

# Perspectives on MZ24 (2011 – V)

March 28, 2011 – Giorgio Buccellati

Briefly outlined below are the goals for the 2011 season at Tell Mozan. They reflect conclusions Marilyn, Iko and I have reached in planning for the season in consultation with the Number Ones of the various units and sectors. The first part deals with field work, the second with laboratory follow-up. It will be a rich season. Inshallah...

## 1. Excavations in general (Fig.1)

We will work in three major zones (for the concept of zone, see the website under RECORD > MZ SITEWIDE > MZ INTRODUCTION > INTRASITE FRAME > ZONES).

1. *The Temple Terrace (zones B and J)*. – A high priority is the clarification of the very significant architectural and stratigraphic evidence for LC3 at the base of the glacis (unit B8, continuing from old J3). At the same time, we want to clarify the organization of the sacred space fronting the revetment wall in the northwestern corner of the Plaza (unit J5).
2. *The service/residential area to the west of the Temple (zone A)*. – In contrast with the surprising continuity of use and function in the Temple Terrace and Plaza, the area immediately to the west underwent three radical transformations, from Palace in late 3<sup>rd</sup> Millennium, to residential area in the early 2<sup>nd</sup>, to service sector of the Temple in the very last century. We stopped reaching for the Palace with the goal of obtaining a wider exposure before doing so. We feel that we can now begin to reach for the Khabur levels (unit A18), while continuing with the Mittani levels in the north. (units A20, possibly developing into A21).
3. *The Outer City (zone OJ)*. – While we have in the past done a number of soundings in the Outer City, this will be the first time we undertake excavations aimed at obtaining a relatively large exposure at a spot where we have one of the highest elevations in the Outer City (hence the greater stratigraphic spread to virgin soil).

## 2. B8 – The LC3 strata in the south-central portion of the glacis (Figs.2-3)

*Number One: Jim Walker*

Unit J3 began along the revetment wall and the fronting Plaza, then it began to extend up into the glacis area. The new structure found in 2010 belongs entirely to the glacis area, hence we changed the nomenclature to refer to zone B. Specifically, the unit will be called B8.

Fig. 3 shows two possible footprints of the building of which we have only a corner. We do not of course know how far this extends, or what the state of conservation is. (We may assume that it is good, considering that the glacis slope up, presumably respecting the building.) It is interesting to note that the alignment of the building matches that of the J2 staircase (which is curiously not orthogonal to the revetment wall).

Two aspects are very significant. First, the elevation is more than 20 ms. above the ancient plain level, and some 3 ms. above the LC3 wall in J1. Second, we have a considerable stratigraphic spread within the limited exposure obtained so far: structure > accumulations presumably post-structure (they include a burial) > glacis.

The presence of a building may imply that within it (we assume we have the exterior SW corner) we may find accumulations on floors, with objects.

The wall sits on what appears to be a foundation platform. We need to determine how deeply founded it is, and what is the original floor that went with the structure. It is conceivable that we may succeed in exposing earlier strata below.

An important fact must be kept in mind as we set out to try and understand the nature and function of the building. The building is apparently on the edge of a steep edge of the Terrace (to judge from the differential elevation vis-à-vis the LC levels in J1), and, however large its footprint may be, it is set in what is presumably a level area that extends to the north. Rather than a peak, we seem to have a plateau at the top of the Terrace already in LC3 times.

### 3. J5 – The upslope of the Plaza in the north-west (Fig.4)

*Number One: Stefania Ermidoro*

The situation in J1 suggests that we have, at this juncture, the closure of the Plaza in LC3 times, and that in ED III times, too, there may have been an upslope going towards higher grounds in the north, along the western side of the temenos. We want to investigate this with three main goals in mind.

First. How does the stone escarpment relate to the revetment wall and, at its base, to the Plaza? Can we get a better date for it by looking at the deposit beneath it? We will do this by excavating the thick Mittani deposits to the south, to the level of the escarpment, and possibly probing below the edge of the stones.

Second. Bearing in mind the possibility that there may be early structures, we will aim to determine whether we have here an organization of space quite different from J1. We are approaching the residential area to the west, and we may have here an indication of what the edge of the Plaza looked like.

Third. From the current situation in J1 and J5, and from the evidence of flooding in LC3 coming from higher up in J5 towards the Plaza in J1, we assume an upslope rising towards the northwest corner of the Plaza, gradually reaching the level of the Temple. If so, the continuation of the revetment wall should be high founded. We will probe this where we have the wall immediately below the late staircase and continuing to the north.

### 4. A20 – The late Mittani service center (Fig. 5)

*Number One: Yasmine Mahmoud.*

Excavations in A20 were aimed at expanding the exposure of what we have understood as the service sector of the Temple after the general shift to the west. A long wall running east-west suggested that we may have a more substantial building to the north, possibly administrative in nature. The brief excavations in 2010 were not conclusive in determining whether or not we do have such a building.

In 2011, we will have two major goals in this unit.

First. We want to probe deeper to see if we can resolve the unresolved issue of the long wall. In principle, we would like to reach the earliest Mittani level throughout the unit.

Second. We will expand the exposure laterally to the north, in order to achieve, through such exposure, as much typological coherence for the architecture as possible.

Just as in A18 and A17, it is likely that the accumulations within the buildings may contain objects.

We may consider from the beginning the possibility of switching to a new unit designation (A21).

