

Bethany J. Walker

**PEASANT DEPENDENCIES IN MEDIEVAL ISLAM:
WHOSE AGENCY IN FOOD PRODUCTION AND
MIGRATION?**

Working Paper, ISSN 2747-9331
Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies
University of Bonn
Niebuhrstr. 5
53113 Bonn
Germany
Editors: Abdelkader Al Ghouz/Jeannine Bischoff/Stephan Conermann

Working Paper 2022/03
© March 2022, by the author

Bethany J. Walker
Research Unit of Islamic Archaeology (University of Bonn)

Peasant Dependencies in Medieval Islam: Whose Agency in Food Production and Migration?

Download

<https://www.dependency.uni-bonn.de/en/publications/bcdsss-publishing-series/bcdss-working-papers>

.....
"Gefördert durch die Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) im Rahmen der Exzellenzstrategie des Bundes und der Länder – Exzellenzcluster Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies (BCDSS) EXC 2036/1-2020, Projektnummer: 390683433"

"Funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Foundation) under Germany's Excellence Strategy – Cluster of Excellence Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies (BCDSS) EXC 2036/1-2020, Project No.: 390683433"

Contact:
Dr. Abdelkader Al Ghouz
Niebuhrstr. 5
53113 Bonn
Germany
Email: publications@dependency.uni-bonn.de
Web: <https://www.dependency.uni-bonn.de/en>

Abstract

Medieval feudalism, while it took different forms in different parts of the world, shared one common characteristic: the military, political, and economy foundations of society were constructed with peasant labor. The “state” could not exist, in this form, without a compliant peasantry. The everyday lives of peasants living in the pre-industrial world thus evokes images of immobility, servitude, and a legal and social status that remained static over time. The realities of peasant life in the Islamicate world, however, were quite different. This paper explores the marked inequalities of the mutually dependent relationships that developed between the Mamluk and Ottoman sultanates and peasant society, focusing on two areas of encounter and control that mattered most to both sets of actors: food production and peasant mobility in its many forms (relocation, dislocation, abandonment of villages, and mass migration). Land use and human migration provide us with a unique vantage point to study strongly asymmetrical dependencies on the scale of the village and over *la longue durée*. A joint archaeological-textual study of two villages in Palestine and Transjordan offer us a regionally comparative context.

Table of Contents

I. Were Peasants Tied to the Land?: The Special Case of the Islamicate World	1
II. Theory – Problematizing Asymmetry and Dependency in State-Peasant Relations	2
III. Historical Context: Mamluks, the <i>iqṭāʿ</i> System, and Islamic Endowments	4
III.1. Flash Points of Conflict with the State – a Summary	7
III.2. Fluidity of Social Categories under the Mamluk Sultanate	8
IV. Centrality of the Village	9
IV.1. Role of the Village in Identity-Making and State Control	9
IV.2. Case Studies of this Essay	10
IV.2.1. Khirbet Beit Mazmīl	11
IV.2.2. Tall Ḥisbān	12
V. The Making and Breaking of Strongly Asymmetrical Dependent Relationships	14
V.1. Food Production, Cropping, and Changes in Land Tenure	14
V.1.1. The Political Ecology of Cereal Production – the Case of Ḥisbān	15
V.1.2. Landesque Investment in Garden Agriculture – the Case of Beit Mazmīl	16
V.2. Migration	17
V.2.1. An Archaeology of Migration	18
V.2.2. Migration and Resettlement at Tall Ḥisbān	21
V.2.3. The “Hand of the State”	23
V. Conclusions	24
Bibliography	26

I. Were Peasants Tied to the Land?: The Special Case of the Islamic World

The pre-modern state and peasants were mutually dependent, but in unequal ways. The state exerted force through its military might, which enforced acquiescence and maintained the status quo. The ruler maintained economic control by holding legal tenure of farmland. However, it was the peasantry, and the literal fruits of their labor, that financially bolstered the military. The medieval “feudal” system was, thus, dependent on control of the peasantry and their labor. Social mores and customs could maintain these relationships indefinitely, breaking down only under special conditions, such as the loss of tenure over land, military decline, and loss of a rural labor pool. The Black Death had the greatest impact on labor, but it impacted Europe and the Levant in very different ways.¹ In Greater Syria and Egypt, other factors came to play to dissolve the power of the state over the lives of peasants and to ameliorate their conditions, while still maintaining an exploitative system. The unique structure of the political and military system there, which molded relations with peasants, created special conditions of dependency that distinguish this region from other “feudal” societies of the time.

The research project on which this Working Paper is based is a practice-oriented approach to understanding the condition of peasants in the pre-modern Levant, problematizing the concept of agency through archaeological methods.² It is very much a work-in-progress, and relies on the cumulative results of ongoing archaeological fieldwork, post-season laboratory analysis (by a team of specialists), and continuing reading and reassessment of contemporary Arabic texts (both documentary and narrative). State-peasant relations sit at the center of this regionally comparative, multidisciplinary project, which aims to reconstruct the realities of daily life for peasants living in Transjordan and Palestine in the thirteenth-eighteenth centuries. The paradigm of strongly asymmetrical dependencies, as being developed by the Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies, provides a new perspective on these relations. The following, then, focuses on two expressions of peasant dependencies in this period: control over critical resources and migration, and the physical form they take in the archaeological record. These two basic conditions of an autonomous life – access to the food one produces and the freedom to live and move where one wishes – form the centerpiece of relations between the Sultanate and its officials, on one hand, and the peasantry, on the other.

¹ Stuart Borsch, *The Black Death in Egypt and England* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005).

² Peasant, environmental, and rural studies are relatively new areas of scholarship in Mamluk and Ottoman Studies. The key works on the peasantry in the Mamluk Sultanate are Tsugitaka Sato, *State and Rural Society in Medieval Islam: Sultans, Muqta's and Fallahun* (Leiden: Brill, 1997) and Yossef Rapoport, *Rural Economy and Tribal Society in Islamic Egypt. A Study of al-Nābulusī's Villages of the Fayyum* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018), for Egypt, and Bethany J. Walker, *Jordan in the Late Middle Ages: Transformation of the Mamluk Frontier* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2011), for Transjordan. For Ottoman Egypt, see Alan Mikhail, *Nature and Empire in Ottoman Egypt: An Environmental History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); and for Ottoman Palestine, Amy Singer, *Palestinian Peasants and Ottoman Officials: Rural Administration around Sixteenth-Century Jerusalem* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

The struggle for control over food and home is at the root of the strongly asymmetrical peasant dependency that developed in this world.

II. Theory – Problematizing Asymmetry and Dependency in State-Peasant Relations

An asymmetrically dependent relationship is a deeply social one; it is coercive and two-directional.³ Strong dependencies emerge when one actor cannot exist without the other; the world of one actor would lose meaning without that of the other.⁴ Such systems survive because of the mutual reliance of actors on one another. Their relations are heavily unequal, however, and this imbalance would not likely change without threatening the collapse of the entire system. The dependencies are maintained through multiple channels: control over resources, actions, verbal resistance, “exit” strategies, and thought.⁵ At the heart of these relations is the expectation that the empowered will benefit from the labor or services of the dependent; dependents are included in this society because they are useful, because society somehow profits from them.⁶

Before the industrial revolution, political power was dependent on the control of agricultural production. The Mamluk and Ottoman states were dependent on peasants in other ways, as well, outside of their labor on the land. Their administrators relied on peasant know-how (at times estate managers even consulted local peasants on “best practices” related to land and water use).⁷ Imperial finances were largely dependent on agricultural taxes. The state confiscated food from villages, in times of famine in the cities, and horses, in times of war. Peasant communities were frequently used as pawns in political disputes⁸, and were coopted into state service to collect local taxes and guarantee safety of travel. In general, the political elite maintained power over them through violence, cooption, administrative restructuring, and tribal politics.⁹

³ Julia Winnebeck, Ove Sutter, Adrian Hermann, Christoph Antweiler, and Stephan Conermann, *On Asymmetrical Dependency*, BCDSS Concept Paper 1 (Bonn: BCDSS, University of Bonn, 2021).

⁴ David Miguel Gray, “Asymmetrical and Symmetrical Dependency: A Particular Problem,” *Aporia* 6 (1996): 17–34.

⁵ Rudolf Stichweh, “How Do Divided Societies Come about? Persistent Inequalities, Pervasive Asymmetrical Dependencies, and Sociocultural Polarization as Divisive Forces in Contemporary Society,” *Global Perspectives* 2.1 (2021): 4.

⁶ Rudolf Stichweh, “Values, Norms, and Institutions in the Study of Slavery and Other Forms of Asymmetrical Dependency,” *DEPENDENT. The Magazine of the Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies*, 2022-1, 4–8.

⁷ Tsugitaka Sato, *State and Rural Society in Medieval Islam: Sultans, Muqta’s and Fallahun* (Leiden: Brill, 1997); Alan Mikhail, *Nature and Empire in Ottoman Egypt: An Environmental History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Thorsten Wollina, *Zwanzig Jahre Alltag: Lebens-, Welt- und Selbstbild im Journal des Aḥmad Ibn Ṭawq*. Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2012); and Yossef Rapoport, *Rural Economy and Tribal Society in Islamic Egypt. A Study of al-Nābulusī’s Villages of the Fayyum* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018).

⁸ Bethany J. Walker, *Jordan in the Late Middle Ages: Transformation of the Mamluk Frontier* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2011).

⁹ *Ibid.*, 123–33 and Bethany J. Walker, “The Tribal Dimension in Mamluk-Jordanian Relations,” *Mamluk Studies Review* 13.1 (2009): 82–105.

How did the peasantry react to such abuses of power? Peasants had certain expectations of the state, which included keeping the countryside, and travel through it, safe. There were other expectations of fair behavior in the economic realm, the “moral economy” that has occupied the accounts of Mamluk historians, medieval and modern.¹⁰ The most important issues were speculation on wheat prices and hoarding of cereals, which led to the disappearance of wheat from the urban and rural markets. Contemporaries were quick to identify the sources of their suffering: the avarice attributed to corrupt amirs, grain brokers¹¹, and *waqf* administrators, the officials with whom rural peoples had the most direct contact and who collected taxes.¹² Peasant response to these actions ranged from acquiescence to petitioning to abandonment of home and land.

Litigation, petition-writing, migration, and even taking up arms were forms of resistance, but it is surprising how seldom peasants appear to have resorted to them. Accommodation, and subtle practices through which they could carve out small niches of autonomy¹³, were more characteristic of peasant action; these were resilience strategies, meant to maintain communal life. Resilience, from a systems perspective, refers to changes made within a system that allow it to survive as a system under periods of extreme stress; it is adaptive, not transformative. It is ultimately a survival strategy, keeping the group together, while not changing the dependent relations. When a resilience strategy is successful, the group survives as a social unit. The survival of a community is a measure of success on its own terms, even when asymmetries continue to exist. There are limits, however, to the degree to which any social unit (or individual) can adapt, accommodate, or sacrifice before it ceases to exist as a group or person. That is a system threshold. When these thresholds are exceeded, the unit can no longer survive in that form, and either dissolves (dies) or changes form. For peasant communities, this could take several different forms, including full-scale abandonment of villages and migration, population dispersal, „bedouinization“, and the disappearance of that community as a recognizable group.

