



PETRA DURING THE CRUSADER PERIOD FROM THE EVIDENCE OF AL-WUAYRA CASTLE: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

This review aims to reappraise the history of Petra region during the Crusader period (A.D.1100-1188), based on both historical and archaeological sources. It discusses the archaeological evidence of Crusader settlement in Petra and al-Wuayra castle, and gives a description of the castle. It also considers the expeditions of the Crusaders kings to Petra during the first half of 12th century, drawing from the historical accounts of Crusader historians which provide important information about al-Wuayra castle, and some economic and social aspects in Petra during this period. Attention also focuses on the writings of 19th-20th century European travelers and the end of Crusader occupation in Petra.

KEYWORDS: Petra, Wadi Musa, al-Wuayra Castle, Crusader Period, Human Settlement, Jordan

INTRODUCTION

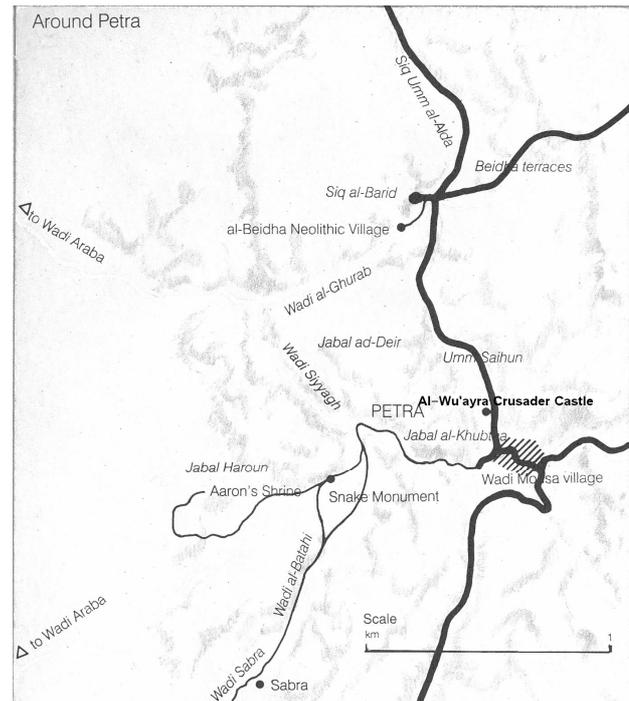
When the trade began to decline after the Roman conquest of Petra in 106 A.D, its inhabitants began to emigrate in search of livelihoods elsewhere. "The fortified nature of the site remained, a fact which did not escape the vigilant eyes of the Crusaders in the southern province of "Trans- Jordan"¹ where they sought positions to build castles for protection and sallying out to intercept the flow of caravans from Cairo to Damascus" (Hammond 1970 5). This accounts for the decision of the Crusader lords of the area, possibly in the 12th century, to establish a new fort on the summit of al-Wuayra mountain in Petra valley (Hammond 1970: 5).

In the 12th century the Crusaders re-imposed central authority over south Jordan. The importance of southern Jordan during the twelfth century and under the Crusaders is archaeologically demonstrated by four significant castles constructed at al-Kerak (A.D. 1142)², ash-Shawbak³ (A.D. 1115), al-Wuayra (A.D. 1115/6) outside Petra and al-Habis⁴ in Petra (Walmsley 2001: 516, AbuDanah 2006: 226).

The Arab biographer and geographer Yaqut al-Hamawi (d.1229) notes that, "owing to the construction of ash-Shawbak the passage from Egypt to Syria was blocked". Not only was ash-Shawbak on one of the main routes between Cairo and Damascus, but it also threatened the free traffic of Syrian pilgrims making the annual hajj to the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina (Milwright 2006: 3).

Central and southern Jordan had a number of important assets during the Crusader period. "First there were the natural recourses of the region. The fertile plains of Balqa, al-Kerak was capable of producing regular agricultural surplus. Second, the Bedouin of the southern and eastern deserts were important for their herds of sheep, goats, horses and camels. Third, southern Jordan had already demonstrated their defensive qualities during the last years of Frankish rule" (Milwright 2006: 7).

The castle of al-Wuayra is most important fortress of the Petra valley, and the largest castle built just outside Petra. The site has always attracted the attention of historians and archaeologists (Walmsley 2001: 516). (Map.1)



Map 1: The site of al-Wuayra Castle (Miettunen 2004:86)

The site of Petra, the ancient capital of the Nabataeans, had a central role in enacting the feudal system of fortification of the valley and a system ready to protect the "Kings Highway"⁵, and that fact was the first defenses of the eastern United Latin Jerusalem (Bini and Bertocci 1997: 407). The arrival of the Crusaders in the early 12th century in the Petra region, most sites especially Petra re-appear in the historical crusader sources.

PETRA (WĀDĪ MŪSĀ) DURING THE CRUSADER PERIOD

The 10th and 11th centuries were a period of prolonged warfare between the central Fatimid government in Cairo and their opponents in Palestine. It is unclear to which extent this unrest affected southern Jordan (Schick 1997: 76-77). However, the written sources of the period indicate that the picture of depopulation suggested by the archaeological finds is exaggerated. In the listings of early 10th century Arab geographers 'Adhruh (Udhruh) is mentioned alternately as the capital of the district of al-Sharāh (Schick 1997: 75).

