

PREFACE

This volume, *Tell Abu al-Kharaz I: The Early Bronze Age*, is the first in a series of three but is actually the second to be published. The first published volume was *Tell Abu al-Kharaz II: The Middle and Late Bronze Ages* (FISCHER 2006a). The author's engagement as a project director in the international project *SCIEM2000, The Synchronization of Civilizations in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Second Millennium B.C.*, prompted the inclusion of the results of the excavations of the Middle and Late Bronze Age levels at Tell Abu al-Kharaz in *SCIEM2000*, because *SCIEM2000* is of limited duration. This meant that *Volume II* was published before the present volume. *Volume III*, which is in preparation, will deal with the Iron Age and Post-Iron Age periods.

The general information in the "Introduction" to *Volume II* is equally applicable to this volume. Nevertheless, some information will be repeated in the corresponding chapter of this volume in order to facilitate the understanding of the characteristics of the site and the excavations without consulting another volume. This information covers the topography, surveys, possible identity of written sources, aims of the project, excavation and recording techniques, nomenclature and legends, various teams, and previously published reports and special studies on which much of this publication is based.

It should be emphasized that the present volume is not a complete final report on the Early Bronze Age occupation of Tell Abu al-Kharaz. 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. However, I have felt that the inclusion of the additional special studies would delay the publication of the material and have therefore decided to proceed with the present volume. It is still 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! New studies based on improved methods, increased knowledge and other approaches will certainly increase our ability to understand the civilizations of Tell Abu al-Kharaz.

In the "Preface" of *Volume II* I have highlighted the difficulty of meeting the wishes of all readers as far as the description of the find material is concerned. 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. Although there are more than a hundred photographs accompanying this volume, these represent only a small selection of the thousands of photographic documentations which were taken over the years.

A number of surveyors and draughtspersons have provided the plans, sections and object drawings over a period of 16 years. It was my intention to keep this documentation as uniform as possible by giving the same instructions to all those responsible for producing them. However, it turned out impossible to fully standardize the plans, sections and object drawings, because every draughtsperson has an individual style. This has resulted in some variation in the design of the drawings produced over this long period.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank again all those people who contributed to the successful execution of the project. I am very much indebted to them. 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 (where delicious food was always served) will forever stay in my memory. Others who strongly supported the project are the various Directors General of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan: Dr. Adnan Hadidi, Dr. Ghazi Bisheh, Dr. Safwan Tell and Dr. Fawwaz Al-Khreyshah – their support included the loan of vehicles, personal and financial assistance, and a smooth bureaucracy which is unparalleled anywhere in the Near East and a

token of genuine Jordanian hospitality. I am also very much indebted to H.E. the former Swedish Ambassador in Jordan, Lars Lönnback, who initiated the Swedish excavations in Jordan; Professor em. Paul Åström, my good friend and former teacher, who supported the project with advice and whose intervention resulted in additional funding from the Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities; Professor em. Basil Hennessy, the former director of the Australian Expedition to Pella, and Dr. Stephen Bourke, the present director of the Australian excavations at Pella, both of whom made it possible to use the dig house at Pella. 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 Zaghoul, Mr. Sultan Shreidah, former chief inspector of the Irbid Department of Antiquities of Jordan, and Dr. Fawzi Zayadine, former Vice-Director General of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan.

Amongst others who facilitated the project is the staff of the Swedish embassy in Amman including the Swedish ambassadors (in chronological order) H.E. Christian Bausch, Agneta Bohman and Klas Gierow. H.E. Stefania Khalifeh, Consul of Iceland, was also a strong supporter of the project. Many thanks also go to the personnel of the foreign archaeological institutes in Amman: the American Center of Oriental Research (ACOR) – in particular Drs. Patricia and Pierre Bikai and Mrs. Humi Ayoubi, and 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 renting of the Deir ^cAlla Dig House, and Professor Ziad Al-Saad, who showed genuine hospitality during our visit to Yarmouk University in 2001, should be thanked in particular.

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 Yarmouk University in Irbid. The latter is still assisting me in the renewed excavations at Tell el-^cAjjul in Gaza, Palestine. They should be thanked especially for their accurate work on the drawings, plans and logistics charts. Others who contributed their drawing skills were Lamia Khoury, Nawal Hawarri and Richard Holmgren.

I wish to thank Rainer Feldbacher, MA, for his arduous and time-consuming work to digitalize the plans, sections and object drawings.

There is one person to whom I personally am especially obliged: Mr. Hikmat Ta^cani, 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 ^cAin ^cAbda (in 1995). He joined the expedition as the Department's representative and 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-^cAjjul project.

I also wish to thank Dr. Angela Schwab for the demanding work with the layout, Rainer Feldbacher, MA, for additional proof-reading, and Professor Manfred Bietak and Dagmar Melman, MA, for their general publication support. 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 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 necessary funding should be particularly mentioned: the first is Professor em. Carl-Gustaf Styrenius, the then director of the Museum of Mediterranean and Near Eastern Antiquities, 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 Tercente-

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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.

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!

Peter M. Fischer
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