

PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE FIFTH SEASON (2009) OF EXCAVATIONS AT KHIRBAT AL-BATRĀWĪ (UPPER WĀDĪ AZ-ZARQĀ'), BY THE UNIVERSITY OF ROME "LA SAPIENZA"

Lorenzo Nigro and Maura Sala

Introduction

The fifth season of archaeological exploration (excavation and restoration) at the Early Bronze Age (EBA) site of Khirbat al-Batrāwī¹ was undertaken by the University of Rome "La Sapienza"² during May and June 2009³. The excavations were supported by Rome "La Sapienza" University, the Italian Ministry of Foreign

Affairs, and the Italian Ministry of University and Scientific Research⁴.

The site of Khirbat al-Batrāwī (**Fig. 1**), a major fortified town of the EB II-III, is located on the periphery of the modern city of Zarqā'. In antiquity it was a strategically located central town in the upper Wādī az-Zarqā', at the crossroads of routes connecting the desert and the steppe



1. General view of the site of Khirbat al-Batrāwī with the EB II-III lines of fortifications on the northern slope of the hill and the EB II restored city-gate at the end of season 2009, from north.

1. Lat. 32°05' N, Long. 36°04' E; *JADIS* site n. 2516.011, p. 2.172 (Nigro 2006: 233-35, fig. 1; Nigro ed. 2006: 16-22, maps 1-6, plan I).
2. The Rome "La Sapienza" team during the fifth (2009) season included: L. Nigro, Director; M. Sala, Supervisor of Area B South and B North; M. D'Andrea, E. Casadei and S. Massi (Area B North); I. Salimbeni (Supervisor of House B2), and D. Ghigi (Area B South-East); A. Massafra, P. Vitolo and M. Zingarello (Area B South). The representative of the Department of Antiquities, and the Inspector, Romil Ghayib who gave logistical support for the expedition.
3. The expedition wishes to express its deepest thanks to Dr Fawwaz al-Khraysheh, General Director of Depart-

- ment of Antiquities of Jordan, for his invaluable support, as well as to the Academic Authorities of Rome "La Sapienza" University, the Rector, Prof. Luigi Frati, the Dean of the Faculty of Humanistic Sciences, Prof. Roberto Nicolai and the Director of the Department of Historical, Archaeological and Anthropological Sciences of Antiquity, Prof. Gilda Bartoloni, who strongly supported our work of the expedition.
4. The authors would also like to thank the Italian ambassador to Jordan, H.E. Francesco Franson, Dr Stefano Stucci, and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs – General Directorate for Cultural Promotion and Cooperation, Office V.

to the Jordan Valley (Nigro 2009, 2010). Previous fieldwork has identified the EB II-III Main City Wall, which encompassed the whole town, and the EB II City Gate. Other major building works identified in previous seasons include the EB III Northern Defensive Works, displaced on at least three lines, the EB IIIB dwelling quarter inside the Main City Wall, the EB II-III Temple on the easternmost terrace and several domestic units and installations of the EB IVB village, which occupied the hill after the abandonment of the EB III city.

During the fifth season⁵, excavations and restorations were focused on three areas, Area B North and Area B South, located in the middle of the northern side of the tell, outside and inside the EB II-III Main City Wall respectively, and Area F on the easternmost terrace of the Khirbat.

Aims of the Fifth Season (2009)

The aims of the fifth season were to:

- Excavate Area B North and Area B South, the northern EB II-III triple line of fortifications with annexed defensive bastions and towers and the EB IIIB northern quarter, including houses and public buildings;
- Complete the excavations and restoration of the EB II-III Broad-Room Temple in Area F on the eastern-most terrace of the tell.
- In order to achieve these goals the following operations were carried out:
- Continuation of excavations towards the west and the north of the imposing EB II-III triple fortification line in Area B North (§ 4);
- Restoration of the western stretch of the EB II-III Main City Wall and in particular in the region of Pit P.819 in Area B North (§ 4);
- Excavation of House B2 and its associated courtyard L.936; excavation in the northern and western sectors of Building B1; excavation of Building B3 west of the laneway

L.1050; and excavation of the street L.1060 along the inner side of the Main City Wall (§ 5);

- Completion of excavation and restoration of the Broad-Room Temple in Area F (§ 6).

Stratigraphic Phasing of Area B North and Area B South

Excavations in Area B North helped to refine the stratigraphic and architectural sequences of the impressive series of EBA fortification works. Excavations in Area B South enabled clarification of the stratigraphy and layout of the EB IIIB domestic and public buildings (ca 2500-2300 BC) erected inside the EB II-III Main City Wall during the EB IIIB, and the stratigraphic and constructional phases of the EB IVB village built over them in the last centuries of the 3rd millennium BC.

Area B North: THE EB II-III Fortification System

Further excavation to the north and west of the EB II-III fortification system was undertaken in 2009 (**Fig. 2**). The exposure of the EB IIIA Outer Wall W.155 and the curvilinear outwork W.185 continued, and excavation of the Scarp Wall W.165 was extended to its western-most extremity where it abutted against the outer face of the Outer Wall. Deposits associated with these features clearly related to the use and destruction of each of the major features encountered, thus providing a more detailed stratigraphic sequence for the area.

The stratigraphy of Area B North

Excavations in Area B North provided a thorough insight into the stratigraphic sequence of the impressive series of the EBA fortification works (and related deposits) on the northern slope of the site, further clarifying the morphology and construction phases of the succeeding

5. In the previous seasons (Nigro 2006; 2007; 2008; 2010; Nigro ed. 2006; 2008; Nigro and Sala 2009) the main chronological, topographical and architectural points of the site were fixed (Nigro 2006: 233-36; Nigro 2007: 346-47, tab. 1; Nigro ed. 2006: 9-36, fig. 1.2; 2008: 7-8) and seven areas were opened. These were Area A on the Acropolis (Nigro 2006: 236-40; Nigro 2007: 347-49; Nigro ed. 2006: 63-102, plan II; 2008: 9-63), Area B North and Area B South on the northern slope (Nigro 2006: 240-46; Nigro 2007: 349-54; Ni-

gro ed. 2006: 153-96, plans III-IV; 2008: 65-240, plans I-II; Nigro and Sala 2009: § 4), Area C and D in the north-western and south-western corners, respectively (Nigro ed. 2006: 25-27, figs. 1.27-1.31; Nigro 2007: 355-57; Nigro ed. 2006: 32-33, figs. 1.38-1.41; 2008: 241-44), Area E on the southern side (Nigro 2007: 357-58; Nigro ed. 2008: 245-68) and Area F on the easternmost terrace of the khirbat (Nigro 2007: 358-59; Nigro ed. 2006: 22, fig. 1.25; 2008: 269-316, plans III-IV; Nigro and Sala 2009: § 5).

Table 1: Architectural and stratigraphic phasing of Khirbat al- Batrāwī.

Archaeological Period	Absolute Chronology	Site Period	Area B North		Area B South	
			Phases	Structures	Phases	Structures
EB I	3400-3000 BC	Batrāwī I	-	-	-	-
EB II	3000-2700 BC	Batrāwī II (fortified town)	Phase 5b-a	Main city wall; City gate L.160; Street L.144b	-	-
EB IIIA	2700-2500 BC	Batrāwī IIIa (fortified town)	Phase 4b-a	Main city wall; staircases W.181 and W.1067; blocking wall W.157; street L.144a/L.809a; outer wall W.155; outwork W.185	Phase 4	Street L.148+L.458
EB IIIB	2500-2300 BC	Batrāwī IIIb (fortified town)	Phase 3c-b	Main city wall; staircases W.181 and W.1067; outer wall W.155; scarp wall W.165; bastion W.825; protruding wall W.177	Phase 3d-a	Building B1; house B2; installation W.135; courtyard L.936; oven T.413; building B1; building B3; lane L.1050; street L.133+L.424+L.1060
EB IVA	2300-2200 BC	Batrāwī IVa (abandonment)	Phase 3a	-	-	-
EB IVB	2200-2000 BC	Batrāwī IVb (rural village)	Phase 2d-a	Embankment W.811; retaining wall W.815	Phase 2g-e	Domestic structures and installations; child burials D.1020 and D.1026
					Phase 2d-a	Houses and domestic installations
Later Periods	2000 BC-1950 AD	Batrāwī V	-	-	-	-
Recent use	1950-2009 AD	Batrāwī VI	Phase 1	-	Phase 1	-



2. The EB II-III lines of Batrāwī fortifications, from east; from left to right: EB II-III Main City-Wall W.101+W.103+W.163, EB IIIA-B Outer Wall W.155 and EB IIIB Scarp-Wall W.165. In the left foreground, the EB IIIB quarter of dwellings and public buildings erected inside the Main City-Wall.

double (EB IIIA) and triple (EB IIIB) lines of defences and their annexed structures⁶.

