

## Village Life in Mamluk and Ottoman Hubras and Saham: Northern Jordan Project -Report on the 2006 Season

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### **Glass (Boulogne) – Figs. 43 and 44**

In addition to pottery, glass, and specifically fragments of glass bracelets (bangles), was among the most chronologically sensitive small finds of the 2006 season. This corpus of 21 bangles consisted of 15 polychrome and 6 monochrome fragments. The polychrome examples represented a range of decorative techniques: prunts (*R31*), mosaic eyes (*R30*), patch decoration (*R34* and *R40*), a single and continuous band of glass crossed by transverse strips (*R19*), a twisted wire on the centre of a flat surface (*R32*), combined patterns (*R41*), and twisted designs (*R3*). Some techniques, however, could not be identified, such as those on *R16* and *R39*. The corpus can be dated to the Mamluk and Ottoman periods through comparative and stylistic analysis (Spaer 1992; Spaer et al 2001: 194; Shindo 1996; Boulogne 2007). The majority of the sites producing comparanda for this study are located in Great Syria: Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi (Grabar et al 1978:138-147), the Castle of Salah al-Din (unpublished, in storage in Damascus Citadel), the Citadel of Damascus (Berthier 2000-1), Masyaf Castle, Khirbat Faris (Johns et al 1989), Tell Abu Sarbut (Steiner 1997-8), Talls al-Hesi and Erani (Spaer 1992; Toombs 1985: 200, Pls. 91-92), and Jerash (Meyer 1988). We have also found parallels with bangles from Fustat and Qusayr al-Qadim in Egypt (Shindo 1996; Whitcomb and Johnson 1979: 9, 64, 196, 199, 203; Whitcomb and Johnson 1982: 233-241, 327, 339), Kawd am-Saila in Yemen (Monod 1975 and 1978), and Julfar in the United Arab Emirates (Hansman 1985: 76-83). Some of the Hubras bracelets demonstrated exact parallels with other excavated sites: *R3* and *R19* were quite similar in form and surface treatment to those at Tall Abu Sarbut and Tall Erani; the best parallels for *R19* came from Masyaf and Kawd am-Saila; *R39* compared favourably to examples from Masyaf (Boulogne 2007: Pl. 15, #83 and Pl. 58C), Fustat (Shindo 1996: 372), and Quseir al-Qadim (Whitcomb and Johnson 1979 and 1982).

The monochrome corpus is composed of twisted (*R20* *R29* *R27*) and smooth bands (*R23* *R33*), with only one fragment exhibiting a different engraved decoration (*R15*). Twisted bracelets of this kind are generally found on most of the Greater Syrian sites and are well represented in Jordan: at Tall Abu Sarbut and Khirbat Faris they are securely dated to the Ayyubid to Ottoman periods (Steiner 1997-8: 145-151;

Boulogne 2007; Johns et al 1989). The smooth-contour samples are more widely distributed for the same period, though in a different colour scheme, than the twisted-band variety. Nevertheless, the brown or translucent fragments from Hubras are not very common at other sites. Similarly, sample R1, a fragment of polychrome glass illustrated in the accompanying plates but not described in the catalogue below, has no close parallels and could be of local manufacture. Unfortunately, we do not have any bangles with the same design.

Although the polychrome and monochrome bangles of Hubras have also been identified at other sites in Greater Syria, the Hubras assemblage stands out for its range of colours (some not known elsewhere), combined with patterns (such as sample R30) familiar from other sites. This seems to be the case with the corpuses identified thus far from Greater Syria: though sharing the same range of patterns, they otherwise demonstrate considerable variation.

### *Bracelets Catalogue*

#### **Polychrome samples** (Fig. 43)

##### **R31**

Inv. # HM06.A3.8A.11. Flat in section. Length: 2.6 cm; width: 1 cm; thickness: 0.5 cm.

This polychrome sample is decorated with a kaleidoscope decoration, comparable to those at Tall Abu Sarbut dated to the Mamluk period; also identified at Khirbat Minyeh, where they are Umayyad and Mamluk in date (Steiner 1997-8: *ibid*; Spaer 1992: 59-60; [www.virtualegyptianmuseum.org/Collection/FullVisit/Collection](http://www.virtualegyptianmuseum.org/Collection/FullVisit/Collection)). Not very common but is known in Yemen: Kawd am-Saila (Late Islamic – Monod 1978: 119). Those last comparatives data show a kaleidoscope pattern of same yellow colour, with more red and blue.