The “subtle practices” are less visible textually, but more likely to be reconstructed archaeologically, as discussed below. They include communal decisions on fair use of crucial resources (namely land and water) and intra-communal conflict resolution (the kind that avoids engaging with official courts). A certain autonomy is achieved in this way, and in those areas of daily life that maintained social cohesion. Traditional practices related to cropping

¹⁰ Boaz Shoshan, “Grain Riots and the ‘Moral Economy’: Cairo, 1350–1517,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 10.3 (1980): 459–78; Amalia Levanoni, “The al-Nashw Episode: A Case Study of ‘Moral Economy,’” *Mamluk Studies Review* 9. 1 (2005): 207–20.

¹¹ Taxes on cereals were generally collected in-kind. When those taxes were not collected at the threshing floor, peasants were required to bear the expense of transporting them to urban markets, at centers of grain brokerage.

¹² Bethany J. Walker, Sofia Laparidou, Annette Hansen, and Chiara Corbino, “Did the Mamluks Have an Environmental Sense?: Natural Resource Management in Syrian Villages,” *Mamluk Studies Review* 20 (2017): 244.

¹³ Autonomy results from actions taken by an individual or group to give it space to maneuver, within the restrictions imposed by a dominant power.

and residence offered the “opportunity to act within the relations of dependency”, without changing the relations of dependence.¹⁴ In order to understand how the dependent relations developed, we begin with a summary of the political, social, religious, and economic context in which these kinds of dependencies flourished, and which distinguished them from other peasant societies of the medieval world.

III. Historical Context: Mamluks, the *iqṭāʿ* System, and Islamic Endowments

Peasant labor drove the economy of the medieval Islamic state, feeding the masses and providing the tax income that financed the military. There is a disconnect between what the law had to say about the rights of peasants vis-à-vis the state and actual practice in the pre-modern Levant. According to Islamic religious law, peasants were free-born and did not belong to the lands they worked. They were allowed to move to other places, had legal rights over their bodies and personal property, and could not be physically punished or killed. The reality was quite different, however. In practice, peasants were tied to the land. There were many mechanisms in place to force them to remain in their villages and work the land that belonged to absentee landowners. At the same time, the state transferred peasant populations, by force, to other villages and lands, for security and financial reasons. Peasants had no say in this form of “forced migration”. Conflicts regularly flared up between peasants and state officials over high taxes and confiscation of crops and animals. Corvée labor was also practiced, particularly on sugar estates, but we have no textual documentation about how peasants responded.

Violent inequalities were pervasive in the Ayyubid, Mamluk, and Ottoman Sultanates. The regiment of imported, and eventually manumitted, slave soldiers (*mamluks*) that constituted the privileged core of the Ayyubid forces in Egypt and Greater Syria usurped power in the mid-thirteenth century. What developed was a military and socio-economic system that was quite unique for the medieval world.¹⁵ Former slaves ran the state; free-born peoples were their dependents. Historians often refer to the Mamluk Sultanate of the thirteenth-sixteenth centuries as a political system based on a single-generation elite: position and wealth could not be passed down to their blood descendants. What wealth they accumulated came largely from *iqṭāʿ*’s, grants of taxes from both urban and rural properties. The Mamluk officer was responsible himself for collecting those taxes from source, keeping lands cultivated and irrigation canals cleaned, and maintaining law-and-order on those lands, which he generally did through proxies (lower officials and local elites coopted into state service) and peasant

¹⁴ Julia Winnebeck, Ove Sutter, Adrian Hermann, Christoph Antweiler, and Stephan Conermann, *On Asymmetrical Dependency*, BCDSS Concept Paper 1 (Bonn: BCDSS, University of Bonn, 2021): 6.

¹⁵ Mamluk Studies has come of its own as a field of research, and has generated a large body of scholarship. It is beyond the scope of this essay to canvass the history of the mamluk system. Comprehensive bibliographies on the topic can be found at the Annemarie Schimmel Kolleg website at the University of Bonn (<https://www.mamluk.uni-bonn.de/publications>) and the Mamluk Studies Resources website of the Middle East Documentation Center, the University of Chicago (<https://mamluk.uchicago.edu/medoc-and-mamluk-studies-resources.html>).

labor. It was in the financial interests of the *muqṭā'* (*iqṭā'*-holder) to squeeze as much labor and taxes out of the peasantry as he could.¹⁶ This system was maintained, with some modification, by the Ottoman sultans until the era of reforms (the *Tanzimat*) in the second half of the nineteenth century.

These political and economic institutions distinguish the mamluk system from European and Chinese feudalism. The medieval Islamic *iqṭā'* was not a fief: it was not transferable; it was a grant of taxes, not land tenure; the holdings were spatially dispersed (to prevent the development of landed elites); and the peasants working the land were legally free (they did not belong to the estate). As a result, relations between the *muqṭā'* (*iqṭā'*-holder) and peasants took a different form from truly feudal systems. The legal system offered protections (at least in spirit, if not always in practice) not offered to peasants in the non-Islamic world. At the same time, the financial institutions that developed as a result of the mamluk political system reinforced asymmetrical dependencies and introduced new, barely legal, abuses of the peasantry. Leasing and endowment of agricultural land were perhaps the most notorious. *Waqf* is the donation of privately-owned, income-producing property to financially support a charity or as a family endowment. The sale of state land during periods of imperial financial insolvency often led to subsequent endowment, which could be used by mamluks to circumvent the restrictions on bequeathing property to their progeny.¹⁷ *Fatwas* (written collections of legal opinions) make reference to the conflicts that arose from the labor demands of peasants by *waqf*-managers and *waqf* recipients. The most notable of these were the building and repairing of agricultural terraces on endowed land, which required heavy physical labor by large work groups.¹⁸ One gets the impression from the written record that such complaints of labor exploitation increased on endowed lands, though this may be the result of the nature of document and archive preservation. Such abuses were part-and-parcel of the unique financial systems of a slave-based political system. Political theory justified some level of pressure and force, if necessary, to get peasants to produce for the state. The Ottoman “Circle of Justice”, articulating a hundreds-year-old political philosophy, describes the

¹⁶ The gradual shift over time to cash-payments of military salaries was never regular or complete. Even in the waning years of the Mamluk Sultanate, a mix of payment schemes, and forms of land tenure to support them, was adopted by the state (Albrecht Fuess, “Waqfization in the late Mamluk Empire: A deliberate policy or chaos management?,” Working Paper 1 (June 2020), EGYLandscape Project). The logic behind the implantation of the *iqṭā'* system – the decentralization of tax-collection – continued until the *Tanzimat*.

¹⁷ On the “waqfization” of the Egyptian countryside from the 15th century, see Carl Petry, “Waqf as an Instrument of Investment in the Mamluk Sultanate: Security vs. Profit?,” in *Slave Elites in the Middle East and Africa*, ed. Miura Toru and John Edward Philips (London: Kegan Paul, 2000): 99–116, Daisuke Igarashi, *Land Tenure, Fiscal Policy, and Imperial Power in Medieval Syro-Egypt* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2015), and Albrecht Fuess, “Waqfization in the late Mamluk Empire: A deliberate policy or chaos management?,” Working Paper 1 (June 2020), EGYLandscape Project. For Transjordan, Bethany J. Walker, *Jordan in the Late Middle Ages: Transformation of the Mamluk Frontier* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2011): 235–47.

¹⁸ Bethany J. Walker, “The Changing Face of Agricultural ‘Estates’ in 15th and 16th-c Palestine: the Commercialization of Khirbet Beit Mazmīl,” in *The Mamluk-Ottoman Transition: Continuity and Change in Egypt and Bilad al-Sham in the Sixteenth Century*, vol. 2, ed. Stephan Conermann and Gül Şen (Bonn: University of Bonn Press, forthcoming for 2022).

relationship between the state and people that guarantees security and prosperity.¹⁹ The peasants must work the land, and the state protects them enough to do so.

While largely adopting the financial administrative structure of the Mamluks, the Ottomans did introduce new measures from the sixteenth century that had a mixed impact on peasants' lives. The *timar*, was in many ways a continuation of the *iqṭā'* system, but one which increased the sultan's control over agricultural land, rather decentralized tax collection. *Timars* were grants of land revenue given to members of the military class *in lieu* of salaries. From the seventeenth century the *timar* system unraveled, and state land was gradually liquidated and privatized, tax collection passing into the hands of tax farmers, new forms of land leasing and exchange (*ijār* and *istabdāl*) emerged, and peasants gained access (though limited) to credit through loans from *timariots*, endowment managers and the "cash *waqf*".²⁰

The *timar* and tax farming had mixed impact on peasants. A new rural elite emerged, which acquired wealth as the local tax collectors serving the *timariots* and endowment managers, and later as tax farmers in their own right. In central Palestine, this nouveau-riche peasant class lived in houses that combined characteristics of contemporary urban styles, with the local, vernacular. Sixteenth-century court documents refer to them as *akābir al-qaryah* (village elites) or *zu'amā' al-qarya* (village leaders).²¹ From their ranks emerged the sheikhs of the "throne villages". The more successful of peasant entrepreneurs bought modest-sized garden plots, they invested in them, with the construction of terraces, planned soil enrichment, expansion of irrigation systems, and types of crops cultivated.²² These methods of agricultural intensification were primarily market-driven and the result of their own initiative. They yielded important results for peasant society: (a modest degree of) accumulated wealth, participation in markets once controlled by the state, and the ability to financially sponsor public works and services (such as building mosques and schools and charitable societies) in their local villages.

While the privatization of land improved the standard of living and social standing of some peasants in their communities, it did not, however, result in an erosion of the abuses of the peasantry described above, and, in some cases, introduced new ones. The attempt to better their lives by buying land came at a price to most peasants. Credit, unfortunately, quickly led to peasant debt: rural indebtedness was becoming a chronic problem from the sixteenth century, as the confirmation (*tathbīt*) of debt liability was frequently registered then in the Jerusalem courts.²³ Moreover, most peasants continued to suffer under the weight of complex

¹⁹ Linda Darling, *A History of Social Justice and Political Power in the Middle East* (Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2012).

²⁰ Munther H. al-Sabagh, *Before Banks: Credit, Society, and Law in Sixteenth-Century Palestine and Syria* (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of California-Santa Barbara, 2014).

