

ER-RUMMAN SURVEY 1985

by
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From May 21 to June 18, 1985, an archaeological survey was conducted by the authors in the immediate vicinity of er-Rumman in conjunction with the second season of excavations directed by Dr. Zeidan Kafafi at the Pottery Neolithic and Early Bronze Age site of Abu Thawwab which lies one kilometre east of er-Rumman at the western foot of Jabal Abu Thawwab by the spring of 'Ain Ras el-Ma' (Palestine Grid 2299/1746, Site 1/2. See Site Index and Fig. 1). The specific objective of the survey was to check for additional Pottery Neolithic occupation in the immediate vicinity of this site. Evidence of this period has rarely been found in Jordan, yet it has been reported from the nearby village of as-Salihi (2283/1707, Site 25; Kirkbride 1959: 52-54) as well as the Abu Thawwab site itself (Gilet 1983; Kafafi 1985: 34, 36). It was therefore postulated there should be additional concentrations of the same period at other points in the environmental zone within which these two sites are found. The survey was successful in that several such sites were discovered.

Er-Rumman (2288/1747, Site 2/2), 'Ain Ras el-Ma' and the neighbouring villages lie along the Amman-Jarash road three to six kilometres south of Wadi ez-Zarqa at elevations of 450 to 550 m. on shelves or shoulders of land with numerous fresh-water springs. These relatively gentle slopes contrast sharply with the steeper terrain above and below. The shoulderlands have the appearance of natural terraces, but if this is their origin, they are much eroded. Rounded heights rise above 700 m. immediately to the east (Zahret Abu Thawwab 2313/1747, Site 3/1; Jabal et-Tuweim 2311/1733, Site 4) and above 800 m. to the south (Jabal Shubeil 2301/1716, Site 7/2). These have little soil cover. Sparse remnants of oak forest dot the eastern heights. Pines have been planted on Jabal Abu Thawwab and the hills to the south. The rounded or level hilltops sup-

port wheat cultivation. Below the shoulderland, the landscape is deeply dissected due to the downcutting of the ez-Zarqa River. Immediately below the settled areas, the tributaries, as in Wadi er-Rumman, have cut narrow chasms and produced waterfalls for which, for example, the neighbouring town of Rumeimin (5 km. SW) has been named. Crops of wheat are grown on every relatively level portion of the escarpment. The deepest, most accessible, and best-watered soil is on the shoulderland and terrace areas. Here wheat is planted, and garden crops near the springs. Irrigation canals carry water from the springs of es-Salihi and 'Ain Ras el-Ma' to irrigated areas more than one kilometre north of each of these springs. The survey shows that irrigation of these specific fields has a long history. Otherwise, crops depending on rainfall, almost entirely wheat, are planted on every conceivable slope. The rockier ground above, around the modern villages, is given over more and more to olive groves. Far below, the river terraces at the bottom of Wadi ez-Zarqa below 200 m. (2332/1806, Site 19) and up to 250 m. AMSL in Wadi er-Rumman (2268/1728, Site 14) have been levelled for irrigation and given over to garden crops, sometimes with climate control (plastic huts). Within the past five years many of the steepest slopes between the two main terrace levels have been artificially terraced by means of heavy machinery. Still, most of the survey area remains barren and offers no hope of archaeological finds because it is so steep.

Given this steep terrain, the aims of the survey and the limited time available for fieldwork, the survey concentrated on the natural terrace or shoulder areas which form a continuous series at the elevation of 'Ain Ras el-Ma' and er-Rumman, following the contour lines for approximately 1.5 km. upstream and 2.5 km. downstream on Wadi er-Rumman and connected wadis. In

