

INTRODUCTION

A first approach to monasticism beyond the River Jordan

Monasticism is still one of the most characteristic and intriguing aspects of Christian life, as it is a physical expression of the desire to renounce an ephemeral material and worldly existence to dedicate oneself solely to Christ. This spiritual quest was at the basis of the decision of the first monks (μοναχοί) to abandon their civil and social surroundings to withdraw to an isolated place, where they could dedicate themselves to ascetic practices to then enter the celestial life promised after death. The environment chosen by the monks for their anchoritic life (ἀναχώρησις) soon became the desert, a space that was both concrete and metaphorical, chosen as the ideal dwelling for both the body and the spirit¹. From the first experiences in Egypt in the middle of the 4th cent. A.D., monasticism underwent rapid development throughout the Christian Orient, with a particular focus on the Palestinian context.

In the diocesan territories beyond the River Jordan, in the provinces of *Arabia* and *Palaestina*, monasticism imposed itself in the anchoritic and coenobitic forms from the second half of the 4th cent. A.D. (Fig. 1). Although they were characterized by two different life styles, these two models often shared the same geographical spaces and the same religious aims. However, the spread of the ascetic form seems to have been the oldest, because the aforementioned territories presented the geo-environmental features most suitable for a hermit's withdrawal from the world². The monks chose, as ideal places of retreat, the numerous natural cavities which dotted the rocky formations of the Jordan Valley. Furthermore, the pilgrims' travelogues record the presence of ascetics near the city of *Livias*, in the peninsula of Lisan and in the valley of 'Uyun Musa³. These elements have motivated the recent topographical surveys, which, together with toponomastic investigations, have allowed the recognition of the numerous hermitages spread through Jordan⁴.

Significant examples are reported in the area between the River Yarmuk and the Zarqua, including the hermitage of Deir er-Riyashi between the Wadi el-Wala-Heidan and the Wadi el-Mujeb Arnon⁵, El-Hamme⁶, the three rock cells in the Wadi el-Habis⁷, the hermitage of Wadi el-Yabis and that in the Wadi Zagara⁸. Near Es-Salt, the installation of al-Mu'allaqah in the Wadi ash-Shuaib⁹ must be recalled while in the region of Kerak numerous rock complexes are attested in the surroundings of Hammam 'Afra¹⁰, in 'Ain el-Qattara (Wadi Zarqa Ma'in)¹¹ and in the Wadi Defali¹². The peninsula of Lisan and Ghor el-Mezra' are dotted with numerous

¹ On the topic of the monastic landscape, the bibliography is vast; see in particular Chitty 1966; Mango 2008, 150–182; Patrich 1995; Marazzi 2015; 9–25; Patrich 2019.

² Desreumaux *et al.* 1978; Hirschfeld 1992; Hamarneh 2014, 361.

³ Hamarneh 2014, 362.

⁴ Hamarneh 2014, 362.

⁵ Burckhardt 1822, 371; Gluek 1935, 36.

⁶ Steuernagel 1925, 121; Saller – Bagatti 1949, 221.

⁷ Steuernagel 1925, 121.

⁸ Steuernagel 1925, 120.

⁹ Villeneuve 2003.

¹⁰ Politis 2001, 588.

¹¹ Piccirillo 1989a, 248–249; Piccirillo 1992, 6.

¹² Canova 1954, 19–22.

