Robert W. Smith
Mid-Atlantic Christian University

Robert W. Smith

Crises and the Development of the Abila/Quwaylibah Pilgrimage Site in Byzantine *Palaestina Secunda* and Umayyad *Jund al-Urdunn*

Introduction

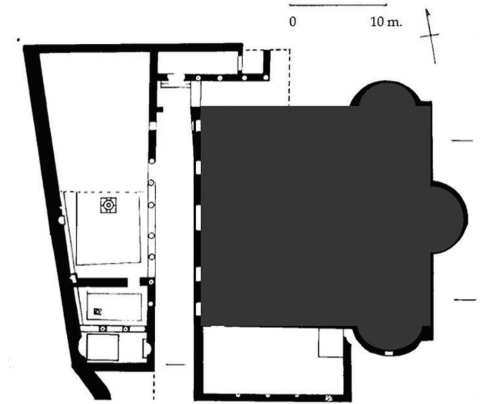
Crises during the mid-2nd through mid-8th centuries stimulated the construction, utilization, enlargement, refurbishment, and maintenance of a sequence of monumental buildings at a site located in the ruins of ancient Abila at Quwaylibah, Jordan. The final phase of monumental construction at that site, identified by the excavators as Area E, was a large pilgrimage complex (Fig. 1) that began its service in Byzantine *Palaestina Secunda* and continued under the jurisdiction of Umayyad *Jund al-Urdunn* until it was destroyed by an earthquake in AD 749. Known ancient pilgrimage itineraries and recent guides (MacDonald 2010) preserve no mention of the Abila pilgrimage complex, but the continuing efforts of the Abila/Quwaylibah Expedition directed by Dr. David Vila of John Brown University under the permission of the Department of Antiquities of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, have exposed much of the complex. Excavation quickly revealed an unusual five-aisled central church (Menninga 2004) and subsequent efforts show it surrounded by extensive processional passages (Smith 2018a) and auxiliary structures (Smith forthcoming). Architectural elements of this pilgrimage complex and its special hydrological features, together with associated artifacts such as eulogia, inscriptions, and an icon fragment (Fig. 2) installed to sacralize water flowing into the complex, bear evidence that the venue provided pilgrims with a memorable multi-sensory experience of being in a particularly special sacred place (Smith 2020). That sense of proximity to the sacred enhanced the pilgrims' hopes for divine intercession in the crises they faced.

The extant remains of the mid-8th-century pilgrimage complex surrounding the five-aisled transept church (Fig. 3) preserve evidence of several additions and repairs (Fig. 4) as well as echoes of two

Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan XIV:
Culture in Crisis: Flows of Peoples, Artifacts, and Ideas
Amman: Department of Antiquities, 2022

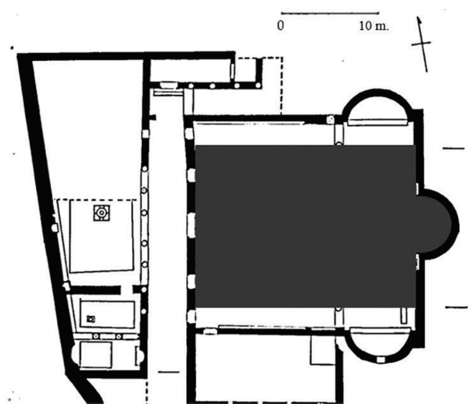
1. Abila pilgrimage complex from the south at the conclusion of the 2018 excavation.

