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SEZIONE DI ORIENTALISTICA



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RICORDO DI GIOVANNI GARBINI
(1931-2017)

Alessandro Catastini - Sapienza Università di Roma

Il 2 gennaio 2017 è scomparso a Roma Giovanni Garbini. Nato a Fiastra (MC) l'8 ottobre 1931 e stabilitosi sin da giovanissimo a Roma, aveva qui condotto gli studi universitari a partire dagli inizi degli anni Cinquanta. Studente del corso in lettere classiche, aveva nutrito incertezze sul percorso definitivo da seguire, ponendoglisi la scelta tra l'archeologia classica, la letteratura indiana – una passione che risaliva all'adolescenza –, l'epigrafia classica e l'etruscologia: non di rado, in effetti, gli si sentivano ricordare con affetto Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli, Alfonsa Ferrari, Margherita Guarducci, Massimo Pallottino. L'incontro decisivo fu tuttavia con Sabatino Moscati, del quale decise di frequentare il corso di Ebraico e lingue semitiche comparate tenuto nell'anno accademico 1951-1952 nell'allora Istituto di Studi Orientali: «Quegli ambienti poco accoglienti e poco frequentati che mi si presentarono al mio secondo anno di università avevano allora sedici anni, ma nascondevano bene la loro età, perché sembravano già vecchi»¹, ricorderà lo stesso Garbini, ma a siffatta apparente vetustà si opponeva la giovane promettente età del maestro e dell'allievo: ventinove anni il primo, venti il secondo. Moscati, con le sue notevolissime capacità didattiche, lo introdusse alla storia delle antiche civiltà semitiche nonché allo studio dell'ebraico biblico e della comparazione linguistica semitica; l'anno accademico che seguì, permise anche lo studio della lingua siriana.

Gli studi orientalistici di Giovanni Garbini videro il loro completamento con il corso di assiriologia di Giuseppe Furlani e quello di arabo di Maria Nallino. La scelta di discutere la tesi di laurea con Sabatino Moscati era ormai sicura e la discussione di laurea ebbe luogo nell'ottobre del 1954 con la correlazione di Giorgio Levi Della Vida. L'argomento della tesi consisteva nella raccolta delle iscrizioni aramaiche antiche con analisi linguistica e grammaticale; la prima stesura fu condotta con l'assidua frequentazione della biblioteca del Pontificio Istituto Biblico e «naturalmente bocciata dal gentile ma severo professore», ma quest'«utile lezione» fece sì che gli altri capitoli della tesi non richiedessero ulteriori seconde stesure².

La conclusione degli studi universitari non ammetteva ormai più deroghe all'adempimento degli obblighi militari e Garbini partì per Lecce il 19 gennaio 1955. Tuttavia, la dinamicità di Moscati – senza soste e che soste non concedeva agli allievi – prevedeva che la tesi di Garbini divenisse al più presto uno studio da offrire alla comunità degli studiosi e la consuetudine tra maestro e allievo non si arrestò: nel 1956 fu pubblicata come memoria dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei la monografia *L'aramaico antico*. Nel medesimo anno il Nostro assunse il ruolo di assistente presso il maestro; furono gli anni, peraltro, della collaborazione all'*Enciclopedia dell'arte classica* sotto la guida di Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli, un'esperienza più volte ricordata da Garbini con piacere.

¹ G. Garbini, "Lehrjahre", in *Omaggio a Sabatino Moscati. Testimonianze di allievi e amici*, Roma 1992, pp. 11-25: 11.

² Garbini, "Lehrjahre", p. 13.

Nel 1960, cioè ad appena ventinove anni, Garbini ottenne la cattedra di Filologia semitica all'Istituto Orientale di Napoli, ma il rapporto con la "Sapienza" non s'interruppe: Garbini continuerà a tenervi corsi e a partecipare alle campagne di scavo organizzate da Sabatino Moscati.

Nel 1977, dietro esortazione di Giovanni Pugliese Carratelli – altro maestro riconosciuto del Nostro – Garbini si trasferì alla Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa; anche in questo caso, non rescisse d'improvviso i rapporti con l'Ateneo d'immediata provenienza, ma vi mantenne per alcuni anni una supplenza. Alla Scuola Normale fu titolare dell'insegnamento di Epigrafia semitica: un'etichetta eccessivamente limitativa, se vogliamo, e per di più collocata in un contesto didattico privo di materie affini. A queste limitazioni supplirono l'energia e gli interessi molteplici del docente. A lezione, Garbini leggeva e commentava epigrafi, ma trattava anche della comparazione linguistica semitica; inoltre, fu durante questo periodo ch'egli sviluppò in maniera assai approfondita l'interesse per un campo che sino allora aveva affrontato in maniera episodica: gli studi biblici.

Nel novembre 1982, Garbini si spostò nell'università ove aveva compiuto gli studi di laurea: lo volle come suo successore Sabatino Moscati, il quale si trasferiva alla neo-costituita Seconda Università di Roma "Tor Vergata". L'anno seguente, il 30 luglio, Garbini venne anche accolto come socio corrispondente dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei; ne divenne socio nazionale il 6 dicembre 1990.

«Un lavoro scientifico ha come scopo primario e irrinunciabile la novità dei risultati raggiunti; esso deve dire o dare qualcosa che prima non c'era»: a questa regola, enunciata da Moscati, Garbini si è sempre attenuto³. Glielo hanno consentito l'applicazione costante dell'acribia e – soprattutto – della sua intelligenza.

Gli studi d'esordio riguardarono la linguistica semitica. Si è già accennato all'iniziale lavoro, frutto della tesi di laurea, sull'aramaico antico: a questa monografia fece seguito *Il semitico di nord-ovest* (Napoli 1960), i cui presupposti s'innestavano sull'ipotesi moscatiana di una originaria unitarietà delle lingue semitiche di area nordoccidentale. Ben presto, Garbini riconsiderò completamente questa visione nell'ambito di una più vasta ricerca nella altre lingue semitiche (cfr. *Le lingue semitiche. Studi di storia linguistica* [Napoli 1972; 1984²] e *Introduzione alle lingue semitiche* [in collaborazione con O. Durand; Brescia 1994]). Le isoglosse che l'arabo manifestava con l'ugaritico anziché con l'accadico collocavano il primo in un contesto più vicino al semitico nordoccidentale. Questo dato indusse Garbini a considerazioni di linguistica storica le quali portarono a una ricostruzione che, a fronte di una fase arcaica rappresentata dall'accadico, l'eblaita e l'ugaritico, riconoscerà il processo innovativo introdotto dalla lingua amorrea; un processo durato circa due millenni e che influenzò le lingue della Siria settentrionale e meridionale (cananaico), fino all'aramaico e all'arabo.

Gli studi linguistici furono in particolare affiancati dall'esame delle testimonianze epigrafiche aramaiche, fenicio-puniche, ebraiche, sudarabiche; mai vi verrà disatteso il proposito di intervenire adducendo nuove esegesi. Questa ricerca condusse a due importanti

³ Garbini, "Lehrjahre", p. 14.

sintesi in monografie dedicate all'argomento: nel 1979, con *Storia e problemi dell'epigrafia semitica* (Napoli) e nel 2006 con *l'Introduzione all'epigrafia semitica* (Brescia).

Altro campo di ricerca prediletto da Garbini fu quello degli studi biblici. Coerente con il suo temperamento di studioso estremamente attento al vaglio delle fonti, Garbini si trovò a dover discutere i punti più critici delle ricerche bibliche: la questione wellhauseniana delle fonti, la veridicità storica di quanto trasmesso dall'Antico Testamento, la necessità di dover abbassare le datazioni di composizione dei testi, sino alla questione della costituzione di un testo critico della Bibbia ebraica. Le sue posizioni hanno contribuito a far collocare Garbini fra i cosiddetti "minimalisti" dai quali, peraltro, egli teneva a distinguersi «per la loro mancanza di senso filologico e storico che ha impedito loro di scorgere quanta storia non sacra sia nascosta sotto le intenzionali corrotture del testo biblico»⁴. Questa affermazione consente di mettere in rilievo due dei più importanti aspetti metodologici di Garbini in merito al testo biblico. L'uno è costituito dalla messa a confronto dei testi biblici con le fonti extrabibliche, un metodo che ha permesso di meglio collocare Israele nel contesto della storia del Vicino Oriente antico. L'altro punto riguarda l'esame "ideologico" dei testi, ossia lo stabilire quanto essi abbiano subito rimaneggiamenti, nel corso della loro trasmissione, dovuti a preoccupazioni di vario ordine, in specie religioso e politico. In questo senso, tra la vastissima produzione di Garbini, hanno valore esemplare *Storia e ideologia nell'Israele antico* (Brescia 1986) e l'edizione del *Cantico dei cantici* (Brescia 2010): in quest'ultima, in particolare, è sorprendente l'individuazione di paralleli tra il testo biblico e la poesia greca alessandrina, tanto da definire magistralmente il contesto culturale della composizione.

Lo studio dei testi permise a Garbini di prendere posizione in merito a svariati temi storico-religiosi. Sono molteplici a questo riguardo i contesti culturali toccati da Garbini; per quello fenicio-punico, si pensi al solo titolo del suo libro *I Fenici. Storia e religione* (Napoli 1980), ma numerosissime attenzioni vennero dedicate anche alle altre culture semitiche. Gli studi biblici hanno goduto di una particolare attenzione sino agli anni più recenti, addirittura con sconfinamenti nell'ambito neotestamentario.

Dieci anni fa il nostro studioso volle ripercorrere i propri interessi di studi con una rassegna ragionata dei suoi scritti, *L'opera di Giovanni Garbini. Bibliografia degli scritti 1956-2006* (Brescia 2007): scorrere i suoi titoli – esercizio tutt'altro che tedioso – è il modo migliore per avere una panoramica dei campi trattati. Solo tra le monografie, da allora, se ne sono aggiunte sei (*Scrivere la storia d'Israele*, Brescia, Paideia 2008; *Letteratura e politica nell'Israele antico*, Brescia, Paideia 2010; *Dio della terra, dio del cielo*, Brescia, Paideia 2011; *I Filistei. Gli antagonisti di Israele* (nuova edizione), Brescia, Paideia 2012; *Il Poema di Baal di Ilumilku*, Brescia, Paideia 2014; *Vita e mito di Gesù*, Brescia, Paideia 2015); *Il vangelo aramaico di Matteo e altri saggi* (Brescia, Paideia 2017). Si tratta, sino a oggi, di una mole di trenta monografie, quasi cinquecento articoli, oltre a numerosissime voci di enciclopedie e recensioni. La sua eredità è cospicua: è stata e sarà feconda per i futuri studi semitici.

⁴ G. Garbini, *L'opera di Giovanni Garbini, Bibliografia degli scritti 1956-2006*, p. 16.

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NEW ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES IN BETHLEHEM (PALESTINE):
THE ITALIAN-PALESTINIAN RESCUE SEASON OF NOVEMBER 2016

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During Autumn 2016 the Italian-Palestinian joint team of Sapienza University of Rome and the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities of Palestine carried out further rescue excavations and surveying in the city of Bethlehem and in its surroundings. These activities were conducted in order to protect the archaeological and historical patrimony of this area of Palestine, and to prevent looting, sites destruction, vandalism and illegal trade of archaeological items. A provisional report on finds and activities is offered below.

Keywords: Bethlehem; Early and Middle Bronze Age; Iron Age; necropolis; archaeological and historical sites

1. INTRODUCTION

In November 2016 the joint team of the Palestinian MOTA-DACH and Sapienza University of Rome¹ resumed rescue activities in the urban area of the city of Bethlehem, due to the accidental discovery of a new burial place at Jebel Dhaher, and with the aim of monitoring the situation in the necropolis of Khalet al-Jam'a (fig. 1). The second season at Bethlehem was in fact also suitable for continuing the graphic and photographic documentation and the study of finds from the tombs of the Khalet al-Jam'a necropolis. A special time was devoted to Tomb D13, called 'Barmil Tomb', an Iron Age II burial cave which illustrated the use of the necropolis also in the 1st millennium BC.² During the four weeks campaign, the team members visited several sites in order to check and document their preservation state. They collected all available data on a GIS platform³ which is now online in the open access website: www.lasapienzatojericho.it/Betlemme. A catalogue of checked sites is offered on § 2. Paragraph 3. is devoted to finds from different burial places: the necropolises of Khalet al-Jam'a, Jebel Dhaher, Bardhaa, and the tomb of el-Atan. Finally, a short note (§ 4.) is devoted to the site of Khirbet el-Kôm – midway from Hebron to Tell ed-Duweir/ancient Lachish, and to one major archaeological site inside the town of Bethlehem, that is the cisterns known as David's Wells.

2. SITES IN MAPS

Natural (§ 2.1.), archaeological (§ 2.2.), historical (§ 2.3.) and cultural (§ 2.4.) sites, and monuments dating back from the beginning of the Early Bronze Age up to the Islamic Period have been monitored and surveyed during 2015 and 2016 seasons for the sake of

¹ An Agreement on Cooperation establishing the joint Italian-Palestinian Expedition to Bethlehem was signed by Dr Jihad Yasine and Prof Lorenzo Nigro on 10th April 2016.

² Nigro *et al.* 2015, 192.

³ <https://pf87.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=60b0495a716d400e97198e11070f8e2e>.

their protection and scientific valorisation. They were recorded and plotted in the Sapienza Expedition - MOTA-DACH GIS, developing a comprehensive archaeological map of the city of Bethlehem (fig. 2) and its surroundings (fig. 3). A detailed catalogue of these sites was then filled up, with relative chronology, occupational periods, archaeological/historical features, and main bibliographic references.

2.1. Natural sites

'Ain Artas/عين اروطاس

ID: 001

Site location: lat. 31.687764429;
long. 35.185372585

State of preservation: preserved and rehabilitated
Occupational period: connected to the Aqueduct C (Herodian period)
Elevation: 695 m

Bibliography: Smith 1907, 124; Nigro 2015, 2.

'Ain Salih/عين صالح

ID: 003

Site location: lat. 31.689172222;
long. 35.1704972220001

State of preservation: preserved
Occupational period: connected to the Solomon's Pool (from Hasmonean period until modern times)
Elevation: 794 m

Bibliography: Smith 1907, 124; Nigro 2015, 3.

'Ain Battir/عين بتير

ID: 002

Site location: lat. 31.7272804680001;
long. 35.1384357090001

State of preservation: preserved
Occupational period: since 4th millennium BC
Elevation: 650 m

Bibliography: Levental 2010; Nigro 2015, 3.

'Ain el-Karmil (Birket al-Karmel)/عين الكرمل(بركة الكرمل)

ID: 012

Site location: lat. 31.4241910170001;
long. 35.13497103

Site extension: 0.9 ha ca.
State of preservation: preserved and rehabilitated
Occupational period: until modern times
Elevation: 805 m.

2.2. Archaeological sites

el-Atan/el-'Atn/العطن

ID: 030

Site location: lat. 31.703926977;
long. 35.211158004

State of preservation: badly eroded
Occupational period: Early Bronze IV (el-Atan Tomb § 3.3.), Iron, Hellenistic, Byzantine periods
Elevation: 733 m
Disturbance: new constructions covering ancient necropolis

Bibliography: Gutman - Berman 1970, 583-585, fig. 3; Prag 2000, 177, fig. 3.

Battir/Kh. el-Yahudiya/بتير

Kh. el-Yahud/Betar Fortress/بتير

ID: 040

Site location: lat. 31.7300621326639;
long. 35.1353022154497

Site extension: 2.45 ha ca.
State of preservation: partially preserved
Occupational period: Middle Bronze II, Iron II, Persian, Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Islamic, Ottoman periods
Elevation: 794 m

Disturbance: modern dump
Bibliography: Clermont-Ganneau 1899, 463-470; Nigro 2015, 2.

Bardhaa/برضية

ID: 029

Site location: lat. 31.684435029;
long. 35.2213540020001

State of preservation: preserved
Occupational period: Middle Bronze Age
Elevation: 664 m
Disturbance: caves looted; site cut by streets.

Battir Roman Bath/الحمام الروماني في بتير

ID: 009

Site location: lat. 31.727374001;
long. 35.138594819

State of preservation: preserved and rehabilitated
Occupational period: Roman period
Elevation: 657 m
Bibliography: Ussishkin 1993.

Kh. Beit Bassa/Kh. el-Bedd/Bir Beit Bassa/خربة بيت بصة

ID: 007

Site location: lat. 31.69232077;

long. 35.223518144

Site extension: 2.6 ha ca.

State of preservation: preserved

Occupational period: Roman, Byzantine,

Early Islamic and Abbasid periods

Elevation: 660 m

Disturbance: altered by terracing and construction of buildings on eastern and southern slopes of the mound

Bibliography: Conder - Kitchener 1883, 87; Barukh - Shorukh 1998, 98; Nigro 2015, 11.

Beit Jala/بيت جالا

ID: 035

Site location: lat. 31.7163525441752;

long. 35.1873015748837

Site extension: 10 ha ca.

State of preservation: preserved

Occupational period: Persian, Hellenistic and Early

Roman periods (Khirbet Kabar); 1st century AD

and Byzantine (Khirbet en-Najjar)

Bibliography: Barukh - Shorukh 2006; Hizmi - Shabtai 1997.

Beit Sahur/بيت ساحور

ID: 005

Site location: lat. 31.698297428;

long. 35.2309542360001

Site extension: 5 ha

State of Preservation: ruins

Occupational period: Early Bronze, Roman,

Byzantine, Islamic, Crusader periods

Elevation: 619 m

Bibliography: Hennessy 1966; De Cree 1999; Nigro 2015, 4-5.

Jebel Dhaher/جبل ظاهر

ID: 028

Site location: lat. 31.6948340370001;

long. 35.18991801

Site extension: 0.5 ha ca.

State of preservation: partially preserved

Occupational period: Early Bronze IV, Middle

Bronze II, Iron periods

Elevation: 800 m

Disturbance: new buildings covered ancient necropolis.

Kh. el-Karmil necropolis/مقبرة خربة الكرمل (fig. 4)

ID: 021

Site location: lat. 31.4234880270001;

long. 35.1459280220001

Site extension: 4 ha ca.

State of preservation: preserved

Occupational period: Early Bronze IV, Middle

Bronze I periods

Elevation: 771 m

Bibliography: Dever 1975.

Khalet al-Jama'a/خلة الجامع

ID: 033

Site location: lat. 31.6818666460001;

long. 35.2102333120001

Site extension: 5 ha ca.

State of preservation: partially preserved

Occupational period: Early Bronze IV, Middle

Bronze, Iron periods

Elevation: 667 m

Disturbance: industrial factories covered partially the necropolis

Bibliography: Nigro 2015; Nigro *et al.* 2015.Kh. el-Karmil wine press/معصر النبيذ في خربة الكرمل (fig. 5)

ID: 040

Site location: lat. 31.4223878808353;

long. 35.144882015879

Site extension: 0.14 ha ca.

State of preservation: preserved

Occupational period: Byzantine period

Elevation: 783 m

Bibliography: Magness 2003, 99.

Burj el-Karmil/Rujm el-Karmil/برج الكرمل (fig. 6)

ID: 016

Site location: lat. 31.4222599940001;

long. 35.1341829630001

Site extension: 0.12 ha ca.

State of preservation: partially preserved;

nowadays excavations in the site are carried on by

Dr. Issa Sarie' (Al-Quds University) and MOTA

Occupational period: Byzantine, Crusader periods

Elevation: 814 m

Bibliography: Conder - Kitchener 1883, 372-374; Pringle 1997, 61.

Kh. el-Kôm/خربة الكوم

ID: 018

Site location: lat. 31.531110993;

long. 34.961203029

Site extension: 5 ha ca.

State of preservation: partially preserved

Occupational period: Chalcolithic, Early Bronze I-III, Middle Bronze, Iron, Persian, Hellenistic periods

Elevation: 456 m

Disturbance: the ancient site is partially covered by new village and by agricultural terracing

Bibliography: Dever 1969-1970; Holladay 1971a; 1971b.

Jebel Qa'aqir/Rasm Qa'qir necropolis/

مقبرة جبل الكعكيري (fig. 7)

ID: 019

Site location: lat. 31.5222379940001; long.

34.951577

Site extension: 4 ha ca.

State of preservation: preserved

Occupational period: Early Bronze Age IV

Elevation: 408 m

Disturbance: cultivation and agricultural terraces

Bibliography: London 1985; Dever 2014.

Domestic cave of Jebel Qa'aqir/

مغارة السكن في جبل الكعكيري

ID: 020

Site location: lat. 31.5217570400001;

long. 34.9542619750001

State of preservation: partially preserved

Occupational period: Early Bronze Age IV

Elevation: 398 m

Disturbance: dense vegetation inside

Bibliography: Gitin 1975; Dever 1981.

Qasr el-Qa'aqir/قصر الكعكيري

ID: 025

Site location: lat. 31.5269620340001;

long. 34.9606309640001

State of preservation: scanty remains

Occupational period: Early Bronze IV, Iron, Byzantine, Ottoman periods

Elevation: 400 m

Disturbance: modern road cut the ancient site

Bibliography: Dagan 2006, 68-70.

Rachel's Tomb/قبر راحيل

ID: 031

Site location: lat. 31.7190922200001;

long. 35.202010237

State of preservation: preserved

Occupational period: remains of Roman aqueduct, Medieval, Ottoman periods

Elevation: 755 m

Bibliography: Vetralli 1967; Tubb 1980; Nigro 2015, 7.

Roman Aqueduct (Lower Aqueduct)/

قناة المياه الرومانية السفلى

ID: 011

Site location: lat. 31.705766972;

long. 35.2046219630001

State of Preservation: partially preserved

Occupational period: Hasmonean-Herodian, Ottoman periods

Elevation: 757 m

Disturbance: section of a Lower Aqueduct is incorporated within a souvenir shop on Manger Street

Bibliography: Smith 1907, 125-127; Prag 2008.

Solomon's Pools/برك سليمان

ID: 008

Site location: lat. 31.6886690050001;

long. 35.1700994220001

Site extension: 3 ha ca.

State of preservation: preserved and rehabilitated

Occupational period: since Hasmonean period

Elevation: 790 m

Bibliography: Murphy-O'Connor 1998, 425-428; Prag 2008; Nigro 2015, 2-3, fig. 5.

Tekoa/Kh. Teku'a/تقوع

ID: 010

Site location: lat. 31.634496991;

long. 35.210964968

Site extension: 12 ha ca.

State of preservation: scanty remains

Occupational Period: Early Bronze, Middle Bronze, Iron II, Roman, Byzantine, Mameluk, Crusader periods

Elevation: 816 m

Bibliography: Saller, 1962, 153, 162; Escobar 1976; Herr 1986; Nigro, 2015, 11.

2.3. Historical sites

Al-Badd Giacaman Museum/

متحف بد جقمان

ID: 013

Site location: lat. 31.7038930300001;
long. 35.2040600400001

State of preservation: restored in 2014
Occupational period: located in a traditional olive
oil mill dated to 18th-19th century AD

Elevation: 765 m

Bibliography: Nigro 2015, 2, fig. 2.

Cremisan Complex (Salesian Monastery, Salesian Sisters Convent and School,

دير كريمزان/Cellars)

ID: 039

Site location: lat. 31.7268450434838;
long. 35.1723252398892

Site extension: 70 ha ca.

State of preservation: preserved
Occupational period: from Byzantine until modern
times.

David's Wells/ ابار داود

ID: 017

Site location: lat. 31.7093779800001;
long. 35.205297042

State of preservation: restored in 1962

Occupational period: Iron, Roman, Byzantine
periods

Elevation: 770 m

Disturbance: wells are in the Catholic Action Club

Bibliography: Bagatti 1952, 248-249; 1968, 223-
236; Bagatti - Alliata 1980; Nigro 2015, 4; § 4.2.

The Green Market/Bethlehem Old Souk/

سوق الخضرة (سوق بيت لحم القديم)

ID: 015

Site location: lat. 31.7045629960001;
long. 35.204602014

State of Preservation: restored

Occupational period: since 1929

Elevation: 775 m.

Grotto of St. Jerome/ مغارة القديس جيروم

ID: 027

Site location: lat. 31.704569753;
long. 35.2076979280001

State of preservation: preserved

Occupational period: Roman, Byzantine, Crusader,
until modern times

Elevation: 758 m

Bibliography: Bagatti 1968, 139-140; Saller 1963,
325; Nigro 2015, 10

Note: this grotto is part of caves complex under the
Nativity Church, composed, in addition to it, to the
Nativity Grotto, Grotto of Magi and the Manger,
Grotto of St. Joseph, Altar of Innocents, and Tomb
of St. Eusebius.

Manger Square/ ساحة المهدي

ID: 022

Site location: lat. 31.7041100370001;
long. 35.20616197

Site extension: 0.32 ha

State of preservation: renovated in 1998-1999

Occupational period: Iron Age until modern times

Elevation: 762 m

Bibliography: Nigro 2015, 2, 4, 6, 8.

Milk Grotto/Magharet Sitti Mariam/

مغارة الحليب/Grotto of the Lady Mary)

ID: 023

Site location: lat. 31.70343102;
long. 35.2087509720001

State of preservation: restored in 2007

Occupational period: 7th century BC

Elevation: 762 m

Bibliography: Bagatti 1952, 258-261; Nigro 2015,
10, fig. 9.

Mosque of Omar/ جامع عمر

ID: 037

Site location: lat. 31.7045411609862;
long. 35.205349898163

State of preservation: preserved

Occupational period: built in 1860, renovated in
1954.

Nativity Church/ كنيسة المهدي

ID: 024

Site location: lat. 31.7043280770001;
long. 35.2072808880001

State of preservation: preserved and restored

Occupational period: Roman, Byzantine, Crusader,
until modern times

Elevation: 762 m

Bibliography: Vincent - Abel 1914; Harvey 1937;
Richmond 1936; Bagatti 1952, 9-69; Taha 2012;
Nigro 2015, 9-11.

St. Catherine's Church/ كنيسة القديسة كاترينا

ID: 038

Site location: lat. 31.7045642251017;
long. 35.2077239268594

State of preservation: preserved

Occupational period: built in 1882, enlarged in
1949

Elevation: 759 m

Bibliography: Bagatti 1952, 218-224.

2.4. Sites of cultural interest

Bethlehem Museum/متحف بيت لحم (fig. 8)

ID: 032

Site location: lat. 31.7166889640001;

long. 35.201593831

Occupational period: Roman (section of stone pipe of Upper Roman Aqueduct passing through the museum)

Elevation: 753 m

Bibliography: Vetralli 1967; Nigro 2015, 2, fig. 3.

Museum of the History of the City of Bethlehem/Baituna al-Talhami Museum/Bethlehem Folklore Museum/متحف تاريخ مدينة بيت لحم

ID: 014

ID: 014

Site location: lat. 31.7048039750001;

long. 35.204948019

State of preservation: preserved

Occupational period: two traditional Palestinian houses host inside a collection of household items

Elevation: 774 m

Bibliography: Nigro 2015, 2, fig. 4.

Salesian Complex and International Nativity Museum/متحف الميلاد الدولي ومجمع السلزيان

ID: 026

Site location: lat. 31.7064453240001;

long. 35.2027301310001

State of Preservation: preserved

Elevation: 781 m

Bibliography: Nigro 2015, 2.

3. BURIAL PLACES

Four different burial places have been the object of rescue interventions during the Autumn 2016 season, all of them located within a radius of 1.5 Km south of the Church of Nativity.

3.1. Necropolis of Khalet al-Jam'a (n. 033 in fig. 3)

Further research activities at the site of Khalet al-Jam'a were carried out by the Italian-Palestinian Expedition in November 2016, with the aim of continuing the archaeological exploration of the recently discovered necropolis (fig. 9).⁴

The new inspection of the burial ground made it possible to ascertain that building activities for the industrial park are still going on over its northern part. The already damaged area has, unfortunately, undergone a - if possible - more drastic impact of new constructions: big warehouses have been erected enlarging the industrial quarter to the north-east in Area B. Moreover, to the south, in the southern part of previously untouched Area C, new structures have definitively obliterated Tombs B9, B10, B11 and C12 (fig. 10).⁵ Also in Area D (i.e. the Iron Age cemetery), new houses are under construction, even though the already excavated Tomb D13 (the 'Barmil Tomb') is still preserved as it was in 2015.

A survey was conducted on November 2016 in Area A, the only one kept completely safe from destruction, as it belongs to the *al-Awqaf* (because of the presence in the last century of an ancient small mosque).

First aim of the survey was to evaluate the preservation state of tombs identified in the first season (2015), and to assure that they had not been looted in the meantime. The second one was to collect further information about the history of the site during later periods, and to analyse scattered pottery fragments collected from the surface. Periods represented by

⁴ Nigro *et al.* 2015.

⁵ Nigro *et al.* 2015, 190-192.

ceramics collected in Cemetery A are Middle Bronze⁶ and, mainly, Iron Age. Middle Bronze pottery consists of sherds of Simple Ware jars; Iron Age pottery consists of ridged neck Simple Ware jug, holemouth jar with cylindrical body, flat and unridged rim, and Cooking Ware.⁷

As regards Khalet al-Jam'a, the main goal of the second season, following up 2015 work, was recording and documenting, by means of descriptions, drawings and photos, Tombs A1, A2, C5, and D13, and their funerary sets. New finds from these tombs were also collected, and they are, thus, illustrated below.

3.1.1. Tomb A1

As regards Tomb A1,⁸ in the 2016 season it was possible to scan Chambers 2 and 4 (fig. 11). Chamber 2 is a round rock-cut underground room (3 m of diameter) with domed roof (1.2 m high), communicating to the north-west through a passage 0.9 m wide with Tomb A2. Chamber 4, to the south-west of Chamber 2, is accessible through a 1.3 m-wide passage opened in the west side of Chamber 2. It has a niche along the south-western wall, large 0.38 m, and to the east there is the blocked access to the shaft, 0.8 m large. The chamber is roughly round with domed roof, 3 m of diameter and 1.1 m high, and the floor is 0.6 m deeper than the one of Chamber 2. Also this chamber was surveyed with a 3D optical scanning device.

As regards Chamber 1, three more vases were found in it: a 'Gublite' bowl, BL6166,⁹ retrieved in Tomb A1 - Filling 1 (fig. 12), two fragmentary Black Burnished piriform juglets,¹⁰ respectively KJ.16.TA1.4/1 and KJ.16.TA1.4/2.¹¹

In Chamber 4 the rim of a jug, KJ.16.TA1.4/3, was also found.¹²

3.1.2. Tomb A2

Two more pottery vessels were retrieved in Chamber 3, Filling 1 of Tomb A2: a White Slip bowl with flaring rim, pronounced shoulders and pedestal base, BL6171,¹³ and a dipper juglet with pinched rim, BL6172.¹⁴ They can be added to the funerary set already described, setting it in a MB IIB horizon (fig. 12).¹⁵

⁶ As it concerns the Middle Bronze Age chronology here followed see: Bietak (ed.) 2000; 2003; Bietak - Czerny (eds.) 2002; 2007; Nigro 2008, 365-368.

⁷ Herzog - Singer-Avitz 2015, respectively 217, 221, 219, pls. 2.4.7:7; 2.4.15:3.

⁸ Nigro *et al.* 2015, 186-187.

⁹ Garstang 1933, pl. V:5. It is comparable with a carinated bowl from Tomb J45 of Tell es-Sultan Necropolis (Kenyon 1965, fig. 230:5).

¹⁰ Nigro 2003a, 351-353.

¹¹ Ben-Arieh 2004, 13, fig. 2.10:38-49.

¹² It can be added to the vases previously published (Nigro *et al.* 2015, 187). Pottery repertoire of Tomb A1 is consistent with Group II-IV typology outlined by K. Kenyon for Middle Bronze pottery from the Necropolis of Tell es-Sultan/Jericho (Kenyon 1960, 268-271; 1965, 268-271).

¹³ Kenyon 1960, fig. 191:3.

¹⁴ Garstang 1933, pl. XVII:6.

¹⁵ Nigro *et al.* 2015, 189; Halayqa 2015. Pottery equipment of Tomb A2 seems to correspond to that of Tomb Group III of Kenyon's typology of Tell es-Sultan Necropolis (Kenyon 1965, 269).

3.1.3. Tomb C5

Tomb C5¹⁶ was, unfortunately, discovered by looters, which broke part of the rocky roof to pillage it. The following excavation by the Palestinian MOTA-DACH, in Spring 2014, allowed to collect what was left inside it.

The entrance to Tomb C5 was through a wide square shaft, 1.35 × 1.55 m, located to the south-east of an underground approximately square burial chamber. This is larger than the other of the same necropolis, as it measures 2.9 × 3.5 m, with a 1.9 m-high domed roof, heavily damaged by collapses. The shaft is 1.5 m deep, and the passage between it and the chamber is only 0.8 m wide and 0.8 m high.

Inside the tomb, 628 pottery fragments were collected (figs. 13-15), which belonged to the most popular shapes and productions known from Middle Bronze II funerary sets: Black or Red Burnished piriform juglets with double handle (KJ.16.TC5.1/1, 2);¹⁷ White Slip bowls with flaring rim, pronounced shoulders and pedestal base (KJ.16.TC5.1/3), a very common type also in Jericho; Simple Ware jugs (KJ.16.TC5.1/4-5); Metallic Ware medium size jars (KJ.16.TC5.1/6-10);¹⁸ Storage/Transport Ware jars (KJ.16.TC5.1/11-13, including a pierced fragment: KJ.16.TC5.1/16), with fifty-six decorated jar walls, fourteen incised (KJ.16.TC5.1/13) and forty-two combed (KJ.16.TC5.1/14-15). This pottery material indicates that the tomb was primarily used during the Middle Bronze II.¹⁹

3.1.4. Tomb D13 ('Barmil Tomb')

A detailed plan of Tomb D13²⁰ was re-drawn at the end of the 2016 season (fig. 16). The round main chamber, 4 m of diameter, has a flat roof and it is 1.6 m high. The shaft is to the south-west of the chamber, 1.1 m wide, while to the north, in front of it, there is a raised niche 1.7 m wide and 1.3 m high, used as repository. The shape of the tomb is characterized by the location of the shaft, which is included within the limits of the circular cave. The underground circular tomb was characterized by the presence of a V-shaped installation made of stones (Bench 3), located roughly in the middle. Three depositional areas were, thus, identified, east of the installation (Filling 1), west of it (Filling 2), and inside it (Filling 4). Installation B.3 was built up with middle size stones and a flat slab, 0.6 m long and 0.5 m wide, upon which human bones (mainly teeth; KJ.16.TD13.1.HR.1, 2) and several personal ornaments were found (bronze and iron earrings, carnelian beads, stamps, sea-shells).

In Filling 1 thirty-eight vessels were found (fig. 17): 1 miniature twin vase; 1 strainer;²¹ 2 one-spouted lamps;²² 5 bowls²³ (one Simple Ware, two Simple Painted, one Red Slip,

¹⁶ Nigro *et al.* 2015, 192.

¹⁷ These piriform juglets are comparable with those from Tomb 24 of Tell Beit-Mirsim (Ben-Arieh 2004, fig. 2.10:38-49).

¹⁸ Garfinkel - Cohen 2007, fig. 3.37:2. They can be compared with some specimens from Tell es-Sultan (Kenyon - Holland 1982, respectively figs. 128:5, 127:22, 25; 129:33, 30).

¹⁹ Pottery repertoire is widely comparable to that of Jericho Tomb Groups II-V, especially Storage jars mainly belong to B.1.a and b types (Kenyon - Holland 1982, figs. 191-193).

²⁰ Nigro *et al.* 2015, 192. The 'Barmil Tomb' is the object of a dedicated publication in preparation where finds will be thoroughly illustrated.

²¹ Loud 1948, pl. 85:9.

and one Red Burnished); 10 small Black Burnished juglets;²⁴ 6 pinched mouth dipper juglets;²⁵ 3 Simple Ware juglets; 5 Simple Ware jugs;²⁶ 1 stirrup storage jar;²⁷ 3 fragmentary cooking pots, and 1 jar. In Filling 2 (fig. 18) 2 one-spouted lamps, 1 high footed chalice,²⁸ 7 small Black Burnished juglets,²⁹ 5 Simple Ware jugs, 1 Line Painted juglet, and 1 Line Painted amphoriskos³⁰ were retrieved.³¹ Moreover, a chalice with high foot from Filling1 and a Red Slip Painted jug plus a strainer-spouted jug from Filling2, already published in the first report,³² must be included to complete the funerary set of Tomb D13.

As it regards small finds, 37 objects were collected in Tomb D13, they mainly consist of bronze and iron bracelets, bronze and iron rings, numerous semiprecious beads, an *udjat*-eye, shells, bone items, one seal, one signet-ring seal, one ivory scarab, and one ivory pommel.³³

A complete analysis of funerary equipment of Tomb D13 confirms a date from Iron IB up to Iron IIA-B.

3.1.5. Human and animal remains from Khalet al-Jam'a necropolis [A.G.]

Human and animal remains from Khalet al-Jam'a necropolis were collected within seven tombs (A1, A2, A4, B9, B10, C12, and D13). They are preliminarily analyzed in this paragraph and summarized in tab. 1.

The most common bone retrievals are human skulls,³⁴ long bones, and teeth. As it regards animal remains, they are most often fragmentary long bones of ovicaprines, canides, and equids.

Sometimes bones have a whitish concretion attributable to the calcification caused by the limestone in which tombs were hewn.

TOMB	HUMAN REMAINS	ANIMAL REMAINS
Tomb A1	Chamber 1: mandible (KJ.15.TA1.1.HR.1), mandible (female; KJ.15.TA1.1.HR.2), mandible and teeth (child; KJ.15.TA1.1.HR.3).	Chamber 1: crania (dog), tarsus, calcaneus, teeth (horse) (KJ.15.TA1.1.FR.1).
Tomb A2	fragmentary skull, teeth, humerus sx, clavicle, ulna, phalanx (KJ.15.TA2.1.HR.1).	teeth, mandible, carpus/tarsus, long bones

²² Herzog - Singer-Avitz 2015, 217, pl. 2.4.8:7-9.

²³ Herzog - Singer-Avitz 2015, pl. 2.4.1:5, 7-8.

²⁴ Tufnell 1953, pl. 88:309; Tubb 1980, pl. I:3.

²⁵ Herzog - Singer-Avitz 2015, 217.

²⁶ Yezerski 2004, pl. 4:13-14; Herzog - Singer-Avitz 2015, 221, pl. 2.4.12:1-3.

²⁷ Albright 1932, pls. 53(A):1; 54(A):1; Yezerski 1997, 32, ns. 17-18.

²⁸ Herzog - Singer-Avitz 2015, pl. 2.4.2:1.

²⁹ Peleg - Yezerski 2004, pl. 6:23, 26-27.

³⁰ Herzog - Singer-Avitz 2015, pl. 2.4.6:4.

³¹ 4 lamps and 7 small Black Burnished juglets are already illustrated in Nigro *et al.* 2015 (fig. 31:1-2).

³² Nigro 2015, fig 18; Nigro *et al.* 2015, fig. 32.

³³ Nigro *et al.* 2015, 192-193.

³⁴ Skulls are indicators of sex of individuals when sexual dimorphism characteristics are marked and clear, and allow it (Acsádi - Nemeskéri 1970; Canci - Minozzi 2005, 119, tab 8.1).

Tomb A4	skull (KJ.15.TA4.1.HR.1)	(KJ.15.TA2.1.FR.1). fragmentary bones (KJ.15.TA4.1.FR.1)
Tomb B9	skulls (two individuals; KJ.15.TB9.1.HR.1, KJ.15.TB9.1.HR.2), mastoid process (two), ribs, sternum, scapula, vertebrae (thoracic, lumbar), phalanges, metatarsus, astragalus, fragmentary humerus (KJ.15.TB9.1.HR.3)	fragmentary bones (KJ.15.TB9.1.FR.1)
Tomb B10	Chamber 2: skull, mandible, teeth, long bones (KJ.15.TB10.1.HR.1)	fragmentary bones (KJ.15.TB9.1.FR.1)
Tomb C12	skull, atlas, teeth, vertebrae, clavicle, humerus (two), radius (two), phalanx, ribs fragments, coccyx, pelvis fragments, femurs (two), tibia (two), fibula (KJ.15.TC12.1.HR.1)	mandible, teeth, humerus, tibia, ulna (KJ.15.TC12.1.FR.1)
Tomb D13	3 lower incisors, 1 upper incisor (KJ.16.TD13.1.HR.1); 2 upper incisors, 4 molars, 4 pre-molars (KJ.16.TD13.1.HR.2)	-

Tab. 1 - Quantity and kind of human and animal remains collected in Khalet Jam'a necropolis.

Human remains³⁵ found in Tomb A1 include: a fragmentary mandible (right side; KJ.15.TA1.1.HR.1); a small human slightly pointed mandible (toothless) presumably belonging to a young female (KJ.15.TA1.1.HR.2); and a nearly complete mandible, left side, plausibly of a sub-adult (KJ.15.TA1.1.HR.3). The autopsy of teeth inside the latter one revealed that two incisors in the distal part of the crown exhibit three small cusps. On their surfaces, it is possible to observe the phenomenon of enamel hypoplasia,³⁶ both vertical (one central line), and horizontal (at the base of the collar). A case of eruption out of the socket can be noticed in the inner-lingual part of the incisors, perhaps due to the eruption of a permanent tooth replacing a deciduous one. Both observations suggest that the young individual of Tomb A1 was in the growing age at the moment of the death, around seven years old.

As concerns animal bones from Tomb A1, the most relevant finds are two fragmentary skulls of dogs (one puppy). Some fragmentary long bones, a metatarsal, a tarsus, a calcaneus of ovicaprine and equids, as well as four teeth of horse/donkey were also collected (KJ.15.TA1.1.FR.1).

Human remains retrieved in Tomb A2 are: a left humerus, a phalanx, two fragments of a skull, a clavicle, and an ulna (KJ.15.TA2.1.HR.1). Animal bones are represented by fragmentary long bones, teeth, mandible, and carpus or tarsus (KJ.15.TA2.1.FR.1). Animal long bones bear signs of butchering, probably due to the use of a scraper. They possibly were part of a food offering.

In Tomb A4, a human skull was found (KJ.15.TA4.1.HR.1). It shows female characteristics, as the pronounced right frontal bone, and an approximate age of 25-30 years.

In Tomb B9, two more human skulls were found. The first one (KJ.15.TB9.1.HR.1) has marked supraorbital margin, eyebrow arch and glabella. Cranial sutures are almost entirely

³⁵ Bones found in Tomb A1 were partially damaged on their outer cortex by fungi and bacteria.

³⁶ Dental enamel hypoplasia is an indicator of health and nutrition conditions, it can occur only during childhood, when the enamel of crown develops, recording episodes of disease or malnutrition in this fundamental phase of the human life (Canci - Minozzi 2005, 211).

obliterated suggesting that it belonged to a mature male adult. The second skull (KJ.15.TB9.1.HR.2; fig. 19) could belong to a young (female?) individual, according to the smoothed and straight forehead, rounded eye sockets, the junction point of the nose close to the front, slight occipital protuberance, pronounced right frontal bone, sutures in some places are not yet calcified. Furthermore, it presents an epigenetic variation on front bone: the furrow³⁷ goes from the nasal area to the wall.³⁸ This feature looks like a rare character, because it is usually attested up to the age of three/four years. In this case, it occurs in an adult, or in a young individual showing a praecox sexual dimorphism. The cranial sutures are open up to 1 cm, from bregma the suture is fully open (1.8 cm), all over the skull. It is 14 cm wide and 17 cm long, the thickness of the crown ranges from 0.3 to 0.7 cm. Also two fragmentary mastoid processes (one short, pointed and curve, long 2.9 cm and wide 1.1 cm; the second 1.3 cm wide, without the distal part), thus, point to a presumable age of 15-18.

The other human bones found in Tomb B9 are ribs, sternum, scapula, vertebrae (thoracic, lumbar), phalanges, metatarsus, astragalus, and fragmentary humerus (KJ.15.TB9.1.HR.3) difficult to be attributed to previous individuals.

Inside Chamber 2 of Tomb B10 a further human skull was found just before the north-western wall, facing up, about 50 cm from a mandible, and near long bones (KJ.15.TB10.1.HR.1; fig. 20). The skull presents some marked features: the glabella and eyebrow arch, the occipital protuberance is pronounced, and the mastoid process is large and rounded, suggesting the identification with a male individual. It can be also noted the disappearance of the coronal suture, especially of the bregma, and of sagittal suture. Medium-lambda and lambda result in synostosis more than 50%, therefore the age of death is in the range 35-45 years. During the excavations a mandible was also found. It is robust, with marked features, and pronounced chin, thick bottom margin with a single tooth (fractured penultimate molar). Dental alveolus are small.³⁹ Right humerus and mandible have mummification traces, probably due to the deposition in the cave. These rests, thus, belong to the same male individual.

Some fragmentary and mixed animal bones were also recovered in this tomb.

An almost complete skeleton (KJ.15.TC12.1.HR.1) was found in Tomb C12. The skull (fig. 21) has large, rounded and vertical mastoid processes. Supraorbital margin, as well as the brow ridge and glabella, is quite wide, nuchal plane presents a pronounced superior line; the frontal and parietal bumps are just slightly pronounced. The skull is 13 cm width, maximum 20 cm length, 16 cm height, and 0.4 cm thick. Twelve teeth are in the upper arch (there are two central incisors and the last right molar, while the second upper molar is missing in the left side). Some thin horizontal lines testify the presence of enamel hypoplasia. Skeletal remains also included the atlas, four vertebrae, a clavícula, two shoulders, two radius, a phalanx, a coccyx, the right pelvis, two femura, two tibia, a fibula,

³⁷ The furrow is the median suture of the frontal bone, which brings together the two symmetrical halves of the bone, corresponding to the two primitive ossification points. It tends to disappear with the ageing, in the event of persistence this phenomenon is called metopism.