Five stratigraphic phases were distinguished, from the uppermost layer of topsoil (Phase 1) to the earliest phase (Phase 5), representing the foundation of the Main City Wall and its first use during the EB II period (2900-2700 BC).

Phase 1 (topsoil) represents the long period of abandonment following the end of occupation of the site around 2000 BC. During this period a layer of silt, up to 30cm thick, accumulated over the remains of the EBA fortification works.

Phase 2, directly below topsoil, represents a partial reuse of the EB II-III collapsed fortification system, consisting of a stone embankment (W.811) which was built to regularise the slope of the Khirbat and to support the EB IVB village erected on the top of it (§ 4.2).

Phase 3 corresponds to the latest reconstruction and use of the EB II-III Main City Wall and the associated outer lines of defence, that is, the final urban occupation of the fortified town of al-Batrāwī (EB IIIB, 2500-2300 BC). It is comprised of three sub phases of activity. Sub-phase 3a, the definitive abandonment and collapse of the EBA fortification system, including the associated pit P.819 which destroyed much of it. Sub-phase 3b, a violent destruction, comprising layers of ash, charcoal and fragments of reddish-yellow mud bricks. This sub phase marks the end of occupation of the 3rd-millennium BC city as excavated between the Main City Wall and the Outer Wall W.155 (F.814), and between Outer Wall W.155 and Scarp Wall W.165 (F.816), and north of the Scarp Wall (F.818). Sub-phase 3c, the latest reconstruction and use of the Batrāwī fortification system, with the Main City Wall and the Outer Wall W.155 kept in use from the previous phase, and the Scarp Wall W.165 with protruding wall W.177 added in this phase.

Phase 4 is represented by groups of stratigraphic units and structures belonging to the EB IIIA reconstruction and use of the fortification system. Two different sub phases were distinguished: Sub-phase 4a, represented by a

significant destruction layer excavated between the Main City Wall and the Outer Wall W.155, and northwards outside the Scarp Wall W.165 beneath the EB IIIB layers. Sub-phase 4b, represented the remodelling of the Main City Wall, including the blocking up of the collapsed EB II City Gate, the erection of Outer Wall W.155 with the annexed curvilinear outwork W.185, and the repair of the street running in between the Main City Wall and the Outer Wall (Nigro 2007: 349-51; Nigro ed. 2008, 73-74).

Phase 5 represents the earliest phase of the city and includes the later sub-phase 5a represented by the collapse of the EB II Main City Wall and City Gate and sub-phase 5b (not excavated in 2009), the earlier erection of the Main City Wall and City Gate L.160 in the Early Bronze II.

The Outer Embankment of Period Batrāwī IVb (EB IVB)

In squares BnII3 + BmII4 + BnII4 + BmII5, the Outer Embankment (W.811), which supported and possibly protected EB IVB dwellings in Area B South⁷ was further exposed and documented. It was roughly 9m wide and had a supporting structure at its base (W.815) and a somewhat stepped outer face of medium-sized stones, well preserved in the lower outer courses, which regularised the underlying the EB III collapsed structures of the Outer Wall W.155 and Scarp-Wall W.165. Further to the east (east of wall W.177), in square BoII3 + BoII4 + BpII4, the lower part of the Embankment was not preserved, possibly due to the presence of the underlying, partly destroyed curvilinear outwork W.185.

The Period Batrāwī IIIB (EB IIIB) Triple Line Fortification

A considerable part of the 2009 excavations in Area B North was devoted to the EB IIIB triple line of fortifications (Nigro ed. 2008: 100-2)⁸, which in the western-most newly excavated squares (BmII4 + BnII4) neatly turned to the

6. For the overall stratigraphic sequences of Area B North, see Nigro ed. 2008: 66-76; Nigro and Sala 2009: § 4.1.

7. Nigro ed. 2008: 102-3; Nigro and Sala 2009: § 4.2.

8. In 2009 the excavated area was extended towards the west and the north, including squares BmII4 (eastern half) + BmII5 (eastern half) to the west; BnII3 + BnII4

(northern half) + BoII3 + BoII4 (northern half) + BpII4 to the north. Excavation was carried out in the open area, including all baulks, in order to prosecute the exploration of the northern slope of the hill with its series of fortification works.

north-west (**Fig. 3**).

The Scarp Wall W.165 was exposed from east (BoII4) to west (BmII4 + BnII4), showing up to six superimposed courses of large stones still preserved *in situ*. In correspondence with the turn towards the north-west was found an inner edge of the structure, which ended against the Outer Wall W.155 with a Round Bastion (W.825) that narrowed from 3.1m diameter at the base, to ca 2.5m in diameter at its top. Like the Scarp Wall W.165, the Bastion W.825 also had a battering face (**Fig. 4**). Further west, another massive stone structure (W.177) was found protruding from the Scarp Wall in BoII4 and which in BoII3 reached a width of 2.1 m, after which it

turned westwards and ran parallel to the north-west orientated stretch of the Outer Wall W.155 for a distance of around 3.8m. In this stretch the Outer Wall W.155 also shows evidence of a battering face, with large stone blocks at its base. In the space between the Outer Wall W.155 and wall W.177 a destruction layer up to 0.70m thick (F.818) was excavated, from which an EB IIIB ceramic repertoire was collected (**Figs. 5-6**), as well as three pottery spindle whorls and a Canaan blade.

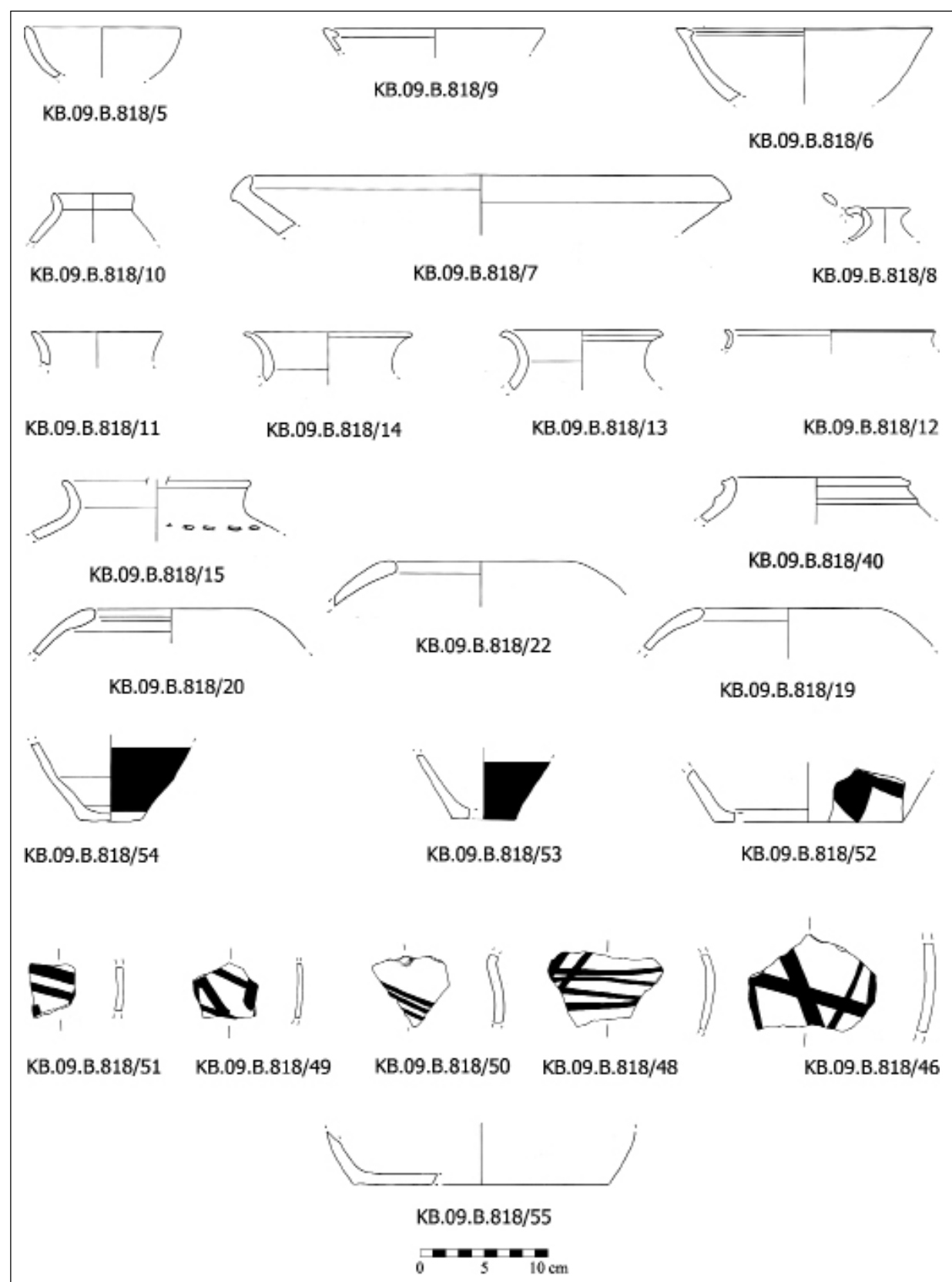
The same EB IIIB destruction layer was also reached between the Main City Wall and the Outer Wall in the eastern half of squares BmII4 + BmII5, where it consisted of a stratum



