What impact did the Frankish conquest and settlement have on the landscapes of Outremer?

1. Introduction

Pope Urban II must have been happily surprised that his call for a crusade against non-Christian enemies in the East resulted in the First Crusade (Kostick, 2003:12). The army was relatively small, possibly with only 7,000 knights and 28,000 soldiers and supporters (Riley-Smith 2002:109). Within a few years campaigning many cities had been captured from the disunited Seljuks Muslims (Holt 2004:12) and the majority of the surviving Crusaders had returned home (O'Shea 2007:163).

The West referred to the Crusader States as 'Outremer', literally 'across-the-sea'. This implies that Outremer was recognised as a plantation of peoples or as Guibert of Nogent described them, c.1108, 'Holy Christendom's new colonists' (Riley-Smith 2001:112).

The Franks, like the Romans, Byzantines and Arabs before them, impacted the landscape, initially by their conquest and then through their settlement of the region (Molin 2001:13). They established a feudal society and constructed religious and secular buildings on an extensive scale. Their impact on the landscape, which included the physical structures, regional economics, settlers and indigenous population, although short-lived, was significant.

2. Crusader States

2.1 *Conquest, Consolidation and Decay*

Only 300 Knights stayed after the First Crusade and they had a precarious hold on the territory (Phillips 2002:41). They employed a policy of Feudalistic domination, not unlike -similar to the Norman Conquest, to solidify and expand their control of a large geographic area , as Figure-1 shows, and a heterogeneous and numerically superior population which out-numbered the invaders three-to-one.

During the following decades the Franks embedded themselves into the Outremer environment. Their manpower-shortages were off-set by the construction of castles and the refortification of captured cities (O'Shea 2007:163). Their existence depended on economic viability which necessitated the immigration of settlers into rural and urban-landscape.

Ellenblum (2009:149) divides the post-conquest military-history into distinct phases; i) first-stage, 1099-1120s, military confrontations, ii) second-stage, 1115- 1160s, relative security/calm and iii) third-phase, 1160s-1180s, incessant pressure. Stages overlap and States had different time-lines. Recognizing the stages is important because they necessitated different attitudes and responses; for example a harmonious attitude during the second-phase and heightened-security during the third-stage.

2.2 *Settlement Landscapes*

The Frankish impact on the landscape can be broadly divided into urban and rural.

Frankish settlement included an extensive and varied range of building including villages and estates, churches, granaries and markets, leper colonies and charnel houses. This complex economy was connected with a network of roads and protected by castles, towers and fortified residences. The Franks introduced western styles of rural land-management and semi-arid zones were made fertile with water-management. Their feudal control including tithes, central storage of surpluses, bath-houses, and manufacturing facilities such as olive-mills, wine-presses and the exploitation of eastern crops such as sugar.

In the urban-landscape the settlers rebuilt and extended defensive structures, reused residential and commercial buildings and converted mosques into churches. Port facilities, which were vital for economic development and influx of settlers and reinforcements, were protected and extended (Riley-Smith 2002:157) - Acre, for example, had an annual revenue of 50,000 pounds of silver which was roughly equivalent to England's revenue.

Within the rural-landscape the Franks initially dominated the fertile coastal areas and quickly expanded their ownership into the hinterland through the construction of castles, such as Montfort, and fortified manors, such as Castellum Regis with its cluster of new and existing villages. These communities provided the agricultural surplus and manufacturing base for the Franks, both for their internal needs and the generation of revenues from exports.

2.3 *Settlers and* indigenous peoples

Settlers, of different social classes, were attracted by the prospects of land and wealth. Nobles, often landless younger-sons, were granted land in return for military and administrative service. Military Orders attracted knights and soldiers who protected pilgrims while living a monastic life (Riley-Smith 2002:160).

The lowest element of the social-structure was populated with similar professions to the west. The rural-landscape was populated with occupations such as farmers and vintners, which formed an effective working community (Phillips 2002:44-45) and the urban-landscape was populated with traders, soldiers and administrators.

Holt (2004:12,14,17) explains that the Franks initially massacred the Muslim population of captured cities and that many Muslims fled eastwards. Necessity forced Frankish attitudes to change because it was essential for the Franks to maintain an effective relationship with both the Eastern Christians and, critically, the Muslims. Encouraging indigenous people to continue their occupations, but under Frankish rule, was critical. However, the actual relationship between the peoples is contentious and alternative theories have been suggested.

The reaction to the invasion by the ruling Seljuks was passive and fortunately for the Franks the territory was considered marginal. The Seljuks had internal disputes and they continued to control the north-south communications between their capitals at Aleppo and Damascus – although the route to Egypt was blocked. However there was a Muslim recognition of the wide-spread assault on their territories including Spain and Sicily.

