

## The Ascent of Luhith\*

The western mountain descent of Moab between Wādī al-Ḥasā and Wādī al-Karak and the shore region of the Dead Sea below (FIG. 1) are one of the few areas in Transjordan where the historical topography is relatively well known, at least as far as the transmitted toponyms are concerned. Sources of the most varied types and dating, such as inscriptions, literary texts, legal documents, and lists, spanning over 2,000 years, mention many localities in this outpost of Eastern Palestine; but they also present a number of problems. At present, only a very few of the names have been identified. This is partly due to the sources and partly to a lack of familiarity with the country and its cultural history.

I travelled to this area in October of 1979 and spent six days (8–13) becoming more familiar with it<sup>1</sup>. Such a brief survey, of course, can only provide a very general synopsis; the findings must be supplemented later by a comprehensive investigation. Certain conclusions, however, can already be drawn, particularly with respect to the historical topography. I would like to illustrate this with the site Luhith and the ascent of the same name.

### I

As is often the case, Eusebius' Onomastikon provides decisive information on the location. Eusebius, referring to the key-word Λουείθ (the grecized form of the Old Testament name 'Luhith' in the Septuagint), writes<sup>2</sup>: καὶ ἔστι μεταξὺ Ἄρεωπόλεως καὶ Ζοορῶν κώμη νῦν καλουμένη Λουεθά 'And between Areopolis and Zoora, there is a village which is now called Luetha'. Areopolis and Zoora, the two orientation points, are well known. Areopolis or Rabat-Moab, now called er-Rabba, controlled the centre of the Moabite plateau south of Arnon; Zoora (the former Zoar), on the other hand,

was located far below in the 'Araba rift, slightly southeast of the Dead Sea, on Ḥirbat aš-Šēh 'Isā in Gōr aš-Šāfi<sup>3</sup>. Why does Eusebius refer to these two sites which are so far apart, as the crow flies, more than 37 km.? Certainly not just because of their size and importance. It would have been just as logical to have mentioned Χαράχμωβα (al-Karak), 10 km. south southwest of Areopolis, since it was closer to Zoora. Another factor plays a decisive role here. When Eusebius states that a village was located 'between' (μεταξὺ, occasionally ἀναμέσον) two presumed known fixed points, he usually means located on or in the vicinity of a Roman road or other road connection between two orientation points<sup>4</sup>. Apparently, this is also what he means in the text cited above. The Tabula Peutingeriana, a road map of the Late Roman Empire, shows a stretch of road running west from Raba to Thamaro, the former Thamar, next to 'Ain al-'Arūs on the western border of the northern 'Araba<sup>5</sup>. This road of necessity passes by Zoora. We will deal later with the course of this road, which has been known for some time. This knowledge, however, does not much improve our understanding of Eusebius' statement. The use of the vague word μεταξὺ, 'between', does not tell us where Luhith

<sup>3</sup> According to Josephus, *Bellum Judaicum*, iv, 8, 4 (§ 482) and the Madeba Map there can be little doubt concerning the site of late antique Zoora lying in Gōr aš-Šāfi nor of its identification with Ḥirbat aš-Šēh 'Isā. The only question is whether Old Testament Zoar also stood here. Researches carried out by W. F. Albright in 1924 (*BASOR* 14 [1924], 4; *AASOR* 6 [1926], 57) brought nothing to light concerning an Iron Age settlement. A sounding at the centre of the extensive ruins penetrated the Byzantine levels to reach virgin soil at a depth of 3 m. However, it is very much at issue whether these findings alone are sufficient to deny the existence of an Iron Age settlement on the site. Biblical Zoar was doubtless smaller than its Byzantine-Arab successor and its remains, possibly only a low knoll, could be at the edge of the present ruin field, so that Albright's sounding missed them. Moreover W. E. Rast and R. Th. Schaub (*Survey of the Southeastern Plain of the Dead Sea*, 1973, *ADAJ* 19 [1974], [5–53, PL. I–XI] 15f., PL. IV) discovered several Middle Iron Age sherds on the nearest hill, 200–300 m. ESE of Ḥirbat aš-Šēh 'Isā above Ṭawāḥin as-Sukkar. This provenance clearly does not itself indicate that it is the main site but suggests a larger settlement in the immediate vicinity—which agrees with my own observation. This supposition is an obvious one since until now no other possible identification has presented itself and in no other region of the Gōr aš-Šāfi are water supplies so favourable as near Ḥirbat aš-Šēh 'Isā. Rast and Schaub (o.c., 9f.) have already rightly rejected Albright's hasty hypothesis that Old Testament Zoar lies beneath the present water level of the Dead Sea.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. M. Noth, *Die topographischen Angaben im Onomastikon des Eusebius*, *ZDPV* 66 (1943), [32–63] 61–63 = Aufsätze zur biblischen Landes- und Altertumskunde, 1 (Neukirchen-Vluyn 1971), [309–331], 329–331.

