

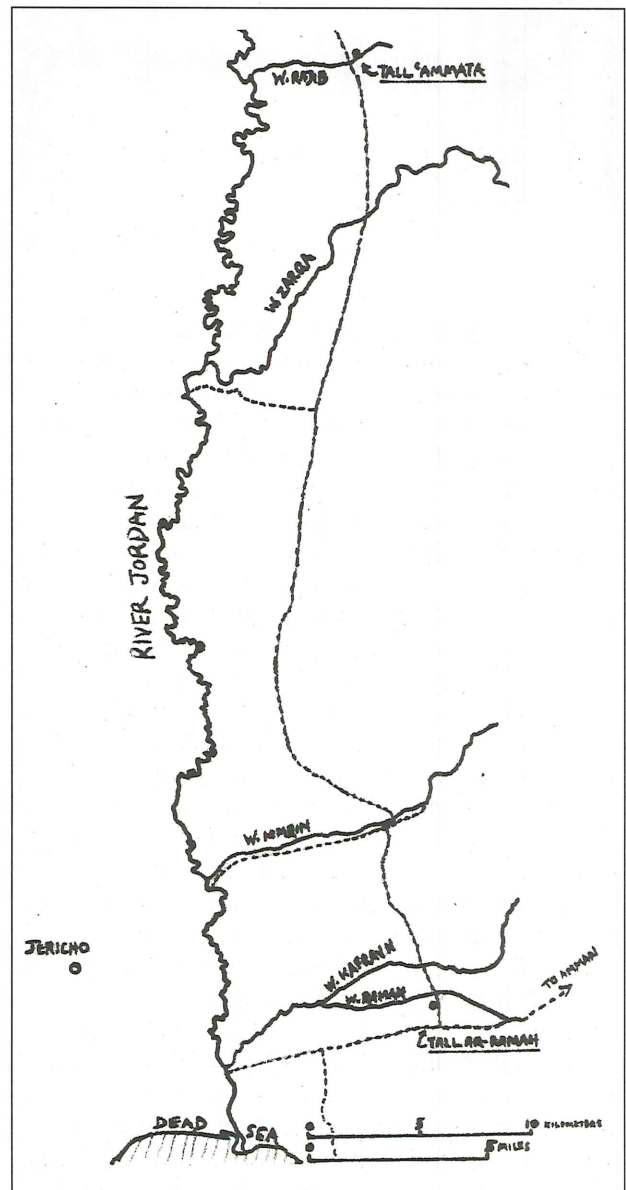
## A RECONNAISSANCE TRIP TO PERAEA (2-12 October 2000)

*Nikos Kokkinos*

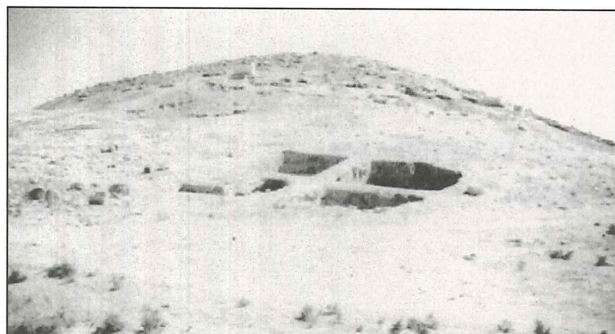
When Josephus (*War* 3.44) said that Herodian Peraea was larger in extent than Herodian Galilee, he was absolutely right. My reconnaissance trip to the valley east of the Jordan River certainly made me realise this, better than any map could. Galilee's size was approximately 55 x 40 kilometres (ca. 2,200km<sup>2</sup>), whereas Peraea's at least 105 x 25 kilometres (ca. 2,625km<sup>2</sup>). In a north-south direction, Peraea extended from Wādī al-Yābis/ar-Rayyān وادي اليبس/الريان (south of Pella) to Wādī al-Mūjib وادي الموجب (the Arnon, south of Machaerus), and in a west-east direction from the Jordan River through the ghawr to some way up the foothills towards 'Ammān عَمَّان (Philadelphia) (Fig. 1). Josephus was also right to say that in his time Peraea was for the most part "desert" and "rugged", though this picture is now being dramatically changed with extensive irrigation and cultivation over large parts of the area.

