

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF THE DHĪBĀN PLATEAU, 1996 A PRELIMINARY REPORT

by

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Introduction

During September, 1996, a new phase of archaeological research took place in the Dhībān plateau. The Dhībān plateau is a semi-arid flat land located between Wādī al-Mūjib in the south and Wādī al-Wāla in the north. It extends about 25 km from Dhībān to the Desert Highway. This plateau includes many well-known archaeological sites like Dhībān, al-Lāhūn, Aroer, Umm ar-Raṣāṣ, and Khirbat al-Mudayyina. This year, a preliminary reconnaissance was conducted as partial preparation for a fullblown archaeological survey of the region. This project was headed by the author, and Taysir 'Attiyat represented the Department of Antiquities.

Research Background and Methodology

In the Dhībān plateau, few archaeological surveys have taken place since the work of Nelson Glueck (1934; 1939), although excavations have been undertaken at Dhībān (Morton 1955; 1989; Winnett 1952; Winnett and Reed 1964; Tushingham 1954; 1989; 1992), Aroer (Olávarri 1965; 1969; 1993), al-Lāhūn (Homès-Fredericq 1989; 1992; Homès-Fredericq and Naster 1982; Naster 1984), Khirbat al-Mudayyina (Daviau 1996; Fraser 1996), and Umm ar-Raṣāṣ (Piccirillo 1988; Piccirillo and 'Attiyat 1986). The Dhībān plateau was visited by early travellers and scholars like Irby and Mangles (1823), Brünnow and von Domszewski (1904; 1905), and Musil (1907). Glueck (1934; 1939) visited the Dhībān plateau and registered about 50 archaeological sites. In 1996, the Wādī ath-Thamad project initiated archaeological surveys in the vicinity of Khirbat al-Mudayyina with special at-

tention to the south bank of the Wādī ath-Thamad between Khirbat ar-Rumayl and Khirbat al-Mudayyina (Daviau 1996; Fraser 1996). In contrast to the Dhībān plateau, extensive work has been carried out in the al-Karak plateau by Miller (1991), Mattingly (1996), and Worschech (1985; 1992; Worschech, Rosenthal and Zayadine 1986). Since 1971 the Mādabā Plains Project has surveyed the Mādabā Plains north to the Dhībān plateau, particularly the regions surrounding Tall Ḥisbān (Ibach 1987) and Tall al-'Umayri (Cole 1989; Boling 1989; Younker 1991; Christopherson forthcoming a; forthcoming b). Accordingly, the area between the Wādī al-Mūjib and the Wādī al-Wāla remains *terra incognita* as far as archaeological surveys go.

The purpose of the Dhībān plateau archaeological survey is fivefold: (1) to locate new archaeological sites in the region; (2) to revisit Glueck's sites to ascertain his dating of each site; (3) to understand the occupational history and settlement pattern of the Dhībān plateau; (4) to study political, social, economic and ecological factors involved in shaping the settlement pattern and occupational history of the region, and (5) to fill the geographical gap between the Mādabā plains hinterlands survey project and the al-Karak plateau archaeological survey project.

To these ends, a major effort will be centered on the collection of pottery sherds and artifacts at each site. In addition, the survey team will record various features of each site and make sketch maps for some selected sites. Off-site features (e.g. rock-cut installations, cisterns, tombs, quarries, terraces, water channels, caves) will be located

and documented as well. Surface soil will be collected at some selected sites for geological studies as well. Although *the Mādabā Plains Project Manual* designed by Larry Herr and Garry Christopherson will be a main guide for these efforts, it will be supplemented by other survey procedures offered by Bintliff and Snodgrass (1985), Shaw and Jameson (1993), and Portugali (1982).

Results of the 1996 Survey

A total of 11 archaeological sites were visited (Fig. 1). Four of the 11 sites are new archaeological sites. An important aim of the 1996 reconnaissance survey was to visit some sites listed in Glueck's survey which had not yet be rechecked to ascertain their periods of occupation. They are Rujaym Salim, Rujm as-Sakrān, Khirbat as-Sāliya, Khirbat aj-Jumayl, Khirbat al-'Aqraba, Khirbat 'Alyān, and Khirbat ar-Rumayl. According to the present survey, Glueck's claim of an Iron Age settlement at Khirbat aj-Jumayl warrants further surface sharding and investigation, since the survey team could not find any diagnostic pottery sherds earlier than Late Hellenistic and Early Roman at this site. On the other hand, at Rujaym Salim Iron I-II period of occupation was identified, providing a better understanding of its settlement history.