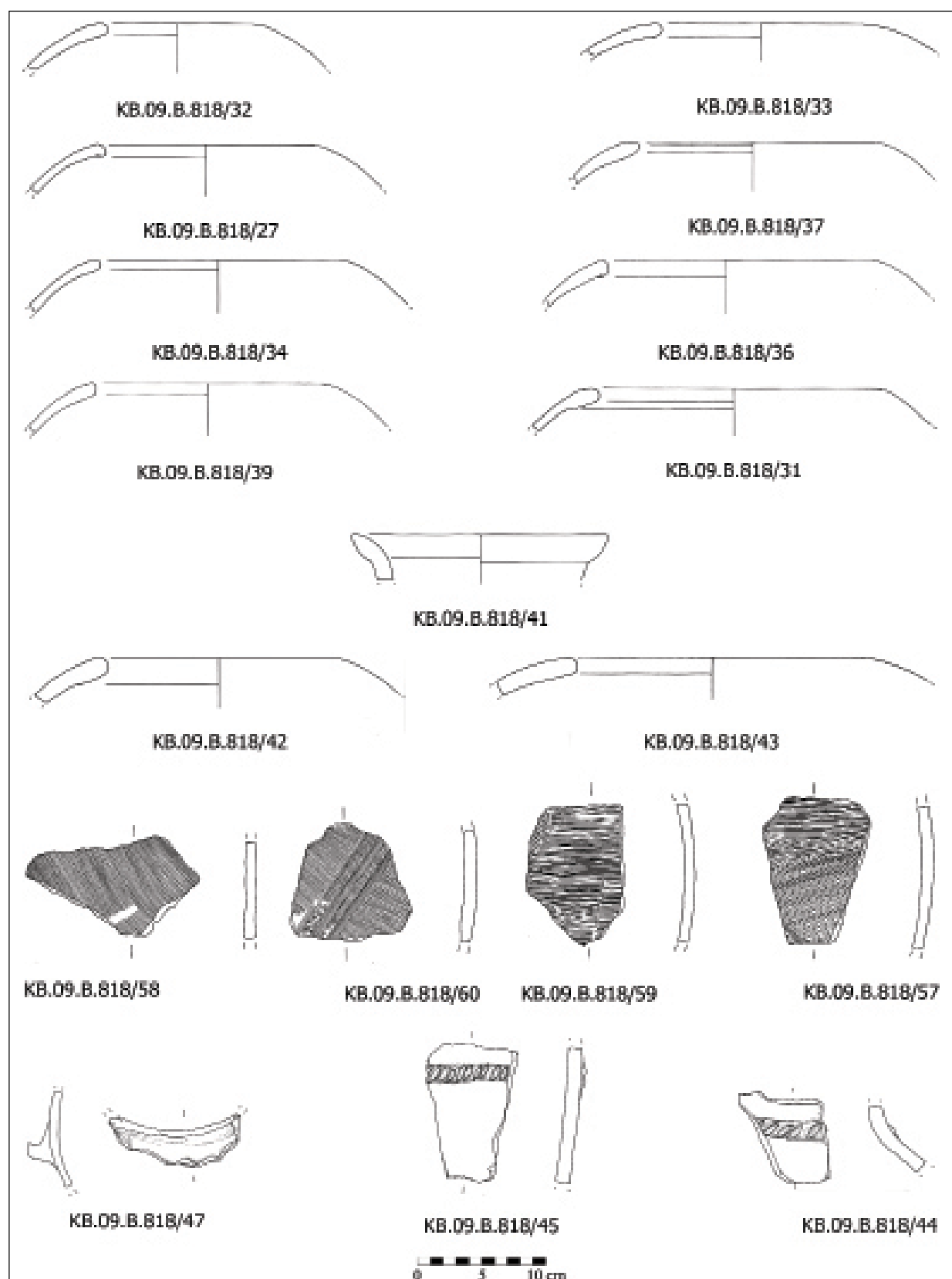
3. The EB IIIB triple line of Batrāwī fortifications, from west: to the left, EB IIIB Scarp-Wall W.165 with protruding wall W.177; in the middle, EB IIIA-B Outer Wall W.155, gradually turning northwards; to the right, EB II-III Main City-Wall W.101+W.103+W.163.



4. EB IIIB protruding wall W.177, and EB IIIB Scarp-Wall W.165 ending against the outer face of the EB IIIA-B Outer Wall W.155 with semicircular Bastion W.825, from north-west.



5. EB IIIB pottery sherds from destruction layer F.818.



6. EB IIIB pottery sherds from destruction layer F.818.

of greyish-brown ashy soil with scattered stones and charcoals (F.814). It was also detected on top of the Scarp Wall leaning on the outer face of the Outer Wall (F.816).

Doubling the Fortification Line: Reconstruction of the Main City Wall and Outer Wall W.155 in Period Batrāwī IIIa (EB IIIA)

Seven superimposed courses of stone blocks belonging to the EB IIIA Outer Wall W.155 (preserved up to 2 m in height) were exposed towards the west in squares BnII4 + BmII4 (eastern half) + BmII3 (eastern half). Here the exposed area turned sharply northwards followed by a stretch that gradually curved towards the west (**Fig. 3**).

An EB IIIA layer of a dark ash, with broken yellowish mud bricks and limestone (F.820), was reached north of the Outer Wall underneath the EB IIIB destruction layer (F.818) in square BnII3 + BnII4 + BoII4. Some sherds of Khirbat Kerak Ware, including a hemispherical bowl (with inverted red-black lustrous slip) an in turned rim bowl, a crater and a jug (**Fig. 7**) were discovered in association with this stretch of the wall.

The curvilinear outwork W.185 was excavated inside in squares BpII4 + BoII3 + BoII4, exposing another portion of it to the north (**Fig. 8**). The overall inner diameter of this structure was around 10m, while the wall thickness varied from 1.5m to 2.0m. Excavations have revealed up to four superimposed courses of stones of this feature preserved to the south. The EB IIIA layer of collapse inside the round tower was also exposed (F.823). This comprised fallen blocks in a dark ashy soil overlain by the EB IIIB destruction layer (F.822) which was a compact stratum of grey earth with sparse stones and rare pottery.

Restoration of the EB II-III Main City Wall

The western stretch of the Main City Wall was restored with a mortar which replicated ancient building materials. The breach opened by pit P.819 was also repaired for the sake of

preservation of the whole structure. Stones were fixed with mortar both on the outer and inner face of the wall, including the staircase W.1067. The upper surface was protected so to create a cap which facilitates rainwater defluxion. The actual length of the wall so far restored has reached around 50m.