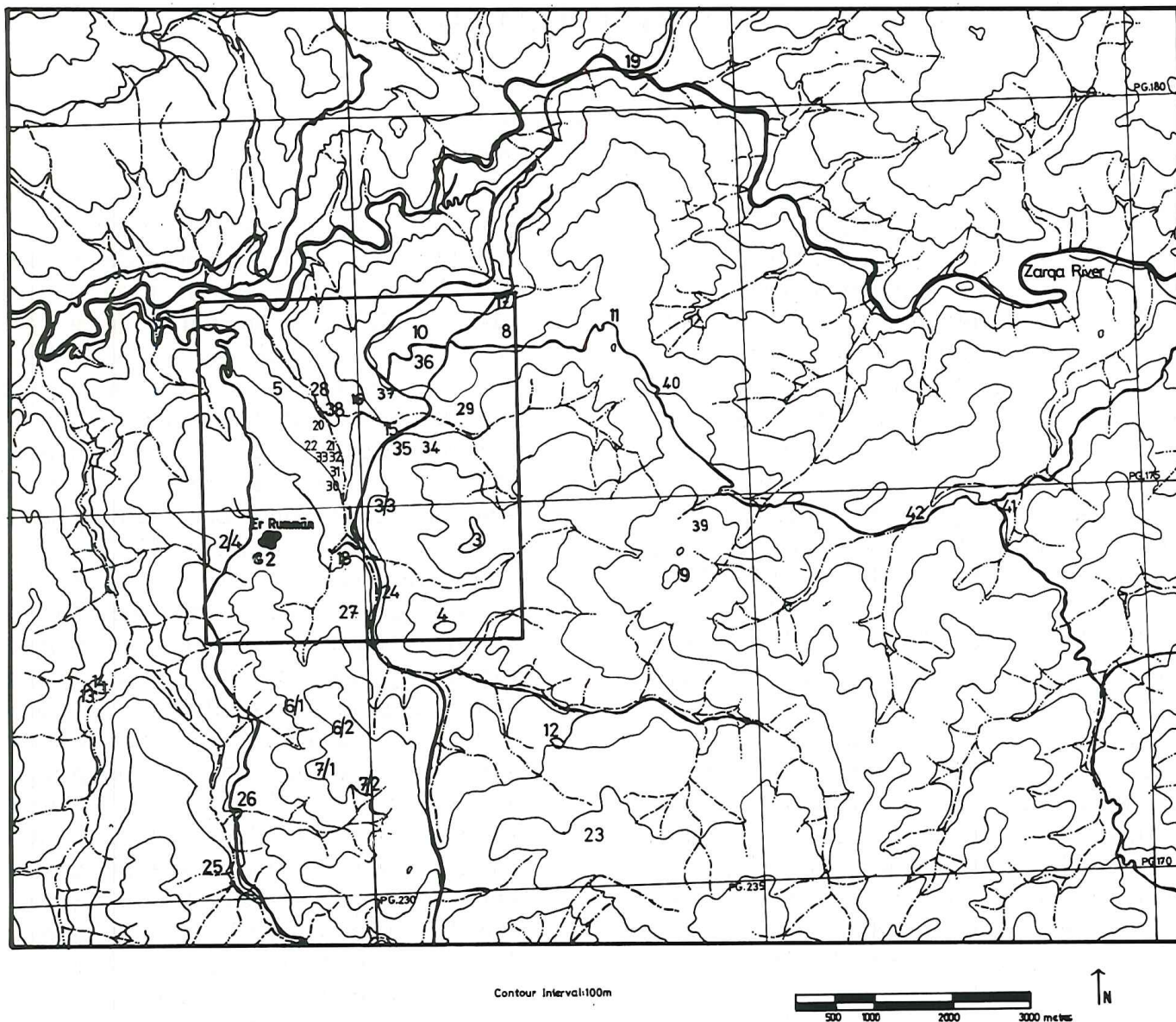


Fig. 1: Map of survey area showing er-Rumman and site numbers.

these areas, the team, usually four, walked transects 50 m. apart. This intensity of coverage was required because the sites of the target period were expected to be small scatter areas. Outside the area of intensive survey, a more general survey covered only selected segments of the landscape and known or possible sites. Wadi terraces and slopes at various levels were chosen to represent the zones of topography and land use described above. In addition, sites noted on air photographs, mentioned by local informants, or in earlier reports were investigated. The farthest points covered in this more general survey were the heights above es-Salihi on the southwest, el-'Udhma (2332/1709, Site 23) on the southeast, terraces on the west bank of Wadi Rumeinin on the west, bottom terraces of

the River Zarqa on the north, and Masarra (2383/1747, Site 41) east of el-'Aluk (2372/1747) on the east. For Mursa' (2327/1720, Site 12) and the highland northeast of Mursa' (Jibal Isneima/Sanama/Suneima 2344/1745+SE, Site 9) we had information from earlier reconnaissance (Z. Kafafi, unpublished ms). Some sites were covered only by transects, but on twelve sites, in addition to or instead of transects, total collections were taken from measured areas of 25 m², 100 m², or larger areas. These were sometimes set down at random, sometimes in relation to architectural features, otherwise to distinguish possible divisions of a site. These collections were treated quantitatively, whereas those from the transects received only period designations.

