

THE 1982 SEASON AT ABILA OF THE DECAPOLIS

by
W. Harold Mare

Introduction

The second season of the Abila of the Decapolis Archaeological Excavation and Regional Survey was conducted June 14 to July 24, 1982. The main sponsor of the excavation was Covenant Theological Seminary. Co-sponsors were Cincinnati Bible Seminary and Grace Theological Seminary (Indiana). In addition, Wilfrid Laurier University, loaned cameras and a portable darkroom for the photographic work.

The core staff decided that the field operations in 1982 should concentrate on an excavation probe (Area A) on the summit of Tell Abila (Pl. VIII: 1) for two reasons. First, because of the rather wide range of archaeological periods represented through the finds of the 1980 surface sherding at that spot. Second, because the ruins of a large rectangular building (designated the "Public Building" during the 1980 Survey) offered an opportunity to date the last phase of extensive construction on the summit of the tell. Dr. Duane W. Roller of Wilfrid Laurier University was the Supervisor of Area A.

Concentrated attention was given to the necropolis of Abila (Areas H and J) along the Wadi Quailbah (east of the site) with Dr. John J. Davis of Grace Theological Seminary as Supervisor. Systematic survey work continued with the regional survey examining transects in radial arms extending 2.5 km. north, south, east, and west to check the continuity or discontinuity of the rural settlements (Fig. 1). The regional survey and the architectural studies were under the supervision of Mr. Michael J. Fuller of St. Louis Community College - Florissant Valley. Extensive architectural drawing of surface structures visible above ground was undertaken by Mr. Kenneth D. Smith of Washington,

D.C. In order to make findings more easily shared and to facilitate the publication of preliminary reports, the staff operated on the basis of agreed upon field procedures. As a necessary part of the excavation, the American expedition has been and is carrying on various geological, botanical and anthropological investigations, both in the field and laboratory.

Assistance was graciously given by the Department of Antiquities of Jordan, Dr. Adnan Hadidi, Director General. He provided a crew of workmen who laboured in each of the sectors listed above. The Department also provided the use of some equipment and arranged for the use of the Hartha Secondary Girls School for staff headquarters. Mr. Sultan Shraidah, Representative from the Department of Antiquities, ably assisted the excavation in numerous ways.

Area A: The Excavation Probe on Tell Abila

Area A consisted of four squares measuring 4.00 m. by 3.00 m., and excavated down to a maximum depth of 2.66 m. The excavation squares were placed slightly east of the summit of Tell Abila where a number of ashlar blocks were visible, giving indication that this might be the Abila acropolis. The Area A probe was "L" shaped, with Squares 1, 2, and 3 oriented on a north-south axis and Square 4 contiguously to and on the west of Square 3. There was a steep slope from south to north; indication of this by measurement was observed in that the surface level of Square 4 was 441.21 m., and that of Square 1 was 436.83, a drop in twelve metres from south to north of 4.38 m. Pottery sherds in the probe tended in part to come from fill material, making the delineation of occu-

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REGIONAL SURVEY & EXCAVATIONS

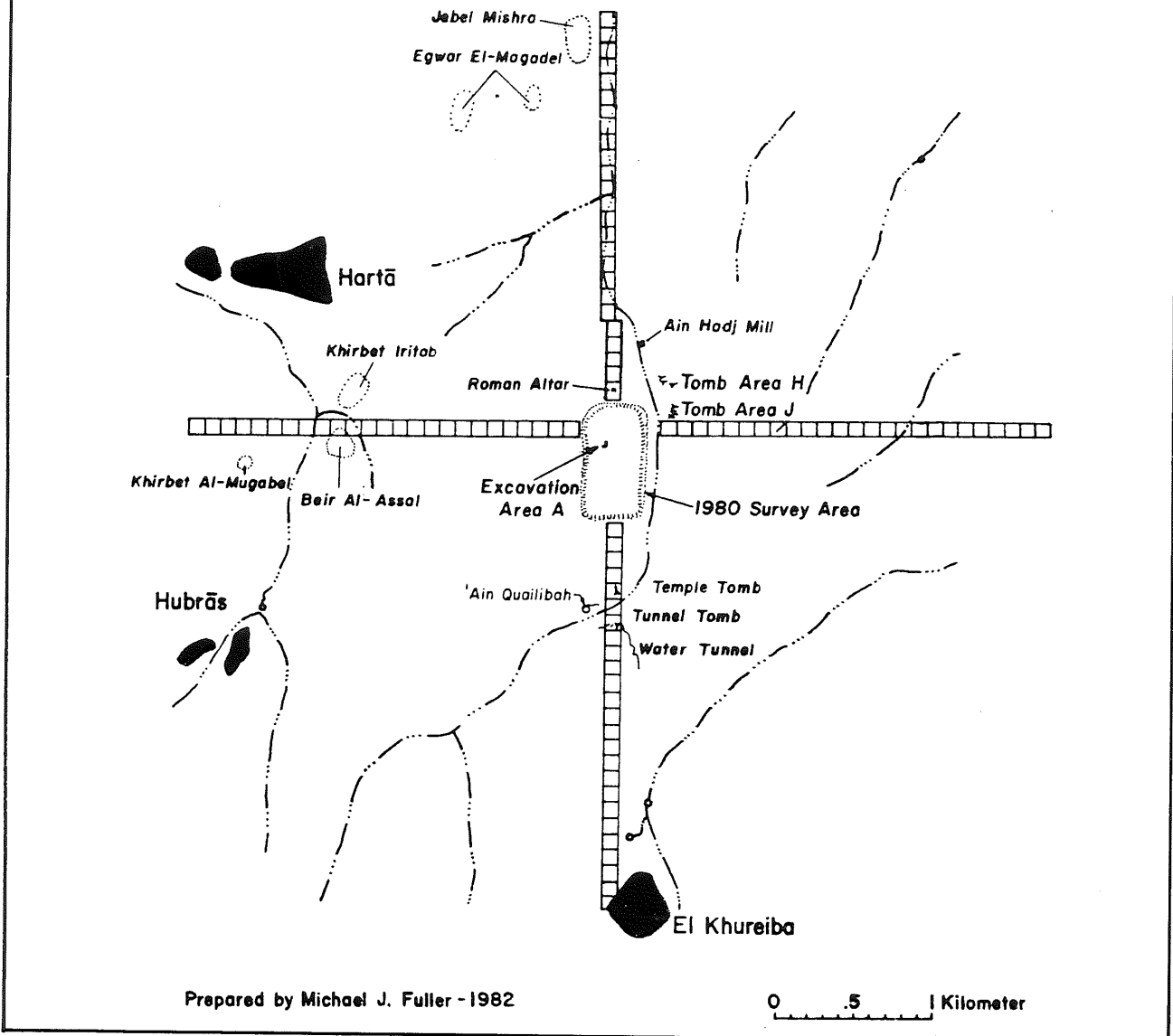


Fig. 1. Map of the Upper Wadi Quailibah, including the Site of Abila.

patational periods sometimes difficult,¹ especially in square 1 where there were several metres of fill. Although there was a network of walls, particularly in squares 1 and 2, there were no definitive foundation trenches which would have aided in the interpretation.

