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## **Coloured Ceramics of the Caliphs: A new look at the Abbasid pottery finds from the old Gözlükule excavations at Tarsus**

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## CONCLUSION

### *The scopes and relevance of this research*

By revisiting the medieval ceramics of the 1935-1948 Gözlükule excavations in Tarsus, the time capsule of this study operates on two stops, corresponding to two important periods in the history of Tarsus: one, more than one thousand years ago, when the city came under Muslim rule for the first time and the other, almost a century ago during the earliest systematic archaeological excavations conducted on the mound. This material not only includes unprecedented data about Tarsus during the Abbasid period (mid 8<sup>th</sup> – mid 10<sup>th</sup> centuries C.E.), but also provides information about the first excavations in this place that were directed by Hetty Goldman, the first female professor of the Princeton Institute of Advanced Study (U.S.A.).

This study on the Gözlükule early Islamic pottery corpus may be pioneering in a number of ways. Firstly, because it covers a major gap for Islamic archaeology in southern Turkey. This ceramic evidence is one of the first archaeological assemblages in Cilicia and the Antiochene region to be discussed in detail, by comparing and connecting the site with the local, regional and broader context of the Near East on the basis of its architecture and its pottery finds.

Excavations of the Islamic layers of these regions are poorly published. Their buildings and their ceramic material are in fact not presented in their totality. The sites excavated before the world war such as Al-Mina and Antioch-on-the Orontes primarily focus on glazed wares and generally offer limited information about the context of the artefacts. Other early Islamic pottery material obtained during recent surveys and excavations such as Hisn al-Tinat and the Amuq survey are not yet fully published. Subsequently, this study hopes to shed new light on a yet archaeologically poorly known area and to contribute to our knowledge of the early Islamic ceramics by presenting the first typo-chronology of this large body of pottery that were found in one of the arguably largest occupation dated to this period, on a mound in southern Turkey. In addition to the ceramic finds, the early Islamic phase of this important site is examined for the first time. The settlement and the architecture are reconstructed from mainly unpublished archival material in an effort to understand the nature and the development of the early Islamic occupation on the mound. Because of the limitations imposed by the unsystematic recording of these old excavations, the settlement could not be studied as a whole. Subsequently, some areas of this extensive occupation are discussed in detail, illuminating the processes of urbanisation on the mound.

Secondly, by using an interdisciplinary approach combining archaeology and other disciplines of history, this PhD thesis attempts to answer more general historical questions dealing with the Middle East during the first centuries of the Classical period of Islam. In particular, it aims to clarify whether the pottery finds of Gözlükule may provide evidence for the Arab occupation on the mound and whether this may reflect the integration of Tarsus in the wider realm of the Abbasid Caliphate, primarily from a technological and socio-economic perspective. To this end, the technological features of the Gözlükule early Islamic ceramics and the socio-economic factors underpinning the production, distribution and consumption of the pottery of the same period are examined by comparing similar assemblages found in other sites with those of Gözlükule.

Thirdly, the socio-cultural component of these ceramics is explored by trying to gain a preliminary understanding of how pottery was used in Abbasid times. Notably, food habits and dining practices are discussed by drawing on a multi-disciplinary

approach coupling the Gözlükule pottery finds with textual sources, pictorial evidence and secondary literature about the Abbasid culinary culture. The following parts are based on the conclusions proposed at the end of each of the previous chapters.

#### *The first Gözlükule excavations and its outcomes*

Due to its long history including its importance for Christianity, Tarsus attracted 19<sup>th</sup> century European travellers who have mainly written historical geographies about their visit. Hetty Goldman's archaeological project on the Gözlükule mound has transformed the fate of this city in southern Turkey. The excavations were conducted on a multi-period settlement hill between 1935 and 1948. In the interwar period, corresponding roughly to the birth of modern archaeology, numerous similar archaeological projects were initiated in Turkey. While Turkish teams excavated frequently sites in central Anatolia, foreign projects were generally set along the seacoast including the eastern Mediterranean littoral. Two other neighbouring sites were excavated in Cilicia and the Antioch region following fairly similar academic motives: Yumuktepe and Al-Mina. The research on these large mounds was primarily designed to understand the prehistoric period. These particular focuses may be situated in the general intellectual context of the 1930s and the 1940s, for example, the diffusionist theories of Gordon Child, the emergence of relative world chronologies and interest in multi-period settlements providing full archaeological sequences (from prehistoric to Roman times).

