ruined *qasr*. The dating of the objects is secured to the late Umayyad period through the assessment of decorative patterning on related ceramic finds.<sup>20</sup>

**Publication(s):**

Jacques Bujard and François Schweizer, *Entre Byzance et L'Islam: Umm er-Rasas et Umm el-Walid fouilles Genevoises en Jordanie*, exhib. cat. (Généve: Musée d'art et d'histoire, 1992), p. 17.

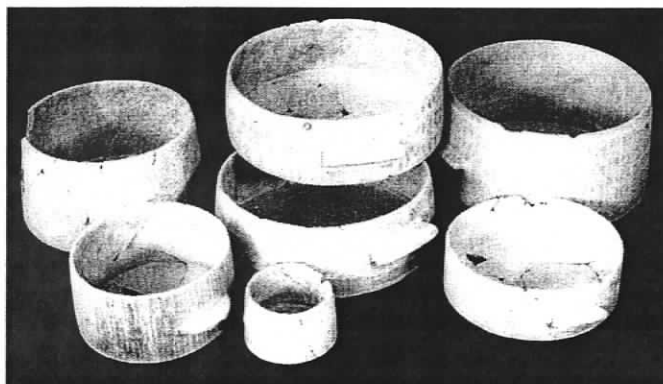
Adia Naghawy, 'Ablution jug', *Museums with no Frontiers*, 2005, <[http://www.discoverislimicart.org/database\\_item.php?id=object;ISL;jo;MUS01;8;en](http://www.discoverislimicart.org/database_item.php?id=object;ISL;jo;MUS01;8;en)>, 4 September 2006.

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<sup>19</sup> Yoram Tsafrir and Gideon Foerster, 'The Dating of the "Earthquake of the Sabbatical Year" of 749 C.E. in Palestine', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 55 (1992), pp. 231-235.

<sup>20</sup> Bujard and Schweizer, *Entre Byzance et L'Islam*, p. 13.

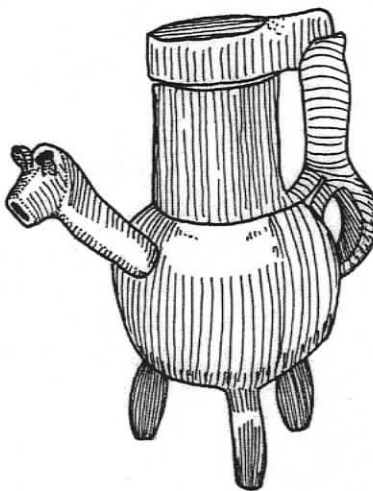
Comparanda:



E.4 Steatite bowls with incised geometric decoration, 8<sup>th</sup> century, Mafraq  
*Jordanie*, p. 169

**Catalogue 4**Zoomorphic kettle with handle<sup>21</sup>

(Illustration 4)



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<sup>21</sup> Ghazi Bisheh, *Jordanie: sur les pas des archéologues*, exhib. cat. (Paris: Institut du Monde Arabe, 1997), p. 173.

**Material:** leaded bronze

**Function:** jug

**Dating:** 8<sup>th</sup> century CE

**Height:** 14.8 cm

**Weight:** 564 gr

**Locale and date of excavation:** Umm al-Walid, Jordan, 1990.

**Manufacture:** cast and cold-worked

**Form and decoration:** This is a freestanding, three-legged, zoomorphic jug, with a head-shaped pouring spout. The jug appears to be of especially dense, solid material, more so than other bronze objects in the catalogue. The thick walls suggest that this jug was used for hot liquids and was placed on or near a fire. However, with the exception of some verdigris on the top of the lid, the surface of the jug is highly polished and in excellent condition. There are no surface embellishments. If this object had been placed in such extreme heat conditions, one would expect the surface to be more pitted.

A cylinder rises directly out of the top of the vessel with a hinged lid, which is fixed to a handle attached at the rear of the animal. The vessel sits upon three simplistically rendered legs, which exhibit no attempt at naturalism. The legs are somewhat stubby, with a pronounced entasis, but are well balanced, forming a solid base for the vessel. The main body of the animal form is nearly spherical. The neck and head rise organically from the front of the jug. The neck is tapered, thinner at the base and widening toward the head, which is completely abstract, without eyes, a stumpy snout and flanking erect ears at the mid point between the

snout and the back of the head. Between the ears is a hole, to facilitate the flow of liquid, and the end of the snout has a pouring hole.

Based on study of early representations of Middle Eastern animals, I have concluded that the Umm al-Walid vessel is in the form of a camel. A horse's head is vertical in form, pointing down towards the ground, whereas a camel's head projects forward. Moreover, use of the camel's form for a vessel is both logical and indicates a sense of whimsy.

The vertical cylinder, its lid, and the handle attached to the tail are all aesthetically disproportionate to the rest of the jug. Although the handle acts as a visual counterbalance to the spout/spigot, the vertical cylinder disrupts the near harmony. Moreover, why is this shape so large, nearly the same diameter as the body of the vessel? The holes in the head indicated that liquid was intended to be poured out, which does not account for the large circumference of the cylinder. I feel that the lack of aesthetic balance of this jug speaks to the limited ability of the artisan and places this artefact in the milieu of non-elite commissions.

**Documentation:** See Catalogue 3 entry.

**Publication(s):**

Jacques Bujard and François Schweizer, *Entre Byzance et L'Islam: Umm er-Rasas et Umm el-Walid fouilles Genevoises en Jordanie*, exhib. cat. (Généve: Musée d'art et d'histoire, 1992), p.17.

Ghazi Bisheh et al., *The Umayyads: The Rise of Islamic Art* ('Amman: Al-Faris Publishing, 2000), p. 81.

Adia Naghawy, 'Kettle', *Museums with no Frontiers*, 2005, <[http://www.discoverislamicart.org/database\\_item.php?id=object;ISL;jo;MUS01;7;en](http://www.discoverislamicart.org/database_item.php?id=object;ISL;jo;MUS01;7;en)>, 4 September 2006.

Ghazi Bisheh, *Jordanie: sur les pas des archéologues*, exhib. cat. (Paris: Institut du Monde Arabe, 1997), p.173.

**Comparanda:**



N.1 Camel Lamp, metal alloy, Late Roman or Byzantine  
*L'Art Copte*, pl. 219



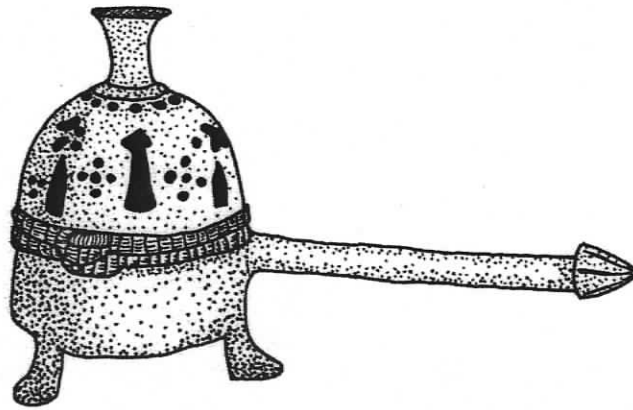
N.2 Painted ceramic figurine of a camel, Byzantine, Egypt  
*L'Art Copte*, pl. 220



N.5 Bronze ewer of a bull, 8<sup>th</sup> century, Transoxiana (Soghdia)  
*Art of the Eastern World*, pl. 90

**Catalogue 5**Footed censer with geometric decoration

(Illustration 5)



**Material:** leaded bronze

**Function:** censer

**Dating:** 8<sup>th</sup> century CE

**Overall length:** 10 cm

**Height:** 6 cm

**Weight:** 254 gr

**Locale and date of excavation:** Umm al-Walid, Jordan, 1990.

**Manufacture:** cast, with geometric fenestration

**Form and decoration:** this is a three-footed bronze censer with a long handle, domed top with geometric fenestrations, and modified lotus flower finial. The base and dome are of similar proportions, which result in a balanced design. The censer rests on three feet, resembling little boots. These create a solid foundation for the object and flow harmoniously into the base. The surface of the censer has a significant amount of verdigris, but there does not appear to be any engraved decoration on the exterior of the object.

The handle is attached to the lower portion of the censer, directly above one of the feet. This feature projects straight out from the sidewall and flares outward slightly tapered, toward the termination. The tip of the handle culminates in a ribbed, pointed cap. The surface of the handle is smooth and without adornment. The top of the base and the bottom of the domed lid share a similar lip feature. The lid projects slightly from the main body of the censer and there is corresponding incised denticulation encompassing the object. Perpendicular to the handle there is a tab facilitating the opening of the object.

The domed lid rises from the lip in a gently curving arc that is divided into three registers of design elements. These decorations are all made through piercing the surface of the metal. The lower register of the lid is pierced in a pattern of isosceles triangles alternated with crosses, created by five equally sized circles. The cross/isosceles design alternate; every other triangle is topped with an equilateral triangle, resulting in an arrow-like design. The register above this is comprised of four "x" piercings. Above this is a ring of circles, like the ones creating the cross patterns below the finial. The finial is located in the centre of the dome and it has a raised ring at the base, initially rising vertically and then flaring outward at the top. There is no incised adornment of the finial.

**Documentation:** See Catalogue 3 entry.

**Publication(s):**

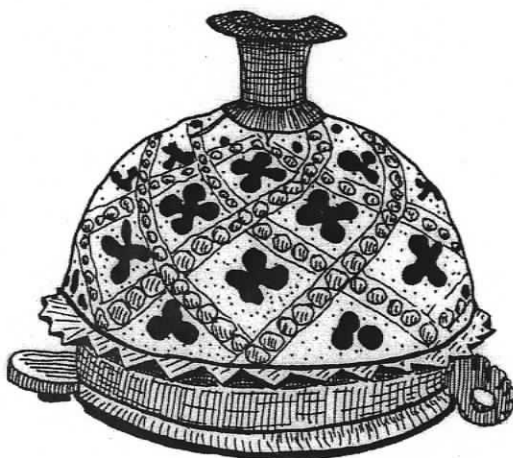
Jacques Bujard and François Schweizer, *Entre Byzance et L'Islam: Umm er-Rasas et Umm el-Walid fouilles Genevoises en Jordanie*, exhib. cat. (Généve: Musée d'art et d'histoire, 1992), p. 17.

Ghazi Bisheh, *Jordanie: sur les pas des archéologues*, exhib. cat. (Paris: Institut du Monde Arabe, 1997), p.164.

**Comparanda:** no specific comparanda

**Catalogue 6**Censer dome with pearl and quatrefoil decoration

(Illustration 6)



**Material:** bronze

**Function:** censer dome

**Dating:** 8<sup>th</sup> century CE

**Overall length:** 8.5 cm

**Height:** 9 cm

**Weight:** 308 gr

**Locale and date of excavation:** Umm al-Walid, Jordan, 1990.

**Manufacture:** cast, geometric fenestration and engraving

**Form and decoration:** All that remains of this censer is the dome and the hinged base that it sets upon. The surface decoration is comprised of geometric fenestrations and low relief patterning. The dome is surmounted by a flaring finial. Overall, the object is in good condition and shows little in the way of corrosion. There is a red corrosion product generally peppering the surface of the dome.

The dome rests on a hinged base, which is of a slightly wider diameter. There is a hinge on one side and a tab on the other. The next register is narrower than the lip and provides the base of the dome. The lower register of the dome is made of another flaring lip of slightly wider proportions than the lower one. It is fashioned into a series of conjoined triangles, creating a zigzag pattern. The dome proper is the next register and rises in a gently curving arc. Single rows of pearl design are incised in criss-crosses and form a lozenge-shaped diaper pattern. Within the centre of each lozenge is a pierced quatrefoil. The design moves beyond the plane of the dome, and the quatrefoils are modified to trefoils around

the base of the dome to highlight this feature. Surmounting the dome is a simple finial that flares at the top. The top of the finial is raised slightly and appears to have been broken.

**Documentation:** See Catalogue 3 entry.

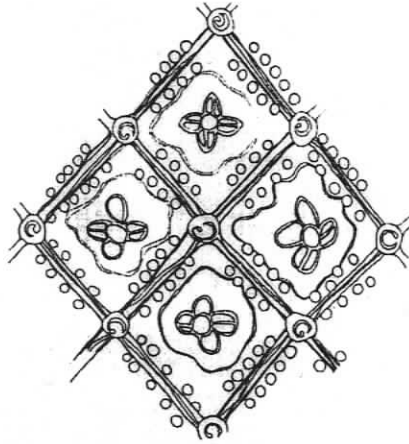
**Publication(s):**

Jacques Bujard and François Schweizer, *Entre Byzance et L'Islam: Umm er-Rasas et Umm el-Walid fouilles Genevoises en Jordanie*, exhib. cat. (Généve: Musée d'art et d'histoire, 1992), p. 17.

Ghazi Bisheh et al., *The Umayyads: The Rise of Islamic Art* ('Amman: Al-Faris Publishing, 2000), p. 81.

Ghazi Bisheh, *Jordanie: sur les pas des archéologues*, exhib. cat. (Paris: Institut du Monde Arabe, 1997), p. 164.

Comparanda:



E.3 Drawing of wall fresco from the Abbasid *qasr* at Humayma  
*ADAJ XXXIX*, pl. 27



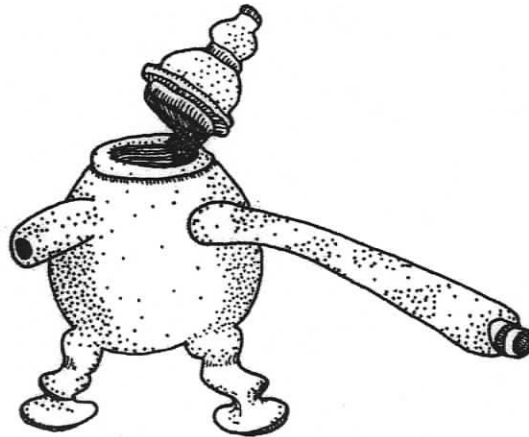
J.4 Sasanian stucco carving of a ram  
*Stylistic Origins*, pl. 102  
(pearl ornamentation)

Catalogue 7

Jug with long handle



(Illustration 7)



**Material:** bronze

**Function:** jug

**Dating:** 8<sup>th</sup> century CE

**Overall Length:** 12 cm

**Height:** 6.5 cm

**Locale and date of excavation:** Mafrq/al-Fudayn, Jordan, 1985.

**Manufacture:** cast bronze

**Form and decoration:** This is a freestanding, three-footed bronze jug with a long handle, for pouring hot liquid. The surface of the vessel shows some surface corrosion, but overall the object is in good condition. The jug rests on three feet of vaguely human design. The legs of the vessel protrude at the joint from the main body, then recede, and again protrude outwardly, like that of the leg of an animal, ending in a circular pad. The three legs are firmly soldered to the rounded body of the jug.

The handle is affixed to the shoulder of the jug. The handle is thinner closer to the body of the vessel and becomes incrementally wider towards the terminus. There is a small finial or knob-like projection at the end. The handle is positioned perpendicular to the spout. The pouring spout emerges organically, without soldering lines of attachment, from the upper area of the jug. It appears rudimentary in form, without any sort of embellishment.

The opening into the body of the jug is narrower than that of the widest section. Surmounting this is a hinged, domed lid, with an inner lip, which fits into the jug.

The dome design is like a lantern and cupola. There is nothing in the way of surface decoration or other design elements.

**Documentation:** The Mafraq/al-Fudayn horde is remarkably similar to the type of horde discovered at Umm al-Walid. Both excavations resulted in finds of numerous valuable portable objects made of a variety of materials: glass, ceramics, metalwork, steatite and ivory (at Mafraq/al-Fudayn) concentrated in an area of the structure. The Mafraq/al-Fudayn horde was located in two areas, a narrow crossing that linked the first terrace to the second terrace of the *qasr* and in the *qasr* proper. The brazier was discovered in the narrow crossing with a bronze saucepan, and two pieces of ivory.<sup>22</sup> The rest of the horde was found in front of a group of shelves that had stood along the walls in the *qasr*. The horde burial is dated to the earthquake of 749, established through the analysis of the various stages of architectural modifications.<sup>23</sup>

**Publication(s):**

Ghazi Bisheh, *Jordanie: sur les pas des archéologues*, exhib. cat. (Paris: Institut du Monde Arabe, 1997), p. 165.

J. B. Humbert, 'El-Fedein Mafraq', *Liber Annuus* 36 (1986), pp. 354-358.

**Comparanda:** no specific comparanda

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<sup>22</sup> J. B. Humbert, 'El-Fedein Mafraq', *Liber Annuus* 36 (1986), pp. 354-358 (p. 356).

<sup>23</sup> Humbert, 'El-Fedein Mafraq', pp. 355-357.

