Tell er-Rumeith in Northern Jordan: Some Archaeological and Historical Observations

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Résumé. *Cet article s'intéresse à Tell er-Rumeith en Jordanie septentrionale, l'un des sites identifiés à la ville biblique de Ramoth-de-Galaad. Le site préserve les vestiges d'un formidable fort des IXe–VIIIe siècles comprenant une colline artificielle surélevée, un fossé et un rempart extérieur. Il est situé sur une colline stratégique qui domine la voie royale menant d'Amman à Damas et la route allant d'ouest en est d'Irbid au désert. Après avoir décrit le site, nous nous pencherons sur son identification et son histoire à la lumière des conflits entre Israël et Aram-Damas.*

Tell er-Rumeith, or Tell er-Ramith[1] is located 15 km to the east of Irbid and 7 km to the south or Ramtha (G.R. 247 212; Figs. 1-2).[2] The site is built on a commanding low hill overlooking the entire plateau from Irbid in the west to the desert in the east and from el-Husn in the south to er-Ramtha and beyond in the north. This is a strategic place, controlling the King's Highway which goes from Amman to Damascus, and the west-east road from Irbid to el-Mafraq. Nelson Glueck surveyed the site in 1943 and reported Iron I–II sherds.[3] He identified the site with biblical Ramoth-Gilead.[4]

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[1] For the name see E. A. Knauf, "The Mists of Ramathalon, or: How Ramoth Gilead Disappeared from the Archaeological Record", *BN* 110, 2001, p. 33-36.

[2] See pictures in N. Glueck, "Ramoth Gilead", *BASOR* 92, 1943, p. 12; N. L. Lapp, "Rumeith, Tell er-", *The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land* 4, 1993, p. 1292.

[3] Glueck, *op. cit.* (above n. 2); *idem. Explorations in Eastern Palestine IV* (AASOR 25-28), New Haven, 1951, p. 98.
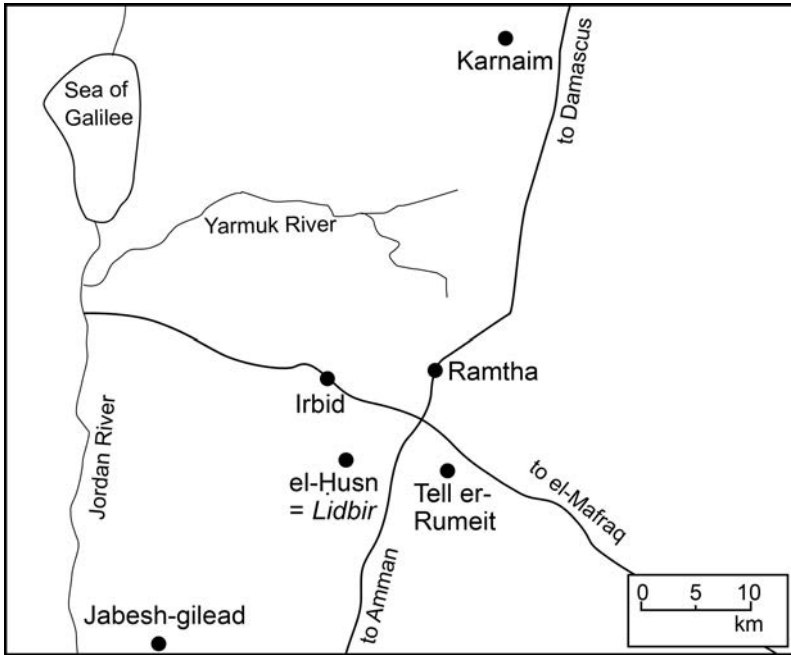
[4] Glueck, *op. cit.* (above n. 2).

Fig. 1: Map of area discussed in the article.

Fig. 2: Old picture of Tell er-Rumeith (courtesy of the Israel Exploration Society: N. L. Lapp, "Rumeith, Tell er-", The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land 4, Jerusalem, 1993, p. 1292).

