QUADERNI DI STUDI ARABI

8   1990

QUADERNI DI STUDI ARABI

8

1990

JOHN G. NANDRIS

THE JEBALIYEH OF MOUNT SINAI, AND THE LAND OF VLAH

Introduction

This paper arises out of fieldwork undertaken with the support of the British Academy in 1978, around St. Katharine's monastery in the area of the granite mountains of southern Sinai (fig. 1). The aim was to examine at first hand the origin and veracity and to record the traces of a persistent historical tradition: that of the south-east European origins of the tribe of Jebaliyeh Bedouin who serve the monastery.

Looking at this specific historical problem from the standpoint of prehistoric archaeology and ethnoarchaeology, a number of general issues emerge. The adaptations of the Jebaliyeh to the desert environment can be studied ethnoarchaeologically, to help interpret the prehistory of the region, which now extends back into epi-Palaeolithic times. The way in which a group like the Jebaliyeh can radically change its way of life, material culture, religion and language, and yet retain its sense of identity, relates to a question which underlies many archaeological problems; namely what exactly it is that constitutes the identity of a human group.

The name of the Jebaliyeh means "the Mountain People". They are seasonally mobile with their goats and families in the high mountains at 2000

metres around St. Katherine's. The seasonal variation in their material culture, for example the winter and summer tent structures (figs. 2, 3) provides useful ethnoarchaeological data. The Jebaliyeh are of interest in the whole context of the nature of exploitation, seasonality, and settlement in the highland zone.

The Highland Zone Ethnoarchaeology Project is currently carrying out fieldwork on the traditional societies of several regions of south-east Europe, notably the shepherds of the Carpathians in Romania and the Latin-speaking Aromâni or "Vlahs", of the Pindus, Velebit, and other mountains south of the Danube. The origins of these populations extend back for over two millennia in south-east Europe. Those of the Jebaliyeh Bedouin in Sinai go back 1400 years. Since there is ultimately a case for a relationship between south-east Europe and the Jebaliyeh it is important to clarify the terms under which this can be envisaged.

If archaeological explanation is not to be wholly at variance with reality, then in such a problem a relationship has to be established between all the components, not merely the archaeological ones. None can legitimately be ignored simply on account of the difficulties of integrating the very different strands of evidence, such as haematology, ethnoarchaeology, anthropology, linguistics, and the criticism of Byzantine historical sources.

The problem of the Jebaliyeh

The problem of the Jebaliyeh emerges in the context of the foundation of the monastery of St. Katherine's in c. 550 AD by the Byzantine Emperor Justinian. Historical sources and oral traditions tell us that one hundred men were sent with their families from a land called "Vlah" in south-east Europe by the Emperor, to guard and serve the monastery very shortly after its foundation. Following complaints by the monks that they were being harassed by the local tribesmen, a legate was sent by Justinian to assess the situation. A further contingent of one hundred from Egypt joined the first, and these two hundred families formed the basis of the Jebaliyeh tribe, which still serves the monastery today.

This population is of extreme interest. It is in any case the oldest Bedouin group on the Sinai peninsula, and still possesses a historical and oral tradition of origin in the land of Vlah. The scientific evidence from blood samples of all the Sinai Bedouin [1] show that the Jebaliyeh are quite unusual and distinct from the other tribes. They have maintained a cultural and reproductive isolation from the other Bedouin groups, enforced on both sides, which has only very recently begun to break down. By virtue of both geographical and cultural isolation they are one of the oldest isolates among the Near Eastern peoples.

---

[1]   Bonné 1968; 1973; Bonné, Godber, Ashbel, Mourant & Tills 1971.

They go back 1400 years, and are second in antiquity only to the Samaritains, who became estranged from ancient Hebrew culture five centuries before Christ. There have been times when the population of the Jebaliyeh dropped very low, and the existence of ancestor effects must be recognised. Remarkably enough even the Egyptian component of the historical tradition seems to be reflected in the blood groupings.

Within south-east Europe no historical possibility existed for geographical isolation of this nature. It has also rarely been possible to maintain cultural isolation, although it is in mountain zones such as those inhabited by the Vlahs and Romanians that the possibility has existed if anywhere. In an area like south-east Europe, subjected historically to continual disruption, continuity can at best be expected among small groups.

The proposition is that, however indirectly and distantly, the Jebaliyeh represent closer living descendants of certain native Thracian or south-east European groups going back over two millennia, than any group at present living in that area. In the south-east European context the closest likely relationship with native prehistoric populations lies among mountain isolates such as the Aromâni or Vlahs, and there are occupational reasons for linking such a group with the Jebaliyeh.

The Jebaliyeh necessarily adopted many of the characteristics appropriate to survival in the Sinaitic environment, which we tend to label as "Bedouin" traits. For the purposes of relations with their tribal neighbours they eventually adopted Mohammedanism. Their oral tradition maintains that initially they were Christian. This claim is as unusual in a Mohammedan Bedouin tribe as that for European derivation. To understand all these developments it is necessary to look in turn at the history and environment of Sinai, at the other Bedouin tribes, and at the historical sources.

The Sinaitic environment is outstandingly interesting. Although certainly a desert the region is still in some ecological respects unusually and deceptively rich. It is in some ways an atypical and certainly not sterile environment. The mountains of south Sinai are of bare exfoliated granite (fig. 4) bereft of vegetation except where there is a limited water source. The floor of the desert consists not of sand but of boulders, granules and crystals (fig. 5) weathered from the granite. Igneous dykes which cut the granite are important for springs, and consequently for settlement.

Oases, springs and walled gardens, (fig. 6), with date palms and above all the small black Sinai goat which is capable of drinking 40% of its own weight in water, are all conventionally thought of as fundamental to subsistence. In fact we shall see they have as much to do with cultural identity. In Sinai it is not boundaries between resource zones which are of importance, so much as human control over resource foci such as water supply, leaving intervening

areas of desert more freely available. This of itself necessitates a modification of conventional ideas of archaeological site-catchment. Traditional rights are of great importance, among these the right to build.

A perspective of changes in this environment through time is now beginning to emerge [2]. During the Early Neothermal period, vegetation and animals were more abundant than at present. Man entered the region probably as a hunter of game such as the ibex. The work of Bar-Yosef [3] has revealed an archaeological sequence going back at least into the eighth millennium b.c., beginning with PPN sites as at Abu Mahdi in Wadi Sebaiyah, or at Ujrat elMehed on Er-Rahah (figs. 7, 8, 9). The sequence continues with Chalcolithic occupation, as at Sheikh Mukhsen near Nebi Saleh [4]; and Early Bronze Age sites as at Sheikh Awad [5] The chacteristic circular stone-built burial chambers called Nawamis [6] have been dated as early as the fourth millennium, while hill-top shrines such as those on Jebel Serbal contain Nabataean remains.

In the Early Christian period, during the first few centuries AD., under the influence of the desert monasticism of the Thebaid, Skete and Nitria and the rule of St. Anthony, the early hermits came to Sinai. These monks, often living in caves as around Feiran, were apparently quite numerous. However ascetic and frugal they may have been, the exact nature of their economic base is unclear, and in itself constitutes an interesting problem, since they must have been largely self-sufficient. Today effectively all food has to be brought into southern Sinai.

The early Christian occupation was responsible for extensive works which survive in the desert to this day. The hermits and early monks constructed gardens, with aqueducts (fig. 10) carrying water for hundreds of meters, like that which supplies the Skete of El Bustan. They made roads and tracks; and the hundreds of steps, with arches (fig. 11) at the top, which climb the massif of Ras Sufsafah [the "Peak of the Willow Tree" above the monastery overlooking the plain of Er Rahah]. They built chapels and hermitages like those of Galaktion and Episteme near St. Katherine's; with terraces, dams and cisterns to retain rain water pouring from the exfoliated granite. The monks even carried loads of earth, basket by basket, up to the rocky summit of Ras Sufsafah to make small gardens.

The building works in the desert are so abundant that there is a problem in dating them, whether to the early Christian centuries or to the Byzantine period. Among the most interesting are well-built stone structures (fig. 13) of

[2]   Brice 1978.
[3]   Eg., as summarised in Early Man News, INQUA, Tübingen 1980/81: 12-19
[4]   Bet Arie 1978.
[5]   Bet Arie 1980.
[6]   Bar-Yosef et al. 1983.

the type found in Wadi Shreij. These compare in form, and possibly in function, to the shielings of the north British Border country [7] ie., they may have combined functions of refuge with storing agricultural produce and working materials.

With the Early Christian influx from the Thebaid there soon grew up sketes, and other centres which could be defined as monastic, such as Deir Antoush, Bethrambe, the Arba'in [or "Forty" martyrs]; and the sizeable bishopric whose tell and ruins still await excavation at Feiran oasis. This was ultimately supplanted as the focus for the whole of southern Sinai by the monastery of St. Katherine (fig. 14), originally erected by Justinian around 550 AD as a defensive foundation, with its church of the Metamorphosis.

Inscriptions recently found on the roof beams of Justinian's church in the monastery indicate a date of 550/1 for the foundation, and in any case between 540 and 565. Around 640 AD Sinai was conquered from the Arabian peninsula by Islam. The result was that within less than a century it was cut off from contact with Byzantium, not to be restored until the 11th century.

It was in these circumstances that the manuscript treasures, such as the Codex Sinaiticus, and the magnificent early encaustic ikons and other works of art, products of Byzantine workshops sent to Sinai, were preserved from the ikonoclastic destruction which took place in Byzantium. This also ensures that even on circumstantial grounds the only date for the sending out of a body of soldiers such as the Jebaliyeh must be within a few decades of the foundation. Once there they were isolated for some four centuries, until after the account of their origins had been written down. Not only did the Jebaliyeh adapt to the desert and adopt Islam, but the monastery itself created a positive relation with Mohammedanism, being one of the few monasteries in the world to contain a mosque and minaret within its walls.

The Christian concern to establish a locus for the Biblical Mount Sinai was one impetus for monastic and scholarly interest in the region through into the nineteenth century. Wherever the original of Mount Sinai was, [and there have been many candidates [8]] the monastery remains since that time as possibly the oldest continuously inhabited building and library in the world [any other candidates would lie in such places as Tibet]; as an autonomous Orthodox Archbishopric; and as the undisputed central place of Sinai.

There came to be three principal foci of settlement in southern Sinai: Wadi Feiran, Tor on the Red Sea coast, and Gebel Musa with Ras Sufsafah [Mount Sinai]. The first two were both lay and religious, the last was exclusively monastic. Outside these main foci there were secondary monastic

[7] Ramm, McDowall & Mercer 1970.
[8] See eg., Davies 1979.

49

settlements, with or without lay villages; eg., Sigilliyeh and Er-Rimm near Feiran, Barabra in the Wadi Hebran, and those in the Wadi et Tlah and Wadi Garbeh not far from Gebel Musa, and of Wadi Zeraigiyeh and Rimhan [Deir Antoush] on the eastern slopes of Gebel Umm Shomer. All were linked by a system of well-constructed and paved routes across the mountains, contrasting with the unimproved tracks used today which largely confine themselves to the beds of wadis and ungraded ascents of passes. Paved sections are still preserved, for example between Sheikh Awad and Nagb Hawa.

It was principally the relatively well-watered granite region of the triangle between the plain of El Kâa, Wadi Feiran and Wadi esh-Sheikh, and southwards to Gebel Umm Shomer, which was settled, exploiting every source of water as a focus. The initial phases of monasticism were represented by abundant but scattered settlement of monks and anchorites, probably thousands of cells. The larger monastic sites started to crystallise as foci of settlement from the fourth century, on account of the persecution of isolated monks by the coeval Bedouin and for other reasons. This culminated in the sixth century foundation of the monastery by Justinian, but included other smaller foci some of which survived until relatively recently [9]. By 1643 the smaller monastic settlements were almost abandoned. Deir Antoush in Wadi Sle was among the last to be occupied and in 1658 Deir Arba'in. Some were no doubt re-occupied and abandoned, as can be seen happening on Mount Athos today. The Arba'in is now once again in repair and occupied by a monk from St. Katherine's.

In summary, at the end of the 14th century there were numerous secondary monastic sites, in the 15th Deir Antoush was still flourishing, and in the 17th century they were successively abandoned. The transition from the pattern of scattered eremitical settlement to the final concentration in the monastery really took from the 4th/5th centuries to the end of the 18th century, or 1300 years.

This pattern of settlement, the stability of the monastery, and the impact of Islam and of the other Bedouin tribes of Sinai, are all important in establishing the claims to antiquity of the Jebaliyeh. The south Sinai Bedouin are known collectively as the Towarah. Their individual histories and various origins indicate considerable changes between the 14th century and the early 17th century, with tribes moving out of the area mainly into Egypt, and the main tribes of northern Sinai moving in during the 16th century.

Of the Towarah, the Sowalha and Aleyqat moved into southern Sinai during the 14th century, and the Huweitat in the 17th century. The Muzeineh came from the Hejaz in flight from blood feuding after the Sowalha and Aleyqat were established. After being rejected by the Sowalha they allied with

---

[9] Weill 1908; Eckenstein 1921.

50

the Aleyqat against them, and came to settle on the eastern side of the peninsula. Other tribes of southern Sinai such as the Awlad Suleiman and the Beni Wasel consist of relatively few families and cannot claim greater antiquity, so that the Jebaliyeh are in any case the oldest established population of the area after the monastic tradition.

