

**AMERICAN EXPEDITION TO PETRA
A PRELIMINARY REPORT
1988 SEASON**

by
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The American Expedition to Petra arrived on-site at Petra on 16 June 1988 and began site lay-out on 17 June. Excavation, site planning, section drawing, and final close-out was completed on 30 July 1988.

Excavation at the Temple area was conducted in two new site locations (each 10 m. x 10 m.): **Site IV.9**, in the Northwest Complex of the residential quarters; and **Site V.9**, in the Southwest Complex; with an extension of **Site III.7** (1 m. x 10 m.); totalling 210 square meters opened this season.

Site IV.9 extended the 1985-1986 excavations, opening a new section of domestic and workshop rooms and completing the rooms of Site IV.6 previously opened.

A storage area was uncovered on the east side of the new sector, with a considerable quantity of stored pottery vessels found on the floor. These had been largely demolished by the A.D. 363 earthquake fall, but some could be reconstructed either physically, or by drawing.

The majority of wares recovered were the common types previously encountered. Forms were likewise consistent with previously recovered domestic types, with the exception of a compound plate, in fine thin Nabataean red ware, with black painted floral decoration, resembling a modern candlestick (RI #52), a new jar form, resembling the knob-based Rhodian wine jar type (although with a deeply turned base within the "knob") (RI #108), and a green-glazed bisque ware pot (RI #66). Other forms included typical Nabataean lamps (RI #10, #26, #39, #40, #41, #60, #64); cups (RI #44, #45, #53, #54, #55); plates (RI #56, #64); bowls (RI #9, #13, #18, #28, #65, #77); a jar (RI #32); a jar top (RI #69); a jug (RI #57); juglets (RI #34, #35); and unguentaria (RI #24, #25, #30, #31, #36, #37, #38, #93). Two ceramic figurine fragments were also found

(RI #8, #17).

Stone objects included pounders, grinders, rubbing stones and bowl fragments (RI #16, #20, #27, #46, #86, #102, #106, #105; #90); a mortar (RI #71); a black basalt platter fragment (RI #23); and a whetstone (RI #14). Most significant in this category, however, was the recovery of a series of altars/incense burners (RI #95, #99, #100, #104), ranging from a blank, through various stages of working, to a completed specimen. This workshop, therefore, brings to four the number of workshops recovered and identified in the Temple precincts thus far.

Metal objects were again of the domestic type, but more scant in numbers than previously encountered in the adjacent rooms in this sector of the Northwest Complex. A few plastering nails/fragments (RI #78, #94, #107) and a single copper fixture (RI #82) were the only metal artifacts, except for coins, recovered.

Among the smaller objects recovered were a bead (RI #12); the cup of an ivory spoon (RI #47); a badly weathered ostrakon (RI #42) similar to that recovered in 1985; and a faience amulet in the shape of a miniature horned altar (RI #59).

Site IV.9 (Figs. 1, 2, 3), produced eighteen coins, of which seven were illegible (RI #C8, #C10, #C13, #C14, #C17, #C25, #C29). Of the legible examples, four were coins of Aretas IV (RI #C11, #C12, #C16, #C28), three of Rab'al II (RI #C6, #C18, #C20, one of Antoninus Pius (RI #C9), and one of Lucinius (RI #C21), with two which appear to represent the Bostra mintage of Julia Mamea (RI #C15, #C27). The latter were unique among the coins previously encountered in the excavations.

The section of Site III.7 and the new area, Site V.9, at the western front of the Temple proper, were opened in order to relieve further the western baulk-side of