A jar burial (tentatively Iron IIC) was found in the northwest sector of Square 1:

it was embedded in a bricky matrix containing Iron IIC and Hellenistic sherds and was covered by a mixed fill of Iron Age to Islamic sherds. A mud-brick *tabun* (containing a mix of Iron Age and Hellenistic sherds) protruded west from the east baulk of Square 1. A network of walls (probably of domestic use), some of which were constructed of field stones and architectu-

¹ The stratigraphy of the Area A Probe can be divided into four phases, based mainly on ceramic evidence: Phase 1, Modern and Post-Umayyad; Phase 2, Umayyad; Phase 3, Byzantine; and Phase 4, the Pre-Byzantine phase. The latter can be tentatively divided into three sub-phases: Roman,

Hellenistic, and Iron II C. The distinction of these sub-phases at this point is based primarily on the ceramic evidence and on comparisons of the architectural forms with Pella of the Decapolis. These divisions are based on the 1982 stratigraphic study of Area A by Dr. Cherie Lenzen and Ms. Alison McQuitty.

ral fragments, well laid and mortared (suggesting a Hellenistic or Roman date) was also excavated in Square 1 and also in Square 2. (Fig. 2) These may have made up in part an east-west retaining wall along the north slope of Tell Abila. Other secondary walls (unmortared and of a rougher construction) with Byzantine sherds predominating, were also found in Squares 1 and 2. All of this evidence shows that the range of material and fill in Squares 1 and 2 extends from Iron IIC to the Byzantine periods. It is possible that the basic wall complex is to be dated to around 200 B.C. When the Syrians gained the region from the Egyptians in the Fifth Syrian War and that the secondary wall complex is from as late as the Late Roman or Byzantine periods.²

Squares 3 and 4 produced pottery sherds from the Byzantine to the Umayyad periods.³ The corner of a platform in the southeast sector of Square 3 was constructed of pseudo-isodomic ashlar masonry covered with a thick plaster up to 0.03 m. thick. It is to be dated subsequent to the nearby apsidal structure (a large Christian church), since a wedge-shaped piece of basalt (reused from the church's apse) is built into the platform. The church's apse, uncovered to a depth of four courses, was curved inside and out. It was constructed of facing (exterior of basalt and interior of limestone) and a rubble core. Workmanship was excellent on the facing stones in terms of sharply cut and finely chiseled surfaces. A little less than one half of the apse was uncovered, (pl. VIII. 2) but enough to estimate that the diameter of the apse was approximately 10.50 m. to 11.00 m.; evidence from a curved block adjoining the large apse on its north, as well as traces of the same curve on the surface north of Square 4, seem to indicate that

there is a smaller northern apse, or connecting walls, for a *pastophorion*. The sherds found in connection with the apses are Byzantine. On the preserved surface of the apse and in much of the region on both sides of the apse was a layer of plaster that, due to the Umayyad pottery sherds found there, suggests that the church was destroyed and the plaster surfaces laid subsequent to the time of the Umayyad conquest in A.D. 636. The evidence of violent earthquake activity was possibly responsible for the displacing of ashlar blocks and voussoirs may suggest a date for the church's destruction on into the eighth century, possibly due to the earthquake of A.D. 746 which caused great destruction at nearby Tiberias and Jerash.

Areas H. and J: Tomb Excavation along the Wadi Quailibah

Six tombs were excavated in 1982 in Areas H and J along the Wadi Quailibah. Tomb H2 dates from the Early Roman period (63 B.C.-A.D. 135), while the other five tombs (H1, J1, J3, J4, and J5) were prepared and used during the Late Roman period (A.D. 135-324), Early Byzantine (A.D. 324-491) and the Late Byzantine (A.D. 491-661) periods.

These six tombs represented three different tomb types. The first was the standard single chamber with loculi tombs which were common and are represented at other sites in Jordan in the Early and Late Roman periods. The second type, popular in the Late Roman period, was the single chamber tomb with *arcosolia* cut into three of the walls. The third type shows single trough graves (or, stone-cut benches along one wall of the central chamber) or **trough cut** into larger *arcosolia*.

² During the Iron II, Hellenistic, and Roman periods, the evidence seems to point to the sector being used primarily as a domestic area. The fill layers in Area A, Squares 1 and 2 actually contained sherds from the Late Bronze II through the Hellenistic periods. The Hellenistic sherds were primarily of two types: 1) red-slipped bowls and plates with slightly inverted rims; and 2) large coarse ware jars with flattened and folded rims.

³ In Area A, Square 4, Wall 4008/4009/4004,

consisting of five voussoirs from the earlier Byzantine Church, judging from the minimal pottery evidence, seems to date to the Mamlūk period (A.D. 1260-1456). In the earlier part of the season the majority of the sherds in Area A, Squares 3 and 4 came from the Umayyad period, but near the end of the excavation, Early Byzantine/Umayyad pottery showed up, with a few Byzantine amphorae sherds being produced; 'Late Roman' fine ware forms came to light in Area A, 3 and 4.

All six of the tombs were excavated stratigraphically, both within the entrance way as well as in the tomb proper. Attention was also given to the interior geotectural characteristics (i.e., subterranean rock-cut features), including a careful study of the masonry work, especially analysis of the tool work of the artisan.⁴

The Early Roman Period (63 B.C. - A.D. 135), Tomb H.2 (Fig. 3)

Tomb H 2 is located about 500.00 m. northeast of Tell Abila on a gently rolling slope beneath ca. 0.30 m. of soil. The excavation of H2 uncovered three rectangular stones positioned on two ledges and blocking the tomb entrance, with a series of steps leading to the tomb proper. Three lines of evidence suggest that the tomb had not been disturbed in modern times: the position of the sealing stones; the minimal amount of soil within the tomb itself; and the presence of only late Roman sherds, indicated that the tomb had not been reopened in modern times. The tomb proper consisted of a small central chamber, with six regularly cut loculi (*kokim* type) radiating from three of its sides; there was no square depression in the chamber floor. The tomb contained at least seven adult burials, with the body fully extended and, in most cases, the head placed into the chamber first. The presence of iron nails in the various loculi indicate that wooden coffins were used for burial here. Artefacts found in the tomb included lamps, glass pieces, juglets, small funerary bowls, bracelets, an alabaster vase, rings, beads, buttons, a bone tool, a fibula, etc. An unusual find included a group of three terracotta figurines in Loculus 6: 1) a rider on a horse; 2) a muse (*Terpsichore*) playing a small lyre with a smaller figure standing at her side; and 3) Dionysius, with a panther on his right and a young boy on his left holding onto the god's garment.

The Late Roman Period Tombs Used on Into the Byzantine Periods. H1, J1, J3, J4, and J5⁵.

The first of these tombs, H1 (located up the slope from H 2), was explored in connection with the 1980 Abila Survey; it had been robbed in modern times. Salvage excavation was engaged in here. The central chamber, (Fig. 4) badly damaged by modern looters, had an off-centre square depression in the floor the origin of which could be interpreted as a vestige of the earlier Iron II and Hellenistic tomb design which included benches around a central depression, or as a conscious representation of a Roman house design with its impluvium basin (for rain water coming from the opening in the ceiling, compluvium) in the central front room (the atrium). The tomb contained fourteen irregularly cut loculi radiating from all four of its walls. The tomb's origin is to be traced to the end of the Late Roman period (ca. the first quarter of the fourth century A.D.). It was used on into the Early Byzantine period; a Greek inscription and a bas relief on the south wall belong to this period. While no crosses were found in the tomb, the relief of stylized angles above Loculus 13 may possibly indicate a Christian re-use of the tomb.⁶

The remaining tombs (in Area J) excavated in 1982 were located on the next hill south of Area H. These tombs (J 1, J 3, J 4, and J5) here showed different styles and periods of use. Of the styles, J 1 was of the loculi type, with a central chamber and eight irregularly cut loculi radiating from three of its walls. Its history of use included the Late Roman through the Late Byzantine periods, as evidenced by the ceramic finds, among which was an ostrakon with a fragmentary Greek inscription. In this tomb, probably a family tomb, were found two bronze coins, one of which has been

⁴ Through this study the following were able to be determined: 1) the number of actual tools employed; 2) the nature of the stroke patterns, long, short, etc.; and 3) the degree of the mason's penetration into the rock.

⁵ J 2 and H 3 were probes that did not uncover

tombs.

⁶ Tomb H 1, in an upper level off to the left (north), evidenced broken remains of stone sarcophagi which had been damaged by tomb robbers. This upper level had been stripped of its stratigraphic soil layers and artefacts and, therefore, excavation was not attempted in this sector.