The tribal structure is commonly divided into "quarters" [Ruba'; pl. Rubu'] or "branches" [Fara'; pl. Furu'] often four in number, and consisting in turn of several families ['Eleh], which are agnatic descent groups named after an ancestral patronymic. The Jebaliyeh tribe consists of four Rubu'. The Awlad Jindi or "Sons of the Soldier" represent the Egyptian contingent of tradition, and are often referred to as "the Egyptians". The Waheibat, Awlad Selim, and Hameida are the contingent from the land of "Vlah". They share a common ancestor-figure, Bahid. There are other segments of the tribe such as the Tebna clan, around the oasis of Wadi Feiran. The name of the Bezia, who work in the monastery garden at Tûr, is reminiscent of the Bessae, who came to Sinai from Thrace. Burckhardt also mentions the Sattla as a moiety of the Jebaliyeh elsewhere in the region. The Jebaliyeh as a whole were classified as "serfs" of the monastery ["Sebayet ed-Deir"]. Some of the other tribes have the relationship to the monastery of Ghaffirs or "protectors" which entails the transportation and guarding of goods and travellers to the monastery, but this has to be distinguished from the "serfdom" of the Jebaliyeh. Groups which have this relationship of Ghaffir are Aleyqat, and certain of the Sowalha tribe, namely the Awlad Said or Saidiyeh branch of the Dhuheiry, and the Awarimeh; but not the Khurrasheh or Rahamy branches of the Sowaleh.

An understanding of the position of the Jebaliyeh in these social classifications and relationships both with other tribes and the monastery is probably necessary in order to arrive at an understanding of the ethno-historical problem. If Justinian sent a population from south-east Europe to the desert of Sinai it must have been with some prospect of their being qualified to fulfil the roles assigned to them. These were initially more military and logistical than domestic, involving the protection of the monastery as soldiers, and its supply presumably then as now by camel. A group of temperate European peasant farmers would in any case have found themselves at a total loss in that environment.

Justinian was, like so many of his Byzantine subjects, a native Latin-speaker from south of the Danube, who to the end of his life spoke rather imperfect Greek. He has to be credited with a close knowledge of the peoples from amongst whom he himself rose. The oral tradition stresses the fact that the ancestors of the Jebaliyeh were "Roman Byzantines". It also mentions the Black Sea [which may be a late interpolation] and accepts that the land of

51

"Vlah" is in the area of modern Romania. We shall have to discuss these terms further in examining the historical sources, notably Eutychius.

Among south-east European peoples with antecedents which arguably extend back over two millennia to Romanised Thracian populations, there is a group whose way of life would have well suited it to carry out the necessary functions on Sinai. It is put forward here not as the direct ancestor of the Jebaliyeh but as surviving representative of precisely the sort of Latinised Thracian group from which they probably did spring; a cousinly rather than literal relation.

This group is the Aromâni, or "Vlahs", the Latin-speaking people who permeate all the countries south of the Danube, distributed among the populations of Greece, Bulgaria, Thrace, and into Yugoslavia and Dalmatia as far westwards as Istria. The history of this distinctive and little understood element is complex. The last substantive account in English is that of Wace and Thompson [1914].

The Vlahs were seasonally mobile pastoralists, based on summer villages in high mountains such as the Pindus [10] and widespread in winter in lowland regions such as Thessaly, which was known in mediaeval times as "Megali Vlahia". They were traditionally recognised as tough mercenary soldiers and merchants. The transport of goods by mule caravans throughout the Balkan peninsula was in their hands. No other people better exemplify all the functions required of the group sent to Sinai, not even the Romanian pastoralists of the Carpathians, who are the closest linguistic and cultural relatives of the Aromâni. The Vlahs have traditionally served as workmen and muleteers at the Orthodox monasteries of Mount Athos, where the earliest of the main monasteries, the Great Lavra, was founded by Athanasius in the tenth century, but where as on Sinai there was undoubtedly an antecedent eremitical settlement.

The historical sources

Two important historical sources bearing on the problem are Procopius, the coeval of Justinian writing in 553/4 AD, almost contemporary with the foundation of St. Katherine's; and Eutychius writing around 900 AD. What Procopius says is in effect merely that Justinian built a church for the monks, not at the summit of Mount Sinai but "a long way below it"; and that at the foot of the mountain he built "a very strong fort" and placed in it "a very considerable garrison of soldiers" [11] Criticisms have been made both of Procopius [12] and of Eutychius [13] but they should not be dismissed out of hand.

[10] Nandris 1980.
[11] Procopius of Caesarea: *The Buildings of Justinian*, Book IV
[12] Eg., by Mayerson 1978: 33

52

In their different frameworks both these ancient authors, and in our context particularly Eutychius, remain worth taking seriously; as is made very clear by Cameron in her discussion of them [14].

With regard to the foundation of the monastery, and to the conditions which exist on Sinai itself, Eutychius now seems, to me at least, to be full of details which ring true, and there are strong grounds for rehabilitating his evidence. By virtue of his origins he was in any case more familiar with the region than was Procopius.

Eutychius was born in Egypt on September 8th 876/7 AD. His name originally was Sa'id ibn al-Batriq, and he died in 939/40 AD. On the 7th February 933 he became Melkite Patriarch of Alexandria and took a Hebrew name, translated into Greek as Eutyches or Eutychios, meaning "fortunate". This contemporary of Alfred the Great of England was widely interested in medecine as well as in history and theology. In his *Annals* he aimed to write a definitive History of the World: there is unfortunately no reliable modern edition of Eutychius. The only one of which I am aware in a western language, Latin with Arabic, is that of Bishop Pococke in 1654-6. This is my source for the Arabic version of the crux word "Lachmienses", to which attention is drawn in this article as a probable reference to the Vlahs on Sinai. It would clearly be necessary to consult the earliest Arabic manuscripts.

Eutychius gives details of the circumstances surrounding the foundation of the monastery by Justinian. He tells how the Emperor's first legate, who sited the monastery in its present position, was beheaded by Justinian, who thought the situation too vulnerable to attack from the adjacent hillside. The monastery is placed on possibly the most abundant water source in the whole of south Sinai, so much so that it would be very surprising if it has not destroyed important traces of prehistoric, including Palaeolithic settlement. It would have been quite impossible to place it elsewhere, and to place it away from water would have jeopardised its security far more. The nature of the opposition has also to be considered. The contemporary Bedouin probably shared the characteristics of modern Bedouin raiders, for whom anything other than speedy success leads to early discouragement, and the raiders melt away into the desert [15]. So the massive walls of Justinian's monastic fortress are not, whatever their outward appearance, designed to withstand long siege. The beheading of the legate was therefore unjustified; but it demonstrates well enough that, then as now, an understanding of the ways of the desert is not always present among those who live away from its influence

---

[13] Eg., by Shevchenko 1966: 256
[14] Cameron 1985: 96-8
[15] Cf. Mayerson 1964: 184, on the disinclination of Bedouin to climb walls

What Eutychius says about the sending of the garrison is as follows [16]:

"Deinde alium misit legatum, unaque cum ipso, e vernis Romanorum una cum liberis et uxoribus ipsorum centum viros, jubens etiam ut ex Ægypto alios centum una cum ipsorum uxoribus et liberis acciperet, quibus extra montem Sinam domos exstrueret in quibus ibi degerent quo monasterium et monachos custodirent; et victum ipsis suppetitandum curaret, ipsisque et monasterio ex Ægypto annonæ quantum sufficeret, deferendum. Cum ergo ad montem Sinam pervenisset legatus extra monasterium Orientem versus multa exstruxit domicilia, eademque arce communivit, in quibus servos istos collocavit quo monasterium custodirent, idemque tuerentur; qui locus ad hoc usque tempus Dir ol Abid, seu, monasteriunt servorum appellatur. Cum vero genitis liberis multiplicati, diu ibi substitissent, ac Mohammedanismus obtineret [quod sub Chalifa Abdil Malec Ebn Merwan accidit] alii in alios irruentes mutuis se cædibus sustulerent, cæsis aliis, aliis fugientibus, aliis Mohammedanismus amplexis, quorum liberi ad hunc usque diem in monasteriis illant religionem profitientes Banu Salehi, appellantur, et pueri [seu servi] monasterii audiunt; suntque ex ipsis LACHMIENSES [17]. Diruerunt autem monachi domicilia servorum postquam Mohammedis religionem amplexi sunt ne quis ea incoleret, quæ ergo et hodia desolata manent."

Comments in square brackets in the following translation refer to points of valid regional detail, in which Eutychius abounds, and points which occur in the oral tradition of the tribe, as we shall see below:

"Thereupon ... [Following the beheading] he sent another legate, and with him a hundred men from among the domestic servants...

[The Jebaliyen were still recently valued in Cairo as domestic servants, above many other races]

of the Romans [Sc. Byzantines] together with their wives and children; and commanded him also to take another hundred together with their wives and children from Egypt, for whom he was to build dwellings outside of Mount Sinai...

[A reference to a strong extant tradition that building may not take place near the monastery, and obliquely to the general importance in Sinai of the right to build, but also to the monks' wish to distance the civil settlement from the monastery].

in which they were to live and guard the monastery and the monks; and to provide for their sustenance, and to see to it that a supply of corn was provided for them and the monastery from Egypt.

[16] Migne 111, col. 1072:165-7
[17] Our emphasis

54

[Eutychius refers to the logistical reality that supplies of food then as now came from outside the peninsula]

> So when the legate had come to Mount Sinai he built many dwellings outside the monastery towards the east, and fortified them round about, and gathered the servants there in them to protect and guard the monastery; which place is known to this day as Deir el Abid, or the Monastery of the Slaves.

[The location of Deir el Abid is not obvious on the ground, but is likely to have lain out of sight and sound of the monastery, somewhat south of east over the saddle below Jebel Muneijah and above Wadi Sebaiyeh. The location of "Hrazim" (fig. 15) named in the oral tradition of the tribe as the secondary settlement of the early serfs, seems likely to lie beyond Aaron's hill, on the other side of the Wadi ed Deir but to the north-west of the monastery. Abu Seilah, discussed below, although more distant would also be a candidate.]

> But when after a long time they had many children and multiplied, and Mohammedanism spread, which happened under the Khalif Abd-el Malek ibn Merwan

[685-705 AD; or according to Mayerson [18] "forcibly" under Marwan I: 684-85 AD]

> they fell upon one another and killed each other, and some were killed and some fled...

[The oral tradition of the Jebaliyeh includes a detailed accounts of these internecine disputes, which at one stage reduced their numbers drastically]

> and others embraced Mohammedanism, whose descendants at the monastery to this day profess this religion...

[Burckhardt, 1822, retails an account of the last Christian member of the tribe being a woman who died in the 18th century, which sounds apochryphal; but this part of the oral tradition that the Jebaliyeh were originally Christian is very emphatic, and unusual for a Bedouin tribe.]

> and are called Beni Saleh...

[meaning "Sons of Saleh"; just as one Rubu' of the Jebaliyeh today is called Awlad Selim: "Sons, or Boys, of Selim"]

> and are also called Children or Servants of the Monastery;

---

[18] Mayerson 1964:197

[recalling the term Sebayet ed Deir, which was in recent times applied to the Jebaliyeh]

among them also are the LACHMIENSES.

[This apparently gratuitous piece of information, appended by Eutychius, has never been properly explained. In Pococke's translation of 1654-56 the Arabic of this section, in which "Lachmienses" is the Latin translation of "Lachmiin", is as follows:

هــذا الوقت في الديارات مسلمين يقــال لهم بنو صــالح
ويسمون غلمان الديــر الى اليوم ومنهم اللحمــيين

[Robinson (1841, note xviii) claims, probably rightly, that the whole section of Eutychius referring to the monastery had been overlooked before his time. This is important in assessing the oral tradition. The laconic reference to "Lachmienses" now finds its true explanation in the context of the problem of the Jebaliyeh and the land of "Vlah"].

But the monks destroyed the dwellings of the slaves after they adopted Islam so that no one could dwell in them any more; and they remain desolate until the present day".   [END OF TRANSLATION]

What Eutychius is saying is that "to his day", around 900 AD, there were "Lachmienses" serving the monastery. It looks as if this term is a reference to the Vlahs of Mount Sinai.

In looking for a correspondence to Deir el Abid the literal archaeologist would have to be seeking a civil settlement dateable specifically to the 7th century AD, with probably very poor material remains. In theory there are archaeological remains which might be looked for in the context of the Jebaliyeh problem; for example lay Christian burials. These would inevitably be very poor in grave goods, and therefore difficult to date. They would have to date after the foundation of the monastery, and before the Hegira [year 622/3 of the Gregorian calendar] or at least before the time of Ibn Merwan. But the problem is really an example of a mis-understanding of the universal and general nature of archaeology. When archaeology sets out to seek a literal validation of historical references, by finding material remains relating to specific events and personalities, it usually succeeds in finding something unrelated; for example in "Biblical" archaeology.

To trace the tradition of "Vlah" we may work back from Palmer, who attests to its existence and gives us a clue as to the philological dimension of the

problem. E.H. Palmer was the noted Arabist who worked in Sinai with the Ordnance Survey team, and published its results together with C.W. Wilson [Wilson and Palmer 1869-71]. He was murdered by Bedouin in north Sinai in 1882. Palmer [1871, The Desert of the Exodus: 74] says:

> "...the Arab servants of the convent are fine sturdy fellows and present a great contrast to their effeminate masters ... they all belong to the Jibaliyeh tribe, who are recognised as the serfs of the convent. This tribe is said to be of European origin, and to have descended from the colony of Wallachian and Egyptian slaves, placed there by Justinian to protect the monks. They themselves have a tradition that they came from a country called "K'lah"; and their features, differing somewhat from the ordinary Bedawi type, would seem to favour the supposition. The Jibaliyeh have an additional claim on our interest as the representatives of the older inhabitants of Sinai. The remaining Bedawin tribes have preserved the purity of descent, and the genealogical pride, which is so curious a characteristic of the desert races; and in names, manners and appearance they are now what their ancestors were in Hejjaz or Yemen. It is clear that they can have no admixture of Aramaean blood; and if any of the local traditions do still survive in the peninsula, it is to the Jibaliyeh alone that we owe their perpetuation."

The use of "Wallachian", meaning the southern part of modern Romania, is quite usual, since Palmer was writing within a decade of the union of the principalities which gave shape in 1862 to that country. The word belongs to the same root as "Vlah"

"Vlah"

The label "Vlah" is one given by outsiders to the Latin-speaking natives of the Balkan and Greek peninsula south of the Danube. They refer to themselves as *Român, Aromân, Armîn, Româr*. "Vlah" is used in its most general form by Greeks to refer to shepherds. It is often used as a term of denigration, or obfuscation, but its overwhelming association, like that of transhumant pastoralism itself, is with Latinity.