³⁸ An abnormality of bone fusion can be identified on this skull. Component part of a bone may fail to fuse together, or normally discrete skeletal structures may instead be fused. In foetus, frontal bone is formed via intra-membranous ossification from two halves which make up the left and right bone. On occasion, however, they fail to unite, so that the division persists. This suture is called the metopic suture (Mays 2010, 184).

³⁹ In this case the loss during the lifetime of some teeth and the total healing of the bone tissue can be identified.

and seven fragmentary ribs. All these observations suggests that the skeleton was of a young male of 20-30 years.

In the same tomb also some fragmentary animal bones were collected.

In Tomb D13 some human remains were upon a flat slab of the V shaped installation B.3, they were: 3 lower incisors mineralized, amongst these one deciduous, and 1 upper incisor (KJ.16.TD13.1.HR.1); 2 upper incisors, 4 molars, one with tooth decay, and 4 pre-molars (KJ.16.TD13.1.HR.2).

Human remains recovered in tombs of Khalet al-Jam'a seem to be related to primary, single, as it is in the case of Tomb C12, multiple, as in the case of Tomb B9, and maybe familiar, as in the case of Tomb A1, depositions, dating back from Early Bronze IV and Middle Bronze Age II, accompanied by funerary sets, mainly consisting of pottery and weapons.

3.2. Necropolis of Jebel Dhaher (*rescue excavations 2016; n. 028 in fig. 3*)

The site lays 1.95 km south-west from the centre of Bethlehem, directly to the south-west of the new souk and to the east of the Al-Ahlia University, in a land owned by the Palestinian Army (figs. 22-23). Geologically the area is composed by a friable whitish chalky limestone spur, the local bedrock, overlaid by reddish-brown soil. Jebel Dhaher necropolis was brought to light by chance on 1st October 2016 during construction works for a military compound. The site is on a regular flat bedrock berm at 714 m a.s.l. The necropolis is distinguished by shaft-tombs, with circular shafts and generally a single round domed chamber, distributed with a noticeable density.

Three tombs (Tombs 1-3) were dug by MOTA-DACH in the days of their accidental discovery (early October), while the other three (Tombs 4-6) were identified when a proper rescue intervention begun on Saturday 12th November 2016, with the participation also of the Italian Team of Sapienza University of Rome which already worked in Khalet Jam'a in 2015 (fig. 24).

Three more tombs (Tomb A, B, C) had already been discovered in 2003 along the western boundary wall of the compound. They were cut by bulldozers in an area slightly westwards and higher in elevation in respect of the tombs discovered in Autumn 2016. When work started at Jebel Dhaher, in 2016, Tomb A (fig. 25), the southernmost one, was still visible, while the other two tombs (B and C) had already been buried under a concrete wall. Tomb A was sliced on its north-south axis, and, according to what it was observable, it was 2.7 m long. It originally consisted of a domed chamber reached by a vertical round shaft. The chamber was filled up with collapsed limestone chops. Some human bones were collected inside it in 2003; ceramic material retrieved inside dates from Middle Bronze II.⁴⁰ Unfortunately, on November 18th 2016, also Tomb A was concealed under the concrete wall.

The necropolis of Jebel Dhaher was in use, according to architectural features of tombs and findings within them (see below), from the Early Bronze IVB/Intermediate Bronze Age up to the Middle Bronze Age, with a possible (maybe restricted) use during the Iron Age (documented only for Tomb 5).

⁴⁰ Local office of the MOTA-DACH, personal communication.

3.2.1. Tomb 1

The identification of Tomb 1 was due to the discovery of the nearby Tomb 2, the first to be brought to light at the site in 2016. In fact, when Tomb 2 was discovered, the bulldozer shovel accidentally broke the rocky diaphragm separating the two tombs, allowing the archaeologists to notice the presence of Tomb 1. Tomb 1 was a familiar tomb, apparently used for two or more generations during Middle Bronze Age I-II (fig. 26).

It consisted of a vertical round shaft, 0.94 × 0.87 m, 1.4 m deep, and one round chamber 3.3 m wide. The shaft was occupied in its lower part by a stepped ramp partly built with stones and partly made of compacted clay reaching the depth of -1.4 m. The passage to the chamber was 0.5 m wide, and also thanks to the ramp could be easily blocked by a flat stone. The latter was still standing *in situ* when the tomb was accidentally discovered, so that it was possible to observe it and how it blocked the passage. The stone was a big limestone slab 0.92 m long, 0.64 m wide, 0.18 m thick, fixed by means of two small limestone chops.

The round chamber had regular circular plan with a diameter of 3.3 m and a shallow slightly domed roof 0.95 m high (fig. 27). Along the north-western wall of the chamber, a platform was uncovered (Bench 33), made of flat stones, which hosted the latest inhumation (§ 3.2.7.) with some skull fragments and its funerary furnishings. Near the skull, between the head of the dead and the wall, an ovoid Middle Bronze IB jug (JD.16.T1/1)⁴¹ with painted decoration had been placed (fig. 28).

Some other long bones belonging to different individuals were found in the space surrounding the platform, and a shallow elongated niche, 0.95 m wide, had been cut along the southern wall of the chamber, perhaps for gaining space for one of them.

3.2.2. Tomb 2

Tomb 2 (figs. 27, 29) is to the north-west of Tomb 1. This is the tomb more damaged by building activities in the compound. Bulldozer removed almost completely its roof and shaft, and also part of the underground chamber. It had a round shaft of 0.9 m of diameter, 1.3 m deep, only partially preserved to the north of the chamber. The burial cave, had a roughly circular shape, with a diameter of 1.8 m, and a slightly concave floor. The roof was domed with a reconstructed height of 1.1 m. A 0.32 m wide and 0.16 m high niche was cut in its southern wall. The dimensions and the presence of the niche suggest that Tomb 2 was originally excavated in the Early Bronze IV/Intermediate Bronze Age.

A Middle Bronze II dipper juglet with pinched rim, JD.12.T2/1 (fig. 28),⁴² was found in the shaft. It may signal the latest use of the tomb. No human neither animal remains were collected in Tomb 2.

⁴¹ Pritchard 1963, pl. 21:48. This jug with painted decoration, that can find some comparison at Tell el-Mutesellim (Loud 1948, pls. 11:18, 22; 12:21), suggests a possible date to the early phase of the Middle Bronze I (Gerstenblith 1980, 69; Nigro 2008, 379).

⁴² It can be compared with Kenyon 1965, fig. 121:5.

3.2.3. Tomb 3

Tomb 3 was discovered to the north-west of Tomb 1 (fig. 24). It consisted of a round vertical shaft, 0.85 m of diameter and 1.6 m deep, and two chambers (1 and 2). Chamber 1 was located to the south-west of the shaft, and Chamber 2 is to the north of Chamber 1 (fig. 30).

The shaft was found filled up with stones of medium dimensions. Like in Tomb 1, also in Tomb 3 at the bottom of the shaft there was a stepped ramp facilitating the access to Chamber 1.

At the bottom of the shaft, the opening towards Chamber 1 was blocked by a closing stone: a big vertical limestone slab 1.5 × 0.6 m.

Chamber 1 has a circular plan with domed roof, 2.2 m of diameter and 0.8 m high. Its south-western quadrant is occupied by a raised stone platform (Bench 3), 1.4 m long on the east-west axis, and 1.1 m wide on the north-south one (fig. 31). The platform was coated with a whitish clayish plaster. Some fragmentary human vertebra (§ 3.2.7.) were still *in situ* on the platform at the moment of discovery. They had belonged to a dead buried on it. This individual was accompanied by a carinated bowl, JD.16.T3.3/1,⁴³ and a jug with double-handle, JD.16.T3.3/2,⁴⁴ hinting at a drinking rite, common in such Middle Bronze Age tombs (fig. 32).⁴⁵

Just to the north of the platform, a squared passage, 0.6 m wide, leads to Chamber 2. A 0.35 m high step marked the passage to this second round chamber, which up to now remained unexcavated.

3.2.4. Tomb 4

A fourth tomb was identified about 5 m east of Tomb 1. It has a roughly round shaft, 1.06 m of diameter, filled up with a brownish sandy soil and limestone chops. Two blocks were uncovered within the shaft at 0.74 m from the surface, and they measure 0.50 × 0.40 m. After the removal of these stones the excavation was interrupted.

3.2.5. Tomb 5

Tomb 5 (fig. 33) is the easternmost one identified so far (fig. 24), and it is provided by a shaft and a single chamber. It is smaller than the other tombs of the same necropolis. The shaft is roughly round, with a diameter of 1.10 m, 0.92 m deep, and it was filled up with a brownish layer (Filling 1). At its bottom some stones were sunken in the clayish soil, and the access to the chamber was blocked by a closing stone 0.5 × 0.4 m. The entrance to the tomb is 0.68 m high and 0.5 m wide (fig. 34). The chamber, to the north of the shaft, is round with a diameter of 1.6 m, and it was filled up in its upper strata with a layer of debris (Filling 2) with limestone chops collapsed from the domed roof, and a few scattered pottery sherds. Under this upper deposit, there was a layer of buff sandy soil (Filling 3) accumulated against the eastern side of the chamber, aside a central L-shaped stone built

⁴³ Pritchard 1963, fig. 50:20; Loffreda 1984, fig. 4:22. The type reminds bowls with high carination imitating metallic prototypes well known in the Levantine tradition (Nigro 2003a).

⁴⁴ Pritchard 1963, pl. 21:48.

⁴⁵ Garfinkel - Cohen 2007, 61; Zuckerman 2007, 189.

platform (Bench 7) which hosted a fragmentary inhumation (Burial 5.1). Along eastern side of the chamber some pottery vessels were aligned (JD.T5.F.5), apparently as funerary set of Burial 5.1: a cooking jug with carinated body (JD.16.T5.5/1); a pinkish fabric jug (JD.16.T5.5/2, fig. 35),⁴⁶ and another fragmentary jug (JD.16.T5.4/1; fig. 36),⁴⁷ which was found on the L-shaped platform together with some teeth (four upper molars and two incisors) and scattered human bones comprising skull fragments (JD.16.T5.4.HR.1; § 3.2.7.), covered by two small flat stones. As the teeth and the jug show signs of having been burnt, it seems plausible that all these finds were the remains of an incineration. Burial 5.1 is thus likely to represent a sort of secondary internment dating back to early Iron Age, with the simple funerary set to the east (Filling 5), for which the bench was built overlaying previous layers. Under the bench, in fact, there was a brownish layer (Filling 6) with some fragmentary human bones (§ 3.2.7.). In this layer a copper dagger (JD.16.T5.1; fig. 37) was found, indicating the original presence of an earlier burial. This dagger belongs to a type spread in the Southern Levant during the Intermediate and Middle Bronze Ages,⁴⁸ hinting, according to its typology, to a use of Tomb 5 during these periods, as it is also documented by other tombs of the necropolis. The architecture of the tomb may suggest that it was first excavated in the Early Bronze IV/Intermediate Bronze Age.

3.2.6. Tomb 6

Tomb 6 (fig. 38) was identified roughly at middle of the small cemetery, north-west of Tomb 5 and south-east of Tomb 3. It has a large round shaft, 1.2 m of diameter, 1.4 m deep from the topsoil. It was filled up with a yellowish fine friable sandy soil (Filling 1), where an EB IVB globular jar with everted rim and flat base was found (JD.16.T6.1/1; fig. 39).⁴⁹ The passage between the shaft and the chamber was blocked by a heap of medium size stones. At the bottom of the shaft a small entrance, 0.6 × 0.6 m, gives access to a large chamber, 3.4 × 4 m and 1.5 m high, to the west (fig. 40). Inside it, there was a thick layer of debris and collapsed stone chops (Filling 2). In this layer an almost complete human skeleton was found (§ 3.2.7.). At the moment of the opening of the tomb, a half skull, pierced on the frontal bone, left side over glabella, was next to the south-western wall. Under the debris layer, a yellowish clayish layer (Filling 3) was all over the chamber. Here, an ovoid jar with everted rim, combed decoration and flat base was found (JD.16.T6.3/1; fig. 39)⁵⁰ along with scattered bones (§ 3.2.7.), in the western quadrant of the chamber. A rectangular limestone slab (Wall 4), 0.95 × 0.5 m, was standing next to the western wall of the chamber just underneath where the pierced half skull was uncovered. Removing Filling 3 a compacted chalky layer (Filling 5) was exposed, from where some fragmentary human bones were collected (§ 3.2.7.). Some human remains were also deposited under slab W.4.

The pottery found suggests a date to the Early Bronze IVB for the last use of the tomb.

⁴⁶ Respectively, Arie 2006, fig. 13.59:8; Singer-Avitz 2002, fig. 9:1.

⁴⁷ Mazar 2015, 16-17.

⁴⁸ Maxwell-Hyslop 1946, 21; Dunand 1950-1958, 253, 292, 302, 383, figs. 277:9162, 415:1068, pls. LXII:9162, LXIV:9534, LXVIII:9662; Philip 1989, 103-104; Gernez 2007, 472-480, 482-486; Montanari 2014, 102-103.

⁴⁹ It seems quite similar to necked jars with globular body and short flaring neck, Class NJ2, of D'Andrea (2014, vol. 2, 265).

⁵⁰ It is comparable to Ovoid Storage Jar 1.2 class of D'Andrea (2014, vol. 2, 294-295, pl. CXVIII:2).

3.2.7. Human and animal remains from Jebel Dhaher necropolis [A.G.]

This paragraph is devoted to a preliminary overview of human and animal remains collected in Tombs 1, 3, 5 and 6⁵¹ of the Jebel Dhaher necropolis (tab. 2). Most of the remains are human long bones and fragments of different kinds. Preservation status is not good, due to the high acidity of the soil inside tombs, which affected in many cases the outer cortex of bones. At a first autopsy, some long bones were totally abraded along the epiphysis and show on the outer surface small grooves.

TOMB	HUMAN REMAINS	ANIMAL REMAINS
Tomb 1	fragmentary long bones, 2 fragments of skull, 2 femura, 2 tibia, 3 or 4 humerus, fragment of ribs (JD.16.T1.3.HR.1)	fragmentary long bones (JD.16.T1.3.FR.1)
Tomb 2	-	-
Tomb 3	vertebrae fragments (JD.16.T3.3.HR.1)	-
Tomb 4	-	-
Tomb 5	F.4: 3 upper molars, fragment of a skull (JD.16.T5.4.HR.1); F.5: fragmentary skull walls (JD.16.T5.5.HR.1), fragment of long bones (tibia), 2 skull walls, 1 small incisor (JD.16.T5.5.HR.2); F.6: 1 small incisor, 1 fragment of rib, fragmentary bones (JD.16.T5.6.HR.1)	ovicaprine astragalus (JD.16.T5.4.FR.1)
Tomb 6	F.2: 1 small incisor, 1 fragmentary rib, 3 fragmentary bones (JD.16.T6.2.HR.1), 1 fragmentary skull, 2 shoulders, 1 ulna, 1 radio, 2 femurs, fragmentary coccyx, 1 atlas, 2 vertebrae, fragmentary long bones (JD.16.T6.2.HR.2); F.3: 2 shoulders, 1 ulna, 1 radio, 1 fragment of basin, 2 tibia, 2 fragmentary ribs, 2 vertebrae, fragmentary foot, fragmentary long bones (JD.16.T6.3.HR.1); F.5: 2 femurs, 1 humerus, 1 phalanx, a fragmentary mandible (JD.16.T6.5.HR.1)	fragmentary long bones (JD.16.T6.2.FR.1)

Tab. 2 - Quantity and kind of human and animal remains collected in Jebel Dhaher necropolis during 2016 season.

In Tomb 1, both human and animal remains were found. Human bones include: two femura, two fragmentary tibia, and three or four humerus (JD.16.T1.3.HR.1; fig. 41). Moreover, between platform Bench 3, on which human remains were laid, and the wall of the chamber skulls fragments were found (a parietal bone and a frontal bone). Skeletal remains on the platform seem to be related to a primary crouched inhumations (Burial 1.1). According to the number of long bones lying on platform, it is reasonable that this tomb was a multiple burial.

In Tomb 3, it was possible to recognized some human vertebrae (JD.16.T3.3.HR.1; fig. 42) on the built up stone platform, JD.T3.B.3.

In Tomb 5, some fragments of a skull and three burnt upper molars (JD.16.T5.4.HR.1), together with an *ovis vel capra* astragalus (JD.16.T5.4.FR.1) were found in Filling 4, in an incineration (Burial 5.1) inside juglet JD.16.T5.4/1 (fig. 36). Moreover, in Filling 5, other fragments of human skull (JD.16.T5.5.HR.1), an incisive and fragments of long bones (probably a tibia; JD.16.T5.5.HR.2) were retrieved. Near the dagger, in Filling 6 under the L-shaped platform, a tooth was collected, a small incisor, together with a fragment of rib

⁵¹ These are currently the only tombs with recognizable remains.

and other small bone fragments (JD.16.T5.6.HR.1), belonging to an earlier inhumation (Burial 5.2).

Bones from Tomb 6 were characterized by clear calcareous concretions which in some cases have contributed to their welding. This is the case of an ulna and radio in T6.F.3, completely welded together with a concretion in the middle, probably residue of tibial plate of a sub-adult placed above. Bones were extremely fragile and in the case of the long bones showed small grooves on the epiphysis, attributable also to corrosion suffered in the soil.

Nevertheless, it was possible to recognize some important skeletal sections, as it is in the case of human remains found in Filling 2 (fig. 43). A small fragmentary skull, probably belonging to a young woman (Burial 6.1), without glabella, with rounded orbits and small and pointed mastoid process was recognized. According to teeth still in place in the mandible two premolars and three molars, it can be assumed that the individual had died when it was 20 years old. In the mandible there is a hole, perhaps the residual of an alveolar infection.

Basically, two burials can be distinguished in Tomb 6: one (Burial 6.1) on the limestone slab W.4 laying to the west of the tomb; the other (Burial 6.2) to the east of the slab and under it, in Filling 5 (a male adult aged 20).

The presence of other sparse bones shows that the tomb served for multiple burials during a certain time lapse during the Early Bronze Age.

3.3. *el-Atan Tomb (n. 030 in fig. 3)*

An Early Bronze IVB tomb was discovered on early June 2009 due to the erection of a private house in el-Atan Street, nearby the Milk Grotto,⁵² 400 m east of the Nativity Church, in the area of the city known as Tell Bethlehem, in a land owned by Mr. Nassri el-Bandaq.

The shaft single chamber tomb was incidentally discovered by a bulldozer which cut through a part of the burial chamber. The archaeologists thus entered it directly from the chamber and they could not excavate the shaft, which was in the land of another owner, who did not allow them to operate.

On 19th June 2009 the MOTA-DACH Office of Bethlehem started rescue excavations, collecting some human remains and a funerary set comprising 4 four-spouted lamps, 5 slightly carinated bowls with combed or grooved decoration under the rim,⁵³ 1 flat base ovoid jar with flaring neck and combed decoration,⁵⁴ 1 flat base jar with upper wall slightly waisted with combed and wavy combed decoration,⁵⁵ 2 amphoriskoi with combed

⁵² In 1989 a rock-cut tomb used between the 8th and the 1st century BC was discovered in the site of Ain el-Atan, in the neighborhood of Bethlehem (Dadon 1990; 1997), at about 2.5 km to the south-west of the centre of Bethlehem, in a site identified with Khirbet el-Khokh.

⁵³ Kenyon 1965, 43-44, fig. 21:2-3.

⁵⁴ Nigro 2003b, fig. 24:1.

⁵⁵ Kenyon - Holland 1982, fig. 94:10; Nigro 2003b, fig. 20:5.

decoration⁵⁶ and a beaker, as well as a copper pin with rolled head,⁵⁷ and 5 carnelian beads. This material dates back to the second part of the Early Bronze IV (fig. 44).⁵⁸

This tomb is included into the already known cemetery extended to the east and to the south of the Nativity Church, in use from the Early Bronze Age until the Byzantine Period.⁵⁹

3.4. *Necropolis of Bardhaa (n. 029 in fig. 3)*

A necropolis in the village of Bardhaa, to the east of Khalet al-Jam'a and 2.5 km south-east of the Nativity Church, was discovered and looted in the period between 1967 and 1995 (fig. 45).⁶⁰ The Necropolis of Bardhaa was set on the northern flank of Wadi Ta'amireh and to the west of Wadi et-Tin, along emerging limestone bedrock cliffs. Tombs are mostly shaft tombs, with squared or round shafts, leading to underground rock-cut chambers. A preliminary visit to the site showed that it had been largely plundered, and a provisional calculation of the number of tombs is around 30-40 tombs.

Information provided by the Palestinian Tourism Police, which sequestered materials by antique dealers during some building activities at the site, allowed to rescue some pottery vessels, including two Middle Bronze ovoid jars, BL1518 and BL1536,⁶¹ which confirm the chronological range of the necropolis between the Early Bronze IV and Middle Bronze I-II (fig. 46).

The Necropolis of Bardhaa seems to belong to a system of cemeteries established on the emerging bedrock spurs of the hills in between Wadi 'Artas, Wadi Ta'amireh and Wadi et-Tin south of Bethlehem up to Tekoa.⁶² Khalet al-Jam'a, Jebel Dhaher, Bardhaa, during the urban occupation of Bethlehem in the Bronze and Iron Ages. They were first established in the Early Bronze Age and one may suggest that each of these cemeteries belonged to a familiar group, a clan or a tribe.

4. OTHER ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

4.1. *Khirbet el-Kôm (n. 018 in fig. 2)*

The site⁶³ that lays along Wadi es-Saffar, a tributary of Nahar ed-Duweir, is about 11.2 Km west of Hebron and 11.6 Km east of Tell ed-Duweir/ancient Lachish.⁶⁴ It was put on

⁵⁶ Kenyon - Holland 1982, fig. 98:19.

⁵⁷ Gernez 2008, 247-248, pl. 11.

⁵⁸ Pottery equipment of el-Atan Tomb, together with the pin with rolled head (Gernez 2008, 260, fig. 8), aligns itself with the horizon of Southern Palestine (Amiran 1969, 80-82, pl. 22; Dever 1980, 48; fig. 4; D'Andrea 2014, vol. 1, 201, fig. 5:32, vol. 2, 91-118, pl. XXX) in late Early Bronze IV.

⁵⁹ Bagatti 1952, 261-262; Saller 1963, 325; 1964, 287; 1968; Gutman - Berma 1970, 585; Prag 2000, 177, fig. 3.

⁶⁰ In the area of Bardhaa some structures, interpreted as a Roman house, an enclosure wall and a mosaic pavement, were discovered on September 1944 (www.iaa-archives.org.il/zoom/zoom.aspx?folder_id=2319&type_id=&id=35263).

⁶¹ They can find a parallel in necropolis of Jericho (Kenyon 1960, fig. 182:2-3) and Tell Beit Mirsim (Ben-Arieh 2004, fig. 2.15.76-77).

⁶² Vincent 1947; Dajani 1960, 102. Moreover, Saller (1964, 288) quotes the presence of rock-cut tombs eastwards and northwards of Tekoa.

⁶³ A special thank goes to Dr. Ahmed Rjoob that made possible the visit to Khirbet el-Kôm and Jebel Qa'aqir, and guided the team sharing his knowledge and experience about these sites and beyond.

⁶⁴ The site has been tentatively identified with Biblical Saphir (Micah 1:11).

the map by Captain C.R. Conder and Captain H.H. Kitchener, who described it as a large ruin,⁶⁵ and successively partially sounded during the Spring 1971 by J.S. Holladay on behalf of the University of Toronto, Canada.⁶⁶ The site was first occupied during the Chalcolithic Period, albeit in a very limited way, and stably settled during the Early Bronze Age. Some small finds, pottery vases and sparse structures of this phase were uncovered.⁶⁷ A more substantial occupation characterizes the life of settlement from the Iron Age onwards, which, in the University of Toronto excavations, was found directly upon Early Bronze Age collapsed remains. According to the collected material, Khirbet el-Kôm was settled in the 10th century BC being reconstructed several times until the Persian and Hellenistic periods. During Iron Age II, Khirbet el-Kôm was a fortified site on the road from Hebron to Lachish in the Kingdom of Judah. The remains of its monumental defensive system, consisting of heavy stone walls, probably of the casemate type with a city-gate, are still visible, in the later reconstruction of the Hasmoneans.⁶⁸

One of the major small finds collected on the site is a bilingual, Aramaic and Greek, ostrakon dated to the late 4th-early 3rd century BC,⁶⁹ concerning an early loan of money (32 drachma), beyond other ostraca in Aramaic and Greek.⁷⁰

Ancient fortification walls underlay the modern terrace wall of the village that nowadays encircles the site (fig. 47); the area all around the city-walls is terraced for cultivation, with olive tree groves. Modern buildings are unfortunately threatening the ancient structures having been built inside and upon the terrace walls.

4.2. *Abar al-Nabi Daoud - David's Wells (n. 017 in fig. 3)*

The so-called David's Wells (*Abar [Beyar] al-Nabi Daoud*) are an historical archaeological site in Bethlehem Downtown, inside the yard of the Franciscan Fathers Catholic Action Circle, in King David Street (fig. 48), where the tradition identified one of the many holy places of the town.⁷¹ They consist of three large cisterns hewn in the northern rock hill (Ras Eftais), located at the entrance of the old main road of the city.⁷²

According to the guardian of the Catholic Action Circle, the wells opening on the cisterns were actually five, but only three of them are still visible inside the compound of this institution, while the other two are northwards, outside the boundary wall of the Circle, buried under the modern street.⁷³ The real situation was clarified by Father Bellarmino Bagatti o.f.m. when he reported that three wells opening on one underground cistern are in Franciscan Father's land, while a second cistern (with two wells) was located north of the street, in the nearby Greek Orthodox Church property.

⁶⁵ Conder - Kitchener 1883, 358.

⁶⁶ Holladay 1971a.

⁶⁷ Holladay 1971a, 176.

⁶⁸ Moreover, Holladay (1971a, 176) mentioned also some rich tombs.

⁶⁹ Geraty 1975.

⁷⁰ Dever 1969-1970.

⁷¹ Nigro 2015, 4.

⁷² Bagatti 1952, 248.

⁷³ Bagatti - Alliata 1980, 259.

What seems noteworthy is that until the 50ies of the last century these cisterns represented the main source of fresh water for inhabitants of Bethlehem, being located on a top-hill, connected to the Roman aqueduct. Nowadays, only the southernmost one is still operating.

In addition to the wells, a cemetery and remains of a Byzantine church (Saint Cassian or Saint Serge) east of them, believed built by Emperor Justinian, were discovered in the same site.⁷⁴

The cemetery, including underground galleries with arcosolia, each containing some sepulchral pits (interpreted at the moment of discovery as the David's sepulchre!), was discovered on June 1935 and restored in 1962 by Br. Michelangelo Tizzani.⁷⁵ During excavations, some pottery dating back to the 4th century AD was collected and some contemporary graffiti were uncovered, among these a Constantine cross.

In 1895, part of the mosaic floor of the church bearing an inscription with verses 19 and 20 of Psalm 117 («Open to me the gates of justice; I will enter them and give thanks to the Lord. This gate is the Lord's, the just shall enter it») was discovered.⁷⁶

The preservation of this site, which has characterized for many centuries the history of Bethlehem, is a goal of the MOTA-DACH, which has now collected plans and pictures of both cisterns and wells.

5. FINAL REMARKS

The second season of joint archaeological investigations and protection of sites in the urban area of Bethlehem has been very fruitful and it has provided a large amount of scientific data, to be included as just recovered tesserae belonging to the beautiful mosaic of the history of this renowned ancient town of Palestine. New data corroborate previous reconstructions and raise new questions for scholars to be answered.

The quick publication of this unfortunately sparse pieces of evidence, in spite of its unavoidable preliminary nature, is the only way to fix the memory of monuments, finds and other archaeological and landscape information, before the hurried development of the town sweeps them definitely out.⁷⁷

The joint commitment for the protection of antiquities of the MOTA-DACH and Sapienza University of Rome allowed to survey, document and recover tombs, structures and items which were threatened by modern building activities and illegal trade of antiquities. Each single rescued pottery vessel or simple archaeological item is a piece of the history of Palestine which is given back to collective memory as part of Humankind's shared Heritage.

⁷⁴ Bagatti 1952, 248-255; 1968, fig. 32.

⁷⁵ Bagatti 1968, 225. Also the area to the west of the wells, nowadays corresponding to St. Joseph Street and St. Joseph Church, in the land of the Sisters of Saint Joseph of the Apparition, an area also called Baten, was occupied by tombs during Roman and Byzantine periods, suggesting that this quarter of the modern Bethlehem was unsettled in antiquity during those phases (Saller 1964, 287; Bagatti 1952, 255; 1968, 237).

⁷⁶ Lagrange 1895, 625-626; Séjourné 1895, 439-444.

⁷⁷ Hussein - Al-Houdalieh - Tawafsha 2017.

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Fig. 1 - The Italian-Palestinian team during the expedition in Autumn 2016 in the Expedition Headquarter at Al-Badd Giacaman Museum in Bethlehem.

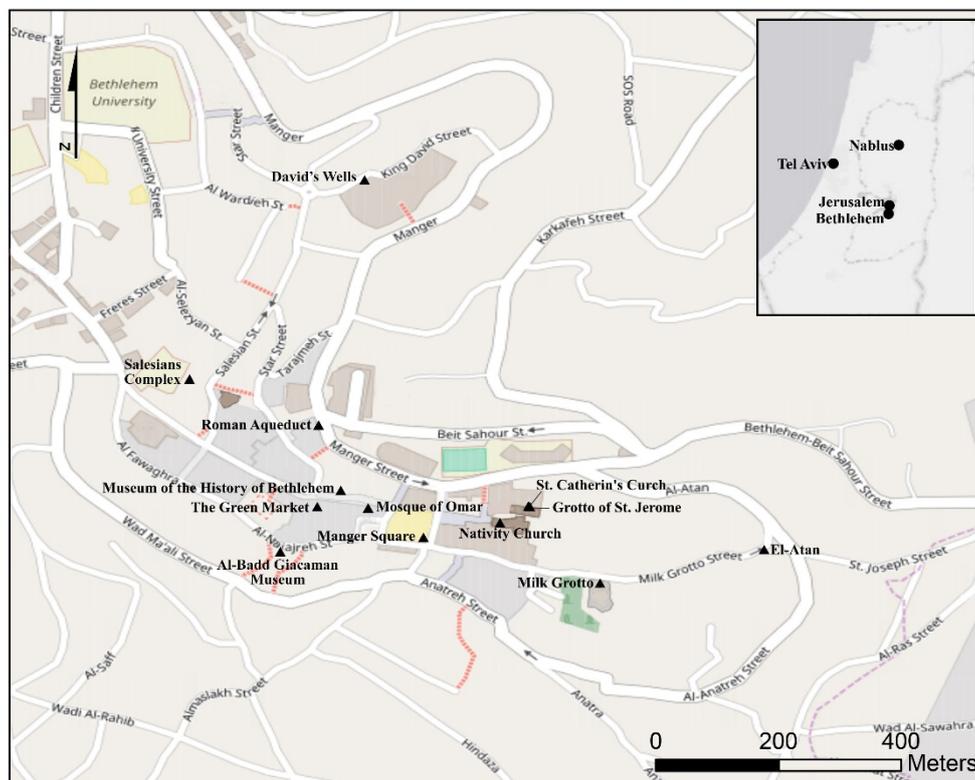


Fig. 2 - Comprehensive archaeological and historical map of the city of Bethlehem developed by Sapienza Expedition - MOTA-DACH.

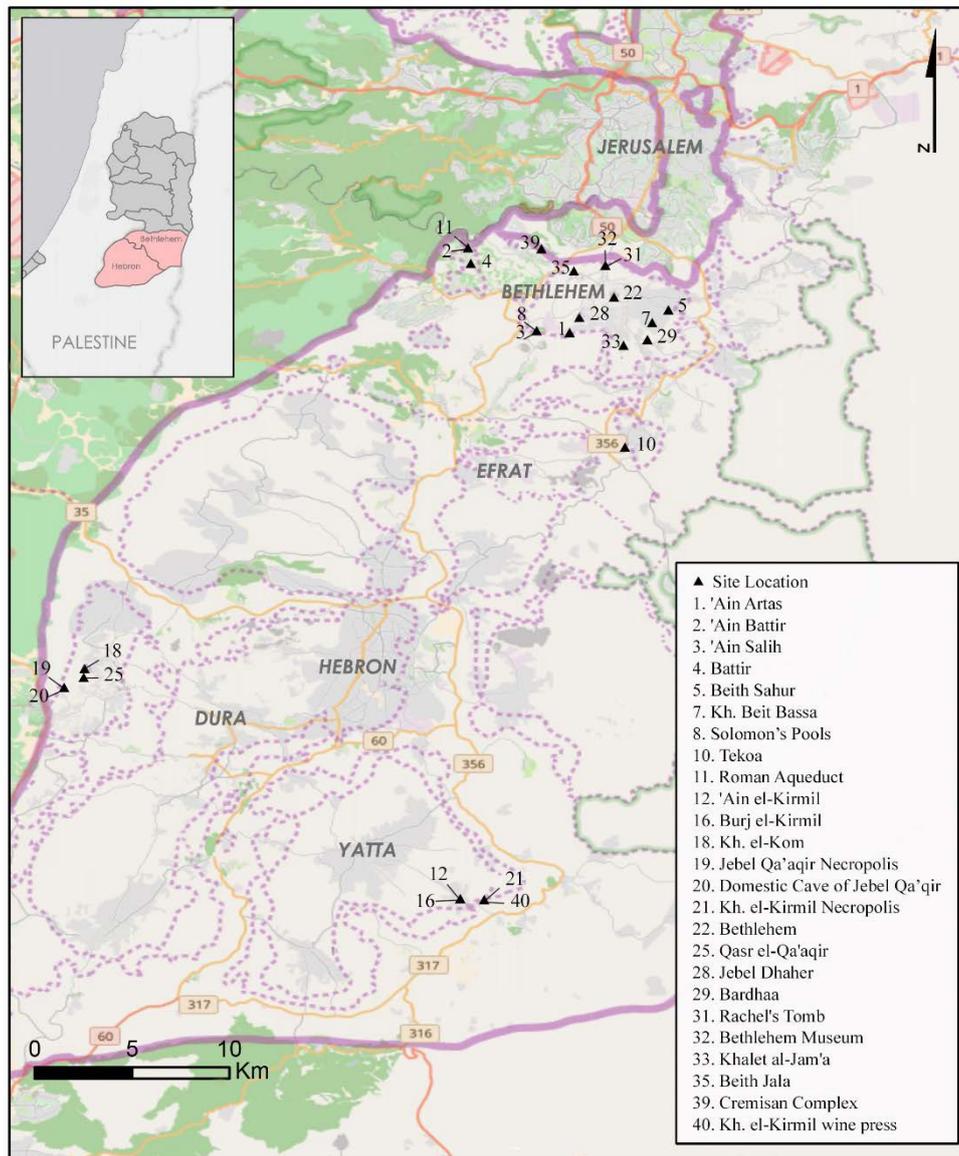


Fig. 3 - Comprehensive map of the area of Bethlehem, city and surroundings, and of neighbouring archaeological sites, developed by Sapienza Expedition - MOTA-DACH.



Fig. 4 - Necropolis of Khirbet el-Karmil, from north-west.



Fig. 5 - Khirbet el-Karmil wine press, from north-east.



Fig. 6 - Burj el-Karmil (left), and the Crusader church (right).



Fig. 7 - Necropolis of Jebel Qa'aqir, from east.



Fig. 8 - The Bethlehem Museum with a stretch of the Roman Aqueduct.



Fig. 9 - Panoramic view of Khalet al-Jam'a necropolis from the upper terrace of Area D.

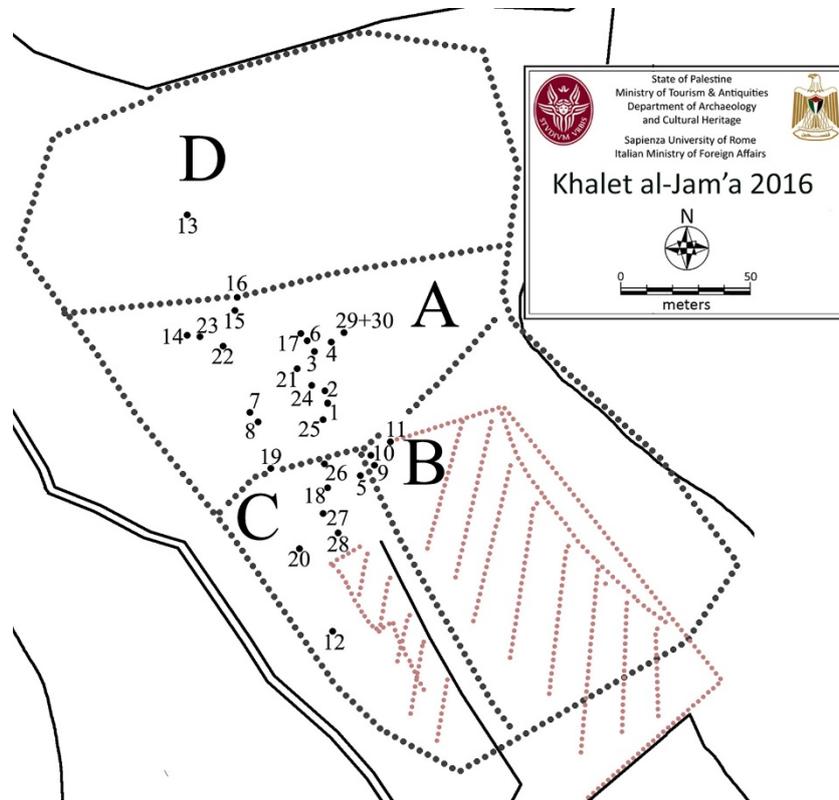


Fig. 10 - Plan of necropolis of Khalet al-Jam'a with areas and tombs.



Fig. 11 - Chamber 2 of Tomb A1, the passage communicating with Tomb A2 (left), and the entrance from Chamber 1 (right).



Fig. 12 - The 'Gublite' bowl (BL6166) from Chamber 1 of Tomb A1; the White Slip bowl (BL6171) and the dipper juglet (BL6172) from Chamber 3 of Tomb A2 (1:4).

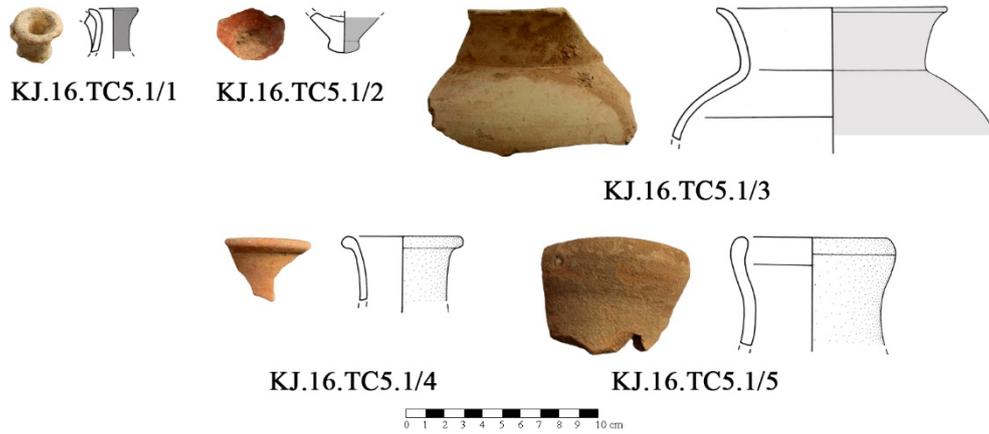


Fig. 13 - Middle Bronze fine ware from Tomb C5 (1:4).

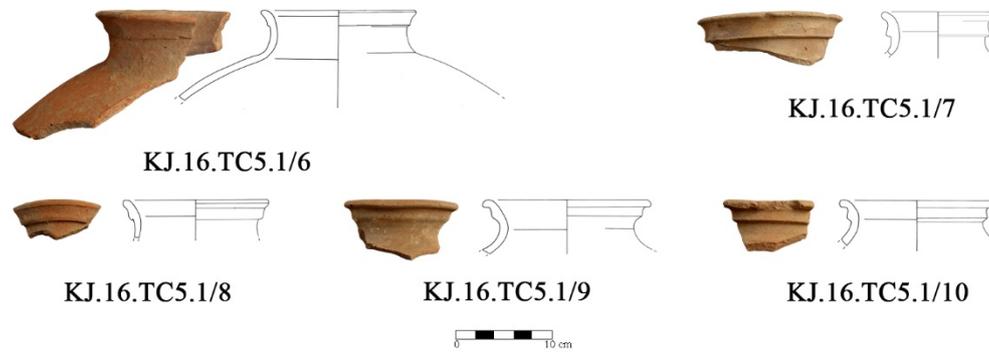


Fig. 14 - Middle Bronze Storage jars from Tomb C5 (1:8).

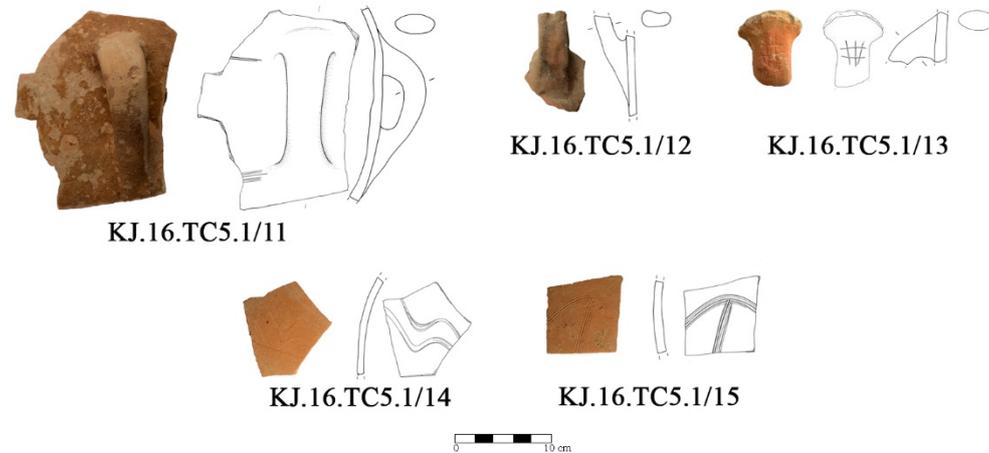


Fig. 15 - Middle Bronze Storage ware from Tomb C5 (1:8).

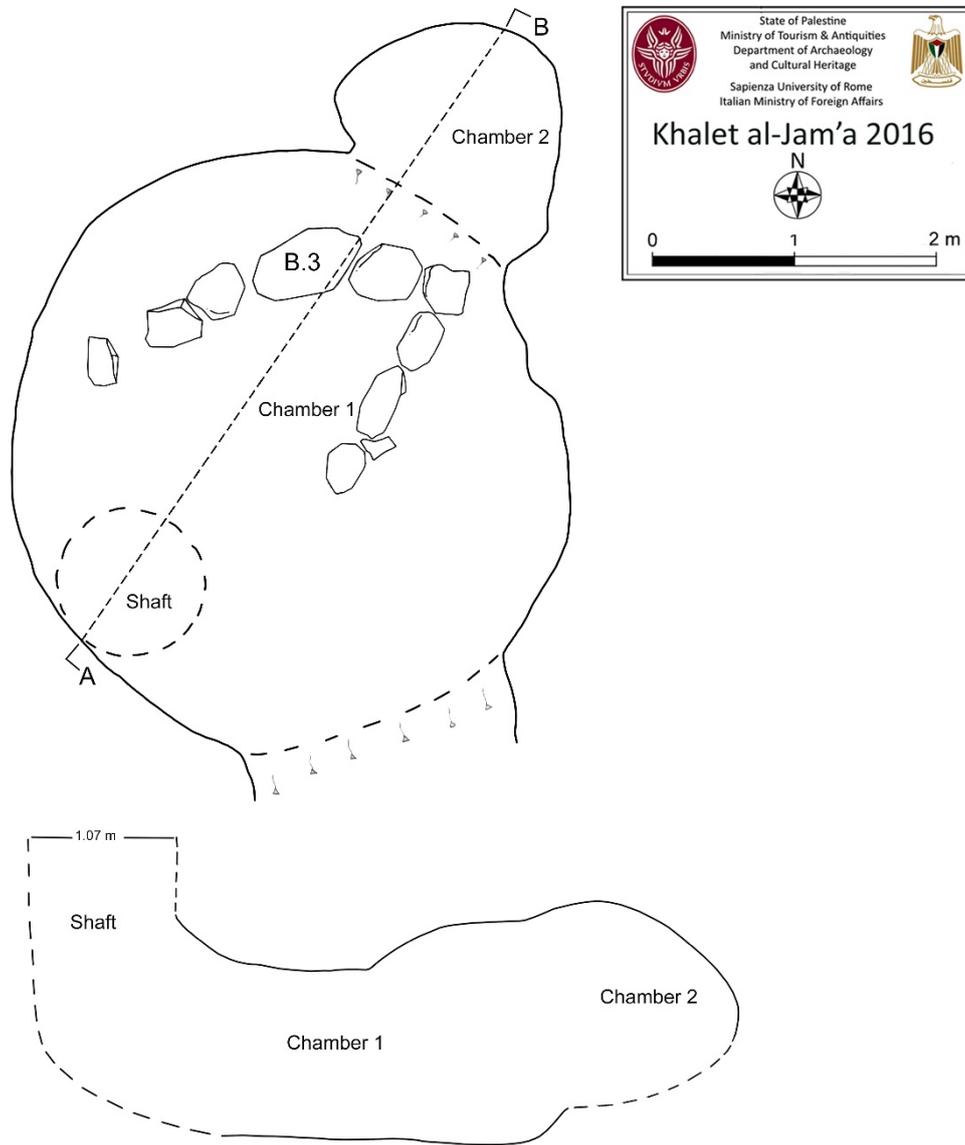


Fig. 16 - Detailed plan of Tomb D13 of Khalet al-Jam'a.



