Thesis 2014

Who says myths are not real? Looking at archaeology and oral history as two complementary sources of data.

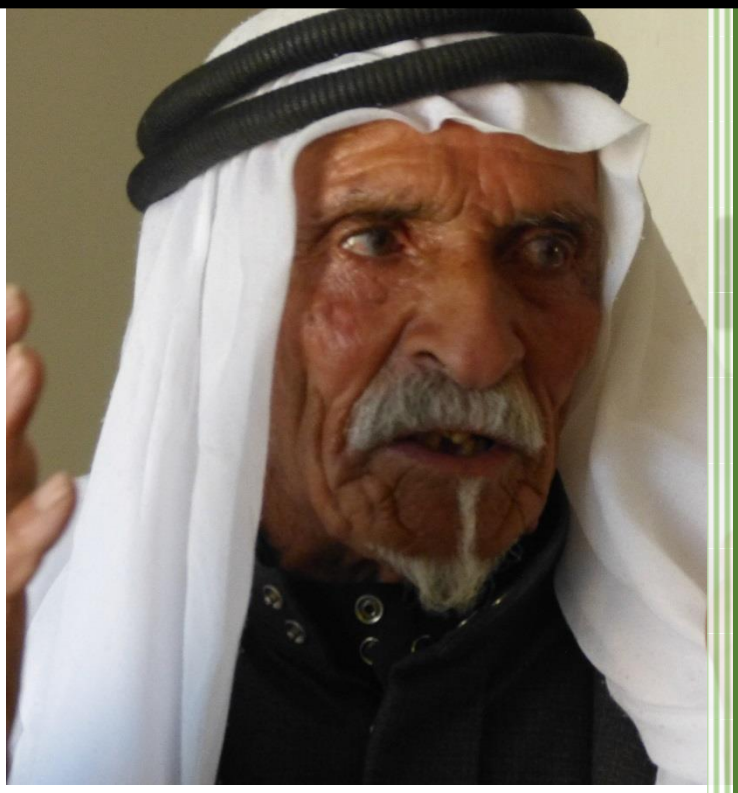

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Image on cover:

Mohamad Kida Qasim abu Shritah Aljazi, respondent of the Udhruh Oral History project. Photo: Guus Gazenbeek.

Who says myths are not real?

Looking at archaeology and oral history as two complementary sources of data.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction of the subject

In the summer of 2013, I joined the Udhruh Archaeological Project in Jordan as a heritage student, focusing on the local community living close to the archaeological site by involving them through an oral history project.[1] The project was executed as an internship, as part of the masterspecialization 'Archaeological Heritage Management in a World Context' at University Leiden. Therefore, the aims of the internship focused on involving the local community in current research and to raise awareness about the archaeological remains. However, while analyzing its results, oral history as a method of research turned out to be a rich source of information in itself. Therefore the combination of archaeology and oral history is here further analyzed and discussed. The Udhruh Oral History project is used as a case study for this subject, in which its storylines are seen from another perspective than during the internship, which is, as an independent dataset that can become part of the archaeological research, instead of as a heritage management project that aims to include the local community through the action of interviewing.

Stories that were gathered in the field vary from tales and myths from the far away past, to local interpretations of the archaeological remains. I believe it is important to take these stories and ideas seriously as an alternative version for what researchers claim as their interpretation of the past, and thus to include them as equally important alternatives in presentation to the public and in education programs. When its value is being recognized, oral history might become a crucial aspect of archaeological research, hereby making it necessary to include local communities.

1.2 Problem orientation

The use of oral history in archeological research is not very common among European archaeologists yet, while it can offer many advantages in expanding knowledge about the archaeological past. This is in contrast with written history, which is often combined with archeology as well as oral history. However, the

[1] See http://projects.commonsites.net/en/project/677/, last accessed 28 September 2013.

idea of combining oral history or oral tradition with archaeological research is not new: many attempts have been made to include local stories and myths in archaeological research (Anyon *et al.* 1994; Beach 1998; Deloria 1995; Echo-Hawk 2000; Levi 1988; Mason 2000; Moody *et al.* 1992; Pendergast and Meighan 1959; Schmidt and Patterson 1996; Swindler *et al.* 1997; Whiteley 2002). Most of these researches focus on the Americas or Australia, where there is a group of native people claiming certain aspects of the past, and where there is a strong cultural tradition of myth- and storytelling. Oral history and oral tradition in these countries is mainly conducted to give the natives a voice in the research of their own past. Moreover, the academic tradition in these countries is different: cultural anthropology and archaeology are seen as one discipline, and past and present are thus not approached as separate fields of study.

The nature of stories told, and therefore the way they were treated in research, differs from the data gathered in Udhruh. The focus of the researches that are mentioned lies mainly on oral traditions from the far away past and truth-finding within these stories. Moreover, researches that do combine oral history and archaeological research with aims comparable to the Udhruh project, do not focus on story-telling and oral history specifically, but on ethnographic research as a whole (Hodder 2002; 2003). Therefore, what I see lacking is an analysis of oral history and archaeological research as two complementary fields of research, which are combined because of its scientific relevance, resulting in archaeological research that actively includes the local community.

1.3 Outline of chapters

Archaeological research has far-reaching consequences for the local community, especially when it is performed directly in and around the center of a small village as Udhruh. Therefore inhabitants should have a say in what happens and how the material is treated and presented. Moreover, if there is a wish to preserve archeological remains for future generations, it is important that they acknowledge the remains as valuable for their environment and past. In order to achieve this, their ideas about the material culture should be incorporated in the research. This approach focuses on the inclusion of local communities, and

preservation and protection of archaeology. On the other side there is archaeological research that first and foremost has the aim to study the past through its material remains. The aim of combining oral history and archaeological research is therefore not only to include the local community through communication, but also to gain value for the research project. My main research question is: how can oral history be used as a source of information for archaeological research, and how can it add to an approach in which the local community is included?

In the second chapter, a theoretical framework is included in which the subject of the thesis is placed in the context of previous research. Some theoretical concepts are shortly explained, and the research is placed in between archaeological ethnographies, to use the data for archaeological research, and community archaeology, to include the local community because they play an active role in the research. The question answered in this chapter is: how can an oral history project, as part of an archaeological project, be used as a source of information as well as a way to include the local community?

In the third chapter, focus lies on the methods and practices used in the field when executing the Udhruh Oral History project, in which the preparation and conduction of interviews is extensively explained. Following, the method of analysis as used in the thesis is discussed, in which the concepts of historicity and multivocality play a central role. In the end, a reflection on research methods for oral history projects interacting with archaeology is given, which can be used in further research.

In the fourth chapter, a historiography is given of Jordan's history and heritage, explaining its heritage discourse and the background of the inhabitants of Udhruh. Jordan takes a special place in the Arabic world because of its lack of natural resources and its stable relationship with the western world. The local inhabitants are Bedouin of the Huwaytat tribe and take a special place in the state of Jordan. Moreover, their past as a Bedouin community is shortly outlined.

In the fifth chapter, the case study of Udhruh and its results from the oral history project will be discussed. In Udhruh, remains of the ancient water

irrigation system and Roman legionary fortress are literary found on the surface. As a result they form a prominently visible part of the landscape and living environment of inhabitants of neighborhood villages. Whether they realize it or not, the local community is in constant interaction with the archaeology. Storylines resulting from the oral history project are presented and reflected upon in three sections: oral history in general, oral history directly connected with archaeological remains, and oral traditions. The question answered in this chapter is: what information do local inhabitants from Udhruh have about the archaeology in their living environment and from what perspective do they look at it?

In the sixth chapter, the information gathered from oral history and its use for archaeological research will be discussed. However, the information has different value, and it is therefore necessary to understand the local perspective as relating to the scientific perspective. Therefore, the concept of historicity will be used to gain better understanding of the local display of historicity and therefore the local perspective on archaeological remains. Storylines are analyzed by dividing them in three groups: landscape, events and myths/legends, and defining several characteristics for every group. Following, the concept of historicity will be applied on every characteristic, which offers a structural way of looking at oral history data that is used in archaeological research. The question answered in this chapter is: how can information from archaeology and oral history be combined?

In the seventh chapter, the social side of oral history as part of archaeological research is discussed through the concept of multivocality. Through oral history, the voice of the local community can be expressed and included in archaeological research as one of the many possible interpretations of the archaeological record. Moreover, this is explained as an aspect of community archaeology because the local community is actively involved in the research. It will be explained why combining oral history and archaeology is a necessary step for the inclusion of local communities as an aspect of community archaeology. The question answered in this chapter is: how can oral history be complementary to an approach in which the local community is included in archaeological research?

1.4 Hypothesis

By analyzing the Udhruh oral history project, possibilities for combining local knowledge and scientific knowledge are defined, and herewith the importance of incorporating local knowledge in archaeological research is emphasized. This will stimulate the cooperation between archaeologists and oral historians in further research and will hereby lead to the enrichment of scientific data and a more accurate inclusion of the local community. It might be difficult to include local knowledge in scientific research, because the kind of information differs in many ways: scientific results are reliable and unreliable in other aspects than the data offered by oral history. However, when oral history can be seen as an essential source of information for archaeology, just as written sources have been for years, it becomes an important aspect of future archaeological research. It might become an obvious step and an advantage for archaeology to include the local community through oral history.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: ORAL HISTORY SITUATED BETWEEN ARCHAEOLOGICAL ETHNOGRAPHY AND COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGY

An oral history project offers important possibilities in archaeological research and promotes inclusion of the local community. Therefore, the Udhruh oral history project can be situated between archaeological ethnography and community archaeology. On the one hand it contributes to archaeological research by offering a material-based ethnographic analysis of the contemporary societies involved. While on the other hand it actively involves the local community in the research process. First, a short outline of the relevant aspects of oral history theory is given, the concepts of processual and post-processual archaeology are explained and the use of the concept 'social memory' is operationalized. An answer on the first research question is given: how can an oral history project, as part of an archaeological project, be used as a source of information as well as a way to include the local community? To answer this question, the practices of archaeological ethnography as well as community archaeology are discussed.

2.1 Oral History Theory

Oral history came into existence with the invention of an easily usable voice recorder in the 1940s. These technologies offered new opportunities of collecting vocal stories with more precision than was possible before (Dunaway 1996, 7). According to Dunaway (1996, 7-23), four generations of oral historians can be distinguished. The first generation looked at oral history as a way to collect histories from important individuals for future research. The second generation (from the mid-1960s) used oral history to empower people who could not read or write, minorities and the historically disenfranchised. The third generation (in the 1980s) looked at ways to use their work for public programs and thought about the effects of interviewing and transcribing on content and the use of such as a historical document. The fourth generation of today is primarily interested in the interdisciplinary use of oral history, seeing the interviews as data to be used in many different fields, as anthropology, sociology and history (Dunaway 1996, 7-10). Placing an oral history project in archaeological research is clearly a product

of the fourth generation. Herein the interview gains a specific focus on material cultural remains. However, it also connects with aims of the second generation: empowering minorities, or in this case the local community, who usually does not have a voice in archaeological research. Moreover, it shares the goals of the third generation, offering the possibility to make a public presentation of archaeological remains easily accessible for a wide audience.

Oral history is a way to look at the past through interviews with eye-witnesses, resulting in a personal, bottom-up account of the past that generally gives a different perspective than the top-down historical account as provided by academics. Therefore, oral history was mistrusted by other scholars (as historians) because it is based solely on memory, which was regarded as unreliable, and because of its artistic writing. Moreover, it was being criticized by the public for containing not enough sufficient 'facts' (Abrams 2010, 14-15). However, oral history as an account of the past is especially valuable because it offers information about the meaning of an event, instead of only about the event itself. Subjectivity is the factor that makes oral history unique: it tells not just what happened, but also what people wanted to do, what they thought they were doing, and how they look at their actions (Portelli 1992, 50). Therefore, subjectivity and personal views add a fascinating new dimension to the scientific archaeological project, which has the potential to make the site more attractive and understandable for a wider public. Moreover, these subjective stories of the past promote the possibility of a social function for archaeology, by making different communities mutually aware of their version of the past.

Oral history is both a research methodology: a means to conduct an investigation, as well as the result of a research: the final product, with its transcriptions and interpretations (Abrams 2010, 10-11). To be able to value the final product correctly, knowledge of the research methodology is required. Another distinction is between oral history and oral traditions. Oral history tells the stories of eye-witnesses, while oral tradition tells stories from the far-away past which are passed on from generation to generation (Echo-Hawk 2000, 270). These two concepts differ in their informational value, and might appear both in

interviews around the archaeological site. Oral history is particularly useful for archaeology because of the knowledge of contemporary formation processes and present features in the surrounding landscape. Oral tradition offers stories in which information about the far away past can be found, and it can offer insight in societies cultural norms and values.

One of the important reasons for collecting oral histories and oral traditions now, is that the current society in Udhruh is changing. While the older generation still tells the stories of how their grandfathers fought in the war, and believe in stories about giants carrying large stones upon their shoulders towards the site, the younger generations seem to change. Many are highly educated and can read and write, while the older generation still knows the life of the Bedouin and sometimes are illiterate. This indicates a social transformation in society, through which it can be argued that the stories might get lost if they are not collected and written down. Therefore, the stories of Bedouin in Udhruh can be defined as endangered oral traditions (Bille 2012, 107-123).

Moreover, an oral history project within the local community focusing on archaeology assumes that people experience a daily interaction with their environment, which is the basis for an informal history and personal stories about the past. Herein, all experiences are individually bound and can thus differ from each other (Kaper 2011, 10-13). Even though the stories are based on individual experiences, some of them might also be typical for the time and place in which they are told. Therefore, oral history should be treated as a personal view on the past from which information can be drawn, but where its subjective nature should be kept in mind (Ritchie 2003, 36-37). When this is recognized, personal narratives from the past can move from a biography to a story with historical meaning, and from an individual to a social experience (Lummis 2006, 255). It thus expects the existence of a public or social memory, a collective remembrance of the past, which can be used as a source of raw data and historical evidence.

2.2 Social memory of a local community

Even though it is the individual who remembers, all these individuals form a group with a shared memory of the past, because they went through the same

events, have the same forefathers or lived at the same place. The social aspect of memory is therefore that it is attached to membership of a social group. This shared memory becomes part of a group identity by talking about it. Sharing individual memories makes a social memory which forms the core of group formation processes (Fentress and Wickham 1992, ix-x). By conducting many interviews among members of the same social group (the local community), the aim is to discover shared stories about the past and the environment (a social memory). These are stories which connect the local community as a social group and gives its members a group identity, and offer a vision on the past which is not only personal but sheds light on a broader cultural context.

Moreover, it can be stated that it is easier to understand individual interviews when they are understood in a comparative social structure, as well as to validate them: if many of the personal stories are similar, they will probably contain some valid information (Lummis 2006, 257). This can be useful in defining certain historical or archaeological events. But the importance of oral history is not so much in its validity: it is in the social meaning of transmission and what is believed or not (Fentress and Wickham 1992, xi). A story about giants is true in its consequences when it is believed to be true, and contains a social value when it is transmitted orally among members of a social group. Therefore, by collecting and recording stories among the local community, and connecting them with the results of archaeological research, archaeology might be accepted as part of the social memory and thus gain a social meaning.

2.3 Processual and post-processual/interpretive archaeologies

By placing oral history in a context of archaeological research, two ways of conducting research are of importance. These are ethnographies within archaeological research, and community archaeology, deriving from post-processual archaeologies. The processual and post-processual movement will first be introduced, followed by archaeological ethnographies and community archaeology.

The development of processual archaeology started in the 1960s, when archaeologists moved their focus of research from finding the right chronology of

events, to explaining processes from the past: a ‘processual interpretation’ of culture history. Moreover, conclusions were now based on an explicit and logically structured argument instead of an interpretation made by one individual researcher. Other disciplines as geography were involved and, for a humanistic discipline, the approach was more of a scientific nature than before. This means defining underlying assumptions, and examine them (Renfrew and Bahn 2008, 40-41). Ethnoarchaeology fits in the framework of processual archaeology, because its aim is to enrich the research with data about cultural historical processes, which can provide new data to test possible hypotheses. Moreover, as with the use of ethnoarchaeological research to study formation processes from the past, we can use oral history around the archaeological site to gather information about recent formation processes at the site, which influenced the archaeological record.

While post-processual archaeology developed as a critique on the processual archaeology, introducing a new movement in archaeological theory, it actually worked out some of the problems introduced by new archaeology and the processual movement. A more appropriate label would be interpretive archaeologies, as introduced by Ian Hodder (1991, 7-18). In combining oral history and archaeological research, the hermeneutic or interpretive view of post-processual archaeology plays an important role. Its main features are that archaeology as cultural research cannot be generalized: every society and culture is unique and should be studied in its complete context. Moreover, it states that there is not one single correct interpretation of archaeological data: everyone is influenced by its own framework of reference and is thus entitled to a personal opinion about the past (Hodder 1991, 7-18). Therefore, multiple versions of the past are possible and equally valid, and should be integrated in research and public presentation as such.

2.4 Oral History as an aspect of Archaeological Ethnographies

It was often believed that the difference between ethnographic research, as often performed by anthropologists, and archaeological research, is that archaeologists deal with an absence of living people. However, people are around more often

than not, and they do challenge the archaeologist's interpretations and legitimacy. These are fellow researchers and specialists, people living on or near a site, and people who stake claim on the material past. Herein, a shared ground emerges between archaeology and anthropology (Hamilakis 2011, 401; Meskell 2005, 85-86). This current wave in archaeological research is termed the 'ethnographic turn' by Castañeda (2008). Oral history research as conducted in Udhruh is seen as an aspect of ethnographic research, because it is a method involving 'living' people and communities around the archaeological site. Moreover, it not only entails stories about the past, but also interviews, communication and conversation about archaeological practice, material remains and daily life, hereby aiming towards an understanding of the relationship between local community and archaeology.

Archaeological ethnographies derives from conventional ethnoarchaeology, which refers to the study of activities in any society. Central herein is the interaction between people and artifacts. Ethnoarchaeology is especially known for the modelling of generalizations and drawing parallels between past and present societies and their relationships with artefacts (Schiffer 2013, 53). However, the term archaeological ethnographies is broader and has a different focus: the merging of ethnographic and archaeological methods to study the relevance of archaeological material culture, landscapes and material traces for contemporary societies and the contestations and claims involved (Hamilakis and Anagnostopoulos 2009, 66). Therefore, if oral history is seen as an ethnographic method of research and it is put into use to study archaeological remains and their current relevance for society, as is the case in the Udhruh project, it can be labeled as archaeological ethnographies.

An example of archaeological ethnographical practice whose aims are comparable to the case study of Udhruh is the Çatalhöyük project in Turkey, which was executed under the direction of Ian Hodder (2002, 174-181; 2003, 55-69). Herein, the contemporary value of the archaeological site and its material remains were researched through ethnographic practices for several groups in society, thus recognizing the influence of different perceptions on the

archaeological fieldwork (Hamilakis and Anagnostopoulos 2009, 70). The aim was to involve different stakeholders from the beginning in the archaeological process, hereby giving them a voice in the decision making process, interpretation of material remains and the discussion and formulation of research questions. Communication and research among the local community and other non-specialist stakeholders was done by ethnographers (Hodder 2002, 174). This should lead to involvement of non-specialists in multivocality (Hodder 2003, 59).

In the case of Çatalhöyük, ethnographic research was used to gather ideas, interpretations and perspectives from the communities involved and include these in the archaeological research. This aim towards an inclusive approach is also an important motivation for the Udhruh Oral History project. However, a difference in looking at local perceptions and stories (see Shankland 2005) is, that the project in Udhruh tries to see them also as displays of material historicization instead of only as folktales and stories (cf. Hamilakis and Anagnostopoulos 2009, 71). The difference between the past as told by the local community and the past as reconstructed by the archaeologists is emphasized. To avoid juxtaposition between the two as much as possible, they are separately looked at and presented each through their own display of historicization. For archaeologists it is important to know about the historicity of a society whose material culture is being studied, because it says something about the pasts and futures that are being produced parallel to the archaeological research. Hereby it says something about how the scientific archaeological story will be perceived among the local community, which makes it possible for archaeologists to anticipate on this perception in their public presentation.

The concept of historicity in this context refers to a definition as given by Hirsch and Stewart, as 'the ongoing social production of accounts of pasts and futures (Hirsch and Stewart 2005, 262)'. 'Social' refers to the boundaries of social ideologies of the present in which these accounts of individuals, collectives or things are produced. Use of the concept 'historicity' instead of 'historicality' implies the possibility of multiple ways of looking at history. It is not necessarily only about the past, because seeing history as a line of events is based on a

western way of thinking, which is not supported in every society. Instead, it is possible that multiple pasts and futures exist at the same time, without making a strict distinction between past, present and future (Hirsch and Steward 2005, 261-174). This might look somewhat like multivocality, but it differs because it indicates a different perception of the concepts past, present and future. In case of combining oral history and archaeology, oral history interviews function as a way to record (socially produced) individual accounts of pasts and futures, as produced within the social context of the community. The oral history accounts are different from the archaeological accounts, because they originate from another present form, and look at the materiality through another display of historicization.

