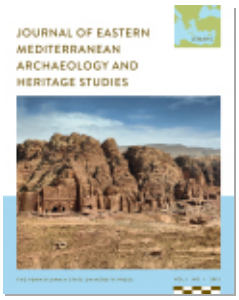
Excavations at Tall Jawa, Jordan. Volume 4: The Early Islamic House by P. M. Michèle Daviau (review)



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BOOK REVIEW

***Excavations at Tall Jawa, Jordan.* Volume 4: *The Early Islamic House*. By P. M. Michèle Daviau.**

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Tall Jawa is located on a small mound in the Balqāʾ in Jordan, ca. 11 km south of Amman. In the past, the advantageous altitude above the surrounding plain gave this location a commanding view of the surrounding agricultural lands, especially those of the Madaba Plain to the southwest. Tall Jawa is not far from Qastal (12.5 km), al-Muwaqqar (15 km), and Ḥisbān (12.5 km), all important centers during the early Islamic period. Between 1991 and 1995, Michèle Daviau's team exposed a domestic structure (Building 600), found adjacent to a late Iron Age house (Building 800) and erected directly over a structure (Building 700) of Iron Age II (750–600 BCE). In fact, Daviau's archaeological project began by looking into remains of Iron Age and earlier occupation (Daviau 2002, 2003), but was diverted by the rich finds of the late Byzantine–Islamic periods. Building 600 certainly provides a glimpse into the full potential of Tall Jawa as a transitional site where, as rightly claimed by its excavator, further excavations are necessary to establish a full picture of occupation under the Byzantines, through the Ghassānids, and finally under Islamic rule. Its rich repertoire of finds makes this report an important contribution to the study of Jordan during late antiquity.

This monograph is composed of sixteen chapters, written by various contributors, in five parts. The first part includes background to the site and its surroundings (chapter 1) as well as the methodology applied to field work and data recording (chapter 2). Part two reports on the archaeological finds (chapter 3) during the five years of excavations, as well as related architectural decoration such as the mosaic floors (chapter 4), wall paintings (chapter 5), and architectural elements (chapter 6). In addition, part two includes a report on a multiple burial found within Building 600 (chapter 7). Pottery and artifacts (including inscriptions and coins) are discussed in part three (chapters 8–14). They are followed in part four by Daviau's conclusions (chapter 15) and by explanations of Tall Jawa's multimedia information system and the use of the accompanying DVD (chapter 16); the latter collects most of the data available on these excavations and is an invaluable source of information for the reader.

Despite the small size of the plans and the many thumbnail photographs, we learn a great deal about the stratigraphy and architectural details of Building 600 in chapter 3 (pp. 25–90). It consists of a rectangular two- or three-storied structure (12.55 × 18.50 m) organized around a central space, the upper one (Room 610) was perhaps open to the sky (fig. 3.2). Many of the walls of the Iron Age structure (Stratum VII) were reused for the erection of Building 600 (Stratum III), whose lower story was below ground level, while some of the rooms of the upper story were built directly over Iron Age debris. The thickness of the outer walls (ca. 90 cm) was adequate to support heavy ceiling slabs; the scantiness of their remains might be explained by the use of a brick superstructure or one made of smaller stones (p. 30). The stone walls surrounding the lower central hall (Room 607) are still preserved to over 2.35 m in height (p. 35), some of them still preserving plaster *in situ*, apparently originally painted (p. 37).

The house was most probably entered through Room 608 in the northwestern unit of the upper story, which led into what seem to have been the utilitarian spaces of the house. A flight of seven steps, a remnant of the Stratum VII structure and comparable in style to two staircases in Building 800, connected the upper story to the lower level. There, we find that the rooms are concentrated in the northern portion of the house. The most intimate and highly decorated unit, Room 606, is located in the northeastern corner. In the author's own words, "the elaborateness of the decor and the marked absence of utilitarian finds strongly suggest that Room 606 served a specialized function, possibly as a reception area" (p. 51). In fact, Daviau perceives Room 606 as a reception room for the male occupants of the house, mainly due to the higher investment in this room (pp. 86–87): a geometric mosaic floor, painted walls, and fragments of window panes hinting at a light source. No cooking or storage utensils were found in this room, but there were 15 lamps, one intact and the others fragmentary (p. 53). In contrast, Room 605, on the eastern side of the upper story, has been identified as the building's kitchen, especially since an oven was among the finds, together with cooking and serving vessels. Other finds hint that the service units were located on the upper level.

