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Abstract

The Near East is a highly seismic area characterized by a succession of catastrophic events that have strongly influenced the history of the whole region. Between the Antiquity and the Middle Ages there followed a series of extremely violent earthquakes recorded both from written and material sources. The former are much richer and more comprehensive for urban contexts while, in the rural context, there are often no valid references to understand how these events have had an impact on suburban sites and, in particular, on villages. This contribution, focusing on the rural site of Umm as-Surab (north-eastern Jordan), on the one hand, proposes to identify these events by analyzing the traces they have left both on the architecture and on the ground. On the other hand, it will try to bring out the dynamics put in place by the local population to overcome these events by developing constructive solutions that, empirically, could help them in the long term to overcome other similar catastrophes. To achieve these results, our approach will be based on a *longue durée* vision taking into consideration a wide chronological span from the Byzantine period to the beginning of the Mamluk sultanate (IV-XIII c. AD). The good conservation of the architecture of the village has allowed us to analyze the changes that have followed over time through the application of the methods of the Building Archaeology. At the same time, the analysis of construction cycles has given us the opportunity to better understand some of the phenomena that underlie the development of building techniques. Our reflections on architecture have been enriched with data from a stratigraphic excavation and laboratory analyzes and datings carried out on mortars and plasters. A picture emerges which, although characterized by a slow transmission of construction knowledge, demonstrates how small technical changes can lead to important and lasting innovations.