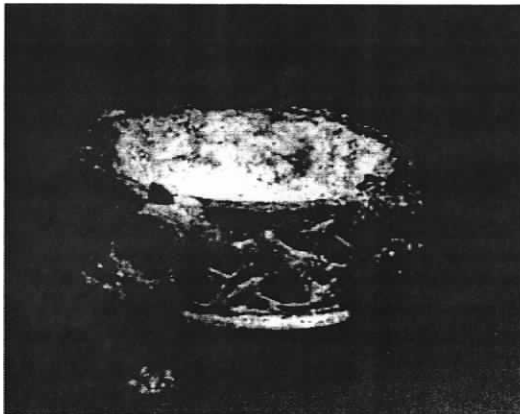
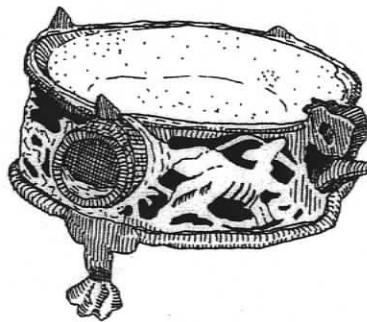
**Catalogue 8**Censer base with inhabited vinescroll

Illustration 8



**Material:** bronze

**Function:** censer

**Dating:** 8<sup>th</sup> century CE

**Length:** 12 cm

**Locale and date of excavation:** Mafraq/al-Fudayn, Jordan, 1985.

**Manufacture:** cast, pierced and cold-worked

**Form and decoration:** The base is all that remains of this damaged censer. The entire surface of the object is covered in verdigris and the basin is highly corroded. The censer has a cutwork screen surrounding a shallow basin with an opening for a handle. The surviving foot is attached externally to the bottom lip of the censer. Although this feature is eroded, it resembles a lion leg, on a splayed paw with three toes.

The cutwork screen around the exterior of the basin is composed of a series of intertwining vine scrolls forming roundels. These shapes are inhabited by an animal figure in profile. The corrosion is such that secure identification is difficult. An animal with prominent ribcage may be discerned, which appears to have four legs, elevated haunches, lowered fore section, and raised head on a medium length neck. Connected toward the rear of the creature, is a form that could be a wing. It appears to travel the length of the body and extends beyond the rear haunches. The stance of the animal is reminiscent of portraits of lions, griffins, senmervs, and other fantastic creatures. The creature is slightly larger than the roundel. The ovoid shape acts as a backdrop, framing the beast, which suggests it has some iconographic significance. Perpendicular to the opening for

the handle is the remnant of a hinge for the dome lid. Interestingly, around the top of the basin are a series of four equally spaced triangular points.

**Documentation:** See entry for Catalogue 7.

**Publication(s):**

Ghazi Bisheh, *Jordanie: sur les pas des archéologues*, exhib. cat. (Paris: Institut du Monde Arabe, 1997), p. 165.

Comparanda:



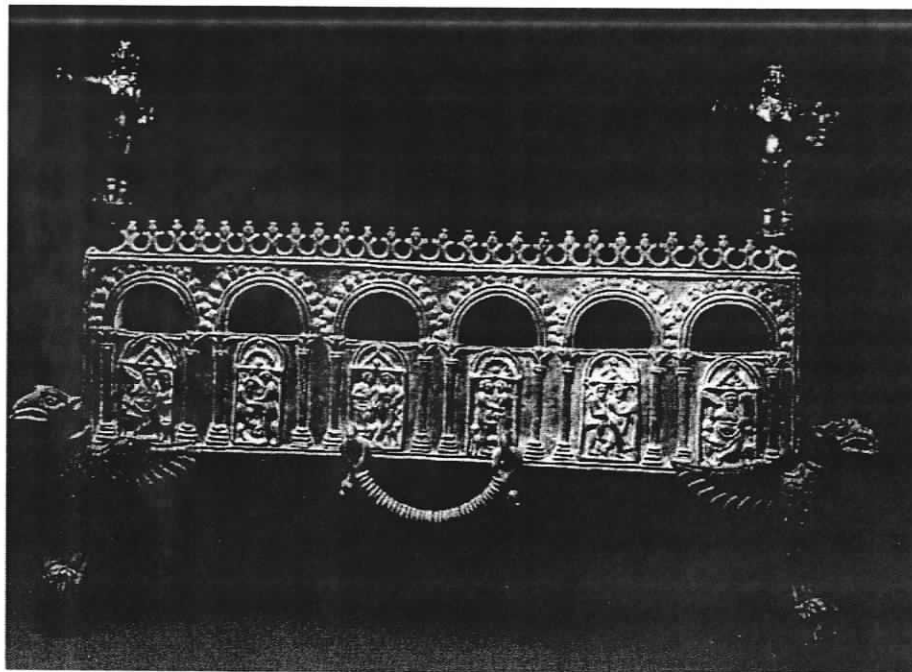
B.3 9<sup>th</sup> century bronze censer from Egypt  
Musée du Louvre (E 11708)



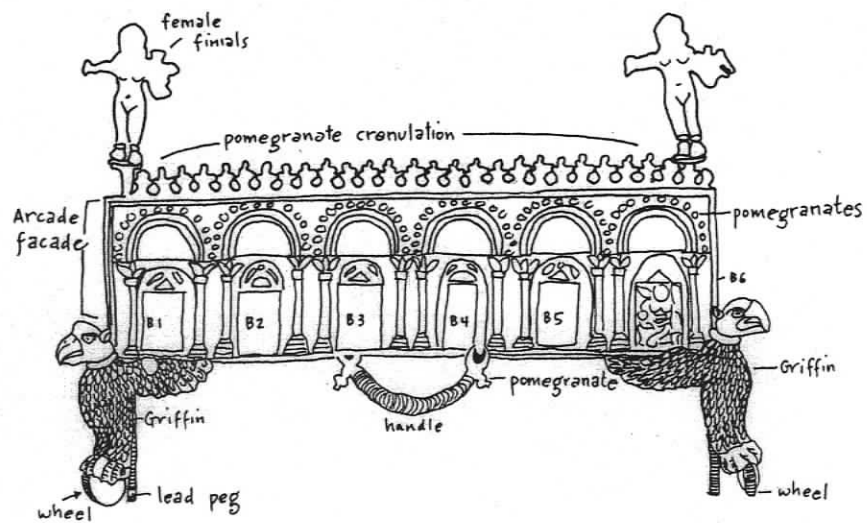
B.4 Bronze with gilt censer, 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> century, Coptic  
Coptic Museum,  
<[http://copticmuseum.gov.eg/English/internal/gallery\\_z1.asp?piece\\_id=285&section\\_ID=5](http://copticmuseum.gov.eg/English/internal/gallery_z1.asp?piece_id=285&section_ID=5)>,</a>

### Catalogue 9

#### Portable brazier with ornate decoration



(Illustration 9 A)



B-4



B-2



Illustration 9 B-4



Illustration 9 B-2





(Illustration 9 C)



**Material:** bronze façade with four bronze finials (removable) and iron pegs

**Function:** brazier. This is one side of a four-sided brazier. The other three sides and the floor of the brazier are missing.

**Dating:** 8<sup>th</sup> century CE

**Measurements:** brazier façade: 68 x 48 cm; griffins: 20 x 16 cm; female figures: 14 x 9 cm; iron rods: 26 x 0.9 cm

**Locale and date of excavation:** Mafraq/al-Fudayn, Jordan, 1985.

**Manufacture:** cast, pierced, and cold-chisel work

**Form and decoration:** This is an elaborately decorated façade of a portable brazier, in excellent condition. It comprises a rectangular, crenellated facade with flanking female finials on the upper register and flanking griffin finials on the lower register, covering iron pegs that extend from the base of the façade to the ground. All finials are removable and sculpted in the round.

The two females are young, frontal, and nude, and essentially identical, with slight variations in the positioning of the rooster perched on the left hand. The left arm is bent at the side and a rooster perches on the open palm. Her right arm is outstretched and perpendicular to the body at the level of the shoulder. The hand is flexed back toward the body in a distinctive and rather awkward position. The hands are shaped like mittens, with an opposable thumb, but the remaining fingers form a solid unit. She has one leg in front of the other, in a manner reminiscent of Greek *kore* figures and Egyptian *ka* statues, suggesting movement

in an otherwise static form. Jean-Baptiste Humbert, director of the Mafrag excavation, identifies the figures as dancers.<sup>24</sup>

The blank facial expression is difficult to interpret; overall the appearance is pleasant, but not expressive. Her hair is rendered simply in the shape of a beret-like hat. Her eyes are exaggerated and accentuated by deeply cut eyebrows; the nose is large and pointed; the chin is receding and the lips are full. Large, heavy earrings dangle from her ears. A sizeable necklace, composed of five discs suspended on a thick band, encompasses her short neck. There are additional bands encircling her upper arms, wrists, and ankles.

The figure is female, and her gender is signalled in a schematic manner; the genitalia have been repositioned to the front of her lower pelvis and are displayed in an open fashion. Her belly is slightly rounded with a prominent navel. Overall, the finials are reminiscent of Late Antique proportions, with stumpy body, disproportionately large head, heavy facial features, and emphasis on the eyes.

The lower finials, also sculpted in the round, cover the lead pegs supporting the brazier and have been identified as griffins by Humbert.<sup>25</sup> The creatures are positioned at right angles to the viewer. An imbricated pattern covers the outstretched wings and the body of the griffin, ultimately more reminiscent of scales than feathers. Trimming the lower edge of the wings are nine large feathers. Both creatures have outspread wings; forward projecting heads with fierce beaks and the legs are extended and bear the heaviness of a lion's lower limb with prominent claws. This open stance is reminiscent of a raptor taking

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<sup>24</sup> Jean-Baptiste Humbert, 'Le surprenant brasero omeyyade trouvé à Mafrag', *Jordanie: sur les pas des archéologues*, exhib. cat. (Paris: Institut du Monde Arabe, 1997), p. 161.

<sup>25</sup> Humbert, 'Le surprenant brasero omeyyade trouvé à Mafrag', p. 164

flight. The legs and talons follow the vertical plane of the raptor and have large talons that grip or cover a metal object, which is a roller. This would facilitate the portable nature of the brazier.

The eyes, positioned at the top of the beak and on either side, project out of the face and are centrally pierced. There is a prominent brow ridge above the eyes that drops towards the back of the head ending on either side at the ears. The ears are small, ovoid shaped and are upright facing away from the head. The creature's beak is exceptionally large and, combined with the erect ears, creates an attitude of alertness. There is a band around the griffin's neck that is reminiscent of the dancer's bands. Consistent with the dancer finials, the griffins have Late Antique proportions, with disproportionately large heads, stumpy wings and limbs, and emphasis on the eyes.

The main body of the brazier is rectangular with an arcaded front, from which an opening is cut out above each architectural formation. At the base of the third and fourth arcades is a carrying handle, which has pomegranates dangling from either side. Along the top of the arcade is a crenellation composed of a uniform series of broken circles with pomegranates balanced where the circles abut. The forms in the arcade are not in repoussé; rather they are cast in low relief.

There is a series of vignettes within the six architectural features of the facade. The arcade is consistent and uniform across the brazier. It is composed of a pair of palm-topped columns resting on a four-stepped base. The arch springs from the top of the palm, which intersects with the lintel and has a wide smooth voussour flanked by narrower extradoi. Across the top of the arch is a row of

pomegranates. The tympanum of the arch is cut out. The columns rest on a four-step base.

There is a rectangular doorway in the centre of the two columns. Above the doorway lintel is another arch. In the tympanum is a shell motif with a central pierced pearl and above the shell is another pierced pearl. The shape of these shell motifs alternate; beginning on the left with a triangle, then semi-circle, triangle, semi-circle, followed by two triangles. The shifting between pointed and rounded shape, encourages the eye to move across the surface of the arcade, creating a visual rhythm.

A pair of human figures is situated in each of the six doorways, numbered B-1 to B-6 (Illustration 9 A). Examining from left to right, B-1 and B-6 contain the same image, two bodies, one that is central and large and a much smaller figure to her right (the viewer's left). B-2 through B-5 each contains two figures of similar size engaged in various activities.

As stated previously, the scenes in arches B-1 and B-6, located at either end of the arcade, contain the same image. In each, there is a large, seated female figure in the centre of the doorway.<sup>26</sup> She is fleshy, bare breasted, and a draped fabric covers her lower body. She is seated cross-legged, on a pillow that extends past her body. Her legs are depicted as if they do not have any bones, and are made of a flexible, rubbery material. To her right is a small figure, probably a child. He/she is holding him/herself up at the right knee of the seated female and is looking up at her. The seated female in turn, is looking to her left, neither

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<sup>26</sup> Garth Fowden, *Qusayr 'Amra: Art and the Umayyad Elite in Late Antique Syria* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2004) p. 58, fig.15. Her body type is reminiscent of the nude bather in the tepidarium fresco, south wall, Qusayr 'Amra.

engaged with the child or the viewer. She holds a rounded, rectangular object up in her right hand (bread?) and appears to be holding a sheaf of wheat in the crook of her left arm.

The figures in doorways B2 - B5 contain the same general body type<sup>27</sup>, always in pairs, and are the same size. In some instances it is difficult to ascertain if these bodies are male and female, as there are no physical indicators of their sex, e.g. fuller hair treatment or breasts on a female (B2). However, in other vignettes, the sex of at least one of the actors is pronounced and easily ascertained (B4). The heads of each of the figures in doorways B2 – B5 are essentially the same. All are depicted with bowl-like hair<sup>28</sup> and facial features that border on the grotesque, with large, bulging eyes, shapeless noses and mouths that are either a gash or a gaping cavern. In addition, the heads are all spherical. No attempt has been made to create individualistic facial features. It is as if the artisan used the same head on every body regardless of the sex of that body.

Overall, the bodies follow Late Antique figural traditions of disproportionately large heads, thick stumpy bodies and bear no attempt at naturalism. The boneless nature described in doorways B1 and B6 is continued in the rest of the figures; arms, legs and heads are positioned in a completely unnaturalistic manner. Through this analysis it is possible to state that these are not intended to be portraits of individuals. Rather, they stand as representatives of humans. Further,

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<sup>27</sup> I will analyze each of the doorway figures in turn, however, there are some qualities that are common to all of the bodies.

<sup>28</sup> Nancy H. Ramage and Andrew Ramage, *Roman Art: Romulus to Constantine*, 3rd edn (New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc., 2001), pp. 318-319. The treatment of the hair is reminiscent of the 4<sup>th</sup> century sculptural additions on the Arch of Constantine in Rome, although in this case there is less differentiation and more uniformity of hairstyles.

these are adults and by comparing them to the large seated figure, they are youthful.

Before beginning the analysis of doorways B-2 through B-5, the sex of the figures can be established. This is accomplished through an examination of doorways B-3 and B-4. Through the visual evidence in B-4, the figure on the left is definitely male. Moving to B-3, the figure on the right can be identified without question as female. By extension, when examining the figures in the doorways that are not visibly sexed, the figure on the left is generally in a dominant position and the figure on the right submissive. Consequently, I will refer to the left figure as male and the right, female.<sup>29</sup>

Doorway B-2 contains two figures facing each other (Catalogue IX, detail B-2, illustration 9 B-2). They are both nude. The male on the left is crouching and his right leg is lifted as if he is stepping up. His left arm is extended to the haunches of the woman. His oversized hand with pronounced fingers are slightly curled in a manner indicating that he is drawing the woman towards himself. The male is not looking directly at the female, but over her left shoulder.

The woman is standing erect and her left arm is extended to the trunk of the male, its final resting position hidden behind his arm. The position of her legs and feet, depicted in profile as in Ancient Egyptian paintings, suggest movement toward to male. Like the male, her gaze is also to the left, however her head is in a position that is completely un-natural and disturbing. The head seems to have grown out of the woman's chest and turned one hundred and eighty degrees toward her back.

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<sup>29</sup> Realizing that this stance could be construed as sexist, I argue that in the period that the object was produced male dominant/female submissive relationships would be considered the norm and subsequently depictions of men and women would reflect this.

This grotesque position is further reinforced by the expression on the female's face, jaw dropped and mouth extended strangely. Doorway B-2 seems to depict a meeting between the man and woman who have seen something to their left that has attracted their attention. However, further speculation is limited at this point. Another way of reading this scene is that the two figures are males and are wrestling. This would explain the nudity of both figures and the need to identify the figures through exposed genitalia. If this is the case, perhaps the two men are wrestling to determine who will win the hand of the woman in the next scene.

Moving to the right, doorway B-3 contains two figures of equal size. On the left the man is dressed in a toga holding a spherical object to his chest with his right arm. His left arm and shoulder are hidden behind the woman's body. His head is turned toward the female and he is looking at her. The woman on the right is presented frontally. An incised pair of semi-circles schematically renders her breasts with a central point serving as the nipple. Below this, her genitalia have been repositioned to the front of her lower pelvis and are displayed openly. Her legs are crossed at the knee in an awkward fashion, with the left leg in profile. Her right arm is placed in front of the male's torso and she holds something in her hand (a bunch of grapes?) at the level of his crotch. Her head is turned to a three-quarter pose and she does not connect with the gaze of her male companion.

The body language of the couple suggests a comfortable and relaxed relationship, in spite of the woman's peculiar stance. They appear to be engaged in conversation, or the male is in conversation and the female is listening passively, if not demurely. This scene appears to indicate the courtship of a young couple.

Doorway B-4 shows two figures facing one another (Catalogue 9, B-4, illustration 9 B-4). On the left stands the man with his head turned in three-quarter position. His left arm is extended to the waist of the woman. His phallus is erect and disproportionately large, using the canon of Late Antique proportions, compared to the rest of his body. The woman is again in a strange position. She is facing the male with her left arm under his right and her hand is reaching toward his phallus. Her head, mirroring the three-quarter position of the males, appears disconnected, but not as dramatically, as in doorway B-2. The lower part of her body (from the knees down), is obscured by the anchor for the handle.

This image is unquestionably focused on sexual union. This does not appear to be an aggressive act, rather a pleasurable experience between the two adults. The expression on their faces, seem to echo this conclusion.