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Top Plan of Tomb H-2

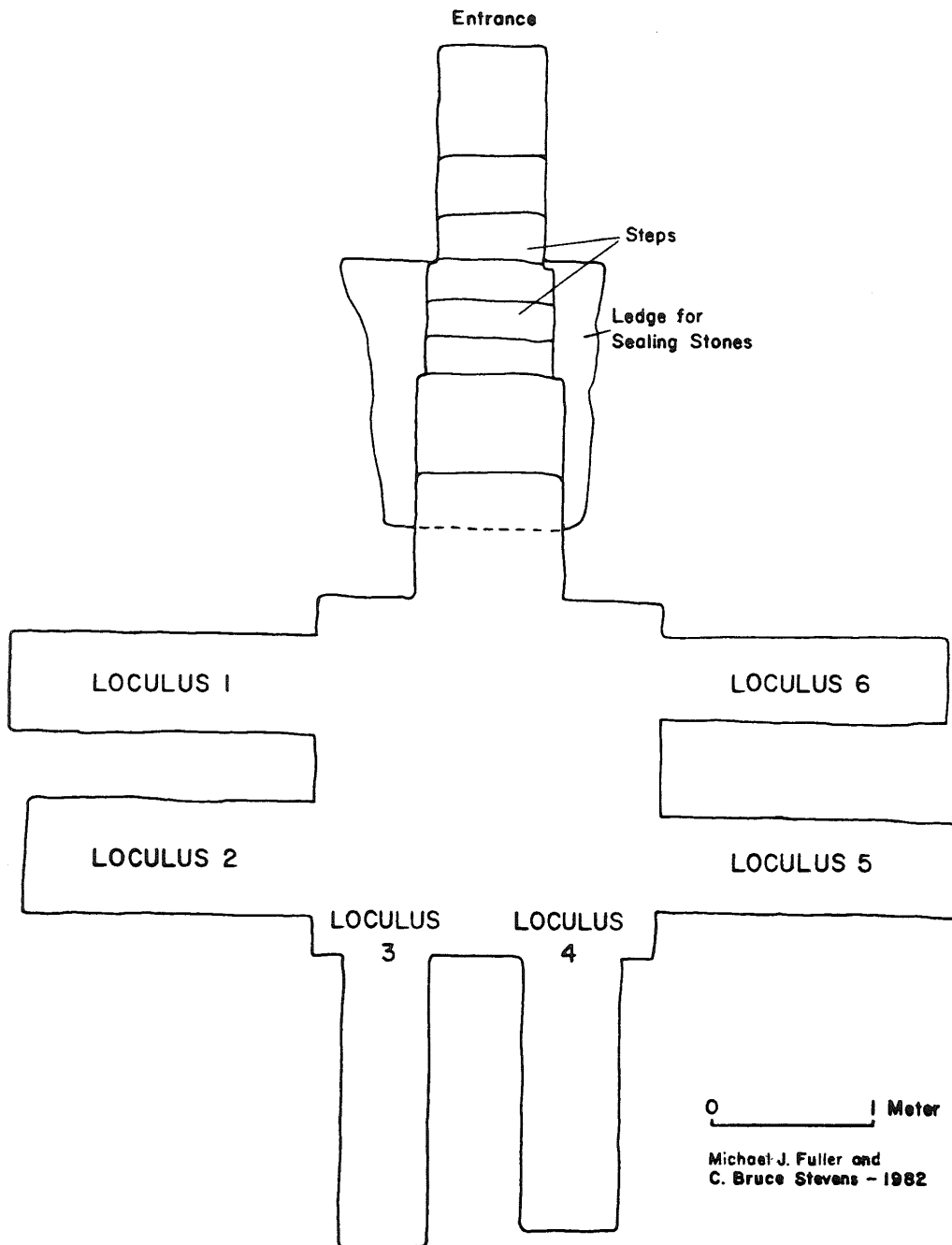


Fig. 3. Top Plan of Tomb H-2.

identified (see section in this report on Selected Finds, coin number 158); iron nails and bronze straps (for the wadded coffins), pins, bracelets and beads, two gold rings (one with a small stone seal incised with a stylized horse, and the other with a small round ruby inset).

Tombs J 3 and J 4 represented the *arcosolium* type. J 3 had three *arcosolia*, one in each of three of its walls. Among the

artefacts were a bracelet, a ring, a small spatula, beads, and an animal bone with a metal ring attached (possibly evidencing some utilitarian or magical purpose). Preliminary evidence revealed skeletal remains of both adults and children. J 4 also with *arcosolia* contained three small crosses (probably inscribed in the Early Byzantine period) above the entrance to the chamber and crosses carved on each side of

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Top Plan of Tomb H-1

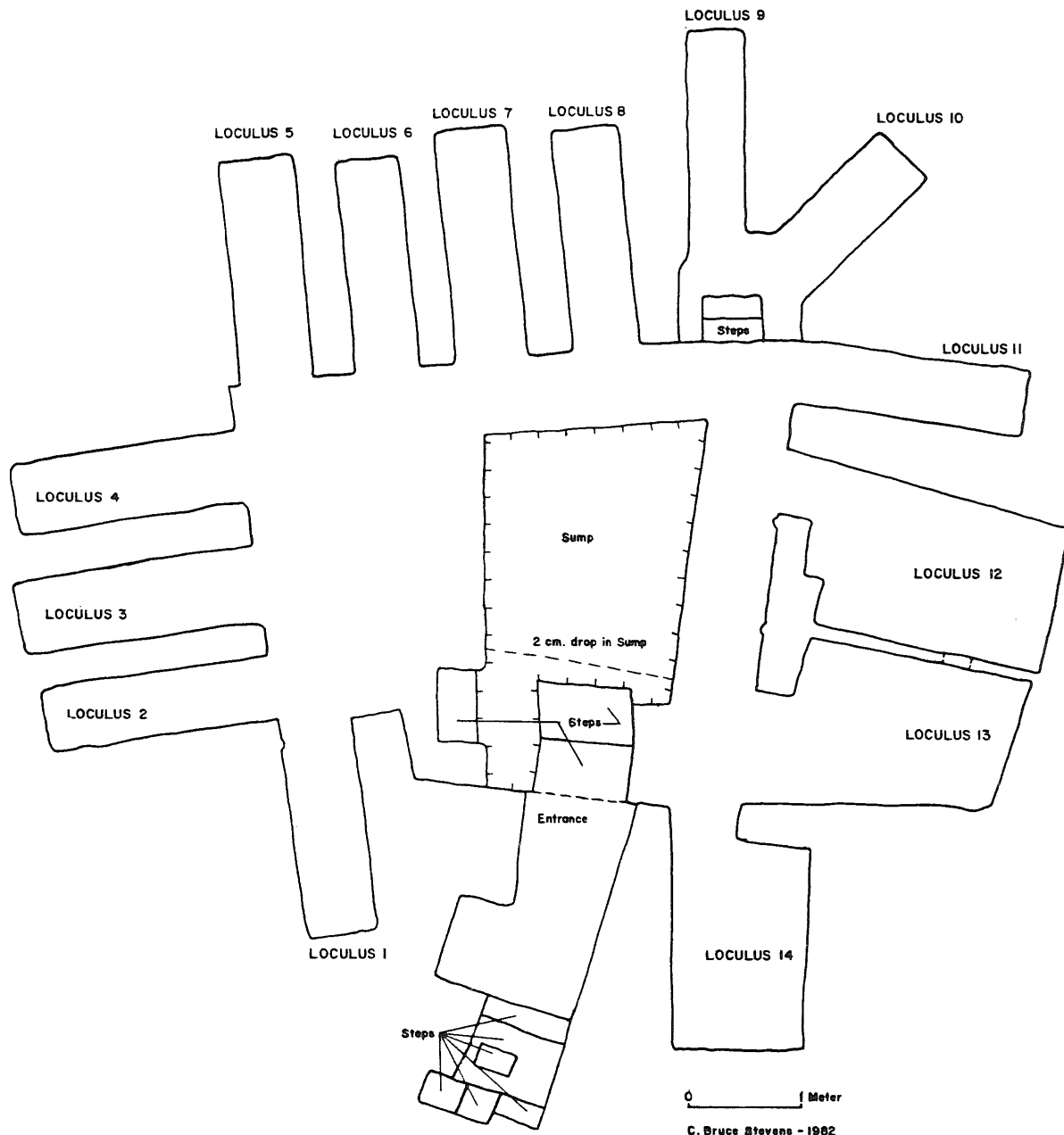


Fig. 4. Top Plan of Tomb H-1.

the *arcosolia*. Tomb J 5, located a short distance south of J 3, was unique in showing a rough cut, rectangular chamber, with a rock-cut bench along the south wall. Evidence points to a Late Roman origin for the tomb. Three adult burials were

found here. Ceramic evidence in the tomb dates from the Late Roman and the Early Byzantine periods.

