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BACKGROUND

The archaeological site of Humayma, located at the northwest corner of Jordan's Hisma desert, has a long history of permanent settlement; beginning with the Nabataeans, followed by Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic occupations. Shortly after Emperor Trajan's conquest of the Nabataean Kingdom in 106 CE, a Roman fort emerged alongside the pre-existing trade route, later known as the *Via Nova Traiana*.

Archaeology at the fort has uncovered six phases, of which Phases II, III, and IV, and possibly V, coincide with the presence of a garrison (Oleson 2019). Excavations directed by J. P. Oleson in 1995, 1996, 2000, 2004, and 2005; and by M.B. Reeves in 2012, have unearthed a collection of ceramic oil lamps which until now had yet to be analysed as a whole.

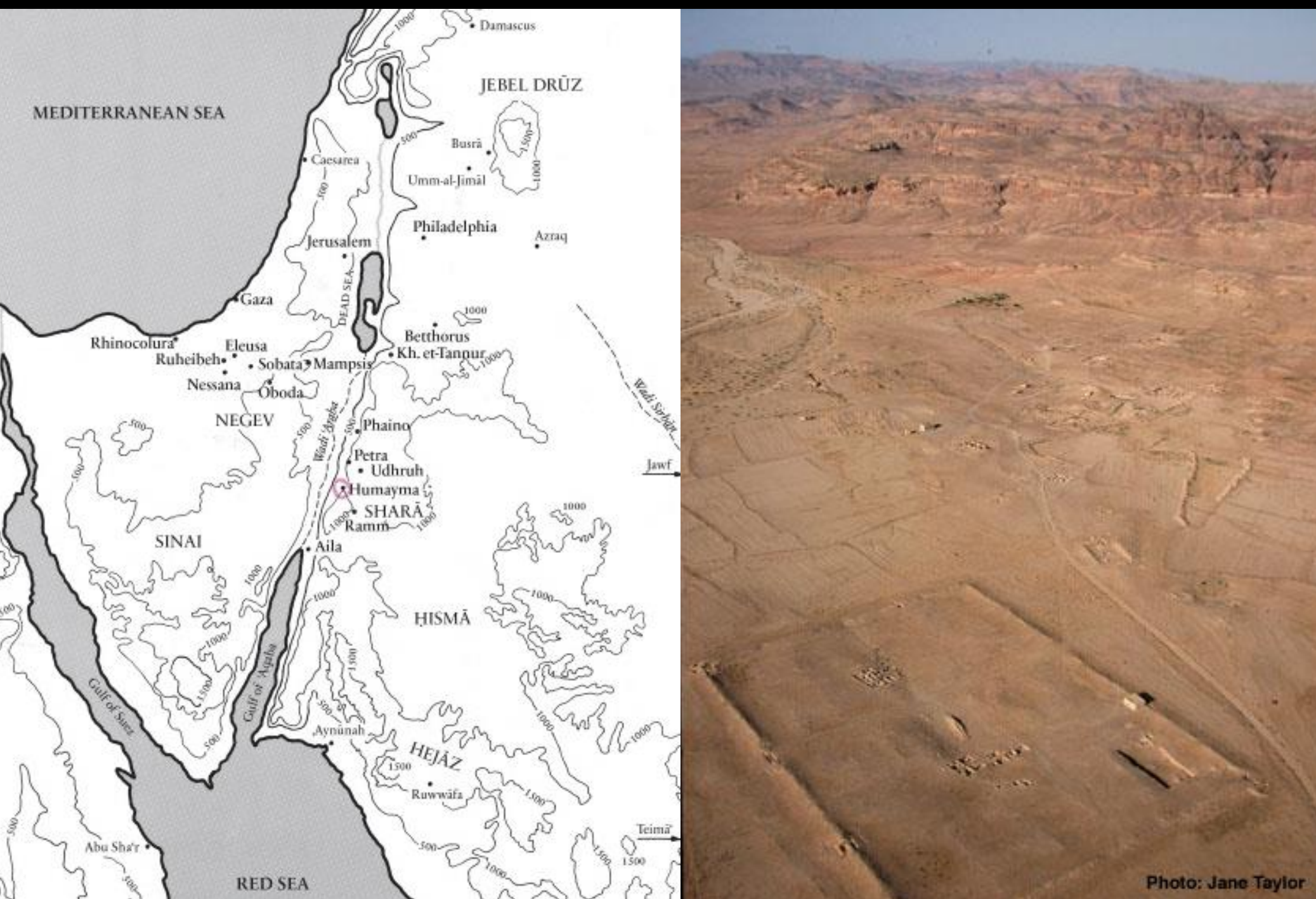


Fig 1: Map of Humayma and aerial photograph of Roman Fort (Courtesy of J.P. Oleson)