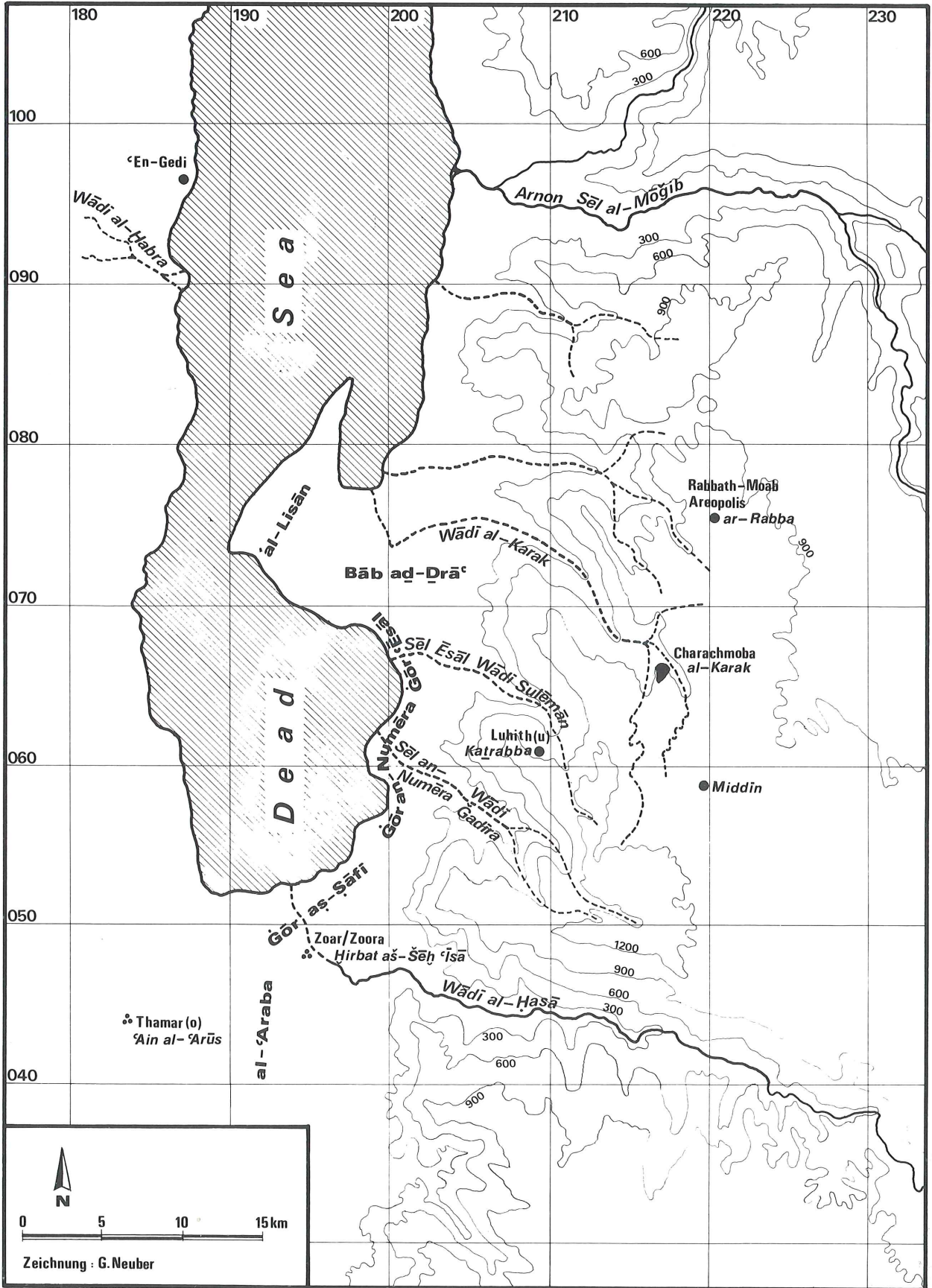
<sup>5</sup> For the site of Thamar(y) and the route in question as given in the Tabula Peutingeriana cf. S. Mittmann, *Ri*, 1, 16f. und das Siedlungsgebiet der kenitischen Sippe Hobab, *ZDPV* 93 (1977), [213–235] 228–232.

