

IV. The Inscription SH 79 (figs. 41-43)

The inscription consists of eight or ten signs that are fairly legible, even if simple scratches in the material must be taken into consideration. Some of the letters (3-4-8-13) seem somewhat bigger than the others. This could mean that we have a palimpsest before us (Riis's suggestion).

Most of the legible characters resemble Phoenician or Aramaic letters as they are known from inscriptions from the 9th-8th century B.C.: 3 (*'ayin*), 5 (*qof*), 6 (*mem*), 8 (*shin*), and 13 (*gimel*). See the drawing p. 64 and the chart p. 65 and compare with e.g. J. Naveh, *The Development of the Aramaic Script*, Jerusalem 1970, Fig. 1, and J.C.L. Gibson, *Textbook of Syrian Semitic Inscriptions, III*, Oxford 1982, p. 180.

Others are enigmatic: 4 (part of *mem*, or conspicuous *kaf*), 7 (vertical stroke under *mem*), 9 and 12 (*taw*-like small letters), 10 (*taw*?), and 11 (*resh*?). Some of them have a certain resemblance to peculiar letters, conjectured to be Proto-Arabic, found among the Aramaic graffiti in Hama (see Hama II 2, København 1990, pp. 301-304). Traces of letters at both ends of the inscription (1-2 and 14) can hardly be identified.

The inscription cannot be read. The tentative reading by Professor Løkkegaard (AASyr XI-XII (1961-62), p. 141) is, I am afraid, based upon too many dubious identifications of letters. Neither the four bigger letters taken together, nor the smaller ones alone seem to make sense as a name of a person or of a deity.