In the course of the excavation season the Survey Team investigated in detail tomb Area H. It is estimated that there are

at least 100 to 125 tombs in this region, and, in the overall, as many as 1,000 tombs in the bedrock ledges on the various sides of ancient Abila. (Fig. 5)

Abila Regional Survey: North, South, East and West Transects

Preceding the regional survey, an east-west transect was sherded across the saddle between Tell Abila and Khirbet Umm el 'Amad. The Regional Survey Team laid out radial transects of 100 m. square cells, extending out 2.5 km. distance to the

north, south, east, and west, and the team then did systematic sherding in each of the transects (one man hour of work for each cell). Work in cells NT 1, NT 2, and NT 3 (the cells closest to Tell Abila) established the presence of a Late Roman-Byzantine suburb (Fig. 6) complete with cisterns, winepress, domestic structures, a religious altar, (Fig. 7) sheltered animal pens, and tombs. Farther out in the transect were seen nomadic encampments, evidence of agricultural activities, and a Byzantine farmstead complex (NT 13).

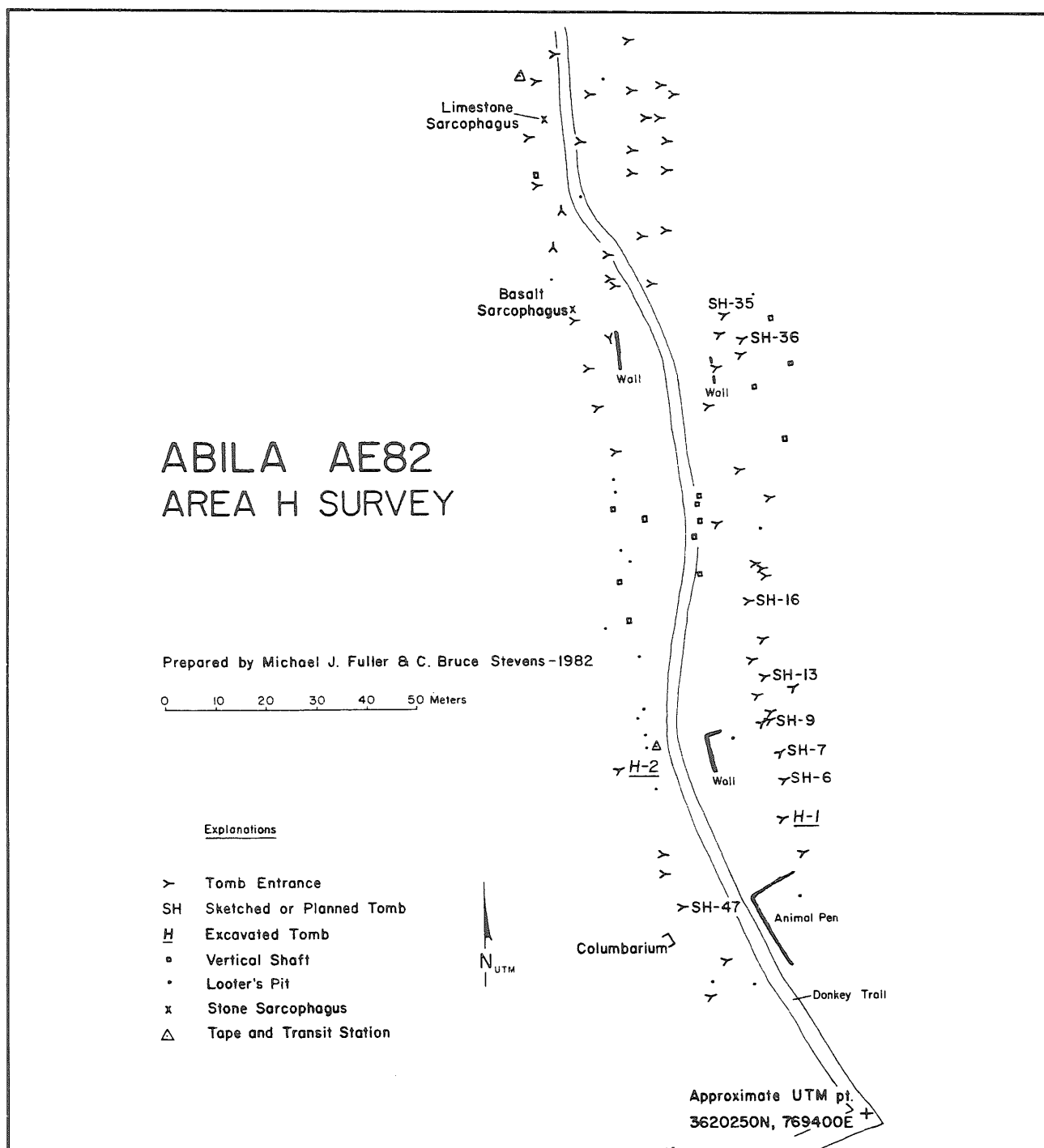


Fig. 5. Plan of Tombs in Area H.

ABILA REGIONAL SURVEY AE82 NORTH TRANSECT SHEET NO. I

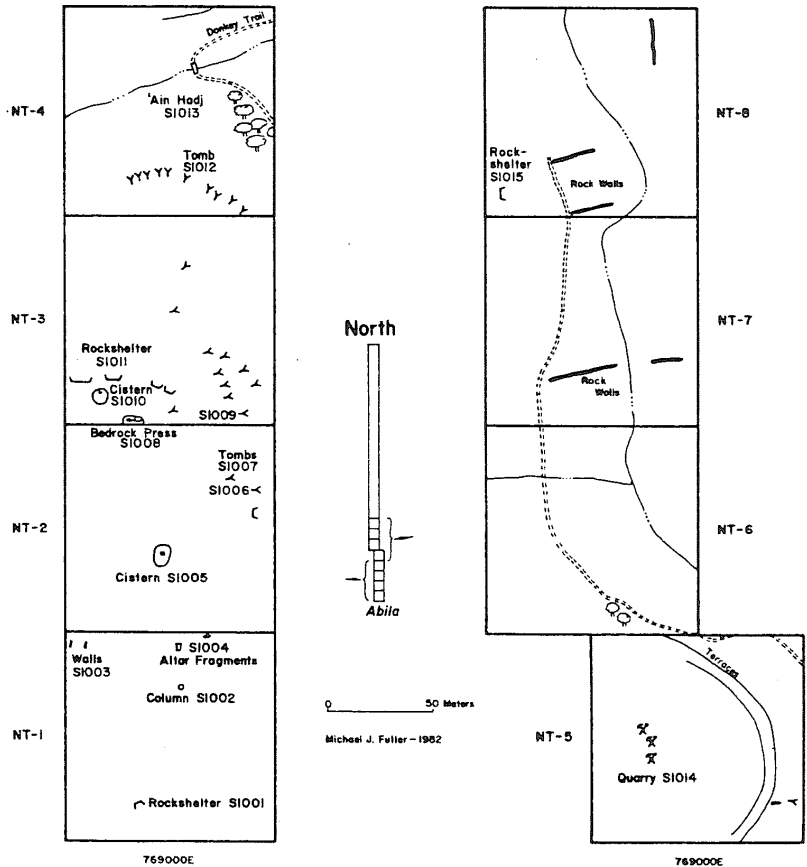
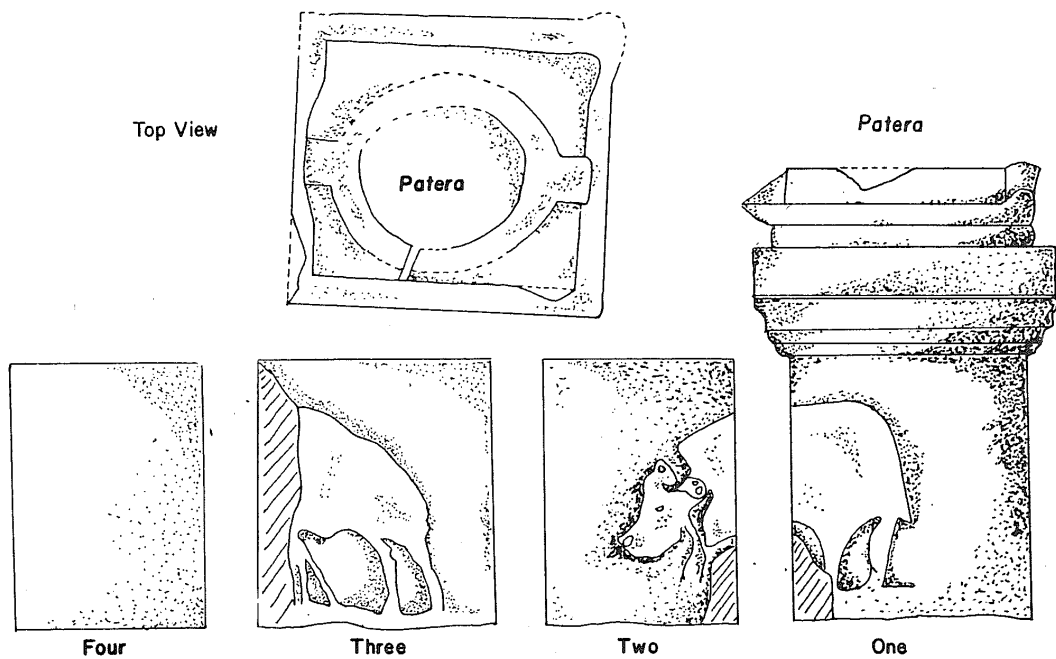