A CBRL grant I received in the year 2000 (together with a needed supplement kindly provided by the Jordanian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities) enabled me to inspect briefly, between 1-12 October, almost the entire length and width of Peraea. The aim was to concentrate on the geography of the region, in an attempt to understand several topo-historical and archaeological questions pertaining to the Hellenistic and Herodian/Early Roman/Early Christian periods. Thus among the many sites visited were the so-called Gadōra (Tall Jadūr تل جدور near as-Salt السلط, some time the capital of the whole province), Birta ('Irāq al-'Amīr عراق الأمير, where the dynasty of the Tobiads flourished), Essebōn (Tall Ḥisbān تل حسيبان, where Herod the Great seems to have established a military colony), Medaba (Mādabā مادبا, famous for its Christian map), Machaerus (Mukāwir مكاور, where John the Baptist was decapitated), Callirrhoe (az-Zārah الزاره, where the hot baths visited by Herod the Great), al-Habbasa (which may be identified with the fortress Herodium II 'towards Arabia'), and Wādī al-Kharrār وادي الخرار (where the current excavators claim to have located the 'baptismal' site

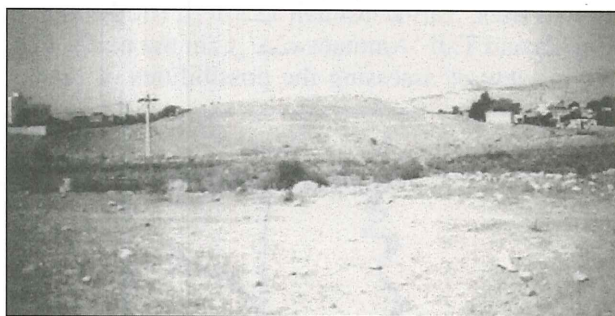
of Jesus). The further aim was to investigate closely two sites, Tall ar-Rāmah تل الرامة (in the south, Fig. 2) and Tall 'Ammata تل عَمَّته (in the north, Fig. 3), in view of assessing the possibilities of under-



1. Map of Peraea.



2. Tall ar-Rāmah. Photo Taken from the northwest. The trenches belong to an as yet unreported excavation.



3. Tall 'Ammata: Photo taken from the southwest across Wādī Rājib.

taking surveys there in the near future.

Peraea acquired its name sometime in the Late Hellenistic period, as a Greek translation (*pera*) of the Hebrew word 'beyond' (*br*), which described the land beyond the Jordan as one looked east from Judaea. While the central part of it in the Ptolemaic period evidently belonged to the district of Ammanitis, Seleucid administrative transformations played a role in the shaping of what was soon to be called Peraea. The wars of the Hasmonaeans in the Transjordan, as the Seleucids declined, made this province clearly visible (even if biblical 'Gilead' had never really been forgotten), thereafter to be consolidated under Roman and Herodian rule. Although from our historical sources we can gather that Peraea was divided internally into three, or up to four, toparchies – Abela, Livias, Gadora and Amathus – we are in the dark as to their precise borders or even the definite identification of their homonymous capital cities. Various philological, historical and topographical arguments (to be avoided here) suggest that Abela = Khirbat al-Kafrayn خربة الكفرين, Livias = Tall ar-Rāmah, Gadora = Tall Jadūr, and Amathus = Tall 'Ammata. Such identifications may well be correct, but in fact are desperately in need of archaeological verification – as none has been excavated!

During my reconnaissance trip to Peraea, I have visited Tall ar-Rāmah (JADIS no. 2113004) three

times – on the 2nd, 3rd and 11th of October. The site is reached by the main east-west road from 'Ammān to the Dead Sea (about 32km away), passing Tall Iktānū تل إكتانو and turning right on the south-north road leading to Wādī ar-Rāmah, Wādī al-Kafrayn and beyond. It is located half-a-kilometre south of Wādī ar-Rāmah in the midst of a cultivated area. The *tall*, which is of an averagely small size, is about 20m in height. It is covered to the top on all sides by modern Islamic graves, with the exception of parts of the north and the north-west. Some large tombs are visible on the summit from afar, a couple of which have been harshly violated, leaving gaps through which one can see parts of the underlying ancient buildings. From the top of the *tall* there is a magnificent view of the Dead Sea in the southwest, about 10km. away, and of Jericho in the west on the opposite side of the Jordan River.