Area B South: the EB IVB Village and the EB IIIB Building B1, House B2 and Building B3

Excavations in Area B South, just south of the EB II-III Main City Wall and the street running inside it, brought to light a series of dwellings and installations belonging to the EB IVB (Batrāwī IVb) rural village, which stood upon the ruins of the EB II-III city. Underneath this were houses and buildings of the EB IIIB (Batrāwī IIIB) city (**Fig. 9**). Excavation was carried out in three different sectors, expanding the area towards the east, the south-west and the west⁹.

The Stratigraphy of Area B South

The 2009 season of excavations in Area B South helped to define and articulate the stratigraphic sequence established during seasons 2006-2007¹⁰. The sequence of phases were refined, from topsoil (Phase 1), through the different phases of the EB IVB village (Phases 2a-g) and the phases of the EB IIIB buildings (Phases 3a-d), down to the EB IIIA layers associated with the street running parallel to the Main City Wall (Phases 4a-b) which leans against the wall (W.157) blocking the EB II city-gate¹¹.

Phase 1 (topsoil) was the long period of abandonment of the site, represented by an accumulation of dust, interspersed with small stones.

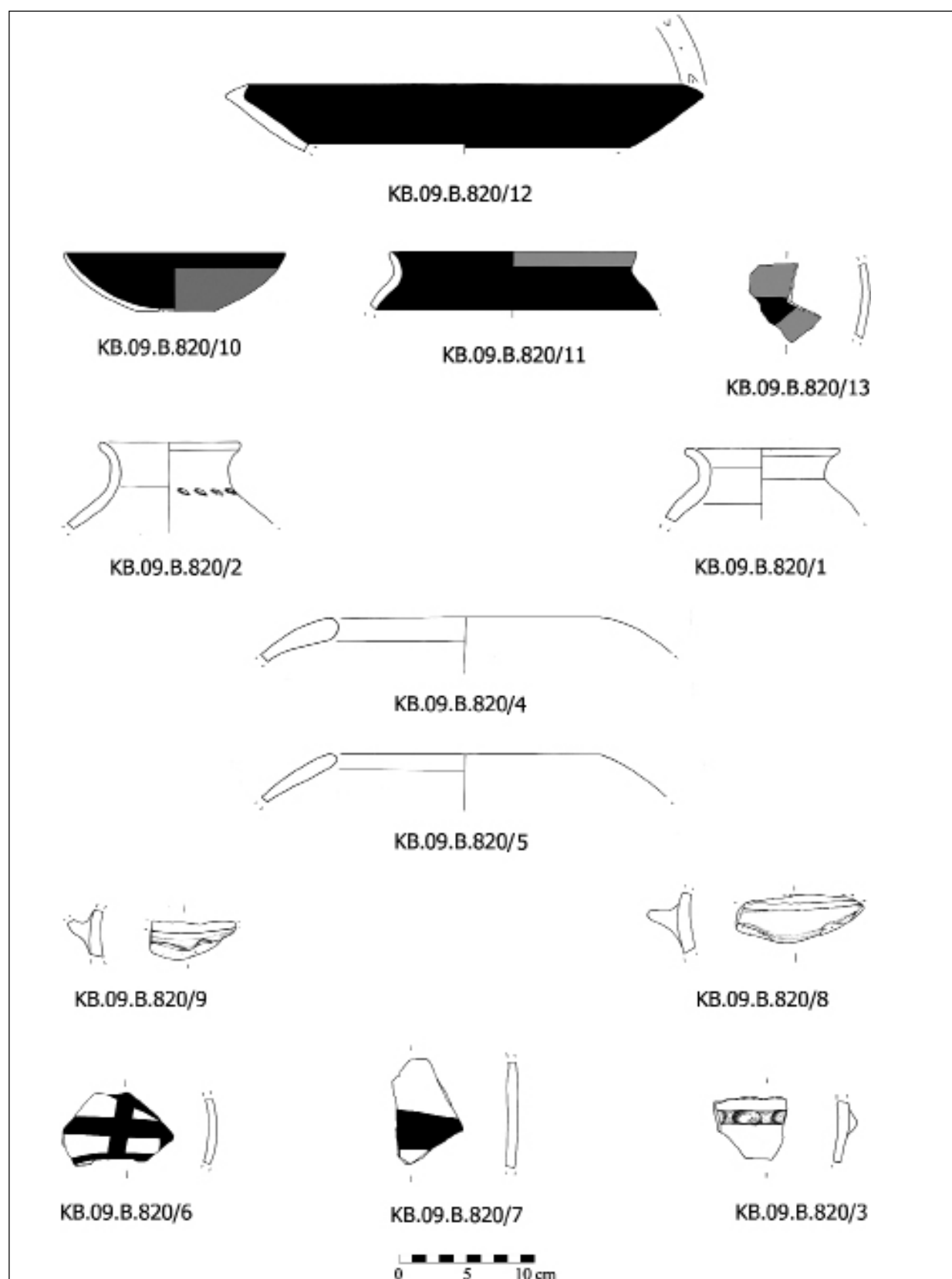
Beneath this, Phase 2 was comprised of seven different sub phases (2a-2g), including two major construction phases (2c and 2f) dating to the EB IVB and corresponding to the Batrāwī IVb village (Nigro ed. 2006: 77, note 36). The later domestic units belonging to the final settlement on the Khirbat are represented by sub phases 2a-d, while the earliest settlement stage,

9. Excavations in Area B South, which started from square BpII7 (eastern half) + BqII7 (southern half) + BqII8 in the first season (Nigro ed. 2006: 153, 167-74, 179-84), and enlarged to squares BoII6 (SW quadrant) + BoII7 + BpII7 + BqII7 (southern half) + BpII8, BqII8 + BrII8 + BrII9 (northern half) in season 2006

(Nigro ed. 2008, 127, 148-76), were resumed in 2009 in squares BnII6+ BoII6 + BnII7 + BoII7 + BpII7 + BrII7 (SW quadrant) + BoII8 + BqII8 + BpII8 + BrII8.

10. Nigro ed. 2008: 127-47.

11. Nigro ed. 2008: 73, 90-91, figs. 3.14-3.15, 3.38.



7. EB IIIA pottery sherds from destruction layer F.820.



8. *EB IIIA Curvilinear Outwork W.185, from east.*



9. *General view of dwellings and buildings in Area B South, erected in the Early Bronze IIIB (2500-2300 BC) inside the EB II-III Main City-Wall, from east.*

with less substantial structures and installations, marking the re-occupation of the site after the fierce destruction which brought to an end the Batrāwī II-III city are represented by sub phases 2e-f. This initial stage was further preceded in some places by occasional use of the EB IIIB buildings (sub phase 2g), which were still standing at the time the site was re-occupied by small groups of farmers¹².

Directly beneath this was Phase 3, represented by a series of sub phases all dating to the EB IIIB. Sub-phase 3a was the final abandonment of the EB IIIB city; Sub-phase 3b was a layer of destruction with evident traces of a violent conflagration which destroyed the whole EB IIIB settlement. Sub-phase 3c was the use of House B2 during EB IIIB, while sub-phase 3d repre-

sents the erection of buildings and houses at the beginning of Period Batrāwī IIIb.

The Dwelling Quarter of the Period Batrāwī IVb (Early Bronze IVB) Village

Two EB IVB (2200-2000 BC) occupational phases were distinguished in Area B South. The earlier was a kind of camp-site representing the re-occupation of the tell in the last centuries of the 3rd millennium BC (currently recorded only in this area of the Khirbat), while the later occupation phase represents the gradual transformation of the settlement into a rural village.