There is little mention of nomads in the literary sources of the Islamic period, although

Arab tribes probably formed a substantial part of the population, as in preceding periods (Schick 1994: 147). The accounts of the Crusader historians, however, give some indications that a mixed settled and nomadic population existed (Walmsley 2001: 520). Nine multi-period camp sites have been recorded in the Jitha sector by the Wādī Mūsā Water Supply and Wastewater Project survey, testifying to the existence of a nomadic population in the eastern parts of the Petra region in 19th century ('Amr and Al-Momani 2001: 278).

In the late 10th century, 'Adhruh and Mu'an (Ma'an) are mentioned as townships in the al-Sharāh region in the account of the geographer al-Maqdisi (d.1000) (al-Maqdisi 1994: 120; Schick 1997: 75; Walmsley 2001: 517). In A.D. 1071 the Seljuq⁶ forces invaded southern Jordan; and the historical sources record the presence of Seljuq military force in Wādī Mūsā in A.D. 1107 (Schick 1997: 77-78). Walmsley (2001: 518) has postulated that Wādī Mūsā became an important centre for the Al-Sharāh district during the Seljuq period, and Schick (1997: 79) considers Wādī Mūsā the major settlement in the area by the beginning of the 12th century. However, apparently there was not a permanent Seljuq military presence in the area, because Baldwin I with his Crusaders was able to make his first expedition to Wādī Mūsā without resistance in A.D. 1100 (Schick 1997: 78-79).

In the early 12th century Wādī Mūsā, ancient Petra, is the most important object of Crusader military activity south of the Dead Sea. Latin sources describe Wādī Mūsā as a fertile valley having dense olive groves and mills on its streams (Schick 1997: 79).

The Petra area was strategically important during the Crusades in the 12th century, as testified in the written sources and the Crusader castles and keeps in the area, namely al-Wuayra (*Le Vaux Moise*) and al-Habis (Vannini and Vanni-Desideri 1995: 514). Smail "has pointed out that the fact of a Crusader castle in an area gave its lord the power to control the area for personal gain, to be sure, but also, at the same time, gave the total military machine of the Crusader Kingdom another force against the Muslim" (Smail 1956: 214). (Fig 1)

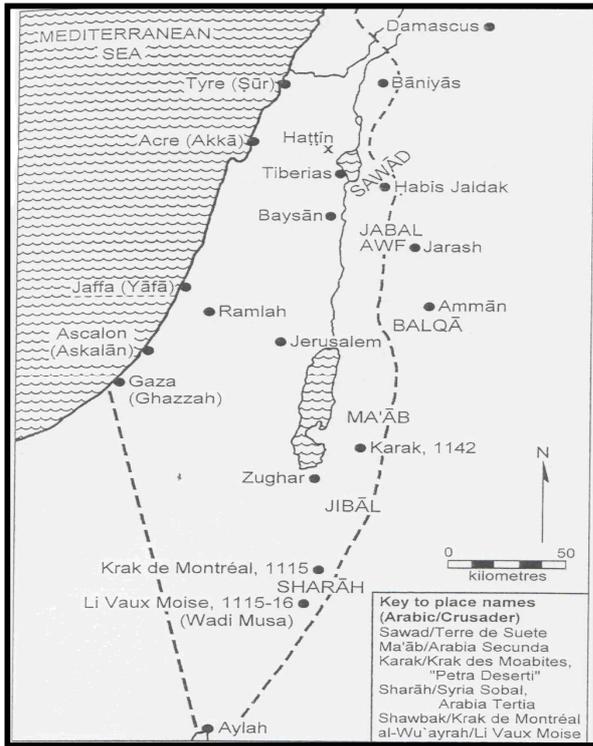


Fig. 1: al-Wuayra Castle, View from north (Photo by Mohammed Nasarat)

The historical evidence suggests that the area of Wādī Mūsā had good trade relations with centers such as Ayla and Udhruh during the Crusader period. Some of the commercial products could have been sold to the garrisons in the castles at ash-Shawbak and Wādī Mūsā (Walmsley 2001: 543). The great North-south route through Wādī Mūsā was of primary importance, in a military sense, since it linked Egypt with the Arab forces to the North.

Thus complete military control of this communication line was imperative (Hammond 1970: 39). The financial aspects of Crusader fortification of any area were also of major importance. The particular geographical situation of Wādī Mūsā relates to Petra which from earliest times was the guardian of the "Gaza Road"⁷, the branch of the North-south route leading off to the coast. Thus, adequate control of the valley area was essential for the revenues of the kingdom (Hammond 1970: 39)

The area of southern Jordan in general, and Wādī Mūsā in particular, fell under the control of Crusaders when the Crusader king Baldwin I King of Jerusalem (1100-1118) led an expedition of 150 knights and 500 soldiers foot in September / A.D. 1100 (Schick 1997: 79, Pringle 2001: 677). The Crusader historian Fulcher of Chartres informs us that "he accompanied Baldwin to Hebron, then down to the Dead Sea, south to Petra" (Fulcher of Chartres 1969: 11).



Map.2: The main castles in the southern Jordan (Walmsley 2001: 517)

The description of the monastery of Aaron at Jabal Harun south of Petra suggests that the Crusaders stayed in Wādī Mūsā for a few days. Fulcher of Chartres observed “Further more we found at the top of the mountain the monastery of St Aaron where Moses and Aaron were wont to speak with God. We rejoiced very much to behold a place so holy and to us unknown...” (Fulcher of Chartres 1969:147, Fulcher of Chartres 1903: 2.5, Frösén and Fiema 2002: 25-27). Other Crusader records mention the presence of a church there (Fiema 2002:34) (Fig 2).