Site 1 is Rujaym Salim (Glueck's Site 157; PG:230.8/102.1). Glueck (1939: 116) found a small number of Nabataean and several Islamic sherds at this site. Yet, the survey team collected about 250 sherds including Iron I and possibly Iron II, Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic pottery sherds. More than 100 possible Iron Age sherds were also collected. Thus, the earliest occupation of Rujaym Salim appears to go back to no later than Iron I, and it has been reused at least three times thereafter. Glueck posited that there were little evidence of ancient remains except for an Ottoman house built out of earlier building

blocks. The survey team, however, discerned several lines of earlier walls under the Ottoman village. In fact, this earlier settlement appears much more impressive than the Ottoman village as scattered and random earlier wall lines cover an area of about 40 x 100 m. A large ancient building complex composed of several rooms measuring 20 m 30 m stands out. Its external walls average about 1.5m thick and are solidly built. There are also internal divisions, although the plan cannot be determined entirely from the surface remains. In the northeast area of the site and about 20 m north from this large building complex are the partially standing remains of wall lines that stretch almost 60 m. The foundation remains indicate a north-east-southwest oriented rectangular structure. There is no evidence of internal division in this structure, which may indicate it was used as an animal pen. A couple of large cisterns were found at this site.

Site 2 (PG:222.8/199.8 Glueck's Site 153) is Rujm as-Sakrān located about 1 km southwest of Dhibān. Glueck (1939: 116) identified this site as a medium-sized Nabataean-Roman site with several plastered cisterns. The survey team collected about 170 pottery sherds at this site, and the majority of them are dated to the Roman and Byzantine periods. No distinctive Nabataean sherds were found. Three possible Ottoman sherds and two possible Early Bronze body sherds were collected at this site as well. The whole ruin, including various terrace walls, covers an area of about 50 x 70 m. This site appears to have been a large building complex site comprised of at least two large buildings. The central feature is foundation walls of a solidly constructed rectangular building (about 20 x 30 m) in the eastern portion of this site. These walls are preserved up to 1 m high and composed of large, well-dressed stones. There are several internal divisions inside this building. Two large cisterns were found inside the building complex with a stone-cut



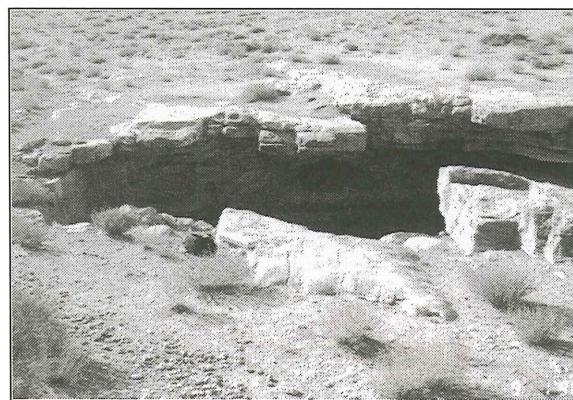
manger. On the west side of the ruin are several terrace walls and Ottoman houses that have almost completely obliterated all traces of earlier settlement. Modern concrete houses stand on the south side of this site. According to the preliminary pottery reading, Rujm as-Sakrān seems to have been an extensive building complex built during the Roman period and reused in the Byzantine period.

