

NOTE ON A PALEOLITHIC FLINT SCATTER IN THE JIZA PLAIN OF JORDAN

by
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(Figs 1 — 4)

Various flakes, blades, cores and one chopping tool were collected from a relatively sparse flint scatter located on a low rise in the wheat fields near the village of Al Jiza, thirty kilometers south of Amman, Jordan. The implements collected were identified by Dr. James Sauer of ACOR, and Ms. Linda Villiers of the Australian National University in Canberra, as Middle Paleolithic in type.

The implements are dispersed randomly over a distance of at least a 0.3 kilometer radius from the top of the low rise. They are disturbed by the agricultural activities that have continued over many years in the fields where the flint scatter is located. As a result of the ploughing, sowing, harvesting and erosion, the flints are not deposited in any designs that would reveal occupation sites or activities of their Paleolithic manufacturers. Moreover, the artifacts are badly rolled and somewhat weathered; several are recently broken; some are marked by modern machine blades that have ploughed or harvested the fields of Jiza. Presumably from age and exposure, many of the implements are covered with a whitish patina; recent chipping reveals their original buff and light gray chert to dark gray flint material.

The flakes and blades (flakes outnumber other forms contained in the scatter) exhibit certain characteristics in common:

1. the flakes are relatively thick; the average thickness of the ten flakes in the accompanying drawing is 10 mm., measured at the thickest point.

2. broad multi-directional flake scars are typical.

3. many of the flakes are trimmed on the interior surface on the butt end, almost as if there were a conscious attempt to remove the bulb of percussion (observation made by Villiers, personal communication).

4. the flakes and blades are almost all struck from prepared cores; two different shapes of such cores are figures 3 and 12.

5. the two examples in figures 13 and 14 led Villiers to date the artifacts typologically as late in the Middle Paleolithic, because of the resemblance between these two implements and the finely retouched "punched" blades typical of Upper Paleolithic cultures (Villiers, personal communication).

6. the chopping tool, figure 5, is bifacially worked over its complete surface, producing a fairly straight, sharp edge, except for the "hand-hold" which is not sharp and retains bits of cortex.

To reach the find-spot, follow the Desert Highway from Amman to Al Jiza. Turn left into the village of Jiza onto the street opposite the desert police station (a fortress-shaped building past the reservoir, with camels corralled out back). Go through the village and pick up the dirt track which begins as you exit the village near a mosque surrounded by ruins. Pass the Bedouin camp and drive 1.6 km. to the Hijaz Railway. On your left, some distance

across the plain, you will see Queen Alia airport. Continue across the railroad track to the top of a low hill, 0.8 km. from the crossing. Turn left onto a wagon track through the wheat fields and go approximately 100 meters to a pile of stones. Surrounding the low rise on which you are now situated, you will find stone implements similar to those described in the present note.

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REFERENCE

Zeuner, F.E., Kirkbride, D., and Park, B. "Stone Age Exploration in Jordan, I." *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, 1957: 17-54.