Paul Lapp's Excavations

Tell er-Rumeith was excavated by Paul Lapp in 1962 and 1967.
Only short summaries were presented to the scholarly communi-
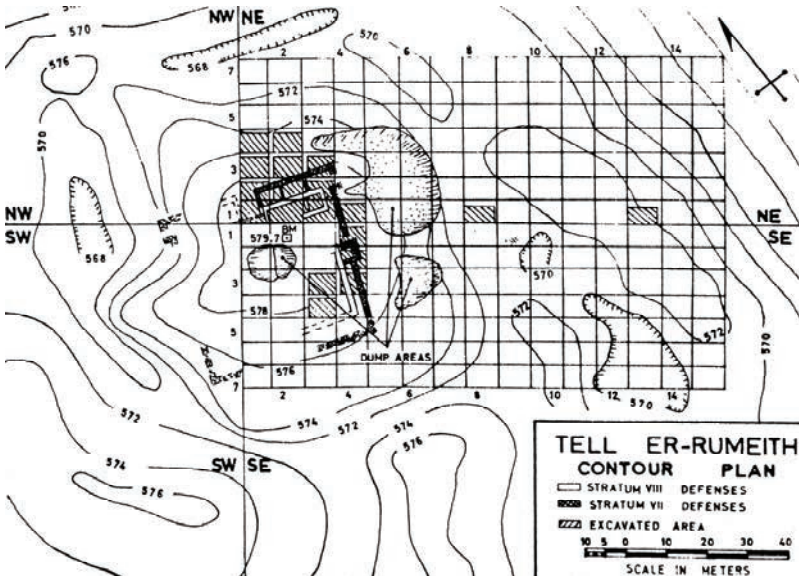ty;[5] a final report of the dig has never been published.

*Fig. 3: Plan of the site and the remains unearthed in the excavation (courtesy of N. L.
Lapp, published in N. L. Lapp, "Rumeith (Tell el)", in D. Homès-Fredericq and J. B. Hen-
nessy (eds.), Archaeology of Jordan II. Field Reports, Leuven, 1989, p. 495).*

Lapp described a small square or rectangular fort with a gate in
its eastern side (Fig. 3). The excavation provided an "exceptional-
ly clear" stratigraphy,[6] covering about two centuries and ending
with the conquest of Tiglath-Pileser III. A quarter or more of the
fort was excavated; the northeastern quadrant was dug down to

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[5] P. Lapp, "Tell er-Rumeith", *RB* 70, 1963, p. 406-411; idem. "Tell er-Rumeith",
RB 75, 1968, p. 98-105; idem. *The Tale of the Tell: Archaeological Studies*, Pittsburg,
1975, p. 111-119; N. L. Lapp, "Rumeith (Tell el)", in D. Homès-Fredericq, and J. B.
Hennessy (eds.), *Archaeology of Jordan II. Field Reports*, Leuven, 1989, p. 494-497;
idem. *op. cit.* (above n. 2).

[6] N. Lapp, *op. cit.* (above n. 2), p. 1291.

bedrock. Four Iron Age strata (VIII–V) were uncovered (Table 1 below p. 19).[7] The preliminary descriptions, which are not accompanied by plans, section drawings and enough pictures, are vague and render the reconstruction of the archaeology of the site almost an impossible task. Lapp's dating of the strata was probably made according to the results of the 1950s' excavations at Hazor (Strata X–V) — at that time the only site in the north with a well-established stratigraphy and well-defined pottery assemblages.

Stratum VIII was established on bedrock (in one place P. Lapp mentions some earlier remains),[8] which was leveled prior to construction. The 37 × 32 m fort consisted of brick walls laid on stone foundation. The 1.25–1.5 m thick walls were well-preserved, in one place to 2.5 m. The northern wall was preserved to almost its full length. In some places two floors were revealed "each with destruction debris above it", the upper featuring half a meter of burned debris.[9] The pottery from this layer — described as belonging to the "répertoire palestinien",[10] was dated to "the time of Solomon" in the 10th century BCE; its destruction was dated to 885 BCE.

Stratum VII was described as a casemate border fort built of stone walls which consisted of big boulders. This fort, which measured 42 × 43 m, was also violently destroyed; in two places the destruction debris reached 2 m. The pottery repertoire was designated as being different from that of Stratum VIII, belonging to a "tradition syrienne".[11] The construction of this fort was associated with the Arameans and its destruction — in the mid-9th century — with the take-over of the area by Ahab and Jehoshaphat, or by Ahaziah and Jehoram.

Stratum VI involved the creation of a platform over the entire area of the fort. It consisted of gray earth debris, laid on top of the destruction debris of Stratum VII. In the time of this layer (and

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[7] Strata IV-I stand for Hellenistic-to-Islamic remains detected to the east of the main mound.

[8] P. Lapp, *op. cit.* (above n. 5), p. 100.

