

2. NEW DATA ON THE MONASTERY OF MOUNT NEBO IN THE EARLY ISLAMIC PERIOD

The stratigraphic survey conducted on the presbytery of the basilica and in room no. 103 of the monastery has returned a large group of pottery sherds, which stand out for their chronological homogeneity linked to the Umayyad period and to the early Abbasid one. Considering this important chronological context, connected to the last phases of the monastic complex and its abandonment, a specific in-depth study on the types of pottery that have come to light becomes necessary (Fig. 85).

Without going over the history of the excavations, it has to be remembered that the finds from the first excavation campaigns directed by S. SALLER were presented only through a selection of photographs and brief references in the text, but without an accurate study of the stratigraphic sequence of reference²³⁶. This circumstance has unfortunately contributed to the loss of a great deal of information about the later contexts. Indeed, the abandonment phase was considered on the basis of an imprecise chronology diffused at that time and it was dated to the end of the Byzantine period (early 7th cent. A.D.). The pottery finds identified by S. SALLER were the object of a typological study by H. SCHNEIDER, which was published in the third volume of the series dedicated to the excavation of Mount Nebo²³⁷. The archaeologist's attention, addressing a morphological examination of the shapes, concentrated on the division of the vessels into functional categories, indicating the rooms of origin of the material, but without providing any precise chronological reference²³⁸.

The continuation of the excavations in the archaeological site, directed by V. CORBO, M. PICCIRILLO and C. PAPPALARDO, was mainly aimed at the lower levels of the church and some external areas, which mostly presented frequentation in the Byzantine period²³⁹. Pottery referable to the Umayyad period came to light during the archaeological survey of a portion of room no. 56 in July 1987 by a mission from the University of Florence²⁴⁰. These finds are relative to the last phases of frequentation when, probably due to the earthquake in A.D. 749, the occupation of the site had to be limited to only the areas closest to the basilica.

The recent surveys addressed to the monastic church and room no. 103, do not yet allow an exhaustive interpretation of the nature of the archaeological contexts and of the chronology of the monastic rooms, however they are witnesses of an activity of reconstruction during the period of transition from the Umayyad period to the Abbasid one. This is clear from the sample of pottery typologies identified in these surveys which has allowed tracing back shapes known in circulation in the central part of the province of *Arabia* between the 8th and the beginning of the 9th cent. A.D. The samples of the shapes, decoration and pottery fabrics are fully part of the typology known as *creamy ware* and *Balqa ware*²⁴¹.

²³⁶ Saller 1941. On the subject, see Vanni Desideri 2012, 302–304.

²³⁷ Schneider 1950.

²³⁸ Vanni Desideri 2012, 302.

²³⁹ Especially the south-eastern wing of the monastery.

²⁴⁰ In particular referred to the most recent layers of room no. 56, when, as this wing of the monastery was no longer in use, considerable levels of waste from the summit of the mountain accumulated inside the room. See phase VI in Vanni Desideri 2012, 309–331.

²⁴¹ The most important diagnostic examples of the diocese of Madaba come from the sites of Umm er-Rasas and Nitl. See in this regard Alliata 1991, Pappalardo 2002, Hamarneh 2006.

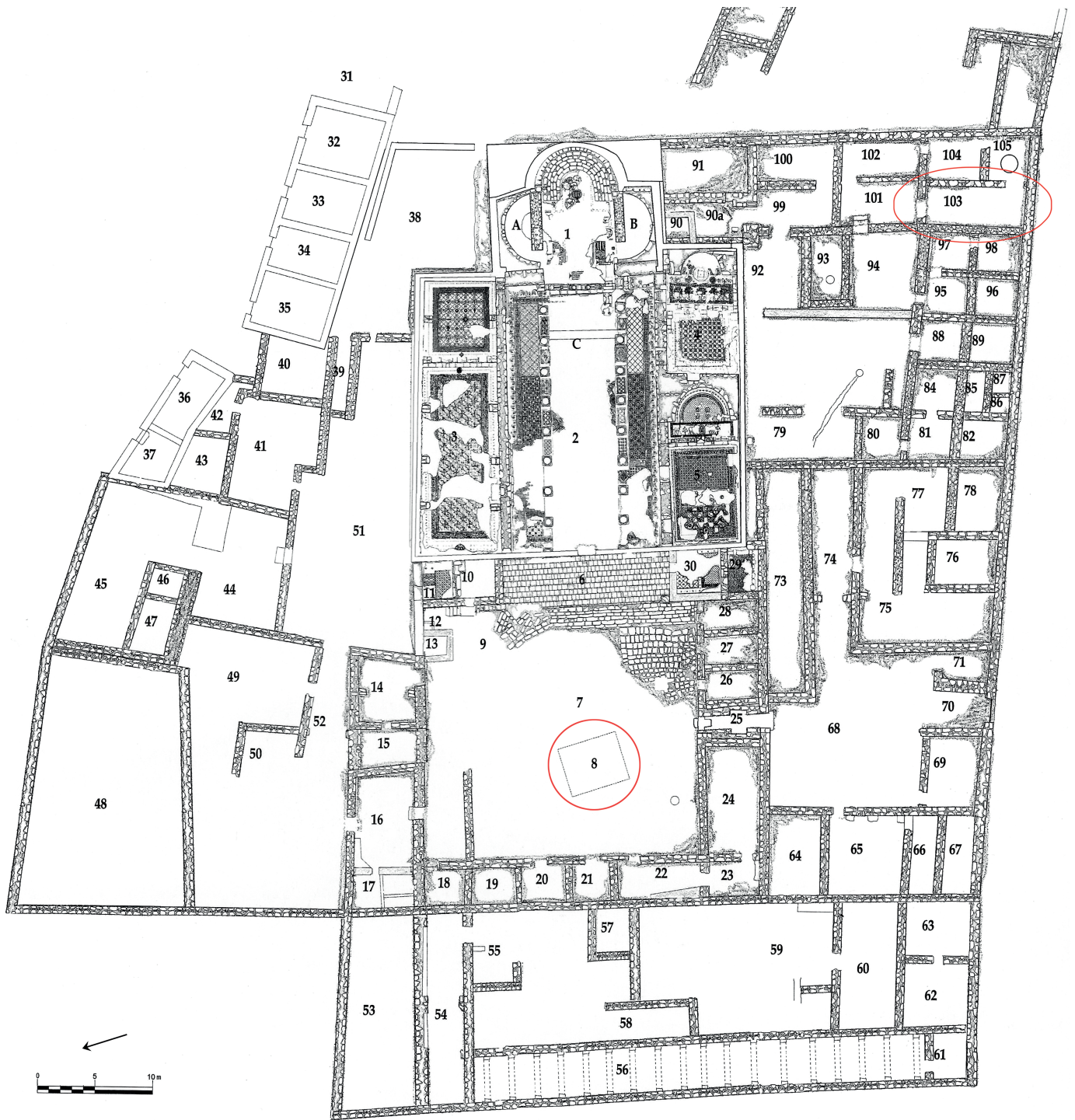


Fig. 85 Memorial of Moses. Plan of the monastery showing the *loci* excavated (drawing by G. MICALIZZI and C. PUGLISI).

Contemporary with these pottery fragments is the fairly homogeneous set found in the excavation of cistern no. 8 standing in the centre of the atrium in front of the basilica's façade. The pottery, made up of large-sized pieces, which in many cases could be reconstructed, has been studied here because it is still unpublished and it presents the characteristics of fabric and shape typical of the period under examination.

These data allow the monastery standing on the summit of Siyagha to be put into relation with other monastic complexes in the surrounding valleys, in particular with the finds from the monastery of Theotokos in the Wadi 'Ain el-Kanisah.

