The city of Rubute is mentioned several times in Egyptian sources as being located on the road from Gezer to Jerusalem. This is explicitly clear in the El-Amarna letters. In two of his letters Abdihipa, king of Jerusalem, blames Milkilu, king of Gezer, together with his allies for the conquest of Rubute and its territory, a deed which is taken as a direct threat against Jerusalem (EA 289, 11 ff.; 290, 5 ff.). This is well in accordance with the Thutmose list, where r-b-t (105) appears after Gezer (g-d-r, 104) and q-p-t (Gibbethon?, 103). Its existence is still attested in the Shishak list (r-b-t, 13), where it is mentioned according to MAZAR and GRDSELOFF in the following context: Gezer, Rubute, Aijalon, Qiriathaim (Kiriath-jearim?), Beth-horon and Gibeon. All of these sources point to its location in the vicinity of Latrun, the modern key point on the Gezer-Jerusalem road.

In 1959 I wrote in my article “the Province List of Judah”:

“Its exact location is still difficult to determine, especially as the political situation forbids an archaeological survey of the area between Bâb el-Wâd and Latrun.” Being able to visit the area I immediately found a site which fits remarkably the conditions demanded for Rubute according to our sources. It is a tell situated directly north of the old Latrun-Jerusalem highway, 3.5 km. west of Bâb el-Wâd (map ref. 14921372). In spite of its situation on the highway the tell apparently remained completely unrecognized thus far. It seems to be missing in all maps, including the old Palestine Exploration Fund

2) It is doubtful if the Rubute of the Taanach letters is identical with the place under discussion (it may be identical with Rabbith of Issachar [Josh xix 20] or with Arubboth of the third Solomonic district [1 Kings iv 10]); in any case its appearance there has no significance for its location.
3) V'T 9, p. 230, note 1.
map. On the Latrun sheet of the mandatory 1:20,000 map it is indicated with the trig. point 135J at level 233.1. Several local monks and Arabs whom I asked were unaware of any name. One called it el-Khirbeh, but this seemed to be a definition and not a true name. South-west of the tell, on the other side of the road, is a spring called Bir el-Hilû, today overbuilt by pumping installations. I am, therefore, calling the site by the artificial name Khirbet Bir el-Hilû (see map, Fig. 1).

The tell occupies a shallow spur near the road, surpassed by higher hills to the north (see Plate). Its western, southern and eastern sides stand out by distinct artificial, steep slopes, doubtless a result of ancient walls, the stones of which are here and there visible. To the north the mound terminates with a shallow depression, perhaps the remnant of an ancient moat now virtually filled in. Its top constitutes a distinct square, the measurements of which are c. 130 m. E.-W. and at least 100 m. N.-S. 1). Its area is therefore, 13-15 dunam (c. 3 acres).

1) The northern end is not accurately defined.