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To cite this version:

Shadi Shabo, Guillaume Charloux. Pre-Islamic Pottery from the Oasis of Khaybar - Saudi Arabia. First Technological and Morphological Considerations. Seminar for Arabian Studies 55, Aug 2022, Berlin, Germany. hal-03926106v2

HAL Id: hal-03926106
https://cnrs.hal.science/hal-03926106v2
Submitted on 6 Jan 2023

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Pre-Islamic Pottery from the Oasis of Khaybar – Saudi Arabia
First Technological and Morphological Considerations

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Introduction
Ceramic studies started in 2020 in the oasis of Khaybar, in northwestern Saudi Arabia, in the framework of the Khaybar Longue Durée Archaeological Project (KLDAP-AFALULA/R. CUG) (2020-2024). This poster aims to present a first characterization of the pottery assemblage of the pre-Islamic period (from the fourth millennium BCE to the first century CE) collected during three first seasons of the project. We introduce here the macrofabrics groups, the methodology and techniques employed, and attempt to provide a first preliminary range of human activities in the Khaybar survey area during this timeframe.

Methodology
So far, 928 sherds have been collected during survey and have been attributed to the pre-Islamic period (late pre-Islamic pottery excluded). They come from 80 archaeological locations within the oasis, settlements, surfaced scatters, tombs and isolated structures. Only a limited part of the Royal commission for AlUla jurisdiction of Khaybar has been surveyed up to now, and the activities are still in progress.

Morphology
The majority of the pottery consists of body fragments and is very poorly preserved. The diagnostic sherds are small and provide only limited information on the vessel shape. Generally speaking, open forms (mostly bowls, large bowls and platters) are predominant (65%), while closed forms (necked and hole-mouth jars and few large jars/basins) are less present (only 9%). Unclassified sherds, due to their insufficient size, represent 20% of the assemblage, and the bases (mostly flat and rarely slightly rounded) 6%.

Technique
After a simple and preliminary macro-observation, it appears that the most frequent fashioning techniques is the use of a coil technique. Slab technique, modelling (hand-made) and wheel-throwing were also identified but in less quantity. Most vessels show minimal surface finishing. Smoothing is the predominant technique; burnishing and the use of a red slip are less common.

Macrofabrics groups
So far, 15 macrofabrics have been identified in the pre-Islamic ceramic assemblage. The identification of the macrofabric groups was carried out by macro-observation of the paste (matrix, inclusions, voids), then confirmed by stereomicroscope examination of fresh breaks and polished sections. The macrofabric identification is based on the size, the shape, the colour of the different inclusions and their distribution in the paste. Only a brief description of the macrofabrics has been included here.

References