

surveyed. The survey was completed at the point ca 5 km south of Tuwaneh, in the area of Jabal Daba; i.e. ca 21 km south from the starting point. All sites located in the distance of ca 100 meters on both sides of the road were described, photographed and surface material (including lithics) collected. In many places the width of the road is clearly marked by its curbstones, being ca 5.90-6.20 m wide in total. The central ridge line and/or the original pavement, consisting of flat basalt or limestone boulders, is often well-preserved too. In total, 42 sites have been recorded. Besides Tuwaneh and three larger forts, the majority (14) were small structures (watchtowers). Also, 49 milestones were recorded, in association with 21 shaft fragments. Most of the inscriptions were badly weathered so as to be illegible. An interesting find was a painted milestone, dated to Constantine, thus probably the latest in the whole area. The pottery collected is predominantly Nabataean through Late Byzantine. Numerous sherds date to the first century A.D., indicating that this route was already used prior to the construction of the *Via Nova* (i.e. well before A.D.106-114). The Late Roman and Early Byzantine periods are the best represented. Although Late Byzantine sherds were also found, their frequency seems to decrease with the increasing distance away from the main settlement of the entire area (Tuwaneh).

The results of the survey of Tuwaneh and the *Via Nova Traiana* in the area gener-

ally support the author's prior theoretical assumptions. The area had experienced a relative prosperity during the Nabataean-Late Roman periods (First century B.C.-late third century A.D.), associated with an intensive long-distance commercial traffic, and reflected in the urbanistic growth of Tuwaneh, evidence of imports, and the well-maintained and guarded road system. The Early Byzantine period (fourth-fifth century) was also marked by well-developed settlement patterns, reflecting the unparalleled expansion into marginal lands and intensive agricultural production as well as the continuity of the interregional trade. However, during the later Byzantine period (fifth-early seventh century A.D.), southern Jordan experienced economic decline marked by a gradual decline in urbanism, growing isolation of settlement clusters, the abandonment of military infrastructure, and a gradual disappearance of interregional means of communication. Probably, some sections of Trajan's Road had become defunct, while the others (closer to the still existing larger settlements, like Tuwaneh) were still used in traffic, maintained, and guarded by attendant military structures. Future studies to be conducted by the author on the site and in the environs of Tuwaneh should further strengthen these conclusions.

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EDH-DHRA' SURVEY 1992

An archaeological survey in Ghor edh-Dhrâ' (Fig. 1) took place from the 29th of February until the 10th of March 1992.¹ The survey covered the area along Wâdî edh-Dhrâ' as far north as the mouth of Wâdî el-Karak into the plain. Within this

survey the main objective was the investigation of the Monolithic Pillar Site at edh-Dhrâ'.²

The Monolithic Pillar Site (Fig. 2)

The Monolithic Pillar Site (PG

1. The survey was conducted in cooperation with Mr. Uwe Engler, Archaeologist, Heidelberg, Germany.
2. Archaeological work in edh-Dhrâ' has earlier taken place at the remains from the Pottery Neolithic A period. This was conducted by C.-M. Bennett.

See C.-M. Bennett, 'Soundings at Dhra', Jordan', *Levant* 12 (1980), p. 30-39; and T. D. Raikes, 'Notes on some Neolithic and later Sites in Wadi Araba and the Dead Sea Valley', *Levant* 12 (1980), p. 56-60.

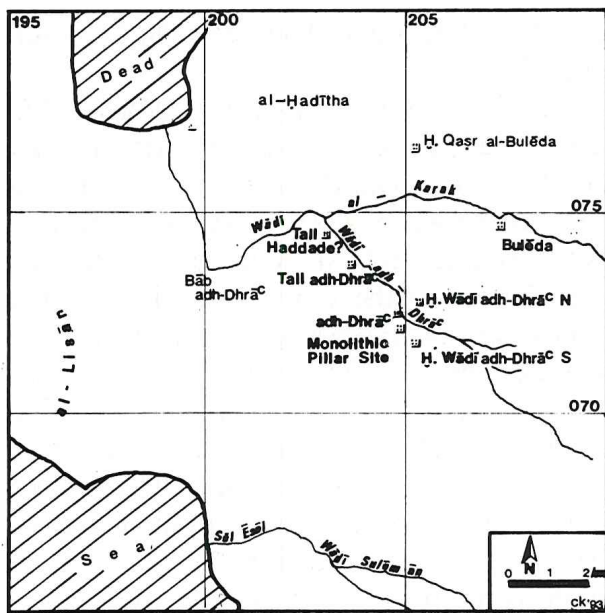


Fig. 1. The Ghor edh-Dhrâ' survey area.

2049:0721) lies 500 m south of the southern bank of Wādī edh-Dhrâ' on a narrow ridge that steeply slopes to the north and south. The ancient architectural remains at this site consist of a Standing Stone Monument, an almost 400 m long wall and some tumuli that are built into the wall or nearby.

