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From the Tobiads to the Hasmoneans: The Hellenistic Pottery, Coins, and History in the Regions of 'Irāq al-Amīr and the Wādī Ḥisbān

The subject of the Hellenistic period has rarely been the centerpiece of archaeological research dealing with Jordan. This fact is well reflected in Berlin's archaeological reconstructions of the Hellenistic period in Israel and Jordan. In this review study, Berlin (1997) has identified numerous remains in Israel, yet this number is substantially reduced to less than ten when she deals with Jordan. This reduction is especially obvious for the early Hellenistic period, since the number of early Hellenistic sites is only four altogether. This view has led to the popular theory of "the early Hellenistic archaeological lacuna" which stands in sharp contrast with "the late Hellenistic expansion and prosperity (Smith 1990: 124, 127; see also Tidmarsh 2001)".

However, recent studies held suspect the popular view of a break in sedentary life during the early Hellenistic period in Jordan, alternatively characterizing this period as the beginning of a return of settlement intensification in Jordan (Ji 1998b; 2001). Interest in these two studies, however, is limited to the early history of the Hellenistic settlements at 'Irāq al-Amīr and their potential influence on and relationship to the settlement history of several Persian-Hellenistic cities in the Jordan Valley. Additionally because of available data, these studies have tended to focus on urban centers and farmstead buildings in northern Jordan and the Mādabā Plains, and have primarily attempted to understand a broad settlement pattern in Hellenistic Jordan. Moreover, in dealing with archaeological survey data, they have neither employed a distinction between the early and late Hellenistic periods nor presented a detailed description of the nature of Hellenistic sites along the Wādī al-Kafrayn and the Wādī Ḥisbān.

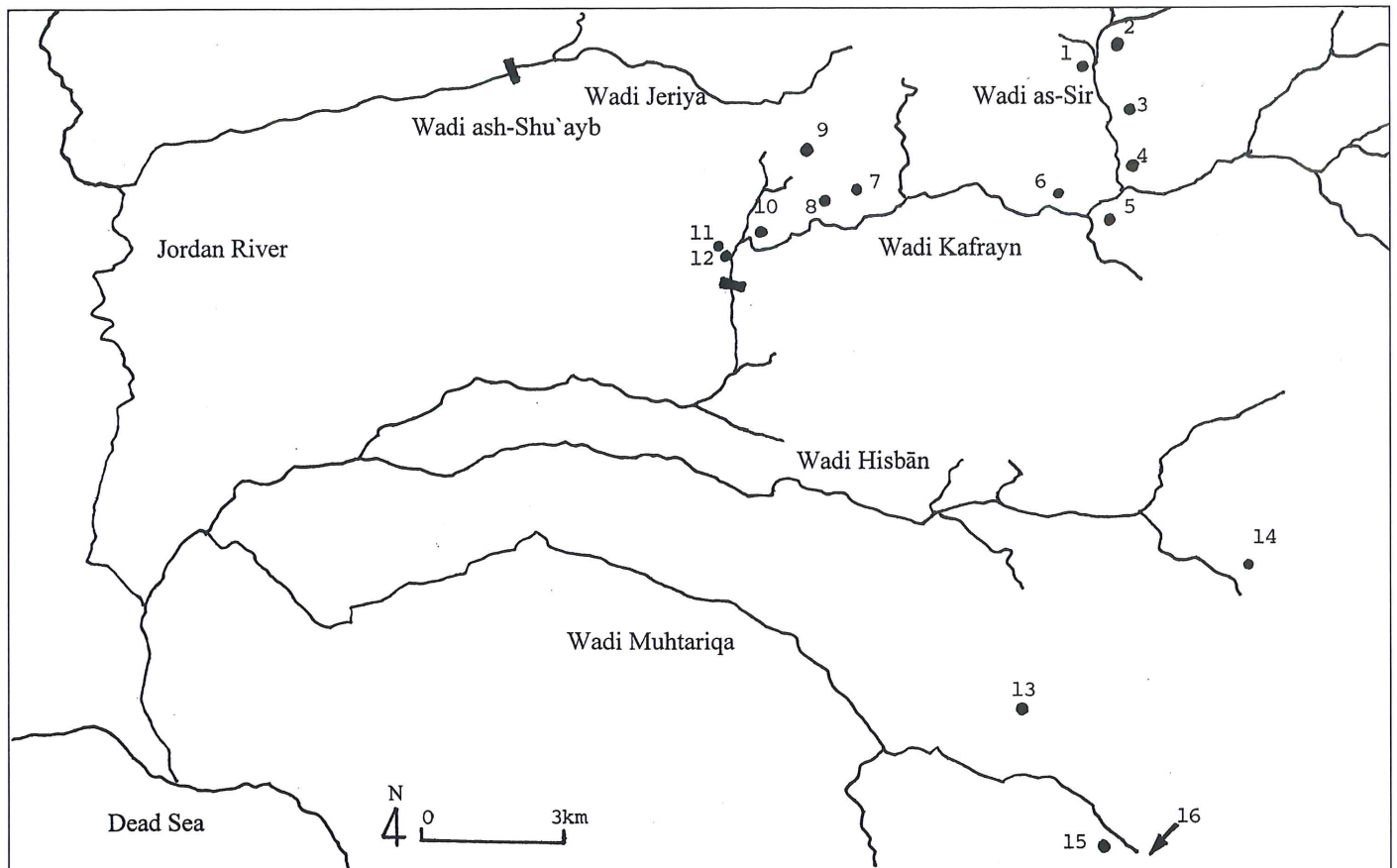
This article was prepared as part of a larger project designed to study the Hellenistic period in Jordan by providing an interim report of ongoing pottery and coin analyses, and describing and explaining their historical implications. Although the volume of archaeological material resulting from various field-oriented research is astounding and complex, in this paper, we focus on data

related to the relatively short period of the transition from early Hellenistic to late Hellenistic. In the process, we give attention to the Tobiads and the Hasmoneans—two political entities that sequentially controlled the region in the Hellenistic period and thus are essential to the study of Hellenistic Jordan. Not intended to be a technical report or an exhaustive historical study of the Hellenistic period in Jordan, this article seeks to offer a partially integrative perspective of a couple of research projects in progress.

Archaeological Surveys and Ceramic Evidence

Under the auspices of the 'Irāq al-Amīr and Wādī al-Kafrayn project, in the region bearing those names, the authors conducted a series of intensive surface survey and archaeological soundings between 1996 and 2000 (Ji 1998a; Ji and Lee 1999; see also Waheeb 1997). The summer of 1999, the lead author also conducted an archaeological survey at Khirbat al-Maḥaṭṭa west of Tall Ḥisbān. Undoubtedly, the surveys have served to improve our comprehension on the Hellenistic period in the study region. Based on the above mentioned fieldwork, FIG. 1, TABLE 1 present the location of important Hellenistic sites and the number of diagnostic Hellenistic sherds found at the sites in percentage terms.