Doorway B-5 contains a couple of the same size, this time, with their bodies facing to the right. The male on the left is in a stepping position, seen in B-2, however this time, the position appears to show movement, perhaps rapid movement. His right arm is bent and he carries what appears to be an oversize rake, which forms a diagonal line from the lower right corner to the upper left. He is in three-quarter profile and is looking at the woman. The female's back is to the male and she looks over her shoulder at him. Her right arm mirrors the shape of the males, however her lower body is once again in a strange position. As in doorway B-3, the woman's genitalia has been moved to the front of her pelvis and openly displayed and her legs are crossed in the same fashion, however this position would prevent her from moving forward. Her left leg is crossed over

her right leg and is in profile in area of her foot. Her right leg is moving underneath and the right foot appears below the bottom of the rake. Her figure seems to have undergone a transformation from doorway B-3, where her stomach was flat; she now appears to be much fleshier and perhaps is pregnant. The body language of the couple indicates harmony, reflected in the mirroring of their arms and that they are looking at one another and heading in the same direction.

**Documentation:** See entry for Catalogue 7.

**Publication(s):**

Pitor Bienkowski, *The Art of Jordan* (United Kingdom: Alan Sutton Publishing Inc., 1991), p. 103.

Ghazi Bisheh, *Jordanie: sur les pas des archéologues*, exhib. cat. (Paris: Institut du Monde Arabe, 1997), pp. 160, 162, and 164.

Ghazi Bisheh et al., *The Umayyads: The Rise of Islamic Art* ('Amman: Al-Faris Publishing, 2000), p. 81.

Garth Fowden, *Qusayr 'Amra: Art and the Umayyad Elite in Late Antique Syria* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2004), pp. 76-79.

J. B. Humbert, 'El-Fedein Mafraq', *Liber Annuus* 36 (1986), pp. 354-358.

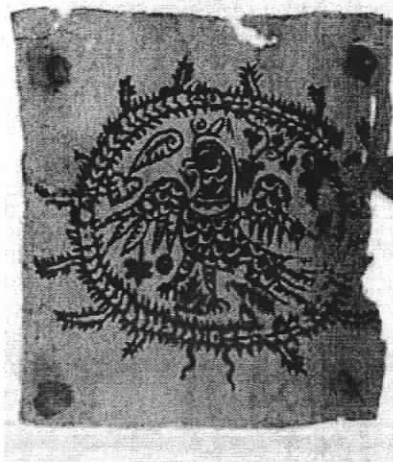
Jean-Baptiste Humbert, 'Le surprenant brasero omeyyade trouvé à Mafraq', *Jordanie: sur les pas des archéologues*, exhib. cat. (Paris: Institut du Monde Arabe, 1997), p. 161.

Adia Naghawy, 'Brazier', *Museums with no Frontiers*, 2005, <[http://www.discoverislamicart.org/database\\_item.php?id=object;ISL;jo;MUS01;6;en](http://www.discoverislamicart.org/database_item.php?id=object;ISL;jo;MUS01;6;en)>, 4 Septembe

Comparanda:

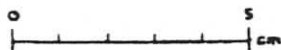


B.1 Marwan Ewer, engraved base metal, ca. 750  
*Islamic Art and Architecture*, p. 18.  
(rooster)



B.3 Rooster, textile fragment, 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century, Coptic  
Coptic Museum

<[http://copticmuseum.gov.eg/English/internal/gallery\\_z1.asp?piece\\_id=285&section\\_ID=5](http://copticmuseum.gov.eg/English/internal/gallery_z1.asp?piece_id=285&section_ID=5)>



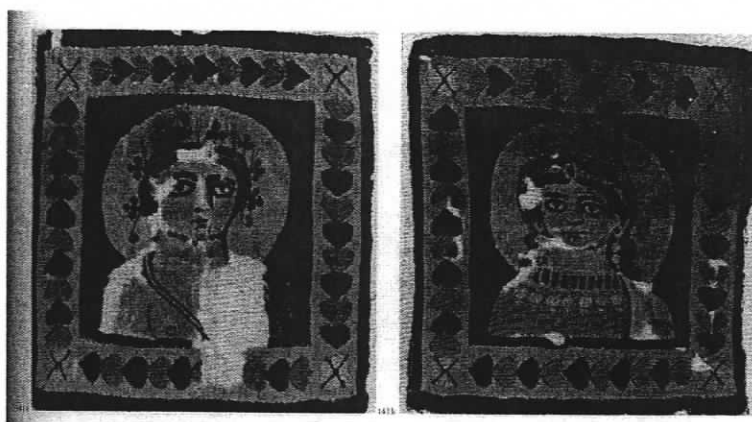
B.4 Rooster finial, metal, Usais, Syria  
*Mitteilungen des Deutschen*, p.160  
(rooster)



H.1 Stone incense burner, 8<sup>th</sup> century, 'Amman  
*Umayyads*, p. 69  
(capitals)



K.1 Central roundel, personification of the sea, floor mosaic  
Church of the Apostles, Madaba, Jordan, 578  
*I Mosaici de Giordania*, p. 75  
(female figure)



K.2 Dionysus and Ariadne, wool tapestry, 5<sup>th</sup> century, Coptic  
*L'Art Copte*, pl. 141  
(Late Antique proportions)



K.3 Bronze candelabra with female figure, 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century, Coptic  
L'Art Copte, pl. 251  
(female figures)



K.4 Metal alloy pitcher in the shape of a female head, Byzantine  
*L'Art Copte*, pl. 257  
(female head, expression)



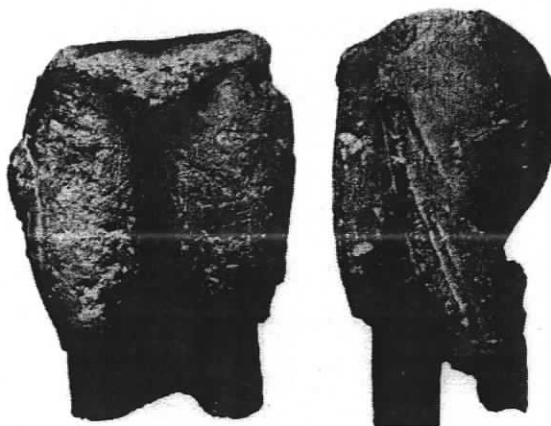
K.5 Metal alloy female musician, late Byzantine or early Islamic, Coptic  
*L'Art Copte*, pl. 285  
(female figure)



K.6 Bronze fragmentary bust of a woman (a handle ?), Coptic period  
*Coptic Art and Archaeology*, pl. 5.25  
 (female figure)



K.7 Female dancer, stucco, Khirbat al-Mafjar  
*Stylistic Origins*, pl. 32  
 (female figure, musician)



K.8 Fragment of semi-naked woman, Mshatta  
*Stylistic Origins*, pl. 61  
(female nudity)



K.9 Woman holding a bird, from the façade of Qasr al-Hair al-Gharbi  
*Stylistic Origins*, pl. 70  
(female holding a bird)



K.10 Sasanian ewer with pomegranate on handle, and dancing woman with bird  
*Sasanian Silver*, pl. 18  
 (female holding a bird; pomegranate on handle)



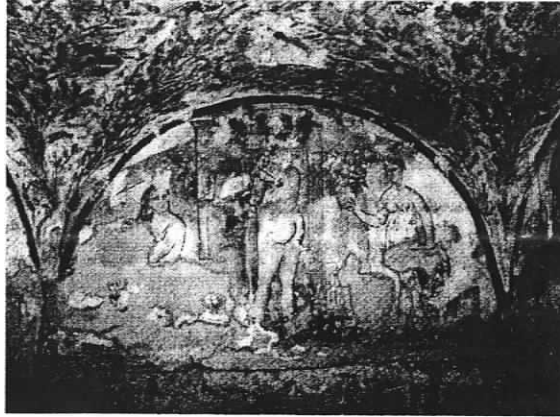
K.11 Sasanian silver ewer with raised design, woman holding a bird  
 Cincinnati Museum  
*Sasanian Silver*, pl. 19  
 (female holding a bird)



K.12 Sasanian silver plate with partial gilt, Anahita  
 Cleveland Museum of Art  
*Sasanian Silver*, p. 23  
 (female figure)



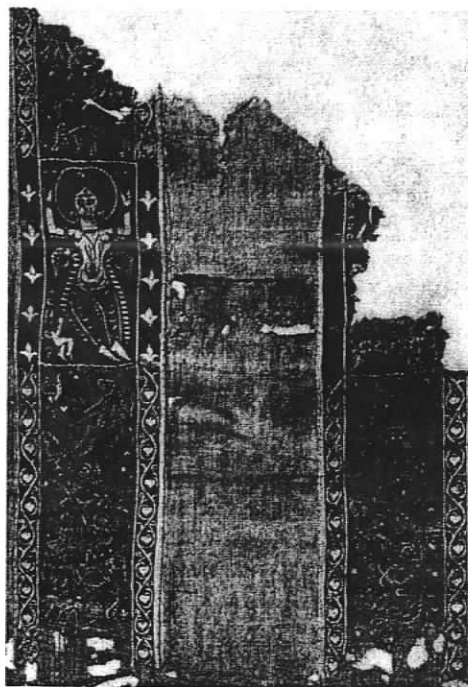
K.13 Sogdian stucco carving of a female dancer, 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> century, Varakhsha, Uzbekistan  
*Stylistic Origins*, pl. 114  
 (female dancer)



K.17 Bathing Scene fresco, Qusayr 'Amra  
*Umayyads*, p. 57  
 (female nudity)



K.14 Wool and linen textile fragment, 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century, Coptic  
 Coptic Museum  
[http://www.copticmuseum.gov.eg/English/internal/gallery\\_z1.asp?piece\\_id=148&section\\_ID=6](http://www.copticmuseum.gov.eg/English/internal/gallery_z1.asp?piece_id=148&section_ID=6),  
 (female bust)



K.15 Tapestry fragment, 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century, Coptic  
*Pagan and Christian Egypt*, pl. 217  
 (female figure)



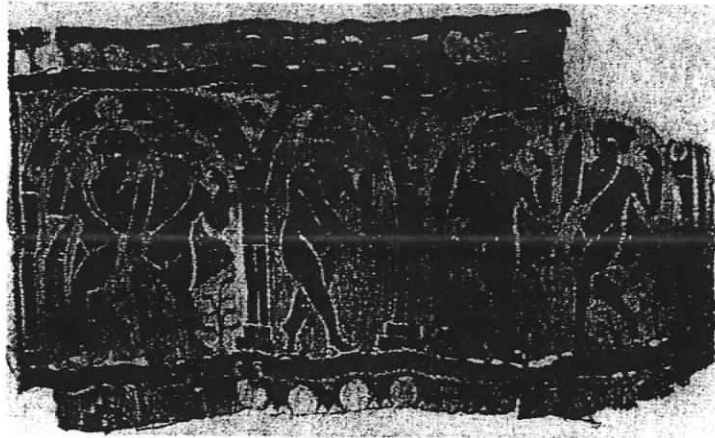
K.16 Dancing woman, apodyterium vault fresco, Qusayr 'Amra  
*Umayyads*, p. 56  
 (female dancer)



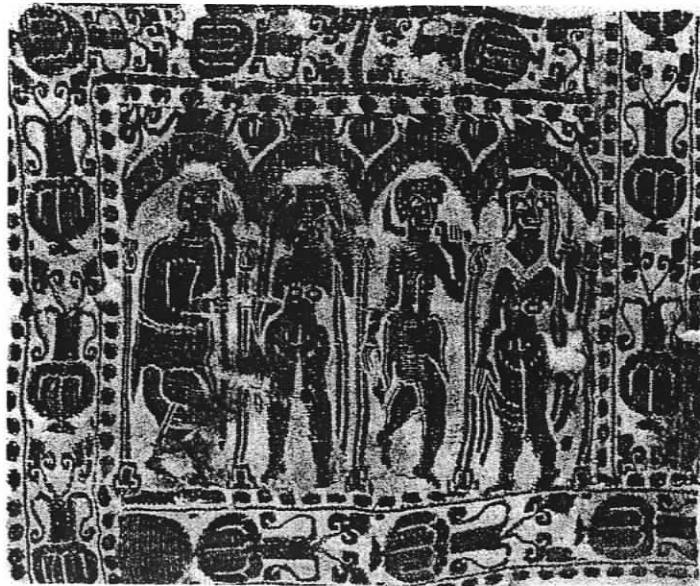
O.1 Erotic image on a terracotta lamp, 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> century, Roman, Ephesus, Turkey  
*Looking at Lovemaking*, pl. 96  
 (erotic scene; Late Antique proportions)



O.2 Linen and wool tapestry of Ariadne and Dionysus, 4<sup>th</sup> century, Coptic  
*Imperial Rome and Christian Triumph*, pl. 73  
 (figures in an arcade)



O.3 Band with dancing figures, 5<sup>th</sup> century, Coptic  
*Pagan and Christian Egypt*, pl.191  
 (figures in an arcade)



O.4 Classical figures in niches, 5<sup>th</sup> century, Coptic  
*Pagan and Christian Egypt*, pl. 207  
 (figures in an arcade)



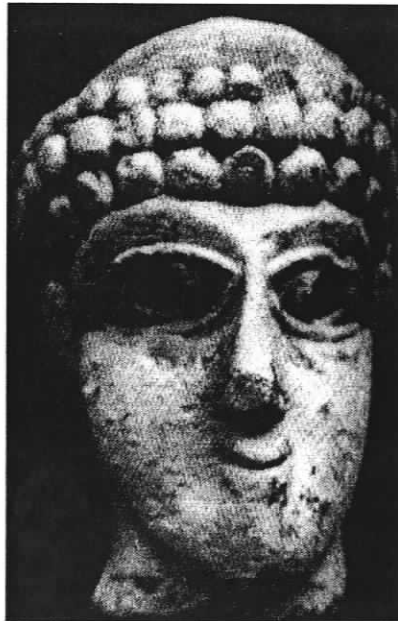
O.5 Sasanian king, ivory inlay, 7<sup>th</sup> century, Coptic  
*Pagan and Christian Egypt*, pl.107  
 (figure in an arcade)



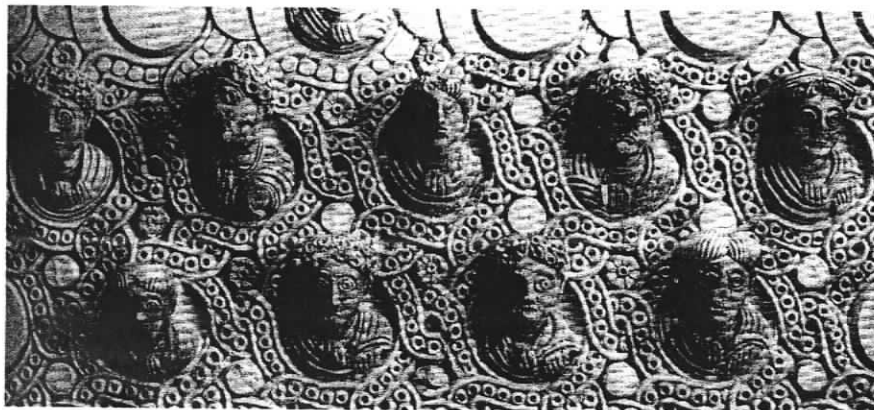
O.6 Enthroned amir, alcove fresco, Qusayr 'Amra  
 Drawing by V. Fiala  
*Qusayr 'Amra*, pl. 37  
 (figures in an arcade)



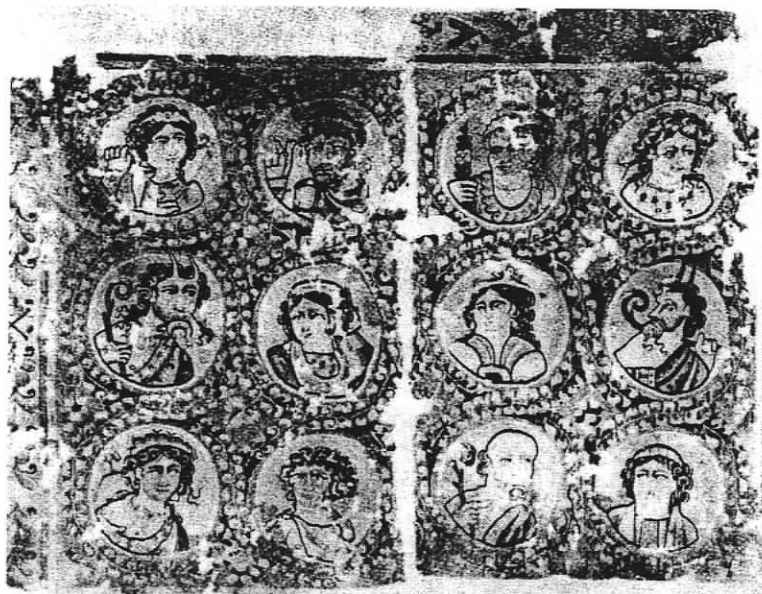
O.7 Icon of Christ the Saviour and Apa Mena (Abbot Menas)  
6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> century, Bawit, Egypt  
*Byzantine Art*, pl. 38  
(Late Antique proportions)



