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Zeidan A. Kafafi



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NEITHER EARLY BRONZE AGE CITIES NOR STATES IN THE SOUTH OF THE LEVANT: ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE

Zeidan A. KAFABI¹

Résumé – Contrairement aux cultures urbaines et civilisations complexes à écriture de l'Égypte et de la Mésopotamie dans la seconde moitié du IV^e millénaire, il faut attendre près de mille ans pour voir se développer l'écriture en Jordanie. Par ailleurs, alors que l'on avait jusque-là identifié le système d'organisation politique comme celui de la Cité-État, certains chercheurs ont proposé récemment que le Levant Sud du III^e millénaire n'ait connu ni État ni ville. Nous suggérons ici une autre interprétation de ces questions, fondée sur le travail de terrain réalisé en Jordanie.

Abstract – Unlike the complex urban cultures and civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia, where writing developed during the second half of the 4th millennium BC, Jordan did not use writing until over a thousand years later. In addition, it has been proposed that the south Levantine Early Bronze Age polities, which have been identified as city-states, were neither cities nor states. This study aims at presenting another perspective of this problem based on archaeological fieldworks conducted in the north of Jordan.

خلاصة – أثبتت الدراسات الأثرية التي جرت في منطقة بلاد الشرق الأدنى القديم أن كلا من بلاد الرافدين ومصر شهدتا ظهور دولة المدينة، والتمدن، والمجتمعات المعقدة خلال النصف الأول من الألف الرابع قبل الميلاد، حيث عرف الناس هناك الكتابة أيضاً. ومع أن بداية ظهور الكتابة في منطقة جنوبي بلاد الشام كانت بعد حوالي ألفي عام على ظهورها في المنطقتين السابقتين، إلا أن بعض المواقع في منطقة جنوبي بلاد الشام، مثل جاوه، وخرية الزيرقون، وخرية البتراوي في الأردن شهدت تطوراً كبيراً في عمارتها المدنية (بيوت ومباني إدارية)، وتحصيناتها (أسوار وبوابات)، والدينية (معابد خربة الزيرقون). كما وعلى سبيل المثال، تبع موقع خربة الزيرقون عدداً من القرى الأصغر مساحة. لكن هذا لم يكن إثباتاً ودليلاً كافياً لدى بعض الباحثين على وجود مدن أو دول خلال مرحلة العصر البرونزي المبكر (حوالي 3500 – 2000 ق.م) في منطقة جنوبي بلاد الشام، بل ذهبوا إلى نفي وجودها. ونحاول في هذا البحث تقديم الأدلة على عكس ما ذهب إليه هؤلاء الباحثين، معتمدين على قرائن وأدلة من المسوحات الأثرية التي أجريت في المنطقة المحيطة بخربة الزيرقون، ودراسة إحصائية لمواقع العصر البرونزي المبكر في شمالي الأردن

INTRODUCTION

This contribution covers a period of 1,500 years spanning from the middle of the 4th to the end of the 3rd millennia BC (ca. 3500-2000 BC). It discusses a variety of sites situated in an environmentally diverse region in Jordan, from east to west: the Badiya, the hill country and the Jordan Valley. The Early Bronze Age in the Levant represents an era which witnessed the development of complex society. Archaeological studies conducted at different sites and regions in this area has showed sometimes dramatic social and economic change throughout the period, which progressed from the emergence of

1. Kafafi, Zeidan A., Department of Archaeology, Yarmuk University, Irbid, Jordan. zeidan.kafafi@gmail.com

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towns through the growth and collapsed of urban centers ². Moreover, it has been proposed that the Early Bronze Age in Jordan, as a part of the eastern Mediterranean region, witnessed the appearance of the earliest walled towns and the invention of fortified cities. Schaub and Chesson add, “there were many new elements to living in a fortified settlement, including the negotiation of living in a densely populated place; organizing one’s daily schedule to include trips into and out of the massive walls to herd, farm, hunt, or trade; increasing social differentiation especially at the group level; and integrating the city’s bureaucratic framework into daily life, including issues of sanitation, payment of tithes or taxes into communal storage, and entrusting oneself and one’s family to the town’s governance structures” ³.

The appearance of towns in the EBII parallels the First Dynasty in Egypt, and the subsequent period the EBIII was marked by the growth of numerous sedentary communities. Moreover, the EBII-III periods are considered the first major expression of Canaanite urbanism ⁴.

However, in recent years, this prevailing view of the origin of Early Bronze Age society has been thoroughly modified (or challenged?). Some scholars believe that urbanisation was introduced to this part of the world by newcomers, while others argue for local development, though they do not exclude external influences.

The Early Bronze Age IV (ca. 2300-2000 BC) has been referred to as an interlude of non-sedentary pastoral life between the town urbanism of the EBII-III and the cities of the Middle Bronze Age. The *tell* sites in Jordan had been abandoned, with the exception of very rare sites such as Khirbet Iskander, although regional EBIV settlement patterns imply extensive use of dry farming land ⁵. It has also been proposed that the inhabitants of the EBIV adopted a new economic strategy and turned to semi-nomadic pastoralism. This hypothesis has been combined with the literary evidence documenting the expansion of the semi-nomadic “Amorites”, though this has been disputed by some scholars ⁶. P. Lapp suggested that the source of the newcomers to Palestine during the EBIV was the north ⁷.