\* For the translation I duly thank Margaret Clarkson (text) and G. R. H. Wright (notes).

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<sup>2</sup> Eusebius, *Das Onomastikon der biblischen Ortsnamen*, ed. E. Klostermann (Leipzig 1904; Reprint Hildesheim 1966), 122, 28f.

1. Southern Dead Sea Region.





may have been located in the area of this long stretch of road between Areopolis/Raba and Zoora. Nor does the term tell us whether the village was located on or some distance off the road<sup>6</sup>.

Additional information is provided by the Old Testament, namely Isaiah 15: 5b, the verse to which Eusebius also referred. Vs. 5b is the first part of a three-part lament which extends through vs. 8. This text has been consistently interpreted incorrectly in light of the preceding verses, and, because of this false premise, it has been amazingly misinterpreted. A warlike devastation of the Moabite towns north of Arnon is lamented in the preceding section (vss. 1–5a) which concludes with ‘My heart cries out for Moab, whose fugitives (have fled) as far as Zoar!’. The generally accepted theory is that vss. 5b–8 describe the flight of the fugitives from the Moabite highlands to the southern end of the Dead Sea in more detail<sup>7</sup>. This interpretation, however, contradicts the clear wording and the unambiguous meaning of the text. Vs. 5b unmistakably speaks of a flight in the opposite direction: ‘On the ascent of Luhith men go up weeping; on the road to Horonaim there are cries of destruction’. The reason for the lamentation and the direction from which the lamenters came are mentioned in the second part (vs. 7): ‘The waters of Nimrim became desolations. The grass is parched; the herbage is exhausted, not a green thing is left’. The cry of lament describes a disastrous drought and not warlike desolation. The text clearly indicates that the lamenters did not come down, but rather went up from the Dead Sea. Certainly, the dried up ‘waters of Nimrim’ refer to Sēl an-Numēra, a strong stream flowing through a canyonlike gorge at the foot of the Transjordanian mountains and into Gōr an-Numēra, the region of land above the Dead Sea which protrudes into the southern basin. The third part of the text (vss. 7–8) refers again to the flight and the wailing brought about by the drought. Three places are mentioned that could be important in locating the ascent of Luhith. These places and Horonaim mentioned in vs. 5b, however, have not as yet been satisfac-

torily identified and therefore cannot be included in our considerations<sup>8</sup>. In any case, the remaining verses contain the essential information about Luhith, particularly the expression ‘ascent of Luhith’. According to this, Luhith must have been located in the slopes of the Transjordanian mountains on a route ascending from the Dead Sea to the Moabite plateau, namely from the area around Sēl an-Numēra. Luhith, the village which gave the ascent its name, was undoubtedly the most important settlement on the ascent. This complements and substantiates the information found in Eusebius, who, in turn, supports and corroborates the Old Testament information. By combining the two sources, we can see that: 1) If Eusebius, as we have shown, oriented himself on the Roman road connecting Areopolis and Zoora when localising Luhith, the ascent of Luhith most certainly must have been a part of the Roman route. 2) Like Moabite Luhith, the succeeding Byzantine settlement Λουειθά was, of course, also located on the road and not off it.

A Nabatean inscription from Madeba, dated in the 46th year of the reign of King Aretas IV, that is in 37 AD, provides special information about Luhith<sup>9</sup>. The text was inscribed twice on a tomb in which two men named ʾytybl, a grandfather and his grandson, were buried. According to the inscription, ʾytybl the Younger was the ‘Commander of the military camp located in/by Luhithu and Abarta’; but Madeba, the burial place, was the residence of this officer, whose title was rb msrytʾ in Nabatean and στρατοπεδάρχης in Greek. Thus the inscription tells us that, during the Nabatean period, troops were stationed in a permanent military camp in or around Luhith, the strategic function of which apparently was to protect the ascent of Luhith. This information also is important with regard to the localization of Luhith: if this camp were to be discovered on the road in question, it would be an excellent indication for the location of Luhith.