2.4 *Harmonious integration?*

Before archaeological evidence was available, Frankish historical documentation was used to theorize on the level of interaction and integration between the immigrants and indigenous peoples (Holt 2004:15).

Phillips (2002:43,170-171,177) explains that before the 1950s French scholars believed that the Franks became 'orientalised' and adopted the customs and practices of the indigenous population and that they had respectful relationships with each other. Ibn Jubayr, c.1184, during a 32-day visit to the region, painted a picture of uninterrupted-trade, a just legal-system and the harmonious co-existence of Christians and Muslims. This rather naive view, where western influence on the east resulted in law, order and tolerance, was little more than a French attempt to prove their "special genius" for colonial rule (Ellenblum 2002:4,10). A more recent example is Bush (2006:323) who theorized that the Franks were "seduced by Muslim culture" simply because they adopted local clothes which are clearly more suitable for the hot-climate.

During the 1950s, Prawer and Smail reinterpreted the same historical information and produced a diametrically opposed model. The argued that the region was highly-segregated by religion and language and that the Franks deliberately isolated themselves from the local population within fortified-walls and were "almost exclusively, an urban society" (Ellenblum 2002:3). Ellenblum (2002:10) ponders whether this theory was a reflection of Zionism's views on Jewish/Muslim tensions. We might see this being possible or even necessary during Ellenblum's first or third-stages of Frankish colonisation but certainly not during the relatively peaceful second-stage.

Archaeological evidence, mainly from the Kingdom of Jerusalem, allowed Ellenblum to significantly adjust these theories and to provide a more convincing reinterpretation based on actual evidence rather than interpretations with a political bias. Ellenblum identified, through wide-scale analysis of settlements, that there was a higher concentration of habitations in Western than Eastern Galilee. This may be explained because of the increasing risk of lawlessness the further east the Franks settled (Phillips 2002:46). Ellenblum also determined that Franks lived alongside Eastern Christians but avoided Muslim areas.

Ellenblum's model is widely supported and demonstrated by archaeological evidence. But we must remember that the Frankish period was not always peaceful and that each State had different relationships with its indigenous population and their Muslim neighbours. It is not possible, in most cases, for archaeology to reveal levels of human-detail or provide a snap-shot-in-time as some written sources can. We must to be cognisant of when a document was written, where it was written about and whether the writing has a bias. It is possible, and I believe likely, that both Ellenblum and Prawer/Smail are correct when taken within the context of particular period-of-time and location and stress that binary-models should be used carefully and within well defined contexts.

3. Frankish Archaeology

Frankish building techniques are a useful, and typically reliable method, of revealing their impact on the landscape.

3.1 Identifying Frankish Archaeology

Field surveys and study of the wider geographical and topographical surroundings, along with excavations and the study of historical documentation, are deepening the understanding of Frankish impact on the Outremer.

Undocumented sites can be difficult to definitively attribute to the Franks, or to one of the many indigenous groups such as Muslims, Jews or Eastern Christians - especially as we know little about the building techniques of the preceding centuries (Pringle 2009:1-2). Pringle wrote that structures are typically attributed to the Franks through historical documentation or by analysis of their form or/and construction methods. Methods include i) ashlar with diagonal dressing, ii) rusticated/bossed masonry iii) high-ceilinged barrel/groin-vaults and iv) Ellenblum (2002:51) adds certain features were only built by the Franks.

3.2 Building Materials and Construction

Romanesque and Gothic styles of architecture were common and Byzantine, Armenian and hybrid-styles, although less-common, were used. There are many exceptions to styles - such as domed church roofs (Boas, 2009:216) – and over time there was a gradual lessening of western-styles and an adoption of eastern-styles.

The most important building material was stone, most commonly limestone and sandstone which was quarried locally. Stone was worked into ashlar, typically with diagonal tooling and inscribed with mason-marks, before being transported to its destination (Boas 2009:212-215).

Buildings, from village houses to castles, were typically constructed with vaulted-roofs and with flat terraced roofs (Runciman 1999:374). Vaulted-roofs, such as those in Figure-2, with strong ashlar sidewalls/piers, could span 7-meters (Boas 2009:216) and larger-buildings supported multiple floors using layers of vaulted-roofs (see Figure-3).

4. Frankish Settlement

The short-lived burst of Frankish building, both in the rural and urban-landscapes, came to a sudden halt in 1187 with the pivotal battle at the Horns of Hattin (Norwich 2007:124-125). From a map of the sites attributed to the Franks, see Figure-4, we can see the clustering of Frankish settlements, for example, along the littoral, around Jerusalem and the preference for western sites.

Ellenblum (2002:13-14) believes, and I agree, that it isn't valid to divide the Frankish settlements into city, town or village because our knowledge of the Frankish understanding of these terms is unclear. The Outremer was certainly not a duplicate of Europe but an adaptation which evolved through the needs of the society and the physical and climatic factors.