[9] N. Lapp, *op. cit.* (above n. 2), p. 1292.

[10] P. Lapp, *op. cit.* (above n. 5), p. 101.

[11] P. Lapp, *op. cit.* (above n. 5), p. 102.

the next one) activity expanded to the north and east beyond the
line of the previous fort. It consisted of terracing on the slope,
which has been eroded. This fort too was destroyed by fire. Its
construction was attributed to Hazael and its destruction to the
expansion of Joram king of Israel ca. 800 BCE.

Stratum V is the last in the series of forts. Its walls were pre-
served to up to 1.5 m. The rooms were filled with destruction
debris. A thick fill separated this stratum from the previous one,
though the excavator noted continuity between them. A copper-
refining kiln belongs to this layer. The destruction of Stratum V
was attributed to Tiglath-Pileser III. Several habitation remains
characterized by brick floors, which postdate the destruction,
were traced on the surface of the site; this occupation ended in
abandonment rather than destruction.

Archaeological Observations

Date of the Four Strata

We did not have access to the pottery retrieved from the site,
which is stored in the Pittsburg Theological Seminary. Yet, Adapt-
ing the excavator's chronology to what we know today, it seems
that Strata VIII and VII belong to the Iron IIA; that stratum VI
may date either to the late Iron IIA or the early days of the Iron
IIB; and that Stratum V dates to the Iron IIB. Recent studies based
on a large number of radiocarbon determinations put the Iron IIA
from the second half of the 10th century to the beginning of the 8th
century BCE.[12] Without a thorough study of the pottery it is im-

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[12] I. Finkelstein and E. Piasetzky, "Radiocarbon-Dated Destruction Layers: A
Skeleton for Iron Age Chronology in the Levant", *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 28,
2009, p. 255-274; idem, "Radiocarbon Dating the Iron Age in the Levant: A Bayes-
ian Model for Six Ceramic Phases and Six Transitions", *Antiquity* 84, 2010, p. 374-
385; idem, "The Iron Age Chronology Debate: Is the Gap Narrowing?" *NEA* 74,
2011, p. 50-54. For a slightly different system, but still not far from this range,
see A. Mazar and C. Bronk Ramsey, "[14]C dates and the Iron Age Chronology of

possible to fix the date of the different strata within the Iron IIA.[13] But taking into consideration the architectural nature of the fort and historical events in this region (below) it is reasonable to assume that the four strata date within the 9th and 8th centuries, until 732 BCE.

Nature of the Fort

The discussion below is based on observations made during a visit to the site in January 2011 and on information which can be deducted from Google Earth image of the site (Fig. 4).

Fig. 4: Google Earth view of Tell er-Rumeith, with main elements marked.

Israel: A Response", *Radiocarbon* 50 2008, p. 159-180; A. Mazar, "The Iron Age Chronology Debate: Is the Gap Narrowing? Another Viewpoint", *NEA* 74, 2011, p. 105-111.

[13] For a distinction in the north between the early and late Iron IIA see Z. Herzog and L. Singer-Avitz, "Sub-Dividing the Iron IIA in Northern Israel: A Suggested Solution to the Chronological Debate", *Tel Aviv* 33, 2006, p. 163-195.
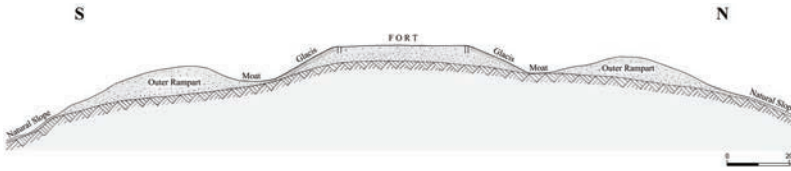
Fig. 5: Schematic architectural cross section emphasizing the main elements of Tell er-Rumeith (prepared by Alexander Pechuro).

The site is bigger than described by P. Lapp. It consists of three main elements, only one of them observed by him: an elevated square or rectangular fort (the feature described by Lapp), a moat and an outer earth rampart (Figs. 4-6). The elevated fort measures up to 50 × 50 m; the hill, including the slopes down to the moat, covers an area of ca. 100 × 100 m. Together with the moat and the outer earth rampart, the remains measure ca. 180 × 180 m. This means that the site covers an area of ca. 3 hectares. It is difficult to say whether the three elements had existed already in the time of the earliest fort (Stratum VIII), or if the moat and outer rampart were added when the fort was extended and made more monumental in the time of Stratum VII (see below).