The Gözlükule excavations were pioneering due to the fact that it opened up the field for other archaeological projects in Anatolia conducted by female archaeologists such as Theresa Goell and Machteld Mellink. On the other hand, the project had a more limited contribution to the education of Turkish students.

The results of the digs on the mound were published by Princeton University as a series covering the prehistoric to the classical periods that shed light on the importance of Cilicia for relative world chronologies. However, the later finds were excluded from these volumes; it is difficult to understand why these artefacts were marginalised. Although much awaited by scholars of the field such as Frederick Waagé, the Islamic ceramics uncovered on the Gözlükule mound were unfortunately never fully published by the Islamic pottery specialist Florence Day. Assessing the pottery according to an art-historical premise, probably under the influence of Alois Riegl's stylistic approach, Florence Day's assessment has not examined this body of pottery in its totality, neither, in relation to its archaeological context. Thus, the archaeological data of this important site located in one of the largest cities of the Arab-Byzantine frontier remained *quasi* unknown.

#### *Tarsus in the early Islamic period and the question of the frontier*

As opposed to archaeological research, numerous historiographical studies have dealt with early Islamic Tarsus because the city is known in written sources as a major town on the *thughūr al-Sham* (the Syrian frontier). Coined by the Muslim geographers in the late Umayyad period, *thughūr* referred to the militarized Arab-Byzantine frontier, that was fully integrated into Abbasid lands in the late 8<sup>th</sup> century. The term of *thughūr* embraced several ideas directly linked with the expansion policies of the Abbasids such as jihad, new administrative systems and repopulation among others. It is not known when exactly Tarsus came under Arab rule but it is during the reign of al-Rashid (r. 786-809) that the city became a medina (a Muslim city), thus reflecting firmer Abbasid control. The military and commercial characters of the town

especially developed by the mid 9<sup>th</sup> century and lasted probably a century until its 965 Byzantine capture.

In line with a more “conventional” text-based approach, historians have often considered this frontier region as peripheral to the heartland and as a zone of exchange with the Byzantines. By using a bottom-up perspective, the archaeological data of the Gözlükule excavations offer valuable information to verify these ideas. In order to study the frontier from an archaeological point of view, Bradley Parker’s theoretical model was used to propose an interpretation of the formation of the borderland in Cilicia (Parker 2006). For this, historical information related to Cilicia and the Antioch region in early Islamic times were put in a dialogue with the material culture of different archaeological sites situated in this geography. By using Parker’s terminology, which qualifies the changing character of the different frontier components (political, demographic, cultural, economic and geographic) from a more solid to a more flexible form, with adjectives such as static, restrictive, porous and fluid, one may summarise the shaping of the frontier in the following way.