Fig. 1

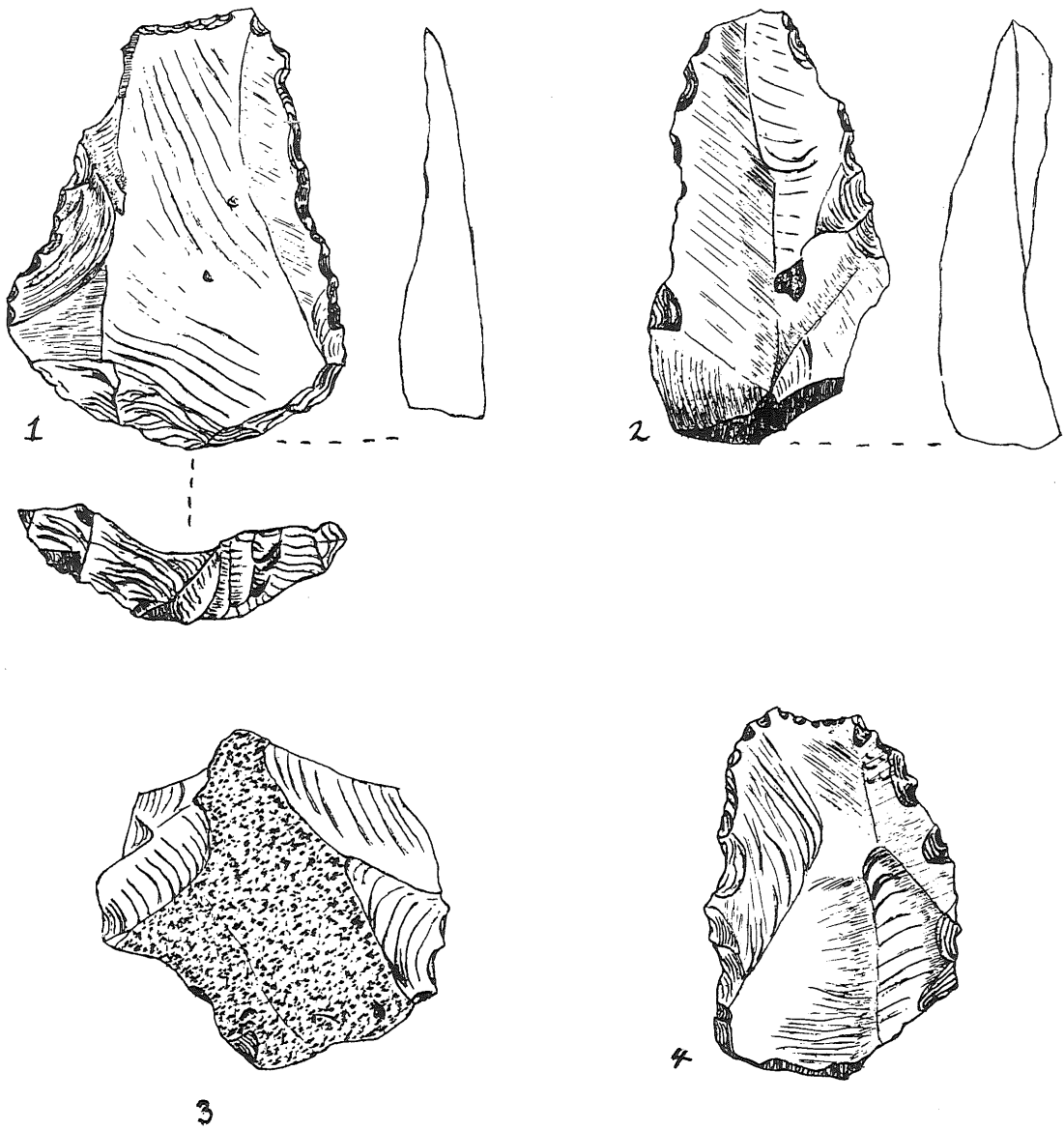


Fig. 2

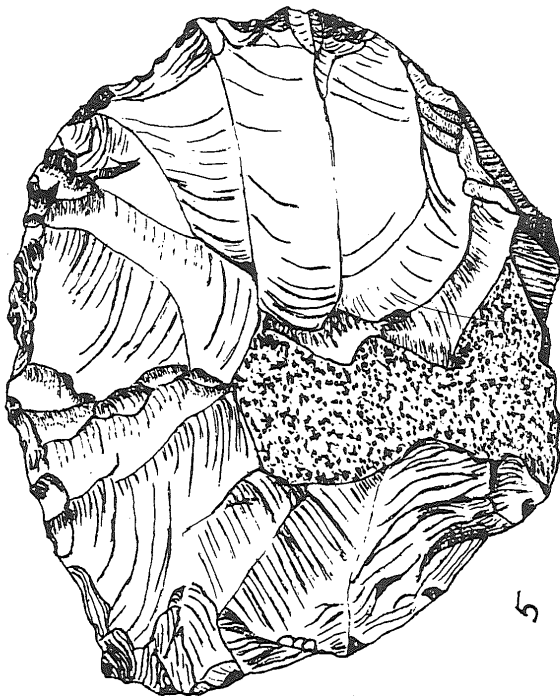
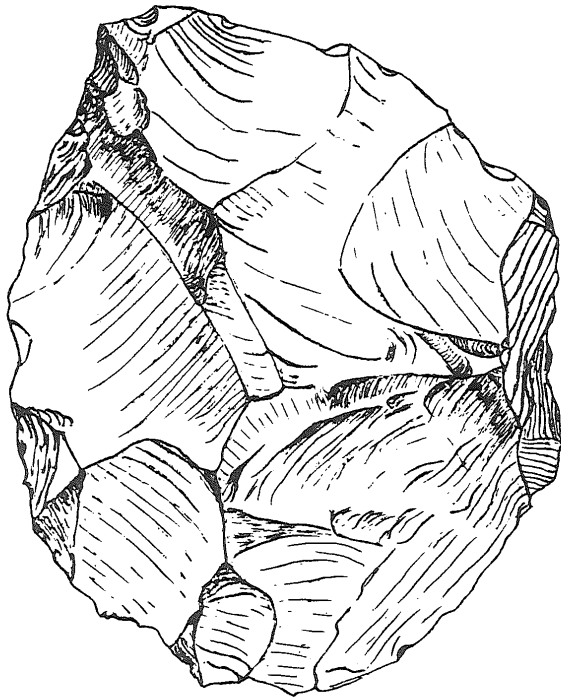
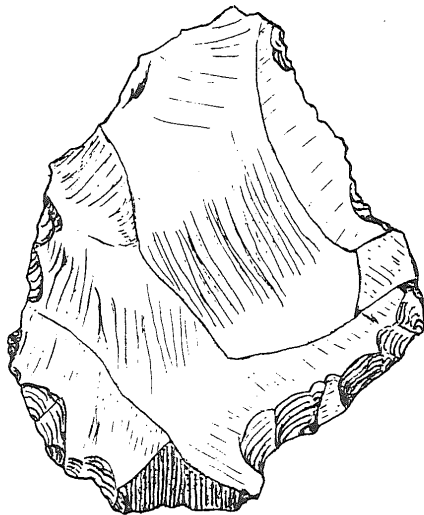


Fig. 3



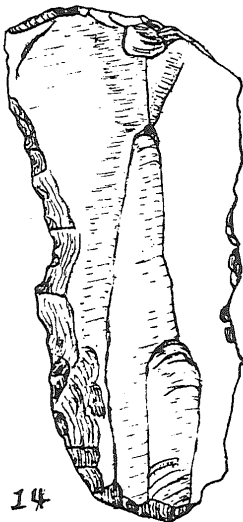
Fig. 4



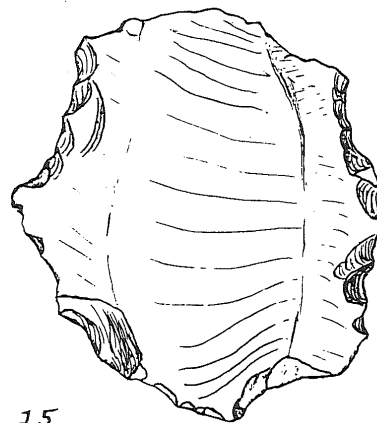
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13



14



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