The aim of this paper is to present a study of the primary Early Bronze Age sites either surveyed or excavated in the area extending from the Zerqa Basin in the south to the Yarmouk River in the north, and to understand the social change that happened in this region during this period.

NEITHER CITIES NOR STATES?

In an article published by Savage, Falconer and Harrison ⁸ discussing the origin of cities and states in the southern Levant, they conclude that there was neither cities nor states during the Early Bronze Age. Their argument is based on a reconstruction of pre- or proto-historic settlement patterns, from which they infer the political organization of whole societies. They maintain that there must be centralized political control and a hierarchical settlement system in place if a site was to have belonged to a city-state. In addition, they assume a linear evolutionary progression from pre-state chiefdom to the state ⁹.

Philip ¹⁰ has also discussed the idea of the existence of city-states during the Early Bronze Age. In addition to critiquing existing models and theories, he has also suggested several other alternative interpretations, preferring terms such as chiefdom and middle-range societies instead of city-state.

2. FALCONER *et al.* 2007, p. 261.

3. SCHAUB & CHESSON 2007, p. 245.

4. JOFFE 1993.

5. FALCONER 1994, p. 124.

6. RICHARD & LONG 2007, p. 275.

7. LAPP 1970, p. 120.

8. SAVAGE *et al.* 2007.

9. SAVAGE *et al.* 2007, p. 285. The data set used by the above mentioned researchers was based on the information published in 1994 in the Jordan Antiquities Data Information System (JADIS) volume, where 8,800 sites were registered (see *JADIS*). Moreover, 2,000 sites have been added to these sites in 2003 (SAVAGE 2004). Nevertheless, the extracted information mentioned in SAVAGE, FALCONER & HARRISON 2007, p. 286 are derived from 10,400 sites.

10. PHILIP 2001, p. 165-166.

Before going into further discussion about the appearance of both cities and states during the Early Bronze Age in the southern Levant in general and Jordan in particular, the following views should be explained.

First, scholars have never agreed upon a specific definition for what is a city. Some have sought to situate south Levantine city-states within a wider theoretical study, and have argued that a city should contain public architecture, including defensive structures and administrative buildings, evidence of growth of social, political and settlement hierarchies, and various systems of economic specialization¹¹. Flannery¹², Wright¹³ and Service¹⁴ assumed that the presence of regional settlement systems and sociopolitical hierarchies were necessary by-products of state formation.

Second, most if not all of the information studied by scholars and related to the subject under discussion are derived either from small scale and a limited number of excavations or/and surveys. The number of excavated Early Bronze Age sites (**table 3**) located to the north of the az-Zarqa River and including the Badiya, the hill country and the Jordan Valley regions do not exceed 55. It might also be cited here, that some of these sites were explored decades ago, which means that excavation, registration and recording methods were different from those applied in modern times. This is reflected in the interpretation of the excavated material culture. For example, few decades ago scholars used to read the grain wash pottery as EBI, however, Genz¹⁵ considered this type of EBII tradition. Moreover, the surveyors are of different scientific backgrounds and have several scientific interests and this is reflected by the collecting of materials at the surveyed sites and the analyses have been undertaken by them.

Third, E. Banning¹⁶ argued that “the conducted archaeological surveys in the Near East have encountered many methodological and theoretical problems but they show promise for addressing previously unexamined questions in the history and prehistory of the Near East”. He added that surveying techniques that are highly productive are different from one natural region to another.

As a matter of fact, most if not all of the surveys discussed below were conducted using field walking techniques, while the Wadi Ziqlab Survey followed a different methodology when exploring the settlement patterns in that region. There, the surveyors took advantage of the different environmental conditions to conduct a subsurface survey of one stretch of wadi floor by small soundings¹⁷.

Fourth, the environment in which the first cities were established in southern Mesopotamia was completely different from that in the southern Levant. Thus, when identifying a city this aspect must be taken into consideration. For example, scholars¹⁸ have argued that despite the evidence of large EBIII architectural complexes, there is nothing resemblance the administrative complexes found in Mesopotamia (Middle and Lower Euphrates regions). We agree completely with Philip that the most ancient cities have been excavated in the Euphrates’ basin, such as Habuba Kabira and Uruk, and have produced written documents which are still unattested in the southern Levant. Nevertheless, we think that scholars should not ignore other solid factors that point to the appearance of complex societies during the Early Bronze Age. Sites in Jordan such as Jawa and Khirbet ez-Zeiraqun were enclosed by city-walls, and had public architecture, including temples and administrative buildings, water systems, and have also produced stamp impressions, clearly part of an administrative recording system. The people of Jawa were able to build a sophisticated hydrological system, the earliest such system in the region, which enabled them to survive the extreme aridity and warm conditions of the Badiya. It may be also acceptable to say that people in the southern Levant stored their products in jars built of clay rather than in silos, as was the case in southern Mesopotamia.