2. Abila icon fragment that sacralized water in the special ritual area adjacent to the atrium in AD 749.

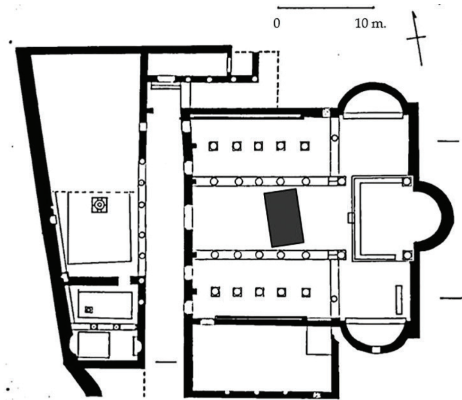


3. Plan highlighting the footprint of the 6th- to 8th-century five-aisled transept church in the complex.

4. View of the water ritual area from the south showing three additions and a repair in the atrium wall.



5. Plan highlighting the footprint of the 5th-century three-aisled church in the pilgrimage complex context.



6. Plan highlighting the footprint of the 2nd-century thermae in the pilgrimage complex context.

major earlier structures on the site. Portions of those earlier structures persisted in the continued use of urban infrastructure, wall foundations, and valuable architectural components from the earlier buildings at the site. Furthermore, probes excavated beneath the floor level of the mid-8th-century pilgrim complex reveal an earlier three-aisle church (Fig. 5) with mosaic floors and pastophoria at the east end and still further, below that, a public bath complex (Fig. 6) with an argillite-lined frigidarium (Fig. 7).

7. View of the argillite-lined frigidarium beneath the earlier structures from the east.

The presentation that follows will survey factors that put individuals of Abila and its broader community into the crises which contributed to the shaping of the structures in Area E that culminated in the extensive pilgrimage complex.

Crises and the Development of the Abila Pilgrimage Complex

The Abila pilgrimage complex in the Wādī Quwaylibah was hidden from travelers' gaze until they reached the edge of the surrounding hills and eastern plateau. That destination of pilgrims' journeys, and a point of pride for Abila residents, lay like a sparkling diamond in the emerald setting of the verdant valley below. Local citizens and the visitors from afar treasured it as a place of respite. In the Late Antique world, where people living around the Mediterranean experienced many troubles, they rarely found freedom from worry and anxiety in the manner prescribed in the Greco-Roman philosophies. Practicing *epoché* and suspending judgment regarding the existence of pains and frustrations had not made them go away or provided *ataraxia*. People continued to look for divine help at physical places, like the pagan temples, until they lost faith in finding help there. The ascendant Christian message proclaimed the possibility of "abundant life" in a fallen world and a future where there would be "no more tears" (Revelation 21:4), but believers in the Christian faith still had to deal with troubles in the present. They believed that in answer to their fervent prayers, and those of other pious people, God would intervene. Over time, Christian churches replaced temples as the preferred places to pray. Some churches, however, came to be seen as better places to pray than others because of their association with Biblical persons and events or their identification with Christian martyrs.

The larger pilgrimage impulse embraced by Byzantine Christian visitors to Quwaylibah, associated spiritual blessings and relief from problems with particular places where they experienced the sense of a physical closeness to God and saintly spiritual champions. When people made claims regarding encountering God and the saints at *loca sancta* and receiving blessings, such good news built a following and traditions. Traditions supported by church leaders and popular funding led to the construction of purpose-built shrines that created aesthetics conducive of a sense of sanctity which satisfied the local community and drew pilgrims from afar.

Pilgrimage structures embraced familiar elements used in ecclesiastical architecture and also copied impressive distinctive elements found at other venerated pilgrimage sites such as having five aisles (Al-Daire 2001). Popular pilgrimage sites had something special that went beyond impressive architecture. The abundant water supply at Abila was the special thing that allowed for the creative construction of a distinctive pilgrimage venue with features that generated a sense of awe. While finely decorated mosaic church floors might have two-dimensional silent portrayals of amphorae pouring out the rivers of Paradise, the Abila pilgrimage complex had splashing water running through it. Believing people, faced with crises, found what they sought at Abila, the sense they were close to God and their prayers were heard. There, their feelings of physical, emotional, and spiritual problems washed away. These powerful impressions helped allay the anxieties caused by crises and generated patronage that built and sustained the pilgrimage complex through the tumultuous Byzantine and Umayyad eras.

Belief in the efficacy of Abila pilgrimages is reflected in the mosaic inscription of Psalm 86:1 found in the north chapel of the pilgrimage church (Smith *et al.* forthcoming). That inscription, together with the subsequent uncited verses of the Psalm, suggests that it was a "lovely dwelling place of God Almighty," a stopping point where pilgrims who had navigated "deserts" and crossed through "valleys of tears," would yearn to visit since it flowed with fresh water and renewed hope that would strengthen them as they continued their journey to its conclusion before God.