In the early Abbasid period (c. late 8<sup>th</sup> – mid 9<sup>th</sup> century), the political boundary (political, administrative and military components) of Tarsus switched to a restrictive state from an open (porous) one, characteristic of the Umayyad period: historical sources state that the caliphs had great control over the city by rebuilding it and converting it into a medina by erecting a congregational mosque, houses for the soldiers, etc. Parallel, the demographic boundary (ethnic attribute, population density, health and gender) became cosmopolitan (porous/fluid) due to the repopulation of Tarsus by military garrisons, coming from different parts of the caliphate. The cultural boundary (linguistic and religious elements and material culture) may have followed the trend of the political boundary, while it turned closed (restrictive). This essentially means that the growing control of the Abbasids, which made political life less accessible to other forms of authority, had probably repercussions on the culture. Regarding the ceramic material, certain shapes of Unglazed Buff Wares and Brittle Ware cooking pots are recorded in the Gözlükule corpus, showing that the pottery finds were comparable to the ones recorded at other Abbasid sites in the Near East. Furthermore, religious ideas became more rigid, as it can be seen in the perpetuating image of the *ghazī* caliph, engaged in performing jihad against the Byzantines, starting with al-Rashid and waning by the time of al-Mu‘tasim (r. 833-841). It is during the reign of this last caliph or shortly after that the economic boundary (procurement of natural resources, transportation of goods, production of commodity and agriculture) may have moved from a relatively open to a much more unlimited form (from a porous to a fluid state). At the same time, the political boundary became looser (reversed from a restrictive to a porous condition). Some key historical factors may have perhaps underpinned these economic and political changes such as the 857 suppression of tax privileges in the *thughūr* by the caliph al-Mutawakkil (r. 847-861) and the political fragmentation of the Abbasid Caliphate happening in the heartland. These generally lead to the intensification of commercial activities, especially so in Tarsus, because volunteer soldiers and scholars who formed an important part of the Tarsiots were not so much connected with the state and thus may have had to trade to survive. The numismatic evidence of Tarsus (found in the Gözlükule excavations, private collections and museums) indicates the presence of a market economy based on monetary exchange. In difference to Syria and Iraq where copper money was rare, Tarsus produced coins throughout the Abbasid period, which were used in economic transactions. The earliest locally made money is assigned to the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> century which may point towards an intensification of commercial activities during this time.

The repopulation of Tarsus with military groups coming from various places of the *Dār al-Islām* had a fundamental impact on the city, while it affected the demographic and economic boundaries, turning them into more diversified (fluid) systems. This cosmopolitan community may have held an important economic role, creating demand for commodities, regulating commercial exchange, etc. Hence, the militarization of the city may have altered the economic and cultural boundary together with the material culture which was integrated into a cohesive Abbasid *koiné*. Despite the gradual dissolution of the early Muslim empire bringing political instability, the economy and the demography may have remained fluid and the culture restrictive in Tarsus, between the mid 9<sup>th</sup> and mid 10<sup>th</sup> century.

Overall, the testing of Parker's model in Cilicia and the Antioch regions in Abbasid times has shown that there was a general overlapping of the geographical and cultural boundaries. In fact, the Taurus Mountains surrounding Cilicia delimited the cultural boundary of the Muslims. This correlation was also reflected in the distribution patterns of pottery pertaining to Abbasid ceramic classes on both sides of the Taurus Mountains/ Cilician Gates. The absence of typical vessels of the Abbasid period in inland Anatolia and their ubiquity in Cilicia and the Antioch region, suggested a correspondence between natural and cultural borders. Although we are not knowledgeable about the whole archaeological picture of Cilicia and the Antioch and Niğde regions, the material culture of the Abbasid period did not seem to extend beyond the Taurus Mountains. This evidence may demonstrate that the Taurus Mountains were the major frontier between Byzantium and the Abbasid Caliphate.

The Gözlükule pottery evidence shed light on various other socio-economic issues with respect to the borderlands. Firstly, although written sources anticipated intense commercial activities with the Byzantines on the frontier through local trade, the Byzantine contact was until now not so much traceable in the ceramic finds of the site. On the one hand, continued imports of luxury ceramics of the 9<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> centuries mainly from the heartland (Iraqi and Chinese among others) illuminated the site's economic role exceeding regional scales. On the other, this ceramic evidence indicated that the site was well-connected with the rest of the early Muslim empire, essentially through trade, despite the rising political instability in the 10<sup>th</sup> century when ties with the centre weakened.

Furthermore, industrial activities such as glass and pottery production in Tarsus not only reveal an important consumption site but also constitute key elements bearing witness to the integration of the site to the Abbasid realm. The process of the industrialisation of the towns can be observed from other contemporary sites such as Raqqa (Syria) or Antioch-on-the-Orontes (Turkey). In these places, small to relatively large industries including extensive ceramic and glass workshops were operating and were presumably connected to the public investments of the authorities.