In the center of the complex stands the hill of the fort. Today, after centuries of erosion, it has a somewhat round shape, but originally it was a square, partially artificial hill. The construction of the first fort probably called for some leveling and filling operations. The slope of the hill on all sides is too regular in line and gradient for a natural slope, and hence it can be assumed that the outer walls of the fort were protected by a glacis (not mentioned by the excavators) which went down into the moat. Today the top of the hill is ca. 10 meters higher than the bottom of the moat. When the area of the fort was extended (in the days of Stratum VII and again Stratum VI) the slope must have been re-arranged with a new glacis.

Fig. 6: The moat on the northern side, looking west, with the hill of the fort on the left and the outer rampart on the right.

The broad moat is clear on at least three sides of the fort (Fig. 6). In fact, a depression is marked on the northern and western sides in P. Lapp's original plan (Fig. 3), thought he did not understand its meaning. The moat is shallow and broad. Its flat bottom is ca. 10 m wide; from mid slope of the central hill to mid slope of the outer earth rampart the moat is ca. 40 m wide. Today the moat is ca. 10 meters lower than the top of the hill of the fort and ca. 4–5 meters lower than the top of the rampart on its outer side.

The outer rampart is ca. 30–40 m wide at its base, from the moat to the outer side (Fig. 7). A bulldozer cut on its northern side shows it to be constructed of small stones and earth debris, possibly taken from the cutting of the moat. It is possible that the lower core of the rampart is the natural hill before the moat was cut and the hill reshaped.

Fig. 7: The outer rampart in the southeastern sector of the site.

The combination of the three elements makes this site much
more than what can be understood from the excavator's descrip-
tion (certainly more than a "miserable little outpost"[14]). It is a
formidable fort overlooking and controlling the entire Irbid–el-
Husn–Ramtha plateau. Its construction involved a major effort of
elevating the natural hill by placing fills, cutting a moat and
throwing earth to create the outer rampart.

The closest parallel to the site as described here — consisting
of an artificially shaped hill with remains of a fort (possibly simi-
lar to the casemate fort of Stratum VII), a board and shallow moat
and an outer rampart — is the site of Khirbet el-Mudeyine eth-
Themed in Moab (Fig. 8).[15]

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[14] Knauf, *op. cit.* (above n. 1), p. 34.

[15] For the excavations see e.g., P. M. M. Daviau and M. Steiner, "A Moabite
Sanctuary at Khirbat al-Mudayna", *BASOR* 320, 2000, p. 1-21; P. M. M. Daviau and
P. E. Dion, "Economy-Related Finds from Khirbat al-Mudayna (Wadi ath-
Thamad, Jordan)", *BASOR* 328, 2002, p. 31-48; P. M. M. Daviau, "Hirbet el-
Mudēyine in its Landscape, Iron Age Towns, Forts and Shrines", *ZDPV* 122, 2006,
p. 14-30. For the architectural elements mentioned above see I. Finkelstein,
"Omride Architecture", *ZDPV* 116, 2000, p. 114-138; I. Finkelstein and O. Lip-

*Fig. 8: Aerial view of Khirbet el-Mudeyine eth-Themed in Moab, featuring its main ele-
ments: a rectangular casemate fortress on an artificially shaped hill, a moat and an outer
rampart. The top of the elevated hill is ca. 50 × 120 m in size (only twice the size of Tell er-
Rumeith) (courtesy of: David L. Kennedy, "Aerial Photographic Archive for Archaeology
in the Middle East" [APAAME_19980520_DLK-0008], http://www.humanities.uwa.edu.au/
research/cah/aerial-archaeology)*

schits, "Omride Architecture at Moab: Jahaz and Atharoth", *ZDPV* 126, 2010,
p. 29-43.