Fig. 17 - Finds from F.1 of Tomb D13 of Khalet al-Jam'a.



Fig. 18 - Finds from F.2 of Tomb D13 of Khalet al-Jam'a.

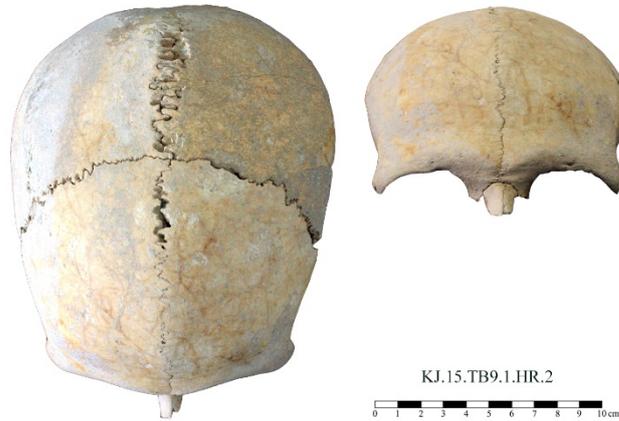


Fig. 19 - Young skull from MB II Tomb B9 of Khalet al-Jam'a (KJ.15.TB9.1.HR.2).



Fig. 20 - Adult male skull from MB II Tomb B10 of Khalet al-Jam'a (KJ.15.TB10.1.HR.1).



Fig. 21 - Young male skull from EB IVB Tomb C12 of Khalet al-Jam'a (KJ.15.TC12.1.HR.1).



Fig. 22 - The site of Jebel Dhafer during rescue excavations in November 2016, from north-east.



Fig. 23 - The site of Jebel Dhafer during rescue excavations in November 2016, from south-west.

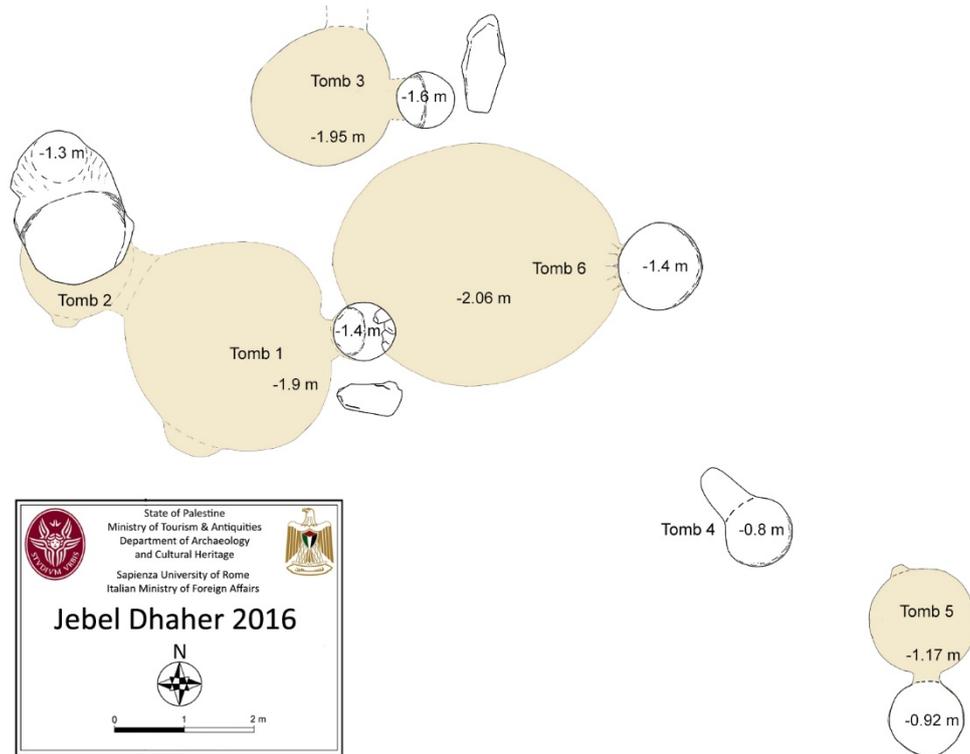


Fig. 24 - Plan of the necropolis of Jebel Dhafer with tombs discovered in Autumn 2016.



Fig. 25 - Tomb A of Jebel Dhafer before its concealing under the concrete wall.



Fig. 26 - Shaft and closing stone (left), and shaft from the inside (right) of Tomb 1 of Jebel Dhaher.

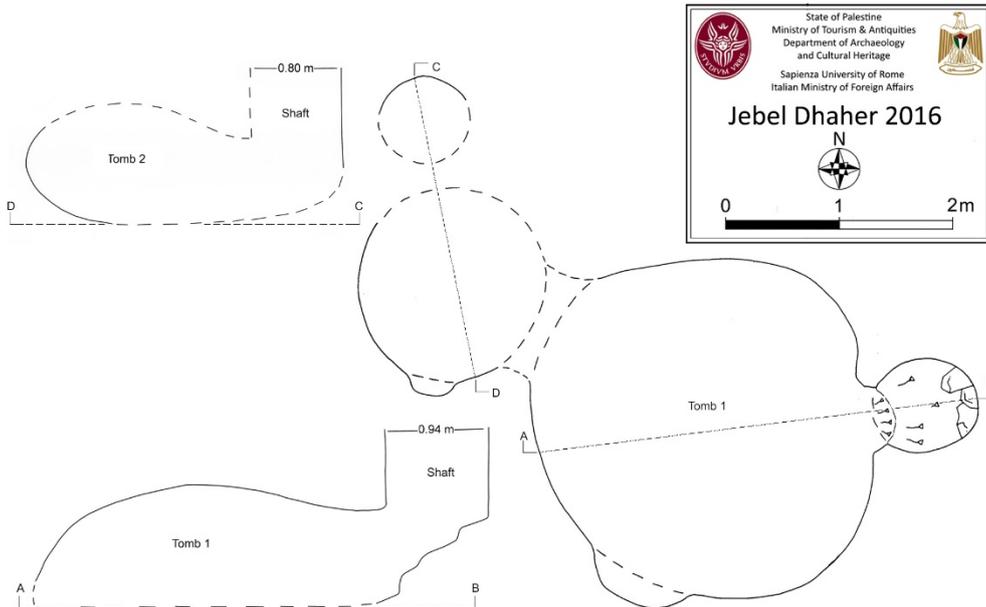


Fig. 27 - Plan of Tombs 1 and 2 of Jebel Dhaher.



Fig. 28 - Middle Bronze pottery from Tomb 1 (JD.16.T1/1) and Tomb 2 (JD.16.T2/1) of Jebel Dhaher (1:4).



Fig. 29 - Tomb 2 of Jebel Dhaher, from north.

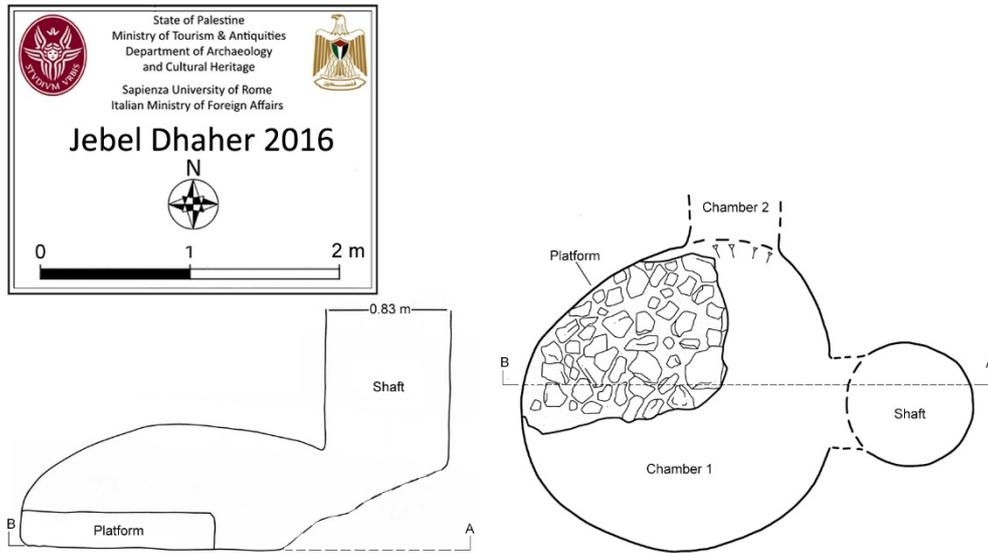


Fig. 30 - Plan of Tomb 3 of Jebel Dhaher.



Fig. 31 - The stone platform B.3 in Chamber 1 and the passage to Chamber of Tomb 3 of Jebel Dhaher.



Fig. 32 - Middle Bronze pottery equipment of Tomb 3 of Jebel Dhaher (1:4).



Fig. 33 - Shaft and entrance of Tomb 5 of Jebel Dhaher.

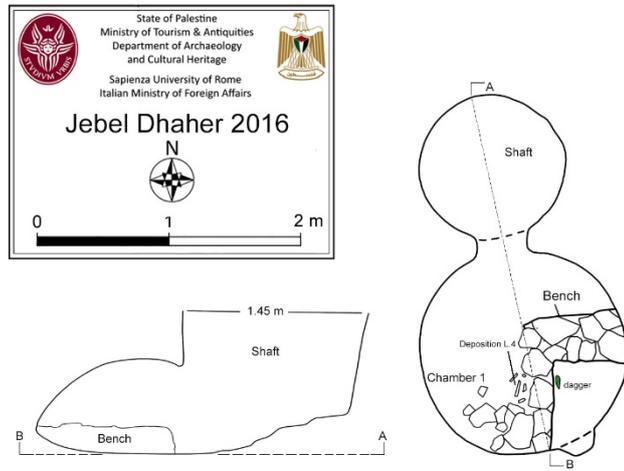


Fig. 34 - Plan of Tomb 5 of Jebel Dhafer.

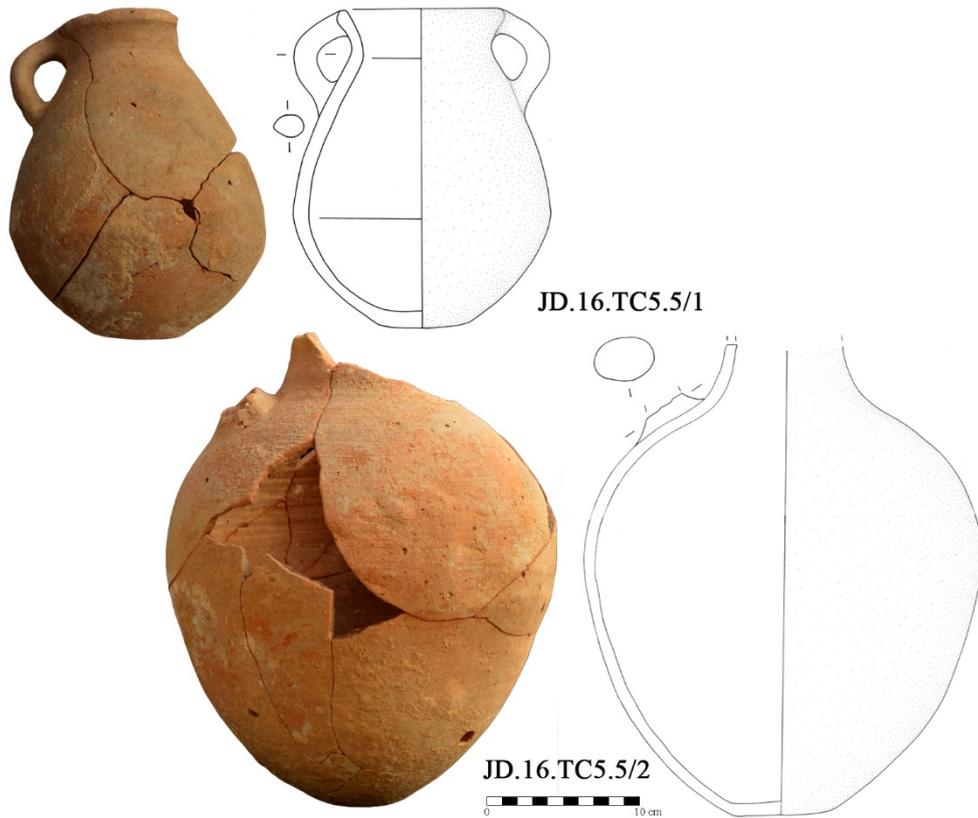


Fig. 35 - Iron Age pottery equipment of Tomb 5, from JD.T5.F.5 (1:4).



Fig. 36 - The Iron Age Burial B5.1 from Tomb 5 of Jebel Dhaher.



Fig. 37 - Intermediate Bronze Age copper dagger from Tomb 5 of Jebel Dhaher.

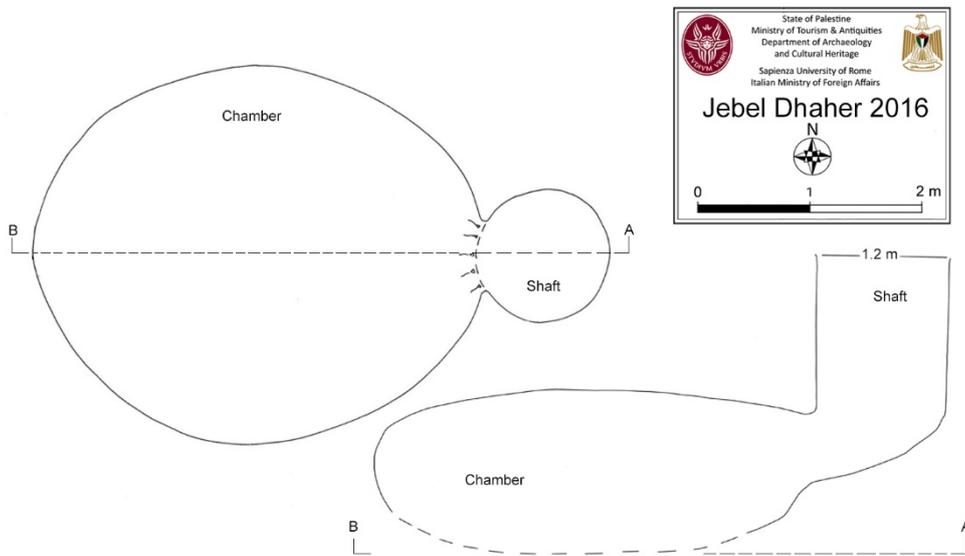


Fig. 38 - Plan of Tomb 6 of Jebel Dhaher.

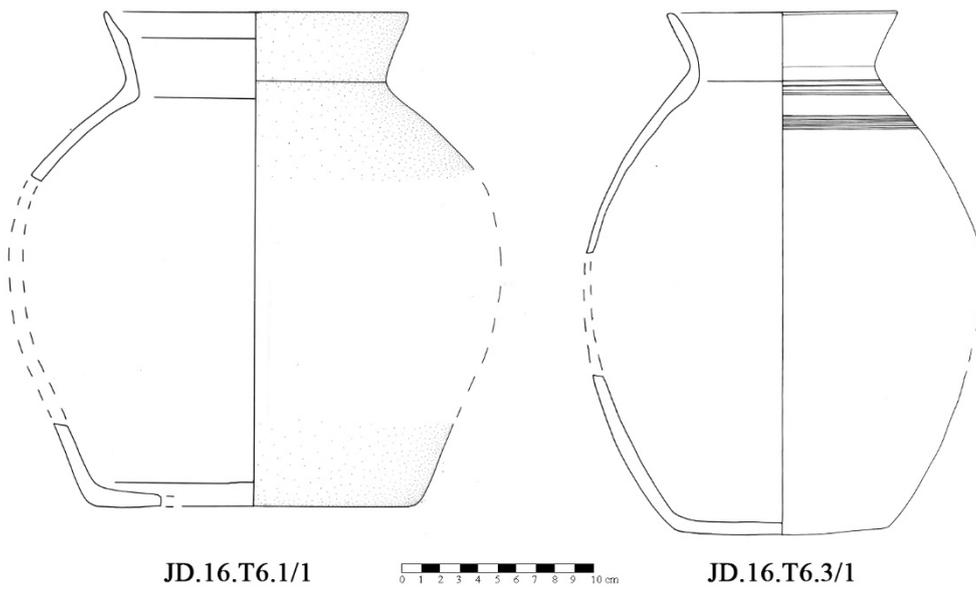


Fig. 39 - Early Bronze IVB pottery equipment of Tomb 6 of Jebel Dhaher (1:4).

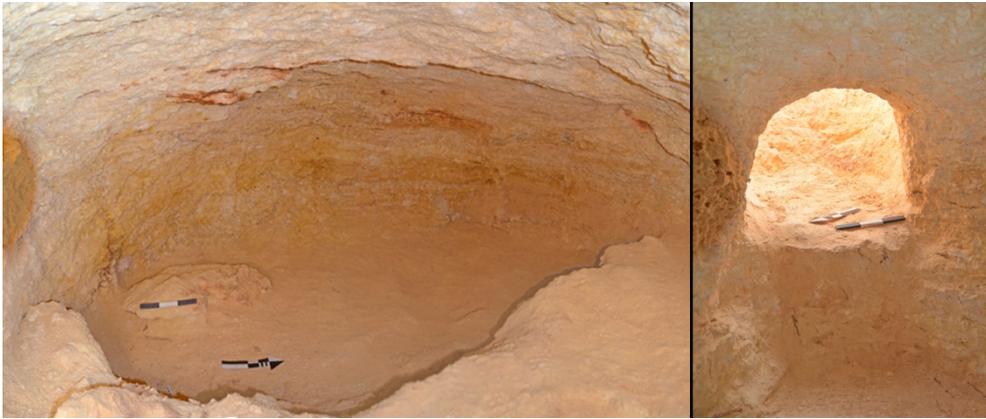


Fig. 40 - Chamber (left) and entrance (right) of Tomb 6 of Jebel Dhaher.



Fig. 41 - Multiple burials (JD.16.T1.3.HR.1) on stone platform B.3 of Tomb 1 of Jebel Dhaher.



Fig. 42 - Human vertebrae (JD.16.T3.3.HR.1) on stone platform of Chamber 1 in Tomb 3 of Jebel Dhaher.



JD.16.T6.2.HR.2



Fig. 43 - Young female skull (JD.16.T6.2.HR.2) from Tomb 6 of Jebel Dhaher.



Fig. 44 - Early Bronze IVB funerary equipment of el-Atan Tomb.

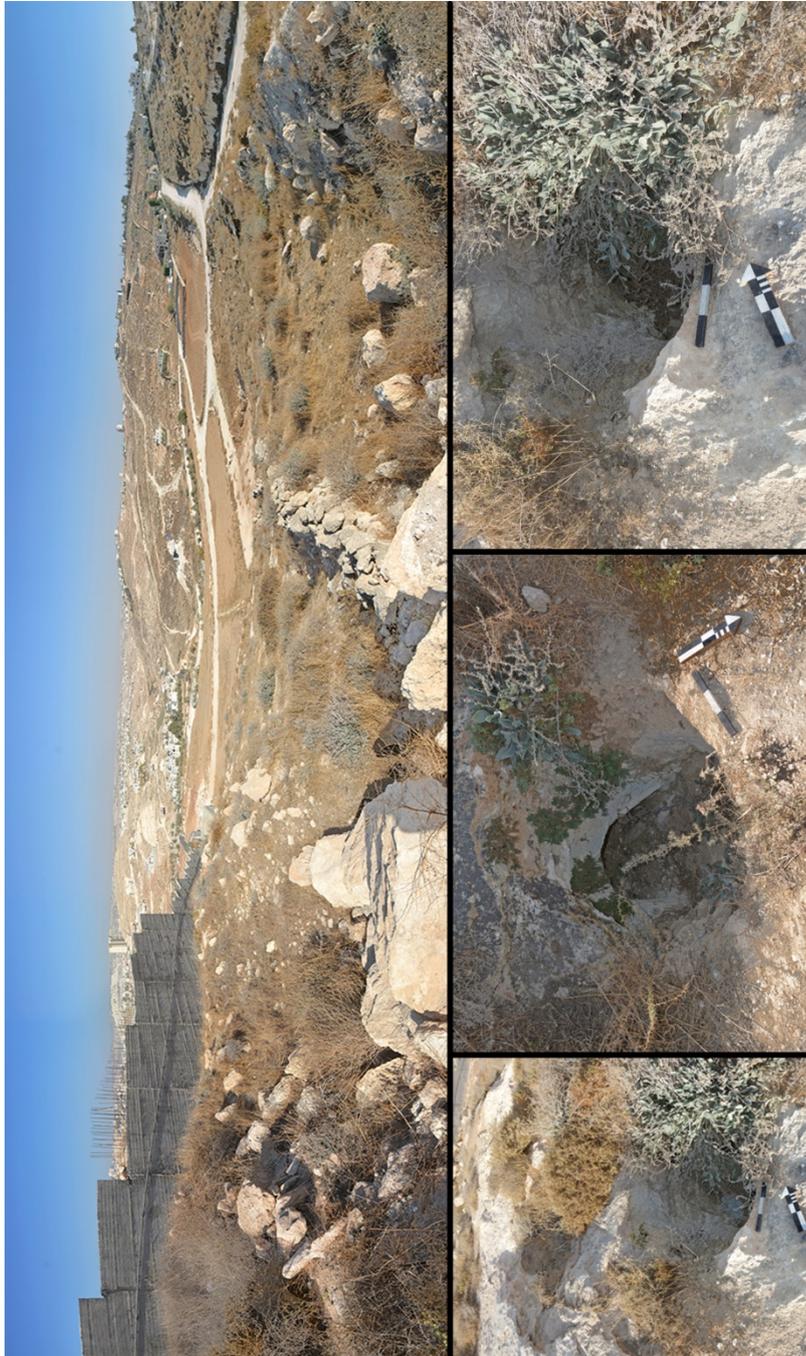


Fig. 45 - Panoramic view of Bardhaa necropolis (from north), and details of some shafts.



Fig. 46 - Two Middle Bronze jars from Bardhaa necropolis (1:8).



Fig. 47 - Modern terrace wall overlapping the Iron Age fortifications at Khirbet el-Kôm.



Fig. 48 - The so-called David's Wells in the Franciscan Fathers Catholic Action Circle.

ARABIC ABSTRACT

معالم أثرية جديدة في بيت لحم /فلسطين
التنقيبات الأثرية الانقاذية لموسم عام 2016 من قبل دائرة الآثار الفلسطينية وجامعة لاسابينزا روما الإيطالية

ضمن التعاون المشترك ما بين وزارة السياحة والآثار وجامعة لاسابينزا- روما الإيطالية ، والذي بدأ منذ منتصف التسعينيات القرن الماضي في موقع تل السلطان في مدينة أريحا، فقد تم توقيع اتفاقية تعاون مشترك بين الطرفين عام 2016 من أجل استكشاف وتطوير موقع خلة الجامع في محافظة بيت لحم وضمن برنامج دراسة الدكتوراه المقدمة كمنحة لكاتب هذا المقال .

تشير الأدلة التي انه لم تجر في مدينة بيت لحم ،اية حفريات أثرية سابقة الا النزر القليل منها ،على الرغم من زيارة العديد من الرحالة الأوروبيين لها،وقد برز اسم هذه المدينة في العديد من الكتابات القديمة والحديثة وخاصة الفترة البيزنطية والإسلامية، ويبدو ان شهرتها جاءت من خلال مولد سيدنا عيسى عليه السلام في كنيسة المهد. لقد تركز هذا الموسم والذي جرى في الفترة الواقعة ما بين 2016/11/10 الى 2016/11/30 على العديد من الجوانب كان أبرزها :

- 1-استكمال توثيق المواد المكتشفة في حفرية عام 2014وعام 2015 في موقع خلة الجامع من خلال الرسم والتصوير ،وكذلك دراسة المواد المكتشفة عام 2009 من قبر العطن في مدينة بيت لحم،والذي يرجع تاريخه الى العصر البرونزي المبكر الرابع وبداية العصر البرونزي المتوسط ،علاوة على ذلك ،دراسة مواد قبر " البرميل" الذي يؤرخ الى العصر الحديدي الثاني في خلة الجامع والمعروف بقبر (13) .
- 2- عمل مسح أثري أولي للمنطقة المحيطة بموقع خلة الجامع مثل بريضعة وكذلك المواقع ذات الصلة التاريخية لمقبرة خلة الجامع في محافظة الخليل مثل خربة الكرمل وجبل الكعكير.
- 3-العمل على توثيق المواقع الطبيعية والأثرية والتاريخية والدينية في محافظة بيت لحم وقد اشتمل هذا التوثيق على اسم الموقع ووضع الاحداثيات له مستخدمين نظام المعلومات الجغرافية،بالإضافة الى تاريخ الموقع، وعمل قائمة مختصرة للمراجع التي تناولت هذا المكان
- 4- اجراء الحفريات الانقاذية في جبل ظاهر والتي اعطت مدلولاً جديداً على أهمية بيت لحم في المرحلة الرابعة من العصر البرونزي المبكر والعصر البرونزي المتوسط وكذلك العصر الحديدي .

مقبرة جبل ظاهر :

تقع المقبرة التي جرت فيها التنقيبات الأثرية الانقاذية في جنوب مدينة بيت لحم على السفح الشرقي لجبل ظاهر، والى الجهة الشرقية من جامعة فلسطين الأهلية، والى الجنوب الغربي من مدينة ابو عمار الرياضة، وشمال شرق قرية اراطاس . انظر (شكل رقم 3). لقد كانت معرفتنا بهذه المقبرة من خلال احد افراد الامن الوطني الفلسطيني الذي يقوم بحراسة الموقع لكونه يقع ضمن مربع امني . خلال حفريات انشائية فتيبين له وجود بعض المقابر فابلق مدير عام التنقيبات في الوزارة والذي بدوره اتصل هاتفياً بكاتب هذا المقال مدير اثار محافظة بيت لحم ،والذي قام بالكشف على الموقع ،ومن ثم تم تشكيل فريق عمل مشترك من دائرة الآثار وجامعة روما لاجراء حفريات انقاذية للموقع استمرت مدة اسبوع حيث عثر على ستة قبور ضمن مساحة محدودة .

تجدر الإشارة الى ان هذه المقبرة تعتبر احد المقابر المهمة التي تم التنقيب بها بعد كل من قبر العطن الذي يقع على السفح الشرقي لتل بيت لحم و الى الشرق من كنيسة المهد بحوالي 250متر. وعلاوة على ما تقدم فان النمط الانشائي لهذه القبور يمتاز بما يعرف القبور البثرية والتي عادة يتم قطعها في الصخر بشكل عمودي لتنتهي على عمق يتراوح ما بين المتر الواحد الى المترين بوجود فتحة في احد جوانبه السفلية صغيرة كانت تغلق بواسطة بلاطة حجرية كبيرة واحيانا تستخدم حجارة متوسطة وصغيرة لاحكام الاغلاق ، وهي تقضي الى حجرة شبه دائرة الشكل ذات سقف على شكل قبة ، وارضية مستوية وجوانب دائرية . كما انها كانت تحتوي على رفات المتوفي والمرفات الجنائزية المتعلقة به مثل الاواني الفخارية او المواد المعدنية مثل المشابك او الخناجر وايضا ربما تحتوي على جعران او اختام وخرز وهذه اللقى تعكس في كثير من الاحيان المستوى الاجتماعي للمتوفي.

كما اشتمل التقرير على دراسة اولية للعظام الحيوانية والبشرية التي عثر عليها في هذه القبور والتي يمكن القول انه تم التعرف على اعمار وجنس المتوفين وانماط و اتجاه الدفن في هذه المقبرة.

يبقى القول ان الملاحظة الجديرة بالمناقشة والتسجيل ان هذه الدافن المنتشرة في محيط مدينة بيت لحم والتي تم التعرف عليها من خلال هذا الموسم والموسم السابقة ، لاسيما وانها متشابهة من الناحية المعمارية وكذلك المعثورات الاثرية والفترة الزمنية ،وعليه يمكن التسليم ربما مؤقتا باحتمالات وجود استقرار استيطاني في محيط المدينة يعود لهذه الحقبة ، لكن مشكلة الاستقرار الاستيطاني في هذه المحافظة تكمن في امرين هما :

1- ندرة الاكتشافات التي تؤيد الاستيطان خلال المرحلة الرابعة من العصر البرونزي المبكر وحتى فترة العصر الحديدي .

2- عدم وجود مسوحات اثرية التي من خلالها يمكن التعرف على مواقع الاستقرار.بالاضافة الى النشاط العمراني الحديث في المنطقة منذ عام 1976 ولغاية الان والذي ربما نتج عنه تدمير هذه المواقع دون العلم بمواقعها ،خاصة ابان الاحتلال الاسرائيلي للمنطقة .

بناء على ما تقدم فان الفريق المشترك يتطلع الى اجراء مسح شامل لمحافظة بيت لحم من اجل التعرف على مواقع الاستيطان لهذه الحقبة الحضارة من تاريخ المنطقة ،في المستقبل واعادة كتابة تاريخ المحافظة من جديد بناء الى ما تقضي اليه هذه الاكتشافات.

محمد غياظه

مدير اثار محافظة بيت لحم

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL ATLAS OF COPTIC LITERATURE. A QUESTION OF METHOD

Julian Bogdani - Sapienza University of Rome

PATHs project is aimed at creating an online archaeological atlas of Coptic literature by providing for the very first time a detailed catalogue of ancient books and their archaeological and cultural context, following a multidisciplinary approach and cutting edge methodologies.

Keywords: Egypt; Coptic literature; GIS; archaeological atlas; online databases

1. INTRODUCTION: THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF THE PATHS PROJECT

PATHs is the short name for “Tracking Papyrus and Parchment Paths: An Archaeological Atlas of Coptic Literature. Literary Texts in their Geographical Context. Production, Copying, Usage, Dissemination and Storage”, a project aimed at creating an online atlas capable of representing the diachronic development of the Coptic literature through the in-depth analysis of the Coptic manuscripts and their places of production, dissemination and discovery.¹ The project, funded by the European Research Council,² is directed by Prof. Paola Buzi³ and is hosted at Sapienza University of Rome (Dept. of History Cultures Religions). An international network of collaborations with research institutions and projects in Europe and USA has already been developed.

2. THE COPTIC LITERATURE BETWEEN 3RD AND 11TH CENTURY

It is beyond the goal of this work – and far from my competence – to outline the history of Coptic literature, yet its highlights must be pointed out because their understanding is one of the main premises for the conception of the information system⁴ described in the following paragraphs.⁵ The Coptic language is partially an artificial language and represents the very last step of the millenary tradition of Egyptian language. At a first stage (3rd-4th centuries AD), it was used to translate the biblical works from Greek; in the following centuries new original works of different genres – monastic letters, rules, homilies, hagiographic texts, etc. – were conceived and written in Coptic language. The most important catalyst in the process of growth and maturation of Coptic literature was the inception of cenobitic monasteries – which turned rapidly into significant centres for text

¹ “PATHs Project” 2017.

² ERC Advanced (2015) “PATHs – Tracking Papyrus and Parchment Paths: An Archaeological Atlas of Coptic Literature. Literary Texts in their Geographical Context. Production, Copying, Usage, Dissemination and Storage” directed by Paola Buzi and hosted by Sapienza University of Rome (project number 687567).

³ At present (2017) the team is composed by Paola Buzi (Principal investigator, Coptologist), Julian Bogdani (archaeologist, GIS and IT applied to archaeology and humanities expert), Nathan Carlig (codicologist), Maria Chiara Giorda (historian), Agostino Soldati (philologist) and Angela Bernardo (project coordinator with technical tasks).

⁴ “Information system” is used here following T. Orlandi’s definition (Orlandi 2010, in particular pp. 114-115).

⁵ A concise yet complete overview of the Coptic literature will be soon published as part of a larger article in the first number of the *Bolletino del Museo Egizio* (by P. Buzi, J. Bogdani, N. Carlig, M.C. Giorda and A. Soldati). This paragraph is a brief abstract of the forthcoming text by Paola Buzi (§ 1).

production, replication and conservation – and the rupture of the Council of Chalcedon (451), which marked the starting point of the Coptic independent (and almost national) church. Important personalities – like Shenoute, archimandrite of an important monastery (the so-called White Monastery) near Panopolis – played a central role in the definition of a strong religious, national and cultural identity through literary production and dissemination.

The Arabic conquest did not, at first, influence the Coptic literary production, but, as time passed, Arabic language replaced slowly and progressively the Coptic one. At the beginning of the 11th century Coptic texts have begun to be translated into Arabic, marking the birth of the so-called Coptic-Arabic literature. For this reason, the 11th century was chosen as the lower chronological limit of the PATHs project.

3. THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL ATLAS OF COPTIC LITERATURE: PROOF OF CONCEPT OF A MULTIDISCIPLINARY GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION SYSTEM

The principal goal of the PATHs project is to sketch the geography of Coptic literary production diachronically, which will be analysed through an innovative and interdisciplinary approach, combining extensively and for the very first time in this field of study philology, archaeology and digital humanities. This methodology will allow exploring the process of production, copying, dissemination, usage, transmission and preservation of Coptic works – with a special focus on hagiography and monastic literature – in relation to the actual geographical contexts of provenance of both texts and related writing supports.

The main efforts will be spent on creating an interactive, versatile and rigorously scientific archaeological atlas of Late Antique and Early Medieval Egypt, searchable at different chronological, regional and thematic levels. This is a geographical information system (GIS) freely available over the Internet and able to contain, display and analyse data of different provenance and typology, collected and maintained by specialists of different disciplines: philologists, codicologists, historians, linguists, archaeologists, IT experts, etc. Even though geography based platforms (GIS) have been in use since long time in the archaeological field for collecting, organising and sometimes also publishing data, they have been only sporadically used in literary and linguistic studies.⁶ Yet, geographical representations – or more simply maps – have always been used as a formidable tool to better explain studies about history, literature, linguistics, etc. Probably the first, and surely the most famous, Geographical Information System applied to linguistics, is the one developed by Adolph Kirchhoff and published in 1887,⁷ where areas of same Greek dialect are rendered with the same colours (fig. 1). These colours give the name of the epichoric variants of Greek alphabet. The geographical representation of Greek dialects contains in embryo all the future research theory about spatial analysis, modelling and mapping of literature and linguistic data.⁸ Furthermore, maps are something more than a powerful communication and visualization tool, they are an important research area of interest, first

⁶ Gregory - Healey 2007; Gregory - Hardie 2011; Martí-Henneberg 2011a; Martí-Henneberg 2011b; Kretzschmar 2013; Murrieta-Flores *et al.* 2017; Bodenhamer - Corrigan - Harris 2010.

⁷ Kirchhoff 1887.

⁸ For a summary of GIS applications to Literature studies, see Kretzschmar 2013.

of all because “mapping constructs the world it represents, selectively, therefore shaping thought and guiding action”.⁹

As far as it concerns Coptic literature, the PATHs project stands on the shoulders of an important and pioneering project, i.e. Tito Orlandi’s *Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari* (CMCL)¹⁰ (fig. 2). It is a leading work aimed at creating a digital archive of Coptic texts, providing – for the very first time – stable 4-digits identifiers for all Literary and Patristic works written in Coptic, at present known as *Clavis Coptica* or *Clavis Patrum Copticorum*.¹¹ Encoded texts, manuscript photos, a list of bibliographic records, a list of Coptic authors and other valuable information complete this archive that is continuously being updated. CMCL is not only a starting point, it is also an endless source of high-quality digital information and provides important theoretical basis for all the further steps of the PATHs project.

Representing Coptic literary works in their geographical and cultural context means that geography and positioning are key features of this project. Possibly, every single element should be somehow placed somewhere in the geographical landscape, i.e. *georeferenced*. Literary works have been conceived, transcribed, transmitted and copied in specific places – monasteries mainly – known to us by archaeological or literary sources (fig. 3). Sometimes the archaeological record gives us detailed information about the last place where certain manuscripts were stored, some other times the manuscript itself tells us through its text about the author of the work, the scribe who transcribed it, the place where it was copied or the persons who financed its copying, usually a rather expensive task and consequently beneficial to the salvation of soul of the payer and thus worthy to be reported. Typically, these information are contained in specific parts of the books, like titles and colophons, where also dating clues can be found. Textual and archaeological data help thus to define the place (or places) where a manuscript and the work (or works) it contains belong. These places must be then identified and located on the Earth’s surface and for each of them a couple of geographic coordinates should be acquired and stored. Once the manuscripts and literary works have been georeferenced, they can be analysed and used to dynamically create thematic maps, which can be of great help to better focus and identify important clusters of the Coptic literature production and dissemination.

Maps can as well be used as a basis for further analyses by connecting dots representing the *places* with lines representing series of relations – both physical and cultural – joining these places to each other to form a network capable of visually describing the creation and circulation process of the literature in Late Antique and Early Medieval Egypt. Hopefully, these analyses will help illustrating the broader cultural, social and religious frame of the country.

⁹ McCarty 2004.

¹⁰ Orlandi 2003; for a full list of Orlandi’s works on Digital Humanities see Orlandi, n.d.

¹¹ Titles recorded in manuscripts are not apt to univocally distinguish different works. In many cases, they have been arranged at a later time to put order in the previous literary tradition (Buzi 2016, 205-206). In some other cases a work has been labelled with more than one title, and other times the title has been treated by modern editors as part of the work’s content. This is – very briefly – the main reason for the urgent need of a new and impersonal naming system. Tito Orlandi (2008) in his CMCL opted for a 4 digits numeric identifier namespaced by CC (*Clavis Coptica*), es. CC 0001.

This particular aspect can be further clarified by few and very simple examples. As far as the manuscripts are concerned, in the most fortunate cases, several places can be referred to them, such as the place where they were crafted and copied, the place where they were stored and the place where they were found. Their textual content could suggest as well other places related to the artefact, like temporary or permanent displacements from one monastery to another, or different cultural contexts perceivable by the contents, the dialects or palaeographic elements. It is true that, in most cases, all these “places” do coincide (which means that the manuscript has not “travelled” much), but the exceptions to this rule are of great importance, because they allow us to trace paths and connections through different ancient sites, scriptoria, monasteries and follow the book production and dissemination chain. Another meaningful example can be offered by considering the literary works that the manuscripts contain and carry.

Not only manuscripts but also literary works can receive a clearer light if represented in maps. Work, indeed, can be reproduced in multiple copies and versions (i.e. manuscripts), copied several times in several places and different periods. A geographical visualization and spatial analysis of the spread of a certain work in one or more reference chronological period will surely provide an important evidence and strong basis for any historical evaluation of the work itself, its antique circulation and appeal and by consequence its original and perceived meaning over time.

These two cases represent a valid and very immediate example of how literature and its principal vehicle – the books – can be georeferenced, and how vice-versa the geographical visualization can help to better understand and deeper analyse texts and their cultural context.

Books, manuscripts in our case, are a special kind of archaeological source because, in addition to standard information conveyed by their substance, the texts they carry provide an entirely new set of valuable elements for the reconstruction of the ancient landscapes. As far as “places” are concerned, texts – if carefully indexed – are tremendously useful either in better defining ancient landscape and geography or building a new one from scratch, be it real, plausible or entirely fiction. The geography of text can at a later time be overlapped and compared with the “real” one, the geography reconstructed by traditional archaeological means, in order to better analyse and comprehend the Egyptian physic and cultural landscape in Late Antique and Early Medieval era.

4. TOOLS AND METHODOLOGY

The information system of the PATHs project is organised to have a tripartite structure at its core, formed by three online platforms: a centralised database, an atlas and a web portal. These three elements are strictly related: the database (DB) is a subset of the Atlas (A) and the atlas a subset of the web portal (P): $DB \subseteq A \subseteq P$ (fig. 4).

Some more explanation is needed because each set is implemented differently and serves different purposes. The very hard core of the entire platform is an online relational database system, able to contain and analyse all primary data migrated from precedents projects – first and foremost the already mentioned CMCL project – or produced *ad hoc*. The principal entities of the database describe in details manuscripts, works, authors, places, people and bibliographical references, but the general ontology is open to further

enhancement that the research project might and will suggest. The different entities are strictly connected to each other by logical rules – the edges of an oriented graph – that have been made object of deep methodological analysis. This paper is not the most appropriate place to fully describe the general schema, but some few and not complete examples could provide a glimpse of the methodological issues involved.

The *Manuscripts* entity collects information about ancient books in their original form and records their history from the moment the book was crafted until the moment it became an archaeological (or archive) evidence. It follows that there is no inevitable or mechanical correspondence between the manuscript that we can leaf through today and the manuscript described in the database: the original manuscript – i.e. the *codicological unit*¹² – can be reconstructed by juxtaposition of fragments scattered in several archives or libraries, or the present manuscript we hold in our hands can be the result of the union of more than one ancient books. This consideration makes the first important point, i.e. that a detailed physical – codicological – description is an essential step in the effort of identifying the original codicological units and providing each of them with a unique stable identifier. This is why a detailed set of codicological attributes has been included in the manuscript description.

Moreover, a manuscript can contain one or more literary works and consequently entity *Manuscripts* is linked by one-to-many ‘contains’ relationship with entity *Works*. The relationship between *Manuscripts* and *Persons* is more articulated because many known or unnamed individuals can be involved in the manuscript creation, circulation, modification or discovery, as the copyist, the bookbinder, the person who financed or ordered the crafting of the book, the recipient and beneficiary of the precious gift, etc. – not to consider persons (we might say characters) mentioned in the text itself. These links are mapped as many-to-many qualified relationships between entity *Manuscripts* and entity *Persons*. I have already mentioned the problematic, but essential, linking system between *Manuscripts* and *Places*, a core issue for the georeferencing of the dataset and subsequently for the creation of the atlas. Links are therefore a fundamental focal point of the entire project and they are not only inward-looking: a series of external references to important projects are being set, in order to make the PATHs database a node of a broader network. Each object of the database will be linked to well known identifiers from other databases, if available, such as the already mentioned CMCL, *Trismegistos*, Leuven Database of Ancient Books (LDAB), *List of Coptic Biblical Manuscripts*, *Clavis Patrum Graecorum*, *Clavis Apocryphorum Novi Testamenti*, *Clavis Apocryphorum Veteris Testamenti*, *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Orientalis*, *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca*, *Bibliotheca Hagiographica Latina*, *Pleiades*, Geonames, etc.. The ambitious goal of this structure is that of creating, for each database row – i.e. for each ‘object’ considered – a rich set of metadata and possibly of semantic triples able to turn the database into an open linked data repository. The above example is incomplete and representative of only a part of the entire information system, which is conceived as a decentralised platform where each node can be placed at the centre of the analysis and made object of a thorough study (fig. 5).

¹² The term “codicological unit” is used here in perfect accordance to T. Orlandi’s definition in Orlandi 2008, 7-11.

It should be clear enough now that the geographical representation – the Atlas – is a fundamental goal of the project and an impressive visual and analysis tool, able to capture and depict the complexity of the collected and analysed data. Technically speaking, the Atlas will be built on top of the main database, wrapping it and extending it with geographical functionality and interfaces. Users should be able to display preset filters on data, but also build their own by using friendly search forms. Specific base maps can be used to better contextualise the data. Commercial online platforms, such as Google Maps, Bing Maps, Open Street Maps, or similar services, may provide a very simple to use and high quality basis for online cartographic projects, yet these tools do not refer to the ancient landscape and geography. New interesting research and collaborative projects are making available map tiles and ready to use GIS data specifically related to the ancient world. The most important among others are Pelagios,¹³ available at <http://commons.pelagios.org>, the Digital Atlas of the Roman Empire by the Lund University (<http://dare.ht.lu.se/>) and the Ancient World Mapping Center of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (<http://awmc.unc.edu/>).

By far, the most important output result will be the dynamic maps, where geographical data can be easily visualised and queried; other important non geographical data, as lists, authority files etc., will be showed in a more traditional tabular form. When possible, also diagrams, graphs, plain and tree-structured layouts will be made available to generic users in the web portal; these are powerful tools for data analysis and visualization, capable of providing easy access to rich and articulated datasets. The web site is, in fact, the most external layer of this structure; it wraps and contains the other layers and enriches their contents with general and practical information about the project and – most important – with metadata about the structure of the database and atlas and practical information on how to query and extract useful information and a complete and updated handbook, which is a tool of great importance for the correct use and comprehension of all available resources and tools. The web portal will also contain a complete formal statement of all the methodological issues encountered and of the solutions adopted.¹⁴

5. CONCLUSIONS

If the reconstruction of the Egyptian Late Antique and Early Medieval (or Coptic) physical (archaeological) and cultural (literary) landscape is the ultimate goal of the PATHs project, the archaeological atlas of Coptic literature is the instrument chosen to reach this important objective, while the interdisciplinary approach, the fruitful dialogue with similar and parallel projects and the collaborative aptitude are the most appropriate methodological approaches capable of keeping the research on the straight path towards this purpose. From this point of view, the PATHs project has the ambition to assume a pivotal position between past and ongoing peer projects, encouraging collaboration, data-sharing and partnership in order to provide a solid cornerstone on which to build a sound scientific research.

¹³ Simon *et al.* 2016; Simon - Barker - Isaksen 2012.

¹⁴ A first version of the Mission statement has been recently made available for free download at the following address: <http://paths.uniroma1.it/download/?file=PATHs-Statement.pdf>.