Crises frequently confronted people of late antiquity living in the territory of modern Jordan. Sometimes the crises were particularly personal, localized to specific individuals and their families, but there were also general population-wide existential threats that prompted crowds of pilgrims to come to pray. As serious problems accumulated, the sense of impending disaster multiplied, resulting in patronage of sacred spaces. Pilgrimage facilities like those at Quwaylibah endured even when problems caused the decline in population and retractions in the economy.

Personal crises led many people to the Abila pilgrimage site. Their personal crises came in varied forms and ranged from overt physical issues to more subjective intellectual and spiritual issues. Examples of personal crisis are evidenced in artifacts found in the pilgrimage complex. First, is a case of acute thoracic scoliosis found in the articulated bones of the older man buried in a stone-lined and sealed grave beneath the marble-paved floor along the south side of the pilgrimage church chancel. Whether caused by a genetic predisposition, cerebral palsy, disease, or a crippling accident, his spine shows that he had long suffered from back pains. A second example illustrating personal crises are prayers inscribed in Kufic script at prominent locations on the paving and columns in the western atrium and processional passage around the pilgrimage church. The texts of these prayers preserve evidence of the supplicant's sense of guilt for known or suspected personal and familial

guilt in the face of approaching judgment by a holy God (Smith *et al.* forthcoming). Pilgrimage with its concomitant travel expenses and perils, together with financial patronage of holy places, functioned as a means of Late Antique personal crisis management. Pains, both physical and spiritual, diminished.

Culture-wide crises, like the aforementioned private problems that stimulated Abila pilgrimage, came in varied forms and degrees of acuity. They included "natural" and "man-made" events. Preserved Byzantine governmental and ecclesiastical reports in Greek alongside contemporary Semitic language texts attest to numerous public crises of late antiquity. While there has been some tendency by modern historians to diminish these sources as "exaggerated," there is increasing anecdotal evidence for the crises as archaeological projects expose physical evidences and can associate them chronologically with the recorded disastrous events. Telluric and anthropogenic crises mentioned in the historical record afflicted the people in the region around Quwaylibah and left evidence of their passage through Abila.

Obvious and imperceptible changes in the physical environment both caused general disasters for people in and around the urban center of Abila. These changes included distant volcanism, regional tectonic movements, severe local weather events, broader climate changes, and the introduction of new pathogens. The resultant effects of these changes could be enormous. Situated near the Great Rift Valley where the African and Arabian tectonic plates come together, Quwaylibah is subjected to frequent palpable tremors and occasional earthquakes of high magnitude. Regionally devastating earthquakes that relate to the story of Area E structures at Quwaylibah include the Galilee Earthquake of AD 363, the Beirut Earthquake of AD 551, the AD 633 Yarmuk Quake, and the cluster of early and the mid-8th-century seismic events which culminated in the Great Rift Valley Quake in AD 749 (Russell 1985). While no skeletons have been found under fallen earthquake-tumbled structures at Abila, and victims with a crushed cranium or fractured femurs have not been found in the tombs, Abila residents, like others in the region, suffered. Physical evidence clearly demonstrates that quakes damaged Abila's structures and infrastructure. The pilgrimage complex, like many city residents, depended on the *ca.* 1.4 m long water system that brought the regular flow from ʻAyn Quwaylibah into the city center (Fuller 1985: 37). The lower-elevation aqueduct which shows evidence of repairs may have been damaged in the Galilee Earthquake of AD 363 and compromised the water supply going to the Area E baths. That may have necessitated the repairs to the higher elevation aqueduct that supplied water to more of the city and the growing pilgrimage facilities around the three-aisled church in Area E. The great AD 551 Beirut earthquake is the possible cause of damages that happened to a portion of the later upper aqueduct. Water flowing to the city fountains and the pilgrimage complex diminished and could have stopped completely. The compromised water system threatened to take away an essential element for the growing pilgrimage traffic. Merchants of Abila, already facing the costs of rebuilding their homes and businesses, may have anticipated grim future economic prospects if pilgrims stopped coming. Human-caused issues, which will be described later, led to a vacancy in the episcopacy as Bishop Alexander was exiled shortly after the earthquake. The loss of his leadership and lack of funds exacerbated the situation and delayed the completion of aqueduct repairs and work in the pilgrimage complex until AD 568.