"Vlah" is a complex term with a wide range of historical and linguistic associations and connotations. It derives ultimately from a Germanic word for foreigners [19]; or is "a Slavonic adaptation of a general term applied by Teutonic peoples to Roman provincials in the 4th & 5th centuries" [20]. The wide range of variants can be seen in the following examples:

Volcae	Celtic tribe
Lah	Slovene
Lasi	
Wloch	Lusatian & Polish

[19] [Kluge F., *Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, s.v. *Vlah*]
[20] Heurtley W.A. et al. 1965, *Short History of Greece*, p. 46, fn. 1

Woloch	
Welsh	An Anglo-Saxon term for yr Cymry.
Walsch	Mediaeval German term for Italians
Wealh [21] *Walh,* [pl. *Walhaz*]	Germanic term for Celts or Romans.
Walho-land	Germanic term for France.
Walloons	French-speaking population of the Netherlands.
Wallis	Canton of Switzerland [Valais] containing Italian-speakers of the Rhône valley.
Churwelschen	Inhabitants of the Grisons speaking the Romansch language.
Wallachia	Southern Romania
Olah	Hungarian term for the Romanians
Olasz	Hungarian term for the Italians
Valaques	French term for Romanians
Ulah	Turkish term for Romanians

To the Turks Moldavia was known as:
Ak Iflak or "White Vlahia" [as reflected in works of the great 18th century Moldavian Prince and polymath, Dimitri Cantemir]; while Wallachia was known as:
Kara Iflak or "Black Vlahia". In the Middle Ages Thessaly was known [eg., to Benjamin of Tudela in the 11th century, and for several centuries roughly from the 10th to the 14th centuries as:
Megali Vlahia, since it was an area of predominantly Aromân settlement. Acharnania and Aetolia were known for the same reasons as:
Mikra Vlahia while
Ano Vlahia was the Epirus and northern Pindus.

Morlachs, Morovlahi, Mavrovlahi [Gr.] or Mavrovlasi [Srb.] were Vlahs of the Dalmatian coast, in existence at least as early as the 12th century, before the arrival of the Turks in Europe. During the course of ethnoarchaeoloaical fieldwork in the Velebit range on the Dalmatian coast near Zadar, Nandris [22] has established that the present-day Croatian shepherds continue to use Latin numerals for counting sheep. He sees this as a transmission, along with the whole technology of the *stani* [sheepfolds], from the Morlachs who occupied the region before them.

---

[21] There is a watercolour of a landscape by Dürer in the Ashmolean Museum Oxford, labelled "*Wealh Purg* [=burg]". This represents Dosso di Segonzano in the Val Cembra [Waetzold 1955: 138], significantly near the Ladin-speaking regions of the eastern Alps.

[22] Nandris 1988b.

The *Vlahorynchini* were a Latin-speaking group associated with the Slavs entering the Balkan peninsula [23]; they appear in the 8th century in Macedonia, in the 10th century near Prespa, in the 11th century in Chalcidice, and later in the 11th century they have a town in Thessaly.

The mediaeval records of Dubrovnik use the word *vlasi* for non-Slavs, and Serbian charters are known to distinguish between Vlahs and Slavs [24]. Nicetas Choniates [482, 3] writing in 1180-1210 AD, expressly says that the barbarians of the Haemus region, who formerly had been called Moesians, were now called Wallachians [*Vlahoi*] [25]

Variants on the word Vlah are also found in such names as *Sveti Vlah* [Yugo. = Saint Vlah] a church in Dubrovnik dating from 1352, whose saint is synonymous with St *Blasius*, St *Blaize* or San *Biagio.*

The Vlah problem reaches back ultimately to the problem of what became of the ancient Thracian populations of the peninsula, not merely within modern in Greece but over the whole area south of the Danube and to the north of it in modern Romania. The formation of vulgar Latin, exemplified today by the Aromân and the Romanian languages, which are mutually intelligible, took place over the whole peninsula. The advent of various barbarians had a small impact until the coming of the Slavs, which was on a scale sufficient to divide the Latin speaking Thracian peoples into the Aromâni south of the Danube, and the Romanians to the north.

The "Vlahs" are at one and the same time a paradigm of the most ancient forms of settlement of south-east Europe [expressed in the categories of the *stîna* and the *katun* [26]] and of one of the most modern of phenomena; namely the struggle of a freely chosen mutually consenting cultural confederation against the imposition of political oppression and existential victimisation.

The case of the Vlahs, like that of the Jebaliyeh, epitomises the problem of what exactly it is that constitutes the identity and individuality of a human group. Without some attempt to understand this problem archaeology is at best superficial. Like ethnoarchaeolgy it must be prepared where appropriate to place its material in historical context. The case of the "Vlahs" is too complex to be easily stated; so that it stands inevitably opposed to the simple verities of literalism, whether in politics, nationalism or archaeology.

The use of term "Vlah" in Sinai can only come from an association with the south-east European milieu.

[23] Lascaris 1943.
[24] Han 1972; Wenzel 1962: 115, fn 3.
[25] Ostrogorsky 1980: 403-4.
[26] Nandris 1985.

Lachmienses and Vlah [27]

The Latin ending "-*iens[es]*" means "like a certain thing"; so Lachmienses could mean "like the Lachmi", or it could be a straight adjectival attribute-use, meaning nothing different from Lachmi.

To draw an equivalence between the stems Lach-, Vlah-, K'lah-, and Tlah- is indeed very feasible, but not of course completely substantiable. If we presume that it all begins with Vlah-, the original south-east European form, the following developments are possible:

[1]   Vlah → Lach

The original "v" which does not occur in Arabic may just have been omitted or else it could have become equated with the [w-] of the word *wa-* = 'and', which is regarded as a prefix in Arabic and therefore omitted. A parallel for this is Aurans ¨ Lawrence [T.E. Lawrence] where the l- was equated with the [l-] of the article *al-*. The development of: ch [خ] from: h [ح or ه] is again highly possible, all being voiceless fricatives formed in the posterior part of the vocal tract.

[2]   Vlah → K'lah

Presumably here the ['] is not the Arabic hamza, which would complicate rather than simplify the position, but is rather used purely [by Palmer] as an English orthographic device in order to avoid the unfamiliar sequence -Kl. The change Vl → -Kl is difficult to support by the usual weakening tendencies, the only explanation one could advance is that the obvious change Vl → Fl was avoided because this would yield Flah, which means "peasant agriculturalist" and therefore Qlah or Klah was introduced in its place.

[3]   Both Vlah → Klah and Vlah → Tlah

[Cf. Wadi Tlah near St. Katherine's monastery] rest on the same thing; non-existence of "v" in Arabic, the unsuitability of the sequence 'flh', and the substitution of another consonant such as k or t. Lach avoids the problem by simply eliding the v-.

There are many historical changes which fit in with ideas of phonetic weakening, like devoicing of fricatives v → f, z → s, weakening of intervocalic plosives aba → ava, ata → ava, aka → agha, etc. The only one which fits this is Vlah → Lach, if we can account for h → ch, which is not difficult.

All one can say about Vl → Kl & Vl → Tl is that similar changes have been observed elsewhere.

The use of "K'lah" by Burkhardt can in its turn be understood in this context, and in that of the Arabic language. "V", especially an initial "V" and a double consonant, is not a sound which comes readily to Arabic speakers. A new letter for "V", which did not exist at the time of Eutychius: ڤ has been created in modern times to cope with alien words imported into Arabic.

We now know that at his time there did exist not only a people but a geographical entity called "Vlah" to which Eutychius could have been referring. The Armenian geographer, Moses Khorenatzi, writing in the 9th century AD about Sarmatia and Thrace, makes reference to "the unknown land they call *Balak*"[28]. The best reason for the country being "unknown" in this not otherwise inherently remote region lies in the mountains and dense forests of eg., the Pindus, the Carpathians, and, by definition, of "Transylvania".

There are other early references to Vlahs themselves, not all of which need detain us. Around 980 AD the Byzantine Emperor Basil II granted an autonomy which lasted almost four centuries to the Vlahs of Hellas, under their Chelnik Nikolitsa, a diminutive of Nicholas still used in Romanian. "Chelnik" is a term still used today among the Aromâni of Greece for the powerful patriarchal figure, owner of many flocks of sheep, and head of an organisation of shepherds. It is rendered into the Greek language of the Sarakatsani, whose material culture and way of life are essentially the same as that of the Aromâni, as "Tselingas".

The Chelnik Nikolitsa lived in northern Greece, roughly speaking the Epirus, which was inhabited by Vlahs during the Middle Ages, and was known as "Mikro Vlakhia". In Thessaly the presence of the Aromâni was so strong that the whole region was known for several centuries as "Megali Vlakhia".

Procopius, Theophanes and Theophylactus record Vlah words and place names. There are numerous other testimonies to the existence of "Vlah" as a regional and ethnic entity; despite the fact that it was not thus that the people concerned referred to themselves. They were effectively illiterate, and it was not in the interests of largely Greek historiographers to stress their existence. We could recall however that "In terms of written history the nomads of the Byzantine period are all but invisible...". Their pastoral system nevertheless "... served to complement the urban and agricultural system of the Byzantine Negev" [29]. Here we have yet another analogy between the Bedouins and the Aromâni. There are indeed many methodological similarities between the

---

28 Barzu 1979: 100.
29 Rosen 1987: 39.

case of the Aromâni and that of the Jebaliyeh. It is not enough to use solely historical, solely archaeological, or indeed single scientific methods.

The oral tradition of the Jebaliyeh

It is worth putting on record the contemporary oral tradition of the Jebaliyeh. I obtained this in 1978 from the Skeikh of the Jebaliyeh and of the Monastery, *Mohammed Murdhi abu el-Heim*. It is regarded as one of the duties of the Sheikh of the tribe to transmit the oral tradition in detail.

> The ancestors of the tribe came from Vlah by the Black Sea. This is Romania. They spoke the Roman language. They were Roman Byzantines. They lived first a part of them at Barbaros [or Barabros, or Barabra] in Wadi Sebaiyah, and a part of them at Abu Seilah.

[Abu Seilah (fig. 9) is a small oasis, at present rather dried out, lying between Er-Rahah and the Nagb el-Hawa. Since it is currently the subject of a dispute between the Jebaliyeh and the Awlad Jindi it is always possible that such references are emphasised or even inserted in the traditional account to support a case. But remembering our discussion of Eutychius above, it could also be a candidate for an early settlement. Barabra acquired its name from the battle with the "Barbarians" who are mentioned next. It lies south-east of the monastery and there is an old burial ground there. A major battle taking place soon after the foundation of the monastery and the arrival of the Jebaliyen would be a test of the new power structure which had arisen with both these events. Early raids on the monks of Sinai were mainly by Sudanese peoples such as Blemmyes [30] &c from Africa.]

> At Barabra there was an important battle between the Jebaliyeh protecting the monastery and the Sudanese who were raiding the area. This was [near the time of the foundation of the monastery]. After the danger from the Barbarians was over the Jebaliyeh came to the site of Hrazim, about 1000 years ago.

[The site of Hrazim thus represents a secondary settlement site of the tribe; both the location of Barabros and its correspondence with Deir el-Abid are still uncertain, while Hrazim (fig. 15) almost certainly corresponds to a small inlet facing Wadi ed-Deir from across the main Wadi north-west of Aaron's Hill, where there are Byzantine buildings, gardens water and modern settlement. The name Hrazim could be held to correspond with Harrazim in Arabic meaning Guards. The Jebaliyeh insist that their first function was as guards and not working serfs. According to some traditions their first site was Qrayat near the cemetery of Bahid which is mentioned below. After a severe

[30] Undergraff 1978.

reduction in numbers, formalised into one ancestor figure, the tribe moved to Hrazim.]

> About 500 years ago they settled also at el-Melga. Bahid had two sons, Selim and Hamed, and Hamed had a son Waheb. From these descend the three Rubu' of Jebaliyeh; the Awlad Selim, the Hameida and the Wahebat.

[The main story to account for the several Rubu' of the Jebaliyeh is thus predicated on the existence of an "earliest ancestor", Bahid, who is nevertheless orally dated only "perhaps 700 years ago".]

> Later the Awlad Jindi came from Egypt making the fourth Ruba' of the Jebaliyeh.

[The Awlad Jindi, or "Sons of the Soldier", differentiate themselves from other Jebaliyeh as originating in Egypt, while adhering firmly to the tribe as a whole. Only since about 1940 have any Jebaliyeh taken wives from other tribes.]

> The cemetery of Bahid and his sons is located in Wadi Umm Gersum.

[In Wadi Umm Gersum there are today larger graves within enclosures, around which later Jebaliyeh burials have accreted. There is no real indication of their antiquity or of that of the tradition. The cemetery seems to me to be younger than that of Barabros. The "earliest gardens" of the Jebaliyeh lie further up the Wadi Umm Gersum in Wadi Sdud, the "Closed-in Wadi", round the well of Bir Buqbaq sunk by the monastery for general use at a much later date.]