Apparently, the 'Irāq al-Amīr region and Khirbat al-Maḥaṭṭa witnessed settlement intensification during the Hellenistic period. Note TABLE 1 showing that at Rujm Musattarah, Khirbat aṣ-Ṣuwwān, Rujm Umm Ḥadhar North and South, and Khirbat al-Maḥaṭṭa, the frequency distribution of Hellenistic pottery is far more compact than the distribution of all the sherds dated to other periods. The Hellenistic period is also well represented at other sites, although either Iron II or Roman-Islamic sherds tend to dominate the pottery assemblage from these sites. Given that surface pottery is often representative of the date of architectural remains at the site, the abundance of Hellenistic pottery at the given sites probably indicates that they were settled in the Hellenistic period.



1. Hellenistic Sites in the 'Irāq al-Amīr and Wādi al-Ḥisbān Regions: 1. 'Irāq al-Amīr, 2. al-Bardhūn, 3. Musattarah, 4. Fajira, 5. Abū 'Unayzah, 6. al-Farāwīt, 7. as-Sūr, 8. Umm Qaṭṭāf, 9. 'Ayn Qrada, 10. aṣ-Ṣuwwān, 11. Umm Ḥadhar North, 12. Umm Ḥadhar South, 13. al-Maḥaṭṭa, 14. Ḥisbān, 15. Mukhayaṭ, 16. Makāwir.

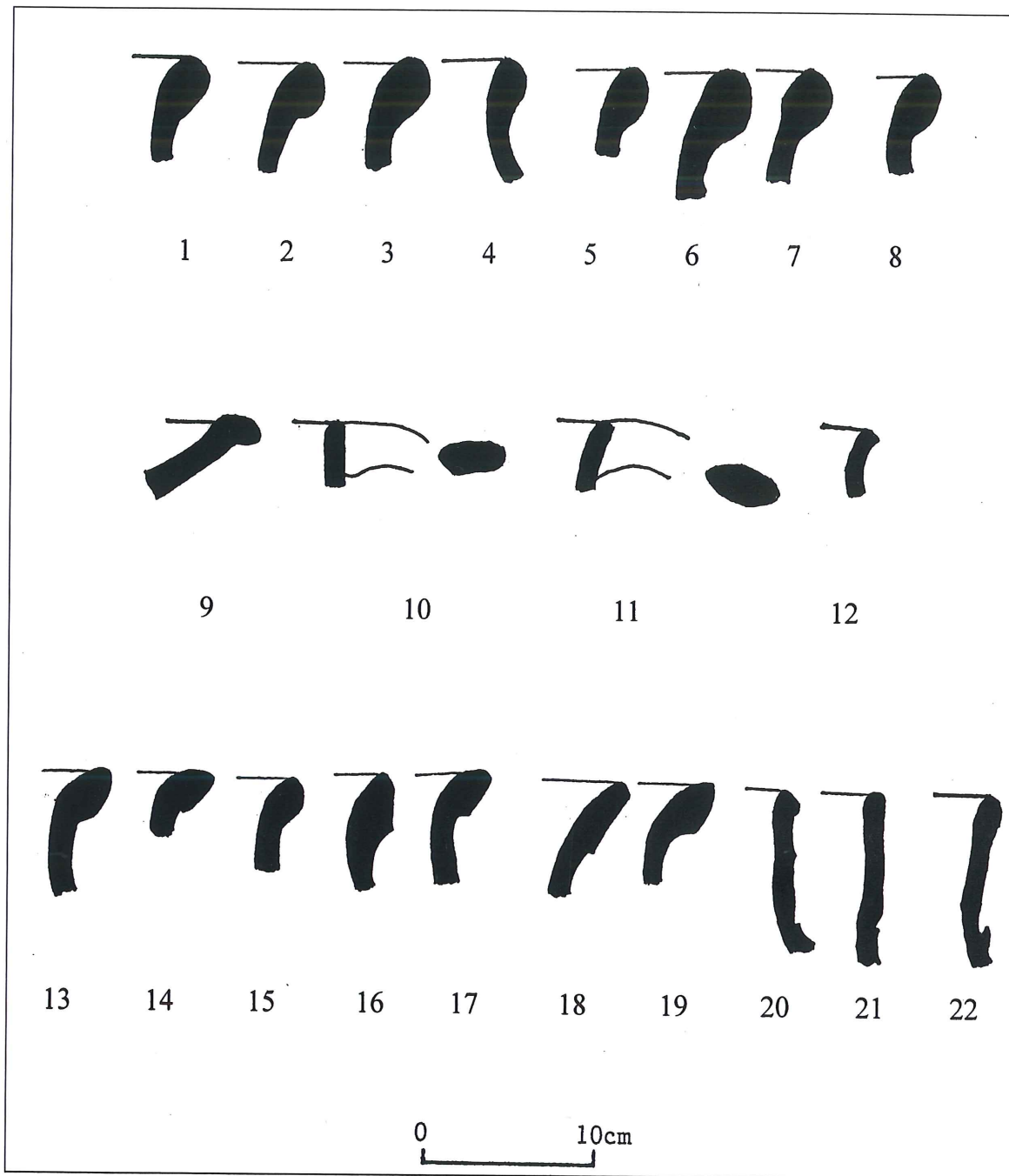
TABLE 1. Selected Hellenistic Pottery from the 'Irāq al-Amīr and Wādi Ḥisbān Regions (Description).

Site Name	'Irāq al - Amīr Survey Site Number	Number of Diagnostic Sherds	Proportion of Hellenistic Pottery (%)
Khīrbat al-Bardhūn	76	42	16.67
Rujm al-Musattarah	27	10	90.00
Rujm Fajayra	59	57	17.54
Tall abū- 'Unayzah	26	23	34.78
Khīrbat al-Farāwīt	28	125	20.80
Khīrbat as-Sūr	67	49	46.73
Khīrbat 'Ayn-Qrāda	57	42	15.00
Khīrbat aṣ-Ṣuwwān	127	32	71.88
Rujm Umm Hadhar South	118	25	85.00
Rujm Umm Hadhar North	120	9	88.89
Khīrbat al-Maḥaṭṭa	-	45	51.11

In the mean time, a careful analysis of Hellenistic pottery from the sites in the 'Irāq al-Amīr region and Khīrbat al-Maḥaṭṭa has been undertaken to determine changes in the settlement history from the early Hellenistic period to the late Hellenistic period. To be sure, scholars meet with some difficulties in distinguishing early Hellenistic pottery from its late counterparts, since the tradition of various early Hellenistic pottery forms continued to the end of the Hellenistic period. This problem may be particularly true when we analyze surface sherds. With these dif-

ficulties in mind, however, let us present an interim summary of three peculiar findings from the ongoing analysis. For the analysis, special attention was given to the comparison of these pottery assemblages to those from the excavations of Qaṣr al-'Abd (Lapp 1983). A more systematic presentation of ceramic finds covered in this section will be available to the readers in due course.