The study of the pottery was preceded by the digitalization of all the previous ceramological documentation in a new online data base, conceived by the restorer M. CHOROSIŃSKI²⁴². The relational database of Mount Nebo is of the MySQL type and allows the information about the finds from the archaeological excavations in the monastic complex to be digitally stored. The objective has been to create an interface that would allow the connection of tables containing the various data, thereby making it possible for a user to add new items to the fields or to modify the existing ones. The command of the search function allows detailed data from the different tables to be recovered and listed all together. The database also includes a couple of scripts on the homepage to which a general map of the site is connected. By clicking on one specific sector of the Mount Nebo complex, it is possible to list all the items relative to that specific place. The examination of the pottery fragments has followed the same methodological premises shown on page 86.

The survey in the southern wing of the monastery has also affected the cleaning of room no. 90 and of room no. 89 to photographically document the channel and basin mentioned by S. SALLER²⁴³ (Figs. 86–87).



Fig. 86 Memorial of Moses. Flagstone pavement in room no. 90.



Fig. 87 Memorial of Moses. Basin in room no. 89.

²⁴² The Website can be consulted at: <<http://nebo.restoration.com.pl>>

²⁴³ Saller 1941, 176–178; 185.

2.1 EXCAVATION OF ROOM NO. 103

The archaeological surveys carried out in the southern sector of the monastery were motivated by practical necessities relative to conduits for the new electrical system of the basilica. The excavations thus allowed deeper reflections on the final phases of occupation of the monastic complex (Figs. 88–89).

Room no. 103, inspected at a superficial level in the years 1933–1935, was identified by S. SALLER as a lobby between room no. 105, containing an oven, and room no. 101²⁴⁴. The presence of two other ovens in room no. 93 had suggested that the archaeologist recognize in this section the productive area connected with the dietary needs of the monastery²⁴⁵. This hypothesis was confirmed by the new finds during the latest investigations.

After having cleaned the room of the modern accumulation, the filling was identified, made up of irregular stones, probably attributable to work done by V. CORBO in 1964, during which some rooms of the monastery were filled in²⁴⁶. In the layer SU.M1031 some out of context pottery fragments were identified (Pl. 23). Continuing the excavation, SU.M1032 was found at –1 m from the initial level, made up of an even yellowish layer with numerous traces of ashes which extended uniformly over the whole surface of the room (Pl. 24). The removal of this SU allowed the identification of a paving SU.M1033 in the northern portion of the room, the same as already identified in S. SALLER's excavation²⁴⁷ (Fig. 91–92). In the southern portion of the room, the foundations of a wall with an east-west orientation (SU.M1034) were identified, parallel to the external perimeter wall of the room, and an embankment of irregular stones SU.M1035 (Figs. 90, 93).

When the paving was eliminated, an oven (SU.M1036), like those excavated in rooms in nos. 105 and 93²⁴⁸, was found (Figs. 94–95). The middle-lower portion of the structure is kept with a depth of 85 cm and a diameter of 150 cm. The clay walls are about 4–5 cm thick. The excavation of the oven has returned two layers full of archaeological material from the Umayyad era (SU.M1037 and SU.M139) (Figs. 96–97; Pls. 25–28) spaced out by a compact layer of red earth and ashes SU.M1037.

List of Stratigraphic Units Room no. 103

SU.M1030	Modern accumulation
SU.M1031	Layer of irregular stones attributable to 1964 filling
SU.M1032	Compact yellowish layer at level –1.00 which evenly covered the whole room
SU.M1033	Stone paving in the northern portion of the room
SU.M1034	Foundations of a wall with east-west orientation
SU.M1035	Irregular embankment of stones in the southern portion of the room
SU.M1036	Oven
SU.M1037	Filling of the oven, upper layer under the paving
SU.M1038	Fine layer of compact reddish earth and accumulation of ash
SU.M1039	Filling of the oven, lower layer

²⁴⁴ Saller 1941, 181–182.

²⁴⁵ Saller 1941, 181–182.

²⁴⁶ Corbo 1970.

²⁴⁷ Saller 1941, 181.

²⁴⁸ The cylindrical oven of room no. 93 has walls 4 cm thick, is 111 cm deep and has a diameter of 130 cm. The oven in room 105 is 3–4 cm thick, 125 cm deep with a diameter comprised between 140–154 cm. In detail, see Saller 1941, 171–172, figs. 21. 182.

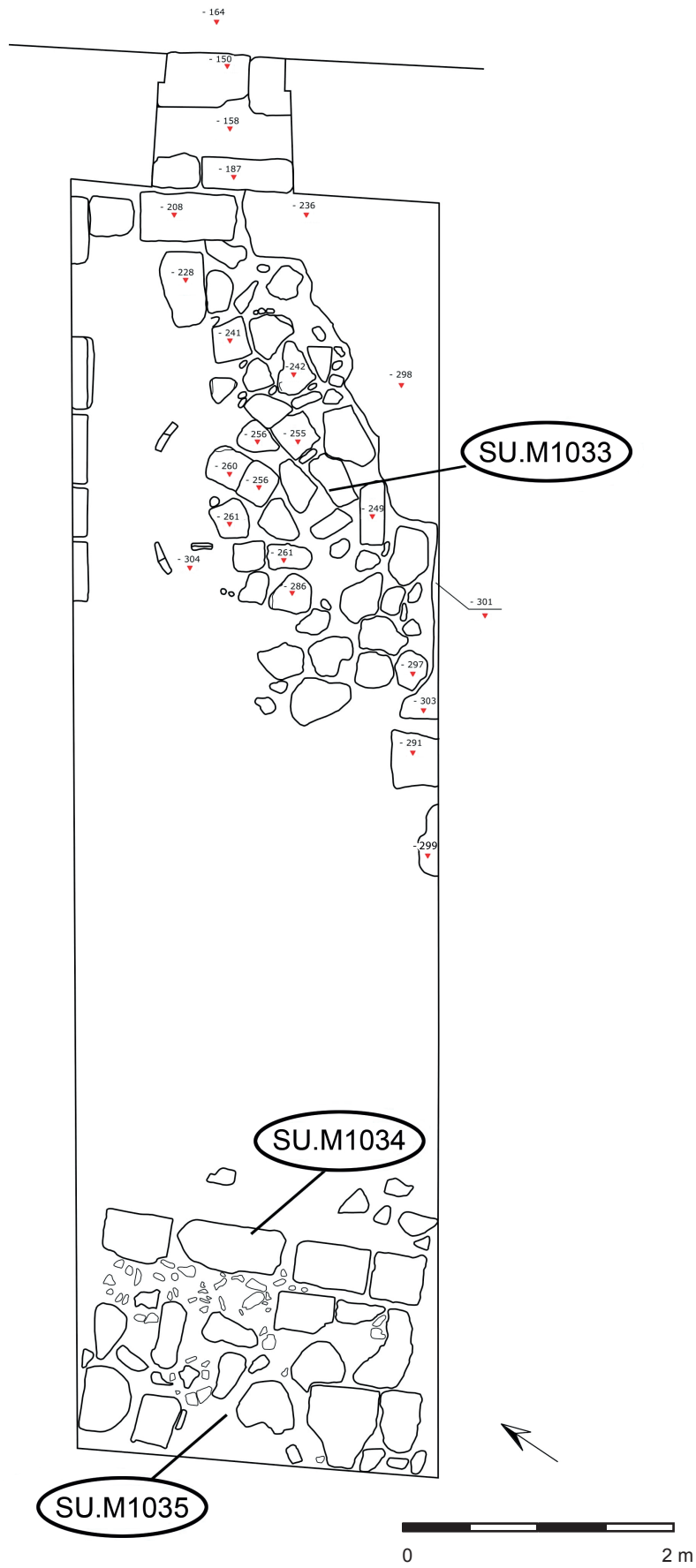


Fig. 88 Memorial of Moses. Plan of room no. 103.