Fig.2: The entrance of church at al-Wuayra Castle (Photo by Mohammed Nasarat)

After staying in Wādī Mūsā the Crusaders returned to Jerusalem, without continuing further south or establishing a permanent fort anywhere in the area. They did not meet any resistance from the local inhabitants (Schick 1997:79). This means that there is no Muslim force neither Fatimid nor Seljuq, in southern Jordan during this period. According to Schick "The fact that Wādī Mūsā served as an appropriate stopping point for the expedition suggests that it was the major settlement in the area" (Schick 1997: 79). During the Crusader period Wādī Mūsā was the most important settlement and administrative centre in al-Sherah (Abudanh 2006: 227).

In A.D. 1106-1107 and at the request of local Bedouin of Wādī Mūsā, the Seljuq ruler in Damascus Tughtigin (*Atabeg* of Damascus) had sent an army to Wādī Mūsā (Edom) to establish a base from which Judaea could be raided.

Runciman observes "the Idumaeen wilderness contained several Greeks monasteries, and one of the monks, a certain Theodore, urged Baldwin I to intervene. Baldwin I marched down close to the Turkish (Bedouin) in the Wādī Mūsā near Petra, but he wished to avoid a battle. Theodore therefore offered to go as though a fugitive to Togtakin's general, to warn him that a huge Frankish army was at hand" (Runciman 1987:97). The result was the retreat of the Turkish army to Damascus without a battle; then Baldwin I punished the local inhabitants by smoking them out of their caves and looting their flocks" (Runciman 1987: 98). When he returned to Jerusalem he took with him many of the native Christians out of fear of reprisals from the Bedouin (Schick 1997: 80).

This may indicate that people lived in the Nabataean tombs of Petra (McKenzie 1991: 144). The main settlement in the valley was probably at Khirbat an-Nawafleh ('Amr *et al.* 2000: 244-246), but evidence of occupation during this period has been found also in the modern Wādī Mūsā area ('Amr and al-Momani 2001: 268). Walmsley notes "the time of the arrival of the Crusaders Jordan was under the jurisdiction of the *atabeg* of Damascus, but that by A.D. 1111 the Crusaders under Baldwin I had deeply penetrated this territory and established a permanent presence, probably with the tacit support of sec-

tions of the local Christian population" (Walmsley 2001: 519).

The earlier Crusader plundering raids would refer to Baldwin's initial raid to Wādī Mūsā in A.D. 1100, or the more extensive Crusader raiding in central and northern Jordan in the following years. Again the objective of the Crusaders' expedition was to keep any hostile force out of the area. Whether they established a permanent fortification in the area at that time is unclear. As in A.D. 1100, Wādī Mūsā appears as the major settlement in the area" (Schick 1997: 80). In A.D. 1115 Baldwin I extended control as far as Ayla (Aqaba) on the Red Sea (Walmsley 2001: 519).

According to the Islamic sources Baldwin II, the king of Jerusalem, attacked Wādī Mūsā again in A.D. 1127 "and having plundered and enslaved its inhabitants and scattered them, he withdrew and left them" (Schick 1997: 79, Ibn al-Qalanisi 1908: 218).

The town again rebelled against the Crusader domination and the castle of al-Wuayra was captured and held for a while. The Crusader historian "William of Tyre" provides us with important account about the locals inhabitants in Wādī Mūsā who seized the fortress of al-Wuayra during the second campaign of Baldwin II, when he writes: "the country had already news of our approach and with their wives and children had fled into the fortress, the defenses of which seemed to render it impregnable. For several days our forces exerted themselves in vain before the place... Finally the Christians became convinced that, because of its fortifications, the place could not be taken, they therefore turned to other plans" (William of Tyre 1943: 145, Schick 1997: 81).

According to Hammond Baldwin II "led a campaign to establish fortified military garrisons in southern Transjordan" such as: ash-Shawbak (Montréal) castle, Aqaba (*Aila*) castle and al-Wuayra castle (fort at *Le Vaux Moise*)⁸ (Hammond 1970: 35). Baldwin set about securing and expanding his lands in Palestine and east of the Jordan. He faced a hard struggle (Kennedy 2008: 38), according to Fulcher of Chartres, who knew the situation at first hand, because only 300 knights remained in the whole kingdom (Fulcher of Chartres 1969: 150).

The Crusader sources give some testimony of the socio-economic conditions of the early 12th century, mentioning villages along the route from Zughar (Ghor es-Safi) to Wādī Mūsā. The valley of Wādī Mūsā is described as "rich in the fruits of earth" and having olive groves and water mills (Walmsley 2001: 520, Schick 1997: 81).

William of Tyre also described the land of Wādī Mūsā and its products; he said: "the entire region was covered with luxuriant olive groves which shaded the surface of the land like a dense forest, from these trees the dwellers in that land derived all their living, as their fathers had done before them. If these failed, then all means of livelihood would be taken away. It was determined, therefore, to root out the trees and burn them. It was thought that the terrified inhabitants, rendered desperate by the destruction of their olive groves, would either give up or drive out the Turks (local inhabitants) who had taken refuge in the citadel and surrender the fortress to us. This plan was entirely successful" (William of Tyre 1943: 145, Schick 1997: 81). This means that Wādī Mūsā and its hinterland is principal settlement in this time, so Baldwin II tried many times to capture this area. He came down from Hebron, round the base of the Dead Sea, and across the Wādī al-Araba (Runciman 1987: 97).

The Crusader fortifications came to protect the eastern and southern flank of Crusader claims in the southern Levant and enable the Crusader to control the trade routes connected Egypt to Syria and Arabia (Brown 1987: 269). "It is evident that one of the primary reasons for Baldwin's II decision to extend his authority into central and southern Jordan was the desire to extract payments from merchants and pilgrims passing through Jordan via the King's Highway (*darb al-sultan*) and other routes further east (Milwright 2006: 4).