²¹ Zuhair Abd Allatif, "al-Timār (al-Iqṭā' al-'Askārī) fī Filisṭīn fī al-Qarn al-'Āshir al-Hijrī (The Timar in Sixteenth-Century Palestine)," *Jordan Journal for History and Archaeology* 4.2 (2010): 26–56 (in Arabic).

²² Bethany J. Walker, "Peasants, rural economy and cash crops in medieval Islam," in *Markets, "money" and exchanges: Their economic logics in pre-modern societies*, ed. Juan Carlos Moreno García (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2021): 91–113.

²³ Bethany J. Walker, *Jordan in the Late Middle Ages: Transformation of the Mamluk Frontier* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2011): 185–86.

and burdensome taxes. Peasants continued to do unpaid labor on endowed lands, paid high taxes (up to 40% of their produce), and regularly suffered confiscation of crops and draft animals.

III.1. Flash Points of Conflict with the State – a Summary

In traditional agricultural societies, the most visible examples of extreme dependency are in control over and access to critical resources (namely land/food and water) and the labor involved in food production and water harvesting. Peasants in the medieval Arab world buckled under many pressures (though dictating cropping was not one of them), but the worst flash points of conflict between imperial authorities and peasants took the form of interference in traditional forms of water-sharing, hoarding of grains (and resale to the peasants that cultivated them at artificially high prices), confiscation of crops and draft animals by the military (without compensation), burdensome taxation, and military conflicts that spilled over into villages and pitted tribes against one another. Local response in these cases, limited as they were, tended to be communal: petitioning in the form of letter-writing and legal action (in the name of tribes and villages), migration of entire communities to other places, and taking up arms against corrupt officials (often in collaboration with Bedouin tribes). These efforts, however, are best described as a form of resistance. They were short-term resilience strategies, but they were not revolutionary. They seldom led to any long-term changes in power relations. Accommodation of peasant demands by the state could take the form of (very temporary) edicts or dismissal of officials. These actions did not have long-term effect, though they often did alleviate suffering for the moment.

Interestingly, there seems to have been little peasant resistance to *corvée* labor (particularly on sugar plantations and factories, which also included slave labor)²⁴ and forced migration (to places where the political elite had economic interests and needed a labor force). The reasons for this have not yet been investigated. Seasonal *corvée* labor appears to have been tolerated by locals, so long as the sugar industry did not siphon off water from fields devoted to subsistence agriculture. On the other hand, there was real resentment towards forced labor on farmland endowed to religious institutions; heavy labor (such as required for the building and maintenance of agricultural terraces on this *waqf* land) led to enough cases of peasant complaints in religious courts that they appear as a typical case study in *fatwa* manuals (collections of legal opinions).²⁵ Ultimately, however, what seemed to have mattered to

²⁴ The historical record is ambiguous in regards to the use of slaves on royal sugar estates. There is growing evidence for slave labor in this sector in Transjordan (Edwards E. Curtis, IV, “The Ghawarna of Jordan: Race and Religion in the Jordan Valley,” *Journal of Islamic Law and Culture* 13.2–3 (2011): 193–209): but not for Egypt, where Rapoport argues for Muslim peasant labor, in sectors divided by religious affiliation, in the Ayyubid Fayyum (Yossef Rapoport, *Rural Economy and Tribal Society in Islamic Egypt. A Study of al-Nābulusī’s Villages of the Fayyum* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018).

²⁵ Bethany J. Walker, “The Changing Face of Agricultural ‘Estates’ in 15th and 16th-c Palestine: the Commercialization of Khirbet Beit Mazmīl,” in *The Mamluk-Ottoman Transition: Continuity and Change in Egypt*

peasants was that they continued to have say in what was planted and when, equitable water distribution (based on custom), and non-interference in daily life on the local level (family life, etc.). Only in these areas of their lives could one say that they generally led an autonomous existence.

III.2. Fluidity of Social Categories under the Mamluk Sultanate

The social structure of these mamluk-centered states presented other anomalies that ultimately impacted the peasantry. Social hierarchies, while widely accepted and culturally reinforced, were rather fluid, particularly as regards the urban professions. The sale of former *iqṭā'* lands and the growing endowment of agricultural properties turned the newly landed elites into “gentleman farmers”. The *ulema* (clerics), in particular, had a vested interest in the productivity of their farms.²⁶ Craftsmen attended reading circles, rubbing shoulders with other literate urbanites. The ruling elite progressively took an interest in learning calligraphy and craftsmanship. The borders between farmer, craftsman, and poet were obscured.²⁷ These were, however, urban phenomena. That the benefactors of endowed lands took a greater interest in the operation of their properties did not translate into changes in the status of the peasants who actually cultivated them. The clerics as managers of *waqf* land could be as oppressive as the mamluks who previously held *iqṭā'* rights. The social mobility made possible by greater literacy and the blending of professions had no direct impact on the countryside.

More than professional class, it was the tribal structure of rural society that was the most important factor in state-peasant relations. Peasant society in Syria was organized tribally, as was nomadic society, and this created local social hierarchies and power centers. The medieval state effectively took advantage of this social structure, coopting tribal elites into state service and awarding them *iqṭā'*s. Tribalism could, alternatively, undermine the power of the state over peasants. When the ability of the state to guarantee law-and-order broke down, and at times of economic collapse, the tribal structure of local society lent itself to

and Bilad al-Sham in the Sixteenth Century, vol. 2, ed. Stephan Conermann and Gül Şen (Bonn: University of Bonn Press, forthcoming for 2022).

²⁶ The *filāḥa* manuals (agricultural treatises) of the time have come under greater scrutiny by Mamluk and Ottoman historians in recent years. While largely encyclopaedic, over time they appear to have incorporated more local knowledge about soil preparation, cropping, watering, and pruning. This suggests that the authors, most of whom were the managers of endowed lands and whose livelihood largely depended on agricultural production, consulted with local peasants about how best to work the land. This genre of literature became very popular at the very time that endowments of farmland became widespread. The ruling elite, moreover, went to great lengths to acquire copies of such treatises for their private libraries, see Aleksandar Shopov, “The Vernacularization of Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Agricultural Science in its Economic Context,” in *Living with Nature and Things: Contributions to a New Social History of the Middle Islamic Periods*, ed. Bethany J. Walker and Abdelkader Al Ghouz, (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2020): 639–81.

²⁷ For the building crafts, see Ammenah Abdulkarim, *Building Craftsmen in Mamluk Society 648–923/1250–1517: The Professional Muhandis in Context* (unpublished PhD dissertation, University College London-St. Mary, 2017).

political autonomy, with tribal confederations and local sheikhs assuming power.²⁸ This, however, did not always work in the interest of the peasantry, as sheikhs often assumed the same position of dominance of the old political elites.

IV. Centrality of the Village

The scale of analysis chosen for this study is that of the village, however, and not the tribe. The village (*qarya*) is a regular point of reference in the chronicles, travelogues, tax registers, and court documents of the period. It represents a social unit, with a shared sense of space. The village leaves a clear archaeological trace, the spatial components of which are relevant for reconstructing the contours of daily life. Villages can, as well, be studied in a regionally comparative manner, contrasting patterns of behavior, social networks, and access to resources. The medieval Arab village, moreover, had longevity, and while its physical location may have shifted with time (the “migration of place within a space” readily acknowledged by archaeologists)²⁹, the continuity of many village names for hundreds of years speaks to a resilience of community that has survived political change and economic and environmental disasters. The village is one of the smallest units of social analysis that leaves a physical trace, and allows us to examine in vivid detail relationships of many forms.³⁰

IV.1. Role of the Village in Identity-Making and State Control

More than tribal affiliation, religion, ethnicity or regional home, the village was the central point of reference for rural peoples who were permanently settled.³¹ In medieval Arabic surnames, the *nisba* (attribution) more often than not referenced the places the person called home at different times of his or her life. For rural society, this usually referred to village names. The village was more than a place; it represented a network of living relationships and communal memories.

²⁸ Bethany J. Walker, “The Tribal Dimension in Mamluk-Jordanian Relations,” *Mamluk Studies Review* 13.1 (2009): 82–105.

²⁹ Bethany J. Walker, “Mobility and Migration in Mamluk Syria: The Dynamism of Villagers ‘on the Move’,” in *Proceedings of the Conference “Everything is on the Move: The ‘Mamluk Empire’ as a Node in (Trans-) Regional Networks”*, ed. Stephan Conermann (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2014): 325–48.

³⁰ The household – the smallest social unit that resides, produces, and consumes together – would, of course, represent the lowest scale of analysis. The archaeological residue of households, however, produce other kinds of information on social relations, such as “activity areas” (where the same activities, often communal, are repeated on a regular basis) and family structure (such as gendered spaces). Only in the collective – as a village, for example – and in comparison with one another can households shed light on social inequalities on an extra-familial level.

³¹ Bethany J. Walker, “Mobility and Migration in Mamluk Syria: The Dynamism of Villagers ‘on the Move’,” in *Proceedings of the Conference “Everything is on the Move: The ‘Mamluk Empire’ as a Node in (Trans-) Regional Networks”*, ed. Stephan Conermann (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2014): 331–334.

The village was also a unit of taxation, administration, and control. It is the village, and not individuals or families, that appear in tax registers. Land for sale was registered in court according to the village to which it belonged. From the perspective of the state, there was nothing smaller than the village; in Ottoman tax registers, sub-village settlements (hamlets, farmsteads, etc. – there were a wide range of terms used to describe these by contemporaries) were simply listed as attachments to villages.

Peasants were controlled in the collective, on the basis of their village of residence. Tax collection was collected by village; collective punishment was meted out on the village basis; confiscations were done by village. The state did not see individual peasants, but a collective that was tied to a village and its land. Recognizing this reality, when peasants filed complaints against government officials, or on the rare occasion they directly petitioned a governor or sultan, they did so in the name of the village. Peasant dependencies were, in fact, those of the village.

IV.2. Case Studies of this Essay

The village thus presents the ideal unit of analysis for studying in detail peasant dependencies, the ways the medieval state maintained systems of inequalities, and evaluating examples of peasant agency. The greatest methodological challenges for the archaeologist is to distinguish the hand of the state from collective and individual decision-making and action by peasants. The coordinated excavations by the author at the well-preserved archaeological ruins of Tall Ḥisbān and Khirbet Beit Mazmīli (Jerusalem) are an initial step towards this end. The selection of these two sites for comparative study was quite deliberate: both are in highland locations and visible to one another (one can see Jerusalem’s Dome of the Rock from the top of Tall Ḥisbān at sunrise), and the ruins of their much earlier settlements were reoccupied at the same time. There was a close relationship between Jerusalem (and its villages) and Ḥisbān (and the villages tied to it) in this period, with integration of their agricultural markets, exchange of agricultural land and other kinds of real estate, and even the sale of building material.³² The peasants living in and working the lands of Beit Mazmīl and Ḥisbān lived in the shadow of the state, with the residences of military officers physically hovering above them. The radically unequal, but mutually dependent, relationships between the state (embodied in its soldiers) and the local peasant communities on a daily basis can be reconstructed through the archaeological remains. Comparisons between the two sites will also reveal common patterns and regional differences in these relations, affording this microhistorical study a spatial dimension. The various social, cultural, landscape, and environmental differences between the two regions would then be investigated for their impact on peasant dependencies.