Fig. 6. Plan of the North Transect, Cells NT-1 to NT-8.

ANCIENT ABILA AE82 ALTAR FROM CELL NT-1



0 10 20 30 cm.
Prepared by Michael J. Fuller - 1982

Fig. 7. Drawing of Altar Manufactured from Limestone, Cell NT-1.

The West Transect recovered evidence of a suburb of the Roman-Byzantine period in WT 1 and 3. Chalcolithic and Early Bronze sherds were also found in cells WT 1 and 2. Cells WT 3-12 seems to evidence Roman-Byzantine farmsteads. From Cell WT 9 came a Tyrian coin of A.D. 104-107. Architectural features were also found in Cells WT 13-15, 18, and 19; the sherds were predominantly Byzantine.

The East Transect, extending from the bottom of Wadi Quailibah east 2.5 km., discovered architectural features in cell ET 2 which included part of an ancient building, eight tombs, and a dressed stone wall. Byzantine sherds were most abundant, along with sherds of the Hellenistic, Roman, Umayyad, and Mamluk periods. Other cells in the East Transect produced animal pens, rockshelters, and cisterns. Cells ET 18, 19, and 21 produced a number of tesserae and pottery sherds from the Late Roman into the Byzantine periods.

The South Transect (beginning near the centre of Khirbet Umm el 'Amad where the 1980 Abila Survey stopped) extended south across the Wadi Quailibah (near the point of 'Ain Quailibah) and continued on to the southern edge of the modern village of Khureida. Several tombs were examined in Cells ST 4, 5, and 6; one tomb, the "Temple Tomb," was decorated with frescoes of a Graeco-Roman temple, geometric designs, fluted columns with Corinthian capitals, a frieze of running animals, and a portrait. The southern wadi scarp contained a decorated tomb, the "Tunnel Tomb," so named because of an extensive Water Tunnel meandering nearby. In the South Transect there were evidences of scattered Byzantine farmsteads in Cells ST 6-9, ST 14-19, and ST 23-24.

The Water Tunnel survey, a part of the South Transect survey, was one of the most important aspects of the 1982 Regional Survey. Roadbed construction near 'Ain Quailibah had truncated the tunnel, thus the survey team was able to investigate three of the segments, as well as the major entrance along the southern wadi scarp to

the southwest of 'Ain Quailibah. The mouth of the major entrance of the water tunnel is 1.78 m. high and 1.20 m. wide (Pl. VIII: 3) Statistics for the deeper portion of the tunnel indicate that the mean width is 0.64 m. and mean height is 1.43 m. It is estimated that the tunnel extends at least a distance of 2.5 km. Back portions of the tunnel included calcified animal bones, Byzantine-Umayyad sherds, and the base of a Byzantine glass flask.

It is probable that the Water Tunnel was constructed during the Roman period and that it was maintained at least through the Byzantine period, as evidenced by the Greek mathematical inscription found in the *Puteus*, the size of the lamp niches and construction techniques. The water tunnel was cut into chalky limestone which does not exhibit faults or solutional pockets which could have influenced its course. The original entrance of the water tunnel is designated on the Irbid topographic map as an addit symbol at UTM coordinates 3618710N, 768930E.

The Abila water tunnel shows no evidence of being part of a water catchment system, which was true, however, of the tunnels at Philadelphia (Amman) and Capitoliass (Beit Ras). There may have been a similar aqueduct system at Gadara (Umm Qeis), according to Pasha⁷ but there are no other literary or archaeological evidence to this effect. Comparable extensive aqueducts were built during the Roman period (cf. the two aqueducts at Caesarea Maritima, the Jerusalem aqueduct, and the one at Syrian Antioch). The construction and use of the Abila Water Tunnel at this period speaks to the city's wealth and integration into the Roman empire; the growth of Abila probably taxed the capacity of 'Ain Quailibah, necessitating another source of water.

Architectural Wall Survey: Architectural Drawing on Tell Abila, the Saddle and Khirbet Umm el 'Amad

The Architectural Wall Survey concentrated on the features of the Basilica Church on Tell Abila and in the saddle

⁷ P. Pasha, *A History of Jordan and Its Tribes*, Florida, 1958, p. 28.

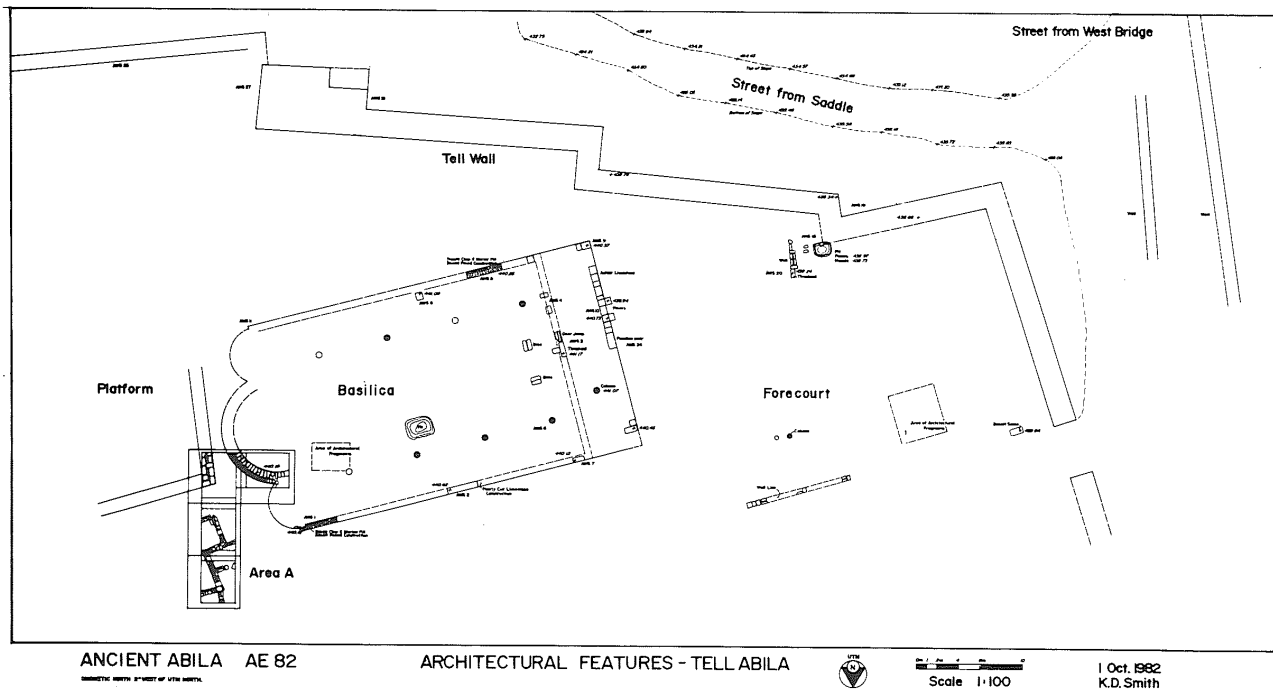


Fig. 8. Synthesis of Wall Structures on the South Portion of Tell Abila and the Area A Excavation Data.

between Tell Abila and Khirbet Umm el 'Amad (Fig. 8). The date for the Basilica building is estimated to be late sixth-seventh centuries A.D., following the model of basilicas in southern Syria, with its form being almost identical to the West Church at Pella.⁸ The platform on which the Basilica was built measures 19.90 m. north to south and 33.10 m. east to west (not including the dimensions of the apses). The west wall of the Basilica is 5.25 m. east of the west edge of the platform, but the location of a basalt column drum in this 5.25 m. strip indicates the probability of a colonnaded porch on the west end of the church. Including the porch, then, the Basilica was the same dimensions as the platform, 19.90 m. north-south by 33.10 m. east-west. The centre aisle of the church is 11.30 m. wide and is separated from the two side aisles by rows of columns each having an intercolumniation of 6.57 m. The side aisles are each 2.10 m. wide with walls of 1.20 m. on each side. All of these features were carefully drawn.

