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The Curtain Wall in Banganarti : Results of Research in 2006

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THE CURTAIN WALL IN BANGANARTI

RESULTS OF REASERCH IN 2006

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Research on the curtain wall of Baganarti, started on 28 February and completed by 9 March 2006, had the objective of mapping the flat northeastern corner of the fortifications and determining the nature of settlement in the immediate vicinity (for the Baganarti site excavation report,

see above, B. Żurawski in this volume). The area was divided into three sectors [Fig. 1], covering a total length of about 100 m of the fortifications.

An arbitrary layer from 0.40 to 0.80 m deep was removed along the inside and outside face of the wall. This layer of

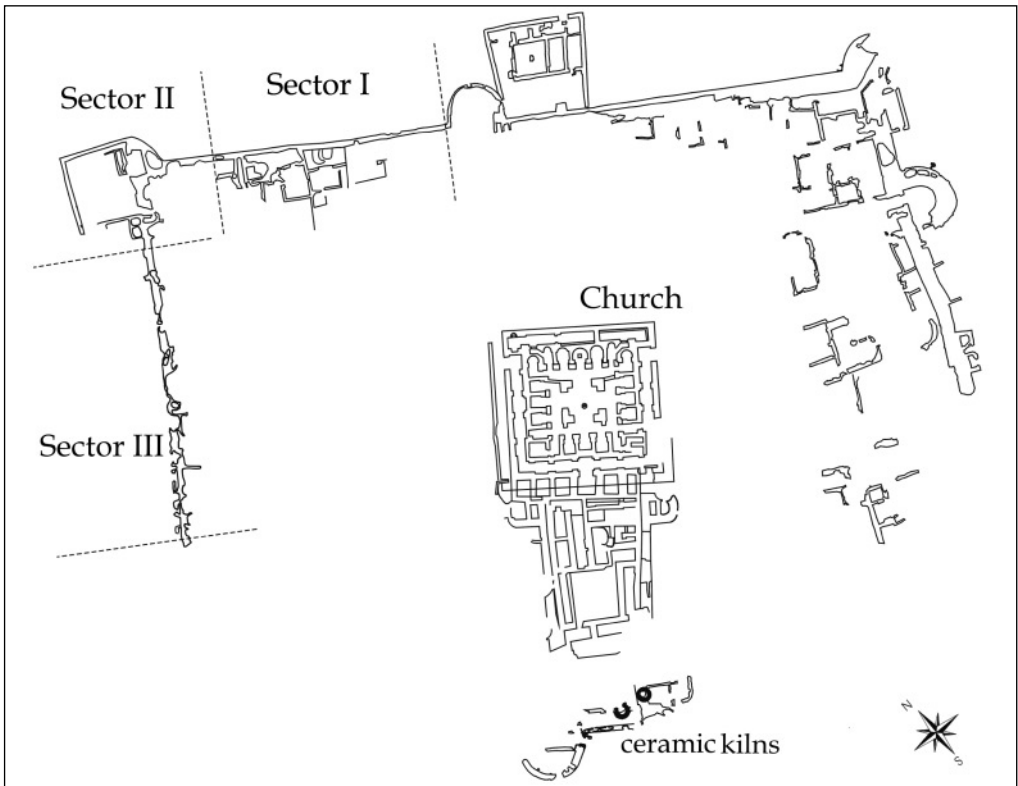


Fig. 1. The Baganarti fortifications, general plan after the 2006 season with sectors of research (Drawing R. Łopaciuk)