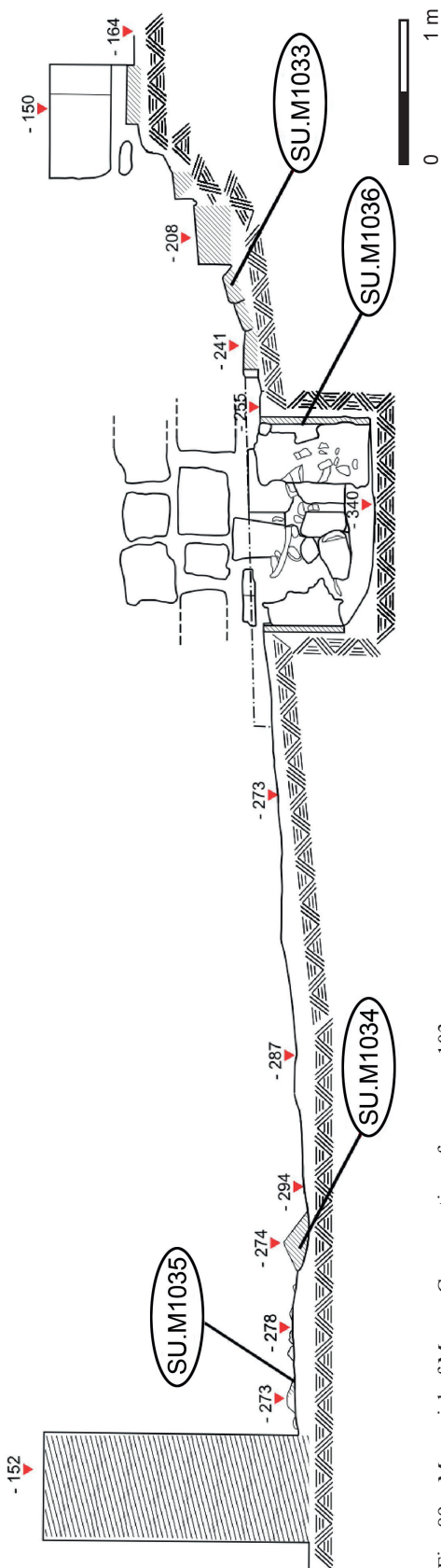


Fig. 89 Memorial of Moses. Cross-section of room no. 103.



Fig. 90 Memorial of Moses. Room no. 103, northern side.



Fig. 91 Memorial of Moses. Room no. 103, southern side.



Fig. 92 Memorial of Moses. Room no. 103, detail of flagstones paving (SU.M1033).



Fig. 93
Memorial of Moses. Room
no. 103, detail of the south-
ern wall.



Fig. 94
Memorial of Moses. Room
no. 103, detail of the oven.



Fig. 95
Memorial of Moses. Room
no. 103, the oven after ex-
cavation.

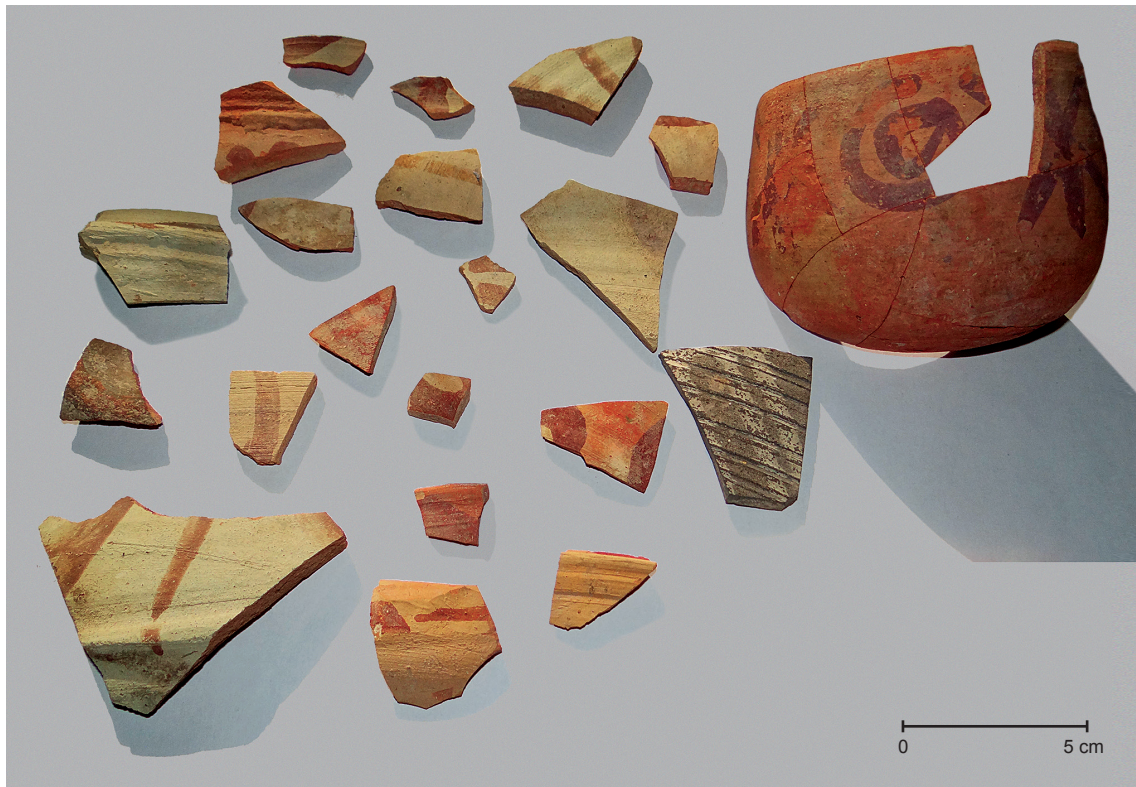


Fig. 96 Memorial of Moses. Room no. 103, Umayyad pottery sherds.



Fig. 97 Memorial of Moses. Room no. 103, Umayyad cup found in SU.M1037.

2.1.1 Catalogue of finds

SU.M1031 (from the surface; filling mainly made up of stones, building waste after CORBO 1964) (Pl. 23)

1. MN-103-A-16 Wall of vase. Granular fabric; colour: pinkish; beige slip; strong firing. Decoration with deep combed carvings.
2. MN-103-A-12 Wall of vase. Very fine fabric; colour: pinkish; traces of fine beige slip; strong firing. Decoration probably made of circles or spirals in a dark red colour.
3. MN-103-A-14 Pitcher. Fine fabric; Diam. 10 cm; colour: beige; strong firing. There is a decoration made up of a continuous series of short signs on the edge of the vessel and a sinuous band which is developed on the neck of the vessel; the decorations are painted in dark red.
4. MN-103-A-3 Pitcher. Granular fabric; Diam. 12 cm; colour: dark brown; medium firing.
5. MN-103-A-7 Jar. Granular fabric; Diam. 36 cm; colour: pinkish; beige slip; strong firing.
6. MN-103-A-11 Plate. Slightly granular fabric; Diam. 26 cm; colour: pinkish; strong firing.
7. MN-103-A-9 Curved tile. Granular fabric; colour: pinkish; dark brown slip; strong firing.
8. MN-103-A-10 Tile. Slightly granular fabric; colour: beige; medium firing.

SU.M1032 (at ca. -1.00 m from the surface; yellow beaten soil with ash) (Pl. 24)

1. MN-103-B-1 Basin. Granular fabric; Diam. 28 cm; colour: pink; beige slip; strong firing. There is a decoration made up deeply engraved comb-like lines.
2. MN-103-B-2 Basin. Granular fabric; Diam. 24 cm; colour: beige; greyish slip; medium firing.
3. MN-103-B-9 Jug. Granular fabric; Diam. 12 cm; colour: reddish; beige slip; medium firing.
4. MN-103-B-10 Plate (?). Granular fabric; Diam. 26 cm; colour: light brown, dark brown slip; strong firing.
5. MN-103-B-5 Bottom of pot. Granular fabric; colour: pinkish; strong firing. Externally darkened by fire.
6. MN-103-B-14 Vessel wall decorated with red paint. Fine fabric; colour: pinkish; beige slip; strong firing.
7. MN-103-B-7 Tile. Granular fabric; colour: beige; medium firing.
8. MN-103-B-8 Tile. Granular fabric; colour: beige; medium firing.