OBJECTIVES & METHODOLOGY

The goal of this project was to create a catalogue and analytical report on the ceramic lamp fragments from the Roman fort at Humayma. In the summer of 2020, the author remotely analyzed fifty-four lamp fragments and four complete lamps, using raw material images and descriptions from the 1995, 1996, 2000, 2004, and 2005 excavation seasons supplied by Humayma's excavators. These artefacts were investigated based on identifiable attributes including the shape, discus design, shoulder patterns, nozzle, and filling hole. In many cases, these criteria could not be evaluated due to the fragmentary nature of the artefacts. In particular, fabric and clay type were often unable to be studied. While considering four recently analysed fragments by Lindsey Holman from the 2012 excavation season led by M.B. Reeves; the author carried out a complete evaluation of the fort's ceramic lamp collection in this project

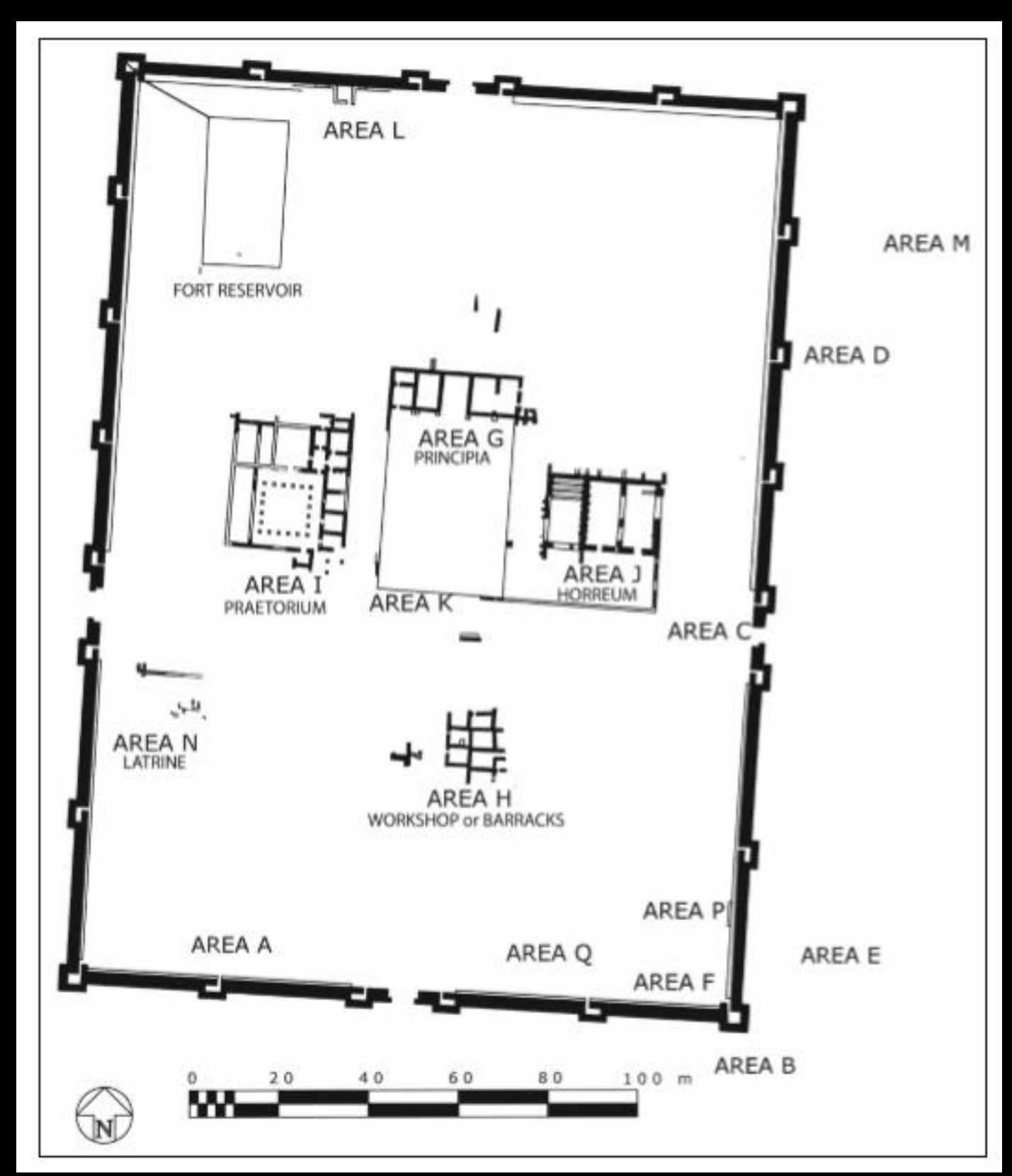


Figure 5: Plan of Fort (Oleson 2019: 397)

Fig 3: Three most common lamp types (Courtesy of J.P. Oleson)



Category & Date	Location & Parallels	Number found
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nabataean rosette 1st c. AD (Negev 1986: 134-37; Khairy 1990: 9-3; Grawehr 2016 296-306; Barrett 2017: 222-23) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the fort: most found in Phase V (363 to early 5th c.) (Oleson 2019: 396) Parallels at Petra (Khairy 1990: 9-3; Grawehr 2016 296-306; Barrett 2017: 222-23) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 complete, 13 fragments 2nd most abundant type at the fort
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mixed Roman/Roman imitation. This example is pear-shaped, Broneer type XXIV (1930: 80-83, 179) but most found were fragmentary round lamps with ovolos Broneer type XXIV: 2nd 1/2 of 1st c. AD (1930: 80-83, 179) Roman round lamp with ovolos: 1st-3rd c. AD (Barrett 2005: 105) or 120-150 AD (Grawehr 2006: 313) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the fort: mostly Phase IV and Phase V (320 to 363 AD) (Oleson 2019: 396) Parallels at Petra (Grawehr 2006: 295-296; Barrett 2005: 108-109) Corinth (Broneer 1930: 80-83, 243), Jerusalem (Gardner 2014: 285), Amman, Beirut, and Egypt (Rosenthal & Sivan 1978: 37-47) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 complete, 8 fragments Wide-ranging stylistic group but overall moderate - few at the fort