We are also directed to the region around the southern basin of the Dead Sea by a Hebrew contract from the time of Bar Kochba, which, along with many other similar documents formulated in Nabatean, Aramaic, Hebrew, and Greek, was found in the desert mountains beyond the Dead Sea, in a cave of Wādī al-Ḥabra, the so-called Cave of the Letters<sup>10</sup>. This document describes the distribution of land leased by four men from Simeon ben Kosiba’s administrator in ‘En-Gedi. All

<sup>6</sup> Only in two instances is the place relatively far removed. Keparadagon (Ḥirbat Daḡūn), according to On. 50, 16 between Diospolis (Ludd) and Iamneia (Yabnā) was some 9 km. West of Diospolis and thus at least c. 5 km. away from the direct Diospolis-Iamneia route. A similar case is Akkaron (ʿĀqir) which, according to On. 22, 9f., was between Azotos (Isdūd) and Iamnia (Yebnā) but actually was 7 km. east of Iamnia. The distant location is here expressly noted by the addition ‘in the eastern region’ ἐν τοῖς ἀνατολικοῖς. According to On. 156, 4 the locality Sior is between Ailia (al-Quds) and Eleutheropolis (Bēt Gibrīn). Noth (o.c., 62 = 330) equates it with Saʿir, ca 7 km. NE of Hebron and thereby imputes a gross inaccuracy to Eusebius. In fact, as already proposed by P. Thomsen (Loca sancta [Halle 1907; Reprint Hildesheim 1966], 106) Eusebius’ Sior should be the same as Ḥirbat as-Sūrā, 5 km. NNE of Bēt Gibrīn on the Roman road from Eleutheropolis to Ailia. When Eusebius (On. 32, 18f.) places Abila (Sūq Wādī Barada) between Damascus and Paneas (Banyās), he obviously does not have the direct Damascus-Paneas route in mind, but a road which leads westward from Damascus, through the Barada valley over the Antilibanos into the Biqāʾ and then through the Wādī at-Tēm into the Jordan valley. For the curious case of the two Astaroth Karnaein which according to On. 6, 55f. are between Adara (Darʾā) and Abile (Tall Ābil/Tell Umm al-ʿAmad) cf. D. Kellermann, ‘Aštārōt-ʿAštārōt Qarnayim-Qarnayim. Historisch-geographische Erwägungen zu Orten im nördlichen Ostjordanland, ZDPV 96 (1980), [45–61] 56–61.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. W. Schottroff, Horonaim, Nimrin, Luhith und der Westrand des ‘Landes Ataroth’, ZDPV 82 (1966), [163–208] 180–184 (lit.); H. Wildberger, Jesaja (Biblicher Kommentar Altes Testament, X/2; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1978), 588.600.615–618. Vs. 9 is an insertion, as is ‘the third Eglat’ in vs. 5a; cf. W. Schottroff, o.c., 183 n. 95 (lit.) and H. Wildberger, o.c., 591.

<sup>8</sup> Vss. 7–8 state: (7) Therefore the people carry off across the Stream of Poplars their hard-earned wealth and all their savings. (8) The cry for help goes round the borders of Moab; as far as Eglaim is their howling, and (as far as) Beer-Elim. . . . This part refers again to the flight, described in the beginning of the lament. Here also the flight leads up to the Moabite plateau. The Poplar Stream should be either Wādī el-Ḥasā or Sēl ʿEsāl depending on whether the refugees come from Zoar or the northern regions of the Lisān peninsula. Their cry extended from here to the borders of central Moab. This is indicated by the mention of Eglaim which, wherever it may have been precisely situated, certainly is to be identified with the Aigalleim attested by Eusebius, On. 36, 19–21 as 8 Roman miles (= 12 km.) south of Areopolis (ar-Rabba), and thus must be in the region E or SE of al-Karak (cf. e.g. G. Donner-H. Cüppers, Die Restauration und Konservierung de Mosaikkarte von Madeba, ZDPV 83 [1967], [1–33] 24f.).

