

IMTO -Italian Mission To Oman-

University of Pisa

SUMHURAM

PRELIMINARY REPORT

(SUM05A)

SUM05A: archaeological report

SUM05A had, as main goal, the restoration and consolidation of part of the complex of the monumental gate. However excavations were carried out in the area of the tower A62, partially investigated in SUM04B, in order to clarify the layout of the western corner of the city wall. It was already clear that it was a monumental structure which, in the past, was enlarged and restored. The wall defined by Albright a “shell reinforcement” was actually an imposing wall built, in the lower part, of huge monoliths perfectly dressed.

Proceeding with the excavation in the western side of A62 the main surprising finding was a second retaining wall built around the north-western corner. Wall M138 leans on walls M132 and M129 and it's preserved for a variable number of rows of stones. The north-eastern corner is at right angles while the north-western is slightly rounded. On the south, the western corner is realized, on the base, with a big stone (l. 1.30 m) perfectly dressed, while the eastern part of the wall is missed. The masonry in fact seems to be interrupted and near the wall M129 we found just some collapsed stones without alignment.

Wall M138 covered US 157 which is the natural deposit accumulated during the occupation of the city. Traces of a kind of floor (US 158) were founded southern from the wall. This pavement consists in big stones roughly dressed covered by a layer of mortar, bad preserved. Stones of small size were used to fill the gaps. This floor was needed to level the different high of the bedrock .

Before the end of the campaign we decided to start cleaning an area 300 metres north from the city where the outcrop appears creating three caves. The location and the conformation of the territory let us to suppose that this was the place used as necropolis. We started with the northern cave which was surveyed in 2004A by prof. Sedov who recognized traces of masonry scattered on the surface. It was labelled “cave 1”. Here dressed stones and the finding of architectural stone elements let to suppose that the settlement was contemporary to Sumhuram.

Removing the stones on the surface we found two small walls, parallel to the entrance of the cave and a small structure realized with three long and narrow stones placed in perpendicular way (a grave?).

On the surface a large amount of shells were found, as well as some fragments of pottery (hand-made vessels and glazed). Since the preliminary character of the excavation it's not possible to argue the date and the function of the structures.



Fig. 1 Tower A62 with the wall M138



Fig. 2 SUMN, cave 1 before the beginning of excavation



Fig. 3, SUMN, cave 1, the walls and the structure found in front of the cave