There were 1,200 villages within Outremer, 900 were under the Franks control and 235 were Frankish settlements (Boas 2009:60). Boas (2008:8) writes that 20% of these belonged to Military Orders. Of course there were villages, like Bethgibelin, which eventually contained a mixture of peoples, especially western and eastern Christians. However there is limited historical documentation relating to the Outremer and even less relating to rural areas. Documentation typically relates to the sale/transfer/lease of land-ownership or those concerning the churches' parochial rights and tithes (Ellenblum 2002:54,145). Currently there is no single location that has been archaeologically studied with a community of related Frankish villages, castra and castle. I will use the estate of Mi'ilya, which includes the spur castle of Montfort and the fortified-settlement of Castellum Regis, and the unrelated planned-village of Parva Mohemeria to demonstrate the Franks impact on the landscape.

4.1 *Estates*

The estate of Mi'ilya was granted by Baldwin III with some settlements inhabited and others as potential sites (Ellenblum 2002:41,66). It was purchased by the Teutonic Order of Knights in 1226 (Boas 2008:6) for their forty knights (Nickel 1989:35). The Order acquired an extensive network of villages and rural burgus which were protected by Order's Knights.

4.2 *Castra and Villages*

At the estates' centre was Castellum Regis. The settlement was protected by a castle and included a church, domus (of the Bishop of Acre), houses and it was enclosed within a curtain-wall (Ellenblum 2002:45-53). The site, as was typical, was on a previously unused location, but close to the remains of a Byzantine village. Some of the network of fields over-lapped the earlier village. Ellenblum (2002:52,94) says that this is a typical Frankish development and that they located new villages close-to but not over existing Christian settlements and re-allocated the agricultural lands.

Originally there were over thirty homes which were within the curtain-wall. The houses were built using re-worked Byzantine stone and constructed using barrel-vaulting. Houses had a garden and some, depending on the local agricultural produce, contained an olive or wine-press. Most were predominantly free-standing, although seven were built in a single terrace. The largest house, decorated with a large cross, was probably a domus. A church had a transept and was at the village centre and next to the castle.

The area surrounding the hill-top village included agricultural terraces (primarily for vineyards and olive-groves), a leper-house, a reservoir and adjoining rural burgus. Settlers received different sized agricultural land (each person's holding varied greatly by crop, location, ability and landlord).

4.3 *Frankish Planned Villages*

Parva Mohemeria is one of few Frankish settlements that have been archaeologically excavated and Ellenblum confirms that other villages have a similar plan (Ellenblum 2002:88,90-91). It was uninhabited from the end of the 12th-century until the 19th-century and built in one phase in a European style.

Mohemeria was a typical Frankish wayside village where, as Figure-5 shows, the houses straddled the road. Non-Frankish villages were unplanned and the result of ad-hoc building over a period of time (Ellenblum 2002:92-93). Linear villages would have been difficult to defend and must have been built during periods of relative calm and security (Boas, 1998:151-152). Other villages, for example Castellum Regis which was on a hill-top and in a circular design, were planned to be sympathetic to the local topography. In addition to houses, the planned village had three centrally located institutions; i) a church, ii) domus and iii) a flour-mill and bread-oven. It contained at least 50 houses which were barrel-vaulted with a maximum height of 6-meters and 2-meters thick walls. Most had one long/thin room measuring 5.5-meters wide and 15-meters long with a front-door opening into the central road and rear-door opening onto fields. Ellenblum (2002:90) believes that they would have had a second-floor accessed via an internal stairway.

Planned villages were built using a common plan and architecture and in a single-phase. I believe that this demonstrates that they were built by a mobile 'gang' of master-builders in advance of the settler's arrival from Europe. This plantation allowed the immigrants to move into a pre-established location and to begin their new-lives – and producing agricultural-surpluses/revenues – as efficiently as possible. My view is supported by Ellenblum (2002:73,82) saying that landlords competed to make their locations attractive to potential settlers and Mohemeria was able to attract a community including cereal-farmers, goat/pig-farmers, vintners, blacksmiths, butchers and bakers.

4.4 *Indigenous Settlements*

The settlement's contact with landowners, whether an Order, religious house or lord, was through a steward or/and a village leader. Landlords were remote from the day-to-day lives of community and life must have continued with little substantial change except changes to taxation. There is little evidence that agricultural methods changed significantly except an increased grape-cultivation, for wine, and pig-farming.

4.5 *Roads and Castles*

Mi'ilya was connected via road-networks radiating out from Castellum Regis. It was half-way between Acre and Tyre, about six-miles from the coast, and it was on the pilgrimage route to the Sea of Galilee and Jerusalem (Dean 1927:12-13).Mi'ilya's castles were part of a patchwork of defenses that formed a loosely connected defensive-line stretching to the strategically important coastal Ladder of Tyre (Runciman 1999:98).