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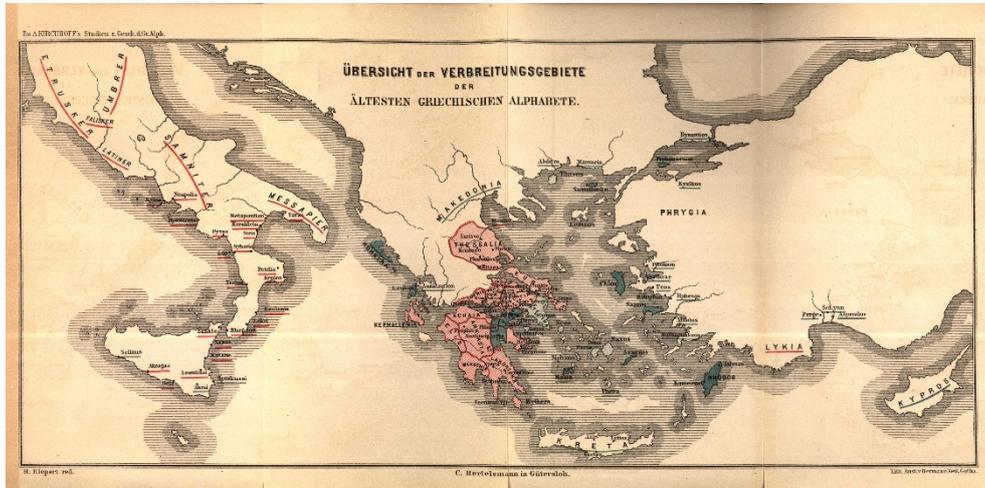


Fig. 1 - Map of Greek dialects (Kirchhoff 1887).

Unione Academica Nazionale — Hüb Ludolf Zentrum, Universität Hamburg — Istituto Patristico Augustinianum

CMCL
Corpus dei Manoscritti Copti Letterari
Projet patronné par l'Union Académique International

Enterprise dedicated to the study of Egyptian Christian culture
in the I-XII centuries C.E., especially for the documents in Coptic language.
CIM server
Direttore: **Tito Orlandi**

Commissione scientifica: Edda Bresciani (Pisa), Paola Buzi (Roma), Alberto Camplani (Roma),
Stephen Emmet (Münster), Bentley Layton (Yale), Manlio Simonetti (Roma)

Imprese collegiate: **PATh**: An Archaeological Atlas of Coptic Literature, Principal Investigator Paola Buzi, Roma.
Coptic Literature and Manuscripts, Alia Suci (Göttingen AdWG, Hamburg HLZ).
Critical Edition of the Works of Shenoute, Director Sigrún Ezzamel, Münster.
Digitale Gesamtedition und Übersetzung des koptisch-sahidischen **Alten Testaments**, Director Heike Behlmer, Göttingen; Managing Director: Frank Feder, Göttingen.
Coptic Scriptorium, created by Caroline T. Schroeder and Amir Zeldes.
TraCES, Changes in Ethiopic Style and Lexicon, Principal Investigator Alessandro Bausi, Hamburg.
Beta maasabell: Manuscripts of Ethiopia and Eritrea, Principal Investigator Alessandro Bausi, Hamburg.
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Clavis Patrum Coptiorum
(List of the Coptic Literature)

[Enter](#)

The Electronic Database
(reserved to subscribers)

Subscribers:
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To subscribe please refer to
[TorreassaStore](#) (Casual Division for e-commerce)
You have to register as User, then select the Publisher (CIM)

Contents of the Database:

- Clavis Patrum Coptiorum:** list of the authors and works of the Coptic literature with information on manuscripts, content, and critical problems
- Manuscript:** list (a) of the individual collections, (b) of the Coptic codices either well preserved or reconstructed, especially from the Monastery of St. Shenoute, Atripe (White Monastery)
- Texts:** electronic edition of Coptic texts with Italian translation. A full edition consists of: reproduction of the manuscripts, diplomatic edition of the manuscripts, critical edition of the text, with translation, index of the words with grammatical explanation, linguistic analysis.
- History of literature:** chronological description of the development of the Coptic literature in 12 parts. Only parts 1, 4, 7 are currently available.
- Grammar:** a computational grammar of Sahidic with a list of words according to the grammatical categories.
- Bibliography:** Complete bibliography for Coptic studies. Some of the subjects are complete from the beginning of the studies: **Biblia; Gnosticism; Apocrypha; Letteratura; Agiografia; Storia; Generalia** (partially); **Manoscritti** (partially). The other subjects (Linguistica; Archeologia, and parts of **Generalia, Manoscritti** and **Storia**) start from 1980, and the previous titles will be completed in the future.

Fig. 2 - CMCL's homepage (<http://www.cmcl.it>).



Fig. 3 - Sketch map of Coptic monasteries in Egypt (data from <https://books.coptic-treasures.com>, basemap <http://from commons.pelagios.org>).

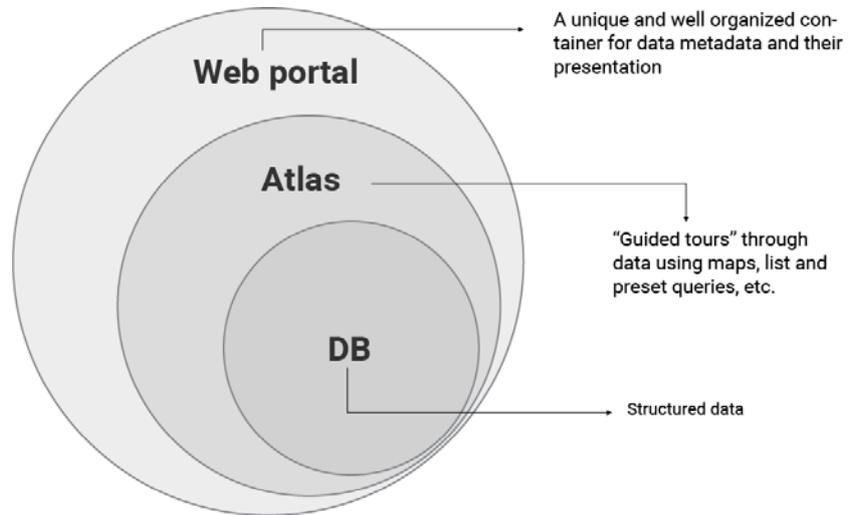


Fig. 4 - Venn diagram of the PATHs project information system.

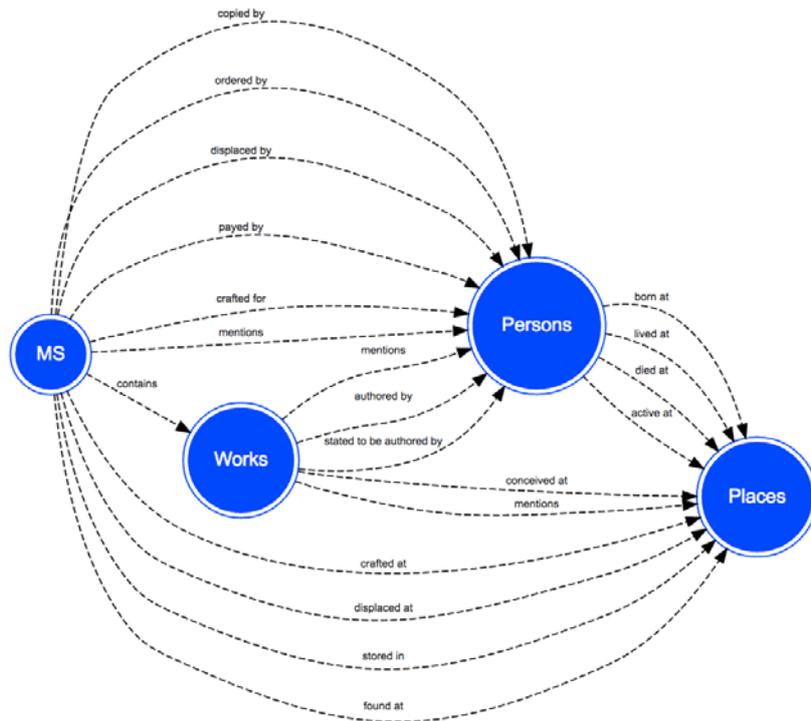


Fig. 5 - A simplified directed graph describing the database entity relations.

HITTITE (NINDA) KAZ(ZA)MI(T)-*

Valerio Pisaniello - Sapienza University of Rome

The Hittite noun kazmi- is generally considered to be a Hurrian or Luwian loanword, representing a kind of bread. Through the analysis of its occurrences, I will make some remarks about its meaning, morphology, etymology, and the function of the Sumerogram NINDA, which sometimes is found.

Keywords: Hittite; Hurrian; Luwian; Akkadian; loanwords

It is mostly believed that the Hittite noun *kaz(z)mi(t)-*, possibly of Luwian or Hurrian origin, represents a kind of bread,¹ since it sometimes occurs with the Sumerogram NINDA, which is generally understood as a determinative. This noun is attested since MS tablets and its use seems to be restricted to the cultic offerings in festivals and magical rituals, all of them showing a Kizzuwatnean background.²

At present, the following forms are documented (broken occurrences are marked by *): **acc.sg.c.** *ka-az-mi-in* (KBo 33.195+, 6'), (^{NINDA})*ga-az-mi-in* (KBo 17.65+ rev. 23, KBo 38.260+ obv. 32), ^{NINDA}*ka-az-za-mi-in* (KBo 15.37 V 51*); **nom.-acc.sg.n.** ^{NINDA}*ka-aš-mi* (?) (ABoT 1.23, 2); **acc.pl.c.** ^{NINDA}*ga-az-za-mi-uš* (KBo 17.65+ rev. 24*); **nom.-acc.pl.n.** *ka-az-mi-ta* (KBo 40.88, 2'*; KBo 24.68+ III 5, KBo 23.67+ III 3, KBo 40.91 + KBo 39.163 IV 17, KBo 40.46 + KBo 35.156 III 9*), *ka-az-mi-da* (KBo 35.158 + KBo 20.113+ III 7), *ga-az-mi-ta* (KUB 45.50+ II 19', KBo 58.216+ I¹ 4'*); **fragm.** *ka-az-m[i- ...]* (Bo 7860 I 4');³ **uncertain (instr.?)** ^{UZU}*ka-az-mi-it* (KBo 61.80, 6', 7'*; 8').⁴

It is generally agreed that these forms belong to a single noun;⁵ as far as I know, the only exception among the lexicographers is represented by Ahmet Ünal, who distinguishes a common gender noun (^{NINDA})*gazmi-/gazzami-* «a kind of bread or cake», and a common or neuter one *kazmi(t)-/kazzami-/kašmi-*, for which he does not give any meaning.⁶ For the latter, the Sumerogram NINDA, when it occurs, should be read as numeral «four».

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¹ Cf. HED K, 140 («a kind of bread»), HEG A-K, 550 («ein Gebäck»). See also the translations offered by various scholars for the example (1) below: «*gaz(z)mi(-loaf)*» (Beckman 1983, 141, with reference to Hoffner 1974 in the commentary), «*kazmi-bread/pastry*» (CHD Š, 175 s.v. ^{NINDA}*šaniiddu-*), «un pain *gaz(z)mi-*» (Mouton 2008, 118), «un pane *gaz(z)mi-*» (Fuscagni 2011), «ein *gazmi(-Gebäck)*» (HEG Š, 833 s.v. ^{NINDA}*šaniiddu-*). As regard to the example (2), Kompalla (2011, 25) translates «ein kazzami-Brot».

² Cf. Trémouille 2002, 850 n. 53.

³ Cf. Hoffner 1974, 168.

⁴ *Contra* Hoffner (1974, 168) and Puhvel (HED K, 140), in KBo 17.7+ IV 6' and 7' read ^{GIŠŠU}A-*ka-az-mi-it*, i.e. ^{GIŠŠU}A-*kaz=(š)mit*, and [*tu-ug-g*]*a-az-mi-it*, i.e. [*tugg*]*az=(š)mit*, respectively (cf. Otten - Souček 1969, 40 and Montuori 2017). Quite uncertain is ^{UZU}*ka-az-mi-it* in the Kizzuwatna ritual fragment KBo 61.80, 6', 7', 8' (NS, CTH 500.515), which is possibly to be read ^{UZU}KA-*az-mi-it* (cf. Weeden 2011, 262), although the common Sumerogram for «mouth» is KAxU: KBo 61.80 ⁽⁶⁾[... MÁ]Š[?].GAL ^{UZU}*ka-az-mi-it* ⁽⁷⁾[... ^{UZU}k]*a-az-mi-it* PA-NI^dIŠTAR ⁽⁸⁾[... MÁ]Š[?].JGAL-*ma* ^{UZU}*ka-az-mi-it* ⁽⁹⁾[...]*x-nu-an-zi*.

⁵ Cf. HED K: 140 and HEG A-K: 550.

⁶ Ünal 2007, 335.

A. Ünal does not make explicit the reasons of this choice in his dictionary, but some hints emerge taking into account the few occurrences of the term (in the following passages, I provisionally transliterate the sign NINDA as a determinative, according to the usual custom):

- (1) KBo 17.65+ rev. 21-24 (MH²/MS, Birth ritual, CTH 489.A):⁷
⁽²¹⁾ *na-aš-ta* MUNUS-za I[Š]-TU É DINGIR^{LIM} p[a-ra-a ú-i]z-zi pé-ra-an-ma a-aš-ki^{NINDA} a-a-an-ta¹ p[ár-ší¹]-[ya]-an⁽²²⁾ na-an^{NINDA} p[ár-šu-u[l]-li-e-eš i-en[-zi na-a]š-ta ma-aḥ-ḥa-an MUNUS-za pa-ra-a a-ri¹ NINDA^ša-n[i]-id-du⁽²³⁾ **ga-az-mi-in** p[í-a]n-zi^{LÚ.MEŠ} pa-a-[ti-li-y]a-aš-ša^{MUNUS.MEŠ} kat-ra-aš^{LÚ.MEŠ} zu-up-pa-ri-¹ya-la¹-aš⁽²⁴⁾ NINDA^{ga-az-za-mi-u}[š] pí-an-[zi]
 «The woman comes out of the temple. In front, at the (temple) gate, hot loaves are brok[e]n, and they mak[e] them into cru[m]bs. When the woman arrives, they g[i]ve (her²) one *šaniddu*-loaf (and) a *kazmi*(-loaf), and they also gi[ve] *kazmi*-loave[s] to the *pa[tili-]*priests, the *katra*-women, (and) the torch-bearers».
- (2) KBo 38.260+ obv. 30-32 (MS, The Ritual of Kizzuwatna, CTH 479.3):⁸
⁽³⁰⁾ ... nu^{NINDA} a-a-an^{Hl.A} NINDA.GÚG^{Hl.A} NINDA.KU⁷^{Hl.A} TU⁷^{Hl.A1} ⁽³¹⁾ IŠ-TU LÚ^{MEŠ} x[...]x-an-zi na-aš-ta ma-aḥ-ḥa-an DINGIR^{MEŠ} a-ku-an-na aš-nu-wa-an-zi⁽³²⁾ nu-kán^{NINDA} **ga-az-mi-in** [...]
 «They [...] the hot breads, the legume-breads, the sweet breads, (and) the stews from the men [...]. When they are done with drinking the gods, a *kazmi*-loaf [...]».
- (3) KBo 15.37 V 50-51 (MH²/NS, (*h*)išuwa- festival, CTH 628.Tf13.A):⁹
⁽⁵⁰⁾ LÚ^{NAR} S[(Ī)]R^{RU} nu LUGAL-i⁽⁵¹⁾ NINDA<sup>ka-az-¹za¹-(mi-in)]¹ p[ra-ra-a ap-pa-an-zi]¹
 «The singer sings and they give the king a *kazmi*-loaf».</sup>
- (4) ABoT 1.23, 1-2 (NS, Festival fragment, CTH 670.1534):
⁽¹⁾ [...] *ták-kán* LUGAL-uš⁽²⁾ [...]x-ni^{NINDA} **ka-aš-mi** kiš-an BAL-ti
 «[...] and the king [...] ... offers a *kašmi*-loaf in this way».

As is clear from the translations, it is not difficult to understand ^{NINDA}*kazmi*- as a kind of bread in these passages. Possibly, the only doubt could concern the belonging of the *hapax* ^{NINDA}*ka-aš-mi* in the example (4) to the stem ^{NINDA}*kazmi*-.

On the contrary, the understanding of the following passages would be more problematic:

⁷ Beckman 1983, 140; Fuscagni 2011.

⁸ Trémouille 2002, 849.

⁹ Kompalla 2011, 19. Dupl. KBo 33.195+, 5'-6' (NS, CTH 628.Tf13.K): ^{NINDA}*ka¹-az-mi-in*.

- (5) KBo 24.68+ III 1-8 (MS, Festival for Teššub and Ḫepat, CTH 706):¹⁰
⁽¹⁾ [m(a-ah-ḫa-an-ma-ša-an)] TU₇^{HIA} a-ri ⁽²⁾ [(nu-za MUNUS^{SANGA} ḫé-pát)]
^{LÚ}SANGA ḫIŠKUR-ya a-da-a[n-na] ⁽³⁾ [e-ša-an-da-ri (nu)] ^{LÚ}SANGA ḫIŠKUR
^{NINDA}a-a-an^{HIA} ⁽⁴⁾ [NINDA.KU₇ ...]-la-an^{HIA} ku-e pár-ši-ya-an-^Γna-i¹ ⁽⁵⁾ [(na-
aš-ta pé-ra-a)]n ar-ḫa **ka-az-mi-ta** ⁽⁶⁾ [(pár-ši-ya-az-zi pár-š)]u-u-ra-az-zi-ya-
kán ⁽⁷⁾ [^{UZU}ku-u-tar da-a-i] na-at-ša-an EGIR-pa ⁽⁸⁾ [iš-ta-na-a-ni] da-a-i
«But [w]hen the stews arrive, the priestess of Ḫepat and the priest of the Storm-
god [sit] to ea[t]. The hot breads, [the sweet breads], (and) the [...-]la-breads
which the priest of the Storm-god breaks, he breaks *kazmi*(-loaves) from the
front, takes the shoulder from the stew and places it back [on the altar]».
- (6) KBo 23.67+ III 1-5 (MS, List of Hurrian gods, CTH 704.I):¹¹
⁽¹⁾ [ma-ah-ḫa-an-ma-aš-š]a-an TU₇^{HIA} a-ri ⁽²⁾ nu 1 ^{NINDA}a-a-a[n] 1
^{NINDA}.KU₇-ya¹² pár-ši-ya ⁽³⁾ na-aš-ta **ka-az-mi-ta** pé-ra-an ar-ḫa d[a-a-i] ⁽⁴⁾
na-at-ša-an EGIR-pa ^{GIŠ}la-^Γah-ḫu¹-u-ri ⁽⁵⁾ ti-an-zi
«But when the stews arrive, one hot brea[d] and one thin bread are broken; he
t[akes] *kazmi*(-loaves) from the front and places them back on the offering
table⁷».
- (7) KBo 40.91 + KBo 39.163 IV 15-19 (MS, List of Hurrian gods, CTH 704):¹³
⁽¹⁵⁾ [(ma-ah-ḫ)]a-an-ma-aš-ša-an TU₇^{HIA} ^Γa¹-ri nu ^{NINDA}a-a-an ⁽¹⁶⁾ [...]^{HIA} ú-
da-an-zi na-[at] ^{LÚ}SANGA ḫIŠKUR pár-ši-ez-zi ⁽¹⁷⁾ [(na-aš-ta)] **ka-az-mi-ta** pé-
^Γra-an¹ ar-ḫa pár-ši-ya ⁽¹⁸⁾ [na-a]t-kán EGIR-pa A-NA DINGIR^{LIM} da-a-i ⁽¹⁹⁾
[^{UZU}wa-al-la-aš ḫa-aš-ta-ya-kán EGIR-pa da-a-i
«But when the stews arrive, they bring the hot bread (and) the [...-]s here, and
the priest of the Storm-god breaks th[em]; he breaks *kazmi*(-loaves) from the
front [and] places [th]em back for the deity. He places back also the thighbone».
- (8) KUB 45.50+ II 16'-20' (NS, List of Hurrian gods, CTH 704.I.1.H):¹⁴
^(16') ... ma-ah-ḫa-an-ma-aš-^Γša-an¹ ^(17') TU₇^{HIA} a-ri nu a-da-an-na ú-e-kán-zi ^(18')
nu ^{NINDA}a-a-an^{HIA} ^{NINDA}.KU₇ ku-e pár-ši-ya-an-na-i ^(19') na-aš-ta **ga-az-mi-ta**
pé-ra-an ar-ḫa ^(20') da-a-i na-^Γat-ša¹-an EGIR-pa PA-NI DINGIR^{LIM} da-a-i
«But when the stews arrive, they ask to eat. The hot breads (and) the sweet bread
which he breaks, he takes *kazmi*(-loaves) from the front and places them back in
front of the deity».

¹⁰ Wegner 2002, 128. Dupls. KBo 40.88, 2' (MS, CTH 705): [... -t]a; KBo 35.158 + KBo 20.113+ III 3-8 (NS, CTH 706.I): *ka-az-mi-da*.

¹¹ Wegner 2002, 76.

¹² Wegner (2002, 76) restores <ku-e>.

¹³ Wegner 2002, 120.

¹⁴ Wegner 2002, 84. Dupl. KBo 58.216+ I 1'-5' (NS, CTH 704): [... -]mi-ta.

- (9) KBo 40.46 + KBo 35.156 III 7-10 (NS, List of Hurrian gods, CTH 704):¹⁵
 (7) *nu* LÚSANGA d[IS̄]KUR NINDA a-a-an^{HLA(8)} NINDA.SIG^{HLA} k[u-e]¹⁶ pá-r-ši-ya-
 ʽna-iʽ⁽⁹⁾ na-ʽašʽ-t[a ka-az-m]i-ta pé-[ra-an a]r-ḫ[a]⁽¹⁰⁾ d[a-¹⁷ ...]
 «The hot breads (and) the thin breads w[hich] the priest of the [St]orm-god
 breaks, he t[akes] [kazmi]i(-loaves) [f]ro[m] the fr[ont ...]».

It is clear that, if the *kazmi(t)*- was a kind of bread, as in the translations offered here, only the examples (6) and (7) would be acceptable. Conversely, in (5), (8), and (9), where a relative clause is involved, we are forced either to insert a parenthetical clause (*he also breaks the kazmi-loaves*) between the relative and the main clause, or to leave the relative clause hanging, if we consider the resuming clitic of the main clause to be referred only to the *kazmi-loaves*.

This is possibly one of the reasons why A. Ünal distinguishes two lemmas in his dictionary; however, I think that the gap between them can be easily closed by assuming that NINDA^{kazmi(t)}- does not denote a kind of bread, but a piece of bread. In this way, we can retrieve the main clause of the relative clause: «the loaves he breaks, from them (=ašta) he breaks/takes *kazmi*-samples from the front and places them back on the altar».

This solution is not new; indeed, although it seems to have gone almost completely unnoticed, and it is generally not reflected in the later editions of the texts too, it had been already offered by Volkert Haas:

«Das Nomen *kazmi*- ist von J. Tischler HEG I 550 (H. A. Hoffner, Alimenta 168 folgend) als «NINDA^{kazmi}- (ein Gebäck)» gebucht. Ein Gebäck *kazmi*- jedoch existiert nicht. Der Ansatz scheint sich auf ABoT 21 + KBo 17.65 Rs. 23-24 zu beziehen, wo nicht NINDA, sondern 4 *ga-az-za-mi-u[š] pi-an-[zi]* zu lesen ist. Im luvischen N.-Akk. Pl. *kazmit* ist das Nomen stets in der Wendung «*našta gazmita piran arḫa dai*» belegt, der die Phrase «*našta anaḫi piran arḫa dai*» entspricht. Der hurritische Terminus *anaḫi* bezeichnet einen Teil des Opfers, der der Gottheit vorweg angeboten wird; seien es Gebäcke, Fleischstücke oder auch nur Haarbüschel als pars pro toto des Opfertieres».¹⁸

Therefore, according to V. Haas, an alleged *kazmi*-loaf does not exist: the word, of Luwian origin, would be a meronym, such as *anaḫi(t)*- «sample, morsel». The sign NINDA, which sometimes precedes it, should always be understood as a numeral.

We can largely agree with V. Haas' arguments, and the comparison with the noun *anaḫi(t)*-, of Luwian or Hurrian origin,¹⁹ is striking, since several of the contexts in which it occurs fully resemble those given above:

¹⁵ Groddek 2000, 364; Wegner 2002, 130; Groddek - Kloekhorst 2006, 189.

¹⁶ But Groddek (2000, 364) and Groddek - Kloekhorst (2006, 189) read NINDA.SIG^{HLA}.y[a].

¹⁷ Probably *dāi* or *daškanzi*.

¹⁸ Haas 1992, 107. As far as I know, Haas' suggestion has been followed only by Wegner (2002, 49; 2004, 111), who translates *kazmi*- with «Kostprobe». Conversely, other scholars persist in considering it to be a kind of bread (see n. 1 above).

¹⁹ The etymology of *anaḫi(t)*- is quite problematic and cannot be extensively discussed here. If we leave aside the alleged Indo-European cognates suggested by Juret (1942, 30: Skt. *ānuḥ*, Gr. *vāvoç*, and Lat. *īna*), *anaḫi(t)*- has been mostly explained, following Friedrich (HW, 21) and Kronasser (EHS, 191-193), as a technical term of the Hurrian cultic lexicon, with a secondary stem in *-ta* (see e.g. HW² A, 72 and HEG A-K, 25). Conversely,

- (10) KBo 21.33 + KUB 32.49a+ IV 45-51 (MS, Drink offerings for the Throne of Hepat, CTH 701.a.A):²⁰
⁽⁴⁵⁾ EGIR-*an-da-ma* ^{LÚ}AZU 1 NINDA.SIG *pár-ši-ya-an-na-i še-e-ra-aš-ša-an*
⁽⁴⁶⁾ ŠA UDU 1 ^{UZU}TI *zi-ik-ke-ez-zi nu-uš-ša-an PA-NI DINGIR*^{LIM} ⁽⁴⁷⁾ A-NA
^{GIŠ}BANŠUR.GIŠ-*ša-an A-NA PA-NI*^{NINDA} *zi-ip-pí-in-ni zi-ik-ke-ez-zi* ⁽⁴⁸⁾ **a-na-a-**
hi-*ma-kán pé-ra-an ar-ḥa da-aš-ke-ez-zi na-at-ša-an* ⁽⁴⁹⁾ *an-da A-NA* ^{DUG}*a-ḥ-*
ru-u-uš-ḥi ^{Ì.GIŠ} *šu-ú-ni-iš-ke-ez-zi* ⁽⁵⁰⁾ *na-at-ša-an ḥu-u-up-ru-u-uš-ḥi ḥa-aš-ši-*
i pí-iš-še-eš-ke-ez-zi ⁽⁵¹⁾ GĒŠTIN-*ya EGIR-an-da 1-ŠU šī-pa-an-za-ke-ez-zi*
 «Then the sorcerer breaks one thin bread, puts one rib of sheep above and places (it) in front of the deity, on the wooden table, in front of the *zippinni*-bread. But he takes a sample from the front, he dips it in the censer with oil, and throws it in the firebox on the hearth. Then he offers wine one time».
- (11) KUB 27.70+ II 11-14 (OH/LNS, Festival of Karahna, CTH 681.1):²¹
⁽¹¹⁾ I-NA U₄.3^{KAM} *ma-a-an lu-kat-ta* ^{GIŠ}IG *ḥé-e-ša-an-zi* ⁽¹²⁾ KUŠ.NÍG.BÀR *da-a-*
an-zi ta I-NA UDUN ḥal-zi-ya ^{NINDA}*a-a-an NINDA.TU*⁷ ⁽¹³⁾ *ku-e pár-ši-ya-an-*
na-i nu-kán 4 a-na-ḥi *da-aš-kán-zi na-at-kán* ^{GIŠ}ZAG.GAR.RA ⁽¹⁴⁾ EGIR-*pa zi-*
ik-ke-ez-zi
 «On the third day, in the morning, they open the door. They “take” the curtain, and “In the oven” is called out. The hot bread (and) the stew-bread which he breaks, they take four samples (from them), and he places them back on the altar».
- (12) KUB 58.71 II 15'-20' (LNS, Festival fragment, CTH 670.1965):²²
^(15') *ma-aḥ-ḥa-an-ma-aš-ša-an* ^{TU}⁷^{HIA} *a-ri na-aš-ta IŠ-TU 1* ^{DUG}UTÚL
^{TU}⁷.[SAR[?]] ^(16') ^{UZU}*ku-du-úr-ri*^{HIA} *da-an-zi na-at-kán* DINGIR^{MES}-*aš* ^(17') EGIR-
*pa ti-an-zi nu NINDA*¹.GUR₄.RA^{HIA} ^{NINDA}¹*a-a-an*^{HIA} ^{NINDA}¹.GÚG^{MES}
^{NINDA}[*ma-r*]ⁱ^{HIA} ^(18') ^{LÚ}SANGA *pár-ši-ya-an-n[a]-ḥi* ^(19') *na-aš-ta a-na-ḥi-ta pé-ra-*
an ^(19') *ar-ḥa pár-ši-ya-an-ḥi* ^(20') EGIR-
^(19') *zi*¹-*ik-ke-ez-zi*
 «But when the stews arrive, they take the shanks from one pot with [onion[?]] stew and place them back for the deities. The priest brea[k]s the thick loaves, the hot breads, the legume-breads, (and) the [*mar*]*i*-breads, he breaks samples from the front and places them back for all the deities».

Laroche (1970, 68-70; GLH, 48) claimed that the noun was Luwian, and it would have been later borrowed into Hurrian. This hypothesis was welcomed by Starke (1990, 158-159) and Melchert (CLL, 12-13), who regard *anaḥi(t)-* as a *nomen actionis* derived from the verb *anā(i)-* (uncertain meaning), whereas, according to Puhvel (HED A, 58), both the Luwian and the Hurrian origins are credible. Recently, the question has been examined by Giorgieri (2012), who convincingly suggested a Hurrian etymology. Indeed, in Hurrian both *anaḥi* (*an=aḡ=i*, possibly «delizia»), and *anaḥiti* (*an=aḡ=idi*, «delicatezza») are found: the two terms, borrowed into Luwian, would have merged in the noun *anaḥi(t)-*, later borrowed into Hittite. Unfortunately, as we will see, such a wealth of contributions is not found for the noun *kazmi(t)-*.

²⁰ Salvini - Wegner 1986, 67.

²¹ McMahan 1991, 64.

²² Groddek - Trabazo 2005, 185.

The similarities are clear: the context is the same, and so are the verbs involved (*dā-* «to take» and *paršiya-* «to break»); therefore, *kazmi(t)-* and *anaḥi(t)-* must denote more or less the same thing.

Moreover, further evidence that we are dealing with meronyms comes from the following analogous passages, where, instead of *kazmi(t)-* or *anaḥi(t)-*, we find a generic *tepu* ‘a little’:

- (13) KUB 10.72+ II 21'-24' (pre-NH/NS, Large festival fragment, CTH 669.4.A):²³
^(21') [...] NINDA.Ī NINDA.KU₇-ya *pár-ši-ya-an-na-i* ^(22') [*pé-r*]a-an ar-ḥa-ya-
kán te-pu ^(23') [*pár-ši*]-ya-an-na-i nu du-wa-an ^(24') [*du-w*]a-an-na iš-ḥu-u-wa-iš-
ke-ez-zi
 «[...] he breaks fat bread and sweet bread, [bre]aks a little (of them) from the
 [fr]ont and scatters (it) here and [th]ere».
- (14) KBo 30.69 III 11'-15' (NS, AN.TAḤ.ŠUM^{SAR} festival, 29th day: to Ea and his
 group, CTH 616.Tg28.1):²⁴
^(11') ... nu LUGAL-uš ^{NINDA}a-a-an ^(12') NINDA.KU₇^{HIA} ku-e *pár-ši-ya na-aš-ta*
ḥu-u-ma-an-da-az ^(13') *pé-ra-an ar-ḥa te-pu* *pár-ši-ya-an-na-i* ^(14') *na-at-ša-an*
^{LÚ}AZU EGIR-pa ^{NA}ḥu-u-wa-ši-¹ya¹ ^(15') *da-a-i*
 «The hot bread (and) the sweet breads which the king breaks, from the front he
 breaks a little from all (of them), and the sorcerer places them back on the stele».

As to the Sumerogram NINDA, there are three possible explanations: 1) the sign should be read as «four», as per V. Haas; 2) it properly is NINDA, which should be understood as a determinative; 3) it is NINDA, but it represents a noun, not a determinative.

It seems to me that the parallel with the noun *anaḥi(t)-* could help us to solve the problem: in the example (11) above – but it is not the only one – *anaḥi(t)-* is preceded by this Sumerogram, which I have transliterated and translated as «four», following Gregory McMahon's edition. However, nothing prevents the reading NINDA, especially because the noun *anaḥi(t)-* surely occurs with this Sumerogram at least in the following passage:²⁵

- (15) IBoT 1.29 obv. 50-53 (MS², *ḥaššumaš* festival, CTH 633.A):²⁶
⁽⁵⁰⁾ [nu] DUMU.LUGAL *ar-za-na pár-na pa-iz-zi nu DUMU.LUGAL a-da-an-*
na ú-e-ek-zi ⁽⁵¹⁾ [n]u 5 ^{NINDA}a-a-an 10 NINDA LA-AB-GA 10 NINDA.ŠE 12
 NINDA.KU₇ 10 ^{NINDA}ta-kar-mu-uš ⁽⁵²⁾ 2 UP-NU AR-ZA-NU 2 wa-ak-šur GA 1
NINDA a-na-ḥi 1 DUG KAŠ 1 DUG mar-nu-an ⁽⁵³⁾ nu A-NA DUMU.LUGAL
^{LÚ.MEŠ}SANGA *ḥu-u-ma-an-te-eš pé-ra-an-še-et e-ša-an-da-ri*
 «The prince goes to the *arzana*-building. The prince asks to eat: five hot breads,
 ten moist breads, ten barley breads, twelve sweet breads, ten *takarmu*-breads,
 two handfuls of groats, two *wakšur* of milk, one sample of bread, one vessel of

²³ Fuscagni 2010, 138.

²⁴ Popko - Taracha 1988, 84.

²⁵ Hoffner (1974, 151) claims that this is the only assured case in which the sign should be read NINDA, and that it would be unlikely elsewhere.

²⁶ Mouton 2011, 8.

beer, (and) one vessel of *marnuan*-beer. All the priests sit down in front of the prince».

In this example, the presence of the numeral «one» prevents the reading of the following sign as «four». Therefore, here the question is whether it is better to transcribe ^{NINDA}*anaḫi* or NINDA *anaḫi*. In my view, the latter solution is preferable: indeed, as noted by V. Haas, *anaḫi(t)-* is a generic meronym, which denotes a part of an offering, not necessary a piece of bread; see e.g. the following example:

- (16) KUB 39.71+ III 23-27 (NS, Ritual for Ištar-Pirinkir with Akkadian recitations, CTH 718.1.A):²⁷
⁽²³⁾ *ma-aḫ-ḫa-an-ma* ^{LÚ}*ša-ku-un-ni-iš* A-WA-TE^{MEŠ} ⁽²⁴⁾ ^{URU}*pa-a-bi-li-li me-mi-ya-u-wa-an-zi zi-in-n[a]-[i]* ⁽²⁵⁾ *nu-kán* A-NA ^{UDU} A-NA SAG.DU-ŠU ZAG-ni-ya ⁽²⁶⁾ ^{UZU}*pal-ta-ni a-na-ḫi da-a-i *na-at-kán** A-NA NINDA.SIG ⁽²⁷⁾ *da-a-i na-at-kán* ^{DUG}*ḫu-u-up-ru-uš-ḫi da-a-i*
 «And when the priest finishes speaking the words in Akkadian, he takes samples from the head and from the right shoulder of the sheep, he places them on the thin bread and puts them in the firebox».²⁸

As a consequence, the HW² is probably right in transcribing as NINDA *anaḫi*,²⁹ although the grammatical function of the noun NINDA remains quite uncertain: it could represent a noun in genitive case, but maybe we should expect a phonetic complement or the Akkadian preposition ŠA, or – and I think it is a better solution – it could be an accusative in partitive apposition (or στήμα καθ’ ὅλον καὶ μέρος), albeit this kind of construction seems to be found almost exclusively in relation to body parts.³⁰

In the light of the above, there are three possible ways for explaining Hitt. *kazmi(t)-*: 1) we can distinguish, with A. Ünal, ^{NINDA}*kazmi-*, which denotes a kind of bread, from *kazmi(t)-*, which now we know is a piece of bread or the like; 2) we can suppose that we are dealing with one single stem with two different meanings; 3) finally, we can assume that it is the same word having the same meaning – a piece of bread – in all its occurrences, as per V. Haas.

In support of the first hypothesis there would be at least a morphological difference between the two terms: ^{NINDA}*kazmi-* is always a common gender noun, if we do not consider

²⁷ Beckman 2014, 16-17.

²⁸ For this translation see Beckman 2014, 37; HED A, 57; and HW² A, 73. See also KUB 45.47+ (MS, Ritual for Ningal, CTH 494.A; Bawanypeck - Görke 2016) I ⁽⁵²⁾ *nu-kán* ^{LÚ}AZU A-NA MUŠEN *a-na-a-ḫi da-a-i*: «The magician takes a sample from the bird».

²⁹ HW² A, 73: «NINDA *a-na-ḫi* “des Brotes Kostprobe” (nicht ^{NINDA}*a*! nicht 4 *a*. mit Darga-Dinçol Anatolica 3. 104ff.)».

³⁰ Cf. Friedrich 1960, 123-124 and GrHL, 247. Exceptions are e.g. KBo 6.26 (OH/NS, Hittite Laws, §168, CTH 292.II.a.B; Hoffner 1997, 135) I ⁽⁴⁶⁾ *ták-ku* A.ŠA-an ZAG-an *ku-iš-ki pá-r-ši-ya*: «If someone violates the boundary of a field (lit. ‘a field, the boundary’)», and possibly KUB 21.17 (NH/NS, Decree of Ḫattušili III regarding the estate of Arma-Tarḫunta, CTH 86.1.A; Ünal 1974, 24-26) III ⁽⁹⁾ *nu ma-aḫ-ḫa-an* MU^{KAM}-za *me-ḫur ti-ya-ḫi* / ⁽¹⁰⁾ *še-li-aš šu-un-nu-ma-an-zi*: «And when the time of the year (lit. ‘the year, the time’) for the filling of the *šeli-s* arrives» (cf. GrHL, 243-244).

the uncertain ^{NINDA}*kašmi* in ABoT 1.23 (which A. Ünal assigns to the other lexeme), whereas *kazmi(t)-* is a neuter noun and shows plural forms in *-ta*.³¹ This argument would be strengthened by two differences in spelling: 1) the Sumerogram NINDA never occurs, as far as I know, with the neuter stem *kazmi(t)-*, the only exception being ^{NINDA}*kašmi* (if it belongs here); 2) the noun *kazmi(t)-* is never spelled **k/ga-az-za-mi-°*, but this is quite insignificant.

However, the close similarity between the two terms and their close semantic field make it highly likely that they are at least cognate forms. Moreover, the term is not Hittite; therefore, morphological differences could be due to the manners of borrowing, as will be shown later. The presence or not of the Sumerogram NINDA – if it is significant and not a merely scribal variant – might be easily explained: in those contexts, in which a *kazmi*-sample is taken from the loaves which are being broken, there is no necessity to specify that the word refers to bread. On the contrary, where this is not evident from the context, the Sumerogram NINDA occurs to make it clear. After all, if we are allowed to carry the comparison with *anaḫi(t)-* a little farther, the noun *kazmi(t)-* too could be a generic meronym, not only a piece of bread. Unfortunately, current evidence does not really support such a claim, the only possible hint being the uncertain UZU *ka-az-mi-it* of KBo 61.80, 6'-8', which occurs in fragmentary context.³²

To sum up, in my view it is not necessary to make a distinction between the stems ^{NINDA}*kazmi-* and *kazmi(t)-*, since both terms can refer to the same thing, i.e. a piece of bread or, in general, a sample of an offering. I do not see compelling reasons for rejecting the reading NINDA, rather than «four», for the Sumerogram which sometimes precedes the term; indeed, the fact that the noun *kazmi(t)-* would not occur with any other number but four is quite suspicious (although we must emphasize that there is a very small number of occurrences). Therefore, I think that the sign should be read NINDA, and it represents a noun – probably an accusative in partitive apposition – rather than a determinative. Thus, in my view, NINDA *kazmi(t)-* is the correct transcription.

Concluding, it remains the question about the etymology of the term. If in the case of *anaḫi(t)-* there have been several contributions, and the problem has finally found a good solution in Mauro Giorgieri's explanation,³³ in the case of the rare *kazmi(t)-* few attempts are found.

On the basis of the secondary stem *-ta*, Jaan Puhvel³⁴ and Johann Tischler³⁵ suggest that the term has a Hurrian origin,³⁶ whereas V. Haas, as seen before, explains it as a Luwian

³¹ However, Ünal (2007, 335) states that both common and neuter forms belong to the stem *kazmi(t)-*; therefore, it is not very clear why the two stems would have to be distinguished. I suspect that, according to Ünal, only the forms *gazmin* and ^{NINDA}*gazzamiuš* in KBo 17.65+ rev. 23 and 24 belong to his common stem ^{NINDA}*kazmi-*.

³² See n. 4 above.

³³ Giorgieri 2012 (see n. 19 above).

³⁴ HED K, 140.

³⁵ HEG A-K, 550.

³⁶ See also Richter 2012, 192. For the Hurrian character of the secondary stem *-ta* cf. Friedrich (1960, 60), Kronasser (EHS, 192), and Berman (1972, 92-99), who, however, do not quote the noun *kazmi(t)-*. For a different explanation, see Carruba 1967 and the discussion below.

noun in *-it*.³⁷ Previously, Howard Berman too considered the «hapax» (sic!)³⁸ NINDA *gazzami-* in KBo 17.65 rev. 24 to be a Luwian term, but he explained it as a Luwian participle in *-m(m)i-*.³⁹ However, this solution does not fit with the *-ta* extension, since the Luwian participle «inflects like an ordinary adjective with ‘*ī*-mutation’». ⁴⁰

In my view, the term could ultimately be an Akkadian loanword, borrowed into Hittite through Hurrian intermediation, reflecting the Akkadian verbal adjective *kasmu* «cut up, chopped» (with thematization in *-i*⁴¹), from *kasāmu* «to cut, to chop», although this verb is always referred to wood, plants and trees, never to loaves.⁴² As a parallel, we can quote e.g. the Hittite noun ^{DUG}*kazzi-*, a container, for which «[t]he homophone Hurr. *ga-az-zi* (KBo XIX 144 IV 11) and the secondary stem with *-t-* point to Hurrian origin, which in turn reflects Akk. *kāsu* ‘cup’». ⁴³

Finally, it is necessary to account for gender fluctuation in the Hittite stem *kazmi(t)-*. As Onofrio Carruba has shown,⁴⁴ the *t*-stem in Hittite neuter nouns borrowed from Hurrian is often due to Luwian intermediation,⁴⁵ but Hittite also shows some direct borrowings from Hurrian, adapted as common gender nouns (e.g. Hitt. ^{GIŠ/URUDU}*zakki-* «locking bolt», beside Luw. *zakkit-*, both from Hurr. *zakki*⁴⁶). Therefore, we can assume that the Hittite common *i*-stem *kazmi-* directly reflects Hurrian **kazmi-* (possibly from Akk. *kasmu*), whereas the neuter *t*-stem *kazmit-* reflects the Luwian adaptation of the same Hurrian noun. I stress again that there is no evidence for a semantic difference between the two stems: the meaning «sample, piece (of bread)» fits well in all contexts.⁴⁷

Unfortunately, at present, there is not enough data in support of the Akkadian etymological explanation, and hints for fully understanding the difference between *kazmi(t)-*

³⁷ However, Starke (1990) does not quote the term, and it is not recorded in Melchert’s dictionary (CLL), nor in the new *Annotated Corpus of Luwian Texts* on-line.

³⁸ Apparently, Berman does not connect ^{NINDA}*ga-az-za-mi-u[š]* to the *ga-az-mi-in* found in the preceding line of the same text; he only quotes the broken ^{NINDA}*ka-az-z[a-* in KBo 15.37 V 51.

³⁹ Berman 1972, 180.

⁴⁰ Melchert 2003, 194.

⁴¹ Cf. Giorgieri 2000, 198-199.

⁴² Cf. CAD K, 240-241, 244 and AHw, 453-454. On the semantic level, Akk. *kasāpu* would be better, since it is sometimes referred to bread (cf. CAD K, 242), but it is formally more difficult.

⁴³ HED K, 141-142. See also Hitt. ^Ē*apuzzi-* < Akk. *abūsu* «storehouse» and Hitt. *hazzizzi-* (pl. *-ta*) < Akk. *ḥasīsu* «ear, wisdom», both through Hurrian intermediation (HED A, 102-103; HED H, 284-286; HW² A, 192-193; HW² H, 547-548).

⁴⁴ Carruba 1967.

⁴⁵ The Luwian suffix *-it-* is often used to adapt loanwords, e.g. Luw. *nathit-* «bed» < Hurr. *nathe* < Sum. *ná(d)* (cf. Melchert 2003, 198). Without Hurrian evidence, there is no necessity to posit two different Hurrian stems, **kazm=i* and **kazm=idi*.

⁴⁶ Cf. Starke 1990, 221 and CLL, 275. Hurr. *zakki* is attested in Nuzi (cf. CAD S, 78 s.v. *sakku* A) and in the letter from Tušratta of Mitanni to Amenophis III EA 22 IV (23) 2 SAG.KUL.ZABAR 30 *za-ag-gi* ZABAR: «Two bronze door bolts, thirty bronze *zaggi-s*» (Knudtzon 1915, 176).

⁴⁷ If my explanation of NINDA *kazmi-* as partitive apposition is correct, the phrase 1 ^{NINDA}*šaniddu gazmin* in the example (1) above – which is the only occurrence of the common stem *kazmi-* without the Sumerogram NINDA – can be easily understood as «a *kazmi*-sample of one *šaniddu*-loaf».

and *anaḫi(t)*- in Hittite texts are lacking.⁴⁸ We hope that future discoveries and publications of texts will help us to solve the question.