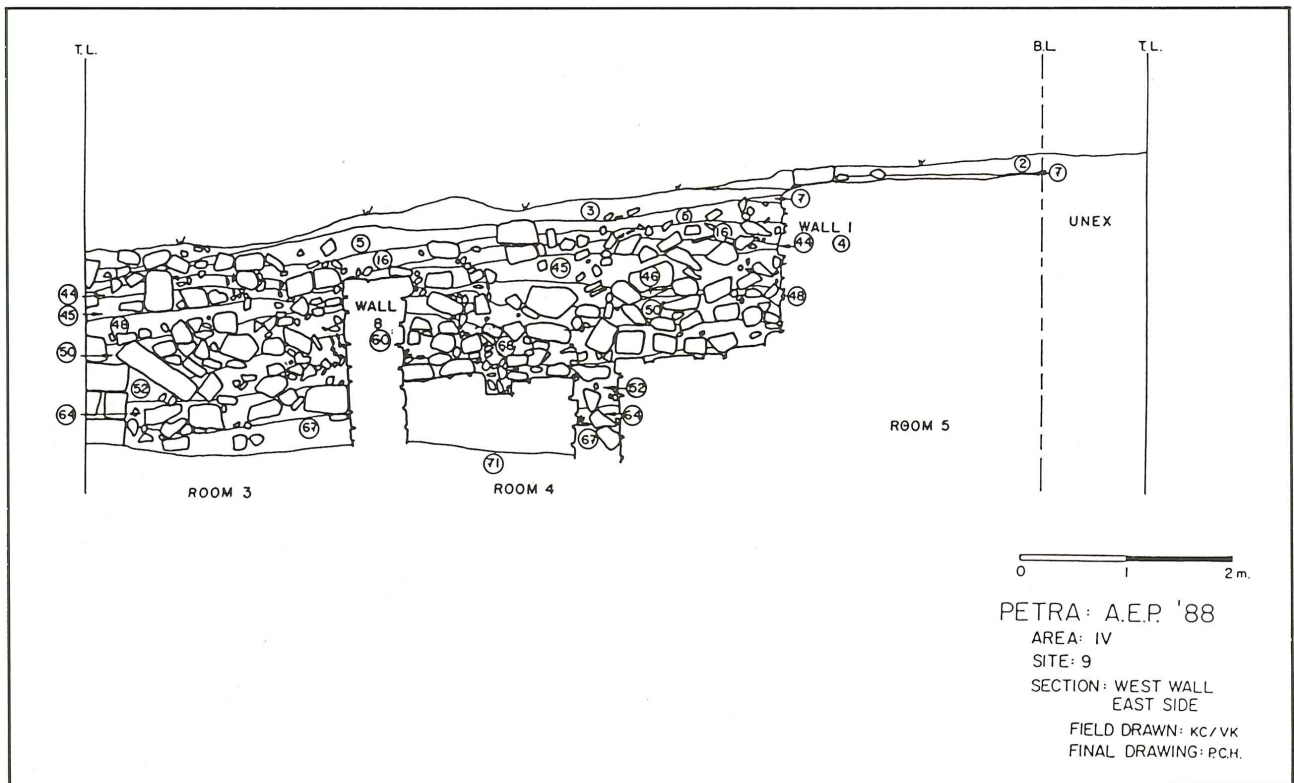


Fig. 1.