The construction of the *castrum* at al-Wuayra could have begun before A.D. 1116 aimed at controlling the King's Highway (connecting Syria to the Hijaz and Egypt) and the strategic natural resources of the pre-desertic belt of springs and exploitable lands (Drap *et al.* 2005: 3).

Walmsley has suggested that the castle of al-Wuayra may have been built around the same time as the ash-Shawbak castle (built in A.D.

1115) (Walmsley 2001: 518-519), but Schick (1997: 80) considers that the date of the construction of the al-Wuayra castle may be later, perhaps after the first revolt which Baldwin II suppressed in Wādī Mūsā in A.D. 1127.

The castles protected the Crusader settlement against external attack; were also an instrument of conquest and colonization, and continuously embodied part of the force on which Latin dominion rested (Smail 1951: 149). The Crusader castle at al-Habis in Petra was erected to "monitor the activities of the cave-dwelling Arabs and the Wadi "Arabeh routes" (Walmsley 2001: 519). In A.D. 1154 Nur ed-Din had extended his territory to the very borders of Oultre Jourdain. In A.D. 1158 an invasion was made into the heart of the district and al-Wuayra was besieged for eight days. The strength of the defenses was such as to resist the attack, however, and the fort was not taken (Hammond 1970: 35). For almost a quarter of a century thereafter Wadi Musa drops out of the records, until, in A.D. 1182 an interdictory move of Baldwin IV was made into the area against the forces of Salah ad-Din, according to the report of William of Tyre (William of Tyre 1943: 165, Hammond 1970: 35). In A.D. 1187, the Muslims swept away the Latin kingdom at Hattin, and the forts of Oultre Jourdain were no longer in Frank hands (Hammond 1970: 35).

By building many castles in southern Jordan the Crusaders dominated the roads between Egypt, Arabia and Damascus and make it difficult for any Moslem army to reach Egypt from the East.

There are quite a few small, short-lived Middle Islamic settlements in the Petra region. Many of these appear to date to the earlier part of the Ayyubid-Mamluk period and are in inaccessible locations, which indicate a heightened need for protection. These sites may date to the Crusader period (Lindner 1999: 482). The archaeological excavations conducted in the site of castle of al-Wuayra revealed many Ayyubid and Mamluk ceramics, which indicate that area continued to flourish during these periods. Sites like Udhruh lost their importance during the Crusader period to other centers with castle, such as ash-Shawbak and Wādī Mūsā (Walmsley 2001: 518-19, AbuDanah 2006: 227). These places were

economically significant due to the abundance of crops and fruits they produced. (Walmsley 2001: 519), in addition to their strategic locations on the pilgrimage route and the routes to Palestine via Wadi Araba (AbuDanah 2006: 227). This fortification network made Jabal Al-Sharāh the strategic center of all southern Jordan; it is therefore not surprising that this area was later set up as a lordship (Vannini and Desideri 1995: 513).

The archaeological excavations conducted in the site of the fortress have not revealed any coins, inscriptions or dated artifacts (Brown 1987: 278). However, they have revealed that coarseware vessels were manufactured by the Arab population of Wādī Mūsā and thus represent a 12th century industry that is native to the region (Brown 1987: 287). "The large quantity of the pottery found in the site of al-Wuayra reflects industrial production, and the use of Nabataean, Roman and Byzantine pottery in the mortar mix in masonry is well attested at the site, used to plaster the inside of water tanks and cistern, and it is probably to this reuse in masonry that the quantity present at the site should be related" (Vannini and Tonghini 1997: 381).

Inside the site German archaeologists have found locally made Islamic pottery of a type also used by Crusader garrisons at other castles in southern Jordan. They also found millstones to grind flour. Water running off rocks on the upper part of the plateau was diverted into a cistern by a carefully constructed stone wall (Nicolle 2005: 41).

The lack of maintenance services at inside the Crusader fortress of Petra at al-Wuayra castle can be interpreted as an indication that the headquarters of the European newcomers were located elsewhere, and specifically, within the carefully guarded bottom of valley (Vannini and Desideri 1995: 513).

The only Latin source of the Crusader period to mention the ancient site of Petra was the pilgrim Thietmar, who visited it in A.D. 1217 His short but very interesting account makes it clear that the site was uninhabited at that time (Palmer 1872: 435). The geographer Yaqut, in his book *Mu'jam Al-Buldan* (Dictionary of Countries), lists al-Wuayra Castle near Wādī Mūsā and a fortress in Al-Sharāh region (Gibson 2003: 51).

The only 13th century description derives from Sultan Baibars went from Cairo to Karak through Petra⁹. He records the way points of the travel, but mentions Petra and Jabal Haroun only briefly because they were both uninhabited except probably by the Bedouins (Zayadine 1985: 162-167).

DESCRIPTION OF AL-WU'AYRA

Archaeologically, the 12th century A.D. has been one of the least known periods in the history of Transjordan (Brown 1987: 267).

At al-Wu'ayra the builders of the castle that the Crusaders knew as *Le Vaux Moise*, used the natural location to maximise the site's defensive potential. Here, on the eastern site of the castle, one of the remaining towers and a crumbling stretch of curtain-wall overlook the near vertical gorge of the Wadi Al-Wu'ayra (Nicolle 2005: 34).