The earliest occupation phase (sub-phases 2f-e) in square BrII8 consists of floors with limestone scales, posts holes, stone-lined circular bins and shallow benches (**Fig. 10**). In the central sector (square BoII8) there was a circular silo and, not far away from it, two infant burials (**Fig. 11**)¹³. Each burial was signalled by a small

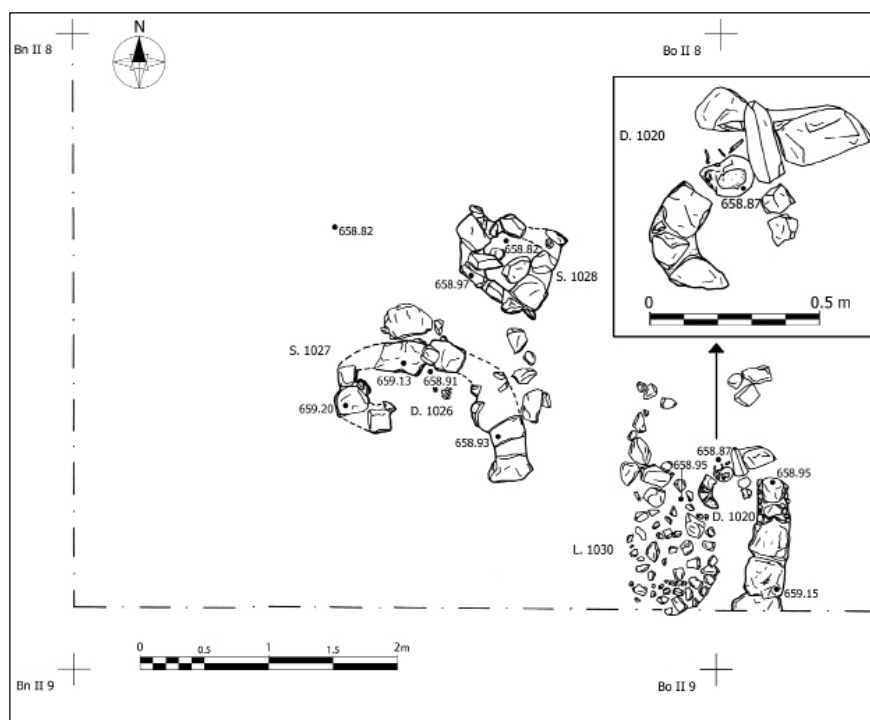


10. *EB IVB (2200-200 BC) stone-lined circular bins.*

12. Nigro 2009: 670-72.

13. Human remains were studied by Dr Mary Anne Ta-

furi, Rome "La Sapienza" University, which I kindly thank for the information.



11. Plan of EB IVB (2200-200 BC) child burials D.1020 and D.1026.

stela or vertical stone¹⁴. The northern most burial, D.1026, was a stone-lined cist of oval shape, in which the skeleton of a child of perinatal age (38 weeks) was buried. Approximately one meter to the south-west, the second burial (D.1020) consisted of a stone cist, leaning on a small north-south wall, within which the skeleton of a child of an approximate age of 1 year was deposited (**Fig. 12**). Two flint blades were associated with this burial. In square BnII6, a stone wall or platform (W.1021) and a square block 1m west of it were uncovered, perhaps to

be used as working installations.

The upper phase (sub-phases 2 d-a) of Batrāwī IVb occupation represents the establishment of a rural village with a series of rectangular dwellings, curvilinear installations, and working areas. In BrII8 a major east-west structure (W.407) was the eastern continuation of wall W.117 (Nigro ed. 2006: 170-73, figs. 4.24, 4.26). Against the southern face of the wall, at its eastern end, there was a bench upon which two mortars were placed. Beside this was a work table with a pestle (**Fig. 13**). In the south-eastern



12. EB IVB (2200-200 BC) child burial D.1020, excavated in square BoII8.



13. EB IVB (2200-200 BC) House L.910, with working table and pestle beside bench B.904, from south-west.

14. A cist burial was excavated in 2006 some meters to

the north-east: Nigro ed. 2008: 174-75, figs. 4.82-4.84.

quadrant of the square, a rectangular installation (L.908) made of limestone was also unearthed.

In the central sector, in squares BnII6 + BnII7 + BoII7 + BoII8, large rectangular compounds and dwellings were uncovered. The work area L.450, which was paved with flagstones (Nigro ed. 2008: 168-169, figs. 4.73-4.75) continued to the south with a solid wall made up of stone headers (W.445) delimitating a rectangular room (L.480). Near the corner of the square BnII8, wall W.445 joined with an east-west structure (W.1059) that belonged to another large square compound (6m x 5m), extending to the north-west in squares BnII6 + BnII7. This was subdivided into two rectangular east-west orientated spaces (L.1062 and L.1010) which opened to the north (L.490). In the south-western sector of L.480, a circular stone-lined silo (S.1056) was identified, while south of W.1061, the north-western corner of a rectangular installation (L.1064) was uncovered. In square BoII8, a wall comprising two rows of stones delimited an open courtyard where a circular silo (S.1008), a rectangular platform paved with flat stones (L.1009), and an oval-shaped feature (W.1011) were erected.

Both occupational phases provided a wide range of ceramic materials (**Fig. 14**) and several objects and tools, including flint blades, stone pestles, basalt grinders, pottery disks (stoppers), spindle whorls, as well as numerous animal bones. All related material belonged to the middle and final stages of the Batrāwī IVb Period (EB IVB, 2200-2000 BC).

The EB IIIB Dwellings and Public Buildings inside the Main City Wall

The exploration of the EB IIIB city was carried on in the 5th season (2009) both east and west of Building B1 (**Fig. 9**). In BrII8, the northern half of a rectangular house stretching north-south was excavated. The House (B2) was delimited by solid stone walls on the northern, eastern and western side. In the middle of the western side there was the entrance (**Fig. 15**). A plastered semicircular storage bin was built against the western face of the this wall (partially excavated in 2006: Nigro ed. 2006: 181-84, figs. 4.39-4.42). Inside it was a copper pivot and two pottery disks (**Fig. 16**). In the middle of the room was a round stone which served as pillar

base. Another flat stone was uncovered against the southern face of the northern wall of the house, perhaps used to support a vertical post or as a bench. In the north-western corner of the room there was a round bench.

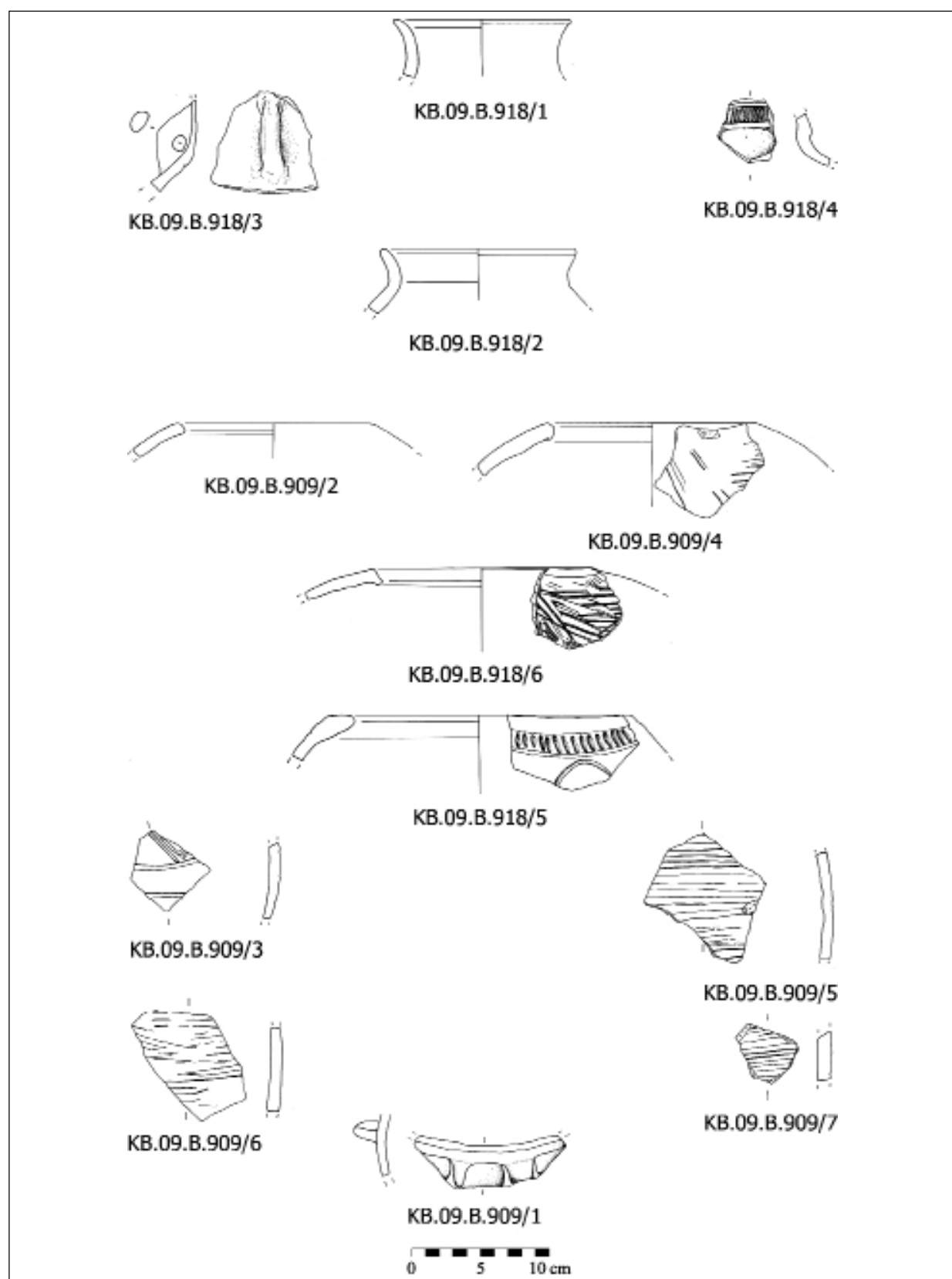
This domestic unit, which was destroyed by a fierce fire (several complete mud bricks from the superstructure were also retrieved) produced a spindle whorl made of animal bone, a bone needle, and two flint blades (**Fig. 16**), as well as distinctive EB IIIB pottery sherds. Building B1 was further explored in squares BoII8 + BoII7 (**Fig. 17**). South of L.430 a second rectangular room (L.1046) was excavated, which was wider than the first and had a thinner wall on its western side. The door (L.1066) connecting the two rooms was located in the middle of wall W.391.