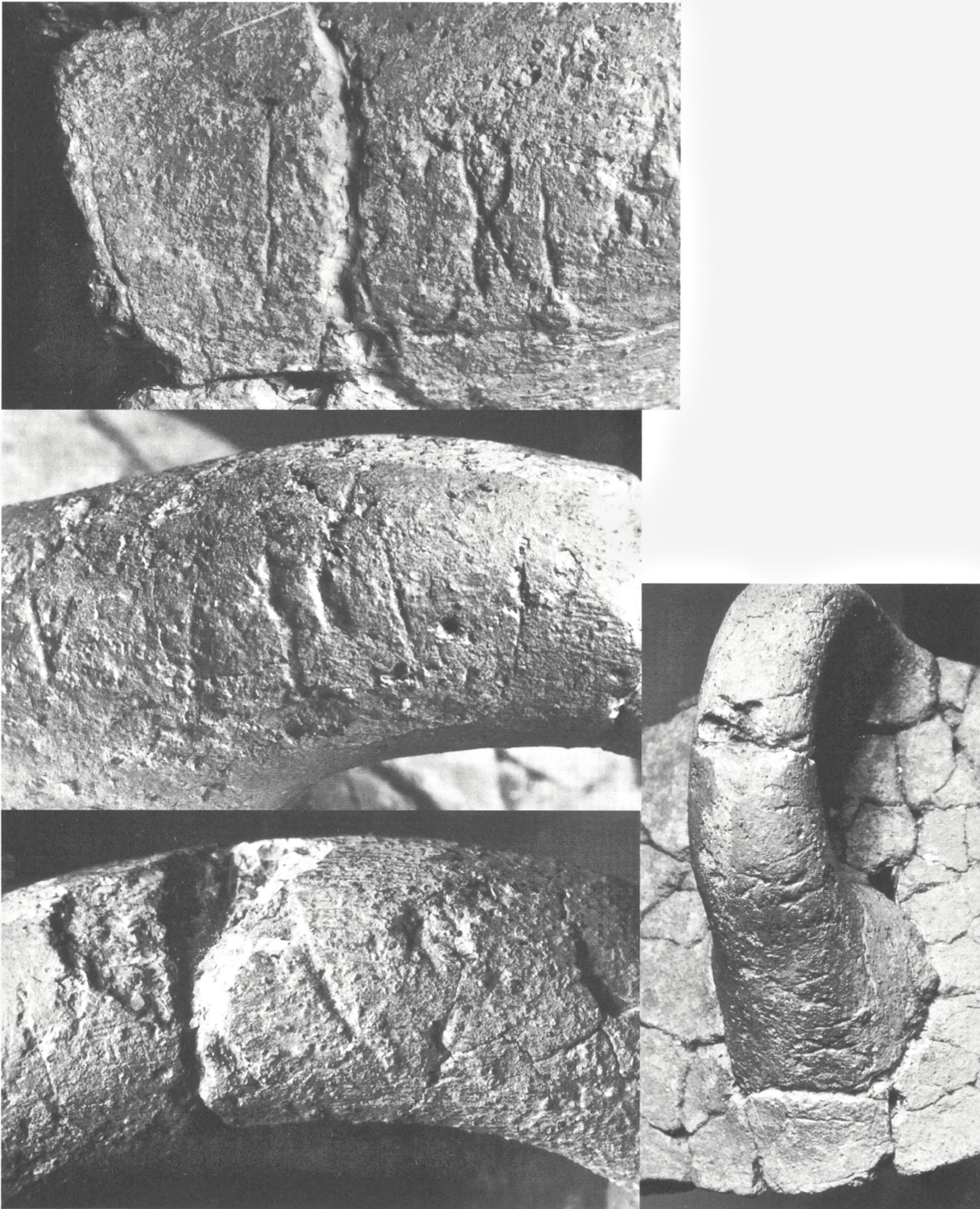


Fig. 41. Scratched inscription on handle of amphora SH 79.



Fig. 42. Scratched inscription on handle of amphora SH 79. 1:2. Drawn by P.J. Riis.