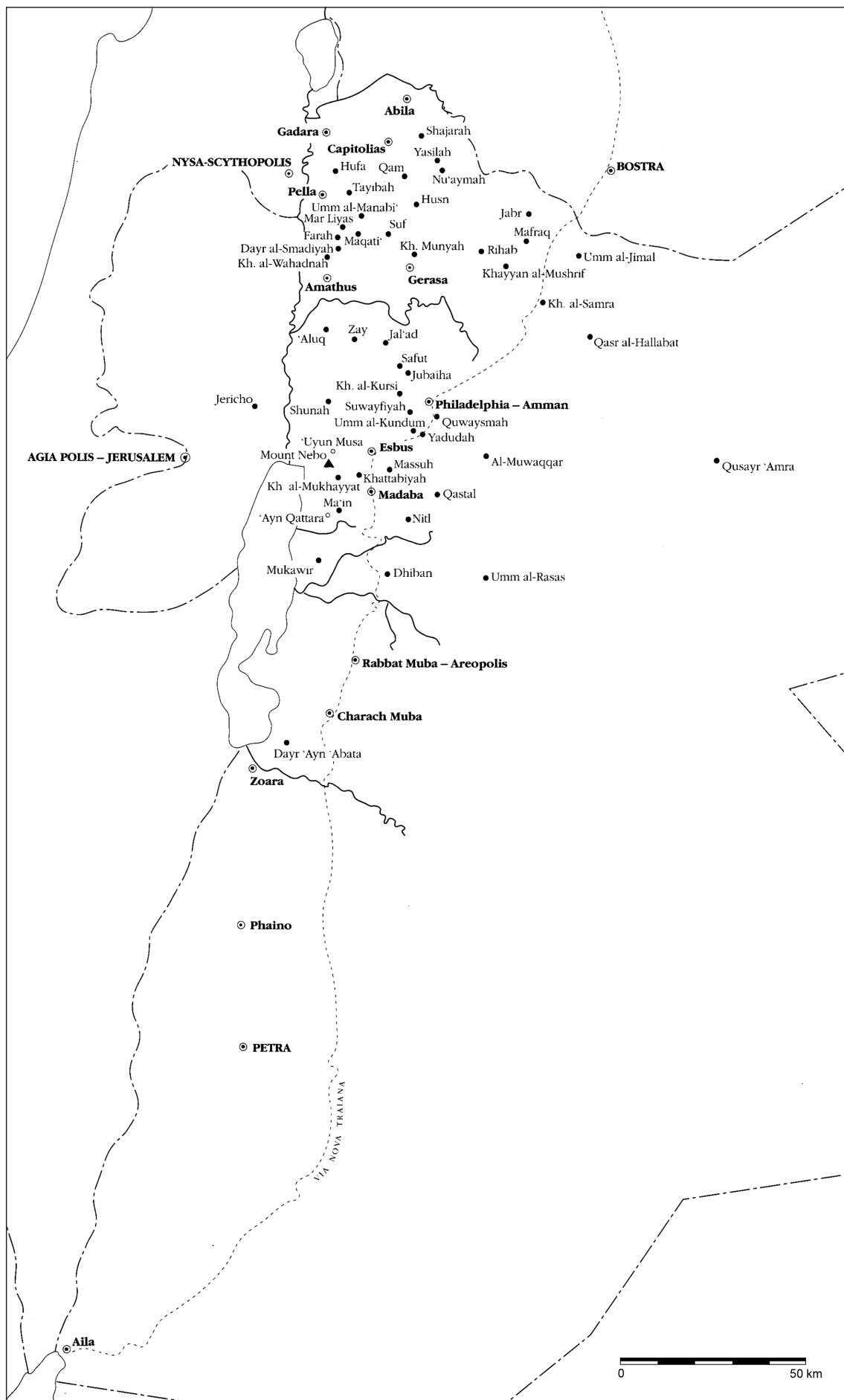


Fig. 1 Map with the main Byzantine sites of Jordan discussed in the text.

hermitic structures¹³; in particular near Deir al-Qattar al-Byzanti¹⁴ and Qasr at-Tuba¹⁵. Lastly, more to the south, a rocky cavity in Sayl Batha in the Petra region¹⁶ should be mentioned, as well as a hermit's cell in Kilwa, east of the city of Ayla-Aqaba¹⁷.