Many of the local roads were built by the Franks (Ellenblum 2002:44-45) and Mi'ilya's roads were partially constructed by the Teutonic Order which demonstrates their impact on regional planning (Ellenblum 1996:108). Frankish maintenance and protection of roads testifies to the central-government's recognition of their criticality to the State's, both militarily and economically. Road building/maintenance requires an investment of material and manpower within a locality which Ellenblum (2002:222) believes indicates that it was a duty placed on the seigniorial-lord.

Deschamps believed that roads were vital to Frank's defense against the armies of the Eastern Muslims (Ellenblum 2009:107-108). The Frankish States were predominantly a narrow north-south entity, with a heavier settlement density in the west. Inland fortresses, like Montfort, were intended to control the east-west routes and, along with the central mountains, obstruct significant military incursions. Montfort, like other small fortresses, would have been able to resist sieges for short periods until support arrived. Larger fortresses, such as Krak des

Chevaliers, were established for strategic purposes but their role included guarding international roads, taxing Muslim-pilgrims and protecting Christian-pilgrims.

4.6 *Urban centres*

Boas (1998:143-146) has confirmed that the Franks did not establish any cities but they did significantly change many cities and towns through their buildings and the settlements of Europeans into divisions or quarters. For example in Jerusalem, Baldwin I settled Oriental Christians in what had been the Jewish quarter and Latins acquired the areas previously populated by Muslims. Urban settlers, such as in Acre, often established streets or quarters based on their nationality.

Their building programs included military defences, extensive religious building and a wide-range of essential services required for day-to-day living such as streets and squares, tax-collectors, drains, cemeteries and charnel houses and, importantly, markets.

Military Orders established headquarters in locations such as Jerusalem, Acre and Montfort. Their building was extensive and included a palace and numerous churches as well as more practical buildings such as refectories, barracks, hospitals/hospices, pilgrim accommodation and bathhouses (Boas 2008:6,17,19; Boas 2009:22-23).

Ports, principally Acre, were essential for the movement of settlers, pilgrims, commerce and, during times of crisis, re-supply (Pryor 1992:112,123). Major ports were re-designed by the powerful Italian merchant-cities, such as Pizza, Genoa and Venice, and developed facilities similar to those in the west including customs-houses, warehouses and wharfs (Boas 1998:145).

4.7 The *Church*

Most of the 400 Frankish churches (Boas 2009:123-124) were of a comparatively simple design and followed a Romanesque basilica plan with a central nave and a single aisle (Boas 1998:146) although there was a wide-range of designs used depending on the churches' function, location and financial support (Boas 2009:124).

Churches were a settlement's nucleus and they served both the inhabitants and their landlords, who contributed tithes to support them. It was both an economic and spiritual institution (Ellenblum 2002:103,109,116,120) and was supported by a Domus which functioned as an administrative centre and for the storage of tithes.

4.7 *Material-Culture at Montfort Castle*

The Teutonic Knights headquarters at Montfort Castle was built in a Gothic style and destroyed by Salah al-Din's siege engines and under-mining in 1271. It was demolished by the Muslims and remained unchanged until its excavation which has provided us with a time-capsule of Frankish material-culture.

Most material-remains relate to daily-life or military-use (Dean 1927:22,30-43) such as:

Metal-work:	Iron-working blooms, tools, lamp-hangings
Materials:	Wooden-spoons, polychrome-painted stonework, leather-work, textiles fragments (cotton/linen/wool), pottery (mainly common earthenware)
Military:	chain-mail, armour, arrow-heads, cross-bows bolts, spear-heads, swords/scabbards, horse-trappings

Medicines:	mortar and fragments of bottles/flasks
Coins:	Kingdom of Jerusalem silver denier coins, minted by Henry I of Cyprus (Nickel 1989:36)
	Roman coins; Elagabalus c.220, Alexander Severus, c.222-235

Hunt (1991:70) says that master-craftsmen were recruited from Italy and France and they may have been responsible for Montfort's high-status items; stained-glass windows and intricately carved stonework. Boas (2009:143,146,155) believes that most traditional crafts were undertaken by local-craftsmen or imported from Syria and Egypt. There is little evidence of Frankish involvement in the widespread manufacture of day-to-day ceramics, metalwork, textiles or glass. I judge that this is too is generalist and that local production happened - for example within Montfort's armoury, domestic situations or for specialist religious items.

5. Conclusion

Frankish impact on the landscapes of Outremer, although short-lived, was significant and this was especially true within the rural-landscape.