The periods of occupation recognized from the survey run from the Middle Palaeolithic to the present. A Middle Palaeolithic site was identified at 'Ain Umm Rabi' II (2302/1757, Site 15/4). Tools showing Middle Palaeolithic activity were also found on the low wadi terrace immediately upstream from 'Ain Ras el-Ma' at the point of discharge from 'Ain Şafşafa (2302/1737, Site 24). Intensive survey of the rocky shoulders at a lower level (230/177, Site 16) where chert is particularly abundant revealed no more than an occasional presence in this and later stone age periods. It is surprising that we have little possible evidence for the Pre-Pottery Neolithic B period which has been noted elsewhere in this region at similar points in the terrain, also near springs (Gordon and Villiers 1983: 285-288). Only one occurrence has yet been confirmed, at 'Ain Umm Rabi' I (2304/1758, Site 15/1), but it is uncertain whether this is the original context, i.e. the true site position.

A remarkably high density of Pottery Neolithic material was found in the area of intensive survey. Beginning from the Abu Thawwab site and following the east rim of Wadi er-Rumman, we note a southern extension of intensive occupation continuing from 'Ain Ras el-Ma' southward beyond 'Ain Şafşafa for about one kilometre. Other possible villages are associated with the next two sets of springs to the northeast, first at 'Ain el-Karm/'Ain Umm Rabi' (2300/1760, Site 15/2) and then near 'Ain Bahram/'Ain el-Bayad (2310/1763, Site 29). Three kilometres to the northeast of 'Ain Ras el-Ma', just east and northeast of the modern village of el-Maştaba (2309/1771, Site 36) the spring of 'Ain Ghathyan'¹ (2319/1774, Site 17) supported a Neolithic-Chalcolithic village of at least 6300 m² and probably a full hectare or more. This covers a broad rise extending northwest from the spring. Packed plaster floors consistent with the Neolithic date are weathering out all along the eastern and northern fringes of the site. On the opposite, west bank of the wadi, farther

extensions were found at Dibba es-Samra' (Umm el-Basatin I, 2297/1753, Site 31) and at Ḥauḍ Umm el-Jiḥash (2292/1758, Site 22). A Neolithic presence noted at 'Ain er-Rumman carries the series around into Wadi Rumeimin. Clearly the settlements were closely spaced and each was attached to a spring.

No site has been precisely dated to the Chalcolithic period proper. It should be understood, however, that it is often difficult to distinguish the common-ware sherds of the Late Neolithic, Chalcolithic and Early Bronze I periods in this region (Gustavson-Gaube 1985: 49-52). Sites noted below could have occupation extending back into the Chalcolithic. Thirty-one sites or parts of sites, i.e. most of those surveyed, appear to have been occupied during the Proto-Urban or transitional phase from the Late Chalcolithic into the Early Bronze I phase. Of these sites, seven can definitely be classified as villages:

Site	Coordinates	No.
Abu Thawwab	2311/1749	1
'Ain el-Karm II	2300/1760	15/2
'Ain Ghathyan	2319/1774	17
Ḥauḍ Umm Sahrij II	230 /177	37/3
Umm el-Basatin I and II	2297/1753	31 & 32
Ḥauḍ Umm Jiḥash II	2292/1758	22

One site of this period qualifies as a town. On Jabal et-Tuweim, the ruins locally known as et-Tell (Site 4) are clearly visible on air photographs. An outer and an inner enclosure can be distinguished. Samples taken at varied points show that the outer enclosure was first occupied during this period. This comprises an area of approximately 2.4 hectares. Thus a hierarchy of sites developed during this period. This remarkable proliferation of settlements corresponds to a similar florescence noted in the lower Zarqa Valley (Gordon 1984: 133) and on the north slopes of Wadi ez-Zarqa opposite the present survey area toward Jarash (Hanbury-Tenison (n.d.).