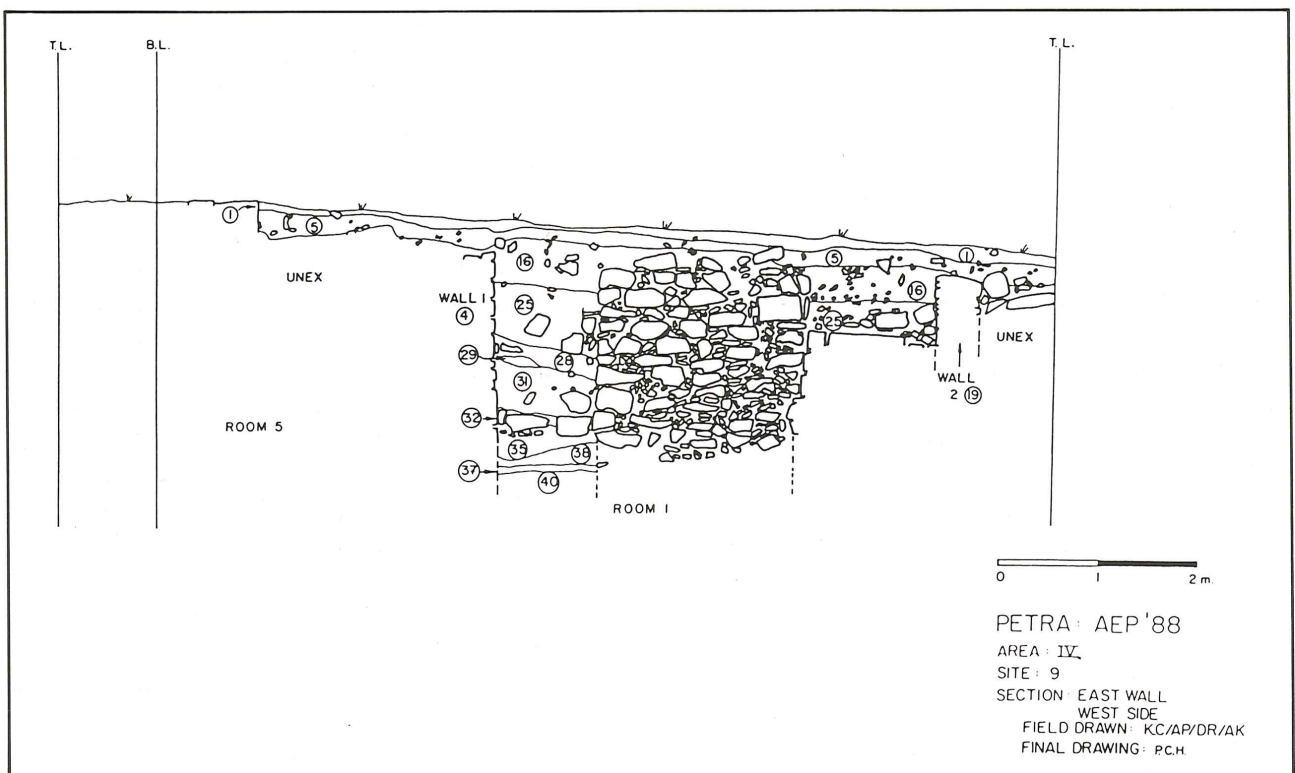


Fig. 2.

Site III.7, as a safety measure for future excavation of the supposed "liwan" room in that square, and to expose more of the Temple face area below the western stair-

way. Dump from earlier seasons was removed to the archaeological surface in these squares and excavation carried down through the debris of the A.D. 551 earth-