#### *State of the arts on ceramics of the Abbasid period*

The current body of knowledge on pottery of the Abbasid period mainly comes from archaeological excavations of sites located in the core of the Abbasid Caliphate including Syria, Jordan and Iran (unfortunately Iraqi sites are fewer because of political turmoil and instability). The lands to the east of Iran are less known by Western scholarship because of language barriers. Although much progress has been made after the Second World War, the ceramic chronologies of the Abbasid period remains an unsolved problem, including the successive introduction and disappearance of the different classes of the "the Samarra Horizon Ceramic Repertoire", as well as the common wares such as the Unglazed Buff Wares. Due to

the lack of stratigraphic evidence, it is also difficult to trace the transmissions and changes of ceramic technology between the eastern Mediterranean, Iraq and the Far East, in particular, the wide spread of White Opaque Glazed Wares and other Polychrome Glazed Wares. For now, it is believed that the introduction of these various classes of glazed table wares seemed to have taken place as successive phases stretching approximately over a century, between the early 9<sup>th</sup> and the late 9<sup>th</sup> century. The appearance of Polychrome Glazed Wares may not be dated before the middle of the 9<sup>th</sup> century in the Near East until new archaeological evidence comes to light.

The distribution patterns of the 9<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> century ceramics reveal that the “the Samarra Horizon Ceramic Repertoire” was circulated inland predominantly in the Near East, and in the Gulf and Africa, mainly through the Indian Ocean. In fact, these ceramics were primarily consumed in urban settlements in the Near East and Egypt as well as in Arab colonies in East Africa and in Thailand. The morphological repertoire of these luxury table wares did not seem to vary extensively between different assemblages. One may therefore propose that these various pottery classes reflect a common technological know-how. These vessels were in fact more or less standardised.

The distribution of Polychrome Lead Glazed Wares and White Opaque Glazed Ware Imitations on the other hand seemed to be confined more to the Near East and the eastern Mediterranean. Vessel shapes, fabrics, surface treatments among other features of these classes showed much more variations, indicating regional adaptation and multiple production centres. Subsequently, it may be difficult to speak of homogenous, standardised ceramic groups for these glazed wares in difference to the “Samarra Horizon Ceramic Repertoire”.

The same conclusion is valid for Unglazed Buff Wares which are used as light utility and heavy utility wares. The formal vocabulary of this pottery class displays even more regional variations. These latter may be generally detected among the moulded vessels and the thin-walled wheel-thrown ones, also known as “Egg Shell” wares, on the basis of the changes in the formal characteristics, such as the dimensions and the shape of body, handles and neck among others. These two types of Unglazed Buff Wares constitute an innovation of the Abbasid period, which can be earliest dated to the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century. However, in North Syria and South Turkey, not all the vessel shapes among wheel-thrown Unglazed Buff Wares were new. Some regional and local forms among utilitarian wares such as large jars, basins and mortars, to name a few, were used continuously between the late Antique and the early Islamic periods.

In the Abbasid period, the cooking wares called Brittle Ware were standardised into several shapes such as the holemouth cooking pot with ledge handles, a pan and a jar. The distribution and the formal repertoire of these vessels reflect a common tradition, which is specific to the region spanning between South Turkey and Iraq, via North Syria.

The regional variations in these afore mentioned wares, may be tied to the important difference between the North and the South of the eastern Mediterranean in terms of ceramic traditions. In fact, there are notable differences between vessel shapes, fabric and decoration, among these table wares, cooking wares and utilitarian wares between North Syria and the southern Levant.

The early Islamic ceramics of Gözlükule may be compared to similar pottery finds in several ways, situated at the intersection of local, regional and more larger networks. Relatively standardised luxury table wares (“Samarra Horizon Ceramic Repertoire”) which were distributed over-seas and recorded at major Abbasid cities,

such as Samarra or Susa among others, are found in the Gözlükule corpus. The assemblage also contains pottery classes, which were more generally found in the sites between Syria and Iraq, and more specifically in South Turkey and North Syria. These last ones are represented by unglazed ceramics including cooking wares (Brittle Ware), light and heavy utility wares (Unglazed Buff Wares) and by certain polychrome glazed wares, which were most of the time covered with lead glazes. The differentiation between local and regional ceramic products is at times not so clear-cut in the case of the Gözlükule corpus. Instrumental analysis is required to provide more specific answers to the question of provenance and diffusion of these regional and local ceramics. These last ones constitute the largest group of pottery found in the medieval layers of the mound.