First, in light of both ceramic evidence from surveys and archaeological soundings together, it appears that settlement was heavy and extensive in the early Hellenistic period. The assemblages consist of the usual domestic repertoire known at many Hellenistic sites in Jordan and Israel, mostly dated from late fourth to early second centuries BC; they are characterized by an abundance of storage jars with a thickened, everted rounded or bulbous rim, typical Hellenistic fish plates, and bowls with an incurved rim (FIG. 2: 1-9). In particular, note that the majority of the jar rims correspond in form to Gitin's Types 159 and 160 storage jars and Guz-Zilberstein's Types JR1a and JR1b. According to Guz-Zilberstein (1995), these forms first came into use in the Persian period and continued as popular jar forms through mid second century BC. They appear only sporadically late in the second



2. Selected Hellenistic Pottery from the 'Irāq al-Amīr and Wādī Ḥisbān Regions.

century BC. They are also the dominant types of Qaṣr al-'Abd III (Lapp 1983). Gitin (1990: 238) also suggests, "the rounded rim sections and vertical necks of Types 160A and 160B of the late third and early second century develop angular rims and curved necks like those of Types 160C and 160D by the beginning of the second century".

In a similar vein, it is important to state that our assemblage also lacks cooking pots with grooved rim and narrow short beveled neck, which are a common form in

the corpus in the late second and early first centuries BC. (cf. Gitin 1990: Type 239). In contrast, the regions of the Wādī as-Sir and the Wādī al-Kafrayn include a large number of globular cooking pots with wide high neck and flanged or simple rims. Cooking pots of this form are very well represented at Qaṣr al-'Abd, Khirbat as-Sūr, Khirbat al-Maḥaṭṭa, Khirbat aṣ-Ṣuwwān, and Khirbat al-Farāwīt (FIG.2: 10-12). Scholars trace this form back to the late fourth century BC. and into the second century BC. Hence, the cooking pot assemblages also contribute

TABLE 2. Surface Survey of Khirbat al-Maḥaṭṭa and Selected Hellenistic Sites in the 'Irāq al-Amīr Regions.

No.	Site	Diameter	Description
1	Sūr	6	pink (7.5YR 8/4), no slip, no core, numerous very small white and gray inclusions
2	'Ayn-Qrādah	6	reddish yellow (5YR 7/6), pink slip (5YR 7/4), gray core (5YR 5/1), numerous small white inclusions
3	abū-'Unayzah	9	pink (7.5YR 7/4), no slip, light brown core (7.5YR 6/3), many small white and gray inclusions
4	Farāwīt	6	reddish yellow (7.5YR 7/6), pink slip (7.5YR 7/4) (E, I), no core, no inclusions
5	Mahaṭṭa	7	reddish yellow (5YR 6/6), pink slip (7.5YR 7/6) (E, I), no core, many small white and gray inclusions
6	Mahaṭṭa	9	yellowish red (5YR 5/6), light brown slip (7.5YR 6/3) (E), gray core (10YR 6/1), many small white inclusions
7	Mahaṭṭa	9	reddish yellow (7.5YR 7/6), no slip, no core, many small to medium white and gray inclusions
8	Mahaṭṭa	8	light red (2.5YR 6/8), no slip, no core, many small white and gray inclusions
9	Sūr	8	pink (7.5YR 7/4), very dark gray slip (10YR 3/1) (E, I), no core, very few small white inclusions
10	Sūr	8	very pale brown (10YR 7/4), reddish gray slip (2.5YR 5/1) (E), no core, many small to medium gray inclusions
11	Sūr	7	very pale brown (10YR 7/4), gray slip (7.5YR 5/1) (E), no core, many small to medium gray inclusions
12	Sūr	7	light reddish brown (2.5YR 6/4), no slip, no core, many very small white inclusions
13	Umm Ḥadhar S	5	gray (10YR 6/1), very pale brown slip (10YR 8/3) (E, I), no core, numerous small white and gray inclusions
14	Umm Ḥadhar S	7	light red (2.5YR 7/8), very pale brown slip (10YR 8/3) (E, I), no core, some small white inclusions
15	Umm Ḥadhar S	5	reddish yellow (5YR 7/6), no slip, light gray core (2.5Y 7/2), no inclusions
16	Umm Ḥadhar S	7	gray (5YR 5/1), pale yellow slip (2.5Y 8/4) (E), no core, many small white inclusions
17	Umm Ḥadhar S	6	light gray (10YR 7/2), pale yellow slip (2.5Y 8/3) (E, I), no core, many small gray inclusions
18	Umm Ḥadhar S	5	reddish yellow (5YR 7/6), very pale brown slip (10YR 8/2) (E, I), no core, many small white inclusions
19	Umm Ḥadhar S	6	light red (2.5YR 7/6), very pale brown slip (10YR 8/4) (E), light grey core (7.5YR 7/1), few small white inclusions
20	Farāwīt	5	light red (2.5YR 6/6), pink slip (7.5YR 7/4) (E), no core, some very small gray inclusions
21	Farāwīt	5	light red (2.5YR 6/6), pink slip (7.5YR 7/4) (E), reddish gray core (2.5YR 5/1), some small white inclusions
22	Sūr	5	pink (7.5YR 7/4), no slip, light gray core (7.5YR 7/1), many small white and gray inclusions

to establishing the chronological positions of the Hellenistic settlements to the third and early second centuries BC.

Second, some typical mid and late second century pottery is virtually absent in the regions of the Wādī as-Sūr, the Wādī Kafraḥ, and the Wādī Ḥisbān. For example,

note the sparsity of folded, flanged storage jar rims (Gittin's Types 161 and 164) in the study regions. Given that these forms appeared in the mid second century BC. and became two dominant jar forms of the second half of the Hellenistic horizon, the virtual absence of these forms in the regions may indicate a settlement interruption at these

sites sometime in the mid and late second century BC. They are also absent at Qaṣr al-‘Abd III except for one sherd (Lapp 1983: Fig. 32: 49). The exceptions to this generalization is Rujm Umm Ḥadhar, and possibly Tall Barakāt, which contain quite a few folded, flanged storage jars plus other typical second-first century vessels (cf. FIG. 2: 13-19). Notice that both Rujm Umm Ḥadhar and Tall Barakāt are located in the region of Umm Ḥadhar Plains. Along with their virtual absence outside of the Umm Ḥadhar region, the frequent appearance of late-second-century pottery at Rujm Umm Ḥadhar may imply that the Umm Ḥadhar region and its vicinity were inhabited during the late second century BC and thus their human resettlement slightly antedated other late Hellenistic settlements along the Wādī al-Kafrayn and the Wādī as-Sūr.

Third, the discovery of late Hellenistic and early Roman sherds indicates the presence of human activities at many sites in the regions during the late second and early first centuries BC. It is not improbable that some of these late settlements are a continuation of early Hellenistic settlements at the sites, for example, al-Bardhūn, al-Farāwīt, and as-Sūr. However, typical late Hellenistic and early Roman pottery are primarily restricted to about half of the early Hellenistic settlements, positing a decrease in population and settlement during the late Hellenistic period in the given region. The largest concentration of late Hellenistic pottery is found at al-Bardhūn, al-Farāwīt, abu-‘Unayzah, as-Sūr, Umm Ḥadhar South, and al-Maḥa a. Yet, the actual number of such later assemblages even at these sites is not impressive when compared with the earlier period, which may indicate that at these sites, the late Hellenistic settlement was much smaller in size than the early Hellenistic one.