The importance of the social role that monks played in the rural society of the provinces of *Palaestina* and *Arabia* has an important echo in literary sources. In particular, they show how the spread of monasticism beyond the River Jordan was originally to Christianize the rural population and the Arab tribes, both with a strong bond to previous pagan religious traditions. The historian Sozomen (A.D. 400–450), in his *Ecclesiastical History*, recalls a massive campaign of conversion to Christianity by the monks of the desert, who were the first to interact with the tribes from southern Arabia¹⁸. A century later, Cyril of Scythopolis (died A.D. 558) in his *Life of St Thomas* recalls how Christianizing the Arab nomads was accompanied by their subsequent sedentariness¹⁹. It is worth mentioning that the evangelization of the nomadic tribes, just as for the rural communities, certainly took place in the Aramaic and Arabic languages with the use of bilingual missionaries and monks (or even with the actual training of an indigenous bilingual clergy)²⁰. These elements show the profound respect and the full veneration that the ancient tribal Arab society gave to the figure of the monk and the hermit. Evidences of that are the well-known legend of the meeting between the young Muhammad and the learned monk Bahira at Deir Nagra near Bosra (or near the site of Umm er-Rasas)²¹ and Surah 57, v. 27 of the Quran²²:

«We gave him [Jesus] the Gospel, and put compassion and mercy in the hearts of his followers. As for monasticism, they instituted it themselves (for we had not enjoined it on them), seeking thereby to please God»²³

Alongside the first hermitages, the monastic foundations were established, made up of a group of monks devoted to a community lifestyle, known as coenobites²⁴. These monasteries took on very distinct forms and characteristics. They included both the small monasteries built in rural villages and the large coenobitic estates, which could administer lands, developed theological learning and managed the flow of pilgrims who often visited²⁵. Very often, the monasteries effectively contained an ecclesiastical shrine linked to the figure of a particularly charismatic monk or hegumen or connected with the memory of a Biblical figure or event²⁶.

The extension of the monasteries could vary depending on the number of the monks, the needs of the community or the physical characteristics of the place where they were built. The division of the internal spaces was particularly heterogeneous, as in addition to the main building

¹³ Canova 1954, 217–218. Nor should the reports provided in the life of St Stephen the Sabaite on the caverns chosen by monks for their Lenten retreat be forgotten. In particular, Arnoon, Giariba, Cutila, ar-Ruba, Castillion. See in this regard the study in Hamarneh 2014, 363.

¹⁴ Holmegren – Kalif 1997; Politis 2001, 586.

¹⁵ Holmegren – Kalif 1997, 333–335.

¹⁶ Linder 1997, 504, table 52.

¹⁷ Saller – Bagatti 1949, 230–232.

¹⁸ Soz. h. e. 6, 38. For the work of preaching Christianity in *Arabia Felix* and the relative journey of Theophilus the Indian, the study by Fiaccadori 1992b with a detailed bibliography is fundamental.

¹⁹ Cyr. S., V. Euthym, 10.

²⁰ Fiaccadori 1992a, 98; Contini 1987, 60. On monasticism in Arabia in the time of the birth of the prophet Muhammad, see Millar 2009.

²¹ The monk Bahira is believed to have recognized the prophetic charisma of the boy. Griffith 1994; Fiaccadori 1992a, 102 with an extensive bibliography.

²² The Quranic text also dwells on Christian monastic life in Surahs 5, v. 82; 9, v. 34; 24, v. 36–37.

²³ Quran, trans. by N. J. Dawood, 540.

²⁴ This particular form of monasticism was founded in the region of Upper Egypt by the monk Pachomius the Great (died A.D. 346) and very soon rapidly spread throughout Palestine.

²⁵ Hamarneh 2003, 195–209.

²⁶ In some cases, the tombs of the monks of particular prestige were placed inside the churches of the monastic foundations and took on the typical connotation of the burial *ad sanctos*, this way becoming real destinations of pilgrimages. On the subject, see Hamarneh 2014, 365–366; Bianchi 2018.

for worship, there had to be a series of fundamental elements for the survival of the inhabitants: in particular, tanks to collect water and facilities for the preparation and preservation of food. External walls with towers also characterized some complexes²⁷.