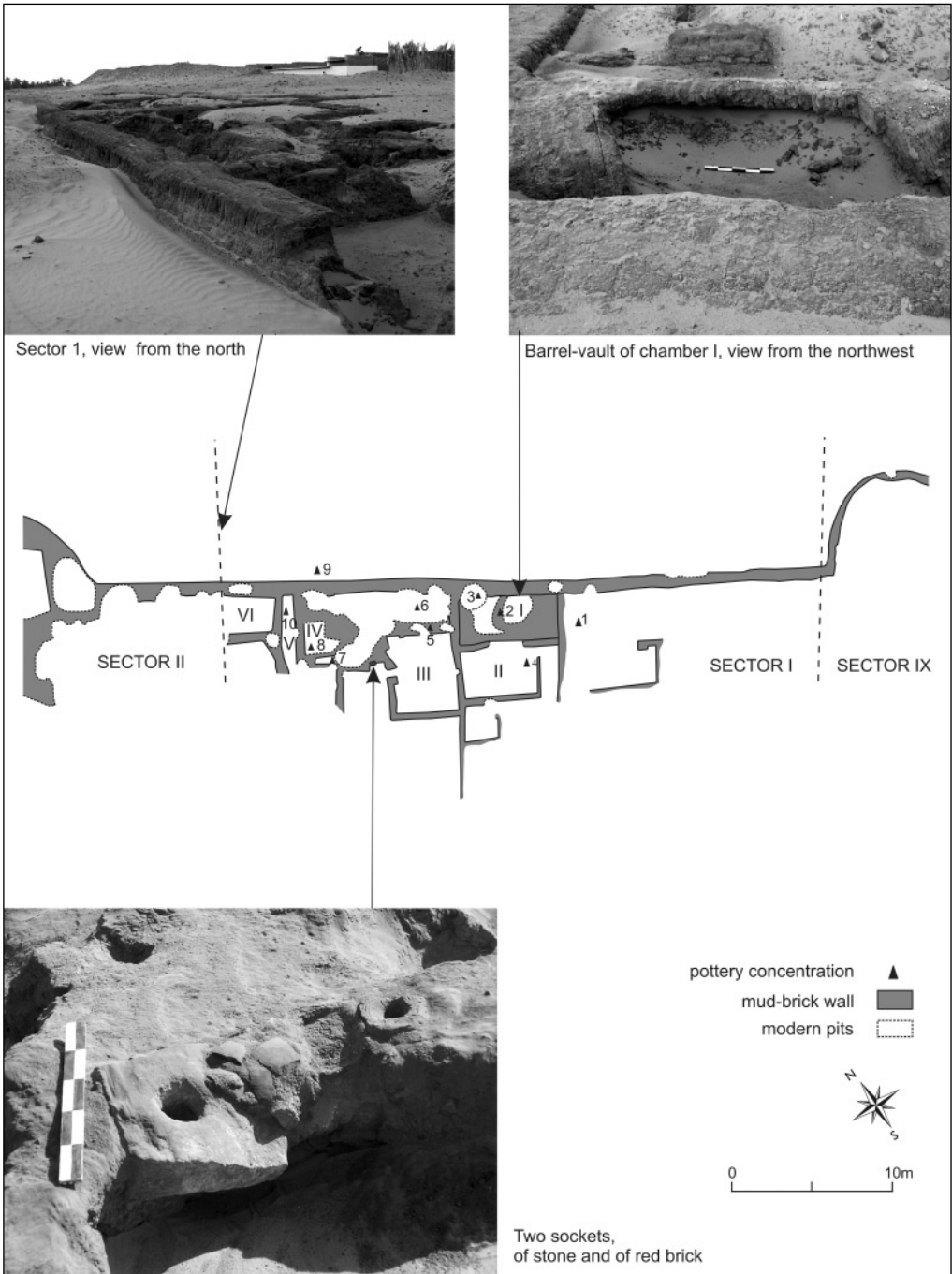


Fig. 2. Plan of the Banganarti curtain wall in Sector 1
 (Drawing and photos M. Drzewiecki)

drifted sand contained archaeological objects, but mostly not *in situ* because of displacement caused by numerous modern pits and atmospheric conditions. Ceramics constituted most of the material, but bones were also recorded, glass shards and stone elements like grinders, one damaged stone basin and one stone block coated with white plaster on one side. Jewelry in the form of a deposit of four carnelian and 15 rock crystal beads was also discovered (Inv.no. 06.15W-18W, *Fig. 3*, top left, see also *Fig. 10* on p. 392).

The fortifications were made in their entirety of mud brick. The outer face featured cross bondwork (course of stretchers – course of headers) with single courses of headers-on-end [*Fig. 3*]. The collected ceramic material falls within a chronological range between the 11th and 14th century AD.

SECTOR 1

The sector covers 37 m of the curtain wall between the eastern and northeastern towers [*Fig. 2*]. In the southern part of the sector, the wall was traceable on the sand surface, the northern part was revealed only after excavations in the 2006 season. A network of chambers (I-VI) was uncovered on the inside of the wall, but no additional structures beyond it.

