

The Archaeology of Agro-Pastoralist Economies in Jordan

edited by Kevin M. McGeough, with contributions by Robin M. Brown, Alan Farahani, Hannah Huynh, Natalie Mueller, Benjamin W. Porter, Jennifer Ramsay, Kevin Rielly, and Bruce Routledge

DESCRIPTION:

The 69th volume of the Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research is devoted to studies of botanical and faunal remains from three major sites in Jordan: Tall al'Umayri (Bronze to early Iron Age), Karak Castle (Middle and Late Islamic Period), and Khirbet al-Mudayna al-'Aliya (early Iron Age). Although each paper reflects the work of different teams, they are all thematically linked by their contributions to the study of agro-pastoralist economic activities in the region. Each paper offers insight into contextually specific historical circumstances but also insight into agriculture and pastoralism more broadly. Likewise, each paper offers different approaches for working with faunal and/or botanical evidence that will be of interest to specialists in bioarchaeology more generally. Scholars of pastoralism will be interested in all of these papers, which touch on issues of foddering and animal consumption.

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Ramsey and Mueller: Plant remains from Tall al'Umayri broadly provide direct evidence for patterns of local consumption and agricultural production from Bronze Age to Early Iron Age contexts. More specifically a cache of wild or two-rowed barley was recovered from a clearly stratified domestic context, which was likely stored for either malting or fodder. This kind of evidence is vital to aid in identifying other aspects (culture, economic exchange and natural environment) of the emerging complex societies that subsequently occupied the region. Brown and Rielly: Middle and Late Islamic faunal collections from Karak castle in Jordan are described and examined in detail and compared with other contemporary collections from southern Jordan with results indicating regional trends in animal consumption that are linked to culture, trade, and subsistence activities. Farahani et al.: This article demonstrates that the collection and analysis of carefully provenienced samples of archaeological plant remains from a variety of archaeological contexts at Kh. al-Mudayna al-'Aliya improves our understanding of how economically important crops were stored, distributed, and processed in early Iron Age Levantine settlements in Jordan. The article contributes to archaeological and paleoethnobotanical studies of agriculture, animal husbandry, and crop storage in southwest Asia more broadly.

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Kevin McGeough is an Associate Professor in the Geography Department at the University of Lethbridge. He was the series editor of ASOR's Archaeological Report Series for six years and is currently the series editor of the Annual. Jennifer Ramsay - is an assistant professor at the College at Brockport, State University of New York, in Brockport, New York. Jennifer is an archaeobotanist that specializes in the Near East and her research involves examining the agricultural economies of ancient societies ranging in date from the Chalcolithic up until the Islamic period. Natalie Mueller - is an archaeobotanical Ph.D. Candidate in the Anthropology Department at Washington University in St. Louis. Natalie is currently focused on studying ancient native North American seeds crops in the Midwest. Robin Brown - is an independent scholar of Islamic archaeology of the Southern Levant with specialized experience in the material remains of the Middle Islamic castles in Jordan where she conducted several excavations. Kevin Rielly - is a professional zooarchaeologist working since the mid 1990s for a commercial archaeology company in London, UK. He was previously employed as a freelance faunal specialist at a number of sites (particularly dated to the Islamic period) in Jordan. Alan Farahani - is a Postdoctoral Scholar in the Cotsen Institute of Archaeology at UCLA.

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