The whole *tall*, as well as the area around it, is full of ceramic fragments belonging to various periods. While I have picked up 'Early Roman' sherds, I could not at all see any 'Hellenistic' examples. This was also the opinion of my field companion on the first day, Dr K. Politis, confirming the 1976 survey of Yassine *et al.* (1988: no. 195). Yet, the information recorded in the electronic edition of JADIS refers to "unspecified Hellenistic" pottery. I have not tried to find out more about this, but we have noticed a small excavation on the lower northwestern slope of the *tall*, which seems to have taken place during the last few years – four shallow squares have been cut there. As far as I know this incomplete dig has not been announced yet, and it may be connected with the team of Dr M. Waheeb who has been working in the region since 1996.

Josephus (*Ant.* 18.27) tells us that Antipas, the son of Herod the Great, built a wall around (*teichei peribalōn*) the city of Betharamphtha or Betharamatha (evidently biblical Beth-haram), which he renamed Livias after the Emperor's wife. So although previous visitors wondered about the lack of walls around the *tall* (bibliography to be avoided in this brief report), it is possible that a fortification system enclosed a wider inhabited area. The *tall* may have served only as the 'acropolis', since the city itself – if indeed identical to Livias – must have been larger in size. The fame of Livias (later also Julias), as the capital of a southern Peraean toparchy, is known not only from our literary sources but also from important finds of documentary nature – i.e. the recently published Archive of Babatha. We have looked around the site cursorily to a distance of between 50 and 100m, noticing in the



south the presence of well-cut, sizable stones removed from the cultivated area, some of which seem to have belonged to a fortification wall. We have also noticed a buried drum of a column made of white stone or marble.

On the *tall* – if it was to be taken as an ‘acropolis’ – I would have expected to find the Herodian palace (*basileia*) mentioned by Josephus (*War* 2.59), though elsewhere (*Ant.* 17.277) he refers instead to ‘Amathus’ as the city where this palace was located (for the textual problem, see Kokkinos 1998: 166, n. 57). My decision is pending – but I shall be discussing this in more detail elsewhere (cf. below Tall ‘Ammata).

It is clear that Tall ar-Rāmah is being slowly destroyed, being used as a cemetery, but there is nothing that can be done to avert the present situation. On my second visit (3 October) I observed two local grave-diggers at work on the southwest side, half-way up the *tall*, making space for a new burial. As they were digging up an area (ca. 2 x 1m) some 2m deep, they were extracting and throwing down the slope many stones which belonged to an underlying ancient building. I was invited to examine briefly the rough stratigraphy created by this operation, though I had to show respect in taking no close-up photographs. On my third visit (11 October) I have re-examined the rubble which came from the new grave, now sealed after the funeral. There is a lot of scope for a proper survey at this site, and both the wider area as well as the northern and northwestern sides of the *tall* are available for close examination – but, of course, such a scope is seriously restricted by the cemetery itself.

My visit to Tall ‘Ammata (JADIS no. 2018003) took place on the 4th of October. The site can be reached from different directions – I took the road down from as-Salt northwest to Wādī az-Zarqā’ وادي الزرقاء, and north, passing Dayr ‘Allā ديرة علا, to the village of ‘Amtā عمتا (some 50km away from ‘Ammān). The *tall* is located around 300m east of the main road directly overlooking the north bank of Wādī Rājib وادي راجب. Like Tall ar-Rāmah, Tall ‘Ammata is also of an averagely small size, but damage in the past (on its eastern side), possibly from army installations (as is clearly the case on Tall al-Qaws تل القوس opposite on the north), and current private buildings (on its western side) are obscuring its true size. The *tall* is full of pottery from various periods, with a good presence of Hellenistic and Early Roman sherds. Its flat summit (of about 40 x 40m) does not show many significant features, though on its northern slope a part of an ancient stone foundation is visible. The

view from the top includes the Wādī Rājib immediately to the south, the imposing hilltop of Tall al-Qaws to the north, and the large Tall al-Mazār تل المزار to the distant southwest. Nearby houses south-east of the *tall* (on the other side of the wadi) have gardens decorated with bases of ancient columns, no doubt discovered during the process of their recent construction. A look for evidence of any fortification in the surrounding area produced a couple of large well-cut, rectangular, white stones (ca. 1.20 x 0.50 x 0.30m), which had been newly dug up, turned around, and left almost *in situ*.