Future archaeological research will deepen our knowledge of this brief-period. An excellent example of this is Ellenblum's reappraisal of the Franks involvement within urban and rural-landscapes. We should not forget the Frankish impact on the local population and the struggle between Christian and Muslim nations.

Even with limited historical documentation, archaeological excavations and landscape research we can demonstrate that the Franks, a collection of different nationalities with different motivations but united by a common religion, conducted a massive building program as they expanded their control of the Outremer landscape.

6. Figures

Figure-1: The Crusader States
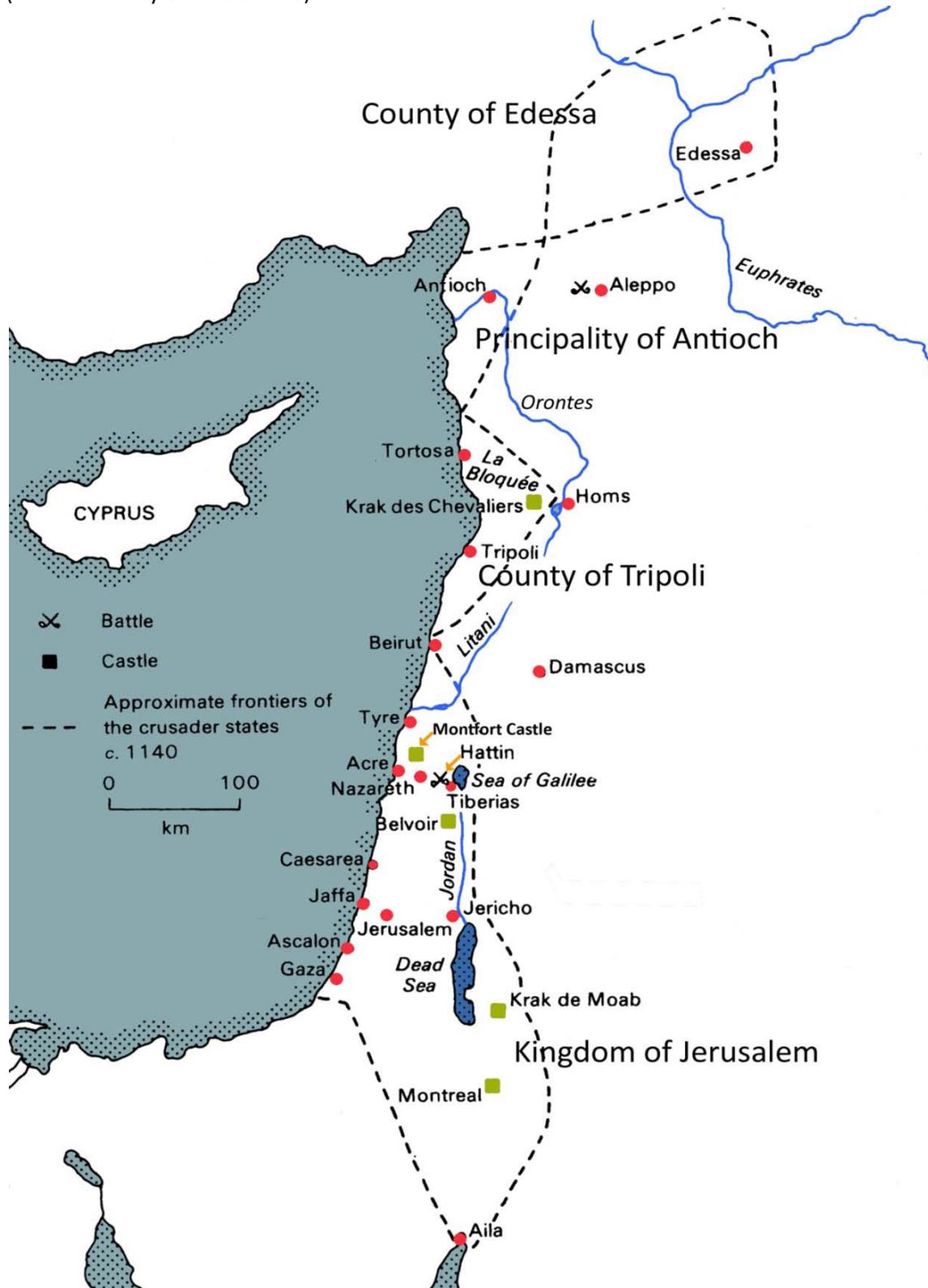(after Ditchbury et al 2007:115)

Figure-2: Vaulted roof of a Jerusalem *Suq*, c.1152
(Riley-Smith 2009:170)