<sup>9</sup> Text, translation, commentary on the historical geography and literature v. W. Schottroff, *op. cit.*, 197–199.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Y. Yadin, Expedition D—The Cave of the Letters, IEJ 12 (1962), 227–257 (the contract mentioned is treated pp. 249–255); H. J. Polotsky, The Greek Papyri from the Cave of the Letters, *ib.*, 258–262.



the tenants lived in 'En-Gedi; two, however, were originally 'from ha-Luhith' 'which (lies) by Maḥoz-'Agaltain' (mḥz 'gltyn). Maḥoz-'Agaltain or simply Maḥoza (mḥwz'; Greek, Μαώζα) also plays a role elsewhere in the documents. The Greek documents refer to it as κώμη or a 'village' in the district of Zoar. The name Maḥoza or 'port'<sup>11</sup> reflects the area of the district in which the village was located. This port was most probably located in the northern bay of the al-Lisān peninsula<sup>12</sup>. The determinative word 'Agaltain most probably is a regional name referring to the northern part of the peninsula<sup>13</sup>. Luhith therefore must have been located in this area if, as the additional phrase states, it was situated close to Maḥoz-'Agaltain. What is the significance of this reference in a document from 'En-Gedi where, according to some of the other documents, there were many close relationships of long-standing with Maḥoz, and where, therefore, everyone was familiar with the location of Luhith, the more so because the region of Luhith was within sight of 'En-Gedi? The additional phrase only makes sense if it distinguishes this Luhith from a second Luhith, namely a settlement with the same name located within the closer geographical horizon of the contract partners. Even though no other literary evidence is available which would indicate the existence of another Luhith, it is entirely possible that a twin settlement with this name may have existed. Just as 'Upper' and 'Lower' Beth-Horon were and are situated on the ascent of Beth-Horon (today Bēt 'Ūr), Upper and Lower Luhith could have existed as a primary and a secondary settlement on the ascent in question.

This then is the extent of the information found in the literary sources; if we want to gain further insight, we must take a look at the countryside itself.

## II

How does the literary evidence correspond with the countryside and its settlement history? What sort of archaeological artefacts have been found there that could have a direct or indirect relation to the literary witnesses?

First of all, the road conditions should be studied and the ascent of Luhith localized, because the identification of the village or of both settlements depends essentially on the solution of this problem, and here we should obtain the most reliable findings.

The geographic possibilities of communication for the ascent and descent are extremely limited on the flank of the Transjordanian mountains between Wādī al-Ḥasā and Wādī

al-Karak. Between the valleys mentioned, the valley systems of Wādī Ġadīra/Sēl an-Numēra and of Wādī Sulēmān/Sēl 'Ēsāl have widely and deeply eroded the mountains. In the lower parts of the flank, dropping in steep steps and slopes toward the Dead Sea, these valleys increasingly narrow until they form impassable canyons. Three relatively narrow ridges, which fan out broadly only at the deeper ends, extend westward between the valleys; an old path runs over the crests and flanks of each of these mountain ranges. The southern path leads down to Gōr aṣ-Ṣāfi; the middle, to Gōr 'Ēsāl; and the northern, to Bāb aḏ-Ḍrā'. From Alois Musil's unfortunately brief description of these three paths which he travelled at the turn of the century, the middle route appears to have been the most easily passable<sup>14</sup>. It was also the most widely used route. A Roman road was built on this route (FIG. 2), which Musil had already discovered. Apparently, the road served as a pilgrim route up until modern times, for it is still referred to as darb al-ḥaḡḡ.

Somewhere around Middīn, approximately 8 km. south southeast of al-Karak, the Roman road branched off, presumably from the *via Trajana*, the north-south communication axis of *provincia Arabiae*<sup>15</sup>, and ran from the border of the Moabite table at the northern slope of the middle mountain ridge, on the route of the modern road down to Kaṭrabba. Today its further course is a comfortable path on the level; after more than a 3-km. stretch of road, one arrives at the steep drop of the main fault in the mountain flank. From there the road drops down more than 500 m. in narrow serpentine windings to a rocky summit plateau of sandstone, which slopes 200 m. in flat steps extending over a distance of 3 km. to the west as far as the edge of the precipice over the Gōr. The way down to the Gōr, a difference in level of more than 400 metres, runs over a ridge which at points is only slightly wider than the road.