SU.M1037 (emptying of oven, under the paving) (Pls. 25–27)

1. MN-103-I-3 Jug. Granular fabric; Diam. 10 cm; colour: pinkish; beige slip; strong firing. Dark red paint.
2. MN-103-I-18 Jug. Fine fabric; Diam. 8 cm; colour: pinkish; light slip, red paint; strong firing.
3. MN-103-I-61 Handle in two pieces. Fine fabric, small white inclusions are present; colour: pinkish, brown nucleus; beige slip; very strong firing.
4. MN-103-I-30 Handle and wall. Fine fabric; colour: pinkish; beige slip, dark red paint; very strong firing.
5. MN-103-I-40 Vessel wall decorated with red paint. Slightly granular fabric; colour: brown; black slip; strong firing.
6. MN-103-I-43 Vessel wall decorated with dark red paint. Slightly granular fabric; colour: brown; beige slip; strong firing.
7. MN-103-I-42 Vessel wall decorated with red paint. Fine fabric; colour: pinkish; beige slip; strong firing. The decorations are made up of plant volutes and spirals.
8. MN-103-I-63 Jug. Fine fabric; colour: pinkish; beige slip; very strong firing.
9. MN-103-I-62 Cup. Very fine fabric; Diam. 9.5 cm; colour: pinkish; beige slip; strong firing. Decoration that develops on the shoulder of the vase made up of geometric marks (spirals alternating with six-pointed stars) in dark red paint applied after firing.
10. MN-103-I-14 Jug. Granular fabric; Diam. 14 cm; colour: light brown; beige slip; strong firing.
11. MN-103-I-7 Jug. Slightly granular fabric; Diam. 10 cm; colour: light brown; dark slip; strong firing.
12. MN-103-I-4 Jug. Very granular-quartziferous fabric; Diam. 8 cm; colour: light brown; dark slip; strong firing.
13. MN-103-I-16 Jug. Medium granular fabric; Diam. 8 cm; colour: pinkish; dark slip and signs of burning; strong firing.

14. MN-103-I-17 Jug. Very fine fabric; Diam. 10 cm; colour: beige-greenish; weak firing.
15. MN-103-I-11 Jug. Granular-quartziferous fabric; Diam. 16 cm; colour: pinkish; dark slip; strong firing.
16. MN-103-I-15 Jug. Granular-quartziferous fabric; Diam. 12 cm; colour: brown; grey slip; medium firing.
17. MN-103-I-26 Pot. Granular-quartziferous fabric; Diam. 12 cm; colour: brown, blackish nucleus; dark brown slip; strong firing.
18. MN-103-I-27 Pot. Granular fabric; Diam. 14 cm; colour: pinkish; blackish slip; strong firing.
19. MN-103-I-29 Pot. Medium granular fabric; Diam. 10 cm; colour: reddish; dark brown slip; strong firing.
20. MN-103-I-13 Lid. Fine fabric; Diam. 24 cm; colour: pinkish; greyish slip; medium firing. Traces of darkening by fire are present.
21. MN-103-I-64 Lid. Slightly granular fabric; Diam. 20 cm; colour: pinkish; dark grey slip; strong firing.
22. MN-103-I-19 Lid. Granular fabric; Diam. 14 cm; colour: pinkish; greyish slip; strong firing.
23. MN-103-I-8 Lid. Slightly granular fabric; Diam. 10 cm; colour: pinkish; dark slip; medium firing.
24. MN-103-I-22 Lid. Fine fabric; Diam. 16 cm; colour: pinkish; greyish slip; strong firing.
25. MN-103-I-6 Plate. Slightly granular fabric; Diam. 22 cm; colour: beige; strong firing.
26. MN-103-I-9 Lid. Slightly granular fabric; Diam. 18 cm; colour: pinkish; dark brown slip; very strong firing.
27. MN-103-I-24 Basin. Fine fabric, small inclusions; Diam. 28 cm; colour: beige; strong firing. Incised comb-like decoration.
28. MN-103-I-5 Plate. Fine fabric; Diam. 22 cm; colour: light brown; dark slip; strong firing.
29. MN-103-I-2 Basin. Fine fabric; Diam. 26 cm; colour: beige; medium firing.
30. MN-103-I-10 Plate. Fine fabric; Diam. 28 cm; colour: brown; strong firing.
31. MN-103-I-25 Plate. Fine fabric; Diam. 24 cm; colour: beige; strong firing. The wall is twisted, perhaps a reject of production.
32. MN-103-I-23 Base of oil lamp. Fine fabric; colour: pinkish; strong firing.
33. MN-103-I-20 Tile. Fine fabric; colour: pinkish, orange nucleus; beige slip; strong firing.

SU.M1039 (emptying of oven, under compact layer of red soil and ash) (Pl. 28)

1. MN-103-II-4 Jug. Fine fabric; Diam. 12 cm; colour: greyish; beige slip; strong firing.
2. MN-103-II-8 Jug. Granular fabric; Diam. 12 cm; colour: brown, light brown nucleus; beige slip; strong firing.
3. MN-103-II-6 Jug. Fine fabric; Diam. 10 cm; colour: brown; greyish slip; strong firing.
4. MN-103-II-12 Jug. Fine fabric; Diam. 8 cm; colour: light brown; beige slip; very strong firing.
5. MN-103-II-10 Jug. Fine fabric; Diam. 6 cm; colour: brown; beige slip; strong firing.
6. MN-103-II-11 Bowl. Very fine fabric; Diam. 14 cm; colour: brown; greyish slip; strong firing.
7. MN-103-II-7 Cup. Slightly granular fabric; Diam. 12 cm; colour: pinkish; greyish slip; strong firing.
8. MN-103-II-2 Small amphora. Very fine fabric; Diam. 15 cm; colour: pinkish, slightly lighter nucleus; beige slip; strong firing. The shoulder is decorated with a continuous spiral painted red.
9. MN-103-II-17 Small cup. Fine fabric; Diam. 12 cm; colour: reddish; strong firing.
10. MN-103-II-21 Lid. Granular fabric; Diam. 21 cm; colour: pinkish; grey slip; medium firing.
11. MN-103-II-5 Lid. Granular fabric; Diam. 22 cm; colour: light brown; dark brown slip, signs of blackening; strong firing.
12. MN-103-II-1 Tile. Granular fabric; colour: brown; beige slip; medium firing.
13. MN-103-II-23 Tile. Granular fabric; colour: reddish; medium firing.

2.1.2 Conclusions

The closed vessels pertaining to the contexts of room no. 103 are characterized by modest dimensions, vertical and slightly thickened lips and by thin walls which allow the supposition of domestic use. The pottery finds can be divided into two groups depending on the fabric. The first contains vessels with a medium purified fabric with whitish inclusions of small dimensions and a colour from reddish-brown to grey (Pl. 26, nos. 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16). The firing is strong. The second group consists of vessels with a purified fabric of a pinkish colour with outer beige slip and decoration in red paint. The walls are carefully smoothed and the firing is strong (Pl. 23, no. 3; Pl. 25, nos. 1, 2).

The cooking shapes are well attested in the layer, with a good number of pots with a short cylindrical neck with low ribbing and handles which are grafted on to the shoulder with an elliptical cross-section and often a two-ribbed ribbon (Pl. 26, nos. 17, 18, 19). Exceptionally well-preserved are the lids made with a reddish brown and medium purified fabric containing white inclusions of small dimensions (Pl. 26, nos. 20, 21, 22, 23, 24; Pl. 28, nos. 10, 11). The shapes are mainly truncated-conical characterized by the use of ribbing in relief and vent holes. No specimen has preserved the grips at the top.

The shapes for tableware include some basins of a truncated-conical shape with a raised rim or of the enlarged type, characterized by a fabric which has been little purified, with a colour from pinkish to beige, beige slip and in some cases external incised comb-like decoration (Pl. 24, nos. 1, 2; Pl. 27, nos. 27, 29). The plates, characterized by an everted rim, still follow the late Byzantine typology (Pl. 23, no. 6; Pl. 26, no. 25; Pl. 27, nos. 27, 28, 30, 31). Amongst the open shapes, for the purposes of dating, a cup without a foot of a truncated-conical shape, with carefully smoothed wall, a very fine pinkish fabric, a light outer layer with a light-coloured slip and geometric decoration with red abstract signs is of great importance (Fig. 97; Pl. 25, no. 9)²⁴⁹.