11. ESSE 1989; MIROSCHEJJI 1989.

12. FLANNERY 1972.

13. WRIGHT 1977.

14. SERVICE 1975.

15. GENZ 2000.

16. BANNING 1996.

17. BANNING 1996, p. 38; BANNING & FAWCETT 1983; BANNING *et al.* 1987.

18. PHILIP 2001, p. 176.

Fifth, pottery dating is the main criteria for dating excavated and surveyed sites. For example, the so-called “Grain Wash” or “Band slip Ware” pottery is dated to the Early Bronze Age, which has been described as a particular style of red painted decoration and considered for a long time to be a diagnostic for the EBI period in Jordan and northern Palestine¹⁹. However, recent publication of the excavated pottery assemblage at Khirbet ez-Zeirāqun has indicated that this type also dated to the EBIII²⁰. This means that sites produced such a type of pottery, either excavated or surveyed, ought to be ranging in date from the EBI through the EBIII. Thus, and in such a case, and in studying settlement patterns based on the results of the published surveys, one has to go through and restudy all collected Early Bronze Age pottery sherds.

To sum up, whenever discussing concepts and terms of either cities or states one should take geographical location and environment into consideration. To explain, the Levant consists of different geographical and environmental zones: Mediterranean Coast, High Land and the Desert and has only small rivers. In the meantime, and to compare with, Mesopotamia has two major rivers (Euphrates and Tigris) and the fertile land in the south. To discuss, in modern times, the millions of cities spread all over the continents are different in types and style, and this was the case in ancient times.

Below, I present a detailed study of the results of excavated or surveyed Early Bronze Age sites in the northern part of Jordan in an attempt to clarify the type and nature of sites belonging to this period.

RESULTS OF SURVEYS AND EXCAVATIONS

Sites which may be described as cities, towns, villages and camps and dated to the Bronze Ages were excavated mostly all over Jordan. Also, one may argue that at several sites a transitional period has been detected. Examples are: the continuity from the Chalcolithic to the following Early Bronze Age I. As for the Early Bronze Age, this is obvious in the archaeological material published from Tell Um Hammad and Bab edh-Dhra' in the Jordan Rift²¹.

After publishing the *Jordan Archaeological Database Information System* (known as JADIS) in 1994, more surveys have been conducted and more new Early Bronze Age sites were registered. For the purpose of this article we found ourselves obliged to study again all published survey reports discussing gathered information from the area located to the north of the ez-Zarqa Basin. The results of the surveys suggested an occupation from the EBI through EBIV²² (**fig. 1**).

The results of the archaeological fieldworks conducted in the area situated to the north of the Zarqa Basin showed that it was continuously occupied from the Chalcolithic to the Early Bronze Age periods. Sites belonging to the Chalcolithic period were found in the Jordan Valley such as Tell esh-Shuneh North, Jabal Sartaba, Pella, Abu Habil, Abu Hamid and Kataret es-Samra, Umm Hammad²³; and in

19. PHILIP & BAIRD 2000, p. 3.

20. GENZ 2000; KAMLAH 2000a.

21. BETTS 1992a; HELMS 1984; SCHAUB & RAST 1989.

22 N. Glueck conducted during the first half of the 20th c. the most intensive archaeological survey in Jordan and registered EB sites distributed all over the Jordanian geographical zones (GLUECK 1951). In addition, S. Mittmann who surveyed the area located to the north of the az-Zarqa River reported that he visited 346 sites, a number of 47 sites out of this total produced material cultures dated either to all the three sub-phases of the EBA I, II and III, or only to one or two of them (MITTMANN 1970, p. 256-264). Furthermore, several other surveys were conducted at several areas in north of Jordan, especially in the wadis running such as Yarmouk (MELLAART 1962; CONTENSON 1964; KERESTES *et al.* 1977-78); Wadi el-'Arab (HANBURY-TENISON 1985, p. 292; KERESTES *et al.* 1977-1978; MITTMANN 1970; GLUECK 1951); Jerash Vicinity (SAPIN 1992) and Wadi el-'Ajib (BETTS *et al.* 1995). Several surveys have been conducted in the vicinity of the city Irbid in north Jordan (GLUECK 1951; MITTMANN 1970; KHOURY *et al.* 2006). In addition to the archaeological site Tell Irbid, many other EB sites were reported, mapped and surveyed by the surveyors. It is of an importance to mention that some of the EB sites are located in areas adjacent to dolmen fields, such as Tell Kufir Yaba (KHOURY *et al.* 2006).

23. KAFABI 1982.

the mountainous regions such as at es-Sayyeh ²⁴ (22) and Sal ²⁵.

Some of these sites such as Shuneh North, Pella, Umm Hammad and Sal continued to be occupied during from the Chalcolithic through the Early Bronze Age I.

In the area extending from the city Irbid in the west and Wadi esh-Shallaleh in the east, also several Early Bronze age sites were registered ²⁶. The site of Sal has been excavated and produced archaeological material dated to the EBI ²⁷.

In 1989 J. Kamlah conducted a survey in the area surrounding the site Kh. ez-Zeiraqun and registered 31 sites. 12 of these sites are belonging to the Early Bronze Age ²⁸. It may be argued that this survey may help in understanding the nature of settlement during the Early Bronze Age in Wadi esh-Shallaleh region since it presents information about the area and the date of the surveyed sites, as explained in the table below.