### 5. A18 – The Khabur layers above the Palace (Fig. 6)

*Number One: Lorenzo Crescioli.*

As we begin to expand the horizontal exposure of the lower levels, it is good to look at the overall situation in area AA. We exposed a fair amount of Khabur occupational levels, and at this point we will concentrate on the eastern portion of AA.

A16 straddled the Palace courtyard and the Khabur phase. A17-18 are split: the eastern portion is still Mittani, while in the western portion we have reached the later Khabur levels.

At this juncture, we have three options.

1. We continue the exposure of A17-18 to the presumed edge of the Palace, thereby exposing a larger area of the Mittani sector. This has the advantage of giving us a good overall view of presumed service quarter in the last period of Urkesh history.
2. We go down to late Khabur in the excavated Mittani portion of A17-18. This has the disadvantage of preventing the full exposure of Mittani, but it would give us a good exposure of the late phase that seems quite different from early Khabur: there are no burials, but a large open space, possibly linked to a presumed public building of which we only have a long wall in the south.
3. We go down to early Khabur in that portion of A17-18 where we have only reached the late levels. This has the disadvantage of preventing full exposure of either Mittani or late Khabur. It would presumably yield more burials like the ones in A16.

We must think this through well, and obviously reach a decision by the time we set to work.

An important consideration in terms of site presentation: we should work towards obtaining a visually very impressive sequence of the three phases, clearly articulated and visible from the southern vista point. The three main horizons (Palace, Khabur, Mittani) will be like three stages linked to a single high section running east west.

## 6. OJ1 – The first large exposure in the Outer City (Fig. 7)

*Number One: Caitlin Chavez.*

Over the years, there have been several excavations in the Outer City, all in response to requests by local farmers intending to dig wells or as a result of special surface finds (e.g., OB1). The most important was OH2, under the direction of J. Walker in 1998, which also resulted in the first CD in UGR format. Excavations in OJ1 will be, however, the first time we undertake a large scale exposure of any given area. OJ1 was a very limited probe in 2010; we may continue as OJ1 or switch to OJ2 depending on where exactly excavations will be located.

In preparation for future excavations for the sewer trenches in Mozan village, we will open a regular excavation in a piece of land we own in the village (we used to have a mud brick house that has completely disintegrated).

The village sits atop a small mound, and the opportunity of a relatively wide exposure, is particularly welcome. Elevation should be about 4 m above virgin soil, and this will give us a good insight into the stratigraphic sequence at this particular location. While the village, inasmuch as it is a small tell of its own, represents a unique situation in the Outer City, it will nevertheless be very instructive with regard to the Outer City as a whole.

There is an outside chance that we may have here the ancient quay. There is evidence of an ancient river or wadi running through the Outer City between the modern village and the High Mound. If so, it is plausible that there should have been some installations where rafts and possibly small boats might dock.

## 7. The volumetry of the Palace

*Iko Buccellati.*

Work will continue on the architectural and conservation record of the Palace.

## 8. Architectural rendering of Temple Terrace

*Patrizia Camatta.*

There will be a short study period to complete the architectural record of the Temple Terrace.

## 9. Conservation and site presentation

*Giorgio Buccellati.*

Two grant proposals are pending for continuing both projects. They entail, among other things, a working visit by a professional conservation architect; continuation of the monitoring record; continuation of the revised system of conservation in the Palace; expansion of the signage system. *Elizabeth Drolet* will take over from *Stefania Ermidoro*.

## 10. Survey in the area of the Park

*Hans Barnard.*

A preliminary survey is planned for September, aimed at defining the strategy, identifying sites, assessing criteria of analysis (e.g., for ceramics)

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## 11. Website and UGR

*Giorgio Buccellati.*

Fall and winter has seen much work on both, with mini study seasons in our homes in Beola and in Los Angeles. Work will also continue steadily during the spring. While there are, as yet, no quick guidelines on how to use the complex system, most of you have sufficient familiarity with the system to make it possible to review those sections that are of direct interest for the coming season. For now, Internet Explorer is still the browser of choice.

Please look also at PROJECT > RESERVED ACCESS. Here you will find several publications that are in press, as well as additional information of interest. The eLIBRARY will also be updated in the next few days, and you find there some articles published very recently.

If you do not have ID and password, please ask Jim. If you have any substantive questions or comments, I will be very interested to hear from you.

## 12. Ceramics

*Marilyn Kelly-Buccellati*

### **Goals During Excavations**

Analyze all important features excavated in 2011 after each feature has been completely excavated and after all joins have been made (see below).

One of the criteria for the choice of features to analyze will be density measurements (the number of sherds per cubic meter of the feature); therefore it will be important to calculate the cubic meters of any given feature so that density figures can be computed after the ceramic analysis when

we know how many and what types of ceramics were contained in the feature. For example in comparing overall density figures for A16 and J1 we have 60,411 total sherds from A16 and 37,551 total from J1. These can be compared on the basis of the overall cubic meters excavated.

Furthermore, if the density of certain types of features can be correlated across units, then some new types of questions can be addressed, such as the function of the feature and the intensity of its use.

### **New Procedures in Sherd Yard**

We need to check more carefully the pottery lots as they come in to make sure lots are tagged to correct feature; this should be done in the afternoon after sherds come into the Incoming Area every day.

When a feature has been completely excavated, we will evaluate it to determine if it should be analyzed immediately. If so, the first step will be to lay out all sherds from the feature to look for joins. Then we will wash and number all sherds from the feature before analysis. This will be done by a single person so that there are no mistakes in the P numbers.