I walked this path, starting at Kaṭrabba, with a local guide, an older resident of the village, on a hot October day in 1979 and was well rewarded for my efforts. Certainly, nowhere in Palestine has a Roman road been so well preserved as on the long untouched rocky sandstone plateau. Looking down from above, the whole length of the road stands out like a double line<sup>16</sup>. Observed close to, these parallel lines can be identified as lateral boundary walls. These walls, carefully laid in double rows, were 60 cm. wide and up to 55 cm. high; they are made of large sandstone slabs or blocks which vary considerably and, here and there, are still covered on top with flat stones. The wall is occasionally broken by a narrow space. The spaces may have been constructed to assist the drainage of rainwater. At one point where the road crosses over a gully, winter torrents can flow through an aperture unimpeded, with-

<sup>11</sup> Not '(coastal) district' as translated by Y. Yadin, *op. cit.*, 250f. E. Y. Kutscher has already taken it otherwise (cf. *Leṣonenu* 34 [1969-70], 8f. [hebr.]). The topographical context of the sources concerned encourages the choice of the elsewhere well attested meaning 'harbour'.

<sup>12</sup> Until recent times it served as a harbour-bay. Cf. A. Musil, *Arabia Petraea*, I. Moab (Wien 1907), 168: 'Lisān streckt den nordwestlichen rötlichen Arm wie eine Nadel in das tiefe Blau des Meeres hinaus und bildet mit dem Ostufer einen schönen bogenförmigen Hafen, in dem al-Baladije als Hafenstadt liegt.'

<sup>13</sup> 'Agaltain is thus definitely not to be separated from 'En-'Eglaim which in Ez. 47, 10 is mentioned as opposite 'En-Gedi. Cf. W. Zimmerli, *Ezechiel* (Biblischer Kommentar XIII/2; Neukirchen-Vluyn 1979), 1197f.

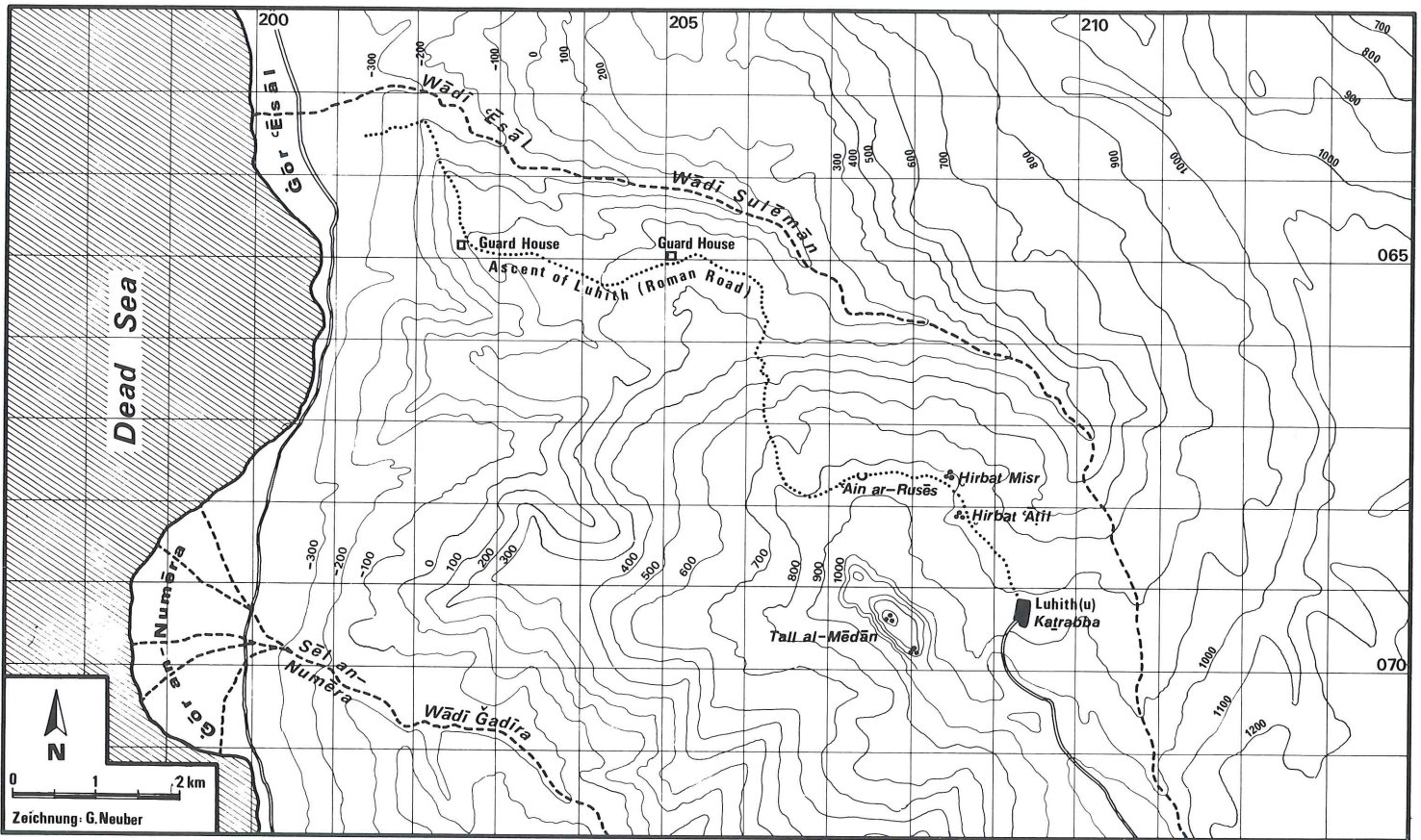
<sup>14</sup> Cf. A. Musil, *op. cit.*, 167f. (middle route); 70-72 (southern Route); 63-67 (northern route).