A second example of archaeological ethnography, in which interviewing and conversation with the local community plays a central role, is a project located around the Kruger National Park in South-Africa (Meskell 2005, 81-100). Especially in a post-colonial nation as this one, it is important to recognize and work with different displays of material historicization, because local historicities might have changed during colonialism and post-colonialism (Hirsch and Steward 2005, 267; González-Ruibal 2010, 37-47; Trigger 2006). This example shows very well the difference between ethnoarchaeology and archaeological ethnographies, by emphasizing that researchers nowadays are not interested in parallels between current societies and previous societies, nor do they want to 'mine' the informants as an historical source of information (Meskell 2005, 89). Moreover, ethnographic researchers working for an archaeological project focus on effects of the excavation on the local community: they want to know their opinions, experiences and visions on archaeology (Meskell 2005, 93).

The intentions of the project at Kruger National Park as described by Meskell are aiming towards a decolonization of archaeological practice by looking at the local community not as informants, but as people whose life and living environment is affected by archaeological practice, and who thus should be involved in its activities. Even though the Oral History project in Udhruh aims towards the same goal of involving the local community and indeed asks for opinions about archaeological practices, it also sees the interviewees as

knowledgeable about their living environment. The information they can provide for the archaeology focuses on knowledge about the present, instead of looking for an artificial connection with the far away past.

A different kind of archaeological ethnographies is ethnographies of archaeological practice. This is a broad concept, extensively dealt with in a volume edited by Edgeworth (2006). It varies from ethnographies within the archaeological community, to a reflexive view on archaeological practice and interactions between archaeologists and the local community (Edgeworth 2006, 1-15). Even though no such research is conducted at Udhruh yet, it would be very useful to conduct such a research as explained by Breglia (2006, 173-184), who worked at the site of Chunchucmil, Yucatán in Mexico. She advocates an ethnography in which the interaction between local community and archaeological research takes a central place. Hereby she distinguishes between practical and ethical research engagements (Breglia 2006, 180-181). Even though Breglia takes on the ethical research engagements by looking outside the archaeological project towards local communities, land use, implications of tourism etcetera, as separate from the practice of doing archaeological research, there is an intermingling of practical and ethical research engagements. The practice of doing archaeology is directly influenced by the needs and wishes as well as the perspectives and knowledge of local communities, therefore making its mutual relationship a worthy subject of study.

Another important note is that archaeology borrows methods of research from disciplines as anthropology, such as ethnographic research, but in many cases lacks to explain why archaeology is valuable for other disciplines (González-Ruibal 2013, 2; González-Ruibal 2014, 14; Hamilakis 2011, 400). Therefore, it can be argued that applying oral history in archaeological research is not only a matter of collecting additional data for the archaeological project and promoting a different approach of archaeological research. Moreover, it might also offer another perspective and additional possibilities for oral history as an ethnographic method of research. Stories gathered as part of an archaeological project are different from general oral history, because they specifically focus on

material remains. Therefore, they have the potential to offer a new perspective on the perception and valuation of material culture, as well as the connection of stories and myths with time and place.

2.5 Oral History as an aspect of Community Archaeology

Community archaeology is part of the wider concept of public archaeology. When talking about public archaeology, most of the time this is an archaeology from the state (public services) and its institutes, to reach and inform the public. While another interpretation might be the archaeology of the public itself, actively involving their ideas and visions in the archaeological process (Merriman 2004, 1-2). The second interpretation involves the concept of community archaeology, which is described as the active involvement of local communities in the whole heritage process and research, taking into account what they want and how they interpret and value their heritage, hereby giving the community (partly) control over the decision making processes (Marshall 2002, 211; Smith 2006, 12). This is important because they are the ones living near the archaeological site and their living environment is directly influenced by archaeological research or restoration activities. More about community archaeology can be found in my bachelor-thesis: *Samen graven. Een sociale functie voor erfgoed en archeologie* (Hageraats 2012).

Foregoing examples of archaeological ethnographies, as the Çatalhöyük project and the conversations around Kruger National Park, also present a form of community archaeology. Dialogues and oral history interviews offer a way to let the voice of the local community be heard and improve communication between archaeologist and public. Moreover, semi-structured interviewing creates the possibility for both researcher and local inhabitants to exchange information and talk about what is seen as important. This might lead to a more democratic way of conducting archaeological research, in which the interpretation of material remains is open for alternative ideas.

Other examples of community archaeology are discussed by Chirikure and Pwiti (2008, 467-485). They focus on excavations taking place in a post-colonial setting in Africa, where indigenous communities are at stake. Herewith they show

the presence of dialogues about alternative histories and different perspectives on the past. Cases with the aim to promote mutual understanding between the local community and archaeologists are presented, for example the painted rock-shelter at Domboshava, the Living Landscape project, the Site of Great Zimbabwe, and the Old Bulawayo project (Chirikure and Pwiti 2008, 469-474). Chirikure and Pwiti very well show the essence of community archaeology, which is the recognition of different needs, concerns and perspectives on cultural heritage between archaeologists and the community (Chirikure and Pwiti 2008, 469-470). Moreover, they show how archaeologists fulfill the aim to give local communities a voice and to include them in the process of interpreting and decision making. Even though they present and review some projects, they lack to also look at the way in which community archaeology is perceived: methods and techniques to fulfill the aim of including the local community.

A list of components to promote collaborative archaeological practice was presented by Moser *et al.* (2002, 220-248). Through reviewing the Community Archaeology Project at Quseir in Egypt, seven components were suggested, including (1) communication and collaboration, (2) employment and training, (3) public presentation, (4) interviews and oral history, (5) educational resources, (6) photographic and video archive, and (7) community-controlled merchandising. The fourth component of 'interviews and oral history' is presented as fulfilling a central place in any project of community archaeology, providing the researchers with important insights on the responds of people on archaeology, as well as on how new information relates to established ideas about the heritage site. Moreover, it offers the opportunity to communicate aims of the project towards the community and thus keep them informed and involved (Moser *et al.* 2002, 236-238).

Even though the information as gathered through interviews and oral history in the Quseir project covers subjects ranging from perceptions and experiences from the community to local knowledge about the past, information was mainly used to support involvement of the local community. Because the project at Quseir is primarily a community archaeology project, it seems they do

not use locally gathered knowledge for the archaeological scientific research. However, doing so would help intermingle the practices of community involvement and archaeological research. Otherwise, study and involvement of the local community stays distinguished from the scientific research, while the two can be very valuable for each other.

2.6 Summary

In this theoretical framework the theoretical concepts that will return in the following chapters are set out, and the Udhruh Oral History project is placed between archaeological ethnographies and community archaeology. In the first paragraph on oral history theory, the aspects that are of importance for the Udhruh Oral History project when it is used in archaeological research are discussed. Therefore, emphasis is put on the personal and subjective nature of oral history data, because it is based on memory, and thus the different judgment of reliability between archaeology and oral history. Secondly, a short explanation of the concept of social memory as used in the context of oral history and archaeology is given. This leads towards a shared vision on the past that connects the community, and shared stories that strengthen their reliability. Thirdly, the movements of processual and post-processual archaeologies are shortly introduced. Fourthly, the Udhruh Oral History project is placed in the framework of archaeological ethnographies, starting from the concept of ethnoarchaeology. Within archaeological ethnography, the importance of historicization and materialization of concepts in oral history is emphasized, as well as the local knowledge of recent formation processes. Moreover, the related field of ethnographies of archaeological practice is mentioned, in which relations between local community and archaeological researcher are studied. This leads towards the fifth concept, which is community archaeology: a field that strives towards an active inclusion of the local community. Oral history is presented as a way to maintain dialogue and exchange information about the archaeological site. Moreover, by collecting stories and incorporating them in the archaeological project, a local perspective within the scientific research is recognized.

3. METHODS AND PRACTICE

As mentioned in the previous chapter, oral history as a method of research means the collection of information about the past through interviews and recordings. The execution of an oral history project is here divided in several steps: set-up and funding, preparing and conducting interviews, and using stories in research and writing. Methods and practice of the Udhruh Oral History project will be explained and reflected upon. Following, the method of analysis will be discussed.

3.1 Set-up and funding

For the set-up of the project and finding funding for its execution, it is important to consider the aims of the project and the kind of information that was collected to achieve this. *Tales from Udhruh* was set up as an internship-project, as part of the master specialisation 'Archaeological Heritage Management in a World Context' at Leiden University (Hageraats 2013, 13). Herein, the integration of local voices was of primary importance in the project design (for more information see CommonSites[2] and Hageraats 2013, 13-16). Financial means for the project was partly raised through the crowdfunding platform CommonSites[3] and the Udhruh Archaeological Project financially supported the project.

Overall, the set-up of the internship project was situated among the 'ethical research engagements' or the 'outside' of the archaeological project (Breglia 2006, 180-181). It focussed on aspects that not directly add to the scientific research of archaeology, but are part of the archaeological project. Realization of possible scientific importance for the archaeological project came during and after the interviews. Moreover, the following analysis is based on the idea that the gathered oral history data also have value for the 'practical research engagements' and thus the 'inside' of an archaeological project (Breglia 2006, 180-181).

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[2] See http://projects.commonsites.net/en/project/677/ for the page of the Udhruh Oral History Project.

[3] See http://projects.commonsites.net/en/project/677/ for the page of the Udhruh Oral History Project and http://projects.commonsites.net/en/project/852/ for the page of theUdhruh Archaeological Project 2013.

Because this was not the first intention of the Udhruh Oral History project, it is argued that a second project is necessary to implement the conclusions from this analysis. Finally, this will lead towards a way of working that is both useful for ethical as well as practical research engagements in archaeology.

3.2 Preparing and conducting interviews

Most decisions with regard to the selection of respondents and interview techniques were made in advance. The decisions were based on a literature study on oral history methods and social research (see Bernard 1995; Ritchie 2003; Bryman 2008), and conversations with researchers who are familiar with Udhruh and the social context (dr. F. Abudanah, dr. M.J. Driessen, drs. S. AlKareimh). An overview of how the information was collected is presented in figure 1.

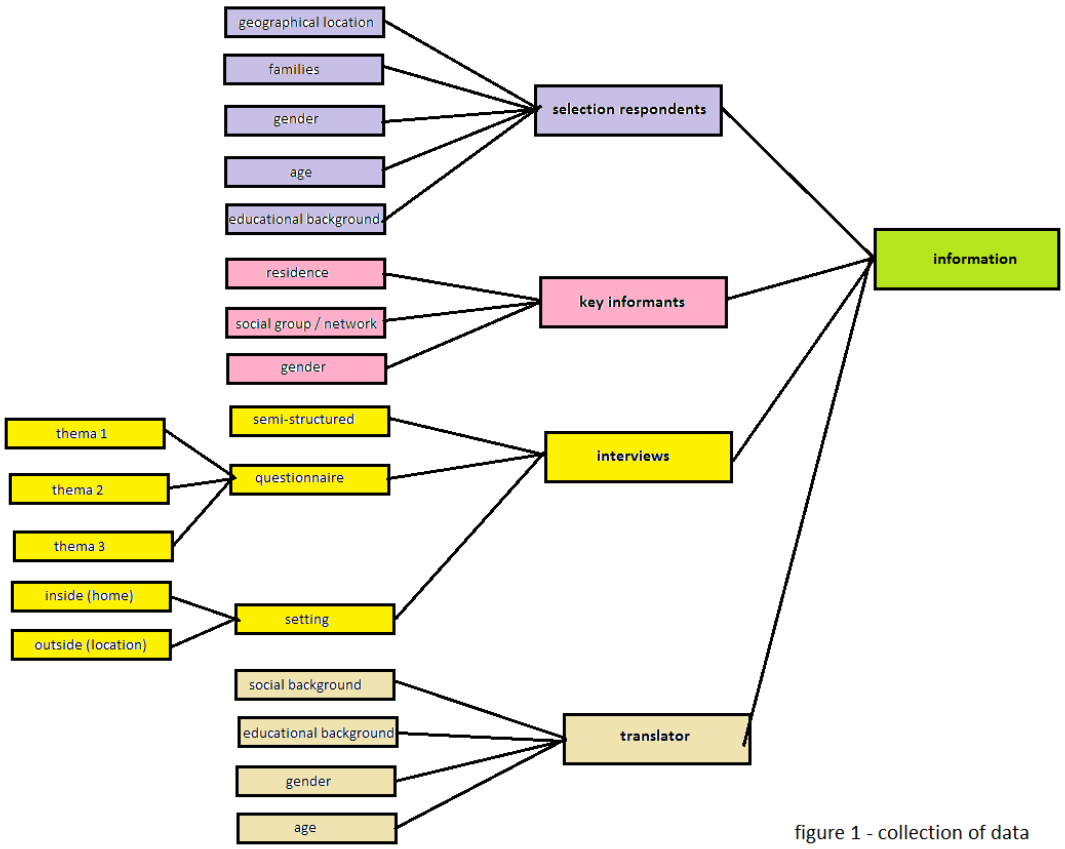

figure 1 - collection of data

3.2.1 Selection of respondents

Selection of respondents was based on the location of houses. This decision was made because of the prominent location of the Roman Legionary Fortress in the centre of the Udhruh village. Inhabitants live in three sub-parts around the Roman Legionary Fortress, as indicated on the map (see figure 2). On forehand, it was not known whether these seemingly separate parts were inhabited by different families or not, and if they would have different stories to tell. That is why participants were selected from all three parts, as well as from a nearby village as Jerba. Also, by making a geographical selection, the aim was to include all groups living in Udhruh. Other selection criteria were gender and age. We wanted to interview as many men as women, and to represent children, teenagers, adults and elderly.

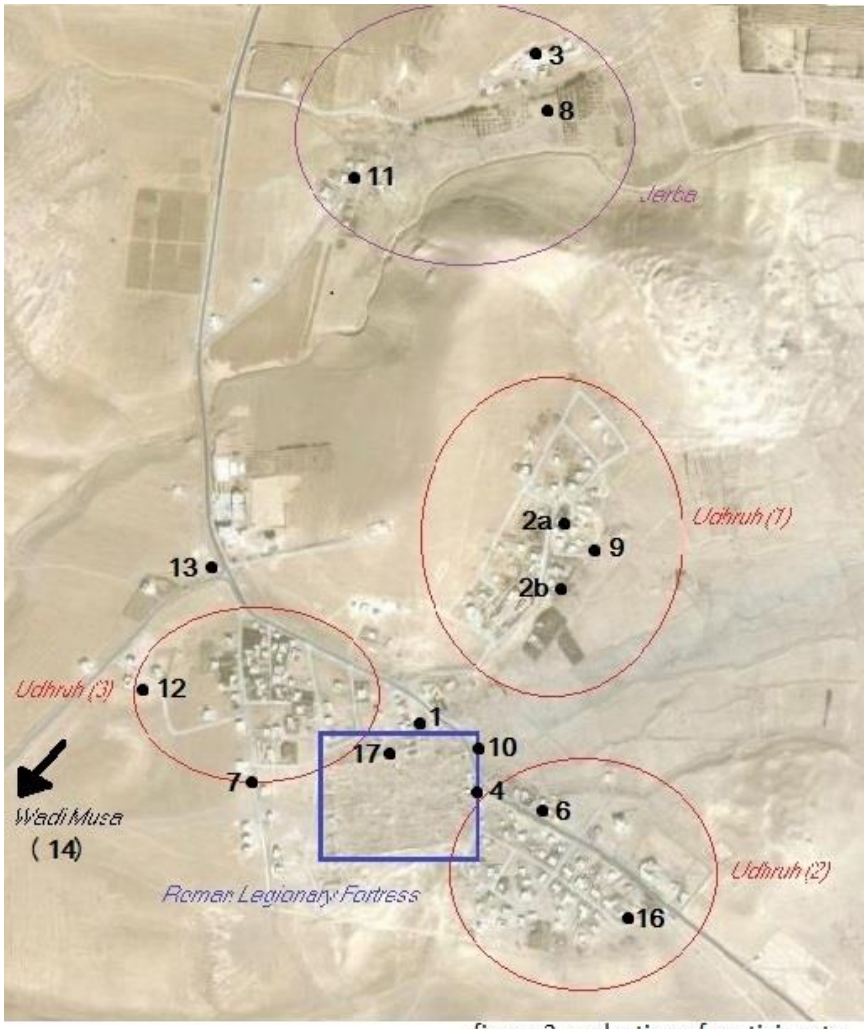

figure 2 - selection of participants

During the research in Udhruh, we had two key informants (Bernard 1995, 166-168) in the village: Ibrahim and Jamiylah, both from a different social group. Jamiylah is the daughter of a local Sheik living in Jerba, and Ibrahim is an inhabitant of Udhruh with a different social network. We already got in touch with Jamiylah before the start of the project, through contact with dr. F. Abudanah who knows the area and its inhabitants very well. Ibrahim lives close to the archaeological site and was selected as a second key informant because he has a different background: as a male key informant living close to the archaeological site but with many contacts in other parts of the village, he selected different respondents than Jamiylah, who runs a women's foundation and lives in a village outside Udhruh. They arranged the interviews and selected participants based on our selection criteria, which they did very well. They knew which people from the community had relevant stories to tell and liked to share them with us (Bernard 1995, 190).

However, because they knew we were from the archaeological project and were looking for stories about the past, they arranged mostly interviews with people who knew a lot about past events: the elderly from the village. And because it was harder to find women who wanted to talk about the past and had permission to do so from their husband or son, the final result contains mainly interviews with elderly men. Moreover, because our key contacts wanted to bring us in touch with people who have a lot of memories about the archaeology, many of the selected respondents live close to the Roman Legionary Fortress.

This means the selection of respondents was based on purposive sampling: the research respondents were not selected on a random basis, but in a way that the group is representative for the goal the researcher has in mind (Bryman 2008, 415; Bernard 1995, 182). According to Bernard, purposive sampling is a good way to execute a pilot study, which can later lead towards a more complete research with a representative sample (1995, 182). During the period of conducting interviews, it seemed that elderly people and people living a nomadic lifestyle had more knowledge of oral traditions and features in the landscape. Hereby, the elderly knew more of events from the past, for example because they

experienced the transition from a nomadic to a sedentary lifestyle and could tell something about the use of archaeological remains for building purposes. Following, the respondents were selected based on their cultural, archaeological and historical competence instead of their statistical representativeness; people with a profound knowledge of the subjects discussed (Bernard 1995, 187-188).

Some stories from children and women were included. Because of their different lifestyle, they probably have different experiences with the archaeology and the surrounding landscape, and are thus likely to tell a different variety of stories, memories and perspectives on the landscape. In a following research, it is of crucial importance for the representativeness of the local community to include more informants that are female and/or young. Interviewing younger respondents, as well as more women, will lead to a more representative sample of the local population (Bernard 1995, 182). An overview of participants can be found in Appendix II.

3.2.2 Interview techniques

The interviews in Udhruh were semi-structured and face to face (Bryman 2008, 438; Bernard 1995, 203). Herein I followed a general script with a list of topics that are relevant for the oral history research as well as the archaeological research, in order to collect comparable, qualitative data. Reason for this choice is that the semi-structured interview model leaves enough space for the participants to tell their own stories and herein follow their own interests and experiences, on which the interviewer can anticipate. However, there are some core questions to lead the interview because a group sharing a common experience (of living among archaeological remains) is involved (Ritchie 2003, 102). The freedom to talk about self-chosen subjects is important, because one of the aims of the interviews was to define what the local community finds important regarding the archaeology. Moreover, it resulted in very diverse conversations, since many respondents have their own connection with the material remains. Ritchie (2003, 20) states that, during the interviews, it is important to follow the line of the storyteller instead of asking strict questions. Most interesting information comes

when the participants are given the possibility to talk freely, and a good interviewer gets its information where you do not expect it.

The questionnaire (see appendix I) contained several topics of conversation, which formed a framework in which many other questions were asked, following the interests of the respondent. The questionnaire was extensively discussed with other members of the archaeological team, my supervisors, and translators, before the interviews in Udhruh were conducted. The questions were divided in three topics of conversation: (1) family relations and location, (2) archaeology and heritage, (3) religion and rituals. The topic of archaeology and heritage was divided in three parts: past, present, and future. Under every topic, some possible questions or guidelines for conversation were listed.

The first topic, family relations and location, is a subject easy to talk about. Questions as ‘where do you live’ and ‘why do you live here’ are quickly answered, and are a good starter in a conversation about the living environment and its archaeological remains. Moreover, questions about family relations and lifestyle generally led towards the popular topic of Bedouin culture. Everyone had a lot to tell about their Bedouin past and in many cases this was the point at which the participant started to talk enthusiastically. From here on, the step towards archaeology was easily made.