Actually, no exact EB dates have been presented by Kamlah. Nevertheless, the surveyor published a map indicating the type of relationship existed among Early Bronze Age sites located in Wadi esh-Shalleh. It proves that they were large, medium and small sites existed side by side in this region during the Early Bronze Age. In his discussion of the results of the survey, Kamlah explained the setting and the exact periods of occupation of these Early Bronze Age sites ²⁹ (table 1).

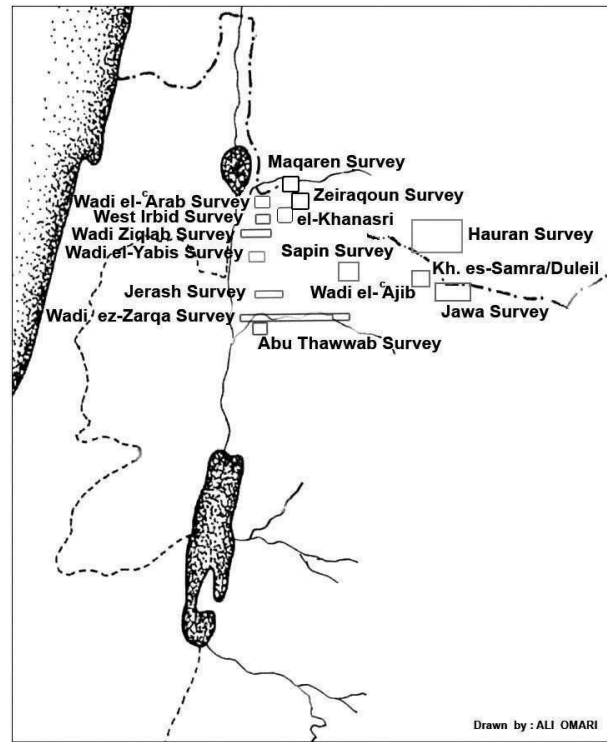


Figure 1. The Archaeological Surveys conducted in North Jordan (© A. Omari).

Site Name	Period	Size (in ha)	Remarks
Tell es-Subba	Chalco./EB	10	
Esh-Shallāf (South)	EB	2,5	
'Ain er-Rahūb	EB	?	
Khirbet er-Rahūb	Chalco./EB	Scatter over 10	
	EB	10	
Tell el-Mu'llaqa	EB	1.5	
Sāl, Kh. el-Bayad	Chalco./ EB	30	
	EB	10	
Khirbet Yariha esh-shamaliyyeh	EB/MB	30	
Khirbet el-Bayad	EB	9-10	
Rujm el-Qadī	EB	6-7	
'Arqūb edh-Dhaheh/-el-Hujaij	Chalco./EB	8	Outside Eez-Zeiraqoun survey region
Edh-Dhanaba (Rujm Sa'ab, Debsa)	EBI	38	Outside Eez-Zeiraqoun survey region

Table 1. Early Bronze Age sites in ez-Zeiraqoun' Region

24. CANEVA *et al* 2001.

25. KAFABI & VIEWEGER 2000; 2001.

26. KAMLAH 2000a; KAMLAH 2000b.

27. KAFABI & VIEWEGER 2000; 2001

28. The sites Tell es-Subba (Chalco-EB), esh-Shallaf South (EB), 'Ain er-Rahub (EB), Kh. Er-Rahub (Chal./EB and EB), Tell el-Muallaqa (EB), Sal, Kh. El-Bayad (Chal. And EBI), Kh. El-Bayad (EB), Rujm el-Qadi (EB), Arqub edh-Dhaheh/el-Hujaj (Chal./EB), ed-Dhanaba (Rujm Sa'ab/Debsa) (EB).

29. KAMLAH 2000b.

As a result of this survey, Khirbet ez-Zeiraqun may represent one of the urban centers founded to the northeast of the city Irbid during the Early Bronze Ages. As regard to the excavators, this site considered to start as a small village which developed into a town during the EBII and to a city during the EBIII. An argument which is completely acceptable, despite the fact that we think Khirbet ez-Zeiraqun may have started even earlier than the EBI³⁰.

In 1998-1999 a German-Jordanian team conducted a regional survey in the steppe area located in the vicinity of Tell Khanasiri, situated in mid-way between the cities Irbid in the north and Al-Mafraq in the southeast. Unfortunately, the surveyors did not register any Early Bronze Age site from this region³¹.

Several other surveys were conducted in the area locate to the east of the city Mafraq, in Wadi el-'Ajib³² and in the Syrian Hauran region³³. There several Early Bronze Age sites were registered and excavated.

In September 2005, a French-Jordano team surveyed the area located west of the city Irbid extending from Wadi al-'Arab in the north and the old pipe-line in the south, Wadi al-Ghafar in the east and the villages of Kufr 'An and Dayr as-Si'na in the west, which measures 71 square kilometres in an area. Only 10 Early Bronze Age sites were registered in the survey³⁴.

However, the site Tall Kufr Yuba (Site 15.1 in WIS) has been visited several times by the author of this article who collected pottery sherds dated from the Chalcolithic through the EBIII periods. Tall Kufr Yuba also was previously surveyed by N. Glueck³⁵.