Regarding the typology of the model of settlement in the area, monasteries of a limited extension are documented near ancient Roman *castra*, as shown by the cases of Khirbet Munya-Asfur²⁸, Qasr el-Bid²⁹, Deir el-Kahf³⁰, Jabal Qu'ais (el-Quttein)³¹ and probably Qasr el-Hallabat³² as well. In other cases, the monasteries stood in completely isolated spots; these include Zay el-Gharbi³³, Khirbet Munya³⁴, Khirbet el-Kursi³⁵, 'Ain Jammaleh³⁶. The Persian writer Hamza al-Isfahani also recalls in his *Ta'rikh* that the sovereign 'Amr ibn Jafna built several Christian monasteries³⁷. Although not all the buildings have been recognized, the monuments and the inscriptions of the sites of Qasr el-Heir el-Gharbi, al-Burj, al-'Umayri and Nitl allow this view to be confirmed³⁸.

The development of the monasteries intensified from the second half of the 5th cent. with a peak in the 6th cent. A.D., coinciding with the great expansion of lay and religious building which had started during the reign of Justinian I³⁹. The monastic institutions of the hermitic and coenobitic types continued to function actively in the subsequent centuries, until they were slowly and gradually abandoned, as will be discussed critically in Chapter Five.

A brief history of the studies and research connected with monasticism

It is not the aim here to present once again the analytical list of the numerous explorations carried out in the lands beyond the River Jordan, for which reference should be made to the well-known summaries in literature⁴⁰. However, the most important archaeological missions, which have dealt specifically with the study of monasteries, should be recalled. This type of research had two different methodological criteria. At first, the investigations were limited to surveys of a topographical and epigraphic nature; subsequently the direct involvement of many research institutes allowed systematic excavations.

European travellers starting from the 19th cent. mentioned ruins of monasteries beyond the River Jordan in their reports. At that time, the desire did not yet exist to investigate specifically the individual ecclesiastical places in the region, moreover almost all unexplored, but instead a more general interest in the exploration of antiquities provided the impetus.

The oldest references to the monasteries in the region, in particular to the hermits' cells, are documented in the pioneering investigations by H. C. BUTLER⁴¹, G. SCHUMACHER⁴² and later N. GLUECK⁴³. Although addressing the wider horizon of antiquities in Transjordan, these texts represent a useful repertoire for knowledge of the territory before modern building. Some

²⁷ Hamarneh 2012, 280.

²⁸ Piccirillo 1983b, 361.

²⁹ Piccirillo 1983a, 61; Michel 2001, 184.

³⁰ Piccirillo 1981, 62; Butler 1907, 148; King 1982, 94–95; Michel 2001, 243; Hamarneh 2012, 280.

³¹ Qaqish 2007, 369; Hamarneh 2012, 280.

³² Arce 2007, 342.

³³ Piccirillo 1982, 359.

³⁴ Piccirillo 1983a, 361; Hamarneh 2003, 196–197.

³⁵ Glueck 1937–1935, 162; Hamarneh 2003, 197–200.

³⁶ Hamarneh 2003, 196.

³⁷ Hamza al-Isfahani, *Ta'rikh*, 117.

³⁸ Genequand 2015, 183.

³⁹ Di Segni 1999b, 140–178; Walmsley 2005, 516.

⁴⁰ Hamarneh 2003, 34–43; Bianchi 2007, 23–26.

⁴¹ Butler 1907.

⁴² Schumacher 1890; Schumacher 1900.

⁴³ Glueck 1934; Glueck 1935; Glueck 1951.

references are also contained in the synthesis by J. W. CROWFOOT on the numerous churches of Palestine⁴⁴.

Amongst the first systematic surveys of the 20th cent., aimed at the specific study of Christian monuments, the surveys made in the 1930s by S. SALLER and B. BAGATTI in the region of Mount Nebo and in the diocese of Madaba⁴⁵ have to be mentioned. This research gave rise to a rich topographical *corpus* of Christian buildings, accompanied by an attentive study of the epigraphic material, which allowed the certain identification of the many monastic complexes in the Mount Nebo region. The same approach was followed by R. CANOVA in 1936 for investigation in the region of Karak⁴⁶. The scholar recorded the Byzantine settlements in the area and made an in-depth epigraphic analysis of more than four hundred funerary steles.