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Byzantine slipper lamp 325-520 AD (Grawehr 2016: 340-349) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the fort: mostly Phase V (ca. 363-early 5th c. CE) and VI (ca. early 5th c.), few in IV (ca. 320-363 CE), and one in II (ca. 106-285 CE) (Oleson 2019: 396) Parallels at Petra (Grawehr 2006: 340-49; Barrett 2005: 109-11; Khairy 1990: 19-20), Tell Hesban (Nitowski 1974: 19-20), Pella (Da Costa 2010: 78, 83), Jerusalem (De Vincenz 2013: 124-29), and Jabal Harun (Holmqvist 2016: 252-53) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 complete, 12 fragments Most abundant type at the fort

Nabataean Lamps

- Most Nabataean lamps were identified as the rosette lamp and found as fragments in Byzantine contexts. There are several explanations for this:
- It is possible that the Nabataean rosette lamps were made later into the Byzantine period, as they have been uncovered with Byzantine lamps at other sites (Barrett 2005:154-59, 162). Furthermore, the fort was completed between 111-114 CE (Oleson 2019: 395), meaning that these 1st c. lamps predate the fort. It seems unlikely that the fort was equipped with old lamps
- These lamps may have been looted from nearby locations with an earlier local presence, such as Nabataean tombs, and brought to the fort during its military or civilian reoccupation after 363 CE.



Figure 6: Beit Nattif lamp from Roman fort (Courtesy of J.P. Oleson)

Roman Lamps

- Roman lamps were infrequent despite many being found at other areas of the site (notably the Roman *vicus* (M. B. Reeves, personal communication, Aug. 2020; Reeves et al. 2009: Fig. 33.3). In the fort they were mostly found in fragments in Byzantine (Phase IV and V) contexts.
- Only one figural lamp was found (Figure 7). This was unexpected for a Roman Fort, especially given that they are common at Petra (Grawehr 2011: 29-30).