At this point, it is informative to compare our late Hellenistic pottery assemblages with those from Machaerus stratum III. The importance of Hellenistic pottery from Machaerus III is immeasurable, since scholars present with reasonable certainty the chronology of this archaeological stratum (Corbo 1980; Corbo and Loffreda 1981; Loffreda 1980; 1981). According to the ongoing analysis, some of Machaerus III pottery have a wide distribution in the study regions. For example, the late Hellenistic and early Roman cooking pots, bowls, and storage jars presented in the report of Corbo and Loffreda (1981: Fig. 34: 1-5, 36: 8 and 15-16) are also present at as-Sūr, al-Bardhūn, al-Farāwīt, Umm Ḥadhar South, and al-Maḥaṭṭa. Of course, most of these late Hellenistic cooking pots and bowls are very well represented in early Hellenistic phases as well, and thus they may not be good indicators of a late date for these sites. Some storage jars (cf. FIG. 2: 20-22), however, appear only in the very late Hellenistic and early Roman horizon including Machaerus III, indicating a historical and chronological tie be-

tween the aforementioned late Hellenistic sites and Machaerus. Interestingly, there are also parallels to these storage jars at ‘Irāq al-Amīr; two early Roman jars from Brown’s sounding (1983: Fig. 54: 5-6) are closely related to the form in discussion. This fact implies that the immediate vicinity of Qaṣr al-‘Abd and ‘Irāq al-Amīr was also in use during the given period, although excavations failed to yield any late Hellenistic-early Roman structures at the site (Lapp 1962a; 1962b; 1963). Suffice to say that this congruency shows that at least some early Hellenistic sites in the region were inhabited again during the time when Machaerus was in use.

Hellenistic Coins (with contributions by Yeshu Dray and Arie Kindler)

Since the completion of the systematic surveys of the ‘Irāq al-Amīr region, archaeological data have further and continuously been documented in the regions of ‘Irāq al-Amīr and the Wādī Ḥisbān. Given that most of these new findings await analysis and publication, in this article we limit our discussion to the Hellenistic coins from the region. Specifically, the summer of 2001 found the lead author at prominent Hellenistic sites in the region of ‘Irāq al-Amīr and the Wādī Ḥisbān for coin survey using metal detection equipment. The main purpose of the survey was to find Hellenistic coins on the surface, although post-Hellenistic coins were also collected and documented. The survey occurred at six selected sites: as-Sūr, aṣ-Ṣuwwān, Umm Ḥadhar South, Barakāt, al-Ḥabbasa, and al-Maḥaṭṭa. Disappointingly, no Hellenistic coins were found at aṣ-Ṣuwwān, al-Ḥabbasa, or al-Maḥaṭṭa, although Hellenistic and early Roman pottery dominated the ceramic assemblage from these sites. Despite this setback, however, the survey produced not a small number of Hellenistic coins at as-Sūr, Umm Ḥadhar South, and Barakāt so that we can compare them with the pottery sherds from the same sites. The results lend substantial credibility to our preceding discussion of ceramic evidence.

At Khirbat as-Sūr, the coin inventory includes six Hellenistic-early Roman coins; one coin from Ptolemy I (301-285 BC), one Ptolemy II (285-247 BC), one Antiochus III (223-187 BC), one Antiochus IV (175-164 BC), one Hasmonean coin minted in 135-134 BC under the auspices of Hyrcanus I, and one Nabatean coin dated to Malichus II. At Umm Ḥadhar South, the survey uncovered three coins, one of which dated to the Antiochus VII (139-129 BC); the other two coins were Hasmonean. These two Hasmonean coins were illegible due to wear and corrosion, and thus it was impossible to assign it to any Hasmonean kings. Tall Barakāt contained eight coins, all of which were minted under the auspices of Hasmonean kings; one from the period of Aristobulus (103 BC), one from Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 BC),

and six coins from John Hyrcanus I (134-104 BC) or Alexander Jannues, but no later than 95 BC.

The heavy clustering of Hasmonean coins at Umm Ḥadhar and Barakāt indicates that they were military fortresses or fortified villas built by the Hasmonean kings near the end of the second century BC and were continuously in use up to the reign of Alexander Jannaeus. In the same vein, notice the absence of early Hellenistic, Seleucid, and post-Hasmonean coins at these sites, strongly implying that the human occupation of Umm Ḥadhar and Barakāt was essentially confined to the relatively short period from the last quarter of the second century BC to the mid first century BC. This suggestion coincides with the ceramic evidence from these sites. Recall that all the pottery from Umm Ḥadhar are dated to the late Hellenistic period, most likely to the late second and first centuries BC. At Tall Barakāt, a relatively small number of sherds were found on the surface during the surveys, yet the assemblage was limited to the late second and first centuries BC. The absence of early Hellenistic pottery typifies Umm Ḥadhar and Barakāt.

The appearance of two Ptolemy, one Antiochus III, and one Antiochus IV coins at as-Sūr possibly suggests long-term, continuous Hellenistic occupation at the site covering the third and early second centuries BC. This is reminiscent of the early Hellenistic coins from the village of 'Irāq al-Amīr; the coins were assigned to the time of Ptolemy II, Antiochus III, or Seleucus IV (Lapp 1983: 13). The French excavations at the monumental gateway also yielded six bronze coins minted under the reign of Antiochus III (Dentzer *et al.* 1983: 142). Of interest is the chronological coincidence between Khirbat as-Sūr and 'Irāq al-Amīr. At both sites, the dates of early Hellenistic coins range from the third century BC until the early second century BC. Needless to say, this dating may witness to early Hellenistic activity at as-Sūr and 'Irāq al-Amīr. It may also demonstrate that as-Sūr was the military fort built to protect the vicinity of 'Irāq al-Amīr no later than the early third century BC.

As important as the early Hellenistic coins at as-Sūr is the case of one Hasmonean coin dated to the time of John Hyrcanus I. This case can be argued in two ways. Khirbat as-Sūr was in use without interruption from the third century BC to the first century BC. Alternatively, the coins were brought into as-Sūr by the new comers who came to the site near the end of the second century BC and produced the late Hellenistic-early Roman pottery. Whichever is correct, the presence of this Hasmonean coin does not necessarily contradict our preceding theory of a low settlement intensification in the 'Irāq al-Amīr region during the mid and late second centuries BC. It is in line with the view that as-Sūr was one of few early Hellenistic sites that continuously attracted human occupation west of 'Irāq al-Amīr after the early Hellenistic settlement came to

an end in the Wādī as-Sir region. In this connection, it is noteworthy that at 'Irāq al-Amīr, the 1961-62 excavations recovered one Hasmonean coin dated to the time of Alexander Jannaeus (Lapp 1983: 13). This is also the case at the monumental gateway at 'Irāq al-Amīr, where the French team identified one Hasmonean coin minted under the auspices of Alexander Jannaeus (Dentzer *et al.* 1983: 142). The Hasmonean coins from as-Sūr and 'Irāq al-Amīr are important to our discussion of late Hellenistic history in the region; with the Hasmonean coin at Khirbat as-Sūr, they may point to Hasmonean activity at 'Irāq al-Amīr and its vicinity during the period.