> The Jebaliyeh were definitely Christian when they came to Sinai. They became Muslims at the time of the Hegira in 623 AD. Many of them had died at this early period; by 640 AD there were very few families left, perhaps twelve

[in some other accounts sixteen]

> on account of the wars with barbarians, and also because of internal feuds between themselves. There were quarrels between the Egyptians and the Romanians or Romans, because of which the monastery separated them and told them where to live. The Egyptians went to Abu Seilah

[which is today a settlement of Awlad Jindi]

> and to Wadi Tlah, while the Romanians settled around el-Melga and in Wadi Sebaiyeh. Until about 1000 years ago the Jebaliyeh were only soldiers, and after that they took up the gardens. About 700 years ago they began to expand from around the vicinity of the monastery and to settle other oases. In Feiran they settled only recently, after 1940, where previously only other Bedouin tribes had

63

lived. Now they number some three hundred there. In Tûr today there are only three families

[the port having declined drastically since the time when it was the main inlet for pilgrims]

In Turfa and at Sheikh Awad

[where the tomb of the Sheikh is an Awlad Jindi shrine, but the inhabitants of the oasis are Romans]

and in Wadi Nasb, there are many Jebaliyeh. They are found at Abu Zeitun, but not at Deir Antoush. They make use [for upland grazing of camels] of the plateau of Deyset Fureiya (fig. 1), whose early monastic ruins must be pre-Hegira, c. 1400 years old, because after the Muslims came there was no monastery other than St. Katherine's

[this depends on the definition of a monastery, because as has already been explained such outlying dependencies as Deir Antoush or the Arba'in flourished until much later. Finally, as Sheikh Muhammed put it]

The Jebaliyeh always had goats; life came from the goats and from the monastery (fig. 7)

[It is of interest in the light of further discussion below that this culminating statement does not stress the role of the gardens.]   [END OF STATEMENT]

Sheikh Muhammed is the " Sheikh of the Monastery", [Sheikh ed-Deir], a term not restricted to the Jebaliyeh, for other tribes have a Sheikh whose particular concern is dealing with the monastery. But the function is naturally particularly important among the Jebaliyeh, and is nowadays virtually synonymous with Sheikhdom of the tribe as a whole. Asked as to the sources of this knowledge he replies that he heard much of it from his father, but that he also read among papers in the monastery. This can be detected for example in his use of historical dates.

Further links with S.E. Europe: the Bessae

The links of the Monastery, of St. Katherine on Sinai with south-east Europe go back to its earliest times not just in connection with the Jebaliyeh. The monastery came over the centuries to have wide-ranging territorial possessions in Egpyt, Cyprus, Crete, Constantinople, Tiflis, Kiev, and as far afield as India.

The principal links of the monastery were with Greece, with Serbia, and especially with Romania. The Voivodes of Moldavia and Wallachia

64

generously endowed many Orthodox monasteries including Sinai. In post-Byzantine times, following the fall of Constantinople in 1453, they endowed or re-founded virtually every one of the monasteries of Athos under Ottoman rule. To St. Katherine's monastery they gave extensive lands, or *metohie*, around Sinaia in the southern Carpathians, which takes its name from this connection.

Another south-east European group became associated at an early stage with Orthodox monasticism. The Bessae like the Aromâni were latinised Thracian mountain peoples. Their presence is attested in Sinai within a few decades of the Foundation of the monastery. In c. 570 AD, some five years after the death of Justinian, Antoninus Martyr [31] [Antoninus of Piacenza] put on record a journey he made from Palestine to Syria through the desert, returning to Egypt via Feiran [Pharom]. He is the first traveller to mention the monastery, and he informs us that at the end of the 6th century the monks included speakers of several languages *"latines et græces, syriacas et ægypticas ac bessas"*. Latin is mentioned before Greek, perhaps not surprisingly since the Byzantine milieu which gave rise to the foundation was and remained until the time of Heraclius officially Latin-speaking, like the Emperor himself.

The testimony of Antoninus Martyr informs us that the *monks* included Latin-speakers. Latin could be learned; but it is highly unlikely that the Bessae whom he mentions were anything other than yet another synonym for those native Thracians, speaking a vulgar Latin allied to Romanian and to the Latin of the Aromâni of modern Greece. The Bessae and the Getae were the principal native peoples of Thrace in the Roman period. They became converted to Christianity, and had by this time established monasteries and sent monks to Palestine [32].

Tomaschek [1893-4] says a great deal about the Bessae [33]. In the context of the Bessae noted by Antoninus in Sinai, Tomaschek [1893: 77] notes:

> "Die Thrakische Sprache war damals langst verschollen; die Bessen sprachen bereits die Limba Rumanesca [Sc. Româneasca: Limba ̄ lingua = Romanian "tongue"]: fur ihre Pilger gab es selbst am Sinai Dolmetsche."

ie., "The Thracian language was by that time long extinct. The Bessae by then spoke the Romanian language; there were even translators and guides for their pilgrims on Sinai."

> "Mit Stolz aber nannten sich diese Bessen Romani so wie ihre nachkommen von heute, die Wlachen [Tomaschek 1893: 79]

---

[31] Goldmeister 1899; Poniatowsky 1895; Geyer 1898; Mayerson 1978: 993.
[32] Weill 1908: 250; Beza 1937; Tomaschek 1893.
[33] For further information on the Dacians, Bessae and Vlahs see: Tomaschek 1893: 72-80, 101-7 & 111.

ie., "These Bessae proudly called themselves Romani, just as do their descendants of today, the Vlahs [or Wallachians]."

The Lakhmids

Some reference must be made to the Lakhmids [34] to forestall the objection that "Lakhmienses" might refer to this group of people, rather than to the Vlahs. The derivation of "Lakhmidae" from "Lachmienses" is problematical, and this solution seems unlikely for several reasons. The Lakhmids appeared in the 2nd-3rd centuries in the Yemen, from whence they moved up the coast in the 3rd-4th centuries. They ended up as one of the main vassals of the Persians, becoming Nestorians in the 4th century on the Euphrates, which in itself makes it improbable that they can be equated with Vlahs in Sinai who became Muslim at the time of the Hegira. The Lakhmids were associated with the Ghassanids in their role as border guards, a role which terminated in c. 581 AD.

It is difficult to reconcile this people, who have no connnection whatever with south-east Europe [or Egypt], with an immediate re-appearance in Sinai at that time, and there does not seem to be any evidence for their presence in the peninsula. The Lakhmids moreover disappear from the record in the 7th century, well before the time of Eutychius, who writes in the present tense about the Lachmienses. Lakhmid is written in Arabic with ح [not as in "Lachmiin" with خ].

Bosnians

Another misconception must be laid to rest, that the Jebaliyeh "originated in Bosnia", or were "some sort of Slavs". This is a confusion between the idea of their south-east European origin, and the fact that Bosnian mercenary soldiers are recorded in Egypt, eg. at the fort of Qasr Ibrahim in Nubia. The Jebaliyeh, from being Christian had become Muslims by the 7th century, while the Slavs were not Christianised until the time of Cyril and Methodius in the 9th century; viz., in Moravia in 863, in Bulgaria in 885, and in Russia not until 988.

The dates for the Bosnian presence in Egypt are between 1560 and 1811, and they have nothing to do with the case of the Jebaliyeh. There is however a methodological link in the fact that recent archaeological excavations at Qasr Ibrahim have so far produced no material evidence to confirm the historical reference. The case of the Jebaliyeh is more securely based, just because it rests on so many different strands of evidence.

---

[34] See eg.: Altheim & Stiehl 1964; Atiya 1968; Charles 1936; Dussaud 1955; Goubert 1951; Nau 1933.

In the context of mercenary soldiers in Sinai [but not of Bosnians] there is a well known inscription from the Wadi Mukkatab, where there are many rock inscriptions of various dates, but commonly dated as Byzantine, from rocks at resting or camping places. This one, quoted for its amusement value, is written in Greek and refers disparagingly to the local tribes, saying

"An evil race! Lupus the soldier wrote this with my hand."

This is not so straightforwardly Greek as it may seem; for whatever language he wrote in, the name Lupus is clearly Latin. The origins of a mercenary soldier with a Latin name, writing in Greek, immediately suggest themselves as being in the Thracian provinces of Byzantium, and culturally and linguistically as allied to the Aromâni. The Aromâni among all Balkan peoples are the most commonly multi-lingual, and certainly the most Philhellene. Under the term "language of daily use", which is taken to define nationality in Greek census returns, they would normally enter "Greek".

The identity of the human group

There are other and perhaps unsuspected dimensions to the problem of the Jebaliyeh. Their material remains, their winter and summer camps, can be used in a fairly straightforward ethnoarchaeological manner to throw light on patterns of prehistoric settlement in Sinai [35]. But going beyond this, there are analogies to be drawn with prehistoric European situations, and generalisations to be set up concerned with group identity and territoriality.

For example the social role of the Saints' Tombs of southern Sinai in defining territorial claims can be set beside the social function of prehistoric European megalithic tombs of the third millennium. Even the nature of the relationship between the Mesolithic and the Neolithic, defined as modes of behaviour, can be illuminated as well as the strategies necessary for the maintenance of group identity which may well have entered into that relationship. This is in addition to the methodological issues involved in relating historical to archaeological criteria, and to the specific ethnohistorical problems of the Jebaliyeh and Aromâni themselves. We must first examine the behaviour of the Jebaliyeh in relation to resources and to the establishment of identity.

---

[35] Nandris 1982.

Emanuel Marx [36] has discussed the effects of economic changes among pastoral nomads in the Middle East, and has outlined [37] the important part played in the social life of the south Sinai Bedouin by annual visits to "Saints' Tombs", with a gathering of the tribe which may last three days. The Saints' Tombs (fig. 16) are small domed buildings, often cenotaphs rather than actual places of burial. They are in the first instance a concrete expression of the right reserved to the tribe to build a house on tribal land, although usually anyone may set up a tented encampment. The right to build in turn compresses the rights "reserved over oases, and their fruit trees, irrigation from wells, and the tribal smuggling routes", as well as other reserved areas such as pasturage and employment [eg. as guides].

"Tribal membership is still important for the pastoral nomad [despite certain economic changes] because it gives him the right to exploit certain resources in tribal territory, and outside it" [38]. The tombs are not exclusive to one tribe, just as many of the rights in the environment are made available to other Towara. The Saint is held at least to mediate with God, whereas the Sheikh may not be in a position to mediate effectively even with the outside forces of governmental authority and external food supply which govern Bedouin existence in the desert. Marx suggests that such communal pilgrimages develop precisely where a hinterland depends on external forces, whether economic, state, or natural, beyond its control. It would be worth testing this generalisation in other areas of communal pilgrimage, such as Brittany. In scattered populations such as the Jebaliyeh or the Aromâni, annual festivals, seasonal fairs and markets, or the very act of transhumance itself, provide an important occasion beyond their ostensible and literal purpose, for a renewal and reinforcement of the relationships which hold the group together. Marx notes that attendance at the gatherings goes up in times of economic or political uncertainty.

Most of the male population of southern Sinai goes to find employment outside the tribal area. "About half the Aleyqat tribe ... have settled in Egypt proper with their families, yet ties of kinship are constantly renewed by marriages with tribesmen from Sinai, and by mutual visits". Marx criticises the received wisdom of such verities as that "under strong government nomads settle down"; or that "when they settle down they become peasants"; or that "under the impact of modern economy tribal organisation breaks down".

On the contrary, even when in urban employment they maintain a basic link with their tribal area, precisely because of the insecurity of such

[36] Marx 1967; 1978.
[37] Marx 1977.
[38] Marx 1978.

employment, and perhaps also because "the uncertainties of the desert environment make them aware of the precariousness of life in general". The fact is that the traditional tribal pursuits, for example the flocks and gardens of the Jebaliyeh, no longer yield profits. Nor in general do the sheep-rearing pursuits of the Aromâni. The traditional resources are made redundant by the wages earned outside the tribal area.

A Literalist [39] observer would be likely to accept the received wisdom of tribal breakdown, and integration with more "advanced" ambient societies [for the Jebaliyeh the Egyptian, for the Aromâni the Greek]; or else he would adopt the romantic view that the traditional way of life was still maintained, albeit "influenced" by modernity, and becoming uneconomic. On Marx's view however the tribesmen are using the outside world in a more subtle way than that. Despite an appearance of neglect and decay in the tribal areas, in fact there is a "large-scale maintenance operation" in the case of Sinai, which involves old men, women and children staying at home, and necessitates the periodic return of the wage-labourers.

The essential reason is the knowledge, or belief, that in time of need the traditional economy can be reactivaced, and that by devoting all their efforts to it, it could be made to work again. This is why during periods of conflict in the Near East the gardens and flocks again become a focus of attention, and why in times of stress the attendances at the annual meetings increased noticeably. "Uncertainty about the political and economic future then ties these people to their country and their tribe, and makes them behave as if they were pastoralists and gardeners in the accepted sense" [40]. In reality it seems that the feasibility of living off these gardens (figs. 6, 13), even in emergencies, is doubtful, and they must also be considered vehicles for enhancing cultural identity.

It is interesting to consider whether the analogy holds good for the Aromâni of Greece. There would seem to be a criterion here against which changes in traditional cultures could be evaluated; namely whether those changes lie above or below a threshold at which traditional practice could be effectively re-activated, in time to provide economic and/or social support at time of need.

---

[39] Literalism may be defined as the trend in archaeology which takes literally the contents of stratigraphies and the relationships between archaeological data. It sees isolated resemblances as indications of contemporaneity or as 'imports'; sees destructions as invasions; change as always taking place elsewhere; the ratio between 'wild' and 'domestic' animal bones as indicating 'the economy'; pottery as equating with people. It thinks in terms of singlefactor explanations, of events rather than processes, typologically rather than statistically, neglects the role of the observer, and in general fails to look behind the archaeological data to the relationships which created them.

[40] Marx 1977: 39.

If traditional practice has fallen below that threshold then presumably they have become touristic or museological curiosities, ineffective as a means of holding together the society. They also become falsified in the sense that they progressively fail to retain the value as ethnographic or ethnohistorical documents so commonly ascribed to such traditional structures by archaeologists and anthropologists. They may finally degenerate into the sort of distortions exemplifed by Soviet "Folk Groups" sent to circulate in western countries, in which the customs, costumes, music and dances of eastern European peoples are progressively distorted into propaganda by the assumptions of impresarios concerning the expectations of their audiences.

Marx observes that "in the absence of joint activities [the preservation of the tribe and its rights can best be ensured] chiefly by organising gatherings at which tribal solidarity is reaffirmed." The way in which traditional activities-in-common served to reinforce the cohesion of the society constitutes some sort of an analogue between the Aromâni and the Jebaliyeh.

Jebaliyeh "seasonality" does produce different tent structures (fig. 2); but the actual distances moved between summer and winter sites may in extreme cases be only a few hundred yards. The transhumance of the Aromâni used also to be much more than merely an economic or ecological mechanism. The very act of partaking in it reinforced the solidarity of the group. Even today, it takes the form of "behaviour as if" the old solidarities and identities, established in the days when whole families moved annually with sheep up to the Pindus from Thessaly, were still unconditionally true.