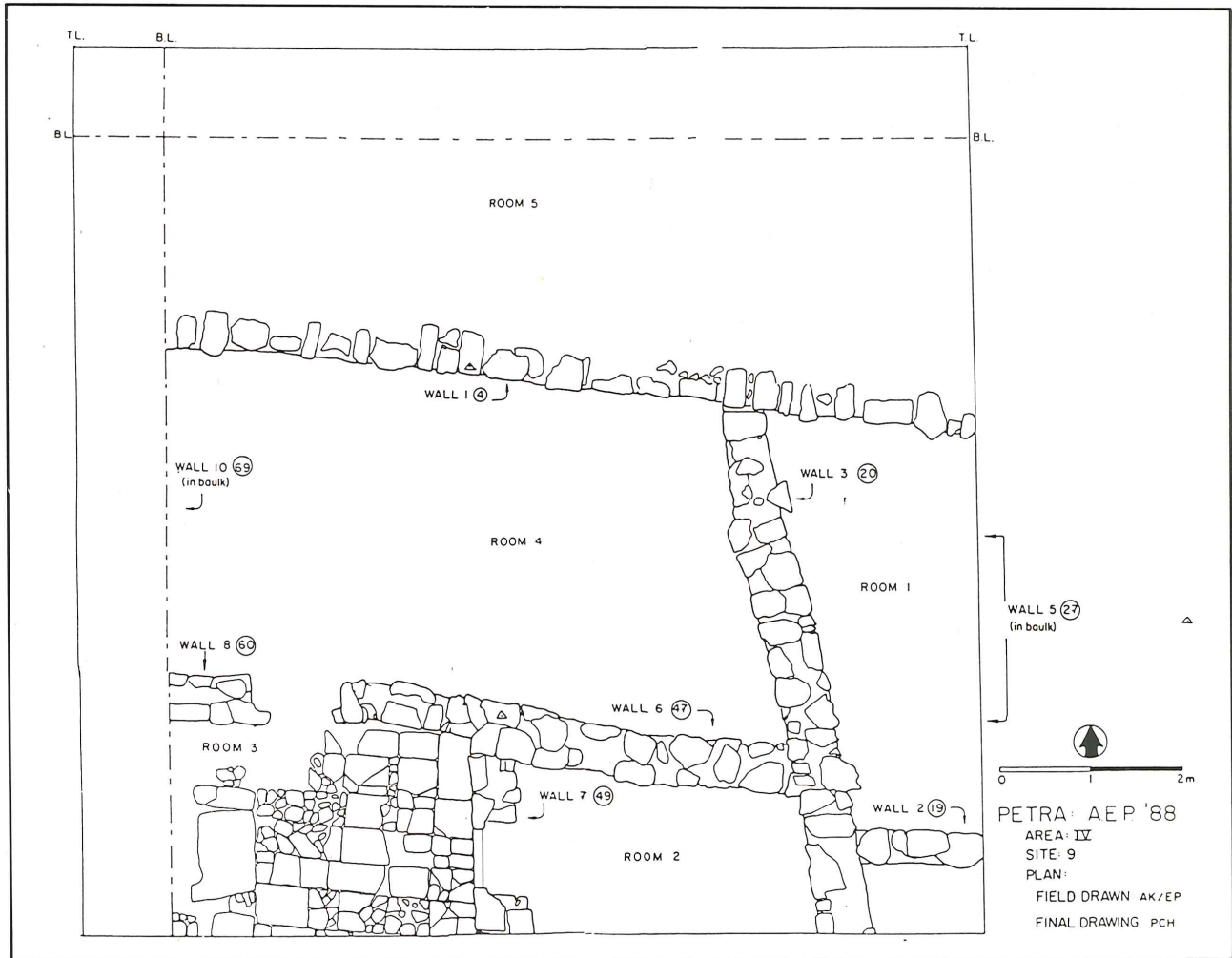


Fig. 3.

quake.

Because of the nature of this sector, little artifactual remains were recovered, with the exception of ashlar and some carved stone. However, the excavation revealed the continuation of a battered boulder-built retaining wall, continuing from the Site II.1/Site III.7 areas, westward. Whether this was faced with plants, or other covering, cannot be determined, since no plane surfaces exist and no fixture holes occurred in the boulder-build. This poses the same enigmatic question as did the badly weathered exposed bedrock below the Lower Porch of the Temple front previously uncovered.

The post-A.D. 551 debris produced a Nabataean lamp discus (RI #79); a copper fixture (RI #90); Nabataean figurine fragments (RI #89, #92, #81); a fine bronze cosmetic stick (RI #87); and a small mason's marking stone (RI #91). Most of

these artifacts, however, were probably washed down over the earthquake debris from higher up on the slope of the mound.

Site V.9 (Figs. 4, 5), produced eleven coins, of which seven were illegible (RI #C1, #C3, #C7, #C19, #C22, #C24, #C29), although one of this group (RI #C19) could be recognized as Roman, even if it could not be specifically identified. The legible examples included one possibly of Obodas III (RI #C5), three of Aretas IV (RI #C2, #C4, #C26), and one of L. Verus (RI #C23).

Architecturally, the season revealed new features in both Site IV.9 and Site V.9. In the latter area, the continuation of the frontal wall has already been noted above.