It is part way up a precipice which forms part of the Jabal Bayda Mountain. For some time the ruins were regarded as the remains of a fortified 12th-13th century Arab-Islamic village, but have now been identified as an isolated Crusader outpost facing west, across the Wadi Araba (Nicolle 2005: 37). Most other Crusader castles in southern Jordan were primarily concerned with threats from the east, north or south.

The castle controlled the king's Highway along the segment that came from ash-Shawbak (Montréal), making the reoccupation of the ancient Nabataean capital- after a period of abandonment lasting almost half a millennium – the focal point (together with al-Karak, and probably even more so than ash-Shawbak) of the entire system of defense and colonization of the lordship of Transjordan (Vannini and Desideri 1995: 516).

It is quite obvious that al-Wuayra represents the major installation, both in size and complexity (Hammond 1970: 36). The castle of al-Wuayra also represents one of the patterns of Crusader occupation in southern Jordan especially in Petra. al-Wuayra is located approximately 4 km north of Petra, 1 km north of the entrance to Pe-

tra Park, and 2 km of the centre of Wādī Mūsā, and occupies an important position in the road connecting it to North-west Arabia, Syria, the Dead Sea and south to the port of Aila (Aqaba) in the Red Sea.

The only access to the castle is across a single narrow bridge (Kennedy 2008: 41). Guarding this bridge stands the most remarkable architectural feature of the defences, a gatehouse carved out of the solid rock (Kennedy 2008: 41). Naturally defended by deep wadis on all sides, the castle of al-Wuayra is the largest in Petra. Now most parts of castle a destroyed.

The Crusader fortress of al-Wu'ayra consists of a double line of defense, in which the mold, the core of the system, situated eccentrically located to the east. The complex fortified church, which is accessed from the south side, is at the top of a ramp where he also found the burial area and cross-protection is set to access to the main water tank site (Vannini and Tonghini 1997:709).

The outer wall had several towers but the main bastions were the west tower, midway between the north-western and south-western corners of the castle, plus the north-eastern tower which overlooks the Wadi al-Wuayra ravine.

The few towers are square but are provided with arrow slits, and one of them, on the centre of the south wall, could be described as a donjon (Kennedy 2008: 43). Outside the main body of the fort, there are remains of watchtowers perched on isolated outcrops and connected to the centre by rock-cut paths and stairs (Kennedy 2008: 43).

Al-Wu'ayra castle is part of the eastern mountain ridge of Petra elevation 1060m. The eastern summit of al-Wuayra is dominated by the ruins of the crusader fortress. The basic plan is a rectangular enclosure approximately 100m north-south x 80-64 east-west, with traces of chambers on the insides of some of the walls, the irregularities of the plan are due in part to the terrain. (Musil 1907: 66-69). (Fig 3)