Site 3 (PG:239.0/196.9) is Khirbat as-Sāliya (Glueck's Site 92) situated about 5 km south of Umm ar-Raṣāṣ and 4 km southeast of Khirbat aj-Jumayl (Site 4). It is an extensive site built on a flat-topped rise overlooking the Wādī as-Sāliya from the north. In the center of this site there is a large ruined stronghold that seems to be a Roman fortress originally built during the Iron Age. Parts of the walls of the Iron Age fortress appear to have been incorporated into the Roman structure (Glueck 1934: 35). There are traces of the foundations of a large number of inner walls inside the fortress. Also numerous building ruins, stone heaps, and sherds are scattered in the area immediately surrounding the fortress, but further building traces are indistinguishable except for the remains of large rectangular structures south and west of the fortress. Yet, occupational remains are still in evidence on the east and west slopes of this site, and these ruins were evidently built in conjunction with the fortress. On the south and east sides of this site are a considerable number of caves, and remains of side and front walls with doorways at the entrance of these caves suggest earlier use as dwellings. There are some 15 to 20 recent tombs in the southern cave settlement area. Wall lines visible in the western slope may suggest a northeast-southwest oriented church building. The apse is recognizable from a few of its foundation stones, which are still in place. A couple of ancient cisterns were noted, which must have been major water sources for the site along with the Wādī as-

Sāliya.

At Khirbat as-Sāliya Glueck (1934: 34-36) collected many sherds dated to the Early Iron Age and the Nabataean period in addition to some terracotta figurines. In 1996 the survey team collected more than 300 pottery sherds including a large number of Roman-Byzantine sherds and several (Early and Mid-) Islamic painted sherds. The Iron Age is also well attested to by many Iron I and II diagnostic sherds and more than 80 possible Iron Age body sherds and several bases. Accordingly, Khirbat as-Sāliya appears to have been an important fortified site during the Iron Age and Roman/Byzantine periods, which may have been partially settled again during the Islamic period. Although some Chalcolithic and Early Bronze pottery was collected at this site, the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze settlement appears to warrant further surface sherding and investigation.

Site 4 (PG:235.5/199.2; Fig. 2) is Khirbat aj-Jumayl (Glueck's Site 94) located about 3.5 km southwest of Umm ar-Raṣāṣ. It represents the remains of a walled settlement which is located on a low knoll surrounded by fertile land and bordered on one side by the Wādī Hinu as-Saliya. Glueck (1934: 36-37) found a large number of Iron Age (including decorated Moabite sherds), Nabataean, Roman and Byzantine sherds. In 1996 the survey team collected about 330 pottery sherds. The majority of these sherds



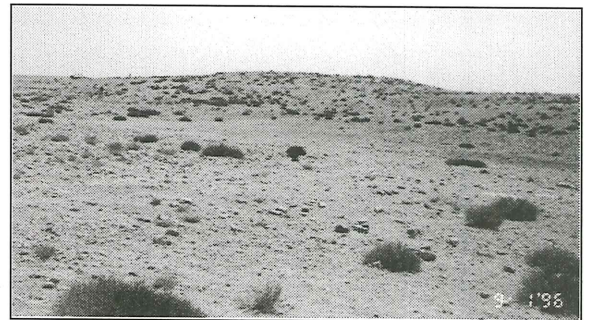
2. Reservoir at Khirbat aj-Jumayl (Site 4; looking southeast).

are dated to the Roman and Byzantine periods, and the Early and Mid-Islamic periods are also well attested to. The pottery assemblage also includes a few Early Bronze sherds. A noteworthy fact is the absence of diagnostic Iron Age sherds in our assemblage, which is in conflict with Glueck's claim of the Iron Age settlement at aj-Jumayl. Traces of Iron Age settlements may be buried under later occupational deposits, and thus Iron Age pottery in the present survey has been rare. The survey team will conduct another intensive surface survey at this site in the near future to resolve this problem.