The second topic on archaeology and heritage included questions about their knowledge of material remains in the area, without mentioning the word archaeology or describing a specific archaeological site. This choice was made because people might feel uncomfortable with the term archaeology. They might think they do not know anything about archaeology and thus stop talking, while they do have knowledge about the area they live in. Some participants responded on these questions with a specific archaeological site in mind, most of the time indicated with ‘the ruins’. A very positive result was thus that they spoke about places they knew themselves, and not only those places as researched by the archaeologists.

In the questionnaire, the subject ‘past’ herein aimed towards knowledge,

stories and ideas about the far away past regarding the material remains, or oral traditions. Following, 'present' asked for recent stories and experiences with regard to the archaeological sites, or oral history. Finally, 'future' was discussed to get an idea of how the local community sees the future for the archaeological remains, and what they want to happen. In some cases, the concept of 'cued recalls' was applied, by visiting certain archaeological sites where a specific memory relates to (Bernard 1995, 237-238). This lead to more reliable information that was directly related to archaeology, than the interviews conducted at home.

The third topic on religion and ritual aimed towards getting information about the connection between religion and religious rituals, and the archaeological sites. But after only a few interviews I decided to erase this topic, because not only were the responses poor, people even were a little insulted by the questions. There seemed to be too much of a cultural gap to ask such questions. Therefore it was decided to not discuss the sensitive subject anymore. It is a very extensive subject that should be researched separately.

3.2.3 Translations

The questionnaire was written and translated in advance. A version was written in English first, afterwards this version was translated by a native speaker of Arabic. The questionnaire was translated twice by two different persons; one version resulted in the questions formulated in the spoken local dialect, while the other was written in standard Arabic. The translation in the local dialect was used, because this made it easier to work with the questionnaire during the interviews and to connect with the respondents on a personal level.

The interviews were conducted together with a translator, who was a native speaker of the Arabic language. The social and cultural background of the translator was comparable to the inhabitants of Udhruh, which made it easier for them to connect. Moreover, the translator was educated and worked at the University of Wadi Musa, which improved communication about the project. The research aims were understood and anticipated upon. Age and gender did not influence the interview setting because they were congruent with the interviewers.

Two interviewers worked for the project during the fieldwork period, both with the same profile. Interaction between interviewer and translator improved by the use of a questionnaire, because it provided the possibility to take control over the interview.

3.3 Qualification of data

When looking at data from an oral history interview, it should be kept in mind that all data comes from a process of communication, in which both the interviewer as the respondent, as well as the situation in which the interview is conducted, influences the answers. Not only "*what* is said, but also *how* it is said, *why* it is said and *what* it means" is of importance when analyzing the material (Abrams 2010, 10). In Udhruh, several factors were noticed which might have influenced the content of the interviews.

First, local politics in Udhruh, and between Udhruh and Jerba. Our first key informant in the village who arranged many interviews for us, was Jamiyla, a woman from a wealthy family, living in Jerba. We were brought in contact with her by dr. F. Abudanah, from the Al-Hussein Bin Talal University in Wadi Musa. She runs a foundation for women in Udhruh, through which she knows many of the women in the village. However, her family is from Jerba and even though contact between the two villages is peaceful, not everyone in Udhruh seemed comfortable with her presence. Therefore, having her as our key informant was not a perfect situation (cf. Bernard 1995, 167). Our second contact, who also arranged many interviews, was Ibrahim. We met him in the village during the first day that we introduced the Oral History project in Udhruh. He was born and raised here and positively known among its inhabitants. But there was a problem between these two main contacts. Ibrahim's wife also had a women's foundation in Udhruh, therefore the two women were rivals. It appeared that they were in a fight for a long time and did not want to talk to each other. The two main contacts tried to sabotage each other's interviews and accidently arranged interviews with the same people. This influenced the selection of respondents and the answers given.

The second factor is the need for income. The Udhruh area is dry, agriculture is becoming more difficult and many people in Udhruh are without a job. The World Heritage Site Petra (Wadi Musa) is not far from Udhruh. Wadi Musa grew into a popular tourist destination during the last twenty years, hereby drastically transforming the economy and lifestyle of its inhabitants (Comer and Willems 2012, 500). People from Udhruh have seen how a tourism industry, based on an archaeological site, attracts many visitors, which can lead to jobs in the tourism industry and thus become a source of income. With this example in mind, they see the archaeological site in Udhruh as a potential tourist destination. Therefore, they promote the archaeological research and wish for a museum or visitors center. This might have influenced the answers given, in a way that they describe their own relation towards the archaeology as protective. This is called the deference effect: when people tell you what they think you want to hear (Bernard 1995, 232). Some inhabitants were denying use and movement of stones from the site to build houses. Also, as an archaeologist who is asking about archaeology, possible social desirability of the answers must be taken into account (Bernard 1995, 239). When an archeologists asks about the importance of an archaeological site it is likely to receive a positive answer.

In the same way, my position as an archaeologist and part of the archaeological team might have influenced the answers given. This depends on the position of archaeologists in the community: have they done well in the past, or have they been a burden for the locals, closing off places that were in use by inhabitants? Because of the excavations in the past which established good contacts with the local community, the position of archaeologists was good. However, in the past some objects were taken from the archaeological site and brought to a museum. This was mentioned by several local inhabitants and regarded as something negative. Therefore, a good communication with the local community regarding objects that are (temporarily) taken for archaeological research is important.

Third, there was a cultural and a language barrier between interviewer and respondents, which influenced mutual understanding of questions and answers

(Andrews 1995, 79-80). On forehand I learned some basics of the Arabic language, but not enough to make good conversation. The change of translator halfway the interview period caused inconsistency in questions and answers, hereby highlighting the influence of the translator on the final results. The most difficult of working with a translator was probably that some of them intended to take over the interview and asked their own questions. In these cases, the conversation was intervened and a translation was asked, after which the questionnaire was followed again. This was necessary to keep control over the interviews. Nevertheless, it can be considered positively that the translators were so involved with the research that they started to think along (cf. Andrews 1995, 79-80).

Fourth, next to my position as an archaeologist, and someone who does not speak the language fluently, my gender, age, class, race, and nationality directly influenced communication with the interviewees (Andrews 1995, 75; Bernard 1995, 230). As a western woman I was welcome in almost any situation. I could talk with the men and sit with them without supervision because I am not Jordanian, nor Muslim; because of my western background, other rules social applied to me. Moreover, I could sit and talk with the women because I am a female, something that would have been impossible as a male interviewer.

3.4 Using stories in research and writing

Because oral history interviews are usually recorded, these tapes are mostly seen as the original document. But when the data are further used and analyzed, scholars tend to work with transcriptions in which intonation, atmosphere as well as rhythm and pauses are lost. Hereby, a great deal of information about the informant and the interview are lost (Portelli 1992, 47-48). However, using the stories in research and writing, and preserving them in archives, is important to maintain the information gathered. Therefore, transcribing is necessary if you want to be able to easily trace certain information from the interview. On the one hand, a transcription does not contain the same information as a recording, because the intonation, expressions and atmosphere are lost. But on the other hand, if you want to use quotes or analyze the information from the interview, it

will take a lot of time to listen to the recording over and over again. For practical reasons, a transcription (see Appendix IV) is then very useful (Starr 1996, 42-43).

In the Udhruh Oral History project, only transcriptions were used and some limited notes about the interview itself. This choice was made because of a lack of time and labor: with only one interviewer making notes and transcribing, and within the timespan of one month, a limited amount of work can be done. The interviews were transcribed as much as possible at the end of every day, with additional notes about the interviews to cover the information that was not recorded. This way, the stories were still in the researchers mind during the process of transcribing, which was very useful: not everything was clear on tape, therefore information could be added from the supporting notes and from recent memory. Moreover, some interviews do not have a voice recording due to the interview-circumstances: for example the interview with a local shepherd, who was interviewed in the field while herding sheep. These conversations were extensively described at the end of every day.

For the Udhruh Oral History project, transcribing and giving detailed descriptions of the interviews is a very important step, because the data are used for research purposes. Therefore, transcribing all interviews offers the opportunity to check assumptions made in the analysis phase that are based on statements from the interviews. Moreover, to improve verifiability of the data and the analysis, everything (voice recordings, transcriptions, additional notes, visual material and background information) was stored in a digital database, were everything is accessible on request. This gives a more complete insight in what has been said and done, and it offers the opportunity to check statements and read more about the context in which they were told (see appendices).

3.5 Data Analysis

In the data analysis phase, first all the important storylines from the interviews were written down and combined, in order to get a set of stories that is workable. Herein I followed two criteria: first quantitative storylines, and second qualitative storylines. The first kind of storylines were selected following the criteria that stories coming back repeatedly are more likely to be important for the local

community than stories that are only told once. They are told more than once for a reason; it indicates that these are stories the local community wants us to know about, and which they regard as meaningful and important. Likewise, because they are of importance for the local community, they are also important for the archaeological research, because archaeologists have to know the interests of the local community so it can be anticipated upon in decision making processes, presentation of data, communication and research activities. The second kind of storylines are important for archaeological research but only told by one respondent, because they present information that can be directly related to the material culture. Moreover, there is always a reference to the individual interview transcripts included in the data presentation. This selection of storylines is presented in chapter 5.

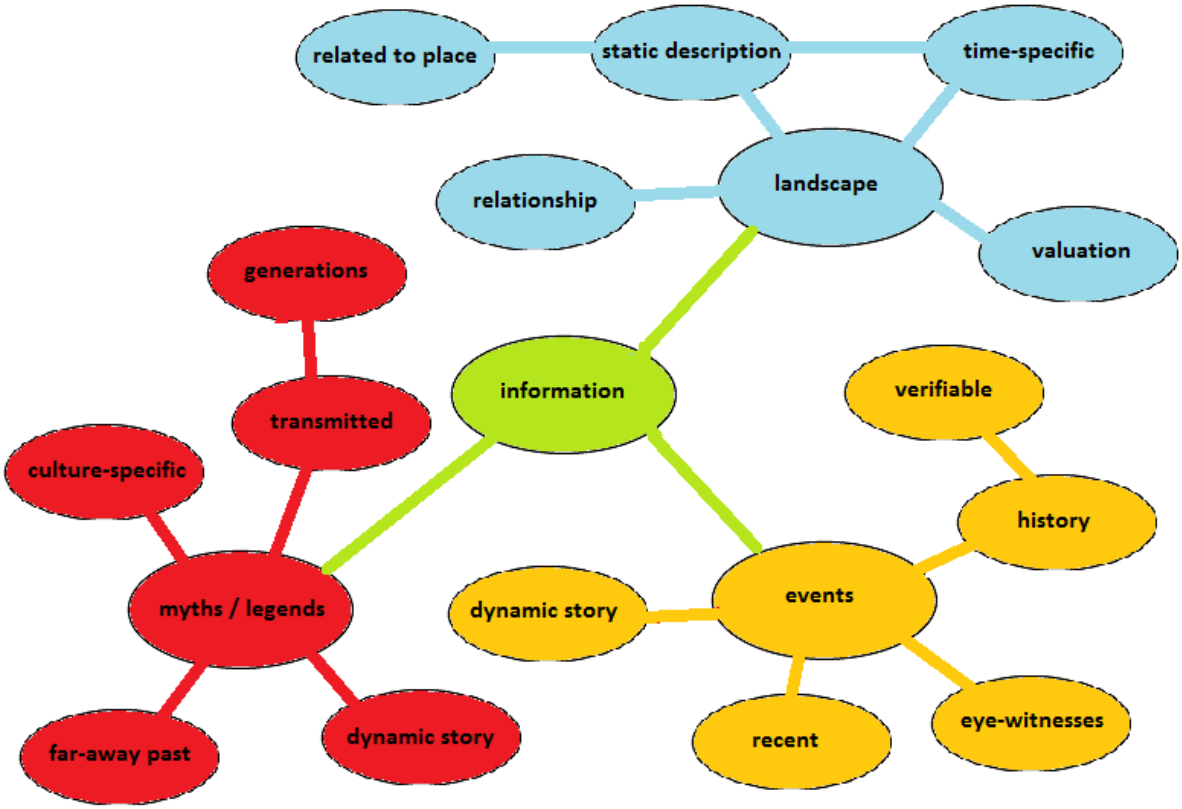

figure 3 - divided storylines

Following, the data was analyzed with the foregoing theoretical framework in mind. First, the stories were looked at from an archaeological ethnographical point of view: conversations with the local community through oral history

interviews. The information was divided in three classes or subjects of conversation, in which the storylines of the individual interviews can be globally divided: first, surroundings and environment; second, important events; and third, myths/legends (see figure 3). These storylines are defined by the following characteristics.

The local community has a **relationship** with the **landscape** based on their activities on the landscape, in the past, present and future. They **value** the landscape because it is important to them for a certain reason. Storylines that focus specifically on the landscape are **static descriptions** of a **place** at a **certain point in time**.

These same storylines can also relate to **events**, but in that case follow different characteristics. Storylines about events are **dynamic**, because time passes within the story. It tells a relatively **recent** event from an **eye-witness**. In some cases, the storyline relates to a **historical** event, which can be **verified**.

When a storyline is not from an eye-witness and describes a **dynamic story** from the **far away past**, it is defined as a **myth or legend**. These are **related to culture** and **transmitted** through **generations**. Following, the examples from the classes were analyzed, hereby taking account of the concept historicity.

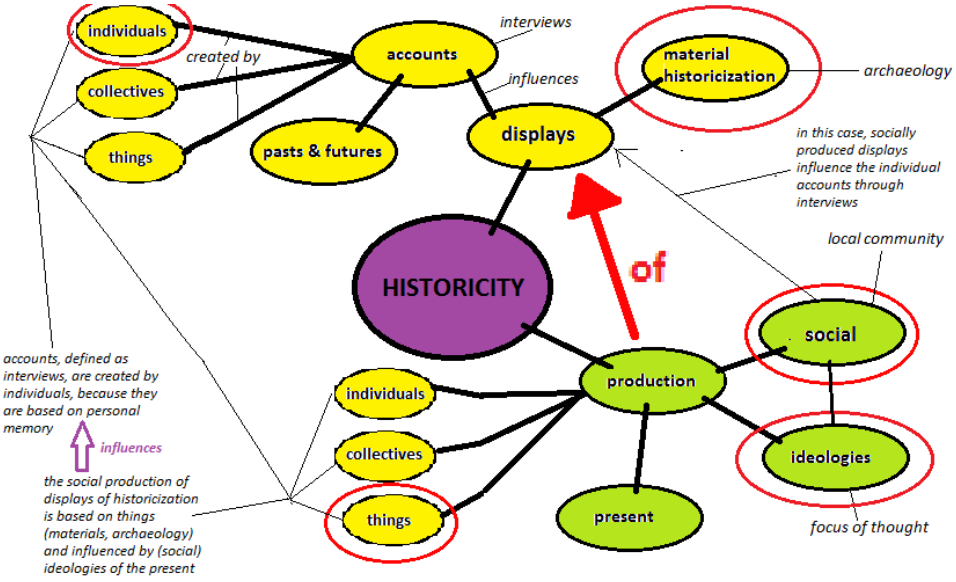

figure 4 - historicity

The concept of historicity (see figure 4) is defined as ‘'the ongoing social production of accounts of pasts and futures (Hirsch and Stewart 2005, 262)'. In this case, the **production** of **accounts** of **pasts and futures** are influenced by the local community (**social**) and their **ideologies**, as presented during the time of the interviews (**present**). The **accounts** are created by **individuals** because of the personal, individual form of the interviews, but together represent a **collective** or **social display** because all interviews take place in the same community. The **production** of **accounts** of **pasts and futures** is based on **things: material historicization** (materials, archaeology) because of the archaeological focus (subject) of the interviews.

Understanding historicity of the local community is a means to work towards the goal of understanding how histories are produced and perceived among the local community, and therefore how interviews should be interpreted by the archaeologists. This makes it easier to understand the information to be used in archaeological research, and to develop a meaningful way in which the local community can be included in the archaeological research. This can be expanded and further improved in following research, by taking into account other factors that influence the local perspective, as sense of time and place.

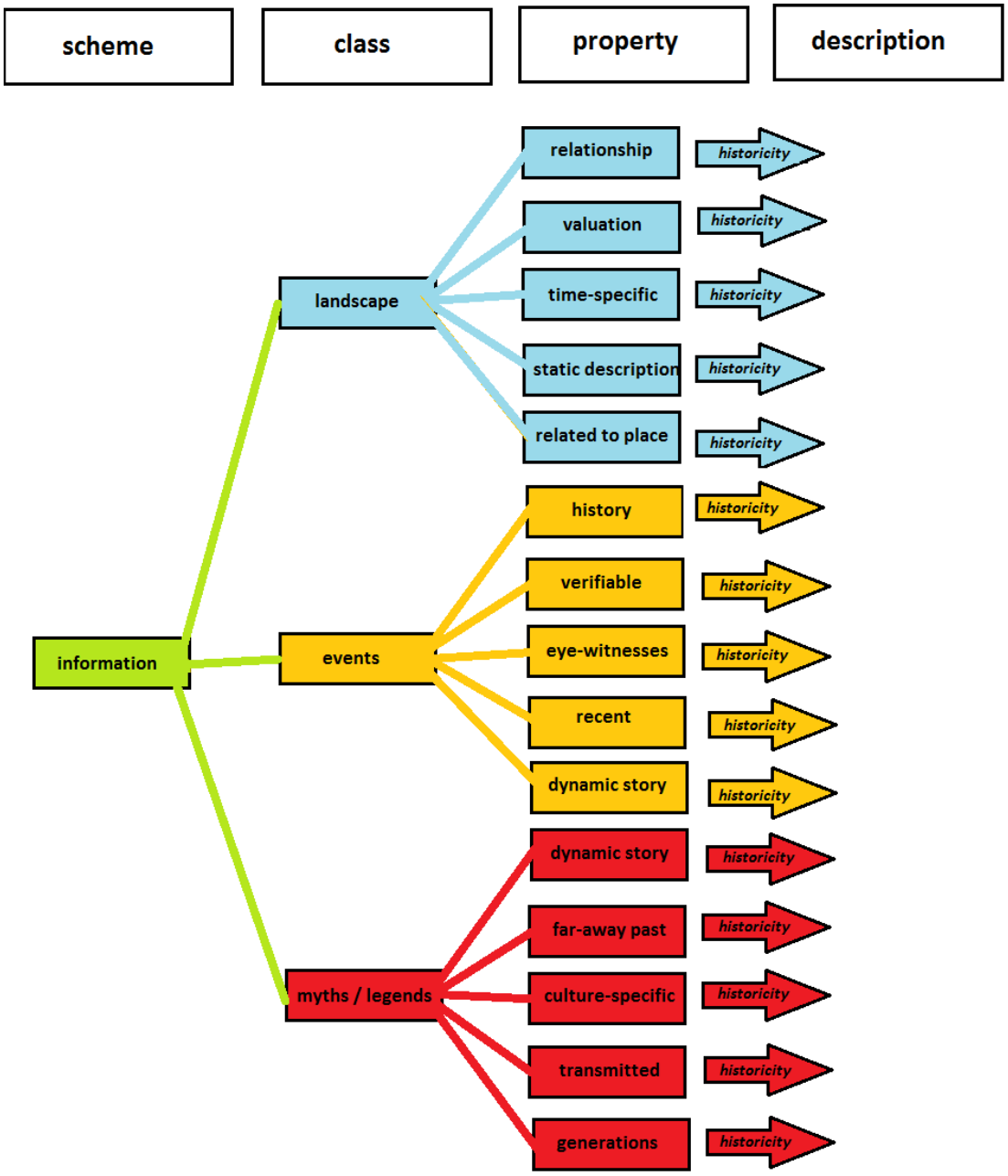

figure 5 - analysis

In order to analyze the storylines, that can be placed in one of the three classes because they contain one or some of the characteristics, the concept of historicity was applied on every specific characteristic (see figure 5). A short description of the resulting information will be given, showing what a certain characteristic of a storyline says about the concept of historicity. The historicity as

defined by the storylines will form the display of material historicization of an individual respondent, and together of the local community: the given description of how the characteristic of the storyline presents historicity, explains the display of historicity through which the respondents look at material culture.