To the north and east of Area A on Tell Abila there were numerous traceable wall lines and concentrations of basalt architectural fragments, including several

large well-carved basalt door jambs, a pilaster base (or top moulding), a drum from an engaged column, and several ashlar basalt stones. Also there were two limestone arches set in a wall line. The evidence points to a large, important building located here. Farther east and north on Tell Abila other extensive building remains are to be observed.

The investigation of the wall system that circumscribes portions of Tell Abila points to a long term use and rebuilding of these walls; this suggests the continued importance of Tell Abila over a long period of its history. Most of the wall is of header-stretcher, ashlar limestone. One notable (probably late) exception is the section of wall to the south of Area A, constructed of reused basalt architectural fragments. These fragments include building blocks, and one fragment with cuttings for door or gate bolts in its uppermost face, suggesting that in this sector there may have been an entrance to the top of the tell from the saddle below.

A flight of basalt steps at the far southeast corner of Tell Abila was mapped: they consist of possibly twelve stairs, 2.3 m. wide, with the average riser height of ca. 0.50 m. This stair installation seems

⁸ R.H. Smith, *Pella of the Decapolis*, Wooster, 1973, p. 139-155.

to lead to the top of Tell Abila from a terrace level below.

Flotation and Soil Testing

The limited analysis of soils and some sampling of test units for botanical remains by use of flotation indicated that the climate of Roman Abila was not significantly different than that of today. The evidence showed that among the economic plants utilized were olive, wheat, millet, barley, grape, lentils, hackberry, vetch, and coriander. Soil samples were systematically taken from square 2 of Area A, with judgment samples collected from the other squares. A pH testing of the acidity or alkalinity of the soil deposits with an **Accutronic** pH computer showed a range of pH values for Area A, Square 2, ranging between 6.7 and 7.0 with a mean of 6.8.

The 1982 Season in Perspective⁹

The 1982 Abila Excavation and Regional Survey¹⁰ contributed to our goal of understanding the archaeological history of ancient Abila of the Decapolis, especially in the Umayyad, Byzantine, and Roman periods. This was true as a result of our excavation of Area A on the summit of Tell Abila. The tomb excavation in Areas H and J particularly added to our understanding of the cultural and material heritage of Abila in the Roman and Byzantine

periods. The Regional Survey also showed the close connection culturally that the immediate suburbs had with the site. The survey of the Water Tunnel just to the south of 'Ain Quailbah raised the intriguing question as to the extent of the expanding population that would need such an increase of water. Future seasons of excavation will increase further our understanding of these periods at Abila, as well as inform us of the broader horizons of the archaeological history of the site.

Finds

1. Selected Finds from Early Roman Tomb H 2 (Fig. 9, listed by tomb object no. and tomb identification no.).

10 (H 2). Wheel-made bowl. Fine grained texture, reddish-yellow core (5YR 6/8) and gray external slip (5YR 5/1) which extends down from the rim 6.7 cm. Single horizontal incised line 0.30 cm. below the rim. Two-thirds restored, except for missing basal sherds. Existing ht. 9.3 cm.; rim dia. 14.0 cm.

14 (H 2). Wheel-made piriform bottle. Reddish-yellow (7.5YR 7/6). sparse grits. Flattened rim, slightly expanding neck; horizontal ribs smoothed by burnishing. Max. ht. 15.1 cm.; rim dia. 3.8 cm.; max. width 8.2 cm.

21 (H 2). Wheel-made two handle jar.

⁹ The 1982 Abila Excavation and Regional Survey had affiliation for the season with the American Schools of Oriental Research and with the American Center of Oriental Research in Amman, as well as always the consistent cooperation and assistance of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan, Dr. Adnan Hadidi, Director General. To all those who contributed to the success of the second season of work the Expedition gives a heartfelt thanks.

¹⁰ The staff of the 1982 Abila Excavation and Regional Survey consisted of the following: Members of the Core Staff: Dr. W. Harold Mare, Director; Mr. Michael J. Fuller, Chief Architect and Surveyor; Dr. John J. Davis, Tomb Excavation Supervisor; Dr. Duane W. Roller, Area A Supervisor; Dr. Cherie J. Lenzen, Pottery Specialist; and Dr. Willard W. Winter, Objects Registrar; Mr. Sultan Shureidah, Department Representative; Area A Square Supervisors: Ms.

Mary-Louise Mussell and Ms. Nancy L. MacLeod, Square 1; Mr. Thomas Lee, Square 2; Ms. Karen Porter, Square 3; and Mr. David Slattery, Square 4; Individual Tomb Supervisors: Ms. Neathery Batsell Fuller; Ms. Kate McGregor; Mr. Shannon McPherron; and Mr. John McGuire; Survey Team Members: Msrs. C. Bruce Stevens, Charles O. Stovall; Ronald E. Jones; Debra Jo Stockton; Angie Gones; Photographer: Mr. Russell Adams; Architect: Mr. Kenneth D. Smith; General Staff Members: Laima Ratavicius; Sharon Moriarty; Cathy Gruspier; Pat Dutton; and Alison McQuitty; Consultants: Dr. David C. McCreery, Paleoethnobotanist; Dr. Gary Rollefson, Paleolithic Specialist. We also had the expertise of Ms. Randa Kakish, of the faculty of the University of Jordan, in the area of art history; she also worked on the survey team. Kate McGregor, Earbie Bledsoe, Thomas Nash, and Frances Havey did valuable art work on a number of the objects present in the United States.