The same type of decoration and fabric is attested for small amphorae and jugs of which some fragments were recovered during the excavation (Pl. 24, no. 6; Pl. 25, nos. 1, 2; Pl. 28, no. 8). These vessels belong to the so-called *red-painted ware*, characterized by light, pure and well-fired fabrics, and naturally red paint²⁵⁰. The main centre of production is still unknown, but considering the area of finds, A. G. WALMSLEY suggests production linked to the area of the Balqa', in particular the region north of Amman²⁵¹. The quality and diffusion of this type of pottery reached a peak in the second half of the 8th cent. A.D., as shown by the interesting parallels that came to light in the sites of Umm er-Rasas²⁵², Tell Jawa south of Amman²⁵³, Amman²⁵⁴ and Khirbet es-Samra²⁵⁵. Worthy of note are some morphological modifications that concern the bottom of the vessels, which tend to prefer flat bases rather than bases with an umbilicus of the Byzantine period²⁵⁶.

²⁴⁹ There are numerous comparisons with the site of Umm er-Rasas, see Alliaia 1991, 395–396.

²⁵⁰ On this type of pottery, the subject of numerous studies, see at least Amr 1986; Gawlikoski 1995; Walmsley 2007, 341–344.

²⁵¹ Walmsley 2007, 342.

²⁵² Alliaia 1991; Alliaia 1993; Sanmori – Pappalardo 1997; Pappalardo 2002.

²⁵³ Daviau – Beckmann 1994, 259–274.

²⁵⁴ Northedge 1992, fig. 131.

²⁵⁵ Humbert – Desreumaux 1998.

²⁵⁶ Bianchi 2007, 172.

2.2. THE EXCAVATION OF CISTERN NO. 8 IN THE ATRIUM IN FRONT OF THE BASILICA

The cistern at the centre of the atrium, in front of the façade of the basilica, was found by S. SALLER during the archaeological campaigns of 1933–1935 and identified with the number 8 on the general plan of the monastic complex²⁵⁷ (Fig. 85, 98). The excavation was carried out in September 1995 and in May 1996 under the direction of E. ALLIATA²⁵⁸. Considering the particularity of the material found, chronologically and typically related to that from room no. 103 of the monastery and the upper rows of the *synthronon*, it was decided to publish it here.

List of Stratigraphic Units Cistern 8	
SU100	Walls of cistern containing small pottery fragments
SU101	Fine layer of plaster facing the walls of the cistern
SU200	Layer of cistern filling at level –1.60 m
SU201	Layer of cistern filling at level –2.50 m containing the reliquary S_21172 ²⁵⁹
SU202	Layer of cistern filling at level –3.70 m containing the capital S_21173 ²⁶⁰
SU203	Layer of cistern filling at level –3.90 m containing marbles S_21174–S_21193 ²⁶¹
SU300	Layer of cistern filling at level –4.00 m with pottery sherds
SU301	Layer of cistern filling at level –5.00 m with pottery sherds
SU302	Layer of cistern filling at level –5.50 m with pottery sherds
SU303	Layer of cistern filling at level –6.00 m with pottery sherds
SU400	Layer of cistern filling at level –6.60 m with pottery sherds
SU401	Upper layer of accumulation on the bottom of the cistern with pottery sherds
SU402	Lower layer of accumulation on the bottom of the cistern with pottery sherds

The structure, excavated wholly in the rock, is square in shape and measures 5.5 × 6 m with a depth of 6.60 m from the level of the atrium²⁶² (Figs. 100–101). Internally the cistern is made up of blocks of local stone laid in regular courses faced with plaster and by a second layer of small lateral stones²⁶³ (Fig. 99). At the time of the excavation in 1995, the vaulted roof partially appeared intact along the northern and southern sides while the remaining part had collapsed on to the upper layers of the filling²⁶⁴. The interior of the tank, as well as the superficial rubble, showed a rich stratigraphy with archaeological material. The upper layers were rich in architectonic elements, including one intact column, a capital and marble fragments belonging to the liturgical furnishings (Figs. 103–104). These marble elements were published by A. ACCONCI in the catalogue of stone finds in the volume on Nebo edited by M. PICCIRILLO and E. ALLIATA. As they are therefore already published in the literature, it was not deemed useful to present them here again, but the reader is invited to consult them elsewhere²⁶⁵. The lower levels, on the other hand, contained pottery fragments which are analysed here and a belt buckle (Fig. 102).

²⁵⁷ The cistern was seen for the first time by C. R. CONDER who mentioned it in his survey. In this regard, see Conder 1889, 155 and also Saller 1941, 77; pl. 49, 1–2; pl. 161; Alliata 1996, 394.

²⁵⁸ Alliata 1996, 394.

²⁵⁹ Acconci 1998, 499 no. 82.

²⁶⁰ Acconci 1998, 475 no. 12.

²⁶¹ Acconci 1998, 484 no. 37. 487 no. 50. 489 no. 58. 499 no. 81. 507–509 no. 102. 516–518 nos. 131–133. 525 no. 148–149.

²⁶² Saller 1941, 77; Alliata 1996, 394.

²⁶³ Alliata 1996, 394.

²⁶⁴ Alliata 1996, 394; Saller 1941, 77.

²⁶⁵ See in this regard the catalogue in Acconci 1998, 471–542.



Fig. 98 Memorial of Moses. Cistern no. 8 at the time of SALLER's excavation.



Fig. 99 Memorial of Moses. Cistern no. 8 after the excavation in 1996 (after Alliata 1996, 394).

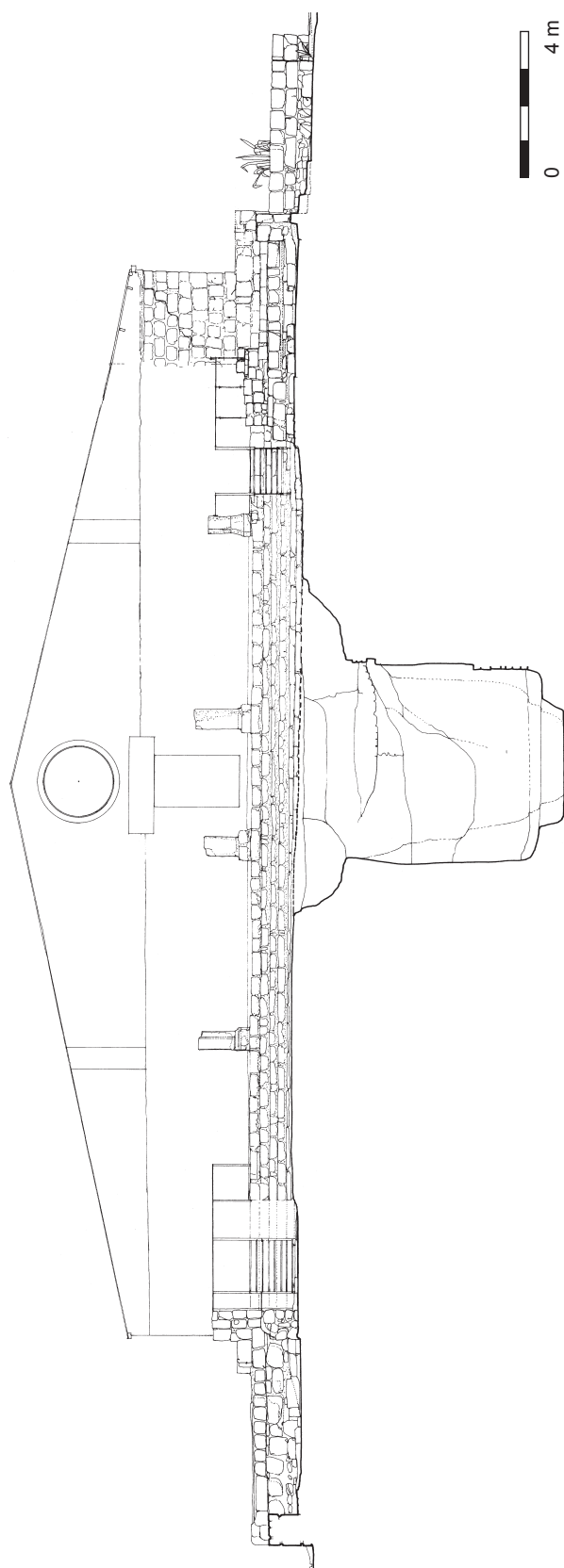


Fig. 100 Memorial of Moses. Cistern no. 8, north-south cross-section after excavation.