There is no question that Tall ‘Ammata was a substantial Hellenistic site (a rare occasion in the valley), and it is probable that Amathus was indeed located here. Josephus tells us that in the Hasmonaeon period Amathus was the most important fortress beyond the Jordan, containing “the most precious possessions” (*War* 1.86: *ta timiôtata tôn ktêmatôn*; and *Ant.* 13.356: *ta kallista kai spoudês axia*) of Theodorus, the local wealthy dynast – thus presumably serving as a fortress-palace. Demolished by Alexander Jannaeus, it must have later been rebuilt to its former glory, if the Roman Gabinius made Amathus a center of government in Peraea (Jos., *War* 1.170; *Ant.* 14.91). This understanding would link well with the possibility I mentioned earlier concerning the Herodian palace being established here rather than at Tall ar-Rāmah.

There is also no question that Tall ‘Ammata is an endangered site which needs immediate attention in order of it being properly recorded and protected. The same advice has been given long ago by the 1975 survey of Ibrahim *et al.* (1976: no. 104). I am now planning to undertake a full survey of this site in the year 2001, as I hope for the continuing support of the CBRL and the interest of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan. Amathus may then initiate my wider archaeological and historical project in the valley on Late Hellenistic and Early Roman Peraea – in short to be named ‘The Peraea Project’.

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## NOTE SUR LE TRÉSOR DE MONNAIES PTOLÉMAÏQUES DE 'IRĀQ AL-AMĪR

Christian Augé

En 1993 a été exhumé fortuitement à 'Irāq al-Amīr (عراق الأمير), lors du creusement d'une tranchée destinée à la pose d'une canalisation, un important trésor de monnaies d'argent ptolémaïques<sup>1</sup>. Les indications précises manquent sur les circonstances exactes de la découverte, et il est difficile de savoir de combien de pièces se composait la trouvaille, l'ensemble ayant été aussitôt dispersé. Selon divers témoignages, elle comprenait au moins un millier d'exemplaires. L'intervention rapide du Département des Antiquités a permis d'en retrouver très vite une partie importante, qui a été acquise en plusieurs lots, déposés et conservés depuis au Musée archéologique de 'Ammān. Grâce à l'aimable autorisation des Directeurs successifs, les Dr. Safwan Tell, Ghazi Bisheh et Fawwaz al-Khraysheh, du Directeur adjoint, le Dr Fawzi Zayadine, à l'aide efficace de toute l'équipe du Musée, ainsi qu'à celle de l'Institut français d'archéologie du Proche-Orient, notamment de M. Laurent Borel qui en a réalisé les photographies, nous avons pu examiner et étudier les huit lots conservés à 'Ammān, qui comprennent au total 315 monnaies.

Ces lots sont inventoriés comme suit dans les registres du Musée :- J16661: 19 monnaies; J16663: 2 monnaies; J16664: 2 monnaies; J16671: 4 monnaies; J16673: 149 monnaies; J16692: 58 monnaies; J16693: 61 monnaies; J16698: 20 monnaies.

A cet ensemble s'ajoutent vraisemblablement deux autres exemplaires que nous avons pu examiner à 'Ammān<sup>2</sup>.

Le **Tableau 1** récapitule la répartition des pièces composant les huit lots du Musée de 'Ammān (315 exemplaires), selon la date de la

frappe et le lieu d'émission. En attendant la publication d'une étude plus complète et plus précise<sup>3</sup>, on peut esquisser quelques conclusions provisoires.

- 1) Toutes les monnaies examinées sont des tétradrachmes d'argent lagides frappés au cours du III<sup>e</sup> siècle avant J.-C., entre les règnes de Ptolémée I Sôter et de Ptolémée III Évergète, à l'effigie et au nom de Ptolémée I : les plus anciens remontent aux années 295-293, les plus récents sont datés de 243/2 avant J.-C.