As it is well known, during the eighties and nineties of the 20th c., several archaeological surveys have been undertaken on the plateau area surrounding the running areas of the wadis, which drain into the Jordan River such as Wadi el-'Arab, Wadi Ziqlab, Wadi el-Yabis and Wadi Kufrinjah. In 1981, 1986 and 1987 the survey team of Wadi Ziqlab conducted several sounding at sites recognized by the team³⁶. One of the visited Early Bronze Age sites (WZ60, Khirbet Mahrama) has been sounded and yielded grain wash pottery sherds in pure levels³⁷. In 1989 G. Palumbo, J. Mabry, and I. Kuijt³⁸ surveyed the flanks of Wadi el-Yabis registering few sites related to the Early Bronze Ages such as Helmet esh-Shariyeh (WY 120).

The vicinity of the city of Jerash, located just to the north of the Wadi az-Zarqa witnessed several surveys³⁹. Thirty of the 59 registered sites by Hanbury-Tenison, yielded Early Bronze Age material culture. The sites numbers 23 ('Ain Qneyah EBI and EBII), 28 (Khirbet 'Ain, EBII and EBIII), and 45 (Jabal Mutawwaq, EBI) seem to be large settlements⁴⁰. The site of Jabal Mutawwaq dated to the EBI considered as one of the large villages dated to this period⁴¹. More Early Bronze Age sites were recorded in the Wadi ez-Zarqa Basin in the surroundings of the sites 'Ayn Ghazal⁴² and Jebel Abu Thawwab⁴³ and to the east of the city az-Zarqa⁴⁴ and in the vicinity of Khirbet es-Samra/Wadi Duleil⁴⁵.

30. The author of this article supervised part of the Lower City excavations at Kh. Ez-Zeiraqun. In that portion of the city caves were found under the EB constructions and have been suggested that were used even earlier the time of the city.

31. BARTLE *et al.* 2002.

32. BETTS *et al.* 1995.

33. BRAEMER 1984; 1993.

34. KHOURY *et al.* 2006. However, this area, or parts of it, has been previously studied by other surveyors: GLUECK 1951, MITTMANN 1970, HANBURY-TENISON 1984 and LAMPRICHS & KAFABI 2000.

35. GLUECK 1951, Site No. 81, 82.

36. BANNING & FAWCETT 1983; BANNING *et al.* 1987.

37. BANNING *et al.* 1987, p. 335.

38. PALUMBO *et al.* 1990, p. 101-102.

39. HANBURY-TENISON 1987.

40. HANBURY-TENISON 1987, p. 154-157.

41. FERNANDEZ-TRESGUERREZ VELASCO 2005.

42. SIMMONS & KAFABI 1988.

43. GORDON & KNAUF 1987; KAFABI 2001.

44. CANEVA *et al.* 2001.

45. SAPIN 1992.

To sum up, we present below two tables showing the major registered EB sites located to the north of Wadi az-Zarqa (**table 2**).

	EBI	EBII	EBIII	EBIV
Jordan Valley region	*Abu el-Kharaz Kataret es-Samra Shuneh North Pella Tell el-Handaquq North Tell el-Handaquq South Tell el-Maqbara Tell es-Sa'idiyyeh Umm Hammad	Abu el-Kharaz Kataret es-Samra Pella Tell el-Handaquq North Tell el Handaquq South Tell es-Sa'idiyyeh	Shuneh North Tell el Handaquq South	Pella Tell el-Handaquq North Umm Hammad Tell el-Hayyat Tiwal esh-Sharqi
Hill country	Jebel Mutawwaq Kh. Batrawi? Kh. ez-Zeiracun Kh. Mahrama (WZ60) Sal Tell el-Fukhar Tell e-Husn Tell Irbid Tell Maqlub Tell Zar'a Abu Thawwab	Kh. Batrawi Kh. ez-Zeiracun Kh. Mahrama (WZ60) Tell el-Fukhar Jebel er-Rahil Tell e-Husn Tell Maqlub	Kh. Batrawi Kh. ez-Zeiracun Tell el-Fukhar Tell e-Husn Tell Maqlub	Kh. Batrawi Kh. ez-Zeiracun Tell el-Fukhar Jebel er-Rahil Tell e-Husn
Badiya Region	Jawa Tell el-Hibr			Jawa
Total	22	13	7	11
???	Jawa+Villages 1 large fortified site (Jawa)	Villages (Batrawi and Zeiracun)	Villages+cities 2 large fortified sites (Batrawi and Zeiracun)	Villages and Tombs

Table 2. Early Bronze Age Sites in the North of Jordan.

The following table (**table 3**) representing the distribution of Early Bronze Age Sites according to regions:

EB sites in the Jordan Valley*	EB sites in the mountainous regions*	Number of Badiya Sites*
EBI = 9	EBI = 11	EBI = 2
EBII = 6	EBII = 7	EBII = 0
EBIII = 2	EBIII = 5	EBIII = 0
EBIV = 5	EBIV = 6	EBIV = 1
Total 20	Total 29	Total 3

Table 3. Distribution of the Early Bronze Sites According to the Geographical Region.

CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY

Conducted archaeological excavations and surveys in Jordan pointed to an increase in number of Early Bronze Age sites. This may have stemmed from an increase in the population, or may indicate that people were relocated within the same area or territory. The best example could be seen from the site of Abu Hamid ⁴⁶, that was perhaps left by the second half of the 4th millennium to other areas further to the east that are located on the foothills of the Irbid and Ajlun Mountains as at the sites of Tell Handaquq North ⁴⁷ and Tell Abu Al-Kharaz ⁴⁸.

In other words, this may indicate in some cases, a shift of the settlements from the Valley to the top of the hills flanking it. In this connection we may also propose that the same happened for the people who lived at Teleilat Ghassul: they may have moved to other areas, such as to the east as to the Madaba area ⁴⁹, or even to the west to Jericho or to the southwest to the Negev area.

The table below (**table 4**) shows that many of the Early Bronze Age I sites excavated in the south of the Levant were founded in the latest phase of the Chalcolithic period and continued to be occupied in the Early Bronze Age. In a few cases the sites developed, in the following EBII and EBIII periods into urban centres such as Tell Abu Al-Kharaz and Tell Handaquq in the Jordan Valley, Bab edh-Dhra' in the Southern Ghors, and Kh. Ez-Zeirāqun and Tell 'Umeiri in the hill country region. Many explored EB I sites were abandoned by the end of this period, although this is still unexplained but it may be due to the concentration of population at the EBII emerging towns.

	Abu Thawwab	Abu Kharaz	'Ai	Arad	Bab edh-Dhra	Handaquq	Jawa	Jericho	Shuneh (N)	Faráh (N)	Um Hammad
EBII											
EBIB											
EBIA											
Chal.											

Table 4. Excavated Chalcolithic/Early Bronze Age sites in South of Levant

An analytical study of the published results of the conducted excavations and surveys is presented below. The aim of this brief study is to show the type/s of settlement patterns attested during each sub-phase of the Early Bronze Ages I-III.

EBI IN NORTH JORDAN

The registered Early Bronze Age I sites located to the north of the Wadi ez-Zarqa Basin are 22 in numbers (**fig. 2**). Three clusters of EBI sites are recognizable, the first in the Jordan Valley, the second in the area located to the east-northeast of the city Irbid and the third in the Wadi az-Zarqa region. The size

46. DOLLFUS & KAFABI 1993.

47. MABRY 1989.

48. FISCHER 2000; 1993.

49. HARRISON 1997.

and nature of these Early Bronze Age I sites indicate that they were villages distributed all over the northern part of Jordan. Actually, these settlements were in contact with each other as is seen with those extended in the Wadi ez-Zarqa Basin ⁵⁰.

The site of Jawa, situated in the area known as Harrat er-Rajil, in Wadi Rajil, must be singled out amongst all other Early Bronze Age I sites in Jordan due to its location in the black desert, being the only fortified EBI site, the oldest water supply system that included dams and artificial reservoirs and the densely packed domestic quarters ⁵¹. To build this, it would have demanded a comprehensive knowledge of building techniques and leadership. The excavator of the site recognized that the upper town had at least five major gates surrounded by chambers and with internal buttresses ⁵².

To sum up, generally speaking the EBI period (ca. 3500-3100) is characterized by the dominance of the village type settlement pattern, except the site of Jawa which may be considered as a fortified site occupied by a complex society. Helms, the excavator argued that the inhabitants of Jawa probably originated from an area outside Jordan ⁵³. Here, we may suggest that this origin of those occupants was Middle and Lower Euphrate in general, and from the region extending from Mari in the north to the Arabian Gulf in the south, in particular. They mastered the hydrologic techniques and new how to deal with the pastoralists in the surroundings.

EBII IN NORTH JORDAN

During the Early Bronze Age II, 13 villages and towns were registered in the area located to the north of the Zarqa Basin (**fig. 3**). Most of these villages were established during the EBI and continued to be occupied through the EBII. The majority of the explored sites located in the Jordan Valley such as at Abu el-Kharaz, Kataret

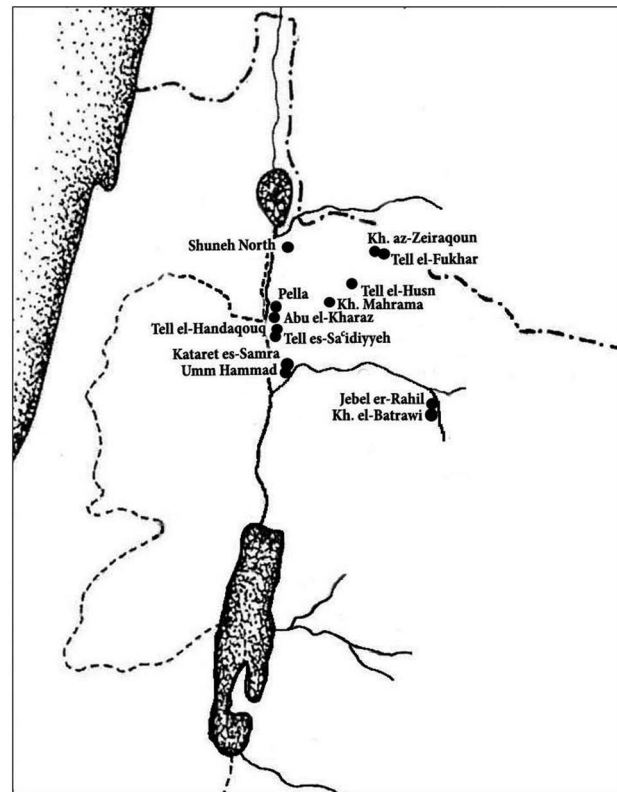


Figure 2. The distribution of the EBI Sites in North (© A. O.).