The Aromâni or Vlahs for most of the year pursue all sorts of professions and avocations in the towns of Greece, where they provide the historical foundations for an otherwise absent entrepreneurial Middle Class. When they abandon the fiction that they are undifferentiated Greeks, and return to Samarina or the Pindus for their summer festival all the men carry the shepherd's crook ["Glitsa"], and many a doctor, lawyer, government minister, or taxi driver, "behaves as if" he were a transhumant shepherd.

Seasonality [comprising mobility within annual and seasonal territories] and territoriality [in the sense of the relation of a site to control of the resources within its catchment] are concepts which have enlarged the potential of archaeology for dealing with prehistoric sites. Perhaps under the residual influence of Marxism economic factors tend to receive over-emphasis, at the expense of social behaviour. This may be understandable insofar as economic data appear to be easier to recover in the archaeological context than social data. They are also deemed to be utilitarian, forgetting that economics is often the means to non-utilitarian ends.

If social factors are consistently more than merely incidental to the choice of location of sites in such societies, then it is misleading to go on treating the

system as if they were not. The resolution on a particular course of action by a group is the prerogative of one or more individuals, invoking conscious individual appraisal of alternatives. In the end the society does not exist until its individual members behave as if it does.

It is uncontroversial enough to ascribe a social purpose to what are after all evidently social gatherings; but transhumance, with the whole basic tradition of seasonal mobility found among the Aromâni, the Bedouin, and many other groups, is such more than a purely "economic" mechanism. It is not sufficient to consider it only as response to the environment, any more than visits to Saints' Tombs are merely to honour the dead. The location of sites in relation to the environment can be fully explained only by taking into account bio-social factors.

Socially related choices introduce a further element of uncertainty into archaeological methods which have been evolved for studying territoriality without recourse to excavation, over and above the two basic difficulties of establishing the contemporaneity of sites in a system, and of reconstructing the ancient environment and resource zonations to which they relate. It is of course also necessary to reconstruct the premisses of exploitation, and as we shall see these are socially transmitted.

Some details about the Bedouin of the Negev will illustrate these points. In the area studied by Marx [1967] between Beersheba and the southern end of the Dead Sea the Bedouin own by far the larger share of the agricultural land. Their preference is not to farm it but to lease it to peasant farmers. Grazing land on the other hand is freely available to all, and anyone may construct cisterns, including the farmers. These however do not usually venture to use much more than the fringes of the available pasture, and this is not because of intimidation by the Bedouin, nor for any good ecological or economic reason. Indeed the farmer "in a situation where he has to lease 60% of this land on an unprofitable share cropping basis ... would do much better to minimise his farming and to devote himself much more to sheep raising ... That the peasants do not take such a course of action has to be ascribed to the limitations which their ideology sets on their freedom of choice and no longer to Bedouin obstruction"[41]. But in addition to this, after 1917 both the "farmers" and the Bedouin "pastoralists" of the Negev, because of the prevailing economic and political conditions, *had acquired a very similar economy,* combining farming and pastoralism, while at the same time each continued to *view himself* and to *behave as if* they were farmer or Bedouin, as these are traditionally defined. The possible relevance of this model to the relationship between the Mesolithic and the Neolithic in Europe is evident.

[41]   Marx 1967: 98.

71

Marx outlines the contrasting seasonal movements and camping habits of peasant and Bedouin groups. For reasons of space these can not be summarised here, although there are some points in which they directly affect the archaeological concept of site catchment. For example Bedouin do not think much of making daily journeys of up to 10 kms to get water from the wells. The distances between a group's tents is not indicative of the intensity of their interactions. Furthermore, especially in the case of a chief who, like the Chelnik, need not follow his flocks but uses his sons or hired men, a tented encampment may acquire a considerable permanence, which is not exclusive of mobility [42]. "The wide range in size of the camps indicates that ecological pressures do not set precise limits to the size of a camp" ... which is rather determined by number of members, usually agnatically related, of a group co-liable in some particular activity.

> "Neither among the Bedouin nor among the peasants does does each man plan his cycle of annual movements and his camping arrangements solely so as to adjust himself to the changing relationship between his economic pursuits and the ecology ... the Bedouin act as if they were still leading a primarily pastoral way or life, and the peasants act as if they were transhumant farmers ... the contrasting camping habits of Bedouin and peasants are neither due to ecological factors nor to a difference in their economies, but have to be traced back to unequal distribution of land ownership" [43]

The differences between them are derived ultimately from their contrasting premisses of exploitation, and are deeply rooted in history and culture.

> A Bedouin feels he cannot live without animals, for he needs them at every turn, *not only for economic exploitation* but also for *sacrifice* and *guests*, and for *presents*, and animal husbandry is *a subject which he and his friends can discuss endlessly*. The reverse applies to the peasant, for were he *not to cultivate* his plot he would be *out of touch with matters which are of primary importance for the rest of his group*"[44]

It could be said that some of the elements emphasised by us in the above quotation were as important as economic considerations throughout European prehistory; for example in the changes involved in the transition between the European Mesolithic and Neolithic.

Another way of looking at this is to say that the archaeological definition of "the economy" in the prehistoric [and traditional] context is too literal. It should be defined more carefully, in terms of the *PREMISSES OF EXPLOITATION* involved. That is to say, in terms of the culturally transmitted

---

[42] Cf. the *katun* sites of south-east Europe [Nandris 1985].
[43] Marx 1967: 99.
[44] Marx 1967: 95, our emphasis.

premisses, presuppositions, or even prejudices, embedded in a traditional society, as to what resources of the environment [whether plants, animals or natural resources] to exploit, and in what ways to do so. These in turn are further mediated by reproductively related r- and K- strategies of exploitation; and by the energetics of succession in the developing environment. These concepts have been discussed elsewhere [45].

The effect is to emphasise the importance of cultural transmission as necessary for the pre-adaptations without which no revolutionary change can succeed. In reaching solutions to group problems of environmental tracking, human interaction is the key to survival. The chosen solutions are human responses to an ecological or social situation, rather than environmentally determined reactions. This is apparent in the contemporaneity for many centuries of the Mesolithic and Neolithic in Europe, exploiting the same environment in different ways.

This bears on the problem of what constitutes the identity of these "cultures". They are distinguished not by imperatives of survival, or the banalities of subsistence, food, and shelter: but by auxiliaries; by belief, custom, social signs, and all the accessories of individuality. It is elaboration beyond the utilitarian which gives rise to the infinite variety and achievements of human culture both in prehistory and the historic present.

As appears from the example of the Jebaliyeh, it is not in the commonly accepted "determinants" of language, "economic base", religion, dress, or even genetic inheritance, that the nucleus of group identity is to be found. With man, the rational animal, what is believed to be true is often as influential as what is so.

The use made by the Jebaliyeh of an historical tradition of south-east European origin to validate the relationship of the tribe to the monastery does not of itself invalidate that tradition. It may be broadly true. Nor does the fact that various individuals admit to various origins destroy the identity, the cohesion, or even the continuity through time of the group. The group exists.

The core of the identity of human groups lies in conviction, sustained by accessory social mechanisms. Membership of the group is defined by "behaviour as if" the category is substantiable, and is sustained by obedience to the unenforceable limits of that behaviour. A group which gives up its identity and individuality fails to survive, as surely as one which fails to track the environment adequately. These seeem to be the sort of issues to which the case of the Jebaliyeh gives rise.

[45] Nandris 1978; 1988a.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abdel Hakim, M. Sobhi, 1960
The Inhabitants of Sinai

Abel F.M., 1905
Note d'archeologie chrétienne sur le Sinai,
Revue Biblique 14: 150-112.

Albright W.F., 1948
Exploring in Sinai,
BASOR 109: 5-20

Altheim & Stiehl, 1964
Die Araben in der alten Welt

Amantou K., 1953
Sintomos Istoria tis Ieras Monis tou Sina,
Thessaloniki [Hetereia Makedonikon Spoudon]

Amiran D.H.K., 1963
Nomadic and Bedouin population in the census
returns of Mandatory Palestine, *Israel Exploration
Journal* 13: 247-52.

Atiya, Aziz H., 1955
The Arabic Manuscripts of Mount Sinai
[Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore]

Atiya, Aziz H., 1968
History of Eastern Christianity
[Methuen]

Avi-Yonah M., 1958
The Economics of Byzantine Palestine, *Israel
Exploration Journal* 8: 39-51

Awad H., 1950
*La Cartographie et la Morphologie de la Peninsule du
Sinai*

Awad H., 1951
La Montagne du Sinai Central; Etude Morphologique
[Cairo]

Baedeker K., 1885
Egypt
I [Lower Egypt and the Peninsula of Sinai]

Bailey C.& Peled R., 1975
Shbti ha-Bedouim b-Sinai,
Northern Sinai Command, [Tel Aviv] Survey of
the Bedouin Tribes of Sinai

Ball J., 1916
The Geography and Geology of west-central Sinai,
[Cairo]

Bar-Yosef O. et al., 1980
Prehistory of the Levant
Amer. Review of Anthropology 9: 101-33

Bar-Yosef O., 1981
Pre-pottery Neolithic sites in southern Sinai
Biblical Archaeologist 45/1: 9-12

Bar-Yosef O. et al., 1983
The orientation of Nawamis entrances in
southern Sinai; expressions of religious belief
and seasonality?
Tel Aviv, vol. 10, No. 1, 1983: 52-60

Bar-Yosef O. & Phillips J.L., 1977
Prehistoric Investigations in Gebel Maghara,
northern Sinai
Qedem Vol. 7 [Hebrew Univ.of Jerusalem]

Barzu L., 1979
Continuitatea creației materiale și spirituale a
poporului Român pe teritoriul fostei Dacii
Biblioteca de Archeologie XXXVII [Bucharest]

Basili W.F., 1964
*The monastery of St Katherine; a practical guide for
travellers*

Beadnell H.J.L., 1926
Central Sinai
Geographical Journal 67/5, May 1926: 305-402.

Beadnell H.J.L., 1927
The Wilderness of Sinai [London]

Becker (Ed.), 1840
in: *Corp Script Hist Byz.*
[Ephriam the Syrian, c. 1313, mentions Vlahs in
his versified history]

Belton, 1893
Four weeks in the wilderness of Sinai
Bull. Amer Geog. Soc. 22: 574-598.

Ben-David J., 1972
The Bedouin Tribes in southern Sinai
[M.A. Dissertation, Dept of Geography, Hebrew
University of Jerusalem]

Beneševič V., 1925
Monumenta Sinaita [Petropoli, St. Petersburg]

Bernstein B. , 1979
A reporter at large; the great and terrible
wilderness, *New Yorker* June 4 1979: 96-145

Bet-Arie I., 1978
A Canaanite site near Sheikh Mukhsen,
Expedition 20/4 [Summer 1978]: 8-11

Bet-Arie I., 1980
An EBA site near Sheikh Awad in S.
Sinai,*Qadmoniot* XIII, 1-2 [49-50]: 22-5

Beza M., 1937
Urme Românești în Răsăritul Ortodox
[Bucharest]

Bonné B., 1966
Are there Hebrews left?, *Amer. J. of Physical Anthropology* 24: 135

Bonné B., 1968
The Bedouins of southern Sinai, *Proc. of the Tel-Hashomer Hospital* VII 3/4: 67-73.

Bonné B. (in preparation), 1971
South Sinai Bedouins - an anthropological genetic study

Bonné B., Godber M.,Ashbel S. & Mourant A.E., 1971
South Sinai Bedouin; a preliminary report on their inherited blood factors, *Amer. J. of Physical Anthropology* 34 No. 3 [May 1971]: 397-408

Bonné B., 1973
Merits and difficulties in studies of Middle Eastern Isolates, *Israel J. of Medical Sciences*, Vol 9 No. 9/10 [Sept-Oct 1973]: 1291-1298

Brice W., 1978
The Environmental History of the Near & Middle East since the Last Ice Age, [Academic Press]

Burada T.T., 1915
O colonie de Valahi in Arabia, *Buletinul Soc. de Geogr.* [Bucharest] XXXI 100-110

Burckhardt J.L, 1822
Travels in Syria and the Holy Land, [John Murray, London] xxiii + 668 pp., maps

Cameron A., 1985
Procopius [Duckworth]

Cândea V. & Simionesu C., 1979
Witnesses to the Romanian presence on Mount Athos [Bucharest]

Chabot J., 1900
A propos du couvent du Mont Sinai, *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* V: 492-8

Charles H., 1936
Le Chrétianisme des Arabes nomades sur le Limes, in: Bibliothéque de l'ecole des hautes etudes, vol. 52 [Paris]

Charlesworth J.H., 1979
St Catherine's Monastery myths and mysteries, *Biblical Archaeologist* 42: 174-9

Charlesworth J.H., 1980
The Manuscripts of St Catherine's Monastery, *Biblical Archaeologist* 43: 26-34.

Cheikho L. et al., 1906 & 1909
Eutychium Patriarchæ Alexandrini Annales, *CSCO* 50 & 51 [Beirut & Paris 1906 & 1909]

Chitty D.L., 1977
The Desert a City [London & Oxford]

Clark K., 1951
Microfilming manuscripts in Sinai and Jerusalem, *BASOR* 123 [Oct 1951]: 17-24

Clark K., 1953
Exploring the Manuscripts of Sinai and Jerusalem, *Biblical Archaeologist* XVI [May 1953]: 22-43

Clark K., 1957
The Microfilming Projects at Mt Sinai and Jerusalem, *Library of Congress Quarterly Journal* 8 [May 1951]: 6-11

Comșa M., 1974
Einige Betrachtungen uber die Ergebnisse im 6-7 Jh. an der unteren Donau, *Slavia Antiqua* XXI

Comșa M., 1975
Socio-economic organisation of the Daco-Romanic and Slav populations on the Lower Danube during the 6th-8th centuries, in *Constantinescu & Pascu Eds.* 1975: 171-200

Comșa M., 1978
Les formations [cnezats de valée] du $VI^{ème}$ siècle sur le territoire de la Roumanie, *Prace i Materialy* [Łodz] 25: 109-117

Costantinescu M. & Pascu St., eds., 1975
Relations between the Autochtonous and the Migratory Populations on the Territory of Romania, [Bucharest]

Dalman G.H., 1964 [1933-42]
Arbeit un Sitte in Palästinen, [7 Vols in 8] [Hildesheim]

Davies G.I., 1979
The Way of- the Wilderness [C.U.P.]