The Standing Stone Monument (Fig. 3) is a flat and broad monolith that is erected in an artificial terrace on the slope of the hillside. The stone is only roughly worked.

The base of the monument is 3.30 m wide and 1.00 m broad. The upper edge of the upstanding monolith reduces to a length of 1.70 m that stands 2.90 m above surface. The top of the stela finishes even. The monument has a massy appearance from the western (front ?) side.

The monolith from local limestone is extremely weathered especially on its western side. A flat groove on top of the monolith (a natural result of weathering?) allows the drainage of rain and leads to the western side of the monument. A 0.50 m wide vestige of silts from rain water leads from the top to the bottom of the stone.

So far nothing can be said about the depth of the foundation of the monolithic stela. The big size of the monument suggests that it has a deep and massive foundation under its present surface.

Facing the hill side a semicircular stone structure is pieced on to the monolith. Most probably these rather big and well cut boulders served as a structure in connection with a later burial.

The artificial terrace in which the stone monument is erected is presumably rectangular. Its long side facing west is still visible in the area. It measures 9.00 - 10.00 m

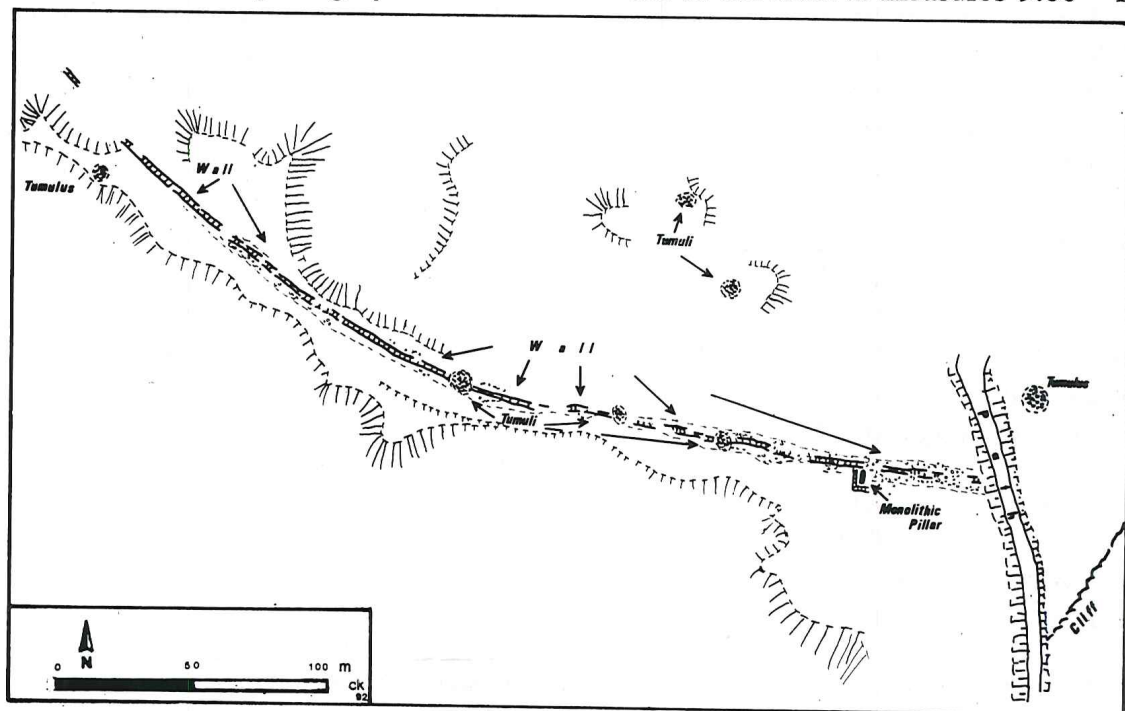


Fig. 2. The Monolithic Pillar Site and the wall (sketch).

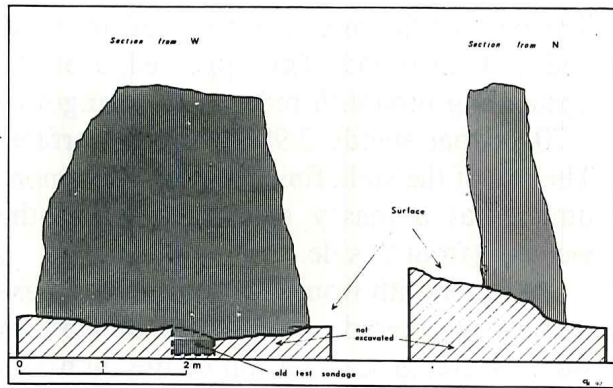


Fig. 3. The standing stone monument at edh-Dhrâ'.

and has a clear height of 0.70 m. The length of the southern side wall is not, yet, determinable due to the heavy stone tumble that covers most of the back side of the installation.

