

TELL JOHFIYEH

- A Regional Study -

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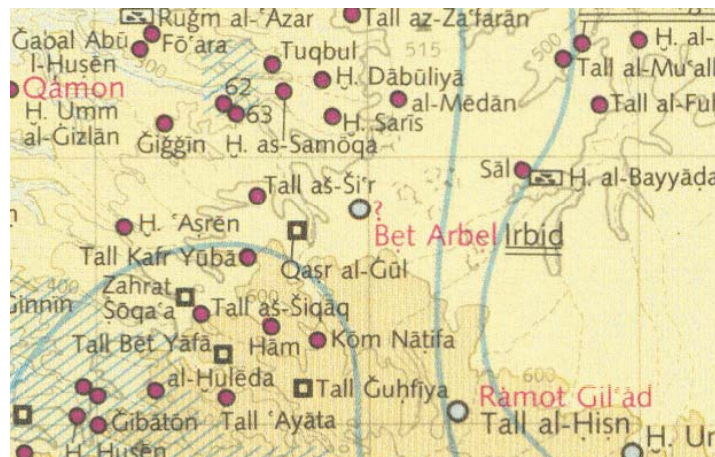
An Iron Age site and its vicinity in North Jordan

Geographical Location



Tell Johfiyeh: Location of Tell Johfiyeh

- Middle East
- Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
- North Jordanian plateau
- 7.5km south-west of Irbid
- Northern edge of the modern village of Johfiyeh
- Within an agriculturally intensively used area
- Rainfed-agriculture is possible



The vicinity of Tell Johfiyeh (Tall Guhfiya)



Situation in 2000

The Project



Aims

- Surface survey of surrounding areas
- Chronological classification of recorded sites
- Spatial analysis of settlement pattern
- Excavation of Tell Johfiyeh
- Historical and functional interpretation
- Reconstruction of social structure
- Reconstruction of political conditions

Organization

- Dr. Roland Lamprichs, University of Münster
- Dr. Ziad al-Sa'ad, FAA-Yarmouk University-Irbid

Time schedule

- Three field-campaigns (excavation/survey)
- Evaluation and publication
- Five years altogether

Budgeting

- 2002 - GPIA and FAA of the Yarmouk University
- 2003 - GPIA and FAA of the Yarmouk University
- 2004 - Gerda Henkel Foundation and FAA of Yarmouk University



Tell Johfiyeh



General information

- Height: 7.0m
- Elevation above sea level: 793m
- Expanse (base) 4000 squaremeter
- Expanse („hilltop“) 950 squaremeter
- Heavy stone cover on the surface
- Uniform distribution of surface pottery
- Coordinates: UTME 7652; UTMN 35986; Zone 36

State of preservation

- Very good
- Few traces of clandestine digging
- Endangered by the growing modern village

Surface structures

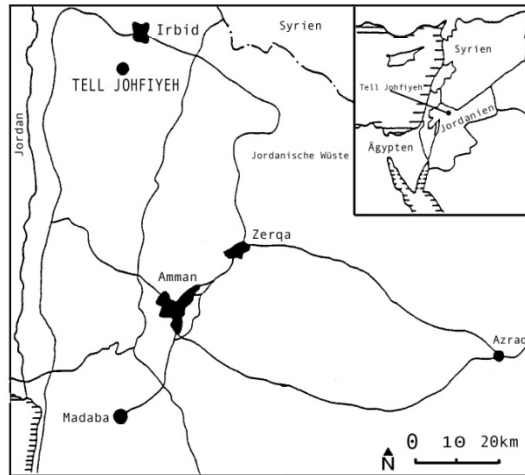
- Surrounding „wall“ (H=1,0m; W=0,8m)
- Recent wall at the foot of the Tell (H=2,5m; W=1,0m)

Research history

- Mentioned in travel reports
- Mentioned in files listing archaeological sites
- Mentioned on thematic maps
- First archaeological survey by N. Glueck
- Mainly un-examined