³² For a full discussion, see Bethany J. Walker, “Peasants, rural economy and cash crops in medieval Islam,” in *Markets, “money” and exchanges: Their economic logics in pre-modern societies*, ed. Juan Carlos Moreno García (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2021): 91–113.

IV.2.1. Khirbet Beit Mazmīl³³

Khirbet Beit Mazmīl is a small, .3 hectare walled farmstead sitting atop one of the highest hills of the Jerusalem area and surrounded by the remnants of relic agricultural terraces. It is located in the westernmost edge of Greater Jerusalem, equidistant between the Old City and the village of Ein Kerem. We do not know the historical name of this site, but it appears to have been related to the Arab village of Beit Mazmil, once located one kilometer to the south. The village of this name was first mentioned in Arabic texts in the fourteenth century, in an endowment document (*waqfiyyah*), which lists villages and their lands in the vicinity of Ein Kerem, their revenues to be earmarked for the financial support of a hostel for Maghribi pilgrims in Jerusalem. The document specifically mentions that much farmland in this area had gone uncultivated for a long time, and that the endowment aimed, in part, to revive them.



Fig. 1 – Entrance to the site of Khirbet Beit Mazmīl (photo by author)

³³ The Khirbet Beit Mazmil Archaeological and Development Project, Jerusalem, under the co-directorship of this author, had five seasons of excavation between 2015 and 2019, and is now in final publication stage. It has been financed in different years by the German-Israeli Foundation for Scientific Research and Development, the Barakat Trust, the Palestine Exploration Fund, and the Deutscher Verein zur Erforschung Palästinas. Preliminary reports can be found in Bethany J. Walker and Benjamin Dolinka, “Ḥirbet Bēt Mazmīl, Investigations of Medieval Jerusalem’s Hinterland: Interim Report on the 2015 and 2017 Field Seasons,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Palaestina-Verein* 136.2 (2020): 191–234 and Bethany J. Walker, Yuval Gadot, Yelena Elgart-Sharon, and Omer Ze’evi, “Agricultural Terracing and Rural Revival in Late Medieval Palestine,” in *Proceedings of the 11th International Conference on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East*, vol. 2, ed. Lorenz Korn and Anja Heidenreich (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2020): 651–61. The final report is forthcoming as Bethany J. Walker, ed., *Life on the Farm in Late Medieval Jerusalem: The Peasant Farmstead of Khirbet Beit Mazmil, its occupants and their industry over five centuries*, Monographs in Islamic Archaeology (Sheffield: Equinox, 2022).

The archaeological site actually constitutes one farmstead built on top of an earlier one. The earliest is Mamluk in date (thirteenth-early sixteenth), with occupation peaking in the fifteenth century. This well-built stone complex makes use of ruins of Roman, Byzantine, Early Islamic, and Crusader wall stubs, vaults, and cisterns, demolishing other parts of these buildings. The result is a two-level complex with outhouses (stables, storage facilities, and industrial installations) occupying the base of the hill, and a vaulted residential complex on the hill's summit. Recovery of military equipment and extensive ceramic imports have led us to identify it as a *qaṣr* (a fortified, hilltop residence awarded to Mamluk officers), associated with an amiral estate, arguably the built environment of the Mamluk *iqṭā'*.³⁴ Built into and on top of the ruins of this was an Ottoman-era complex of agricultural watch towers, domestic spaces, and stables, the seasonal family farmsteads called *e'zbahs* that were once characteristic of the central Palestinian highlands and connected to olive and grape cultivation.

Excavations of this archaeological site have been done in conjunction with fieldwork in the ancient agricultural terraces between the site and Ein Kerem, led by colleagues from Tel Aviv University. Relic terraces were mapped, excavated, and their soils sampled for botanical remains and to obtain OSL (optically stimulated luminescence) dates. The growing application of OSL dating of terrace soils in Israel and Jordan has made it possible for the first time to assign a chronology to field development. The chronology of the terrace construction (and maintenance) correlates with the history of occupation at Khirbet Beit Mazmīl. This, in conjunction with an ongoing study of Ottoman-era court records by this author, has provided a truly rare opportunity to follow the relationship of settlement, land use, land tenure, at a single village. As a result, the function of access to critical resources – namely, land and food – in the complex relations between local peasants and the Ottoman state are coming into clearer focus.

VI.2.2. Tall Ḥisbān³⁵

The eight-hectare tell of Ḥisbān is located between Amman and Madaba on the Madaba Plains of central Jordan. The Madaba Plains was since Antiquity a bread basket for empires, producing a wide variety of cereals for local consumption and export markets. The excavations are among the longest-lived foreign projects in the Middle East, with American (and now also German) teams working there since 1968. This long history of fieldwork has documented a

³⁴ Bethany J. Walker, "The Changing Face of Agricultural 'Estates' in 15th and 16th-c Palestine: the Commercialization of Khirbet Beit Mazmīl," in *The Mamluk-Ottoman Transition: Continuity and Change in Egypt and Bilad al-Sham in the Sixteenth Century*, vol. 2, ed. Stephan Conermann and Gül Şen (Göttingen: V&R unipress, forthcoming for 2022).

³⁵ Current excavations at Tall Ḥisbān, directed by the author, are part of the Madaba Plains Project. It has been recently financed by the American Center of Research, the Gerda Henkel Foundation, and the Max van Berchem Foundation. Over the course of over five decades, this project has produced a large body of publications, which will not be listed here. For selective bibliographies and offprints, see the following project websites: www.islamic-archaeology.uni-bonn.de/field-projects/tall-hisban and www.madabaplains.org

history of occupation that spans the Iron Age through nineteenth century. Most of what is visible on the ground surface today dates to the Mamluk period.



Fig. 2 – Aerial view of Tall Ḥisbān (courtesy Bob Bewley, APAAME)

After centuries of textual silence following the Abbasid era, the village of Ḥisbān re-emerges in the written record only in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The village appears to have been a late Ayyubid resettlement, in which was eventually built a madrasa (legal school) and was serviced by a judge. The modest village grew rapidly in the fourteenth century, when the administration of the Balqa District of the Madaba Plains (and its civil servants) were transferred here, and a small garrison established in the ruined fort on the top of the hill. The village had a farmer's market that served several hundred other villages in the region, and to which peasants from as far as Jerusalem brought their produce. An earthquake in the late fourteenth century caused significant structural damage to the Citadel and houses in the village, forcing the transfer of garrison, civil administration, and court to the town of Amman. In the process the Mamluk governor forcefully relocated many of the “people of Ḥisbān” to Amman to populate it. Slowly the village was abandoned by the rest of its inhabitants in the early Ottoman era, to be left in ruins until the establishment of the modern village in the nineteenth century.

Because of its remarkable preservation, the predominance of standing architecture from the Mamluk period, and the mission's sustained research on the Middle Islamic cultural period (thirteenth–sixteenth centuries), Tall Ḥisbān has become the archaeological type site for Mamluk Jordan. The Mamluk citadel straddles the summit of an archaeological tell that overlooks a dense configuration of barrel-vaulted, single-roomed structures – the remains of medieval Ḥisbān. These multi-purpose buildings (some identified as farmhouses), which in

some cases preserve as many as ten courses of their walls and vault springers, are built against one another in a row, all facing a common courtyard and shared cistern. Though these structures have been the object of periodic excavation since the late 1970s, the Ḥisbān farmhouses have been the focus of fieldwork only very recently. As in many village sites throughout southern Syria, they are largely refurbishings and reoccupations of Late Byzantine and Early Islamic domestic ruins, which were at the time hundreds of years old. The site is, additionally, extremely well stratified, with a series of plaster floors separating thirteenth (late Ayyubid) from fourteenth-century (Mamluk) occupation. It is the perfect site to physically trace the social transformation of the site from the Ayyubid to Mamluk periods, as well as document changes in peasant-state relations over *la longue durée*. Moreover, the botanical preservation is outstanding, which has made possible many years of detailed study of cultivation and food preparation practices, and diet. In this way the lives of peasants – their standard of living and their general health – can be described in the context of a village living in the shadow of a Mamluk castle.

V. The Making and Breaking of Strongly Asymmetrical Dependent Relationships

These two archaeological sites offer the opportunity to study in detail the realities of state-peasant relations, and how the asymmetries of peasant dependencies may have changed over a period of several hundreds of years. As agricultural centers, Khirbet Beit Mamīl and Ḥisbān open a window on the ways that control of critical resources was the linchpin in these relations. Control over farmland, agricultural taxes, and rural labor were central to maintaining power over local peoples and were the underpinning of the medieval economy. The potential of changes in land tenure to undermine such systems is explored in our archaeological fieldwork.

V.1. Food Production, Cropping, and Changes in Land Tenure

For this project, we understand a critical resource as one without which one cannot have food security.³⁶ The United Nations' Committee on World Food Security defines food security as means the “physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy life”.³⁷ For the study of the peasantry the most important resources are food and water; control over access, production, and consumption was essential for well-being and autonomy. Generally, the state did not interfere in the daily management of state lands, except in the case of estates owned by sultans or amirs, which either produced for lucrative markets or were imperial monopolies.

³⁶ See Paul Graf “Essential Resources as Bodies of Dependency in Classic Maya Society,” *DEPENDENT. The Magazine of the Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies*, 2021-1, 10–11, for a different understanding of “essential resources”, based archaeological studies in Latin America: https://www.dependency.uni-bonn.de/images/pdf-files/cluster-magazin/dependent_21-1_web.pdf

³⁷Food Policy Research Institute: <https://www.ifpri.org/topic/food-security> (last accessed 4 March 2022).

Notorious in this case were the “sugar estates” of the Fayyum, Upper Egypt, and the Jordan Valley riparian system. Interference with the traditional water-sharing system in the Jordan Valley, by diverting much-needed water to cane sugar plantations, was a violent point of conflict between state and peasants. Combined with forced labor (and perhaps slave labor), possibly forced residence, and interference with local crop rotation practices, this industry presents us with one of the most vivid examples of the strong asymmetrical dependency of the local peasantry.³⁸

More subtle forms of dependency, however, can be found in other areas of the agrarian sector, namely cereals and garden produce. Certainly, it was in the interest of the medieval Islamic state to collect as much tax income as possible, and particularly on cash crops. These financial objectives, though, had to be balanced with the realities of, literally, providing bread to the masses. This was true of peasants, as well. They participated in exchanges at local “farmers’ markets”, paid (often exorbitantly high) taxes, and had to feed their families. The choice of what to plant, when, and how was generally in the hands of the peasants, as a group (though under certain pressures from governmental officials). This communal decision-making process has left no trace on the written record. It has, however, in the archaeological record, where botanical remains from key spatial contexts allude to the cropping decisions made by peasants, and even the reasons why.

