

RESCUE EXCAVATIONS AT AN-NAQ' AND TULAYLĀT QAŞR MŪSĀ AL-ḤAMID 2000

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Introduction and Objectives

During April 2000, excavations took place at an-Naq' (النقع) and Tulaylāt Qaşr Mūsā al-Ḥamid (تلايلات قصر موسى الحمد) in the Ghawr aṣ-Ṣāfi (غور الصافي). The project was funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Greece and was conducted by a team of Greek archaeologists from the University of Ioannina in Greece.

The main objectives of the project were to continue rescue excavations at the badly robbed cemetery site of an-Naq' (Waheeb 1995: 553-555) and search for the settlement which belonged to it (Fig. 1). One good candidate for this settlement was the recently discovered site of Tulaylāt Qaşr Mūsā al-Ḥamid (Politis 1999: 543-544).

Excavations

1. An-Naq'

At an-Naq', 17 tombs were excavated which were constructed of large wadi pebbles (Figs. 2, 3). Although almost all had been recently robbed-out, important information concerning their construction and date were gained. Some had fragmentary and complete objects associated with the burials. One exceptional find was an andesite porphyry spheroidal vase fragment (reg. no. GS-AN 16) (Fig. 4) comparable to Egyptian First Dynasty types. On the basis of pottery and other finds, most could be dated to the Early Bronze Age I-II period (ca. 3,100- 2,600 BC) similar to those found on previous excavations in the area (Waheeb 1995: 553; Politis 1997: 342).

One tomb had Middle Bronze Age IIB period (ca. 1,750 BC) pottery fragments. Similar results were also mirrored in a surface collection which was conducted to the north and south of the excavation trench. This is associated to the Middle Bronze Age cairn tombs excavated at Dayr 'Ayn 'Abāta (دير عين عباطه) only a couple of kilometres to the north (Politis 1995: 483-488; 1997: 344-347).

The discovery of a tombstone (reg. no. GS-AN 22) dated to the late fourth century AD and in-

scribed in Greek immediately to the west of the Bronze Age cemetery was further evidence of the overlapping with the Byzantine cemetery of ancient Zoara (Politis 1998: 627-634).

2. Tulaylāt Qaşr Mūsā al-Ḥamid

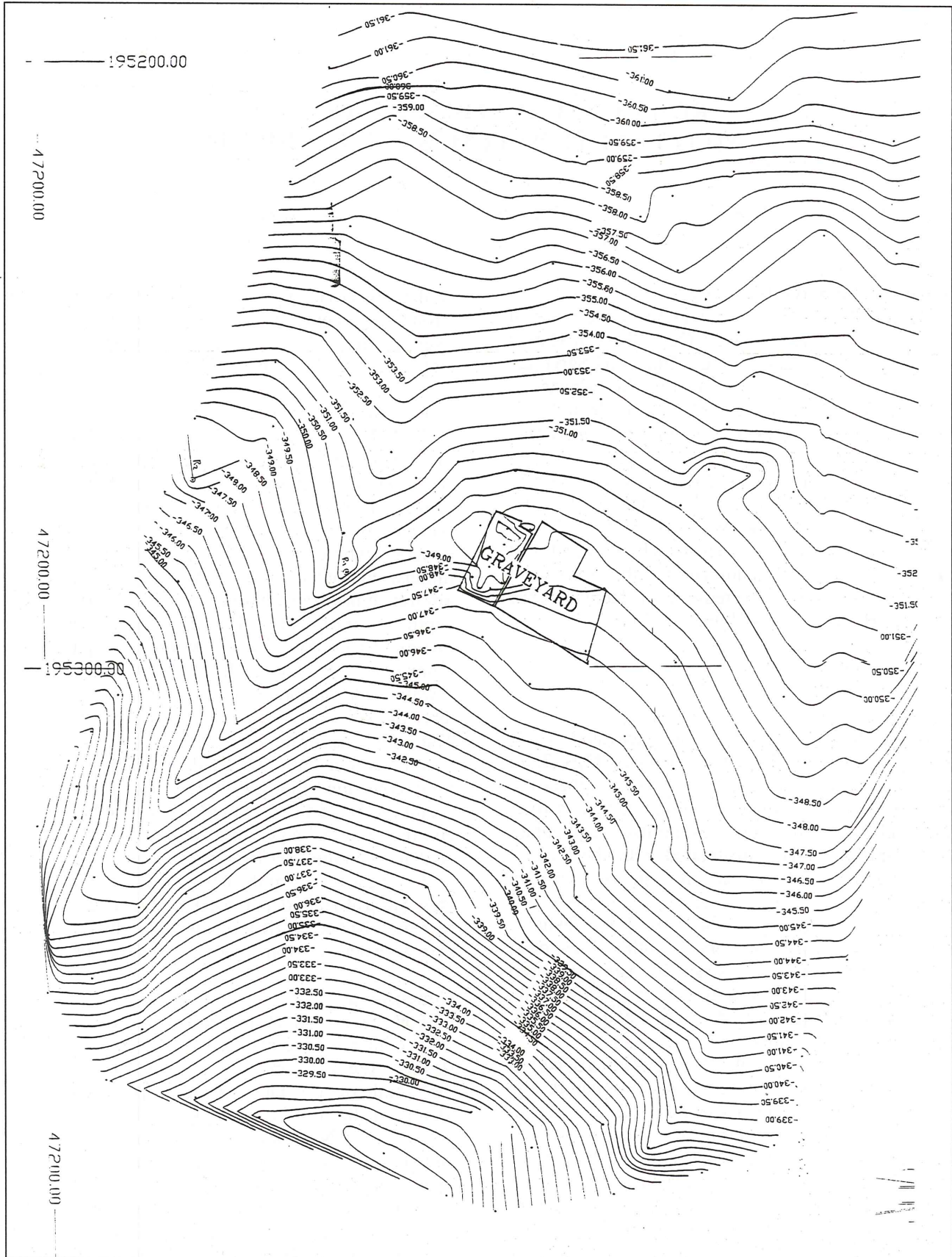
Tulaylāt Qaşr Mūsā al-Ḥamid is an extensive, low-laying *tall* in the Wādī al-Ḥasā alluvial fan surrounded by modern agricultural fields, with dozens of large saddle quern stones and Iron Age pottery strewn on the surface. Two small test trenches were made on the southwest to distinguish the outer limits of the site, and one 5m x 4m trench near the centre in order to determine the depth of stratigraphy (Fig. 5). There were two phases of Iron Age II (ca. 900 BC) occupation on orange clay virgin soil. The earliest phase revealed a wall made of adobe bricks with associated pottery, animal bones, metalwork and quern stones. The later phase was a ca. 2m diameter pit cutting into the earlier level. The finds from these excavations confirmed that the pottery and quern stones found on the surface came from stratified contexts, and that they belonged to a substantial agricultural settlement in the later Iron Age period.