Davies G.I., 1979a
The location of Mount Horeb, *P.E.A.*: 87-101.

Dickson H.R.P., 1949
The Arab of the Desert [London]

Dussaud R., 1955
La Pénétration des Arabes an Syrie avant l'Islam, [Paris]

Ebers G., 1881
Durch Gosen zum Sinai [Leipzig]

Eckenstein L., 1921
A History of Sinai [SPCK]

Evelyn-White H.G., 1926-33
The Monasteries of Wadi'n Natrun, [New York]
2 Vols

Finkelstein I., 1979
Monasticism on Mount Horeb; and
archaeological survey at Jebel Sufsafah, [Society
for the Protection of Nature] [In Hebrew]

Finkelstein I., 1981
Byzantine prayer niches on Mount Horeb, *Israel
Exploration Journal* 31: 81-91

Forsyth G.H., 1969
The Monastery of St Catherine at Mount Sinai -
the Church and Fortress of Justinian, *D.O.P.* 22:
1-19.

Forsyth G.H. & Weizmann K., 1973
*The Monastey of St Catherine at Mount Sinai; the
Church and Fortress of Justinian,* [Univ
Michigan Press] Vol. I: Plates

Forsyth G.H. & Weizmann K., 1978
Saving the Mount Sinai Mosaics, *Biblical
Archaeology Review* IV/4: 17-31

Galey J., 1979
Sinai

Gaster M., 1923
The Samaritains, [British Academy Schweich
Lectures] [London 1925]

Geyer P., 1898
Antonini Placentini Itinerarium et Recensio
altera, in *Corpus Script. Ecclesiasticorum* Vol.
XXXVIII: 157-91 & 193-218 [Vienna]

Gilead D., 1973
Prehistoric finds in the Negev and Sinai,
Mitekufat Haeven 11: 36-42

Glassner M.I., 1974
The Bedouin of southern Sinai under Israeli
Administration, *The Geographical Review* 64:
31-60

Goldmeister I., 1899
*Antonini Placentini Itinerarium in
unentstellten Text* [Berlin]

Goring-Morris, 1987
At the edge; terminal Pleistocene hunter-
gatherers in the Negev and Sinai, *B.A.R.* Int.
Ser. 361 [2 vols.]

Goubert P., 1951
Byzance avant l'Islam Vol. I, Byzance et l'Orient
[Paris]

Gregoire H., 1907
Sur le date du monastère du Sinai, *B.C.H.* 1907:
327-334.

Griffith S., 1982
Eutychius of Alexandria on the Emperor
Theophilus and Iconoclasm in Byzantium: a
tenth century moment in Christian apologetics
in Arabic, *Byzantion* 52, 1982: 154-190

Han, Verena, 1972
La culture materielle des Balkans au Moyen Age
à travers la documentation des archives de
Dubrovnik, *Balcanica* III: 157-93

Hull E., 1885
Mount Seir, Sinai and western Palestine
[London]

Hull E., 1886
*Memoir on the Physical Geology and Geography
of Arabia Petraea, Palestine and adjoining
districts.*
[London; for the Committee of the P.E.F.]

Jarvis C. S., 1931
Yesterday & Today in Sinai [Edinburgh]

Jennings Bramley W.E., 1914
The Bedouin of the Sinaitic Peninsula, *P.E.F.*
Quarterly Statement [1905-14]

Jones A.H.M., 1964
The Later Roman Empire, III vols and maps
[Blackwell]: 284-602

Khamil M., 1970
*Catalogue of all MSS in the Monastery of St
Catherine on Mount Sinai,* [Harrasowitz,
Wiesbaden]

Kitzinger E., 1978
Byzantine Art in the Making

Kondakoff N., 1882
[In Russian - Voyage to Sinai in 1881; Odessa
1882. Extract of Vol. XXXIII of *Memoires de
l'Univ. Imperiale Neo-Russe.* Folio Atlas of 100
photos by J.X. Raoult, 71 being of MSS.]

Korfmann M., 1979
Zur Neolithisierung Nord u- Mittelafrikas,
Beitr. z. Allgem. u.-Vergleichenden Arch. I,
[D.A.I Munchen]

Labib M., 1961
Pélérins et Voyageurs au Mont Sinai [Cairo]

Lagrange M.J., 1896
Le Sinai, *Revue Biblique* 5: 107-130

Lascaris M., 1943
Les Vlachorhynchines, *Revue historique du sud-est Européen* XX

Lengyel I.A., 1975
Palaeoserology [Budapest]

Lepsius C.R., 1846
A Tour from Thebes to the Peninsula of Sinai [London] Transl. C.H. Cotterell

Lepsius R., 1876
Reise nach der Halbinsel des Sinai [Berlin]

Lewi S., 1979
Hameshpahah ha-Bedouim b-derom Sini, Soc. for the Protection of Nature in Israel

Lewi S., 1979a
Lost Traditions at Moneidjat Musa in Sinai, *Israel - Land and Nature* Spring 1979: 107-111.

Lipschitz N. & Waisel Y., 1976
Dendroarchaeological investigations in Israel at St. Catherine's Monastery in southern Sinai, *Israel Exploration Journal* 26: 39-44.

Marx E., 1967
Bedouin of the Negev [Praeger, New York]

Marx E., 1977
Communal and individual pilgrimage: the region of Saints' Tombs in southern Sinai, in *Regional Cults.* R P Werbner Ed. [London, Academic Press]

Marx E., 1978
Economic change among pastoral nomads in the Middle East.[*in typescript*]

Mayerson P., 1963
The Desert of southern Palestine according to Byzantine sources, *Proc Amer Philosoph Soc.* 107/2: 160-172.

Mayerson P., 1964
The first Muslim attacks on southern Palestine [AD 633-634], *Trans. Amer Philological Assocn.* XCV [Cornell]

Mayerson P., 1978
Procopius or Eutychius on the construction of the Monastery at Mount Sinai: which is the more reliable source?, *B.A.S.O.R.* 230: 33-38.

Meinardus O.F.A., 1961
Monks and Monasteries of the- Egyptian Desert [Cairo]

Monde de la Bible, 1979
Vol. 10, passim [Issue devoted to Sinai]

Mourant A.E., 1976
The Distribution of Human Blood Groups, [O.U.P.] 2nd Edn., 1055 pp.

Murray G.W., 1935
Sons of . Ishmael: a study of the Egyptian Bedouin, [London]

Murray G.W., 1953
The land of Sinai, *Geogr. Journal* vol. 119: -140-54.

Nandris J.G., 1978
Some Features of Neolithic Climax Societies, *Studia Praehistorica* 1, [Sofia, Bulgaria]: 198 - 211 [14 figs & maps]

Nandris J.G., 1980
The Thracian Inheritance, *Illustrated London News* (June 1980): 99-101, [Archaeology Section No. 2960]

Nandris J.G., 1981
The role of Vlah and its rulers on Athos and Sinai, *Revue des Etudes sud-est Européenes* XIX/3: 605-10.

Nandris J.G., 1982
Tribal Identity in Sinai, *Illustrated London News* [February 1982]: 56-7, [Archaeology Section 2978].

Nandris J.G., 1985
The Stîna and the Katun: Foundations of a Research Design in European Highland Zone Ethnoarchaeology, *World Archaeology* Vol. 17, No. 2.: 256-68.

Nandris J.G., 1987 [1989]
The Aromâni: Approaches to the Evidence, *Balkan-Archiv* NF Beihef t Bd. 5 *Die Aromunen,* Ed. Rupprecht Rohr [Hamburg] 1987: 15-71. [Map fig. 1 p. 25; chronological listings pp. 42-6; selective bibliography of Vlah studies pp. 47-71]

Nandris J.G., 1988a
The r- and K- Strategy Societies of Lepenski Vir in Early Neothermal perspective, *Rivista di Archeologia* [Rome] XII: 5-13

Nandris J.G., 1988b
Ethnoarchaeology and Latinity in the mountains of the southern Velebit, in: Chapman J., Bntlif f J., Gaffney V. & Slapsak B (Eds), *Recent Development in Yugoslav Archaeology, B.A.R.* Int. Ser. 431: 125-255

Nandris J.G., 1988c
Aspects of Ethnoarchaeology, and the exploitation of the Highland Zone, *Natura Bresciana* [Ann. Mus. Civ. Sci. Nat. Brescia] 24 [1987] 1988: 112-9.

Nau F., 1933
Les Arabes chrétiens de Mésopotamie et de Syrie du VIIIᵉ au VIIIᵉ s. [Paris]
Naval Intelligence Sinai Handbook; *Western Arabia and the Red Sea.*

Negev A., 1977
A Nabataean sanctuary at Jebel Moneijah, southern Sinai, *I.E.J.* 27/4:219-31.

Newcombe Capt S.F., 1914
Report on the survey of Sinai & south Palestine, *P.E.Q.*

Nijenburg, en Hayman J. [= J.A.E. van Egmond], 1757-58
Reizendooren gedee te van Europa ... Syria, Palestina, Aegypta, den Berg Sinai &c. [2 Vols, Leyden]

Nestle, Eb., 1907
Kleine Mitteilung on Vulgar Latin & Bessae, *in: Zeitschr. d. deutschen Morgenld. Gesch.*, Vol. 61, 1907: 500-1, with reply by E. Kum, *ibid:* 759.

Obolensky D., 1971
The Byzantine Commonwealth; eastern Europe, 500-1453. [London]

Odeberg H., 1928
The Fourth Gospel [Upsala]

Oikonomos G.A., 1954
To metochion tis Agias Aikaterinis Ioanninon 1630-1954 [Ioannina]

Oppenheim M. von, 1943
Die Bedouinen 3 Vols. [Leipzig]

Ostrogorsky G., 1980
History of the Byzantine State [Oxford]

Ouspensky P., 1856
(1st voyage to the monastery of Sinai in 1845: St. Petersburg 1856. 2nd voyage in 1850: Moscow 1856. Both in Russian.)

Palmer E.H., 1871
The Desert of the Exodus 2 Vols., [Cambridge and London]

Palmer E.H., 1881
The Desert of the Tih and the country of Moab, in: Besant W, Special papers on topography and archaeology etc.

Palmer H. S., 1892
Ancient History from the Monuments; Sinai from the 4ᵗʰ Egyptian Dynasty to the present day [London SPCK]

Pandursky V., 1945
Gregorios Sinaita und sein Mystik, [Marburg 1845 - Phil Diss masch.]

Papamichalopoulou K.N., 1932
Hi moni tou Orous Sina [Athens]

Papazoglu F., 1978
The Central Balkan Tribes, [Amsterdam]

Perevolotsky A.A., 1979
Subsistence patterns of the Jebeliya Bedouins in the high mountain region of southern Sinai, Soc. for the Protection of Nature in Israel.

Perevolotsky A.A., 1979a
Aspects of Bedouin judicial practice in southern Sinai, Soc. for the Protection of Nature in Israel.

Perevolotsky A.A., 1987
Altruism among the Bedouin of S Sinai, *J. of Arid Environments* 13: 153

Petrie W.M.F., 1906
Researches in Sinai [London, John Murray]

Plowden J.M.C., 1940
Once in Sinai [Methuen]

Pococke E., 1656-54
Contexio Gemmarum, sive, Eutychii-Patriarchæ Alexandrini Annales. Interprete Edwardo Pocockio. [Oxford] II vols.; I 1656, & II 1654 [sic]

Pococke R., 1743-48
Description of the East [London]

Poniatowsky, 1895
Antonini Placentini Itinerarium sæculo sexto ..., [St. Petersburg]

Prescott H.F.M., 1957
Once to Sinai [The pilgrimage of Felix Fabri in 1483], Eyre & Spottiswode [London]

Rabino M., 1938
Le Monastère de Sainte Catherine du Mont Sinai [Cairo]

Ramm H.G., McDowall R.W. & Mercer E., 1970
Shielings and Bastles, [London H.M.S.O.]

Raswan C.R., 1935
The Black Tents of Arabia [London]

Ritter C.C., 1966
The Comparative Geography of Palestine and the Sinaitic Peninsula [Edinburgh]

Robinson E., 1841
Biblical Researches on Palestine, Mount Sinai and Arabia Petraea. 3 Vols.

Rosen S., 1987
Byzantine nomadism in the Negev: results from the emergency survey, *J Field A* 14: 29-42

Rothenburg B., 1970
An archaeological survey of south Sinai, *PEQ*: 4-29.

Rothenburg B. (Ed), 1979
Sinai

Rozov V., 1921
Sinajcy v Serbii v XIV veke , *Byzantinoslavica* I

Runciman S., 1947
The Mediaeval Manichee [Cambridge]

Russeger, 1841-46
[Geological plan of Sinai]

Ševčenko I., 1966
The Early period of the Sinai Monastery in the light of its Inscriptions, *D.O.P.* 20.

Shuqair N., 1906
Ta'rikh Sinan History of Ancient and New Sinai and its Geography [In Arabic]

Shuqair N.,1916
The History of Sinai and the Arabs, Ma'aref Press, Cairo [In Arabic]

Simms S.R., 1988
The archaeological structure of a Bedouin camp, *J. Arch. Sci.* 15 No.2: 197-211

Sinai Guide, 1971
In Hebrew; Map 1:125,000

Skrobucha H., 1966
Sinai [O.U.P.]

Stanley A.P., 1866
Sinai and Palestine, in connection with their history , [London, John Murray]

Tomaschek W., 1893-4
Die Alten Thraker, Sitzb. d. Kais. Akad. d. wissen. [Wien] Phil.-Hist. klasse: vol. 128, Pt. IV; vol. 130, Pt. II; vol. 131, Pt. I

Tsofrir Y., 1978
St Catherine's Monastery in Sinai: drawings by Dunayevsky, *I.E.J.* 28/4: 219-29

Undergraff R.T., 1978
A study of the Blemmyes, PhD., Brandeis Univ [Univ Microfilms Anct. Hist.]