It is odd that the Early Bronze II-III

1. The name 'Ain 'Atban, given on the 1:10,000 Zarqa Basin maps of the Jordan Valley Author-

ity, is a mistake which clearly arose from imprecise vowel pointing of the Arabic name.

phases, a period of high population in Jordan, are relatively poorly represented in this survey area except at et-Tell, whereas two sites show at least a presence in the Early Bronze IV to Middle Bronze I phases (Umm el-Basatin II, Site 32; Wadi Dulani I, Site 34/1), a period of low population in Jordan generally. The fortified area of et-Tell (Jabal et-Tuweim, Site 4) continued in use during the Middle Bronze Age. The Middle Bronze II and Late Bronze Age are, not surprisingly, poorly represented. Evidence of a hamlet of the MB II phase was found at Abu Zibneh on Wadi ed-Dulani (2304/1757, Site 35) opposite to and above the petrol station on the Amman-Jarash road. At 'Ain el-Mayyita, the land by the spring immediately southwest of er-Rumman, another hamlet appears to have been settled during the MB II and LB I phases if not later. Otherwise only a presence could be established at three sites.

For the period from the last part of the Late Bronze Age through the Iron Age and into the Persian period, we find enclosed hilltop forts on Jabal et-Tuweim (Site 4), at Rujm Shubeil (2295/1724, Site 6/1; Glueck 1939: 201), and above this on the peak previously called Rujm Madba'a (2298/1719, Site 7/1, now bulldozed) and at the extreme south end of the survey area at el-'Udhma (Glueck 1939: 226-228). Aside from these strategic points, settlement in the survey area during these periods appears remarkably sparse. The only clear concentration was on the knoll of Ḥauḍ Abu Billana immediately southwest of 'Ain Ras el-Ma' (2298/1737, Site 27) a town of at least four hectares which was occupied from the Late Bronze Age. Its citadel was fortified at least toward the end of the Iron Age, possibly during the period of Assyrian or Persian domination. A hamlet could be defined at Abu Zibneh (Site 35) and the numerous structures at Ḥauḍ Umm Kharruba northeast of es-Saliḥi (2284/1793 Site 26) might belong to this period, but otherwise only limited scatters were noted.

Not surprisingly, the Late Roman to Early Byzantine was one of the peak periods in this locality. Only el-Maṣṭaba

(Site 36) yielded enough Hellenistic pottery to prove that it was settled before the inception of the Roman period. The larger settlements of Roman-Byzantine times were set on hilltops which were later reoccupied in the Ayyubid-Mamluk periods and again by the modern villages (er-Rumman, es-Saliḥi, Murṣa', el-'Aluk, el-Maṣṭaba, Jubba, Masarra). Among these, only Masarra yielded clear remnants of a Byzantine church. Detailed sampling shows that the hilltop fort of Rujm Shubeil (Site 6/1) reached its largest size during this period. The structures visible there should be so dated. Smaller settlements or specialized sites were located near these (er-Rumman South, Site 2/3; Ḥauḍ Umm el-Ful I, Site 2/5; el-Mashhadiyah, Site 39). Iron working at the Abu Thawwab caves (2302/1748 Site 3/3; Coughenour 1976: 74) and now noted at Masarra (Site 41) could have begun in the Roman-Byzantine period. A Roman-Byzantine presence was noted at practically every other site visited.

Clear settlements cannot be defined for the early Islamic periods except at es-Saliḥi (Site 25), where a significant number of types of Umayyad date were found in the vicinity of the spring at the southern edge of the town. During the Ayyubid-Mamluk periods, large settlements existed in the positions of all the present-day villages except for Masarra. This was the period of greatest activity at the mountain-top site of el-'Udhma and for the village site of Murṣa'. In addition, an extensive site (scatter 200 m. long) was found alongside the irrigation canal which leads from 'Ain Ras el-Ma' along the slope east of er-Rumman (Ḥauḍ Umm el-Jiḥash I, I, Site 21). Several phases of canal construction were noted. In general, during the Ayyubid-Mamluk periods, this region was as intensively settled as it ever was. From the Ottoman records (Hütteroth and Abdul-Fattah 1977: 164, Karten 1, 5) continuity of occupation in this vicinity from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, particularly at er-Rumman, is certified. P. Roland de Vaux (1938: 422 #59) also noted a Turkish fountain at 'Ain Ras el-Ma' which has long since disappeared. Pottery of the Ayyubid to mod-

ern periods marks the site.