The site is commonly identified with biblical Jahaz,[16] which is
mentioned in the Mesha Inscription as a fort built by the Omrides
on the border of Dibon. The features of the site characterize
Omride architecture and hence the shaping of the hill and the
original construction should probably be attributed to their
time.[17]

Historical Observations

The scale of the building operation at Tell er-Rumeith has so far
escaped the attention of scholars. The Iron IIA construction cre-
ated a well-protected, elevated fort. Though small in size, the
formidable fort guarded the entire plateau around it, and the
nearby junction of the King's Highway leading to Damascus with
the road from the Jordan Valley and Irbid in the west to the de-
sert in the east. Few sites in the Levant demonstrate similar stra-
tegic value. This is especially noteworthy in light of the fact that
in much of the 9th and 8th centuries BCE, the area was disputed
between the Northern Kingdom of Israel and Aram Damascus, and
probably changed hands several times.[18]

It is difficult to decide who was responsible for the construc-
tion of each of the forts and who can be blamed for their demise.
The excavator describes four buildings each ending in a confla-
gration. Though the latter lends credibility to his stratigraphic
observations (the conflagrations probably made it easy to distin-
guish between the layers), from the published data it is hard to
assess whether in any single place the four destructions were
found superimposed. Also, in the course of the creation of the

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[16] J. A. Dearman, "The Location of Jahaz", *ZDPV* 100, 1984, p. 122-125.

[17] See: Finkelstein and Lipschits, *op. cit.* (above n. 15). Another parallel is the
50 × 50 m elevated fort of Khirbet Arair on the northern rim of Wadi Mujib,
though no moat or outer rampart can be seen there. See: Finkelstein and Lip-
schits, *op. cit.* (above n. 15). This site, which probably served as a Moabite fort
that guarded the crossing of the Arnon, also seems to date to the Iron IIA.

[18] I. Finkelstein, I. Koch and O. Lipschits, "The Biblical Gilead: Observations
on Identifications, Geographic Divisions and Territorial History", *UF* (in press).

Stratum VI "platform", destruction debris of Stratum VII could have been used for filling operations.

The recorded history of the region in the 9th and 8th centuries BCE allows for five possible destructions in this strategically sensitive spot:

1) The take-over of the area by the Omrides, probably in the middle of the 9th century BCE.

2) The defeat of Israel in the battle of Ramoth-Gilead in 842/841 BCE.[19]

3) The renewed expansion of Israel in the days of Jeroboam II. This king is credited in 2 Kings 14:28 with pressing Aram Damascus in the north. His offensive in Transjordan may be referred to by Amos (6:11-14), who hints that Israel conquered *Lidbir* (probably el-Husn south of Irbid),[20] and Karnaim north of the Yarmuk River.

4) The take-over of this territory by Rezin king of Damascus after the days of Jeroboam II. This conquest can be deducted from the fact that in 732 BCE Tiglath-Pileser III took this area from Damascus rather than from Israel.[21]

5) The conquest of this region by Tiglath-Pileser III in 732 BCE.[22]

There are several possible scenarios here. With the data at hand, they all remain somewhat speculative. Nonetheless, we find it appropriate to bring below the two which seem to us most reasonable (Table 1).

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[19] For the correct order of the battles between Israel and Aram see M. J. Miller, "The Elisha Cycle and the Accounts of the Omride Wars", *JBL* 85, 1966, p. 441-454; M. J. Miller and J. H. Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah*, London, SCM Press, 1986, p. 297-302, 331-347; E. Lipiński, *The Aramaeans: Their Ancient History, Culture, Religion* (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 100), Leuven and Paris, Peeters, 2000, p. 375, 378, 397-399; Finkelstein, Koch and Lipschits, *op. cit.* (above n. 18).

[20] Finkelstein, Koch and Lipschits, *op. cit.* (above n. 18).

[21] N. Naᵓaman, "Rezin of Damascus and the Land of the Gilead", *ZDPV* 111, 1995, p. 105-117; see there an explanation of 2 Kings 15:29, which mentions the conquest of the Gilead only in the days of Pekah.

[22] N. Naᵓaman, *op. cit.* (above n. 21).

Table 1: The history of Tell er-Rumeith according to the excavator and in this article

Str.	P. Lapp Built	Destroyed	This article, Scenario A Built	Destroyed	This article, Scenario B Built	Destroyed
VIII	Solomon	By Aram 885	Aram	Omrides	Omrides	Hazael
VII	Not specified	Mid-9th c. by Israel	Omrides	Hazael	Hazael	Jeroboam II
VI	Hazael	Joram	Hazael	Jeroboam II	Jeroboam II	Rezin
V	Not specified	Tiglath-Pileser III	Jeroboam II	Rezin	Rezin	Tiglath-Pileser III