Hence, considering Daviau's conclusions that the entrance to Building 600 was in the northwestern corner of the upper story and that the lower level was the reception area, it seems that after entering the 3.00 × 3.70 m entrance hall (Room 608), a visitor would be led directly downstairs through the stairway located between Room 608's eastern wall and the courtyard's western wall. Consequently, although its plan was dictated by that of the previous Iron Age structure, Building 600 succeeded in keeping the house's private area separate from its more public activities.

But who were the inhabitants of the house? Unfortunately, the contributors to the Tall Jawa report have not succeeded in providing a single answer to this difficult question. In fact, along with the different chapters we are provided with data that appear to show first that the occupants were Christians and then Muslims, or that the members of the two faiths lived together. The different interpretations are mostly based on the finds from Room 606, such as the unique geometric mosaic found in the western portion of this room, wall paintings including Greek and Arabic inscriptions, ostraca, and lamps inscribed in Arabic.

Among the finds, the geometric mosaic in Room 606, discussed by Debra C. Foran in chapter 4 (pp. 91–106), is doubtless the most intriguing. This 1.70 × 1.86 m carpet is divided into two sections, a square in the west and a rectangular one in the east. The main square section is divided by diagonal strips, which form twelve lozenges bordered by twelve triangles. The three triangles on the west side are filled by a smaller yellow triangle topped by red tesserae, while the three on the east are filled with arrow-shaped motifs. The rectangular panel on the east, without a colored frame, is separated from the main panel by two rows of white tesserae. It is roughly composed by central lozenges bordered by triangles, the easternmost of which are filled by yellow triangles.

Foran concludes that "the orientation [of the mosaic] suggests that this room may have originally served a religious purpose for the Christian community at Tall Jawa" (p. 106). This suggestion is based mainly on the comparison of the asymmetrical arrangement of this small mosaic to that of the complex mosaic in the nave of the monastic church at Khirbet Yattir in the southern Judean Hills (p. 96). The latter mosaic, 4.70 × 12 m, was laid over a previous mosaic. It is divided into 23 registers and displays an asymmetrical composition of religious and seemingly magic symbols. An inscription in its central register, underneath a cross, dates this second phase of the church to 631/632 CE (Eshel et al. 1999: 415–18; Bordowicz 2007: III). Nevertheless, the finding of a second Greek inscription in the atrium of the church has led Leah Di Segni to suggest an alternative chronology, by which the first phase should be dated 682 CE and the second, to which the later mosaic belongs, to 725 CE (Bordowicz 2007: III). Foran comments that Yattir's grid pattern panels "closely resemble those at Tall Jawa" and that "this similarity can assist in dating the Tall Jawa mosaic [i.e., seventh century] and may suggest a possible use for this building" (p. 96).

Comparison between these two mosaics and their respective settings is not straightforward. While the unique mosaic of Yattir is in a church and includes an inscription and symbols of clear Christian nature, the

one at Tall Jawa is located in a small, domestic unit. However, it is true that this room has a unique arrangement, by which two low partition walls more or less separate its easternmost side from the rest. In addition, a wall painting in this very room that includes a few Greek letters in red paint and a cross may point to a Christian identity, as discussed (pp. 118–19) in chapter 5 ("Painted Plaster in Building 600," pp. 107–20) by N. J. Johnson. Furthermore, a bronze cross, probably a pendant, found in an undisturbed fill in Courtyard 607 (TJ 1104, pp. 375–77, fig. 12.2:2), provides further support for the hypothesis that this house was inhabited by Christians. Nevertheless, Johnson's later conclusion (in chapter 11, "Inscribed Vessels, Ostraca, and Plaster," pp. 351–65) that "it is possible, therefore, that Building 600 was originally associated with a church which may have been nearby" (p. 360) must be approached with much caution, as firm evidence is clearly lacking.