In the analysis phase we will separate all sherds into large categories of jar rims, bowl rims, bases. Depending on her availability, *Sahar* could do this. She could also analyze the bases which are easy and then learn to do the rest slowly.

### **Post Excavation Goals**

Analyze sherds from Mittani strata in A17, A18, and A19. If time allows analyze sherds from remaining strata in these units.

## **13. Physical anthropology**

*Arwa Kharobi.*

*Arwa* is taking over from *Laura Ramos* as our physical anthropologist. Besides completing *Laura's* research on human remains already excavated, she will be on hand for the excavation of possible new burials (probable in B8 and A17-18).

## **14. Local Area Network**

*Massimo Maiocchi.*

We will revamp the system, with new computers for the various units.

We have also just received word that we will have an ADSL line at Mozan.

## **15. Coroplastics**

*Rick Hauser.*

The in depth analysis of animal figurines will be resumed for those we have in storage plus, of course, for any new items coming from the excavations.

## **16. Video clips**

*Rick Hauser.*

The integration of video clips in the website and more specifically in the UGR (see under MZ SITEWIDE > CONSTITUENTS > VIDEO CLIPS) is an important feature, that needs to be developed further. To this end, we need to improve on two grounds, and *Rick* will show us how.

First, the archaeologist should have a clearer idea of what can be filmed to document something for which a video is particularly suited. Second, the photographer must develop a special technique.

## 17. Plato and Giotto

*Bill Orrange, Kamiran Feisal.*

We have introduced a new local site for drawings, named Giotto. It is parallel to what Plato is for photographs. *Kamiran* and *Massimo* have been working on this during the year, and this summer we want to regularize fully the system, so that *Kamiran* can run the programs that produce the exogen files for the UnitBooks.

*Bill* has also been working during the year to complete the labeling of the VD folders that had not yet been processed. He will work closely with *Sahar*, and possibly with *Adib* who is planning to come back (as a surveyor as well).

A special effort has to be made to avoid errors in labeling photos. The major problem seems to have been the way in which object numbers were written – often not with sufficient clarity for the photo registrar.

## 18. ZSB – storage

*Jean Nijhowne*

Work will be completed on the regularization of the earlier inventory.

The processing of new data will also be followed with special care, in order to avoid errors. The running of the program that produces an exogen file for the UnitBooks will be part of this.