In Site IV.9, the continuation of Site IV.6, wall lines into the new square clarified the room arrangement in the Northwest Complex a bit further. The line of north-south Site IV.6 Wall #2 (6) entered Site

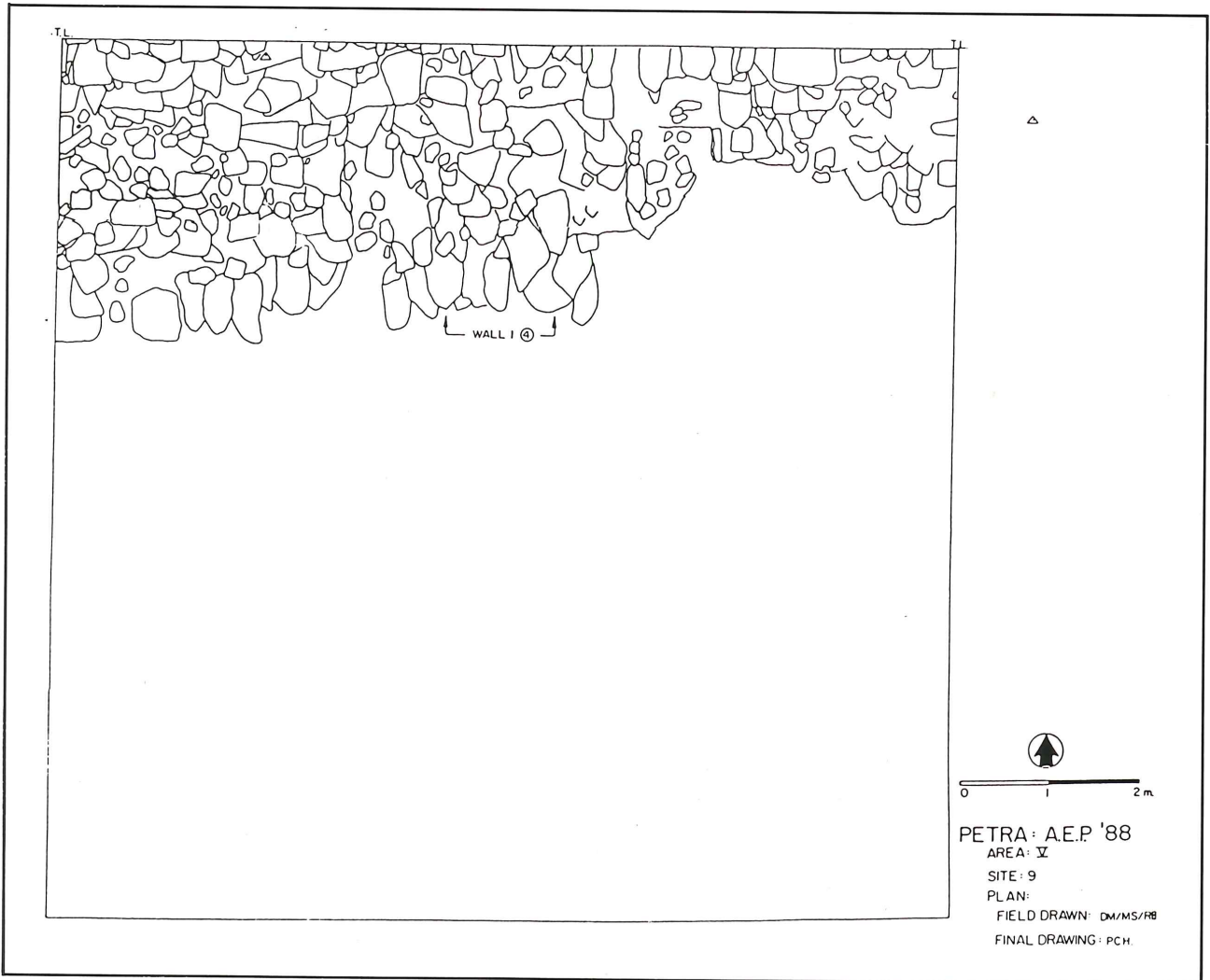


Fig. 4.