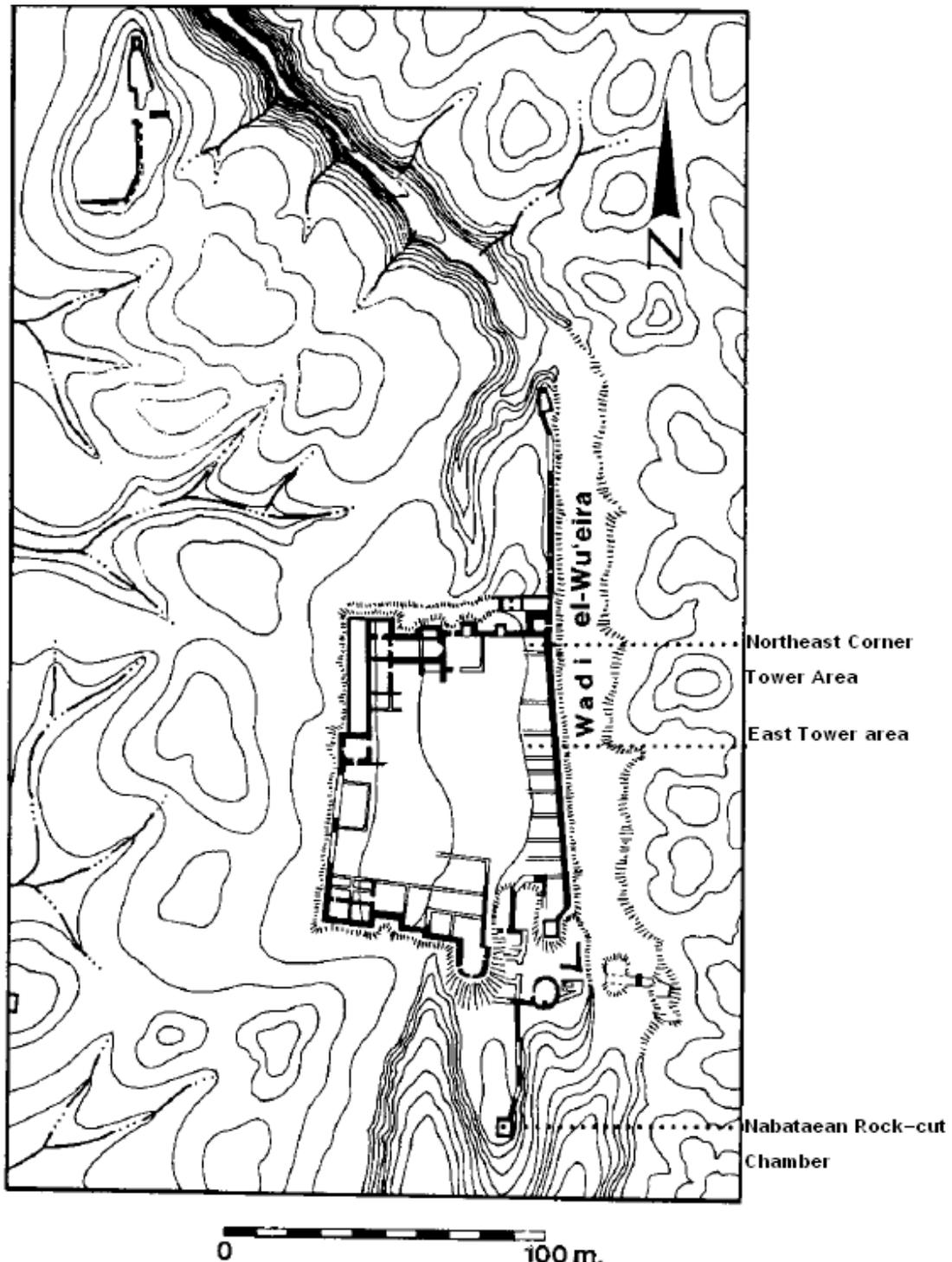


Fig.3: Plan of al-Wuayra Fortress (Musil 1907: 64)

It consists of an irregular, four-sided fortified enclosure whose shape is largely dictated by the extremely rocky nature of the site. The outer walls stand on top of natural sandstone ridges overlooking water-worn gorges. The ravine on the eastern side of the castle was artificially deepened to create a highly effective vertical fosse, while a rocky pinnacle was left to support a bridge to the barbican and gate at the south-

eastern corner of the castle. This is similar in concept to the amazing pinnacle at Saone, though much smaller, and has a tunnel cut through its top to form an outer gateway. The actual entrance to the castle was through a narrow rock-hewn passage near the southeastern corner, which was itself originally reached by a wooden bridge across the al-Wuayra gorge (Nicolle 2005: 19). (Fig 4)



Fig.4: The entrance of al-Wu'ayra castle (Photo by Mohammed Nasarat)

Additional outworks strengthened the northern and southern walls within the walls; part of the floor of the enclosure was plastered with clay. Four finely carved white limestone blocks, two of which were decorated with Christian crosses, were inserted in the top course of the wall. They probably either came from a chapel built when the Crusaders first took over the site shortly after 1108, or from a pre-Crusader monastery. Other structures were placed around the insides of the main curtain-wall, leaving a large but irregular courtyard in the centre (Nicolle 2005: 36).

THE HISTORY OF AL-WU'AYRA, FROM THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

The archaeological surveys revealed that the whole area of al-Wuayra has settlement from the Bronze Age to the Nabataean period¹⁰, when the area was used both as a monumental necropolis and as a sacred area of the settlement of Petra (Bini and Bertocci 1997: 410). The site had been widely inhabited in the Nabataean period (Vannini and Desideri 1995: 513). The site also was crucial for the strategic control of the entire Petra valley, and an interest in controlling the zone persisted down to the Byzantine period (Vannini and Tonghini 1997: 371). The main human settlements were concentrated in the vicinities of the administrative and military outposts (castles) throughout the middle Islamic period (Abu Danah 2006: 226).

The Crusader reoccupation of the site is therefore an explicit confirmation of the re-

newed strategic interest of Petra as a whole in the new political situation that was emerging in the 12th century (Vannini and Tonghini 1997: 371). As already mentioned, the castle of al-Wuayra appears frequently in the documentary sources of the 12th century, and always as the subject of some royal activity or as a centre of military episodes; this leads us to conclude that it had an important role in the protection and survival of the Crusader presence in Transjordan (Vannini and Tonghini 1997: 377).

Al-Wu'ayra like other fortifications in Jordan (such as al-Salt, Karak, Tafilah and ash-Shawbak), were erected with remarkable speed. This line of castles was built with limited money and labour, using rubble, ancient Nabataean masonry and a minimal amount of newly dressed stone. Refinement, it seems, was not considered necessary whereas the provision of reliable sources of water was much more significant (Nicolle 2005: 43).

The 12th century pottery from al-Wuayra has absolutely nothing specifically Crusader about it. The archaeological excavations provided stratified series of ceramic assemblages associated with the Crusader and early Ayyubid occupation of the site (Brown 1987: 267). The common cooking pot form can be traced to Fatimid prototype. Brown noted the preponderance of hand-made wares with only a few wheel-thrown *zirs* and glazed bowls (Brown 1987: 268, Walmsley 2001: 549)

Archaeologists excavating the early-12th century al-Wuayra in found several neatly cut

blocks of limestone, which may have once formed keystones in an earlier church. They were re-used in roughly made Crusader wall. Each stone had a two-armed Christian cross, though these were partially defaced at some later date (Nicolle 2005: 40).

Analysis of 16 skeletons from al-Wu'ayra castle offered a great opportunity to assess the impact on the Europeans who migrated into a different environment without changing their way of life (Rose and Khwaleh 2008: 2)

All of the Crusader and Arab castles are built on ancient sites: Azraq upon a Dicoletianic *castellum* of the Roman frontier, Kerak upon a Moabite stronghold, Habis on a Nabataean sacred high-place. But at none do the ancient structures survive. And this may be because the stones were to be found aplenty in those places where there had once been a fortress. At al-Wuayra castle site there are traces of a Nabataean presence, as evidenced by carved staircases and chambers cut into the bedrock folds and outcrops (Brown 1987: 267). This chamber stands to the south of the fortress overlooking the chasm of Wadi al-Wu'ayra. The location of this chamber would have benefited the 12th century garrison as a watch tower, for it provides a view down Wadi al-Wuayra and across the rugged sand stone ridges of el-Qararah (Brown 1987: 277). When the Crusaders first ventured the east of the Jordan in the early 12th century, they constructed their castles from the ruins of earlier fortress of the region.