Khirbat al-Maḥaṭṭa was included in the 2001 coin survey project because of its heavy clustering of Hellenistic sherds on the surface and its potential importance to the history of the Tobiads and the Hasmoneans. Oddly enough, the collection of coins from al-Maḥaṭṭa lacks Hellenistic coins. All the coins collected from the surface were late Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic, and many, but not all, were minted during the fifth century AD. As for the Ḥisbān region, however, recall that according to previous research, the numismatic corpus from Mount Nebo and Khirbat al-Mukhayyaṭ is composed of a large number of Hasmonean and Herodian coins. In the excavations carried out at Mount Nebo, one Hasmonean coin was discovered, which includes double cornucopias with pomegranate set between the horns (Gitler 1998). Apparently, the coin was minted sometime in 103-76 BC during the reign of Alexander Jannaeus. The reign of Alexander Jannaeus is also well represented in the coins at al-Mukhayyaṭ south of Mount Nebo. The new volume about Mount Nebo excavations contain, as part of its discussion of biblical references to Mount Nebo, a picture of Hasmonean and Herodian coins from al-Mukhayyaṭ (Cortese and Niccacci 1998: Fig. 2). From a total of 22-23 coins, at least four coins include the symbol of a star that was probably connected with Alexander Jannaeus. Alexander Jannaeus utilized the star and diadem as the symbol of his kingship and thus, scholars usually attribute the Hasmonean coins with the symbol to the king (Meshorer 1982). The picture also shows a couple of coins with double cornucopias and Hebrew letters, which were commonplace on coins struck during the time of Alexander Jannaeus.

In any event, the frequent appearance of coins minted in the time of Alexander Jannaeus provides us strong testimony for the Hasmonean presence in the Mount Nebo area during the first century BC. The results of a century of archaeological research in the Mount Nebo area opens a window on an important view relating to the Hellenistic political history of the region. In the review of various reports on the Mount Nebo area it becomes clear that no Ptolemy and Seleucid coins have yet been discovered in the area (cf. Piccirillo and Alliata 1998). There is strong numismatic representation of the early Hellenistic period

in the Mādabā Plains farther east of Mount Nebo (Ji 2001). This contrast indicates that the Mount Nebo area was much more sparsely populated when compared to the Mādabā Plains, and it was in the late Hellenistic period that the area witnessed an increase in settlement. Equally suggestive is the absence of late Hellenistic coins ascribable to the reigns of Antiochus VII, Antiochus VIII, and John Hyrcanus I in the region of Mount Nebo. During the late second century BC coins struck by these kings were in circulation in the region of Umm Ḥadhar and as-Sūr. This exclusive appearance of late second-century coins in the north may be viewed as strong support for the view that the expansion of Hasmonean settlements into the region south of the Wādī Ḥisbān occurred no earlier than the late second century BC. To summarize, so long as it is clear to us that all the coins discovered in the Mount Nebo area belong to the reign of Alexander Jannaeus or later, we hold reservations concerning any proposals attributing the late Hellenistic settlements in the area to the earlier periods of the Hasmonean dynasty.

Three main conclusions emerge from the preceding presentation of numismatic evidence with relevance to the Hellenistic history of the 'Irāq al-Amīr and Wādī Ḥisbān regions. Of course, numismatic evidence by no means determines a precise date of human activities in the region. Despite this limitation, however, there is little doubt that coins are often of help in the study of Hellenistic history. First, the available numismatic evidence confirms the view that in the region of 'Irāq al-Amīr and its immediate vicinity, early Hellenistic coins minted under the reigns of Ptolemy kings were first in wide use during the third century BC and then were replaced by Seleucid bronze coins around 200 BC (Dentzer *et al.* 1983: 142). After that the use of Hasmonean coins, particularly those minted under the reign of Alexander Jannaeus, became common. Notice the virtual absence of mid and late second-century Seleucid and Hasmonean coins at 'Irāq al-Amīr and its immediate vicinity. This absence perhaps suggests a short interruption of human occupation and commercial activity in the region of the Wādī as-Sūr. Second, this gap in evidence stands in contrast with the sporadic appearance of late second-century Seleucid and Hasmonean coins at Umm Ḥadhar and Tall-Barakāt. Along with this evidence, recall the survey at as-Sūr, which produced one Hasmonean coin minted under John Hyrcanus I. The combination of evidence strongly indicates the Hasmonean occupation of the Umm Ḥadhar Plains and its surrounding ridges, possibly including the area of Khirbat as-Sūr, during the late second century BC. Third, of equal importance is the appearance of Alexander-Jannaeus coins in the regions of Nebo and Machaerus. This fact perhaps points to a substantial expansion of Hasmonean fortunes and occupation during the reign of Alexander Jannaeus in the region south of the Wādī Ḥisbān. It also implies that

the Hasmonean settlement in the vicinity of 'Irāq al-Amīr and the strip of land between the Dead Sea and the Mādabā Plains postdated that in the Umm Ḥadhar region by approximately 20 to 30 years.

Tobiads and Hasmoneans

The foregoing discussion on the pottery and coins seems to have turned up a division of the Hellenistic period into three phases in the regions from 'Irāq al-Amīr in the north to Mount Nebo in the south. The first of these, the third and early second centuries BC witnessed flourishing settlements, which consisted of cities, villages, military fortresses, and watchtowers. The ceramic analysis suggests that this phase very likely came to an end early in the second quarter of the second century BC. In the second phase, the majority of the settlements were abandoned, and this sudden decline continued through the third quarter of the second century BC. In the third phase, approximately half of the early Hellenistic settlements were reused, but they probably did not reach the degree of prosperity that their predecessors enjoyed. The last phase is dated to the end of the second century BC and the early first century BC.

In the authors' view, the historical context of the three archaeological phases is relatively well established by various historical accounts and recent studies. For the first phase, it is rather clear from historical sources that the early Hellenistic settlements in the regions of the Wādī as-Sūr and the Wādī al-Kafrayn were closely associated with the Tobiads at 'Irāq al-Amīr (cf. Avi-Yonah 1979; Gera 1990; Ji 1998b; 2001; Mazar 1957). In other words, what lies behind the substantial population and settlement in the region seems to be the political and economic stability under the Tobiad reign over the region. Further corroboration of this suggestion is furnished by the chronological correspondence between the interruption of Qaṣr al-'Abd's construction and the abrupt settlement decline in the region during the mid second century BC.