Velkov V., 1977
Cities in Thrace and Dacia in Late Antiquity, [4th -6th centuries AD] [Amsterdam]

Walters C.C., 1974
Monastic Archaeology in Egypt

Weill R., 1908
Le Presqu'ile du Sinai [Paris]

Weitzold W., 1955
Dürer [Phaidon]

Wellard J., 1970
Desert Pilgrimage [Hutchinson]

Wendorf F. & Marks A.E. (Eds), 1975
Problems in Prehistory: N. Africa & Levant [Southern Methodist Univ. Press, Dallas]

Wenzel M., 1962
Bosnian and Herzegovinian tombstones; who made them and why?, *Südostforschunen* 21: 102-43 [Munich]

Wilson C.W. & Palmer H.S., 1869-71
Ordnance Survey of the Peninsula of Sinai. 5 vols.: I. Account of the Survey, II. Maps Plans and Sections, III. Photographs

Wilson C.W., 1880-84§*Picturesque Palestine, Sinai and Egypt,* 4 vols., [London]

Woolley L. & Lawrence T.E., 1936
The Wilderness of Zin, P.E.F. Annual, 3

RESUMÉ

Dans les montagnes granitiques du Sinaï du sud, les Bédouins qui s'appellent les Jebaliyeh, ou "hommes de la Montagne", ont été étroitement associés pendant quatorze siècles au monastère orthodoxe de Sainte Catherine. Traditionellement on attribue leur origine a un group de familles, envoyées au Sinaï peu après la fondation du monastère en l'année 550 AD par l'Empereur byzantin Justinien, pour qu'ils remplissent les rôles de gardiens, guides et serviteurs. Ils seraient provenus d'un pays nomme "Vlach" dans les hautes terres du sud-est de l'Europe, qu'on a situe dans la région de la Roumanie moderne.

L'attention est attiré ici pour la première fois sur le terme Lachmiin *ou* Lachmienses, *dont se sert Eutychius [né 876/7 AD] ce qui serait une allusion corroborative a ce groupe de "Vlachi". On examine les données linguistiques et ethno-archologiques portant sur le tribu, selon des lignes diverses d'evidence qui se rapportent à ce probleme telles que leurs groupes sanguines distinctifs. Après les Samaritains, les Jebaliyeh constituent le plus ancien groupe génétique isolé du proche orient.*

Le tribu s'est adapté à l'environnement désertique du Sinaï, tout en modifiant tous les critères normales d'individualité qu'on puisse attribuer aux groupes humains, tels la réligion, la culture materielle, et la langue. La question est fondamentale pour l'archéologie, tant que pour de tels problemes ethnohistoriques: en quoi est-ce que ça consiste, l'identité durable d'un groupe humain, sous des tels changements de circonstances?

On examinera donc cette question, en donnant une réponse lié au comportement culturelle. On port attention à un cas analogue et apparenté d'identité durable, parmi les peuples européens du sud-est, celui des Vlachs ou Aromâni en tant que group thracien latinisé.
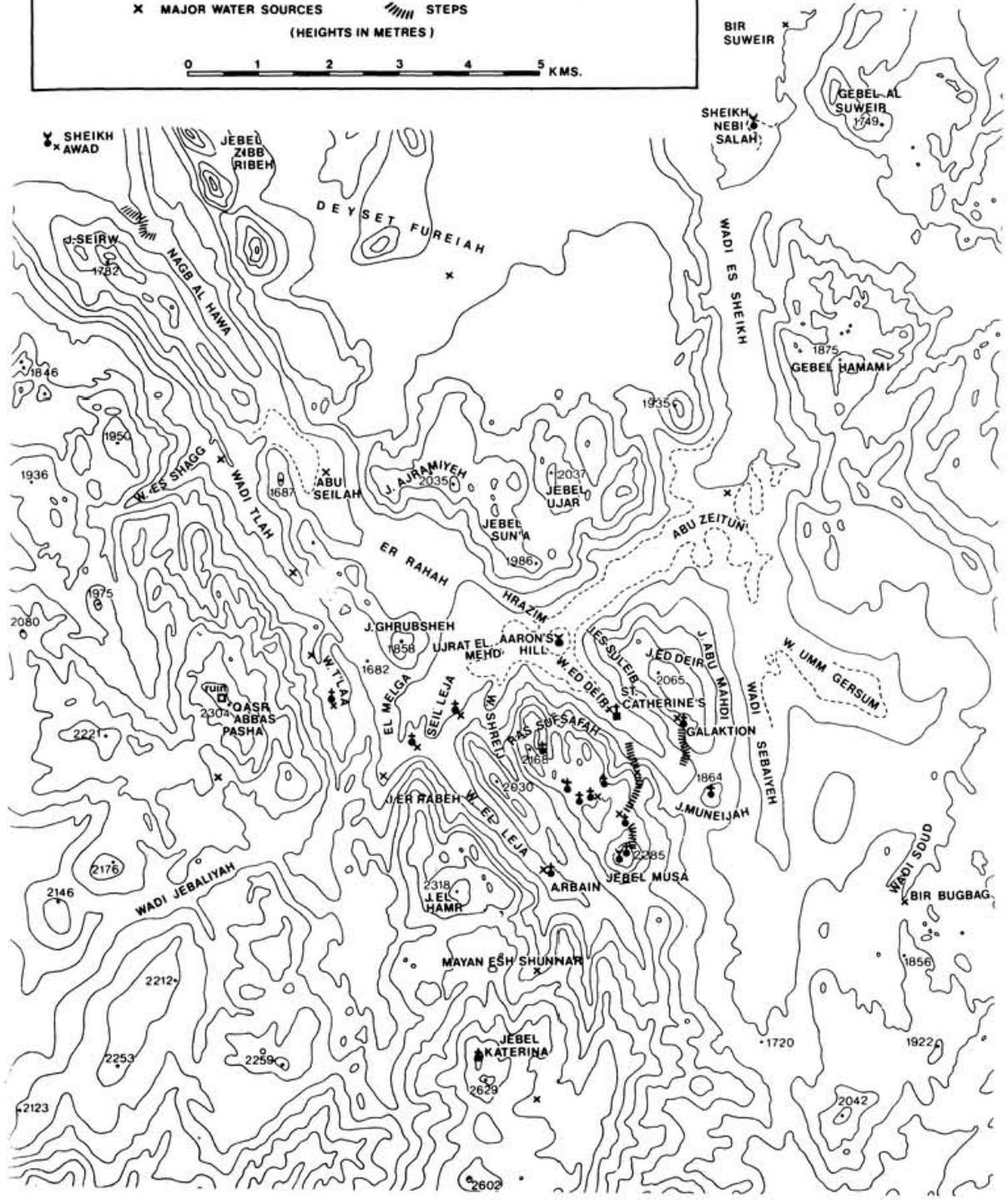
Fig. 1   Sketch map of the region around St. Katherine's monastery in southern Sinai (Contours at 100 m intervals).
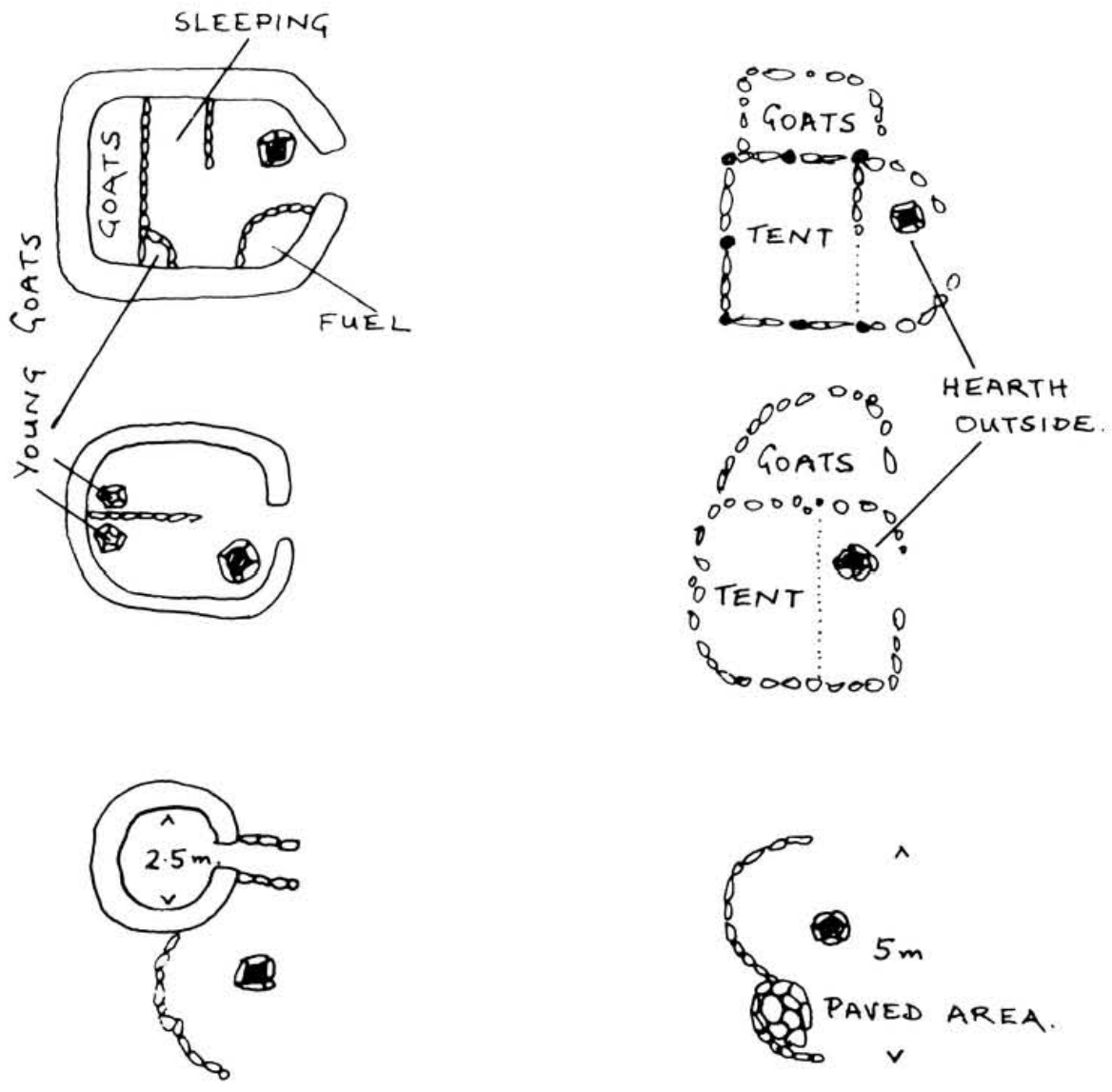
81

Fig. 2   Jebaliyeh (above) and PPN (5th Mbc) (below), winter (left) summer (right) site plans compared.
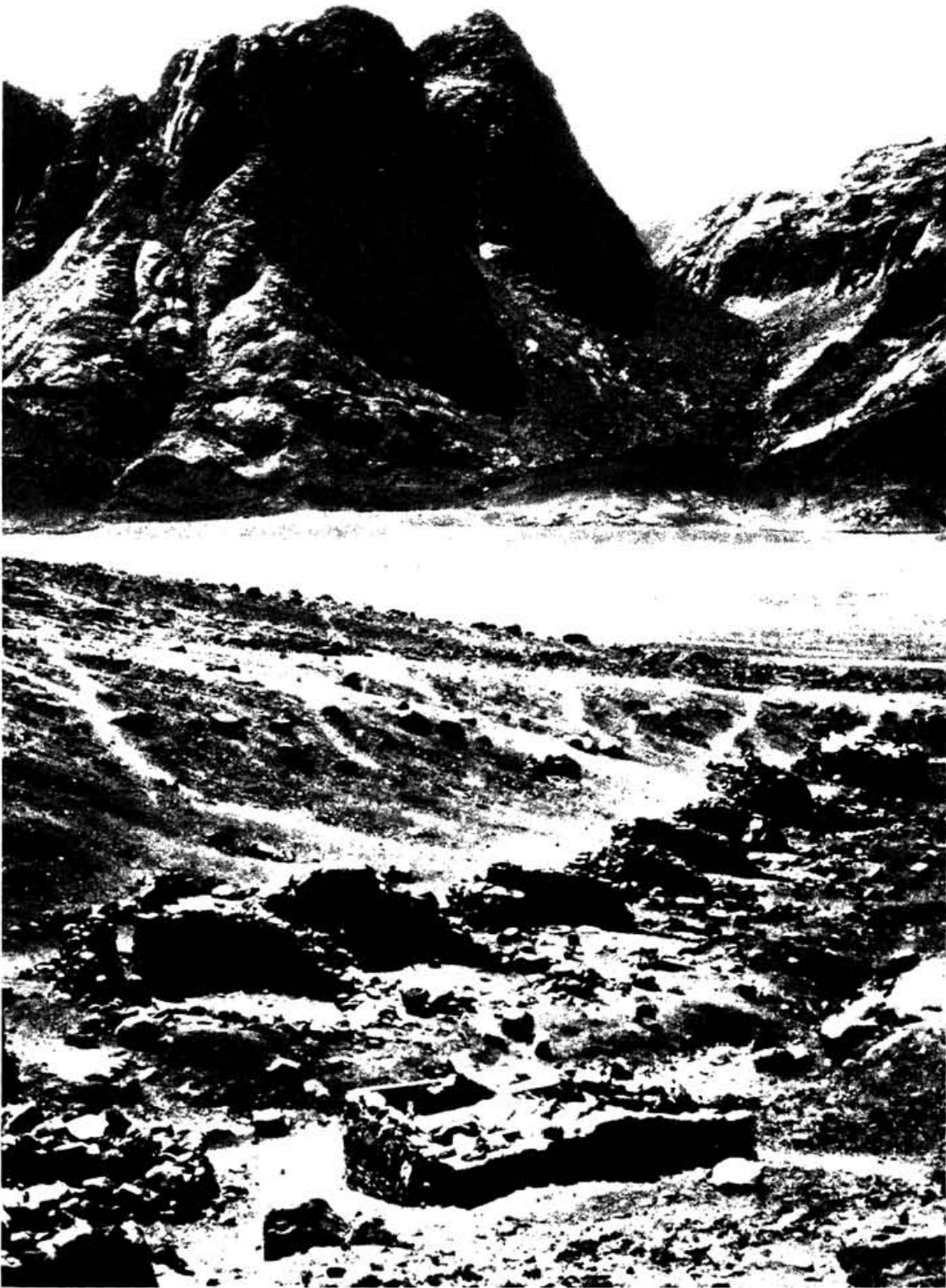
Fig. 3   Rows of Jebaliyeh winter tent walls. Across Er Rahah is Ras Sufsafah and Wadi Shreij (cf. fig. 9).