During a survey at the northwest end of Tulaylāt Qaşr Mūsā al-Ḥamid, two recently dug irrigation pits revealed Nabataean/Roman pottery sherds which may have derived from a farmstead of the period.

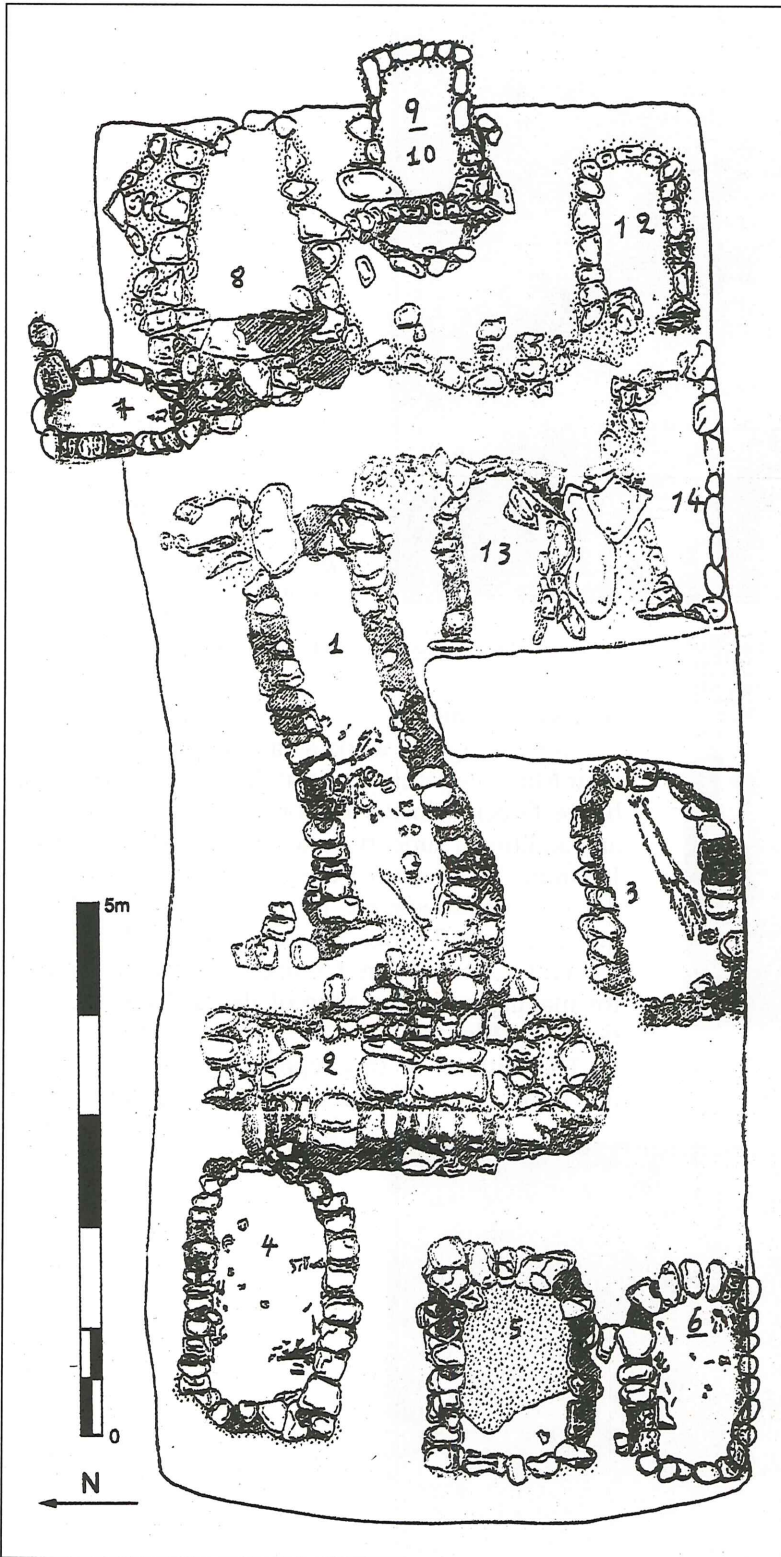
Conclusions

Surface investigations and excavations at an-Naq' confirmed the presence of an extensive Early Bronze Age I-II cemetery, perhaps the largest in the southern Levant. Although previously unidentified, the presence of Middle Bronze Age II pottery at an-Naq' was not surprising considering similar recently discovered and excavated finds at Dayr 'Ayn 'Abāta.

Although the quest for an associated Early Bronze Age settlement was inconclusive, a large Iron Age II agricultural site was verified at Tulaylāt Qaşr Mūsā al-Ḥamid.



1. Contour plan of excavation area of an-Naq' (by AEGEK Co.).



2. Plan of excavated tombs at an-Naq' (by K. Paskhalides).

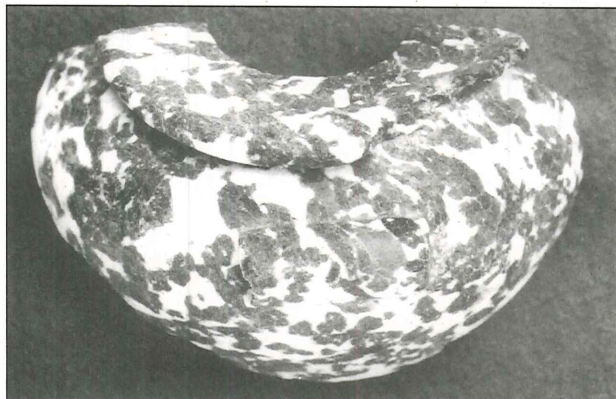
The Staff