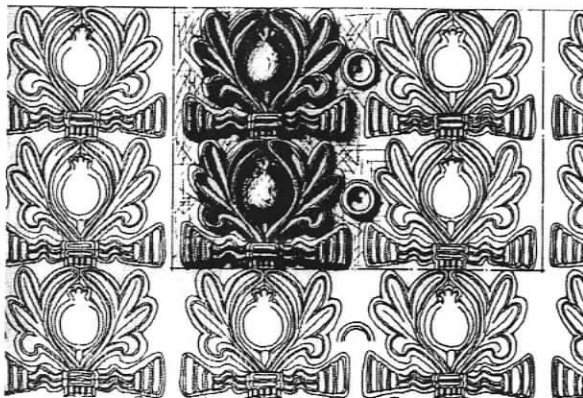
O.8 Head sculpture, Coptic  
*Stylistic Origins*, pl. 142  
(Late Antique proportions)



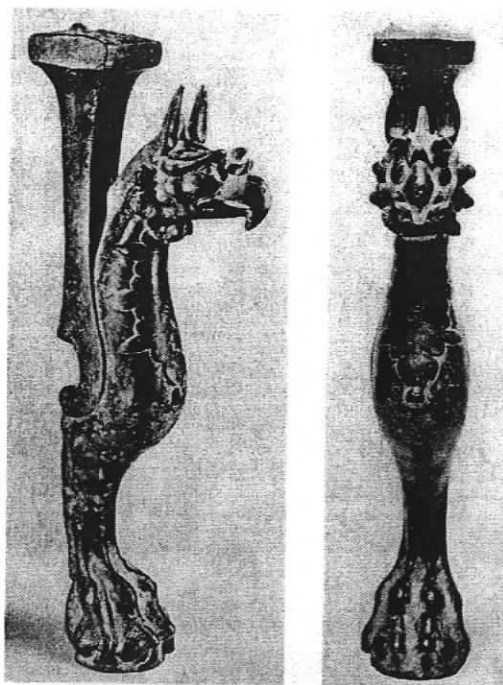
O.9 Frieze of heads, 8<sup>th</sup> century, Khirbat al-Mafjar  
*Art and Architecture of Islam*, pl. 38  
 (Late Antique proportions)



O.10 Hanging with Bacchic figures, tapestry, 5<sup>th</sup> century, Coptic  
*Pagan and Christian Egypt*, pl 238  
 (Late Antique proportions)



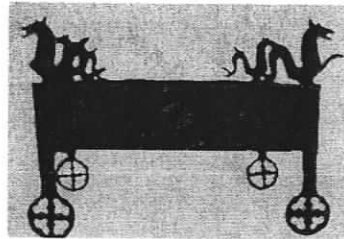
P.1 Drawing of Sasanian stucco revetment from Palace I, Kish, Iran  
*Persian Art*, p. 609  
 (pomegranates)



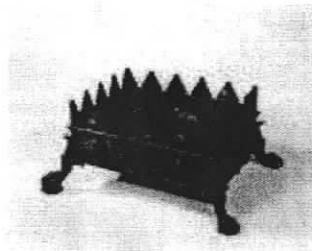
S.1 Sasanian throne-leg  
*Persian Art*, p. 240  
 (griffin)



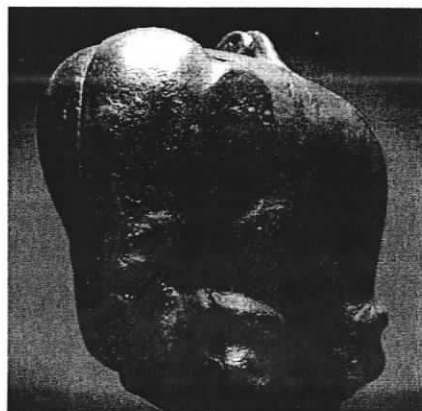
T.3 Detail of the Hippolytus Hall floor mosaic, tyche figures in top register, Aphrodite in central register (second from right), man with a bird lower register, Madaba, Jordan  
*I Mosaici de Giordania*, p. 78  
 (Late Antique proportions)



U.1 Bronze brazier, Roman, Chiusi, Italy  
<http://www.vroma.org/~bmcmanus/kitchen.html>  
 (brazier)



U.2 Rectangular brazier, Roman  
 University of Pennsylvania, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology  
<http://www.tcnj.edu/~anchouse/kitchen.html>  
 (brazier)

**Catalogue 10****Elephant mould**

**Material:** bronze

**Function:** hinged mould, possibly for bread or cake

**Dating:** 8<sup>th</sup> century CE

**Measurements:** 18.5 x 21 cm; depth: 9 cm

**Locale and date of excavation:** Mafraq/al-Fudayn, Jordan, 1985.

**Manufacture:** cast and cold-worked (interior)

**Form and decoration:** The elephant is standing upright with head positioned parallel to the line of the spine. The trunk curls back on itself and the ears are open and flush on either side of the head. The elephant's four legs are large and sturdy and have a decorative ankle band above the foot. This is similar to the banding around the female finial on the Mafraq brazier.

The surface of the mould is surprisingly smooth, although there is some surface pitting. The form is composed of two equal halves, with the division occurring through the medial line of the creature, resulting in two fully distinct halves. The mould is hinged at the mid-point of the elephant's back. Although

the exterior of the mould only suggests the form and shape of an elephant, it is possible to identify it as South Asian. This is due to two prominent features: the small ears and banding around the ankles. This mould has been identified as a cake or bread mould.<sup>30</sup>

**Documentation:** See Catalogue 7 entry.

**Publication(s):**

Ghazi Bisheh et al., *The Umayyads: The Rise of Islamic Art* ('Amman: Al-Faris Publishing, 2000), p. 51.

Ghazi Bisheh, *Jordanie: sur les pas des archéologues*, exhib. cat. (Paris: Institut du Monde Arabe, 1997), p. 166.

J. B. Humbert, 'El-Fedein Mafrq', *Liber Annuus* 36 (1986), pp. 354-358.

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<sup>30</sup> Humbert, 'El-Fedein Mafrq', pp. 356.

**Comparanda:**



Q.1 Elephant-head capital, Great Temple, Petra  
*Petra and the Lost Kingdom*, p. 110



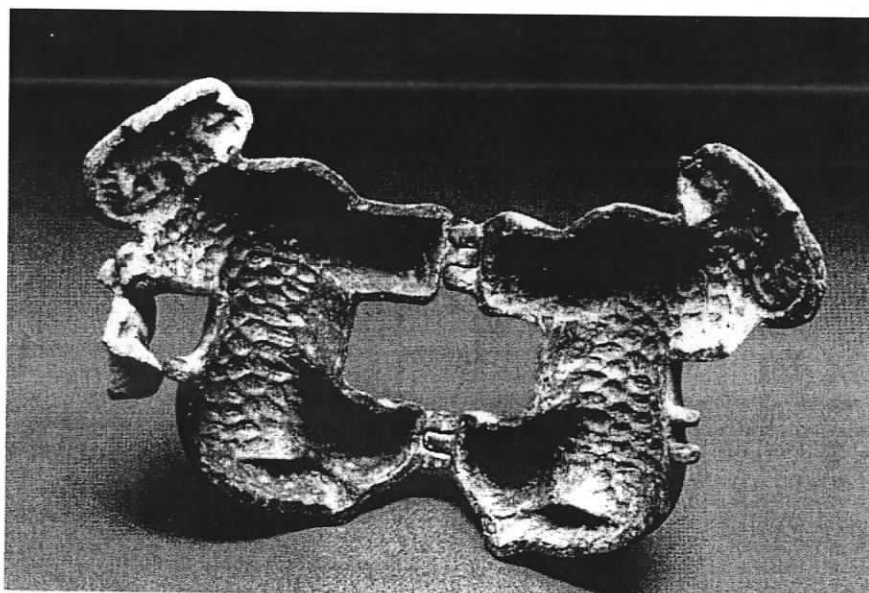
Q.2 Sasanian relief carving, Taq-i-Bustan, Iran  
*Persian Art*, p. 164



Q.3 Sasanian silver plate, with elephant and rider on right  
*Sasanian Silver*, p. 94



Q.4 Elephant in mosaic pavement, Caesarea, Israel  
Image: Erica Dodd

**Catalogue 11****Ram mould**

**Material:** bronze

**Function:** hinged mould, possibly for bread or cake

**Dating:** 8<sup>th</sup> century CE

**Measurements:** 17 x 17 cm, depth: 6 cm

**Locale and date of excavation:** Mafraq/ al-Fudayn, Jordan, 1985.

**Manufacture:** cast and cold-worked (interior)

**Form and decoration:** This is a standing ram, facing forward with large curled horns on either side of its head. Details of the ram's coat are handled in a schematic fashion, in a series of lozenge-shapes suggesting the animal's shaggy fur. In addition, the ram's head has the essential features needed to identify it as a ram, however little attempt has been made at capturing a naturalistic rendering of

the creature. The sense of Late Antique proportions is evident in the ram mould, with the stumpy body and emphasis on the head.

The ram is split centrally, making two halves when the mould is opened. There are two hinges at the base of the feet, which join the halves. On the top of the back is a device that would keep the halves together during use. The ram mould is similar in overall treatment of the animal form to the elephant mould (Catalogue 10). Humbert suspects that the two moulds were created in the same workshop.

**Documentation:** See Catalogue 7 entry.

**Publication(s):**

Ghazi Bisheh, *Jordanie: sur les pas des archéologues*, exhib. cat. (Paris: Institut du Monde Arabe, 1997), p. 166.

Ghazi Bisheh et al., *The Umayyads: The Rise of Islamic Art* ('Amman: Al-Faris Publishing, 2000), p. 81.

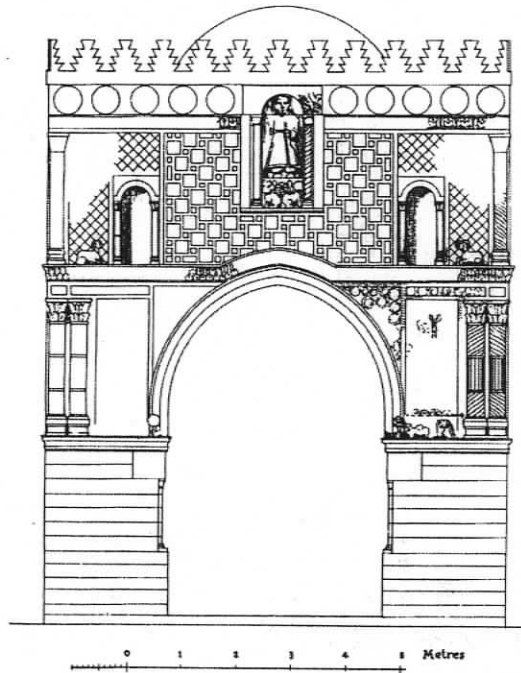
J. B. Humbert, 'El-Fedein Mafraq', *Liber Annuus* 36 (1986), pp. 354-358.

Jean-Baptiste Humbert, 'Le surprenant brasero omeyyade trouvé à Mafraq', *Jordanie: sur les pas des archéologues*, exhib. cat. (Paris: Institut du Monde Arabe, 1997), p. 161.

Adia Naghawy, 'Ram mould', *Museums with no Frontiers*, 2005, <[http://www.discoverislamicart.org/database\\_item.php?id=object;ISL;jo;MUS01;43;en](http://www.discoverislamicart.org/database_item.php?id=object;ISL;jo;MUS01;43;en)>, 4 September 2006.

**Comparanda:**

J.1 Detail of 6<sup>th</sup> century mosaic pavement from Atwal, Jordan  
*I Mosaici de Giordania*, p. 57



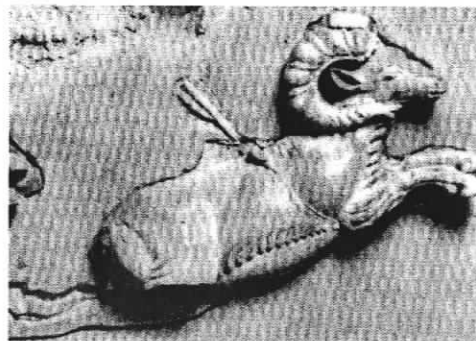
J.2 Reconstruction drawing of the entrance to the bath-house at Khirbat al-Mafjar  
*The Great Mosque of Damascus*, pl. 83  
 (ram on second register)



J.3 Fragment of stucco ram, Khirbat al-Mafjar  
*Stylistic Origins*, pl. 27



J.4 Sasanian stucco carving of a ram  
*Stylistic Origins*, pl. 102

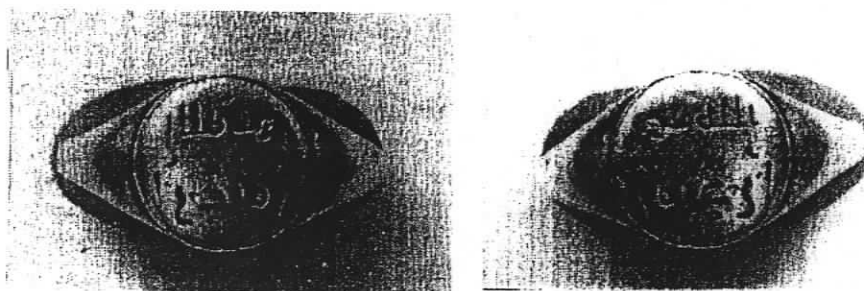


J.5 Sogdian stucco carving of a ram, 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> century, Varakhsha, Uzbekistan  
*Stylistic Origins*, pl. 115



J.6 Rams flanking a kylix, floor mosaic, Petra Church  
*The Petra Church*, p. 314

**Catalogue 12**  
**Silver finger-ring**



(Reverse)

**Material:** silver

**Function:** finger-ring, possibly a seal-ring

**Dating:** Umayyad period (661-750) through the archaeological evidence.<sup>31</sup>

**Measurements:** none available

**Locale and date of excavation:** Qasr 'Ayn al-Sil, Jordan, 1984.

**Manufacture:** cast and cold-worked

**Form and decoration:** a silver finger-ring with Arabic inscription in retrograde lettering.<sup>32</sup> The ring is similar to a signet ring, a well-known style of ring often used by the aristocracy in the west. The band is even across the back of the finger and flares toward the front of the finger, culminating in a spherical disk that covers the front of the digit. Inscribed on the disk is Arabic lettering. The epigraphy is legible and states, "God is the helper of the compassionate."<sup>33</sup> Other

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<sup>31</sup> Ghazi Bisheh, 'Qasr Mshash and Qasr 'Ayn al-Sil: Two Umayyad Sites in Jordan', in *The History of Bilad al-Sham during the Umayyad Period (Fourth International Conference: 24-29 October 1987: Amman): Proceedings of the third Symposium/Bilad al-Sham History Committee*, ed. by Muhammad Adan Bakhit and Robert Schick ('Amman: The Committee, 1989), pp. 81-103 (p. 93).

<sup>32</sup> Retrograde means that the letters are presented in mirror form. The ring would have been used as a seal and when impressed in wax the lettering would have been legible.

<sup>33</sup> Ghazi Bisheh, 'Qasr Mshash and Qasr 'Ayn al-Sil: Two Umayyad Sites in Jordan', p. 93.

than the lettering, there is no obvious decoration. The band appears smooth as does the surface of the disk without lettering.

**Documentation:** This ring was discovered in a structure identified as a fortlet or well-built farmhouse with *hammam* at Qasr ‘Ayn al-Sil.

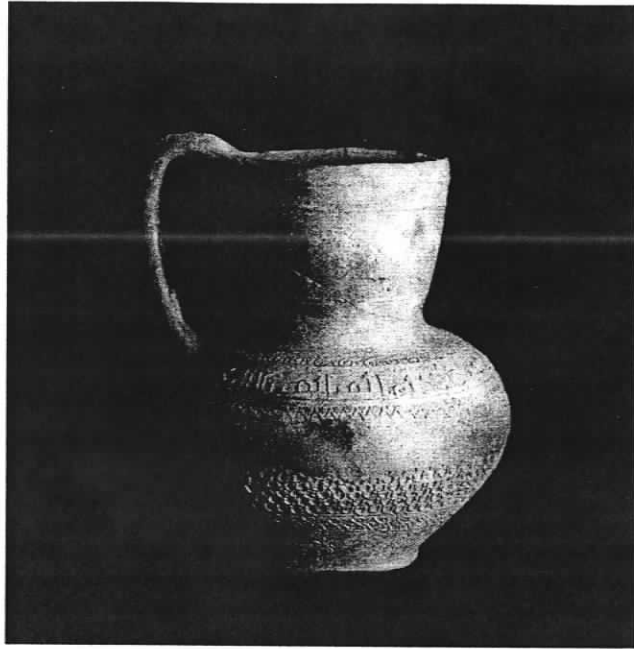
**Publication(s):**

Ghazi Bisheh, 'Qasr Mshash and Qasr ‘Ayn al-Sil: Two Umayyad Sites in Jordan', in *The History of Bilad al-Sham during the Umayyad Period (Fourth International Conference: 24-29 October 1987: Amman): Proceedings of the third Symposium/Bilad al-Sham History Committee*, ed. by Muhammad Adan Bakhit and Robert Schick (‘Amman: The Committee, 1989), pp. 81-103.