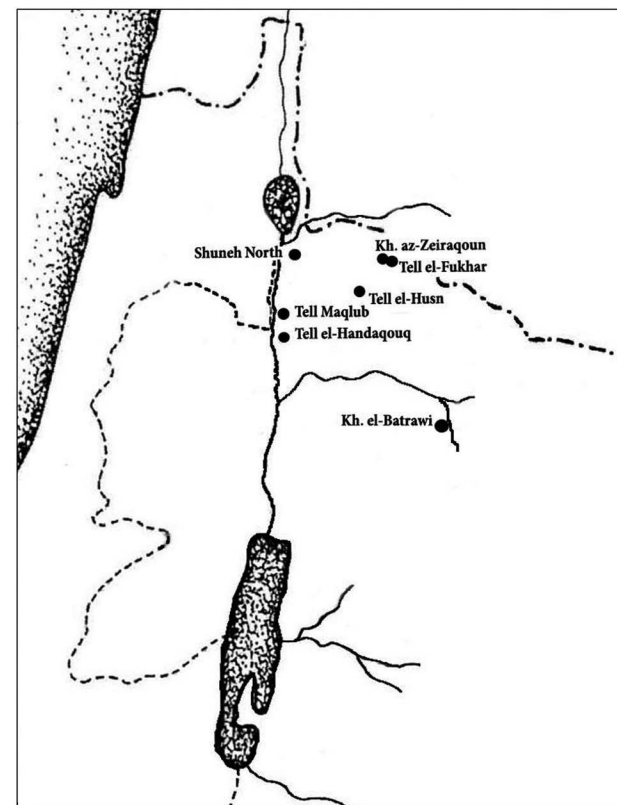


Figure 3. EBII Sites in North Jordan (© A. O.).

50. KAFABI 2008.

51. BETTS 1991; HELMS 1981.

52. HELMS 1977, p. 29; 1975, p. 22-36.

53. HELMS 1981.

es-Samra, Pella, Tell es-Sa'idiyyeh and Umm Hammad were left by the end of the EBII. Only two sites, Shuneh North and Tell el-Handaouq north, continued to be settled through the EBIII.

In the hill country, the situation is completely different in a way that all EBII sites continued to be settled through the EBII and EBIII periods. In addition, new established sites in the EBII such as Jebel er-Ruheil were recognized.

To explain, it may be deduced that by the end of the EBII most villages established in the Jordan Valley were left, and then people moved towards the east and gathered in some of the previously erected EBII villages, where some of which were developed during the EBIII into large towns and cities, as proven by archaeological evidence. Best example can be looked at the sites Khirbet Ez-Zeiraqun and Khirbet Batrawi.

EBIII IN NORTH JORDAN

During the Early Bronze Age III the number of registered sites became less than during the Early Bronze Ages I and II. For example only four sites belonging to this period were recognized, yet, one in the north (Tell esh-Shuneh North) and three others center of the Valley (Al Ghawr Al Awsat) (Tell Maqlub, Tell el-Handaouq North and Tell el-Handaouq South) (**fig. 4**).

In the meantime, villages in the north (Kh. ez-Zeiraqun) and in the Zarqa Basin (Kh. Batrawi) continued to develop into large and small centers during this period, consequently. The excavators of both sites considered the first site is representing a city, meanwhile the second as a town. In explaining the term city, we agree with H. J. Nissen⁵⁴, who argues that it consists of a center and surroundings. And the people lived in the surroundings were dependent on the central functions.

However, the results of the archaeological excavations conducted at both sites showed that they were enclosed by city walls and occupied a strategic large area overwhelming the surrounded regions. In addition to this, the results of the excavations at Kh. ez-Zeiraqun⁵⁵ indicated that it was built according to a plan (**fig. 5**). Streets separating between the housing units, the common buildings, such as the temple and an administrative structure were built on top the Upper City and separated from the domestic construction in the Lower City is an indication of the type of the social life of the people lived at the site during this period. Moreover, the excavated temple, stamp impressions, and the hydraulic system may point to a complex society lived at Kh. ez-Zeiraqun during the EBIII.

It seems that Kh. ez-Zeiraqun faced the same fate as the other EBIII cities by the end of the EBIII when it was abundant and only few pottery sherds related to the EBIV were collected from the surface of the site. This may indicate the nature of the site changed from a city to a camp that was used by a group of pastorals who lived in the Wadi Shallaleh area.