The research by B. BAGATTI and A. AUGUSTINOVIĆ in the northern areas near ‘Ajlun followed shortly afterwards and allowed the recording of the ecclesiastical buildings in the rural areas and above all, the identification of the monastic complex dedicated to Elijah near the ancient Thisbe⁴⁷. The study of northern Jordan was then resumed in the 1960s by S. MITTMANN⁴⁸ and later in the 1980s by M. PICCIRILLO, who collected epigraphic and monumental data in an interesting publication completed with the results of the excavations he had directed in the site of Rihab⁴⁹. In the same period, the Franciscan Archaeological Institute also turned its attention to the diocesan region of Madaba, coordinating a series of new archaeological investigations published in a volume edited by M. PICCIRILLO assisted by E. ALLIATA⁵⁰, which from certain points of view is still very topical. The two archaeologists continued in particular the systematic excavations in the Memorial of Moses, started by S. SALLER and resumed by V. CORBO⁵¹, extending the study to the numerous ecclesiastical complexes in the Mount Nebo region⁵².

An analysis of monasticism which developed in the peninsula of Lisan is owed to R. HOLMGREN and A. KALIFF⁵³, active in particular in the site of Deir al-Qattar al-Byzanti and to K. POLITIS, who concentrated mainly on the site of Deir ‘Ain ‘Abata and on the phenomena of asceticism and coenobitism in the southern region of the Dead Sea⁵⁴. Further south, the archaeological activity of the University of Helsinki has to be mentioned which, directed by Z. T. FIEMA, involved an international team in the systematic excavation of the monastic complex dedicated to Aaron on Jabal Haroun, the results of which have been collected in a recent publication⁵⁵.

Among the studies on sacred architecture in the Jordanian region, which also mention monasticism, the book by A. MICHEL has to be included, which synthesizes and collects the inventory of ecclesiastical building of the Byzantine and Umayyad eras in Jordan⁵⁶. Indispensable for the study of the relationship between the Christian topography and the local Christian community is the research conducted by B. HAMARNEH on the Jordanian rural context⁵⁷. In the volume she edited, there is also a first critical reflection on the monasteries in the region, highlighting in particular their socio-economic role. The scholar’s interest in the study of the monasteries is also

⁴⁴ Crowfoot 1941.

⁴⁵ Saller – Bagatti 1949.

⁴⁶ Canova 1954.

⁴⁷ Augustinović – Bagatti 1952.

⁴⁸ Mittmann 1970.

⁴⁹ Piccirillo 1981.

⁵⁰ Piccirillo 1989a.

⁵¹ More specifically on the history of the studies on the Memorial of Moses, see below, 28–29.

⁵² For a synthesis of monasticism in the region of Mount Nebo, see Piccirillo 1998b, 194–219 and 221–263.

⁵³ Holmgren – Kaliff 1997.

⁵⁴ On the studies on the complex of Deir ‘Ain ‘Abata and on monasticism in the region of Ghor es-Safi, see the book by Politis 2012.

⁵⁵ Fiema *et al.* 2016.

⁵⁶ Michel 2001.

⁵⁷ Hamarneh 2003.

found in two recent articles for an annotated synthesis on monasticism of the coenobitic⁵⁸ and hermitic⁵⁹ type. B. MACDONALD deals with the phenomenon of the pilgrimage to the Christian sanctuaries of Jordan in his travel guide⁶⁰.

Lastly, it is worth mentioning a series of studies linked to Palestinian monasticism, which, although they are concentrated on the monasteries of the Judean Desert, represent an essential instrument for the comparison with the monasteries of Jordan. In particular, the first annotated introduction on monasticism in Egypt and Palestine edited by D. CHITTY⁶¹ was followed by a wider work by J. BINNS on both the hagiographic and the historical-social aspects⁶². The studies by Y. HIRSCHFELD⁶³ and J. PATRICH⁶⁴ focus more specifically on archaeological aspects. M. MCCORMICK resumed these data in his recent analysis of the monastic phenomenon based on the philological analysis of the Carolingian text *Commematorium de Casis Dei*⁶⁵.