##### **R30**

HM.06.A3.1.2. Triangular in section. Length: 4.5 cm; width: 1.3 cm; thickness: 1.1 cm.

This polychrome sample has a black core. One side is decorated in a yellow and orange-checked pattern. Reverse is black and brown. This kind of decoration of mosaic eyes is generally known from the Ottoman period. Samples identified at Dan and Tall Erani (Palestine), dated to the medieval period (Spaer 2001 et al: 197; Spaer 1992: 158).

##### **R34**

HF06.B3.1.1. Triangular in section. Length: 5.5 cm; width: 0.8 cm; height: 0.7 cm.

Polychrome fragment with a green core and yellow, blue, brown decoration. Of relatively poor quality. This type has an applied decoration of “separate strips”, which is well-known at the Citadel of Damascus, Tall al-Hesi, Tall Erani, Jerash, and Julfar, although colors vary (Boulogne 2007: Pl. 12, #44; Hansman 1985: 76-83; Spaer 1992: 44-62, 197; Toombs 1985; Meyer 1988: 214-215). Mostly Ottoman in date.

##### **R40**

HMO6.A3.4.7. Circular in section. Length: 1.5 cm; width: 0.6 cm; height: 0.5 cm.

Blue core with yellow, white, and black lines. Very small polychrome fragment but seems to be the same type as R34, with a blue paste. This kind of decoration made of strips of glass wound around the bangle is a well-known type that demonstrates regional variety. Parallels: cf.R.34.

##### **R32**

HF06.B4.7.7. Circular in section. Length: 1.3 cm; width: 0.6 cm; height: 0.3 cm.

Polychrome green paste, white and black twisted wire, yellow and orange decoration.

One kind of this model of polychrome bangle has been identified at Khirbat Faris, dated to the Mamluk period. However, the central wire of Khirbat Faris is not a twisted bichrome, but is entirely white. Not common (unpublished; see Boulogne 2007: Pl. 24, #399).

##### **R19**

HFO6.B1.4.4. Triangular in section. Length: 9 cm; width: 0.5 cm; height: 0.8 cm.

This very interesting polychrome fragment is clearly represented at Masyaf Castle by two samples: one of Mamluk date and the other Ottoman. A similar bangle, flat in section and decorated in yellow, brown, and white transversal strips, has been identified in samples bought in Sanaa in 2003 (Boulogne 2007: pl. 15, #74 and #82).

**R16**

HFO6.B1.1.1. Triangular in section. Length: 1.9 cm; width: 0.1 cm; height: 0.1 cm.

Polychrome fragment: one side is black and yellow with small black strips; the other is white and black on a yellow strip. Difficult to ascertain the manufacturing technique. Very rare, few parallels can be made; comparable to a fragment from Masyaf Castle, dated to the Mamluk period (Boulogne 2007: Pl. 16, #89).

**R3**

HF06.B4.9.9. Circular in section. Length: 1.7 cm; width: 1.1 cm; thickness: 0.5 cm.

This polychrome, twisted bangle with one wire of white colour is closely paralleled at Tall Abu Sarbut by a nearly identical fragment, Mamluk in date (Boulogne 2007: Pl. 20, #37); see a comparable example from Tall Erani (Spaer et al 2001: 197). Others examples with twisted bands are well-known, such as at Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi (Abbasid-Mamluk: Grabar et al 1978: 138-147 – exhibited in Palmyra Museum and in storage), and the Castle of Salah al-Din (Ayyubid: Boulogne 2007: Pl. 41, #A-B-C – unpublished and stored in the National Museum in Damascus).

**R39**

HM06.A3.4.6. Rectangular in section. Length: 1.7 cm; width: 1.1 cm; thickness: 0.5 cm.

The polychrome design of chevrons is unusual but can be compared to fragments discovered at Masyaf Castle (Ottoman: Boulogne 2007: Pl. 15, #83 – in storage on-site; Pl. 58C – private collection), Fustat (Shindo 1996: 372), Qusayr al-Qadim (Mamluk: Whitcomb and Johnson 1979 and 1982).

**R41**

HF06.B4.7.7. Triangular in section. Length: 5 cm.