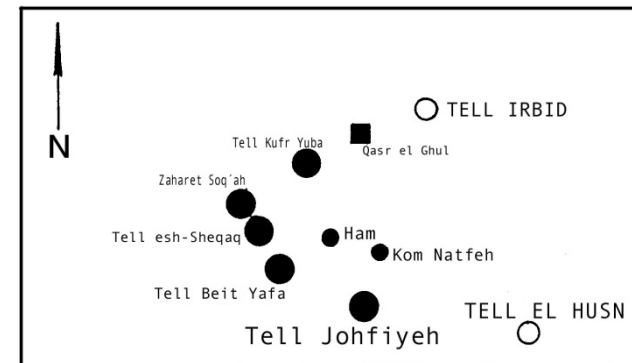
The Vicinity



Tell esh-Sheqaq



- Tell Beit Yafa
- Tell esh-Sheqaq
- Zaharet Soq'ah
- Tell Kufr Yuba



A number of small settlements (tells) situated to the west and south-west of Irbid – so far unexamined – are characterized by some common features:

- Round/oval form of their bases
- Exposed location (600m or more above sea level)
- Located within a fertile region
- Short distance to each other
- Partially located in view of each other
- Large cover of stones on the surface
- Remains of a „perimeter wall“

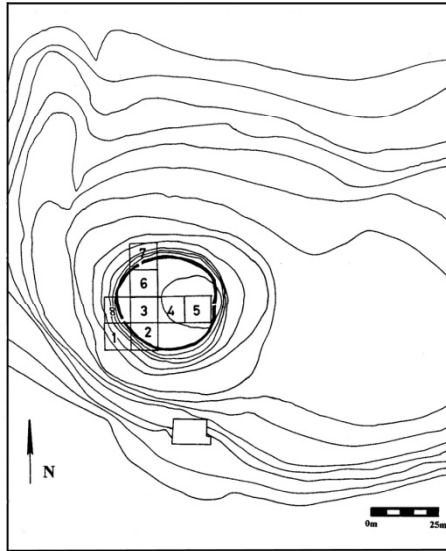


Tell el-Husn



Tell Beit Yafa

The Campaign of 2002



Topographical sketch showing excavation-squares

Aims

- Preparation of a topographical map
- Selection of squares measuring 10m x 10m
- Documentation of surface structures
- Excavation of the slope area (south-west)
- Excavation of the plateau

Duration

05.05. 2002 - 26.05.2002

Acknowledgement

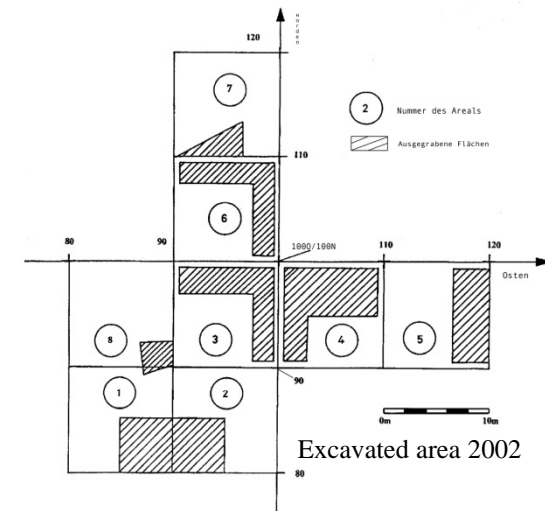
- Dr. Fawwaz al Khraysheh (DoA-Amman)
- Nasser Khassawneh (DoA-Irbid)

Team members

- Dr. Lutz Martin
- Elke Posselt, M.A.
- Katrin Bastert, M.A.
- Gerhard Reimann
- Arnd Kulla
- Nabil Qadi
- Muaffaq Batainah
- Hussein Debajah
- Elke Schmidt-Kulla
- Dia Tawalbeh
- Ute Koprivc