The wall was c. 0.80 m thick in this sector, unlike a section of the southern line of the fortifications excavated in previous seasons, which reached a width of up to 3.30 m (Wiewióra 2005: 265). This considerable difference in thickness can be explained by different construction techniques. The south wall was a monolithic structure, but the section of the fortifications in Sector I had a series of long chambers (I, IV and VI) erected presumably together with the curtain wall, the purpose of this being to strengthen the construc-

tion [*Fig. 2*, top right]. The advantage of this technique is saving on building material, while creating spaces for either storage or dwelling. However, excavations in 2006 brought no evidence of such “secondary” usage of these chambers.

The walls of the chambers ranged in thickness from 0.30 to 0.60 m. Entrances were recorded in the case of chambers II and III. The former was entered from a narrow corridor, which ran SW-NE, while the latter had a door in the northwest side; this entrance was 0.55 m wide and the flanking jambs were thickened at this point. A short distance from this door there was a secondary deposit of two sockets for a revolving door beam [*Fig. 2*, bottom left], a stone one for the bottom side and one of red brick for the top (the hollow for the beam being in both cases c. 0.10 m in diameter).

Establishing whether these chambers were all built at one time or not is hardly simple. Chambers I, IV and VI seem to have been constructed along with the curtain wall. Chamber III does not fit the pattern, as it now appears, which could possibly indicate that it came into existence at a later time. A tentative assumption is that it was raised partly on top of the ruins of chamber IV.

SECTOR 2

The sector includes the northeastern corner tower and a 7-m section of the curtain wall running toward the southeast (where it joins Sector 1) and a 5-m section running southwest (to Sector 3).

A rebuilding of the fortification related to a change of function from defensive to domestic was observed here. Originally, a round corner tower with a radius of c. 6.50 m was built at the corner of the fortifications, resembling in shape and wall thickness the southeastern tower. It was