The nature of Room 606 in particular and Building 600 in general become even more intriguing when taking into consideration the fragments of cursive script written from right to left recovered next to the south and east walls of Room 606, as presented in chapter 5 (pp. 112, 116–18). Johnson believes that, together with the ostracon inscribed with the *basmala* (from Room 605), pottery lamps, and graffiti bearing Arabic inscriptions (pp. 360–65), these inscriptions "are strong evidence for the presence of Arabic-speaking Muslims here" (p. 117) and that, if indeed the right-to-left script "proves to be Arabic or was intended to appear so . . . this reception room may have had a devotional function. By which is meant, the south and east walls could have functioned as the *qibla*" (p. 118). If we add Daviau's assumption that Room 606 was a reception area for the male occupants of the house (pp. 86–87), the reader must conclude that while a cultic/devotional function cannot be ruled out for Room 606, a secular use cannot be ruled out either.

Daviau proposes yet another possible interpretation of the finds, based on the example of Qaṣr al-Ḥallabāt, which "may offer an explanation for the mix of Christian and early Islamic elements in the archaeological record of both sites." Drawing on the evidence for Ghassānid settlement in Qaṣr al-Ḥallabāt during the sixth century, Daviau sees some rock-cut installations south of Tall Jawa as evidence for Ghassānid agricultural exploitation of the area (pp. 474–75). She concludes: "[t]he culturally mixed assemblage at Tall Jawa may be a clue that Christian Arabs lived at this site and gradually converted to Islam" (p. 475).

The eight burials found in Corridor 617 together with animal bones, discussed in chapter 7 by M. A. Judd (pp. 143–67), do not help to clarify the issue of religious identity either, since it is not clear in which circumstances they were buried inside the house. Furthermore, as many body parts are missing, pointing to the collection of bones for secondary burial, religious identity cannot be inferred from body orientation. In fact, despite the fact that the burials have been dated to the early Islamic period, they were found together with a ceramic smoking pipe, TJ 836 (p. 143, not illustrated in print or on the DVD), which implies a post-seventeenth-century date for their deposition.

This brings us to the general dating of Building 600, which is based partly on the style of the mosaic in Room 606 and on the graffiti found in the building, but mainly on the pottery, lamps, coins, and glass finds, all discussed in part three of the report.

Starting from the coins (and not following the order of presentation in the book), one could say this is one of those lucky cases in which a hoard provides a clear *terminus post quem* for the latest use of a building. The hoard, studied by A. Walmsley (pp. 393–413), consists of 35 coins found in small stacks in Room 605 (identified as a kitchen), buried in a cotton bag just below the western edge of the flagstone pavement (pp. 78–79). Most of the coins (45%) are from Damascus, while others with mint names come from central and southern Syria-Palestine; the remaining coins (31%) are anonymous issues. One of Walmsley's most important conclusions is that the anonymous issues found in this hoard could also have come from Damascus and been obtained at the same time as the Damascus issues. In terms of chronology, although none of the coins bears a date, Walmsley provides a clear chronological range for the numismatic assemblage: between the opening of the Filasṭīn mint at Ramla (after ca. 720 CE) and the coinage reforms under the ʿAbbāsid caliph al-Maʾmūn (813–833 CE).

This result is of extreme importance for the general interpretation of the finds from the latest phase of Building 600, especially that of the ceramics (including lamps). Ever since the initial publication in 2001 by Daviau and Beckmann, the pottery of the site has evoked much discussion due to the dating of the late assemblage to the early Umayyad period, despite the presence of lamps typically dated to the ʿAbbāsid period.