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⁴⁸ I admit that it is difficult to imagine that two different words, borrowed from the same language, show the very same meaning; therefore, it is likely that there was some semantic difference between *anaḫi(t)*- and *kazmi(t)*-, but we lack positive evidence.

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A BRIEF NOTE ON EARLY ABBASID STUCCO DECORATION.
MADINAT AL-FAR AND THE FIRST FRIDAY MOSQUE OF IŞFAHĀN*

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The aim of this paper is to demonstrate how an in-depth study of the stucco decoration could be useful in dating different phases of the Early Abbasid period in the absence of other precise archaeological evidence. Two case studies are presented: the residence of Madinat al-Far in Syria and the Early Abbasid Mosque of Işfahān in Iran.

Keywords: stucco; Early Abbasid; Madinat al-Far; Işfahān; Friday Mosque

1. EARLY ABBASID STUCCO DECORATION

The Early Abbasid period has been labelled «the dark age of early Muslim archaeology».¹ With the exception of the two sites that surely date back to the early years of the Abbasid caliphate (i.e. Ukhaider and the caliphal city of Raqqa), we can cite not many other buildings of which, unfortunately, only a few parts have survived. The architectural stucco decoration is one element that can be used to help date the buildings due to its particular 'style', which features many aspects common to places located even very far from each other.² Yet despite these common elements, we can observe that many variations occurred over the years before the foundation of Samarra, even in stuccoes coating the same building.

The decorative motifs include vegetal elements with a different degree of 'stylisation'³ and geometric patterns; there are no examples of human or animal figures. One of the most common features - since it appears in all Early Abbasid stucco finds and is also useful for dating - is the 'Sasanian' pearl border, which was highly successful in Umayyad times. Observations show that in the Early Abbasid period, the pearls with drilled holes forming the border were rough and cursory, and their hand-made profile was created with small and usually irregular engravings very different from the circular pearls of the Late-Sasanian and Umayyad examples.⁴ Shortly after (the first examples are probably from Balkh and Samarra),⁵ there seems to have been a return to the Sasanian-Umayyad circular prototypes.

* This paper is based on part of the author's MA thesis (Corsi 2017)

¹ Meinecke 1991, 226.

² This type of stucco decoration has been found over a large territory: from the examples of Madinat al-Far in the west to Samarkand in the east (for bibliographical references cf. notes 7 to 12, below). No studies examined all aspects of this architectural decoration: each find is presented in an archaeological report complete with brief comparative analyses. The studies by Haase (2007) and Meinecke (1991) are the only comprehensive ones, mostly focusing on the area of Bilad al-Sham.

³ Vine scrolls are the most represented motif, with three or five-lobed leaves and grapes. Palmettes or acanthus leaves, pomegranates and lotus flowers are less represented.

⁴ For Sasanian and Late-Sasanian examples see Kröger 1982, especially pls. 14.2, 20.1-3, 37.4, 68.2, 77.1, 88.5, 91.2-4, 95.2, 97.1; Thompson 1976, pl. XVIII, fig. 5. For Umayyad examples from Bilad al-Sham see Grabar 1978, 271, fig. 4; Hamilton 1959, pls. VI.1, XXX.1, XXXIV and Schlumberger 1986, pls. 59.b, 60.b-c, e-f.

⁵ As for the pearl borders from Samarra, see Dept. Ant. Iraq 1940, pls. XXXII, XXXIV; for Balkh see Golombek 1969, 181, figs. 14 and 17.

Although the vegetal and geometric elements were rendered in a similar way in the Early Abbasid stuccoes, two main typologies can be distinguished: a ‘miniaturistic type’ (fig. 1), due to the high number of small vegetal elements filling the geometrical patterns in a free scheme, composed of pairs of stylised leaves and bunches of grapes; and a ‘monumental type’ (fig. 2), accordingly to the proportions of the vegetal elements forming the decoration of the usually narrow vertical panels.⁶

Examples of these Early Abbasid stucco decorations have been found at several sites. In Syria there are examples of both types, although the ‘monumental’ one seems to be a prerogative of Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi, Madinat al-Far and Raqqa.⁷ In Iraq many stucco panels were recovered from Ctesiphon/al-Mada’in,⁸ Hira⁹ (Najaf) and Habibiyya.¹⁰ As regards the eastern regions (Iran and present-day Uzbekistan and Afghanistan), there are stucco panels from Susa, Bishapur, Siraf, Işfahān,¹¹ Balkh and Samarkand.¹² With the

⁶ The large dimensions of the leaves allow the artist to use just a few elements to fill the vertical panels of the ‘monumental type’ (like those of al-Raqqa, see Daiber - Becker 2004). On the contrary, in the ‘miniaturistic type’ more elements are required to fill similar spaces and thus the work takes longer and is more painstaking.

⁷ The stuccoes of Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi were published by Grabar 1978; most of the pearl borders (over half) belong to the so-called type 1, datable to the Abbasid period (ca. 760-780; Grabar 1978, 68, 175-176) and feature sketched pearls instead of the distinct rounded pearls so widespread during the Sasanian and Umayyad epoch, of which we have examples from the same place (see Grabar 1978, 271, fig. Ap. 4). The excavations at Madinat al-Far were directed by C.-P. Haase and have brought to light several stucco fragments and panels still *in situ*, as displayed in many useful plates, see in particular Haase 2007. The huge amount of carved stucco finds from Raqqa has been recently published by Daiber - Becker 2004.

⁸ The old Sasanian capital was excavated by O. Reuther (1930); among the published stucco finds, mostly dated to the Sasanian period, there is a panel identical to an exemplar found at Hira (Reuther 1930, 36), both dated to the early Abbasid period. Nevertheless, some stucco fragments from Ctesiphon, dated from the 6th to the second half of the 8th century and kept in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, actually show similarities with finds from Abbasid sites such as Habibiyya (cf. n. 10, below). Another lesser known but very important discovery in the area of al-Mada’in has been published by Khatiq (1985-1986) and consists of the stuccoes decorating a room (known as the “room of decorations”).

⁹ The old Lakhmid capital of Hira was excavated in 1931; the stucco finds were published by Talbot-Rice (1934). As stated by the latter «by far the largest group of the stucco work is, however, dated by numismatic and other evidence to the second half of the eighth century A.D.», while another group of cornice fragments are dated, by comparing them with examples from Ctesiphon, to the late Sasanian period (Talbot-Rice 1934, 61). Another mission was started in 2015 under the direction of M. Müller-Wiener in the region of Hira/Najaf in order to identify the area previously excavated and to provide more reliable information on the dating of the different occupations of the site, but as yet no stuccoes have been published (Müller-Wiener *et al.* 2015, 5-7).

¹⁰ Habibiyya lies on the eastern bank of the Tigris; today it is part of the city of Baghdad. The results of the Iraqi excavations were published by Hammoudi (1981).

¹¹ The majority of the early Islamic stucco finds from Susa have been published by Hardy-Guibert (1990). The stucco decoration from Bishapur and attributed to the Early Abbasid period has been published by Salles (1939-1942). Only some small fragments were found at Siraf during Whitehouse’s excavations of the Congregational Mosque, from a layer dated to between 815 and 850 (Whitehouse 1980, pl. V.b). As for Işfahān cf. § 1.2., below.

¹² The stuccoes from the Masjid-i nuh-gunbad of Balkh have been studied by different scholars but their date is not clear. Only the last sondages actually reached the original floor and the lower part of the wall decorations (Adle 2011). The lowest band of the latter shows a stucco ornament recalling the earlier Sasanian compositions from Nizamabad, Chal Tarkhan Ishqabad and Tapa Mill, and the Umayyad ones from Khirbat al-Mafjar and Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi (cf. n. 31, below), but with higher relief and less attention to detail. If we compare this ornamental band to that of the qibli wall of the earliest Friday Mosque of Işfahān, it is clear that the latter is more similar to the Sasanian and Umayyad examples. Some panels from the mihrāb of the

exception of the Syrian sites, Balkh and, partially, Iṣfahān (see below), the stucco decoration of the other Iranian sites and that of the Iraqi sites features the typical small ‘miniaturistic type’ elements. Most of the vegetal stucco panels found *in situ* in the palaces of Raqqa are of the ‘monumental type’; in this case, the choice of this large-scale ornament may have been originally imposed by the urgency of building the caliphal residences as fast as possible in order to move the court from Baghdad to the new city.

1.1. A case study from Syria: *Madinat al-Far and its chronological sequence*

It is still hard to determine whether a chronological sequence can be established for these two types of stucco decorations, which both existed during the first century of the Abbasid caliphate, and, if so, which one was the earlier. In order to understand the chronological relationship between them it would be necessary to ascertain a more precise dating for the ‘miniaturistic type’ finds in Iraq (i.e. those from Hira, Ctesiphon/Mada’in and Habibiyya), as they are indeed undoubtedly different from both the Iranian ‘miniaturistic type’ examples - with a less naturalistic appearance - and the whole Umayyad *corpus* of Syrian stuccoes.

Iraq was in fact the most important region during the Early Abbasid caliphate: its first capital, Kufa (750-751), is just a few kilometres from Hira; Habibiyya is located in the present-day territory of Baghdad. The stucco decoration of Harun al-Rashid’s Raqqa should be dated some years after 796, roughly around 800; thus we lack certain data about the architectural stucco decoration between the end of the Umayyad period (the last evidence comes from Khirbat al-Mafjar)¹³ and the foundation of Raqqa. In fact, only these stuccoes have been dated on the basis of archaeological evidence, while the majority of the stuccoes from the other Abbasid sites mentioned have been dated by stylistic analyses.¹⁴ Among the latter, the case of Madinat al-Far is remarkable as it is the only one that shows clear evidence of a decorative development: the decoration of one of the panels found there was most likely influenced by that of the Samarra ‘B style’ stuccoes¹⁵ and thus datable to the mid-9th century, while the patterns of the other panels are stylistically closer to those of Umayyad and, mostly, Early Abbasid specimens.¹⁶ It is difficult to establish the chronological sequence of the latter, mostly referring to those found *in situ* in the same rooms,¹⁷ of which at least two exemplars are very similar to those from the Raqqa palaces (fig. 3),¹⁸ while others show precise parallels with the ‘miniaturistic type’ decoration of

Nuh-Gumbad Mosque, brought to light during the last works (Adle 2011, 601), show few similarities with stuccoes from Raqqa (see Daiber - Becker 2004, pls. 22.c, 23.d-e). Finally, as for Samarkand, several stucco panels and semi-column coatings were recovered in the area of the mosque and published by Grenet - Isamidinov - Bernard (1992, 306, 307).

¹³ See Hamilton 1959.

¹⁴ Grabar 1978, 68; Grenet - Isamidinov - Bernard 1992, 305, 308; Hardy-Guibert 1990, 292.

¹⁵ Haase 2007, 447 and fig. 12.

¹⁶ In this regard cf. Haase 2007, 444-446.

¹⁷ Haase 2007, 447-448, figs. 9, 14-15.

¹⁸ As for space, the decoration from Madinat al-Far is the closest to that from Raqqa. Two panels in particular resemble the examples from the capital, with the typical “monumental” size of the vegetal elements (see Haase 2007, 445, 448, figs. 4, 15).

panels from Iraq (fig. 4).¹⁹ Two hypotheses could be suggested in this regard: the ‘monumental type’ panels were modelled on those from Raqqa due to the vicinity of the latter and the fashion originating in this caliphal city or, instead, given the many ‘monumental’ finds from this region they could testify to a ‘Syrian style’ developed after the Umayyad period, less accurately and naturalistically executed – placed on door jambs and *mihrābs* only.²⁰ In this case the ‘miniaturistic type’ stuccoes of Madinat al-Far would attest to a secondary influence from the Iraqi region.²¹

1.2. A case study from Iran: the Early Abbasid Friday Mosque of Isfahān

Another interesting chronological sequence from the Abbasid period is to be found in the earliest *Masjid-i Jum'a* of Isfahān. The first phase of this mosque is datable to 767 CE.²² The Italian excavations (1972-1978) identified both the *qiblī* wall and the *mihrāb* of the first Abbasid mosque, with a different orientation compared to the present-day one, and some traces of a previous Sasanian occupation.²³ The *mihrāb* was found in sector 190, which corresponds to the south domed hall; the *qiblī* wall was unearthed in the western sectors 204-205 and 218-219.

The stucco panels found *in situ* on both the *mihrāb* and the *qiblī* wall are of great interest. The decoration of the fragmentary right panel of the rectangular niche of the *mihrāb* (fig. 5) consists of an interlacing geometric pattern, formed by a pearl band with small leaves filling the twists. Leaves of a similar type have been also found in the central panel of the *mihrāb* (fig. 6), which is more fragmentary and displays the typical small vegetal elements of the ‘miniaturistic type’.²⁴ Instead the interlacing motif of the right panel is an *unicum* among the Abbasid stuccoes and may be related to the later specimens from the 10th-century Friday Mosque of Nayin.²⁵

The decoration of the *qiblī* wall (figs. 7-8), perfectly preserved for a height of 92 cm ca., that corresponds to the cut made during the building of the second Abbasid Mosque (841-42), is completely different from that of the *mihrāb*. The stuccoes are enclosed by rectangular panels (52 cm wide) separated by narrow vertical pearl listels and show a larger variety of vegetal elements than those of the *mihrāb*, rendered in higher relief: they range from typical vine leaves (but without the usual bunches of grapes) to different kinds of

¹⁹ As stated by Haase, the decoration of several panels resembles those of specimens from Hira (Haase 2007, 453 fig. 6, 456 fig. 11, 457 fig. 14).

²⁰ Parallels can be found in some Abbasid panels from Qasr al-Hayr al-Sharqi (Grabar 1978, 58, figs. 140-141).

²¹ Haase 2007, 449.

²² Cf. Duva on this issue.

²³ The first acquaintance with the Sasanian phase consists of the discovery by E. Galdieri of a pillar, attributed to the Sasanian period thanks to its preserved stucco decoration (see Galdieri 1972, 369 and fig. XII.d and f).

²⁴ Furthermore, some fragments of stucco decoration unearthed during the excavation works in the southern domed hall show the ‘miniaturistic’ features, similar to those of the *mihrāb* (Scerrato 1973, 418, fig. 8). Similar leaves have been found in Iran; in particular, the sharp-cornered leaves from the *mihrāb* right panel can be related to those from Bishapur (cf. Ghirshman 1956, pl. XXII) and Susa (cf. Hardy-Guibert 1990, 279, fig. 5).

²⁵ A geometric stucco pattern with interlaced pearl bands covers the pillars of the mosque, incorporating stylised small vegetal elements (see Flury 1930, pls. VIII.1, IX.1).

flowers, shrubs and palmettes.²⁶ It is difficult to find such a variety of elements placed together in Early Abbasid stuccoes, and some of the elements mentioned may be more easily related to Umayyad examples from Iran.²⁷ Strong parallels are to be noted not only with the more naturalistic late Sasanian-Umayyad features but also with typical Early Abbasid stucco vegetal elements, such as stylised five-lobed leaves with drilled holes and engraved veins, and frames with sketched pearls showing a particular similarity to the Raqqa panels.²⁸ The direct comparison with Raqqa, together with the archaic taste of many of the *qiblī* wall panels, makes this decoration a combination of Umayyad and Early Abbasid features.

1.2.1. The Early Abbasid Friday Mosque of Isfahān: a hypothesis on the chronological sequence of its stucco panels

Umberto Scerrato stated that two floors pertinent to the first Abbasid mosque have been found: the original walking surface corresponds to the plastered floor - «a beaten layer of lime mixed with earth»²⁹ - in front of the *mihrāb* (fig. 6); as regards the second floor (a restoration work preceding the construction of the second Abbasid mosque) only traces of small square tiles on the mortar of the ground in front of the *qiblī* wall remain (fig. 7).³⁰

Looking at the ornamental stucco motifs of the *mihrāb* and *qiblī* walls, it is evident that they do not belong to the same decorative phase due to the clear differences observed above. Only the lower ornamental bands display similar features, showing a Sasanian-Umayyad-inspired motif made up of a modular composition of four lance-shaped leaves forming an X-shaped motif, with a concentrically geometric pattern filling the spaces.³¹

²⁶ Some of the stylised plants on the *qiblī* wall seem to represent sweetwater plants due to their large leaves and wavy profile. Of particular interest is the small tree depicted on the central panel of the *qiblī* wall portion displayed in fig. 8, which may be interpreted as an olive plant (*olea oleaster*) due to the shape of the leaves and the stylised small flowers (I would like to express my deepest thanks to Dr Alessandra Celant whom I consulted about this plant). On the left panel in the same fig. 8 the five-lobed leaf can be related to other ones from Raqqa (see Daiber - Becker 2004) and Samarkand (Grenet - Isamiddinov - Bernard 1992, 306 fig. 22b). In the left panel shown in fig. 7 the pointed elements may represent closed acanthus flowers or large sweetwater flowers. The small elements depicted in the centre of the right panel in fig. 8 can be interpreted as papyrus flowers. The whole decoration may have been inspired by the species of the Isfahān territory since some plants are unique among the other early Abbasid stuccoes. On the contrary, the less distinctive vine leaves on the *mihrāb* represent the most widespread vegetal species, attested in almost every early Abbasid stucco find.

²⁷ The decoration of the plant in fig. 8, interpreted as an *olea oleaster*, is particularly interesting. It can be compared to more naturalistic examples from nearby Tapa Mil and Qal'a Gawri (Hasanpur - Hashemi 2016, fig. 3.19) and in particular from Chal Tarkhan - Ishqabad (see Thompson 1976, pls. XIV.5, 6, 7 and XVIII.5). A similar plant seems to be represented in a panel from Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi (Talgam 2004, fig. 73). There is no comparison for this plant with those illustrated in stucco exemplars from the Abbasid period.

²⁸ For many examples of similar leaves, see Daiber - Becker 2004, pls. 58-60.

²⁹ Scerrato 1977, 453.

³⁰ Scerrato 2001, XLII.

³¹ The lower motif is a well-known decorative pattern, attested at several sites since the late Sasanian period: Chal Tarkhan Ishqabad (see Thompson 1976, pl. XVII.2), Tapa Mil (see Kröger 1982, pl. 96.1), Nizamabad (see Kröger 1982, pl. 65.1-2), Qal'a Gawri (see Hasanpur - Hashemi 2016, figs. 3.14, 4.1-2), and probably Susa (see the small fragment published by Kröger 1982, pl. 92.2). Other examples from Umayyad residences in Syria were found at Khirbat al-Mafjar (see Hamilton 1959, pls. VI.1-3, XXXIV.5), Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi (see Schlumberger 1986, pl. 77.b) and the 'Amman citadel (see Arce 2001, 138, fig. 6a). Examples of the

This pattern is employed in its complete form on the lower band of the *qiblī* wall, while on the *mihrāb* lower band it is composed of just the upper half, certainly following a planned scheme, since the lowest plain listel confirms that the motif was closed.

It is interesting to note that the flooring of the second phase identified by Scerrato, found only in front of the *qiblī* wall, cuts the decoration of the above-mentioned lower band precisely in half, leaving out just its upper part (fig. 7). This evidence could suggest that the decoration of the lower band of the *mihrāb* panels was planned following a scheme which includes only the upper half of the whole pattern, in order to establish continuity with the *qiblī* wall decoration that remained in view in this second phase (fig. 9).³² Therefore the *mihrāb* panels should not date to the first phase of the first Abbasid mosque but rather they should be coeval to the ‘second flooring’ found in front of the *qiblī* wall or, more probably, even subsequent to it, given the absence of both tiles or their traces.³³ Furthermore, the right panel - where the lower band does not contain a pearl band - seems to have been added later next to the central panel (fig. 5).³⁴ In addition, the decoration of the lower band of the *mihrāb* panels is less precise, as evidenced by leaves of different sizes and irregular shapes. The lower degree of craftsmanship of these panels, imitating the high-quality decoration of the *qiblī* wall, can be identified thanks to the careless execution.

Due to the dating of the mosque (767 CE) these *qiblī* wall stucco panels are the earliest datable examples from the Abbasid period. Although the small vine scroll motif (including the ‘miniaturist type’ features) is well attested in Iran during the Early Abbasid period, as displayed in the examples from Nayin, Bishapur, Susa and Nishapur,³⁵ it should be attributed, at least for the case of Iṣfahān, to later artistic development. Numerous fragments of this kind have been recovered in sector 190 (the Nizam al-Mulk’s southern hall) in the Seljuk filling.³⁶

Abbasid period can be found at Mada’in (see Khatiq 1985-1986) and Balkh (see Adle 2011, 601, fig. 20). For the case of Balkh, despite the same position of the decorative pattern if compared to that of Iṣfahān, the rendering is considerably different from the latter with its simpler forms and fewer details.

³² This continuity can be confirmed by the measurements of the lower band of the *qiblī* wall. The lower band of the *qiblī* wall with the modular motif of lance-shaped leaves measures 16 cm in height, while the upper half (with a flat listel and pearl band) is approximately 8 cm high. The ratio between these two parts is 2:1, corresponding to the 1:1 ratio between the same parts on the *mihrāb* central panel, since just the upper half of the lower pattern was produced.

³³ In this case the *mihrāb* panels could testify to a possible third phase of the first Abbasid mosque.

³⁴ Two or more phases can be reasonably hypothesised since the literary sources record an enlargement of the first Abbasid Mosque (see Duva in this issue, n. 53). The slight space on the corner between the central and right panel of the *mihrāb* (fig. 5) may suggest that the latter was subsequently placed against the central panel.

³⁵ Cf. n. 11, above. Another particularly interesting case of a renewed decoration phase of a *mihrāb* is to be found at Nishapur. The refurbishment is linked to new flooring 16 cm higher placed in front of Tapa Madrasa Mosque *mihrāb* (Wilkinson 1986, 119-123). In this case there was an overlap of panels, with the more ancient ones (highly damaged, but clearly showing a decoration with tiny leaves and bunches of grapes) covered by another panel with different patterns. It is interesting that in the case of Iṣfahān there was neither an overlapping nor a trace of the removal of a previous panel.

³⁶ Scerrato 1973, fig. 8; 1976, 595, figs. 14-15.

2. CONCLUSIONS

A second phase, testified by the new flooring, probably influenced the *mihrāb* stucco decoration of the first Abbasid Friday Mosque of Iṣfahān. Information inferred from the patterns of the lower bands shows that the *mihrāb* panels should be dated later than those of the *qiblī* wall. This hypothesis is supported by the more archaic look of the *qiblī* stuccoes, which finds parallels not only with Abbasid examples but also with late Sasanian and Umayyad specimens. This decorative type might be the most ancient decorative stucco find from the Abbasid period. Thus, the ‘miniaturistic type’ decoration identified on the *mihrāb* panels represents a later development, which was extremely successful in Iran during the 9th and 10th centuries.

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Fig. 1 - Hira, stucco panels from Building 1 (after Talbot-Rice 1934).



Fig. 2 - Stucco panel from Raqqa (after Daiber - Becker 2004).



Fig. 3 - Madinat al-Far, stucco panel from S. 21 (after Haase 2007).



Fig. 4 - Madinat al-Far, fragment of a stucco panel from S. 21 (after Haase 2007).



Fig. 5 - Isfahān, first Abbasid Friday Mosque, *mihrāb*, right stucco panel (after Scerrato 2001).



Fig. 6 - Isfahān, first Abbasid Friday Mosque, *mihrāb*, central stucco panel (after Scerrato 2001).



Fig. 7 - Isfahān, first Abbasid Friday Mosque, *qiblī* wall (sector 204), stucco panels (after Scerrato 2001). Traces of the flooring “cutting” the lower band of the panels in half.



Fig. 8 - Isfahān, first Abbasid Friday Mosque, *qiblī* wall (sector 205), stucco panels during the process of discovery (after Scerrato 2001).

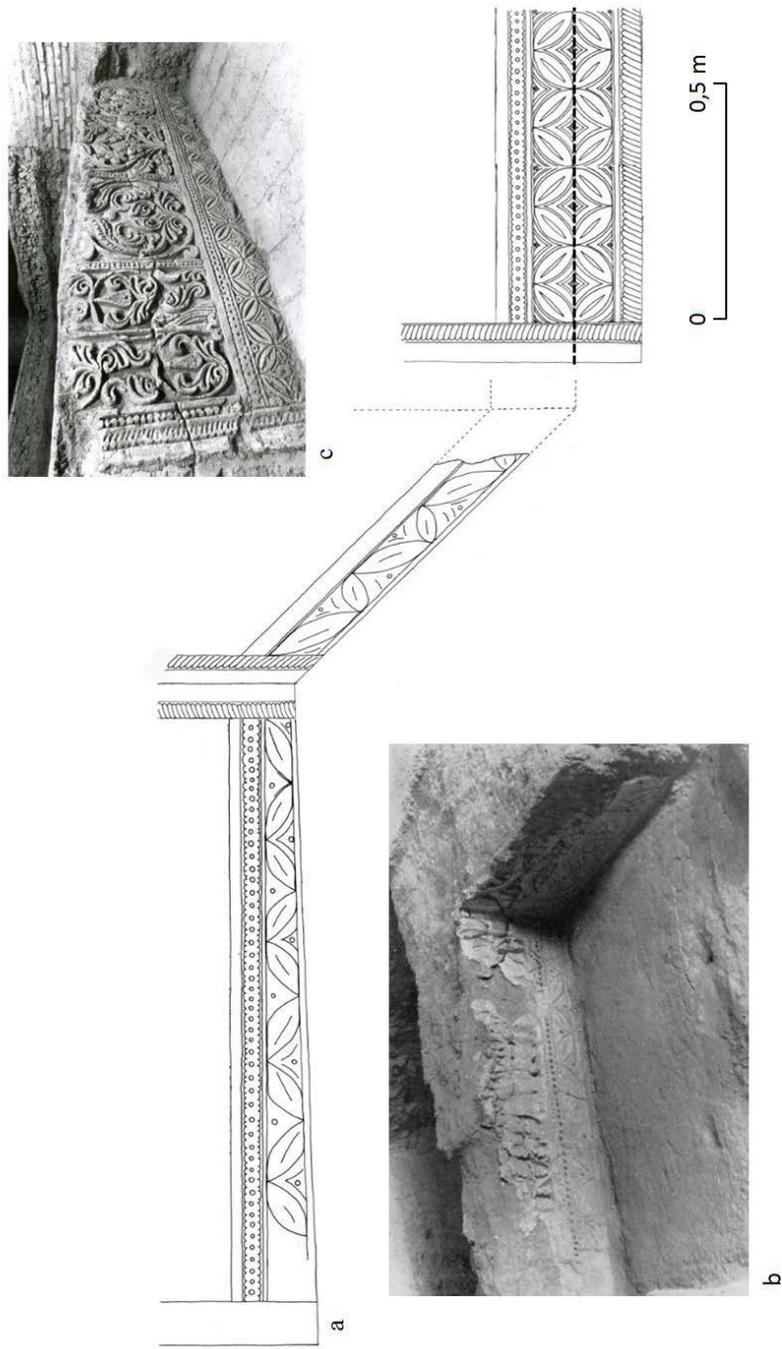


Fig. 9 - a) Reconstruction of the stucco lower decoration of the *mihṛāb* and *qibīlī* wall; b) the *mihṛāb* of the first Abbasid Friday Mosque; c) the *qibīlī* wall, a detail (drawing by the author).

NEW PERSPECTIVES ON THE FIRST ABBASID
MASJID-I JUM‘A OF IŞFAHĀN*

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Following an in-depth study and comparison of historical sources and the archaeological data from the Italian Mission, a new interpretation of both the topographical position and the precise dating of the first Abbasid Friday Mosque of Işfahān can be suggested, which departs from previous theories. Particularly, the date of 772 so far accepted by scholars should be called into question and a new and earlier date hypothesized.

Keywords: Iran; Işfahān; Abbasids; 8th century; Friday Mosque

In the past, scholars have paid much attention to the Masjīd-i Jum‘a of Işfahān, but very little has been devoted to its early construction phase. The first mosque, erected by the Abbasids in the 8th century and brought to light in the '70s by the Italian Archaeological Mission of IsMEO (fig. 1),¹ has been patchily studied and few attempts have been made to reconstruct its genesis.

In this paper I seek to place the first Abbasid Masjīd-i Jum‘a in a coherent historical and topographical context, the Işfahān region in the early Abbasid period, in order to precisely understand when and where the Friday Mosque was built.

At present there is unanimous agreement among scholars on when the first Masjīd-i Jum‘a of Işfahān was built. In fact, it has been generally equated with the mosque constructed in 772 by the Banū Taym, one of the Arab tribes settled in the region of Işfahān since the Umayyad period.²

As for where the mosque was built, on the other hand, two major hypotheses have been formulated so far. The first claims that the Friday Mosque was located in the city of Yahūdiyya;³ the second puts it in the village of Yawān.⁴ The city of Yahūdiyya was founded by the Abbasid governor Ayyūb ibn Ziyād under the caliph al-Manşūr in 767 by means of a *tamşīr*, coalescing fifteen villages in the area of Işfahān.⁵ Subsequently the *mişr* of Yahūdiyya⁶ developed over time through the annexation of other villages rapidly expanding into the flourishing city depicted in historical accounts and leading to the formation of the oldest nucleus of modern Işfahān.⁷ Nevertheless, prior to the arrival of the

* This paper is based on part of the author's MA thesis (Duva 2016).

¹ Scerrato 1973-1978.

² Here, the form 'Banū Taym' given by the *Dhikr Akhbār Işbahān* of Abū Nu‘aym (see Appendix) has been chosen. Instead, in Māfarrūkhī's *Kitāb mahāsīn Işbahān* the form given is 'Banū Tamīm', a tribe placed by Ya‘qūbī among the Arabic people who moved to Işfahān under Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf (76 [274]: «[...] ils appartiennent aux tribus de Thakīf, de Tamīm, des Banū Ḍabba, de Khuza‘a, des Banū Ḥanīfa, des Banū Abd al-Kais et de différentes autres»).

³ See among others: Le Strange 1905; Gaube 1979; Barthold 1984; Grabar 1990; Falahat 2014.

⁴ Golombek 1974.

⁵ Abū Nu‘aym, I, 16-17; Māfarrūkhī, 8-9; *Mujmal al-tawārīkh wa al-qiṣaṣ*, 523-525.

⁶ As regards the name of Yahūdiyya, see footnote 10.

⁷ «Djey fut ruiné et il n'en resta qu'une petite portion, tandis que la Yahoudieh s'agrandit et devint la ville moderne d'Ispahān» (Yāqūt, 45). The same information is to be found in Abū'l-Fida, II, 160 [411].

Abbasids and the consequent urban rearrangement of the area of Iṣfahān they accomplished, a place named *yahūdiyya*⁸ already existed but it referred to a small suburb of the village of Yawān where Jews had lived and worked since at least the Parthian period.⁹ Thus there is a substantial and essential difference between Yahūdiyya¹⁰ (the *miṣr*/city founded in 767 by the governor Ayyūb ibn Ziyād) and the *yahūdiyya* (the area inhabited by the Jewish community prior to 767 where Ayyūb located the market probably in order to stem Jewish power in controlling the economic and merchant activities of the area). Most Muslim authors from the 9th-10th centuries when mentioning the Masjid-i Jum‘a label it as ‘the mosque of Yahūdiyya’ because they describe the city of Yahūdiyya as it was at their time or blindly transmit information through *isnād*.¹¹ As a result, scholars have not as a rule made a chronological and territorial distinction between the Jewish quarter of *yahūdiyya*, preceding the *tamṣīr* of 767, and Yahūdiyya, the city that originated from the *tamṣīr*, wrongly considering it to have been a big city even before the coming of the Abbasids.¹²

Thus, even if the Masjid-i Jum‘a of Iṣfahān can be correctly identified with the mosque of Yahūdiyya, this is only the case after the *tamṣīr* of 767 when Yahūdiyya was actually founded.

The second theory, which locates the Abbasid Masjid-i Jum‘a in the village of Yawān, one of the fifteen villages merged into the *miṣr* of Yahūdiyya, was formulated by Lisa Golombek as part of a reconstruction of the urban area of Iṣfahān in the first Islamic period.¹³ This study is the best undertaken on Iṣfahān so far and Golombek’s assumption has been largely accepted in the academic world.

This paper will propose new perspectives on where and when the first Abbasid Friday Mosque of Iṣfahān was built. It suggests that the latter should be identified with the mosque erected at the same time as the *tamṣīr* (767) by Ayyūb ibn Ziyād in the *miṣr* of Yahūdiyya, in the area earlier occupied by the village of Khushīnān. Indeed, by comparing the historical sources with the archaeological data originating from the excavations carried out by the Italian Archaeological Mission, it reaches the conclusion that the reconstructive model so far proposed in scientific literature, which reads the Masjid-i Jum‘a as built by the tribe of the Banū Taym (or Banū Tamīm)¹⁴ in 772, should be called into question.

To better explain this hypothesis, it is now necessary to briefly discuss the urban situation of the region of Iṣfahān at the rise of Abbasid power and to focus on the *tamṣīr* of Yahūdiyya. The *Dhikr Akhbār Iṣbahān* written by Abū Nu‘aym in the 11th century has proved to be a very important source of information on that point. In fact, the author owes

⁸ Persian *kō johūdan*, literally meaning ‘the street of the Jews’.

⁹ «While the presence of a Jewish community in Iṣfahān area is undoubted at least since the reign of the Sassanid king Yazdagird I, it’s only under Islām, in particular during the two decades after the Abbasid revolution and the foundation of Baghdād, that it widely grew in number» (Pourshariati 2012, 10).

¹⁰ The name Yahūdiyya given to the new *miṣr* probably reflected the economic role fulfilled by the Jewish community and the number that Jews had reached in the area in the pre-Abbasid period.

¹¹ Iṣṭakhṛī, 117; Ibn Ḥawqal, 354 [362]; Abū’l-Shaykh, 12; Muqaddasī, III, 345-346 [388-389]; *Hudūd al-‘ālam*, 131; Idrīsī, II, 167-168 [667].

¹² Le Strange 1905; Golombek 1974; Gaube 1979; Barthold 1984; Falahat 2014.

¹³ Golombek 1974.

¹⁴ See footnote 2.

his historical introduction to Iṣfahān to the lost *History of Iṣfahān* by Ḥamza Iṣfahānī, the most authoritative history of the city written in the 10th century.

At the coming of the Abbasid dynasty in 750 the plain of Iṣfahān was in urgent need of rearrangement in terms of the urban layout. In fact, several small or medium-sized villages orbited around Jayy,¹⁵ the Sasanian city chosen as the governmental seat of the province by Muslims, and moreover Arab settlements had been disseminated throughout the region since the Umayyad period. Therefore, in 767 al-Mahdī, son and heir of the caliph al-Manṣūr and *walī* of the Khurāsān region, appointed Ayyūb ibn Ziyād as *'āmil* (governor) of Iṣfahān and charged him with the *tamṣīr* of a new *miṣr* that would unify the area in a unique centre. The primary purpose of this foundation it is likely to be to ease the political control and economic management of the region, thus guaranteeing efficient tax collection and constant income, especially given the presence of ancient caravan routes. The *tamṣīr* coincided with a great deal of building and development. According to Abū Nu'aym, the new city of Yahūdiyya was established jurisdictionally by merging fifteen villages (Bāṭīrḡān, Fursān, Yawān, Khurjān, Filfilān, Sunbulān, Furā'ān, Kamā'ān, Jūzdān, Lunbān, Ashkahān, Jarwā'ān, Khushīnān, Barwaskān and Fābijān) and building up a core consisting of the main buildings and facilities associated with an Islamic city: the congregational mosque and the *dār al-imāra* in the former village of Khushīnān,¹⁶ and the *sūq* in the neighbouring Jewish settlement (*yahūdiyya*).¹⁷

1. THE FIRST ABBASID MASJID-I JUM'Ā: A NEW INTERPRETATION

Though, as just mentioned, Abū Nu'aym's work has been very helpful in this study, the section concerning the *tamṣīr* and the concomitant foundation of the first Friday Mosque is quite complex. In fact, the author uses three different chronological periods (one preceding, one contemporary to and one following the time of Ayyūb) switching from one to another. In the first stage Abū Nu'aym talks about the "mosque of Khushīnān", while for the years after the *tamṣīr* he speaks of the "mosque of Yahūdiyya". This discrepancy can be explained in that following the physical union of Khushīnān to the new *miṣr* the identity of the single village got lost in favour of complete territorial unity. Consequently the mosque of Khushīnān became the congregational mosque of the new *miṣr* of Yahūdiyya.

However, when the time disparity between the different chronological periods used by Abū Nu'aym is resolved, the setting is sufficiently reliable and consistent, and in the end it is the most detailed and complete section based on the original work of Ḥamza Iṣfahānī.¹⁸

¹⁵ Jayy, جي, the Arabic form of the middle-Persian term *Gay*. *Gay* was a round city located around 4 km east of where the medieval Iṣfahān developed (Abū'l-Fida, II, 160 [411]; Ibn Ḥawqal, II, 354 [362]; Idriṣī, II, 167-168 [667]; Muqaddasī, III, 345-346 [388-389]; Yāqūt, 188-89). Its fortifications were built sometime between the reign of Ardāshīr I (224) and that of Fīrūz I (459-484), but it seems very likely that a small settlement had existed since the Achaemenid period (Strabo, XV, 3.3; Ptolemy, VI, 4.4; Curtius Rufus, V, 13.2; Polybius, XXI, 9.3).

¹⁶ Abū Nu'aym, I, 16.

¹⁷ Abū Nu'aym, I, 16. See also *Mujmal al-tawārīkh wa al-qīṣaṣ*, 523.

¹⁸ Moreover, Ibn Rusta and Yāqūt sometimes quote from Ḥamza Iṣfahānī but they do not deal with the construction of the Friday Mosque and its history. Another important source about the *tamṣīr* and the history of the first Abbasid mosque is the *Mujmal al-tawārīkh wa al-qīṣaṣ*, a chronicle from the 12th century. It is not

Secondly, and more importantly, the literary sources seem to be confirmed by the archaeological data from the excavations made at the Masjid-i Jum‘a. Indeed, the archaeological reports by Umberto Scerrato have been used here for the first time to reconstruct the area around the first Friday Mosque of Iṣfahān and its history.

First of all, it should be highlighted that it seems impossible to identify the mosque built by the Banū Taym (or Banū Tamīm) in 772 as the first Masjid-i Jum‘a of Iṣfahān.¹⁹ In fact, a passage from Abū Nu‘aym, even though it was not easy to interpret, talks about the mosque of the Banū Taym and seems to suggest that the mosque built by the Banū Taym was بطهران, literally meaning ‘in Ṭīhrān’. Thus, Abū Nu‘aym doesn’t state that the Banū Taym ‘of Ṭīhrān’ had constructed a mosque as generally interpreted.²⁰ Ṭīhrān was not among the villages we listed as part of the new *miṣr* and in the 13th century it was still located outside the Buyid walls of Iṣfahān,²¹ far from the Masjid-i Jum‘a. This is clearly reflected in the persistence of the name Tīrān in a village located at about 50km northwest

as detailed as Abū Nu‘aym’s account, but it dedicates much space to that matter and occasionally provides some additional details.

¹⁹ The only source that supports this theory is Māfarrūkhī, 84. Nevertheless, the information included in Māfarrūkhī’s historical introduction should be taken with a pinch of salt. Durand-Guédy in his study of the *Kitāb Maḥāsin Iṣfahān* perfectly explained that Māfarrūkhī had sifted through the anecdotes transmitted about the Abbasid period and reformulated or left aside a great many of them (Durand-Guédy 2008, 67). For instance, a comparison with the introduction to Abū Nu‘aym *Dhikr Akhbar Iṣbahān* shows a different approach on both a quantitative and qualitative level. Both authors impart information on the *History of Iṣfahān*, but while Abū Nu‘aym’s text is much more accurate, in Māfarrūkhī only some passages are reported almost identically, most being reported in a different form or not at all. Durand-Guédy states: «The same process can be observed in relation to urban development. The coherence of Abū Nu‘aym’s account, which in four pages sets out a brilliant synthesis of Isfahan’s development since the Sasanian period, disappears completely in *K. Maḥāsin Iṣfahān*, where the same information is used from a very different point of view, not so much didactic and historical as anecdotal and apologetic. Māfarrūkhī uses Abū Nu‘aym’s text on the establishment and expansion of the Friday Mosque, but integrates it into a passage of his own composition in praise of the city’s monuments (the walls, governor’s palace, bazaars and mosques). What covered a page in Abū Nu‘aym takes up only three lines in Māfarrūkhī. By contrast, the latter adds an anecdote (how the expansion of the mosque was delayed through the obstinacy of a Jew who refused to sell his land) and a first-hand description of the mosque. Similarly, the account of the *tamṣīr*, or the formation of Isfahan around the new centre of Yahūdiyya, appears in greatly abridged form in an anecdote concerning the caliph al-Manṣūr’s (d. 158/775) plan to take up residence in Isfahan [...] Abū Nu‘aym gives copious amounts of information concerning Jayy, the ancient Sasanian city alongside which Yahūdiyya/Isfahan had grown up in the early Abbasid period. The passages on the successive administrative divisions of Isfahan province, the population of Jayy before the conquest, the area of Jayy, the enmity between Jayy and Yahūdiyya, and the opening of a new gate in Jayy’s city wall after the arrival of Islam are all dropped by Māfarrūkhī. This because in the Saljūq period Jayy had entirely lost its status, becoming a mere suburb (*shahristān*) in decline on the outskirts of Isfahan. Māfarrūkhī has no reason to waste time dwelling on these events [...] Above all, Māfarrūkhī (unlike Abū Nu‘aym) was not trying to write an exhaustive history of Isfahan; he was trying to ‘sell’ Isfahan to the new regime. And so, when dealing with ancient history, he retained only those anecdotes and accounts that redounded to the city’s credit [...]» (Durand-Guédy 2008, 79-82). This is why Māfarrūkhī’s credit of the first mosque of Iṣfahān to the Banū Tamīm seems to be a complete misunderstanding (deliberate or not) of the sources he used, having summarized too much the intricate events relating to the *tamṣīr* and the subsequent period as reported by Abū Nu‘aym. In fact, the *Mujmal al-tawārīkh wa al-qīṣaṣ*, much more detailed than the *Kitāb Maḥāsin Iṣfahān*, makes no mention of the Banū Taym/Tamīm or the mosque they built in 772, perhaps because that information was not considered to be as relevant, confirming that Māfarrūkhī had misunderstood his source.

²⁰ Abū Nu‘aym, I, 17 (see Appendix).

²¹ Yāqūt, 400.

of the present Friday Mosque,²² challenging the wrong conclusion that the mosque of the Banū Taym corresponded to the first Masjid-i Jum‘a of Iṣfahān. Tīhrān was an isolated urban entity independent from the area of the *tamṣīr* and exclusively inhabited by Arab-Muslims who had never wanted to merge with the native Persian component.²³ It is unlikely that the Banū Taym could have imagined building a Friday Mosque so far away from their village and, furthermore, beside the Ayyūb’s mosque erected only five years earlier.

Other remarks can be reported to endorse this hypothesis.

Firstly, accepting the date of 772 - instead of 767 - would create a hiatus of five years between the *tamṣīr* undertaken in 767 and the expansion of Yahūdiyya into the other fifteen villages, thereby failing to meet the main aim of the *miṣr* to unify the area. In fact, according to Abū Nu‘aym, Yahūdiyya assimilated the other villages just after the construction of the mosque.²⁴ It was the ‘mosque-palace-*sūq*’ nucleus established by Ayyūb to act as a pivot for the centripetal centering of the various villages in a single center, as coincidentally happened at Rayy, again under al-Mahdī, the other main center along with Yahūdiyya in the province of Jibāl.²⁵

It is not possible to think about the foundation of a *miṣr* without the simultaneous establishment of a Friday Mosque.

Secondly, both Abū Nu‘aym and the author of the *Mujmal al-tawārīkh wa al-qīṣaṣ* clearly state that in their time it was still possible to see the *maqṣūra* of the mosque of Ayyūb ibn Ziyād,²⁶ probably still in use as a memory of the original mosque by now buried under the second Abbasid mosque (840-841) and its successive enlargements.

Afterwards, Abū Nu‘aym talking about Ayyūb ibn Ziyād in a different chapter designates him as *the governor of Iṣbahān, who built the mosque and the sūq*²⁷ and ruled at the time of Abū Ja‘far al-Manṣūr, in 151H. The author knows well which part of the city corresponded to the plots of Ayyūb’s family in Khushīnān: by the Buyid time they were neighbourhoods of Iṣfahān (Kūrā’ and Milanjah).²⁸ We know that the mosque and *sūq* are usually very close in Islamic cities or even that the mosque is within the *sūq*. On the other hand Khushīnān and the *yahūdiyya*, where the mosque and the *sūq* were respectively

²² Siroux 1971, 8: «En prégnant cet itinéraire à l’inverse, à partir d’Ispahān [...] Passé Nadjaf-ābād [...] A 20 km on longe la bourgade de Tīrān (Tīhrān-Teheran-Tiroun) qui fut fondée par des Arabes de la tribu de Taīm, lesquels y fixèrent un petite colonie. L’ancien tracé entre Nadjaf-ābād et Tīrān suivant le cours desséché d’une petite rivière...». A lot of place names quoted in the written sources for the Early Islamic period have remained the same in the present day: for instance, Lunbān, Farsān and Juzdān, i.e. three of the villages unified in the *miṣr* of Yahūdiyya.

²³ In the 17th century Arabs still had their own market, the ‘Arab bazar’, located right next to the Dardasht door towards Tīhrān (Chardin 1811, VIII, 1). Moreover, it seems very odd that the tribe of the Banū Taym wanted to build a Friday Mosque so far from their village in a place mostly populated by Jews and Persians.

²⁴ Abū Nu‘aym, I, 17.

²⁵ At Rayy al-Mahdī merged the villages of Bibi Zubayda, Ḥusaynābād, Chashma-yi ‘Alī, Chāl Tarkhān, Ishqābād, Tepē Mill, Niẓāmābād in the unique *miṣr* of Muḥammadiyya.