On the other hand, the background of the second settlement intensification seems to be the Hasmonean control of the region. Although we have to exercise caution in identifying all the settlers in the region with the Hasmoneans, it seems plausible that the region's second Hellenistic increase in settlement is related to the Hasmoneans who briefly took control of this region during the late Hellenistic period. One argument that can be raised against this view is the possible linkage between the settlements and the Nabateans. Historically and archaeologically, however, it surely takes more than one's lively imagination to conceive of the association of the settlements with the Nabateans, since excavations and surface explorations have yielded no strong connections between the two (Michtel 1992). More specifically, the

authors conducted a series of archaeological surveys in the region of 'Irāq al-Amīr and the Wādī al-Kafrayn and found no link between the Nabateans and the settlement intensification (Ji 1998a; Ji and Lee 1999). Likewise, according to the research in the Wādī Ḥisbān region, there is no direct evidence to show Nabatean activities at al-Maḥaṭṭa or in the Wādī Ḥisbān region during the late Hellenistic period (Ibach 1987). One empirical support linking the Nabateans and the late Hellenistic settlements involves two Nabatean coins; one Malichus II coin from Khirbat as-Sūr and one illegible Nabatean coin from Khirbat al-Maḥaṭṭa. Notice that in the region Nabatean coins are found very sporadically and this distribution has so far been restricted to the sites associated with regional highways, probably indicating that they came to as-Sūr and al-Maḥaṭṭa via commercial transactions during the early Roman period. The exception to this geographical generalization is 'Irāq al-Amīr which includes several Nabatean coins dated to the time of Aretas IV (Dentzer *et al.* 1983; Lapp 1983). Another possibility lies with the Jambrites and the Arabs, yet in the Wādī Ḥisbān region, their settlements were probably circumscribed by Mount Nebo and the Wādī Muhtariqa in the north (Milik 1980). We know of no other distinctive ethnic or tribal groups that can be related to the late Hellenistic sites in the given regions. Accordingly, in the absence of strong alternatives, we may associate the late Hellenistic settlement intensification with the Hasmoneans.

Since some studies of the Hellenistic history in Jordan have already presented textual and archaeological materials on the Tobiads in the regions under consideration, not much can be added in this paper (Gera 1990; Ji 1998b; 2001). Two clarifications, however, are in order in conjunction with the Tobiad history in the region. In view of all the evidence deduced from available data, the lead author (Ji 1998b; 2001) and Mazar (1957) proposed that the early Hellenistic settlements of the Tobiads had originated in the late Iron II and Persian settlements in the region. This view still remains tenable. Besides this confirmation, the present study also sheds new light on the termination of Tobiah's control over the region. The evidence adduced above leads to the view that Tobiah's reign of the region virtually came to an end when, or shortly after, Hyrcanus Tobiah died in the mid second century BC. Hence, the death of Hyrcanus Tobiah appears to have had a more profound impact on the history of the Tobiads than Gera (1990) suggested. Gera's claim that some of the Tobian Jews remained in the 'Irāq al-Amīr region after the death of Hyrcanus Tobiah may deserve some attention, since some of the Tobiah's settlements were repaired and reoccupied after a short period of abandonment. Yet, it should be noticed that this re-inhabitation likely occurred under the auspices of the Hasmoneans, not the Tobiads, and were smaller in size

than their predecessors. In this context, recall Goldstein's note (1976: 299) that neither Josephus nor the authors of *The Books of Maccabees* call the region of 'Irāq al-Amīr the territory of the Tobiads in their accounts about the Hasmonean rescue of Jews in Jordan or wars against the Arabs. The Jews related to the Tobiads were, instead, found in the plateau region (cf. *Mac* I 5: 1-68). To put it another way, after the death of Hyrcanus Tobiah, the majority of Tobian settlers seem to have moved to the new cities and villages that began to mushroom and flourish in the Transjordan plateau and the northern Jordan Valley. To be sure, this does not necessarily mean the total absence of Tobian Jews in the 'Irāq al-Amīr region. The authors of *The Books of Maccabees* posit that a small number of Tobian Jews remained in the area originally called Tobiah's land, i.e., the 'Irāq al-Amīr region, when Judas mounted his Transjordan campaign. Given the scarcity of late-second-century settlements along the Wādī as-Sūr and the Wādī al-Kafrayn, however, these remnants are likely to have engaged in animal herding rather than agriculture and centered around the city of Jazer in the upper stream of the Wādī as-Sūr.

On the other hand, in view of new evidence, the authors suggest that in the early Hellenistic period, as-Sūr and al-Maḥaṭṭa were probably the major military centers of the Tobiads. Beside the chronological and typological congruity in ceramic evidence, architectural remains of the two sites provide substantial support for this view. Both settlements have the defense walls consisting of medium to large undressed limestone blocks and measuring at least 2m in thickness. The two forts have large corner towers, two of which are still visible at as-Sūr and al-Maḥaṭṭa respectively. At intervals of about 30 to 50m between the large corner towers are smaller square towers. At both places, the course of the wall is largely determined by the topography of the area and by the requirements of the defense in time of war. The builders seemingly tried to expand the forts to the size the contour of the ridge on which the sites were located allowed. For this reason, the forts at al-Maḥaṭṭa and as-Sūr look somewhat irregular in shape. In addition, there are a number of buildings inside the forts, and these buildings appear to have been military barracks, given their large size and thick walls. Presumably, some of the structures were animal pens for cavalries. No specific section for small domestic houses and streets has as yet been identified on the surface. At both sites, the surrounding areas apparently do not provide good farm land, although there are some modern terraces on the eastern slope of as-Sūr. A suggestion is, then, that the non-military settlers associated with the forts were primarily tent-dwellers and lived in the vicinity of the forts rather than inside the forts. That is, there is no clear and direct evidence for large agricultural communities at as-Sūr and al-Maḥaṭṭa.

If the surface observation stands, the preceding suggestion then requires a minor revision of the previous view on the territory of the Tobiads. On the basis of archaeological evidence available at that time, the lead author (Ji 2001; see also Mazar 1957), has posited that during the early Hellenistic period Tobiah's primary habitation did not extend to the south beyond the hilly ranges along the Wādī al-Kafrayn. In light of new data from al-Maḥaṭṭa, however, Tobiah's territory seems to have been slightly larger than previously suggested as it included al-Maḥaṭṭa and its vicinity south of the Wādī al-Kafrayn. Geographically, Tobiah's territory is now likely delimited on the south by the Wādī Muhtariqa and Mount Nebo, since the southern neighbors of this region appear to have belonged to the Jambrites and the Arabs. We should note, however, that the present analysis shows a heavy concentration of early Hellenistic sites only in the valleys along the Wādī as-Sīr and the Wādī al-Kafrayn, not in the Wādī Ḥisbān region. Recall that large village-type settlements are noticeably clustered along the valleys, such as 'Irāq al-Amīr, al-Bardhūn, Abu-'Unayzah, aṣ-Ṣuwwān, and Al-Farāwīt. In the vicinity of these sites are small to medium fortresses and watchtowers, including al-Musattarah, Fajīra, and Umm Ḥadhar South. By contrast, some early Hellenistic sherds may be found at Tall Ḥisbān, but this site apparently lacks architectural remains dated to the period (Mitchell 1992). This also stands for the ridge between the Wādī Ḥisbān and the Wādī Muhtariqa. In this region, according to the Ḥisbān survey, sherds of Hellenistic period come from only two sites, i.e., al-Maḥaṭṭa and 'Ayn Sumia (Ibach 1987). Moreover, al-Maḥaṭṭa was a military garrison, not a population center. Put together, the Wādī Ḥisbān region was very likely to have been less densely populated than the 'Irāq al-Amīr region during the early Hellenistic period, although it was in the hands of the Tobiads along with the 'Irāq al-Amīr region.