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SITE INDEX

No.	Site Name	Paleolithic		Neolithic			Bronze			Iron			Classical			Islamic		
		mp	up	ppn	ln	ch	eb	mb	lb	iron	pers	hell	rom	byz	um/ab	ay/ma	ot/mod	
1	Jabal Abū Thawwab			○			○	x		x		---	---					
1/2	'Ain Ras el-Mā'			x			x					---	---					
2/2	er-Rummān North			---			---		---	---		○	○			○		
2/3	er-Rummān S						x		x			△	△			△		
2/4	'Ain el-Mayita						---		△		---	---	---				x	
2/5	Ḥauḍ Umm el-Fūl I						x					△	△				x	
2/6	Ḥauḍ Umm el-Fūl II											---	---				x	
2/7	Ḥauḍ Umm el-Fūl III											---	---					
3/1+2	Zāhret Abū Thawwab																	
3/3	Khīrbet Abū Thawwab								x	x		---	---				x	
4	et-Tell (Jabal et-Tuweim)						□	---	---	○	○	△	△					
5	Ḥauḍ Zuhair											---	---				x	
6/1	Rujm Shubeil								x	---	---	△	△					
6/2	Jabal Shubeil I			---			x			x		?	?				?	
7/1	Rujm Maḍba'a						---					---	---					
7/2	Jabal Shubeil II			---			---					---	---				x	
8	al-Manaṭṭ			---			---					---	---					

No.	Site Name	Paleolithic		Neolithic			Bronze		Iron		Classical		Islamic				
		mp	up	ppn	ln	ch	eb	mb	lb	iron	pers	hell	rom	byz	um/ab	ay/ma	ot/mod
9	Jibāl Isnēma																
10	el-Mastaba																
11	Jubba																
12	Murşī'																
13	Samra																
14	Ḥaḍ eṭ-Ṭawaḥīn																
15/1	'Ain Umm Rabī' I																
15/2	'Ain el-Karm II																
15/3	'Ain el-Karm III																
15/4	'Ain Umm Rabī' II																
16	Ḥaḍ eṣ-Şahrīj I																
17	'Ain Għathyan																
18	Wādī Shubeil																
19	Wādī Zarqā (bridge)																
20	Wādī Rummān																
21	Ḥaḍ Umm el-Jiḥash I																
22	Ḥaḍ Umm el-Jiḥash II																
23	el-'Udhma																
24	'Ain Şaṣāfa																





No.	Site Name	Paleolithic		Neolithic		Bronze		Iron		Classical		Islamic						
		mp	up	ppn	ln	ch	eb	mb	lb	iron	pers		hell	rom	byz	um/ab	ay/ma	ot/mod
25/1	es-Saliḥī				x?	x?	x											
25/2	Wādī Saliḥī West				x	x												
26	Ḥauḍ Umm Kharruba				x	x	x	x	x									
27	Ḥauḍ Abu Billāna I				x	x	x	x	x									
27/2	Ḥauḍ Abu Billāna II				x	x	x	x	x									
28	es-Siṭān																	
29	Ḥauḍ el-Bayāḍ				x	x	x	x	x									
30	Wādī Rummān West																	
31	Umm el-Basāṭīn I				x	x	x	x	x									
32	Umm el-Basāṭīn II				x	x	x	x	x									
33	Umm el-Basāṭīn III																	
34	Wādī Dūlānī Tal'at er-Ruz				x	x	x	x	x									
34/1	Wādī Dūlānī I																	
34/2	Wādī Dūlānī II																	
35	Abū Zibne																	
36	el-Maṣṭaba																	
37	Ḥauḍ Umm Ṣāhrij I																	
37/3	Ḥauḍ Ṣāhrij II																	
38	Wādī Rummān East																	

No.	Site Name	Paleolithic	Neolithic	Bronze	Iron	Classical	Islamic
		mp up	ln ch	mb eb	iron pers	rom byz	ay/ma ot/mod
39	el-Mashhudiye				?---x---x	x  -----x	x x
40	Abu 'Aude				-x-	?	
41	Masarra			?		-○-----	○
42	el-'Alūq		?	x		-----○-----	○-----○

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Phonetic transliteration (eg. Š = Sh, Ĥ = Kh)

KEY

- x presence
-  house, group of houses
-  village
-  city
-  fortress
- ? questionable
- extends
- - - may extend

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