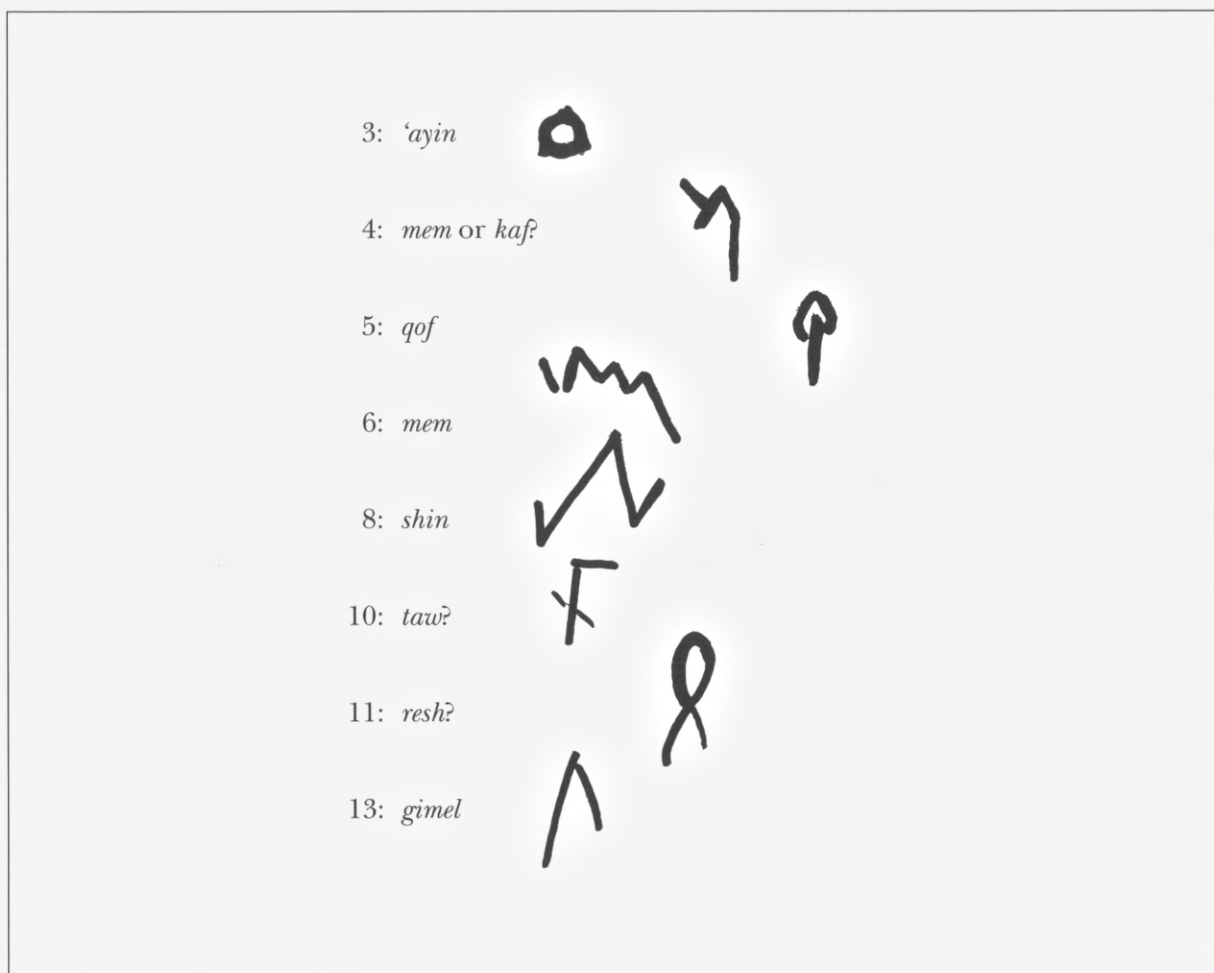
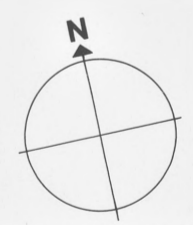
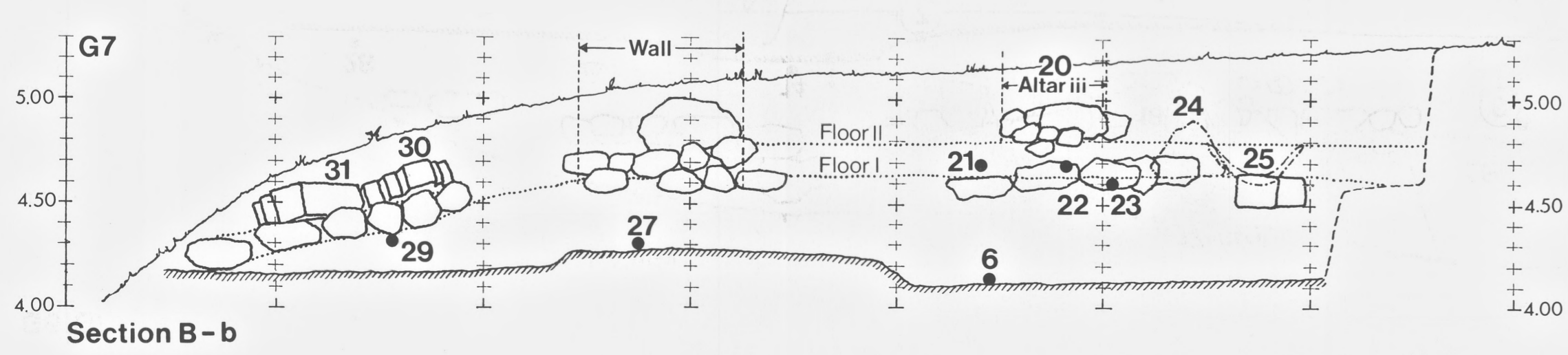
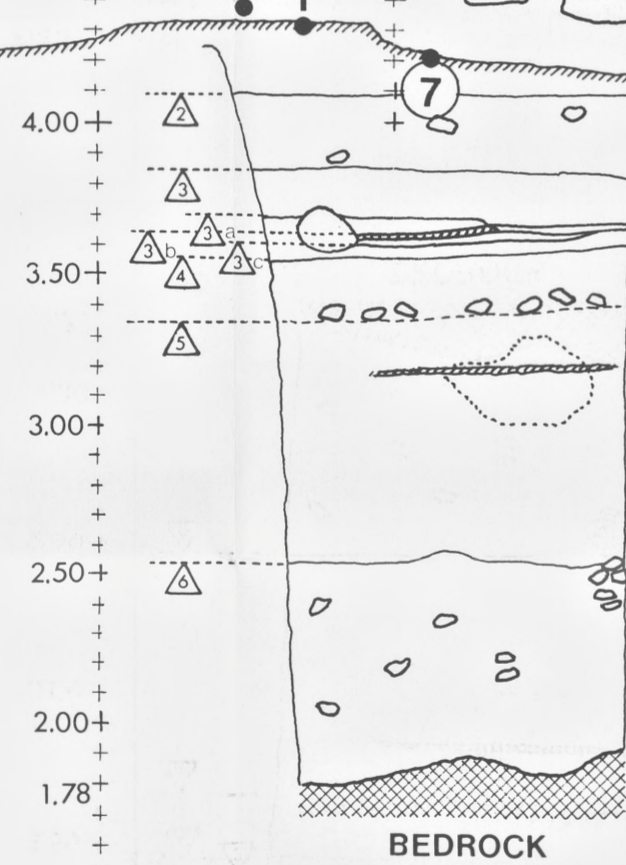
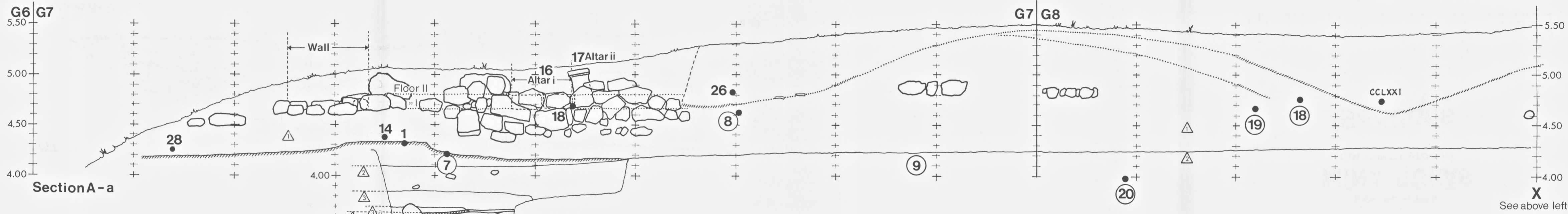
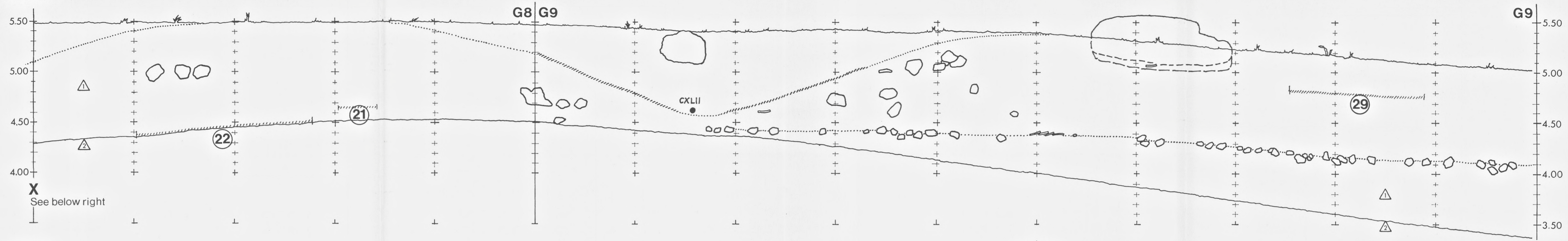