Polychrome fragment with a green core and a black and white twisted strip.

Clearly identified at Khirbat Minyeh (Umayyad), and Qusayr al-Qadim (Mamluk: Whitcomb and Johnson 1979 and 1982).

**R24**

HF06.B4.10.10. Triangular in section. Length: 3.1 cm; width: 0.6 cm.

Polychrome sample, white horizontal strip on turquoise blue and brown. No parallels have been found.

**MONOCHROMES SAMPLES (Fig. 44)**

**R20** (not illustrated)

HF06.B3.5.7. Circular in section. Length: 5.5 cm; width: 0.6 cm; thickness: 0.7 cm.

Brown core, blue surface. This monochrome twist sample is decorated by one strip of prunts. Not really common on monochrome bangles, though one is clearly identified at Tall Abu Sarbut (unpublished).

**R29**

HF06.B1.10.11. Semi-circular, flat section. Length: 3.1 cm; width: 0.6 cm; thickness: 0.6 cm.

Monochrome, twisted band. Green core, brown surface. Twisted, dark-colored bangle is quite common at Tall Abu Sarbut and Khirbat Faris, dated to the Mamluk and Ottoman periods (Boulogne 2007: 445).

**R27**

HM06.A3.2B.14. Semi-circular, flat in section. Length: 6.5 cm; height: 7 cm; width: 6 cm.

Monochrome blue fragment with twisted band. Common, like R29.

**R23** (not illustrated)

HS.06.B1.19.16.19. Circular in section. Length: 1.9 cm; width: 0.7 cm; thickness: 0.5 cm.

Green core; brown, smooth surface. Although bangles with a smooth surface are known from most sites, the brown colour is not common. A few samples have been identified at Damascus (triangular in section, Mamluk in date), Tall Abu Sarbut (semi-circular in section, also Mamluk in date), and at Jerash (Boulogne 2007: 445; Meyer 1988).

**R15**

HF06.B1.6.7. Circular in section. Small fragment.

Translucid, with engraved decoration. No parallels have been found.

*Stratigraphic contexts*

Only two of the bracelets excavated at Hubras were retrieved from loci of some importance.

A3.8A.11, which was wall collapse above the flagstone floor of the “eastern building”, produced R31, a polychrome bangle of likely Mamluk date. The pavement may have been part of a late Ottoman expansion of the complex, this locus representing the final use and collapse of the eastern building. Associated objects include mostly Mandate-period pottery (jars) and a late Ottoman pipe; the locus is a mixed one. Together they suggest a domestic use of this space before the collapse of the structure, sometime in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, perhaps as late as the bulldozing of 1970. The second (R20) was found in abandonment, post-collapse fill inside the ‘Obeidat farmhouse (square B3). Most of the pottery from this locus was late Ottoman through modern in date.

The remainder of the loci are fill and destruction debris; none represent sealed or stratigraphically secure contexts. Four of the bracelets (R30, R40, R39, R27) were found in association with Mamluk-Mandate period sherds, late Ottoman pipes, ceramic stoppers made from recycled sherds, and miscellaneous glass fragments in the bulldozer debris of the eastern building (A.3). They collectively illustrate the range of domestic items used in the village in the late medieval period until today and at the very least identify this part of today’s Hubras as the location of the medieval village, in the absence of standing architecture of the period (outside of the mosque). As for the farmhouse (Field B), three bracelet fragments (R3, R41, and R24) came from what is likely kitchen refuse in B.4, a square placed immediately outside the kitchen of the farmhouse to determine refuse disposal patterns and to examine kitchen cleaning patterns. These loci contained the expected concentrations of charcoal and ash, as well as lithics, glass, and personal items, including jewellery. The remaining glass fragments in this catalogue (R34, R19, R16, R29, R23, and R15) are among the objects retrieved from the courtyard fill of the ‘Obeidat farmhouse.

**Soil** (Lucke)

To determine the extent to which climatic events or human land use were factors in first, rural decline, and second, landscape transformation, we included a soil genesis study in the design of the 2006 field season. Research followed a twofold approach: on the one hand, soils and colluvia were compared applying a variety of analytical techniques. On the other, historical sets of air photos and CORONA satellite images were evaluated in order to understand the age and stability of field systems, landscape change, and the presence of ancient land use installations.