The excavation campaigns in the Memorial of Moses on Mount Nebo

Mount Nebo is on one of the western crests of the plain of the Balqa' region, known as the ancient Biblical plain of the land of Moab, which looks on to the north-eastern part of the Dead Sea in the present-day Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (Fig. 2). The westernmost spur looking towards the Jordan Valley is today called Siyagha, a name of ancient Aramaic origin, the meaning of which can be translated as "monastery, community of monks." This element allowed the first explorers to correctly identify the summit of Siyagha with the Biblical Phisga, the place where, according to the Biblical text, the prophet Moses could contemplate the Promised Land⁶⁶. The first group of Christian monks who decided to link this topographical site with the important Biblical memory of Moses was certainly aware of the marvellous view from this location of the Holy City of Jerusalem.

During the 19th cent., the territories beyond the River Jordan attracted the attention of the first orientalist who, arriving from the Palestinian holy places, usually descended towards the shores of the Dead Sea to then climb up to the Moab plain. It was precisely the use of the toponym Jabal Nibu (جبل نيبو), still used today by the Bedouin tribes, that stimulated the curiosity of the first explorers and made them visit the ruins of the ancient monastic complex⁶⁷. We owe the first documentation on the site to these scholars and specifically: the archaeologist F. de SAULCY for the first regional map of 1853⁶⁸, Le Duc de LUYNES for the first photo and the sketch of the ruins in 1864⁶⁹ and H. B. TRISTRAM (1864 and 1872) for a synthetic written report⁷⁰.

More detailed information on the archaeological aspects of the site come from the reports of 1873 by the archaeologist and naturalist J. A. PAINE⁷¹ and in 1876 by S. MERRIL⁷² who both took part in the expedition organized by the newly-founded American Palestine Exploration Society based in New York City. This was followed by the research by C. R. CONDER in

⁵⁸ Hamarneh 2012.

⁵⁹ Hamarneh 2014.

⁶⁰ MacDonald 2010.

⁶¹ Chitty 1966.

⁶² Binns 1996.

⁶³ Hirschfeld 1992.

⁶⁴ Patrich 1995; for a recent summary on the distribution of monasteries in Byzantine Palestine, see Patrich 2019.

⁶⁵ McCormick 2011.

⁶⁶ Piccirillo 1998a, 13.

⁶⁷ Piccirillo 1998a, 13.

⁶⁸ de Saulcy 1853; de Saulcy 1865.

⁶⁹ de Luyne 1874.

⁷⁰ Tristram 1865; Tristram 1874.

⁷¹ Paine 1875.

⁷² Merrill 1881.