At Khirbat aj-Jumayl, ruins consisting of numerous wall lines with visible corners encompass an area that measures about 150 x 200 m. A modern village is situated west and south of the ancient remains. The most impressive building ruin is situated at the highest point of the ruin, which is apparently a stronghold oriented roughly north-south. The stronghold measures about 8.5 x 8.5 m and has exterior walls about 1.4 m thick. It is filled with tumbled stones, and thus it is difficult to identify interior walls without cleaning the surface. There is some evidence to indicate that this rectangular stronghold was built upon an earlier round structure. This round structure appears to measure about 9 m in diameter and to have exterior walls about 1.5 m thick. It is built of large, rudely shaped stones, and is still about 80 cm high on the average. Nearby is a large rectangular building with several interior walls. It is oriented in roughly a northwest-southeast direction and measures about 8.5 x 17m. Its exterior walls are about 85cm thick and remain standing about 1 m high. This ruin appears to represent an administrative building associated with the fortress. Numerous wall lines and stone heaps are situated on the western and northern sides of this site. A number of arches, apparently remains of Byzantine churches, are still standing on the western terrace. On

the northern edge of this site are a few cisterns and a large plastered reservoir dug into bedrock (Fig. 2). The reservoir measures about 7 x 10 m and is 3 m deep. There are a couple of additional cisterns scattered on the south side of this site.

Site 5 (PG:225.2/198.1; Fig. 3) is Khirbat al-'Aqraba, Glueck's Site 151 (Glueck 1939: 113-14). The survey team collected about 230 sherds. They are dated to the Early Bronze or Roman/Byzantine periods. This site is located on a low hill about 1 km east of the modern King's Highway, providing a commanding view over the Wādī al-Mūjīb and the highway. It is an extensive archaeological site covering an area of no less than 100 x 170 m. Remains of a main building, possibly a Roman fortress, are still visible in the east side of this site. This building is a rectangular structure (about 34 x 42 m) built with large, dressed limestones, and its foundation remains standing about 50 cm high. Some internal walls are discernible amid the rubble which is less than 1 m deep. One of the important discoveries of our survey is that there are several thick wall lines west of this building, and some of them, constructed of large cut stones, extend almost 50 m in a roughly eastwest direction. In this area, more than 10 large cisterns were found with a couple of cave settlements. Situated about 100 m west of the Roman building, on a fairly flat-topped spur jetting out of the plateau to the Wādī al-Mūjīb, are the possible foundation walls of a crudely constructed building complex, presumably a Roman watch-tower overlooking



3. Khirbat al-'Aqraba (Site 5; looking northwest).

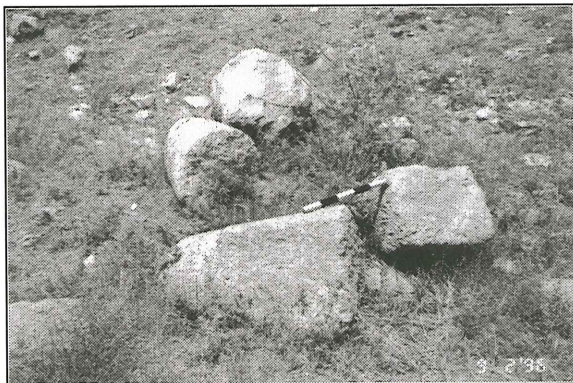
the King's Highway. As Glueck suggested, Early Bronze sherds were restricted to the west side of this site, particularly the area between the Roman building and the watch-tower.

Khirbat 'Alyān (PG:233.7/104.6) is Site 6 (Glueck's Site 162, 1939: 116-17). The mound on which Khirbat 'Alyān sits is situated on the watershed of the Wādī al-Kaum, providing an overview of approaches through Khirbat ar-Rumayl and the Wādī al-Kaum from the Wādī ar-Rumayl to the plateau. This site covers an area of more than 150 x 200 m including western and northern terraces. In the middle of this site are extensive stone tumble and debris of a stronghold at the acropolis and several large buildings. Occasional wall lines of these buildings are discernable amid the rubble of stone blocks spread over an area about 40 x 50 m. Fortification walls are still visible all around the site except for the south where they are largely obliterated by construction of modern houses and roads. There are numerous caves on the northern terrace of this site, and many of the caves have walled entrances, apparently having served as dwellings. It is noteworthy that the majority of sherds collected on this northern terrace are dated to the Iron Age, which may indicate the caves were originally used by Iron Age settlers of this site. On the west side of this site are numerous wall lines and more than ten dwelling caves. A substantial number of ancient buildings can be traced as well. At the southwest edge of the site, wall lines visible at ground level mark three sides of a large rectangular structure measuring about 25 m (eastwest) by 40 m (northsouth). The walls were constructed of large limestone blocks and there is a heavy scattering of Roman, Byzantine and Islamic sherds. In addition, a large number of cisterns dot around this site, most of them now collapsed and filled with debris. Glueck found quantities of Iron I-II and Nabataean sherds. The survey team collected about 400 sherds in-

cluding a large number of Iron II, Roman and Byzantine sherds with some LB II/Iron I and Mid-Islamic sherds. Thus, it appears that in the Iron II and Roman/Byzantine periods there were thriving settlements at Khirbat 'Alyān.

