

**PRELIMINARY REPORT OF A SURVEY OF
ROMAN MILITARY INSTALLATIONS IN
NORTH-EASTERN JORDAN**

By
D. L. Kennedy

The survey began work on 15th July, 1978 and finished on 18th August. Apart from myself as Director, the team consisted of my wife Julie, Mr. Michael C.S. Godfrey and Mr. Kenneth S. Brasil. Permission to carry out the survey was granted by Dr. Adnan Hadidi, Director General of the Department of Antiquities, to whom I am indebted for the courtesy and efficiency with which he handled my plans and enquiries throughout. The project was financed by generous grants from the Craven Committee, the Meierstein Fund, Seven Pillars of Wisdom Trust, Society of Antiquaries, Sheffield University Research Fund, the Graham Willis Fund, and the award of the University of Edinburgh Tweedie Exploration Fellowship. In addition, my wife, who participated in her own right to study the coarse pottery, was assisted by grants from the British School of Archaeology at Jerusalem and from the Graham Willis Fund. The expedition was mounted from the Department of Ancient History and Classical Archaeology at Sheffield University and, while in Jordan, came under the aegis of the newly established British Institute for Archaeology and History at Amman to whose Director, Mrs. C.-M. Bennett, I am indebted for assistance in the preparation and conduct of the fieldwork.

The objectives of the expedition were both positive and experimental. As a result of a visit to Jordan in 1976, I believed that many sites,

which had only been visited/studied in the distant past and/or cursorily by travellers or foreign expeditions, would yield much more to a detailed examination. It was my belief that, in view of the very high cost of excavation, a surface examination could be much more cost effective. With this in mind, it was my intention to examine a number of specific sites and to subsequently evaluate the method for possible practise on a larger scale survey in which excavation might play a minor part. With the time at my disposal it would have been absurd to even consider a total survey. Consequently I aimed to look not only at specific sites but also to try and examine them in their wider immediate context. I believed that while this approach would not allow total coverage of any area it would permit experimentation with a variety of different regions and terrains. I believe the experiment to have been a success and it is my hope to carry out a more extensive survey in the same area in a subsequent season.

The region in which the survey was carried out and the sites examined are shown on the map enclosed. A full report of the findings of the survey together with an interim review of the state of our knowledge of the Roman military installations in north-eastern Jordan is currently in progress and will, it is hoped, be ready for publication in the summer of 1980. An interpretation of a small part of the material

will be published in the Proceedings of the XII International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies early in 1980.

Qasr-el-Hallabat :

Three weeks were spent living on the site. The fort and associated features such as the reservoir, agricultural enclosure and a selection of the houses were planned. Sherding was carried out, the water-collection system studied, and the structure of the fort was examined in detail to determine the sequence of building phases as they appear above ground. An attempt was made to record all the blocks of the Hallabat Edict. Only some 35 of the 68 seen by the Princeton Expeditions in 1904 and 1909 were still to be seen. Some may be buried and recoverable but it was my impression that a great deal of the stone from inside the fort had been removed. However, by way of compensation, eight new blocks and fragments were recorded and minor corrections or additions to the published texts of the others were noted. In addition, the text of a broken milestone was discovered. In all, twelve new texts were recorded.

Qasr-el-Azraq :

Two weeks were spent living in the fort. A new plan was prepared of this very difficult site and again sherding was carried out. Fragments of three unpublished milestones will be published in due course together with the texts of the two inscriptions from the site already well-known (G.W. Bowersock, *JRS*, 61 (1971), 241 and pl. XIV). I have also recovered a further unpublished inscription from a manuscript source and one, possibly, two others, briefly mentioned.

Qasr Aseikhin :

The site was visited from Azraq, planned and sherds collected for study. No inscriptions were recorded but a piece of sigillata — possibly first century A.D. — was found.

