



Great Arab Revolt Project

Fifth Fieldwork Season

**Sunday 24th October – Sunday 7th November 2010
Southern Jordan**

Introduction

The Great Arab Revolt Project (GARP) is planned as a ten-year project to investigate First World War archaeology in Jordan and develop new heritage sites for visitors. In contrast to the Western Front, where considerable fieldwork has taken place, First World War remains in Jordan have never been systematically investigated. These remains have particular interest for four reasons:

- they are associated with the exploits and legend of Lawrence of Arabia, an iconic historical and cultural figure in the English-speaking world
- they represent a struggle, known as the Great Arab Revolt, that was central to the creation of the states and conflicts of the modern Middle East
- they represent the archaeological imprint of a distinctive type of irregular or guerrilla warfare which has been of huge historical importance over the last 90 years
- they offer a range of military landscapes, sites and artefact assemblages, and a range of memories, associations and modern significances, which contrast with the more familiar archaeology, commemoration and tourism of the Western Front

Our aim, working closely with Jordanian colleagues and local communities, is to catalogue the visible remains (buildings and earthworks), to carry out surveys and trial excavations at a representative sample of sites, to record oral histories and folk memories, and to develop one or more sites for effective public presentation.

Work in the first two seasons (November 2006 and November 2007) focused on two main areas, Ma'an, and Wadi Rutm/Batn Al-Ghoul, supported by extensive survey of the surrounding landscape as far as the Saudi border in the south and Shobek in the north. Ma'an was the principal Ottoman military base in what is now southern Jordan, and we have established that the high ground for miles around the Hijaz railway station was entrenched in 1916–1918, transforming the area into a First World War trench fortress. Wadi Rutm, about 60 km south of Ma'an, is the site of a fortified railway station, an Ottoman army camp, a fortified hilltop redoubt, and various other military features on and close to the former railway line extending in

both directions. While Ma'an represents a major, heavily defended base, Wadi Rutm represents the militarization of communication lines and the landscape more generally.

In November 2008, we extended our focus northwards to Fassu'ah Ridge, the possible Ottoman command-and-control base for the entire Batn Al-Ghoul/Wadi Rutm area. This site occupies a stunning location on top of an escarpment overlooking Wadi Rutm and comprises perimeter walls built of dry-stone masonry, many with shallow trenches behind, and a central defensive block-house complex. We carried out a comprehensive record of all the standing remains, and clarified details through surface clearance and shallow excavation in certain areas. We will also carry out further survey work to set the fort in its wider context, including recording the bread ovens and discovering the mule lines.

At Batn Al-Ghoul Ottoman Army camp, which comprised about 50 tent rings, we established that there was excellent preservation of *in-situ* organic remains reflecting the character of Ottoman military occupation in the later stages of the war. (It was from here, that we recovered part of an Ottoman military uniform in 2007.) Post excavation analysis of these finds will be carried out to maximise the amount of detail we recover about activity in and around the rings.

Last season (November 2009), after a brief return to Batn Al-Ghoul Ottoman Army camp, work focused on two main aspects of an extensive militarised landscape at Wuheida. Three Ottoman hilltop forts or redoubts on the Eastern Hill were recorded, one of which (Redoubt A) was thoroughly explored. Each redoubt comprises a breastwork-trench perimeter and various small rock-cut and/or stone-built structures with internal fireplaces, presumably for troop accommodation. In some places, there are additional exterior breastwork-trenches, forming an outer defensive line. Also surveyed were a series of complexes of stone alignments extending down approximately 2km of the wadi immediately to the west. The alignments indicate the former locations of enclosures, tents, and fire-pits of Prince Feisal's Arab Northern Army when it was based here between February and September 1918.

(For reports on past fieldwork, see *Current World Archaeology* 23, 27 and 39, plus the GARP website at www.jordan1914-18archaeology.org)

The Great Arab Revolt Project is based at the University of Bristol, and is supported by the Jordanian Department of Antiquities, the al-Hussein bin Talal University, the Jordan Museum in Amman, the Council for British Research in the Levant, HRH Prince Hassan, and *Current World Archaeology* magazine.

