

PREFACE

This volume will be the second in a series of three but is actually the first to be published. Another volume (Volume I) will be one on the Early Bronze Age and a third will deal with the Iron Age and Post-Iron Age periods (Volume III). The reason for publishing *Tell Abu al-Kharaz II: The Middle and Late Bronze Ages*, prior to the publication of *Tell Abu al-Kharaz I: The Early Bronze Age*, is the author's current engagement as a project director in the international project *SCIEM2000, The Synchronization of Civilizations in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Second Millennium B.C.*¹ This project deals mainly, as its title implies, with the chronology of the Middle and Late Bronze Ages in the Eastern Mediterranean, which includes Jordan. In order to include the results of the excavations of the Middle and Late Bronze Age levels at Tell Abu al-Kharaz in *SCIEM2000*, the author made the decision to process and to present this material before that of earlier periods, because *SCIEM2000* is of limited duration. It is the author's conviction that the scientific evidence presented here will be of value to *SCIEM2000* because chronology and synchronization are central objectives of this volume. A synopsis of the Early Bronze Age of Tell Abu al-Kharaz, although dealing mainly with pottery and chronology (FISCHER 2000a), and a synthesis of all three main periods (FISCHER 2000b) are already in print.

This, the first published volume, will therefore contain general information in the chapter "Introduction", which is equally applicable to the other volumes. The chapter "Introduction" therefore includes a description of the topography of Tell Abu al-Kharaz, which will be followed by a summary of previous surveys in the area – excavations had never taken place there prior to the arrival of the author and his team – and by a presentation of the aims of the excavations, the method of selection of excavation areas, the measuring and recording techniques used during the surveys and excavations, the excavation techniques, the annual excavation teams and finally a list of the published preliminary reports and special studies on which much of the final publication is based.

It should be emphasized that the present volume is not a complete final report. There are a number of special studies which are in preparation and additional topics which will be dealt with in the future. These will appear in the form of separate appendices or in conjunction with the Volumes I and III. However, I felt that the inclusion of the additional special studies would delay the publication of the material and decided therefore to proceed with the present volume. It is my belief that it is better to expose myself to critics than to delay access to the material from Tell Abu al-Kharaz by the archaeological community until the research is completed, which – generally speaking – it never will be! There will always be new topics which can be investigated or topics already investigated which can be examined again using new methods or with other aims.

I have tried to keep the description of the find material as simple and clear as possible. It is, however, difficult to meet the probable wishes of all readers: some may argue that the present report is generally too detailed; others, who have a special interest in specific topics, may argue that it is not detailed enough. I have, however, tried to keep this report balanced in order to provide maximum information within the framework of financial constraints. The same may be said of the published photographs, which number more than a hundred but which represent only a small selection of the thousands of photographs and slides which were taken over the years.

A number of surveyors and draughtspersons have provided the plans, sections and object drawings over a period of more than a decade. It was my intention to keep the drawings as uniform as possible by giving the same instructions to all those responsible for producing them. However, it turned out to be impossible to standardize the plans, sections and object drawings, because every draughtsperson has an individual style and this resulted in differences in the design of the drawings, which were produced over a considerable period.

There are many people who contributed to the successful execution of the project and to whom I am

¹ *SCIEM2000* is a special research programme (SFB) of the Austrian Academy at the Austrian Science Fund and under patronage of UNESCO.

very much indebted. Amongst these is a non-archaeologist, who in fact initiated this project in the late 1980's, namely H.E. Ambassador Lars Lönnback, and this brings me to a brief description of the background and the start of the first Swedish excavations in Jordan. It was in 1988 that a letter from the Swedish Embassy in Amman was, I am happy to say, forwarded to me by Professor em. Paul Åström. In this letter Ambassador Lönnback encouraged the start of a Swedish project in Jordan. There have been a number of well-known Swedish expeditions, some way back in the past and some recent, which have worked all over the Eastern Mediterranean. The countries concerned include Greece and the Greek islands, Turkey, Cyprus, Syria and Egypt. However, Jordan is a country where a Swedish expedition – strangely, considering the cultural richness of the country – has never worked before. I myself had worked for five seasons in Cyprus and for six in Greece prior to my engagement in Levantine archaeology. During these excavations I was frequently in contact with finds displaying connections with the Levant. My interest in that region was further stimulated by scholars who were working in Jordan at that time. Amongst these should gratefully be mentioned Professor em. Basil Hennessy together with other members of the Australian Expedition to Pella, especially Dr. Stephen Bourke, the present director of the Australian excavations at Pella, and Dr. Kathryn Eriksson. Dr. Jonathan Tubb from the British Museum, at that time excavating at Tell es-Sa'idiyeh, is another scholar who encouraged the start of a Swedish project in the Jordan Valley. These fruitful contacts gave me the idea of linking the activities of a number of Swedish projects, which were and still are dealing mainly with the Middle and Late Bronze Ages of the Cypriote and Helladic cultures, in particular, with the excavation of a Jordan Valley site. I anticipated that such a site, which would be within reasonable distance of the Mediterranean, might produce material which was exported to other sites in the Eastern Mediterranean and might also, based on mutual trade, have received objects from there, thus enabling us to synchronize a number of cultures.