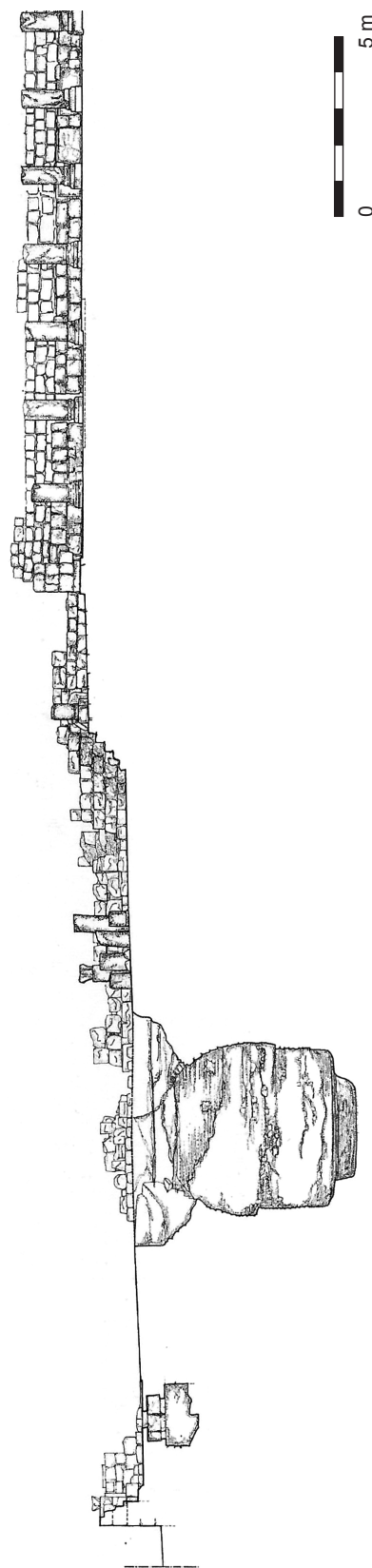


Fig. 101 Memorial of Moses. Cistern no. 8, east-west cross-section after excavation.



Fig. 102 Memorial of Moses. Cistern no. 8, bronze buckle.



Fig. 103 Memorial of Moses. Cistern no. 8, column found in SU203.



Fig. 104 Memorial of Moses. Cistern no. 8, marble fragments belonging to the liturgical furnishings found in SU203.

2.2.1 Catalogue of finds

SU100 (cistern walls) S_21151–S_21169 (Pls. 29–30)

1. S_21160 Amphora. Very fine fabric; Diam. 10 cm; colour: pinkish, brown in cross-section; beige slip; metal firing.
2. S_21161 Pot. Fine fabric; Diam. 16; colour: pinkish; beige slip; strong firing.
3. S_21156 Cup. Very fine fabric. Diam. 20 cm; colour: pinkish; beige slip, red paint with geometric motif; strong firing.
4. S_21152 Basin. Granular fabric; Diam. 28 cm; colour: pinkish; beige slip; strong firing.
5. S_21167 Basin. Fine fabric; Diam. 24 cm; colour: brown, grey in cross-section; weak firing.
6. S_21159 Small amphora (foot). Very fine fabric; colour: pinkish; very strong firing.
7. S_21158 Basin. Fine fabric; Diam. 30 cm; colour: brown, pinkish in cross-section; beige slip, incised geometric decoration; strong firing.
8. S_21162 Tile. Granular fabric; colour: pinkish, grey in cross-section; strong firing.
9. S_21166 Tile. Granular fabric; colour: pinkish; beige slip; strong firing.
10. S_21169 Small brick. Fine fabric; colour: pinkish; beige slip; strong firing.

SU300 (sherds at level –4.00 m) S_21196–S_21208 (Pls. 31–32)

1. S_21200_21240_21292 Flask. Very fine fabric; Diam. 8 cm; colour: grey; pinkish slip; very strong firing. (Combines fragments S_21240, S_21292).
2. S_21196 Small amphora. Fine fabric; Diam. 10 cm; colour: pinkish, brown in cross-section; beige slip, red paint; very strong firing.
3. S_21205_21229_21253_21254 Small amphora. Fine fabric; Diam. 10 cm; colour: yellowish, white slip, dark red painted decoration; medium firing (combines the fragments S_21229, S_21253, S_21199, S_21254).
4. S_21206 Cup. Very fine fabric; Diam. 10; colour: light brown; metal firing.
5. S_21204 Amphora (base). Fine fabric; colour: pinkish; white slip, red paint; medium firing.

SU301 (sherds at level –5.00 m) S_21209–S_21223 (Pls. 33–34)

1. S_21210 Large jar for oil. Medium fabric with small white and black inclusions; Diam. 18; colour: pinkish, beige in cross-section; white slip, decoration incised with comb; strong firing.
2. S_21214 Basin. Medium fabric with small white inclusions; Diam. 28; colour: brown; beige slip, decoration incised with comb; strong firing.
3. S_21215 Basin. Medium fabric with small white inclusions; Diam. 28; colour: pinkish; white slip, decoration incised with comb; strong firing.
4. S_21216 Basin. Fine fabric; Diam. 28; colour: yellowish, plastic cord decoration; medium firing.
5. S_21220 Large jar for oil (base). Medium fabric with white inclusions; colour: pinkish, light brown in cross-section; beige slip; very strong firing.
6. S_21217 Basin. Fine fabric; colour: pinkish; white slip, brown in cross-section; strong firing.
7. S_21211 Basin. Fine fabric; colour: pinkish; white slip, decoration incised with comb; strong firing.
8. S_21212 Large jar for oil (handle). Medium fabric with white inclusions; colour: pinkish; white slip; strong firing.
9. S_21223 Large jar for oil (handle). Granular fabric; colour: pinkish; beige slip, red paint; strong firing.
10. S_21219 Small brick. Very fine fabric; colour: light brown; beige slip; very strong firing.

SU302 (sherds at level –5.50 m) S_21224–S_21248 (Pls. 35–36)

1. S_21225 Jug. Very fine fabric; Diam. 12 cm; colour: light brown, beige slip; very strong firing.
2. S_21230 Small amphora. Fine fabric; Diam. 10 cm; colour: pinkish, beige slip, red paint; very strong firing. (Combines fragment S_21320).
3. S_21231_S_21348 Amphora. Very fine fabric; Diam. 10 cm; colour: pinkish, beige slip, red paint; very strong firing. (Combines fragments S_21291, S_21317, S_21348).

4. S_21236 Rim of small amphora. Very fine fabric; Diam. 10; colour: pinkish, light brown in cross-section; beige slip, red paint; strong firing.
5. S_21244 Small jug. Fine fabric; Diam. 12 cm; colour: pinkish; beige slip, red paint; very strong firing.
6. S_21245 Amphora. Very fine fabric; Diam. 10 cm; colour: pinkish; beige slip; very strong firing.
7. S_21235 Small amphora (base). Fine fabric; colour: pinkish; beige slip, red paint; strong firing.
8. S_21237 Pot. Medium fabric with white inclusions; Diam. 14 cm; colour: light brown, black in cross-section, external blackish patina of firing, ribbing on neck and shoulder; very strong firing.
9. S_21242 Pan (bottom). Very fine fabric; Diam. 11 cm; colour: grey; beige slip; metal firing. Cf. S_21250
10. S_21239 Handle. Fine fabric; colour: yellowish; strong firing.
11. S_21226 Oil lamps of the type with vine decoration. Fine fabric; colour: beige; weak firing.