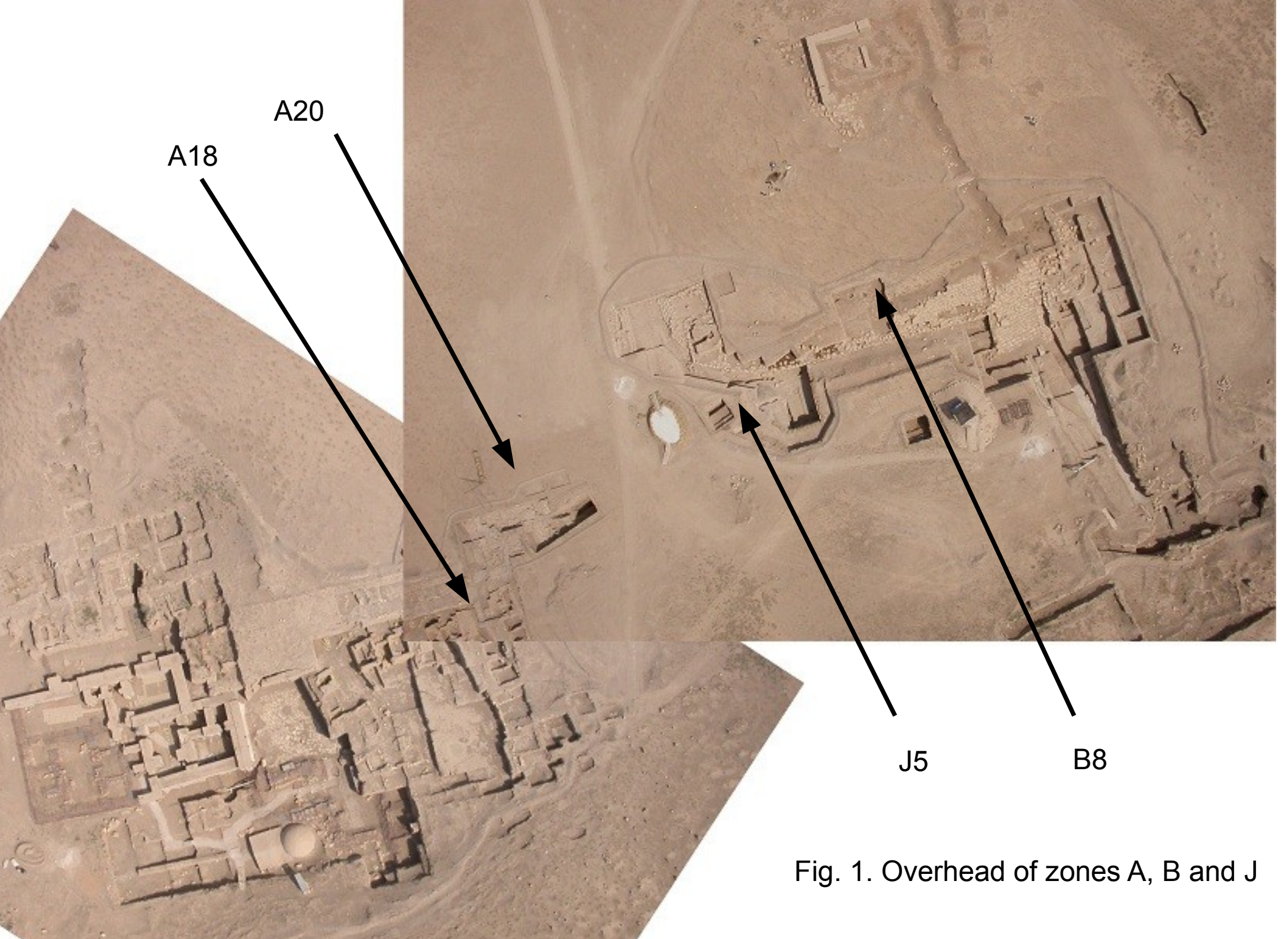
## 19. Pending

paleozoology

paleobotany

petrology and lithics

Park



A18