According to the water tunnel inscription at the south end of the upper water tunnel, the subsequent "illustrious" and

"most pious" local bishop, whose name might have been Ioannes, was responsible for effecting the clearing out of the blocked upper aqueduct that delivered water at sufficient height to provide water on the terrace above the pilgrimage church in AD 568 (Smith *et al.* forthcoming). Beyond simple maintenance and a clearing away of accumulated silt, what was needed was the reconstruction of a portion of the roof of the water tunnel at a point where it approached the city center. The bishop's engineers accomplished this using opposing ashlars set at an angle in a corbelling technique. The bishop used the crisis of the earthquake as an occasion to enhance the appeal of the pilgrimage complex and set it on an improved trajectory in the numbers of visiting pilgrims.

Unusual phenomena and severe weather events find mention in texts from late antiquity that caused local as well as regional crises. At Quwaylibah, study of the deep sediments filling the *wādī* near the bridge adjacent to the pilgrimage complex indicate that it did not fill slowly over time. Instead slips are the result of rapid events where mass-wasting caused soil on the flanks of the *wādī* slump into the valley. The first of these events occurred in the 6th century and is connected with the abnormal weather that began in AD 536 following a major seismic event far away, that caused a brief period of global cooling and abnormal rainfall (Lucke 2013: 213). When the soil was saturated by unusually heavy rains, gravity sent sheets of sediment sliding into the valley. As they did so, they carried away terraces of vines and destroyed some of the best watered crops growing in the valley floor. A year "without summer" followed by subsequent years of irregular weather would have had local economic repercussions as surviving grapevines that produced the wine, for which the city was famous, along with other cultivars that would not have produced good crop yields. In Area E, the movement of sediments down the slopes flanking the *wādī* and changing water flows suggest an explanation for why the relatively new three-aisled basilica, decorated with pleasingly patterned mosaic floors, was not worn by years of foot traffic, not damaged by falling masonry, and with still solid foundations was elevated one meter when work on the enlarged pilgrimage complex with the five-aisle transept church was undertaken. The creative response generated an attractional facility that would last two centuries.

Disease was a constant peril in late antiquity that caused both personal and public problems. At Abila, the public water system with its constantly flowing spring water had limited opportunities for contamination by pollutants along the route of the subterranean water tunnel. Most of the *putei* used in construction were sealed and there were otherwise only three well openings along upper tunnel's route to the urban center (Fuller 1985: 39). The water was therefore generally healthful and less susceptible to contamination by pathogens than cisterns where contamination from dirty hands and containers could accumulate and bacteria grew. While the water system of Abila would have helped to ameliorate a very common source of diseases, there were other vectors of contagion. Historical sources attest to the emergence of the Antonine Plague in the Levant in the 2nd century. That epidemic, together with the war against the Parthians, unstable weather, and the potential for instability like what developed at the time in Egypt (Elliott 2016) was on the minds of the local patrons of the Abila thermae in the first phase of monumental construction at Area E. Votive inscriptions on columns they erected proclaimed their belief that "Beneficent Tyche" had sustained the well-being of the co-emperors Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus in the year AD 165. The trade in wine, for which Abila was famous

in the Byzantine era, and olive oil for which it was renowned in the Umayyad era, along with pilgrims and immigrants brought people of Abila into contact with others and potential exposure to pathogens transmitted from persons. In AD 540, the first great wave of the deadly bubonic plague came to the Levant. That plague and the recurrences that followed in ensuing years left their mark at Abila where bodies evidenced in articulated skeletons were sometimes discarded unceremoniously onto the floors of tombs and in one Byzantine era tomb in the necropolis on the west side of the Wādī Quwaylibah, articulated skeletons were found stacked three deep in adjacent loculi. Diseases threatened all ranks of society and led the sick and scared to seek God's assistance.