#### *Reconstructing the Islamic layer of the mound*

The study of the 1935-1948 Gözlükule excavation diaries, maps and inventory notebooks has shown that the Islamic settlement on the mound was extensive. In fact, these Islamic layers were systematically exposed while digging the two areas at the east and west of the mound in the 1930s. The correlation of the Islamic pottery finds with their archaeological context was not an easy task since the Islamic structures uncovered during the excavations were not sufficiently documented. Nonetheless, one context, “the Islamic villa”, which was recorded more carefully, emerged, and enabled to acquire more information about the Islamic settlement on the mound.

Belonging to a set of contemporary structures excavated on other parts of the mound, this building presented a domestic character, although one cannot exclude an industrial function. In fact, the different archaeological features, the complex drainage system connected to a well, and the finds seem to suggest a possible change in the function of the building. In a first phase, the structure seems to be presumably employed as a dwelling where a craft-related activity was preponderant. In a later phase, as the archaeological finds such as the fine wares and the stucco architectural elements suggest, this establishment seems to be enlarged into a more opulent house. The plan of the building consisting of five rooms connected through corridors differs from the more widely spread structures of the Abbasid period, centred around inner courtyards. Because houses of the Abbasid period are not so well-known archaeologically in East Turkey nor, in North Syria, the closest parallels in terms of the irregular plan of the architecture came from Susa and Fustat C houses. This latter site provided further comparison especially in relation to the general urban layout –rather small houses juxtaposed on both sides of a main street- and complex sanitary systems including elaborate pipe constructions connected to drainage pits.

Of these, the “intrusion 18” of Gözlükule was studied in detail, especially in relation to its ceramic assemblage. This pit was dug on the main street to the southeast of the Islamic building. It was a typical drainage pit, covered with elaborately laid stones. Its pottery assemblage may point towards a dating between the late 8<sup>th</sup> and the mid 10<sup>th</sup> century. Stratigraphically, this pit may have been older than the ceramics it contained.

The Islamic layer and this house included at least two habitation phases. This phasing remains a bit speculative. In fact, the recorded numismatic evidence is not physically available in the storage rooms of the Tarsus archaeological project and the context information of the pottery is not systematically documented in the inventories. Furthermore, the plan of the architectural layout does not always correlate with the photographs of the trenches. In the few cases where coins and pottery can be

associated, they agree in the common date of 10<sup>th</sup> century for the abandonment of the “villa”. The earliest phase of use appears to date to the 9<sup>th</sup> century.

The pottery finds uncovered in the different rooms of the “villa” primarily consisted of the “the Samarra Horizon Ceramic Repertoire” table wares including imported fine wares such as Lustrewares and White Opaque Glazed Ware with cobalt blue decoration, and Polychrome Sgraffito Ware. Along with other objects such as lamps, the ceramic finds were predominantly concentrated in the two largest rooms of this building. Due to the selective preservation of the ceramics, it is difficult to understand the function of the rooms on the basis of the finds. The Room 5 which occupied the central position in the building contained almost exclusively Iraqi luxury imports such as Lustrewares and White Opaque Glazed Ware with cobalt blue decoration. Even though some walls were recorded, we cannot be sure whether this was a courtyard or a room. If this latter was the case, it may be generally suggested that daily activities were practiced there. The distribution of pottery in the other room, Room 8, which was situated at southeast of the building, included a mix of regional and imported ceramics. This more hazardous mix may be resulting from dumps caused by the abandonment or later building activity and so forth. The lack of information regarding the stratigraphy of the building makes it difficult to put together a more precise interpretation of the formation processes of the settlement on the mound. Anyway, the reconstruction of the early Islamic layers enabled to match some of the ceramics with the rooms or areas they were found.

#### *The pottery corpus and the limits of this study*

The medieval pottery corpus of the Goldman study collection is an unusual ceramic assemblage while more than 60% of the material is glazed due to the fact that the archaeologists of the 1930s discarded a fair amount of the unglazed and undecorated sherds. This quantity may not be so much comparable with the relative composition of the pottery corpus found during the recent excavations on the mound, where glazed wares equate roughly to 7%.