The excavation team consisted of Khalil Hamdan, Department of Antiquities representative; Konstantinos Paskhalides, Stavros Balakas, Demetrios Basakos, Georgios Papaioannou, Evi Pa-

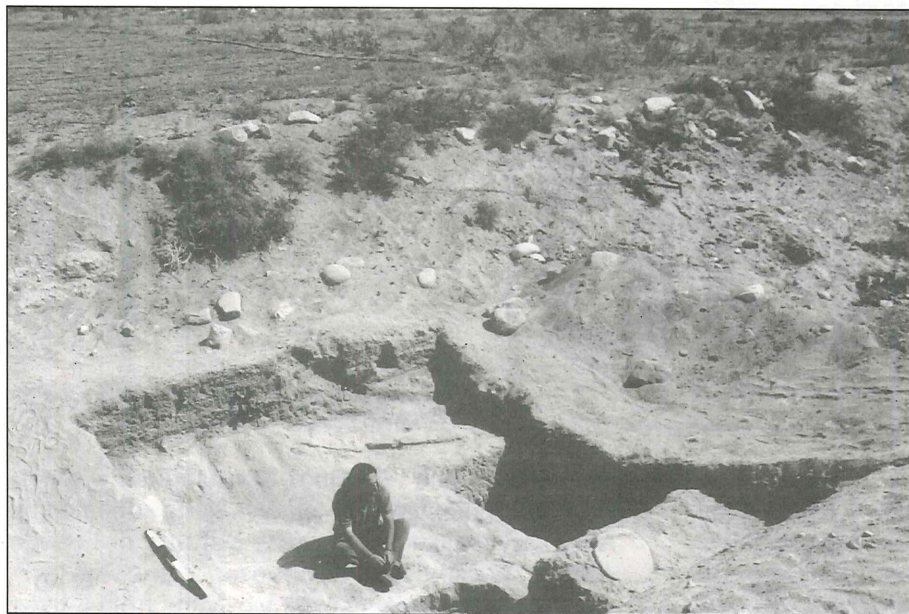
padopoulou and Anagnos-Konstantinos Tsonos, field archaeologists. The project was also joined by Anna Dalamanga of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Locally hired workmen, many with previous archaeological experience, came from Ghawr



3. Excavated burials constructed of large wadi pebbles at an-Naq', from the west (photo: G. Papaioannou).



4. Andesite porphyry spheroidal vase fragment (reg. no. GS-AN 16) from an-Naq', comparable to Egyptian First Dynasty types (photo: G. Papaioannou).



5. 5m x 4m trench near the centre of Tulaylāt Qaşr Mūsā al-Ḥamid, from the southwest (photo: K.D. Politis).

aş-Şāfi . The project was directed by the authors.

Acknowledgments

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