The Christian nature of this castle is demonstrated by the existence of a chapel, very similar in design and in the detail of its apse moulding to that in the outer ward at ash-Shawbak (Pringle 2001: 681). The archaeological excavations have been revealed that al-Wuayra church has a single aisle leading to an apse with two small niches at the sides. The aisle is 13.95 m long and 6.97 m wide, there is an entrance on the southern side and another entrance on the western side and at least one window or slit on the northern side (Bini and Bertocci 1997: 410). Baldwin II's attempt to encourage Christian settlement in the area is also attested by the mention around 1160 of a village in the plain below Wādī Mūsā, called Hara, which contained a church of St Moses (Pringle 2001: 681).

Excavations during 1987 identified settlement occupation to the Crusader period and dated to A.D. 1108/1116-88, as well as early Ayyubid (Walmsley 2001: 526), which immediately follows the capture of the castle in A.D. 1187, and continues to the 13th century.

The archaeological excavations conducted by Vannini and Tonghini (1997: 377) revealed that the site was definitively abandoned, follows massive wall collapses with masonry often falling consistently in a uniform direction, suggesting a particularly violent earthquake, such as the one attested in Petra in 1201-1202. The last phase of collapse can be attributed to the 20th century since the vault of the apse of the church was still standing when Savignac visited the site in 1903 (Vannini and Tonghini 1997: 377).

AL-WU'AYRA IN 19TH-20TH CENTURY TRAVELERS¹¹

The existence of the fort was noted by many of European travellers who visited Petra during the 19th and 20th centuries. Burckhardt visited Petra in 1812 and identified the ruins of al-Wuayra for the first time, and stayed in encampments of Bedouin found in the crusader Castle near Wādī Mūsā (Burckhardt 2003: 176). Von Schubert, in 1837, also noted the remains of the fort, and identified then as crusader (Hammond 1970: 17). The castle was published by Savignac for the first time as 'Ou'airah'; who studied its fortifications (Savignac 1903: 114). Musil gives a general account in his report on Petra, noting that "walls of al-Wuayra castle are combined with a series of towers" (Musil 1907:67), and that the entrance to the fortress is through a narrow rock hewn tunnel southeast of the *castrum*, which was connected to a bridge spanning Wadi Al-Wu'ayra (Musil 1907: 57).

Kennedy, in his discussion of the fort, gave a detailed description of the ruins at Al-Wu'ayra observing " the castle was fortified by a low wall which run along on the eastern side, and looks toward Al-Sharāh; it was from this side only that an attack could be successfully made" (Kennedy 1925: 15). Robinson in 1930 also records his visit, noting that "Rounded arches and vaulted chambers are found among the ruins; also, the apse of what is supposedly a

Crusader church" (Robinson 1930: 34). Margaret Murray apparently visited the summit of the mountain sometime during her work in Petra commentary "at al-Wuayra on one of the eastern hills are the remains of a Crusader fort, probably placed there to guard an entrance to the valley" (Murray 1936: 63).

THE END OF CRUSADERS IN PETRA

The Ayyubid leader Salah ad-Din realized the critical importance of taking Jordan from the Franks in order to impede communications between Egypt and Syria (Milwright 2006: 5). Following the Battle of Hattin and the defeat of the Crusader army in A.D. 1187, the 70 year history of crusader occupation at al-Wuayra ends with its fall to Salah ad-Din's army in A.D. 1188 (Walmsley 2001: 520). Al-Wuayra was the last Transjordanian stronghold to fall (Vannini and Tonghini 1997: 373). The Muslim historian Ibn el-Athir in his book *"el-kamel fi al-tawarikh"* record that al-habis and al-Wuayra were taken in A.D. 1188 by Salah ad-Din forces (Zayadine 1985: 167). This defeat at Hattin in A.D. 1187 caused the Crusaders to quickly abandon all of Transjordan. The different traditions of settlement culture and the strategic requirements for territorial defense made this departure, on the whole, both total and final for all the strongholds and castles controlled by the Crusaders (Vannini and Desideri 1995: 514, Brown 2008: 6, Drap *et al.* 2005: 3).

The year of the Crusader defeat at Kerak, and shortly before the fall of ash-Shawbak in 1189, most of Jordan was joined under the administration of Al-Afdal ibn Salah ad-Din, who governed from Cairo (Walmsley 2001: 520). al-Wuayra held out for over a year until it fell to Salah ad-Din's brother, al-Malik al-Adil, in November 1188. He refortified the castle in 1192. The Ayyubids downgraded the status of Al-Wu'ayra, and there is evidence for increased domestic occupation as well as industrial activity on the site (Milwright 2006: 3).

In 1264 Baybars strengthened al-Wuayra and improved the fosse. Most of the defences visible today date to these post-Frankish phases (Boas 1999: 107, Nicolle 2005: 56).

The re-use of existing materials from destroyed buildings was widespread: the insertion of antique columns as a form of horizontal bonding, noted previously, was already a characteristic of Islamic fortifications (Nicolle 2005:19). The Crusader attitude to such matters was summed up by William of Tyre when he described the building of Ibelin (Yibna) in 1144: "First of all they laid the foundations, and then they made four towers". Stones were to be found in sufficiency in those places where there had formerly been fortresses for, as they say, "A castle destroyed is a castle half remade" (Nicolle 2005: 21).

