



Figure 0.1. Saint graves at ‘Ayn Amūn. Photo by the author.

🌀 Introduction

IN THE PRESENCE OF THINGS

'Ignorant, all of them ignorant' (*jāhil, kulhum jāhil*). The judgment came without any hesitation from Hussein's mouth, loaded with utter disgust. We were on our way to meet some friends in Taibeh, just south of the Petra in Jordan, when we passed the saint graves in the cemetery at 'Ayn Amūn (figure 0.1). With an elaborate stone construction around the largest of the graves, pieces of torn cloth tied to sticks inserted into the grave, used candles, and burn marks from incense, it was evident that the graves were still used for saint intercession – at least by some people.

Hussein¹ is in his mid-twenties from the Ammarin tribe, defines himself as Bedouin, and works as a park ranger in the nearby national park of the ancient city of Petra. Unlike the older generations of Bedouin who once lived in tents and caves in the surrounding desert mountains, Hussein was born and raised in a small village, where he now lives in a house with his wife and children. His rejection should be seen in the context of religious scholars increasingly preaching a more purist, scriptural understanding of Islam in the village mosque since the late 1990s, as part of what has more generally been called the Islamic Revival (*al-Ṣaḥwa al-Islamiyya*) spreading in various forms out of Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Consequences of this increasing religious awareness in the late twentieth and twenty-first century are the development of Islamic parties such as the Islamic Action Front in Jordan, discourses of a 'return' to a true Caliphate, and a rhetoric of the existence of only one monolithic Islam and a worldwide *umma* – an Islamic community of believers. Hussein was inspired by such teachings, now seeing himself as a true and devout Muslim, although

¹"Being Bedouin Around Petra: Life at a World Heritage Site in the Twenty-First Century" by Mikkel Bille. <http://berghahnbooks.com/title/BilleBeing>

he may only occasionally do his prayers and find fasting a bit too challenging. But the disdain for the saint graves was heartfelt. To Hussein, the material evidence of recent use of the graves was a clear sign that not everyone in the area had learned about the proper – and in his mind original and only – way of being a Muslim but adhered to remnants of a ‘folk Islam’.

Yet there is more to Hussein’s outburst than simply a matter of how to be a ‘proper’ Muslim. It was a matter of history and heritage. Like the other holy sites in the area, which numbered around thirty, these graves were, he admitted, part of tribal history, burial places of descendants of the tribes, and places associated with stories of extraordinary events. Even his close relatives would have used them in what he saw as ‘ignorant’ ways, and some may still do so. The contemporary practices at the sites, and, at times, even the claims of sainthood, were certainly part of history and the past, but not of his heritage. As Samuli Schielke and Georg Stauth note, the contestation of a saint’s shrine is also ‘a contestation of the identities and values of the people who relate to it’ (2008: 15). Even if the saint graves are still there, the important question is how people relate to them, and seen from the evidence at the graves, some still do. Defining heritage in this part of Jordan is thus an important, yet also contentious matter, encompassing claims of knowledge and morality of dealing with material objects. To Hussein, it is a display of both ignorance and heresy to think you can influence the will of God by interacting with the graves. But for the (few) people who still go to these graves, such practices offer a potential closeness to God mediated through material objects, and are part of a contemporary informal heritage.

Most aspects of people’s lives in this area of Jordan are about heritage or the effects of it. In 1985, Petra became a UNESCO World Heritage site. In effect, the Bedouin, who had inhabited the landscape for centuries, were forced, by a combination of international heritage protection policies and national settlement ideologies, to resettle. Two villages were built outside the Petra heritage area for the two major tribes inhabiting Petra: Umm Sayhoun for the Bdoul tribe and Beidha Housing (*Eskān al-Beida*) for the Ammarin. While in the past they lived a semi-nomadic subsistence in tents, caves and vernacular houses rearing livestock – mostly sheep and goats – these Bedouin were now far removed from any general nostalgic image of camel-herding, tent-dwelling nomadic Bedouin you may have, and the effects of UNESCO heritage regulations and mass tourism are largely the cause.

In 2005, in an ironic turn of events, the Ammarin Bedouin tribe residing in the northern part of Petra, along with a few neighbouring

tribes, became part of UNESCO's newly established intangible cultural heritage list – 'Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity'. Although most of the Ammarin themselves were unaware of the formal international recognition of their cultural heritage, scholars and heritage agents working in the area responded to the proclamation with a mixture of proud nods of approval and baffled astonishment. On the one hand, the Bedouin incorporation on the list meant international acknowledgment of the oral traditions and skills of nomadic desert survival that the Bedouin across the Middle East have developed over millennia. It was the recognition of a type of knowledge at risk of disappearing with urbanisation, settlement and new economic structures. It was simultaneously a legitimisation of the central narrative that Bedouin culture, and tribal society at large, hold in the Jordanian national discourse. On the other hand, these particular Bedouin had for decades been economically dependent on tourism, had cars and mobile phones, spoke several languages and – not unimportantly in terms of the bafflement – were, like Hussein, settled and relocated from the area by the government as a response to UNESCO tangible heritage. It was a spatial and social change from living a life in tents and caves in the 1980s to living in concrete buildings detached from the landscape which they now, according to UNESCO intangible heritage programmes, are so intimately related to in oral traditions and skills. Furthermore, the saint intercession practices Hussein had protested so much against are celebrated as part of the intangible cultural heritage of humanity by UNESCO, even though they are now rarely practiced, and mostly frowned upon by people like Hussein. In part, this is because people no longer live close to the cemeteries previously used, but it is also due to the Islamic Revival noted above, emerging in the area through schools, mosques and television. In this line of thought, these religious practices are not viewed as a heritage embodying the knowledge of contemporary people, but rather as un-Islamic ignorance.

In a sense, what we are witnessing is a reversal of a traditional academic discussion of a dichotomy between a purist, scriptural Islam of a cultural elite or State in the urban centres (sometimes called high Islam or Greater tradition) and the folk Islam of the rural areas (sometimes called low Islam or Little tradition) (Asad 1986: 6; Geertz 1968; Gellner 1981; Goldziher 1967, 1971; Lukens-Bull 1999). While such a dichotomy may initially seem fruitful in pointing to a clear distinction between approaches to Islam, it has also been heavily criticised for resting on the idea that both the purist Islamic revival and the so-called folk Islam may be envisaged as an ahistorical single whole (in line with

Antoun 1989: 39; Goldziher 1981: 4; Makris 2006: 49–54). More than this, it also creates a geographical distinction between urban and rural, which the case of UNESCO heritage in Petra in part is reversing, or at least complicating. Here, the state and parts of the urban elite are seeking diversity, while the rural population at first sight is seeking unified scriptural dogmatism.

We are confronted with the case of a UNESCO world heritage claim to universalism – the heritage of humanity – meeting a competing Islamic claim to universalism – one Islamic community of believers, which simultaneously aims to break with a diverse range of practices associated with so-called folk Islam. In many situations, these two universalistic ideals overlap and join forces, but in other cases they also differ when questions are raised about which pasts should be recognised. Few other places in the world can present such a conglomeration of heritage ideologies, encompassing international agencies, state policies, regional heritage management and everyday disputes over the presence of the past that at least initially seem incompatible if the goal is to protect both tangible and intangible heritage. Therefore, what we see here, in essence, are central tensions and dichotomies between formal and informal, tangible and intangible heritage, purist and folk Islam, and the negotiation of the past in the present.