Fig. 4 (top)   Exfoliated granite peaks of southern Sinai looking north from Jebel Musa.

Fig. 5 (bottom) Massive boulder, product of exfoliation, in Nagb al Hawa, fallen from Jebel Seirw.

Fig. 6   Small garden, near Mayan esh-Shunnar (the "well of the partridges")
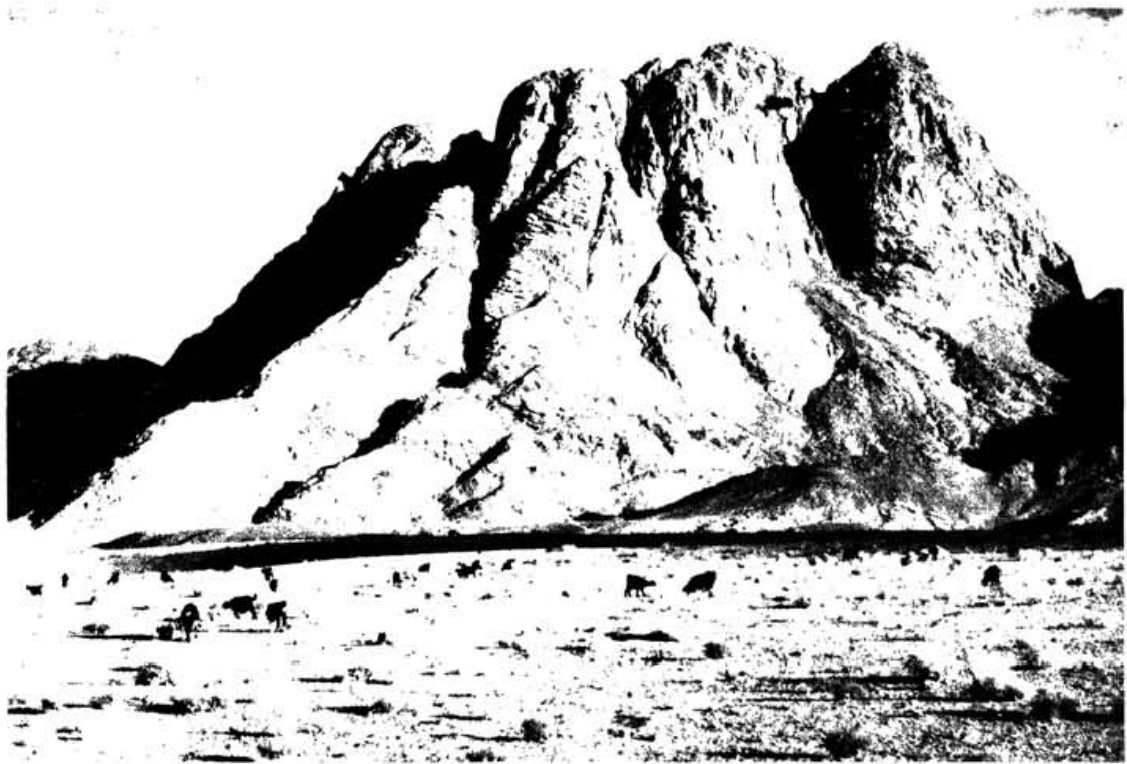   below Jebel Katerina, watered by a trickle of water, and ringed by a stone
          wall topped with camel-thorns.

85

Fig. 7 (top)   The massif of Ras Sufsafah ("the peak of the willow") above Er Rahah. The small goats of the Jebaliyeh are black to conserve heat at night. The horizontal gravel ridge at the foot of Ras Sufsafah is Ujrat el-Mehed (PPN site).

Fig. 8 (bottom)   Painting of Ras Sufsafah (c. 50x65 cms) by the Author, showing monastery in Wadi ed-Deir (left), and Wadi Shreij (right).
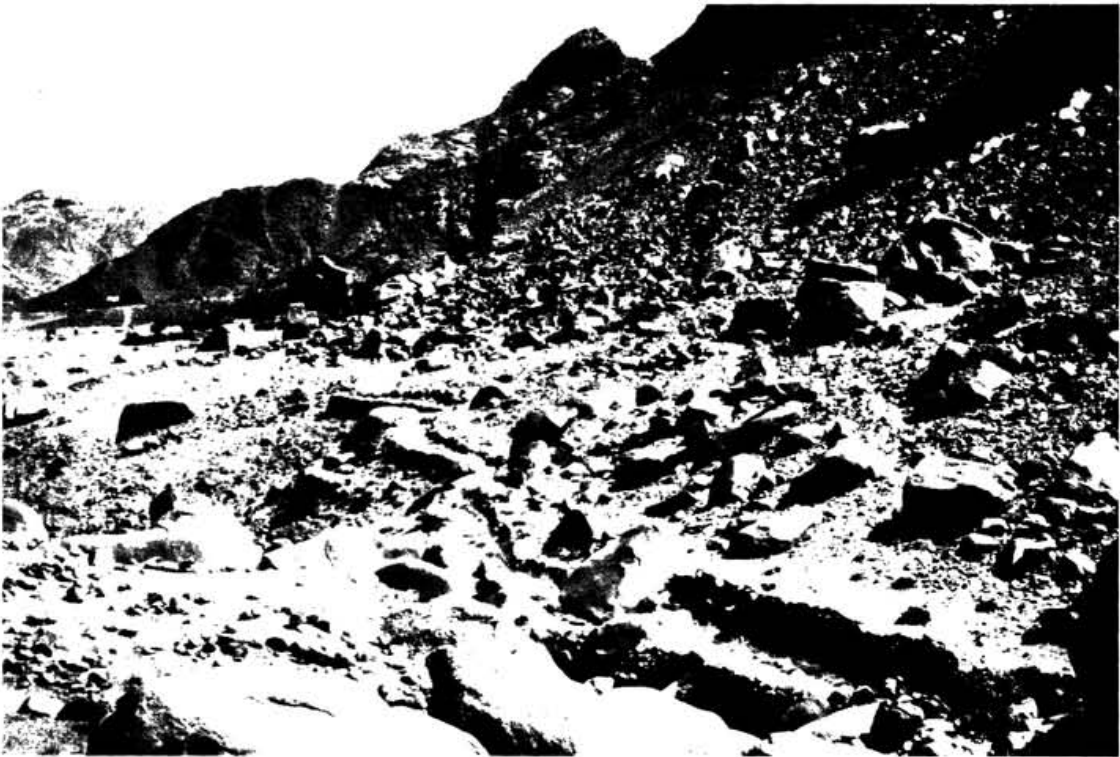
Fig. 9 (top) The plain of Er Rahah seen from the top of Ras Sufsafah. The PPN site of Ujrat el-Mehed lies on the gravel ridge running to the right from the buildings. The right hand of the figure indicates the position on Er Rahah of a winter camp of the Jebaliyeh which is shown in fig. 3. Er Rahah runs out into the "Pass of the winds" Nagb al Hawa, to the rear, via Abu Seilah.

Fig. 10 (bottom) Aqueduct, running from lower right to El Bustan (building to left rear)
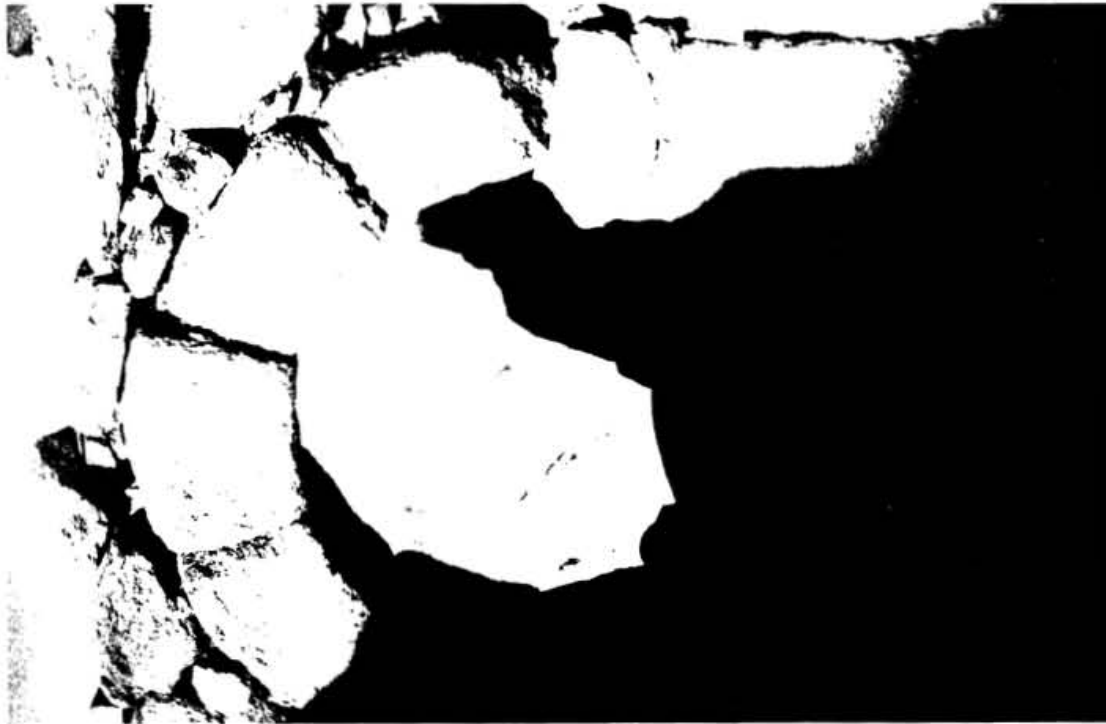
Fig. 11 (left)   Confessional arch of granite (note weathered inscription in Greek) at the top of steps on Ras Sufsafah.

Fig. 12 (right)   Hermitage of Galaktion above St. Katherine's to the east.
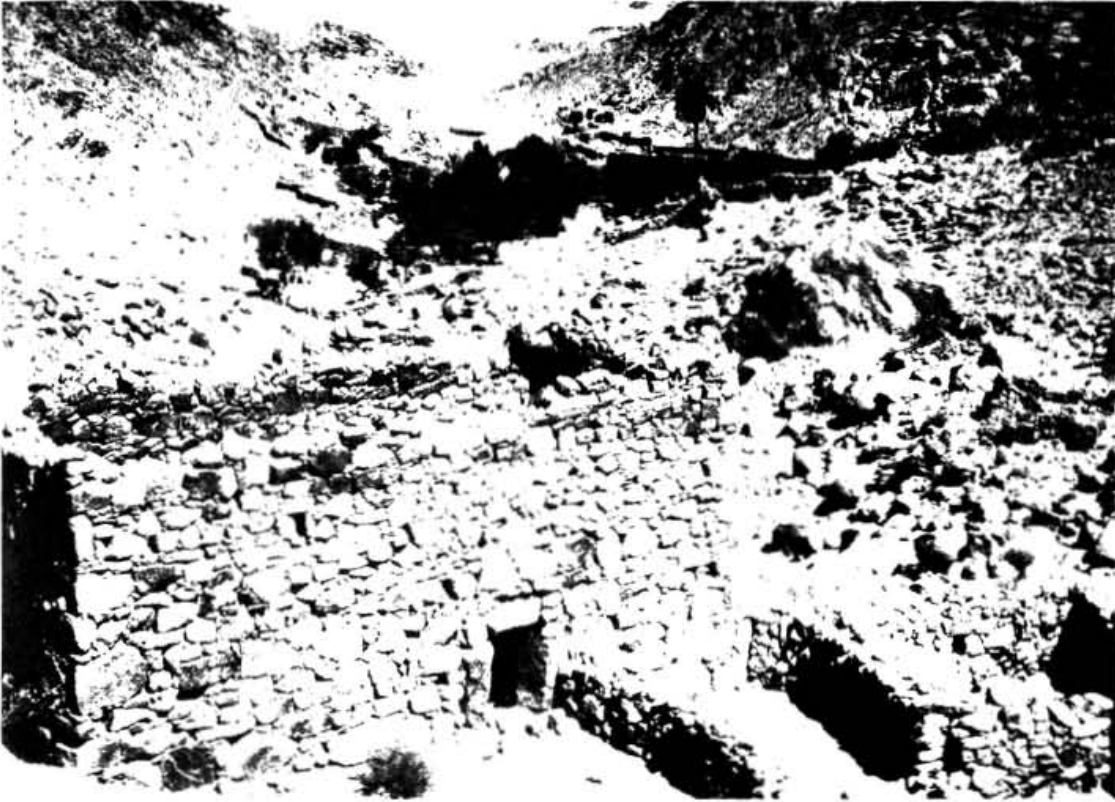
88

Fig. 13 (top)   Stone storehouses in Wadi Shreij, and associated gardens.

Fig. 14 (bottom)   St. Katherine's monastery, looking NW down Wadi ed Deir towrds Er
                    Rahah.

Fig. 15 (top)   The site of Hrazim. A Jebaliyeh woman cloaked in black and followed by black goats walks below the ruins (centre). Running from top left corner downwards is a massive igneous dyke cutting the granite, and channelling ground water to a small spring which supplies the gardens below.

Fig. 16 (bottom)   The "Saint's Tomb" of Sheikh Awad, looking SE up the pass Nagb al Hawa.