Situation 2002 (post-excitation)



The Campaign of 2003



Participants 2003

Team members

- Dr. Lutz Martin
- Dr. Andreas Kunz
- Katrin Bastert, M.A.
- Gerhard Reimann
- Dipl. Ing. Kai Poenitz
- Nabil Qadi
- Muaffaq Batainah
- Hussein Debajah
- Einat Khreis
- Dia Tawalbeh
- Ute Koprivc
- Irmtraud Schmalfluss

Aims

- Continuation of the „plateau-excavation“
- Laying out of a deep sounding in the western part
- Clearing of stratigraphy and phases of occupation
- Recording of architectural remains
- Interpretation of excavated structures

Duration

24.05. 2003 - 14.06.2003 (3 weeks)

Acknowledgement

- Dr. Fawwaz al Khraysheh (DoA-Amman)
- Ibrahim Zoubi (DoA-Irbid)
- Dia Tawalbeh (Local representative-DoA)



Local workmen



Situation 2003 (post excavation)



General view (from north)



The Campaign of 2004



Participants 2004

Team members

- Dr. Kai Kaniuth
- Dr. Andreas Kunz
- Katrin Bastert, M.A.
- Isabelle Ruben
- Maher Tarboush
- Nabil Qadi
- Muaffaq Batainah
- Hussein Debajah
- Ali Scotten
- Katrin Lübcke
- Ute Koprivc
- Richard Graupner
- Judith Seidel

Aims

- Continuation of the „plateau-excavation“ (NW)
- Investigation of the so called „perimeter-wall“
- Starting a step-trench in the western part of the tell
- Continuation and extension of the deep-sounding
- Final interpretation of stratigraphy and structure

Duration

17.05. 2004 - 15.06.2004 (4 weeks)

Acknowledgement

- Dr. Fawwaz al Khraysheh (DoA-Amman)
- Waji Kharasneh (DoA-Irbid)
- Jamil Alaijan (Local representative - DoA)



Situation 2004 (post excavation)



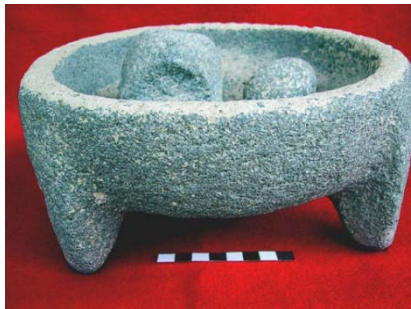
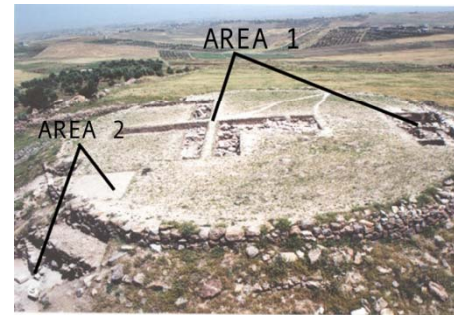
First Results 2002-04

An Iron Age farmstead discovered

The activities of 2002 indicate that **Tell Johfiyeh** and the small archaeological sites in its vicinity were used most probably as farmsteads, dating back to the 7th century B.C..

The following results were obtained:

- **Two phases** of settlement could be separated: Iron Age II and Byzantine-Omayyad era
- Remains of the latter were found exclusively on the south-western fringe of the tell and at the eastern slope. Remains of the Iron Age, however, were found all over the site and dominate the finds made so far.
- Remains of the the **Byzantine-Omayyad** era are:
 - A cistern
 - Remains of a small house
 - Two almost complete vessels of clay
 - Numerous clay sherds, glas and metal remains
- **The remains from the Iron Age** belong to domestic activities within an agricultural world:
 - Numerous fire places and cooking spots, grinding-stones, mortars, basalt pestles and scrapers, weaving-weights, spinning-whorls, a three-footed basalt-bowl with tools, „buttons“, numerous stone-vessels, several arrow-heads made of iron and needles as well as a few pearls from carneol

