

Khirbat al-Batrawy

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The seventeenth season (2021) of archaeological excavations and restorations at Khirbet al-Batrawy was devoted to the continuation of the exploration of the Early Bronze Age III monumental buildings discovered on the northern side of the *khirbat*. Along the northern fortifications (area B north), a special focus was devoted to the investigation of the main inner city wall (MIW) and the outer wall (W.155) at their easternmost stretch. Inside the fortifications, excavations continued in the area of the Early Bronze Age III “Palace of the Copper Axes” (area B south), expanding the explored area of this building to the southeast. Before reaching the room stratum, another portion of the multi-layered Early Bronze Age IVB village was also excavated.

Area B North: The Northeastern City Wall

In area B north, a further 5 m stretch of the MIW and the parallel outer wall were brought to light, with a thickness north-south of about 12 m (Fig. 1). These structures were uncovered after the removal of the huge collapse layer related to the final destruction of the EB III city (F.1552).

Batrawy’s multiple city walls represent a unique summary of the city history, from its foundation on the eve of the 4th millennium BCE to its first destruction due to a tremendous earthquake around 2700 BCE, the following reconstruction during EB IIIA, then another destruction and final fire that destroyed the city in about 2300 BCE.

Area B Southeast: The “Palace of the Copper Axes,” Room L.976, and Courtyard L.936.

Excavation in squares BpII9+Bp/BqII9+BpII9/10 brought to light room L.976 and the southern part of courtyard L.936, identifying the southern wall (W.989) of the eastern pavilion, which runs west-east (Fig. 2). The extension of the excavation area allowed the clarification of the plan of the palace toward the east, with wall W.1187 separating the eastern pavilion (specifically inner court L.1046) and courtyard L.936. The two spaces were linked by a door (L.992), found blocked, which was opened through wall W.1187.

Excavations in the 2021 season allowed us to complete the investigation of a room with access from above (L.976), located at the southeastern corner of court L.1046, which possibly hosted a staircase. The room is delimited by a semicircular wall (W.969) to the north and two walls oriented north-south (W.973 to the west, and W.983 to the east). In the southwestern corner of courtyard L.936, two floors were distinguished. The uppermost floor is designated L.980, with a related preparation (F.987) made of pebbles and smashed bricks. A squared block (B.985),





Fig. 1. General view of the Early Bronze Age III multiple fortifications (area B north) and the “Palace of the Copper Axes” (area B south), from the east. (Photo courtesy of Rome “La Sapienza” Expedition to Palestine and Jordan.)



Fig. 2. General view of room L.976 and courtyard L.936 at the end of the 2021 season of excavations, from the southwest. (Photo courtesy of Rome “La Sapienza” Expedition to Palestine and Jordan.)

measuring 0.39 x 0.41 m, was found 1.40 m north of wall W.989 and is interpreted as a pillar base. After the excavation of a 25 cm-thick layer of destruction (F.988), the lower floor was reached (L.990), which was composed of a thick whitish plaster applied to the bedrock to level the difference in elevations. The upper floor (L.980) lies at 657.49 m asl, and the lower floor (L.990) at 656.97 m asl.

Conclusions

The seventeenth season (2021) at Khirbet al-Batrawy contributed to a deeper and more detailed knowledge of this ancient city of Jordan, of its monumental defensive system, and its inner layout, as well as of its history, economy and social organization in the Early Bronze Age II-III.

References

Nigro, L., E. Gallo, R. Gharib, F. Mura, M. Macri, and T. Rinaldi. 2020. "An Egyptian Green Schist Palette and an Amazonite Gemstone from the 'Palace Of The Copper Axes' at Batrawy, Jordan." *Vicino Oriente* 24: 1-26.