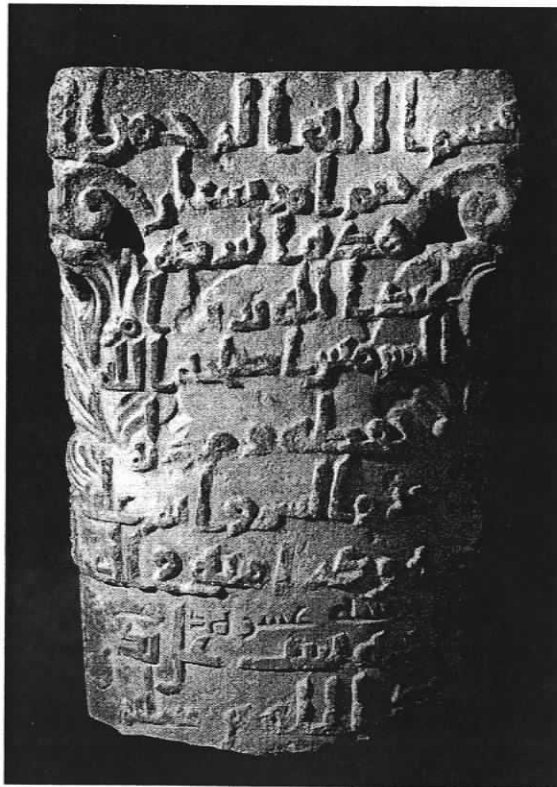
**Comparanda:**



G.1 Engraved stone with verse from the Qur'an, ‘Amman  
*Umayyads*, p. 59



G.2 Ceramic jug, with Kufic inscription, Dayr 'Ayn 'Abata, Jordan  
*Umayyads*, p. 68



G.3 Carved capital with Kufic inscription, al-Muwaqqar water reservoir, Jordan  
*Umayyads*, p. 118

**Catalogue 13****Pair of dishes from a scale**

**Material:** leaded bronze

**Function:** “pans” (small, convex dishes) used to hold objects to be weighed on an antique beam balance scale. These would have been suspended by a fine chain at three points on the rim of the dish.

**Dating:** 8<sup>th</sup> century CE

**Measurements:** none available

**Weight:** 11 gr

**Locale and date of excavation:** Umm al-Walid, Jordan, 1990.

**Manufacture:** hammered and smoothed sheet bronze

**Form and decoration:** a pair of bronze slightly convex pans, circular, and without decoration.

**Documentation:** See Catalogue III entry.

**Publication(s):**

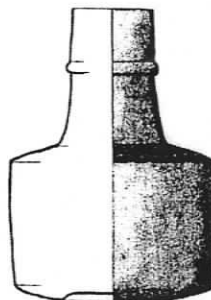
Ghazi Bisheh et al., *The Umayyads: The Rise of Islamic Art* (‘Amman: Al-Faris Publishing, 2000), p. 51.

Jacques Bujard and François Schweizer, *Entre Byzance et L'Islam: Umm er-Rasas et Umm el-Walid fouilles Genevoises en Jordanie*, exhib. cat. (Généve: Musée d'art et d'histoire, 1992), p.17.

**Comparanda:** no comparanda

**Catalogue 14**

## Small Jug



**Material:** bronze

**Function:** possibly perfume bottle

**Dating:** 8<sup>th</sup> century CE

**Measurements:** none available

**Weight:** 585 gr

**Locale and date of excavation:** Umm al-Walid, Jordan, 1990.

**Manufacture:** open-face sheet casting, four-part construction (neck, shoulder, body and base) soldered after hammered into form.

**Form and decoration:** Remarkably similar to Catalogue 3, ablution jug. Although significantly smaller, the proportions are consistent with the other jug however, this item lacks surface decoration.

**Documentation:** See Catalogue 3 entry.

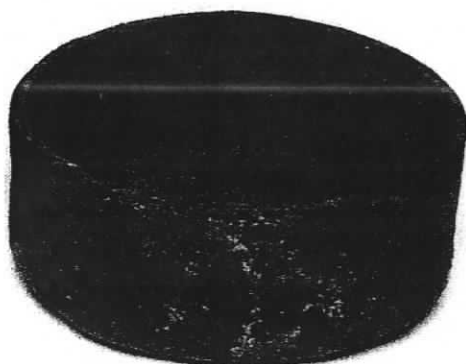
**Publication(s):**

Jacques Bujard and François Schweizer, *Entre Byzance et L'Islam: Umm er-Rasas et Umm el-Walid fouilles Genevoises en Jordanie*, exhib. cat. (Généve: Musée d'art et d'histoire, 1992), p. 17.

**Comparanda:** See Catalogue 3.

**Catalogue 15**

Convex dish

**Material:** bronze**Function:** kitchen utensil, possibly serving or cooking dish**Dating:** 8<sup>th</sup> century CE**Measurements:** none available**Weight:** 885 gr**Locale and date of excavation:** Umm al-Walid, Jordan, 1990.**Manufacture:** cast and cold-worked**Form and decoration:** this is a round, straight sided dish, with thick sidewalls.

The surface is without decoration.

**Documentation:** See Catalogue 3 entry.**Publication(s):**Ghazi Bisheh et al., *The Umayyads: The Rise of Islamic Art* ('Amman: Al-Faris Publishing, 2000), p. 51.Jacques Bujard and François Schweizer, *Entre Byzance et L'Islam: Umm er-Rasas et Umm el-Walid fouilles Genevoises en Jordanie*, exhib. cat. (Généve: Musée d'art et d'histoire, 1992), p.17.**Comparanda:** no comparanda

**Catalogue 16**

**Mortar and pestle**



**Material:** bronze

**Function:** mortar and pestle

**Dating:** 8<sup>th</sup> century CE

**Measurements:** none available

**Locale and date of excavation:** Umm al-Walid, Jordan, 1990

**Manufacture:** cast and cold worked

**Form and decoration:** the pestle has a slightly flaring shaft that culminates in a typical bulbous grinding end (inside mortar). The exterior end is shaped in flatted spherical knob with smooth sides to fit comfortably in the palm of the hand. The pestle is without surface decoration. The mortar is circular with thick sidewalls, which rise straight up from the base. There is a modest indentation near the bottom of the mortar delineating the base from the main body of the vessel. There is no obvious surface decoration on the mortar.

**Documentation:** See Catalogue 3 entry.

**Publication(s):**

Ghazi Bisheh et al., *The Umayyads: The Rise of Islamic Art* ('Amman: Al-Faris Publishing, 2000), p. 51.

**Catalogue 17****Set of weights**

**Material:** bronze

**Function:** weights

**Dating:** first half of the 8th century, through analysis of stratigraphic context (pottery shards)

**Measurements:** height: 0.4 - 2.5 cm, width: 0.13 - 0.25 cm, weight: 2.10-0149 gr

**Locale and date of excavation:** 'Aqaba (Ayla), Jordan, 1990.

**Manufacture:** cast, moulded

**Form and decoration:** a set of eight moulded weights of incrementally larger sizes. They fall into five different types of shapes: barrel, truncated bi-conical, polyhedral with sides cut into polygonal facets, brick and square.<sup>34</sup> They are without inscription. Most of the weights appear to have a simple decoration, often found on Coptic made goods, of a smaller circle within a larger circle.

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<sup>34</sup> Adia Naghawy and Manal Basyouni, 'Weights', Museums with no Frontiers, 2005, <[http://www.discoverislimicart.org/database\\_item.php?id=object;ISL;jo;MUS01;16;en](http://www.discoverislimicart.org/database_item.php?id=object;ISL;jo;MUS01;16;en)>, 4 September 2006.

**Documentation:** discovered during archaeological excavation carried out in 'Aqaba in 1987-1994.

**Publication(s):**

Ghazi Bisheh et al., *The Umayyads: The Rise of Islamic Art* ('Amman: Al-Faris Publishing, 2000), p. 186.

Adia Naghawy and Manal Basyouni, 'Weights', *Museums with no Frontiers*, 2005, <[http://www.discoverislamicart.org/database\\_item.php?id=object;ISL;jo;MUS01;16;en](http://www.discoverislamicart.org/database_item.php?id=object;ISL;jo;MUS01;16;en)>, 4 September 2006.

Donald Witcomb, *Ayla: Art and Industry in the Islamic Port of Aqaba* (Chicago, Illinois: Oriental Institute Museum Publications, 1995), p. 19.

**Comparanda:** no comparanda

**Catalogue 18****Floral appliqué**

**Material:** bronze

**Function:** appliqué, possibly from a brazier

**Dating:** first half of the 8th century, through analysis of stratigraphic context  
(pottery shards)

**Measurements:** none available

**Locale and date of excavation:** 'Aqaba (Ayla), Jordan, 1990.

**Manufacture:** cast and cold worked

**Form and decoration:** a series of six hearts radiate from a central circle, forming a floral pattern. Where the two halves of the heart meet the metal flares into an arrow-like point. There is a large sphere of what appears to be corrosion in the northwest quadrant of the floral appliqué.

**Documentation:** discovered during archaeological excavation carried out in 'Aqaba in 1987-1994.

**Publication(s):**

Ghazi Bisheh et al., *The Umayyads: The Rise of Islamic Art* ('Amman: Al-Faris Publishing, 2000), p. 187.

Donald Witcomb, *Ayla: Art and Industry in the Islamic Port of Aqaba* (Chicago, Illinois: Oriental Institute Museum Publications, 1995), p. 19.

**Catalogue 19****Buckle**

**Material:** bronze

**Function:** buckle

**Dating:** first half of the 8th century, through analysis of stratigraphic context (pottery shards)

**Measurements:** none available

**Locale and date of excavation:** 'Aqaba (Ayla), Jordan, 1990.

**Manufacture:** cast and cold worked

**Form and decoration:** described as an appliqué, this object appears to be a buckle from some sort of garment, shoe, or perhaps part of a dressing for an animal bridle. It is comprised of a rounded rectangular opening on the left side, which held the strapping material. On the right, is a kidney shaped opening that is bisected by a pointed tongue. There appears to be a hinge where the tongue is attached to the medial bar of the object, allowing the tongue to easily swing open. The surface appears to be without decoration although this is difficult to determine due to corrosion on the surface.

**Documentation:** discovered during archaeological excavation carried out in 'Aqaba in 1987-1994.

**Publication(s):**

Ghazi Bisheh et al., *The Umayyads: The Rise of Islamic Art* ('Amman: Al-Faris Publishing, 2000), p. 187.

Donald Witcomb, *Ayla: Art and Industry in the Islamic Port of Aqaba* (Chicago, Illinois: Oriental Institute Museum Publications, 1995), p. 19.

**Catalogue 20****Heart-shaped appliqué**

**Material:** bronze

**Function:** appliqué, possibly for clothing

**Dating:** first half of the 8th century, through analysis of stratigraphic context (pottery shards)

**Measurements:** none available

**Locale and date of excavation:** 'Aqaba (Ayla), Jordan, 1990.

**Manufacture:** cast and cold worked

**Form and decoration:** heart-shaped piece of bronze, the surface is pitted due to corrosion, but without obvious decoration.

**Documentation:** discovered during archaeological excavation carried out in 'Aqaba in 1987-1994.

**Publication:**

Ghazi Bisheh et al., *The Umayyads: The Rise of Islamic Art* ('Amman: Al-Faris Publishing, 2000), p. 187.

Donald Witcomb, *Ayla: Art and Industry in the Islamic Port of Aqaba* (Chicago, Illinois: Oriental Institute Museum Publications, 1995), p. 19.

**Catalogue 21****Double hook with suspension ring**

**Material:** bronze or iron

**Function:** hook

**Dating:** first half of the 8th century, through analysis of stratigraphic context (pottery shards)

**Measurements:** none available

**Locale and date of excavation:** 'Aqaba (Ayla), Jordan, 1990.

**Manufacture:** cast and cold worked

**Form and decoration:** this is a double-sided hook. The top of the object is made of a circle from which the two hooks run straight and parallel, turning outward, becoming "u" shaped forms that culminate in a circular knob. The circular knob suggests that the end is meant to be smooth and not for piercing whatever was meant to hang from it. The surface shows signs of corrosion, so it is difficult to determine if there is any surface decoration.

**Documentation:** discovered during archaeological excavation carried out in 'Aqaba in 1987-1994.

**Publication(s):**

Ghazi Bisheh et al., *The Umayyads: The Rise of Islamic Art* ('Amman: Al-Faris Publishing, 2000), p. 187.

Donald Witcomb, *Ayla: Art and Industry in the Islamic Port of Aqaba* (Chicago, Illinois: Oriental Institute Museum Publications, 1995), p. 19.

**Catalogue 22****Rooster finial**

**Material:** bronze

**Function:** finial

**Dating:** first half of the 8th century, through analysis of stratigraphic context (pottery sherds)

**Measurements:** none available

**Locale and date of excavation:** 'Aqaba (Ayla), Jordan, 1990.

**Manufacture:** cast and cold worked

**Form and decoration:** this finial is broken at the base and one can only speculate where it was originally attached. The bird is a rooster identifiable by the stylized cockscomb and hooked tail feathers.

**Documentation:** discovered during archaeological excavation carried out in 'Aqaba in 1987-1994.

**Publication(s):**

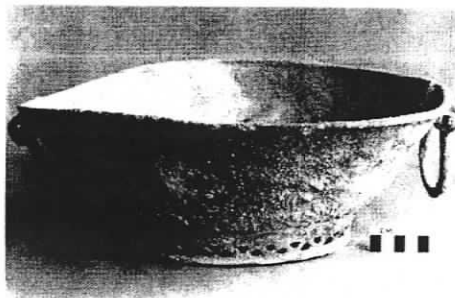
Ghazi Bisheh et al., *The Umayyads: The Rise of Islamic Art* ('Amman: Al-Faris Publishing, 2000), p. 187.

Donald Witcomb, *Ayla: Art and Industry in the Islamic Port of Aqaba* (Chicago, Illinois: Oriental Institute Museum Publications, 1995), p. 19.

**Comparanda:** see Catalogue 9, rooster.

**Catalogue 23**

**Convex dish with handles**



**Material:** bronze

**Function:** serving dish

**Dating:** dating by small horde of coins associated with the remains of a human skeleton found in room number sixteen, which was crushed by falling debris during the earthquake of 749.<sup>35</sup>

**Measurements:** none available

**Locale and date of excavation:** Pella, Jordan, 1981.

**Manufacture:** cast and cold worked

**Form and decoration:** this serving dish rests on a small fenestrated foot. The sides flare to a rim that is turned and rounded. Two horseshoe-shaped handles flank either side of the vessel. The fenestrated base decoration is comprised of triangle shapes that alternate pointing upwards and downwards.

**Documentation:** discovered in a small room (number 16) in the North Building (Area IV), a structure dated to the final urban phase of Pella, 746-747.<sup>36</sup> The

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<sup>35</sup> Yoram Tsafrir and Gideon Foerster, "The Dating of the 'Earthquake of the Sabbatical Year' of 749 C.E. in Palestine", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 55 (1992), pp. 231-235.

North Building is a domestic structure comprised of a complex of dwellings built around a large courtyard, used for livestock during the Umayyad period.<sup>37</sup>

**Publication(s):**

Anthony McNicoll et al., *Pella in Jordan I: An interim Report on the joint University of Sydney and the College of Wooster Excavations at Pella 1979-1981* (Canberra: Australian National Gallery, 1982), pp. 135-136.

**Comparanda:** no comparanda

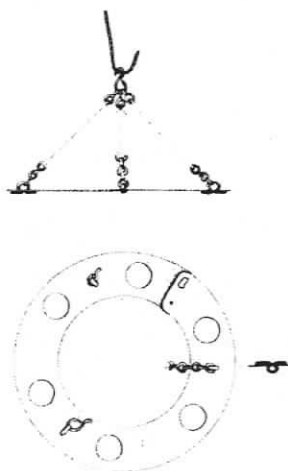
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<sup>36</sup> Anthony McNicoll et al., *Pella in Jordan I: An interim Report on the joint University of Sydney and the College of Wooster Excavations at Pella 1979-1981* (Canberra: Australian National Gallery, 1982), pp.135-136.

<sup>37</sup> Anthony McNicoll et al., *Pella in Jordan*, pp. 135-136.

## Catalogue 24

### Chandelier (Polykandalon)



**Material:** bronze

**Function:** chandelier

**Dating:** between the two earthquakes of 717 and 749 CE<sup>38</sup>, through an assessment of the layers of successive building levels of the structure the chandelier was found within.

**Measurements:**

**Locale and date of excavation:** Pella, Jordan, 1981.

**Manufacture:** sheet bronze, hammered, cut and cold worked

**Form and decoration:** this is a flat piece of bronze that has been forged into the shape of an "O" and riveted together. There are three loops attachments in three positions around the body of the chandelier. A chain would be attached to the ring and the ends suspended from a hook in the wall or ceiling. There are six holes cut into the base of the chandelier, which would have held glass lamps.

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<sup>38</sup> Yoram Tsafir and Gideon Foerster, "The Dating of the 'Earthquake of the Sabbatical Year' of 749 C.E. in Palestine", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 55 (1992), pp. 231-235.