Site 7 (PG:233.2/107.2) is Rujm ar-Rumayl south, a new archaeological site located by the modern road from Khirbat ar-Rumayl (Site 11) to Umm ar-Raṣāṣ. Rujm ar-Rumayl south, apparently a watch-tower, is situated by an old track which leads south from Khirbat ar-Rumayl (Site 11), along the east bank of the Wādī al-Buṭum, and then turns southwest in the direction of Khirbat 'Alyān. If this track is associated with an ancient trade route, this site appears to have served as a wayside fortress to secure commercial trade and stabilize it by monitoring the nomadic tribes. Part of Rujm ar-Rumayl south is currently in use by local villagers for burials. That the heap is a collapsed building rather than the result of field clearing is indicated by the large roughly dressed stones at the outer edges of its base and a couple of wall lines laid out according to an overall plan. In the debris, which remains some 70 cm high, is the vague outline of a rectilinear watch-tower that measures about 9 m x 9 m. Immediately on top of these rectilinear wall lines are occasional traces of circular walls which may pertain to a later building phase. A few non-diagnostic sherds were collected, and they are dated to the Iron Age and Byzantine period.

Site 8 (PG:222.9/106.2), about 5.5 km north of Dhibān, is a small Roman milestone station with five milestones (Fig. 4). All of them are carved into a limestone cylindrical shaft with a square base. Given the size of these stones, it is not feasible that they were moved from earlier locations to this site. They are about 40 - 55 cm in diameter and stand about 1.3 - 2.0 m high. One of them bears Latin inscriptions. The milestones are about 8 - 13 m apart from each other except for two milestones. They



4. Roman milestones at Site 8 (looking northwest).

are scattered about along the Wādī Duhfura flowing into the Wādī al-Wāla. Ibach (1994: 71) suggested that at a milestone station each of a cluster of milestones may indicate the construction or subsequent repair of the Roman road. This being the case, a cluster of five milestones at this site may mark the road was built and repaired at least five times. One late Roman/Byzantine sherd was found at this site.

Site 9 (PG:224.3/105.1) is another small site which includes two Roman milestones. This site is located about 1.3 km south of Site 8, which may indicate that in this survey area the Roman road was not marked in precise miles. No pottery was found at this site.

About 150 m northeast of Site 9 is Site 10 (PG:224.3/105.2). This is a small rock-cut installation site including 12 small cup-holes and two large basins. Two Byzantine sherds were found inside a large basin and two more Byzantine sherds were found around the installations with one possible Iron Age body sherd.

Site 11 (PG:233.0/109.5 Glueck's Site 176) is Khirbat ar-Rumayl. Situated on a high point overlooking the Wādī ar-Rumayl from the south, Khirbat ar-Rumayl is visible for an extensive distance round about. Below the southwestern and eastern sides of the hill are small wadis which curve around and join the Wādī ar-Rumayl, isolating the site.

The survey team collected more than 300

sherds, all dated to either late Iron I/early Iron II or late Iron II except for a couple of Roman and Byzantine sherds. Therefore, it is not improbable that there were two settlement periods at this site ranging from early Iron II to late Iron II. Glueck (1939: 118) also dated Khirbat ar-Rumayl to Iron I and II. This site appears closely related to King Mesha and his military expansion toward the north.

Glueck (1939: 118-23) provides a detailed and precise description about this site and the survey team saw Khirbat ar-Rumayl essentially as Glueck described it. It is an impressive fortress with a central stronghold, a very strong surrounding casemate outer wall, and a large number of houses built against the wall on the inside, facing the dominating central fortress.