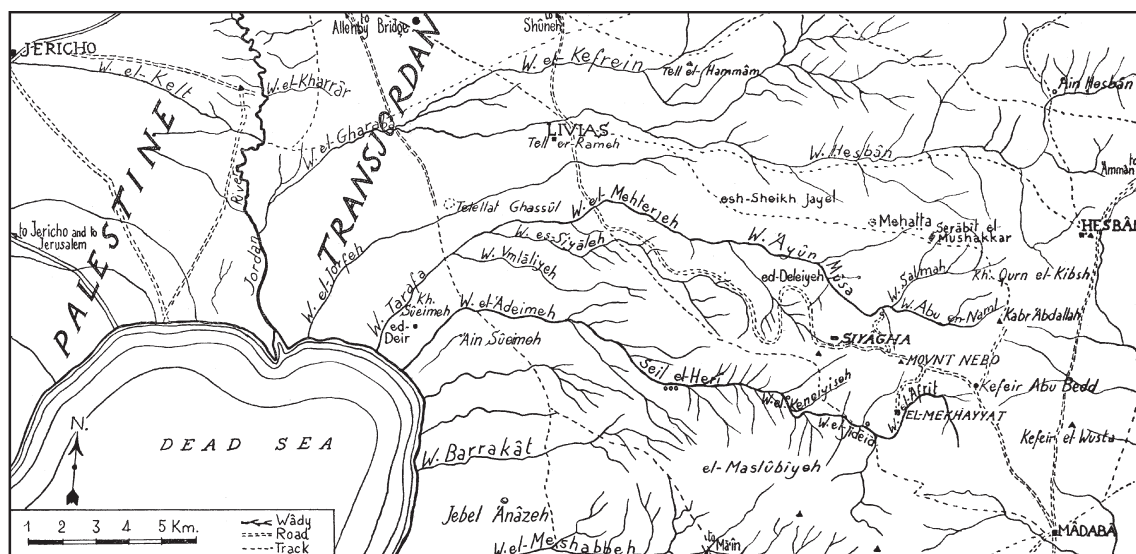


Fig. 2 Map with localization of the Memorial of Moses in the Nebo Region (after Saller 1941, Fig. 1)

1881, who made the first analytical survey east of the River Jordan⁷³ and the publications by G. SCHUMACHER (1891)⁷⁴, A. MUSIL (1901)⁷⁵ and N. GLUECK (1932)⁷⁶.

A turning point came in 1902 when the Franciscans of the Custody of the Holy Land founded the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, a research institute for the study of theology and Biblical archaeology, in Jerusalem, and began the first archaeological campaigns at Mount Nebo. Following the example of the British and American archaeological centres, the Catholic Church also expressed the desire to accompany the study of the Scriptures with pioneering research in the field. The first surveys on Mount Nebo were possible thanks to the passion and the spirit of initiative of J. MIHAIC, a Croatian friar⁷⁷.

In 1932, with the consent and the collaboration of the emir ‘Abd Allah ibn al-Husayn, the Custody of the Holy Land purchased some properties on Mount Nebo which belonged to the Arab tribe of the Wukhyan in which the ruins of the archaeological sites of Ras Siyagha and Khirbet el-Mukhayyat were located⁷⁸. The decision to purchase both places was very shrewd because it allowed the revelation that the Memorial of Moses was under the peak of Siyagha while the ancient town of Nebo was at Mukhayyat.

On 14th July 1933, the systematic investigation of the site started under the scientific direction of S. SALLER, a young Franciscan archaeologist who belonged to the teaching staff of the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum (Figs. 3–5). The expedition to Mount Nebo was the first excavation campaign in *stricto sensu*, and was a good school-site for the training of the first generation of archaeologists of the Studium, including B. BAGATTI and H. SCHNEIDER.

At the end of the first campaigns (1933–1937), which involved dozens of local workers, a large monastic complex with an overall surface area of about 6640 square metres was brought to light. The attention of the excavators, although limited to the superficial layers, was first on the centre of the complex, in particular the basilica with three chapels, the narthex and the atrium surrounded by numerous rooms, and then extending to the surrounding area. However,

⁷³ Conder 1889.

⁷⁴ Schumacher 1893, 164–168.

⁷⁵ Musil 1907, 265–274; 334–348.

⁷⁶ Glueck 1934; Glueck 1935, 110–111.

⁷⁷ Piccirillo 1998a, 47–48.

⁷⁸ Piccirillo 1998a, 47–48.



Fig. 3 Memorial of Moses. The members of the first excavation campaign.



Fig. 4 Memorial of Moses. The excavations in the Basilica, 1933.



Fig. 5 Memorial of Moses. The monastic complex at the end of the first excavation campaign in 1937.

not all the areas were excavated, in particular the eastern wing and some hermitages facing the valley. Alongside the stratigraphic investigation in the site of Siyagha, B. BAGATTI made a detailed territorial survey of Mount Nebo, which allowed the identification of other Christian buildings in the area.

The excavations were then resumed in 1963, when V. CORBO promoted the construction of a first roofing to protect the archaeological ruins of the basilica (Figs. 6–7)⁷⁹. This structure was made of prefabricated concrete to be very resistant to the strong winds, which especially in the winter, blew around the top of the mountain. V. CORBO's research enabled the identification of some of the oldest levels of occupation of the monastery of Mount Nebo, but the Six Days' War, which broke out in 1967, precociously stopped the research because a fortified military base occupied Mount Nebo.