A20

J5

B8

Fig. 1. Overhead of zones A, B and J

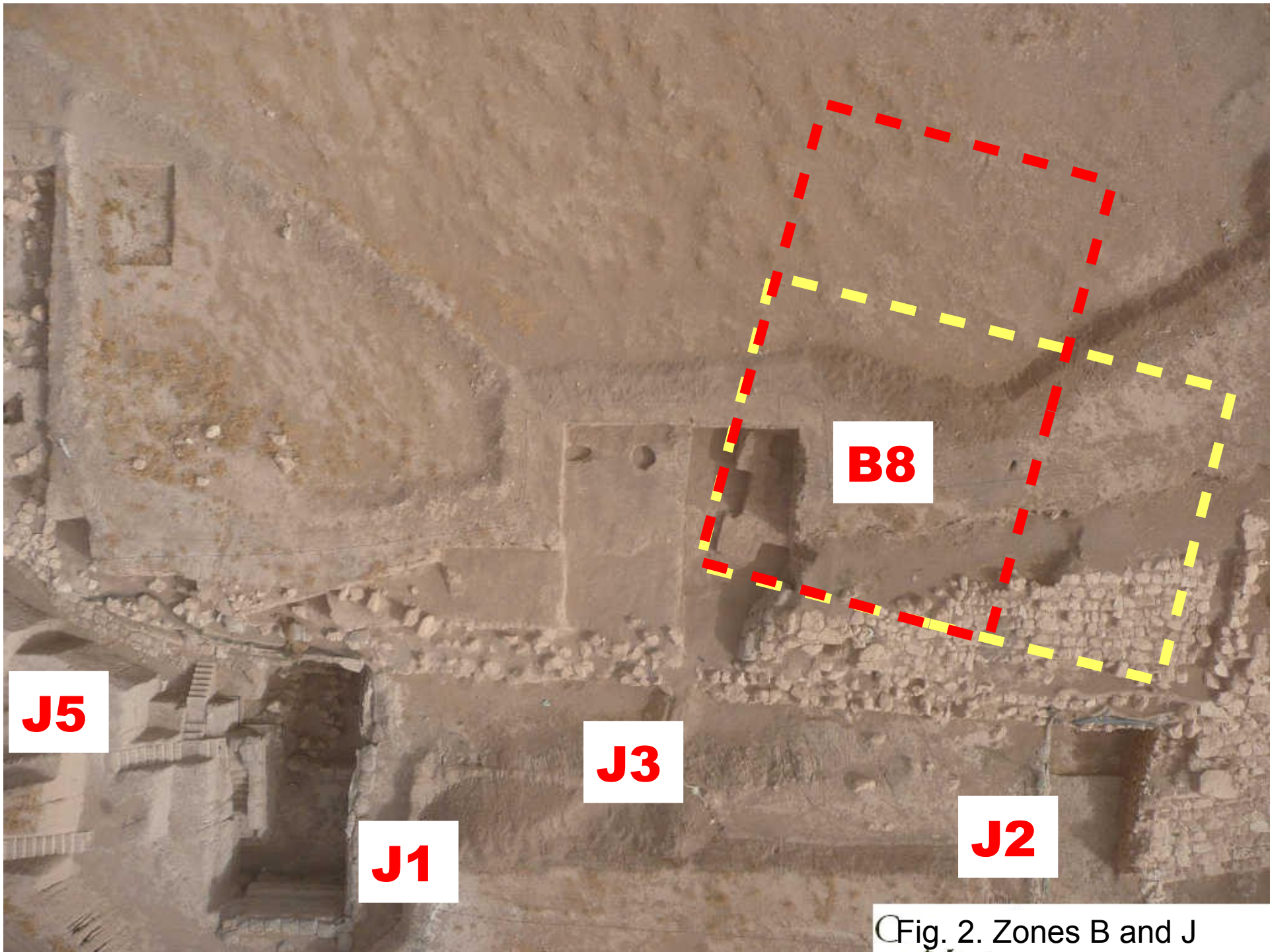


Fig. 2. Zones B and J