The dominant feature of ar-Rumayl is the central fortress, which measures approximately 15 x 20 m (Fig. 5). Its walls are about 1.5 m thick and still remain standing 6 m high. The corners are laid in the header and stretcher system. This stronghold appears to have been built upon an earlier tower, and occasional traces of this earlier stronghold are still discernable. In addition, it is very likely that a glacis was originally built against the walls of the fortress. The outer wall of this site is about 2 m thick and is built of large, roughly hewn flint blocks. A ditch or dry moat was dug around the outer wall except for the northern slope leading down to the Wādī ar-



5. Fortress at Khirbat ar-Rumayl (looking north).

Rumayl. A gateway is situated at the north-east corner of the enclosure and flanked by two towers measuring about 5.5 x 6.5 m. Inside the outer wall are a confusing maze of ruined house foundations, but a careful observation shows that they were constructed according to an overall plan. Additionally noticeable is the large empty courtyard in front of the north side of the stronghold.

In addition to Glueck's observation, we may add the possible presence of governor's residence west of the fortress. This building consists of walls laid two to three courses wide and standing three to four courses high. It is a rectangular structure which measures roughly 9 m (east-west) by 12 m (north-south). Many internal walls are evident. On the western terrace of Khirbat ar-Rumayl the survey team also discovered traces of a wall which once may have surrounded the entire site. The thickness of this wall ranges from 0.70-1.30 m, which indicates it may have been a fortification wall. Remains of settlement caves and various buildings were also found on this western terrace.

Finally, immediately south of Khirbat ar-Rumayl across the modern road is a small Iron Age structure (Rujm ar-Rumayl north) that appears closely associated with Khirbat ar-Rumayl.

This site appears to consist of a rectilinear structure, a wall line, and a large number of cisterns and caves. This year, the survey team did not conduct a systematic survey at this site; thus no site number has yet been given to it, but Iron II sherds with a couple of terracotta figurine fragments seem to dominate the pottery sherds on the surface. It seems doubtful that this site was a military fortress or outpost since it is locat-

ed a short distance from Khirbat ar-Rumayl and its visibility to the east and south is obstructed by high hills. The combination of its location and some pottery figurines may indicate it is associated with some cultic functions. This site warrants a further systematic survey and investigation in the future.¹