In chapter 8, "The Pottery: A Functional and Formal Typology" (pp. 171–292), Daviau starts by presenting the methodology applied in her pottery analysis, then discusses the various types while also showing parallels, and concludes by dating the pottery assemblage. Daviau discusses the ceramic finds from open to closed forms, from serving to storage vessels. First the various vessel forms are generally discussed (e.g., Type A-1 "Round-Bodied Shallow Cups"), then variations are presented in detail (Type A-1/a "Simple Rim Shallow Cups"; Type A-1/b "Cyma Rim Shallow Cups"). Some labels should perhaps be revised, such as Types P-1/b ("Folded Triangular Rim Pithoi") and P-1/c-1 ("Everted Rectangular Rim Pithoi"). A few forms seem out of place in their classification, amongst them "Large Jar with Everted Rim" and "Wide Mouth Jar" in fig. 8.15.10–12, which perhaps should have been singled out in a category of their own as "Wide Mouth Jars."

Daviau uses a different typological system when it comes to cooking pots (pp. 220–23), which are classified by wares, not forms. It changes again for jars (pp. 250–56), where the types and subtypes are organized according to general size (Type Q-1 "Very Small Jars," Type Q-2 "Small Jars," and Type Q-3 "Small Globular Jars"), then changes once again (pp. 256–60) in the category of "Medium Jars" (Type R), where the system returns to a classification according to rim styling (Type R-1 "Medium Jars with Rounded Rim," Type R-2 "Medium Jars with Offset/Grooved Rim," and Type R-3 "Miscellaneous Plain Jars").

This system comes in place of a typology following wares, surface treatment, and/or decorative style and sometimes poses difficulties. For example, B-6/a-3 (pp. 199–200) is a typical profile for both Red Painted Ware and for what used to be called "Fine Byzantine Wares" (a term that for good reason is now usually avoided in corpora of the Islamic period). When comparing B-6/a-3 to Caesarea's Marble Ware (another term for Fine Byzantine Wares, or at least for one of its variations), Daviau writes that it "is similar to but not identical with V632" (her prototype for B-6/a-3). We are thus left confused as to whether Daviau's prototype has the burnished mottled surface of the Marble Ware (unfortunately the DVD contains only a drawing of this piece and not a photograph) and, most importantly, how many wares share this profile.

Despite the observations above, one can see the advantages of Daviau's system for large-scale projects dealing with large quantities of pottery, as it leaves room for adding types and subtypes/decoration. Yet, I would have preferred a presentation of the material in its stratigraphic context, in which pottery assemblages from relevant loci are represented as a unit (rather than by room, as in the lists of finds in chapter 3, which bring together finds from different levels). Building 600 is a self-contained unit with a clear stratigraphy, and hence the advantages of presenting assemblages in context supersede those of typological presentation. In the specific case of Tall Jawa, it would have allowed us to evaluate the appearance of typical Umayyad wares such as Red Painted bowls and jars (fig. 8.3, 13), Biscuit Ware jars (fig. 8.14:7–9), or even earlier material such as the Gaza Storage Jar in fig. 8.16:3 and the storage jar in fig. 8.15:8, to mention only a few examples, together with lamps with a tongue-shaped handle.

The lamps are discussed by Beckmann and Daviau in chapter 9 ("The Ceramic Lamps from Building 600," pp. 293–340), and by N. J. Johnson in chapter 10 ("Inscribed Lamps," pp. 341–50). They present the results of their analysis of over 107 lamps, some complete and others represented only by fragments (p. 293). A dominant group among these is lamps with tongue-shaped handles (Types L-3 and L-4); Type L-3 is not classified as such but as "Almond-Shaped Lamps," although it generally follows the characteristics of this class (see Hadad 2002: 95–106). In their own words, "[t]he lamps were found in use with a predominantly Umayyad ceramic corpus and represent a variety of well-known types usually assigned to the late Byzantine, Umayyad and early Abbasid periods. Four basic types are represented, along with numerous fragments that fall into a fifth 'miscellaneous' type" (pp. 295–96).