During preliminary discussions in 1988, in the course of which I stated my intention to find and to investigate a site where connections with the Aegean sphere of culture could be detected, the then director

of the Department of Antiquities, Dr. Adnan Hadi-di, generously offered me access to three sites: Tell al-Maqlub at Wadi al-Yabis, Tell al-Hammam² at Wadi Meqta'a and Tell al-Kefrein at Wadi Kefrein. In February 1989, in advance of a planned survey of these sites, I met the new director of the Department of Antiquities, Dr. Ghazi Bisheh. He kindly studied my plans to survey sites in or near the Jordan Valley, and helped to plan future activities. I am much in his debt for his generosity, which facilitated my survey of two of the three sites³ during February 1989: Tell al-Hammam and Tell al-Maqlub. Professor em. Basil Hennessy generously invited me to use the dig house at Pella as a base camp for my surveys and also as a dig house for the future Swedish excavations. During one of my reconnaissance trips I visited the double site of Tell Abu al-Kharaz/Tell al-Maqbarah in the Wadi Yabis, which aroused my curiosity. This site turned out to be the most interesting of the surveyed sites in the light of my initial intentions and goals: it has a convenient geographical and topographical position (only some 80 km to the Mediterranean); it was "untouched" except for some minor military (?) trenches, i.e. no regular excavations have been done there in the past; it showed well-preserved architectural remains on the surface; and it yielded a large number of ceramic artefacts on the surface, spanning the period from the Early Bronze Age to Islamic times in what seemed to be an almost unbroken sequence, i.e. the surface pottery also included representatives of the Middle and Late Bronze Ages. The final decision to choose Tell Abu al-Kharaz was taken after a thorough surface survey which showed that the most frequently collected pottery derived from the Early Bronze Age, the late Middle and Late Bronze Age, and the Iron Age. Stray finds from the Chalcolithic, as well as periods following the Iron Age, mainly Roman and Islamic, were also made.

There is not a single archaeological project which can be carried out without the support of many people. Amongst the people who supported *The Swedish Jordan Expedition* were R.H. Prince Raad Bin Zeid and Princess Majda Raad and their family. My deepest appreciation goes to them for their genuine interest in the excavations and their strong backing and encouragement over the years. Their enjoyably frequent visits to Tell Abu al-Kharaz and the expedition's visits to their most hospitable private residence

² I am much indebted to Kay Prag who facilitated my survey of the area.

³ Tell al-Kefrein housed an Islamic cemetery on the summit. It could not therefore be surveyed.

(where delicious food was always served) will forever stay in my memory.

The generous help of the Directors General of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan is hereby gratefully acknowledged: Dr. Adnan Hadidi, who lent a hand during the initial phase of the project; Dr. Ghazi Bisheh, with whom I had the longest and a very fruitful cooperation; Dr. Safwan Tell, who provided much help during the trying negotiations with the landowner of Tell Abu al-Kharaz; and Dr. Fawwaz Al-Khreyshah, who provided much support during the latest, European-Union-financed campaign. Their support included the loan of vehicles, and personal and financial assistance, which is unparalleled anywhere in the Near East and a token of genuine Jordanian hospitality. Most valuable support was also received from other employees of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan. Amongst these should be mentioned with gratitude Mr. Faisal Al-Qudah, former acting Director General of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan, Mrs. Muna Zaghloul (Publication Office), Mr. Sultan Shreidah, former chief inspector of the Irbid Department of Antiquities of Jordan, and Dr. Fawzi Zayadine, Vice-Director General of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan.

The staff of the Swedish embassy in Amman has always been a great support over the years. In addition to Lars Lönnback, the Swedish ambassadors (in chronological order) H.E. Christian Bausch, Agneta Bohman and Klas Gierow should be remembered with gratitude. H.E. Stefania Khalifeh, Consul of Iceland, was also a strong supporter of the project. I wish to thank all of them.

Many thanks also go to the personnel of the foreign archaeological institutes in Amman: of the American Center of Oriental Research (ACOR) – in particular Drs. Patricia and Pierre Bikai, Mrs. Humi Ayoubi, and of the British Institute at Amman for Archaeology and History (BIAAH) – in particular Dr. Alison McQuitty, Dr. William Lancaster, Dr. Graham Philip and Dr. Pamela Watson.