²⁶ Abū Nu‘aym, I, 16; *Mujmal al-tawārīkh wa al-qīṣaṣ*, 523.

²⁷ Italics by the author.

²⁸ Abū Nu‘aym, I, 38. It must be noted that the source no longer mentions the palace built by Ayyūb. This is probably because while the Friday Mosque and the *sūq* were still in use in his time, i.e. the 11th century, this was not the case with the palace, since the governmental area had shifted south of the Masjid-i Jum‘a in the Buyid period (Duva 2016).

established, already confined and got merged after the *tamšīr* due to a large building work carried out by Ayyūb.

Moreover, we are told by the sources that the Ayyūb's market place was still occupied by workshops and market activities at the sources time (Buyid-Saljuq period); precisely the Ayyūb's *sūq* corresponded to the part of the 11th-12th centuries market where the straw sellers had their shops. Hence, the larger Buyid and Saljuq *sūq* of Iṣfahān was located roughly in the same place as that of 767. We know that in the Buyid-Saljuq period the market was next to the Friday Mosque: indeed the Buyid-Saljuq Friday Mosque is nothing but the still-standing one. Consequently, by syllogism, the mosque brought to light during the excavations is the mosque of Ayyūb.

Furthermore, in his text Abū Nu'aym frequently connects the "mosque of Ayyūb ibn Ziyād" to notables of Iṣfahān as *imāms* and *muftīs*.²⁹

Lastly, if the Masjid-i Jum'ā in Iṣfahān found by the Italian Mission is the building constructed by Ayyūb in 767, as suggested here, it would have still been new in 772, not to mention large and splendid.³⁰ The presence of rich and well-made polychrome stucco decoration in the *ḥaram* of the first Friday Mosque, brought to light by archaeologists,³¹ fits perfectly with the high-level patronage of the mosque of Ayyūb rather than the patronage by Banū Taym/Tamīm.³² Indeed, some patterns on the right panel of the *mihrāb* and some on the *qiblī* wall can be compared to the stuccos of the Friday Mosque in Raqqā³³ built in 772 by al-Manṣūr and those of the western building once again at Raqqā,³⁴ commissioned by the successor and son of al-Mahdī, Hārūn al-Rashīd.

Let us now examine what happened, according to the author of this paper, in the area of the *tamšīr* and the related foundation of the first Abbasid Masjid-i Jum'ā in Khushīnān.

1.1. *Urban and topographical reconstruction of the Masjid-i Jum'ā area at the time of the tamšīr*³⁵

Before the *tamšīr* of Yahūdiyya, Khushīnān joined up with the medium-sized village of Yawān from the east. The Jewish settlement of *yahūdiyya*, on the other hand, had grown up on the extreme outskirts of Yawān, in a completely uninhabited area towards the southern limit of Khushīnān. Khushīnān, Yawān and the *yahūdiyya* all had risen near to the Farsān canal³⁶ which flowed through this area in a south-westerly direction.³⁷ Thus they had grown

²⁹ For instance, a passage reads: «The judge Abū al-Aswad al-Kūfī, chief judge of Iṣfahān, which held at the mosque of Ayyūb b. Ziyād [...]» (Abū Nu'aym, II, 318).

³⁰ Abū Nu'aym, I, 17. Although we know that the *minbar* of the mosque of Ayyūb was picked up by the Banū Taym after Ayyūb's imprisonment to be transferred to their new mosque in Ṭīhrān, it is unlikely that the mosque of Ayyūb was definitely abandoned.

³¹ Scerrato 1977, 453. For a follow-up see Corsi 2017, in this issue.

³² The stucco decoration of the *mihrāb* consists of close scrolls with tiny vine leaves that branch out from a candelabrum, while on the right-hand wall there is a panel divided into compartments by the intertwining of a ribbon of stylized beads, again with tiny vine leaves. The decoration on the rest of the *qiblī* wall is different, divided into panels bordered by stylized beads that contain saplings, vines and acanthus tufts.

³³ Creswell - Allan 1989, 246 ff.

³⁴ Meinecke 1999, *passim*.

³⁵ This paragraph is based on a reconstruction by the author of this paper.

³⁶ A canal named Farsān is mentioned in Abū Nu'aym, I, 16.

up sharing a rather narrow border area where the boundaries were quite transient and blurred and where the built-up areas almost rubbed up against each other.

Thus, in 767 the ‘*āmil* Ayyūb ibn Ziyād began the construction of the complex consisting of the mosque on one bank of the Farsān canal, with a *maqṣūra* and a *minbar* inside, and the *qaṣr* - intended as a government palace rather than a fortress - upon al-Mahdī’s wish. Lastly, he laid out plots for the *sūq* in the *yahūdiyya*, just off the mosque, and constructed some residences there for his family.³⁸

Abū Nu‘aym does not specify that the palace and mosque faced each other on opposite banks of the Farsān. However, the presence of a *maqṣūra* in the mosque leads to the reasonably certain hypothesis that, by analogy with Umayyad political centres³⁹ as well as, and more significantly for the case of Iṣfahān, the Abbasid capital Baghdād, there was a structural link between the mosque and the *dār al-imāra* along the *qiblī* wall.⁴⁰ Although the source does not state exactly where the two buildings were sited, it is conceivable that the two buildings were located on opposite sides of the small canal and that they were structurally connected at the *qibla*, perhaps by some sort of device that created a ford resulting in a direct connection from the palace to the *maqṣūra*. Unfortunately, due to the particular damage to the *qiblī* wall of the 767 mosque caused by the 11th century Saljuq foundation digging,⁴¹ a potential opening besides the *mihrāb* - a *bāb al-imām* - that would have permitted direct passage from the government house to the mosque has not been found. In any case, during the excavations carried out in the Saljuq southern domed hall⁴² of the Friday Mosque, the Italian archaeological team noticed extensive water infiltration into the layers below the Timurid alabaster pavement down to those corresponding to the *qiblī* wall of 767. In fact, according to the local population, an ancient underground canal or some kind of stream flowed behind the southwest side of the mosque, initially on the surface but at some point in the past it would have been filled and obliterated.⁴³ There is no certainty that this canal can be ascribed to the pre-Safavid period - when the water system of the city was reorganized - but two interesting passages by Muqaddasī and Yāqūt

³⁷ In particular, the industrial activities carried out in the Jewish community - i.e. the shopping area with butchers, weavers, dyers, tanners, etc. - demanded a water supply to dispose of waste.

³⁸ *Mujmal al-tawārīkh wa al-qīṣas*, 524.

³⁹ In *miṣrs* such as Baṣra, Kūfa and Wāṣit and also in other seats of government (a comprehensive overview is to be found in Santi 2015).

⁴⁰ It may have been a wooden walkway or a bridge of boats to cross the river. For instance, a case where the mosque and the *dār al-imāra* were located on opposite banks of a river is that of Uskaf Banū Junayd in Iraq (Creswell - Allan 1989, 267, figs. 166-167). A direct link through a masonry bridge was used, instead, to mind the difference in height between al-Aqṣā mosque and the *dār al-imāra* in Jerusalem (Ben-Dov 1971, 39-41, fig. 1).

⁴¹ Scerrato 1976; 1977, 451.

⁴² Built by the Saljuq minister Nizām al-Mulk in the 11th century.

⁴³ In fact, recent excavations led by Mohsen Javeri (deputy head of the Cultural Heritage Department of Iṣfahān) in the Atīq Square - just off the Friday Mosque on SW - found on the south-west side of the mosque, i.e. the *qibla* side, an old canal at the depth of about 10 m (Javeri 1387). Furthermore, Safa Mahmoudian suggests that the modern Fadān canal, traceable from the Zāyanda Rud as far as the Naqsh-i Jahan Square, is part of the old Farsān. From the Naqsh-i Jahan, the canal branches off into three other canals: two, in an easterly direction, are still in use; one, in a north-easterly direction, is no longer existing but it can be detected from the oldest street network and it is possible to see that it passed by the Masjid-i Jum‘a (Mahmoudian 2017; Mahmoudian - Bidhendi 2017).

respectively can further our understanding. The first states: «The river (*nahr*) flows through the town, but the people do not drink from it, for it has become polluted from the sewage dropped into it»;⁴⁴ Yāqūt claimed: «[...] it's the water that flows through its [of Iṣfahān] congregational mosque».⁴⁵ It seems quite unlikely that Muqaddasī is referring to the Zāyanda Rud with his mention of a river so polluted that it would prompt the inhabitants of Iṣfahān to cease drinking from it. In fact, at the time of Muqaddasī's writing in the 10th century, Iṣfahān did not touch yet the banks of the Zāyanda, and later sources still locate the latter outside the city limits to the southwest and no mention is made of pollution - highly unlikely for such a big river - but rather it is praised for its pure water.⁴⁶ Therefore, the river mentioned by Muqaddasī may be the Farsān canal quoted in Abū Nu'aym's account. Indeed, one can argue that the small river had become very polluted due to its reduced flow rate and proximity to the market. As regards Yāqūt, on the other hand, that passage talks about the Zāyanda but, as just pointed out, the latter did not reach the medieval centre of the city in the 13th century so it is likely to have been, synecdochically, a tributary of the Zāyanda that flowed past the Friday Mosque, i.e. the Farsān.

Ayyūb placed the *sūq* in a *maydān*.⁴⁷ It later came to be known as 'the straw sellers' rows/platforms',⁴⁸ probably because it included many shops arranged in a row and under porticos on the sides of the former *yahūdiyya*, well suiting the shape of the 'street of the Jews' preceding the *tamšīr*. The *sūq* thus followed the 'linear market' model with lower branches developing laterally into a major axis, conforming to other Iranian bazars.⁴⁹

We can be reasonably certain that the *maydān* was known as *maydān-i Sulaymān* even under al-Ma'mūn (813-833), after the name of its owner, Muḥammad b. Sulaymān al-Iṣfahānī.⁵⁰

Thus, the mosque was built close to the southern border of the former village of Khushīnān where the latter adjoined the *yahūdiyya* since the mosque was deemed to be next to the *sūq*. The Friday Mosque was associated with the commercial centre of the city from the very outset, as was the case in most Islamic towns in Iran and beyond.⁵¹ The two structures fit together perfectly in the street plan preceding 767 - as can still be partially inferred from aerial pictures of the area surrounding the present-day Friday Mosque (fig. 2) - as if they were placed in an already existing urban layout (i.e. that of *yahūdiyya* and part of Khushīnān and Yawān). It is no coincidence that in 1973 at various points of the modern area of the mosque the Italian archaeologists unearthed some secular structures dated to the late-Sasanian and Early Islamic periods and representing part of the urban layout where the Ayyūb's mosque and market were situated. These structures were mostly oriented on a north-south east-west axis, the same orientation recognizable in the first Abbasid mosque

⁴⁴ Muqaddasī, III, 345 [389].

⁴⁵ Yāqūt, 44.

⁴⁶ Yāqūt, 44; Mustawfī, 55.

⁴⁷ A large and often rectangular open space where markets were usually held (Gaube 1979, 76).

⁴⁸ Abū Nu'aym, I, 16; *Mujmal al-tawārīkh wa al-qīṣaṣ*, 524.

⁴⁹ Like those in Kirmānshāh, Kashān, Shīrāz (Bonine 1989) and, albeit in a later period, in Lashkarī Bāzār (Schlumberger 1978, pl. 3) and Ghaznī (Scerrato 1959).

⁵⁰ Abū Nu'aym, I, 38. See Abū Nu'aym, I, 34, where the author states that the mosque was located on one side of the *maydan-i Sulaymān*.

⁵¹ Under Ayyūb, in fact, the area of the *yahūdiyya* and that of Khushīnān ended up to join.

and the surrounding street network. In particular, the sectors excavated in correspondence to the north Saljuq *īwān* show a complete stratigraphic sequence dating to the late or post-Sasanian period, providing evidence of the continuous occupation of the area.⁵²

Lastly, Māfarrūkhī informs us that during the first extensions of the mosque made shortly after the *tamṣīr* of Yahūdiyya, it was necessary to buy the surrounding land from a Jewish man who lived there,⁵³ thus providing - if we trust the source - further confirmation of the proximity of the mosque of Ayyūb to the *yahūdiyya*.⁵⁴

⁵² Scerrato 1975, 538-40; 1977, 454.

⁵³ Māfarrūkhī, 84-85. The rapid demographic growth occurred in Yahūdiyya after the *tamṣīr* demanded a first enlargement of the mosque. Thus, Khaṣīb ibn Sālm bestowed some lands on the mosque that were added to its perimeter and consequently named *khaṣībābād*. See also Abū Nu'aym, I, 17 and *Mujmal al-tawārīkh wa al-qīṣaṣ*, 524.

⁵⁴ Consequently, I questioned the localization of the Friday Mosque in the village of Yawān proposed by Lisa Golombek in the article she published in 1974 where she offered *inter alia* an urban reconstruction of the area of Iṣfahān from the pre-Abbasid period to the time of the *tamṣīr* (Golombek 1974, 42, fig. 2). First of all, Golombek confers to Yawān a doubled concentric fortification system while attempting to interpret the story of the Sasanian foundation of Gay related by Abū Nu'aym: «He [the Byzantine physician] wrote to him [King Fīrūz II] thus: I travelled the length and breadth of your kingdom until I arrived in a region where there is nothing imperfect. There I stopped in the area between the two fortresses [*bayn al-ḥiṣnayn*] of the village of Yawān and if the King deems to grant me what is between the two forts and let me build a church and a house, I will solve his problem. Thus, he built his house in front of the two fortresses [*bi-izā' l al-ḥiṣnayn*] and his plot was where the home of al-Nushajān and Iṣḥāq of Yawān still stands. He built the church in front of the other fortress and the term 'other fortress' means the area of the present-day Friday Mosque. Since at that time there were two fortresses of the village of Yawān and the plot of the church was at the mosque which is now on the side of Sulaymān Square, the one that was built and remains to this day» (Abū Nu'aym, I, 34). The fortification system imagined by Lisa Golombek seems implausible as it would be too imposing for a medium-sized village, for which such a defence was not necessary. Furthermore, only 4 kilometres away, Jayy was provided with the same defensive system, making the simultaneous development of two urban entities at such a short distance unlikely because they would inevitably come to clash. However, it should be noted that this passage from Abū Nu'aym is not simple and straightforward, either because we are not aware of any fortifications in this area from other sources or it is not clear what the relationship was between the church and the palace on the one hand and the two fortifications on the other. In fact, the author seems to deliberately include some notes in the text to clarify the cryptic passage handed down through the *isnād* in the work of Ḥamza Iṣfahānī. Even the possibility of translating the dual *ḥiṣnayn* as 'two fortresses' was excluded because there is neither archaeological nor literary trace of them among the Sasanian fortresses forming part of a defensive system of the hinterland of Jayy. For example, in the account of the resistance against the Muslim conquest the fortresses of the area played an important role (such as those of Qah, Māhrbīn, Taimarā, etc.), but there is no mention of Yawān among them (Balādhurī, 485 ff. [312 ff.]; Abū Nu'aym, I, 19-30). Furthermore, as stated above, Golombek made no distinction between the Jewish settlement of *yahūdiyya* and the *miṣr* of Yahūdiyya founded in 767. Consequently, as regards the location of the mosque, the *qaṣr* and the *sūq* established by Ayyūb ibn Ziyād, she gave them a somewhat unusual position. The mosque was placed in the middle of the walled city of Yawān completely isolated from the outside and, in particular, from the area of the *miṣr* of 767. If, according to Abū Nu'aym, the market of 767 was still in the same place in his time - i.e. next to the Friday Mosque - locating the Masjid-i Jum'ā in Yawān would place the latter far from the market. The *sūq* was placed behind the palace and not, as one would expect, near the Friday Mosque. In addition, contrary to what Abū Nu'aym states, the market was placed by Golombek not in the *yahūdiyya*, but in the periphery of Khushīnān. Lastly, the *maydān* was proposed as a separate urban entity even at the time of the construction of the *sūq* in 767.

APPENDIX

Abū Nu‘aym, I, 16-17

وأما تمصير البلد المسمى باليهودية فمصرها أيوب بن زياد في خلافة أبي جعفر المنصور في سنة نيف وخمسين ومائة من الهجرة وورد عاملا على الخراج مع خال المهدي سعيد بن منصور الحميري وكان على الحرب ثم صرف سعيد وجمع لايوب الحرب والخراج فنزل بقرية خشينان وبنى قصرا على شاطئ نهر فرسان ثم بنى بحذائه مسجدا ذا مقصورة هي باقية إلى اليوم ووضع فيه المنبر وخط سوقا للباعة والتجار والعمللة ذات صفوف في طرف اليهودية في الموضع الذي يعرف بصف التبانين واتصلت في أيام ولايته بدور اليهودية دور قرية خشينان * وخطة أهل بيته من باب مسجد خشينان طولا إلى باب [باغ] عيسى بن أيوب وعرضا من جانب محلة كوراء إلى ملنجة * وكانت اليهودية تسمى في أيام مملكته الفرس كوجهودان يعني سكة اليهود وهي من صحراء قرية يوان فأحد حدودها ينتهي إلى قرية يوان والثاني إلى قرية خرجان وسنبلان والثالث إلى قريتي كماءان وأشكهان والرابع إلى قريتي جروءان و خشينان ورقعتها سبعمائة جريب

وسكنتها

اليهود مقبلين على صناعاتهم القذرة كالحجامة / والدباغة والقصارة والقصابة إلى أن سخط المهدي على أيوب بن زياد فحمل إلى الحضرة وحبس فاجتمع عرب قرية طهران وهم التميم على بناء مسجد جامع واسع ينقلون إليه منبر مسجد أيوب ابن زياد وكان موضع صدر الجامع المسقف إلى وراء السقاية طارارا لصخر بن سنان وأرض مركة لزيارة⁵⁵ بطهران فوهبه للجامع فنقل المنبر إليه في سنة ست وخمسين ومائة في إمارة هانئ بن أبي هانئ بعد تمصير أيوب بن زياد لليهودية بخمس سنين *

Mujmal al-tawārīkh wa al-qīṣaṣ, 523-525

اندر عهد خلافت منصور سنة اثني وخمسين و ماية ايوب ابن زياد كه عامل خراج بود و بر حرب درين وقت سعيد بن منصور الحميرى بود خال مهري چون سعيد بر رفت همه كاوها ايوب را ماند و بديه خوشينيان قصرى كرد و مسجد با مقصوده چنانك بجايست و منبر بنهاد و كسانى را كه با وى بودند بدانجا باز رها روزگار و صفها ساختند جاني كه آنرا كاه فروشان خوانند تا بعد روزگار سراها بدان پيوست و آنست كه اكنون كه رسته خوانند و باز حقيقت چنانك گويند جامع خوشينيان نخستين مسجد بود كه باصفهان كردند در اسالم و بناء آن ابو خناس مولى اميرالمؤمنين عمر بن خطاب كرد در خلافت على ابن ابى طالب عليه السلام و بعد از آن مسجد وليد بن نامه كردند در سنه مائة درخلافت سليمان بن عبد الملك اندر و پس مسخد سعيد بن دينار در سنه ثمان و ماية و پس مسخد الفضل بن عوث درخلافت هشام و شهر فراخ گست درخلافت منصور و اين پانزده پاره ديه بود كه همه صحراى آن خانها ساختند و بهم پيوست محلتها را بدان نام ديهها باز خواند چون : باطوقان فرسان يوان جرمان فلغلان سبيلان كمان جوزدان لنبان اشكهان جروآن خشيشان براوسكان قالحان و جامع اصل هم درين وقت كردند

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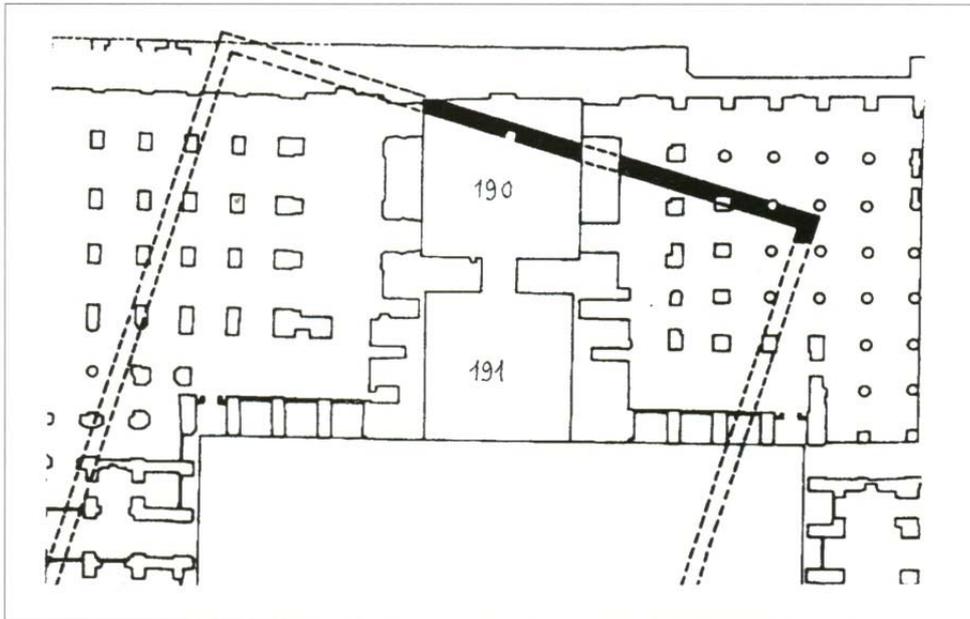


Fig. 1 - *Qibli* wall of the first Abbasid mosque uncovered in the southern area of the Masjid-i Jum'a of Iṣfahān (after Scerrato 2001).



Fig. 2 - Iṣfahān, the street network of the *tamṣīr* area in 767, including the first Masjid-i Jum'a (© Duva 2016).

THREE ISLAMIC INKWELLS FROM GHAZNI EXCAVATION*

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Three Islamic inkwells emerged from excavation in Ghazni in 1957-1958. The artefacts show extremely interesting features from a technical, morphological and decorative point of view. The study put them in relation with other known inkwells and the artistic production from Ghazni.

Keywords: inkwells; Ghazni; Islamic metalwork; silver decoration; scribes

In 1957-1958 three inkwells - two cylindrical and one hexagonal - emerged from the excavation of Islamic secular buildings in Ghazni.¹ This paper aims to provide an analysis of the artefacts and propose chronological hypothesis putting them in relation with the artistic production (not only metalwork) coming from the city.

1. TWO CYLINDRICAL INKWELLS

In 1958, during the excavation of Ghazni royal palace,² the Italian archaeologists retrieved two cylindrical boxes, intact and complete of their lids: the objects showed the unmistakable profile of Islamic inkwells.³

The two inkwells emerged from room III, lying in the southwestern quarter of the palace close to the throne hall.⁴ The area served as private apartments, but it undergone many changes across time: ceramic evidence demonstrates a settlement dating to the late 11th-early 12th century and a presence even after the Mongol invasion.⁵

* I wish to thank Anna Filigenzi, director of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan, and Roberta Giunta, deputy director of the Mission and director of the *Islamic Ghazni Archaeological Project* (Is.I.A.O. – University of Naples 'L'Orientale') for giving me the chance to study such interesting material.

¹ Only the two cylindrical inkwells were given an inventory number (C10, C11) on the excavation field. For further information about archaeological activities, see Bombaci 1959, Scerrato 1959a, Adamesteanu 1960. See also <http://ghazni.bradypus.net>.

² The ruins of the palace revealed a typical ancient Iranian plan: a central rectangular courtyard with four *īwāns* opening onto it, and antechambers leading to the inner rooms that flanked them (fig. 1). From the very first moment, the palace was ascribed to Mas'ūd III (1099-1114): its foundation probably dates back to the late 11th-early 12th century. Scerrato (1959a, 42) suggested that it should date back to the period between the reign of Ibrāhīm (1049-1099) and that of his son Mas'ūd III. In the last few years, Roberta Giunta has resumed studies about the palace chronology in collaboration with the architect Carlotta Passaro (a brief report of first results has been presented by Giunta on the occasion of the international conference *The Architecture of the Iranian World 1000-1250*, held in the Saint Andrews University [UK], in April 2016). The building knew many transformations in the Ghaznavid and Ghurid period until, once permanently abandoned, it became a source of re-employment materials and a place of burying (a mausoleum known as the *ziyāra* of Ibrāhīm raised on its former western *īwān*, see Scerrato 1959a; Laviola 2015).

³ A fragmentary inkwell, composed by a sub-cylindrical glass vessel with everted rim, inserted in a plaster cube, also emerged from the royal palace (Inv. No. C4155). In 2004, the object was still stored in the Kabul National Museum (Inv. No. 05.2.0692).

⁴ This quarter was originally designed, in Ghaznavid time, as a copy on smaller size of the palace plan: four *īwāns*, flanked by rooms, opened on a square courtyard with a well in its centre (halls with the same plan, beside the throne hall, appear in the palaces of Lashkar-i Bazar, cf. Schlumberger 1978, pl. 4.II, and Kufa, cf. Creswell 1989, fig. 2, as well).

⁵ Fusaro 2015, 225-226.

Many bronze medieval inkwells are known from the Iranian world, but very few coming from an archaeological context, and none of them similar to those from Ghazni.⁶

In 1966, on the basis of the agreements taken by the Italian and Afghan Governments, some finds left Ghazni for Italy: among them, there was the inkwell no. C11, which since then has been on exhibition in the *Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale* of Rome (fig. 2).⁷ The other inkwell (no. C10) remained in Ghazni and was included in the exhibition of the newly born Rawza Museum of Islamic Art, at least until 1978 (fig. 3). Then, unfortunately, the artefact has gone lost and it is still missing today.

Both inkwells are composed by a cylindrical box and lid surmounted by a lobed dome.⁸ This model is the most attested in the Islamic production. About thirty inkwells of this shape are known, coming from the regions of Khurasan and Transoxiana and dating from the 11th century on. Some of these inkwells bear inscribed the name of the owner, giving important information from a social and historical point of view.⁹ Among artisans' signatures, some *nisbas* refer to the Khurasan,¹⁰ while other signatures without *nisba* belong to artisans known from other metalwork, as in the case of Šādī *al-naqqāš*.¹¹

Notwithstanding their importance, these two inkwells from Ghazni have never been published properly. Umberto Scerrato, then field director of the Italian Archaeological Mission, announced their finding in 1959 and later provided a description.¹² James Allan included them in his PhD thesis about Iranian metalwork, discussing in particular the no. C11.¹³

⁶ Two bronze inkwells emerged from Nishapur excavation (see Allan 1982a, 87, nos. 104-105).

⁷ Inv. No. 8368. The Museum was entitled to Giuseppe Tucci in 2010. I express my gratitude to the Museum director Filippo M. Gambari and Gabriella Di Flumeri Vatielli, curator of the Islamic Art Department.

⁸ The lobed lid is considered typically Iranian (see Baer 1972, 199-211; Fehérvári 1976, 58).

⁹ An 11th century inkwell from the British Museum (Inv. No. 1968.7-22.3) was property of a woman, 'Ālima bint Ibrāhīm *munağğīm*: her name, *nasab* and the fact that she owned a personal inkwell would suggest that she was a scholar herself (see Allan 1976, 289-290, 724, fig. 50; 1982a, 44). Another specimen from the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Inv. No. 40.170.116) bears the name of *mawlā al-amīr 'Abdallāh ibn al-Ḥasan Pārsī*, possibly a *ḥajīb* of Bukhara (see Allan 1982a, 44-45, 87, no. 105).

¹⁰ 'Abd al-Razzāq b. Mas'ūd al-Nišāpūrī (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Inv. No. 48.108; see Melikian-Chirvani 1979a, 8; 1982, 72, and previous bibliography); Nāšir b. As'ad al-Nišāpūrī (Adrienne Minassian Collection, New York; see Melikian-Chirvani 1982, 72); Muḥammad b. Abī Sahl al-Harawī (Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, Inv. No. 54.514; see Ettinghausen 1943, fig. 4; Melikian-Chirvani 1986, 75).

¹¹ See Melikian-Chirvani 1974, 29-30. Šādī *al-naqqāš* signed also a pen-case destined to Mağd al-Mulk al-Muzaffar, vizier of 'Alā'l-dīn Muḥammad Ḥwārizm-šāh (Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Inv. No. 36.7; see Herzfeld 1936; *RCEA* 10 1939, 51; Harari 1938-1939, 2521, fig. 841; Aga-Oglu 1946, 122; Melikian-Chirvani 1979b, 232). The artisan bears the *nisba al-harawī* only in a bird-shaped indigo flask (private collection; see Melikian-Chirvani 1979a, 8; 1979b, 224). Other unsigned artefacts are ascribed to him (see Melikian-Chirvani 1979b, 235).

¹² See Scerrato 1959a, 39, fig 38; 1959b, 96-97.

¹³ Allan (1976, 290-291, 728, no. 7) curiously indicates Kabul as the location of inkwell no. C10.

1.1. *Inkwell no. C11*

Inkwell no. C11 presents slightly concave wall¹⁴ and rests on three low feet - one of which is missing.¹⁵ The lid rests on a protruding pointed edge with an underlying fillet. Lid's side mirrors the same morphology of the box.

The outer surface shows a dark black and green colour and is perfectly smooth and polished; while the inner surface is extremely raw. The base material is a copper alloy, which precise composition has been ascertained in 2007 (see Appendix).¹⁶ The elevated percentage of lead in the alloy surely helped the stability of the inkwell.¹⁷ Silver, in plates, is employed as an additional material in decoration. The artefact is in a very good state of preservation.

Three flat loops protrude inside the box, just below the rim; given their thickness, they must have been cast with the box (fig. 4). As many circular holes, pierced through the lid shoulder, coincide with them. The lid fits perfectly on the box only making the loops and holes correspond. Through the holes and loops passed a suspension system – maybe chains or cords - to fasten the lid to its box, and then to the scribe's wrist as well.¹⁸

The small square feet are decorated in their inner section by a rhomboid lozenge.¹⁹ Certainly, they were soldered to the box as attested by the different colour visible in the missing foot's original place. The underside is undecorated, but three pairs of concentric circles, at constant distance, show a red copper colour. They appear too thin to be considered a decorative pattern and could have been made by a manufacturing tool, as a lathe. A round hole, whose contour is extremely clear and precise, is pierced in the centre (fig. 5). It seems executed with expertise, so made on purpose. Beside it, there is a connecting smaller hole, which irregular contour is probably due to an accidental hurt. Some dents and surface raising in the area suggest that the blow should have come from inside the box. The reason for the main hole is unclear (see below § 2.).²⁰

On the lid, a dome is raised on a tympanum surrounded by a round funnel. Dome surface is lobed in six almonds (or lotus petals),²¹ carved in relief. The dome itself is topped by an almost spherical knob, which rests on a raised step.

¹⁴ The cylindrical box with slightly concave wall was already in use in early Islamic time and probably derives from the ancient Iranian metalwork tradition.

¹⁵ The object measures 7.5 cm in the base diameter, 9.9 cm in its maximum height, 5.6 cm in the height of the body, 395 g in weight.

¹⁶ Chemical analyses were made in the *Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale* by the Department of Engineering of 'Sapienza' University of Rome.

¹⁷ To prevent the ink from splashing outside the box was a primary concern: many inkwells of any material had a tube inside the vessel, while others used a piece of felt or wool inside (Allan 1982a, 44).

¹⁸ A walking man holding in hand an inkwell suspended through a cord appears in a figurative scene engraved on an inkwell from the David Collection (Inv. No. 32/1970; see Taragan 2005, fig. 13).

¹⁹ Examples of rhombi included into squares, and vice versa, occur on some baked bricks belonging to the architectural decoration of Ghazni royal palace: a column element, currently on exhibition in the *Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale 'G. Tucci'* (Inv. No. 7086), and other two finds (Inv. Nos. 5450, 5839); see Artusi 2009, I, 46; II 320.

²⁰ Many hypothesis are conceivable: it could have had a functional role, maybe hosting a removable cap to consent the cleaning of the inkwell; a decorative role, hosting a now lost roundel or silver plate; or a mechanical reason, being the result across time of an area weakened by the manufacturing technique.

²¹ Melikian-Chirvani (1986, 75), talking especially about the 'State inkwells', interprets the architectural form of domed cylindrical inkwells as a celebration of the rotating celestial vault, a theme closely related to the role of

Dealing with the decoration: nine silver plates are applied on the undecorated box and lid with a mastic.²² Plates in precious metal usually are inlaid, hammering them inside specific incisions made on the object. This inkwell is the only known specimen to adopt a different technique.²³ The width due to the mastic is clearly visible and makes the thin silver plates to emerge significantly on the surface.

Three circular silver plates are applied to the box wall, each one framed by an engraved roundel, filled with oblique cuts. A second roundel, defined by a double circle, is engraved on each plate: in two cases, it includes a pair of addorsed birds with backward turned heads so that the beaks meld. They hold an upturned trilobed flower, composed by two curl-shaped lobes at the base and an elongated and pointed central lobe that inserts between the birds' wings (fig. 6). On the third plate, a single bird, looking leftward with an uprising double tail, is engraved. All the incisions on silver are nielloed to make them stand out.

Three trapezoidal silver plates are applied on the lid's shoulder, alternated to the above-mentioned holes (fig. 7). Each one bears engraved an epigraphical cartouche, with concave short sides, defined by a double line, that frames an engraved and nielloed Arabic inscription in Kufic with ornamental apices (*Text A*). The same benedictory expression repeats any time: *bi'l-yumn wa'l-bara(ka)*, 'With good luck and bless(ing)'. The second term, *al-baraka*, is shortened omitting the last two letters: this is a common feature that consents also a double reading, interpreting the term as *al-birr*, 'devotion'.²⁴ The inscription disposes on a single line, occupying the whole height available. The three cartouches show variations in the script, details that testify they were hand-written and not obtained through a stencil. In the first cartouche, the inscription looks a bit confused: letters lean one against the other; apices are sometimes thick and squared, and sometimes so thin and horizontal to blend one into the other. The *bā'* is oblique and slightly concave, revealing a sharp profile. The *wāw* has a round body, surmounted by an upended terminal. Above the *yā'*, in the first term, there is a downward lance-shaped leaf, while a semi-palmette is barely visible behind the *bā'* of the second term. In the second cartouche, the script is bold with squared squat apices. All the *hastae* are cut horizontally at the same height, while the initial *bā'* and the *yā'* in the term *bi'l-yumn* are slightly shorter. The *yā'* is the only letter with a sloping profile. The *mīm* is shaped as a vaguely pointed round; the *nūn* draws a round body, wider and flatter than *mīm*'s one, and its terminal raises as an apicated *hasta*. The *rā'* in the second term resembles it closely, but its starting segment descends below the writing line. The conjunction *wāw* slims down vertically. Some signs belonging to additional letters are visible, in particular between the end of the first term and the *wāw*, and at the end of the cartouche, maybe to fake the missing syllable *ka*. Moreover, two vegetal elements appear, a downward three-pointed leaf above the *yā'* and *mīm* of the first term, and another one disposed obliquely above the second

power exercised by the ruler on earth, whom the inkwell itself would have represented a symbol of. The six-lotus petals dome would then reflect the 'blue lotus dome', a standard metaphor in Persian literature for the sky, *gunbad-i nīlīfārī*.

²² Allan (1976, 290) named the technique 'overlay'.

²³ Already Scerrato (1959b, 96-97; 1966, 62) pointed out this feature. In his opinion, it was a cheaper solution less resistant than the usual one, and this would explain why no other specimen of this kind survived. However, from the moment of finding (in 1958) up today, silver plates have always been firm in their location.

²⁴ The shortened form of the term *al-baraka* probably derives from its splitting in two parts, a habit that recurred especially in the Samanid period to convey an esoteric meaning. See Melikian-Chirvani 1982, 34.

term's *bā'*. The third cartouche shows most of the already mentioned features. The profile of the *yā'* is clear and sharp at vertexes; the *mīm* has an almost triangular body, while the *nūn* is deformed by an unprecise execution. The *wāw* is stylized, with a just sketched apice. The second term's *bā'* is sloping, and the *rā'* presents a very thin horizontal apice. A vegetal element, extremely thinned, surmounts the first term, while the one above the second term is barely visible.

Three silver almond-shaped plates used to cover as many lobes of the dome: one of them is lost revealing that only the undecorated lobes were polished. Each plate bears engraved an almond-shaped frame, defined by a double line and enclosing a vegetal element.

To sum up, the suspension system passing inside the object represents an early device, since in other Islamic cylindrical inkwells the lid usually is bent through loops applied on the external surface (see inkwell no. C10). The external system should have been introduced in the early 12th century.

Other three specimens are known to adopt such system: the first is the already mentioned inkwell from the British Museum (see footnote no. 9), ascribed to the 11th century on the base of the Kufic inscription.²⁵ The second specimen is an inkwell lid from the de Unger Collection, assigned to the 12th-early 13th century and reckoned to have been produced in Transoxiana.²⁶ The third is also a lid - unrelated to the inkwell it is associated to - from the Nuhad Es-Said Collection that bears three holes on its shoulder.²⁷

Decoration is executed according to a stylistic coherence: roundels, cartouches and almond-shaped frames are defined by a double line, engraved and nielloed. Oblique cuts encircle the round plates on the body and recur on the fillet underlying the box edge and at the base of the dome tympanum on the lid. Birds, vegetal elements and inscriptions show variations typical of the handmade work, which must have been a tricky challenge on such thin plates. Moreover, the *niello* is quite well preserved, another rare circumstance.²⁸

The presence on the epigraphical background of additional signs and trilobed leaves above the text recurs in the inscriptions carved on the upper part of the marble tomb of Sabūktigīn (r. 977-997).²⁹ The Kufic script, particularly sober, is attested in Ghazni within the 11th century. Taking into account the technical, decorative and epigraphic features, the early 11th century looks an appropriate date for this inkwell.

1.2. Inkwell no. C10

Inkwell no. C10 rests on a flat base.³⁰ Three heart-shaped loop handles are hinged to the wall of the box through as many trilobed plates; three fixed semi-circular loops are nailed on

²⁵ Inv. No. 1968.7-22.3. The inkwell is provided with internal tubes, cast in one with the box, through which passed the cords (see Allan 1976, 289-290; 1982a, 44).

²⁶ It would attest a late persistence of the internal system in a period when it had already been abandoned in the Iranian area (see Allan 1976, 291, 724).

²⁷ See Allan 1982b, 32-35, no. 1.

²⁸ Other silver artefacts with engraved and nielloed decoration are known, but most of them coming from western Iran. See for example the wine service from Hamadan, probably dating to the first half of the 11th century, inscribed in the name of Abū'l-'Abbās Valgīn ibn Harūn (Pope - Ackermann 1938-39, pls. 1345-1346; Melikian-Chirvani 1986, 99; Allan 1986, 56).

²⁹ See Giunta 2003, 24, figs. 3-4.

³⁰ The object measures 7.6 cm in the base diameter, 9.2 cm in maximum height, and 6.2 cm in body height.

the lid side. The dome on the lid is raised on a tympanum and lobed in six almonds carved in relief. It is topped by a slightly squared and raised knob finial. The inkwell, in excellent state of preservation, was inlaid with copper and silver.³¹

On the underside, in the centre, a small roundel includes a bird looking rightward on a vegetal background (fig. 8). Around this, three elongated almond-shaped frames, with vertexes pointing to the roundel, enclose a lance-shaped leaf ending in two curls at its base.³²

A continuous ribbon runs on the body distributing the space and obtaining three trilobed niches, flanked by round knots, and three cartouches (*Text A*) on the lower body. The benedictory inscription in Kufic with ornamental apices reads:

باليمن والبركة وال / و الدولة و السلا(مة) / و الكرامة و السلا(مة)

With good luck, blessing, AL /, fortune, spiritual integri(ty) /, divine favour, spiritual integri(ty).

The inscription disposes on a single line; letters occupy the whole height available inside the cartouches, even with their terminals (see the *wāws* and *tā' marbūtas*). Apices are thin and triangular. At the end of the first cartouche, the article *al-* is left suspended. The word *al-salāma* appears two times, in the second and third cartouche, in its shortened form. Conjunction *wāw* has round body, with terminals drawing a 90° angle resting on the writing line. The *dāl* in the term *al-dawla* is wide and flattened, with a high terminal. Signs in the last term of the sequence appear less neat than previous ones, maybe due to a deterioration of the surface in that area.

Hinged loops divide the box wall in three panels. An intricate vegetal background, composed by concentric budded scrolls ending in five-lobed flowers, covers as a wallpaper any space framed by the ribbon. Each niche encloses a figurative scene related to the writing art (scenes nos. I-III). In scene no. I a man, in three-quarter profile looking leftward, sits on his heels (fig. 9). He wears a three-pointed hat, a tunic closed at centre and waist - enriched by decorated inserts (*tirāz*) on the shoulders -, trousers and boots. Clothes softness is conveyed through the incisions, which also help in indicating the bent arms and suggesting the knee's angle. Long hair frame his face descending in two locks on the shoulders. The figure is portrayed in the act of presenting the spectator with a round-bottomed box, probably an inkwell, which he holds with both hands.

In scene no. II there is a man sitting cross-legged, as the trousers' volume and roundness suggest; his body is in front position, while his face in a three-quarter profile looking rightward (fig. 10). He wears a small turban, from which a fabric ribbon goes out flying backwards, and a tunic closed on the front, enriched by decorated inserts (*tirāz*) on the shoulders recalling those on the turban. The right arm, close-up, is bent: wrist and hand come

³¹ To detect a copper inlay in black and white pictures is not easy, unfortunately. Scerrato (1959b, 96-97) noted such decoration without specifying its position. On the base of comparison with similar inkwells mentioned below, the inlay is likely to have involved the niches framing the figurative scenes and cartouches framing the inscriptions.

³² The engraved almond-shaped elements occupy the position usually hold on other inkwells by almond-shaped feet: see an inkwell from the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Inv. No. 35.128; see Baer 1972, 201, 203, fig. 9) and another one from the Victoria and Albert Museum, whose three feet are lost leaving traces of the solder (Inv. No. 86-1969; see Melikian-Chirvani 1982, 124, no. 52). See also below the hexagonal inkwell excavated in Ghazni.

out from the wide sleeve holding vertically a long pen. Face features are defined simply: a long thin eyebrow runs parallel to the elongated almond eye; the nose ends in a square profile.

In scene no. III a man sits in the same position as the previous one, wearing the same clothes (fig. 11). He handles a long pen, which seems moving on a square tablet. The latter bears engraved two ‘S’ signs, probably meant to represent the already written text. Face features are sketched fleetingly.

Fixed loops alternate on the lid side to long, thin rectangular cartouches, which frame a Kufic inscription with ornamental apices, on a vegetal background (*Text B*). It reads a benedictory expression:

باليمن و البركة و السلا(مة) / و الدولة و الكرامة / و السلا(مة) و الدولة و الس(ر) (...)

With good luck, blessing, spiritual integri(ty)/, fortune, divine favour /, spiritual integri(ty), fortune, al-sa(...).

The text disposes on a single line and the script presents the same characteristics already outlined in *Text A*. The term *al-salāma*, repeating two times followed by *al-dawla*, is always shortened in the form *al-salā*. The *kāf* in the term *al-baraka* is significantly smaller than the one in the word *al-karāma*, but both are thinner than the *dāl* in *al-dawla*, which is particularly thick. *Wāws* rest on the writing line with triangular terminals.

A third inscription, in cursive, (*Text C*; fig. 12) runs on the shoulder, distributed in three trapezoidal cartouches with concave short sides: an intricate and luxuriant vegetal pattern, composed by scrolls ending in trilobed flowers, is on the background. Roundels alternate to cartouches enclosing a vegetal element: a thin vertical stem surmounted by a big bloom and flanked by two smaller ones. The text reads a benedictory expression for an unknown recipient:

العز و الاقبال و الدولوة و السلامة / و السعاده) و البقا لصاح(به)

Glory, prosperity, / fortune, spiritual integrity/, happines(s), eternal life to its own(er).

It disposes on a single line, with one exception in the third cartouche: the *hā'* in the term *li-ṣāḥi(bi-hi)* is elevated above the *ṣād* and overlaps the *alif mandūda*. Shortness of space forced the decorator to omit the following two letters. An article is split between the first and second cartouche. The *tā' marbūṭa* at the end of the term *al-sa'āda* lacks. *Wāws* rest on the writing line with a soft curve and often overlay the articles' *alif* and *lām* that follow. The *sīn* is flattened on the writing line, barely visible, in contrast with the height of the following group *lām-alif*, whose *hastae* diverge. The small *tā' marbūṭas* lean forward. Each lobe of the lid dome bears engraved an almond-shaped frame enclosing a lance-shaped leaf, an accurate copy of those on the box underside. One last detail concerns this artefact: the word *Allāh* is engraved with a tiny, rapid incision on the knob finial that tops the dome - that is to say in the highest position available.

The three scenes devoted to the writing art portray the inkwell itself and related implements, testifying the object function. This is a quite rare circumstance among metalwork. Other inkwells, generally ascribed to Khurasan and datable to the second half of the 12th-early 13th century, showing *kātib*s portrayed in the same way are known:³³ one from

³³ I wish to thank Margaret Graves, who signaled to me a still unpublished inkwell, from the Khalili collection, belonging to this group.

the Royal Ontario Museum;³⁴ a second from the Victoria and Albert Museum;³⁵ and a third from the Eretz Israel Museum.³⁶ The three figurative scenes are clearly based on the same model: scribes position, their clothes, the tools they handle, even face features are quite all the same, executed relying on the same stencil. Few variations have been detected on the specimen from Ghazni. The halo encircling the scribes face is just hinted, confused in the hair locks, but well visible on the other inkwells; about the scribes' clothes, the *tirāz*-strip inserts show a highly-stylized design of squarish form if compared with the 'S' shaped one on the above-mentioned inkwell from the Royal Ontario Museum. The inkwell presented to the spectator in scene no. I has an unusual round bottom, while in the other representations it is square. The whole execution looks far less naturalistic than that on the other specimens. On the other hand, the ground covering vegetal pattern that plays a crucial role in the decoration is executed with an incision deep enough to create a vivid *chiaroscuro*. Trilobed and five-lobed flowers represent a traditional feature in Eastern Iranian metalwork, and especially in Ghazni, detected on numerous artefacts and materials. Vegetal elements enclosed in the almond-shaped frames on the underside, on the lid's dome and into roundels on the lid's shoulder are executed with a lighter, but precise incision.