From the pottery and other finds, the author concludes that Building 600 could have been built and occupied during a transitional [late Byzantine to Umayyad] period in the seventh–eighth centuries (p. 471). She thus implies an Umayyad dating for the tongue-handle lamps, despite the mounting evidence for their post-Umayyad date (Hadad 2002: 105–106), and also stresses the "absence of Abbasid indicators" (p. 473), such as Mahesh Ware, *Kerbschnitt,* Buff Ware jugs (with molded and barbotine decoration), steatite vessels and imitations in Black Burnished Ware, and, most importantly of all, glazed wares (to this one could add the absence of glazed cooking vessels). In a general comment on the transition between the Umayyad and the ʿAbbāsid periods, Daviau also stresses the need to redate certain wares such as Cut Ware (*Kerbschnitt*) and Painted Palace Ware, against the "current trend" (referring to Whitcomb 1988 and Magness 1993) to push the dating of their first appearance into the late eighth–ninth centuries CE. Her proposed redating, she claims, "may better represent the continued settlement and use of certain sites," as "there is still a need to identify the precise characteristics of the material culture of the Umayyad period and not create a gap in chronology as had been the case previously with the Abbasid period" (p. 474).

Acceptance of Daviau's conclusions would necessitate a complete revision and reworking of our present understanding of the material culture of the early Islamic period. It would also imply the redating of many excavated sites in Greater Syria, whose pottery analysis has been based on the results from various well-stratified sites excavated since the 1980s (e.g., Pella, Jerash, Beth Shean, ʿAmmān, Ayla). Daviau's conclusions must be thus approached with care and examined thoroughly.

For this purpose, a methodological exercise seems useful. We can start by hypothesizing that the dating of lamps with tongue-shaped handles, which pose the main obstacle to an Umayyad date for Tell Jawa's assemblage, should be moved back, as proposed by Daviau.

In fact, that would be an easy solution for enigmatic stratigraphic gaps in sites, such as the seemingly non-existent Umayyad layer in the heart of historical Ramla, for example, on which I have worked in person (Cytryn-Silverman 2010: 98). An early eighth-century date has already been suggested for the pottery assemblage found in the well-known yet unpublished excavations at Shikun Giora in Ramla by M. Rosen-Ayalon and Avraham Eitan in 1965. This excavation revealed finds that can be related to a potter's workshop (installations, large piles of pottery, molds, and wasters) that lay immediately over the virgin sand on which the city was forming. These finds were perceived by the excavators as shedding light "on the material culture and the history of the city at its beginning in the VIIIth century CE" (Rosen-Ayalon and Eitan 1969: 3). This dating was later refuted, mainly in light of mounting evidence from Jordanian sites, which places most of the finds in the second half of the eighth century and later. Among the finds from Shikun Giora, published in an exhibition catalog, are mold-made almond-shaped lamps with tongue-shaped handles (one of them very similar to a lamp found in Room 606 at Tall Jawa, fig. 10.1.2), Buff Ware jugs (plain, incised, and molded, with handle thumb-rests decorated with barbotine), molds for jugs and lamps with tongue-shaped handles, and some glazed pottery. Apart from them, the catalog also shows images of a bag-shaped storage jar that could be Umayyad (Bar-Nathan and Atrash 2011: 235, fig. 11.4:2–5), zoomorphic vessels/toys (Umayyad and ʿAbbāsid; Cytryn-Silverman 2010: 117–18; Bar-Nathan and Atrash 2011: 321–31), a typical Umayyad lantern similar to Tall Jawa's fig. 8.11 (p. 243; Hadad 2002: 143–46; Bar-Nathan and Atrash 2011: 319–20, fig. 11.55), as well as a pilgrim flask of a type produced at Beth Shean in the Umayyad period (Bar-Nathan and Atrash 2011: 272–75, fig. 11.28–29), though known to have continued into ʿAbbāsid times as well (Tal and Taxel 2008: 144–46, fig. 6.93).