**Documentation:** Room 10, South Building in Area IV. This was a two-storey dwelling, with animals housed on the main floor and human occupancy above.<sup>39</sup>

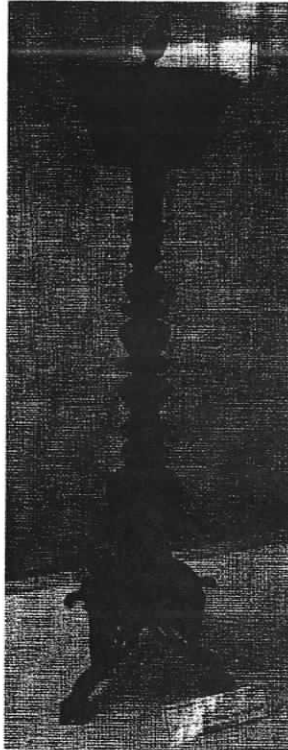
**Publication(s):**

Anthony McNicollet al., *Pella in Jordan 1: An interim report on the joint University of Sydney and the College of Wooster Excavations at Pella 1979-1981* (Canberra: Australian National Gallery, 1982), pp. 135-136.

**Comparanda:** no comparanda

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<sup>39</sup> Anthony McNicollet al., *Pella in Jordan*, p. 132.

**Catalogue 25****Standing Censer<sup>40</sup>**

**Material:** bronze

**Function:** incense burner

**Dating:** Umayyad period (661-750)

**Measurements:** none available

**Locale and date of excavation:** 'Amman Citadel

**Manufacture:** cast and cold worked

**Form and decoration:**

**Documentation:**

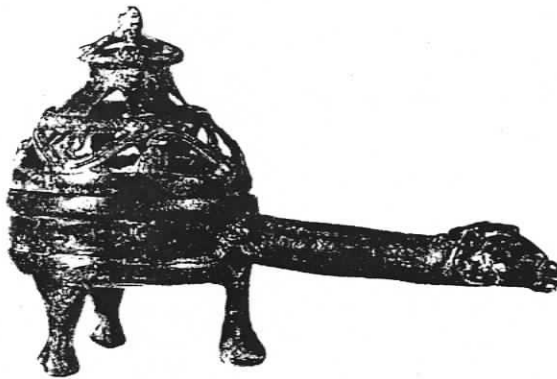
**Publication(s):** This object is currently unpublished.

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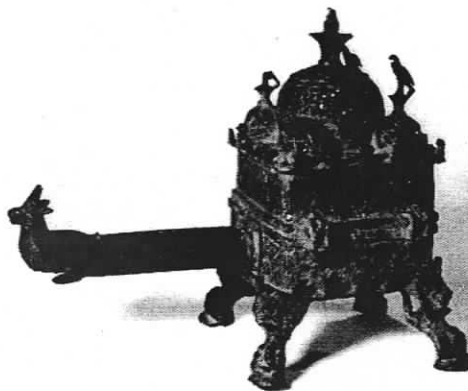
<sup>40</sup> Photograph courtesy of Alex Townsend, University of Victoria.

**Appendix II:**  
**Comparative Material**

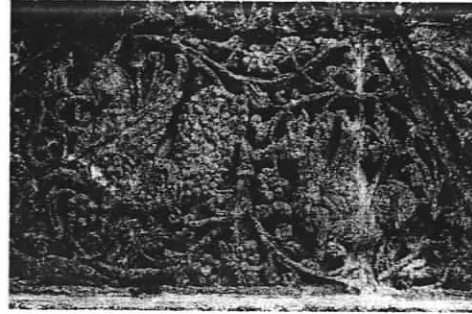
**A) Animal head handles**



A1 6<sup>th</sup> century bronze incense burner.  
*Malcove Collection*, p. 84.



A2 Freer Gallery, 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> century brass censer.  
*Metalwork in Medieval Islamic Art*, p. 46.

**B) Vine scroll**

B.1-B.2 Details of Mshatta façade

<http://depts.washington.edu/wuch/silkroad/cities/jordan/mshatta/mshatta.html>

2 October 2004.



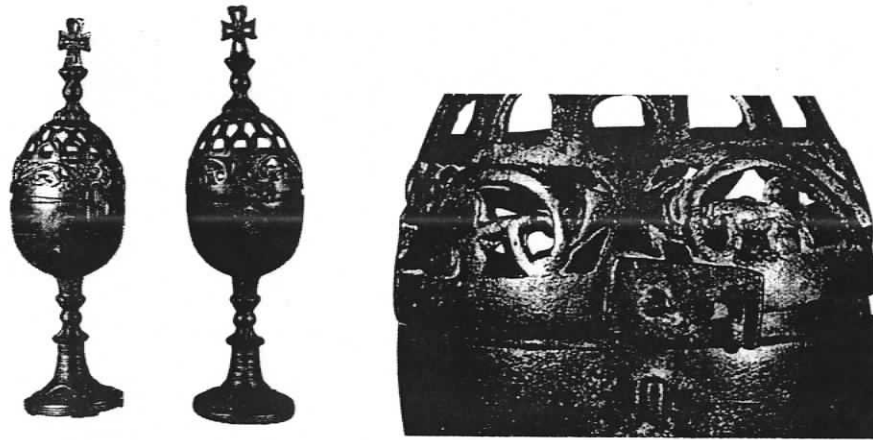
B.3 9<sup>th</sup> century bronze censer from Egypt  
Louvre



B.4 Bronze with gilt censer, 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> century, Coptic  
Coptic Museum,  
<[http://copticmuseum.gov.eg/English/internal/gallery\\_z1.asp?piece\\_id=285&section\\_ID=5](http://copticmuseum.gov.eg/English/internal/gallery_z1.asp?piece_id=285&section_ID=5)>,



B.5-B.6 Left: Cylindrical Box (pyxis), carved ivory, from Egypt or Syria, 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> century  
Right: Fragmentary Plaque, carved ivory, likely Egypt, 8<sup>th</sup> century.  
*The David Collection*, p. 24 and 14.

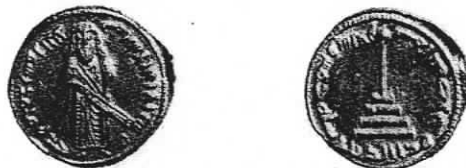


B.7 Bronze censer, 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century, possibly Syria  
*Malcove Collection*, p. 85.

### C) Coins



84. Umayyad *dirham* imitating Sasanian issues but substituting a mihrab (?) and 'anaza for the fire altar, no mint.



85. Umayyad *ḍīnār* with standing caliph and modified cross on steps, 75/694, no mint.



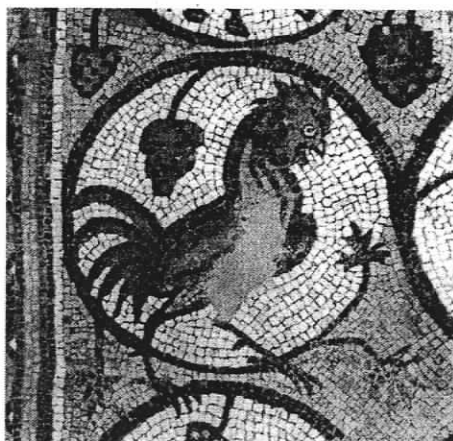
86. Epigraphic *ḍīnār* issued in Damascus in 79/698, after the coin reform of 'Abd al-Malik.

C.1 Three styles of coins from the Umayyad period  
*The Great Mosque of Damascus*, pl. 86.

### D) Roosters



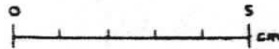
B.1 Marwan Ewer, engraved base metal, ca. 750  
*Islamic Art and Architecture*, p. 18.



B.2 Rooster, mosaic pavement, Petra Church  
*The Petra Church*, p. 313.



B.3 Rooster, textile fragment, 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century, Coptic  
Coptic Museum  
<[http://copticmuseum.gov.eg/English/internal/gallery\\_z1.asp?piece\\_id=285&section\\_ID=5](http://copticmuseum.gov.eg/English/internal/gallery_z1.asp?piece_id=285&section_ID=5)>,

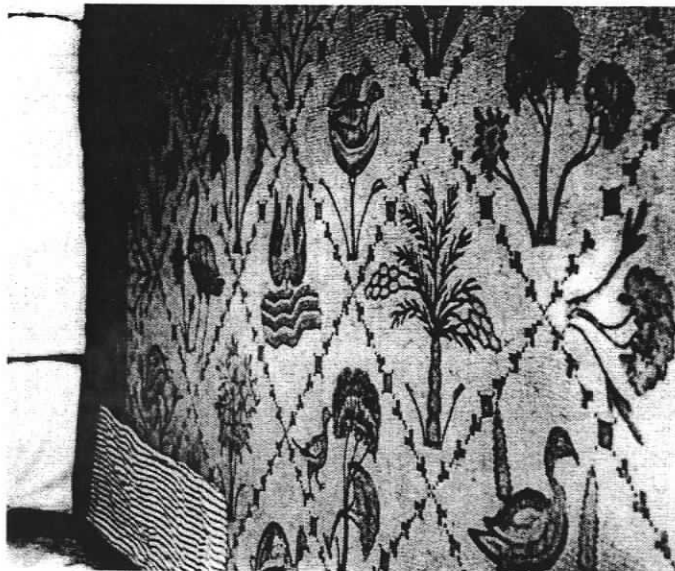


B.4 Rooster finial, metal, Usais, Syria  
*Mitteilungen des Deutschen*, p.160

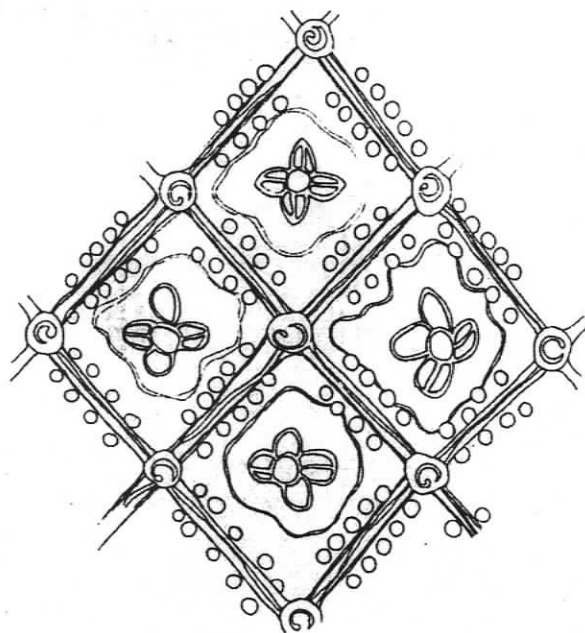
**E) Geometric**



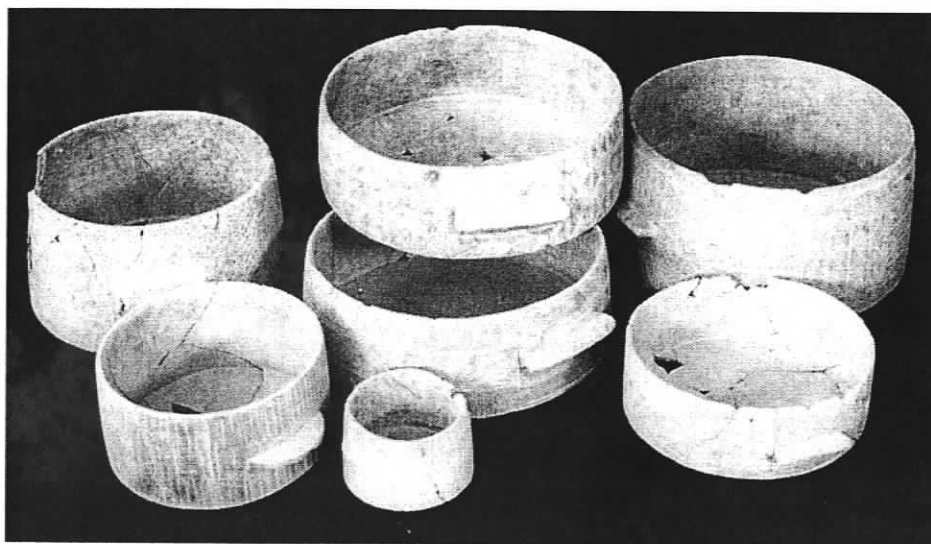
E.1 Vault fresco, Qusayr 'Amra, early 8<sup>th</sup> century  
*Islamic Art and Architecture*, p. 30



E.2 Floor mosaic, western portion of the Hippolytus Hall, Madaba, mid-6<sup>th</sup> century  
*I Mosaici de Giordania*, p. 51



E.3 Drawing of wall fresco from the Abbasid *qasr* at Humayma  
*ADAJ* XXXIX, pl. 27



E.4 Steatite bowls with incised geometric decoration, 8<sup>th</sup> century, Mafraq  
*Jordanie*, p. 169



E.5: Unglazed pottery, Umayyad period, Umm as Summaq, Jordan  
*The Arab Contribution*, pl. 17

### F) Hunting

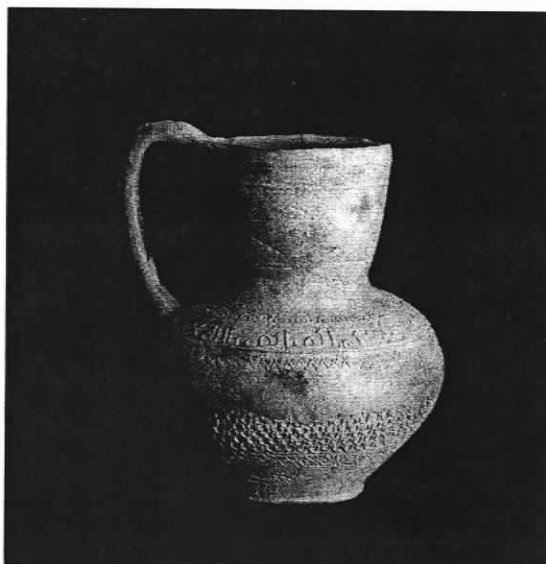


Floor fresco detail, Qasr al-Hair al-Gharbi, Syria, ca. 725  
*Islamic Art and Architecture*, p. 35

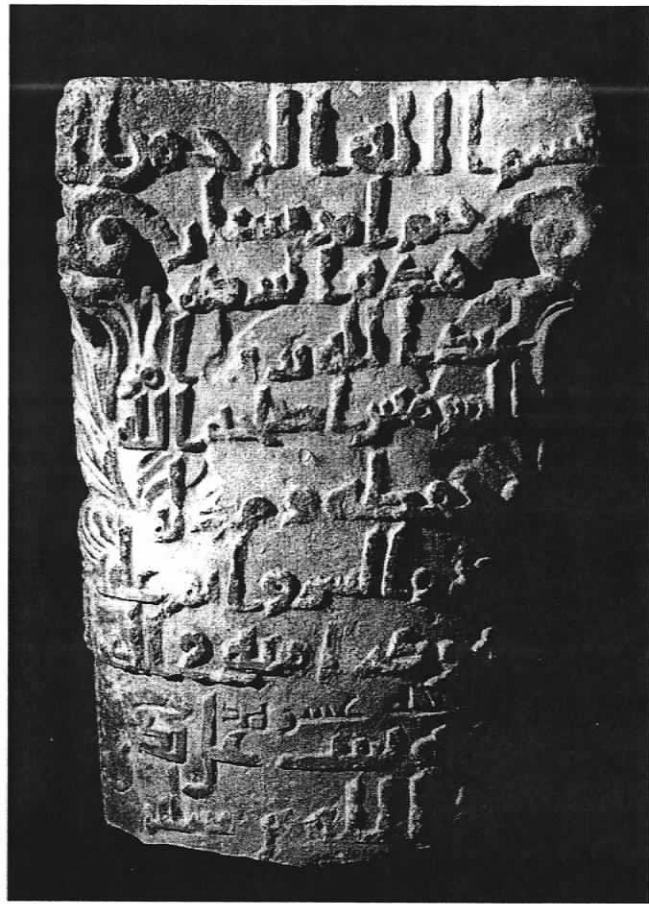
### G) Epigraphy



G.1 Engraved stone with verse from the Qur'an, 'Amman  
*Umayyads*, p. 59



G.2 Ceramic jug, with Kufic inscription, Dayr 'Ayn 'Abata, Jordan  
*Umayyads*, p. 68

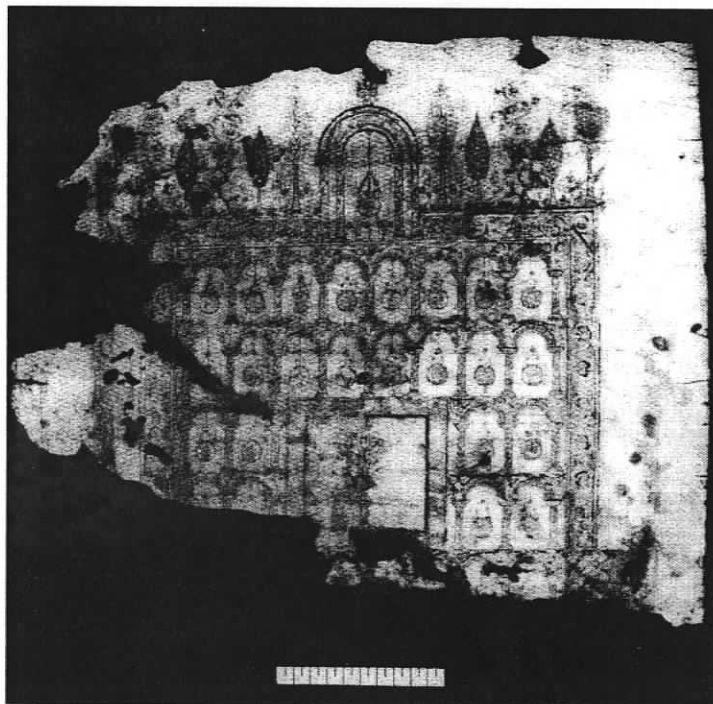


G.3 Carved capital with Kufic inscription, al-Muwaqqar water reservoir, Jordan  
*Umayyads*, p. 118