The sharding at the monolithic pillar site and in the vicinity of it produced a small amount of pottery dating into the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age. Due to the heavy amount of stone tumble in this area it seems likely that better and larger quantities of sherds are covered under the tumble.

The Standing Stone was probably an open air place of cultic purpose, but enclosed by some architectural features.

A wall, almost 400 m long and 1.50 - 2.00 m broad runs down the hillside from east to west. The alignment passes the Monolithic Pillar on its northern side. The wall is well preserved; sometimes standing up to five courses above surface. The function of this wall in antiquity is not, yet, certain. Two ideas are suggested: the wall is what remains of an encircling wall for the area between the Monolithic Pillar Site and Wâdî edh-Dhrâ'. Alternatively the remains of this wall may constitute the foundations of a staircase, as some sort of procession way up to the Standing Stone Monument.

The Fortifications Above edh-Dhrâ'

Further exploration of the region produced the recognition of two fortifications above edh-Dhrâ': Khirbet Wâdî edh-Dhrâ'

North and Khirbet Wâdî edh-Dhrâ' South (see Fig. 1).³

Khirbet Wâdî edh-Dhrâ' North (PG 2055:0727) towers above the northern bank of Wâdî edh-Dhrâ'. A natural passage in the hill between 4.00 - 5.00 m wide that was extended into a ramp leads from the area below to the top of the hill. In the upper part this rampart ends at a bastion. A passage into the fortification leads around the northern side of this bastion. The strongly fortified summit of the hill is about 100 m long and 30 m wide. The terrain gently slopes from north to south. The eastern side of the fortification is protected by a high rising rock barrier. Gaps in this natural rock barrier are carefully sealed with stone boulders. The inside of the fortification is covered with massive stone tumble. Few walls can be detected under the tumble. For all that some walls are still preserved in its upper courses above foundation and suggest the ancient occupation of the inside of the fortification. Due to the stone tumble not much pottery is found on the surface.

Another strongly fortified rocky and sloping plateau, Khirbet Wâdî edh-Dhrâ' South (PG 2053:0717), towers above edh-Dhrâ'. This fortification is horseshoe shaped, 130 m in length and about 80 m in width. The open narrow northern side of this bulwark is defended by a cliff that serves as a natural glacis. The outer walls of the fortification have an average width of 1.70 m. The walls measure a clear height of 1.30 - 2.00 m above surface. Mainly the eastern and southern angle inside this fortification had been occupied in antiquity. Large areas within the enclosure must have remained unoccupied.

It is, yet, too early to make definite statements about the date of the construction of these strongholds. The evidence from the collected surface pottery sherds from both fortifications suggests a construction in the Early Bronze Age.

3. These structures are briefly mentioned in R. G. Khouri, *The Antiquities of the Jordan Rift Valley*, Amman (1988), p. 97.

*Survey in the Ghor edh-Dhrâ' Region (Fig. 1)*⁴

The survey in Ghor edh-Dhrâ' focused on the archaeological relics along the banks of the Wâdî edh-Dhrâ' and covered the area up north to the southern bank of Wâdî el-Karak. Altogether 24 different sites with cultural remains were documented during the survey.

The ruin of Tell edh-Dhrâ' (PG 2037:0738), just south of Wâdî edh-Dhrâ' and west of the modern road from Karak into the Southern Ghors, produced cultural remains, mainly pottery, from the (Early) Iron Age. A. Musil⁴ and N. Glueck⁵ have noticed this ruin, but did not observe it. Further west of Tell edh-Dhrâ' and also south of Wâdî edh-Dhrâ', very near to the confluence of the Widyân el-Karak and edh-Dhrâ', another ruin Tell Haddade (PG 2030:0745) was recognized. This site produced pottery from the Early Bronze Age, Middle Bronze Age and the Iron Age. Square walls of different sizes were detected on the surface.

One more site that was investigated shall only be mentioned: Bulêda (PG 2073:0748). The surface pottery collected at this site that lies on the southern bank of the mouth of Wâdî el-Karak into the Ghor dates this ruin into the Early Bronze Age II and III. The extensive archaeological relics there suggest it to be a major Early Bronze Age II/III city in the Southern Ghors. A necropolis that belongs to the EB city ruin of Bulêda was located to the southwest of the city on both sides of a small side wâdî into

Wâdî el-Karak.

Moreover a large number of grave tumuli have been documented.

Future work in edh-Dhrâ' will focus on excavations at the Standing Stone Monument.⁶ The subsequent topographical and archaeological survey of the fortifications above Wâdî edh-Dhrâ' shall give more evidence of the kind and the date of construction of these fortifications. Archaeological work is planned in Bulêda as well.

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4. A. Musil, *Arabia Petraea*, Bd. 1 *Moab*, Hildesheim, ... (1989 Reprint), p. 67.

5. N. Glueck, *EEP 2*, *AASOR 15* (1935), p. 5.

6. A first season of excavations at the Monolithic Pillar Site has already been carried out in November 1992. See forthcoming report.