The preoccupation with protecting or denouncing various kinds of formal and informal heritage in Petra is at the heart of this book. Why are specific traditions and material remnants from the past around Petra so important to protect or denounce as heritage by various actors? How did specific people, places and things become inscribed as heritage by UNESCO, rather than others? These questions will be answered through a detailed ethnographic account of Bedouin life around Petra.

However, beyond the selection and denunciation of heritage, to answer such questions we also need to dwell on Hussein's remark, as it raises a range of other questions about the role of material objects in people's lives, which are deeply entangled in those processes of shaping both religious and heritage identities. We are surrounded by millions of objects, but what is it about certain objects, at certain times, that make us identify and celebrate them, or challenge and obliterate them? Is it just the 'meanings' projected onto them by people, or is there another material logic that makes people visit such graves or denounce them? How do different material objects work in fundamentally different ways where some strike back and present their own agenda? Connecting these questions is the need to understand how distinctions between the material and immaterial – if and when

they indeed make sense in people's lives – come to matter in everyday life and how they need to be framed in precise ways to accommodate religious and social ends in heritage politics. These understandings of the role of material culture, or its supposedly immaterial counterpart in heritage and religious processes, raises broader issues across the (Islamic) world in terms of identifying roots in a world of unremitting social upheaval, where claims of apostasy lead to the destruction of proclaimed cultural heritage.

Aims and Process

The central question addressed throughout the book is how, and why, do Islamic pasts and Bedouin heritage shape identities in Jordan? In dealing with this question, the book presents an ethnographic exploration of aspects of Bedouin life around Petra and the process of heritage preservation and contestation, while simultaneously seeking to expand our understanding of the role of material culture in people's lives more generally. The data used to investigate this question is based on sixteen months of anthropological fieldwork between 2005 and 2011.²

A first step towards answering this question is to address heritage from multiple perspectives. A micro-scale perspective on how a group of Bedouin perceive their past and revitalise a Bedouin heritage in a new sedentary context does not suffice. Nor can we reach an understanding of the workings of heritage by relying on the practices and representations of the heritage industry on either a regional, national or international scale. We need to see how the everyday life, heritage practices and infrastructure run parallel, connect, overlap or sometimes deliberately divert from each other. To understand this, the book deliberately shifts between perspectives. At times, it addresses how international institutions protect heritage; at other times, it deals with the local or national preservation efforts; while other parts discuss the everyday life of living with particular objects among the Bedouin. I have chosen this way of presenting heritage processes to illustrate how these local, regional, national and international levels are entangled and variously rely on and constitute notions of how the world is or should be present. This sort of identity formation happens as much through national and global connections as through local attachments. As Hussein showed, sometimes the universal connection to an *umma* is more relevant than adherence to past local traditions.

The first part of the book specifically explores how cultural practices among a small Bedouin tribe in southern Jordan rise to

national and international prominence through tapping implicitly and explicitly into different claims to universality. It becomes clear in the second half of the book that on this journey from local knowledge to international heritage acknowledgment, material objects – or the absence thereof – are focal points in heritage debates over what it means to be a Bedouin, Muslim and Jordanian, or variations of all three at once.³ The starting point of this analysis is the observation that there are parallel claims as to what heritage is and is not. These claims rely on broader – yet different – claims to universalities that unfold when people ignore, discard, tolerate or identify with places, practices and things passed on from previous generations. They are claims to universality rather than actual existence of such universality. For instance, promoters of the Islamic Revival tried to disseminate the notion that there is one monolithic way of being a ‘proper’ Muslim across the world – seemingly in opposition to ‘folk Islam’ – but such claims may be dealt with in ambiguous ways locally. Even UNESCO notions of heritage, that almost all nations now accept, are challenged or adjusted to meet local interests, or rethought, as with the invention of intangible heritage lists.

The key analytical point made in this book is that we see *parallel universalities* at work, where an organisation, institution or person may justify their actions through broader universal reference. These different justifications may run parallel to each other, or they may even intersect and be used simultaneously to meet specific aims. The notion of parallel universality emphasises that the question is not how one universalism is more dominant than the other or came first. The term instead highlights how people navigate between the imbrications and incompatibilities of the parallel – and at times competing – notions of universality through material practices. It is about finding the fertile spaces between positions, where ambivalence and potentiality offer guidance, loopholes and comfort. The same practice or object may thus simultaneously present evidence for the importance of recognising a universal heritage of humanity, for instance in terms of saint veneration, while also proving the need for a universal practice of a purist Islamic faith by not recognising it. Or aspects of it may be recognised as compliant with one universality and denounced as compliant with another. This also illustrates how tensions between definitions of heritage as formal or informal, tangible or intangible, and/or purist and folk Islamic, are at the heart of understanding what heritage is and does. By situating discussions of the role of things in the everyday life of a Bedouin tribe and following their path through the tourism industry and international heritage proclamations, the book

thus explores the overlaps and gaps between the everyday life of the Ammarin Bedouin tribe around Petra and the production of UNESCO tangible and intangible cultural heritage, the shaping of Jordanian national identity, the disappearance of folk Islamic practices, and the rise of a new Islamic awareness.

With the rise of tourism and cultural heritage discourse in the twentieth century, there is also a notion of risk evolving, which is reflected in the desire to rescue authenticity and cultural diversity from loss, dilapidation and destruction (cf. Harrison 2013, ch.2; Layton et al. 2001). Authenticity is seen to exist 'just prior to the present' (Clifford 1987: 122), and the notions of 'distance' and proximity (whether in time or space) are often linked to the aesthetic presentation of the materials of the past. Through heritage, people, organisations and states can engage in the powerful blame game: who is to blame for the dilapidation of cultural resources or practices? Or as David Lowenthal also notes, 'To neglect heritage is a cardinal sin, to invoke it a national duty' (1998: xiii).

Following Mary Douglas's (1992) insight that risk is about blame (including self-blame), an argument recurring throughout the book is that protection against whatever is considered a risk – heritage protection in particular – is about the duality of exposure: a recognition of vulnerability – of being exposed – and thus adhering to a shared idea that something is valuable; and displaying and confirming the appropriate ways of achieving such protection. In other words, while the protection of heritage may be galvanised by the risk of losing it, the act of protecting it simultaneously displays the propriety and ability to act properly by those protecting the valued objects or traditions (see also Harrison 2013: 26–28). This view forces us to explore the social entanglement of protection as an act against whatever constitutes a risk and whatever protective traditions, materials and political means the act of protection makes use of.

From such a position, it seems that the relationship between the material and the immaterial – often simply translated into the tangible and intangible, or presence and absence – is not as clear cut as one would presume; neither in tangible or intangible heritage proclamations by UNESCO, nor in everyday life. Rather, the relationship between seemingly opposing concepts, or even links between materiality, presence and tangibility, is somewhat ambiguous, and no less so when we are talking about religious objects. This ambiguity offers space for social tensions, defining subjectivities and mitigating social instability. It is a presence that is not simply about whether an object is there or not, but rather *how* it is there, what it does, and what people do to it.

Taming Things

In my analysis I employ the notion of 'taming' to understand how people constantly frame a material world that otherwise threatens to overwhelm them (taking my cue from Goffman 1974). Taming is thus an analytical, rather than ethnographic, term that aims to highlight the processes taking place in cherishing or abolishing aspects of past practices and materials. At the most basic level, the human brain is the first line of defence, subconsciously sorting out what is relevant to notice. For instance, when driving a car, some things demand attention more than others, and yet some things may be simply impossible to ignore. The notion of 'taming' rests on the premise that the presence of things may force itself upon us, wherein excessive aspects of things need to be neutralised, while more cherished and relevant aspects are highlighted. For instance, think of the way smell in a toilet is either subtracted through ventilation or overpowered through the addition of other smells.