IV.9 on the southeast side, becoming Site IV.9 Wall #4 (21), forming a corner within the new square and turning to the east as Wall #2 (19), in good ashlar build. Behind Wall #2 (19) was a narrow storeroom, Room 1, in which the mass of stored pottery, noted above, was found. The western wall of this room, Wall #3 (20), was of rubble-build, in contrast to Wall #4 (21), however. The storeroom was bounded on the north by another well-laid ashlar wall, Wall #1 (4), running diagonally northwest/southeast across the square.

Wall #61 (35) from Site IV.6 entered Site IV.9 at mid-point, becoming Wall #7 (49). This completed Site IV.6, Room 5, as Site IV.9, Room 2. A doorway, with well-cut jambs, a threshold, and a recovered fallen lintel, allowed passage between Room 2 and an adjacent one, Room 3, the continuation of Site IV.6, Room 6,

to the west. Room 3, in its northern sector, was paved with large slabs, filled-in with smaller ones. Rooms 2 and 3 were defined, in the north, by Wall #6 (47) = Wall 8 (60), a rubble-built wall, joined on its eastern end to north-south Wall #3 (20). Wall #8 (60) had a doorway, with well-cut jambs, set-off by vertical outsets on the southern face on each side. A possible arch ran from this wall, north-south, to the protruding Wall #9 (62) in Room #3. This doorway connected Room 3 with Room 4 to the north. The latter room was floored with hardpacked earth, with ashlar blocks imbedded at various points. In the doorway, between Room 2 and Room 3, were found the altar/incense burner blocks, noted above, in the process of production; Room 3 would therefore appear to have been a workshop. The single completed example of this type of artifact was found resting