Ces tétradrachmes sont frappés selon le système de poids dit ptolémaïque ou phénicien, en usage en Égypte et dans les possessions lagides au Proche-Orient : leur poids varie entre 14,45g et 13,42g, sauf pour quatre exemplaires (dont un fourré), anormalement légers<sup>4</sup>. Le droit représente uniformément le buste de Ptolémée I Sôter, ceint du diadème royal, l'égide nouée autour du cou, et le revers un aigle debout sur un foudre, tourné vers la gauche, les ailes fermées. On lit au revers la légende, tantôt *Ptolémaïou Basilêôs*, tantôt *Ptolémaïou Sôtêros* ("du roi Ptolémée", "de Ptolémée Sôter") et sur presque tous les exemplaires on distingue des symboles ou des marques d'atelier, des lettres ou des monogrammes, marques d'émission ou de magistrats, parfois aussi l'indication de l'année de règne. Ces critères depuis longtemps reconnus permettent, en s'appuyant sur quelques ouvrages classiques<sup>5</sup>, de dater les pièces, de les répartir selon les règnes et les ateliers, en somme d'effectuer sans grande difficulté un classement plausible, dont le **Tableau 1** donne le résumé.

En outre, comme on l'a souvent remarqué pour

1. La découverte a été signalée dans la presse jordanienne. Dans les mois suivants, de nombreux tétradrachmes ptolémaïques apparus sur le marché des antiquités en Europe et aux États-Unis ont été présentés comme provenant de cette trouvaille.

2. L'un a été frappé à Alexandrie à la fin du règne de Ptolémée I (286/5), l'autre à Tyr sous Ptolémée II (253/2). En revanche, un ensemble de quinze tétradrachmes ptolémaïques conservé au Musée de as-Salt et provenant de 'Irāq al-Amīr ou de sa région n'appartient pas au grand tré-

sor (sa date d'entrée au Musée est antérieure à la découverte de celui-ci).

3. Les résultats en seront exposés lors du colloque international *L'exception égyptienne*, organisé à Alexandrie en avril 2002.

4. 12,82g, 12,51g, 11,99g et 7,80g.

5. J.N. Svoronos, *Ta nomismata tou kratous tôn Ptolemaïôn* (Athènes, 1904); A. Davesne et G. Le Rider, *Gülner II, Le trésor de Meydanccikkale (Cilicie Trachée, 1980)* (Paris, 1989).

Tableau 1: Répartition des exemplaires examinés selon les ateliers et les dates d'émission.

	Alexan- drie	Tyr	Sidon	Joppé	Ptolé- mais	Gaza	Kition	Sala- mine	Chypre	Incer- tains	Total
<b>Pt.I</b>											
295-3	1 ?										1 ?
292-90	3										3
290/89	1										1
289/8	3										3
288/7	5										5
287/6	3										3
286/5	1										1
<b>Pt.II</b>											
285/4	6						1	1			8
284/3	4										4
283/2											
282/1	1										1
281/0	6						1	4			11
280/79	2										2
279/8											
278/7											
277/6											
276/5	4										4
275/4											
274/3											
273/2		1	1								2
272/1											
271/0									3		3
270/69											
269/8		6	4								10
268/7											
267/6											
266/5		31	25								56
265/4											
264/3		2									2
263/2			3				6	1			10
262/1		5									5
261/0		1 ?	4								5 ?
260/59	1										1
259/8		2	1			1					4
258/7		1				1					2
257/6		1	3		1						5
256/5		11	2		4	2					19
255/4			3	2	6						11
254/3		9	4	2	2	1					18
253/2		11	4	1	1	2				1	20
252/1		1	2	2	1						6
251/0			1	2	1				3		7
250/49			2	2	1			1 ?			6 ?
249/8			3	7	3	1					14
248/7	7	2	3	1	1						14
247/6		1	3								4
<b>Pt.III</b>											
246/5		1	4	8	1	3 ?					17 ?
245/4		2	6	3	2						13
244/3		2	2 ?								4 ?
243/2		2		3							5
<b>Incert</b>	1					1				3	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>315</b>