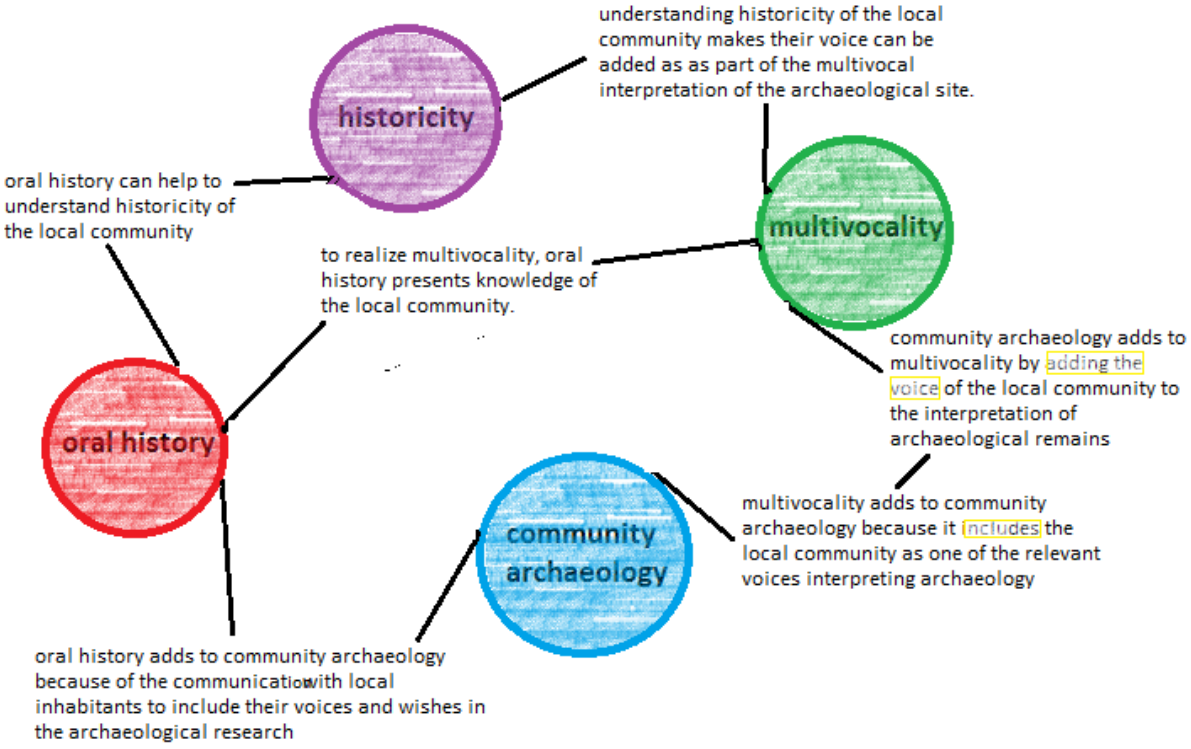

figure 7 - multivocality and community archaeology

After incorporating local **historicity** in the **oral history** research to improve understanding of the stories as told by the local community, the information as represented by the oral history research is being used to improve **multivocality** of the archaeological research. Moreover, multivocality through oral history research is an important aspect of **community archaeology** because it includes the voice of the local community in archaeological research (see figure 7). By using examples from literature and fragments from the interviews in Udhruh, it is argued how and why oral history is important for multivocality as well as community archaeology, thus how it adds to the social function and ethical research engagements of an archaeology project.

3.6 Recommendations for oral history projects interacting with archaeology

Methods of research as applied in the Udhruh Oral History project were extensively discussed and reflected upon. Moreover, three kinds of valuable information which can be derived from an oral history project were discussed: environmental information (landscape), historical information (events) and culture-specific information (myths, legends). Reflecting upon these experiences leads to valuable insights on oral history can gain more value for archaeological research, by selecting the right participants, asking certain questions and finding a good setting for interviews.

3.6.1 Selecting participants

For the execution of an oral history project that is supposed to interact with archaeology, it is of importance to select the right participants. Not everyone has useful information about the past to be discussed. Moreover, participants of different ages, gender and background will react differently on questions about the past. Therefore, in order to work efficiently and collect as much useful information as possible, a selection should be made. Besides age, gender and background, it should be considered how the participants relate to each other (Bryman 2008, 481-2). In this case an intentionally biased selection can be argued for, because some participants have more knowledge about certain subjects that are relevant than others, for example the subject of events from the past, or features in the landscape (Bernard 1995, 187-188).

In case of conducting oral history to underpin archaeological research, the most important factor is *location*. All participants should live at or near the archaeological site, or did so at a certain point of time. Selecting people who share the factor location assures that everyone has something to tell about the relevant surroundings of the archaeological site. Moreover, this means that participants should be selected by looking at the location of their houses: fifty participants living at the same block will provide a selective social memory, while fifty participants who are spread over the relevant area of research will provide a very diverse and rich database of individual stories.

Participating in oral history-interviews requires a certain amount of experience and knowledge about the past. Therefore it is preferable if participants have a high *age* and live at the location for a long period of time, or if the participants know many stories told by elderly people. Participants above the age of sixty are therefore a richer source of information than younger people. Children play at the site and know the surroundings, but have little knowledge about formation processes and the past. Adults under the age of sixty might be too busy with other activities (children, work) and have therefore less time to think about and elaborate on stories about the past, but probably have an active knowledge of history. The elderly have plenty of time to think and tell stories, and have had a long lifetime to gather these stories and experiences. Even though older than sixty can be seen as a guideline, it is necessary to also interview some of the younger generations, who have probably very different stories to tell and who might have a more active memory. This makes it possible to place the information as gathered from the elderly in perspective.

Gender also has an influence on the nature of stories told. Where men seem mostly interested in recent history and stories of war and heroes, women have a preference for experiences from their child years. Most people interviewed at Udhruh were men. Most of them liked to talk about the Ottoman period and the stories told by their grandparents about Bedouin fighting against the Turks. These stories were less popular among women, who preferred stories about the Bedouin past as they experienced it: living as nomads during summer and using the Roman Legionary Fortress as their home during winter. In order to get a complete image of the past as passed on by the local population, women as well as men need to be interviewed because of their different scope.

Educational background has an influence of how much the stories are based on written history. Some people interviewed at Udhruh had a very high educational background, these were the people who were most likely to come with stories about the past as they know it from the history books. Others wanted to share more orally transmitted stories, as myths, in which they had a stronger believe than the people with university education. Nevertheless, both kind of

stories were equally useful. Stories as myths give a good insight in the cultural world of local inhabitants and show their vision on the world, explain how they experience archaeology, and contain historical facts from the far away past. People with a high educational background also knew these myths because they are part of their culture, but sometimes tried to debunk them, or to explain and connect them with historical facts. Moreover, both offered another perspective on the past, therefore both should be incorporated in the interviews.

In some local communities, as in Udhruh, many participants belonged to the same *family*: there were three large families living at the site, all belonging to the same tribe. According to some of the participants, when you ask the right questions, every family has its own stories to tell. However, when conducting a large oral history project, it is likely to find many members of the same families in the area of research. It is therefore important to include an equal amount of participants of every family in the research. Not just because the data has to be representative (Bernard 1995, 182), also because acting otherwise might lead to conflicts within the local community, as experienced with the conflict between our key informants (see paragraph 3.2.1).

In summary, the focus group of an oral history project is (1) living near the archaeological site, (2) preferably of elderly age (above sixty) even though other ages should not be excluded, (3) both male and female, (4) both with a long and short educational background, (5) belonging to different families.

3.6.2 Asking questions

The interview-type relevant for collecting oral histories is the *semi-structured interview.* It offers a prepared list of topics, but leaves room for other topics of interest that might come up during the interview (Bryman 2008, 438). When researching oral history, it is very important to be flexible and leave a lot of space for the participants, to let them freely associate and to go further into the topics they find interesting, because this is where the stories are (Ritchie 2003, 20). Every participant has its own favorite subject, which might lead to new storylines in the social memory of the local community. Nevertheless, it is important to

come up with a prepared list of topics, because there is a research focus: archaeology. Topics that are of interest in an oral history interview that aims to interact with archaeological research are threefold: surroundings/environment, important events, and stories/myths.

The first topic, *surroundings and environment*, should contain some questions about the living area of the participants. Even though emphasis is not on the individual, asking about personal experiences might lead to valuable information about the presence of certain features in the landscape. Questions as 'why do you live here', 'what is your favorite place in the area', 'where do you come often' and 'what do you like about your village' show the participants interest in the region and the areas visited mostly. This functions as a basis for further questions asked about the surroundings. It very much depends on the respondent whether it is useful to directly ask about archaeological remains in the area. Most participants will not have an adequate response because they are intimidated by the use of the word archaeology. Therefore it is better to let them start talking about ruins and features in the landscape while discussing personal experiences in the area, and then continue the interview in this direction using their own terminology.

The second topic, *important events*, should lead to the discussion of historical events and their impact on the community, as well as their impact on the archaeological remains. Because the interviewer does not have any knowledge about what the participant knows about the past and which periods are of importance to them, it is most effective to start this topic with the broadest question of all: 'tell me about the past.' Events which are known best and left the biggest impact will be told. In order to follow the conversation and to be able to ask the right follow-up questions, it is important to have knowledge about the past of the area. At the same time, it might also be very fruitful to act a little naïve regarding the past, because this leads to a more detailed description of events. Asking where certain events took place leads the interview towards a more archaeology-focused conversation, discussing the features of history in the landscape.

Moreover, the third topic is about stories and myths, and has a different value for archaeologists than the second topic, but during the interview the two will very likely be intertwined. Talking about events and stories from the past might lead by some participants to a historical event, but by other participants to a myth or oral tradition. Myths and oral traditions are culturally interwoven and in some cultures not easily accessible for the outside world. It is difficult to get to know these myths and stories if you are not a cultural expert. However, a question that might lead the interview in the right direction is: 'What stories about the past did your father or grandfather tell you?', or more direct: 'What do you tell your children about the past?'.

3.6.3 Finding the right setting

The right setting for an interview where you are able to give the participant the freedom to talk and where you are able to record everything clearly, is a quit room which is comfortable to the respondent – preferably at the participant's home – without loud noises and disturbances that might interfere with the recording. However, other places where the respondent feels comfortable can lead to very fruitful conversations, as shown by interview 15, where a shepherd was interviewed in the fields. Moreover, when conducting interviews that focus on archaeological remains and features in the landscape, the participant might want to show you around and tell his story at the place which is the subject of conversation. In any case, this will lead to a richer story about the archaeology and will bring up more memories than when staying inside the house: a cued recall of memories (Bernard 1995, 237-238).

The method of conducting interviews that will lead to the most useful and interesting information is therefore an interview split in two – or even three – parts. First, general interviews should be conducted inside the house (or a place wished for by the respondent), gathering an overview of information and potential stories. Second, many people will start thinking about the interview afterwards and need a second round in order to tell all complete stories. During the interview inside, it can be proposed to take the conversation outside and make a tour among

the archaeological features mostly discussed in the participant's interview. This will definitely be worth the extra time, because the information will be richer, more specific and inspired directly by the archaeology, which makes it much easier to interact with the archaeological research.

4. HISTORIOGRAPHY: HISTORY AND HERITAGE OF JORDAN.

4.1 Jordanian history and the post-colonial heritage discourse

Jordan is situated at the border of the desert and used to be an important crossroad for trading activities. During time, the dominant lifestyle alternated between urban culture and nomadic culture. The country was, together with Israel and Syria, part of Biblical Kanaän. In 1230BC Moses led the Jewish people towards the Promised Land, of which Jordan was part. Here, three independent states were established: Edom (south), Moab (middle) and Ammon (north) (Meijer 1997, 6). In the archaeological heritage discourse of Jordan, the Biblical past plays an important role. One reason is that Archaeology came to Jordan originally as a western discipline, researching the past important for Western history. A second reason is that, by looking at the Biblical past in Jordan, a shared heritage between the three religions (Judaism, Islam and Christianity) is emphasized (Maffi 2009, 18-23).

In the fourth century BC the Nabatean kingdom arose in the south of Jordan, stretching its power from Mecca and Medina to Damascus. The important tourist destination and World Heritage site Petra originates from the Nabatean period. The Nabataeans were nomads and successful traders (Meijer 1997, 7-8). Their state came to an end in AD106, with the Roman occupation. Roman rule lasted until AD363 (Fiema 2003, 38). Fiema (2003, 38-58) discusses the so-called 'neglected' subject of Roman Petra, and mentions how the city is sometimes assumed to be too isolated for Roman trading routes. Instead, some scholars believe the Via Nova Traiana (a large, monumental highway from one end of the province to the other) went through Udhruh instead of Petra (Killick 1986, 432; Millar 1993, 572 in Fiema 2003, 44-45). Even though Fiema disagrees with this idea and instead argues for the unacknowledged importance of Roman Petra, the alternative mentioning of Udhruh shows its assumed presence and prominence in Roman Jordan. It is here that the Udhruh Archaeological project and the Udhruh Oral History project take place.

Also for these pre-Islamic civilizations as the Nabataeans and Romans, Maffi (2009) argues that these derive mainly from a western archaeological

discourse. Moreover, she states that these pre-Islamic civilizations present a past connected to the roots of the western world, while the Arab-Islamic period is very important for the current local population (Maffi 2009, 12). Results from the Udhruh Oral History project might confirm this statement because apart from material observations on Roman archaeological remains, there seems to be a limited interest for the Roman period in Udhruh. Stories gathered focus mainly on Arab-Islamic periods, for example the story about Jabel at-Tahkim, which according to the local community represents an important event in Islamic history. Also the Ottoman period, which ended only about 100 years ago, is well known. However, it is difficult to say whether this is due to the Arab-Islamic nature of these periods, or because they are closer in time.

The Umayyad-dynasty was the first Arab-Islamic empire, starting in 636 after the Byzantine period (324-636). During this time, the area of Jordan was especially important for Islamic pilgrimages (*hadj),* because it was situated between Damascus and Mecca. Gradually, the official language became Arabic and Islam the dominant religion. During the Abbasid-dynasty in the ninth century, the nomadic lifestyle again dominated in Jordan (Meijer 1997, 7-8). In 1516, Jordan became part of the Ottoman empire. The Ottomans saw the remote area of Jordan only as a route for pilgrimages while the Bedouin kept their power in the desert, which led to many raids on travelers (Meijer 1997, 9). Because the current official language of Jordan is still Arabic, and Islam is the dominant religion, it can be stated that these Muslim empires had a large impact on society nowadays.

Moreover, the Udhruh Oral History project can be placed in the post-colonial heritage discourse of Jordan, because it includes local visions on the past in the scientific research. Even though the research focuses on a pre-Islamic period in time, which would previously be labeled as a western research focus, local perspectives are taken seriously. Not only as a folktale, but as a meaningful vision on the archaeological record which is included for its scientific relevance, local material historicization and local knowledge of recent formation processes. Moreover, it presents the relationship between the archaeological record and the local community, hereby showing how certain features are valued.

Currently, the Jordan authorities are working towards the development of several cultural and historical heritages, with the aim of stimulating income from tourism (Maffi 2009, 28). The country lacks natural resources as minerals and oil, exists for 80% of desert and suffers from water shortage (Meijer 1997, 56). Heritage tourism is seen as a quick way of creating employment and generating income (Daher 2006, 291). Even though the social and local history of villages and towns was dominated by the official national history, and local realities are set back as 'folkloric' accounts of the past (Daher 2006, 303), these histories can create a great experience for the tourists visiting Jordan. The wish for a flourishing tourist industry was also emphasized in Udhruh by the local inhabitants, who are mostly without a job. They know the economic influence of tourism from the nearby World Heritage site Petra. This makes the promotion of a tourist industry in Udhruh one of the goals of the archaeological project.

4.2 The Bedouin state of Jordan

The state of Jordan in its current form came into existence after World War I. Under the leadership of sharif Hussein from Mecca and his two sons Abdallah and Faisal, the Bedouin formed an army in 1916 to participate in the Arabic uprising against the Turks. Despite the victory over Damascus, the hope on an Arabic state came to an end because of the French and the British, who already divided the land in a secret agreement. This led to the creation of a border between the French: Lebanon and Syria, and the British mandated territory: Palestine, which was later divided in Palestine and Trans-Jordan. Abdallah became king of Trans-Jordan and Faisal became king of Iraq. The state of Trans-Jordan was a marginal area at the border of Syria, Palestine and Iraq, with limited social and economic development. Half of its 225.000 inhabitants were Bedouin (Meijer 1997, 11).

The Bedouin played an important role in the state of Jordan. After their help in the Arab uprising against the Turks, they fought for the Arab Legion: a Bedouin army under the leadership of the British general Glubb, to keep control over the new state. King Abdallahs dependence on the British was written down in a 'friendship treaty'. His only way out of this was to strive towards one large Arab state, which he wanted to realize by putting a Hashemite ruler on the throne

in Syria. This plan failed: instead, he could fulfil his aspirations in Palestine (Meijer 1997, 12).

Again, the Bedouin played an important role in the Arab-Israeli war in 1948. The British recognized the country as independent Hashemite kingdom in 1946. Following the UN plan in 1947 to divide Palestine and Israel in two countries, the Arab legion agreed on a non-aggression pact with the Zionists: the Arab legion could occupy the Arab part of Palestine, as long as they did not take action against the founding of the Israeli state. The Arab legion took place at the Arab side of the UN dividing border and even though it resulted in fights between the Arabs and the Israeli, the plan to divide Palestine stayed largely intact. Trans-Jordan annexed the West-Bank and changed its name to Jordan. This also changed the character of Jordan, because many Palestine citizens now became Jordan citizens (Meijer 1997, 13; see also Sicker 1989).

In 1957, the Bedouin played a role in the protection of king Hussein, grandson of king Abdallah. They fought for the king against pan-Arab sympathizers, who wanted to 'save the country from the Hashemite'. Thus, with help of the Bedouin, king Hussein ended the internal treats in Jordan (Meijer 1997, 15; see also Alon 2007). This was followed by the six-day war against Israel in 1967, in which Jordan lost the West-Bank and Palestines became a majority in Jordan. Moreover, the power of Palestinian guerillas grew and they showed their aversion against the king. In 1970 they blew up two planes, which led to 'black September' in which the Bedouin army of king Hussein drove back the Palestinian guerillas. More than 3000 Palestinians were killed. As a result of the *intifada* in 1987, king Hussein officially gave up the West-Bank. This was positively achieved by the growing amount of Jordanian nationalists, who were afraid the majority of Palestinians tried to make Jordan a Palestinian state (Meijer 1997, 16-19; see also Alon 2007).

The reason for mentioning these actions by Bedouin groups and the Bedouin army, is that the local community in Udhruh exists of Bedouin who are very proud of their history. As a result, many of the stories gathered mention the heroic past of forefathers and relatives, who fought in the Bedouin army. Some

stories were based on the wars in Palestine, and also the protection of king Hussein was very important for the local community, because this resulted in the ownership of the land they now live on. Moreover, fighting and ownership of land is a very important aspects of the oral history as told by the people from Udhruh.

Inhabitants of the Udhruh village belong to the Huwaytat tribe, who played an important role in the history of Jordan: for example, they are well known from the famous story of Lawrence of Arabia. This nomadic tribe dominated southern Jordan from Tafila to Áqaba and consists of several branches (see appendix II for an overview of tribes and branches living in Udhruh). After founding of the state they changed their lifestyle to include farming, herding, employment in the Arab legion and public works (Alon 2007, 162). Most of the people from Udhruh belong to the Ibn Jazi branch of the Huwaytat tribe, which became under the leadership of shayk Hamad bin Jazi the most powerful component of the confederacy (Alon 2007, 162).

5. CASE STUDY: TALES FROM UDHRUH

In the following chapter, I will discuss the oral history project *Tales from Udhruh*, as executed within the Udhruh Archaeological Project. Herein, I will give an overview of information gathered in the field and shortly reflect on how they are situated in a context of time and place. Therefore, I will present the oral history as a result instead of as a method of research. The question answered in this chapter is: what information do local inhabitants from Udhruh have about the archaeology in their living environment and from what perspective do they look at it?

The stories are presented not as individual accounts of the past, but as a social memory. Reason is that most stories were told more than once, by several members of the local community. Following the model of 'cultural consensus', a story on which respondents agree is more likely to be true than a story on which respondents disagree (Romney *et al.* 1986 in Bernard 1995, 171). However, to improve reliability of the representation, it is clearly noted who the individual sources of information are. However, this is only a short overview of a couple of aspects from the interviews that might be of importance for the archaeological research. Because the data is again re-interpreted and rewritten, and several aspects are emphasized or left out, this representation is not suitable to be used as a source for further research. Therefore, in every story is directly referred to the interviews from which the information is derived and where more information about the subject can be found. Moreover, this representation only offers information that might be useful for the practical research engagements, excluding explicit wishes of the local community for the archaeological project. For this aspect I refer to my internship product: *Advices from Udhruh* (Hageraats, unpublished).

The result of the oral history project can be divided in three sections, namely oral history in general, oral history directly connected with archaeological remains, and oral traditions. In the following chapter, global storylines from the interviews are presented. Notes from the author, in which the storylines are interpreted and placed in a historical framework, are clearly separated from the information as derived from interviews.

5.1 Oral History: General

5.1.1 Bedouin life

The current inhabitants of Udhruh have not always lived here. These Bedouin settled here around AD 1910. Before that time, another tribe from Palestine was living in this area.[4] From the interviews it is unclear whether they left out of free will, or were forced to leave.[5]

> *Author's note*
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> Settlement in Udhruh by the current inhabitants seems to have started just before World War I. As stated by Yoav Alon on the Huwaytat-tribe: 'Just before World War One most of the confederacy abandoned its semi-nomadic way of life combining farming in Jabal Shara and pastoral economy and became one of the powerful and rich nomadic tribes in Arabia, deriving their income from raiding, *khawa* collection and herding camels and horses (Alon 2007, 162).' This is congruent with the information from the interview, apparently this branch of the Huwaytat settled in Udhruh.

