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Dossier : Recherches actuelles sur l'occupation des périphéries désertiques de la Jordanie aux périodes protohistoriques

Foreword

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FOREWORD

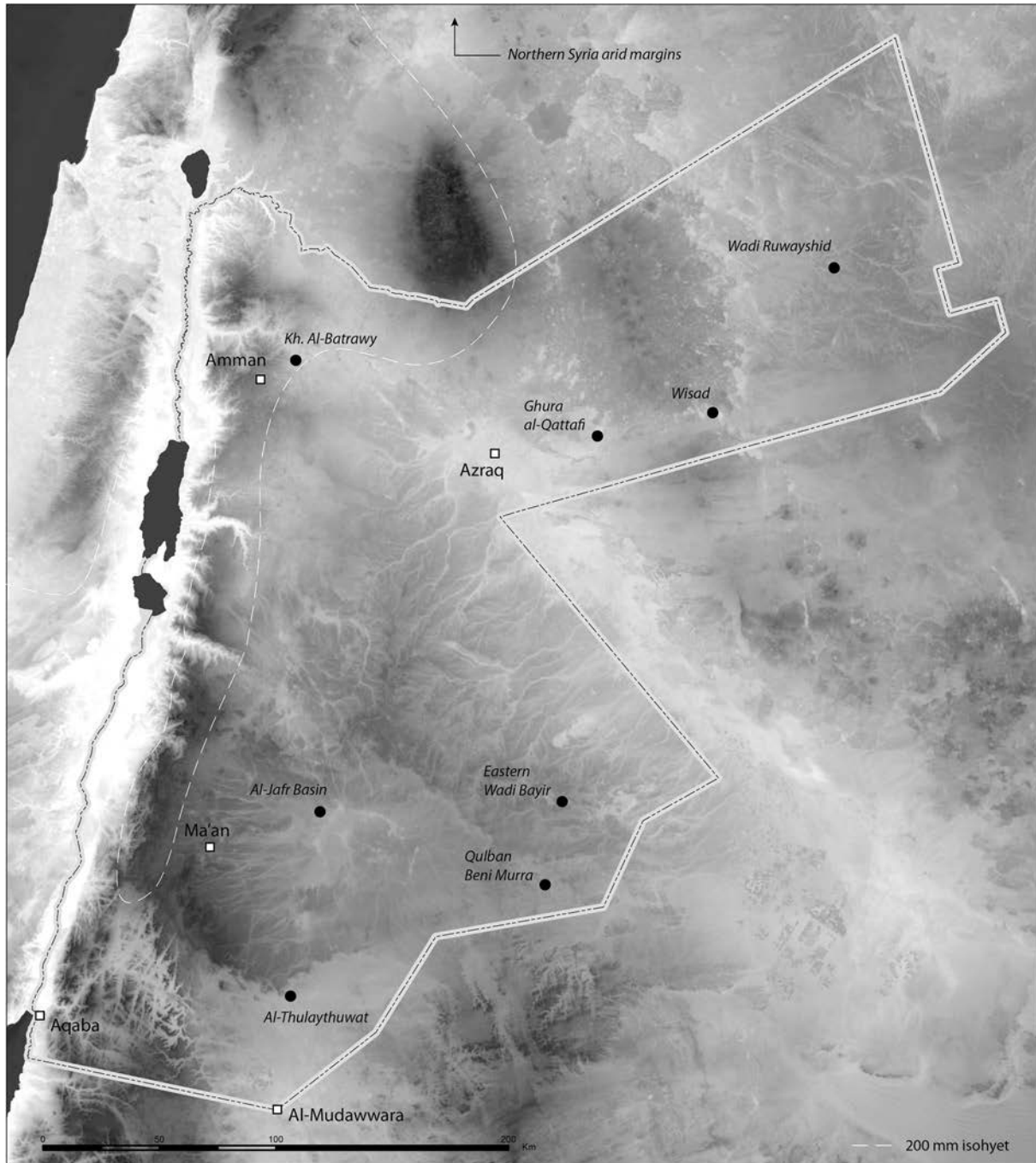
This file includes eight articles stemming from contributions presented during a workshop organized in July 2011 within the framework of a cooperation established between the French Institute of the Near East and the Al-Hussein Bin Talal University in Jordan. The collaboration comes within the scope of a scientific program codirected by W. Abu-Azizeh and M. B. Tarawneh, combining the study of two desert areas (the sector of Al-Thulaythuwat to the south of Al-Jafr Basin and the Eastern Wadi Bayir sector) in a complementary and comparative approach to the protohistoric occupation of the Southeastern Badia of Jordan. The workshop, which benefited from the support of the Cultural Service of the French Embassy in Jordan, took place in the Petra College for Archaeology and Tourism of the University in Wadi Musa.

The aim of this scientific event was to review the current research concerning the protohistory of the desert regions of Jordan. In the Near East these regions, bounded by the isohyet of 200 mm of annual precipitation, constitute peripheral zones, as regards to their environment, but also as regards to the archaeological research, which for long time focused exclusively on the study of the zones of sedentary population, in areas of more favorable climate.

The recent multiplication —during only a decade— of archaeological projects in totally unexplored territories of the desert peripheries of Jordan, provides invaluable material for our understanding of a still underestimated occupation phenomenon. These data allow us to make comparisons with the results available from other desert zones of the Near East, as the arid margins of Northern Syria for instance. This research brings a fundamental contribution to our knowledge of the critical phase of early developments of pastoral nomadic subsistence strategies, from the Late Neolithic and through the Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age periods.

This file constitutes a first preliminary synthesis on current work undertaken in these desert areas, allowing us to bring into light the dynamism of such research programs. It offers an unprecedented compilation of very rich data that reflect various aspects of this protohistoric utilization in the desert peripheries. Investigated themes, which translate the stakes in these new orientations of the archaeological research, concern funerary aspects as well as settlement patterns and subsistence strategies, the definition of the chronological sequence, the exploitation of natural resources, and the question of the interaction between nomads and sedentary societies.

Les régions et sites mentionnés dans le dossier thématique.



Location of the sites and regions concerned by the articles of the thematic file
« Current Research on Protohistoric Occupation in Peripheral Desert Areas of Jordan ».