The Yarmouk University in Irbid supported our project in many ways, for instance with logistics and personnel. Professor Zeidan Kafafi, whose interest in our work facilitated the rent of the Deir ʿAlla Dig House, and Professor Ziad Al-Saad, who showed genuine hospitality during our visit at the Yarmouk university in 2001, should be thanked in particular.

The Australian Expedition to Pella (Sydney University) and its directors Professor em. Basil Hennessy, Dr. Allan Walmsley and Dr. Stephen Bourke supported the expedition by allowing us to

rent the Pella Dig House and with other logistical assistance, for which I am very grateful.

I would like to express my great gratitude to the expedition's architects and draughtspersons, Mr. Elias Markou from Nicosia, Cyprus, and Mr. Muwafaq Al-Bateineh from the Yarmouk University in Irbid. The latter is still assisting me in the renewed excavations at Tell el-ʿAjjul in Gaza, Palestine. They should be thanked in particular for their accurate work on the drawings, plans and logistics charts. Others who contributed their drawing skills were Lamia Khoury, Nawal Hawarri, Richard Holmgren and Anders Andersson.

There is one person to whom I am obliged in particular: Mr. Hikmat Ta'ani, who has worked with me for 12 years. Our collaboration started in 1989 when Hikmat became the representative of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan in connection with the *Swedish Jordan Expedition's* excavations at Tell Abu al-Kharaz and Tell ʿAin ʿAbda (1995). He joined the expedition as the Department's representative and also participated in every single season after his early retirement. Hikmat, who is beyond any doubt one of Jordan's most experienced archaeologists, also attended to most of the logistical matters, the employment of the labourers and their salaries and all the necessary contacts with the authorities and local people, in one word: everything. I feel honoured to have Hikmat as my collaborator and friend. Hikmat is also still assisting me in the Tell el-ʿAjjul project.

I also wish to thank Dr. Angela Schwab for the layout, Dr. Ernst Czerny and Irene Kaplan for additional proof-reading, Professor Manfred Bietak and Dagmar Melman, MA, for their general publication support, Rainer Feldbacher, MA, for his arduous work to correct the digitalized plans and object drawings, and the photographer Hussein Debajeh from the Yarmouk University of Irbid for some of the photographs. The manuscript has been checked from a linguistic point of view by Bernard Vowles, whom I thank for his help and suggestions, and his genuine interest in archaeology in general. I would also like to thank Professor Max Bichler for our rewarding discussions concerning the terminology of various materials and for a number of material analyses, Professor Paul Åström, again for his comments on the Cypriote pottery, and Professor Jean-Paul Thalmann, the excavator of Tell Arqa in Lebanon, for providing the program which helped to measure the volumes of various vessel types.

Financial support over the years was received from many different sources, which are specified below. There are two persons whose efforts in raising the nec-

essary funding should be mentioned in particular: the first is Professor em. Carl-Gustaf Styrenius, the then director of the Museum of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Antiquities (Stockholm), who very kindly acted as an intermediary in my contacts with BITS (now part of Sida), the Swedish Government Agency for International Technical and Economic Cooperation. BITS provided the major funds for the expedition during 1989–1996, which is hereby gratefully acknowledged. The second is my former tutor and present mentor and friend, Professor em. Paul Åström, whose intervention resulted in the necessary funding from the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities during the entire duration of the project and especially after the BITS-funded period of the project, i.e. during the years 1997 and 1998. Additional funding came from the following sources (in chronological order): the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation, Stockholm; the Gyllenstiernska Krapperup's Foundation, Nyhamnsläge; Anna Ahrenberg's Foundation of Science, Gothenburg; Wilhelm and Martina Lundgren's Foundation of Science, Gothenburg; the European Commission; the Swedish National Museum for World Culture, Gothenburg; the Museum for Mediterranean and Near Eastern Antiquities,

Stockholm; SCIEM2000; the Mediterranean Archaeological Trust; and the Institute for Aegean Prehistory. Ulf Bejmar, the then local director of the Swedish–Swiss company ABB supported the project with the loan of a vehicle in 1992. The author's private company Polylys Com provided additional means whenever necessary.

Last but not least, I wish to thank all the participants in the *Swedish Jordan Expedition*, who came from all over the world and who are listed in the chapter "Preface" under the heading of each single season, for their excellent and self-sacrificing work accomplished under sometimes difficult conditions, which greatly contributed to the successful execution of the project. My thanks also go to the people of Pella, al-Mashar'a and al-Yabis.

Last but not least - this had been said before but it cannot be repeated often enough: I would like to thank my understanding family. Without the support of Ingrid, Michael and Andreas, this volume would have been published in half the time!

Gothenburg/Vienna, January 24, 2004
Peter M. FISCHER