In Kufic cartouches, the script is geometric and squat, almost forced into the limited space available. The cursive inscription, instead, shows a remarkable game of proportions between the letters, which creates an alternation of empty and full spaces, vertical leaps of the *hastae* and soft curves of the *wāws*. *Texts A* and *B* almost mirror each other: the wishing terms chosen are the same, with particular stress on the terms *al-dawla wa'l-salāma*, repeated with a changing in the word ordering. *Al-salāma* is the only shortened term, always appearing in the form *al-salā*. *Text C*, instead, employs different terms, none of whom is shortened. The sequence is common and shares some details with the inscription on an inkwell lid, also coming from Ghazni, ascribed to the second half of the 12th century:³⁷ the term *al-sa'āda* lacks the final *tā' marbūṭa*; the *ḥā'* in the closing formula *li-ṣāḥibi-hi* overlaps the *alif*. The three inscriptions express good wishes to an unknown recipient, while each one of the above-mentioned inkwells is dedicated to a more or less specific person: the Persian expression *mu'allim rā*, 'for the teacher', appears on the tablet written by the scribe on the Victoria and Albert inkwell. The name of a royal treasure inspector, 'Alī b. Muḥammad b. 'Alī *al-mušrif*, is on the inkwell from the Royal Ontario Museum, and that of Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad *ḡawāhir-zāda* on the Eretz Israel Museum inkwell.

Traditionally, the use of precious metals and figurative scenes including animal or human figures on inkwells was opposed on the ground that these vessels would have been employed to copy the holy Quran.³⁸ Ghazni inkwell no. C10, with its human figure decoration on the box and God's name on the lid would represent a loud offence to such rule.

³⁴ Inv. No. K 722 A, already in the Köfler Collection; see Baer 1972, 199-201, figs. 1-5.

³⁵ Inv. No. 86-1969; see Melikian-Chirvani 1982, 124-125, no. 52.

³⁶ Inv. No. MHM1.93; see Taragan 2005. The scholar attributes the Tel Aviv inkwell to a specific date and place of origin - the last quarter of the 12th century in the city of Herat - on the basis of an alleged kinship between the inkwell's recipient and the artisan who decorated the famous Tiflis ewer - dated to the 557/1181 and made in Herat. Such relation seems hard to verify, considering how largely spread the name under discussion - Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad - can be in the Islamic world.

³⁷ Louvre Museum, Paris, Inv. No. AA 65; see Marchal 1974, 10, fig. 3.

³⁸ See Baer 1972, 199.

2. A HEXAGONAL INKWELL

In 1957, a third inkwell came from the excavation of the so-called 'House of the Lusterware', near Ghazni (fig. 13).³⁹ The aristocratic dwelling extended on at least two floors of vaulted rooms, disposed around a square courtyard with no *īwāns*. The retrieved ceramic dates the superficial occupation of the building to the second half of the 12th century.⁴⁰

Not a hint about the inkwell discovery was in the publications. Only recently its place of finding has been ascertained through to a crosscheck between Italian Mission registers and photographic negatives. The object's last picture portrays the inkwell in Ghazni storage, in 1966; there is no news about what followed.

The hexagonal box rests on three almond-shaped feet and protrudes in respect to the shoulder (fig. 14). The inkwell looks in fair condition, with the exception of a gap enlarging the regular round opening on top. The lid is missing. Three small holes are pierced on the shoulder and underside, communicating with each other (fig. 15). Thus, the object is provided with an internal suspension system passing through the whole body.⁴¹ This inkwell is then to be added to the short list mentioned in paragraph 1.1. Being the base raised by the feet, there would have been enough space to knot, under the inkwell, the cords passing through the box. The same could have been possible in inkwell no. C11, using the central hole pierced on the underside. At the state of our knowledge, this would be the most reasonable explanation for the mysterious central hole.

The hexagonal inkwell is undecorated, so no clue other than its technical device can help in dating. The model is quite a rarity in the medieval period: the only similar specimen come to my knowledge is an incense burner on exhibition in the Archaeological Museum of Tehran, provided with three holes pierced on the lid.⁴²

3. CONCLUSIVE REMARKS

The three inkwells found in Ghazni were the first bronzes coming from a regular excavation in the whole Afghanistan.⁴³

Their technical, morphological and decorative features attest a high variety, also confirmed by other inkwells documented by the Italian Mission.⁴⁴ The two sites of

³⁹ The nickname came after the discovery of some intact lusterware sealed in a *ḥāq* in the southern wall of the building. A second inkwell, in transparent glass, with octagonal faceted body and flaring neck, came from the same site. The latter is in exhibition in the *Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale 'G. Tucci'* of Rome (Inv. No. 8292).

⁴⁰ Fusaro 2015, 256. Two coins with the name of Mu'izz al-dīn Muḥammad b. Sām (1173-1206) emerged from the house (Inv. Nos. V142, V585; dynastic attribution by Giunta).

⁴¹ No picture of the inner box is available, so it is impossible to state whether each pair of holes was linked through a tube or not.

⁴² Inv. No. 3463. The artefact, attributed to the 12th century, is published by Ettinghausen (1969, pl. 13) who infers its function on the base of the open-worked wall of the box, echoed by the open-worked hold on the lid. It would be worthy to note that the object is very close to inkwells in shape and size. Should have been used as an inkwell, an inner vessel would have been necessary.

⁴³ Scerrato 1959a, 39.

⁴⁴ Along with specimens coming from excavation, the Italian Mission archives record other inkwells, purchased or documented in the Afghan museums between 1957 and 1978: four cylindrical boxes - only one of those complete of its lid -, three unrelated cylindrical lids and two parallelepiped inkwells. A catalogue including the

provenance are physically very close (about 550 m) and not distant chronologically as well. The finding of two inkwells, no. C11 and the hexagonal one, featuring the same rarely attested suspension system represents more than a coincidence. The number of survived inkwells testify that the internal suspension system was not the successful device in Islamic time. The common provenance may demonstrate that this system was popular in Ghazni. Far more crucial in placing inkwell no. C11 in Ghazni are its decorative details, recalling the early artistic production of the city. This artefact could testify, along with other evidence, the existence of a highly skilled silversmith active in Ghazni in the golden age.⁴⁵

Inkwell no. C10 attests the spread of a drawing which origin can be either in the Khurasan or in Ghazni. In any case, it comes not as a surprise that the same decorative model could be employed in both areas, anytime adapted by artisans. Among the group of inkwells which decoration is devoted to the writing art, no. C10 looks much closer to the specimen from the Victoria and Albert Museum, in particular for the vegetal pattern on the background executed in *champlevé*. These two inkwells are likely to be most ancient than others. As no conclusive proof can demonstrate that inkwell no. C10 was actually made in Ghazni, there is no apparent reason to state the contrary.

As far as we known, the two inkwells unearthed from the royal palace could have been used in the same moment, even if dating to different periods. They were luxurious objects, endowed with symbolic value, based on the great esteem assigned to writing art by the Islam,⁴⁶ and political importance, as actual tools of government. Such assessment led to preserve them carefully. In Ghaznavid time, in fact, State inkwells were preserved in a specific room, the *dawāṭhāna*, under the guarding eye of the *amīr-i dawātdār*.⁴⁷ Their finding in the same room could be a remarkable archaeological evidence in support of such conservative custom. To imagine these inkwells in the hands of the highest profile personalities serving at court may be daring, but extremely fascinating as well.

APPENDIX

Description	Fe	Cu	Zn	Pb	Ag	Au	Hg
Black patina	1,75	69,11	4,31	24,43	0,00	0,00	0,00
Silver plate	0,54	13,48	1,21	0,00	81,98	2,35	0,43

Tab. 1 - Chemical analysis made by the Department of Engineering, Sapienza University of Rome.

Description	Fe	Cu	Zn	Pb
Inner surface of the lid	0,29±0,04	71±1	10,2±0,3	18,2±0,2
Loop inside the box	0,29±0,04	76±1	12,0±0,3	11,0±0,1

Tab. 2 - Chemical analysis made by the Department of Engineering, Sapienza University of Rome.

whole metalwork documentation (more than 400 artefacts) is in preparation by the author: *Islamic Metalwork from Afghanistan (9th-13th c.)*. The Italian Archaeological Mission Archives (1957-1978), Brill publisher.

⁴⁵ A silver spoon-fork engraved and nielloed; two sets of silver door rings with a lock, produced for the Ka'ba (see Laviola 2017, 209).

⁴⁶ In the fourth verse from the Quranic *sura* no. 96 - regarded among the most ancient revealed to the Prophet Muḥammad - the writing, *qalam*, is called as the first teaching of God to the human kind.

⁴⁷ Melikian-Chirvani 1986, 72.

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Fig. 4 - Inkwell no. C11: loops inside the box (© V. Laviola).



Fig. 5 - Inkwell no. C11: underside (© V. Laviola).



Fig. 6 - Inkwell no. C11: silver plate on the box, with engraved and nielloed decoration (© V. Laviola).



Fig. 7 - Inkwell no. C11: lid (© V. Laviola).



Fig. 8 - Inkwell no. C10: underside (IsIAO archive).



Fig. 9 - Inkwell no. C10: scene no. I (IsIAO archive).



Fig. 10 - Inkwell no. C10: scene no. II (IsIAO archive).



Fig. 11 - Inkwell no. C10: scene no. III (IsIAO archive).



Fig. 12 - Inkwell no. C10: lid with cursive inscription (IsIAO archive).



Fig. 13 - Hexagonal inkwell (IsIAO archive).



Fig. 14 - Hexagonal inkwell: underside (IsIAO archive).



Fig. 15 - Hexagonal inkwell: upper view (IsIAO archive).

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TOMBEAUX ET INSCRIPTIONS FUNÉRAIRES DE GHAZNI (AFGHANISTAN).
QUELQUES DOCUMENTS INÉDITS DU XI^e-XIII^e SIÈCLE

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This paper deals with twenty-two Islamic tombs which the Italian Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan recorded in Ghazni. These artefacts, despite their frequently fragmentary state, further contribute to our knowledge of medieval Islamic funerary and epigraphic workmanship in the eastern Iranian region.

Keywords: Ghazni; Afghanistan; Ghaznavids; tombs; epitaphs

En 2003 a paru une étude monographique sur les tombeaux découverts par la Mission Archéologique Italienne dans la ville de Ghazni, en Afghanistan (1957-1978), datables entre la fin du X^e siècle et la première moitié du XIII^e siècle¹. Ces monuments funéraires en marbre blanc, compact et dur, furent souvent retrouvés en bon état de conservation dans leur emplacement d'origine. Ils ont permis de faire de la lumière sur une tradition architectonique funéraire qui prit naissance à Ghazni dès l'arrivée de la dynastie ghaznévide (977-1186) et qui ne semble pas trouver des comparaisons dans les autres régions islamiques, à l'époque dont il est question².

Dès 2004, grâce à la reprise des activités de la Mission en Afghanistan et à la constitution du projet archéologique *Islamic Ghazni* de l'IsIAO de Rome³, il a été possible d'effectuer un réaménagement de la totalité de la documentation d'archive et d'entreprendre un recensement des matériaux, surtout dans le but d'assurer leur sauvegarde. Ces travaux ont également permis d'acquérir des données nouvelles et de parvenir à une connaissance beaucoup plus approfondie d'un patrimoine dont la valeur historique et artistique est indiscutable. Parmi les « découvertes », nous avons enregistré un petit lot de tombeaux d'époque médiévale, entiers ou fragmentaires, qui font l'objet de cette étude et représentent un élargissement du *corpus* publié en 2003⁴.

La qualité des photographies étant variable, il n'a pas été toujours possible d'avoir une reproduction complète de ces monuments funéraires ; par conséquent, le déchiffrement des épitaphes est parfois partiel.

¹ Giunta 2003. Cette monographie était le résultat d'une thèse de doctorat soutenue à l'Université Aix-Marseille en novembre 1999, sous la direction de Solange Ory (Giunta 1999).

² Giunta 2000.

³ Dès lors, la Mission Italienne est dirigée par Anna Filigenzi ; la direction du projet *Islamic Ghazni* m'a été confiée par Maria Vittoria Fontana.

⁴ Dans les dernières années, Martina Massullo a conduit une recherche importante sur 177 tombeaux de la ville datés à la période post-mongole (Massullo 2017). Toutes ces études montrent qu'aucune ville de l'Afghanistan actuel n'a livré autant de tombeaux à épitaphes s'échelonnant entre la fin du X^e siècle et l'époque moderne, même si la plupart d'entre eux ne demeure plus sur place.

1. TOMBEAUX ENTIERS

Lors d'une prospection menée en 1966, l'une des faces longitudinales de deux tombeaux a été prise en photo (fig. 1, 2)⁵. Dans les deux cas, l'épithaphe était gravée sur l'élément de couronnement. Le premier tombeau (inv. IG485) se composait de trois éléments entourés par des blocs en pierre : un socle à deux degrés dépourvu de décors et d'inscriptions, un socle prismatique orné d'une séquence de motifs végétaux gravés en creux et un couronnement monolithique mouluré. Une plaque rectangulaire, également en marbre et sans doute ajoutée postérieurement, marquait la position de la tête du défunt (fig. 1). Le mauvais état de conservation du bloc de couronnement - cassé en trois morceaux - ne permet qu'une lecture partielle de cette partie du texte, qui est sculptée en relief à l'intérieur d'un bandeau rectangulaire. L'écriture est en caractères cursifs, sans points diacritiques. Des décors végétaux comblent les espaces vides entre les lettres, dans la moitié supérieure du bandeau :

حسام الدولة و الدين [...] الشرق علي بن [ابرهـ]يم ؟ رحمه الله

Husām al-dawla wa'l-dīn [...] al-šarq 'Alī b. [Ibrah]īm ? . Que Dieu ait pitié de lui !

Cette partie de l'épithaphe contient les *laqabs*, le *ism* et le *nasab* du défunt, suivis d'une bénédiction en sa faveur. Les cassures du bloc rendent difficile le déchiffrement du deuxième *laqab* et du *nasab*.

Dans le deuxième tombeau (inv. IG491) plusieurs éléments sont assemblés et il est impossible de savoir s'ils étaient cohérents⁶. La photo reproduit un bloc de couronnement monolithique et mouluré qui reposait au-dessus d'un socle à degrés ; des plaques rectangulaires, partiellement enterrées, étaient disposées autour des deux éléments, en guise d'enclos ; ces plaques, qui devaient originellement délimiter le soubassement de la tombe, portent une décoration - qui semble avoir été laissée inachevée - composée de petites édicules évoquant le profil d'une niche de *mihrāb*⁷. Plusieurs blocs en pierres étaient éparpillés sur le côté nord de la tombe, en correspondance avec la tête du défunt (fig. 2). L'écriture est en caractères cursifs très minces, pourvus de points diacritiques.

عالم الغيب و الشهادة هو الرحمن الرحيم

**Il est celui qui connaît ce qui est caché et ce qui est apparent* (Cor. XIII, 9)⁸. Il est le Bienfaiteur, le Miséricordieux.*

Le verset coranique - dont le texte n'offre que la partie initiale - ne se rencontre pas dans les autres épithaphes anciennes de la ville⁹. Il en va de même pour l'exaltation de

⁵ Aucun renseignement ne permet de remonter à la localisation de ces deux monuments qui, dès lors, semblent avoir disparu.

⁶ En ce qui concerne la question des emplois d'éléments en marbre, voir Giunta 2003, 333-334 et tombeaux n° 71-77.

⁷ Une décoration similaire est témoinnée sur les plaques du soubassement de certains tombeaux de la première moitié du XIII^e siècle (Giunta 2003, n° 58, 62, 63, 74, C.1-C.13, C.15, C.19-C.21).

⁸ Ici et *infra*, pour la traduction des versets coraniques nous avons utilisé D. Masson, *Le Coran*, Paris 1967.

⁹ Un tombeau du XII^e siècle retrouvé dans la *ziyarat* Ḥwāḡa Muḥammad Kalbī à Bāḡ-i Bihišt, dans la zone occidentale de la ville, porte le verset 24 de cette sourate (Giunta 2003, n° 32).

Dieu en tant que bienfaiteur et miséricordieux¹⁰. Le nom du défunt était probablement gravé sur la face opposée.

Trois tombeaux (inv. IG1811, IG57, IG6200) furent découverts dans des sondages de fouille conduits en 1969 par la Mission, sous la direction de Maurizio Taddei, à proximité de la *ziyāra* de Šams, au nord-ouest de la citadelle. Les trois monuments, ensevelis à moins d'un mètre de profondeur, se conservaient presque intacts dans leur emplacement d'origine, parfaitement orientés ; il restait également un bon nombre de plaques en marbre constituant le dallage du petit espace funéraire (fig. 3). En 2004 les blocs de couronnement de deux de ces tombeaux (IG1811 et IG57) ont été retrouvés par la Mission dans les dépôts du Musée National de Kaboul. Nous ignorons la localisation des autres éléments qui, en l'état actuel, semblent avoir disparu. Dans tous les cas, l'épithaphe, sculptée en relief dans un même style d'écriture en coufique feuillu, figure uniquement sur les faces longitudinales des couronnements, à l'intérieur de bandeaux rectangulaires¹¹.

Inv. IG1811. Tombeau composé de cinq éléments : un soubassement délimité par des plaques verticales, un socle/couvercle, un socle à deux degrés, un socle prismatique et un bloc de couronnement mouluré. Exception faite du socle à deux degrés, les trois autres éléments inférieurs offrent une riche décoration : une séquence d'arcs trilobés, entrelacés en leur sommet et sculptés en relief, orne les plaques du soubassement ; des motifs végétaux gravés en creux suivent le contour des quatre faces supérieures du socle/couvercle, ainsi que les quatre faces du socle prismatique. Un large fleuron polylobé est sculpté en relief sur les deux petits côtés supérieurs de ce dernier. L'épithaphe ne contient que huit mots (fig. 4-6).

Couronnement, face est :

ملك [...] عبد ملك
Malik [...] 'Abd Malik

Couronnement, face ouest :

كل نفس ذائقة الموت

Tout homme goûtera la mort (Cor. XXIX, 57).

La première partie de cette épithaphe, qui pourrait se référer au défunt, pose des problèmes de déchiffrement. Toutes les lettres du deuxième mot ont la forme de segments verticaux dépourvus de points diacritiques ; les deux graphies possibles, سناتين ou شناتين, ne sont pas convaincants. L'expression *Tout homme goûtera la mort* est empruntée à deux autres versets coraniques (Cor. III, 185 et Cor. XXI, 35) et trouve plusieurs attestations dans les épithaphe de la ville, ce qui laisse imaginer qu'elle devint à l'époque une formule stéréotypée¹².

Inv. IG57. Tombeau composé de cinq éléments : un soubassement délimité par des plaques verticales, un socle/couvercle, un socle simple, un socle prismatique et un bloc de couronnement mouluré. Les plaques du soubassement portent la même séquence d'arcs

¹⁰ Ces deux épithètes divines se retrouvent uniquement dans la *basmala*.

¹¹ D'après une habitude fréquente, les faces latérales des couronnements de ce type sont souvent dépourvues de décors et d'inscriptions (voir Giunta 2003, 349-352).

¹² Voir Giunta 2003, 365.

trilobés et entrelacés qui figure sur le soubassement du tombeau précédent. Des motifs végétaux gravés en creux suivent le contour des quatre faces supérieures des deux socles, ainsi que les quatre faces du socle prismatique.

Couronnement, face est (fig. 7) :

كل نفس*

**Tout homme*

Couronnement, face ouest (fig. 8) :

ذائقة الموت*

*goûtera la mort** (Cor. XXIX, 57).

Inv. IG6200. Tombeau composé de cinq éléments, dont la forme, les dimensions et la décoration sont identiques à celles du tombeau précédent.

Couronnement, face est (fig. 9) :

محمد بن احمد

Muhammad b. Ahmad

Couronnement, face ouest (fig. 10) :

عبد السلام

Abd al-Salām.

Différemment des deux autres tombeaux de cet espace funéraire, l'épithaphe révèle uniquement le nom du propriétaire de la tombe.

Un autre tombeau entier enregistré dans les archives de la Mission Italienne (inv. IG6201) a été pris en photo en 1978 par Francesco Noci dans la *ziyarat* 'Alī Lālā, pas loin d'autres tombeaux datés à une période postérieure (fig. 11)¹³. De ce monument il ne restait qu'un bloc de couronnement monolithique et mouluré, cassé en deux parties inégales placées au-dessus de deux blocs en marbre dont celui de droite appartenait à un socle prismatique peu élevé. Soit le bloc, soit le morceau de socle portent une inscription en écriture cursive dépourvue de points diacritiques ; néanmoins, les dissemblances entre les deux styles de graphie laissent supposer l'appartenance des deux éléments à deux tombeaux différents.

Couronnement :

لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله

Il n'y a point de divinité hormis Allāh, Muhammad est l'Envoyé de Dieu.

Le nom du défunt était vraisemblablement contenu dans le bandeau de la face opposée. Les deux mots qui restent visibles sur le socle prismatique semblent correspondre à ذكر له, *souvenir de Dieu*, expression absent du Coran¹⁴, ce qui est intéressant, les socles de ce type portant généralement des versets.

¹³ Trois de ces tombeaux sont visibles sur le cliché photographique. Nous remercions Martina Massullo de nous avoir fourni l'indication du nom de la *ziyāra*. Pour des renseignements concernant ce petit cimetière, localisé à l'est de la citadelle en direction des collines de Rawza, voir également Massullo 2017.

¹⁴ Dans le Coran nous retrouvons uniquement les expressions ذكر الله (Cor. LVIII, 19) ; عن ذكر الله (Cor. V, 91 ; Cor. XXIV, 37 ; Cor. LXIII, 9) ; إذا ذكر الله (Cor. VIII, 2 ; Cor. XXII, 35 ; Cor. XXXIX, 45) ; من ذكر الله (Cor. XXXIX, 22) ; إلى ذكر الله (Cor. XXXIX, 23 ; Cor. LXII, 9).

2. ELEMENTS ISOLES

Dans cette section nous prenons en examen les éléments de tombeaux isolés et pourvus d'une partie de l'épithaphe. Il s'agit de neuf couronnements (fig. 12-37) et de quatre socles (fig. 38-42).

2.1. *Les blocs de couronnement*

Tous les blocs dont il est question appartiennent à la même typologie de couronnements monolithiques et moulurés dont le côté latéral affecte la forme d'un arc/fleuron trilobé¹⁵. Deux spécimens (inv. C5812 et C5817) furent retrouvés en 1958, durant les fouilles du palais ghaznévide, réemployés dans une petite nécropole qui, bien après la chute de la dynastie, avait été installée devant la façade de l'édifice.

Inv. C5812. Ce petit fragment (20,5 × 20 × 10,5 cm), exposé au Musée Islamique de Rawza, fut déplacé pendant les années du conflit dans les dépôts du Musée National de Kaboul, où il se trouve encore aujourd'hui (n° inv. du musée 05.2.1243). Le texte, dont ils ne restent que le début et la fin, était sculpté en écriture cursive - vraisemblablement dépourvue de points diacritiques - sur les deux faces longitudinales du bloc, à l'intérieur de deux bandeaux rectangulaires. L'expression *اغفر ل*, (*O Dieu*) *pardonne à*, introduisait le nom du défunt (fig. 12). Le dernier mot du texte sculpté à la fin du bandeau de la face opposée étant incomplet, sa lecture nous échappe, mais il devait terminer la séquence des éléments du nom (fig. 13). Le *ductus* des quelques lettres restantes pourrait reconduire au mot *السلاطين*, *les/des sultāns*, et avoir fait partie d'un *laqab*. Cependant, cette hypothèse est soulevée avec beaucoup de prudence, un *laqab* de ce type, à l'époque ghaznévide, ayant appartenu uniquement à un souverain¹⁶.

Inv. C5817. Le deuxième élément a été également découvert dans une forme fragmentaire (20 × 31 × 8 cm). En 1966 il fut transféré au Musée National d'Art Oriental de Rome (n° inv. du musée 7782)¹⁷. Ce fragment présente cinq portions de bandeaux épigraphiques en écriture cursive pourvue de points diacritiques (fig. 14-16).

Face est, partie centrale :

لا اله الا الله

Il n'y a point de divinité hormis Allāh

Face ouest, partie centrale :

[محم]د رسول ا

[Muḥa]mmad est l'Envoyé de

¹⁵ Voir Giunta 2003, 333-344.

¹⁶ En effet, les trois seules occurrences de ce terme se retrouvent dans les *laqabs* *مولى* et *ملك السلاطين*, *سيد السلاطين*, qui sont sculptés sur des éléments de décoration architectonique en marbre provenant de la ville. Les deux premiers *laqabs* rentrent dans le protocole officiel du *sultān* Ibrāhīm fils de Mas'ūd I (1059-1099), le dernier dans celui de son fils, le *sultān* Mas'ūd III (1099-1115). Pour ces *laqabs* voir Giunta - Bresc 2004, 190, 198, 200.

¹⁷ Pour des renseignements à propos du déplacement en Italie d'une partie des objets retrouvés par la Mission Archéologique Italienne, voir Giunta 2005.

Face nord, partie centrale :

لله
Dieu

Face est, sommet :

[صلى] على محمد و على [الله]
[Que la bénédiction (de Dieu)] soit sur Muḥammad et sur [Sa Famille]

Face ouest, sommet :

كل نفس ذائقة الموت
Tout homme goûtera la mo[r]t (Cor. XXIX, 57).

Malgré la longueur de cette partie de l'épithaphe, il n'y a aucune indication sur le défunt¹⁸. La *šahāda* et le verset coranique sont fréquemment employés dans les épithaphes de la ville. En revanche, la *taṣliyya* trouve ici sa première attestation à l'époque prise en examen.

Trois blocs de couronnement (inv. Sp98, Sp95, Sp96) proviennent de la *ziyārat* Ḥwāja Awliyā' - dans la zone méridionale de la ville¹⁹ -, enregistrés en 1966. En 2013 ils étaient dans les dépôts de Ghazni, en très bon état de conservation.

Inv. Sp98. Ce bloc (75,5 × 22 × 17 cm) offre une longue épithaphe très soigneusement exécutée sur les quatre faces de l'élément, à l'intérieur de six bandeaux rectangulaires. De plus, deux ou trois mots sont sculptés sur le côté gauche de la moulure de la face ouest. Les quatre bandeaux de la partie centrale renferment une inscription en coufique fleuri caractérisée par la présence de feuilles bilobées et de demi-palmettes qui agrémentent l'extrémité supérieure des lettres ; quatre éléments en forme de vase générant des fleurons sont sculptés à cheval sur les limites gauche et droite des bandeaux. Les deux bandeaux du sommet présentent un texte en écriture cursive pourvue de points diacritiques (fig. 17-20).

Face est, partie centrale :

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم *شهد الله
Au nom de Dieu, le Bienfaiteur, le Miséricordieux *Dieu témoigne

Face sud, partie centrale :

انه
que

Face ouest, partie centrale :

لا اله الا هو و الملائكة و(و)الو(ا) العلم قائما با
"Point de divinité hormis Lui" et avec Lui les anges et ceux qui sont doués

Face nord, partie centrale :

لقس(ط)*
d'intelligence* (Cor. III, 18).

¹⁸ Le nom du défunt aurait pu être absent, où figurer sur un élément inférieur du tombeau. A cet égard, voir Giunta 2003, n° 1, 5, 9, 14, 15, 17, 18, 28, 35, 38.

¹⁹ Quatorze épithaphes de tombeaux appartenant à cette *ziyāra* avaient déjà été lues au tout début du XX^e siècle par Muḥammad Riḍā et publiées en 1967 (Riḍā 1967, 92, 182, 209 ; Laviola 2010-2011, 64). Une épithaphe attribuée au XII^e-XIII^e siècle, retrouvée par la Mission italienne dans cette *ziyāra* en 1957, figure dans notre étude monographique (Giunta 2003, n° 53) ; toutes les autres épithaphes datent à partir de la deuxième moitié du XV^e siècle. A propos des erreurs fréquents dans les lectures fournies par Riḍā, voir Giunta 2003, 10.

Face est, sommet :

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ *كُلْ نَفْسٌ ذٰئِقَةٌ الْمَوْتِ ثُمَّ الْیٰنَا تَرْجِعُوْنَ *فِی یَوْمِ الرَّاٰیِعِ
 Au nom de Dieu, [le Bienfaiteur, le] Miséricordieux *Tout homme goûtera la mort.
 Vous serez, ensuite, ramenez vers nous* (Cor. XXIX, 57). Dans le jour 4

Face ouest, sommet :

مِنْ شَهْرِ اللّٰهِ الْمِبَارِكِ شَعْبًا؟[ن سَنَةٌ خَمْسٌ وَ تَسْعِیْنٌ وَ خَمْسٌ مِائَةٌ] [...]
 du mois bé[ni] d'Allāh [ša 'bā ?]n de l'année cinq et quatre-vingt-dix et cinq cents
 [...] (4 ša 'bān [?] 595 / 8 juin [?] 1199).

Les bandeaux sculptés sur la partie centrale des quatre faces du bloc offrent un verset coranique, d'usage fréquent à Ghazni²⁰, introduit par la *basmala*. Une deuxième *basmala*, suivie du verset coranique XXIX, 57, est exécutée sur le sommet du bloc. Cette partie précède les informations relatives à la date du décès qui reste parfaitement lisible. En revanche, nous n'arrivons pas à proposer une lecture du dernier mot de ce bandeau, ainsi que des quelques mots sculptés en relief sur la moulure. Un déchiffrement de l'épithaphe a également été proposé par Riḏā²¹. Nous avons relevé deux discordances dignes d'attention : l'auteur omet le nom du mois qui, malgré partiellement effacé et dont la lecture est douteuse, suit le mot *al-mubārak* ; pour le chiffre des dizaines il propose تسعین (soixante-dix) au lieu de تسعین (quatre-vingt-dix). La présence des deux points diacritiques au-dessus de la première lettre de ce mot est toutefois certaine.

Inv. Sp95. L'épithaphe de ce bloc (65,5 × 24,5 × 15 cm) est également sculptée sur les faces longitudinales, soit sur la partie centrale, soit sur le sommet. Dans les deux cas, l'écriture est en caractères cursifs, partiellement diacrités et vocalisés. De nombreux petits cercles - qui jouent parfois la fonction de *sukūn* - se distribuent au-dessus des lettres. Un listel sculpté en relief dessine sur les faces latérales du bloc un motif en forme d'arc trilobé qui reproduit, de façon schématique, le profil latéral du bloc (fig. 21-24).

Face est, partie centrale :

العبد المذنب الى رحمة الله تعالى
 L'esclave pécheur qui a soif de la miséricorde de Dieu, le Très-Haut

Face ouest, partie centrale :

ابو بكر الحسن معروف دهستاناي
 Abū Bakr al-Ḥasan dit le villageois

Face est, sommet :

لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله
 Il n'y a point de divinité hormis Allāh, Muḥammad est l'Envoyé de Dieu

Face ouest, sommet :

بتاريخ قرة (sic) ماه رجب سنة تسع و تسعين
 En date du premier jour du mois de raġab de l'année neuf et quatre-vingt-dix.

L'épithaphe de ce bloc contient les renseignements principaux relatifs au défunt. Seul est omis le chiffre des centaines de la date, curieusement fourni par Riḏā qui lit 399²².

²⁰ Ce verset coranique a été enregistré 21 fois dans les épithaphe déjà publiées (Giunta 2003, 364-365).

²¹ Riḏā 1967, 183.

²² Riḏā 1967, 182-183. Parmi les autres anomalies dans le déchiffrement du texte donné par Riḏā, signalons *al-Husayn* au lieu d'*al-Ḥasan* (pourtant, ce mot est clairement vocalisé), ainsi qu'*al-ma' rūf* au lieu de *ma' rūf*.

Or, sur la base de nos connaissances, une datation de ce bloc à la fin du IV^e siècle de l'hégire (fin X^e siècle) est à exclure, surtout en vertu de l'emploi du cursif qui n'apparaît que durant la première moitié du siècle suivant²³. En effet, nous avons le choix entre 499/1106-7 et 599/1203-4, avec une forte présomption en faveur de la première date qui tomberait durant le règne du Ghaznévide Mas'ūd III²⁴. En ce qui concerne la date, notons également que le mot غرة, *le premier jour du mois*, a été incorrectement transcrit sous la forme de فرة ; le mot « mois » est donné avec le terme persan ماه²⁵.

Inv. Sp96. La distribution de l'épithaphe sur le troisième bloc de la *ziyāra* (65,5 × 26 × 11 cm) suit une organisation assez singulière : la face orientale porte trois lignes de texte respectivement sculptées sur le sommet, sur la section centrale et sur la base ; la face opposée présente une seule ligne sur la partie centrale. Le style de la graphie cursive, pourvue de points diacritiques, diffère sensiblement d'une ligne à l'autre, ce qui donne l'impression d'un résultat obtenu par plusieurs lapicides (fig. 25, 26).

Face est, partie centrale :

العبد علي يشير بغدادي حاجي المسترشدي

L'esclave 'Alī Yašīr Bagdādī Ḥāġġī le Grand Maître

Face ouest, partie centrale :

بتاريخ الخامس والعشرين من الشهر الله [...] (sic)
en date du 25 du mois d'Allāh [...]

Face est, sommet :

لا اله الا الله محمد رسول الله

Il n'y a point de divinité hormis Allāh, Muḥammad est l'Envoyé de Dieu.

L'épithaphe révèle le nom et la date de mort du défunt qui provenait de la ville de Baghdad. La date comprend uniquement le jour du mois. Les quelques mots sculptés sur la base de la face orientale du bloc sont si embrouillés qu'il est difficile de trouver un significat en les lisant de droite à gauche. Nous avançons l'hypothèse qu'un lapicide pas trop expert ait voulu transcrire une expression fréquemment employée dans l'*incipit* des épithaphes beaucoup plus tardives إلى حريم العقبى, *vers le lieu sacré de l'au-delà éternel*, sans toutefois respecter la disposition correcte des trois mots²⁶.

Deux blocs de couronnement, enregistrés en 1966 dans un espace funéraire localisé à l'est du mausolée de Muḥammad Šarīf Ḥān²⁷, ont été retrouvés dans les dépôts de Ghazni en 2004 (inv. Sp90 et Sp92).

²³ Giunta 2001.

²⁴ Cette hypothèse se base soit sur le style de la graphie cursive, soit sur le décor des faces latérales du bloc.

²⁵ La question relative à la présence de mots en persan dans les épithaphes en arabe de la ville a été abordée dans Giunta 2010 et Allegranzi 2015.

²⁶ Pour les attestations de cette expression dans sa forme complète (قد ارتحل من دار الدنيا إلى حريم العقبى) *il s'est transporté de la demeure terrestre périssable vers le lieu sacré de l'au-delà éternel*, voir les épithaphes datables du XVII^e-XVIII^e siècles publiées dans Riḍā 1967, 185-191, 196-202, 204, 209-218 ; voir également Massullo 2017, n° 6, 25, 35, 49, 50, 71, 80, 85, 86, 92, 102, 112, 113, 117, 134.

²⁷ A propos de ce petit cimetière et du mausolée qui porte ce nom, voir Massullo 2017 (catalogue, section VI). Pour un autre tombeau du XII^e-XIII^e siècle provenant de ce même espace funéraire voir Giunta 2003, n° 54.

Inv. Sp90. Le bloc est en bon état de conservation. L'épithaphe se déroule dans les deux bandeaux de la section centrale des faces longitudinales et s'achève sur le sommet de la face orientale. Dans le premier cas, il s'agit d'une écriture cursive non-diacritée qui se détache sur un fond nu ; la partie du texte sculptée sur le sommet est dépourvue de cadre et elle est exécutée en écriture coufique (fig. 27, 28).

Face est, partie centrale :

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم *شهد الله ا

*Au nom de Dieu, le Bienfaiteur, le Miséricordieux *Dieu témoigne*

Face ouest, partie centrale :

نه لا اله الا هو و الملائكة والولوا*

"Point de divinité hormis Lui" et avec Lui les anges et les po(ssesseurs) (Cor. III, 18)*

Face est, sommet :

ابو نصر بن عمر

Abū Naṣr b. 'Umar.

Remarquons ici une inversion dans l'emploi du cursif et du coufique ; en effet, contrairement à un usage courant dans la ville, la partie « historique » du texte est transcrite en coufique²⁸.

Inv. Sp92. Le deuxième bloc présente un texte totalement en cursif non-diacrité et dépourvu de cadre, qui se déroule sur les quatre faces et s'achève sur le sommet de la face orientale (fig. 29-32).

Face nord, partie centrale :

هذه

Cette

Face est, partie centrale :

روضة القاضي الامام اجل بها

tombe appartient à al-Qāḍī al-Imām aḡall Bahā

Face sud, partie centrale :

الدين

al-dīn

Face ouest, partie centrale :

ابو المعالي بن محمد بن احمد الصغاني رحمه الله

Abū al-Ma'ālī b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Ṣaḡānī. Que Dieu ait pitié de lui !

Face est, sommet :

في شهور سنة ثمان و ثمانين

dans l'un des mois de l'année huit et quatre-vingt.

Encore une fois l'épithaphe du bloc dévoile le nom du défunt et la date de sa mort ; mais la date est à nouveau dépourvue du chiffre de l'année, malgré l'espace à la disposition du lapicide. L'incipit du texte contient la désignation de la tombe pour

²⁸ Voir Giunta 2003, 431-432.

laquelle le mot *روضة*, *jardin paradisiaque*, est utilisé²⁹. La *nisba* du défunt est attestée dans d'autres épitaphes de la ville, dont l'une datée de 506/1113-4³⁰.

En 1966, à l'intérieur du mausolée de Muḥammad Šarīf Ḥān, à côté de sept tombeaux datés à une période comprise entre 1544 et 1611³¹, se trouvait également un petit fragment de couronnement (inv. IG6202) dont la forme, le type d'épitaphe et le style de l'écriture trahissent une réalisation à une époque plus ancienne (fig. 33). Le cliché photographique reproduit uniquement la face orientale :

[بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ]

[Au no]m de Dieu, le Bienfaite[ur].

Un autre bloc de couronnement cassé en deux parties qui s'ajustaient parfaitement (inv. IG6203) a été retrouvé dans le *masḡid* Ḥaḍrat-i Šams en 1962. Il était placé sur le côté d'un tombeau plus tardif³², appuyé contre l'une des parois de l'édifice. La photo reproduit la partie de l'épitaphe en cursif de l'une des faces longitudinales, vraisemblablement la face ouest de la tombe (fig. 34).

عبد الذليل ؟ *و رب غفور*

'*Abd al-dalīl ? *un Seigneur qui pardonne** (Cor. XXXIV, 15).

Les cinq mots qui restent visibles sur ce bloc contiennent la partie finale du nom du défunt suivie de la partie finale d'un verset coranique. Le nom de 'Abd al-Dalīl se retrouve dans une autre épitaphe de la ville dédiée à un personnage provenant de la ville de Balkh³³.

Nous ignorons la provenance des trois derniers blocs de couronnements inédits (inv. IG1180, IG1181, IG1143) qui, en 2013, étaient conservés dans les dépôts de Ghazni. Par ailleurs, les clichés photographiques reproduisent uniquement l'une des faces longitudinales de chaque bloc.

Inv. IG1180. Le bloc est pourvu d'un bandeau rectangulaire renfermant une inscription cursive. Des éléments végétaux typiques du répertoire ornemental ghaznévide comblent les espaces vides entre les lettres. Nous n'arrivons pas à proposer une lecture du texte qui, par ailleurs, pourrait avoir été transcrit en langue persane (fig. 35).

Inv. IG1181. Le bandeau épigraphique sculpté sur ce bloc occupe toute la longueur de la face visible sur la photo. L'écriture cursive est pourvue de points diacritiques (fig. 36).

كل من عليها فان و يبقى وجه ربك ذو الجلال و الاكران

Tout ce qui se trouve sur la terre disparaîtra. La face de ton Seigneur subsiste, pleine de majesté et de munificence (Cor. LV, 26-27).

Inv. IG1143. A l'instar du spécimen précédent un long bandeau rectangulaire se déroule sur la section centrale du bloc. L'écriture cursive n'est pas diacritée (fig. 37).

شهد الله انه لا اله الا هو و الملائكة

Dieu témoigne "Point de divinité hormis Lui" et avec Lui les anges (Cor. III, 18).

²⁹ Pour d'autres attestations, voir Giunta 2003, n° 54.

³⁰ Riḍā 1967, 157-161.

³¹ Massullo 2017, n° 29-35.

³² Massullo 2017, n° IG6027.

³³ Riḍā 1967, 191.

2.2. Les socles

Parmi les autres éléments de tombe pourvus d'inscriptions et inédits signalons, pour conclure, quatre fragments de socles (inv. C2897, Sp74, IG319, IG496). Exception faite pour le premier spécimen qui est à degrés, tous ces socles affectent la forme d'un prisme à section trapézoïdale.

Inv. C2897. Ce fragment, divisé en deux morceaux (28 × 25 × 9 cm) qui, vraisemblablement, n'étaient pas directement agencés, a été récupéré par la Mission en 1957 à l'intérieur de la *ziyāra* dite d'Ibrāhīm, construite aux XV^e-XVI^e siècle à l'intérieur du périmètre de l'*īwān* ouest du palais royal ghaznévide³⁴. En 2004, il a été retrouvé dans le même état de conservation dans les dépôts du Musée National de Kaboul (inv. du musée 05.2.1571 ; fig. 38). L'inscription, en coufique à peine fleuri, est sculptée en relief sur le bord du degré supérieur.

*[... غافر الذنب]ـبـ[...]

[...] *Celui qui pardonne le péché* [...] (Cor. XL, 3).

Nous arrivons à proposer uniquement le déchiffrement de la partie de texte du morceau de gauche qui contient les deux premiers mots d'un verset coranique.

Inv. Sp74. Ce fragment (41 × 26 × 6,5 cm) formait l'un des angles d'un socle prismatique retrouvé en 1966 dans un petit cimetière localisé au nord du minaret de Bahrām Šāh. Il est actuellement conservé dans les dépôts du Musée National d'Art Oriental de Rome (n° inv. du musée 7813). L'inscription est exécutée en coufique simple ; les terminaisons supérieures des corps des lettres sont agrémentées de pointes effilées (fig. 39).

*[... والقانتين والمنفقين / والمستغفرين]ـبـ[...]

*[... pour ceux qui sont patients, sincères] et pieux, pour ceux qui font l'aumône / et qui implorent le pardon de Dieu [...] (Cor. III, 17).

Inv. IG319. Ce deuxième fragment d'angle de socle, aujourd'hui disparu, a été pris en photo en 1977, lorsqu'il était remployé sur la paroi extérieure d'une maison moderne de la ville. L'inscription est sculptée en cursif dépourvu de points diacritiques (fig. 40, 41).

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ [...] *عنده اجر عظیم*

Au nom de Dieu, le Bienfaiteur, le Mi[séricordieux...] *une récompense sans limites se trouve auprès de Dieu* (Cor. VIII, 28).

Nous supposons que le socle contenait uniquement la *basmala*, suivie du verset coranique VIII, 28 dont ils ne restent que les trois derniers mots.

Inv. IG496. Ce troisième angle d'un socle prismatique (28 × 20 cm) est absent de l'ancienne documentation acquise par la Mission ; en effet, il a été retrouvé en 2004 dans les dépôts du Musée National de Kaboul (sans n° inv.). Une inscription en cursif diacrité est sculptée sur le rebord de l'élément (fig. 42).

*[... الملـك ممن تشا و تعز من تشا و تذلل من تشا]ـبـ[...]

*[... Tu enlèves la royauté à qui Tu veux. Tu honores qui Tu veux et Tu abaisse qui Tu v[eux...] (Cor. III, 26).

³⁴ En ce qui concerne les éléments en marbre remployés dans cette *ziyāra*, voir Laviola 2010-2011, 46.

Les tombeaux de ce petit recueil forment un groupe assez homogène et font partie de la plus ancienne production funéraire d'époque islamique de la ville. Sur la base de nos connaissances, ainsi que des comparaisons avec les tombeaux publiés en 2003, certains spécimens remontent à l'époque ghaznévide, tels les trois tombeaux fouillés aux alentours de la *ziyāra* de Šams (fig. 3-10) ; les deux fragments de blocs de couronnement fouillés à l'entrée du palais ghaznévide (fig. 12-16) ; les blocs de couronnement inv. Sp95 (fig. 21-24), Sp90 (fig. 27-28), IG6202 (fig. 33), IG1180 (fig. 35), IG1181 (fig. 36), IG1143 (fig. 37); les socles inv. C2897 (fig. 38) et Sp74 (fig. 39)³⁵. L'un des spécimens provenant de la *ziyārat* Ḥwāja Awliyā' (Sp98, fig. 17-20) est daté de 595/1199³⁶. Pour tous les autres tombeaux (fig. 1, 2, 11, 25, 26, 29-32, 34, 41, 42), une datation entre la fin du XII^e siècle et le XIII^e siècle peut être proposée avec beaucoup de probabilité.

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³⁵ Un tombeau ghaznévide inédit et en parfait état de conservation a été exclu de cette étude et il fait l'objet d'une publication en cours. La datation du monument pouvant s'inscrire dans les premières années de règne de la dynastie, l'analyse de son aspect morphologique, du contenu des inscriptions et des styles de l'écriture demande d'être conduite en profondeur.

³⁶ Le type de coufique représente une évolution de celui qui avait été utilisé dans l'inscription en langue persane des plaques en marbre du palais royal de la ville (Bombaci 1966).