Figure-3: Montfort Castle

Excavated remains (Speelman 2010)
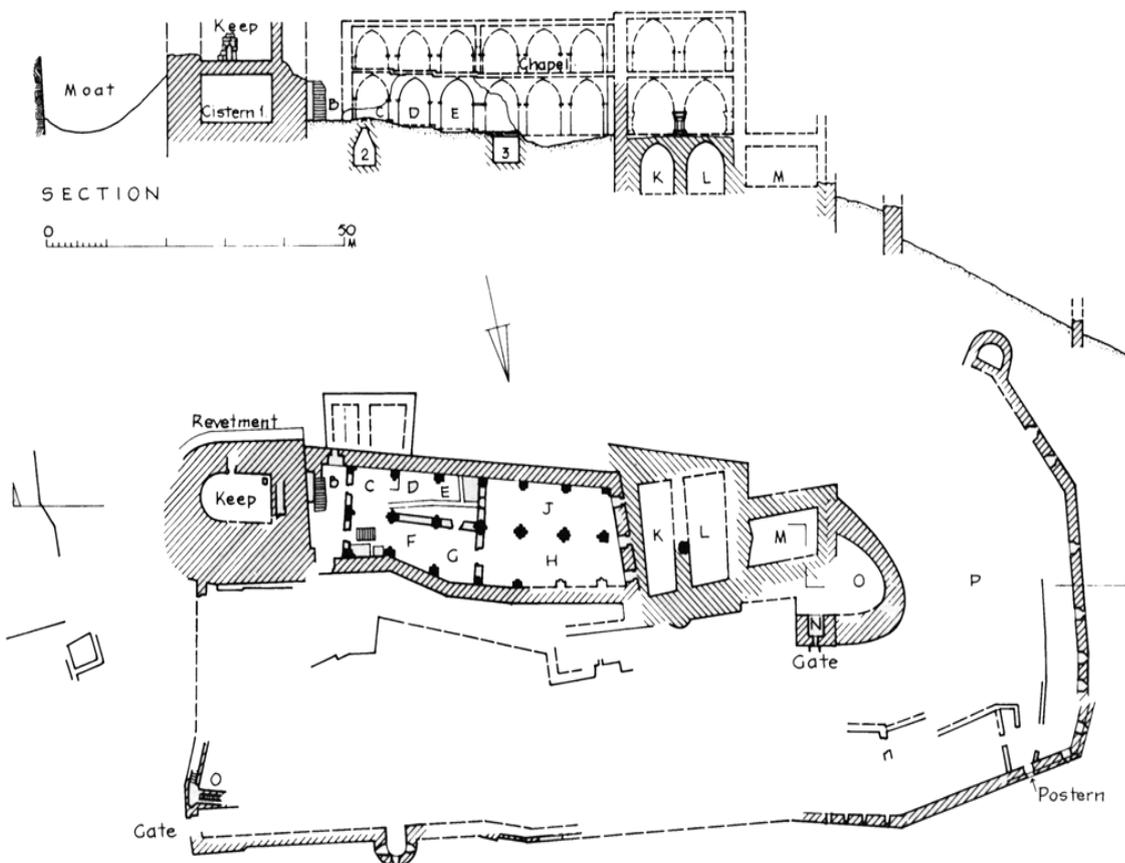

Plan and Section (Pringle 2009:73)