Hussein's outburst exemplifies a broader discussion about the ways in which humans should engage with things. Human life unfolds through material objects, but that does not make all things equal. The notion of 'taming' entails that at certain times we ignore, discard, tolerate or identify with what is in our presence. Some things we identify strongly with and care for – at times to the point of being indistinct from oneself or a person: an heirloom, wedding ring, ashes from a family member and so on. Some things we tolerate and accept: the ugly chair or the dust mites on the floor. Most things we simply actively ignore or do not notice, such as the floor panels or background noise. And then there are the things that we seek to negate: when there are too many dust mites in inappropriate places or, to return to the heritage scene, when a former political regime's statues need to be removed.

Things have an affecting presence (Armstrong 1971), and people are in a constant process of sorting out what aspects need attention. This process of sorting out is thus what I call a 'taming process' that helps us to understand the different relations and qualities of things that people engage with. 'Taming' is not fixed once and for all, nor is it simply an autonomous individual act, but one that may be embedded in social or religious movements. Through law, politics and everyday life, it may become naturalised as the evident thing to do or way to think. But in each case, further analysis shows that it is indeed a process of highlighting, accepting or negating certain aspects of things. The question of how things are 'there' is thus a question of taming their materiality in a meaningful way and engaging with the social propriety of handling their effects and affects.

"Being Bedouin Around Petra: Life at a World Heritage Site in the Twenty-First Century" by Mikkel Bille. <http://berghahnbooks.com/title/BilleBeing>

To sum up the answer to the central question of how, and why, Islamic pasts and Bedouin heritage shape identities in Jordan, I argue that universalistic ideals of how things should be present are tamed by naturalising the duality of exposure – acknowledging vulnerability and displaying propriety. While this taming process of establishing what is heritage or not (formal/informal, tangible/intangible or Islamic/un-Islamic) may rest on parallel universal claims at a general level, these are heavily entangled in everyday material practices, where certitude, ambiguity and ignorance compete in shaping identity. Before we embark on trying to understand Hussein's irritation towards the saint graves, and the advancement of a small group of Bedouin to international fame, we first need to know the larger context of the role of the Bedouin in Jordan.

Building a Modern Bedouin Heritage in Jordan

In art, film and public discourse there has at times been a romantic representation of the Bedouin as a tribal society roaming the desert since time immemorial, herding camels, acting with honour and valour. Empirically, however, the Bedouin have transformed tremendously over the centuries. By the 1950s, for instance, most Bedouin were at the fringes of society almost everywhere in the Arab world. There was widespread illiteracy among the Bedouin, most had no access to modern health care, and they probably experienced the region's highest rates of infant mortality. They also suffered from a decline in market demand for caravans, camels and horses, with few alternatives in terms of employment (Cole 2003). This situation was further exacerbated by drought in the late 1960s among the large camel-herding tribes (Lancaster 1997: 100). All over the region, the nomadic Bedouin were encouraged, or economically forced, to settle and lead a so-called modern sedentary life either in government-designed or vernacular houses and villages.⁴ This was not just an adaptation to the environment and to new technologies of transportation, however. WHO, UNESCO and many Middle Eastern governments had also decided to initiate an intensive sedentarisation programme for the pastoral nomadic Bedouin tribes. These organisations predicted that encouraging or coercing the nomadic Bedouin to settle would help the Bedouin cope with growing health problems, poverty and hunger (Bocco 2000: 199, 214).

The mobile, pastoral way of life had become increasingly problematic after the decline of the Ottoman Empire as the Bedouin formed

a 'state within a state' (Chatty 1986: 154) and referred to themselves as Bedouin (or 'arab) rather than as Saudi or Egyptian. They did not pay taxes and crossed modern national borders at will, which led to accusations of smuggling and of being responsible for extensive land degradation (Chatty 1986). Yet, the Bedouin in Jordan, in contrast to their counterparts in other Middle Eastern countries, were venerated as the backbone of Jordanian identity.

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan was established in 1946, when it broke away from its colonial ties. The British mandate of Transjordan, founded in April 1921 (Masalha 2007; Robins 2004), had been established in a collaboration between the British (most notably T.E. Lawrence and Pasha Glubb), the Bedouin tribes of southern Jordan (the Howeitat in particular), and the Hashemite family from Hijaz in contemporary Saudi Arabia. These parties revolted against the Ottoman Empire to establish Transjordan. Emir Abdullah, who would later become King Abdullah I, administered the 300–400,000 inhabitants of Transjordan, of which about 80 per cent were nomadic.

The early independence years of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan were turbulent. King Abdullah I was assassinated in 1951, and King Talal, who succeeded him, abdicated shortly thereafter due to a mental condition. For the rest of the twentieth century, Jordan was ruled by King Hussein, who needed to balance British, American, Palestinian and Arab political and economic interests in the area. The country became increasingly divided during the late 1980s and early 1990s in terms of economic prosperity. The economic difficulties eventually resulted in an IMF intervention. Southern Jordan (here understood as approximately south of the Dead Sea) had few development plans and little economic growth compared to the north; southern Jordanians consisted mostly of lower-class farmers, and settled or pastoral nomadic Bedouin population. The southern Jordanian tribes have historically shown strong support for the royal family, so their economic struggles became an even more sensitive political issue (Joffé 2002; Robins 2004). Upon Hussein's death in 1999, the current King Abdullah II ascended the throne in a controversial change of succession with Prince Hassan, who some saw as the rightful successor. Since then, a fine balance in international and national politics has kept Jordan relatively stable.

At the end of my fieldwork in 2011, Jordan had an estimated 5,600,000 inhabitants, mostly living in northern Jordan's major cities, such as Amman, Irbid, Zarqa and Mafraq. It is commonly held that most Jordanians are actually of Palestinian descent, but it is a highly contentious topic, as it puts pressure on the perceived 'Jordanian-ness' of Jordan. Additionally, between 750,000 and one million Iraqi

refugees arrived after the second Gulf War (Masalha 2007: 637).⁵ To counter these developments, the national campaign 'Jordan First' sought to make Jordanians set aside their differences and unite under a common national heritage, as 'Jordanians' and as 'Hashemites' (Al-Mahadin 2007a). 'Jordan First' has, however, also facilitated a crackdown on critical, anti-government and Islamic voices, as represented by the opposition Islamic Action Front party, which has close ties to the Islamic Brotherhood in Egypt.

Jordanian heritage discourses are based on shaping a multifaceted history of Jordan by incorporating the roots of the royal family within the Bedouin culture, as well as stressing the importance of Christian sites and community, and minority groups such as the Circassian, and only more recently have Jordan's Islamic roots been showcased more prominently (Addison 2004; Neveu 2010). In Jordan, tribal society – and in particular the Bedouin – is critical to representations of Jordanian national identity. Bedouin heritage has been highlighted since the birth of the state, as it has been made to represent notions of hospitality, courage, protection and honour. The selection of the Bedouin heritage to represent the country is also a way of silencing other pasts or political voices. Tribal influence continues to be a topic in elections and in the development of the political infrastructure, particular through the Bedouin tribes.