West of Building B1, a lane (L.1050) was uncovered separating the former from a second structure, of which only the northern and western side walls (W.1033 and W.1043 measuring 0.8m - 0.9m thick) have so far been excavated. The northern wall (W.1033) was exposed to 7.5m of its length (**Fig. 18**). Along its inner face, a row of pithoi (**Fig. 19**) was found *in situ*, still completely preserved and submerged in a 1 m thick destruction layer (**Fig. 20**) which had accumulated in what seemed to be a large rectangular room (L.1040). Such substantive storage vessels hint at public storage activities carried out within this building.

The street running inside the Main City Wall was further excavated to the west in square BnII6, just north of wall W.1033. At the western end, inset into the southern inner face of the Main City Wall was a second staircase (W.1067), mirroring the Staircase W.181 (**Fig. 18**). The inset area in which the two staircases were built measured 7m wide and 0.4m deep.

Area F: Restoration of the Broad-Room Temple

Restoration and reconstruction of the Broad-Room Temple in Area F (Nigro 2007: 359; Nigro ed. 2008: 276-93) was completed during the 2009 season (**Fig. 21**). A special effort was devoted to the distinction of the EB II phase (phase 4, Temple F1) from the EB III phase (phase 3, Temple F2). The original building (Temple F1; Nigro ed. 2008: 276-81) was a broad-room elongated structure, with a major entrance ori-



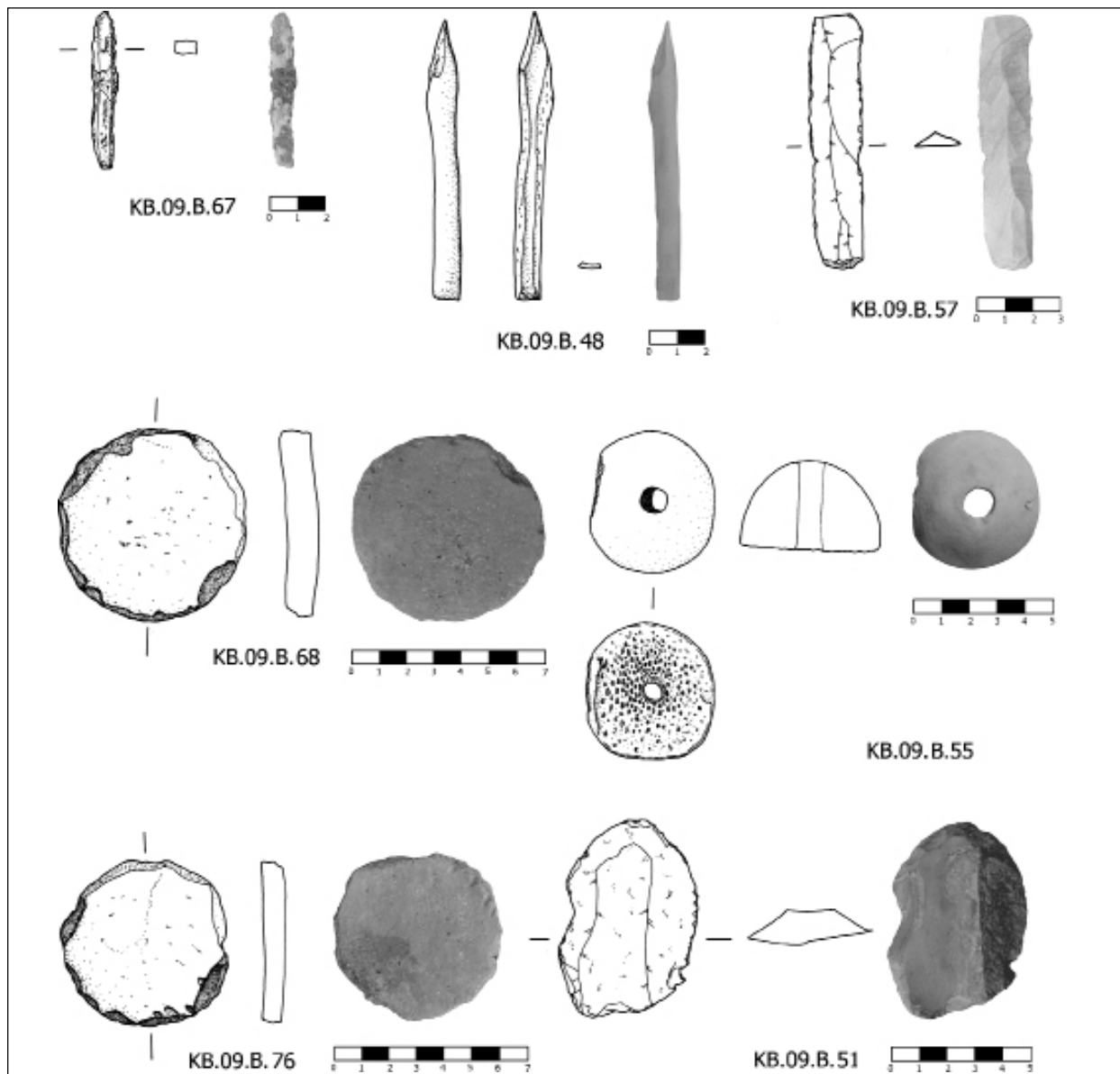
14. EB IVB (2200-200 BC) pottery sherds from Batrāwī IV village.



15. EB IIIB (2500-2300 BC) House B2, from north-west.



17. EB IIIB (2500-2300 BC) Building B1 with semi-circular oven T.413, from north-east.



16. EB IIIB small finds from destruction layers related to House B2.



18. General view of the row of EB IIIB (2500-2300 BC) buildings and street L.1060 parallel to the EB II-III Main City-Wall, from west; note the two facing staircases (W.181 and W.1067) in the inner side of the Main City-Wall.

entated south and centred on a niche inside the cella. The entrance opened onto a courtyard, where a circular platform (S.510) with a central cup-mark stood, flanked by a base, possibly for a freestanding betyl (Nigro ed. 2008: 283-84). After the earthquake, which destroyed the EB II city and caused the collapse of the central stretch of the temple façade, the sacred building was largely reconstructed with a new protruding front wall (a pillar or an altar stood at the centre of the façade). The cella was completely refurbished (Nigro ed. 2008: 285-89) moving the cult focus on to the western short side. Thus, the temple achieved a bent-axis plan in spite of its original broad-room layout.

The restoration of the Temple makes a significant contribution to the repertoire of Jordanian pre-classical architecture and should be compared with the renowned sacred building of similar plan discovered in Bāb adh-Dhrā', which also accompanied by a semicircular raised platform (Rast-Schaub 2003: 157-66, 321-35; Sala 2008: 179-86, 283-90).