There are several ways of interpreting the above. First, we could assume that the vessels originate from different phases, that is the ʿAbbāsid material belongs to the latest activities and the Umayyad to the earliest ones. Yet Rosen-Ayalon and Eitan mention in their catalog "four levels of settlement, represented by floors of beaten earth and gravel (. . .) *No major changes* were encountered on passing from level to level" (Rosen-Ayalon and Eitan 1969: 4; emphasis added). The second option is that all the material is post-Umayyad (and in fact the Umayyad material listed above could well continue after

750 CE) and that Shikun Giora belongs to an expansion postdating the foundation of the city in the early eighth century CE. This is more likely, and is the working premise of many current researchers (Stacey 2004: 13), including myself. A third option would be to push all the material—tongue-handle lamps, Buff Ware, and glazed wares alike—back to the Umayyad period.

Yet, for the last option to be possible, we must assume that there is extreme regionality in pottery distribution. Otherwise, there is no explanation for the data from various sites in Jund al-Urdunn, where these wares were found only in levels clearly postdating the earthquake of 749 CE (see discussions in Cytryn-Silverman 2010: 106, 109–12, 115). In addition, these sites prove that many of the Umayyad wares cited here continued after the earthquake and well into the ʿAbbāsid period (on the continuation of Red Painted Ware, for example see Cytryn-Silverman 2010: 104). Could new wares and styles have been first introduced to Jund Filasṭīn/southern Jund Dimashq (hypothetically assuming that the regionality in production and trade followed geopolitical boundaries) so much earlier? Could the tongue-handle lamps, Buff Ware, *Kerbschnitt* Ware, Black Burnished Ware bowls, and others (and here we have no choice but to discuss these wares jointly, as their appearance is interrelated) have started to appear in these southern regions prior to their debut in the north? I find this difficult to believe. Results from the Caesarea excavations, recently published by Y. Arnon (2008), generally confirm the accepted chronology for the wares under discussion, with some fine tuning that follows the stratigraphic contexts of the Combined Caesarea Expedition (Arnon 2008: 17–28, 34–39). It is hard to assume that wares reaching Ramla would have skipped the markets of Caesarea, a trade hub for central Palestine, for several decades. In addition, renewed excavations of Khirbat al-Mafjar by D. Whitcomb and H. Taha in 2011 and 2012 are gradually confirming Whitcomb's theoretical reappraisal (1988) of Baramki's typology (1944), which also supports the current chronology.

Following the above, I find it difficult to concur with Daviau's chronology for Tall Jawa. In fact, I would like to propose a different reading, based on the data published in this report and on the DVD.

The loci underlying the earliest floors and walls, some of them mixed with the debris of Stratum VII, yielded limited diagnostic material. I examined the following loci: D23:37 in Corridor 619; D2:8 in the construction surface of Wall 6004; D2:21–24 in Room 601; D12:20–21 in Room 602; D21:19–20 in Room 603; D31:30 in Room 604; D32:43–49 in Room 605; and D13:31 in Room 609. Most of them had little or no representation on the DVD's database of pottery and lamps. The main finds are the incised and punctured strainer jug V649 (fig. 8.9:2) found in Room 603, one casserole with plain walls and high horizontal handles (V605, fig. 8.5:5) and one Red Painted sherd (not illustrated) on the construction surface of Wall 6004 (p. 60). Among these finds, it is the Red Painted sherd that seems to provide the early eighth century as a *terminus post quem* for the building's erection. This dating also works well for some transitional types found in the repertoire (from mixed provenances in the building). The Gaza storage jar depicted in fig. 8.16:3, for example, could be residual from late Byzantine activity nearby, but could well date to the early eighth century; mounting evidence from excavations in Palestine, including Caesarea (Arnon 2008: 32, 80) and Ramla (Cytryn-Silverman 2010: 102, Pl. 9.14:2), have shown that late variations of this storage vessel continued into the Umayyad period. Likewise, the few examples of candlestick lamps recovered (pp. 328–29) could also be representative of the early eighth century (Magness 1993: 251–52, Oil-Lamp Form 3A).

As for the latest activity in Building 600, a dating of the second half of the eighth century seems suitable. That would justify the lack of Buff Ware, glazed wares (including cooking pots and pans), *Kerbschnitt*, and others, which seem to have developed from the early ninth century onwards. On the other hand, a post-749 CE date would suit the co-appearance of Red Painted vessels, abundant in Tall Jawa, and molded lamps with tongue-shaped handles.