Yet despite the critique of tribalism being unsuited to a democracy, tribes continually figure in the royal family's rhetoric of unity, solidarity and heritage. King Abdullah II, for example, responded to the critique by stating: 'We have a deep-rooted culture and a strong national fabric that make us invincible to challenges. We are the inheritors of the Great Arab Revolt; the homeland of Arab Islamic Hashemite heritage and the country that is rich with its tribes that will remain the pillar of its strength, steadfastness, stability and progress'.⁶ Statements such as these make use of the general idea that Jordanian national identity emerges from three main stories: the Great Arab Revolt of 1916–1918 against the Ottoman empire; the tracing of a monarchy lineage back to the Prophet Muhammad; and the role of the tribes throughout Jordanian history (Layne 1994). With the Hashemite royal family claiming a Bedouin lineage, the Bedouin are lauded for their role in the uprising against the Ottoman Empire and in upholding security through claims that 'the army is still a heavily Bedouin army' (Layne 1994: 11–12). The Bedouin have until recently been represented to an international audience in brochures and discourse as the 'only people in Jordan' and the symbol of Jordanian hospitality (Layne 1994; Massad 2001). The Jordanian state is therefore generally conceived as being based on the 'nobility' of the Bedouin

as its original inhabitants. However, several scholars have rightly pointed out that the colonial and orientalist background that produced this image is largely ignored, along with this background's continuous influence on postcolonial governmentality (Butler 2001; Daher 2007a; Daher and Maffi 2014a; Maffi 2009, 2011; Massad 2001).

Simultaneously, the Bedouin in Jordan, as in other parts of Middle Eastern state administrations, are seen as 'the source of all troubles, a backward entity that stands in the way of national progress ... [where the] pastoral way of life ... is a holdover from an irrational past' (Chatty 1986: xix). Even more recently, Kamel Abu Jaber, former foreign minister and director of the Royal Institute for Interfaith Studies, said that whereas Jordan may not yet be a full-fledged democracy, 'The Jordanian community has succeeded in transforming from a bedouin society into a civilised society in a short period, and we have lots of great accomplishments that we should be proud of'.⁷ In other words, in Jordan the Bedouin are ambiguously positioned between embodying honourable traditions, heritage and personal character and an incompatible empirical category in a modern state due to its tribalism and mobile pastoralism foundation.

Bedouin Representations

It may come as some surprise then, that according to the Department of Statistics, only 132,671 of the approximately six million inhabitants in Jordan were, at the time of my fieldwork, registered as 'Bedouin' – equalling around 2 per cent. The image of the role of the Bedouin in Jordan marginalises the position of the majority of Jordanians, who have their roots in Israeli and Palestinian territories. The representation of the Bedouin heritage offers a sense of historically and territorially rooted national identity, despite its apparent demographic distortion (Anderson 2005; Hazbun 2004, 2008; Massad 2001). The role of the Bedouin and tribalism in national discourse has, however, often been criticised, especially during the 1984 parliamentary elections, in which King Hussein, like King Abdullah II after him, came out defending tribalism as a foundation of the state (Shryock 1997: 7). In that sense, the construction of official (national) heritage is continually reshaped or strengthened in the face of dissonance or alternative competing claims to belonging, memory and history through more unofficial heritage discourses. As some heritage scholars have noticed, what matters is not the past but one's relation(s) with it (Hewinson 1987: 43). Legitimising the role of the Bedouin and tribal society in discourses as well as through the archaeological records, is aimed beyond a national

scale towards a context of wider regional politics and a break with the colonial past (Al-Mahadin 2007a, 2007b; Corbett 2011; Hageraats 2014; Maffi 2009, 2014). In that context, defining what a Bedouin is becomes a way of doing heritage work. Is a Bedouin a pastoral nomad? Could he, or she, be a settled pastoralist? Or could someone working in an office, with little knowledge of the desert or pastoralism, be a Bedouin if they uphold certain traditions? As this book attests, recent decades have shown how deliberate work is performed to construct an image of what a Bedouin is, ranging from highly essentialised orientalist images of an empirical category of subsistence to naturalising representations of a social identity based on skills and traditions. 'Bedouin', in this sense, is simultaneously a strategic narrative, a sense of belonging, skills and practices, and an identity-marker.

Defining cultural heritage, particularly in terms of the desired official recognition from UNESCO, generates a certain kind of ordering of the past that is entangled in negotiations of local, cultural and national identities through the power structures involved. In the case of Jordan, the leap between establishing a modern nation and tracing tribal traditions seeks to consolidate Bedouin culture and tribal society as the roots and backbone of Jordanian national identity. Simultaneously, Petra is the symbol of Jordan, epitomised in the national news agency of the same name and emblazoned on everything from paper money, to commercials, government signs, tourist brochures and so on. The Nabataeans, who carved the rock facades in Petra more than two millennia ago, are by many people considered to have been pastoral, nomadic pre-Islamic Arabs: hence, 'proto-Jordanians', living like the Bedouin. Such a link between Petra, the original inhabitants and national identity is also present in a heritage management report on Petra National Park from UNESCO, which states that 'Petra posses [*sic*] great meaning for the people of Jordan, giving them a tangible connection to their ancestral lands and traditions' (Management Analysis 1996: 13), and the monuments help to connect the 'ancestral lands and traditions' to the Jordanian people, thus materialising the image of unity and belonging. Furthermore, the Jordanian economy is based on tourism, mining and substantial expatriate and international funding. Tourism, particularly heritage tourism, is one of the main industries in Jordan and contributes around 11 per cent of GDP,⁸ and according to some estimates, as much as 90 per cent of the tourist revenue originates from Petra (Comer 2001: 1). Petra, as the major tourist attraction in Jordan, is thus both a crucial economic and social factor in Jordanian politics.

Against this background, the productive use of the past in heritage discourse is of little surprise, as the ruling powers are struggling to

shape their legitimacy and a united Jordanian national identity. The productive use of heritage 'always entails protecting a specific idea of the past, and excluding other pasts' (Daher and Maffi 2014b: 35) – for instance, downplaying the Ottoman past in Jordan. Images of traditions and roots are therefore heavily politicised in a post-colonial Jordanian context, as Irene Maffi and others have shown, where the state continually tries to impose juridical and coercive efforts to define and redefine Jordan's national and Bedouin identity. Thus, despite the history of 'outsider' interest – the colonial rule, the Hashemites from Hijaz, the Palestinian majority, IMF intervention – the past in Jordan, as in any other country, often situates national identities and unity within changing contexts of identity formation (Anderson 2005; Corbett 2011; Daher and Maffi 2014a; Layne 1994; Massad 2001).

Studying the Bedouin

Within the context of redefining nomadic Bedouin ways of life, and their role in the national narrative in the twentieth century, there is also increasing ethnographic interest in these changes (Cole 1981; Marx and Shmu'eli 1984; Nelson 1973; Salzman and Galaty 1990; Salzman and Sadala 1980). There has been a somewhat disproportionate interest in studying those considered to be the 'most' Bedouin, seen as those travelling farthest with camels; this interest prevailed in early nineteenth- and twentieth-century ethnographies, compared to other topics in Middle Eastern anthropology, or even the smaller scale semi-nomadic pastoralists, such as those around Petra (Cole 1975; Doughty 1883; Jabbur 1995; Lancaster 1997; Raswan 1935). Since the 1970s, studies have concentrated more on the transitional role of herding (Meir 1997), socio-geographic analyses of education (Abu-Rabia 2001; Abu-Saad 1991), employment and unemployment (Chatty 2000; Gardner 2000), tourism and heritage (Chatelard 2003, 2005a; Cole and Altorki 1998; Hood and Al-Oun 2014; Kooring and Simms 1996; Wooten 1996), traditional medicine (Abu-Rabia 2005a; Al-Krenawi and Graham 1996; Bailey and Danin 1981; Kressel et al. 2014; Sincich 2002) and, especially in Israel, the often severe impact of the political measures of sedentarisation of the Bedouin (Abu-Rabia 1994; Dinero 1997; Lavie 1990). Studies on the Bedouin have also reached beyond the confines of a Middle Eastern regional anthropology to a broader academic audience via studies of poetry, women, nationalism and tribal histories (Abu-Lughod 1986, 1993; Layne 1994; Massad 2001; Shryock 1997).