About 200 years ago, there were many tribal wars in Jordan and surrounding countries. According to the interviews, the Huwaytat tribe turned out to be the biggest and strongest in the area. Moreover, they helped king Abdallah to establish the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.[6]

> *Author's note*
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> During the tribal wars, the northern Bedouin tribes of the Bani Sakhr were the main rivals of the Huwaytat. They made peace in 1926 (Alon 2007, 161-162). According to the foregoing historiography, the event in which the Huwaytat helped king Abdallah to help establish the Hashemite

[4] Interview with 'Abd Allah Dhyab Harb Al Jazi on 12 June 2013
[5] Interview with 'Abd Allah Dhyab Harb Al Jazi and Ibrahiym Arbiy'a Klyib Al Jazi, discussion on 12 June 2013
[6] Interview with Mohammad Qida Qasem Abu Shriyth Al Jazi on 24 June 2013; Mohamad Farhan Kaiyd Al Jazi and Bassaam Mohammad Farhan Al Jazi on 17 June 2013.

Kingdom of Jordan probably refers to the Arab revolt against the Turks in 1916, when the state of Trans-Jordan was established.

Because of their help with the big Arabic revolution, they could choose the land where they wanted to live[7]. They had to make a choice between land in the region of Amman, and land in the region of Udhruh. They choose for Udhruh because of the vegetation, which was good for keeping camels, even though Amman had better circumstances for agriculture: more water and fertile ground.[8] This land is very important to them. Their grandfather choose it, and they have a paper that says it is theirs. Therefore they will always defend it. After the war, all tribes came to the Udhruh-region because there was water.[9]

Author's note

The notion that the Bedouin could choose the land where they wanted to live *after* the Arab revolt, which means after 1916, means they choose the land on which they already lived, instead of moving to the North (where the Bani Sakhr tribe lived). Moreover, two reasons for the choice to settle in Udhruh were mentioned. First: the vegetation for camels, and second: the water. The presence of water indicates a local source, as a well, which might also have been the reason for previous societies to settle at this particular place.

Especially sheik Haroon bin Jazi is very famous in Udhruh, he was a leader of the Huwaytat tribe. With other members of the family, he fought in Palestine in

[7] Interview with Mohammad Qida Qasem Abu Shriyth Al Jazi on 24 June 2013; Ghandwur Harwun Shyman Al Jazi on 23 June 2013.
[8] Interview with 'Abd Allah Dhyab Harb Al Jazi on 12 June 2013; Ibrahiym Arbiy'a Klyib Al Jazi on 30 June 2013.
[9] Interview with Mohammad Qida Qasem Abu Shriyth Al Jazi on 24 June 2013; 'Ataallah Al Jazi on 24 June 2013; Mohammad Sammwr Al'awdat Al Jazi on 25 June 2013.

1948.[10] Sheik Haroon prevented that people took stones from the archaeological site.[11]

Author's note

This refers to the Arab-Israeli war in 1948, when the Arab legion occupied the West-Bank. In Alon (2007, 162), there is a reference to a leading shayk in this period as Hamad bin Jazi; Haroon bin Jazi was not specifically mentioned.

Before the 1950s the Bedouin lived as nomads. They lived in tents of goat hair and travelled with their animals during summer. They only stayed in Udhruh during winter. When it was cold, they found protection within the walls of the Roman legionary fortress and the later Ottoman buildings on the current archaeological site. There were no houses during that time, the Bedouin lived near the archaeological buildings and in their tents.[12] Many people believe that Bedouin life was good and that everyone was happy during these times. Even though it was a hard life because everything was made by hand, it was an easier and better life.[13]

Author's note

According to the interviews, until the 1950s the inhabitants of Udhruh lived as nomads. The older participants remembered this time from their

[10] Interviews with a Wife of Harwun Shyman Al Jazi on 24 June 2013; Diyf Allah Dhyab Al Jazi on 18 June 2013; Mohammad Hatmal Al Jazi on 17 June 2013; Rabiy'ah Altarqi Dhyab Al Jazi on 17 June 2013.

[11] Interviews with Diyf Allah Dhyab Al Jazi on 18 June 2013; with a wife of Haroon Aljazi on 24 June 2013.

[12] Interviews with Diyf Allah Dhyab Al Jazi on 18 June 2013; Mother of Jamal Al'awdaat on 18 June 2013; Mohammad Sammwr Al'awdat Al Jazi on 25 June 2013; Khaled 'Ataallah Al Jazi on 24 June 2013; Mohammad Hatmal Al Jazi on 17 June 2013; 'Aiyd Rfiyfaan Z'al Al'awdat on 23 June 2013; Mohammad Qida Qasem Abu Shriyth Al Jazi on 24 June 2013.

[13] Interviews with Mother of Jamal Al'awdaat on 18 June 2013; Wife of Harwun Shyman Al Jazi on 24 June 2013; 'Abd Allah Dhyab Harb Al Jazi on 12 June 2013; Diyf Allah Dhyab Al Jazi on 18 June 2013; Ghandwur Harwun Shyman Al Jazi on 23 June 2013; Mohammad Sammwr Al'awdat Al Jazi on 25 June 2013; Khaled Salem Hiyshan Al Jazi on 30 June 2013; Ibrahiym Arbiy'a Klyib Al Jazi on 30 June 2013.

childhood or from stories told by their parents. Alon states for the Huwaytat that ‘after the founding of the state, their resources changed and diversified to include farming, herding sheep and goats and employment in the Arab legion and public works (Alon 2007, 162).’ However, most interesting from this part is the reference to the archaeological site situated in the centre of the Udhruh village, and how they lived among the ruins. This gives information about recent formation processes on the site. For example, there are almost no standing buildings now. Only sixty or seventy years ago, it must have looked very different. Moreover, living on the site leaves traces on the material remains. Furthermore, it tells something about the connection of the local inhabitants with the archaeology and their material historicization of the site.

Overall, their Bedouin past is seen as their most important and meaningful heritage.[14] This has to do with the beauty of desert life: hunting, adventures and nights under the stars. Moreover, the shared customs, traditions and culture, the hard life in the past and how to live in the desert without fear are memories that are seen as most important to share with the younger generations.[15] People find themselves more connected to the past that is the Bedouin lifestyle and family traditions, than with the far-away past connected to the Udhruh region and its material culture, which can be explained by the nomadic lifestyle of Bedouin. Because they travel around a lot, they do not connect strongly with their surroundings. But wherever they go, they always travel together with their family. This is why they have a stronger connection with family traditions than with the landscape and the material culture in their surroundings.[16]

[14] Interviews with ‘Aiyd Rfiyfaan Z‘al Al‘awdat on 23 June 2013; ‘Ataallah Al Jazi on 24 June 2013.
[15] Interview with ‘Ataallah Al Jazi on 24 June 2013.
[16] Interview with ‘Aiyd Rfiyfaan Z‘al Al‘awdat on 23 June 2013.

Author's note

This is a strong reference to the local community's connection with the archaeological site and what they see as important aspects of their past. Moreover, it says something about their relation with material culture and the landscape in general, which is supposedly very weak. However, from the point of view of an outsider, it can be argued that because the Bedouin used to live as nomads and travelled around, they must know the surrounding landscape and its features very well.

In 1958, people decided to permanently settle in Udhruh because of the water.[17] This was ten years before the government announced in 1968 that all Bedouin had to settle down.[18] Therefore, they had to make a shift from living in a tent of goat hair, to living in a stone house, which had a very large impact on their society. Because they settled down, their lifestyle drastically changed from keeping animals to agriculture.[19] Later, the water disappeared and people got governmental jobs. This was again a change in lifestyle.[20]

Author's note

The changes in lifestyle as indicated by the participants seems later than the one indicated in the literature about the Huwaytat-tribe. However, the Huwaytat cover a very large area of southern Jordan and they probably did not settle down all at the same time. Another possible explanation is that the local definition of settling down is different from the definition as stated by Alon (2007, 162). An important notion however, is the notion of water disappearance as a reason for changing their lifestyle. Why did the area become dryer, was it because of a lack of rain? Or did something

[17] Interview with Rabiy'ah Altarqi Dhyab Al Jazi on 17 June 2013.
[18] Interview with Mohammad Qida Qasem Abu Shriyth Al Jazi on 24 June 2013.
[19] Interviews with Khaled 'Ataallah Al Jazi on 24 June 2013; Mohammad Hatmal Al Jazi on 17 June 2013; Soliman 'Ali Soliman on 26 June 2013.
[20] Interview with Mohammad Qida Qasem Abu Shriyth Al Jazi on 24 June 2013; 'Ataallah Al Jazi on 24 June 2013; Mohammad Sammwr Al'awdat Al Jazi on 25 June 2013.

change in the (use of) irrigation systems which made agriculture more difficult?

Even though memories about their Bedouin-past are very positive and they will keep their Bedouin-values, they will not go back to their old lifestyle. They got used to a more comfortable life, with cars instead of camels. Moreover, the desert has changed and it would be difficult to pick up their old lifestyle again.[21]

Author's note

A reason for not being able to pick up their old lifestyle might be the change of the desert by the creation of borders, which makes it more difficult to travel to the desert in Saudi Arabia.

5.1.2 Family relations

Bedouin living in the Udhruh area are related to each other and therefore connected to the region.[22] There are especially strong connections between Udhruh, El-Jerba and Wadi Musa.[23] All Bedouin living in these places share the same customs and values.[24] They also share the same building techniques, land, agriculture, traditions and religion.[25] Family law and family customs and traditions are seen as the most important part of their heritage, more important than the place and its material remains. This is because of the nomadic lifestyle of Bedouin families.[26]

[21] Interviews with Mohammad Qida Qasem Abu Shriyth Al Jazi on 24 June 2013; Khaled ʻAtaallah Al Jazi on 24 June 2013; Mohammad Sammwr Alʻawdat Al Jazi on 25 June 2013; Umm Umm Thamir on 25 June 2013; Mohammad Hatmal Al Jazi on 17 June 2013.
[22] Interview with Musa Zaál Hamd Al Jazi on 16 June 2013; Ali Hamd Al Jazi on 16 June 2013.
[23] Interviews with Mohammad Sammwr Alʻawdat Al Jazi on 25 June 2013; Mohammad Hatmal Al Jazi on 17 June 2013; Mohamad Farhan Kaiyd Al Jazi and Bassaam Mohammad Farhan Al Jazi on 17 June 2013.
[24] Interview with Mohammad Hatmal Al Jazi on 17 June 2013.
[25] Interview with Mohamad Farhan Kaiyd Al Jazi and Bassaam Mohammad Farhan Al Jazi on 17 June 2013.
[26] Interviews with ʻAbd Allah Dhyab Harb Al Jazi on 12 June 2013; ʻAiyd Rfiyfaan Zʻal Alʻawdat on 23 June 2013.

Author's note

The sharing of building techniques and perceiving this as part of the family customs and traditions might be interesting for further research. Since it can be observed in the village that inhabitants made use of the ancient materials from the archaeological site in their buildings, it might be questioned whether this was done with a specific purpose and if it is a custom shared with other neighbouring villages.

Another story is being told about family relations that goes far back into the past. A connection is made between the Al-Huwaytat tribe and the Nabatean civilization. Apparently, a researcher from Saudi Arabia explains in an article how the Al-Huwaytat tribe can be connected through a family tree with the Nabatean civilization.[27]

Author's note

This idea is proposed by only one source, but nevertheless worth mentioning. Not because it is an idea naturally supported by the archaeological research, but because it says something about the perception of history and what is seen as important. The participant was very proud of this connection with the Nabataeans. Family connections take an important place in their history and heritage, and (the idea of) being related makes the Nabatean civilization part of their cultural heritage.

5.1.3 Politics

When king Abdallah lived in Ma'an, he visited Udhruh for holidays, to sleep in a tent of goat hair and to breathe fresh air.[28]

[27] Interview with Mohammad Sammwr Al'awdat Al Jazi on 25 June 2013.
[28] Interviews with 'Abd Allah Dhyab Harb Al Jazi on 12 June 2013; Rabiy'ah Altarqi Dhyab Al Jazi on 17 June 2013.

Author's note

An event in Udhruh that many people refer to; the king had a good relationship with the Bedouin.

5.2 Oral History: Archaeology

Since the Oral History project mainly aimed to collect information regarding the subject of archaeology, this was an important subject of conversation. It was also a topic to which many inhabitants could not directly relate, but after some talking they had a lot to say about it. For example, some of the inhabitants participated in previous excavations, or remembered the Roman Legionary Castra before it was destroyed by an earthquake.

5.2.1 Earlier excavations

On an earlier excavation, a large stone was found with an inscription written on it. Archaeologists took the stone to Amman for preservation, where it still remains. Other finds contained coins, glass and pottery from the Roman period.[29]

Author's note

Apparently, the stone was very important and left a large impact, because many inhabitants remembered that it was found. Taking archaeological material from the site is one thing that should be avoided in the future as much as possible, or at least should be discussed with the local community. The participant who knew about Roman finds used to work on the previous excavation. This shows that active involvement, for example through labour, leaves the local community better informed about the archaeological research and what has been found.

[29] Interview with Musa Zaál Hamd Al Jazi on 16 June 2013; Diyf Allah Dhyab Al Jazi on 18 June 2013;.

5.2.2 The Roman Legionary Fortress

When passing the fortress, a small circle of stones is visible next to the road. It is the reburial of a human skeleton. Inhabitants found it beneath a tower of the fortress and buried the bones. It was told that the space beneath the tower used to be a prison, and the dead body was a prisoner.[30] Moreover, I was told there used to be a Turkish police station at the fortress.[31]

> *Author's note*
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> The fortress is situated in the centre of the Udhruh village and therefore takes a prominent place in the living environment of most participants. Children play at the site and the ruins have been used for many purposes over the years. Mentioning of the presence of a Turkish police station at the site might indicate that the human skeleton from the prison dates from the Ottoman period.

The fortress itself is built up of very large and heavy stones. First, it is believed that people in the ancient past were much larger and stronger than we are, and that they carried the stones on their shoulders.[32] This interpretation is based on the large skeletons which they found in the ground beneath their houses.[33] Second, other participants heard from their father that the stones were moved with the use of rope.[34] Third, the stones could have been moved with the use of animals.[35] About 70 years ago, some of these heavy stones from the fortress were moved with the help of camels, to build another house in a cave nearby.[36] The stones originally come from the stone-quarry Mgatha ElHadar.[37]

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[30] Interview with 'Abd Allah Dhyab Harb Al Jazi and Ibrahiym Arbiy'a Klyib Al Jazi on 12 June 2013.
[31] Interview with 'Aiyd Khaliyl Al Sbwu'a on 27 June 2013.
[32] Interviews with 'Abd Allah Dhyab Harb Al Jazi on 12 June 2013; 'Ataallah Al Jazi on 24 June 2013; Mohammad Hatmal Al Jazi on 17 June 2013; Diyf Allah Dhyab Al Jazi on 18 June 2013.
[33] Interview with 'Ataallah Al Jazi on 24 June 2013; Musa Zaál Hamd Al Jazi on 16 June 2013.
[34] Interview with 'Ataallah Al Jazi on 24 June 2013; Soliman 'Ali Soliman on 26 June 2013.
[35] 'Ataallah Al Jazi on 24 June 2013; Soliman 'Ali Soliman on 26 June 2013.
[36] Interviews with 'Abd Allah Dhyab Harb Al Jazi on 12 June 2013; Soliman Ali Soliman on 26 June 2013.
[37] Interviews with 'Abd Allah Dhyab Harb Al Jazi on 12 June 2013; 'Ataallah Al Jazi on 24 June 2013; Mohammad Sammwr Al'awdat Al Jazi on 25 June 2013..

Author's note

The first interpretation, stating that people were much larger in the past and able to carry these heavy stones, is an oral tradition explaining a material phenomenon that is otherwise difficult to understand, thus it is a way to make sense of the world. The second and third explanation, in which rope and animals were being used to move the stones, can be supported by experiences and archaeological evidence and are thus more likely. The story about large people from the past is still told and believed among the local community, especially among the older people, but some participants[38] emphasized its unscientific nature and regarded it as nonsense. This might indicate a changing nature in perceptions of the past and material culture.

Before the fortress was destroyed by an earthquake[39], most of the walls were still standing up. People used the walls to build their houses against it. These houses, attached to, and inside, the fortress, were therefore also protected against the outside world.[40]

Author's note

This fragment shows two things. First, much of the fortress was still standing up before it was destroyed by an earthquake. This must have been a relatively recent event, because people remembered the fortress and how it looked before the earthquake. Second, the material remains were being re-used by the local community to find protection and build their houses. In my assumption, the walls of the fortress were used because there was a

[38] Interviews with Ghandwur Harwun Shyman Al Jazi on 23 June 2013; Soliman 'Ali Soliman on 26 June 2013.
[39] Interviews with Mother of Jamal Al'awdat on 18 June 2013; 'Aiyd Rfiyfaan Z'al Al'awdat on 23 June 2013.
[40] Interviews with Ibrahiym Arbiy'a Klyib Al Jazi on 30 June 2013; Musa Zaál Hamd Al Jazi on 16 June 2013; Mother of Jamal Al'awdat on 18 June 2013; Wife of Harwun Shyman Al Jazi on 24 June 2013.

lot of building material available at the site, which made it easier to make houses of stone when the Bedouin settled down. As one of the participants[41] pointed out, the nearest stone-quarry is a couple of kilometres away and re-using stones is thus much easier. It is worth researching whether there was another reason for using these stones, what the considerations were back then and if it is still being done. An interesting note is, that some participants denied the use of stones from the archaeological site for the purpose of building houses, while others agreed that it has happened and even showed me the houses with ancient building material. The denial of the use of these building materials might be a result of the deference effect (they preferred to tell that they wanted the material remains to be protected), or a misinterpretation of the question asked: some of the participants[42] explained that stones were taken to Udhruh from a collapsed site in Jerba or from walls that were used to divide the land for agriculture.

Under the fortress lies a system of tunnels that ends in a spring. A participant told me they were used for water, and that there are holes in the ground, now covered with stones, which were used to get water. These holes were just beneath an entrance, and with the use of holes in the stones of the entrance, and a piece of rope, they could get water out of the ground.[43] Children used to play in the 'secret' tunnels, because they were perfect to hide in.[44]

Author's note

First, this fragment confirms the presence of a spring in Udhruh which was used in the past by the inhabitants of the fortress. Second, the way in

[41] Interview with Mohammad Sammwr Al'awdat Al Jazi on 25 June 2013.
[42] Interview with Musa Zaál Hamd Al Jazi on 16 June 2013; Mother of Jamal Al'awdat on 18 June 2013.
[43] Interview with Rabiy'ah Altarqi Dhyab Al Jazi on 17 June 2013.
[44] Interviews with Mohamad Farhan Kaiyd Al Jazi and Bassaam Mohammad Farhan Al Jazi on 17 June 2013; Umm Thamir on 25 June 2013; Mohammad Sammwr Al'awdat Al Jazi on 25 June 2013.

which the water system in the fortress might have functioned was explained by a woman living next to the site. However, she did not tell me how she knew about this, and she explained it to me by referring to a restored Ottoman building. Third, the presence of tunnels under the fortress was known by almost every participant, even though some referred to them as 'the secret tunnels'. This indicates the knowledge of the local community about the archaeological site and what can be found here, and the atmosphere of mystery that is attached to the archaeological remains, for both children as adults.

The fortress served many different purposes in the past. As mentioned before, the Bedouin lived within the walls during winter and used the ancient buildings to store their properties. There was a whole village within the walls of the fortress, with many facilities and services.[45] Earlier uses of buildings within the fortress were for example, a school, a place where you could get married, and a small police station.[46] After the earthquake, some people who lived at the fortress used the destroyed material to build their new houses.[47]

Author's note

Again, the most important historical period for the people in Udhruh regarding the archaeological site is mentioned, which is the time that they used it to live on. For them it was a resource: a place where they lived, where they went to school etcetera and later where they got their building material from. Now the government tells them they cannot use it anymore, they want it to become a source of income by attracting tourism.

[45] Interview with Mohamad Farhan Kaiyd Al Jazi and Bassaam Mohammad Farhan Al Jazi on 17 June 2013; Khaled Salem Hiyshan Al Jazi on 30 June 2013.
[46] Interview with Mohamad Farhan Kaiyd Al Jazi and Bassaam Mohammad Farhan Al Jazi on 17 June 2013; 'Aiyd Rfiyfaan Z'al Al'awdat on 23 June 2013; Mohammad Hatmal Al Jazi on 17 June 2013; Khaled Salem Hiyshan Al Jazi on 30 June 2013.
[47] Interviews with Ibrahiym Arbiy'a Klyib Al Jazi on 30 June 2013; Musa Zaál Hamd Al Jazi on 16 June 2013.