Figure-4: Frankish settlements in Outremer
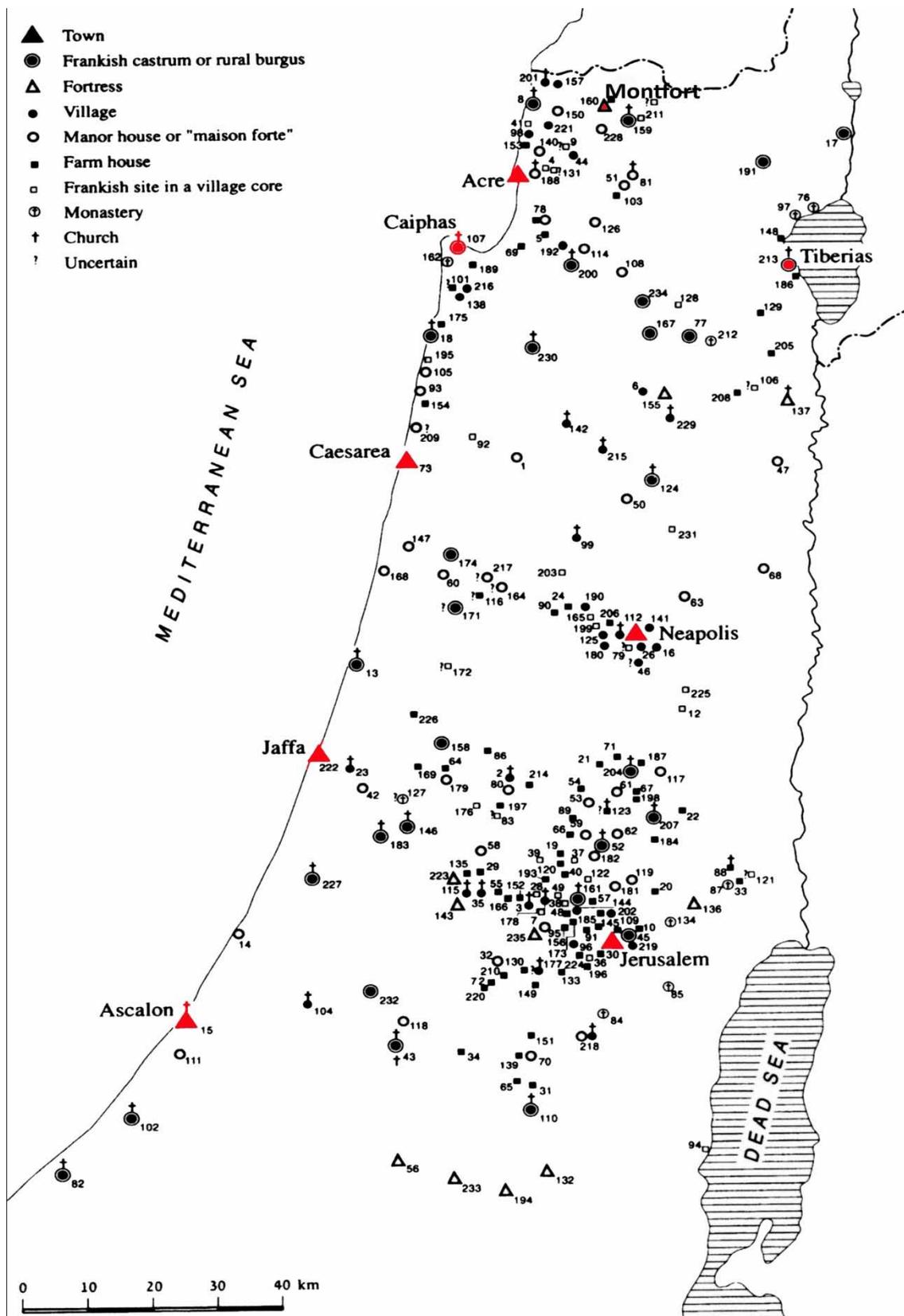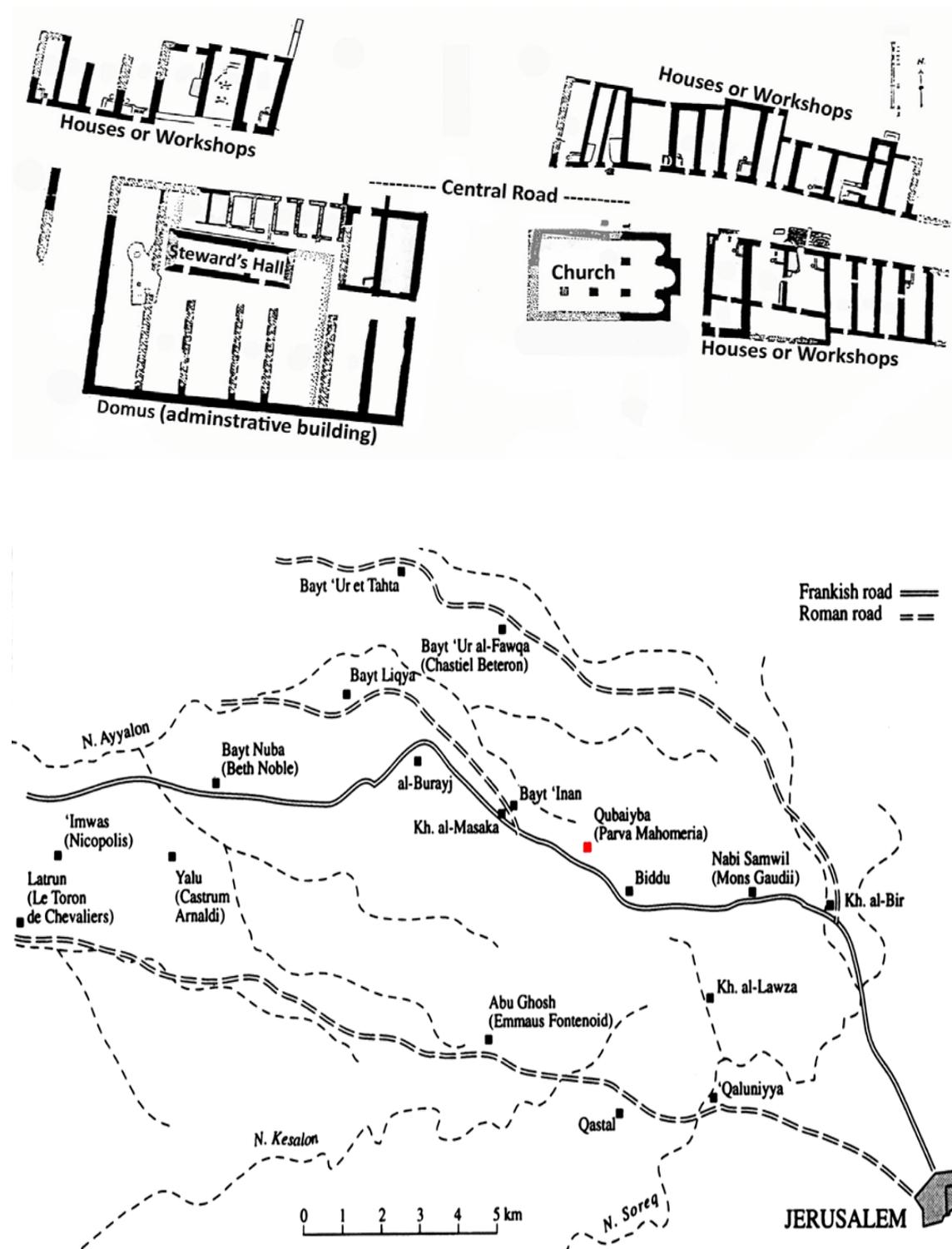(after Ellenblum 2002:Map 1)