Following the above, the data presented in chapter 14 ("Glass Vessels and Lamps" by Heather A. Siemens, pp. 415–64) should also be carefully examined, especially as the parallels listed as references tend to concentrate on the early side of the chronology. For the small cup G174 (p. 419, fig. 14.1:3) which has a slightly tapering body and a simple rim, for example, Siemens brings parallels from

Jarash, Khirbat al-Karak, and Mezad Tamar. I would suggest referencing more recent reports, richer in data and parallels, than Meyer 1988, Delougaz and Haines 1960, and Erdmann 1977. To cite just a few relevant sources, Lester's report on the 1973–1974 excavations in Tiberias (Lester 2004), Hadad's on Beth Shean (2005), and Gorin-Rosen's on Ramla (2010, then unavailable to Siemens in the course of her study) offer a wide range of finds, retrieved from good stratigraphic contexts, accompanied by rich discussions and parallels. Hadad presents a deep bowl ca. 7.4 cm in rim diameter in her Umayyad repertoire (Hadad 2005: Pl. 1:14), as does Gorin-Rosen (2010: Pl. 10.1:3; 8.3 cm in rim diameter with applied horizontal trails on the upper body), thus strengthening Siemens's dating. In the case of the latter, nevertheless, the related glass assemblage (from Locus 62.1039) was retrieved together with typical ceramic wares of the ʿAbbāsid period (detailed discussion of the discrepancy between the glass and ceramic results on the Ramla report is beyond the scope of this review). It should be also pointed out that Gorin-Rosen stressed that "although we assign it to the Umayyad period (up to the mid-eighth century), we must bear in mind that some vessel types continued in use during the second half of the eighth century" (2010: 215). Lester (2004: fig. 7.1:2), on the other hand, brings a wider range of parallels to her cup (a little wider than Tall Jawa's, ca. 9 cm in diameter), showing that this type is also found in post-Umayyad contexts. Tall Jawa's small bowl G161 (fig. 14.2:1), 13 cm in diameter, has basically the same shape as the cup and is thus comparable to Gorin-Rosen's complete beaker (2010: Pl. 10.1:1), 11.2 cm in rim diameter, dated Umayyad. Yet it is also comparable to some of Hadad's plain bowls (2005: Pl. 26:512–20) and Lester's Deep Bowls (2004: fig. 7.1:27), which have been found in ʿAbbāsid-Fāṭimid contexts. It should also be noted that various decorated bowls of the ʿAbbāsid-Fāṭimid period were also blown into this shape, including mold-blown bowls (Hadad 2005: Pl. 30), tonged bowls and beakers (Hadad 2005: Pls. 31–32), incised bowls (Hadad 2005: Pl. 33), and luster bowls (Lester 2004: fig. 7.15:181).

Another example of a type for which a narrow (and early) chronological range is proposed, despite evidence indicating a long period of use, is the Beaded Stemmed Lamp (pp. 446–47; fig. 14.14). This dating is in accordance with the results from the Umayyad pottery workshop in Beth Shean, for example (Winter 2011: fig. 12.2:31–32); yet, Hadad's examples from this site (2005: Pls. 22:425–34, 45:958–68), as well as items from Tiberias, come from strata ranging from the Umayyad through the Fāṭimid periods. Lester also lists parallels supporting this wide range (Lester 2004: 195, fig. 7.11:135–40). Accordingly, an early ʿAbbāsid dating for the latest finds in the assemblage seems more probable.

