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with a Nabataean inscription. Although the inscription has not been closely dated, the stone indicates the epigraphic richness of the Khirbet es-Samra' cemetery, which contains tombstones inscribed in four different scripts: Greek, Syro-Palestinian Aramaic, Himaic, and Nabataean.

The 2011 excavations were carried out at site E (a 200 m² area with 26 tombs) and site A (a 175 m² area with 28 tombs). Of the 54 excavated tombs, only 4 were intact; 47 contained human bones, and at least 3 cases of multiple burials were noted. This part of the cemetery revealed diversity in the funerary practices with clear evidence of some wooden coffins.

With the conclusion of the 2011 season, 614 tombs have been excavated in the Khirbet es-Samra' cemetery. A wide range of objects from surface collection and excavation have also been retrieved. Although many objects are fragmentary, incomplete, or too fragile to restore, these objects reflect an abundance not reported from other similarly dated cemeteries in Jordan—and this despite having been looted a century ago.

KHIRBET AL-BATRAWY

Lorenzo Nigro, Rome “La Sapienza” University, reports:

The Early Bronze Age site of Khirbet al-Batrawy is in the Upper Wadi az-Zarqa at the northern periphery of the modern city of Zarqa. The Batrawy I–IV periods cover the time span from 3300 to 2000 B.C.E., and the architecture and material culture demonstrate a fortified Early Bronze Age city followed by an extensive rural village in the last quarter of the third millennium B.C.E.

The Palace of the Copper Axes (Palace B)

The 2010–2011 seasons were dedicated to the exploration of the large Palace B, which consists of two roughly symmetrical pavilions (Buildings B1 and B3) with an entrance or passage in the middle. Palace B was found buried under a thick layer of burnt debris from a violent fire that destroyed the EB IIIB city of Batrawy.

Both seasons focused entirely on the Western Pavilion (Building B3) of Palace B. A large hall (Pillared Hall L.1040) was discovered (fig. 6) with two main doors—one in the west wall and one in the south—both with steps made of yellowish mudbricks. Between the southwest corner and the west door, burnt traces of a wooden bench or shelf were visible. Two secondary blocked doors were located near the corners on the eastern side; a fifth door, which was approached

through a step in the emerging bedrock, opened at the eastern edge of the southern side of the hall, giving access to an elongated rectangular room (L.1120). Along the central east–west axis, four pillar bases of various shapes were arrayed on the edge of the bedrock step, which formed the flooring. Four round cup marks and a channel were also cut into this floor.

Numerous pottery vessels and other objects were buried in the destruction layer filling Pillared Hall (L.1040) (online fig. 26). Large storage jars and pithoi were aligned all around the walls in at least two rows; others (including a metallic pattern-combed jar) were grouped in the middle. Distinctive features of the pithoi were the wheelmade neck fixed on the coil-built body, the rope-like ridge hiding the junction, and a capacity ranging from 80 to 120 liters. Many big jars, pithoi, and holemouth jars were filled with carbonized seeds (up to a capacity of ca. 2 tons of barley); one pithos contained red ochre, while small vessels apparently contained liquids and ointments. The large vessels and jars were usually encircled by a series of small vessels. These included medium-sized jars, jugs, juglets, vats, miniature bowls, and beakers. The shoulders of some of the jars showed designs made with applied ceramic coils recalling Egyptian hieroglyphs. Next to the second door, a medium-sized jar was found with the plastic figure of a snake applied on the shoulder. Found in front of a door was a medium-sized jar incised on the shoulders with a herringbone motif separating two panels in which, respectively, a snake and a scorpion were represented.

In a *cachette* cut in the bedrock beside the second pillar, close to the grouped vessels, four copper axes were found (online fig. 27). One axe of the flag type with a square handle hole showed use marks on the blade. The three other axes were apparently not used, probably accomplishing a symbolic function as insignia of power. A fifth copper axe was recovered in Hall L.1110, which lies to the south. The discovery of the axes is particularly noteworthy, since copper axes from Early Bronze Age Jordan are rare.¹⁵

Excavation in a storeroom (L.1120) and another large hall (L.1110) recovered many more storage vessels and other ceramics, some of which seem to have come from an upper story. Against the western face of the eastern wall of Hall L.1110 is a bench with a seat or a niche and, underneath this installation, a jar containing about 600 beads of carnelian, bone, seashell, and rock crystal, which were strung on a copper wire. Eight medium-sized jars were arrayed east–west roughly at the

¹⁵Fewer than 30 pieces for both EB II and EB III are known in Palestine and Transjordan. Eleven EB III specimens exist, six of which derive from an uncertain context in Tell el-Hesi (Bliss 1894, 39, figs. 69, 73–7).