Figure-5: Parva Mohemeria, plan of the village centre and map of its location
(after Ellenblum 2002:89,223)

7. Bibliography

Boas, A. 1998. The Frankish Period: A Unique Medieval Society Emerges, *Near Eastern Archaeology*, Vol. 61, No. 3: 138-173

Boas, A. 2001. *Jerusalem in the Time of the Crusades: Society, Landscape and Art in the Holy City Under Frankish Rule,* London: Routledge

Boas, A. 2008. *Archaeology of the Military Orders: A Survey of the Urban Centres, Rural Settlements and Castles of the Military Orders in the Latin East (C.1120-1291),* Abingdon: Routledge

Boas, A. 2009. *Crusader Archaeology: The Material Culture of the Latin East,* Abingdon: Routledge

Bush, B. 2006. *Imperialism and Postcolonialism (History: Concepts, Theories and Practice),* Harlow: Pearson Education Limited

Dean, B. 1927. The Exploration of a Crusader's Fortress (Montfort) in Palestine, *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, Vol. 22, No. 9, Part 2: 5-46

Ditchbury, D, MacLean, S and MacKay, A. 2007. *Atlas of Medieval Europe*, Abingdon: Routledge

Ellenblum, R. 1996. Colonization Activities in the Frankish East: The Example of Castellum Regis (Mi'ilya), *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 111, No. 440: 104-122

Ellenblum, R. 2002. *Frankish Rural Settlement in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Ellenblum, R. 2009. *Crusader Castles and Modern Histories,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Holt, P. 2004. *The Crusader States and Their Neighbours: 1098-1291,* Harlow: Pearson Education Limited

Hunt, L. 1991. Art and Colonialism: The Mosaics of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem (1169) and the Problem of "Crusader" Art, *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, Vol. 45: 69-85

Kostick, C. 2003. Ireland and the First Crusade, *History Ireland*, Vol. 11, No. 1: 12-13

Molin, K. 2001. *Unknown Crusader Castles,* London: Hambledon and London

Nickel, H. 1989. Some Heraldic Fragments Found at Castle Montfort/Starkenberg in 1926, and the Arms of the Grand Master of the Teutonic Knights, *Metropolitan Museum Journal*, Vol. 24: 35-46

Norwich, J. J. 2007. *The Middle Sea: A History of the Mediterranean,* London: Vintage Books

O'Shea, S. 2007. *Sea of Faith: Islam and Christianity in the Medieval Mediterranean World,* London: Profile Books Ltd

Phillips, J. 2002. *The Crusades, 1095-1197,* Harlow: Pearson Education Limited

Pringle, D. 2009. *Secular Buildings in the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem: An Archaeological Gazetteer,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Pringle, D. 1998. *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem; A Corpus, Volume II, L-Z,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Pryor, J. 1992. *Geography, Technology, and War: Studies in the Maritime History of the Mediterranean, 649-1571,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Riley-Smith, J. 2001. *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Crusades,* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Riley-Smith, J. 2002. *The First Crusaders, 1095-1131,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Riley-Smith, J. 2009. *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading,* London: Continuum International Publishing

Runciman, S. 1990. *A History of the Crusades: Volume II: The Kingdom of Jerusalem and the Frankish East 1100-1187,* London: Penguin Books

Speelman, A. 2010. Montfort Castle. http://news.webshots.com/photo/(accessed 10-Dec-2010)