The disproportionate focus on the Bedouin and the rural areas, however, has recently been radically supplanted by an almost exclusive focus on the urban centres in the Middle East. Ethnographies concentrate on places like Damascus, Cairo or Beirut, or take root in archival studies. This has led to decreasing anthropological knowledge about what is occurring in rural areas in the twenty-first century, even though these areas are mainly where the 'Arab Spring' uprisings originated. It is in these more remote areas that the social and economic developments have had the least impact: places where poverty and unemployment is ever-present, and where the population has limited political influence to change their conditions.

The 2011 uprisings also point to the crucial role of both politics and religion in the Middle East today, if those spheres can even be separated. An inspiring amount of work, particularly by Lara Deeb (2006), Sabah Mahmood (2005), Charles Hirschkind (2006) and Liza Wedeen (2008), has eloquently shown how a piety trope is emerging and is part of everyday life, whereas Samuli Schielke (2012) has shown how piety may not be as certain a stance, but may be constituted by ambiguity, doubt and uncertainty. It is in this anthropological context of – and oscillations between – collaboration and dissociation between urban and rural imaginations that this book offers an ethnographic understanding of what goes on in the rural areas around Petra in terms of negotiating the role of the past. It is about understanding how 'folk traditions' may not just be discarded by adhering to an emerging piety trope, but also need to address the materiality of protection that sustains ambiguity and uncertainty.

Aside from the general shift towards urban anthropology in the Middle East, there has also been a profound lack of attention paid to the Bedouin's material world. Material culture, as an integral part of social life emerging in other fields of anthropology from the 1980s and onwards, has been largely ignored in studies of the Bedouin (and of the Middle East at large) with few exceptions, most notably relating to architecture (Bienkowski and Chlebik 1991; Bille 2017; Ferdinand 1993, 2003; Katakura 1977; Layne 1987, 1994; Pütt 2005; Weir 1976). More recently, a few studies focusing on material culture in Middle Eastern anthropology have emerged (Daher and Maffi 2014a; Limbert 2008; Meneley 2008; Starrett 1995) and, as illustrated in this book, more can be said about how social conflict and balances are achieved through the material world. To illustrate this, I now introduce the people for whom these negotiations of heritage and the proper ways in which to engage with material culture are an essential part of life.

The Ammarin

During the late 1970s, a discourse of modernisation and caring for the (semi-)nomadic pastoral Bedouin tribes emerged, together with a wish to protect Petra's archaeological landscape as it succumbed to increasing pressure from goat herding and tourism. The wish to protect the archaeological record resulted in the end of Bedouin inhabitation of the Nabataean caves and plains in Petra, to the lamenting voices of both scholars and residents (Shoup 1985).⁹ Some of the Bedouin tribes from Petra claim that their genealogical origins lie with the Nabataeans (Nielsen 1933: 207; Ohannessian-Charpin 1995; Russell 1993: 16; Shoup 1985: 288), and use this narrative to argue that they are treated unjustly by the government and heritage industry. They are thus not only displaying a long-held 'right' to inhabit the landscape, but equally, as 'Bedouin', become the epitome of Jordanian national identity (Massad 2001). The tribe that received most scholarly attention was the Bdoul, who had occupied the heartland of Petra (Angel 2012; Ayad 1999; Bienkowski 1985; Bienkowski and Chlebig 1991; Koorring and Simms 1996; Ohannessian-Charpin 1986, 1995; Russell 1993, 1995; Shoup 1985; Wooten 1996). Yet, other tribes living in the greater Petra area were also affected, and this book primarily deals with one of these: the Ammarin in Beidha in the northern part of Petra.

The ancient city of Petra lies within the sandstone formations of the Sharah Mountains. The main entrance to Petra is through the city of Wadi Mousa (previously known as Elgi). Wadi Mousa means the Valley of Moses after the biblical story of Moses's striking his staff into the rock to obtain water. It is both the name of the large valley and the main city. The city is inhabited by about 35,000 people – predominantly farmers from the Liathneh tribe. If one drives north on the small winding road from Wadi Mousa, one first enters Umm Sayhoun, the village where the Bdoul tribe from central Petra was primarily relocated (figure 0.2). Further north is an area called Beidha. The government built Beidha Housing for the Bedouin tribes north of central Petra, predominantly the Ammarin tribe. This is the southernmost territory of the Ammarin tribe. It is within view of the tourist site Siq al-Barīd, also known as Little Petra (about 1.7 kilometres to the west). Beidha, like the rest of Petra, is located on the upper part of the mountain range leading from the Arabian plateau through the sandstone mountain of Petra and down to Wadi Araba in the west.

Inhabited today by around 350 people, Beidha Housing was built by the government as part of the 1985 relocation from Petra, and