Scenario A assumes that the Stratum VI pottery repertoire looked to the excavator similar to the assemblages of Strata VIII and VII, which means that this fort too belongs to the Iron IIA. This would mean that the fort of Stratum VI could not have been destroyed too long after the very early 8th century. According to this scenario, there was a small Aramean fort here in the first half and/or middle of the 9th century. This fort — Stratum VIII — was destroyed in the course of the expansion of Israel to the plateau in the days of the Omrides, probably after 853 BCE. The early fort could have been nothing but a modest building on a low hill. The major construction of the fort of Stratum VII — which included the extension and re-shaping of the hill, the cutting of the moat and the laying of the outer rampart — should be affiliated with the Omrides. This fort was destroyed in 842/841 BCE as an outcome of the defeat of Israel in the battle of Ramoth-Gilead which was fought nearby. The fort of Stratum VI was then built by Hazael and destroyed during the renewed expansion of Israel to this region in the days of Jeroboam II in the early 8th century.[23] The final fort (Stratum V) was therefore Israelite; it was taken over by Rezin king of Damascus in the second half of the 8th century. The post-fort remains belong, according to this scenario, to

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[23] Even though he affiliated the early fort of Stratum VIII to the Omrides (see below), Lipiński suggested to assign the fort of Stratum VI to Hazael and its destruction to the expansion of Israel in the days of Jeroboam II. See: E. Lipiński, *On the Skirts of Canaan in the Iron Age — Historical and Topographical Researches*, Leuven, Peeters, 2006, p. 277.

a Damascene activity here after this take-over and prior to the Tiglath-Pileser III conquest. There was no need for Rezin to establish a fort here because the entire Israelite Gilead, all the way down to the borders of Ammon and Moab, fell to the hands of Damascus.[24]

According to Scenario B, there was no Aramean fort here prior to the Omride take-over. The construction of the fort — including the moat and the outer rampart — should then be associated with the Omrides.[25] The nature of the original fort — whether built of mud-bricks only or of a combination of mud-bricks and stone walls — is difficult to assess. This fort (Stratum VIII) was destroyed as a result of the battle of Ramoth-Gilead (842/841 BCE). The victorious Hazael then built the fort of Stratum VII as a command center in the plateau, which has now been ruled, possibly for the first time (after the annexation of the small peripheral Aramean kingdoms), by Damascus.[26] This fort could have been destroyed by Jeroboam II in the early 8th century BCE. The fort of Stratum VI was then built by Israel, and destroyed when Rezin took over these territories in the 8th century. The last fort was erected by Rezin and destroyed by Tiglath-Pileser III.

Tell er-Rumeith and the Battle of Ramoth-Gilead

The battle of Ramoth-Gilead between Joram, the last Omride king of Israel and Hazael, king of Aram-Damascus, took place in 842/841 BCE, on the eve of the Assyrian campaign against Damascus.[27] It is mentioned in a short chronistic note (2 Kings 8:28), in a

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[24] N. Naʾaman, *op. cit.* (above n. 21).

[25] This was already suggested by Lipiński, *op. cit.* (above n. 23).

[26] See recently N. Naʾaman, "The Kingdom of Geshur in History and Memory", *SJOT* 26, 2012, p. 88-101.

[27] S. Yamada, *The Construction of the Assyrian Empire: A Historical Study of the Inscriptions of Shalmaneser III (859–824 BC) Relating to his Campaigns to the West* (Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 3), Leiden, Brill, 2000, p. 313, 319-320.

prophetic story (2 Kings 9:14–16) and probably in a royal inscription (the Tel Dan stele, lines 2-4). The problem is that these sources present two different scenarios. According to the chronistic note and the royal inscription, Joram launched an attack against Hazael, implying that previously Ramoth-Gilead was an Aramean site. According to the prophetic story (especially 2 Kings 9:14a), however, Ramoth-Gilead was ruled by Joram, and was the target of an attack launched by Hazael.

Many scholars concluded, with the prophetic story, that Ramoth-Gilead was Israelite and that Hazael was the aggressor.[28] Lipiński, noting the fact that the battle occurred on the eve of the Assyrian campaign against Damascus, suggested that Joram allayed with the Assyrians.[29] Accordingly, he argued that the chronistic note in 2 Kings 8:28 should be preferred. The Tel Dan stele (lines 2–4) strengthened his conclusions.[30] Indeed, it is only reasonable to argue that historical memories documented in contemporaneous royal inscriptions or in chronistic notes should be regarded as more reliable than those mentioned in prophetic stories. The prophetic story about Jehu's coup was composed several decades after the events it depicts took place,[31] and may reflect a later geopolitical situation. If this reconstruction is valid, the above suggested Scenario A, according to which Tell er-Rumeith was an Aramaic fort conquered by the Omrides, is more plausible.