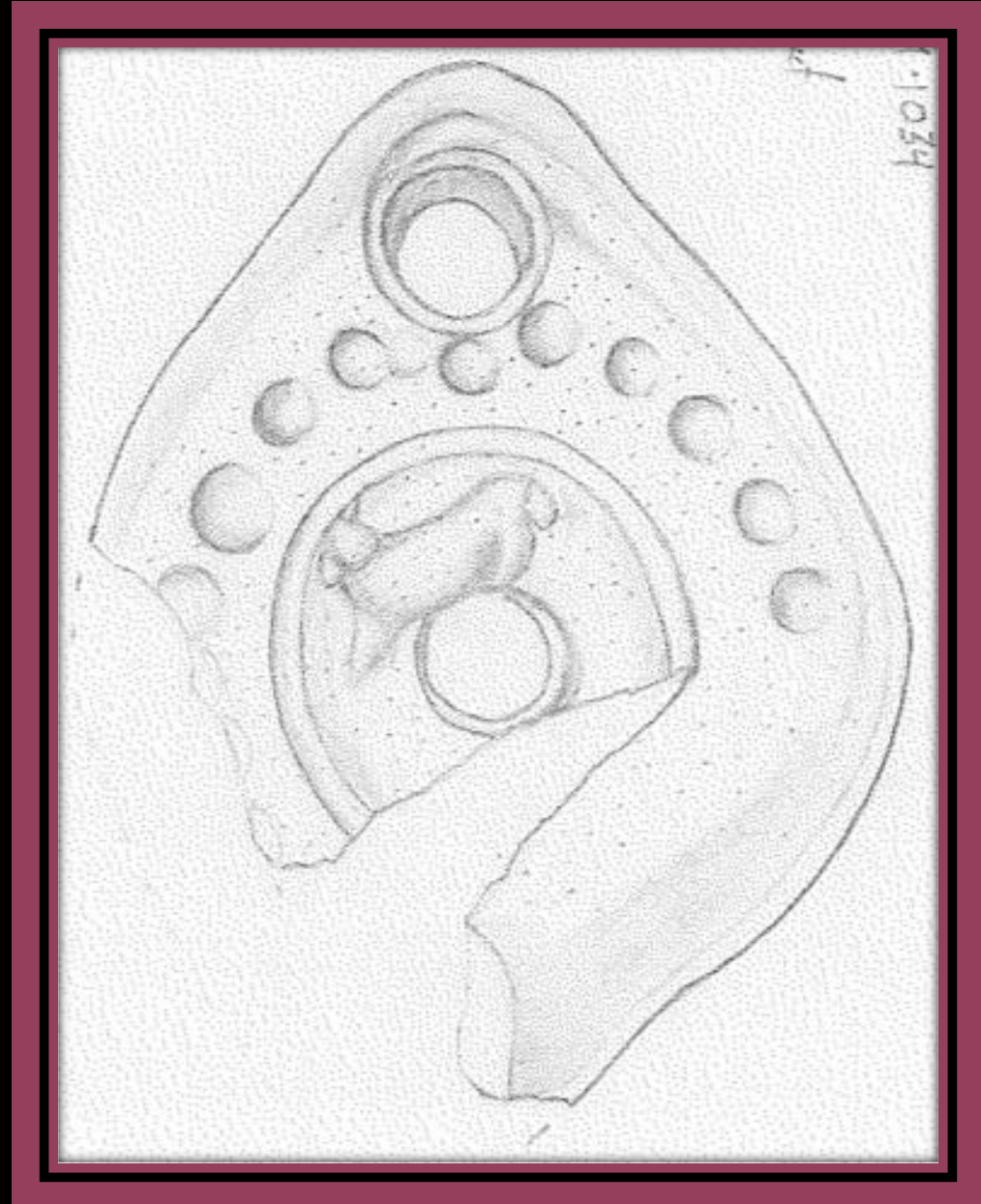


Figure 7: Lamp with quadruped in relief (Courtesy of J.P. Oleson)

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Relative Lamp Abundance by Fort Phase