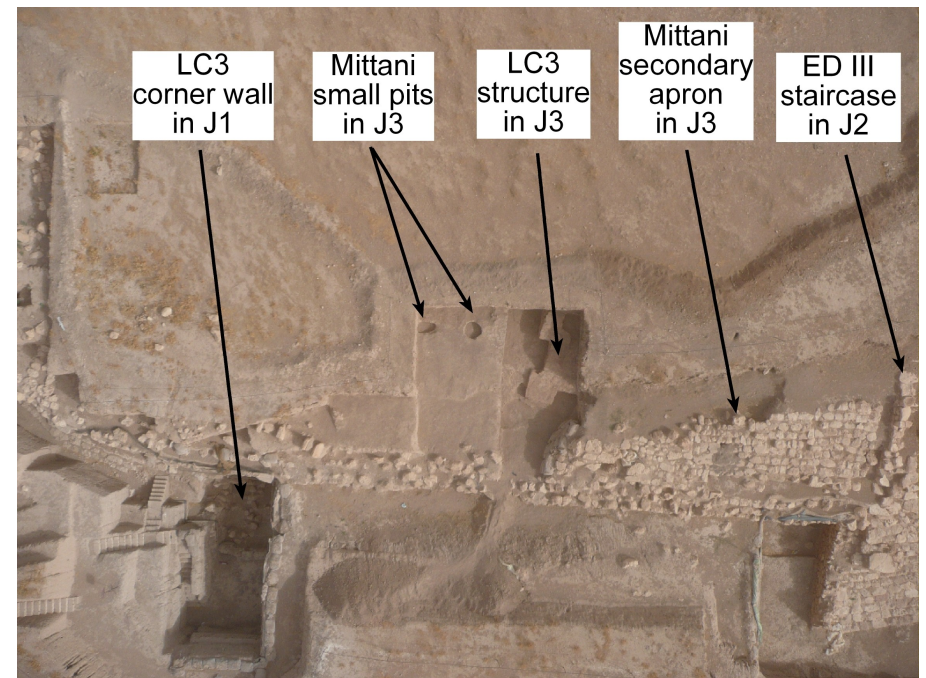
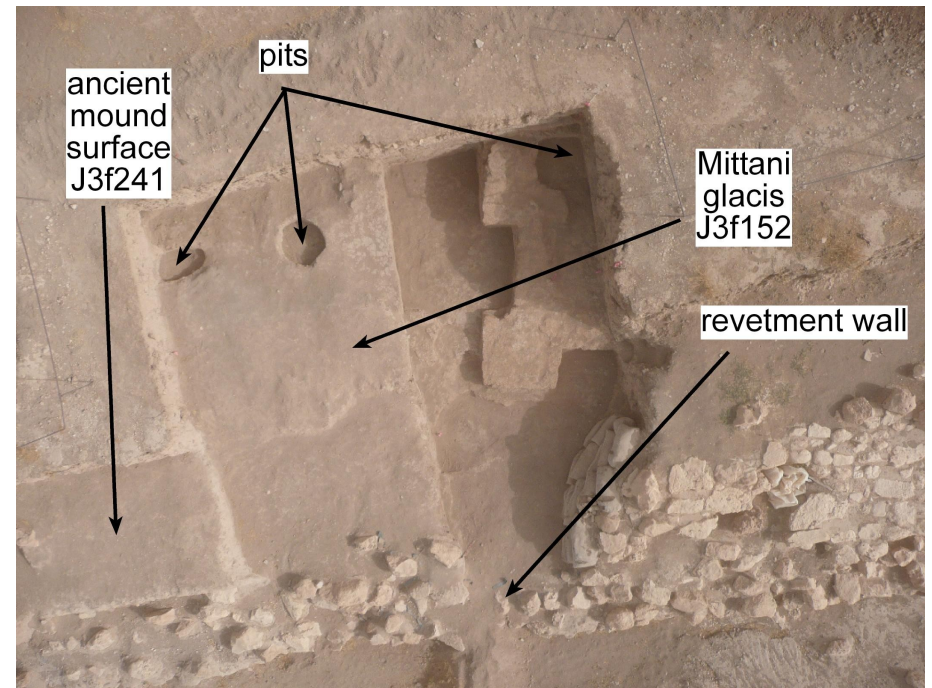
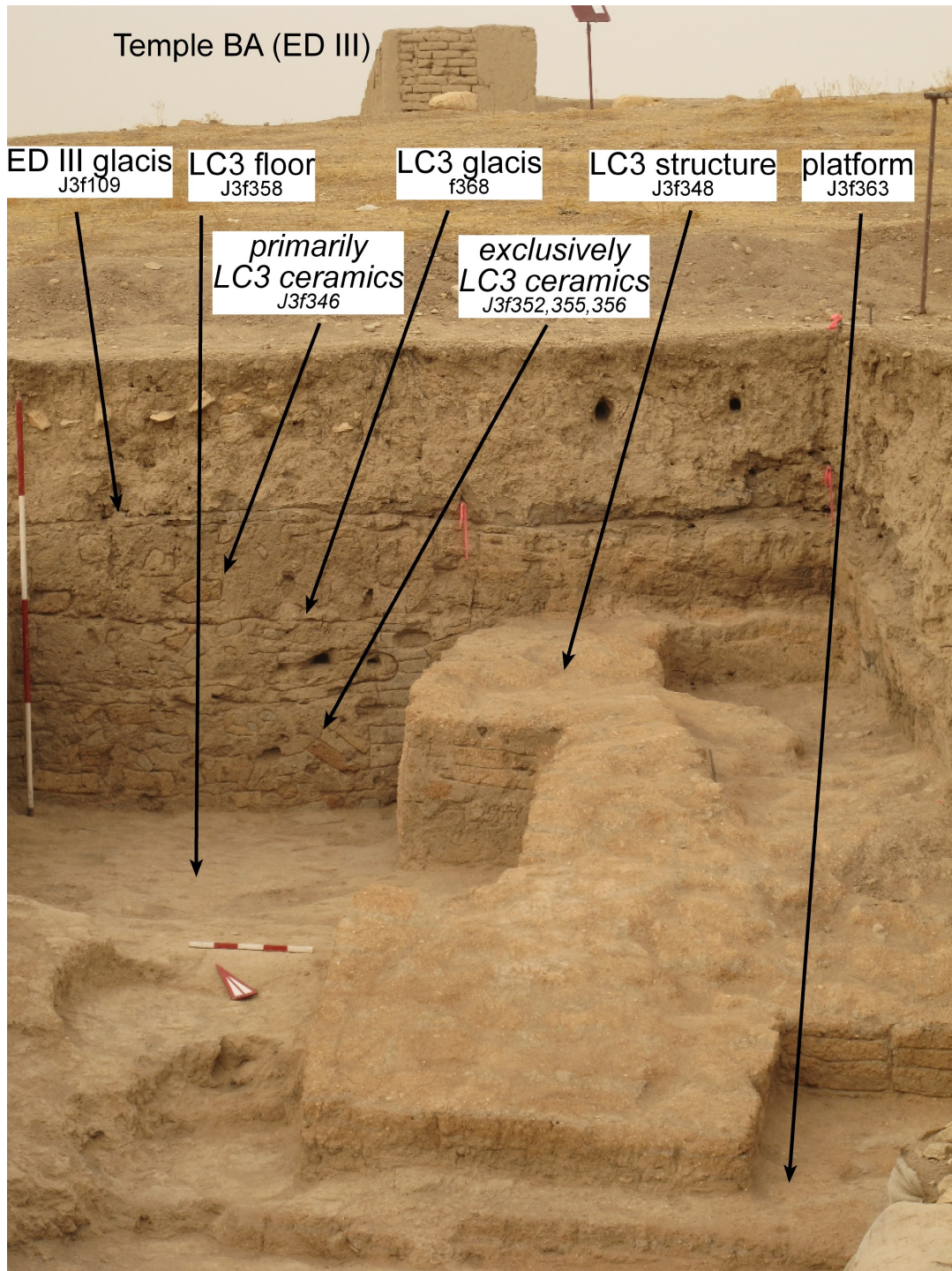