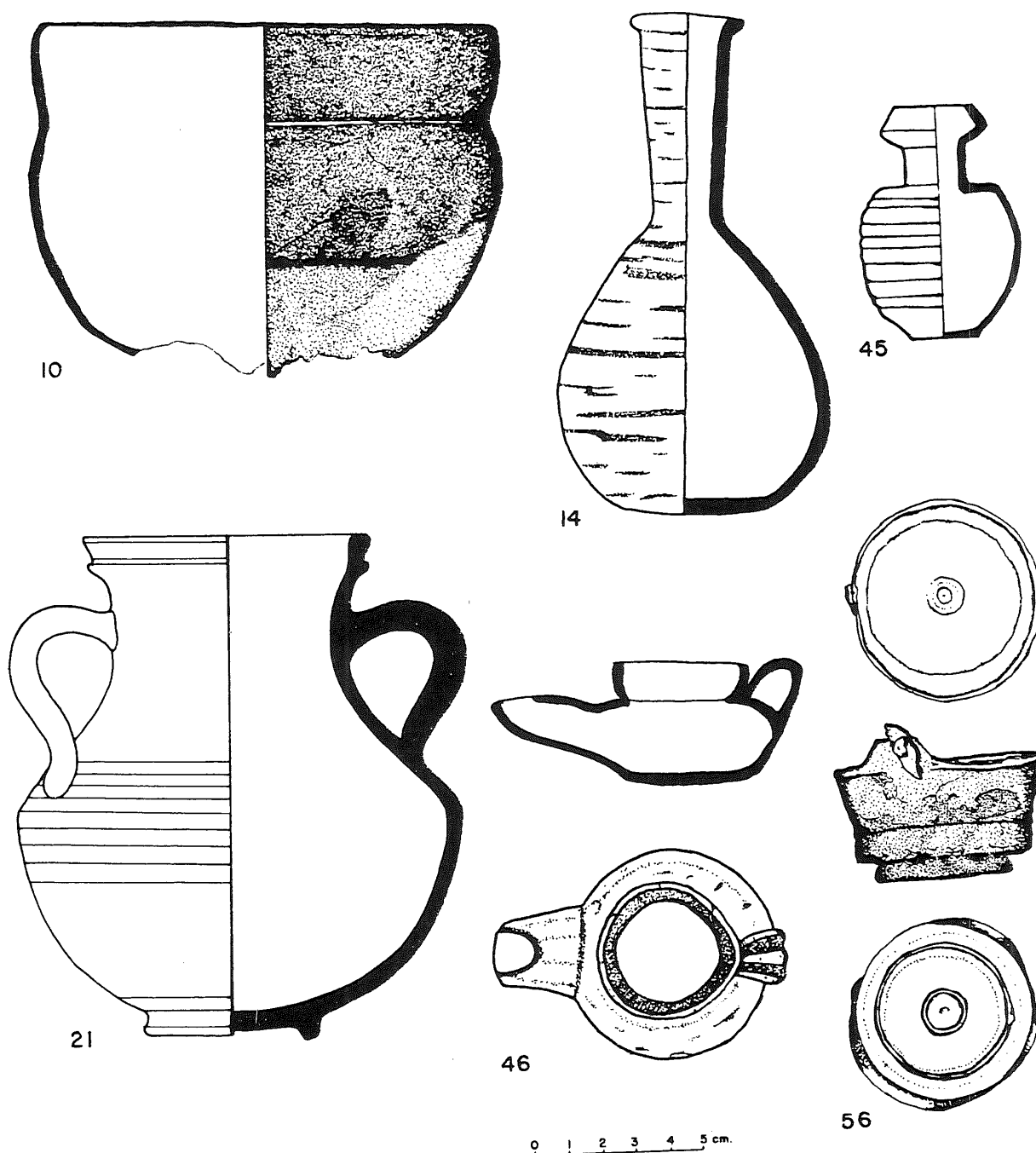


Fig. 9. Selected finds from Early Roman Tomb H-2.

Good quality of manufacture: finely mixed clay, even firing, sparse grits, fired pink (5YR 7/4). Strap handles attached on opposing sides to neck and shoulder. Horizontal broad ribbing over much of the body. Max. ht. 14.7 cm., rim dia. 8.5 cm.; dia. at widest point 12.6 cm. Cf. Dyson 1968: fig. 13.437.

45 (H 2). Wheel-made small bottle. Small white grits, exterior colour red (10R 5/6). Attached neck and horizontal ribs from shoulder to within 1.0 cm.

of base. Restored except for one missing body sherd. Max. ht. 7.1 cm.; rim dia. 2.4cm.; max. width 4.7 cm.

46 (H 2). Wheel-made lamp. White grits, light red (10R 6/6). Attached spout and neck and strap handle. Max. ht. 4.0 cm.; max. length 8.6 cm.; max. width 6.4 cm. Cf. Smith 1973: pl. 57.59.

56 (H 2). Small bronze dipper. Handle missing but rivet preserved. Attached disc base. Horizontal ridge 0.2 cm.

below rim and 1.5 cm. below rim. Originally circular in shape. One side slightly compressed. Surface oxidized with some lime **encrustation**. Max. ht. 3.7 cm.; max. dia. 5.8 cm. Cf. Meyers, *Meiron*, 1981: Photo 52:1; Fig. 7.6.9.

2. Selected finds from Late Roman-Byzantine Tombs, H 1, J 1, J 4 and J 5 (Fig. 10; listed by tomb object no. and area identification no.)

159 (H 1). Female statuette, carved from chalky limestone. Light gray (10 YR 7/1) to white (10YR 8/1). Figure has braided hair covered by (phrygian) cap; left arm folded under breast; right arm extended along body. Possibly seated, or left unfinished. Face expressionless. Possibly a cult object. Max. ht. 17.6 cm.; max. dia. 4.7 cm.; max. thickness 4.3 cm.

320 (J4). Two piece mold-made clay lamp. Byzantine with Christian motif. Wet slurry with slight patina on under side. Silty clay, reddish-yellow (7.5YR 7/6). Decorative motif: three concentric rings with attached rays around the central orifice; cross surrounded by **nodes** and on either side a circle filled with nodes. Carbon black on wick orifice. Max. ht. 3.1 cm.; max. length 9.1 cm.; max. width 6.0 cm.

324 (J 4). Two piece mold-made clay lamp. Some white grits. Pink (7.5YR 7/4). Raised candlestick decoration. Carbon on wick orifice. Max. ht. 2.8; max. length 7.7 cm.; max. width 5.4 cm. Cf. Smith, 1973; Plate 66, Nos. 368, 369.

444 (J 5). Wheel-made cooking pot. Good quality clay. Slight exterior evidence of smoke blackening. Partly calcium encrusted. Exterior colour weak red (10R 5/4). Opposing strap handles, attached from rim to body. Horizontal flattened ribbing from neck to bottom; rounded bottom. Max. ht. 14.2 cm.; rim dia. 10.2 cm; max. dia. 19.6 cm.

3. Selected finds from Area A and Regional Survey (Fig. 11; listed by object no. and area identification no.).

268 (A 3). Silver pendant figurine

Mold-made, with hole made above the head for string or cord. Length 2.5 cm.; width 1.0 cm.; max. thickness 0.6 cm. Cf. Negbi, 1976: pl. 42: 1563.

301 (ST 7). Mold-made circular clay lamp. Originally dark gray slip (7.5YR 4/0), largely weathered, exposing a pinkish white (7.5YR 8/2) surface. Depressed broken discus, no handle. Slight nozzle. Decorative motif: double axe-head motif on the top of the discus; rays emanating around discus and double volutes near the nozzle. Faint trace of carbon around the nozzle. Max. ht. 2.1 cm.; max. length 8.5 cm.; max. width 7.3 cm. Cf. Meyers 1981: *Meiron*, pl. 6.2; Meyers 1981, BASOR 244, 21-22.

4. Selected finds: Coins from the tombs, the Regional Survey and Area A (Pl. IX; listed by object no. and area identification no.).

158 (J 1). Bronze nummus, 12 mm., weight 0.5 gm., Place of origin or reign: Rome, Leo I, mint uncertain. Date: Reign of Leo I, A.D. 457-474. Obverse: Diademed bust, facing right: (DNL)EO Reverse: Emperor standing facing, holding transverse scepter in his left hand and globus cruciger in his right. Mint mark below the standing figure is illegible, but coins of this reign were struck in nine mints, including Constantinople, Nicomedia, Cyzicus, Antioch, etc. Cf. Sabatier 1862: 133, pl. VII.6; Ratto 1959: 14, 266.

262 (WT 9). Bronze coin, 16 mm., weight 2.6 cm. Place of origin: Phoenicia, Tyre. Date: A.D. 104-107. Obverse: Veiled, turreted head of Tyche, facing right. Reverse: Palm tree with two bunches of grapes. Date on the coin is illegible. Around the flam occur: (✱MH) ΤΡΟΠΙΟΛΑ (ΕΩΣ ΙΕΡΑΣ).