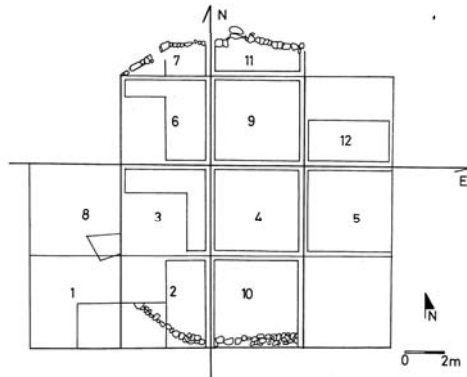


Archaeological sites in the vicinity of Tell Johfiyeh

- Founded mainly during the Iron Age
- Usually re-settled during the Byzantine and Omayyad era
- Most probably agricultural facilities
- The sites maintained relations to each other
- Tell Irbid or Tell el-Husn probably functioned as central sites

Tell Johfiyeh 2003: 2/3 of surface area already opened

Within 12 squares (10m x 10m) more than 600sqm have been opened and investigated at **Tell Johfiyeh** during our campaigns in 2002 and 2003. In **2003** a deep sounding has been started and more than 400sqm of the summit area were newly unearthed. The outcome of 2002 has been tested successfully and the knowledge of the site was increased. The following new results were obtained:



-The **stratigraphy** worked out in 2002 was confirmed by the results of 2003. Besides some poor remains of the Omayyad era the material is exclusively dating back to the Iron Age IIC (800v.Chr - 587v.Chr.) and IIB (900v.Chr. - 800v.Chr). Pieces belonging to the latter were found mainly within the deep sounding

-Almost 80% of the more than 23000 **sherds** registered in 2003 (in 2002: 17000) date back to Iron Age IIC. The remaining pieces date to the Iron Age IIB and the Omayyad period. Besides a huge amount of storage jars and cooking pots many jars, jugs, bowls, pot stands and oil lamps were found in 2003

-The excavated **remains** of the Iron Age belong again mainly to domestic activities within an agricultural world. The assemblage is dominated by pieces used for transportation, processing and storage of agricultural products:

Apart from numerous fire places, cooking spots and „taboons“ a great variety of querns, pestles (round, cornered, conical), scrapers, mortars, bowls (round, cornered) and rubbers made of basalt, as well as many weaving-weights, spinning-whorls, „buttons“, pot -stoppers and stone-vessels were found.

Furthermore the activities of 2003 at Tell Johfiyeh produced for the first time some pieces of „**luxury goods**“: These are remains of jewellery made of beads (carneol), pierced stone-discs and shells as well as a tooth of a comb (ivory ?), a fibula made of bronze, two (decorated) cosmetic-palettes made of limestone, a small (complete) basalt bowl (tripod) for the preparation of cosmetics or spices and some arrow-heads and an axe made of iron.



Main-building (from NE)

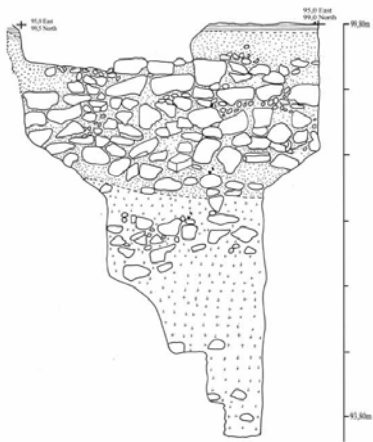
An Iron Age farmstead and its structure: first insights

The finds mentioned above and the architectural remains uncovered in **2003** give us a first clue concerning the structure of an Iron Age farmstead in north Jordan. Based on our information about the site at least two units have to be separated:

- MAIN BUILDING situated in the northern part of the tell containing kitchen, living-area and courtyard (large rooms, domestic installation, and luxury goods)
- STORAGE and PROCESSING UNITS for agricultural goods situated in the southern and eastern parts of the tell (small rooms containing silos, „taboons“ and storage jars - partly upside down-, which are connected by a semicircular passageway)

Tell Johfiyeh 2004: Excavation of the plateau area continued - Iron Age farmstead almost completely unearthed !