Fig. 3. B8 (old J3)

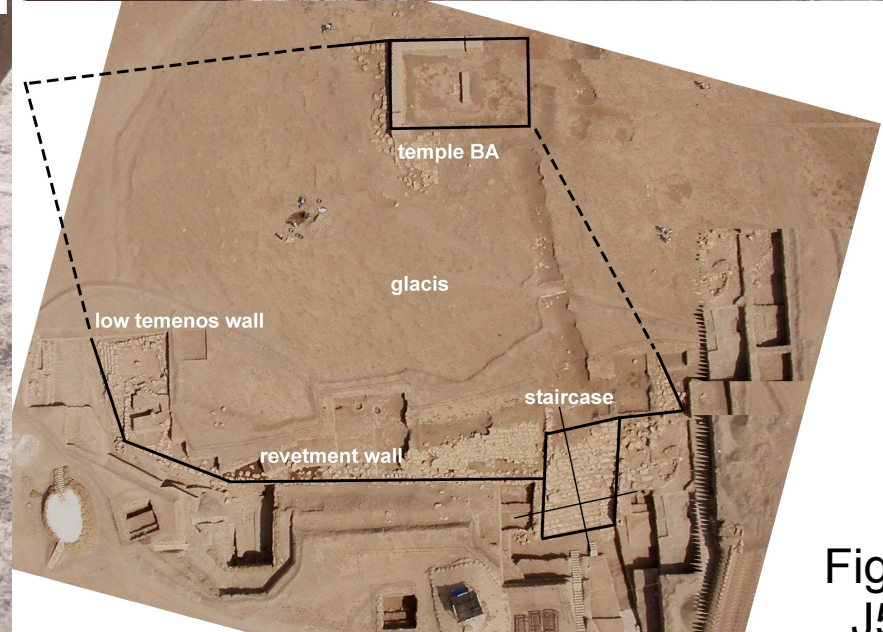
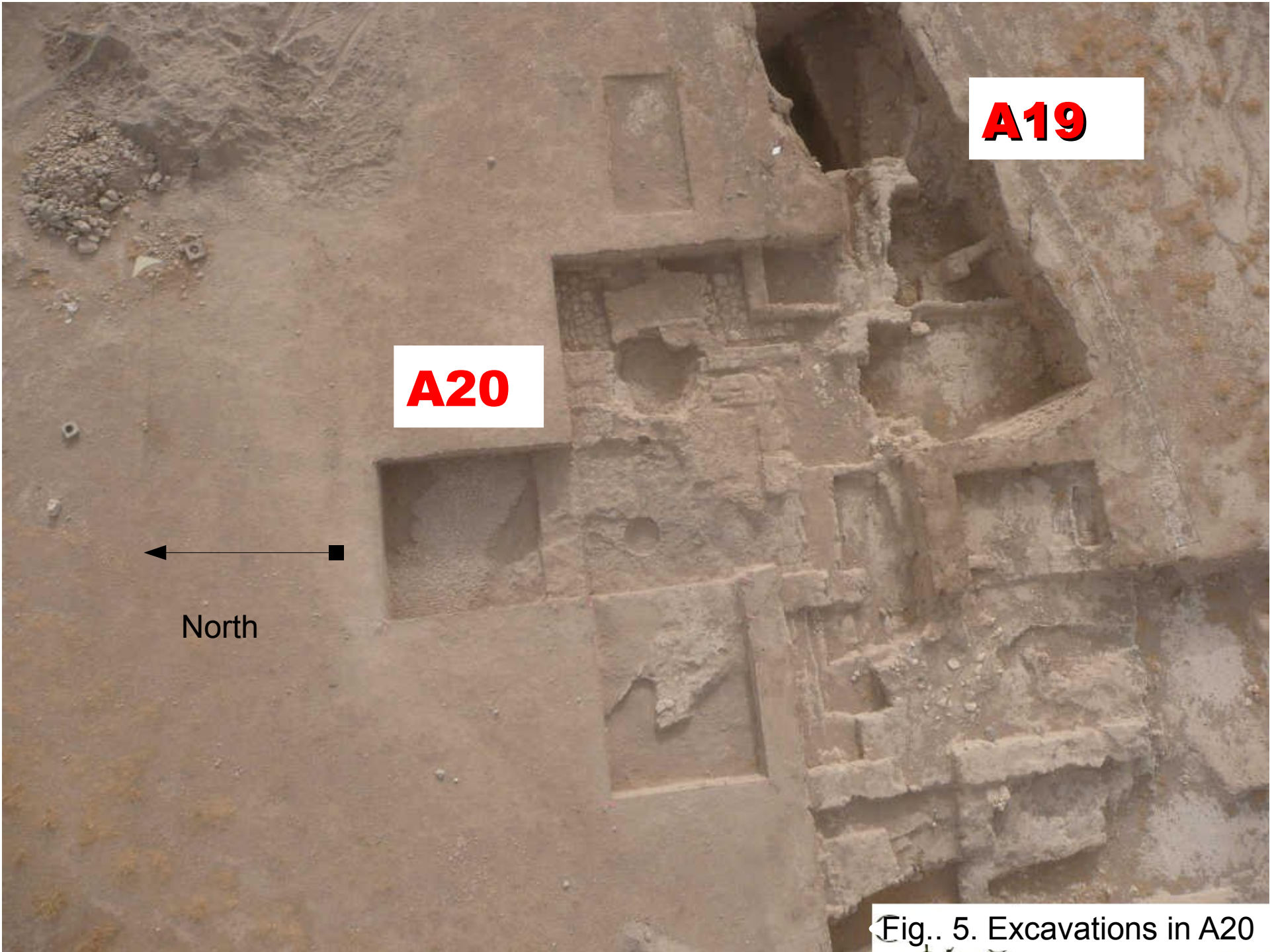
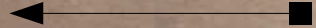