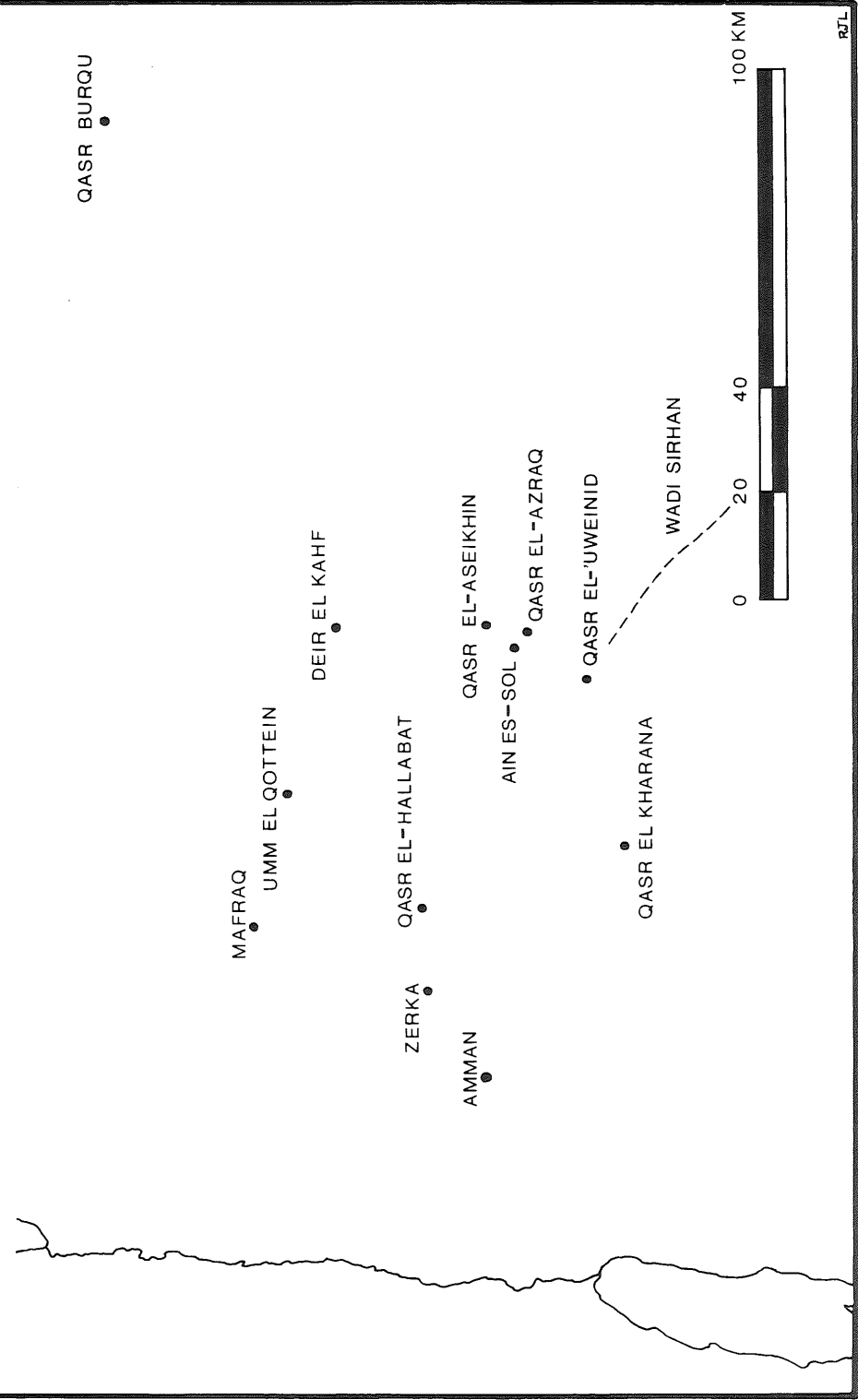
Ain es-Sol :

The site is not previously known under this name but it may be better attested as the Ain el-Onqiyya of Musil (*Arabia Deserta*, 339) and other travellers. It had been covered with drifting sand until recently. The guardian of the site has recently cleared the sand to reveal a small square courtyarded building to which a bath extension had been added. As it appears today it may be a fortified farmhouse of the type so well-known from Tripolitania but I am inclined to regard it as a small fortlet taken over and extended in the post-Roman period. A quantity of pottery had been turned up by the guardian's external clearance work together with half of a small decorated lamp. All are now being studied although the preliminary examination indicates that the greater part of the pottery is Ommayad and the lamp late Byzantine.

Qasr el-'Uweinid:

The site was planned on a visit from Azraq and sherds were collected. The building inscription published in 1978 (S.T. Parker and P.M. McDermott, *ZPE*, 29 (1978) 61-66) was re-read and further details were elucidated including the name of the governor: [L. MARIUS] PERPET [VVS]. A further inscription from this site - erroneously proposed for Azraq by Bowersock (*op. cit.* 241) — has been read in

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full to give the consular year 201 (Kennedy, *Congress of Frontier Studies*, 1980, forthcoming).

Deir el-Kahf :

There was only time for a very brief visit but it was clear that the site was not only gravely endangered by the encroachment of the modern village and needed a close study now but that it would probably repay the sort of examination accorded to Hallabat and Azraq. It is my hope to be allowed to return and carry out this work in a future survey.

With the aid of a generous grant from the British Academy work is now in hand preparing the finished plans, maps and line drawings from all these sites, and relating to the area and remains in it. If the success of the survey is to be measured then it should be clear, I believe, that the provision of new ground plans of the

sites — some never before recorded — will in itself be useful for future work. Furthermore, the study of the pottery should make some small contribution in an area so desperately in need of a detailed and extensive treatment. Again, the recovery of 20 previously unpublished inscriptions and the revision of others will make its contribution to a growing corpus of epigraphic material. For myself however, the outstanding outcome of the survey was the revelation of just how much more there was to be studied not only of the classical period but of earlier and later times. With the approval of the Department of Antiquities it is my hope to put into effect a more extensive and longer-term project in the near future to examine in greater detail the desert region extending eastwards from the Amman/Mafraq road to and beyond Deir el-Kahf, Azraq and the Wadi Sirhan.

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