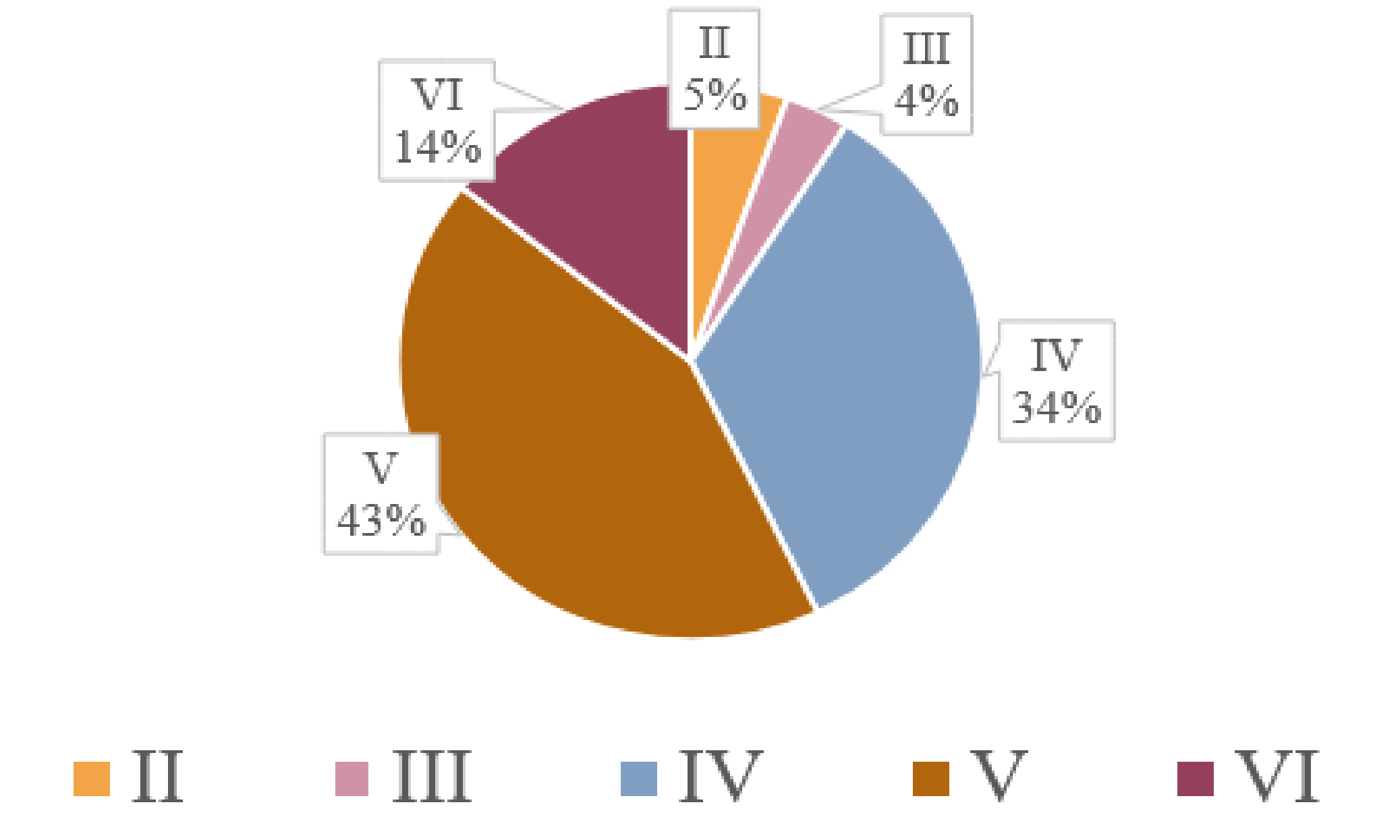


Figure 4: Lamps by occupational phase

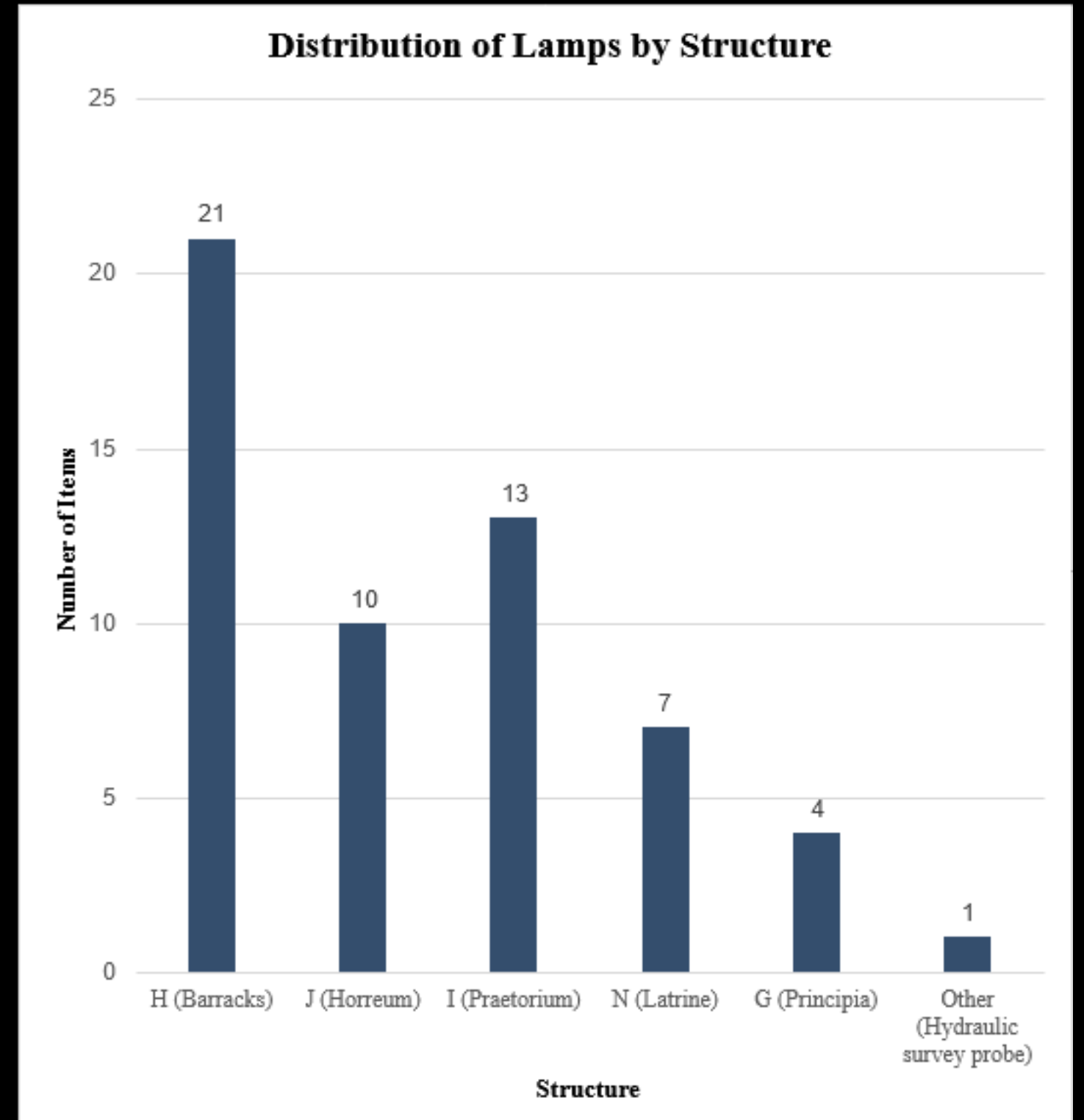


Figure 2: Distribution of lamps by structure

Byzantine Lamps

- This group centered around contexts associated with the 363 earthquake.
- As no single lamp dates to a point exclusively beyond 419 CE, based on parallels from other sites (Grawehr 2006: 340-349), such as the boot or cone-shaped lamp, the lamp corpus supports the fort's proposed abandonment in Phase VI in the early 5th c. (Oleson 2019: 396).

Christian Symbolism?

The following three early Byzantine fragments may include Christian symbols:



Figure 8.1, Figure 8.2, Figure 8.3 (Courtesy of J.P. Oleson)

CONCLUSION

Excavations at the Roman Fort at Humayma yielded a variety of lamps from the Nabataean, Roman, and early Byzantine periods. Anomalies were frequent in the chronology of the findings, as the vast majority of items were found in mixed dumps. This may be an indication of items looted from other areas, destruction by human activity, the earthquake of 363 CE, or displacement through abandonment and reoccupation. The Nabataean rosette lamp and Byzantine slipper lamp were the two most prevalent types, while few Roman lamps were found, contrary to expectations. The production range of the lamps identified extends from the 1st c. CE – to the early 5th c. CE with many parallels from Petra. The barracks generated the greatest assemblage of lamps, which is anticipated due to the nature of activities occurring in that area. No boot-shaped lamps were found, suggesting that the fort's occupants did not import new lamps beyond the early fifth century CE.

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