Finally, let us address the Hasmonean activities in the region east of the Jordan River. Hasmonean influence in the region had already begun to rise in 163 BC when Judas Maccabeus conducted his campaign in Transjordan. The primary purpose of this campaign was to save Jews in the region, including the Tobiads, from the Arabs, and the campaign by Judas first centered on Jazer and its vicinity (cf. *Mac I* 5: 6-68; *Mac II* 12: 1-45). Given that Jazer is commonly identified with Khirbat as-Sīr near the head of the Wādī as-Sīr, Judas would have proceeded to Jazer by way of the 'Irāq al-Amīr region, most likely along the ancient route from the Umm Ḥadhar region to Khirbat as-Sīr via Rujm Klal and Khirbat as-Sūr (Ji 1998a; 1998b; Kasher 1988: 28). Accordingly, it is not improbable that the 'Irāq al-Amīr region was subdued by the Hasmoneans during the early days of Judas Maccabeus. If so, the Hasmoneans appear to have regained

Tobiah's estate and its territory in the region of 'Irāq al-Amīr within one or two decades after the death of Hyrcanus Tobiah. That is, the 'Irāq al-Amīr region after Hyrcanus' death seems to have passed directly into Hasmonean hands without a long-term break.

Notice, however, that despite Judas' campaign to the 'Irāq al-Amīr region, there is no textual and archaeological evidence of building projects by the early Hasmonean leaders in the region such as Judas and Jonathan. This suggestion that the early Hasmonean rulers conducted no building projects in the region rests on several observations. First, in *The First Book of Maccabees* (5: 6-8), Judas returned to Judea immediately after his victory at Jazer, and there are no textual records of rebuilding of cities and villages in the region. Second, we should remember that Jonathan did not flee eastward into Transjordan when the Bacchides sought to kill him (*Mac I* 9: 32-73); if the 'Irāq al-Amīr region was under Hasmonean control, why did he not seek his refuge in the region which is farther away from the hands of Bacchides than the desert of Tekoa? Should the Hasmoneans have possessed military forts in the 'Irāq al-Amīr, it is hard, if not impossible, to explain why Jonathan and his army went to the marshes of the Jordan, not to 'Irāq al-Amīr or the forts in its vicinity, for a hiding place after they took their revenge against the Jambrites. It is also indeed unlikely that the 'Irāq al-Amīr region was under Jonathan's firm control during the period when his fortunes substantially declined in Judea. Third, Hasmonean rule over Palestine formally began no earlier than 147 BC only after Jonathan was appointed as high-priest and ruler of the Judea, and his rule was extended over the *nomes* of Lydda, Haramatha, and Apharaema (Avi-Yonah 1979: 55). It is reasonable to assume that the architectural activities of the Hasmoneans east of the Jordan River were initiated no earlier than this event. Fourth, this view is apparently in accord with the archaeological evidence presented above, showing a short occupational hiatus in the region during the second half of the second century BC. All these facts seem to indicate that Hasmonean rule over the 'Irāq al-Amīr region was not solidly established in the early days of the Hasmonean revolt, even though the political condition of the region was moving in that direction (Goldstein 1976: 380-81).

To rephrase, presumably, the 'Irāq al-Amīr region was *de facto* incorporated into the realm of the Hasmoneans during Judas' campaign to Jazer, yet it was no earlier than the last days of Jonathan's rule or later that the Hasmoneans formally began to exercise their authority in the region. Accordingly, the resettlement of the region appears most likely to have occurred later than Jonathan's rule, although it is possible that some people seasonally stopped by at the village ruins of al-Farāwīt and al-Bardhūn to graze animals. Unfortunately, however, the

paucity of textual evidence prevents us from further discussion of this matter. An answer to this question may come from the Wādī Ḥisbān region.

The reign of John Hyrcanus I saw a marked increase of the Hasmonean control of the Transjordan plateau as he succeeded in capturing the western part of the Mādabā Plains (Mitchel 1992). The first conquest of John Hyrcanus I was the capture of the cities of Mādabā and Samaga. This fact may imply that the Wādī Ḥisbān region was firmly annexed to the Hasmonean kingdom during the late second century BC and Tall Ḥisbān was already inside the Hasmonean domain when Hyrcanus I mounted his campaign against the Mādabā Plains (Antiquities 13: 9.1). Hence, not surprisingly, Mitchel (1992: 34) proposes that Tall Ḥisbān and its vicinity were under Hasmonean rule during the mid and late second century BC. In line with this view, Avi-Yonah (1979: 57) also suggests that, “at the beginning of Hyrcanus’ reign the Hasmoneans already had a bridge-head across the Jordan,” and that Hasmonean rule over the west of Ḥisbān “must have been established de facto for some time before it was formally confirmed.” Interestingly enough, however, there is no textual evidence to show that the Hasmoneans made efforts to conquer the region west of Tall Ḥisbān during the mid second century BC. In fact, historical sources do not mention any military fighting in the region between Ḥisbān and the Jordan Valley (Avi-Yonah 1979: 57). In addition, the accounts of the war against Mādabā and Samaga do not mention Heshbon; it appears later in the list of Moabite cities held by Alexander Jannaeus.

In the authors’ view, textual evidence leads to an explanation different from the view of Avi-Yonah and Mitchel; the Wādī Ḥisbān region was not firmly subject to the authority of the Hasmoneans during the period of Jonathan and Simon, and the Hasmonean building activities postdated John Hyrcanus I’s campaign to the Mādabā Plains. The keys to this suggestion are fourfold. First, the Wādī Ḥisbān region was not heavily inhabited by Jews. This fact contrasts with the ‘Irāq al-Amīr region that was the center of the Jewish settlements in Transjordan. In light of *The Books of Maccabees* and Josephus, indeed, there is no hint that remnants of the Tobiads or Jews were in the Wādī Ḥisbān region. If so, given that political propaganda for the liberation of Jews played an important role during the early days of the Hasmonean revolt, the Wādī Ḥisbān region very likely lay outside Hasmonean’s immediate concern. It is then hardly problematic to assume that the Hasmoneans first centered their efforts on the ‘Irāq al-Amīr region and the plateau rather than the Wādī Ḥisbān region.

Second, the absence of Heshbon in the episode of John Hyrcanus I’s campaign to Mādabā and Samaga may merely reflect the absence of settlements at Heshbon before and during his reign. Recall that when Jonathan took

revenge on the Jambrites at Mādabā, his army “emerged from ambush” rather than marching from forts or cities in the Wādī Ḥisbān region to attack the Jambrites. This fact contrasts sharply with the movement of the Jambrites who escorted the bride from Nadabath, presumably an Aramaic form of the name of Nebo south of the Wādī Ḥisbān (*Mac. I* 9: 32-42; Goldstein 1976: 384-85; cf. Milik 1980). Also notice that no earlier Hasmonean victory involves the Wādī Ḥisbān and Nebo, and the bride’s father was possibly an Arab noble from Mā’in, modern Mā’in some 7km southwest of Mādabā. Such being the case, we guess that the southern neighbors of the Wādī Ḥisbān belonged to the Jambrites and the Arabs, and the Hasmonean rule over the Wādī Ḥisbān was not established during the early Hasmonean period.