SU303 (sherds at level -6.00 m) S_21250-S_21286

(Pls. 37-38)

1. S_21259 Bottle. Fine fabric, small white inclusions; Diam. 6.5 cm; colour: light brown; beige slip, red paint; strong firing.
2. S_21280 Amphora. Fine fabric; Diam. 10 cm; colour: light brown, pinkish in cross-section; beige slip; strong firing.
3. S_21266 Amphora. Very fine fabric; Diam. 10 cm; colour: pinkish; beige slip; strong firing.
4. S_21267 Amphora. Fine fabric; Diam. 8 cm; colour: pinkish; beige slip; strong firing.
5. S_21268 Small amphora. Very fine fabric; Diam. 8 cm; colour: light brown; beige slip, red paint; strong firing.
6. S_21273 Jug. Fine fabric; Diam. 8 cm; colour: yellowish; strong firing.
7. S_21265 Amphora. Fine fabric; Diam. 10 cm; colour: pinkish; strong firing. (Combines fragment S_21330).
8. S_21281 Small amphora. Very fine fabric; Diam. 10 cm; colour: pinkish; beige slip; strong firing.
9. S_21258_21360 Cup. Very fine fabric; Diam. 20 cm; colour: pinkish, brown in cross-section; beige slip, decoration with plant scrolls in red paint which enclose alternately a bunch of grapes and a lanceolate leaf; metal firing.
10. S_21264 Cup. Very fine fabric; Diam. 8 cm; colour: pinkish; beige slip, red paint; very strong firing.
11. S_21277 Cup. Fine fabric; Diam. 10 cm; colour: brown; beige slip; strong firing.
12. S_21250 Pan (handle) Very fine fabric; colour: grey; beige slip; metal firing. Cf. S_21242.
13. S_21271 Jug (spout). Fine fabric; colour: pinkish; beige slip, red paint; strong firing.
14. S_21278 Handle. Very fine fabric; colour: pinkish; beige slip; very strong firing.
15. S_21274 Handle. Very fine fabric; colour: pinkish; beige slip, red paint; strong firing.
16. S_21275 Handle. Very fine fabric; colour: pinkish; beige slip, red paint; strong firing.

SU400 (sherds at level -6.60 m) S_21287-S_21313

(Pls. 39-41)

1. S_21290_21316_21345 Amphora. Fine fabric; Diam. 10 cm; colour: yellowish, decoration incised with comb on shoulder; good firing. (Combines the fragments S_21316, S_21290).
2. S_21287 Amphora. Very fine fabric; Diam. 13 cm; colour: pinkish; beige slip, red paint; very strong firing. (Combines the fragments S_21362, S_21315, S_21325).
3. S_21294 Amphora. Very fine fabric; Diam. 11 cm; colour: light brown; beige slip; strong firing.
4. S_21302 Small amphora. Very fine fabric; Diam. 10 cm; colour: pinkish; beige slip; strong firing.
5. S_21301 Small amphora. Fine fabric; colour: yellowish, comb decoration; medium firing. (Combines the fragment S_21224).
6. S_21288 Jug. Fine fabric; Diam. 5.5 cm; colour: pinkish; beige slip; decorations incised with comb; good firing.
7. S_21303 Small amphora. Fine fabric; Diam. 11 cm; colour: light brown; beige slip; strong firing.
8. S_21312 Small amphora. Fine fabric; Diam. 10 cm; colour: light brown; beige slip, red paint; strong firing.
9. S_21311 Small amphora. Fine fabric; Diam. 10 cm; colour: pinkish; beige slip, red paint; strong firing.
10. S_21306 Cup. Very fine fabric; Diam. 10 cm; colour: pinkish; beige slip, red paint; strong firing.
11. S_21295 Cup. Fine fabric; Diam. 6.5 cm; colour: pinkish, white paint, bottom with signs of burning; strong firing.
12. S_21310 Cup. Very fine fabric; Diam. 12 cm; colour: pinkish, red paint; very strong firing. (Combines the fragments S_21296 and S_21248).

13. S_21295/1 Handle. Very fine fabric; colour: pinkish; beige slip; strong firing.
14. S_21300 Miniature jug. Very fine fabric; Diam. 2 cm; colour: pinkish, decorations incised on shoulder; strong firing.
15. S_21309 Ointment holder (bottom). Very fine fabric; colour: grey; strong firing.

SU401 (sherds accumulated on the bottom) S_21314–S_21327 *(Pl. 42)*

1. S_21321 Amphora. Fine fabric; Diam. 13; colour: yellowish, dark red geometric spiral-shaped decoration; strong firing.
2. S_21319 Small amphora. Fine fabric; Diam. 8 cm; colour: light brown; beige slip; strong firing.
3. S_21326 Small amphora. Fine fabric; Diam. 8 cm; colour: yellowish; very strong firing.
4. S_21321/4 Small amphora (foot). Very fine fabric; colour: pinkish; beige slip; strong firing.
5. S_21324 Small amphora (foot). Very fine fabric; colour: pinkish; very strong firing.
6. S_21323 Small amphora (foot). Very fine fabric; colour: grey, red paint; strong firing.
7. S_21327 Small amphora (bottom). Very fine fabric; colour: pinkish; beige slip, red paint; metal firing.

SU402 (sherds-bottom) S_21328–S_21364 *(Pls. 43–44)*

1. S_21331 Pot. Medium fabric with small white inclusions; Diam. 10 cm; colour: grey; blackish patina, ribbing on neck, shoulder and belly; strong firing.
2. S_21357 Amphora. Fine fabric; Diam. 11 cm; colour: pinkish, grey in cross-section; beige slip; decoration in bands in red paint; strong firing.
3. S_21353 Amphora. Fine fabric; Diam. 14 cm; colour: pinkish; beige slip, red paint; very strong firing.
4. S_21355 Amphora. Fine fabric; Diam. 10 cm; colour: pinkish; strong firing.
5. S_21340 Jug. Fine fabric; Diam. 8 cm; colour: light brown; beige slip; strong firing.
6. S_21349 Jug. Very fine fabric; Diam. 8 cm; colour: light brown; beige slip, red paint; metal firing.
7. S_21351 Jug. Fine fabric; Diam. 6 cm; colour: light brown; beige slip; very strong firing.
8. S_21350 Small amphora. Granular fabric; Diam. 7 cm; colour: reddish, brown in cross-section; beige slip; strong firing.
9. S_21352 Jug. Very fine fabric; Diam. 8 cm; colour: pinkish, red paint; very strong firing.
10. S_21356 Jug. Granular fabric; Diam. 8 cm; colour: brown; strong firing.
11. S_21329 Cup. Very fine fabric; Diam. 8 cm; colour: brown, grey in cross-section; metal firing.
12. S_21338 Amphora (bottom). Granular fabric; colour: light brown; beige slip; strong firing.
13. S_21361 Jug (spout). Fine fabric; colour: pinkish; beige slip, red paint; strong firing.
14. S_21359 Pot. Fine fabric; colour: reddish, brown in cross-section; very strong firing.

2.2.2 Conclusions

The Amphorae found in cistern no. 8 show generally very pure or finely granular fabric and are of a pinkish colour with an external beige slip and very strong firing. Numerous sherds show the typical geometric and abstract decoration in red typical of the *red-painted ware* of the Umayyad-Abbasid period already recalled for the finds in room no. 103. Specimens with an incised decoration used in the Byzantine period are absent. Worthy of note is an Amphora with a very long neck and rim reinforced by a band (Pl. 39, no.1) which finds comparison at the monastery of ‘Ain Kanisah²⁶⁶ and above all in the ecclesiastical complexes of Umm er-Rasas²⁶⁷ and Amman²⁶⁸. The small amphorae, very numerous, show decorations with sinuous bands on the neck and on the shoulder, a slightly everted rim and handles with a hexagonal

²⁶⁶ Alliata 1994a, 534 no.2

²⁶⁷ Sanmori – Pappalardo 1997, 400–401 no. 9a.