<sup>15</sup> Cf. in this connection and also for the further course of the road, A. Alt, *Zum römischen Straßennetz in der Moabitis*, ZDPV 60 (1937), 240-244.

<sup>16</sup> N. Glueck observed and photographed this part of the road from the air; cf. *An Aerial Reconnaissance in Southern Transjordan*, BASOR 67 (1937), 19f.; *Explorations in Eastern Palestine*, III, AASOR 18-19 (1939), 148 FIG. 49.



## 2. The Ascent of Luhith.



out backing up and eventually breaching the wall. The inner width of the road was 5.70 m. The road was apparently unpaved. Evidently just exposing and smoothing the rocky bed under the thin layer of earth was adequate here for a road. On the slopes, the route was cut in and through the rock were necessary, and stones were laid at the edges of the steps. In the centre of the plateau and at the beginning of the ascent into the Gōr, we find the ruins of a small guard house on the road. Milestones were nowhere to be seen; if they had been present, they could not have been overlooked. This, however, does not challenge the dating of the road to the Roman-Byzantine period<sup>17</sup>.

There is no doubt that this is the road referred to in the Tabula Peutingeriana as the stretch of road from Raba to Thamaro and which I think Eusebius had in mind when he referred to the location of Luhith. With this road, we have then also found the 'ascent of Luhith'. But where was Luhith (or where were both Luhiths of the Bar Kochba period) located, providing we have correctly interpreted the document from the 'Cave of the Letters'?

It must be presumed that the Luhith of the Old Testament was an Iron Age settlement and, at the same time, a settlement important enough to lend its name to the long ascent.

<sup>17</sup> The same state of affairs also occurs e.g. in Western Palestine south of Hebron; cf. M. Noth, *op. cit.*, 318f.

Considering the modern conditions, this problem could quickly be solved, for there is only one settlement on the whole stretch of road, namely the village of Kaṭrabba. The problem is similar for the older periods, at least for the Iron Age. As far as I could ascertain, no remnants of an Iron Age settlement were present at Gōr 'Ēsāl at the foot of the ascent, and to the best of my knowledge no Iron Age finds have been reported in the environs. Such finds first appear in the near neighbourhood of Kaṭrabba. Approximately between 1.5 and 1 km. before the bounds of Kaṭrabba, the path passes by two small ruins where some later pottery and also Iron Age ware was found, but only in very small amounts. According to other indications, there cannot have been more than one or two houses here, and that is not enough for Luhith<sup>18</sup>. What is Kaṭrabba itself like? Kaṭrabba today is a medium-sized village in the uppermost region of Wādī Sulēmān. The old centre of the village forms a thick built-over terrace, the flanks of which drop rapidly, protruding approximately 150 m. to the north and narrowing to about 90 m. at the peak. A large spring