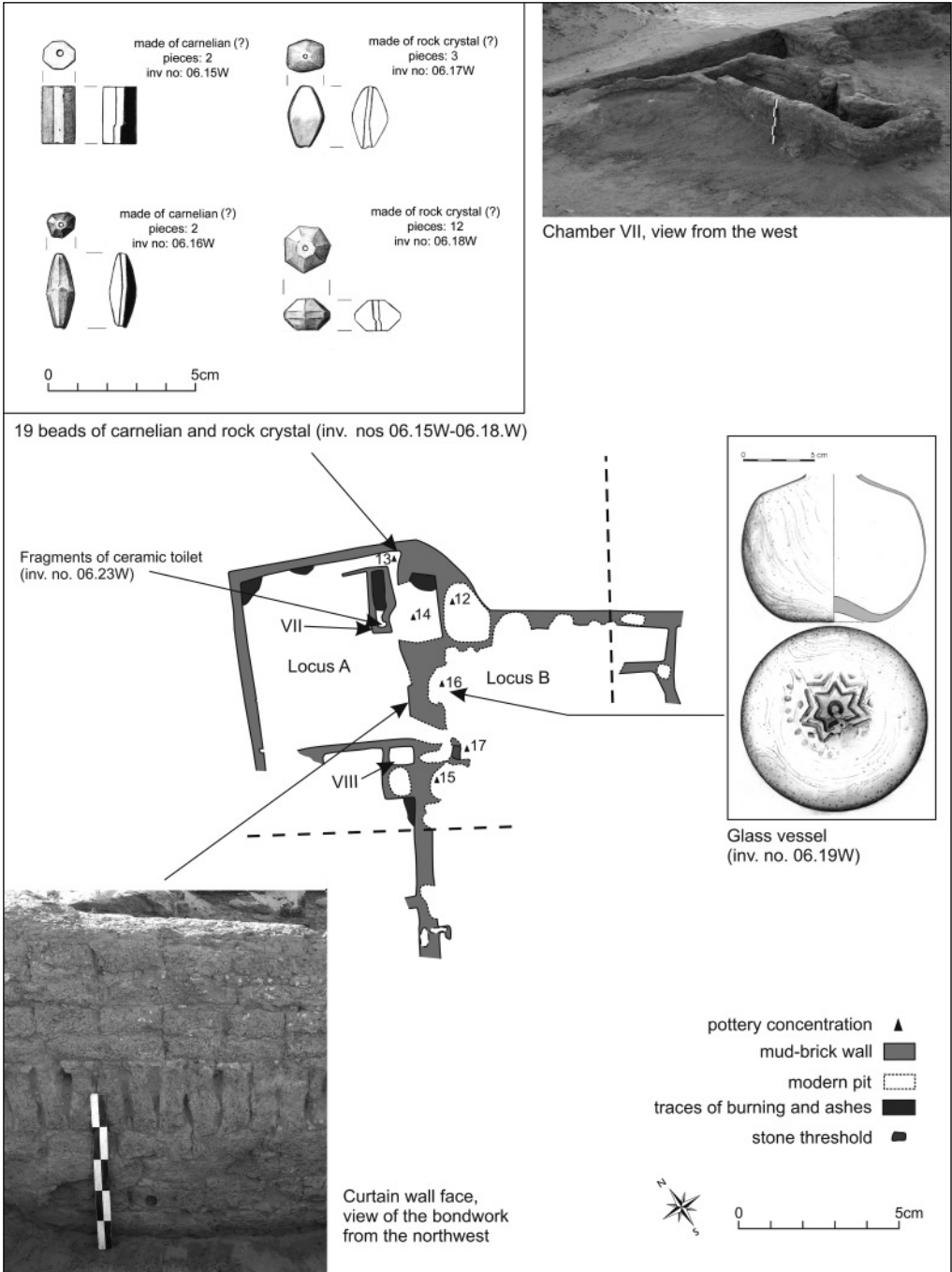


Fig. 3. Plan of the Banganarti curtain wall in Sector 2
(Drawing M. Momot; photos M. Drzewiecki)

then either damaged to some extent or partly dismantled. A wall 0.60 m thick was built onto the fortifications from the northwest, incorporating part of the tower and the curtain wall, to form a space of about 100 m² (locus A). Inside this unit an elongated chamber (VII; c. 3.50 by 1.20 m) was constructed [Fig. 3, top right]. A ceramic toilet (Inv.no. 06.23W) found in the top parts of the layer and a horizontal layering of ashes suggests the chamber's function as a *cloaca*. Numerous concentrations of burning and ashes were also noted inside locus A.

The bead necklace (see above) was discovered together with a small bowl in the eastern corner of locus A (findspot marked in the plan in Fig. 3). It is more likely to be connected with the functioning of the later unit rather than the earlier defensive phases, and it was quite probably hoarded in this spot.

The only fragment of glass from this area, a broken small bottle with ovoid body and long neck, and a monogram on the base [cf. Fig. 3, center right], was located in the vicinity of a concentration of pottery (no. 16).

An enigmatic structure was recorded between the southwestern wall of locus A and the outer face of the original curtain wall. This unit, designated as Chamber VIII, measured 1.40 by 1.10 m and had a wall c. 0.40 m thick. Another apparently similar room lay to the southwest, but at the level reached during excavations this year, it was destroyed by a modern pit. The function of these rooms has not been identified as yet.

A large concentration of pottery was discovered near a stone threshold block measuring 0.60 by 0.40 m, found *in situ*. However, the architecture could not be

identified because of the extensive modern burrowing in this area.

SECTOR 3

The sector encompasses 45 m of the wall between the northeastern tower (Sector 2) and the place where excavations were interrupted at the end of the 2006 season. There is no further surface evidence of the wall running to the southwest.

The sector is characterized by intensive modern digging, making it difficult on occasion to trace the course and determine the thickness of the fortifications. Single walls built onto the face of the curtain wall presumably belong to chambers once located here [Fig. 4].

The slightly curved line of the fortification in this sector could be construed as intentional, in analogy to the situation in the southern part of the site, where the curtain wall there has been observed to avoid a round chamber standing near the inner face of the fortifications. The thickness of the wall here appears to change, from c. 1 m at the northeastern end to c. 2 m at the southwestern end.

Near the northeastern end clearing work on the curtain wall brought to light a startling set of finds, which included a single block of stone with lime mortar on one side – blocks of this kind had not been found outside the central part of the kom before – a damaged stone basin measuring 0.60 by 0.30 m, also plastered on one side, and two fragments of a ceramic toilets (Inv.nos 06.21W-22W). These elements must have been brought here for some purpose, but the aim of this action remains in the sphere of conjecture.