Fig. 43. Letters nos. 3-6, 8, 10, 11 and 13 in the scratched inscription on handle of amphora SH 79. Drawn by B. Otzen.

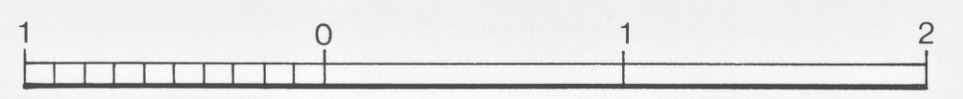
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Excavations 1960
MĪNA SŪKĀS
 (Southern Harbour)

Sections
 A-a and B-b

○ Remains of burial



SCALE OF METRES 1:25

a

+

b

+

c

+

d

+

e

+

f

+



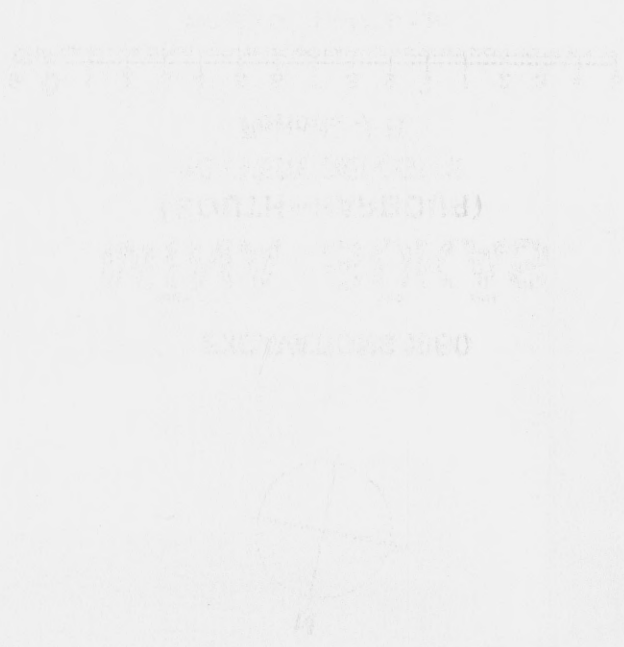
G8

G9

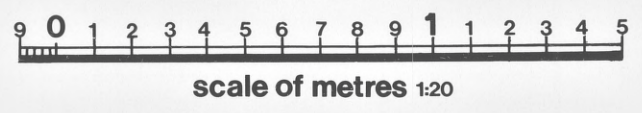
K7

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EXCAVATIONS 1960
MĪNA SŪKĀS
(SOUTH-HARBOUR)
POTTERY DEPOSITS
Periods J-H



Faint, mirrored text from the reverse side of the page, including the words 'EXCAVATIONS' and 'POTTERY DEPOSITS'.

FOR PRACTICAL REASONS ARABIC
NUMERALS HAVE ON THIS PLAN
BEEN USED TO INDICATE THE
LOCI FOR WHICH THE TEXT USES
ROMAN NUMERALS
THE SMALLER NUMBERS INDICATE
THE ALTITUDE ABOVE SEA LEVEL
IN CENTIMETRES