Anthropogenic crises promoted anxieties in late antiquity that drove people to places of respite. The comparative political tranquility and related economic prosperity of the *Pax Romana* ended with the reign of Emperor Marcus Aurelius' son and successor, Commodus. His assassination in AD 193 led to civil war and the "Year of Five Emperors" that concluded with the ascendance of Septimius Severus. Abila, continuing their former practice, honored this new ruler and his Levantine wife, Julia Domna, on the obverse of city coins. Succeeding Severan emperors, Caracalla and Elagabalus, similarly graced the city's coins until AD 219 (Spijkerman 1978: 52–7). These emperors of the Severan dynasty succeeded in raising armies to restrain the Parthian Empire to the east, but it came at a price. In order to pay the legions, the imperial mints dramatically diminished the amount of silver in their coins. This made it necessary to discontinue making local coins in cities like Abila and created inflation, causing issues in making both small local transactions and doing long distance trade. The age of monumental constructions such as the hexastyle, tetrastyle, and distyle temples seen on the city coins, as well as baths at Abila, fell on hard times without funding.

Throughout late antiquity, resources had to be spent on conflicts that attempted to sustain Roman/Byzantine frontiers from territorial seizures and from threatening mass migrations. People of Abila were most aware of the great threat posed from the Neo-Persian dynasties of the Parthians and then after AD 230, their Sassanian successors. In the mid-3rd century, the tumultuous civil warring of the Barracks Emperors made the Roman Empire vulnerable on all frontiers. It is not surprising that a major public construction project in the late 3rd and early 4th centuries was the wall around Tall Abil above Area E. Those physical walls alone could not protect Abila from the Sassanids and this realization helped to promote the construction of spiritual walls that employed ashlars (Smith 2011: 504). The intensity of the Sassanid threat fluctuated between all out wars to short-lived peace treaties. When the Sassanians invaded, they took advantage of social divisions. In the population of Palestine, ethnic tensions, sometimes related to historical, cultural, and religious differences between individuals and people groups, held the potential to breed violence. The varied residents of Abila appear to have been generally convivial, but ethnic and religious differences created concerns and crises. In the region, Samaritans had revolted in AD 529 and were suppressed by the forces of the newly crowned emperor Justinian I. A century later, Benjamin of Tiberius and Jews of Galilee, feeling disenfranchised in the Byzantine Empire, supported the Sassanid invasion. No evidence of extensive damage in the pilgrimage complex or other church buildings at Abila can be definitively related to the seizure of control over Palestine between AD 614 and 628 by the Zoroastrian Sassanians and their Jewish allies. The threat of war and simmering

tensions caused distress for people of Abila and the region.

The immigration of Arabs into the territory of Abila and the plain of Ḥūrān, across the Yarmuk River valley from Tall Abil, would have been the source of some cultural conflict through the Late Roman and Early Byzantine eras. There the formerly nomadic immigrants settled and enculturated in a major grain-producing area balancing pastoralism and agriculture. Citizens of Abila and its pilgrimage complex came to benefit from the migration of the Ghassanids into the region. They generated wealth to spend on Abila products and to patronize the pilgrimage complex. The Ghassanids, who had embraced the Christian faith, however, remained a distinct group: speaking Arabic, having their own bishop and having their own mind regarding theological issues. Al-Harith V, from his capital at Jabiyah, seen on the east flank of the Jaulan north from Tall Abil, was a proponent of miaphysite Christology that was opposed by Emperor Justinian I and the influential clergy of Constantinople. The Byzantine emperor strategically endured the Ghassanid's theology since he depended upon them as *foederati* that had helped suppress the previously mentioned Samaritan revolt in AD 529 and served as a buffer against the Sassanians and their allies. Ethnic identifications, however, were not lost and Byzantine mistrust of the Arab Ghassanids contributed to the victory of the Muslim forces at the Battle of Yarmuk in AD 636.