Some technical observations on this important publication should be made, not as a specific critique to this volume but as a suggestion for those working on archaeological reports. Firstly, plans and maps must be clear and easy to read, while photographs should be representative and elements therein easy to discern. Daviau's volume has the great advantage of providing the reader with a DVD on which most images are available, but a printed report must stand on its own since the means to read a DVD are not always at hand. Take as an example the topographical map in fig. 1.4. It is difficult to follow, and many of the features referred to in the text are not marked (such as the remains of Building 600 itself, as well as the modern property). The same is true for the description on pp. 58–60 of Room 616, whose elements are not all marked in fig. 3.10. The schematic representation of Iron Age and Umayyad wall-construction techniques in fig. 3.5 should preferably have been accompanied by photographs. The drawing of the mosaic in Room 606 in fig. 3.17 is too schematic as well, and a person working on mosaics would have preferred a larger and more detailed plan. The photographs showing the geometric motifs in figs. 4.2–4.4 are an important addition, yet they lack a scale. In the case of the coins published by Walmsley in chapter 13, we have the opposite case: they do come with a scale, but the images could be bigger.

Furthermore, references to relevant illustrations and cross-references between chapters are crucial in a report. Unfortunately this is problematic in this volume, which carries over to its DVD. If, for example, the reader is interested in checking the vessels found near Doorway BB mentioned in chapter 3 (p. 40), he has to search for them on his own. It would have been better if reference had been made to the illustrations found in chapter 8, for example to the hemispherical Red Painted bowl (V654) mentioned amongst the finds and illustrated in fig. 8:3.3. The same

is true for table 3F, listing the finds from Room 606, which includes two bowls, 15 lamps (an assemblage of great importance), and a baggy (bag-shaped) jar (p. 53). As mentioned above, it is possible to search for each of the finds on the DVD, yet it takes extra work to find their illustrations in the book: in this case, figs. 9.1.6, 9.3.1, 9.3.5, 9.5.4–5, 9.6.2 (with the detail of an inscription in fig. 10.2.2a–b), 9.6.3 (also in fig. 10.1.2a–b), and 9.6.6. A further and important example is that of an interesting jug inscribed "Naoumas" in Greek (V618), mentioned in the discussion of Room 601 (p. 66). No reference is given either to its drawing, which appears in chapter 8 in Daviau's ceramic typology (under "Thick-Walled Cylindrical Bottles," fig. 8.8.4, p. 226), or to the discussion in chapter 11 by Johnson ("Inscribed Vessels, Ostraca and Plaster," pp. 351–52, fig. 11.1).

In conclusion, much is to be gained by making an excavation report more organic by interrelating its various components. In the case of Daviau's publication, which presents a rich repertoire of early Islamic finds and prompts us to rethink some accepted premises regarding this period's material culture, a more integrated presentation of the excavation results would have better succeeded in achieving the report's goals.

Errata

- Page 29: According to the plan in fig. 3.2 (p. 27), Doorway DD leads to Room 604, not to 605.
- Page 69: Doorway CC is marked neither in fig. 3.2 nor in fig. 3.27. See photograph fig. 3.35 in p. 71, which helps the reader to locate this feature.
- Pages 110–11: Fig. 5.4 (the painted dado reconstruction of Sequence 122 in Room 606) is missing.
- Page 248: P-1/c-3 should be "Everted Concave Rim Pithoi."
- Page 269, fig. 8.16: The drawings have been transposed; the Gaza amphora is fig. 8.16:3.
- Pages 341, 361, 362, 364: There is a problem with the letter ب —the editor seems to have used the letter د (provided with a dot underneath) instead.
- Page 341: I am not totally convinced that the inscription in Lamp V1645 (figs. 9.2:5 and 10:1) is *Baraka* [. . .], but unfortunately I cannot offer an alternative reading.
- Page 346: The ب is used, but the Arabic for the inscription of a multi-nozzle lamp at the Jordanian Archaeological Museum, which reads 'Astura and / son of Astan' (Khairy and ʿAmr 1986: fig. 11, pl. XL, no. 12), is jumbled and reads اصطان بن / اصطورا و.
- Page 377: The reader should be referred to chapter 11 rather than chapter 10 for the discussion of ostracon TJ359 (p. 362, fig. 11.2:11).
- Page 396: Damascus (Dimashq) is misspelled in Arabic, a ف/ق with no diacritic used instead of mīm (م).
- Page 402: Homs/Ḥimṣ is written حعص instead of حمص.

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