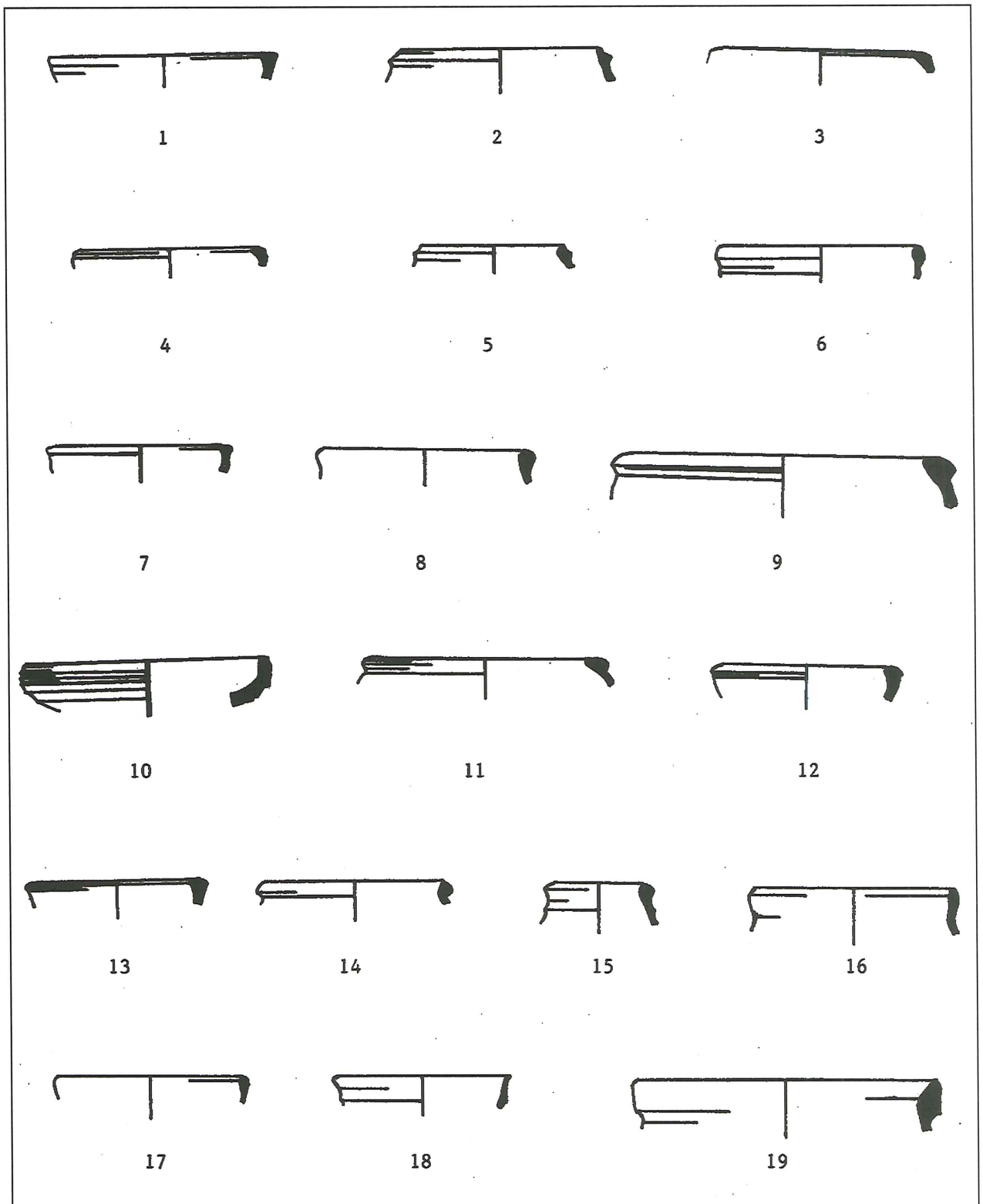
Conclusion

In regard to the settlement pattern in this region, the survey provides a couple of research hypotheses to be tested in the future as our work continues. First, a first cycle of settlement intensification appeared during the Chalcolithic/Early Bronze period, and abatement process began at the end of this period to be continued until the Late Bronze Age period. A second phase of sedentarization started in Iron I and reached its peak in Iron II (see Fig.6). Settlement again increased in the Roman and Byzantine periods after an occupational gap during the Hellenistic period. Population appears to have decreased during the early Islamic period, and the process of a fourth intensification was slowly built up through the mid Islamic period. Accordingly, the occupational history of the Dhibān plateau seems to bear a resemblance to that of the Mādabā Plains (cf. LaBianca 1990).

Second, the distribution pattern of Iron Age sites shows that they tended to be along the northern and southern edges of the plateau rim overlooking the Wādī al-Wāla and the Wādī al-Mūjib. Khirbat 'Alyān and Khirbat ar-Rumayl are situated along the northern rim of the plateau, and Khirbat al-Mudayyina and Khirbat al-Kaum seem to be a continuation of this Iron Age settlement strip along the Wādī al-Wāla. Of related interest is the fact that Iron Age sites

1. After this paper was submitted to *ADAJ*, the authors held a conversation with Dr P.M. Michèle Daviau and Dr J. Andrew Dearman regarding a cultic site near Khirbat ar-Rumayl. From this conversation, the authors found out that the Wādī ath-

Thamad regional survey team had visited this site in June 1996, and that a salvage excavation would be conducted in 1997 under the direction of Dr Daviau and Dr Dearman.