19. EB IIIB (2500-2300 BC) pithoi retrieved in Building B3.

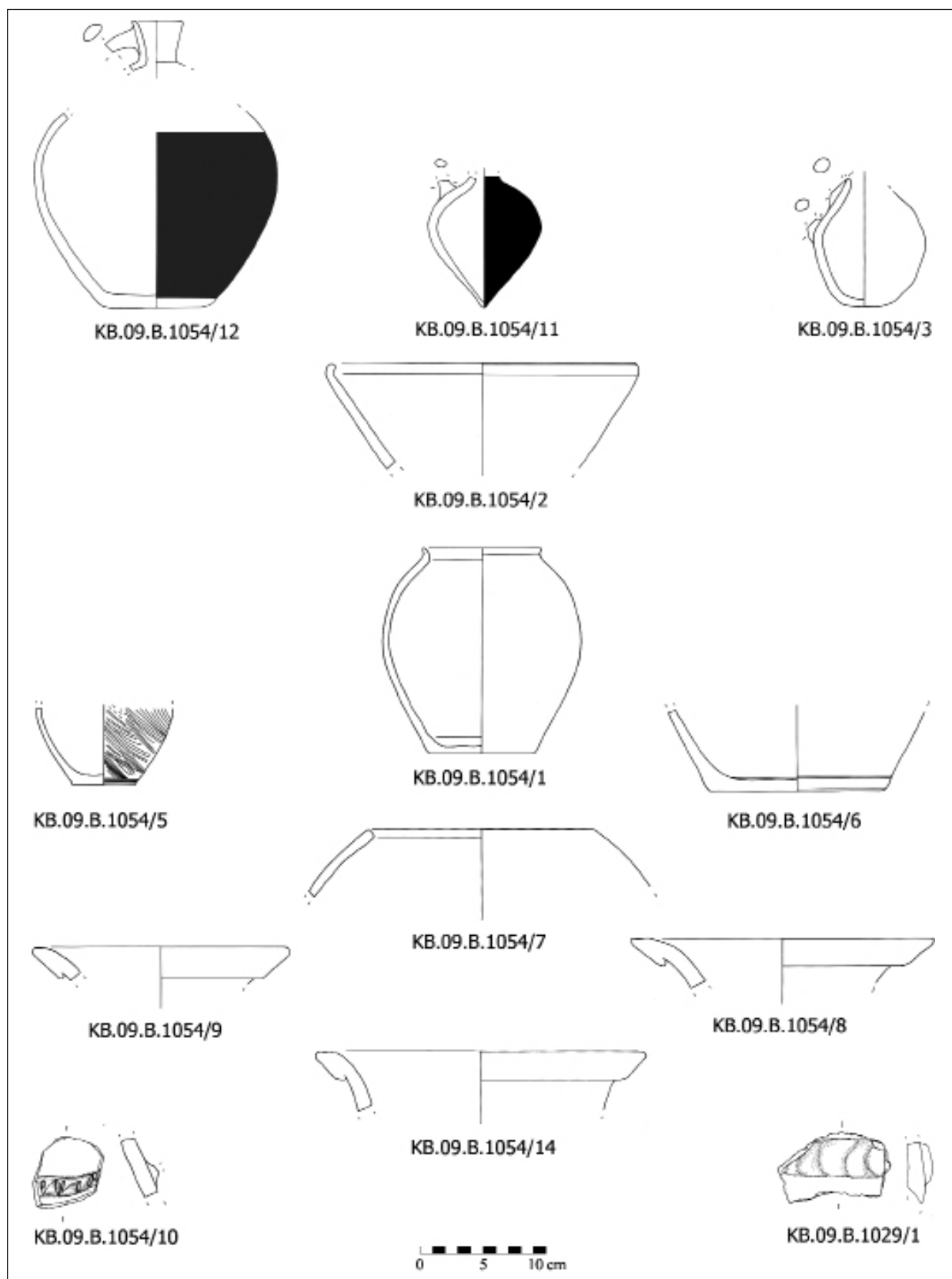
Conclusions

The 2009 season of excavations and restorations at Khirbat al-Batrāwī shed new light on the EB II-III city, which controlled the Upper Wādī az-Zarqā' (Nigro 2009) at the end of the 3rd millennium BC. The Triple Line Fortification on the northern side of the tell, which reached an overall width of around 20m (Fig. 2), was further investigated revealing a Round Bastion W.825. Inside the Main City Wall, in Area B South, the discovery of a further portion of Building B1, the excavation of House B2, and the identification of Building B3, with a series of *pithoi* fully preserved *in situ*, showed the urban layout and the richness of the city at its *floruit* during the third quarter of the 3rd millennium BC. The Broad-Room Temple erected on the easternmost terrace was fully restored, so that it was possible to reconstruct its architectural and functional development between EB II and EB III.

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20. EB IIIB (2500-2300 BC) vessels from destruction layer F.1054 inside Building B3.



21. General view of restored EB II-III Broad-Room Temple in Area F, from west.

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THE INTERNATIONAL AŞLAḤ PROJECT (IAP) 2010: PRELIMINARY REPORT ON THE FIRST SEASON

Laurent Gorgerat and Robert Wenning

Introduction and Acknowledgments

The first field season of the International Aşlah Project (IAP) lasted from 18th of March to 8th of April 2010. The IAP was initiated and organized by Prof. Dr Stephan G. Schmid, Co-director of the French-German research project 'Early Petra', which is sponsored by the German Research Association (DFG), the Excellence Cluster TOPOI at the Humboldt University Berlin, and the Association for the Understanding of Ancient Cultures (AUAC). IAP 2010 was directed by Prof. Dr Robert Wenning on behalf of Muenster University. Laurent Gorgerat of the Antikenmuseum Basel was field director.

We would like to thank the Director General of the Department of Antiquities, Dr Fawwaz al-Khraysheh, for his support and for granting the working permit (Permit No. 2010/12). We would also like to thank IFPO 'Amman, especially its director Dr Jacques Seigne, and GPI 'Amman, especially its director Dr Jutta Haeser for accommodating the team during its stay in 'Amman. In Petra we were kindly supported by Dr Emad Hijazeen, Commissioner of the Petra Archaeological Park & Cultural Heritage and Tahani Salhi, Director of Cultural Resources.

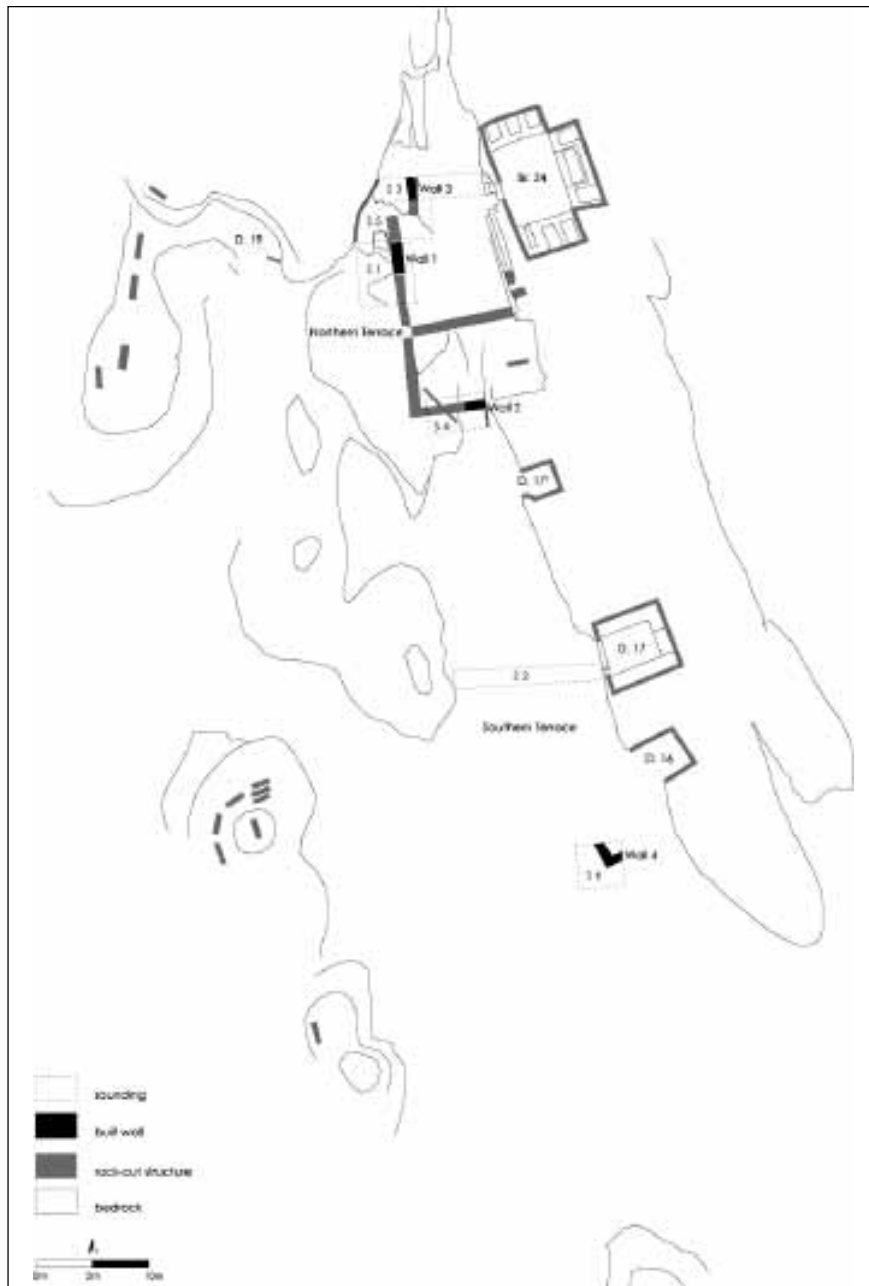
The team from Germany consisted of the following archaeologists and students: Karin Petrovsky, Marco Dehner, Thomas Kabs (all from Berlin), and Wiltrud Wenning (Muenster). Up to nine Bdool workmen were employed. The Department of Antiquities representative was Mohammad Abdel Aziz al-Marahleh, whose help and advice was most welcomed. During the team's sojourn at Nazzal's Camp, Ali Khalaf al-Bdool was our camp manager and Suleiman Mohammad al-Bdool and his wife Aziza were our cooks.