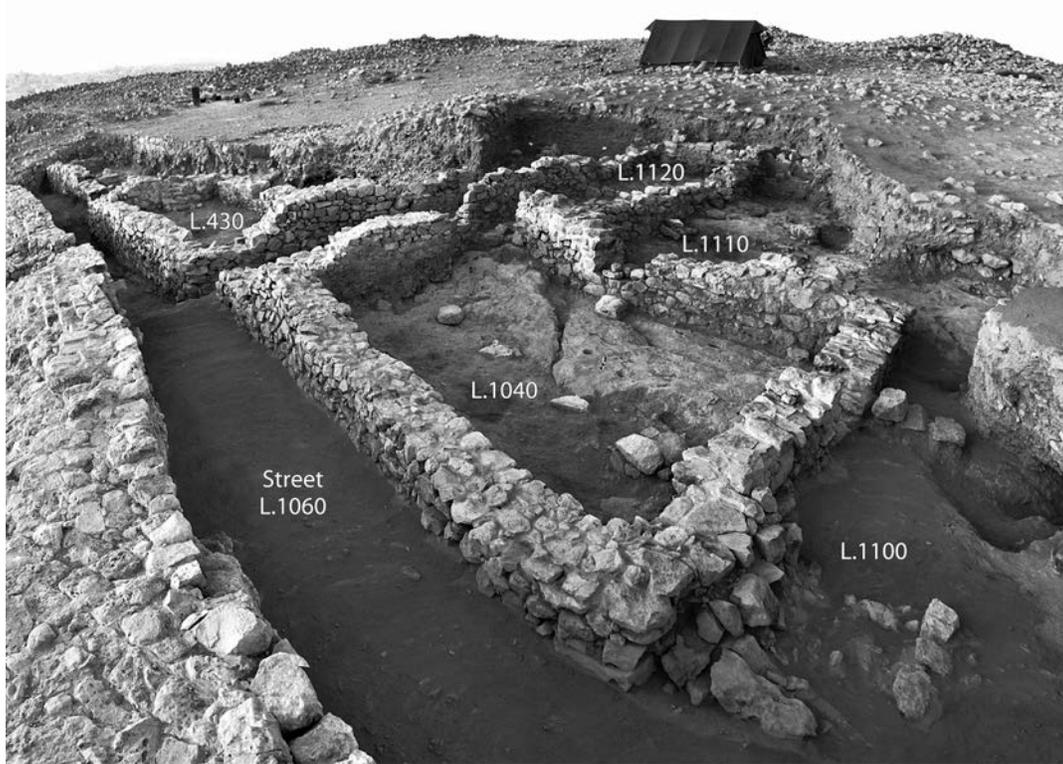


Fig. 6. Khirbet al-Batrawy, general view from the northeast of EB IIIB Palace B, erected inside the EB II–III Main Inner City Wall. Pillared Hall (L.1040) is visible in the foreground (M. Al-Bataineh).

middle of the hall, and one contained a bone ring and a group of seashells (for a necklace), while two others had small cups at their bases. Clusters of smashed jars and other vessels were uncovered around the central pillar, including an Egyptianizing lotus vase. The southern side of the room hosted a stone-built bench in a niche in the wall, with a pithos inside it. In the doorway, two jars were found with a small cylindrical cup or measurer. The fifth copper axe mentioned above was found in a bedrock cavity just inside one of the doors.

JNENEH

Khaled Douglas, Hashemite University, reports:

Jneneh is located in the northwestern periphery of the city of Zarqa and covers about 45 ha on a natural hill on the western bank of the Zarqa River. It is surrounded on three sides by gentle slopes; only the east side is protected by a sharp cliff rising from the Wadi az-Zarqa. The site was first discovered in 1993 during the Upper Wadi az-Zarqa survey conducted by Palumbo, and it was identified as a large open village.¹⁶

In 2011, a combined survey and excavation project by the Hashemite University and the Department of Antiquities of Jordan began at the site. The preliminary results of the intensive survey show that the site was occupied during two major phases—EB I and Iron II. During EB IV, the site was reoccupied in the form of a small seasonal camp, as indicated by a few pottery sherds on the surface. The goals of the subsequent first excavation campaign were (1) to explore the origin of urban culture in the Early Bronze Age in the Upper Wadi az-Zarqa by understanding the connection between Jneneh and the EB II–III fortified settlement of Khirbet al-Batrawy located 1.5 km east of Jneneh, across the Wadi az-Zarqa; and (2) to explain the nature of Iron Age culture north of Amman (or Ammon).

Excavations in the first season concentrated on the highest area (north side) of the site, where traces of buildings and fortification walls were still visible on the surface (fig. 7). Five areas, covering a total of 248 m², were excavated partially or completely; the work in the 2011 season focused on the latest occupational

¹⁶Palumbo et al. 1996, 388 (site JRS 45).