V.1.1. The Political Ecology of Cereal Production – the Case of Ḥisbān

Peasants had to weigh their options carefully, to avoid risk (the loss of crops by drought, for example) and at the same time meet the market demands of the state and make an income for the household, if possible. Mixed cereal cultivation, as a form of crop diversification, has been historically, as today, adopted as a risk management strategy. The ratio between hulled barley and naked wheat has been recently cited as one way to differentiate between subsistence and market-oriented production.³⁹ Barley, for example, is a drought-resistant, “hearty” cereal; its hulled variety makes it best suited for long-time storage, because of its resistance to spoiling. *Durum* (“hard” or “naked”) wheat is free-threshing; by losing its loose-fitting husk during threshing, it is of lighter weight (and less expensive) for long-distance transport, making it well suited for export to distant markets.⁴⁰ A village that cultivated more *durum* wheat than hulled barley, according to this argument, produced primarily for the market. Likewise, although agricultural intensification could be a response to different pressures, it is usually associated with market-production. Archaeobotanical evidence of

³⁸ The relationship between mono-cropping of this form and famine is not fully understood, and remains an aim of future research by this author.

³⁹ John M. Marston, “Archaeological Markers of Agricultural Risk Management,” *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 30.2 (2011): 190–205.

⁴⁰ Frits B.J. Heinrich, “Modelling Crop-Selection in Roman Italy: The Economics of Agricultural Decision Making in a Globalizing Economy,” in *Rural Communities in a globalizing economy: new perspectives on the economic integration of Roman Italy*, ed. Tymon de Haas and Gijs W. Tol (Brill: Leiden, 2017): 141–69.

intensification in the cereal sector includes irrigation of high-value cereals, identified through the irrigation signals of wheat phytoliths.⁴¹

Careful sampling and botanical analysis of cereal remains from kitchens, refuse areas, stables, and storerooms at Tall Ḥisbān has revealed changes in the ways peasants cultivated cereals at the site over the course of the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods. There is a sudden diversification of cereal production (cultivating three kinds of wheats and hulled barley) and irrigation of wheats for a few decades in the first half of the fourteenth century, this at a time when the village became a center of administration and hosted a small garrison. The combination of diversification and intensification of cereal cultivation would have been the ideal strategy for responding to (state-driven) market demands, while safeguarding household stocks during times of drought.⁴² The replacement of the “bread” wheat more popular in the Ayyubid period with “hard” wheat at this time is likely related to either increased taxes or increased state demands for transport of wheat, in particular, to imperial granaries. We are in the process now of comparing this botanical record with that of Khirbet Beit Mazmīl, in order to see if this was a region-wide pattern and if it was related to other imperial interventions in the local economy and society.

V.1.2. Landesque Investment in Garden Agriculture – the Case of Beit Mazmil

The building of agricultural terraces is a form of landesque investment: it raises the value of the land and increases its productive capacity, by controlling water flow, reducing erosion, and providing level plots for cultivation on hillsides. Until now, we cannot say who made the decision to construct the terraces of central Palestine in the late medieval and Early Modern periods, but one can argue that the status of land tenure may be the key to understanding this process. The decisions to build and the labor behind them are unique windows on how asymmetrical dependencies changed over time in pre-modern Palestine.

The construction and maintenance of agricultural terraces is among the most labor-intensive of farm work of the pre-modern era. Construction involves removing soil down to bedrock (by hand), transporting rocks to the location and building walls, and carrying large quantities of heavy soils to lay behind the terrace walls.⁴³ Who exactly did this work differed according to the legal category of land tenure and cultivation contract. Peasants were forced to do this labor on *iqṭā'āt* and endowed lands; it was resented by the peasantry and, according to the legal manuals, a regular source of tension with estate managers. Self-exploitation of one's

⁴¹ Sofia Laparidou and Arlene Rosen, “Intensification of production in Medieval Islamic Jordan and its ecological impact: Towns of the Anthropocene,” *The Holocene* 25.10 (2015): 1685–697.

⁴² Modern Jordan suffers drought on the average of every five years, and the historical record regularly documents the same for this period. Rainfall even in the Madaba Plains – a region of dry-farming – was irregular.

⁴³ Building a flower bed is a similar exercise, though on a much smaller, and less back-breaking, scale.

family provided the labor on privately-owned land, as we can reconstruct from ethnographic accounts of the early twentieth century.⁴⁴

The earliest large-scale construction of agricultural terraces in Jerusalem's hinterland occurred in the thirteenth century and accelerated through the Mamluk and Ottoman eras. Although demographic pressure is often cited as a driving force behind terrace construction, it has been rejected as a factor in the Palestinian highlands, where periods of terrace-building do not coincide with population growth.⁴⁵ Instead, the rejuvenation of once derelict farmland through terrace-construction may have been a local response to the boom in the rural real estate market and commercialization of agriculture, their participation in which is documented in Mamluk and Ottoman legal records.

Court documents record the active buying, selling, and renting of small garden plots by rural elites and regular peasants from the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries. An increasingly diverse range of fruits, in particular, were grown there for sale at markets in Jerusalem and beyond. Archaeological surveys in the vicinity of Khirbet Beit Mazmīl have documented an intensive terracing of the hillslopes in this period, as well as the subsequent subdivision of fields into smaller plots (from further sale or as a result of partitioning under Muslim inheritance law). The impact of such development can, in part, be followed with the physical and functional development of the Ottoman-era farmstead at the site. It remained a private, family residence during this period, in contrast to the semi-official estate of the Mamluk site, the ruins of which it rehabilitated. The material culture associated with it suggests a modest standard of living, a diverse and sufficient diet (also meat-rich), self-sufficiency, and participation in a monetarized market system (as cash in the form of coinage was always kept on hand).

This farmstead, however, was abandoned at some point in the eighteenth century, to be resettled (and significantly rebuilt) decades later by new residents. Significantly, there is at yet no evidence for building or maintenance of terraces nearby at this time, as well. The reasons for the apparent failure of this family farm are difficult to determine at this point. There is no evidence of military conflict or earthquake in the archaeological ruins. The cause is like to be sought in economic factors, which are the ones that long plagued peasants living in this region.

V.2. Migration

Medieval rural populations were always highly mobile, moving from one village to another for joint harvests, market days, on pilgrimage, to work lands at some distance from their homes,

⁴⁴ Gustaf Dalman, *Work and Customs in Palestine*, vols. 1 and 2, trans. Nadia Abdulhadi-Sukhtian (Ramallah: Dar Al Nasher, 2013).

⁴⁵ See Bethany J. Walker, Yuval Gadot, Yelena Elgart-Sharon, and Omer Ze'evi, "Agricultural Terracing and Rural Revival in Late Medieval Palestine.," in *Proceedings of the 11th International Conference on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East*, vol. 2, ed. Lorenz Korn and Anja Heidenreich, (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2020): 651–61 for a bibliography of the relevant work by Gadot and Porat.

and for economic and professional opportunities.⁴⁶ Communal migration represents the extreme of these modalities of mobility. Peasant migration under duress – leaving the village for good and abandoning the land – was generally seen as a disaster, both by the state and local peasants.⁴⁷ The decision to leave one’s village and farmland was never taken easily. Syrian historians of the late Mamluk period, for example, understood peasant flight as the result of human suffering caused by a failing state and years of drought; hunger, poverty, and war were responsible for the emptying out of the countryside.⁴⁸ On the other hand, peasant migration was an action of opportunity and hope for new starts: a community can retain its integrity as a social unit by migrating to a new place as a group, and leaving the homeland behind. This is a kind of communal resilience. The place is sacrificed for the survival of the community.

Migration was also imposed on local communities. When the migration was a result of state initiative, the dynamics of resettlement and its social impact were quite different. The Ottoman state was notorious for moving populations around, mostly for political and military reasons. The Mamluk state did, as well, occasionally, often for financial reasons: to repopulate the town of Ajlun, for example, in 1328, when a flood swept away people and property⁴⁹, or to revitalize the Balqa in 1357, when the Mamluk state moved the garrison, civil servants, market, and, apparently, peasants from Ḥisbān to Amman.⁵⁰ Forced migration leaves a different spatial and material pattern: large numbers of people appear suddenly, and bring their material culture with them. Construction and repairs are done quickly, to settle the arrivees efficiently.

V.2.1. An Archaeology of Migration

Rural migration rarely enters the written record, except when it is large-scale and immediately impacts the financial and political lives of the ruling elite. It does, however, leave a physical trace; identifying this in the archaeological record, however, and making sense of the factors driving it, are methodological challenges. The best evidence “on the ground” of forced migration is settlement abandonment, appearance of new settlements or the reoccupation of

⁴⁶ Bethany J. Walker, “Mobility and Migration in Mamluk Syria: The Dynamism of Villagers ‘on the Move’,” in *Proceedings of the Conference “Everything is on the Move: The ‘Mamluk Empire’ as a Node in (Trans-) Regional Networks”*, ed. Stephan Conermann (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2014): 325–48.

⁴⁷ The Ottomans considered the abandonment of villages in sixteenth-century Palestine to be such a threat to the local economy, a social crisis, and challenge to their authority that they went to new legal and armed efforts to keep peasants in their villages and maintain cultivation, and to bring back (by force) those that had fled elsewhere, see Amy Singer, *Palestinian Peasants and Ottoman Officials: Rural Administration around Sixteenth-Century Jerusalem* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

⁴⁸ Yousef D. Ghawanmeh, *Dimashq fī ‘Aṣr Dawlat al-Mamālīk al-Thāniyyah* (Amman: Dār al-Fikr, 2005).

⁴⁹ Ellen Kenney, “Reconstructing” Mamluk ‘Ajlūn: The 728/1328 Flood Report as a Source on Architectural Patronage,” *Studies on the History and Archaeology of Jordan* 10 (2009): 787–94.