6. Some selected examples of pottery.

Fig. 6. Pottery Descriptions

No.	Provenance	Date/Type	Descriptions
1	'Alayān	Iron II bowl	wheel-made, light red (2.5YR6/6) (E, I*), gray core (2.5YR5/0), light red slip, no inclusions
2	'Alayān	Iron II cooking pot	wheel-made, light reddish brown (2.5YR6/4) (E, I), dark gray core (2.5YR4/0), many small white inclusions
3	'Alayān	Iron II krater	wheel-made, reddish yellow (5YR7/6) (E, I), reddish yellow core (5YR7/6), no inclusions
4	'Alayān	Iron II bowl	wheel-made, light red (2.5YR6/6) (E, I), gray core (2.5YR5/0), many small white and gray inclusions
5	'Alayān	Iron II cooking pot	wheel-made, light reddish brown (2.5YR6/4) (E, I), dark gray core (2.5YR4/0), many small white inclusions
6	'Alayān	Iron II krater	wheel-made, light reddish brown (2.5YR6/4) (E, I), gray core (2.5YR5/0), many small to large white and gray inclusions
7	'Alayān	Iron II bowl	wheel-made, reddish yellow (5YR6/6) (E, I), gray core (2.5YR5/0), some small to large white inclusions
8	'Alayān	Iron II krater	wheel-made, light reddish brown (2.5YR6/4) (E, I), gray core (2.5YR5/0), many small to medium white and gray inclusions
9	'Alayān	Iron II krater	wheel-made, reddish yellow (5YR7/6) (E, I), reddish yellow core (5YR7/6), no inclusions
10	ar-Rumayl	Iron II bowl	wheel-made, light reddish brown (5YR6/4), gray core (2.5YR5/0), many small to large white inclusions
11	ar-Rumayl	Iron II storage jar	wheel-made, reddish yellow (5YR7/6) (E, I), reddish yellow core (5YR7/6), few very small white inclusions
12	ar-Rumayl	Iron II bowl	wheel-made, light red (2.5YR6/6) (E, I), light red core (2.5YR6/6), some small white inclusions
13	ar-Rumayl	Iron II bowl	wheel-made, light reddish brown (5YR6/4) (E, I), gray core (2.5YR5/0), many small to large white inclusions
14	ar-Rumayl	LB II/Iron I cooking pot	wheel-made, reddish yellow (5YR6/6) (E, I), gray core (2.5YR5/0), many small white and gray inclusions
15	ar-Rumayl	Iron II jar	wheel-made, reddish yellow (5YR6/6) (E, I), reddish yellow core (5YR6/0), numerous small to medium white and gray inclusions

16	ar-Rumayl	LB II/Iron I krater	wheel-made, light red (2.5YR6/6) (E, I), gray core (2.5YR5/0), many small white and gray inclusions
17	ar-Rumayl	Iron I bowl	wheel-made, reddish yellow (5YR6/6) (E, I), reddish yellow core (5YR6/0), no inclusions
18	ar-Rumayl	LB II/Iron I bowl	wheel-made, light reddish brown (5YR6/4) (E, I), light reddish brown core (5YR6/4), few medium gray inclusions
19	ar-Rumayl	Iron I storage jar	wheel-made, light red (2.5YR6/6) (E, I), dark gray core (2.5YR4/0), many small to large white and gray inclusions

*E:exterior; I:interior.

are frequently to be found along the southern rim as well. Examples are Khirbat as-Sāliya, Aroer (Olávarri 1965, 1969, 1993), and al-Lāhūn (Homès-Fredericq 1989, 1992). These Iron Age settlements are strongly fortified and provide commanding views. Thus, the location of the site, the dimensions and solid construction of the settlement, and the associated pottery combine to suggest that during the Iron Age the Dhibān plateau was protected by a system of strategically located forts and cities. Certainly this observation must remain in question until further fieldwork can settle the matter, but it is worthy of particular attention with regard to the settlement pattern in the Dhibān plateau.

The reconnaissance survey of the Dhibān plateau appears to be successful. The results of the survey show that, in the Dhibān plateau, systematic archaeological surveys are both warranted and long overdue. Glueck's sites need to be revisited for more precise dating, as noted at Rujaym Salim and Khirbat aj-Jumayl. In addition, there seems to be a large number archaeological

sites that Glueck did not recognize. The first season of intensive surface surveys of the region and archaeological soundings at some sites is planned to begin in the summer of 1997. At least three seasons of archaeological fieldwork appear to be needed to complete the fieldwork in the Dhibān plateau.

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