

Tall Zira‘a

Five Thousand Years of Palestinian History on a Single-Settlement Mound

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The Wadi al-‘Arab lies roughly five kilometers to the southwest of the ancient Decapolis city of Gadara (today Umm Qays). It was part of an ancient trade route, and a number of springs, fertile soils, and a moderate climate all provided for excellent living conditions. The economic success and industriousness of the wadi’s inhabitants have left plenty of traces over the millennia.

Over one hundred sites mark out the distinguished history of human settlement in the region from the advent of sedentism to the Islamic period. With settlements, canals, water mills, cisterns, oil presses, wine presses, watch towers, graves, and, above all, Tall Zira‘a with over five thousand years of settlement activity, the wadi offers archaeologists countless opportunities for research activity.



The mound of Tall Zira‘a can be seen in the center of this photo, which is taken from the site of Gadara. The site is situated between the Wadi az-Zahar (above) and the Wadi al-‘Arab (below).