Third, we do not have any evidence to show that Jonathan’s revenge at Mādabā led to Hasmoneans’ subsequent large-scale military victory over the Jambrites and the local Arabs in the regions of Nebo and the Wādī Zarqā-Mā’in. Instead, there was likely continuous struggle and tension between the Hasmoneans and local Arabs over the region, even after Jonathan’s battle against the Jambrites at Mādabā.

Finally, in this context, it is worth revisiting historical evidence showing that Alexander Jannaeus built the fort at Machaerus (Makāwir) at beginning of the first century BC (Kasher 1988: 87). Combined with the absolute absence of historical records on the region between Mādabā and the Jordan Valley during the reigns of Jonathan and John Hyrcanus I, this fortification of Machaerus may provide reasonable grounds for assuming that the Hellenistic settlements at Tall Ḥisbān and in the region of al-Maḥaṭṭa are attributable to the reign of Alexander Jannaeus. Strategically located on the south of the Wādī Zarqā-Mā’in, the fortress at Machaerus was apparently designed to defend the southern border of the Hasmonean kingdom in addition to serving as a desert hiding place for the Hasmonean ruler (cf. *War* 7.172). With this aim in view, Alexander Jannaeus may have created a chain of fortresses along this southeastern border, and the fort at Tall Ḥisbān was probably founded as a part of this fortification system. This was also possibly the case for Khirbat al-Maḥaṭṭa. That is, the fortification of the southeastern border of the Hasmonean state appears to have taken place after Alexander Jannaeus’ war against the Nabateans at the beginning of the first century BC. Alexander Jannaeus likely constructed forts at Makāwir, Hisban, al-Maḥaṭṭa in order to secure his territory after the conquest of the region. Of course, it is also possible that Jannaeus built military forts in the region right before his campaign against the Nabateans in order to use them as a base for the war. In either scenario, the outset of the Hasmonean building projects in the Wādī Ḥisbān region began later than the popular scholarly view. In line with this suggestion is Jos-

ephus' mention that Aristobulus II, Alexander Jannaeus' successor, possessed 22 strongholds, most of which were built during his father's reign (Avi-Yonah 1979: 73-74). The archaeological records of Alexander Jannaeus clearly suggest that he devoted his time to territorial expansion and defense of the kingdom. In Palestine and Judea, large building projects took place under the auspices of Alexander Jannaeus, and many of them were defensive in nature (Berlin 1997: 40-41). As in Judea, Alexander Jannaeus probably devoted his resources to the developments of a defense system along the southeastern border of his Transjordan territory. If such is the case, it is likely that the Wādī Ḥisbān region became, in effect, Hasmonean during the period of Alexander Jannaeus, and the forts at Makāwir, Hisban, and al-Maḥaṭṭa constituted part of this defense system. The present pottery and coin analysis also lends strong support for the dating of these sites to the reign of Alexander Jannaeus.

To summarize, the Wādī Ḥisbān region was likely first subdued to the Hasmoneans during or after Jonathan's campaign against the Jambrites, slightly later than the 'Irāq al-Amīr region. Like the 'Irāq al-Amīr region, however, despite this military victory, the early Hasmonean leaders had neither immediate political incentives nor military strength to formally annex the region into their kingdom and to develop a defense system in this marginal territory. The Wādī Ḥisbān region appears to have formally been joined into the Hasmonean territory by John Hyrcanus I. Notwithstanding, John Hyrcanus I probably made no serious attempt to build permanent Jewish settlements and fortresses in the region. It was most likely during the rule of Alexander Jannaeus or near the end of the reign of John Hyrcanus I that the Hasmoneans founded forts in the region. This military achievement was to secure the economic benefits accruing from the control of the King's Highway as well as to defend the kingdom from its Arab neighbors beyond the southeastern border. If so, the Hellenistic fort at Tall Ḥisbān seems to be roughly contemporaneous with that at Machaerus. Khirbat al-Maḥaṭṭa was also possibly rebuilt around this time, if it was ever used in the late Hellenistic period.

In brief, then, the Hasmonean rule over the regions of 'Irāq al-Amīr and the Wādī Ḥisbān underwent three stages of development. First, in the days of Judas and Jonathan, the Hasmoneans efforts focused on defending the remnants of the Tobiads in the region and expanding their domains to the east. These efforts seem to have centered more on the 'Irāq al-Amīr region than on the Wādī Ḥisbān region. Second, during the reign of John Hyrcanus I, the two regions were formally incorporated into the Hasmonean domain, but this period failed to witness any substantial increase in population and settlement in the regions. One exception to this generalization is the Umm Ḥadhar Plains. Should there be any increase outside of

the Umm Ḥadhar Plains, it must have been modest and restricted to a small number of sites in the 'Irāq al-Amīr and Wādī al-Kafrayn regions. Third, it was probably Alexander Jannaeus who rebuilt villages and constructed a chain of fortresses in the 'Irāq al-Amīr and the Wādī Ḥisbān regions in order to keep the country under control. Finally, this Hasmonean rule over these regions continued until the mid first century BC when the Romans appeared in Palestine and Jordan.

Conclusion

Because of the recent intensive archaeological surveys and soundings, reasonably abundant information is available regarding the Hellenistic settlements in the regions of the 'Irāq al-Amīr and the Wādī Ḥisbān. The primary purposes of this paper were to integrate the results of the recent archaeological research in the regions and to make some tentative historical observations of their importance for our knowledge of the Tobiads and the Hasmoneans in Jordan during the Hellenistic period. According to the present study, the regions of the Wādī as-Sīr, the Wādī al-Kafrayn, and the Wādī Ḥisbān witnessed a flourishing population during the early Hellenistic period, and this proliferation seems to have been associated with the dominance of the Tobiads in the regions. This settlement intensification, which included the construction of Qaṣr al-'Abd, consists of a variety of settlements such as large villages, massive forts, small fortresses, and watchtowers. A decrease in settled population came in the mid second century BC, when the Tobiah's settlements at Qaṣr al-'Abd and 'Irāq al-Amīr collapsed with the death of Hyrcanus Tobiah. A resurgence in settlement occurred in the late second or the early first century BC with the establishment of Hasmonean dominance over the regions of 'Irāq al-Amīr and the Wādī Ḥisbān, and probably reached its peak under the auspices of Alexander Jannaeus. This late Hellenistic increase appears to have first taken place in the Umm Ḥadhar Plains late in the reign of John Hyrcanus I, and spread to the hills and village sites along the Wādī as-Sīr and the Wādī al-Kafrayn during the period of Alexander Jannaeus. At the same time, the large forts were built at Machaerus and Tall Ḥisbān. The geographical boundary of this first-century Hasmonean settlement, thus, seems to have been larger than that of the Tobiads in the early Hellenistic period, as the region between the Wādī Ḥisbān and Machaerus was incorporated into the Hasmonean state during this period.

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