Fig. 4.  
J5



**A19**

**A20**



North

Fig.. 5. Excavations in A20

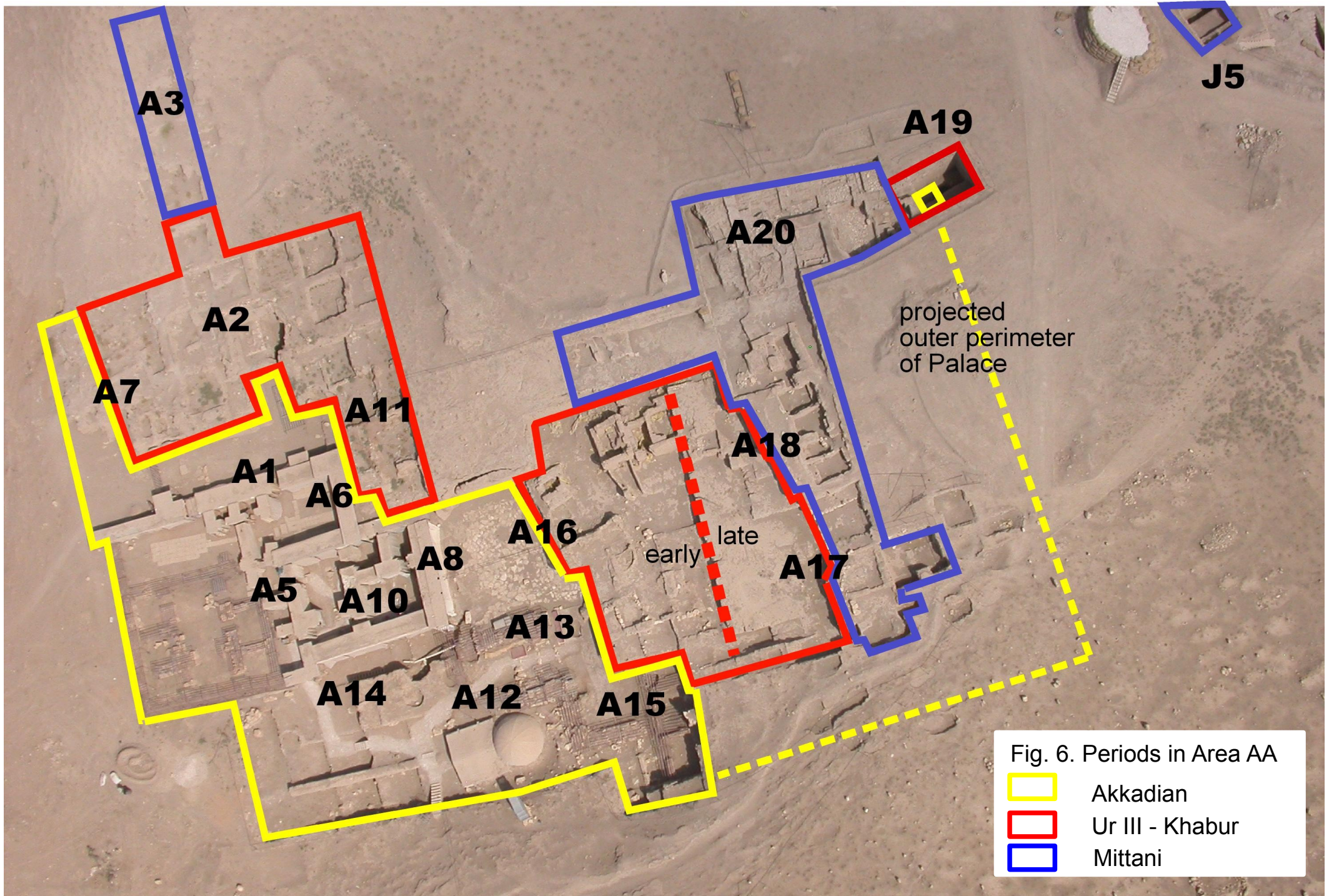





Fig. 6. Periods in Area AA

	Akkadian
	Ur III - Khabur
	Mittani

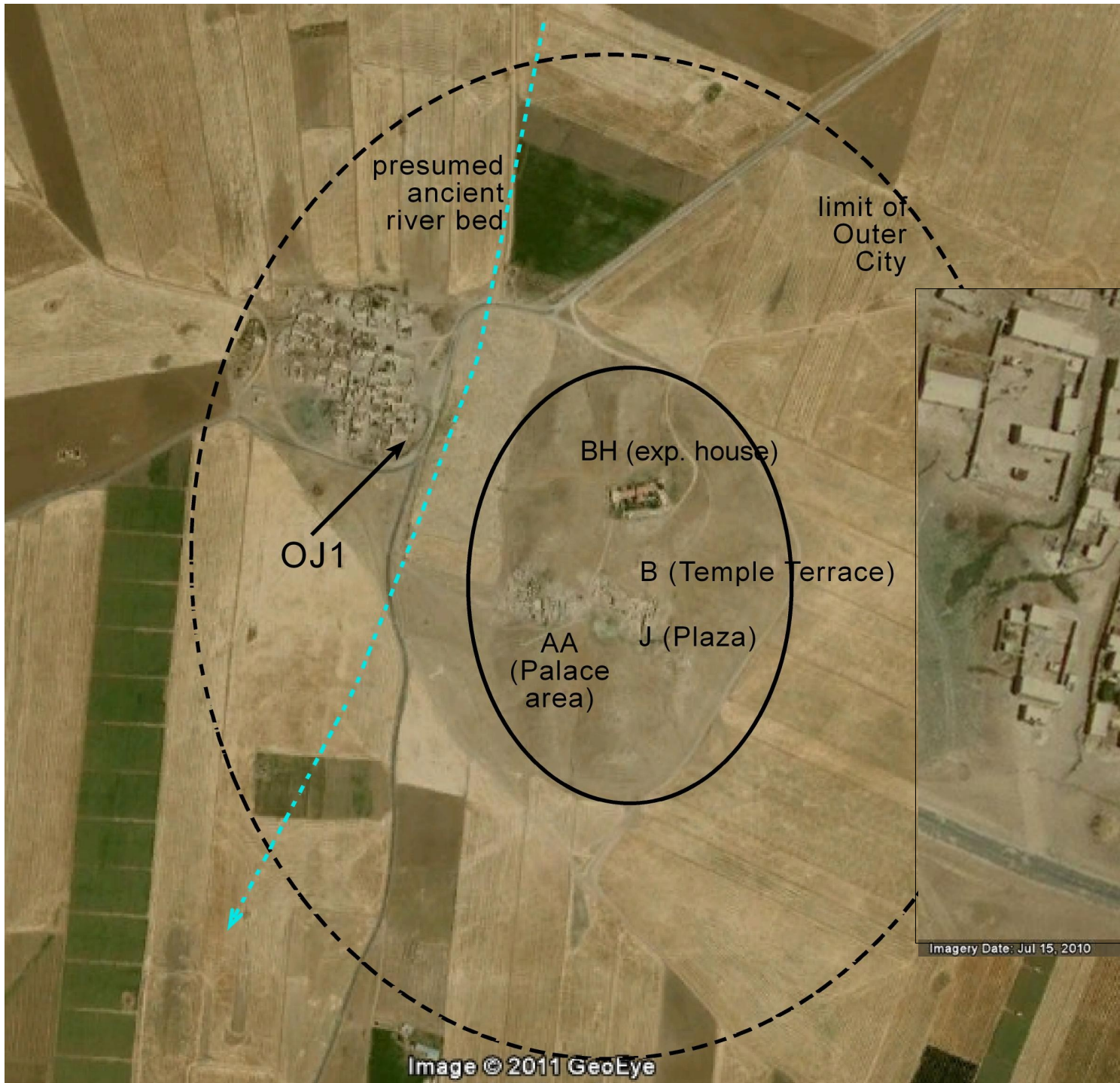


Fig. 7. Outer City and OJ1