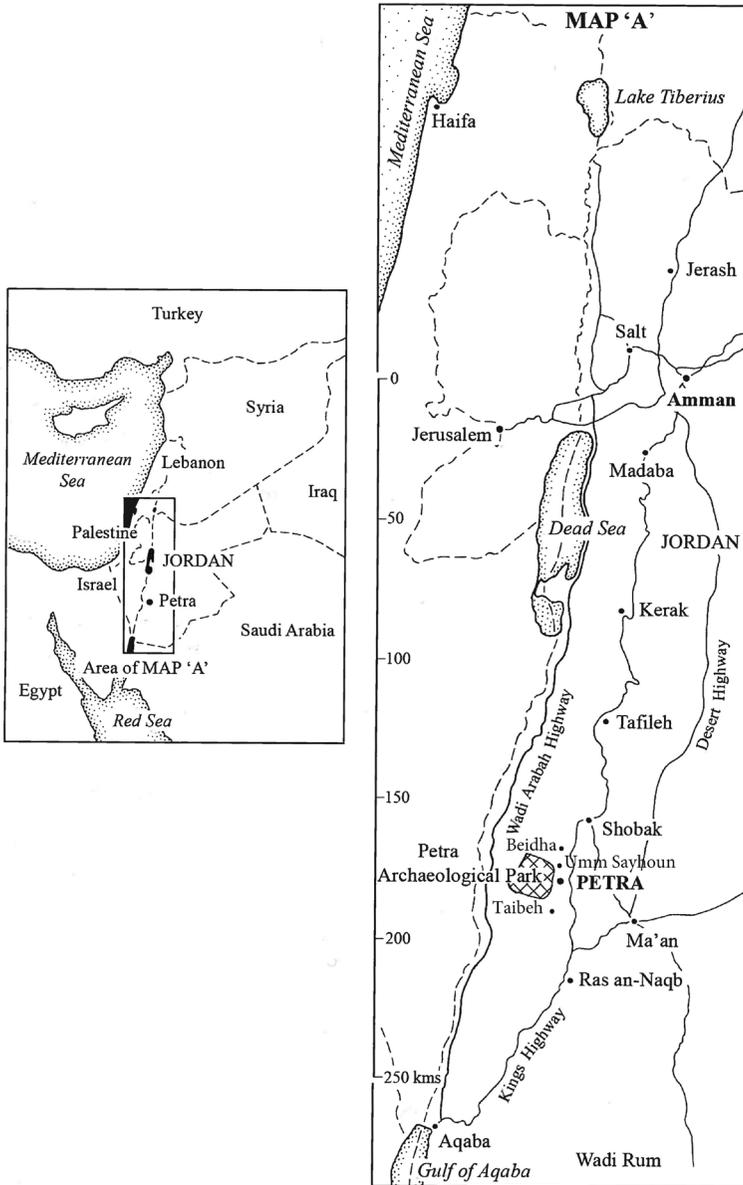


Figure 0.2. Map of Jordan and surrounding countries. Inset enlarged in Map A to the right: Map of Jordan Rift Valley including the Petra Archaeological Park. Adjusted version of Ruben and Disi 2006: 12, published with permission.

effectively meant that the Ammarin resettled from the land they had inhabited for at least three centuries as semi-nomadic herders, and to a limited extent, small-time farmers. The village has a mayor (*mukhtār*) and several sheikhs or tribal leaders, although none are considered head of the Ammarin tribe at large.¹⁰ The Ammarin tribe is part of the larger Beni Atieh confederation,¹¹ which also inhabits the Sinai, Negev desert and Saudi Arabia, where they claim to originate from.¹² Today, what the Ammarin consider as their territory extends from Wadi Dibdiba and Siq al-Barīd in the south, to just south of Wadi Feinan to the north. To the west, the Ammarin stretch from the village of Qurayqera in Wadi Araba (south of the Dead Sea at around 400 b.s.l.), and to Bir ad-Dabaghad on the Arabian plateau to the east (around 1100m a.s.l.). Tribal boundaries are not clear-cut, and different tribes may inhabit the same area.

During my fieldwork, fewer than five households from the entire Ammarin tribe in Jordan were full-time tent dwellers, and most of these had no small children. The vast majority live in the three main villages: Qurayqera, Beidha and Bir ad-Dabaghad. The largest village of the three, according to the Department of Statistics, is Qurayqera (1,021 inhabitants, 147 houses), followed by Bir ad-Dabaghad (783 inhabitants, 135 houses) and Beidha (332 inhabitants, 50 houses).¹³ Aside from the Ammarin, Beidha is inhabited by one household from Meraske (a small tribe of six core families from further north), one family from Merei (a tribe mainly from northeast of the Ammarin area towards Shobak), one from Sayydiyyn (a tribe from the west and south in Wadi Araba) and one man from Bdoul, whose second wife lives here. On the outskirts of the village are two uninhabited houses: a person from Wadi Mousa owns one, and someone from Ma‘an owns the other (figure 0.3).

Officials from Petra Regional Authorities estimate that within recent years, 90 per cent of the land around Beidha has been sold by the Ammarin to people from Wadi Mousa, Bdoul and Amman. The major reason for selling off land that was not nationalised as heritage in 1985 is that only a few people need land for either agriculture, tent dwelling or grazing, because they now have employment elsewhere. In addition, land prices are rapidly increasing, especially since Petra became one of the ‘New Seven Wonders of the World’¹⁴ in 2007, and with the persistent rumours of imminent tourist development plans around Beidha. Still, during wet years, people, the Bdoul from Umm Sayhoun in particular – but also people from Ammarin – are increasingly beginning to move into tents again in spring, suggesting that even in areas of tourism sedentarisation is not a one-way process (cf. Baumgarten 2011: 227–33).

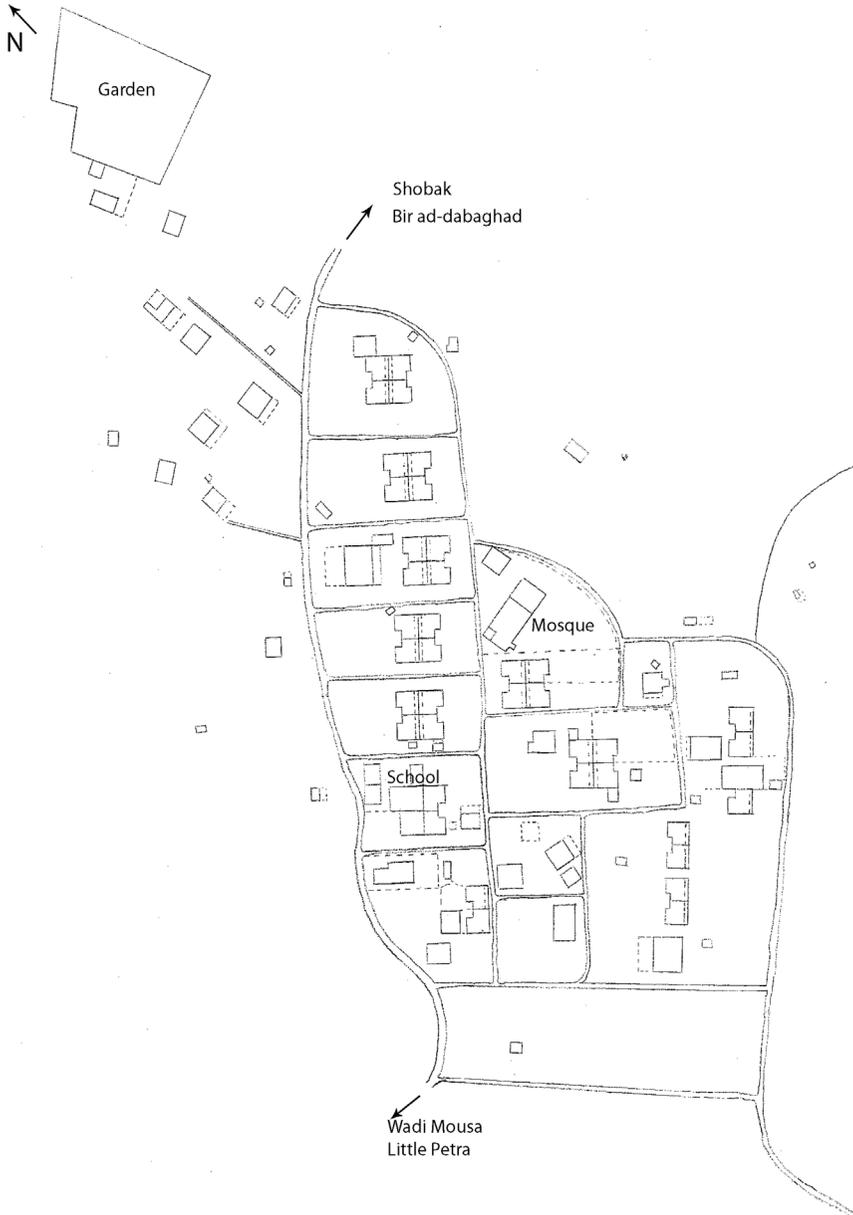


Figure 0.3. Map of Beidha Housing in 2006. Map created by the author.

Particularly for families with cars, it is easy to adapt to varied ways of life now that an extensive road network has been built.