## H) Architectonic Elements



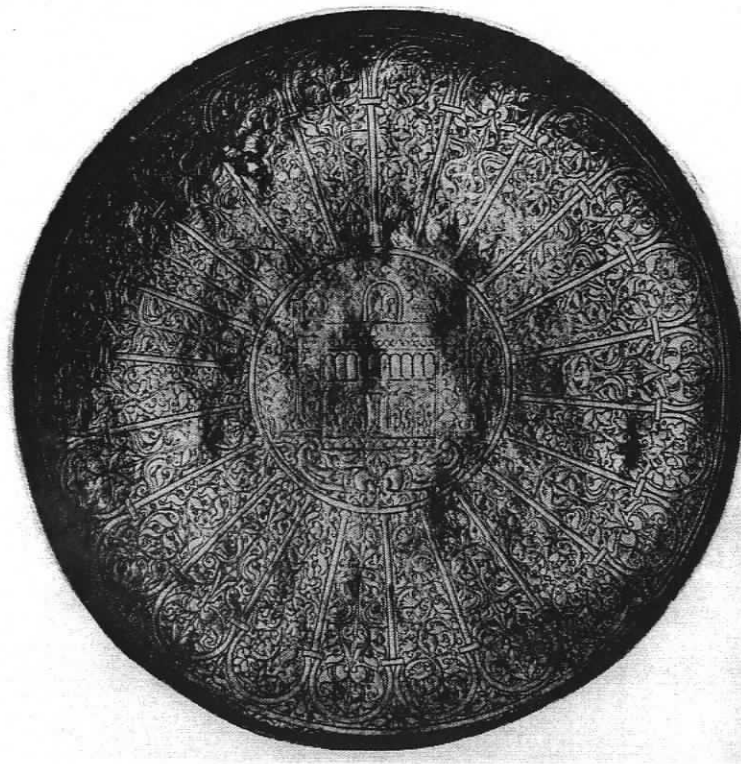
H.1 Stone incense burner, 8<sup>th</sup> century, 'Amman  
*Umayyads*, p. 69



H.2 Fragment of an illuminated Qur'an, from the Great Mosque of San'a, Yemen, 8<sup>th</sup> century  
*The Great Mosque of Damascus*, pl. 25



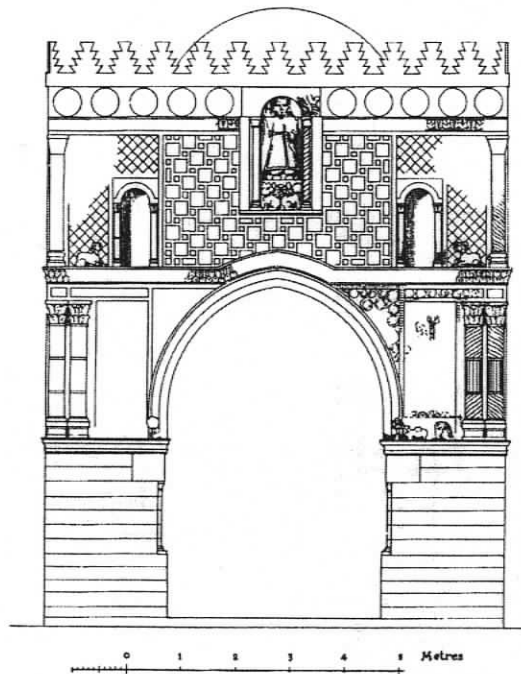
H.3 Lamp shade, steatite, 8<sup>th</sup> century, Mafraq  
*Jordanie*, p. 167



H.4 Sasanian bronze tray with architectural decoration, Staatliche Museum, Berlin  
*Persian Art*, p. 237

J) Ram

J.1 Detail of 6<sup>th</sup> century mosaic pavement from Atwal, Jordan  
*I Mosaici de Giordania*, p. 57



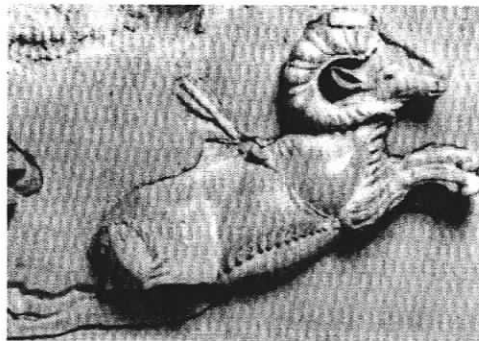
J.2 Reconstruction drawing of the entrance to the bath-house at Khirbat al-Mafjar  
*The Great Mosque of Damascus*, pl. 83



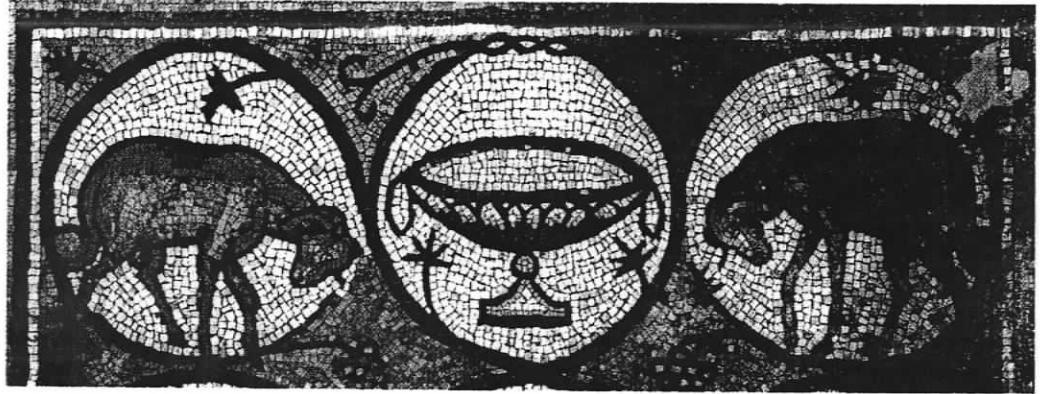
J.3 Fragment of stucco ram, Khirbat al-Mafjar  
*Stylistic Origins*, pl. 27



J.4 Sasanian stucco carving of a ram  
*Stylistic Origins*, pl. 102



J.5 Sogdian stucco carving of a ram, 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> century, Varakhsha, Uzbekistan  
*Stylistic Origins*, pl. 115



J.6 Rams flanking a kylix, floor mosaic, Petra Church  
*The Petra Church*, p. 314

### K) Female Figures



K.1 Central roundel, personification of the sea, floor mosaic  
Church of the Apostles, Madaba, Jordan, 578  
*I Mosaici de Giordania*, p. 75



K.2 Dionysus and Ariadne, wool tapestry, 5<sup>th</sup> century, Coptic  
*L'Art Copte*, pl. 141



K.3 Bronze candelabra with female figure, 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> century, Coptic  
*L'Art Copte*, pl. 251



K.4 Metal alloy pitcher in the shape of a female head, Byzantine  
*L'Art Copte*, pl. 257



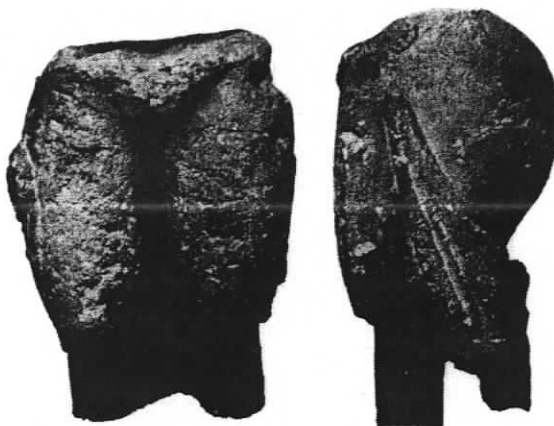
K.5 Metal alloy female musician, late Byzantine or early Islamic, Coptic  
*L'Art Copte*, pl. 285



K.6 Bronze fragmentary bust of a woman (a handle ?), Coptic period  
*Coptic Art and Archaeology*, pl. 5.25



K.7 Female dancer, stucco, Khirbat al-Mafjar  
*Stylistic Origins*, pl. 32



K.8 Fragment of semi-naked woman, Mshatta  
*Stylistic Origins*, pl. 61



K.9 Woman holding a bird, from the façade of Qasr al-Hair al-Gharbi  
*Stylistic Origins*, pl. 70



K.10 Sasanian ewer with pomegranate on handle, and dancing woman with bird  
*Sasanian Silver*, pl. 18



K.11 Sasanian silver ewer with raised design, woman holding a bird  
Cincinnati Museum  
*Sasanian Silver*, pl. 19



K.12 Sasanian silver plate with partial gilt, Anahita  
Cleveland Museum of Art  
*Sasanian Silver*, p. 23



K.13 Sogdian stucco carving of a female dancer, 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> century, Varakhsha, Uzbekistan  
*Stylistic Origins*, pl. 114

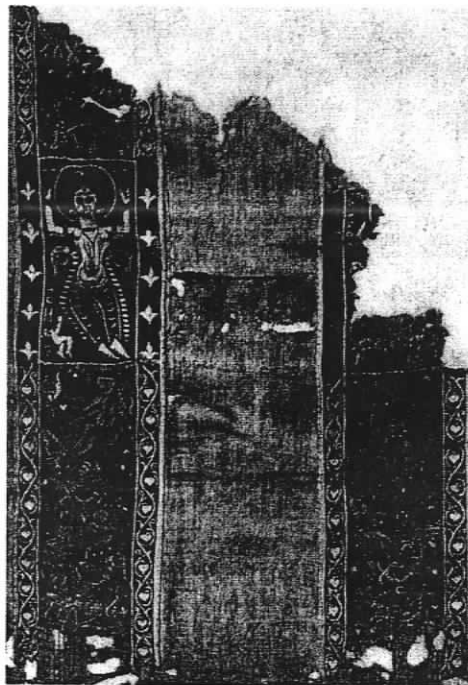


K.17 Bathing Scene fresco, Qusayr 'Amra  
*Umayyads*, p. 57



K.14 Wool and linen textile fragment, 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century, Coptic  
Coptic Museum

[http://www.copticmuseum.gov.eg/English/internal/gallery\\_z1.asp?piece\\_id=148&section\\_ID=6](http://www.copticmuseum.gov.eg/English/internal/gallery_z1.asp?piece_id=148&section_ID=6)

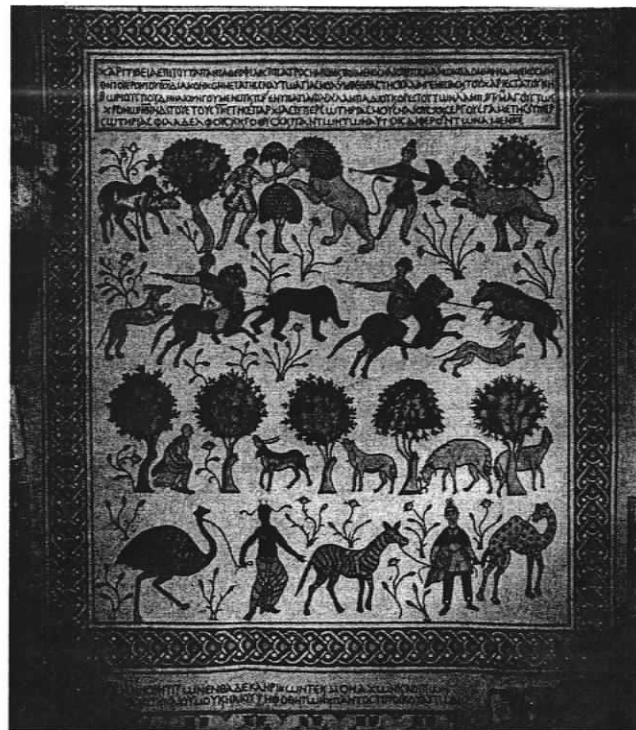


K.15 Tapestry fragment, 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> century, Coptic  
*Pagan and Christian Egypt*, pl. 217



K.16 Dancing woman, apodyterium vault fresco, Qusayr 'Amra  
*Umayyads*, p. 56

**L) Peaceful Kingdom/Dar al-Islam**



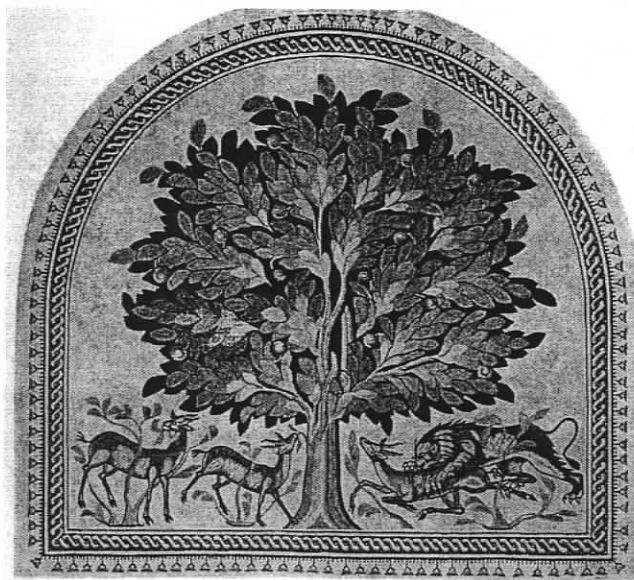
L.1 Floor mosaic, Baptistery Chapel of the Memorial of Moses, Mt. Nebo/Siyagha, 531  
*I Mosaici de Giordania*, p. 95



L.2 Floor mosaic, 8<sup>th</sup> century, Qasr Hallabat, Jordan  
*I Mosaici de Giordania*, p. 131

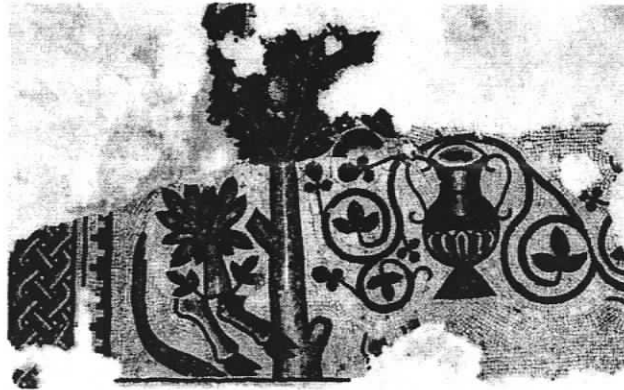


L.3 Presbytery of the Church of the Lions at Umm er-Rasas/Kastron Mefaa, late 6<sup>th</sup> century  
*Umayyads*, p. 97.



L.4 Umayyad *diwan* (retiring room), floor mosaic, Khirbat al-Mafjar  
*Islamic Art and Architecture*, p.31

**M) Iconoclast Damage**



M.1 Evidence of careful iconoclast damage, Diaconicon-Baptistery hunting scene, 530-531, Mt. Nebo/Siyagha  
*I Mosaici de Giordania*, p. 207

**N) Camel**



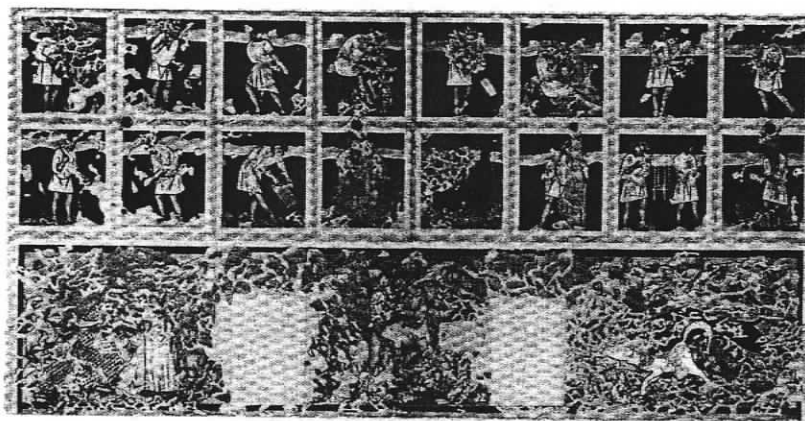
N.1 Camel Lamp, metal alloy, Late Roman or Byzantine  
*L'Art Copte*, pl. 219



N.2 Painted ceramic figurine of a camel, Byzantine, Egypt  
*L'Art Copte*, pl. 220



N.3 Mosaic pavement, 7<sup>th</sup> century, Dayr al-'Adas, Busra Castle, Syria  
*Qusayr 'Amra*, pl. 30