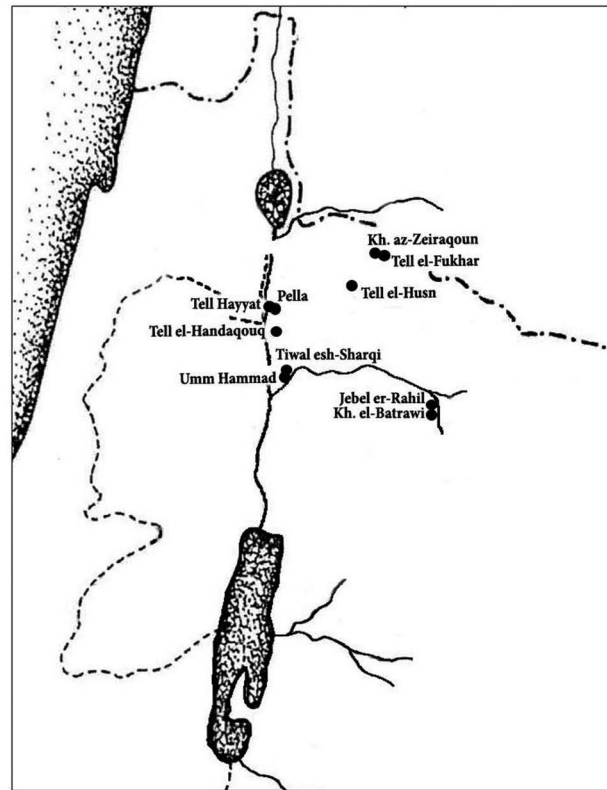


Figure 4. EBIII Sites in North Jordan (© A. O.).

54. NISSEN 1988, p. 10.

55. IBRAHIM & MITTMANN 1989; 1994.

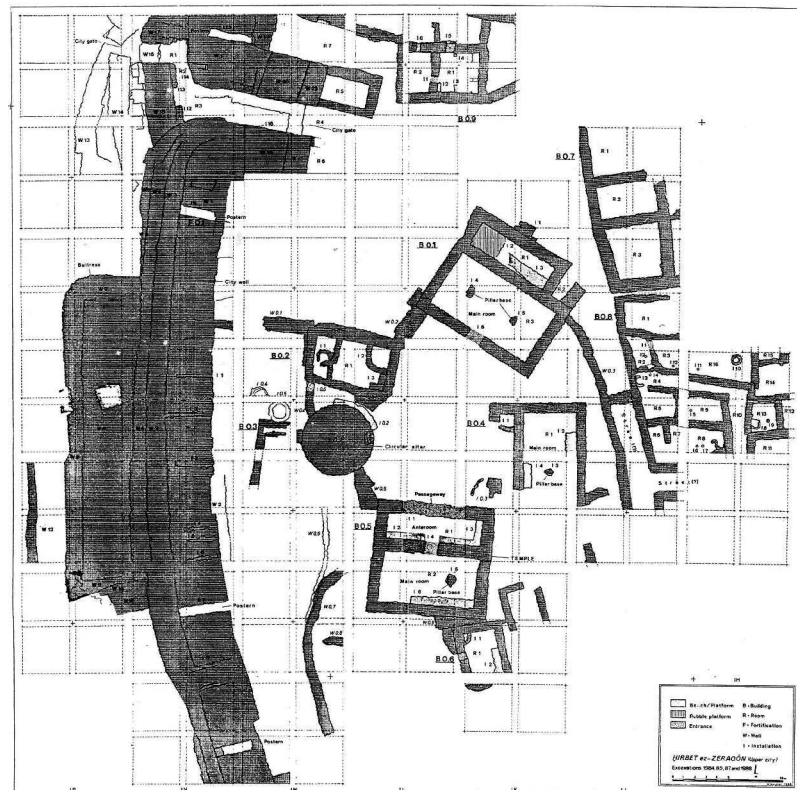


Figure 5. The excavated Upper City at Kh. ez-Zeiraqun (after Ibrahim and Mittmann 1989).

As regard to Kh. Batrawi the excavators of the site mentioned that it continued to be occupied as a village. Extensive archaeological remains belonging to the EBIV were found ⁵⁶.

CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, the above mentioned evidence helps in understanding the type of settlements and the nature of societies lived in Northern Jordan during the Early Bronze Age. These archaeological aspects may indicate the presence of large urban centers, such as at Jawa, Khirbet ez-Zeiraqun and Kh. Batrawi. One of these centers (Kh. ez-Zeiraqun) had all the qualifications and characteristics of a city. Thus, we may present here a different interpretation of the Early Bronze Age settlement patterns of Northern Jordan, which may contradict the views of my three distinguished colleagues. Our claim is based on the following factors.

- Archaeological fieldworks conducted at sites in the southern Levant prove that there was a continuation from the Chalcolithic to the Early Bronze Age I.
- The sites of Jawa (EBIA), Khirbet ez-Zeiraqun (EBII-III), and Khirbet Batrawi (EBII-III) were fortified during the EB I-EB III periods.
- A temple complex dated to the EB III has been unearthed at Kh. ez-Zeiraqun.
- Excavated archaeological remains such as stamp seals and impressions, and the hydraulic systems excavated at Jawa and Kh. Ez-Zeiraqun point to complex societies.
- Small Early Bronze Age sites were surveyed in the vicinity of large central urban sites such as Kh. ez-Zeiraqun, which infers that hierarchical forms of political and social structures existed during this period.

56. NIGRO 2006; 2006a.