In the Ayyubid-Mamluk period (late 12th to beginning of the 16th century), expansion of sedentary settlement seems to have taken place. The village at the site of Khirbat an-Nawafla, identified by 'Amr as the village of al-'Udmal mentioned in the account of the travel of Sultan Baybars from Cairo to Baghdad (Zayadine 1985:159-162), grew to its largest extent ('Amr *et al.* 2000: 244, 'Amr and Al-Momani 2001: 268). Several other village sites were also re-occupied during this period ('Amr *et al.* 1998; 'Amr and Al-Momani 2001: 269). Domestic houses and courtyards have been excavated at Khirbat an-Nawafla. Archaeological evidence indicates remains of agricultural tools and activities dated to this period ('Amr *et al.* 2002: 244). After the Mamluks were defeated in 1516, rule of Transjordan passed to the Ottoman sultans for almost 400 years. Southern Jordan was part of the province of Syria. In practice, however, the hold of Ottoman central authority on southern Jordan was weak after the 16th century until the administrative reforms of the mid-19th century (Van der Steen 2004: 451).

Starting in the early 19th century western travelers began to visit Petra in the wake of John Burckhardt. From their records over the 19th and early 20th century we know that there was a Bedouin tribe called the Liathneth living in and around the small town of Elji (Wādī Mūsā), and that Bedouin - most probably of the B'dul tribe - were living in the caves of Petra in winter, although it seems that the control of the site was disputed and may have changed hands over time (McKenzie 1991: 140-141). More detailed descriptions from the early 20th century confirm

that the B'dul were living in the caves of Petra for the rainy and cold season, while during spring they camped with their flocks of goats and spent the summer in the high mountains around Petra, nevertheless not moving far from their district (McKenzie 1991: 143). Recent records indicate that Christian families were still living in al-Wuayra castle at the end of the 19th century, when they migrated to karak and Madaba.

CONCLUSIONS

This review has focused on the history of the Wādī Mūsā area during the Crusader period, based on the accounts provided by the historians of Crusaders expeditions and archaeological excavations. From this material, certain conclusions may be suggested. This unrivaled attention to Wādī Mūsā from the crusader kings of Jerusalem indicates that the area had exceptional importance during Crusader period.

The geographic role of Petra, as a guardian of military and commercial routes, again in the Crusader period, as in the days of its height as the capital of the Nabataeans, is reflected in the installation established there. It is likely that in

addition to a lordly residence it also contained a dependent civilian settlement. The valley area was fortified by the Crusaders, but their occupation lasted only until A.D. 1189 when the last stronghold fell to the Ayyubids. The accounts of Crusader historians help provide a better understanding of the social-economic position of Wādī Mūsā and Petra during this period. This confirms that these sites were vitally important due in a large measure to their geographical positions to protect the route through them lead from southern Syria through south Jordan to Aqaba (Aila), and also to provide protection against attacks from Bedouin to Crusader settlement in Jerusalem, and, above all, it was only a few miles distant from the main road- the King's Highway that led to Damascus and northern Syria.

When the Wādī Mūsā area is mentioned in the Arabic chronicles of the period, a fortress of al-Wuayra is seen to be the major instillation there. The Arab historian stress al-Wuayra as the major strong point in the area of Wādī Mūsā, with the site still known by that name and having on it the major Crusader remains of the area.

NOTES

¹ Trans-Jordan includes the area east of the Jordan River, extending from the Dead Sea and Wadi 'Araba to the Gulf of Aqaba (Aila) (Hammond, 1970: 9).

² For the importance of al-Kerak and ash-Shawbak during the Crusader period, see (Milwright 2006: 3-5).

³ Castle of ash-Shawbak, traditionally known in historical reports as the "*Montréal*" in Jordan. The site of this castle was evidently chosen to allow the knights stationed in it to control the desert road (Pringle 2001: 678).

⁴ A smaller castle was built on al-Habis near the Qasar el-Bint inside Petra, which commands the southern approach to the city and overlooks the road to Sinai and Egypt. This castle is described by Yaqut in *Mu'jam el-Buldan* as citadel in Wādī Mūsā, peace upon him, near Jerusalem (Zayadine 1985: 164). It must be concluded that the fort of al-Habis, was not simply a temporary strong point, but subsidiary installation, and hence post-dates al-Wu'ayra. For more details about the Castle of al-Habis in Petra, see (Hammond 1970: 17-32; Luschi 2009: 23).

⁵ For more information about King's highway, see (Mattingly 1996: 89-99).

⁶ The Seljuqs controlled Bilād ash-Sham between 1071 and 1079.

⁷ For more information about the Petra-Gaza Road, see Negev 1966: 89-98.

⁸ *Le Vaux Moise* (Castellum Vallis moysis) has now been identified as al-Wu'ayra in Medieval French and Latin sources (Pringle 1998: 373, 455).

⁹ For more details about the voyage of Sultan Baibars in Petra, see (Zayadin 1985: 159-174).

¹⁰ In the 7th century, during the Islamic period, the city of Petra seems to have been left in the political and financial shadow of its neighbors. The history of Petra as an urban center appears to end by the late 7th - early 8th century. (Fiema 2001: 115 ; AbuDanah 2006: 25).

¹¹ Lancaster Harding observed "It is only since about 1925 that it has been possible for any except very intrepid and wealthy explorers to visit Petra, for the local inhabitants maintained their unfriendly attitude for a long time, even massacring the members of the first Arab Legion police post, established there to protect visitors". (Harding 1959: 101)

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