⁵⁰ Bethany J. Walker, *Jordan in the Late Middle Ages: Transformation of the Mamluk Frontier* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2011): 71–72, 76–78.

ruined sites, and epigraphical traces (namely travelers' graffiti).⁵¹ On the scale of the individual archaeological site (or "settlement"), one can draw on the composition and quantity of household goods (the "assemblage"), spatial organization of the site (and its neighborhoods), chronology of the occupational phasing, and architectural interventions (if a site once in ruins is suddenly resettled) to distinguish modalities of migration (in what manner, how quickly, and under what pressures) a group of migrants arrived and successfully resettled.⁵² In those exceptional cases where burials have been recovered, oxygen and strontium isotope analysis of dental enamel is becoming an important laboratory method of determining the origins of the migrant population.⁵³

Many modalities of mobility are visible archaeologically. Forced migration is the most extreme form of mobility. It is done under duress, either as a form of escape (outside of suicide, it is the ultimate "exit strategy") by dependents or under pressure of those exerting power over the emigres. Extreme migration is forced migration on a large scale, where entire regions empty out, creating new patterns of settlement in the landscape and resulting in discernable demographic change. In the archaeological record, we can document two periods of "extreme migration" in the period covered by this project in Transjordan and Palestine: in the thirteenth century (in the form of resettlement of places in ruin) and again in the late fourteenth/fifteenth centuries (in settlement abandonment). While the trigger for the first wave of migration remains a focus of ongoing research⁵⁴, the later process appears to have

⁵¹ Increasingly more "desert graffiti" are being documented at the Early Islamic desert castles and in Jordan's eastern steppe (Demetri Baramki, "an-Nuqūsh al-'arabiyya fi-l-bādiya as-sūriyya,," *al-Abḥāth* 17.3 (1963): 339–461; Khaled Suleman al-Jbour, "Bayān as'ār al-ḥiṭṭa fi naqṣ mamlūkī min al-bādiya al-urduniyya fi 'amay 757 H/1347M wa 764 H/1363 M," *Journal for History and Archaeology* 5.4 (2011): 1–18; and Ahmad Lash, "Kitābāt 'alaa-l-Jidrān Qusayr 'Amrah al-Umawii," *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 58 (2017): 7–36, Arabic section). Some of these inscriptions are lengthy, describing the harsh circumstances that pushed people to leave their villages.

⁵² Migration archaeology is a growing area of research. Recent scholarship has focused on such methodological issues, see Jan Driessen, ed., *An Archaeology of Forced Migration: Crisis-induced mobility and the Collapse of the 13th century BCE eastern Mediterranean* (Louvain: Presses universitaires de Louvain, 2018); Cormac McSparron, Colm Donnelly, Eileen Murphy, and Jonny Geber, "Migration, Group Agency, and Archaeology: A New Theoretical Model," *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 24 (2020): 219–32; Nicolò Pini, "The Different Fates of Architectures," *Journal of Islamic Archaeology* 8.1 (2021): 23–51; Bethany J. Walker, "Searching for a Home in Long-Abandoned Places: the Resettlement of Late Medieval Syria," in *Humanistische Anthropologie. Ethnologische Begegnungen in einer globalisierten Welt. Festschrift für Christoph Antweiler zu seinem fünfundsechzigsten Geburtstag von seinen Freund*innen und Kolleg*innen*, ed. Trang-Dai Vu, Oliver Pye, Hans Dieter Ölschleger and Günther Distelrath (Berlin: EB-Verlag, 2021): 451–72.

⁵³ Iranzu Guede, Luis Angel Ortega, Maria Cruz Zuluaga, Ainhoa Alonso-Olazabal, Xabier Murelaga, Miriam Pina, Francisco Javier Gutierrez, and Paola Iacumin, "Isotope analyses to explore diet and mobility in a medieval Muslim population at Tauste (NE Spain)," *PLOS One* (2017) (<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0176572>).

⁵⁴ Bethany J. Walker, "Mobility and Migration in Mamluk Syria: The Dynamism of Villagers 'on the Move'." *Proceedings of the Conference "Everything is on the Move: The 'Mamluk Empire' as a Node in (Trans-) Regional Networks"*, ed. Stephan Conermann (Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2014): 325–48 and idem, "Searching for a Home in Long-Abandoned Places: the Resettlement of Late Medieval Syria," in *Humanistische Anthropologie. Ethnologische Begegnungen in einer globalisierten Welt. Festschrift für Christoph Antweiler zu seinem*

been done by peasant initiative, in reaction to unsustainable economic, environmental, and political conditions in the Syrian countryside.⁵⁵ The methodological challenge, as with cropping, is to distinguish the “hand of the state” in peasant migration from the agency of the peasants themselves.

It is the sudden full-time reoccupation of long-abandoned places in the thirteenth century, which followed what appears to have been large-scale movements of peoples, that concerns us here. Places of diverse heritage and function were resettled: amiral estates, castle towns, villages of various size, hamlets, isolated farmsteads, monasteries, and towns. In general, the ruins of these places could be rehabilitated: the walls of houses still stood, and cisterns and reservoirs did as well, though not maintained for centuries. Reoccupation of such sites was not gradual at each site: it happened suddenly and involved what appear to have been several family units. Roofs were repaired, cisterns cleaned out and replastered, fields once again cultivated, and agricultural terraces built to expand cultivation and control water runoff. These sites were only partially restored, however, and the local residents appear to have continued to live side-by-side with ruins for a long time. This pattern has been identified in all regions of southern Syria: in the Negev, the central Palestinian highlands, the Petra Valley, the central plateaus of Jordan, the northern Jordanian highlands, the southern Hawran of Syria and Jordan, in salvage excavations throughout Israel, and recently in the Golan.⁵⁶

In many cases, ruins were repurposed. Church buildings that had not been used for worship since the eighth and ninth centuries, for example, were converted to industrial centers and cemeteries. Frankish forts of the Crusader era were repurposed as farmhouses. Elsewhere, old farmhouses found new life as granaries. In the Decapolis cities and Late Antique towns, some neighborhoods were rebuilt as agglomerated housing units, dispersed throughout the old urban fabric, and functioned as farmsteads, while the ruins of buildings in others were converted to garden plots. The same pattern has been identified with the resettlement of the so-called Early Islamic desert castles in modern Syria and Jordan. Entire towns could be repurposed. Different patterns of reoccupation can be traced throughout Transjordan and Palestine, suggesting that more than one factor may have driven resettlement at this time.

*fünfundsechzigsten Geburtstag von seinen Freund*innen und Kolleg*innen*, ed. Trang-Dai Vu, Oliver Pye, Hans Dieter Ölschleger und Günther Distelrath (Berlin: EB-Verlag, 2021): 451–72.

⁵⁵ Bethany J. Walker, “The Phenomenon of the ‘Disappearing’ Villages of Late Medieval Jordan, as Reflected in Archaeological and Economic Sources,” *Bulletin d’Études Orientales* 60 (2011): 223–37 and idem, “Settlement Abandonment and Site Formation Processes: Case Studies from Late Islamic Syria,” in *Proceedings of the Tenth International Conference on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East, 2016*, ed. Markus Ritter and Mattia Guidetti (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2018): 681–94.

⁵⁶ Bethany J. Walker, “Searching for a Home in Long-Abandoned Places: the Resettlement of Late Medieval Syria,” in *Humanistische Anthropologie. Ethnologische Begegnungen in einer globalisierten Welt. Festschrift für Christoph Antweiler zu seinem fünfundsechzigsten Geburtstag von seinen Freund*innen und Kolleg*innen*, ed. Trang-Dai Vu, Oliver Pye, Hans Dieter Ölschleger und Günther Distelrath (Berlin: EB-Verlag, 2021): 451–72.

Moreover, the timing of the resettlement may not have been the same everywhere. The poor dating of local handmade pottery continues to make site phasing difficult.⁵⁷

Many strategies were adopted to make these places liveable again. At well-preserved sites, collapse was removed, levelling-fill laid, and construction done on fill. Elsewhere, structurally unsound buildings and walls were simply demolished, with new construction done on bedrock.⁵⁸ This practice, combined with heavy recycling of dismantled building blocks, rather characterizes construction of the period. These are efficient ways of building quickly and at lowest cost, a strategy that might have been adopted when populations needed to be (re)settled quickly, or in response to an imperial directive that required immediate action (such as construction of a garrison in response to a military threat, or the need to quickly relocate officials of the state during administrative restructuring, as at Ḥisbān). It was not only abandoned settlements that were rehabilitated; their agricultural lands were, as well.⁵⁹ One of the most vivid examples of this resettlement can be found at Tall Ḥisbān, where the village and its hinterland were revived at this time.

V.2.2. Migration and Resettlement at Tall Ḥisbān

Few medieval-era rural sites are as well-preserved or well-stratified as that of the eight-hectare Tall Ḥisbān. The town of Ḥisbān, mentioned by early Arab geographers and historians, disappears from medieval texts for at least a couple of centuries. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the place name is suddenly and richly documented. It is at this time its ruins were suddenly resettled, its water infrastructure revitalized, and its lands cultivated once again, by what appears to be a sizeable group of people. Its occupational history thereafter mirrors that of many villages across Transjordan and Palestine: exponential growth and evidence of urbanization during the fourteenth century, and a gradual or phased abandonment over the course of the fifteenth century, as one neighborhood after another were left to ruin and the population dispersed to smaller settlements in its vicinity.⁶⁰

The most recent season of excavations in October 2021 aimed to answer very specific questions related to this initial phase of occupation, to investigate locally patterns of migration

⁵⁷ Bethany J. Walker, "Southern Syria," in *Oxford Handbook of Islamic Archaeology*, ed. Bethany J. Walker, Timothy Insoll, and Corisande Fenwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020): 56–57.

⁵⁸ Georg Kalaitzoglou, "A Middle Islamic Hamlet in Jerash: its Architectural Development," in *Middle Islamic Jerash (9th century – 15th century): Archaeology and History of a Ayyubid-Mamluk Settlement*, ed. Achim Lichtenberger and Rubina Raja (Turnhout: Brepols, 2018): 97–116; Nicolò Pini, "The Different Fates of Architectures," *Journal of Islamic Archaeology* 8.1 (2021): 23–51

⁵⁹ For central Palestine, see note 45; for the Madaba Plains in central Transjordan, see Robert D. Ibach, Jr., *Archaeological Survey of the Hesban Region: Catalogue of Sites and Characterization of Periods* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1987). The relic terraces of the Wadi Ḥisbān will be the target of joint study soon by the University of Bonn and the German-Jordanian University in Madaba.

⁶⁰ Bethany J. Walker, "Settlement Abandonment and Site Formation Processes: Case Studies from Late Islamic Syria," in *Proceedings of the Tenth International Conference on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East, 2016*, ed. Markus Ritter and Mattia Guidetti (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2018): 681–94.

documented throughout the region. We wanted to be able to determine when exactly (and how rapidly) this resettlement took place, to explore possible scenarios of what initially drove people to resettle here, and to determine, if possible, who the people were that came back to this site and where they came from. We have worked out patterns of spoliation and architectural reuse, demolition, and new construction that may be markers of rapid resettlement of many people on the move. We hoped to determine what the triggers were for this demographic phenomenon, whether a forced migration by the late Ayyubid state, crisis-induced, or done for financial opportunities. Through our ongoing study of the intrusive medieval cemetery in the ruins of one of the Christian basilicas at the site, we aimed to determine from where this population came in the thirteenth century, what may have pushed them to leave, and what impact the relocation had on the health of the resettled population.