508 (found ca. 50 m. northeast of Area A). Bronze follis, 22 m m., weight 3.7 gms. Place of origin or reign: Byzantine, Heraclius. Date: A.D. 624/5. Obverse: Standing figures of Heraclius (centre), Heraclius Constantine (left), and Martina (right) each holding a

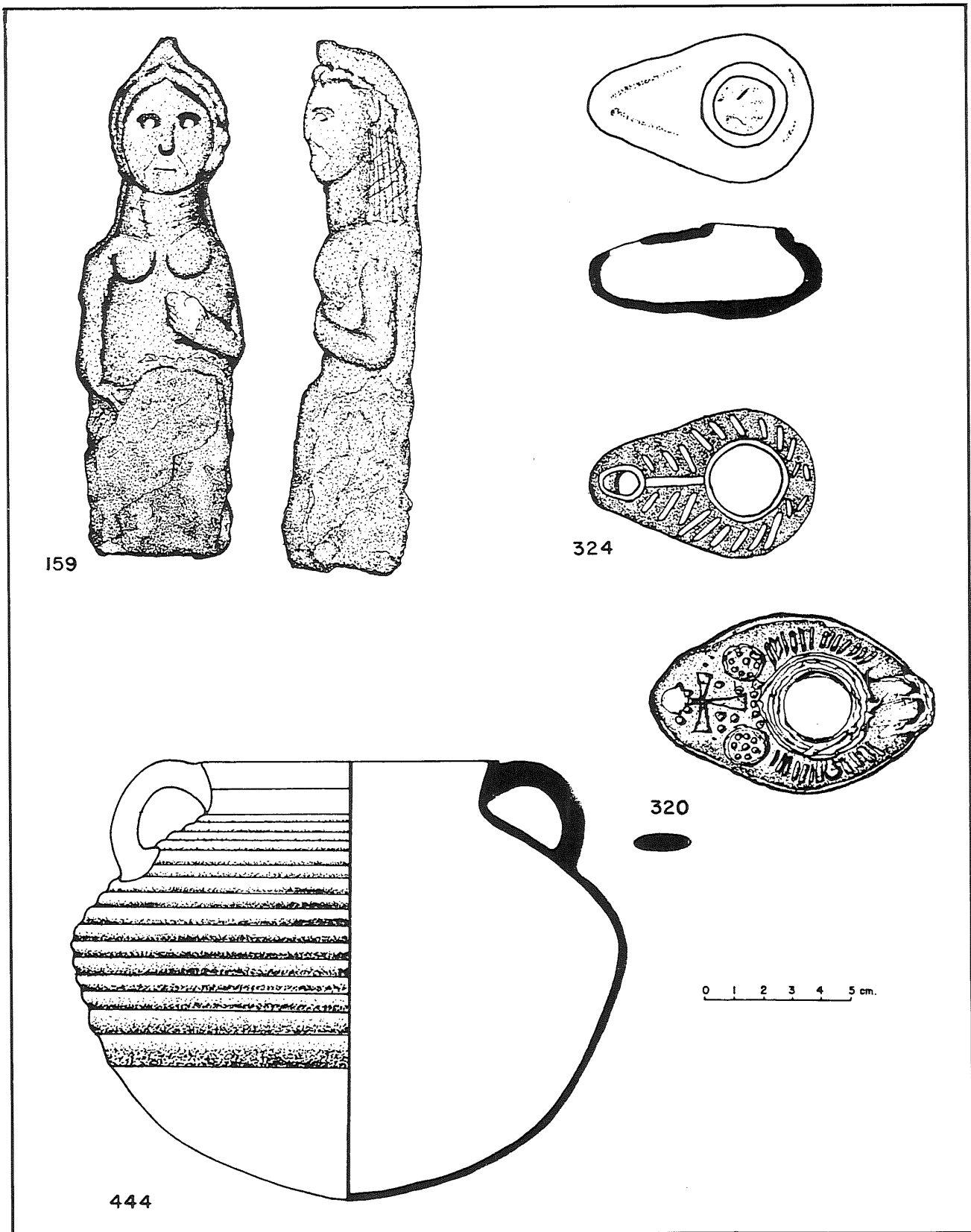


Fig. 10. Selected Finds from Late Roman-Byzantine Tombs, H-1, J-1, J-4, and J-5.

globus cruciger. No inscription. Reverse: Large M (=40 nummi), ANNO,

ⲙⲕ (monogram of Heraclius), ⲛⲓⲛⲓ (these two letters represent the regnal year 15) and Γ (the officina workshop number; mint mark uncertain, probably Constantinople: (CON). This coin was

probably overstruck on an earlier ½ follis.

New Areas of Archaeological Importance

In addition to the extensive number of Roman-Byzantine tombs which

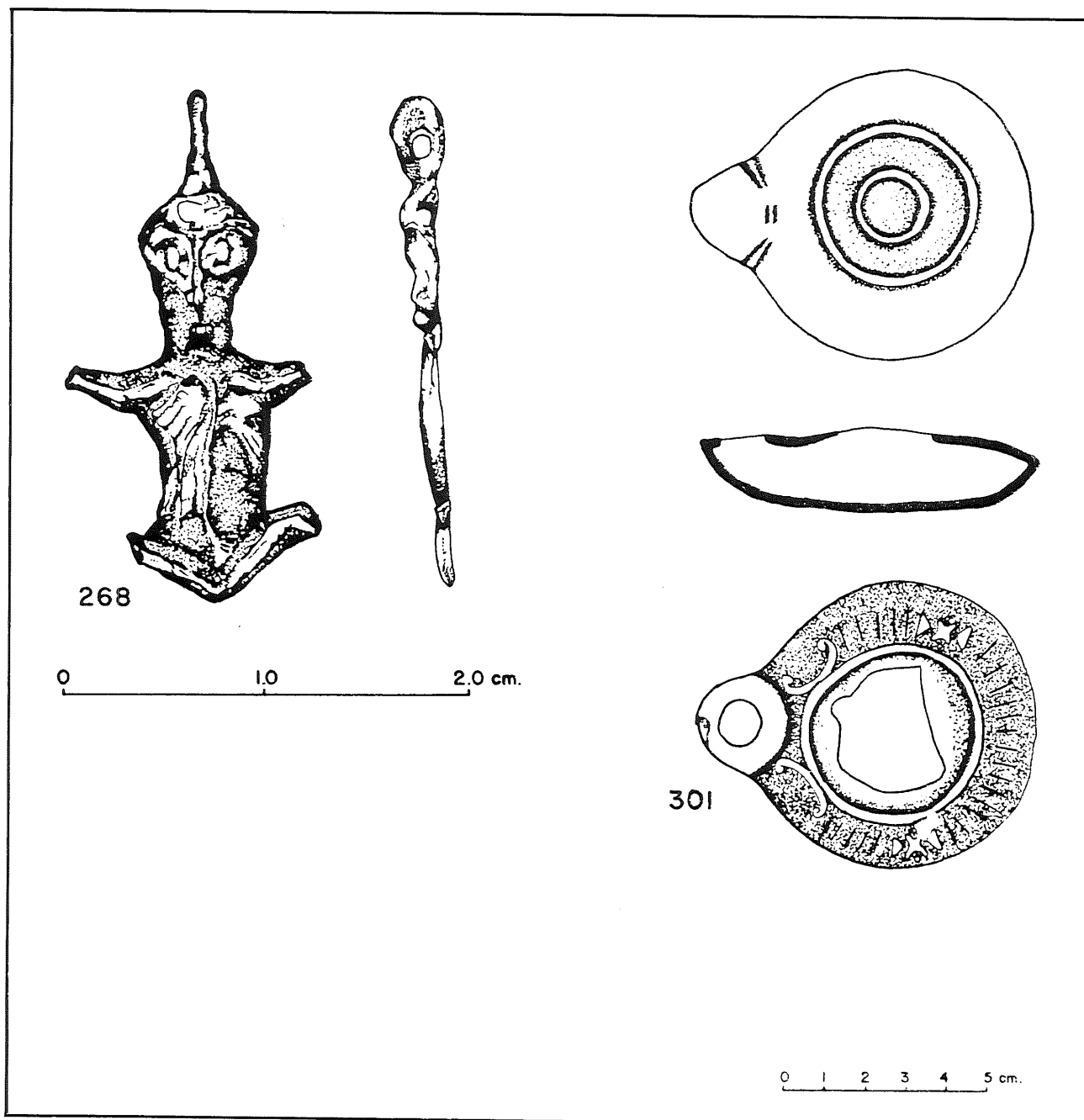


Fig. 11. Selected Finds from Area A and Regional Survey.

are currently being investigated, the presence of Iron Age and earlier tombs need to be searched for in the Abila region. Also, there are extensive surface ruins both on the south tell, Khirbet Umm el 'Amad and in the saddle between it and the north tell, Tell Abila, which invite further investigation and research. In addition to the water tunnel found just to the south of 'Ain Quailibah, there seems to be evidence of the remains of additional water sys-

tems located just to the west (and south) of 'Ain Quailibah. Research in all of this material may give us additional understanding of the nature and breadth of the cultural heritage of Abila and its environs.

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