5.2.3 Other ruins in the Udhruh region

Some members of the Bedouin families now living in Udhruh lived in cave-houses near the current village. Some of these houses were built with stones from the fortress (see figure 8), using the same building techniques as used by the Romans: arches with key stones, which were moved with camels, as a whole from the fortress to the cave house.[48]

Author's note

Questions that can be asked are: why did they use the material from the site in Udhruh? The cave-houses are within one kilometre from the site, but still it must have been difficult to get the building material from one place to the other. Are there other reasons for choosing these stones? And did they take them from the site before or after the earthquake?

Figure 8 – 'Abd Allah Dhyab at his previous cave house, built with material from the archaeological site. Photo: Guus Gazenbeek.

Several places are known which can be connected with the ancient past. For example, people come from far to look at the image of a spoon and a knife, cut in stone, which can be found in a place called ElHadar. Also, coins from the Roman and Ottoman past were found here. Other places are the caves in which people

[48] Interview with 'Abd Allah Dhyab Harb Al Jazi on 12 June 2013; 'Aiyd Khaliyl Al Sbwu'a on 27 June 2013.

from the area used to live, as: Maghared Um Jarad, Maghared Ghathaibe, Maghared Sende, Maghared Um Alfutus, Maghared Fi Cuver Esham and Maghared Mutahar Ghalaf. Some have a niche which was used to let the animals drink.[49] Also, a story goes about the 'Cave of Sende' (figure 9). She used to live in a cave with her three sons, but they grew up and Sende died. After her dead, the cave was closed and no-one knew where to find it. Until a shepherd with a mirror saw how the reflected sunlight disappeared in a crack in the stone. The cave was found, and shortly after destroyed by treasure seekers.[50]

Author's note

From this fragment it can be concluded that the Roman Legionary Fortress is not the only archaeological site which was reused by the Bedouin. The cave houses with a niche were interpreted by one of the archaeologists as possibly a former Nabatean grave. Moreover, it was suggested that the cave of Sende could also be interpreted as a Roman water storage. Therefore, a tour among the previous houses and storages as used by the Bedouin can lead to many more archaeological sites in the area.

Figure 9 – Cave of Sende. Photo: Guus Gazenbeek.

In the past, in the time of Shabib, there was a clear distinction between desert and land for agriculture. The land was divided with a line, called the 'line of Shabib'. At one side of the line, the land was good for agriculture. At the other side, it was only desert. It is a division line, which goes from Syria to the border of Jordan.

[49] Interview with 'Aiyd Khaliyl Al Sbwu'a on 27 June 2013.
[50] Interview with 'Aiyd Khaliyl Al Sbwu'a on 27 June 2013.

The eastern part is for keeping animals (desert), and the western part is for agriculture.[51]

> *Author's note*
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> This story is important because it directly refers to the archaeological site Khatt Shabib (or wall of Shabib), a long wall of stones and a prominent archaeological feature in the landscape that was first described by Sir Alec Kirkbride (1948, 151) and whose date and function are uncertain (Abudanh 2006, 235). 'Shabib' might refer to Shabib el'Oqaili el Tubba'I, a prince that governed major parts of Jordan in the 10th century AD (Kirkbride 1948, 151-153; Bowersock 1971, 239, note 141 in Abudanh 2006, 235).

The mountain (Jabel at-Tahkim) gives a great view over the whole desert. You can see everything, it is a good source of information. Especially in the morning, around 9 or 10, when the weather is clear. [52]

> *Author's note*
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> According to the interview, this would be an accurate place for a watchtower.

5.2.4 Water irrigation systems

The local community came to Udhruh because there was a lot of water.[53] There was a spring in Udhruh.[54] The spring was mainly used by people from Ma'an, who used the area for agriculture; while the Bedouin were still travelling and only used the spring to make coffee or tea. In the past, there were three water channels

[51] Interview with 'Abd Allah Dhyab Harb Al Jazi on 12 June 2013.
[52] Interview with 'Abd Allah Dhyab Harb Al Jazi on 12 June 2013.
[53] Interview with 'Ataallah Al Jazi on 24 June 2013; Musa Zaál Hamd Al Jazi on 16 June 2013; 'Aiyd Rfiyfaan Z'al Al'awdat on 23 June 2013.
[54] Interview with Mother of Jamal Al'awdat on 18 June 2013.

to irrigate the land in the region, one of them went all the way to Ma'an.[55] Another source mentions five water channels.[56] While there was enough water for everyone in 1935, the area became dryer in 1960-1961.[57]

> *Author's note*
>
> The ancient water irrigation systems are still visible in the landscape. To which water channels does the local community refer, when they mention one water channel for every family? Is it possible that the ancient irrigation systems were still in use only several decades ago, or do they refer to more recent irrigation systems? To which families do they refer, and is the current water management system still regulated in this way? These questions can easily be answered by visiting the irrigation systems with the participants, and let them tell their story on-site. Moreover, this would give much information about the recent formation processes of the water irrigation systems.

In 1970/1980, when there was very little water left, agriculture stopped for a large part. Many people went to a nearby village, where they also have land.[58] Inhabitants from Udhruh dug into the ground to find out where the water was going. About two/three meter under the ground they found a lot of stones, probably the remains of an ancient water system. They found two sides of stone, which were covered with bigger stones. There were many small, fine stones on the bottom, to let the water pass from it. The system near Udhruh was about 200 meter tall, while the system in the village was about 50 meter tall. They were very accurately constructed. Most parts of the ancient water system are now destroyed, due to the heavy water flows.[59]

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[55] Interviews with Diyf Allah Dhyab Al Jazi on 18 June 2013; Ibrahiym Arbiy'a Klyib Al Jazi on 12 June 2013.
[56] Interview with Mohammad Qida Qasem Abu Shriyth Al Jazi on 24 June 2013.
[57] Interview with Mohammad Sammwr Al'awdat Al Jazi on 25 June 2013.
[58] Interviews with Mohammad Qida Qasem Abu Shriyth Al Jazi on 24 June 2013; Mohammad Sammwr Al'awdat Al Jazi on 25 June 2013.
[59] Interview with Mohammad Qida Qasem Abu Shriyth Al Jazi on 24 June 2013.

Author's note

Besides information about the presence of the ancient irrigation system that this fragment contains, it emphasizes the importance and influence of water in the area, and the limited amount of time in which the landscape changes. Also, it shows the respect of current inhabitants for the advanced construction of the irrigation system: it was explicitly stated they could not build something like that nowadays.[60] Moreover, the presence of heavy rains might indicate that the area has not really become dryer, but that there are no more efficient water systems to regulate the flows and store the water for periods without rain.

In the past there was so much water, people had to prevent their land from the heavy rains. There was a water mill about 2 kilometre east of Udhruh. But it collapsed, and even though the channels are still visible, no-one uses it anymore. There is a new water system in the village now.[61]

Author's note

This indicates the presence of more recent water channels and remains of an irrigation system besides the ancient and current systems.

The story goes that there is a large and deep tunnel with water[62], which connects Udhruh and Wadi Musa.[63] They know this because people from Udhruh threw a piece of wood in the water, which came out all the way in Wadi Musa.[64]

[60] Interview with Mohammad Qida Qasem Abu Shriyth Al Jazi on 24 June 2013.
[61] Interview with Diyf Allah Dhyab Al Jazi on 18 June 2013; Mohammad Hatmal Al Jazi on 17 June 2013.
[62] Interview with Mohammad Hatmal Al Jazi on 17 June 2013; Mohamad Farhan Kaiyd Al Jazi on 17 June 2013.
[63] Interview with 'Abd Allah Dhyab Harb Al Jazi on 12 June 2013.
[64] Interviews with Musa Zaál Hamd Al Jazi and Ali Hamd Al jazi on 16 June 2013; Mohammad Sammwr Al'awdat Al Jazi on 25 June 2013.

Author

As in Roman times, there still is a strong connection between Wadi Musa and Udhruh. This story, and the enthusiastic reaction on it from the participants, emphasizes the practical and emotional connection between the two settlements.

5.2.5 Graveyards

While building their houses, people from Udhruh discovered human remains. It appeared that the Udhruh village was built on a cemetery. The graves which they found under their houses are probably very old and originating before Islamic period, since they are not buried facing Mecca. Also, the skeletons which they found were much bigger than the inhabitants of Udhruh are used to.[65] Beneath the modern cemetery, old mass graves were found. But it is against Islamic tradition to open up graves, so now they try to leave them alone as much as possible.[66] In previous excavations, not long ago, two mummies were found: a man and a woman.[67]

Author's note

The large skeletons were related to the large building stones at the archaeological site, hereby showing the impact of the presence of the archaeological site and the mystical and imaginative value attached to it. Since the graves or cemetery found by the local inhabitants is interpreted by them as from pre-Islamic times, which is before AD 636 (beginning of the Umayyad-dynasty), they could date from the Roman or Byzantine period. However, an archaeological excavation will be very difficult. First, because the local community is against opening graves, and second, because they have accidently built a contemporary cemetery on top of the

[65] Interview with Ibrahiym Arbiy'a Klyib Al Jazi on 30 June 2013; Musa Zaál Hamd Al Jazi and Ali Hamd Al jazi on 16 June 2013.
[66] Interview with Ibrahiym Arbiy'a Klyib Al Jazi on 30 June 2013.
[67] Interview with Wife of Harwun Shyman Al Jazi on 24 June 2013; Ghandwur Harwun Shyman Al
Jazi on 23 June 2013.

older graves. This could lead to a conflict with the local community, going against their wishes and believes.

5.2.6 Agriculture

The many piles of stones and terraces were made because there is only limited fertile soil for agriculture, but there were many people in the area. In the past, in the time of Shabib, there was a clear distinction between desert and land for agriculture. The land was divided with a line, called the 'line of Shabib'. At one side of the line, the land was good for agriculture. At the other side, it was only desert. It is a division line, which goes from Syria to the border of Jordan. The eastern part is for keeping animals (desert), and the western part is for agriculture.[68]

Author's note

This story is important because it directly refers to the archaeological site Khatt Shabib (or wall of Shabib), a long wall of stones and a prominent archaeological feature in the landscape that was first described by Sir Alec Kirkbride (1948, 151) and whose date and function are uncertain (Abudanh 2006, 235). 'Shabib' might refer to Shabib el'Oqaili el Tubba'I, a prince that governed major parts of Jordan in the 10th century AD (Kirkbride 1948, 151-153; Bowersock 1971, 239, note 141 in Abudanh 2006, 235).

5.3 Oral Traditions

Many of the stories collected were not from direct eye-witnesses and are thus classified as 'oral traditions' instead of 'oral history'.

5.3.1 Ottoman period

There are a lot of stories told about the Ottoman period, because it is a relatively recent past which is still alive among the local population. Even though there are

[68] Interview with 'Abd Allah Dhyab Harb Al Jazi on 12 June 2013.

no more eye witnesses alive, people heard about the events from their grandparents. For example, there are stories of grandfathers who fought against the Ottomans to protect the area, and got killed during the battle.[69]

Author's note

These stories are referred to in the first paragraph on general oral history. The late Ottoman period, which ended around the time of World War One, is still very well known. It is difficult to define whether these stories should be classified as 'oral history' or 'oral traditions', since they are passed on from eye witnesses, but the eye witnesses themselves have passed away and the stories gain a mythical character during time.

The Ottomans left their traces in the landscape of Udhruh. They took over the road from Ma'an to Syria and build many watchtowers, to control the trading route and the attacks from Bedouin. The Ottomans treated the Bedouin badly, and the Bedouin in their turn attacked the Ottomans and their caravans during raids.[70]

Author's note

This is one of the stories told by 'Aiyd Khalil Al Sbwu'a, who was an extraordinary participant because he did not live in Udhruh but in a nearby village, had a different lifestyle (as a shepherd), belonged to a different family (coming from Saudi Arabia) and told many myths and legends from a completely different perspective than the local community in Udhruh. From the Ottoman period, he told about the Bedouin as a strong and brave group of people who were constantly violently fighting with the Ottomans.

[69] Interview with Ibrahiym Arbiy'a Klyib Al Jazi on 30 June 2013; 'Aiyd Khaliyl Al Sbwu'a on 27 June 2013.
[70] Interview with 'Aiyd Khaliyl Al Sbwu'a on 27 June 2013.

5.3.2 Ancient times

The story goes that the Romans planted many trees in ancient times, for example olive trees, who have grown here for years.[71] A story is being told about a man who travelled to Palestine. When he came back, he was blind. He lowered his head so he would not bump into an olive tree, but the tree was not there anymore.[72]

> *Author's note*
>
> Stories are being told about the olive trees close to Udhruh, which were standing there since Roman times. This indicates a knowledge of, and connection with, the surrounding area. Trees in the area play a very important role because they indicate the presence of water.

Also, a Roman city has been found under the ground in Udhruh. It was a trade centre between Yemen and Syria.[73] By looking at the stones and building materials, a distinction can be made between villages of the Nabateans, Roman and Ottoman civilization. The Nabataeans lived in areas with soft stone, so they could cut out their houses. The Ottomans used clay and stone, while the Romans used very hard stone.[74]

> *Author's note*
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> This distinction was made by 'Aied the shepherd. For archaeologists it is interesting to be aware of the knowledge already present among local inhabitants, so it can be used as a starting point for further distribution of knowledge.

[71] Interviews with Diyf Allah Dhyab Al Jazi on 18 June 2013; and Mohammad Qida Qasem Abu Shriyth Al Jazi on 24 June 2013; 'Abd Allah Dhyab Harb Al Jazi on 12 June 2013; Mohamad Farhan Kaiyd Al Jazi and Bassaam Mohammad Farhan Al Jazi on 17 June 2013.
[72] Interview with Soliman Ali Soliman on 26 June 2013.
[73] Interview with Mohammad Sammwr Al'awdat Al Jazi on 25 June 2013.
[74] Interview with 'Aiyd Khaliyl Al Sbwu'a on 27 June 2013.

5.3.3 The Mountain of Judgement

North of the Udhruh village lies the Mountain of Judgement (Jabel at-Tahkim). The mountain is very prominent in the landscape and visible for the whole area. On top of it lies the ruin of a building, about which many stories are being told. Representatives of leaders from the area gathered on top of the mountain, in order to talk about the situation of Islam. Following, the leader of the area was chosen.[75] Herewith they introduced a new period in Islamic history.[76] This specific mountain was chosen for the meeting because it is situated between Saudi Arabia and Syria. The meeting led to the establishment of Islamic civilization and Syrian government.[77]

> *Author's note*
>
> This is a fragment that can be related to Islamic history. It places Udhruh in a larger context of history and makes it a very important place for the Arab world. This event took place in the early Islamic period and therefore it is an oral tradition about the area that goes back for many generations.

Another story about the Jabel at-Tahkim tells that a man was killed on the mountain. Years later, his body still looked intact. This is called Shaheed in Islam.[78] A third story tells about a man who carries two stones in his hands upon the mountain. On the mountain, he sees a lot of people. They tell him someone is dead, and the man drops the two stones. They fall and break on the road. These pieces of stone can still be found on the mountain. Sheik Haroon forbid people to take the stones.[79]

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[75] Interviews with Diyf Allah Dhyab Al Jazi on 18 June 2013; Mohammad Sammwr Al'awdat Al Jazi on 25 June 2013; Musa Zaál Hamd Al Jazi and Ali Hamd Al Jazi on 26 June 2013; Mohamad Farhan Kaiyd Al Jazi on 17 June 2013; 'Aiyd Rfiyfaan Z'al Al'awdat on 23 June 2013; Ghandwur Harwun Shyman Al Jazi on 23 June 2013; Mohammad Sammwr Al'awdat Al Jazi on 25 June 2013.

[76] Interview with Musa Zaál Hamd Al Jazi and Ali Hamd Al Jazi on 26 June 2013.

[77] Interview with Mohamad Farhan Kaiyd Al Jazi and Bassaam Mohammad Farhan Al Jazi on 17 June 2013.

[78] Interview with Musa Zaál Hamd Al Jazi and Ali Hamd Al Jazi on 26 June 2013.

[79] Interview with Mohammad Qida Qasem Abu Shriyth Al Jazi on 24 June 2013.

5.3.4 Old name of Udhruh

According to the participants, *Udhruh* carried another name for a long period of time: *Fayd-al-Rwhe*, which means 'spring of the Souls'. It can be interpreted in two ways. First, spring of the Souls may refer to the water spring and heavy rains in the *Udhruh* region. Second, spring of the Souls may refer to the many graves in the area.[80] During the Turkish invasion, both names were used. The word *Udhruh* exists in Islamic history, and means 'holy land'. The naming of land is part of tribe culture.[81]

> *Author's note*
>
> The naming of land as being part of tribe culture might explain the existence of two names. Udhruh as the official name as known from Roman and present times, and Fayd-al-Rwhe as a name given by the tribes living here.

5.4 Summary

In this chapter, stories and visions from the interviews are presented as a social memory, even though the individual additions can be traced through the footnotes. Comments by the author are given through the text. The first group of results focuses on general oral history. Herein, Bedouin life plays an important role in the stories. Participants describe their nomadic lifestyle and how this changed while the land became dryer. They also tell about why the land they live on was chosen: because of the water, and because the right herbs for keeping camels grow here. Many of the archaeological remains are seen through this point of view, relating to their Bedouin past. The second group of results focuses on results directly related to archaeology. Subjects discussed are the remembrance of earlier excavations and finds, uses and knowledge of the Roman Legionary Fortress,

[80] Interview with Musa Zaál Hamd Al Jazi and Ali Hamd Al Jazi on 26 June 2013; Diyf Allah Dhyab Al Jazi on 18 June 2013; Mohammad Hatmal Al Jazi on 17 June 2013; Ziynab Mohammad Almarahlah Almhaiydah on 25 June 2013; Ibrahiym Arbiy'a Klyib Al Jazi on 30 June 2013.
[81] Interview with 'Ataallah Al Jazi on 24 June 2013.

stories about how the stones came to the castle, tunnels lying under the fortress, the earthquake destroying the fortress and other ruins around Udhruh, like cave houses. Moreover, the water irrigation systems and uses for agriculture were discussed, and the graves on which the village Udhruh was built. Because the water is highly valued in this area with a water shortage, there are many stories relating to the importance of water in the past, and the water irrigation systems. The third group of results focuses on the oral traditions: stories told without direct eye witnesses, about the far away past. Periods are the Ottomans and their watchtowers, the Romans and the olive trees growing in Udhruh, Jabel at-Tahkim, and the old name of Udhruh: Fayd-al-Rwh. These storylines present information that relates to the periods as researched by the archaeologists.

6. ARCHAEOLOGICAL PRACTICE

Oral History is an approach of the past that focuses on a spoken version of history of ordinary people. Archaeology on the other hand relies on artifacts and their interpretation, mostly done by professional archaeologists or scientists. It aims to study the human past through its material cultural remains. Oral history has the potential to be a source of information complementary to the professional interpretation. It can offer data about recent formation processes at ancient archaeological sites, which is important because what we see first at the surface are the traces of recent activity. Moreover, oral traditions can offer potential alternative interpretations of archaeological sites. This situates it at the side of archaeological ethnographies.

The aim of this chapter is to show the connection between archaeological data and oral history data from Udhruh, through which is explained how archaeology and oral history can be combined in order to benefit scientific research. I reflect on the foregoing theoretical chapter on archaeological ethnographies, by using data from the Udhruh Oral History Project. Therefore, the question answered in this chapter is: how can information from archaeology and oral history be combined?

6.1 Archaeology and Oral History as complementary practices

Within the Udhruh Archaeological Project, surveying is the most important research method until now. Hereby, the surroundings of Udhruh are mapped and analyzed in order to gather information about the larger processes around the Roman Legionary Fortress. To understand the functioning of this ancient Roman building, it is important to understand its role in the landscape and in ancient societies. Besides the castra, there are large irrigation networks visible in the landscape, which made the area usable for agriculture. Small settlements in the surrounding area of the castra were found. Moreover, the material remains of possible Roman watchtowers were found on hilltops within the landscape (Driessen and Abudanah 2014, 45-52; in press). What can the oral history project add to these finds? To find an answer on this question, I refer to the theoretical chapter in which the idea of ‘archaeological ethnographies’ was presented, and

herein the importance of understanding historicity. Herewith the oral history is placed in perspective and can better understood.

A general outline of stories from the oral history project was given in chapter two. From these stories, three kinds of information that might be of use for archaeological research can be distinguished, namely (1) information about the environment and direct surroundings, coming from personal experiences, referred to as landscape; (2) information about events that tells something about recent formation processes of the archaeological remains coming from stories told within the family, referred to as events; and (3) fictitious stories about the (far away) past as myths, legends and other oral traditions. Their value for archaeological practices is discussed from an archaeological ethnographic point of view in which the concept of historicity takes a central place.