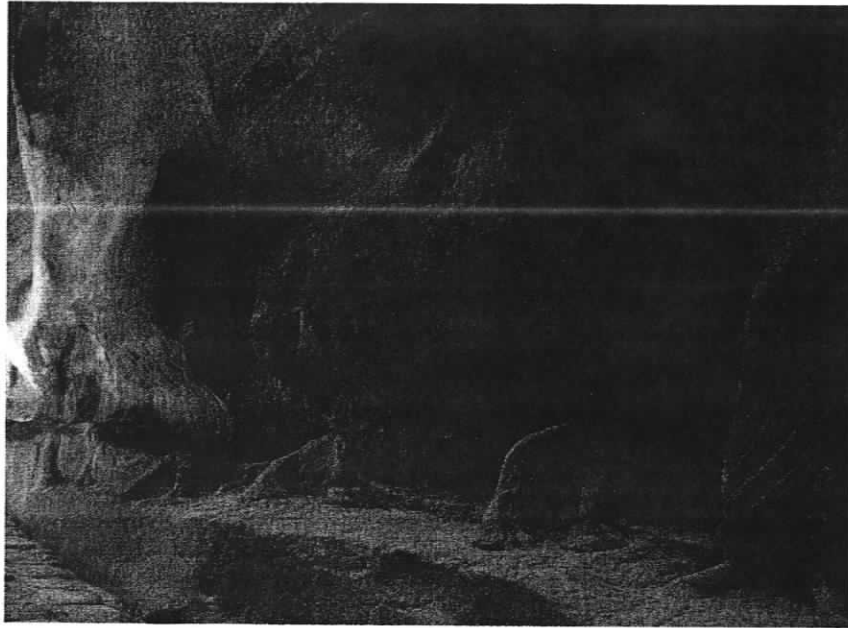
N.4 Drawing of the Qusayr 'Amra vault fresco, by A. Mielich  
Camel is in lower register fourth from right  
*Qusayr 'Amra*, pl. 61



N.5 Bronze ewer of a bull, 8<sup>th</sup> century, Transoxiana (Soghdia)  
*Art of the Eastern World*, pl. 90



N.6 Camel carrying a tree trunk, floor mosaic, Petra Church  
*The Petra Church*, p. 312



N.7 Fragments of a pair of camels and their driver, Siq, Petra  
*Petra and the Lost Kingdom*, p. 87



N.8 "Bahram Gur" hunting, Sasanian silver-gilt plate, Metropolitan Museum of Art  
*Silver Vessels*, p. 239

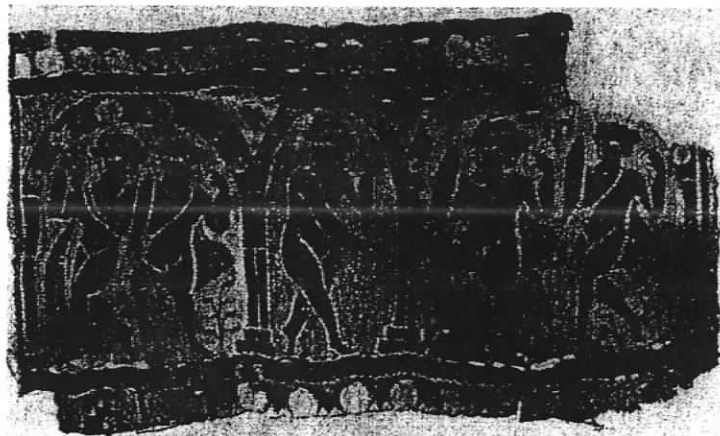
**O) Figures in an Arcade**



O.1 Erotic image on a terracotta lamp, 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> century, Roman, Ephesus, Turkey  
*Looking at Lovemaking*, pl. 96



O.2 Linen and wool tapestry of Ariadne and Dionysus, 4<sup>th</sup> century, Coptic  
*Imperial Rome and Christian Triumph*, pl. 73



O.3 Band with dancing figures, 5<sup>th</sup> century, Coptic  
*Pagan and Christian Egypt*, pl.191



O.4 Classical figures in niches, 5<sup>th</sup> century, Coptic  
*Pagan and Christian Egypt*, pl. 207



O.5 Sasanian king, ivory inlay, 7<sup>th</sup> century, Coptic  
*Pagan and Christian Egypt*, pl.107



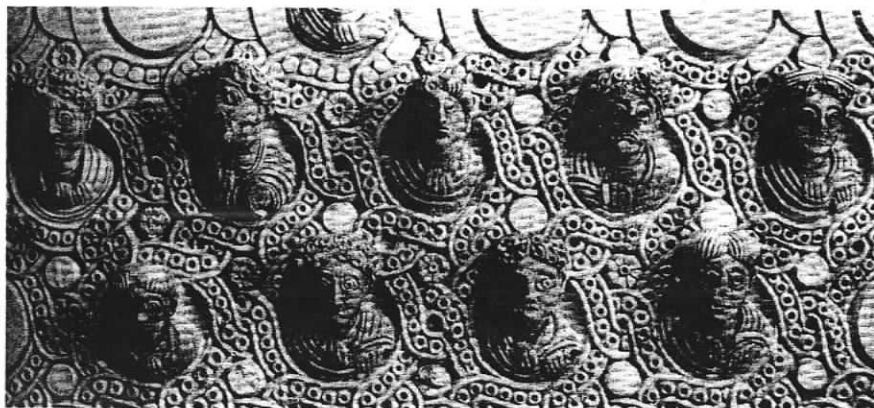
O.6 Enthroned amir, alcove fresco, Qusayr 'Amra  
Drawing by V, Fiala  
*Qusayr 'Amra*, pl. 37



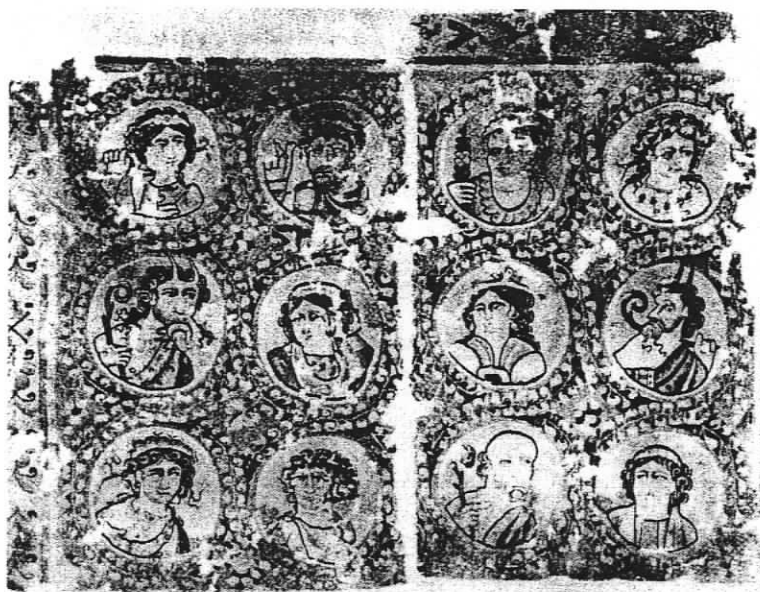
O.7 Icon of Christ the Saviour and Apa Mena (Abbot Menas)  
6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> century, Bawit, Egypt  
*Byzantine Art*, pl. 38



O.8 Head sculpture, Coptic  
*Stylistic Origins*, pl. 142

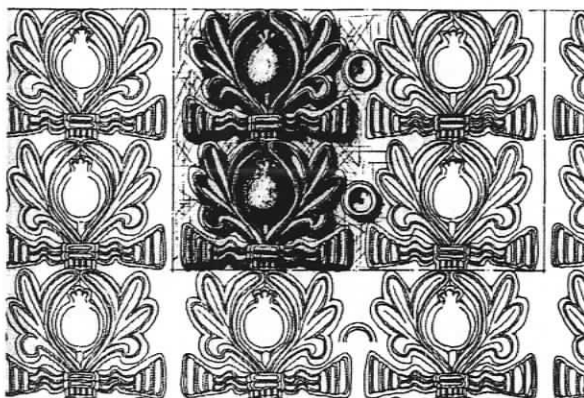


O.9 Frieze of heads, 8<sup>th</sup> century, Khirbat al-Mafjar  
*Art and Architecture of Islam*, pl. 38



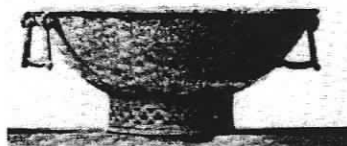
O.10 Hanging with Bacchic figures, tapestry, 5<sup>th</sup> century, Coptic  
*Pagan and Christian Egypt*, pl 238

**P) Pomegranates**

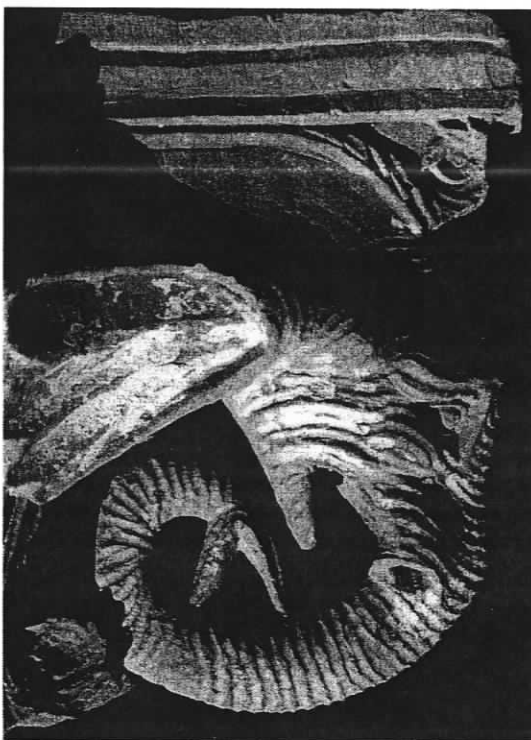


P.1 Drawing of Sasanian stucco revetment from Palace I, Kish, Iran  
*Persian Art*, p. 609

Misc



Bronze bowls, Coptic period  
*Coptic Art and Archaeology*, pl 5.1

**Q) Elephant**

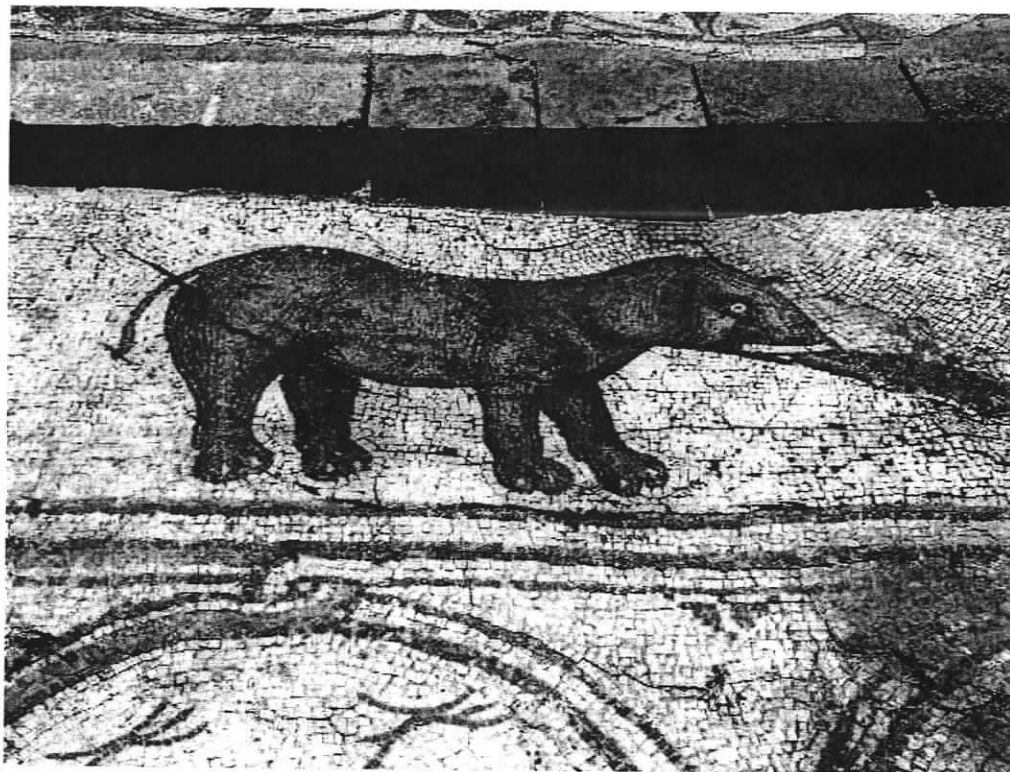
Q.1 Elephant-head capital, Great Temple, Petra  
*Petra and the Lost Kingdom*, p. 110



Q.2 Sasanian relief carving, Taq-i-Bustan, Iran  
*Persian Art*, p. 164



Q.3 Sasanian silver plate, with elephant and rider on right  
*Sasanian Silver*, p. 94



Q.4 Elephant in mosaic pavement, Caesarea, Israel  
Image: Erica Dodd

**R) Lions**



R.1 Sasanian silver plate with carved and engraved design, Hermitage  
*Persian Art*, p. 204



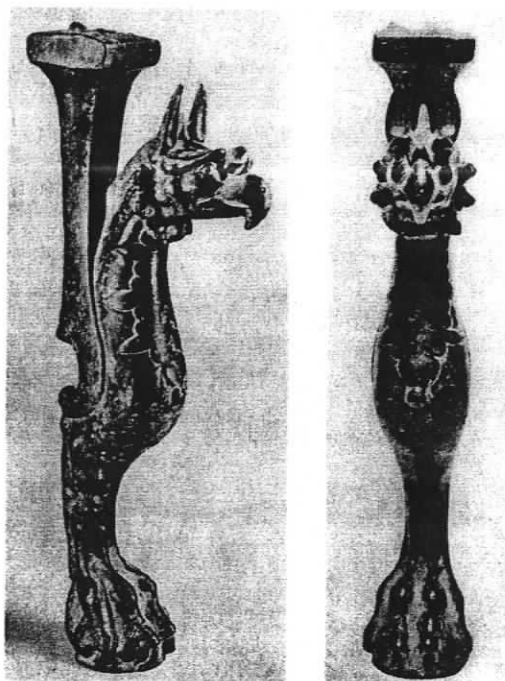
R.2 Post-Sasanian silver plate with carved and engraved design, partial gilt, Hermitage  
*Persian Art*, p. 208



R.3 Sasanian bronze repoussé tray, lion rampant is directly below the central roundel  
*Persian Art*, p. 236

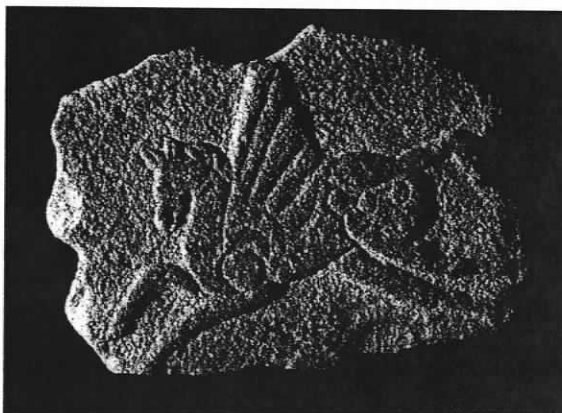


R.4 Stucco figure of the caliph standing on lions, bath house, Khirbat al-Mafjar  
*Stylistic Origins*, pl. 31

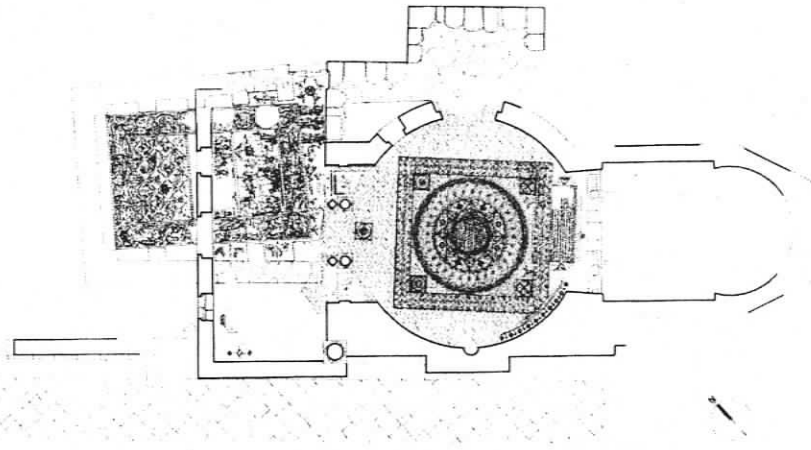
S) Griffin

S.1 Sasanian throne-leg  
*Persian Art*, p. 240

## T) Hellenistic/Pagan Imagery



T.1 Carved basalt image of Pegasus, Azraq, Jordan  
*Umayyads*, p. 163

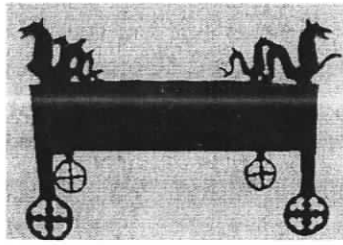


T.2 Hippolytus Hall, mosaic pavements, with pagan imagery on left and the mosaic of the Church of the Virgin laid overtop on the right  
*I Mosaici de Giordania, p.50*

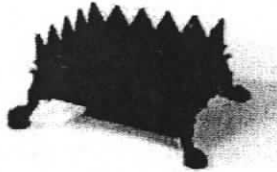


T.3 Detail of the Hippolytus Hall floor mosaic, tyche figures in top register, Aphrodite in central register (second from right), man with a bird lower register, Madaba, Jordan  
*I Mosaici de Giordania, p. 78*

### U. Brazier



U.1 Bronze brazier, Roman, Chiusi, Italy  
<<http://www.vroma.org/~bmcmanus/kitchen.html>>



U.2 Rectangular brazier, Roman  
University of Pennsylvania, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology  
<<http://www.tcnj.edu/~anchouse/kitchen.html>>