The Geographical Situation

The Aşlah-triclinium-complex is situated on a rocky plateau of the Bāb as-Siq area directly opposite of the entrance into the Siq lying high above the path along the Wādī Mūsā, which leads into the Siq (**Fig. 1**). A small, but long stretched rock oriented north-south formed the boundary of the complex to the east and a much higher rock closed the area in the north (**Fig. 2**). Between the two rocks a path leads to the large rocky area of ar-Ramla in the north. The southern part of the long stretched rock looks more or less semicircular in shape if seen from the west (Wenning 2004: 44-45), which could have been of some significance. We defined the area in front of the triclinium as the Southern Terrace, while the area in front of the tomb Br. 24 was called the Northern Terrace.

At the Southern Terrace, the triclinium of Aşlah (D. 17), two small lateral chambers (D. 16, 17') and a row of niches (D. 15) are cut into the rock, while the eastern face and the top of the rock remained without installations. The façade faces the large plateau in front of the rock and is orientated towards the entrance of the Siq. From the Siq entrance itself only the upper part of the rock is visible. Nevertheless, this orientation seems to be intended. The rock façade itself is divided into irregular layers, which are either curved in shape or drop down diagonally. No artificial smoothing of the rock nor channels protect the façade or the triclinium against rainwater, but it probably did not cause as much damage as on steeper rock cliffs.

The rocks and the plateaus of the Aşlah-triclinium-complex are part of the massive and white weathered Disi sandstone of the Lower Ordovician with the rounded hillocks, typical for the eastern parts of Petra (Rababeh 2005: 33-



1. Bāb as-Sīq. General plan of the Aṣḥaṭ triclinium-complex (M. Dehner, L. Gorgerat).



2. Bāb as-Sīq. The Aṣḥaṭ triclinium-complex from the west (L. Gorgerat).

39). The smoothed surface seems to be dense in material and is of a greyish white colour. Below the hard surface, however, the stone can be quite friable.

In the northern part of the rock Tomb Br. 24 is cut. On the rock face in front of the tomb traces of an architectural structure are still visible. The structure occupied the larger part of the plateau on the Northern Terrace and its construction was facilitated by deep right-angles cut into the rock. In a shallow rocky depression to the west of the plateau a cistern (D. 19) is situated.

The western border of the Aşlah-triclinium-complex is formed by several low hillocks with a total of 53 rock-cut pit graves and shaft graves (D. 21). They are orientated towards the path running along the Wādī Mūsā into the Siq and are clearly visible from the road. It is also possible that they had a relationship with the triclinium-complex. The plateau slopes to the south towards the path, where two aqueducts from the 'Ayn Mūsā can be seen somewhat higher at the slope.

Southern Terrace (The Triclinium of Aşlah D. 17)

Previous Analysis

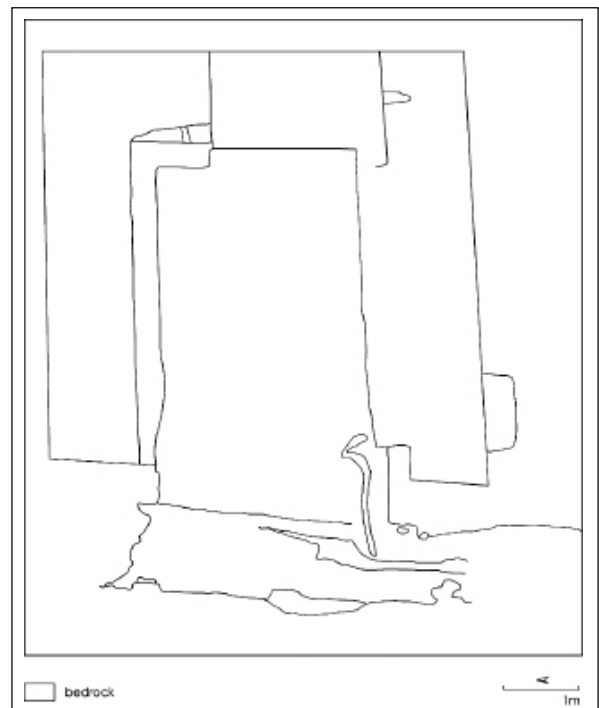
Brünnow-von Domaszewski were the first to list the monuments of the Aşlah-triclinium-complex in 1904 (Brünnow-von Domaszewski 1904: 199, 203 nos. 19-28 with map pl. III; cf. Markoe 2003: fig. 142 for a more precise map from 1999), followed by Dalman in 1908 (Dalman 1908: 107 nos. 15-21 and 1912: 40). In 1990/91 Zayadine and Farajat cleaned the triclinium and studied the complex (Zayadine-Farajat 1991: 275). Furthermore, Merklein attempted some interpretation of the area in 1995 (Merklein 1995: 109-115, but cf. Kühn 2005: 70-73). In 1997, Merklein and Wenning studied the complex again as part of their "Petra Niches Project (PNP)" (cf. the sketch in Kühn 2005: fig. 8). The first thorough study of the Aşlah-triclinium-complex, however, is currently done by the IAP. Wenning (forthcoming) gave a paper on the historiography of the complex at the 11th International Conference on the History and Archaeology of Jordan in Paris 2010.

After the cleaning of the triclinium by Fawzi Zayadine and Suleiman Farajat in 1990/91, it took not much effort to clean the room once

again. We measured and documented the room in full detail including ancient and more recent alterations, due to intense secondary use by the B'dool in the past and present (**Fig. 3**). None of the older plans of the triclinium proved to be correct (Dalman 1912: fig. 34; McKenzie 1990: pl. 167d; Zayadine and Farajat 1991: 277, fig. 2).

The Aşlah-Inscription

The triclinium constitutes the most important structure of the Southern Terrace as can be deduced from the Nabataean inscription cut high into the back wall (**Fig. 4**). We are dealing with at least two inscriptions as line 1 is to be separated from lines 2-4. The latter is a dedicatory inscription: "Aşlah, the son of Aşlah, made this rock-cut chamber for Dušara, the god of MNBTW (or MNKTW), for the life of Obodas, king of the Nabaṭū, the son of Aretas, king of the Nabaṭū, year 1." Following palaeographic analysis the Obodas mentioned in the text is in fact king Obodas I. He became king after about 96/100 BC and before 93/95. Therefore the inscription is often dated into the year 96/95 BC. It is stated that this is the oldest Nabataean inscription found in Petra so far. This was the main reason



3. Southern Terrace. Triclinium of Aşlah (Th. Kabs, L. Gorgerat).