The 2010 fieldwork season

As the aim of the project in its first five year phase is to explore the theme of desert warfare between Ma'an and Mudawwara, work will continue in 2010 on the line of the Hijaz Railway in this region. We wish to carry out surveys and sample excavations at one or two new sites, mainly as a compare and contrast exercise in relation to the intensive work already carried out in the Wadi Rutm/Batn Al-Ghoul/Aqabat-Hijaz study area. How typical is the pattern of militarization already observed?

In addition, we hope to complete a full survey of the stone alignments representing the site of Feisal's Camp at Wuheida, though we are exploring the possibility that this might be done using a combination of aerial photography and desktop rectification.

Logistics

At present we are unable to fund places on the expedition beyond a small core team. All other participants at this stage in the development of the project are self-funding. This includes a contribution to the cost of post-excavation work and the publication of results (without which archaeological fieldwork cannot be justified). The price per person for the 2010 season is £2,450.

This sum will cover the entire two-week fieldwork season, including flights, 3-star hotel accommodation, good-quality food, and comprehensive insurance for UK residents. Non UK residents will have to take out 'working holiday' travel insurance if they are not already covered. Our current plan is to use the Edom Hotel at Wadi Musa. This ensures private accommodation with en-suite facilities in a medium-sized, family-run hotel. Two day-excursions are also included in the price, one to Petra (the hotel is located only a few minutes walk from the entrance to the archaeological site), one to Aqaba, taking in sites associated with Lawrence's campaigns, including Wadi Rum.

Jordan is a friendly and welcoming country, but the geographical, economic, political and cultural differences between Britain and Jordan are considerable. Though our aim is to maximise comfort and convenience – to maintain our own morale, to ensure good work is done, and to make the whole experience the fun that archaeology should be – we cannot guarantee that everything will always go smoothly. On the other hand, all participants will be encouraged to share ownership of the expedition, to participate fully in decision-making and problem-solving, and thus be part of a team which works as an effective collective.

In setting up the expedition, we will need to complete formalities and make bookings, and in doing so we will incur expenses. It is important, therefore, that we establish who is joining us at an early stage. If you wish to join the expedition, you will need to send us the following by 30th April at the latest:

- A deposit of £450, in the form of a cheque payable to: Dr N Faulkner and Mr D Thorpe, T/A Great War Archaeology Group. This deposit is non-returnable UNLESS it is necessary to increase the price due to cost of flights, in which case deposits WOULD BE RETURNABLE to anyone who wishes to withdraw. As places are limited, it would be advisable to send your deposit as soon as you have decided to join us to ensure you secure a place. The balance of £2,000 will be due by 15 June at the latest.
- Two colour passport photographs (for completion of your Jordanian security form). PLEASE WRITE YOUR NAME ON THE BACK OF THE PHOTOS
- The following information (for your Jordanian security form and for medical insurance purposes): your full name, mother's maiden name, full date and place of birth, nationality, passport information (number, date of issue, place of issue, expiry date), occupation, home address, any allergies or medical complaints potentially relevant to medical insurance, and any previous excavations at home or abroad you have worked on (THIS INFORMATION IS VITAL TO COMPLETE JORDANIAN FORMALITIES AND TO ARRANGE INSURANCE COVER IN GOOD TIME). Please also provide a contact telephone number and e-mail.

Please note that your passport should be valid for at least 6 months after the date of the dig (ie: 7 May 2011). If it is not, you will have to renew it before 15 June when all information has to be submitted to Jordan.

You will also need to ensure that your typhoid, hepatitis A and tetanus vaccinations are up to date.

Insurance can only be provided for residents of the UK. Overseas participants will have to arrange their own insurance which should be on the basis of a 'working holiday'.

You should send your deposit cheque, passport photos, security form/medical insurance information and contact details to: Susan Daniels, GARP Administrator, 3 Millers Croft, Copmanthorpe, York, YO23 3TW. Susan can be contacted via e-mail, susan@gwag.org or by phone: 07815 570507.

If you are applying from outside the UK, we will strongly recommend flying to London to join the main group here. If for any reason this is likely to be especially impractical or inappropriate, then please contact Susan to discuss the matter.

Places are limited. We will allocate places to all suitable applicants on a first-come, first-served basis. Early booking and payment of the deposit may, therefore, be advisable.

Dr Neil Faulkner
Dr Nick Saunders
Mr David Thorpe
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University of Bristol
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