Despite the selective retention of objects of the 1930s, this corpus is a homogenous assemblage consisting predominantly of fine wares both in glazed and unglazed versions. The glazed table wares are the most important category followed by light utility wares, heavy utility wares and coarse wares. The distribution of the provenances of the glazed pottery might illustrate the site’s substantial ceramic consumption. In fact, 22% of the glazed table wares are imported while, 42% are regional products. Most of the imported wares were identifiable with the naked eye due to their fabrics, displaying a fine to extremely fine, yellow paste, which may originate in the Tigris-Euphrates area, or near Basra, in southern Iraq. There are also few Chinese sherds but these may not reflect direct trade with eastern Asia, only through the intermediary of Iraq or Syria, perhaps.

Because well-stratified contexts are not abundant, the Gözlükule pottery finds are dated by means of comparanda with scholarly publications on similar pottery. Accordingly, the Gözlükule ceramics correspond to a typical Abbasid assemblage dated between mid 9<sup>th</sup> and mid 10<sup>th</sup> century on the basis of comparison with the pottery assemblage of al-Hadir, in North Syria (phase IV).

The fabric description of this body of pottery is also incomplete because fresh breaks are not allowed on the finds uncovered during the Goldman excavations. Further, the fineness of the fabric requires scientific analytical methods such as chemical analysis. Despite the limits of the fabric description, the typology provided by this thesis reflects the diversity of the ceramics found on the Gözlükule mound, a

settlement, emerging as an important consumption centre and bearing the signs of being in the proximity of a production site.

The possibility of local ceramic production near/in Tarsus is very likely. In fact, Buff Unglazed Wares and Polychrome Painted Glazed Ware display a broad morphological repertoire and diverse surface treatments. Moreover, there is an interchange of shape and decoration between these wares. The same forms occur in unglazed and glazed versions. Moreover, other specialised industries such as glass workshops were archaeologically attested in the city, as rescue excavations have uncovered medieval glass kilns (chapter three).

The morphological repertoire of the glazed table wares can be broadly classified into two classes. The rounded bowl with simple or inverted rim and the flared bowl with curved everted rim. These two forms seem to appear simultaneously in the Abbasid period with the emergence of polychrome glazing. Borrowed from a Chinese vessel form, the second one is associated with the Iraqi tradition. The origin of the rounded bowl is more difficult to assess even though its ubiquity in Syria and the eastern Mediterranean ties it to the Mediterranean world. Furthermore, another form, a dish with a flat everted rim occurs in Cilicia and the Antiochene regions commonly. This form might perhaps be the continuation of the Eastern *Sigillata*.

Regarding classes of glazed pottery imitating the Iraqi White Opaque Glazed Wares such as White Opaque Glazed Ware Imitation, plain, and with turquoise and other decoration, the formal repertoire bears more affinities with Polychrome Painted Glazed Ware or Splash Glazed Ware than the Iraqi wares. In fact, some forms such as medium rounded bowls appear with different surface treatment techniques. Concerning the decorative vocabulary, the interchange of motifs between non-Iraqi glazed wares and Lustrewares and White Opaque Glazed Ware with cobalt decoration, seems to reflect a shared taste and fashion emanating from the widespread Abbasid cultural *koiné*.

The comparison between the early Islamic ceramics of different sites situated in Cilicia and the Antioch region – Al-Mina, Antioch-on-the Orontes, Misis and Hisn al-Tinat- with Gözlükule lead to some observations that may set a preliminary ground for the debate about pottery production, distribution and consumption in a frontier region. Although the archaeological context of these afore-mentioned sites may not be so similar, almost all of these pottery assemblages included the “Samarra Horizon Ceramic Repertoire”, Chinese imports, different kinds of Lead Glazed Wares comprising the regional products including Polychrome Painted Glazed Ware and common and cooking wares such as Unglazed Buff Wares (the wheel-thrown type and the moulded type) and Brittle Ware.