Religious differences between people created tensions in the Levant and sometimes led to violence during late antiquity. Inter-religious differences and intra-religious differences were both problems that related to real and potential crises at Abila and the pilgrimage complex. An intra-faith issue reported in historical records is that concerning the beliefs of Bishop Alexander of Abila. He came to be identified as unorthodox when he refused to condemn the 3rd-century theologian Origen, as a "heretic" during an AD 543 regional meeting of church leaders at Jerusalem. The issues of Origenism were entangled in a broader debate regarding the nature of Jesus. Justinian I believed that it was his responsibility to keep the church unified and that holding fast to orthodoxy would sustain divine support in his effort to restore the Roman Empire. So when Bishop Alexander would not affirm the decree of the Council of Constantinople of AD 553, Justinian I had him exiled to Constantinople where he died in an earthquake (Wineland 2001: 66). This left Abila without a bishop to lead in the long-term recovery of Abila in the aftermath of the AD 551 earthquake and probably alienated Abila Christians and others who had positive regard for the former bishop. The religious division in the eastern empire over monophysitism created problems for the Emperor that became a crisis.

With all the wars directed by Justinian and fought by Byzantine armies, the Emperor found money to fund extensive church construction projects described by the court historian Procopius. His descriptions demonstrate that Justinian saw the ecclesiastical structures, like the walls that he funded, as part of the empire's spiritual defenses. He particularly funded church buildings dedicated to Mary and the creation or repair of aqueducts and cisterns restoring and creating water systems. At a location just outside Constantinople's walls is a site where Justinian funded a lavishly decorated complex of the Mother of God of the Life-giving Spring. The water effects and *hagiasma* there drew pilgrims looking for miraculous healing just like at the complex at Abila. That complex described by Procopius (*On Buildings* 3.6) is a strong parallel with the Abila complex. A possible artifact from the western water ritual area in the Abila complex that suggests connections with the *Theotokos* is the relief icon. The fleur-de-

lis in the guilloche framing and suggestive reconstructions based on the dimensions of the carving may point to a focus on Mary at Abila (Smith forthcoming).

While Procopius lists and occasionally describes projects funded by Justinian in surrounding provinces, he makes no mention of buildings in *Palestina Secunda*. This area was certainly strategically valuable and would have received aid. The scale of the funding needed for the repairs to the upper aqueduct and the enlargements in the Abila pilgrimage complex are suggestive of imperial patronage. In funding work at Abila, Justinian may have attempted to secure divine favor for himself and his subjects, and his subjects' loyalty to Byzantium since his religious agenda had alienated many like the Ghassind Arabs. The bishop who had replaced Alexander was most probably a person with close connections to the Emperor in Byzantium who helped to cement his place in Abila with needed imperial funding to enhance the pilgrim complex. Unfortunately, the damage to the top of the painted plaster water tunnel inscription has limited possible proof for imperial patronage.

Inter-religious differences posed potential problems for the survival of the Abila pilgrimage complex with the coming of the Islamic army of the *Rashidun* and the ascendance of the Umayyad Caliphate in Damascus. Abila citizens had reason to be anxious as they watched the battle of Yarmouk unfold in AD 636. In its aftermath, under both *Rashidun* Caliphs and the Umayyads, Christians found they could continue their religious practices and use churches as long as they allowed Muslims access if they wanted to pray in holy places. The Byzantine bureaucratic infrastructure in which bishops served as judges and tax supervisors and the size and symbols on coinage they employed, continued until the rule of Abd al-Malik. During the Umayyad rule over Abila, old problems persisted. Disease took lives and power politics produced three internecine wars that took more lives. Crises continued and people continued to look to places where they believed they would encounter God and get help.