A series of thick, plaster floors across the site provide an excellent stratigraphic separation between thirteenth- and fourteenth-century phases of occupation in these structures, a chronology confirmed by C14, along with ceramic imports, glass, and some coins. The occupational levels on and above these floors were excavated in previous seasons, and have produced fourteenth-century assemblages of pottery and glass that include many imports, with a large component of Damascene imports, evidence of local industrial activity, and a rich botanical and faunal record (demonstrating a varied diet with high content of meat and fruit). The strata below these floors – dated to the early thirteenth century – were excavated for the first time in 2021, and produced a material culture of a strongly rural character, with a poorer botanical record (suggesting a more modest, and monotonous, diet). Moreover, the pottery appears to be non-local, a hypothesis that will be tested in 2022 with petrographic analysis in Bonn.

One room of the farmhouse cluster in Field O, to the southwest of the tell, was of particular interest. The plaster floors covered what was once a large cooking facility of the thirteenth century. It appears to have been at the time an open space, and included at least four *tannurs* (domed-shaped clay ovens fired from the inside) and a complete ceramic cookpot used as a kind of *tabun* (cylindrical clay oven heated from the outside). Botanical samples were taken of all oven and cookpot contents, to reconstruct cooking practices and diet. This public kitchen could have served multiple households. It was used in this fashion for only a short period of time. When it went out of use, the clay ovens were demolished and their foundations and cookpot plastered over by the first of the floors, and a vaulted roof built over the space, transforming a rural, public kitchen to a private, urban-style house. While the process of this transformation still needs to be studied in more detail, the picture is emerging of the ways populations may have been quickly settled and new communities formed.

In order to address the question of *who* resettled Ḥisbān in the thirteenth century, we turned to the intrusive, medieval cemetery in the North Church, which was an early Byzantine construction used into the Umayyad period and located off the tell. Over eighty graves were

uncovered by John Lawlor in 1978 during the only large-scale excavation of the church.⁶¹ They were dated at the time to the Mamluk period, on the basis of the handmade pottery found in the fill, suggesting the church ruins were reused hundreds of years later as a long-term, communal cemetery. More cists were uncovered in the south half of the church by Calvin College in 2018. In October 2021 the University of Bonn continued the study of the cemetery by excavating five cist graves, located outside the southern aisle, cut into and laid on a flagstone pavement. Samples of dental enamel were taken for isotope analysis, in order to determine where the population came from and what they ate; histological analysis of select non-dental skeletal samples will shed light on the general health of the population.⁶² A single legible coin, recovered from fill above one capstone and dating to the early thirteenth century, and thirteenth and fourteenth-century pottery from fill above the graves, provides our only chronological markers. The interred represent all age groups and both genders, suggesting this may be the cemetery of the late Ayyubid and Mamluk village, which has never been identified as such in over five decades of intermittent fieldwork.⁶³

The 2021 excavation of these farmhouses and the cemetery have raised many key questions about the conditions under which people resettled the site in the thirteenth century, as well as their standard of living. The critical issues of who these people were and what happened to them in the long run will be addressed by laboratory work in Bonn and abroad in the next year.

V.2.3. The “Hand of the State”

The question remains, then, why this long-abandoned site was resettled at this time – like many others in the larger region – and under what conditions. *Waqf* documents in the Endowments Ministry in Cairo may provide an answer. To cite one example, one lengthy *waqfiyya* of 777H/1375 CE lists all of the urban and rural properties in Egypt and Greater Syria donated by the Mamluk Sultan Shaʿbān for the financial support of his madrasa complex in Cairo.⁶⁴ Farmland and villages in the Kerak and Shobak region figure prominently in this text. The longest Transjordanian entry describes in detail the potential income-producing real estate of the village of Adar near Shobak: houses (both occupied and empty), mills and shops, caves (for storage), cisterns (both in use and derelict), and fields (cultivated, for pasturage, and abandoned). The houses (all vaulted stone buildings) were listed as potential rental

⁶¹ John I. Lawlor, “The Excavation of the North Church at Ḥesbān, Jordan: A Preliminary Report,” *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 18.1 (1980): 65–76.

⁶² The osteological study from the North Church is being done by Prof. Megan Perry, a bioarchaeologist at East Carolina University in the U.S.

⁶³ On the Roman and Byzantine necropolis excavated in the 1970s, see S. Douglas Waterhouse, *The Necropolis of Hesban: A Typology of Tombs*. (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998). For the Ottoman-era “Bedouin” cemetery on the Citadel, see Bethany J. Walker, “The Late Ottoman Cemetery in Field L, Tall Hisban,” *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 322 (2001): 47–65.

⁶⁴ *Wizārat al-Awqāf*, Cairo, *Waqfiyya* 49. For a longer analysis of this document, see Bethany J. Walker, *Jordan in the Late Middle Ages: Transformation of the Mamluk Frontier* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2011): 158–61.

properties, not as estimates of population. Many of these houses were in ruin at the time. Using what we know about the urban real estate of the Mamluk period, much rural housing would have been rented, particularly by people recently arrived or staying for a short period of time.

This *waqfiyya* highlights another relevant point. Adar was well equipped with a water infrastructure and was close to markets, with roads tying it to Shobak and other larger towns. These are the kinds of amenities that, according to administrative documents of the Ottoman period, made places attractive for imperial investment and settlement.⁶⁵ Perhaps it is no surprise that the majority of the sites reoccupied in this manner in the thirteenth century also had ready access to marketplaces, a dependable water supply, and were on well-travelled roads.

V. Conclusions

Deep-time, micro-historical studies of small-scale communities allow us to trace gradual changes in social relations over time. The strongly asymmetrical dependency of peasants on the state in the pre-modern Levant cannot be denied. Peasants were not, however, docile bystanders or mere victims of an oppressive political system. They were quite capable of taking advantage of opportunities to assert themselves, through actions described above. One of the “unanticipated consequences”⁶⁶ of the sale of state lands during times of imperial financial insolvency, was that peasants came to buy the small plots of land they and fellow villagers had been cultivating for years. Some became small-scale farmers, and actively participated in the growing rural real estate market and urban market agriculture from the sixteenth century. Financial capital gave them social capital, and this is one mechanism through which some regions gained political autonomy in the later Ottoman centuries. At this point they were able to literally enjoy the “fruits of their labor”, through self-exploitation in labor, exchanging market knowledge within the community, and sharing seed and tools. A combination of factors – privatization of agricultural land and expanded cooption of rural leaders into state service – were responsible, over time, in the development of new social classes (tax farmers and state-recognized tribal sheikhs) and new forms of village organization (the Ottoman throne villages of the central Palestinian highlands, for example).⁶⁷ The withdrawal of Ottoman forces from much of the region after the sixteenth century allowed for the emergence of autonomous sheikhdoms.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Engin Deniz Akarlı, *Some Ottoman Documents on Jordan: Ottoman Criteria for the Choice of an Administrative Center in the Light of Documents on Hauran, 1909–1910* (Amman: University of Jordan, 1989).

⁶⁶ Here we adopt the classic concept of the American sociologist Robert Merton, which refers to human actions that do not go as planned, which have unexpected consequences (Robert K. Merton, “The Unanticipated Consequences of Purposive Social Action,” *American Sociological Review* 1.6 (1936): 894–904).

⁶⁷ Kamal Abdulfattah, “Throne Villages of the Highlands: Local Nobility and Their Mansions in Ottoman Palestine,” *Near Eastern Archaeology* 70.1 (2007): 43–50.

⁶⁸ Among the most powerful were the al-Zayadina of northern Palestine and Lebanon.

Not everyone benefited from these developments, however. More peasants ended up impoverished through debt to (absentee) tax farmers, endowments managers (who were largely urban-based clerics), and local tribal sheikhs. Tribal leaders became the new local elites, exerting much of the same pressures on peasants that the Ayyubid, Mamluk, and Ottoman states did previously. Peasants were pushed to pay off Bedouin tribes to prevent attacks on their villages. Peasant dependency, in fact, continued relatively unaltered until the era of the Ottoman Tanzimat, when the medieval system of land tenure and military slavery came to an end. Rural peoples were then able to register land they have cultivated for generations in their own names, a process that gave them full legal tenure of agricultural land, but also subjected them to new forms of taxation and military subscription.⁶⁹ While the specifics of the dependent relationships changed over time, the basic structures of inequality did not.

Many questions about the dynamics of state-peasant relations remain open. Future work on this project will focus on regional differences, in order to distinguish possible local factors in creating and maintaining these dependencies, as well peasant health and the extent and nature of forced labor. The details of rural labor organization in Palestine and Transjordan in this period have yet to be documented, and this will be a priority of this author's research this coming year.

⁶⁹ The Tanzimat era marks an important watershed in the history of the Middle East. It introduced wide sweeping social, political, and economic changes in the region, and for this reason is not included in this study.

Bibliography

- Abd Allatif, Zuhair. "al-Timār (al-Iqtā' al-'Askarī) fī Filistīn fī al-Qarn al-'Āshir al-Hijrī. (The Timar in Sixteenth-Century Palestine)." *Jordan Journal for History and Archaeology* 4.2 (2010): 26–56 (in Arabic).
- Abdulfattah, Kamal. "Throne Villages of the Highlands: Local Nobility and Their Mansions in Ottoman Palestine." *Near Eastern Archaeology* 70.1 (2007): 43–50.
- Abdulkarim, Ameenah. *Building Craftsmen in Mamluk Society 648-923/1250-1517: The Professional Muhandis in Context*. Unpublished PhD dissertation, University College London-St. Mary, 2017.
- Akarlı, Engin Deniz. *Some Ottoman Documents on Jordan: Ottoman Criteria for the Choice of an Administrative Center in the Light of Documents on Hauran, 1909–1910*. Amman: University of Jordan, 1989.
- Baramki, Demetri. "an-Nuqūsh al-'arabiyya fī-l-bādiya as-sūriyya." *al-Abḥāth* 17.3 (1963): 339–461.
- Borsch, Stuart. *The Black Death in Egypt and England*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005.
- Curtis, Edward E., IV. "The Ghawarna of Jordan: Race and Religion in the Jordan Valley." *Journal of Islamic Law and Culture* 13.2–3 (2011): 193–209.
- Dalman, Gustaf. *Work and Customs in Palestine*, vols. 1 and 2, trans. Nadia Abdulhadi-Sukhtian. Ramallah: Dar Al Nasher, 2013.
- Darling, Linda. *A History of Social Justice and Political Power in the Middle East*. Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2012.
- Driessen, Jan, ed. *An Archaeology of Forced Migration: Crisis-induced mobility and the Collapse of the 13th century BCE eastern Mediterranean*. Louvain: Presses universitaires de Louvain, 2018.
- Fuess, Albrecht. "Waqfization in the late Mamluk Empire: A deliberate policy or chaos management?". Working Paper 1 (June 2020), EGYLandscape Project (https://www.egylandscape.org/papers/June2020_Fuess_WorkingPaper.pdf)
- Ghawanmeh, Yousef D. *Dimashq fī 'Aṣr Dawlat al-Mamālīk al-Thāniyyah*. Amman: Dār al-Fikr, 2005.
- Graf, Paul. "Essential Resources as Bodies of Dependency in Classic Maya Society." *DEPENDENT. The Magazine of the Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies*, 2021-1, 10–11.
- Gray, David Miguel. "Asymmetrical and Symmetrical Dependency: A Particular Problem." *Aporia* 6 (1996): 17–34.
- Guede, Iranzu, Luis Angel Ortega, Maria Cruz Zuluaga, Ainhoa Alonso-Olazabal, Xabier Murelaga, Miriam Pina, Francisco Javier Gutierrez, and Paola Iacumin. "Isotope analyses to explore diet and mobility in a medieval Muslim population at Tauste (NE Spain)", *PLOS One* (2017) (<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0176572>)
- Heinrich, Frits B.J. "Modelling Crop-Selection in Roman Italy: The Economics of Agricultural Decision Making in a Globalizing Economy." In *Rural Communities in a globalizing economy: new perspectives on the economic integration of Roman Italy*, edited by Tymon de Haas and Gijs W. Tol, 141–169. Brill: Leiden, 2017.