The Ammarin are Sunni Muslim, *madhhab shāfi* ^{¶15} with the exception of the small Christian fraction in Kerak.¹⁶ Since settlement into government planned villages (rather than caves, tents and vernacular houses) in the late 1980s and particularly late 1990s, there has been a considerable change in Bedouin ways of life in this region. They have needed to adjust to a more settled life, with an increasing tourist economy, instead of living as pastoral semi-nomads, with, occasionally, small-time farming.

Since the early 1960s, the increasing move to more standardised Islamic teaching has been apparent in the villages and cities throughout Jordan, established through an infrastructure of mosques and schools, and later satellite television (Antoun 1989). It is particularly apparent today that through schools, mosques and satellite-transmitted Islamic programmes, the resettlement has increasingly incorporated people into a more standardised Islamic piety, influentially described by other scholars (Deeb 2006; Hirschkind 2006; Mahmood 2005; Wedeen 2008). Since the relocation, the Ammarin have increasingly developed a more scriptural understanding of Islam than they have historically practiced, although by no means are they understood as 'hardliners', 'fundamentalists', 'Islamists' or other terms currently designated in the media and political scene. The influence of religion has increased through the educational system and teachings from the village mosque. For instance, by 2007, nine female heads of household (around 25 per cent) in Beidha were wearing the full-face veil (*niqāb*), not seen a few years earlier during a pilot study in 2005. The rest wear the typical veil (*hijāb*), unless they have not reached puberty when they do not wear a veil. People increasingly perform public prayers and fasting, whereas other religious practices more often associated with 'folk Islam', such as saint veneration, are rapidly decreasing, now seen as un-Islamic and part of past ignorance, as Hussein illustrated.

The religious transformations mentioned above point towards the development of a particular kind of understanding of Islam, articulated through the increasing access to satellite television that is often produced by Muslims inspired by Salafi, Wahhabi and Muslim Brotherhood understandings of Islam (see also Mittermaier 2010; Moll 2010). The theological inspiration is evident in arguments undergirding the emerging awareness of and resistance against so-called materialism in the face of the increasing wealth of the population in the area. 'Materialism' is presented as adherence to consumer society at the expense of the spiritual realm: that is, forgetting one's spiritual needs

while focusing on buying more stuff and defining oneself through a reliance on new, as well as old, things. Things, such as food, clothes, mobile phones, cars, houses, etc., are of course needed, but one should not rely too much on them. The car is important, but if it becomes too important and a person relies too much on it to assert his or her status, it is a problem. The material object, in a sense, takes over from being a representation of one's personal character, to presenting in material form this character. With Hussein, the problem is not about caring for the memory of past generations at the grave, but about the idea that the dead can mediate with God through material objects. In other words, the specific presence or absence of things is at the centre of discussions about what it means to be a good Muslim, to care for the past and to be a modern Bedouin.

Outline of the Book

The book is structured in a narrative that takes the reader from the interplay between heritage organisations, national and more regional authorities, and individual actors on the heritage scene in the following three chapters, to chapters dealing more with local processes of navigating between more abstract universal religious claims and local traditions. This also implies a move from relying largely on archival research in Chapters 1 and 2, towards qualitative ethnographic methods used to explore the affecting and mediating role of present or absent objects and the potentials they afford.

Chapter 1, 'Preserving Heritage – Marketing Bedouinity', outlines the heritage context of the Bedouin by discussing the consequences of the rapidly spreading universalising claim of a world heritage, which culminated in the UNESCO-backed heritage protection of Petra. A perception of the pristine, depopulated landscape inherent in the heritage strategy has been instrumental in shaping spatial changes by settling the Bedouin and transforming nomadic life into an economy based on agriculture and tourism. The chapter argues that, in effect, a hyper-nostalgia is presented through iconic Bedouin objects, such as the camel and the tent, that solidify new identities among settled Bedouin. To the tourists, Petra is represented as a remote place, where visitors can relive ideas of discovering a 'lost city' and even meet the Bedouin, who have been the focus of romantic narratives in both Western and Arab minds. The chapter scrutinises more closely the link between national identity, premises for preserving heritage in Petra, and the local adaptations to the tourism economy. This is done through 'imaginings of presence'

unfolding in nostalgic narratives and re-enactments shaping an image of Bedouin presence in the area. The chapter argues that the tensions and contradictions between heritage management, discourses of preservation, and people living in the area have produced nostalgic narratives to meet tourist demands and post-nomadic negotiations of Bedouin identity.

In part through archival research, Chapter 2, 'Taming Heritage', explores the process of safeguarding intangible heritage through UNESCO heritage lists. The power of the past in grounding cultural identities relies on its ability to create desirable objects out of historical figures, traditions and things. While these traditions or things may have changed rapidly or been left to dilapidate, it is when they almost disappear – that is, in the transformation from presence to absence – that people become aware of their social, material and political importance. In essence, the chapter shows how the potential absence enforces strategies that in effect assemble a particular presence anew. This is seen through the case of the international celebration of Bedouin traditions. Of course, this does not imply that people today necessarily want to live under the conditions that fostered the tradition. Yet claims to be 'near' – either genealogically, spatially, in practices or as caretakers – are powerful tools in negotiating cultural and national identities. By investigating the multiple interests that link local actors with national and international policies, the chapter argues that through the process of enlisting the Bedouin in UNESCO's universal ideals of safeguarding and promoting intangible heritage, the very notion of 'Bedouin' is transformed from an empirical category of (semi)nomadic pastoralism into a definition of cultural practices that many settled Bedouin, and even non-Bedouin, may identify with. The chapter thereby captures how national identity is shaped by taming particular kinds of Bedouin figures through universal heritage recognition.

Chapter 3, 'The Shameful Shaman', concerns the effects of fitting the past into the present to suit spiritual needs, where there is not just one, but multiple versions of a renowned figure from the Bedouin past. In the UNESCO documents discussed in Chapter 2, the figure of 'Bedouin shamans' occurs, and this chapter explores the origins of this figure. The chapter shows how New Age discourses about original universal shamanic roots are applied to the Bedouin saints and healers by an urban, non-Bedouin elite of heritage entrepreneurs. This shamanistic turn, however, conflicts with local ideals where the past is told through an emerging Islamic revival. The chapter argues that multiple versions of religious figures may coexist to support individual claims to

universality because the precise definition of what the figure is remains undecided. In this chapter, we thus turn to the broader question of heritage in tourist representations and the spiritual universes within which Bedouin heritage in Jordan is entangled.

Chapter 4, 'Dealing with Dead Saints', maps out the saint graves in the Petra region and investigates protective practices and oral traditions relating to the graves, which are celebrated in the UNESCO intangible heritage proclamation. The people visiting the graves are not certain that healing will occur, but rather recognise the potential for healing. The chapter includes a discussion of how the 'potentiality' of the dead saint to interfere in people's life is a crucial feature in debates about the role of protective practices in a context of Islamic revival. Here, Hussein's statements which opened this book, resting on the universal ideal of one unified Islamic practice, are competing with the local folk Islamic narratives of the power of things. In that sense, we are moving from parallel efforts to solidify the notion of where and what the Bedouin is, to engaging with discussion of how things are present in those negotiations.

Chapter 5, 'The Allure of Things', explores the protective strategies that the Bedouin have used (and to some extent still use) to protect themselves against misfortune, discussed in the UNESCO intangible heritage proclamation. These material strategies are part of local conceptualisations of heritage and traditions and are presented in ethnographic museums and to tourists as essential Bedouin cultural heritage. Yet these objects are also increasingly contested as un-Islamic among the Bedouin themselves, thus raising questions for interlocutors of how the amulets actually work. The chapter examines how the material practices and traditions of protection against danger enter a contested scene of displaying religious deviance through conceptions of materiality. What is needed is a notion of presence that enables protection, resting on being a materially irreducible – and spatially present – object.