Conclusion

Abila started out as a pagan city promoting its products, piety, and prestige through its coins and subsequently developed as a Christian and Muslim pilgrimage destination. It benefitted from being hospitable to diverse peoples. The perceived sanctity generated at the complex at Area E with its "miraculous" water appealed to crises-afflicted people of different religions and ethnicities building upon a long tradition. Polytheistic pagans burdened with the cares of the world built the monumental public baths that were numinous and patronized them in the Late Roman era. In the 5th century, Christians took over the baths and eventually built a three-aisled, mosaic-floored church, with an abundant water supply. The restorative waters of the baths had become associated with miracles at the church and attracted Christian pilgrims and most probably some people who still held to polytheism. In the early 6th century, further crises prompted the reconstruction of the pilgrimage destination with the construction of the five-aisled transept church with a yet again improved water supply. When that system was compromised, it was restored and additional increasingly spectacular water ritual facilities were added. After AD 636, the crowds who came included those who were embracing Islam. Some Muslims who had local roots returned to pray in the long-revered sacred place. In the early 8th-century patronage by Arabs helped rebuild and restore the facilities damaged in disasters. The creativity in developing the sanctity of the complex generated such powerful public pilgrimage support that it continued

its prominent use of a relief icon in spite of ideological opposition from Patriarchs and Caliphs. The Quwaylibah pilgrimage complex served as a venue where the desire for divine aid in alleviating shared problems and anxieties created a sense of community that crossed ethnic and religious divisions. Crises, like gravity that caused the water to flow through the water tunnels created a flow of people and their patronage to the Area E pilgrimage complex.

Bibliography

Al-Daire, M. 2001. *Die fünfschiffige Basilika in Gadara-Umm Qais Jordanien*. Marburg: Tectum Verlag.

Eliott, C.P. 2016. "The Antonine Plague, Climate Change and Local Violence in Roman Egypt." *PastPres* 231:3–31.

Fuller, M.J. 1985. "The Third Campaign at Abila of the Decapolis: Report of the Survey-Architectural Investigations." *NEASB* 25:37–63.

Lucke, B. 2018. "Climate, Land Use, and Landscape Change in Southern Bilad al-Sham (Northern Jordan) during the Islamic Periods." *Journal of Islamic Studies* 5:203–23.

MacDonald, B. 2010. *Pilgrimage in Early Christian Jordan: A Literary and Archaeological Guide*. Oxford: Oxbow Books,

Menninga, C. 2004. "The Unique Church at Abila of the Decapolis." *NEA* 67:40–9.

Russell, K.W. 1985. "The Earthquake Chronology of Palestine and Northwest Arabia from the 2nd through the Mid-Eighth Century A.D." *BASOR* 260:37–59.

Smith, R.W. 2011. "Walls of the Decapolis." *ARAM* 23:489–508.

———. 2016. "Abila and the Decapolis in Modern Mystical Literature." *ARAM* 28:219–35.

———. 2018a. "Preliminary Report on the 2014 and 2016 Excavations Revealing Processional Ways in the Area E Pilgrimage Complex." *ADAJ* 59:649–61.

———. 2018b. "Abila of *Palestina Secunda/ Jund Al-Urdunn*: Discoveries and Observations Regarding Materials and Motives in a Multi-Phase Byzantine/ Umayyad Ecclesiastical Complex." *ARAM* 30:1–24.

———. 2020. "The Abila Relief Fragment and the Creation of Hierotopy in a Byzantine/Umayyad Era Pilgrimage Complex at Quwaylibah, Jordan." In *Proceedings of the 11th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East*. Vol. 2, edited by A. Otto, M. Herles, K. Kaniuth, L. Korn, and A. Heidenreich, 521–33. Weisbaden: Harrassowitz.

———. Forthcoming. "Preliminary Report on the 2016 and 2018 Excavations Revealing a Relief Icon and Ritual Spaces on the Northwest side of the Abila, Area E Pilgrimage Complex." *ADAJ* 61.

Smith, R.W., A. Zerbini, and F. Bqain. Forthcoming. *Inscriptions from the Structures of Area E at Abila/Quwaylibah*.

Spijkerman, A., and M. Piccirillo. 1978. *The Coins of the Decapolis and Provincia Arabia.* Jerusalem: Franciscan Press.

Wineland, J.D. 2001. *Ancient Abila, An Archaeological History*. Oxford: Archaeopress.