In 1973, M. PICCIRILLO took on responsibility for the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum for the antiquities in Jordan. Three years later, in 1976, the young archaeologist resumed the excavations started by V. CORBO in the basilica, concentrating in particular on the *diakonikon*⁸⁰. When he had finished the investigations inside the church, the scholar turned his attention to the ruins on the slopes of the mountain and in the valleys. The territorial surveys allowed the identification and mapping of the natural cavities occupied by the ascetics.

Unfortunately, the geophysical instability of the place, the precocious deterioration of the covering of the basilica and above all the difficult heating insulation, which made it unsuitable for pilgrims to come to the church, made replacing the roofing compulsory. M. PICCIRILLO then appointed the architect R. SABELLI of the University of Florence to make a new structure that

⁷⁹ For the data relative to the investigations, see Corbo 1970.

⁸⁰ Piccirillo 1976.



Fig. 6 Memorial of Moses. Eastern wing of the monastery in the early 1990s.



Fig. 7 Memorial of Moses. Northern wing of the monastery in the early 1990s (© APAAME).

could preserve the ruins of the basilica. After the premature death of M. PICCIRILLO, in October 2008, the central administration of the Custody of the Holy Land subsequently took over the direction of the works and after a series of new archaeological investigations by C. PAPPALARDO, E. ALLIATA and the author, the Memorial of Moses could at last be reopened in October 2016 (Figs. 8–12).

Timeline of occupation of Mount Nebo

- 1,500,000 years B.C. – The oldest human presence in the area of Mount Nebo
- 3,000 years B.C. – Many megalithic stone-circles are erected in the valleys of Mount Nebo
- 13th cent. B.C. – Presumed date of the Exodus of the Israelites, their wandering in the desert and the death of the prophet Moses (Deuteronomy 34: 5)
- 8th cent. B.C. – King Mesha of Moab conquers the town of Nebo (Kh. el-Mukhayyat)
- 2nd cent. B.C. – Foundation of a Hasmonean settlement in Kh. el-Mukhayyat
- 2nd cent. A.D. – The Roman emperors group together these territories in the new province of *Arabia*
- 3rd–4th cent. A.D. – Some funerary inscriptions in the Samaritan language are made at the site of Siyagha
- 4th–5th cent. A.D. – Development of hermitic monasticism near ‘Uyun Musa. Written travelogues by pilgrims who visit the place. Building of the oldest church on the summit of Ras Siyagha, on the spot where, according to tradition, Moses died
- 6th cent. A.D. – Development of a large monastic complex around the basilica
- A.D. 530 – Building of the *diakonikon* – northern baptistery
- A.D. 597 – Building of the southern baptistery
- A.D. 604 ca. – Building of the chapel of the Virgin Mary (*Theotokos*)
- A.D. 638–642 – Muslim armies conquer the Levant
- A.D. 749 – An earthquake hits the Jordan Valley, including Mount Nebo
- 8th cent. A.D. – The apse of the church and part of the monastery are rebuilt
- 9th–10th cent. A.D. – The site is abandoned permanently
- 19th cent. – Topographic reconnaissances by Western explorers in the ruins of Mount Nebo
- 1932 – The Franciscans purchase the land of Ras Siyagha and Kh. el-Mukhayyat
- 1933–1937 – Archaeological investigations of the site directed by S. SALLER
- 1964 – V. CORBO builds a first roofing for the protection of the archaeological site
- 1976 – M. PICCIRILLO brings to light the mosaic of the *diakonikon*-northern baptistery
- 2016 – Reopening of the ancient basilica and of the archaeological site after restoration



Fig. 8 Memorial of Moses. Eastern side of the Basilica after the restoration work. October 2016.



Fig. 9 Memorial of Moses. Western side of the Basilica after the restoration work. October 2016.



Fig. 10 Memorial of Moses. New display in the Basilica.



Fig. 11 Memorial of Moses. The mosaic floor in the Theotokos Chapel after the restoration work.



Fig. 12 Memorial of Moses. The excavating team (2012–2014).