Chapter 6, 'Ambiguous Materialities', continues the exploration of how to handle misfortune by examining the predominant way of protecting against misfortune, namely Koranic merchandise. This merchandise constitutes an ambiguous material category. It is not understood as essentially material, but rather as the immaterial 'Word of God', which carries with it a wide range of moral prescriptions on how to deal with their materiality. The chapter thus deals with a radically different kind of presence than in Chapter 5. The social stakes are high in the precise understanding of the relationship between human, thing and God as conceptualised in protective registers and

traditions. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 thereby also touch upon the question of the everyday life of being a Muslim, Bedouin and Jordanian, where past and modern practices and conceptualisations merge, often in a seemingly unproblematic manner, while at other times minor deviances carry with them powerful social effects. The chapter addresses spiritual healing, spirit possession and fortune telling, which still occur in the area, even if religious scholars denounce these practices as heretical and ignorant. In line with recent literature on ignorance, the chapter argues that ignorance is not just a matter of not knowing, but also of social evaluation. The chapter extends this insight by highlighting how ways of knowing and not knowing tie into the religious morality of dealing with the presence of things and the processes of taming them.

Finally, the conclusion summarises the arguments and outlines how notions of materiality and processes of taming help us to understand how claims to universality and establishing a dichotomy between a purist and folk Islam come to matter. Such concerns are increasingly important as Jordan's neighbouring countries are set aflame, threatening national unity, cultural identities and the very presence of tangible remnants from the past, and the practices that have been passed over and reformulated for generations.

Notes

1. Pseudonyms are used for all interlocutors unless they hold an official position or have published documents by which they can be regarded as publicly accountable for their opinions and statements.
2. This book is mainly based on thirteen months of anthropological fieldwork in Beidha Housing living with an Ammarin family of two adults and eleven children in a house with two rooms that was extended with an extra storey during my stay from summer 2006 to summer 2007; it followed seven years of archaeological fieldwork, undertaken every summer since 1999, and an anthropological pilot study in 2005. Two more months of postdoctoral fieldwork followed in 2011. Interviews and conversations were conducted predominantly with men but also with fifteen women.
3. As always, there is an 'ethnographic present'. I deliberately avoid dealing with processes which evolved after my last fieldwork in spring 2011. Since then, the Arab uprisings have changed many things in Jordan, with a major influx of refugees, together with various oppositional political voices calling for both calm and solidarity. In this context, the question of heritage and the role of things has not lessened. This is particularly evident in the large-scale destruction of and illicit trade in archaeological artefacts in Syria, which show that things matter – even if in this book I do not investigate these further developments.

4. The settlement policies represented the beginning of a period of rapid change which affected nomadic Bedouin culture all over the Middle East. This also led to increasing ethnographic interest in these changes (Cole 1981; Marx and Shmu'eli 1984; Nelson 1973; Salzman and Galaty 1990; Salzman and Sadala 1980), perhaps even disproportionate compared with Middle Eastern anthropology in general. There was an increased passion for studying the 'most' Bedouin, i.e. those travelling farthest with camels, that had prevailed in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century ethnographies (Cole 1975; Doughty 1883; Jabbur 1995; Lancaster 1997; Raswan 1935).
5. Since 2011, with the uprising in the Arab countries, and the Syrian civil war in particular, the country has been one of the highest recipients of refugees.
6. *Jordan Times*, 2 July 2008.
7. <http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/jordan-made-leap-modernity> (accessed on 5 August 2015).
8. According to Prime Minister Bakhit in *Jordan Times*, 3 June 2007. Other sources claim 6.9 per cent in 2004 (Daher 2007a: 23), and 8.5 per cent in 2000 (Hazbun 2008: xv).
9. Few families still live in the area. However, in times of economic instability, many otherwise settled Bedouin move, at least briefly, into tents again.
10. There are four major sheiks (tribal leaders) of the Ammarin tribe in Jordan: Sheikh Abu Susha and Sheikh Abu Tawfik in Qurayqera, Abu Rakat in Bir ad-Dabaghad and, during my fieldwork, the official Sheikh Suleiman Mohammed Shtayyan Abu Adef resident in Aqaba. On the death of the latter in early 2008, his place was given to Sheikh Atallah Mohammed Abu Khaled. Beidha has a mayor and a local sheikh, both from the Awwad family line, and one sheikh from the Hmeid family line, who often act as official representatives in issues of tourism development. Furthermore, splinter groups and families of the Ammarin are living in Aqaba, and a Christian section in Kerak.
11. Other scholars claim that they are part of Howeitat (Banning and Köhler-Rollefsen 1992: 187). This may be due to an alliance between Beni Atieh and Howeitat; however, my interlocutors would claim that their origins lie with Beni Atieh. One version of Ammarin genealogy bases their origins on mythical or historical people such as Adnanyyīn, followed by Asad, Raba', Atieh, Ma'az, Ammarin, Abdallah and Mansour. Interestingly, when I accompanied some of the men to Amman, they would claim that they were from Howeitat or Beni Atieh, rather than Ammarin, as a way of gaining respect from people they met, instead of being associated with Petra, with its connotations of tourism.
12. The Ammarin in Jordan consist of ten major family lines (*ayal* or *fekhdh*). The three major family lines are Hmeid, Awwad and Bekhit, from which others derive, such as M'teb and Hassasīn from Bekhit, or Suelim, Jummaīn, Juma'h and Salem from Awwad. Some lineages, such as the Awwad, claim centuries-long genealogies. Others are new, for example the Jummaīn lineage, which derives from the Awwad line three generations back. The major family lines in Beidha are the Hmeid and the Awwad. The Awwad in Beidha Housing mainly (but not exclusively) used to live around al-Fersh, whereas the Hmeid mostly lived around Sidd al-Ahmar. Both lived in the

- now abandoned village of Khirbet Neg‘a from the early twentieth century, close to Beidha Housing, which today functions as a storage facility.
13. Department of Statistics Population and Housing Census, 2004. For comparison, Umm Sayhoun has 1,352 inhabitants (predominantly Bdoul tribe), 197 households, and Wadi Mousa has 14,162 inhabitants (predominantly the Liathneh tribe), 2,446 households.
 14. <http://www.new7wonders.com>.
 15. The Bedouin in Jordan for most part belong to the *shāfi‘ī*-school of Sunni Islam. However, Canaan (1930) notes, in case of the Bdoul in Petra in 1929, that this was more in name than in practice. He observed that among his interlocutors none of them could recite the opening verse (the first and most important verse of the Koran), and none of them prayed regularly, in contrast to the Liathneh of Wadi Mousa. While this has changed, the social positioning in terms of religious awareness is to a certain extent still present among the tribes. Today, the surrounding tribes tend to be condescending towards the Bdoul for their practice of Islam, which in general is more relaxed than that in Wadi Mousa or among the Ammarin.
 16. One member of this part of the tribe, Nazih Ammarin, became a member of the Jordanian parliament. The stories about how this family became Christian differ, but it is commonly told in Beidha that at the end of the nineteenth century, a male Ammarin fell in love with the daughter of the owner of a major farm around Kerak. The father of the girl accepted their marriage on the condition that the Ammarin converted to Christianity and raised the children as Christians.