The variety of imports and regional products in these pottery corpuses indicate that we are dealing with large consumption sites like Gözlükule. The similarity of the compositions of these pottery assemblages may lead us to question the nature of the ceramic consumption, distribution and production mechanisms, in particular the role of the state in these socio-economic and industrial processes. What kind of exchange system was operating in these “frontier” areas: commercial transactions based on conventional market systems regulated by supply and demand or different forms exchange accommodated by the state? What about the organisation of industrial production, what was the role of the state in generating and controlling demand and supply? The archaeological evidence of sites such Raqqa (Syria) among others indicates that large-scale industries were established by the state (see chapter four). Because Tarsus seems to produce its own pottery (probably glass too), the case of this urban centre seems to fit in the overwhelming industrialisation of the towns in eastern

Mediterranean in the 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> century, frequently manufacturing commercial commodities. Was this trend a response to a large demand for ceramics or was this part of the state intervention: we do not know. Perhaps both factors may have underpinned this industrial activity.

#### *Questioning the use of the table wares*

After dealing with the ceramic objects archaeologically, the question of their daily use came naturally. Thus, this study inquires on diet and eating practices in Tarsus, in Abbasid times, a relatively under-investigated topic. For this, the study draws on a number of sources including the Gözlükule medieval ceramic evidence, primary and secondary literature about the Abbasid food culture and illustrations depicting dining scenes in medieval Islamic manuscripts. There are a number of data bias: the pictorial materials are dated to the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, the stratigraphic information of the pottery finds is fairly limited and the sources which were consulted belong essentially to the Islamic world. Despite these limitations, this multi-disciplinary approach proved to be useful in providing preliminary conclusions about dining habits on the Gözlükule mound in the Abbasid period.

The primary sources and secondary literature bore witness that status and display were important elements for the Abbasid society. These were also manifest in the food culture. Offering food to the poor, fine dining, cookbooks and dining utensils participated in the expression of these societal values. The pictorial and written evidences reflect that a distinctive taste for cooking and dining equipment including ceramics was developed. And apparently, these objects were mainly employed during communal dining. Varying sizes of vessels were used for different foods and according to the number of guests. Small bowls and juglets circulated among the guests for drinks.

In order to refine these insights into the dining culture of Abbasid times, two of kinds of ceramic datasets from the Gözlükule pottery corpus are integrated into the discussion about diet and food consumption. The first consists of the ceramic assemblage of the villa. The second is based on two groups of the glazed table wares of the Gözlükule medieval corpus (i.e., Polychrome Painted Glazed Ware, the probably regionally produced class and Lustrewares, the class presumably imported from Iraq).

With respect to the pottery finds of the villa, at this stage, we favour the idea that these ceramics are associated with the use of the rooms, particularly when it served as a residential building. However, this is not a definite conclusion. The villa pottery corpus predominantly contains imported glazed table wares (Lustrewares) wherein open shapes including bowls in various forms are prevalent; these appear in small to large sizes and with different rim profiles. Other vessels such as plates are found as well. The diversity of the formal repertoire may reflect several underlying factors. First, there is the economic factor of high demand for table wares. Then, there is the cultural component as mentioned previously of valuing variety as a sign of status and display. Finally, there is the functionality of employing various vessels for different purposes including in the service of distinctive foods. These suggestions can be observed in the pictorial and written sources.

Another suggestion provided by the ceramic assemblage of the largest room of the villa (Room 5) rather speculative, is that they could be associated with a table set. This body of pottery was quite homogenous in its composition, there were almost exclusively imported Iraqi fine wares of various sizes (e.g., Lustrewares, White Opaque Glazed Ware with cobalt decoration). Because these ceramics belong to the

same or related classes, and these vessels display various forms, one could conjecture that these dining objects were employed altogether in a table set where people shared their food from a communal table. A comparable example is the Brittle Ware cooking vessels which were sold as a kit. In fact, this latter contained different forms of vessels, a tall cooking pot, a shallow pan and a jug in the Roman period which were replaced by two-handled holemouth cooking pots and pans in the early Islamic period.