- Ibach, Robert D., Jr. *Archaeological Survey of the Hesban Region: Catalogue of Sites and Characterization of Periods*. Hesban 5. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1987.
- Igarashi, Daisuke. *Land Tenure, Fiscal Policy, and Imperial Power in Medieval Syro-Egypt*. Chicago: Center for Middle Eastern Studies, The University of Chicago, 2015.
- al-Jbour, Khaled Suleman. "Bayān as'ār al-ḥiṭṭa fī naqs' mamlūkī min al-bādiya al-urduniyya fī 'amay 757 H/1347M wa 764 H/1363 M." *Journal for History and Archaeology* 5.4 (2011): 1–18.
- Kalaitzoglou, Georg. "A Middle Islamic Hamlet in Jerash: its Architectural Development". In *Middle Islamic Jerash (9th century – 15th century): Archaeology and History of a Ayyubid-Mamluk Settlement*, edited by Achim Lichtenberger and Rubina Raja, 97–116. Turnhout: Brepols, 2018.
- Kenney, Ellen. "'Reconstructing'" Mamluk 'Ajlūn: The 728/1328 Flood Report as a Source on Architectural Patronage." *Studies on the History and Archaeology of Jordan* 10 (2009): 787–94.
- Laparidou, Sofia and Arlene Rosen. "Intensification of production in Medieval Islamic Jordan and its ecological impact: Towns of the Anthropocene." *The Holocene* 25.10 (2015): 1685–697.
- Lash, Ahmad. "Kitābāt 'alaa-l-Jidrān Qusayr 'Amrah al-Umawii." *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan* 58 (2017): 7–36, Arabic section.
- Lawlor, John I. "The Excavation of the North Church at Ḥesbān, Jordan: A Preliminary Report." *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 18.1 (1980): 65–76.
- Levanoni, Amalia. "The al-Nashw Episode: A Case Study of 'Moral Economy.'" *Mamluk Studies Review* 9.1 (2005): 207–20.
- Marston, John M. "Archaeological Markers of Agricultural Risk Management." *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 30.2 (2011): 190–205.
- McSparron, Cormac, Colm Donnelly, Eileen Murphy, and Jonny Geber. "Migration, Group Agency, and Archaeology: A New Theoretical Model." *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 24 (2020): 219–32.
- Merton, Robert K. "The Unanticipated Consequences of Purposive Social Action." *American Sociological Review* 1.6 (1936): 894–904.
- Mikhail, Alan. *Nature and Empire in Ottoman Egypt: An Environmental History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.
- Petry, Carl. "Waqf as an Instrument of Investment in the Mamluk Sultanate: Security vs. Profit?" In *Slave Elites in the Middle East and Africa*, edited by Miura Toru and John Edward Philips, 99–116. London: Kegan Paul, 2000.
- Pini, Nicolò. "The Different Fates of Architectures." *Journal of Islamic Archaeology* 8.1 (2021): 23–51.
- Rapoport, Yossef. *Rural Economy and Tribal Society in Islamic Egypt. A Study of al-Nābulusī's Villages of the Fayyum*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2018.
- Redman, Charles L. "Resilience theory in archaeology." *American Anthropologist* 107.1 (2005): 70–77 (<https://doi.org/10.1525/aa.2005.107.1.070>).

- al-Sabagh, Munther H. *Before Banks: Credit, Society, and Law in Sixteenth-Century Palestine and Syria*. Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of California-Santa Barbara, 2014.
- Sato, Tsugitaka. *State and Rural Society in Medieval Islam: Sultans, Muqta's and Fallahun*. Leiden: Brill, 1997.
- Shopov, Aleksandar. "The Vernacularization of Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Agricultural Science in its Economic Context." In *Living with Nature and Things: Contributions to a New Social History of the Middle Islamic Periods*, edited by Bethany J. Walker and Abdelkader Al Ghouz, 639–681. Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2020.
- Shoshan, Boaz. "Grain Riots and the 'Moral Economy': Cairo, 1350–1517." *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 10.3 (1980): 459–78.
- Singer, Amy. *Palestinian Peasants and Ottoman Officials: Rural Administration around Sixteenth-Century Jerusalem*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Stichweh, Rudolf. "How Do Divided Societies Come about? Persistent Inequalities, Pervasive Asymmetrical Dependencies, and Sociocultural Polarization as Divisive Forces in Contemporary Society." *Global Perspectives* 2.1 (2021) (<https://doi.org/10.1525/gp.2021.25658>).
- Stichweh, Rudolf. "Values, Norms, and Institutions in the Study of Slavery and Other Forms of Asymmetrical Dependency." *DEPENDENT. The Magazine of the Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies*, 2022-1, 4–8.
- Walker, Bethany J. "The Late Ottoman Cemetery in Field L, Tall Hisban." *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 322 (2001): 47–65.
- Walker, Bethany J. "The Tribal Dimension in Mamluk-Jordanian Relations." *Mamluk Studies Review* 13.1 (2009): 82–105.
- Walker, Bethany J. *Jordan in the Late Middle Ages: Transformation of the Mamluk Frontier*. Chicago Studies on the Middle East 8. Chicago: Middle East Documentation Center, University of Chicago, 2011.
- Walker, Bethany J. "The Phenomenon of the 'Disappearing' Villages of Late Medieval Jordan, as Reflected in Archaeological and Economic Sources." *Bulletin d'Études Orientales* 60 (2011): 223–37.
- Walker, Bethany J. "Mobility and Migration in Mamluk Syria: The Dynamism of Villagers 'on the Move'." In *Proceedings of the Conference "Everything is on the Move: The 'Mamluk Empire' as a Node in (Trans-) Regional Networks"*, edited by Stephan Conermann, 325–348. Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2014.
- Walker, Bethany J. "The Struggle over Water: Evaluating the 'Water Culture' of Syrian Peasants under Mamluk Rule." In *Developing Perspectives in Mamluk History: Essays in Honor of Amalia Levanoni*, edited by Yuval Ben-Bassat, 287–310. Leiden: Brill, 2017.
- Walker, Bethany J. "Settlement Abandonment and Site Formation Processes: Case Studies from Late Islamic Syria." In *Proceedings of the Tenth International Conference on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East, 2016*, edited by Markus Ritter and Mattia Guidetti, 681–94. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2018.
- Walker, Bethany J. "Southern Syria." In *Oxford Handbook of Islamic Archaeology*, edited by Bethany J. Walker, Timothy Insoll, and Corisande Fenwick, 49–79. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020.

- Walker, Bethany J. "Peasants, rural economy and cash crops in medieval Islam." In *Markets, "money" and exchanges: Their economic logics in pre-modern societies*, edited by Juan Carlos Moreno García, 91–113. Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2021.
- Walker, Bethany J. "Searching for a Home in Long-Abandoned Places: the Resettlement of Late Medieval Syria." In *Humanistische Anthropologie. Ethnologische Begegnungen in einer globalisierten Welt. Festschrift für Christoph Antweiler zu seinem fünfundsiebszigsten Geburtstag von seinen Freund*innen und Kolleg*innen*, edited by Trang-Dai Vu, Oliver Pye, Hans Dieter Ölschleger und Günther Distelrath, 451–472. Bonner Asienstudien. Berlin: EB-Verlag, 2021.
- Walker, Bethany J. "The Changing Face of Agricultural 'Estates' in 15th and 16th-c Palestine: the Commercialization of Khirbet Beit Mazmīl." In *The Mamluk-Ottoman Transition: Continuity and Change in Egypt and Bilad al-Sham in the Sixteenth Century*, vol. 2, edited by Stephan Conermann and Gül Şen. Göttingen: V&R unipress, forthcoming for 2022.
- Walker, Bethany J., Sofia Laparidou, Annette Hansen, and Chiara Corbino. "Did the Mamluks Have an Environmental Sense?: Natural Resource Management in Syrian Villages." *Mamluk Studies Review* 20 (2017): 167–245.
- Walker, Bethany J. and Benjamin Dolinka. "*Ḥirbet Bēt Mazmīl*, Investigations of Medieval Jerusalem's Hinterland: Interim Report on the 2015 and 2017 Field Seasons." *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Palaestina-Verein* 136.2 (2020): 191-234.
- Walker, Bethany J., Yuval Gadot, Yelena Elgart-Sharon, and Omer Ze'evi. "Agricultural Terracing and Rural Revival in Late Medieval Palestine." In *Proceedings of the 11th International Conference on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East*, vol. 2, edited by Lorenz Korn and Anja Heidenreich, 651–61. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2020.
- Waterhouse, S. Douglas. *The Necropolis of Hesban: A Typology of Tombs*. Hesban 5. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1998.
- Winnebeck, Julia, Ove Sutter, Adrian Hermann, Christoph Antweiler, and Stephan Conermann. 2021. BCDSS Concept Paper 1. *On Asymmetrical Dependency*. Bonn: BCDSS, University of Bonn.
- Wollina, Thorsten. *Zwanzig Jahre Alltag: Lebens-, Welt- und Selbstbild im Journal des Aḥmad Ibn Ṭawq*. Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2012.

For further titles see: <https://www.dependency.uni-bonn.de/en/publications>



Contact:

**Bonn Center for
Dependency and Slavery
Studies (BCDSS)**

University of Bonn
Niebuhrstr. 5
53113 Bonn
Germany

For more information:

Web: www.dependency.uni-bonn.de/en

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/DependencyBonn>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/DependencyBonn>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/dependencybonn/>

Newsletter: <https://listen.uni-bonn.de/wvs/subscribe/dependencystudies>