By investigating another 175sqm (-the Iron Age farmstead was almost completely unearthed-) the floor was fully opened for a comprehensive interpretation and reconstruction of the site and its vicinity. An analysis of the excavated material will give for the first time insights in the social structure of a farmstead and its inhabitants on the north Jordanian plateau during the late Iron Age. A reconstruction of the political conditions will be possible. The following new results were obtained:

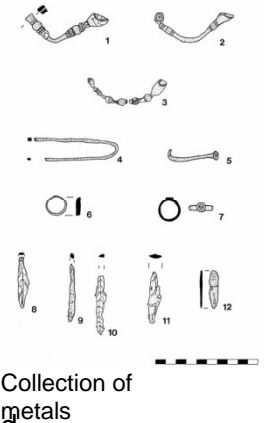


Deep sounding (E-section)

A deep sounding excavated for more than 6.50m below surface level cleared the stratigraphy of the tell and produced a pottery sequence of the site. The main occupation levels are as follows:

1. Massively built structures of a Late Bronze-/Iron Age I date (function is still unknown).
2. Massive structures used as a farmstead during the Iron Age II period.
3. Re-use of the farmstead-structures (poor remains) during Persian times (Iron Age III). Single finds of Hellenistic and Roman date.
4. Resettlement of the site (especially the fringes of the tell) and its vicinity in the Late Byzantine-/Omayyad period.

A „step-trench“ conducted on the western slope of the tell clearly showed, that the so called „perimeter wall“ was part of the Iron Age II farmstead. Almost 92% of the more than 22000 pottery sherds registered this year (in 2002: 17000; in 2003: 23000) date back to Iron Age II. The remaining pieces date mainly to the Omayyad period. Only a few pieces points to Persian, Hellenistic and Roman eras. In addition, the lower layers of the „deep-sounding“ brought to light pottery sherds of a Late Bronze- and Iron Age I date for the first time at Tell Johfiyeh.



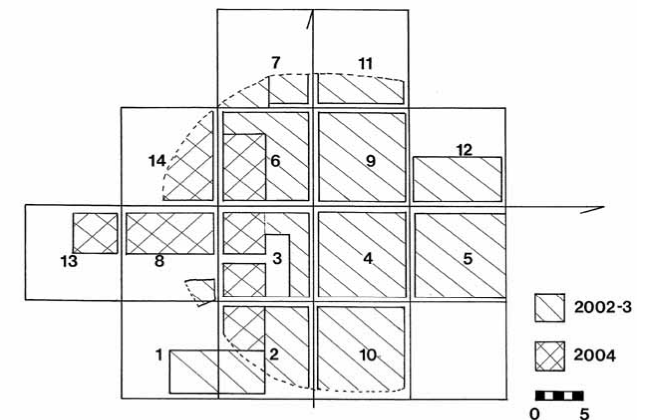
Collection of metals

Function and status of the farmstead confirmed

The areas west and southwest of the so called MAIN BUILDING were successfully excavated: the logistic and functional interrelation between the STORAGE and PROCESSING units in the south of the farmstead and the Main Building in the north were cleared. Numerous pieces of „luxury goods“ (e.g. fibulae, beads, fongerrings) found in this area confirmed in a convincing way that the inhabitants of the „Main Building“ belong to an „elite“ which was closely connected to a regional centre (Tell el Husn ?). In how far the assyrian empire, however, was involved in organizing farming activities in north Jordan during the Iron Age has still to be found out in the future.



Farmstead (seen from North)



Excavated squares 2002-2004

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