The morphological comparison (e.g., vessel volume, shape and decoration) between Polychrome Painted Glazed Ware and Lustrewares has shown a similarity of vessel volume and a shared decorative repertoire. On the basis of these components, one could propose a similar use for the vessels of these two groups. Thus, soft or liquid dishes such as stews or pulses, which were popular foods of the Abbasid period, could be consumed by two or more people from these medium-large bowls. More solid and hard dishes such as grilled meat or fruits, could be served in plates. The wide use of the glazing technology on ceramics in the Abbasid period enhanced the quality of the vessels in a certain way. Above-all, it restrained the penetration of water through the clay. This change in the surface treatment of pottery may have been caused by the diet of the period, which included perhaps more juicy dishes. The colourful decoration of these glazed table wares manifest their value as display items underpinning socio-economic hierarchy and competition politics among other characteristics of the society of the Abbasid times.

#### *Reconciling fact and fiction*

Joanita Vroom has recently stressed the inevitable difficulties of interpreting the archaeological record in medieval and post-medieval sites in the eastern Mediterranean (Vroom 2015, preface). She has designated one factual approach reckoning the complexities of disentangling data and one more fictional approach revolving around “the pitfalls of archaeology” such as creating theories without reliable archaeological evidence (Vroom 2015, 13). For this current study, things are not so clearly definable.

First, because the contextual information that was reconstructed from the old and primarily unpublished documents only allowed more speculative archaeological interpretation. This leaves us at the sharp end, in the dangerous area of producing inaccurate analysis of the archaeological record, which among other problems may render a limited evaluation of the complex formation processes of the settlement. Subsequently, while this research has underlined and attempted to foresee the limits of the stratigraphic study of these early Islamic layers, it is inevitable to be on the fictional side, considering the very peculiar character of these old excavations (see introduction). The reconstruction of the Islamic phase provided here should in fact be considered as a basis for more detailed research in the future.

The second reason why it is difficult to make a clear distinction between fact and fiction in this PhD thesis may be approached from a chronological angle. As a matter of fact, modern scholarship, for example Donald Whitcomb (e.g., Whitcomb 1988, 64), views dynastic qualification in archaeology as misleading or not fact-based. Accordingly, in the context of the Gözlükule excavations, the attribution of the early Islamic period (mid 7<sup>th</sup> - mid 10<sup>th</sup> centuries) to the Umayyad or the Abbasid dynasties would be inaccurate. However, in this site, these dynastic divisions, which would be considered fictional *per se*, are in fact supported by the archaeological finds and the historical record. Thus, one could possibly speak of the Abbasid settlement on the hill. This feature makes the Gözlükule mound excavations even more relevant for the field. Nonetheless, this characterisation may prove to be inappropriate for the

other parts of the city because the material culture of the tell may be different from the one used in the town-centre, for example.

#### *Prospects for future research*

The mound of Gözlükule offers an exceptional potential for Abbasid archaeology in Turkey. This PhD thesis has tried to come up with certain conclusions about early Islamic Tarsus with a particular focus on the medieval ceramic corpus of the Goldman Study Collection excavated in the 1930s. The archival material of these early excavations has revealed that several other Islamic buildings were found on the mound (see: Appendix 2). This present study has not included these other remains first because their documentation was relatively less detailed than the “villa” but also due to time constraints. Despite the complexity of working with old excavations, the correlation of the finds and the archaeological context is an exercise with surprising results: it was important to explore the architecture of the early Islamic settlement on the Gözlükule mound to gain a fuller picture of the Arab occupation in this place. Similar work on the old Gözlükule excavations in combination with the data of the new digs on the mound could contribute to the understanding of the whole settlement in this area including early Islamic housing complexes in Cilicia.

Furthermore, the substantial quantities of early Islamic pottery uncovered during the past years, which came from well-stratified context will shed new light on the inquiries of this present study. Future research on this body of pottery and on the settlement will contribute significantly to our knowledge of the early Islamic phase on the mound.

Because this archaeological material came from a peculiar place in the city, that is to say, the mound, it may not render a complete picture of the society and the occupation in the town of Tarsus. Subsequently, it is also important to compare this archaeological evidence with the other excavations conducted in the city to acquire a better understanding of the urban layout of Tarsus in early Islamic times among other questions. Although on the fringe of the Abbasid Caliphate, Tarsus emerges as an important town of the period. Its archaeology plays a major role in gaining an insight into the local history of this city after the advent of Islam, during the height of the Abbasid Caliphate.