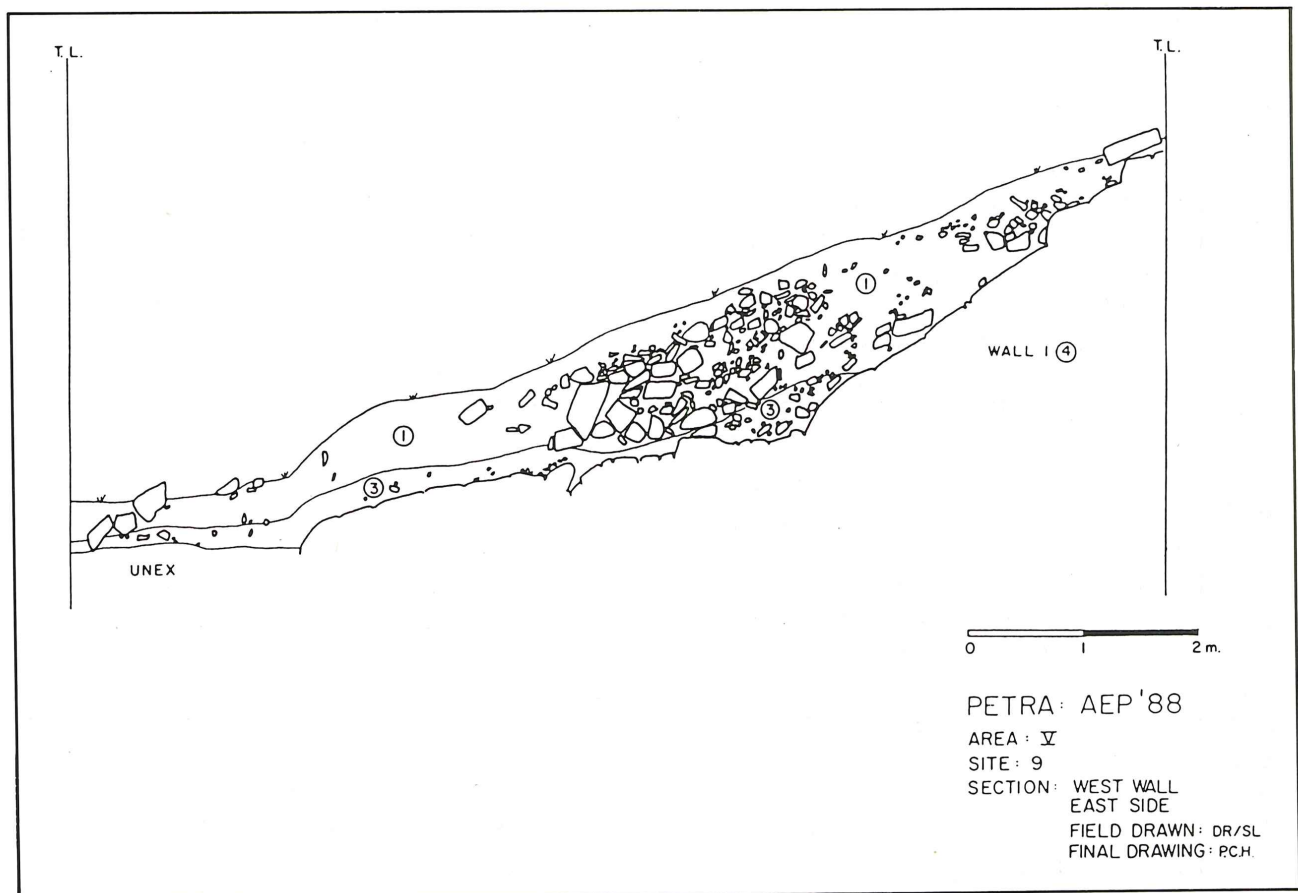


Fig. 5.

against the threshold of the eastern door of the paved southern Room 3. The western workshop area (Room 3 and Room 4) was defined in the north by the ashlar-built diagonally-running Wall 1 (4). It would appear, therefore, that subdivisions of larger rooms, bordered by the ashlar-built walls, took place, with rubble and possible left-over building materials from the Temple being used to form the interior subdivision walls.

Since the A.D. 551. earthquake fall rested upon the floor of all of these rooms, as in the case of Site IV.6 and Site II.4 rooms, their terminal-use date may be set at that point in time, also.

The season produced an additional 85 Stratigraphic Units, bringing the total S.U.'s now isolated in the course of the entire excavations to a total of 1,535. No change, however, as a result of this season, is seen in regard to the over-all stratigraphic picture of the Temple area and the cultural phasing (91 cultural phases), already identified in preparation for the

Final Report of the excavations.

The Expedition accomplished, in the forty-five days in the field, the basic research objectives planned for the season.

Additional plane survey activities were conducted in the course of the season, verifying the overall excavated area position along the UMTG grid, as laid out in 1973-74.

Core samples were taken of discarded architectural stone fragments unsuitable for any future reconstruction for further investigation of density and strength of the materials employed in the Temple construction, for the purpose of continuing technological and labour-investment research.

A total of 137 recovered artifactual items and samples were registered.

A total of 712 strata-characteristic ceramic forms, stone, and other artifacts were drawn for comparative study and for chronological ordering, as well as 35 Registered Items. All recovered sherds were photographed, prior to sampling for draw-

ing of the characteristic forms.

Acknowledgements

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The Expedition Staff was composed of Dr. Philip C. Hammond, Professor of Anthropology, the University of Utah, Director; Dr. David J. Johnson, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, Brigham Young University, Assistant to the Director; Amy Strand, Chief of Registration; Norman Stark, Geologist; Robin Acomb, Camp Manager; Stanford Acomb, Surveyor and Photographer; Keith Russell, Area Supervisor; Dr. Gerald W. Johnson, Professor of Civil and Mineral Engineering, the University of Minnesota and Evan Johnson, Video Documentary Photographers.

Participants in the Expedition were: Robert M. Bolzendahl, Debbie Reiss, Kay Sellers (University of Utah); Kathleen E. Callister, Angela M. Piereder, Michael F. Slaughter (Brigham Young University); Stephanie Daw, Petra Duffett, Stacy Lundgren, Valerie C. King, Alexandra Kincannon (St. John's College); Donald Mitchell, Eric Parker (Indiana University); Alyson Shotz, and Senator Hal and Mrs. Julianne Zimmerman. Mr. Suleiman Farajat, Inspector of Petra, was the Representative of the Department of Antiquities to the Expedition.

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