6.1.1 Landscape

The first and most elaborate kind of information that can easily be gathered through an oral history project is about the area and surroundings of the archaeological site in question. People who live in an area for years know what is present and what can be found. Inhabitants with a limited knowledge about archaeology will probably not provide you with an answer if you ask them where to find the Roman Legionary Fortress, but they might be able to provide you with a tour to show all irregularities in the landscape, piles of stone, caves they used to live in, and ruins, because they know of their existence. Not because archaeology interests them, but because the features have been useful for them in the past. They look at them from a different point of view. As defined in the chapter on methods, stories that relate to the landscape have the following characteristics: **relationship, valuation, time-specific, static description, related to place**.

Local knowledge of the landscape and its use for archaeological research is discussed by Riley *et al.* (2005, 15-26). He presents the Community Landscape Project (CLP) in Devon, where oral history is recognized as a technique that is important for archaeological fieldwork. An example is mentioned where a farmer talks about the burial mounds of the archaeologists, which they themselves use for loading cows in trucks, to bring them to the market. This provides the

archaeologists with valuable information about the **relationship** between local community and the cultural landscape. Apparently, this relationship is based on farming activities: the farmers use the burial mounds to reach a goal as a farmer, therefore they become part of their job equipment. The relationship between landscape and local community is thus based on their interaction over time.

Moreover, a distinction is made between the archaeologist's and the farmer's **valuation** of the landscape (Riley *et al.* 2005, 15-26). In the foregoing example of a burial mound, archaeologists value this feature because it is a link between past and present; it has heritage value. However, the farmer values the feature because it provides him with a tool to easily load his cows on trucks, so he can sell them on the market and earn an income. Besides use of the feature, he uses the landscape to let his cows graze. Therefore, the landscape and the burial mounds in it have economic value for the farmer. The valuation of the landscape by the local community is thus based on how it is being used and what they get out of it.

It is unlikely that the local community sees the past and future of these features as burial mounds that are now in use for loading cows, as archaeologists would do. Instead, when the farmer looks at his land, he probably sees a place where his father and grandfather worked and lived, and where he, his children and grandchildren will work and live (their relationship with the land). The burial mound is a piece of their land, which they use because it gives them economic advantages. Therefore these in the landscape are seen and understood from this perspective of a farmer's relationship with his land and the economic use of it: the farmer's historicization of the landscape.

Another example that relates to knowledge of the landscape is the description by Mohammad Qida (interview on 24 June 2013) of the ancient qanat system. When the

Example 1

We found something beautiful, it looked like archaeology. It was like a system for water, I think it was thousand years old. We walked along it, it went three or four meters down. There were two sides of stone, covered with a big stone, and small stones on the ground, to let the water pass from it. It was about fifty meters tall. It is an accurate job to build something like this, I don't think anyone can do it now. If you want, I can show you what is left of it (Mohammad Qida Qasem Abu Shriyth Al Jazi on 24 June 2013).

area became dry, 20 or 25 years ago, they wanted to find out where the water went and started digging. They found part of an old water system and he gives a detailed description of the situation as he discovered it, see 'Example 1'. The information that derives from this fragment indicates knowledge of the surrounding landscape and the presence of archaeological features. Because the description of objects is limited to the moment he first discovers it, it is a **time-specific** description. This is unique for information about the landscape, because no time passes within the story. It is therefore also a **static description**. It says something about the personal experience and interaction with the landscape, which is **related to place**. Because a time-specific and static description is bound to a personal observation, it reflects the historicity of a place or an object, as experienced by the observer. Mohammad Qida describes a place that they found by accident when searching for water; it was thus discovered as part of the ongoing struggle for water in the desert. In the previous fragment he describes it as something very old and beautiful, and very accurately built. Herewith, he shows his appreciation for the archaeological feature and his recognition of it being part of a landscape where especially the water is highly valued, which transcends the boundaries of the past, present and future.

6.1.2 Events

Many events from the past can be known from written sources, but also oral history can offer a lot of information, especially about the past that is regarded as important within the area by the local inhabitants. The value of these stories for archaeology lies in its direct connection with contemporary archaeological structures. Local inhabitants can tell you what happened in certain periods of time and how archaeology relates to these events through their eyes. Stories that are classified as 'events' have the following characteristics: **history, verifiable, eye-witnesses, recent, dynamic story.**

Many stories about the historic past are being told in Udhruh, especially the heroic stories about Bedouin and their achievements in history. Children learn about the past not only at school, but also from their parents and grandparents.

Historic events that are still very much alive are told from generation to generation. It is likely that these events are, in some way, partly **verifiable** through **history** (historical sources). In 'Example 2', Aied Khalil El Spou'a, one of the shepherds working in the Udhruh region, tells about the Bedouin raids in the Ottoman period. He presents a story that directly relates to the archaeological remains in the area, and is partly verifiable by historical sources: the Ottomans occupied the area, during this time pilgrims travelled through it from Damascus to Mecca, but the Bedouin kept control in the desert (Meijer 1997, 9), see also the historical framework. This historical event is in the example illustrated by a personal story, which shows how the respondent sees this part of history and how it is kept alive for the next generation. The Ottoman period and the heroic deeds of Bedouin still take a prominent place in the stories told, even though the Ottomans are gone for about 100 years. Past and present overlap, which shows how, in this aspect, the historicity of Bedouin is different from the chronological historicity of a written history book.

Example 2

My grandfather lived in the time of the Ottomans, he fought against them. Once, he killed 20 Ottomans, because they attacked a woman. He helped her by killing the whole convoy. Because of this, he was wanted by the Ottomans and they put him in prison for three years in Syria. There was a long route between Damascus and Mecca with many caravans. My grandfather, and others, raided these transports. To control these raids, the Ottomans built many watchtowers (Aied Khalil El Spou'a on 27 June 2013).

Another interesting archaeological aspect about this story is that it refers to the many observation posts and watch towers, which were built by the Ottomans at strategic points on hills along the route, in order to stop the Bedouin from raiding. During the 2013 archaeological survey in Udhruh, many hilltop structures were noted in the landscape, possibly forming a Roman network of connectivity around the Udhruh fortress (Driessen and Abudanah 2014, 45-52). Because of their strategic position in the landscape, built on a hilltop with wide views, the Ottoman watchtowers could very well be built on the same hills. This would give the archaeologists insight in the use of remains after the Roman period and the biography of these particular sites, as well as a possible richer, completer and

therefore more valuable interpretation of the material remains, and an idea about possible other hills with archaeological structures.

Even though the foregoing example presents a story that is not from an eye-witness, the respondent heard it directly from his grandfather. 'Example 3' is told by an **eye-witness** of an event that directly relates to the archaeology. Because the event happened relatively recently, as with the Ottomans, emotions still play a role in these stories. In this case, the respondent still laughed very hard about the event. She remembers everything that is important to her regarding the event. In this case, the importance lies in the fact that life was easy: there were many parties, no money was used, and everything was made by hand. Moreover she appreciates the customs and traditions that relate to the simple life as it was in the past, as traditional weddings. The event thus shows what the respondent sees as important, what aspects of her life-history she emphasizes and is interested in, hereby presenting it within the personal historical timespan in which the events takes place.

Example 3
In the past everything was easy. There were many parties at the archaeological site, like traditional weddings. I remember that one time, during the party, we took the bride and the camel and an accident happened. The camel was walking and the bride fell off. But no one noticed there was no bride (Umm Jamal on 18 June 2013).

The storyline of an event has the characteristic of a **dynamic story** in which time passes. The respondent from 'Example 4' used to work at the archaeological excavation in Udhruh and witnessed how they found a large stone with inscription on it, and brought it to a museum. The story has a very **recent** nature, and the way it is told says something about the perception of recent events with a dynamic character that only covers a small period of time. It says something about the relevance and intensity of the experience of the event and the perception of archaeological remains herein. Moreover they reflect a direct knowledge, different from stories from the far away past.

Example 4
I worked on the archaeological site for six months. We told our family and children stories about what happened with us during our work. One year, we found a stone, about one, one and a half meters, which has all the history of Udhruh on it. They took the stone to a museum (Musa Zaál Hamd Al Jazi on 16 June 2013).

6.1.3 Myths/legends

Oral traditions as myths and legends are transmitted through many generations and contain information referring to a far away past. They present the past in a way that fits within the internal logic of the culture from which it derives, and therefore says a lot about this culture and its perception of time and place. Oral traditions show the characteristics of **dynamic story, far-away past, culture-specific, transmitted,** and **generations.**

Example 5
Our fathers and grandfathers told us that the main name of this area is Fayd-al-Rwhe, which is the land of good things and the land of holy water. There were three canals for water, to irrigate the land of three families. So three families and three channels of water. Now the water disappeared. Because of the heavy water in the past, there were much olive trees and I saw that there were olive trees from the Roman period (Diyf Allah Dhyab Al Jazi on 18-06-2013).

Similar to the storylines categorized as 'events', the oral traditions also present a **dynamic story**. However, this dynamic storyline covers a longer period of time, and takes place in the **far-away past**. A storyline as described in 'Example 5' shows how much time can pass in one oral tradition. The name Fayd-al-Rwhe was used during the time of the Ottomans. The heavy water is placed in the past, but because some respondents remember the time of heavy water, its disappearance was probably not that long ago. However, the example also states that there are olive trees, which grew in the area during the time of heavy water, that originate from the Roman past. The complex build-up of the storyline regarding order of events indicates a cultural difference in the perception of far-away past, recent past and present.

In Udhruh, Jabel at-Tahkim (the mountain of judgment) is a place with a couple of oral traditions connected to it. According to the people living in Udhruh, and to historical sources about Islamic periods, this is where the decisive meeting among Islamic leaders took place after the battle of Siffīn (657 CE). For someone not very familiar with Jordanian culture, the stories around Jabel at-Tahkim and their importance for the local community are difficult to understand because they

have a large **culture-specific** element: they indicate the beginning of a new era in Islamic history, an important period for the Muslim inhabitants of the area. The story and its material representation, the mountain, thus says something about the cultural context in which the archaeological record is researched.

A story about the far-away past can only survive when it is **transmitted** over **generations**, as 'Example 6', which was repeatedly told. The event with the stone happened a long time ago, while Sheik Haroon is a well-known and respected figure within the local community whose wives and children are still alive. By the transmission of the story, far-away past and recent past are intermingled. There is no clear distinction between what happened when and how much time passed. Even though the event clearly took place in the past and there is no indication of the future, a different historicity of the broken stone is presented because two separate events with hundreds of years in between are told as one continuing story.

Example 6

It is an old story. There was a man, no-one knows him, who carried a stone by his two hands. Maybe he wanted to go to the Mountain of Judgement. On his way, he sees a lot of people and they ask him, what are you doing? It was a funeral, and someone said, we have a person that is dead today. He asks, what, dead? And he drops the stone. It was broken. For hundreds of years, nothing happened with the stone. Then, a man comes from Ma'an who wants to take the stone, because it is very beautiful. But Sheik Haroon forbid him to take any piece of this stone (Mohammad Qida Qasem Abu Shriyth Al Jazi on 24 June 2013).

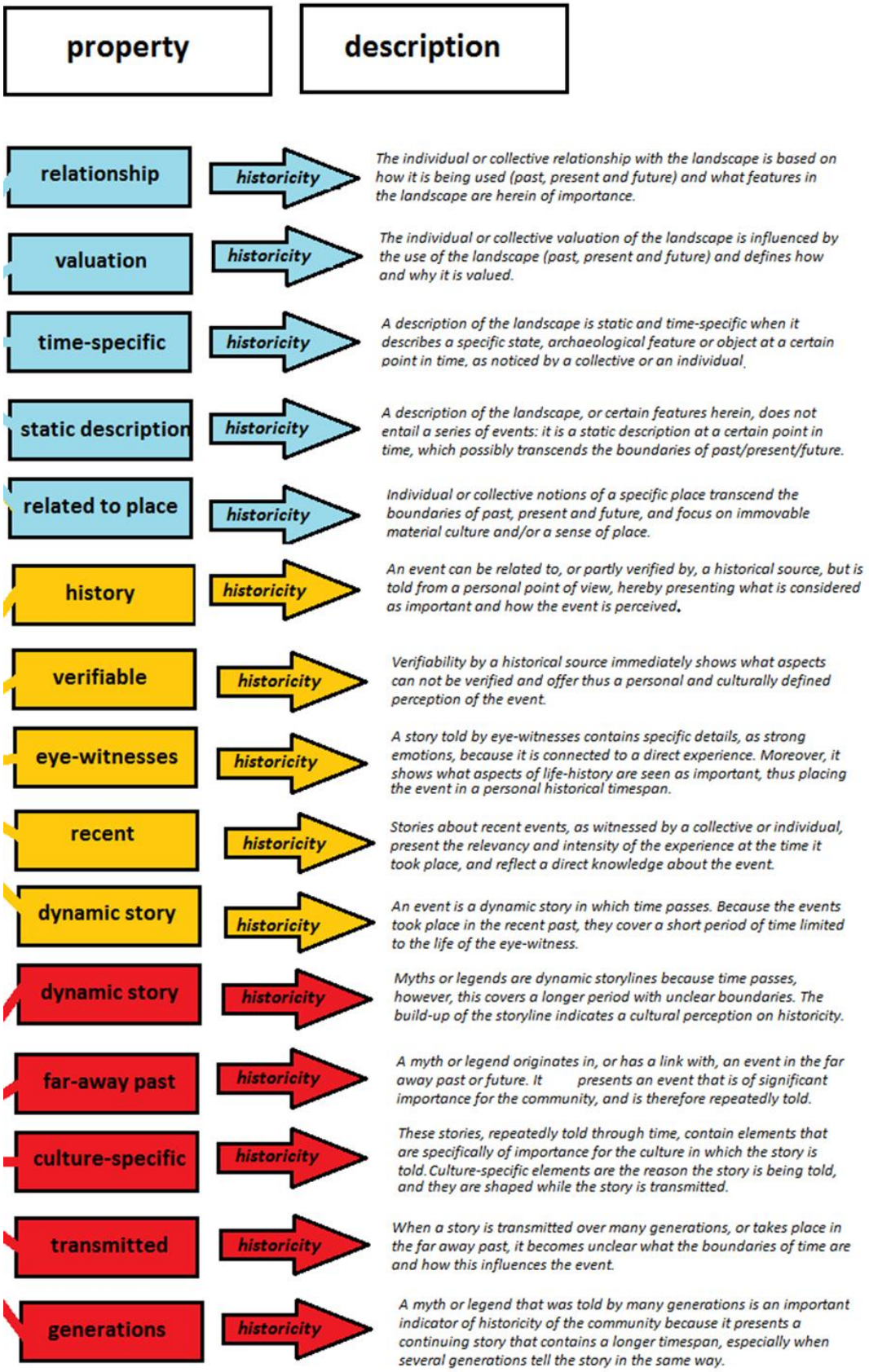

figure 6 - analysis

6.2 Understanding historicity

Oral history offers a way to become familiar with the perception of historicity as present within the local community, as illustrated in figure 6. This makes it possible to combine information as derived from an oral history research with information from an archaeological research, while respecting differences in looking at the material remains from the past. Since both versions are essentially different, they should be presented separately. But information from oral history can also be used in archaeological research when the context from which it originates is well known, as is presented in ‘Example 7’ and ‘Example 8’.

When archaeologists try to formulate their version of the past and aim to include oral history and oral traditions, they should be judged the same way as other archaeological research methods. This problem is also mentioned by Echo-Hawk (2000). He states that if oral history and oral tradition are used as a source of information within archaeological research, it should be treated in the same way as other methods of gathering data for archaeological research. Thus, if information from oral tradition or oral history competes with, for example, information from osteological evidence, the researcher should question the reliability of the osteological results as well as the oral tradition or oral history (Echo-Hawk 2000, 271). By pleading for a better understanding of the historicity of the local community, it is emphasized that oral sources are differently judged than other, scientific sources of information. Stories are not regarded as true or false as can be done by results from a laboratory, but they should be perceived as told from a certain cultural background. Understanding the historicity from which stories derive, is one way of placing them in perspective.

Example 7

The case of shepherd 'Aiyd Khaliyl Al Sbwu'a (23) and the Cave of Sende

During a survey in the surrounding area of Udhruh, a couple of members of the archaeological team met 'Aiyd the shepherd. Because of daily wanderings with his sheep, he knows the area very well. During summer, children from his family join him in the field and he tells them what he knows about the area. Especially stories about how people used to live in caves are of importance for his family history. 'Aiyd mentioned six different caves. We visited one of them: the Cave of Sende.

The Cave of Sende

Elderly people from the region told 'Aiyd about Sende: a woman who used to live in a cave with her three sons. Her sons grew up and they moved out of the cave, and for a while the cave was used as storage. When Sende left she closed the cave, and after her dead no one knew where to find it. Until one day, when a shepherd with a mirror saw a ray of sunlight disappear in a small gap, which led to the cave: it was discovered again.

Archaeological interpretation

Shortly after its discovery the cave was destroyed by treasure seekers. At first sight, the archaeological team interpreted the cave as a, possible Roman, water storage. A trench, which could have been connected to water, was noticed in a corner in the back of the room. No clear signs of habitation were visible, although a niche in the wall could have been used as storage. In the past, a large pillar stood in the center of the room. The niche, pillar and the stone floor are partly destroyed, possibly by treasure seekers.

Material historicization of the archaeological site

The story as told by the shepherd is classified as a myth or legend because it is a dynamic story from the far away past: the shepherd cannot define anyone who witnessed the event, nor how long ago it took place. He knows the story of Sende from elderly in the region. A culture-specific element can be defined, because living in caves is part of the local culture. When interpreting this story for archaeological research, the culture-specific element should be recognized as possibly transforming the interpretation of local inhabitants, but also as a real possibility of the cave being used as a place to live.

The story can also be classified as the description of a specific element in the landscape, with which the local community has a relation and which is valued by the way it is used. Places like this are valued as heritage by local inhabitants because of the recent past and the local stories connected to it, and by its possible economic value when valuable objects can be found. This example shows how local knowledge might lead the researcher to other archaeological features in the landscape. The story of the cave of Sende brought the archaeological team to a place that was possibly used by humans since the Roman period. Moreover, 'Aiyd mentioned the presence of six caves in the surrounding area, each of them potentially an important archaeological feature.

Example 8

Archaeological survey

In 2006, dr. Fawzi Abudanah wrote about surveying in Udhruh, in which he also took into consideration local knowledge. For example, he notices a previously unreported ancient water-reservoir, which was known to the local people, and most likely exposed by a bulldozer because its southern and western walls are disturbed (Abudanah 2006, 67-68). This find can be approached from a local historicization of the landscape. The ancient water reservoir as found by dr. F. Abudanah is by the local population probably seen as a stone feature as found in the search for water; or as an object they stumbled upon during their search for gold and antiques.

Local historicization of the landscape

In this case, the difference in historicization of the landscape is explained as follows. Local inhabitants see the landscape as something that provides them with everything they need to survive. In their life as Bedouin it gave them water and grass for their animal stock. Somewhat later it gave them water and land for agriculture. Now the landscape is dry and the economic value from keeping stock and agriculture is disappearing together with the water. However, digging in the ground sometimes leads to valuable finds of gold, coins or antiques. Again an economic valuation of the landscape is of importance.

Combining archaeology and local stories

This shows how the local population sees and values the landscape, and what forms the basis for the creation of social accounts of the past, present and future. This differs from an archaeological point of view where a strict distinction is made between features that relate to different time periods in the past, and features that relate to the current local inhabitation. By knowing the perspective in which the story should be seen, their value for scientific research can be distinguished, for example when examining large holes in the ground.

6.3 Summary

In the combination of archaeological data and data derived from oral history, three groups of focus are distinguished: landscape, events and myths/legends. The information about landscape and environment focuses on the knowledge of local inhabitants about the area they live in and descriptions of specific features in the landscape. The information about important events are stories told by eye-witnesses, which can be easily related to archaeological remains and can be backed up with historical sources. The information concerning stories and myths contains culture-specific information which is more difficult to understand from an outsider perspective, but nevertheless might contain new views on the archaeological remains and historical events. Analyzing the characteristics of every storyline and being able to place them in perspective by understanding the way they are historicized by the local community makes them useful for scientific archaeological research.

7. MULTIVOCALITY AND SOCIAL RELEVANCE: ORAL HISTORY IN COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGY

In the previous chapter it was argued that the use of oral history in archaeological research is of crucial importance because it is a valuable and irreplaceable source of information, when looked at from the right window of historicization. This presents the use of oral history for the practical side of archaeological research. Another reason for using oral history within archaeological research is the inclusion of local communities and multiple voices, or the ethical side of archaeological research (cf. Breglia 2006, 180-181). Therefore I will now look at oral history and multivocality, as an aspect of community archaeology. The question answered in this chapter is: how can oral history be complementary to an approach in which the local community is included in archaeological research?

