



Khirbat al-Batravi

Project Name: Urban Origins in the Wadi az- Zarqa

Duration: May 14th and June 11th 2006

Number of workmen: 22 (plus 2 restorers)

Cost of Project: 10,700 JD

Sponsor: Rome University "La Sapienza", Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Director: Prof. Lorenzo Nigro

Representative: Mr. Romel Ghraib

The second season of excavations at Khirbat al-Batravi (Lat. 32°05',218" N, Long. 36°04',237" E), an prominent Early Bronze Age site in the Upper Wadi az-Zarqa, was carried out under the auspices of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan and in cooperation with Queen Rania's Institute of Tourism and Cultural Heritage of the Hashemite University of Zarqa, with the aim of further investigating the site history and topography, of clarifying its periodisation, and of restoring part of the impressive city-wall of the Early Bronze Age already brought to light in the first season.

Excavations were carried out in the two areas already investigated in the first season (Area A, on the Acropolis, Area B, on the northern fortification) and in three new areas located in different spots of the site (Area D, at the south-western corner of the hill; Area E, at the mid of the its southern side; Area F, on the eastern plateau).

Area A – the Acropolis

Excavations on the Acropolis were focused in Area A West, where a large portion of the Early Bronze Age IV village had already been brought to light in year 2005. Here five new squares were opened adding at least four new houses to the previously known layout of the village. Underneath the EB IV occupation layers more substantial Early Bronze III structures were uncovered in a very bad state of preservation. Nonetheless, they testified to the earlier occupation of the Acropolis.

Area B – the City-Gate

Excavations at the mid of the northern line of fortifications were subdivided into two connected areas: Area B North outside the city-wall and Area B South inside the city-wall.



Fig .1 : General view of Area B North at the end of the 2006 excavation with the articulated fortification system which defended the town during the Early Bronze II-III. Three parallel lines of fortification walls were brought to light: W.105, the inner and major city-wall; W.155, the outer wall; and the reinforcing buttress w.165. In the middle of W.105 the city-gate L.160 has been excavated.



Fig .2 : The City-Gate L.160, from north.



The extension of Area B North (Fig.1) towards the west allowed the identification of the main city-gate, a simple passageway 1.4 m wide leading into a corridor, preceded by a step (Fig.2). The gate was blocked by a stone wall, which was removed in order to allow the restoration of this important monument preserved to a height of more than 2.2 m. Outside the city-wall a paved passage was connected to an outer gate, opening in a massive outer fortification wall made of large boulders (1.4-1.6 m thick), which ran parallel to the main city-wall. The exploration of this further structure continued towards the north and west, opening four more squares and discovering that a reinforcing buttress abutted on it, and that in that direction the state of preservation of the massive defensive system of the site was preserved to up to 3 m of elevation. The overall layout of the city-gate and its related structures from the one hand testifies to a very complex and well protected entrance to the city, from the other hand, illustrates the major constructive phases of the town. The town of Batrawy was founded in the Early Bronze II, with a single massive city-wall 3.5 m thick, and rebuilt in the Early Bronze IIIA, when the outer line of fortification was added, protected also by a series of bastions and towers.

In Area B South, inside the city-wall, underneath a very interesting portion of the Early Bronze Age IV village (with at least two superimposed structural phases of houses and installations), a huge public building was discovered, with a perimeter wall parallel to the city-wall and the main entrance just east of the city-gate. The building was in use during the Early Bronze III, with several transformations in the Early Bronze IIIB, when it was destroyed by a fierce fire (Fig.3). The excavation of the corridor inside the city-wall also allowed the identification of a staircase leading to the top of the city-wall, which suggests an elevation of around 10 m for the city-wall itself.

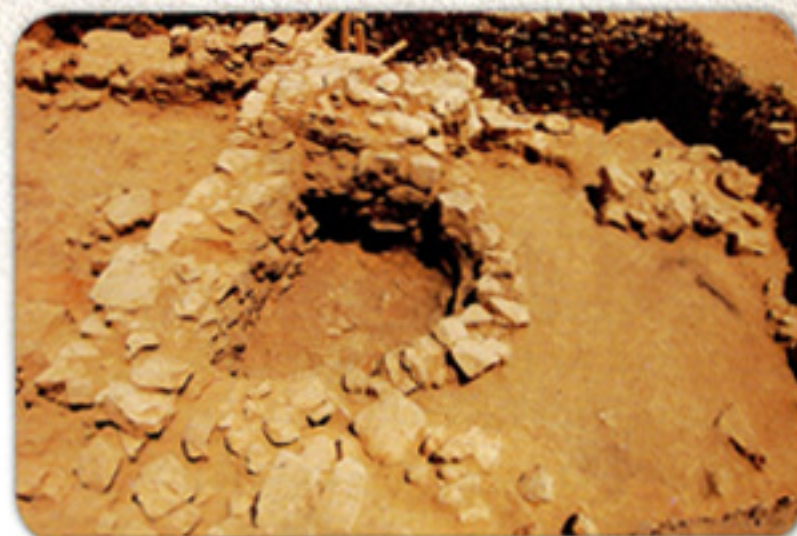


Fig .3 : Area B South, installation T.413, connected to the huge public building in use during the Early Bronze III, from south.

Area D – the south-western tower

A further area of excavation was opened in the south-western corner of the site, where a huge tower protected the town and controlled the underlying valley. The round shape of the tower has been outlined and the city-wall adjoining it has been brought partly to light. Different layers of occupation and destruction were excavated inside the city-wall, belonging to the whole period of occupation of the site (Early Bronze II-IV).

Area E – the southern fortification

A trench of two squares was opened in the middle of the southern line of fortifications, where a postern was identified, with a staircase leading into the city. The filling inside the city-wall was characterized by heavy traces of a violent destruction, which affected the town around the end of the Early Bronze III.

Area F – the easternmost plateau

An area of ten squares was opened on the easternmost plateau, where a substantial structure was visible on the ground. Sparse remains of Early Bronze IV dwellings were discovered in the uppermost layer, while a huge building, very badly preserved, occupied the area in the Early Bronze II-III. This building has a broad-room plan and a raised circular platform in front of it. This scanty evidence supports the hypothesis that this was a broad-room temple with a related raised platform (Fig. 4).

The second season of excavations at Khirbat al-Batrawi produced meaningful new evidence regarding the status of the town, which can definitely be described as an urban centre with a well-articulated defensive system and a series of public buildings inside it during the Early Bronze II and III. In the



meantime, the investigations demonstrated the existence of a sparse village on top of the ruins of the previous city, which provided a lot of information on daily life of its inhabitants. The discovery of the main city-gate, moreover, provided a basic key for the interpretation of the urban topography and an important monument to be included in the project of the future Archaeological Park. For this reason, intensive restoration works were undertaken rehabilitating the stretch of city-wall excavated in 2005, and restoration of the gate itself was started (Fig. 5).



Fig 4 : Area F:ten squares opened on the easternmost plateau



fig 5 : Restoration works undertaken during the 2006 season rehabilitating the stretch of the city-wall excavated in 2005