<sup>18</sup> In question are Hīrbat 'Āfil and Hīrbat Misr (v. the sketch map FIG. 2). An exact description of the ruins and the pottery will be given elsewhere. Through lack of time I could not investigate Hīrbat ar-Rusēs which, according to A. Musil, *op. cit.*, 168, must be south of the ar-Rusēs spring (c. 2.5 km. NW of Kaṭrabba as the crow flies) but was not visited by him. Should there be an Iron Age site there it can hardly be of more importance than the above-mentioned settlements because of its exposed setting in an apparently unproductive region.

arises a short distance away from the eastern point of the terrace. Thick layers of debris from the Turkish and Arab periods cover the summit and extend quite a way down the slopes. Under these conditions, the surface sherds are only of limited value. The pottery which I found goes back to the Byzantine era. The site, however, was most certainly already occupied in the Nabatean period. A Nabatean horned capital of basalt, together with a column drum and base also made of basalt found in a courtyard at the east border of the terrace, is evidence of this. The Nabateans were also hardly likely to have been the first ones here. The living and settlement conditions made possible through the spring, the ascent, and the cultivatable terrace landscape of the surroundings, had undoubtedly also been utilized in the Iron Age. Is it therefore not possible that Moabite Luhith was located here? The question becomes even more urgent, since no ruins are to be found further up in the region of the ascent and, due to the increasing narrowness and steepness of the valley of ascent, also cannot be expected there.

There is no doubt that Kaṭrabba is the Nabatean Luhith. This assertion is based not only on the Nabatean column in Kaṭrabba, but also particularly on the archaeological fact that a Nabatean military camp existed in the immediate vicinity of the village. West of the site, on the other side of a small gorge, the ridge of the dominating range rises steeply to a peak, Tall al-Mēdān. From this point, there is a commanding view into the valley system of Wādī Sulēmān and Wādī Ġadīra. The summit, approximately 250 m. higher than Kaṭrabba, is a narrow plateau, about 500 m. long, extending from the northwest to the southeast, slightly crosswise towards the main direction of the ridge. The ruins of an Iron Age fort have been found at the south end. This fort, a square approximately 60 × 60 m., encloses a round tower attached to the south wall. Nelson Glueck discovered this small fort and described it correctly in most respects. However he completely misinterpreted the ruins at the north end of the plateau

when he refers to the 'foundation walls of a considerable number of houses' of a Nabatean site<sup>19</sup>. In reality this is a fort: a closed rectangle of approximately 80 × 50 m. with an east-west longitudinal orientation. The entrance was on the narrow eastern side. The walls, with a continuous series of rooms at the western and northern sides, enclose a courtyard with a tower-like construction in the eastern half. The relatively dense distribution of sherds is a clear-cut indication of the Nabatean origin of this fort. In addition the Nabateans also used the Iron Age construction and may even have enlarged it, for here as well there is a lot of Nabatean pottery. The Nabateans therefore were able to control both valleys at the same time. On the basis of the preceding considerations, there is almost no doubt that this strategic high point with its military buildings is the 'military camp by Luhithu'; and then there can no longer be any question but that Luhithu itself was the nearest settlement, namely modern Kaṭrabba. The location of Nabatean Luhithu, however, was certainly also that of Moabite Luhith and Byzantine Λουειθιά.

Finally, let us raise the question of the second Luhith 'by Maḥoz-ʿAgaltain'. The mountain village of Luhith was in no case located by the port of Maḥoz on the Dead Sea. It is entirely possible that a part of the Ġōr, especially Ġōr ʿĒsāl at the foot of the ascent of Luhith, belonged to Luhith, just as villages and families of the ʿAġlūn mountains today own parts of the middle Jordan Valley. For this or some other reason, one or other of the families from Luhith may have preferred to settle in the Ġōr without severing all connections with the 'mother' village. Natural limitations prohibited a larger emigration; the stone-strewn ground of Ġōr ʿĒsāl did not provide the economic basis for more extensive settlement. It therefore is all the more conceivable that the few individual settlers continued to refer to themselves by the name of the village from which they came and on whose village land they lived.

<sup>19</sup> Explorations III (s. note 16), 95.