Traces of settlement were noted along the wall in the form of burning and ashes in the southwestern part of the sector and

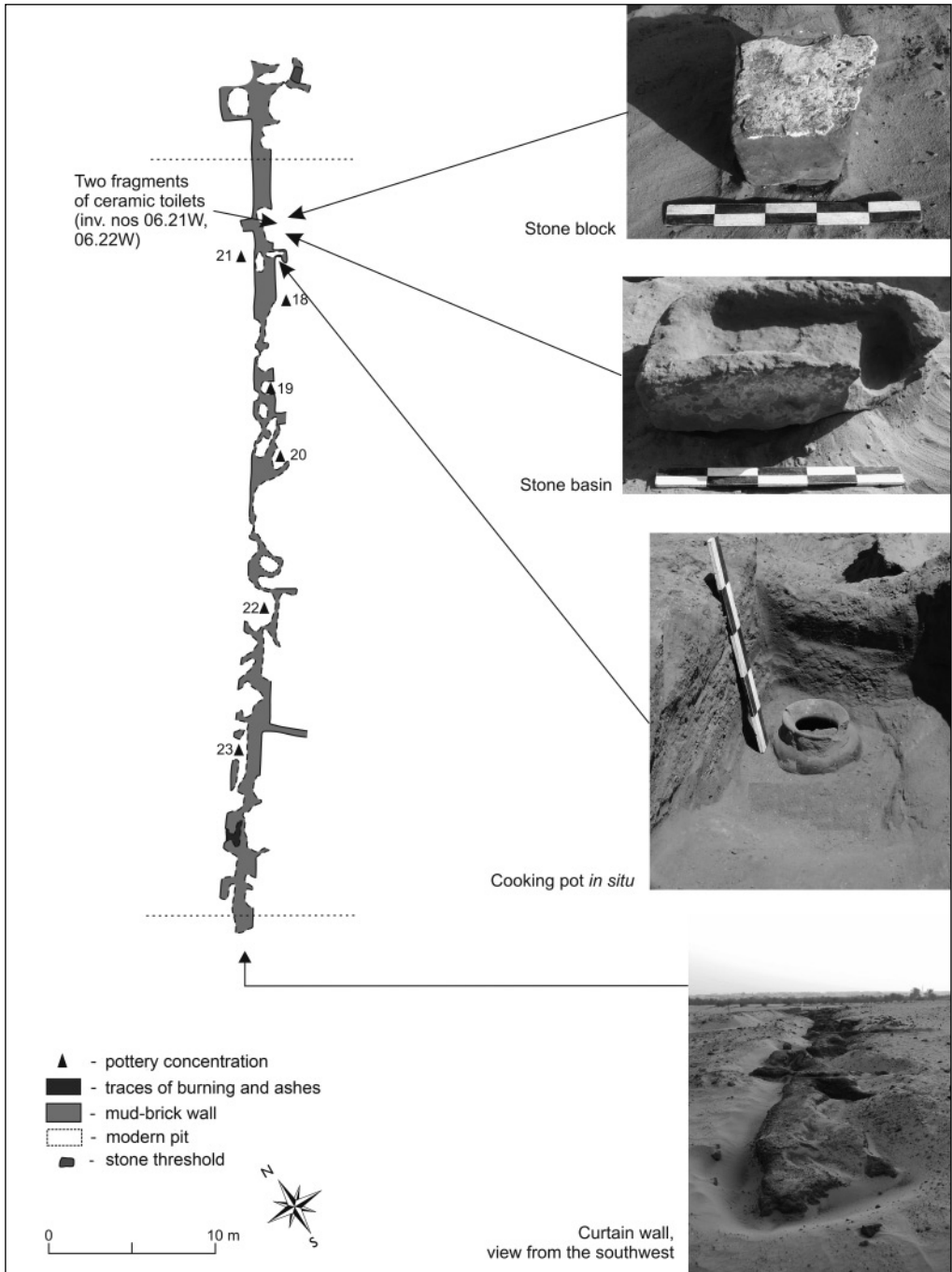


Fig. 4. Plan of the Banganarti curtain wall in Sector 3
 (Drawing and photos M. Drzewiecki)

a cooking pot still in place, sheltered from the elements in a crook of the curtain wall by its inner face [cf. *Fig. 4*].

CONCLUSION

The structure of the curtain wall in the three sectors covering the northeastern part of the fortifications has been severely damaged by digging for fertile soil and this hampers interpretation at the level to which they were cleared arbitrarily in the

2006 season. Yet they seem to be preserved much higher than in the case of the part of the fortification in the southeastern part of the site. The barrel vaults of chambers (I, IV, VI) in Sector I indicate a considerable thickness of occupational layers, reaching even a few meters in depth. Considering that most of the modern pits are no more than 0.80 m deep, it is likely that deep trenches will reveal in this area undisturbed stratigraphy down to bedrock.

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