²⁶⁸ Harding 1951, fig. 4, 38.

and double ribbed profile (Figs. 105–106; Pl. 32, no. 3; Pl. 35, no. 2, 3, 5; Pl. 42, no. 1; Pl. 43, no. 2). Morphologically the globular shape recurs and, in some cases, a slight fairing appears (Fig. 107; Pl. 39, no. 2). The ensemble of pottery from the cistern contains a specimen of a jug with the usual hole for the spout which unfortunately has been lost (Pl. 41, no. 6). As this was an important element useful for dating, considering its progressive lengthening in the Abbasid phases, particular prudence is necessary in dating. However, the morphological characteristics outlined seem to differentiate the vase from the previous Byzantine vessels, thus suggesting a dating which is ascribed to the late Umayyad period²⁶⁹. Lastly, a small miniature jug which has an exact comparison in Pella is interesting, and suggests a dating to the end of the 7th cent. A.D.²⁷⁰ (Fig. 114; Pl. 41, no. 14).

A bottle that morphologically represents a single piece in the pottery production of Mount Nebo agrees in the same type of fabric and decoration with the small amphorae described previously (Fig. 108; Pl. 37, no. 1). Amongst the drinking vessels, particular attention should be paid to a flask, preserved in its entirety, characterized by a globular body, a very fine fabric and a very accurate polishing which finds an interesting comparison dated to the beginning of the Abbasid period, from the site of Pella (Fig. 113; Pl. 31, no. 1)²⁷¹.

As for the cooking shapes, only one pot shaped on the lathe is attested, with a fairly rounded rim with a dark coloured granular fabric (Fig. 109; Pl. 36, no. 8). Pans are totally absent. This particularity of the pottery lot is probably to be attributed to the peculiar nature of the context where they were found, a cistern, where drinking forms linked to drawing water prevail.

Among the open shapes, there are large basins of truncated-conical shape, characterized by a medium pure fabric of a pinkish-brown colour and with a light-coloured slip (Pl. 29, no. 4; Pl. 30, no. 6; Pl. 33, nos. 2, 3, 4). Highly evident incised decoration is on the walls of the receptacles. The rim, often with a brim, in one case has applied cords (Pl. 33, no. 4).

Cups form a good part of the pottery ensemble and can be divided into three distinct groups. The first comprises the small cups of a hemispherical shape with a very fine fabric and a polish tending to brown which are also found up to the Abbasid period (Pl. 32, no. 4; Pl. 38, no. 11)²⁷². The second includes the cups with a truncated-conical shape, characterized by a greater depth, slightly more vertical walls and a slightly everted rim (Pl. 38, no. 10; Fig. 110; Pl. 41, nos. 10, 11, 12). These show the usual red paint on white slip, typical of the last Umayyad period as shown by the cases of Umm-er Rasas²⁷³, Dhiban²⁷⁴, and Jerash²⁷⁵. The last group, certainly the latest, includes a large cup with a truncated-conical shape, a very fine pinkish fabric, often a light-coloured slip and red paint decoration (Fig. 111; Pl. 38, no. 9). The find was restored in its entirety and deserves special mention for the aesthetic refinement of the decorative motif made up of a band containing a sinuous vine which forms some spirals containing bunches of grapes alternating with large lanceolate leaves. This typology is very common in the excess layers of the site of Umm er-Rasas. The dating proposed, thanks to the numerous comparisons with the material studied by E. ALLIATA and C. PAPPALARDO, situated it in the middle of the Abbasid period with a use continuing until the 10th cent. A.D.²⁷⁶.

The only oil lamp found is of the type with spirals of vine with an almond-shaped body and bottom (Fig. 112; Pl. 36, no. 11). The valves of the oil lamp are particularly crushed and the handle with a truncated-pyramidal and trapezoid shape belongs to the type called “tongue”. The

²⁶⁹ For some comparisons with Umm er-Rasas, see Alliaata 1994b, 283–284 no. 95.

²⁷⁰ Smith *et al.* 1992, 177–178 no. 6; pl. 113, 6.

²⁷¹ Walmsley 1982, 170. 171 no. 1; Walmsley 1988, 155 fig. 8, 2.

²⁷² See in particular the case of Umm er-Rasas in Alliaata 1991, 419.

²⁷³ In the complex of St Stephen, see Alliaata 1991, 370 fig. 3, 3. 396 fig. 17, 3. 398 fig. 18, 11; 18, 21.

²⁷⁴ Tushingham 1972, 40–42, fig. 6.

²⁷⁵ Gawlikowski 1986a, pl. XXII; XIIIb.

²⁷⁶ Alliaata 1991, fig. 18, 21; Alliaata 1993, 286. Sanmori – Pappalardo 1997, 422–424 no. 9.



S_21321



Fig. 105 Memorial of Moses. Cistern no. 8, amphora S_21321.



S_21357

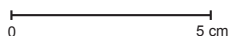


Fig. 106 Memorial of Moses. Cistern no. 8, amphora S_21357.

fabric is of a light colour and the firing is very strong. The particularly significant decoration represents two *kantharoi* at the sides of the *infundibulum* and other plant elements. The decorative pattern has comparisons above all in the area of Jerusalem, as shown by some specimens recovered during the excavation of the Probatic Pool in the Holy City²⁷⁷ and at the site of Khirbet el-Mafjar²⁷⁸. The morphological and typological characteristics ascribe the lamp to the middle of the Abbasid period (late 8th – early 9th cent. A.D.) when the archaeological site was frequented at its latest²⁷⁹.

²⁷⁷ Arndt 1987, 264–268 nos. 94–99; figs. 6–7.

²⁷⁸ Baramki 1944, pl. XVIII no. 3.

²⁷⁹ Da Costa 2001, 255 no. 9. See also Daviau – Beckmann 2001, 259–274 on the subject.



S_21287_21315_21325

0 5 cm

Fig. 107 Memorial of Moses. Cistern no. 8, small amphora S_21287_21315_21325.



S_21259

0 5 cm

Fig. 108
Memorial of Moses.
Cistern no. 8, bottle
S_21259.



Fig. 109 Memorial of Moses. Cistern no. 8, cooking pot S_21237.

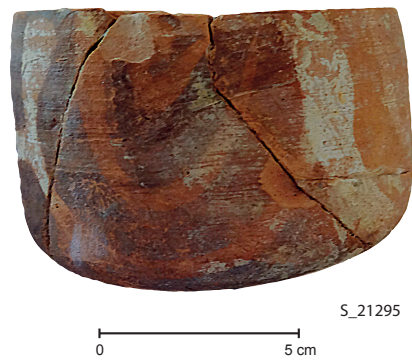


Fig. 110 Memorial of Moses. Cistern no. 8, cup S_21295.



Fig. 111 Memorial of Moses. Cistern no. 8, cup S_21258_21360.

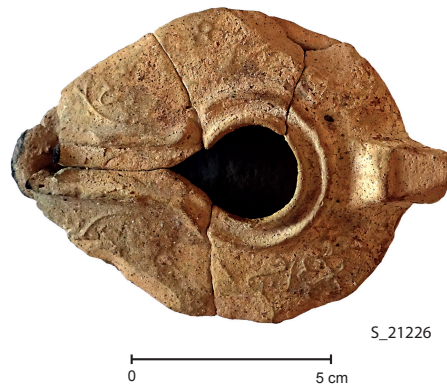


Fig. 112 Memorial of Moses. Cistern no. 8, oil lamp S_21226.



Fig. 113 Memorial of Moses. Cistern no. 8, flask S_21200_21240_21292.



Fig. 114 Memorial of Moses. Cistern no. 8, miniature jug S_21300.



Fig. 115 Memorial of Moses. Cistern no. 8, small amphora S_21262_21294.