[28] See, e.g., M. Noth, *The History of Israel*, London, A. & C. Black, 1965, p. 241; M. Cogan and H. Tadmor, *II Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 11), New Haven and London, Doubleday, 1988, p. 121; Miller and Hayes, *op. cit.* (above n. 19), p. 284.

[29] E. Lipiński, "An Assyro-Israelite Alliance in 842/841 BCE?", *Proceedings of the Sixth World Congress of Jewish Studies*, Vol. I, Jerusalem, 1977, p. 273-278.

[30] N. Naʾaman, "The Story of Jehu's Rebellion: Hazael's Inscription and the Biblical Narrative", *IEJ* 56, 2006, p. 160-166.

[31] S. Otto, *Jehu, Elia und Elisa—Die Erzählung von der Jehu Revolution und die Komposition der Elia-Elisa–Erzählungen,* Stuttgart and Berlin, W. Kohlhammer, 2001, p. 104-111, with further literature.

Identification

Two main sites have been proposed as the location of biblical Ramoth-Gilead: the town of Ramtha, 15 km east of Irbid,[32] and Tell er-Rumeith.[33] Ramoth-Gilead was probably a town, that is, a settlement with long history, at least in the Iron I and the Iron II. The town must have been known as Ramah or Ramoth. This is similar to other settlements in the northern Gilead called in the Hebrew Bible by their name and the ending Gilead: Jabesh, Mizpah and Tishbe; the ending Gilead was added in order to explain that this area — north of the Jabbok — was part of the Gilead, the core of which was south of the river.[34] A visit to Tell Maqlub, the location of Jabesh, revealed a relatively big mound with at least Iron I and Iron II pottery. A visit by Dieter Vieweger to the small Tell Masfa, the probable location of Mizpah of Gilead,[35] revealed Bronze and Iron Age sherds (personal communication from Dieter Vieweger). Tishbe is identified at the Iron Age site of Khirbet Umm el-Hedamus near Ajlun.[36] The nature of Tell er-Rumeith — a small fort which functioned for a relatively short period of just over a century — does not fit this description. To differ, the site of Ramtha (the low hill in the center of the modern town), which also yielded Iron I and Iron II sherds,[37] seems to hide a large-enough ancient settlement.

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[32] Knauf, *op. cit.* (above n. 1), with previous literature; for a description of the site see also Glueck, *op. cit.* (above n. 2), p. 11.

[33] Glueck, *op. cit.* (above n. 2), supported by Albright (letter cited there, p. 12-13); P. Lapp, *op. cit.* (above n. 5), p. 104-105.

[34] Finkelstein, Koch and Lipschits, *op. cit.* (above n. 18).

[35] A. Lemaire, "Galaad et Makîr : Remarques sur la tribu de Manassé à l'est du Jourdain", *VT* 31, 1981, p. 39-61; Finkelstein, Koch and Lipschits, *op. cit.* (above n. 18).

[36] S. Mittmann, *Beiträge zur Siedlungs- und Territorialgeschichte des nördlichen Ostjordanlandes* (Abhandlungen des Deutschen Palästinavereins 2), Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 1970, p. 68-69, 222, 230; G. Palumbo, "The 1990 Wadi el-Yabis Survey Project and Soundings at Khirbet Um el-Hedamus", *ADAJ* 36, 1992, p. 25-41.

[37] Glueck, *op. cit.* (above n. 2), p. 97.

We therefore agree with Knauf and Lipiński, that the town of Ramoth-Gilead should be identified with Ramtha.[38] This leaves Tell er-Rumeith — the fort which guarded the strategic junction east of Irbid and south of Ramtha — unidentified.[39] The late monarchic biblical authors, located far from this arena of operations both geographically and chronologically, could not have known of the existence of the fort, or could have confused the two sites for one.

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[38] Knauf, *op. cit.* (above n. 1); Lipiński, *op. cit.* (above n. 23).

[39] Lipiński (*op. cit.*, above n. 23, p. 277) suggested that the name of the site, a Semitic *quṭayl*-diminutive of *Ramṯ-*, is an indication that it is a relatively recent toponym. He assumed the toponym may have originated in the later periods of occupation (until the 7th century AD), and designate the site as the "small Ramṯa", indicating that Biblical Ramoth-Gilead should be identified at Ramtha.