7.1 Oral history and multivocality

The importance of involving the public as well as local communities is seen as increasingly important in archaeology since the late 1980s (Harrison *et al.* 2008, 7). There are many different publics or communities as well as other stakeholders involved in the heritage process, each differently valuing heritage. Therefore it is important to include them in the heritage process (Mason 2008, 100). Some stakeholders are already part of this process, as the professionals, experts, large heritage bodies, government, archaeologists and other researchers. However, there are also stakeholders that are not included, for example those who have ideas that differ from the general view and are thus not accepted as feasible. The public is usually underrepresented in the decision making process. Moreover, the local community is most directly influenced by decisions made about the archaeological site, because it directly influences their living environment. Therefore, their voice should be incorporated in the heritage discourse as one of the most important. There are already many aims to involve locals in archaeological research, but no clear way of how to do this has been defined (Hodder 2003, 64). The concept of multivocality can function as a theoretical framework for the inclusion of local voices in archaeological research.

Multivocality derives from the post-processual or interpretive movement in archaeological research, much dealt with by prof. I. Hodder. It states that there are multiple owners of the past, which also means multiple different interpretations. This means that archaeology as a science has to open up to other interpretations in order to keep the field relevant (Hodder 1991, 16). Every archaeologist interprets the past from its own, limited perspective and from its own background. Therefore it is better to have a range of perspectives than only those of the excavating archaeologist (Hodder 2003, 61). Multivocality is thus defined as the allowance of many different interpretations of the archaeological material culture (Hodder 1999 in Fawcett *et al.* 2008, 2-3). Moreover, Hodder sees it as an ethical and moral responsibility of archaeologists to let multiple groups participate in archaeological research (Hodder 1992, 165). Multivocality is not just to provide archaeology with many different interpretations, it also offers archaeologists the opportunity to be socially engaged (Habu and Fawcett 2008, 93).

A project in which multivocality plays an important role, for the practical as well as the ethical research engagements, is the archaeological research at the New York African Burial Ground (Blakey 2008, 17). In this research, it is acknowledged that the communities that are most affected by the research should play a key role in the research design. Because the research takes place at a burial ground where descendants and culturally affiliated communities are directly influenced by the research, a democratic pluralism in formulating research questions is plead for, through which an 'ethical epistemology' is formulated (Blakey 2008, 18-19). Moreover, multidisciplinary expertise is used to analyze the data: besides the scientific experts this also includes experts from the local community, leading to sometimes crucially different interpretations of culture-specific objects (Blakey 20-26).

Example 9

I don't care about archaeology, but the buildings were very important for me when I used them as storage. I had no other place to go and I was very angry when they told me I couldn't use it anymore 'Abd Allah Dhyab Harb Al Jazi on 12 June 2013).

At the New York African Burial Ground, there is a strong awareness of the ethical responsibilities of researchers of the archaeological site. This results in an active involvement of communities in formulating research objectives, interpreting finds and analyzing results. The context differs from Udhruh because there are descendants and culturally affiliated communities involved, which makes their involvement for ethical reasons of a higher urgency than is the case in Udhruh, where the local community feels connected with the archaeological remains through the recent past and because it is part of their living environment, as is presented in 'Example 9'. However, the project at the New York African Burial Ground presents the motivations and possibilities for including affiliated communities in multivocal archaeological research. In the same way, oral histories of the archaeological site, perceived through a culturally sensitive window of historicity, can add to multivocality of archaeological research by taking into account stories of the local community in the interpretation and analysis of finds.

A reflective approach, which is here seen as the incorporation and recognition of multiple stakeholders in archaeological research and a critical view on the interpretation of the archaeological past, becomes necessary when groups of people "claim" a certain past as theirs. In many cases, this will not happen because current communities do not easily relate to groups from the far away past (Hodder 2003, 56). But even if the past is not claimed by current groups, archaeological research and the story of the past that is derived from it keeps a relevancy which influences people living around, or connected with, the site. Therefore, the local community should be recognized and incorporated in the research. Moreover, as shown in 'Example 9' and 'Example 10', there are certain specific interests in the archaeological site which makes that the local community is directly influenced by the research, but they differ from the research focus of the archaeologists. In the case of the New

Example 10

If the government takes care of the archaeology, it will attract tourism and the area will flourish because of the shops. We have a lot of people without a job and tourism will create jobs ('Aiyd Khaliyl Al Sbwu'a on 27 June 2013).

York African Burial Ground, the community was directly affected because they are culturally affiliated with the people buried at the archaeological site. In the case of Udhruh, the local community is affected because the region in which they have lived for many generations is changing with the arrival of archaeological researchers. An oral history project brings these differing interests to the surface, making it possible to reconsider the project aims and research focus with the local interests in mind.

Another casus on multivocality is presented by Sonya Atalay, who discusses the Ojibwe past in relation with western archaeological practices (Atalay 2008, 29). She pleads for a *de*colonizing archaeological practice, by arguing for the incorporation of indigenous practices into mainstream archaeology (Atalay 2008, 31). Archaeology, originally a western science, is built upon Western paradigms and ways of viewing the world. This also means privileging written and material sources over oral sources of the past, instead of recognizing the importance of creating and sharing knowledge within the community and the power of oral tradition (Atalay 2008, 33). Also in Udhruh there is a culture of storytelling and sharing knowledge in the community, as shown in 'Example 11'. Even though in the 1960s a teacher came from Ma'an to Udhruh to teach the children how to read and write, there are still elderly in the village who are illiterate and thus base their whole knowledge on oral sources of information. It is not only another way of transmitting knowledge, it also contains different information than written sources and material culture, as stories about how the caves were used in the past.

Example 11

Stories are transmitted in the family. We sit around, visit each other and tell stories, for example about the time we lived in caves. I believe it is important to share this information and knowledge. Now, my nephews come to me during spring and ask about the archaeology. I tell them what I know so the children learn about the area. They know almost everything ('Aiyd Khaliyl Al Sbwu'a on 27 June 2013).

Atalay presents a case in which the Ojibwe past is shown together with the archaeological data. She explains that in a cultural center, a display is created, called *Diba Jimooyoung: Telling Our Story*. Here, multivocality is brought in

practice by presenting archaeological objects on a display with both archaeological data as important cultural information from the Ojibwe. The aim is to make cultural perspectives of the Ojibwe accessible for outsiders by explaining them through a western worldview of time, space and historicity (Atalay 2008, 38-42).

Example 12

Our fathers and grandfathers told us that the original name of this area is Fayd-al-Rwhe, which means the land of good things and the land of holy water (Diyf Allah Dhyab Al Jazi on 18 June 2013).

Atalay's ideas about a multivocal presentation of the past shows the same material object seen from two different worldviews. Understanding historicity of both worldviews helps in presenting these two perspectives next to each other. However, presenting them next to each other might be a disadvantage for maintaining the integrity of both perspectives. For example, a fragment of the history of Udhruh, as told by the local community that can be explained from two worldviews, is the name of Udhruh itself. In 'Example 12' is presented what local inhabitants know about the old name of Udhruh, seen from a culture where both water and religion are very important. From written sources it is known that the name Udhruh was already in use during the Roman period.[82] Presenting this information together might result in local knowledge being judged as false by outsiders of the local community, because the perspective from written sources represents the widely acknowledged authorized heritage discourse. To avoid this, the concept of multivocality and multiple possible interpretations and visions should be emphasized as part of the educational function of an exhibition.

7.2 Exhibiting multivocality to the public

When presenting oral history, archaeology (and written history) to the public, I believe it is important to make a clear distinction between the different datasets. It should be possible to see and criticize all information independently without

[82] Udhruh in Antique sources:

Adrou (Ptolemy V 16,4; Beersheba Edict: imperial edict of around 536 CE mentioning taxation of local communities. Udhruh (apo Adroon) pays 2nd highest taxes in list of 18 towns in Palaestina Tertia with annual payment of 65 golden solidi). **Adara** (Stephan of Byzanz 18, 18: largest town in Palaestina Tertia). **Augustopolis** (George of Cyprus 1045; Hierocles 721,3; Notitita Episcopatum 5,126, 1,999; Petra Papyri I and III).

influencing each other focus points or credibility. Every dataset should be presented in a similar but separated space, giving a clear overview of stories and facts, while remaining faithful to one's own suitable format.

The space designated for archaeology gives an overview of the archaeology in the area and the specific research project in question. A timeline is based on typology and other kinds of dating methods available for archaeologists. There is a sign or video, with the personal background of members of the archaeological team which explains why certain decisions were made, and how the research was executed. Following the idea of multivocality, a presentation of archaeological research is not made by archaeologists only. Specialists of other disciplines are involved. The presented interpretations of the material record are not connected with interpretations of the past that come from other, written or oral, sources.

The space designated for history presents a historiography of the area of research. This space is designed by a historian. A timeframe is based on written sources, for example different dynasties and rulers. Other ideas, stories and interpretations about the past, certain events, functioning of urban areas and villages and other information, that are based on written sources and create an image of the past, are presented, together with supporting material. Also in this space background information of the researchers and the decisions made in selecting certain material, and background information about the writers of historical sources, is available.

The space designated for oral history is available for stories as told by the local community. Every story is personal and thus told from a personal point of view, together with some background information about the participants and the interviewer. The stories are supported by video material, pictures and audio files of the participants.

In the last space the three databases are combined, which shows the visitor how different disciplines support each other, or differ from each other in their interpretation of the past. Hereby it is important to present all interpretations as equal to each other. The aim of a presentation like this is not to present the past,

but to show that multiple interpretations of the past are possible: visitors have to decide for themselves which perspective they want to learn more about.

7.3 Oral history as part of community archaeology

Knowledge about how locals assign value to heritage places means learning about their social significance (Byrne 2008, 152). When aiming to include the local community in archaeological research, knowledge of its social significance is of crucial importance. Archaeology should not only be seen as the subject of scientific research but also as a meaningful object placed in society. For an outsider, it might be difficult to understand the social meaning of a heritage site for the local community, which is more often connected to memories, events and actions, rather than to the alienated site itself (Byrne 2008, 158). Oral history and interviews is one of the components of community archaeology as defined by Moser *et al.* (2002, 236-238) that might help to understand the social meaning of archaeology within the current local community. It shows how archaeology is experienced and negotiated in the present and how the past plays a role in the construction of identity, providing the researchers with insights on how to communicate the aims of the project towards the community and how to promote further community involvement (Moser *et al.* 2002, 236).

The social meaning of archaeology was recognized in the Udhruh project, for example when talking about the Roman Legionary Fortress, situated in the middle of the village. When talking about the Bedouin past and living as nomads, during summer in the desert and during winter in the fort, many stories came up. In 'Example 13', Mohammad (13 years old) tells about how he plays at the castle

Example 13

I go to the castle to meet with my friends. We write in the stones, catch birds and spend a lot of time here. I heard from my grandfather that in the castle, there is a separate place for women and men. When we play at the castle, I repeat my grandfather's history. We sit in the rooms, in a circle, and we act like in the past. We take coffee with us to the castle, sit around and talk, as we heard from our grandfathers. We discuss how to make a party, who we will invite, and about the right opinion, what we should and should not do. I feel my grandfather's history is very near to me (Mohammad Ibrahiym Arbiy'a Klyib Al Jazi on 30 June 2013).

and imitates how his grandfather lived here. This means his grandfather told him about his time in the fortress. When asked specifically about the ruins and their meaning for the local community, often the answer is that it has no meaning. The connection with ruins is not recognized, because archaeology is associated with the far-away past, while stories like 'Example 13' show how the local community has a connection with the archaeology from the recent past.

Another recent connection between local community and archaeology as observed by archaeologists, is the re-use of ancient building material in houses. Especially in the older houses close to the archaeological site, the re-use of stones is clearly visible. There is no consensus in the stories told where these building materials come from. Some inhabitants say they come from the archaeological site, while others deny this. In 'Example 14' a woman who lives in one of the oldest houses explains what kind of material they used to build their house. The stones are recognized as ancient, even though she claims they are not taken from the Roman legionary fortress. These recent connections with archaeology as derived from oral history should be emphasized in a presentation about archaeology, because they show how archaeology is experienced in the present.

Example 14

There were many stones in Udhruh. In the past, there was land for agriculture under the road. They build walls around the land, to divide and to protect it. After the earthquake, these walls collapsed and we took the stones to build our houses. We did not use stones from the fortress because they are very large and heavy, no one can carry them (Umm Jamal Al'awdat on 18 June 2013).

Oral histories present a link between past and present, between archaeological remains and recent memories and events. Aspects of the past that are of importance for present communities and have meaning in the present are emphasized in the stories told (David *et al.* 2003, 158). A case study in which oral history and oral tradition are used to execute archaeological research with meaning and relevance for the local community, is 'Goba of Mua', at the island Goba in the Torres Straits. The burial place of an ancestor of the islanders, Goba, was located with the use of an oral tradition (David *et al.* 2003, 161). Following, archaeological research was used to construct a local history, with the

representation of events that have meaning and relevance for the local community (David *et al.* 2003, 171). This approach places oral tradition at a central place in the research: the archaeology is used to reconstruct a local history based on oral traditions. This is a successful way of executing community archaeology, because the subject of research is completely defined by the local community and the oral tradition is backed up with archaeological evidence. It might offer inspiration for an archaeological research based on oral sources, next to or additional to regular archaeological research based solely on written sources and material traces from the past.

Concluding, through interacting with the local community and talking with them about their stories of the past while presenting information about the archaeology, the social value and the material value are connected. By showing local inhabitants that they have a connection with the archaeological site, even though in the contemporary past, they might develop a new appreciation for the heritage site as a physical place. By making archaeologists familiar with the social value of the archaeological site, they are better able to understand the local community and to anticipate on their needs. Moreover, the public will also be more attracted to the heritage site by knowing both stories. The archaeological one, because its approach and terminology is known among everyone familiar with the authorized heritage discourse, and the local one, because it is a story based on personal experiences and emotions to which the public can easily relate, and because it offers an insight in the local culture.

7.4 Summary

In every archaeological project, there are multiple stakeholders involved. The public and the local community are often underrepresented. Especially the local communities should be recognized and incorporated in research. One possible way of doing so is through the concept of multivocality. It states that archaeology has to open up towards multiple different interpretations of the archaeological record, of which the local interpretation is one. Therefore, knowledge about social significance of the objects is invaluable. Moreover, by learning about social value, archaeologists are more able to anticipate on local needs. A way of presenting oral

history combined with archaeological research to the public is offered, in which the division of different datasets is emphasized, before they are brought together. Following, oral history and oral tradition as part of community archaeology, through multivocality, is explained. It is emphasized that archaeologists should get insight in the valuation of the past in the present to be able to react on current interests of the local community in archaeology and thus to involve them in the research.

8. CONCLUSION

Oral history as a source of data has irreplaceable value for archaeological research because it offers information about the past and the archaeological remains that cannot be derived otherwise. This contains facts and ideas about the environment and recent formation processes, memories about events from the past and stories told from generation to generation. Each of them has the potential to offer a new vision on archaeological research, and influence or change the interpretation of archaeological features in the landscape. Moreover, it adds to the inclusion of local communities in archaeological research, because it involves them in the heritage process and gives researchers the opportunity to adapt to local perspectives. Hereby the main question is answered: how can oral history be used as a source of information for archaeological research, and how can it add to an approach in which the local community is included?

The combination of oral history and archaeological research was reflected upon, from an archaeological point of view. The combination of these two sources of information is not new, as shown by the many case-studies from literature included in this thesis. However, by using the information for practical as well as ethical research engagements through an extensive analysis of the local perspective by looking at historicity and multivocality, it is shown that much more can be achieved with oral history research when the local perspective is thoroughly understood and precisely described. The scheme in figure 6 presents a way of doing so by looking at the presentation of historicity through specific characteristics of oral history storylines, and offers a new framework of reference for further research on combining oral history and archaeology. Following, it was argued how certain statements of the local community can be better understood and used in community archaeology after the local window of historicity is analyzed.

The first research question is discussed in the theoretical framework in chapter two: how can an oral history project, as part of an archaeological project, be used as a source of information as well as a way to include the local community? In order to answer this question, oral history as part of archaeology is

placed in between archaeological ethnography and community archeology. In archaeological ethnography, the importance of understanding a local perspective on archaeology, and thus the local display of material historicization in oral history, is emphasized. Moreover oral history offers local knowledge of recent formation processes. It therefore contributes to the practical research engagements of the archaeologists. As a component of community archaeology, oral history is a way to maintain dialogue and exchange information about the archaeological site. Moreover, by incorporating local stories in the archaeological project, a local perspective is recognized within the scientific research. This is a contribution to the ethical research engagements of the archaeological project.

The second research question, answered with the presentation of results of the oral history project, is discussed in chapter five: what information do local inhabitants from Udhruh have about the archaeology in their living environment and from what perspective do they look at it? Three groups of storylines that specifically relate to the context of the Udhruh Oral History project were distinguished in the field. Firstly, many stories were told about Bedouin life, and about the contemporary past in which local inhabitants lived as nomads. They see many of the archaeological remains within the context of their previous Bedouin life. Secondly, there are storylines that directly relate to the archaeology in the area, as a result of the questionnaire, which has a specific section on questions about archaeology and material culture. Information varies from descriptions of the archaeological remains, to myths that relate to archaeology. Many storylines relate to the water in the area, which can be explained by the valuation of water in an area with a water shortage. Thirdly, stories about the far away past are being told, hereby presenting information that relates easily to the periods as researched by the archaeologists.

The third research question is discussed in chapter six and focuses on the practical research engagements: how can information from archaeology and oral history be combined? To answer the question, information from oral history is divided in three groups: landscape, events and myths/legends. Every group is divided in several characteristics, based on the storylines of which it exists. A

description was given of these characteristics in relation to historicity, to define the display of historicization of the local community. Understanding the historicity of the local community enables archaeological researchers to place the stories from oral history in perspective, which makes them useful for scientific archaeological research. Whether this method is applicable on other oral history projects interacting with archaeology is open for further research.

The fourth research question is presented in chapter seven and entails ethical research engagements, by focusing on inclusion of the local community in archaeological research: how can oral history be complementary to an approach in which the local community is included in archaeological research? An answer is sought in the concept of multivocality, which opens up the discipline to other interpretations of the archaeological record. One of these interpretations derives from the perspective of the local community, formed through their display of historicity. Including local interpretations in the archaeological project as part of a multivocal approach is an aspect of community archaeology, because it actively involves the local community in research. Moreover, archaeologists should be familiar with ideas about the past to be able to react on current interests of the local community in archaeological research.

The method used for the collection of data in the field contains some specific elements that are of importance for oral history projects interacting with archaeology. From the Udhruh Oral History project it is concluded that the focus group of an oral history project is living near the archaeological site, preferably of elderly age (over sixty), even though other ages should not be excluded, both male and female, both with a long and short educational background, and belonging to different families. Interviews should be conducted as a semi-structured interviews, emphasizing the material culture in the landscape but maintaining enough freedom in the interview for participants to go into their own subjects of interest. Interviews combined with a tour over the archaeological site lead to more information because it triggers the respondent's memory regarding the archaeological remains. Moreover, the method used for the analysis of data focuses on the concepts of historicity and multivocality, arguing that knowledge

of local historicity is needed to include the local community in multivocality. Analysis of data from the Udhruh Oral History project thus leads towards the outline of a method that can be tested in following research and that can be expanded upon, by taking into account other factors that influence the local perspective, as sense of time and place.

It is concluded that oral history can be used as a source of information for archaeological research, and that it is complementary to an approach in which the local community is included, when the local perspective is known. Oral history offers information about historical events, stories and myths from the far away past, but also about the surroundings, environment, landscape and recent formation processes of archaeological sites. This information can be used in archaeological research when the local perspective is understood, and analysis of the local display of historicization is a way to improve this understanding. Thus, oral history has the potential to become a valuable aspect of archaeological research and to actively include local communities through multivocality, by including their voices and therefore adjusting archaeological research to their perspective and valuation of heritage.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this research is to define how oral history can be used as a source of information for archaeological research, and how it can be complementary to an approach in which the local community is included. By using the information for practical as well as ethical research engagements through an extensive analysis of the local perspective by looking at historicity and multivocality, it is shown that much more can be achieved with oral history research when the local perspective is thoroughly understood and precisely described. Therefore, Oral history as part of archaeological research is placed in between archaeological ethnography and community archaeology. Analysis of oral history data supports knowledge of the local display of historicization and thus helps to understand the information as deriving from a local perspective, which improves its usefulness for archaeological research. By looking at the presentation of historicity through specific characteristics of oral history storylines, a new framework of reference is presented for further research on combining oral history and archaeology. When the perspective of the local community is understood, information from oral history interviews can be included in the archaeological research as part of a multivocal interpretation of the past. Including voices of the local community and therefore adjusting archaeological research to their perspective and valuation of heritage promotes the active involvement and inclusion of the local community.

LIST OF FIGURES

APPENDICES