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Fig. 1 - Tombeau dans un cimetière inconnu, inv. IG485 (© IsIAO, Neg. R 5315/18).



Fig. 2 - Tombeau dans un cimetière inconnu, inv. IG491 (© IsIAO, Neg. R 5315/19).



Fig. 3 - Les trois tombeaux fouillés à proximité de la *ziyāra* de Šams : inv. IG1811 en haut ; inv. IG57 en bas à gauche ; inv. IG6200 en bas à droite (© IsIAO, Neg. R 8153/12).



Face est



Face sud



Face ouest

Fig. 4-6 - Couronnement du tombeau inv. IG1811 (© IsIAO, Neg. R 8152/12-14).



Face est



Face ouest

Fig. 7-8 - Couronnement du tombeau inv. IG57 (© IsIAO, Neg. R 8152/9, 10).



Face est



Face ouest

Fig. 9-10 - Couronnement du tombeau inv. IG6200 (© IsIAO, Neg. R 8179/1, 2).



Fig. 11 - Tombeau de la *ziyārat* 'Alī Lālā, inv. IG6201 (© IsIAO, Neg. 13297/31).



Face est



Face ouest

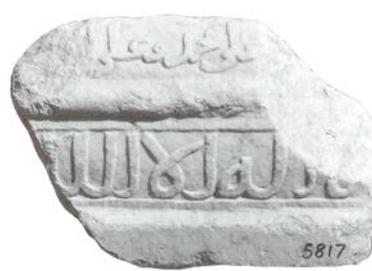
Fig. 12-13 - Fragment de bloc de couronnement inv. C5812 (© IsIAO, Neg. R 968/2-3).



Face nord



Face ouest



Face est

Fig. 14-16 - Fragment de bloc de couronnement inv. C5817 (© IsIAO, Neg. R 988/7, 9-10).



Face sud



Face est



Face nord



Face ouest

Fig. 17-20 - Les quatre faces du bloc de couronnement inv. Sp98 (© IsIAO, Neg. R 995/2, 8, 1002/10, 12).



Face nord

Face ouest

Face sud

Face est

Fig. 21-24 - Les quatre faces du bloc de couronnement inv. Sp95 (© IsIAO, Neg. R 1006/5-7, 9).



Face ouest

Face est

Fig. 25-26 - Les deux faces du bloc de couronnement inv. Sp96 (© IsIAO, Neg. R 1006/2-3).



Face ouest

Face est

Fig. 27-28 - Les deux faces du bloc de couronnement inv. Sp90 (© IsIAO, Neg. R 1002/7-8).



Fig. 29-32 - Les quatre faces du bloc de couronnement inv. Sp92 (© IsIAO, Neg. R 996/2, 1002/3-4, 6).



Fig. 33 - Fragment de bloc de couronnement inv. IG6202 (© IsIAO, Neg. 11017/19).



Fig. 34 - Bloc de couronnement inv. IG6203 (© IsIAO, Neg. R 2229/1).



Fig. 35 - Fragment de bloc de couronnement inv. IG1180 (© IsIAO 2013).



Fig. 36 - Bloc de couronnement inv. IG1181 (© IsIAO 2013).



Fig. 37 - Bloc de couronnement inv. IG1143 (© IsIAO 2013).



Fig. 38 - Fragment de socle inv. C2897 (© IsIAO Neg. R 968/4).



Fig. 39 - Fragment de socle inv. Sp74 (© IsIAO Neg. R 626/10).



Fig. 40-41 - Fragment de socle de tombe encastré dans la paroi d'une maison moderne (inv. IG319 ; © IsIAO Neg. R 12934/8).



Fig. 42 - Fragment de socle inv. IG496 (© IsIAO 2004).

QAL 'A-IṢṬAKHR AND THE SI GUNBADĀN

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The aim of this paper is to examine the unclear connection between a well-known fortress (Qal' a Iṣṭakhr), located in the Fārs region on a mount not distant from the city of Istakhr, and the Si Gunbadān (three domes), the name frequently given to the three mounts also standing on the plain of Marvdasht. The mix-up over the two subjects - fortress and mount(s) - may have arisen from the shape evoked by the term gunbad.

Keywords: Istakhr, Fars, Iran, fortress (*qal'a*), dome (*gunbad*)

1. QAL 'A IṢṬAKHR IN THE MEDIEVAL ARABIC AND PERSIAN SOURCES

The first mentions of the fortress of Istakhr (on the open Marvdasht plain in the Iranian region of Fārs) were probably made by two 10th-century Arab geographers, Iṣṭakhrī (d. 957) and Muqaddasī (d. ca 990). The first stated that «Istakhr hat ein Schloss [*ḥiṣn*¹] und Festungswerke»;² Muqaddasī was more accurate in his description: «In Istakhr is a great citadel [*qal'a*³], the width of the main part of it a *farsakh*. **In it are water tanks**. A commander is permanently there, as are merchants. A number of kings' storehouses are there, and some pre-Islamic chattels».⁴

Michelina Di Cesare has suggested⁵ that this could be one of the three *īwānāt* mentioned by Dinawarī (d. 894-895 or 902-903) and specifically - as confirmed by Ṭabarī (d. 923)⁶ - the one on the road from Istakhr to Khurāsān.⁷

A text entitled *The Book of Treasures and Gifts* (written no later than 1071) and attributed to an official or administrator of the Egyptian Fatimid court, Aḥmad al-Rashīd Ibn al-Zubayr, reports that the Buyid 'Imād al-Dīn Marzubān (1024-1048) ascended the *qal'a* and **found a tank** and rooms full of precious gemstones.⁸

Furthermore, in the 12th-century *Fārsnāma*, a work ascribed to Ibn al-Balkhī, we read that «Within the circuit of the city [Istakhr] there were three castles, one Qal'ah Iṣṭakhr, the second Qal'ah *Shikastah* (the Broken Castle), and the third Qal'ah *Shakanvān*. These were known as the **Three Domes**».⁹

¹ Iṣṭakhrī (Arabic text 1927), 116.

² Iṣṭakhrī (German translation by Mordtmann 1845), 64; cf. also Tskitishvili 1971, 315.

³ Muqaddasī (Arabic text 1877), 446.

⁴ Muqaddasī (English translation by Collins 1994), 393. The editor added: «Addition / version MS. C. In it are the treasures of the kings of Fārs from the pre-Islamic period. It is a difficult place to approach, well fortified, and with some ponds of water and with the entrenched ruler who will not leave it» (Id., 393-394).

⁵ Di Cesare 2015, 19-20.

⁶ Ṭabarī (Arabic text 1881-1882), 690.

⁷ Dīnawarī (Arabic text 1888), 30.

⁸ The tank was eighty cubits long and very deep (Ibn al-Zubayr [Arabic text 1959], 78-79; cf. Bivar 1998, 643).

⁹ Ibn al-Balkhī (English translation by Le Strange 1912), 25-26. In n. 1 the editor added: «*Sih Gunbadān*. - At fol. 15b of the MS. the author writes that in the castle of Iṣṭakhr Jamshīd kept his treasury [*khazānah*], in the castle of *Shikastah* his storehouse [*farrāsh-khānah*], and in the castle of *Shakanvān* he established his armory [*zarrād-khānah*]. This last name is sometimes written *Shankavān*». The British Museum Manuscript (Ms. Or. 5983) records these statements in the Persian text (Ibn al-Balkhī [Persian text 1921], 32).

The first to affirm that the Istakhr fortress was also known as *Si Gunbadān* (Three Domes) and to attribute to the Buyid ‘Aḏud al-Dawla (949-983) the construction there of a dam and other cisterns - the latter already mentioned by Muqaddasī and Ibn al-Zubayr - was Mustawfī, who composed his *Nuzhat al-Qulūb* in 1340 and, in turn citing the *Fārsnāmā*,¹⁰ stated in the geographical part of his work:

Iṣṭakhr Castle. According to the *Fārs Nāmāh* there is no castle through the land older than this, and every device which a castle can have to strengthen this castle possess. Anciently it was known as **Sih Gunbadān (Three Domes)**, for round and about it stand other two castles, called Shikastah and Shankavān. At this the main castle there is a cleft going deep into the ground, through which the rain water passed, falling out at the further end into the plain. ‘**Aḏud-ad-Dawlah built a dam at this lower end**, and with cement and stones and mortar turned the cleft here into a tank, to which a stairway led down, of seventeen steps. By means of canvas soaked in bitumen and wax, he rendered the cement so impervious that no water could percolate through, and so great a quantity of water used to be collected here, that had a thousand men used of the same for a whole year, its level would not have dropped one single step. **The tank further was set with columns, and roofed over,**¹¹ so that the water was undisturbed by changes of the weather ; and **besides this there were other cisterns** lying beyond and about. The climate of this castle is temperate, and the only weakness of the place is that its fortifications are not quite strong enough to resist an attack.

Iṣṭakhr Yār Castle (the Companion of Iṣṭakhr). This is strongly fortified, and it is thus called because, in its strength, it is the companion of Iṣṭakhr. Its climate is good, and it possesses likewise a cistern, also there are in its circuit springs of living water.¹²

The fortress of Istakhr was also mentioned in the *Shāhnāmā*.¹³

The *Burhān-i Qāṭi* ‘ is a Persian Dictionary compiled in India in 1651 by Muḥammad Ḥusayn b. Khalaf Tabrīzī, whose pen-name was Burhān. In two instances reference is made to a *qal’ā*, situated in the *mulk* of Fārs, called Istakhr since it contains a great reservoir of water.¹⁴

¹⁰ Ibn al-Balkhī (Persian text 1921), 156. On *Qal’ā Iṣṭakhr* and the *Si Gunbadān*, see also A.A. Asadi - C.G. Cereti, Two New Pahlavi Inscriptions from Fars Province, Iran: M.V. Fontana (ed.), *Istakhr (Iran), 2011-2016. Historical and Archaeological Essays* (Quaderni di Vicino Oriente), Rome, forthcoming.

¹¹ This evidence has been confirmed by Flandin’s meticulous description in the 19th century (see below).

¹² Mustawfī (English translation by Le Strange 1919), 131-132. In n. 2, in connection with Shankavān, the editor adds: «Also written Shakanvān and Ashkanvān. Of the ‘Three Domes’ the Iṣṭakhr Castle lies 2 leagues to the north of the village of Fathābād; Qal’ah Shikastah (the Broken Castle) is now known as Miyān Qal’ah (the Midmost Castle), and lies 2½ leagues to the north-west of Fathābād ; while the castle of Ashkanvān stands one league south-east of Dashtak, the older Abraj. [...]». And in n. 3, in connection with Iṣṭakhr Yār Castle (the Companion of Iṣṭakhr), Le Strange records: «Probably situated on the hill above Iṣṭakhr (Persepolis)». Cf. also n. 15.

¹³ For occurrences of it in Firdawsī’s poem, cf. Ouseley 1821, 350-357. Cf. also n. 16.

¹⁴ Burhān (Persian edition 1951-1952), 124, 128. Note that the Arabic version of the Persian name Istakhr (استخر) is اصطرخ or اسطرخ. In this regard cf. also Ouseley 1821, 309-311.

2. THE *SI GUNBADĀN*

Although the first medieval sources do not mention “three mounts” or “three hills”, but rather cite only three palaces (*īwānāt*, Dinawārī) or structures (*bunyān*, Ṭabarī) or *qal'as* (Ibn al-Zubayr, Ibn al-Balkhī and Mustawfī), the explanation given by Mustawfī for the words *si gunbadān*, namely «for round and about it stand other two castles», may have led modern local people and, consequently, some European travellers to believe that the *si gunbadān* were each placed on the three mounts¹⁵ or that the *si gunbadān* were the three mounts themselves located in the north-western area of the Marvdasht plain, the closest of them to the city of Istakhr being located 9 km from it.¹⁶ The mix-up over the two subjects - fortress and mount(s) - may have arisen from the shape evoked by the term *gunbad*, literally ‘dome’. As *pars pro toto*, *gunbad* can be referred to both a fortress (a domed *qal'a*) and a mount (a dome-shaped *kūh*).¹⁷

The first to portray the three mounts may have been the German naturalist, physician and traveller Engelbert Kämpfer (d. 1716), who visited the area of Istakhr in 1686 (fig. 1), while the Dutch artist and traveller Cornelis de Bruijn (d. 1726 or 1727), after his travels in 1704, produced two drawings on this subject (figs. 2-3) and a description which clearly alludes to three mounts and as many fortresses: «les trois montagnes, sur lesquelles il y avoit autrefois des forteresses».¹⁸

¹⁵ This opinion is shared by Streck (1978, 221).

¹⁶ Cf. also Le Strange 1905, 276 and Matheson 2001, 115. See the aerial photo taken in the 1930s by Schmidt (1940, pl. 12, in the background; here fig. 6).

¹⁷ See the «cône tronqué» and the «truncated hills» to which Flandin (1843 [T], 71) and Stanley (1895, 380), respectively, make reference (cf. below and fig. 9). Also note the *sa dizh-i gunbadān-i Istakhr* “the three domed fortresses of Istakhr” mentioned by Firdawsī in his *Shāhnāma* (cf. Ouseley 1821, 386). Furthermore Streck affirms: «All three [forts], which lie practically in a straight line, are frequently comprised under the name of Qal'a or Kūh-i Iṣṭakhr, “the citadel” or “the mountain of Iṣṭakhr”, also Kūh-i Rāmdjird, from a district of this name on the left bank of the Kur (into which the above mentioned Pulwar flows). [...] The most important of the three, the Qal'a Iṣṭakhr in the narrower sense, is also called Miyān Qal'a, “the central fort” from its position between the other two» (Streck 1978, 221-222).

¹⁸ Le Bruyn 1718, 294. He stated: «Chapitre LI. *Amandiers, sauvages, & autres arbres. Montagnes sur lesquelles il y avoit autrefois des forteresses. Riviere de Bendemir. Arrivée a Persepolis.* [...] nous entrâmes dans une plaine, où nous vîmes à notre droite, environ à deux lieues de distance, un grand rocher fort élevé sur lequel il y avoit anciennement une forteresse considerable, dont il paroît encore, à ce qu'on dit, quelques restes. On pretend aussi qu'il y a sur le sommet de ce rocher une grande plaine rempli de troupeaux dans la saison. [...] Sur le 11. heures nous passâmes proche de deux autres montagnes assez près l'une de l'autre, sur lesquelles il y avoit aussi autrefois des forteresses, dont il ne reste aucunes ruines. [...] On trouve en cet endroit deux chemins qui conduisent à *Persepolis*, [...] Chapitre LV. *Depart de Persepolis. Arrivée à Zjie-raes ou Chiras. Description de cette ville. Arrivée à Ispahan.* [...] [je] repris le chemin de la plaine [...] Etant parvenu à la moitié du chemin, je dessinai les trois montagnes, sur lesquelles il y avoit autrefois des forteresses, dont j'ai déjà fait mention. La plus grande, & la première, est celle qui paroît divisée par le milieu, & les deux autres, à droite, sont proche du pont de *Jesneioen* : la plus reculée est presque toujours couverte de neige» (Le Bruyn 1718, 258 and 294). Pietro della Valle (1677, 331), who travelled some years before - in 1621 - referred to two mounts and as many castles: «Ma prima di passare il Ponte nella ripa Orientale vn poco lontana, notammo due rupi alte, sopra le quali, nella cima delle medesime pietre tagliate, dicono, che ne' tempi addietro vi fossero due Castelli, vno di essi, il più vicino al Ponte, lo chiamano *Caluhai sachi*, cioè Castello forte; e l'altro più innanzi a Mezo giorno, *Caluhai scechiscèt*, che vuol dir Castello rotto. [...]».

The German cartographer and explorer in the service of Denmark Carsten Niebuhr (d. 1815) made a journey to the area of Istakhr in 1765 and recorded three castles, all situated on a single mountain:

Trois ou quatre milles d'Allemagne vers l'Ouest, il y-a encore trois vieux châteaux, qu'on appelle *Kalle Istakr*, *Kalle Schikafte*, et ... [editor's note *a*, Le nom du troisieme château, ne se trouve point aussi dans l'Original T.]. On prétend que l'un est situé au bas, l'autre au milieu et le troisieme en haut d'une montagne haute et escarpée. Comme je n'ai pas été dans cette contrée, je ne saurois déterminer avec certitude s'ils ont été batis par les anciens Perses, ou seulement après par les Mahométans ; selon toute apparence ils sont des premiers et meritent aussi qu'un Européen les aille voir.¹⁹

The British diplomat and traveller James Justinian Morier (d. 1849) referred to only two mounts during his 1811 journey:

In the plain of Merdasht, to the northward, are several conspicuous masses of rock, which are insulated, and unconnected with the surrounding mountains. One of these was pointed out to me as the Rock of Istakhar, [...] In the fore-ground arises another insulated rock, similar to the one on which I stood, on which are the ruins of the Castle of Shahrek. It looks like an immense square turret placed on a tumulus.²⁰

In 1821 James Baillie Fraser (d. 1856), a Scottish traveller and artist, provided his version of the mounts' names:

Before quitting the plain of Merdusht we have to notice certain remarkable castellated rocks near the ruins, which probably formed the defences of the ancient city. We allude to the hills of Istakhar, Shekusteh, and Shemgan, which, with their respective forts, are by Persian writers termed the Seh Goombedan or the Three Domes. The first of these rises nine miles north of the Tucht, [...] As the travellers looked down from this summit, full in front was seen another singular insulated cliff, also crowned with a fortress, and known by the name of Kallah Shareek or the Castle of Shareek, a king or governor of the province, who was killed in defending it against the Arabs in the seventh century.²¹

Jean-Baptiste Eugène Napoléon Flandin (d. 1889), a French orientalist, painter, politician and traveller, sojourned in the area of Istakhr during the last two months of 1840 and recorded the three mounts, both describing and illustrating them (figs. 4-5):

Monts-Istâkhr. Dans la partie occidentale de la plaine de *Merdâcht*, là où elle se rétrécit et se trouve borné par les montagnes du *Louristân* (Pl. LVIII, *here* fig. 4) on aperçoit trois masses de rochers qui se suivent presque en ligne droite, et très-

¹⁹ Niebuhr 1780, 131.

²⁰ Morier 1818, 83, 86.

²¹ Fraser 1834, 138.

rapprochées l'une de l'autre. On les remarque à leur forme singulières et semblables qui, de loin, figure un cône tronqué. **Ces trois éminences portent les noms de Khou-Istākhr, Khâlèh Istākhr,** ou encore *Khou-Ramgherd*, c'est-à-dire *Monts-Istākhr* ou *citadelle d'Istākhr*, ou bien *Monts-isolés*. [...] ²²

Immediately after Flandin's departure, Baron Karl-August von Bode (d. 1887), a member of the Russian Legation at Tehran, arrived and visited the area of Istakhr from 5-11 January 1841. He described the mount of the Istakhr fortress (see below) and mentioned the other two mounts:

This isolated hill of Istakhr is the key of the pass which opens into the plain of Persepolis from the hilly country of Ardekan. *^[23]

Not far from Kuhi-Istakhr, in a south-eastern direction, is another hill which cannot be ascended on account of its steepness ; it is barren, and has a very grotesque appearance.

At the distance of two farsangs to the west, inclining to north, is a third isolated hill, on the summit of which some ruins are seen, said to have been an ancient fort, but time would not allow of my visiting the spot, much to my regret, as hitherto no traveller appears to have described it. **It bears the name of Kuhi-Shahrek.** ²⁴

Two Scottish gentlemen, James Fergusson (d. 1886) - an architectural historian - and Robert Blair Munro Binning (d. 1891) - an orientalist and member of the Madras Civil Service -, who came to the Marvdasht plain in the same years (1851 and 1851-1852, respectively), stated:

Looking up the valley to the right of the spectator standing among the ruins, the flatness of the plain is broken by three singular rocky hills, perfectly isolated from

²² Flandin - Coste 1843 (T), 71.

²³ In his note * von Bode provided a detailed description of the landscape he saw from the Istakhr mount: «I took advantage of the elevated spot on which I stood to mark a few bearings of the compass, relying on the words of my guide, and on my own sight, to determine the relative distances of the several places. *Bearings taken from the south side of Kūhi-Istakhr.* The bridge of Puli-Khan and direction of the river Kūm-Firūz, due south; distance of the former, between three and four farsangs. To the west of the Kūm-Firūz extends the district of *Ramjird*, bounded to the west by a mountainous country, forming the buluk of *Baiza*. To the east of the same river is the district of *Hafrek*. Direction of the hill at Nakshi-Rustam, E. by E.S.E., distant about two farsangs. *Bearings taken from the north-east side of the hill of Istakhr.* The hill of Kuhi- Shahrek, N.W. by W.N.W., two farsangs distant. The Kūm-Firūz flows from the same direction. It has its source in the snowy range of Ardekan, near a place called *Runje- Gambil*, and is the Araxes, or Cyrus of the ancients, which Alexander had to cross before he reached Persepolis. It is joined in the plain by the river Moīn, coming from the village of the same name in a N.N.W. direction. The summer road from Isfahan to Shiraz passes through Moīn. The extremity of the mountain ridge of Husein-Kūh, a continuation of the Nakshi-Rustam hills, lies to the north-west. The villages Germ-abad (one farsang), and Kazimabad (one and a-half farsangs distant) are to E.N.E. by E. The bridge of Puli-no over the Kum-Firuz is situated to the south-east, at no great distance from Kuhi-Istakhr. The bridge Alexander the Great had to throw over the Araxes, before he could enter on the plain of Persepolis, was probably somewhere in the same neighbourhood».

²⁴ De Bode 1845, 122-124.

the rest, and so fantastic in their shapes, that modern Persian writers have peopled them with gins and deevs, whose petrified castles they conceive them to be ; [...].²⁵

and

On the north-west side of the plain of Mervdasht, at a distance of ten miles or more from Jemsheed's throne, are three insulated hills, collectively termed the *sih goombedân* or "three domes," and respectively named, as our guide informed us, Istakhar, Shahrek, and Kom-feerooz. Fraser calls them Istakhar, Shekusteh and Shemgan—on the summits of which, are said to be remains of ancient fortresses.²⁶

In 1870 the Welsh-American journalist and explorer Henri Morton Stanley (d. 1904) interpreted the archaeological ruins of Istakhr as the Istakhr fortress,²⁷ but described the three hills as follows:

From Naksh-i-Rustam we proceed south to Persepolis across the gorge (in the narrowest part and centre of which stands **Istakhr, the fortress**), and over a loamy land intersected and cut up by many scores of canals which water the plain of Persepolis. On our right as we travel stands a group of three lofty and **truncated hills**, which go by the name of **Myûm Kalah** ("Between the Mountains"),^[28] but whose real names, according to Hamdallah the Persian historian, are Istakhr, Schesch, and Skhwan ; on our left is Istakhr, its double pylon, its mounds and ruined halls, and the narrow valley leading to Saidan.²⁹

Lord Georg Nathaniel Curzon (d. 1925), Viceroy and Governor-General of India, stayed in the Persepolis area in 1880-1881; he provided this following description of the three "rocky bluffs":

To a person standing on the platform of Persepolis, and looking over the plain of Mervdasht, the most conspicuous objects in the landscape are three insulated rocky bluffs, rising abruptly at a distance of from seven to eight miles to the north-west. Their lower parts consist of steep slopes, above which a precipitous scarp shoots into the air, terminating in a sharp and jagged summit. These hills are known as Seh Gumbedan, or Three Domes; [...].³⁰

Only a few months later, in 1881, a British official who served with the Bengal Civil Service, Edward Stack (d. 1887), crossing the plain of Mervdasht came in sight of the three hills:

²⁵ Fergusson 1851, 91.

²⁶ Binning 1857, 37-38.

²⁷ «As we study the site and its surroundings we become certain that the position of this fortress commands an entrance to the plain of Persepolis» (Stanley 1895, 374).

²⁸ It is likely that Stanley attributes to the three hills or mounts the name sometimes given to the middle one, on which the fortress of Istakhr is located (cf. «Mijânkale „Mittel-Burg“» in Nöldeke 1887, 145, and above, n. 17: «Miyân Kal'â, "the central fort"», reported by Streck 1978, 222).

²⁹ Stanley 1895, 380-381.

³⁰ Curzon 1892, 136; Curzon continues by listing scholars and travellers who mentioned the three mounts before him.

As if by iron of Nature, the work of monarchs is dwarfed and outraged by three castles of Nature's building, planted on the distant plain. They are three hills, rising 700 feet with steep smooth slope, and then crowned with a wall of crags 300 feet high. It is these gigantic objects which seem the proper guardians of Marvdasht; and to look towards of the vanity of human greatness.³¹

3. THE FORTRESS OF ISTAKHR DURING THE ISLAMIC ERA AND THE ACCOUNTS OF 19TH-CENTURY EUROPEAN TRAVELLERS

We have no reliable information on when the Istakhr fortress was built. Muqaddasī, who was a contemporary of the Buyid 'Aḍud al-Dawla, seems to not attribute it to a pre-Islamic period, since he refers only to "chattels" dated to that epoch.³² In any case the use of the fortress since the time of the Islamic conquest suggests it is an ancient building.³³ As a matter of fact, after the conquest the governors of Fārs used the fortress as a natural defence and after 'Alī's death Ziyād ibn Abīhi (d. 673), governor of Kūfa and Baṣra, chose it as his residence to defend himself against Mu'āwiya.³⁴

As mentioned, important hydraulic works were carried out during the Buyid period. A system of reservoirs has been assigned to 'Aḍud al-Dawla.³⁵ The Istakhr fortress was subsequently recorded over time as a citadel-prison, certainly in use for this purpose at least from the late Saljuq period. There were at least four episodes, the most ancient of which refers to the Saljuq vizier Niẓām al-Mulk who conquered the fortress of Istakhr on behalf of Alp Arslan (1063-1072) in 1067, taking it from the Saljuq 'prince' Qavurt (d. 1073).³⁶ Almost a century later, after the death of the Saljuq Malik Shāh b. Maḥmūd in 1160,³⁷ his son Maḥmūd - who ruled for just three months, in 1152³⁸ - was held prisoner in the fortress of Istakhr by the Salghurid atabeg Muẓaffar al-Dīn Zangī (1161-1175), who considered him a dangerous claimant to the government of Fārs.³⁹

³¹ Stack 1882, 68-69.

³² Iṣṭakhrī - therefore native of the city - makes no reference to the origin of the fortress.

³³ On the Persian legends referring to mythical times cf. Streck (1978, 222), who mentions both Arabic sources and the traditions recorded by William Ouseley. In particular, on the identification of this *qal'a* with the mythical fortress where the *Avesta* would be deposited, i.e. the Castle or Hill of Writing(s), see also G. Terribili, *Istakhr and Its Territory. A Glance over Middle Persian Sources and Sasanian Epigraphic Evidence*: M.V. Fontana (ed.), *Istakhr (Iran), 2011-2016. Historical and Archaeological Essays* (Quaderni di Vicino Oriente), Rome, forthcoming.

³⁴ Fraser 1834, 138; Wellhausen 1902, 76; cf. Streck 1978, 222. Curzon (1892, 134) attributes the fortress to Mu'āwiya.

³⁵ On the attribution of the tanks to 'Aḍud al-Dawla also by Ṣādiq Iṣḫānī see the quotation by Ouseley, below and n. 45; cf. also Busse (1975, 281): «The citadel in *Shīrāz* and a reservoir in the castle at *Iṣṭakhr* appear to have been 'Aḍud al-Dawla's only military constructions [...]». For another Buyid ruler, 'Imād al-Dīn Marzubān, who ascended the *qal'a*, see above and n. 8. On the inscriptions engraved in Persepolis upon the wishes of both 'Aḍud al-Dawla (344H/955) - cf. Frye 1962, 251 and n. 31 - and the other Buyid Baha' al-Dawla (392H/1001-2), see Blair 1992, nos. 6-7, 18, respectively.

³⁶ Bosworth 1968, 59-60. Cf. also Bivar 1998, 644.

³⁷ He was the son of Maḥmūd Mughīth al-Dunyā wa'l-Dīn (1118-1131), who was in turn the son of Muḥammad b. Malik Shāh (Ghiyāth al-Dīn Muḥammad, 1105-1118).

³⁸ Lambton 1988, 228, n. 35.

³⁹ Bosworth 1968, 169.

Later Zangī, the son of the Salghurid atabeg ‘Izz al-Dīn Sa‘d I (1194-1203), was held prisoner by the Khwarizm Shāhs in the fortress of Istakhr until his brother-in-law, the Khwarizm Shāh Jalāl al-Dīn,⁴⁰ returned from Sind (in present-day Pakistan).⁴¹

In the 15th century three sons of Ḥaydar (d. 1488), the head of the Safavid order in Ardabil, were interned in the Istakhr fortress by the Āq Quyūnlū Ya‘qūb (1478-1490).⁴²

Finally the fortress was demolished by Shāh ‘Abbās I (1588-1629) at the end of the 16th century,⁴³ after Ya‘qūb Khān, the Dhu‘l-Qadr ruler of Shiraz, was forced to leave the fortress in 1590 and move to Shiraz, where he was executed in the same year.⁴⁴

In 1811 two British gentlemen, Ouseley and Morier, visited Istakhr; for the latter it was his second journey. The officer and orientalist William Ouseley (d. 1842) recorded that the geographer Ṣādiq Iṣfāhānī (d. ca 1650) attributed «a reservoir or cistern in the castle of Istakhr»⁴⁵ to the Buyid ‘Aḍud al-Dawla, while the diplomat and traveller James Justinian Morier (d. 1849) ascended the “Rock of Istakhar” - he may have been one of the first European travellers to do so - and described the archaeological remains as follows: «part of a gate, the ruins of several turrets, four reservoirs, and the wrecks of many walls»;⁴⁶ moreover he made a drawing of the “The rock of Istakhar” (fig. 7).

The Scottish diplomat, artist and traveller Robert Ker Porter (d. 1842), who visited the area of Istakhr in 1817-1820, affirmed to have only seen a “building” from a distance and demonstrated his knowledge of Mustawfī’s account.⁴⁷

⁴⁰ The Salghurid Sa‘d, after his conflict with the Khwarizm Shāh ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad (1199-1220), agreed that his daughter, Malika Khātūn, should marry the then Khwarizm Shāh ‘prince’ Jalāl al-Dīn, while his son Zangī should remain at court (cf. also Malcolm 1815, 387).

⁴¹ Malcolm 1815, 387; cf. De Bode 1845, 122. For the same and other episodes related to the Istakhr fortress as a prison, see Ouseley 1821, 371-399 (passim).

⁴² See Savory 1980, 20 and Mitchell 2009, 21. Cf. also De Bode 1845, 122, who attributes the task of imprisonment to the Āq Quyūnlū Uzun Ḥasan (1453-1478), rather than to Ya‘qūb.

⁴³ Matthee 1996, 401 and n. 88.

⁴⁴ Quinn 2010, 219; 2015, 56. The episode is also narrated by the chronicler Afūshā-yi Naṭānzī in his work (*The Choicest of Works in Remembrance of Righteous*) written in 1598 (Quinn 2010, 210 and n. 68). Curzon (1892, 134) stated that «The latter [i.e. the ‘mediaeval citadel of Istakhr on the pointed hill’] was made a state-prison by Atabegs of Fars, and was so used as late as 1576 A.D.». On *Qal‘a Iṣṭakhr* see also Ishrāqī 1974; Bivar 1998, 645 and, more recently, Asadi 2012.

⁴⁵ Ouseley 1821, 183. Ouseley provided a history of ‘Aḍud al-Dawla’s cistern (citing both the *Fārsnāma* and Mustawfī) and a detailed description of the reservoir’s construction materials (Ouseley 1821, 313-315).

⁴⁶ Morier 1818, 85. «One of these was pointed out to me as the Rock of Istakhar, on the extreme summit of which I was informed were to be seen the wonderful remains of a castle. [...] We ascended the rock on the N. W. side, winding around the foot of it, through more shrubs than are to be seen in any other part of the surrounding country [...] The rock we were ascending arises abruptly from a steep conical hill. The collected mass, I calculated might be twelve hundred feet in height, the perpendicular of the rock being about five hundred. [...] The remains that are to be seen, are part of a gate, the ruins of several turrets, four reservoirs, and the wrecks of many walls. The rock at its summit exhibits nothing but a few scanty shrubs, and one large fir tree, that is situated near to the largest reservoir, at its southern extremity. It has a gradual inclination from both sides towards the centre, forming as it were a furrow, in which the reservoirs have been constructed. The view from its height commands a great extent of country. I could discover the range of mountains which bound the plain of Shiraz to the south, as also those of the Peer-a-Zun» (Morier 1818, 83-85).

⁴⁷ «At about a farsang’s distance from hence [Takht-i Rustam], rises a pointed hill, on which is the appearance of a considerable building. This, I concluded to be one of the three fortresses mentioned by the Asiatic author Hamdollah [Mustawfī], under the names of Istaker, Chekesch, and Chekwan, and which of old formed the great bulwarks of the plain. But the people of Hadjee-abad, and Kanarah, seemed to know nothing of the

The already mentioned Scottish traveller, James Baillie Fraser, did not visit the fortress, as a matter of fact he located it on the top of the “first” of the “Three Domes”, nevertheless he described it as follows:

On the top, which is marked by a single fir-tree and some bushes, are four reservoirs, part of a gateway, and several broken turrets and walls, - the remains of a fortress constructed by the Arabian general Zeid.⁴⁸

The most detailed description of the reservoirs and some information on other remains of the fortress of Istakhr, arising on the top of the middle of the three hills he named “*Khâlèh-Serb, forteresse du ciprès ou du cèdre*”, were supplied by Jean-Baptiste Eugène Napoléon Flandin in 1840 (see above).

Monts-Istâkhr. [...]

La première de ces éminences, celle qui est la plus rapprochée des ruines de la ville d'*Istâkhr*, en est à neuf kilomètres environ. Elles sont espacées entre elles de deux à trois kilomètres. Dans les intervalles qui les séparent, on retrouve, même quelques parties de murs qui s'élèvent au-dessus du sol. On doit, après cela, présumer que ces espèces de citadelles naturelles se reliaient entre elles au moyen de murailles, et avaient dû être utilisées pour la défense du territoire de la ville d'*Istâkhr*.

En approchant de ces rochers, l'aspect conique qu'ils présentent se modifie ; leur base forme un plain incliné ou la terre se maintient encore et recouvre suffisamment le roc pour que quelques rares arbrisseaux y attachent leurs racines.

Au-dessus s'élève à pic une masse de pierre entièrement dénudée. Le périmètre de la base, comme celui de la partie supérieure, se rapproche de la forme circulaire.

Ces trois monts, bizarres de forme, ne présentent pas d'ailleurs un grand intérêt archéologique. Cependant celui du milieu que les habitants désignent sous le nom particulier de *Khâlèh-Serb, forteresse du ciprès ou du cèdre*, porte encore en son sommet des vestiges qui ne laissent pas que de mériter quelques attention. Peu importants par eux-mêmes, ils attestent néanmoins l'existence passée d'ouvrages qui avaient dû être exécutés dans un but de défense, et qui devaient se rattacher à un système de fortifications que les princes *Achéménides* avaient voulu donner pour rempart à leur capitale et à leur trône. Celui de ces trois monts, désigné par le nom de *Khâlèh-Serb*, porte, en effet, sur un plateau élevé de quatre cents mètres, les restes d'une construction solide, en pierre de blocage, revêtues de moellons smillés (Pl. LXII [lower], here fig. 8). Le sol, qui est incliné vers le centre, est coupé par des réservoirs destinés à recevoir en même temps les eaux du ciel et celles d'une petite source voisine. Ils ont été construits en maçonnerie revêtue d'un ciment très-dur. Ils étaient placés les uns au-dessus des autres, de façon à ce que le trop plein se déversât successivement de l'un à l'autre, pour arriver à celui du centre qui est le plus grand et forme la piscine principale. La première a trente-six mètres cinquante centimètres de longueur sur quatre mètres de largeur et quatre

matter, when I enquired particularly about the most famed of them all, that of Istaker» (Porter 1821, 575-576). Cf. also Curzon 1892, 136: «[...] and their [the Three Domes] names have been returned by Hamdallah [Mustawfi] in the fourteenth century as Istakhr, Shekesteh, and Sangwan; [...]».

⁴⁸ Fraser 1834, 138. Concerning his latter assertion, see, above, n. 34.

mètres cinquante centimètres de profondeur. La seconde, avec la même largeur et la même profondeur, a une longueur de quarante mètres. Le bassin principal, où affluaient les eaux des deux autres, a quarante-trois mètres de longueur sur seize mètres de largeur et huit mètres cinquante centimètres de profondeur moyenne. Auprès de ce bassin est l'arbre vert qui a donné son nom au rocher. A ses branches projetées horizontalement, il nous a paru être un cèdre, et si l'on juge par la circonférence du tronc qui est de quatre mètres, il doit être très-vieux. L'existence de cet arbre et la place qu'il occupe de manière à couvrir de son ombre le bassin auprès duquel il a été planté, doivent faire penser que si ces réservoirs sont taris aujourd'hui, ils ont dû être entretenus et contenir de l'eau bien de siècles encore après la ruine de *Persépolis* ou d'*Istâkhr*. Ce fait paraît d'ailleurs confirmé par une assez grande quantité de débris de briques répandus sur ce sommet, et dont la surface émaillée prouve qu'elles sont d'origine moderne.

Cette position, qui réunit toutes les conditions désirables dans un poste militaire, a dû certainement en être une importante dans les temps anciens. L'escarpement et la hauteur de la partie supérieure devaient en rendre autrefois, comme aujourd'hui, l'approche des plus difficiles.

Pénétrés des difficultés de la construction d'une citadelle sur ce plateau presque inabordable, les Persans disent que ce sont des chèvres qui y portèrent tous les matériaux. Il est certain qu'aujourd'hui, dans l'état où sont les côtés de ces éminences, d'autres animaux auraient la plus grande peine à y parvenir si toutefois ils y réussissaient.⁴⁹

In January 1841 Karl-August von Bode (see above) provided a very interesting description of his visit to the "rock of Istakhr":

Among other excursions, I had in view to perform a trip to the hill of Istakhr, which reared its brow at a distance in a north-western direction from Persepolis, [...]. Independently of the splendid sight I anticipated to behold, the height and situation of the **isolated rock of Istakhr** were such, [...].

The ascent was steep and difficult, [...]

Istakhr can only be ascended by one path, like Kal'eh-Send, in the country of the Mamaseni, from the north-eastern side ; everywhere else it is so steep, and in many places so nearly vertical, that an involuntary shudder comes over one, on looking down into the plain. A stone wall, now partly overthrown, formerly ran across the path, and defended the approach to the summit. On arriving at the top, **I found a dilapidated tower, with heaps of broken bricks, tiles, pottery, and glass strewed about, as likewise a few ruined habitations, denoting that this had in former times been the inhabited part of the hill.**^{50]} [...] Further in the interior of the hill, where a declivity exists towards the east, I found **an immense reservoir for water, divided into three compartments** ; the banks are lined with stone, and the floor paved. The breadth is unequal, but it measures 205 paces in length. The melting snow of winter, and the rains at other seasons of the year accumulate in this and another reservoir on the south side ; this was the only means the inhabitants had of procuring water at so great an elevation, the hill

⁴⁹ Flandin - Coste 1843 (T), 71-72.

⁵⁰ At present, apart from the more evident remains of the reservoirs, only ruins of the fortress still appear (fig. 10).

possessing no springs. It has, however, several oak trees, if I recollect right, and the crags and caves abound with wild goats and rams.⁵¹

The famous orientalist Theodor Nöldeke (d. 1930) left us the following description of the fortress:

Die „Burg von Istachr“ spielte aber noch in der islāmischen Zeit wiederholt eine Rolle als starke Festung. Dies ist die mittlere und grösste von den drei schroffen Felshöhen, welche sich in einiger Entfernung westlich oder nordwestlich von Nakschi Rustem aus dem Kur-Thale erheben. Die Höhe wird jetzt von ihrer Lage Miĵānkale „Mittel-Burg“ genannt. Aeltere Schriftsteller und Reisende geben andre Namen an, wie denn die Benennungen in diesem Theile Persiens sehr viel gewechselt haben. Der Name „Burg“ oder „Berg von Istachr“ scheint übrigens noch nicht ganz verschollen zu sein.⁵²

Lord Curzon - after recalling that the fortress had been ascended by Morier, von Bode and Flandin, and the latter gave «a plan of the three tanks or reservoirs» - paused to describe the other emerging ruins:

Upon the same rock are remains of a gateway, and of the walls and towers of the ancient castle; similar ruin being visible upon the adjacent rock of Shahrek. Its summit is 1,200 feet above the plain.⁵³

4. CONCLUSION

Most likely built in the pre-Islamic era, the fortress of Istakhr is connected to a certain number of historical episodes which took place in Fārs from the Islamic conquest of that region onwards. At the same time it is part of the legendary repertoire involving the mythical Iranian kings whose stories are skilfully told in the *Shahnāma*, and in Arabic and Persian sources. *Qal'a Iṣṭakhr* is on the top of the middle of the three mounts located on the Marvdasht plain with the rocks of Naqsh-i Rostam behind it. Its form - most probably featuring a domed hall - generated an overlap between the *qal'a* and the upper and dome-shaped part of the three mounts, so a double belief was established over time under the appellation of *Si Gunbadān* (three domes): the latter are three fortresses, each on the top of a mount, or the three mounts themselves.

⁵¹ De Bode 1845, 116-122.

⁵² Nöldeke 1887, 145. Cf. also Nöldeke 1911 [1st edition 1885], 186: «The “castle of Istakhr” played a conspicuous part several times during the Mahommedan period as a strong fortress. It was the middlemost and the highest of the three steep crags which rise from the valley of the Kur, at some distance to the west or north-west of Nakshi Rustam. We learn from Oriental writers that one of the Buyid (Buwaihīd) sultans in the 10th century of the Flight constructed the great cisterns, which may yet be seen, and have been visited, amongst others, by James Morier and E. Flandin. W. Ouseley points out that this castle was still used in the 16th century, at least as a state prison. But when Pietro della Valle was there in 1621 it was already in ruins».

⁵³ Curzon 1892, 136. As Curzon (1892, 136, n. 2) already observed, the statement by Fergusson (1851, 91) «[...] no trace of building however, I believe, exists upon them, though their form would almost justify the Persian tradition» appears groundless.

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celles du Fameux Palais de Persepolis. Que les Perses appellent Chelminar. Le tout dessiné d'après la route qu'a suivie Mr. Isbrants, Ambassadeur de Moscovie, en traversant la Russie & la Tartarie, pour se rendre à la Chine, Et quelques Remarques contre M^{rs}. Chardin & Kempfer, Tom II., Ches les Freres Wetstein, Amsterdam 1718.

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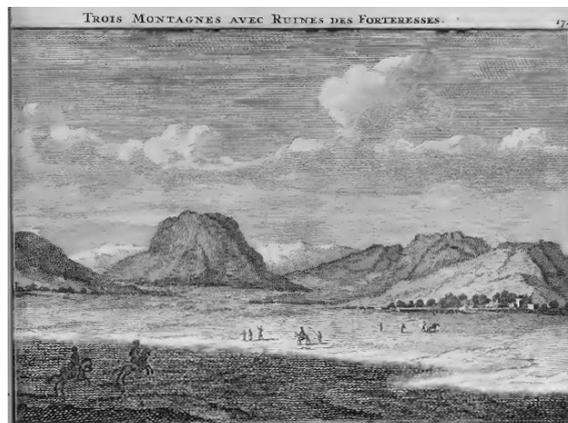
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Fig. 1 - Drawing (1686) illustrating the three mounts of the Marvdasht plain; on the right, in the foreground, the two fire altars of Naqsh-i Rostam (Kämpfer 1712, ill. between pp. 386 and 387, upper).



Figs. 2-3 - Two drawings (1704) illustrating the three mounts of the Marvdasht plain (Le Bruyn 1718, ill. on p. 259 and ill. [172] between pp. 294 and 295).

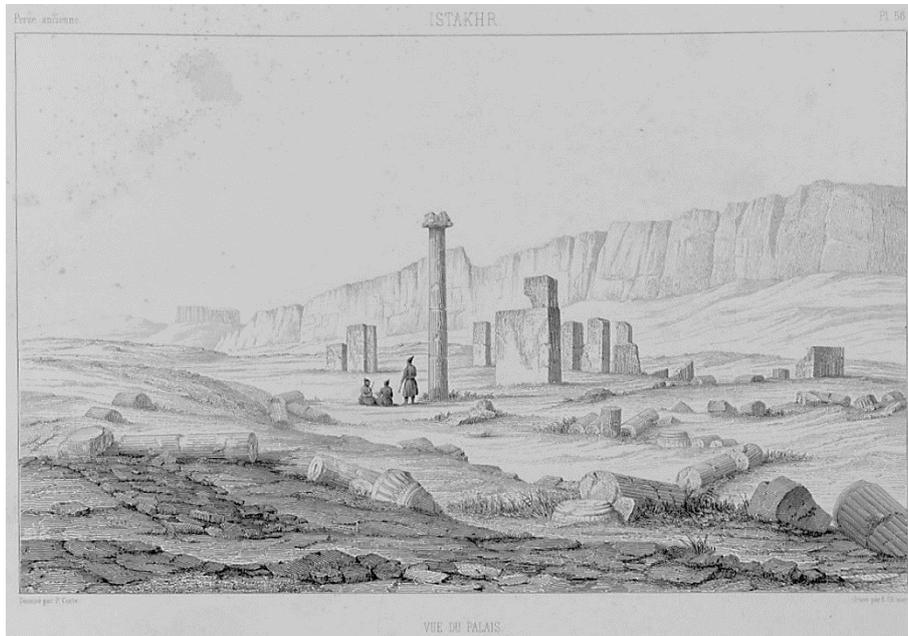


Fig. 4 - Drawing (1840) illustrating the ruins of the city of Istakhr and, in the background, on the left, the closest of the three mounds of the Marvdasht plain (Flandin - Coste 1843 [PI], pl. 58, upper).

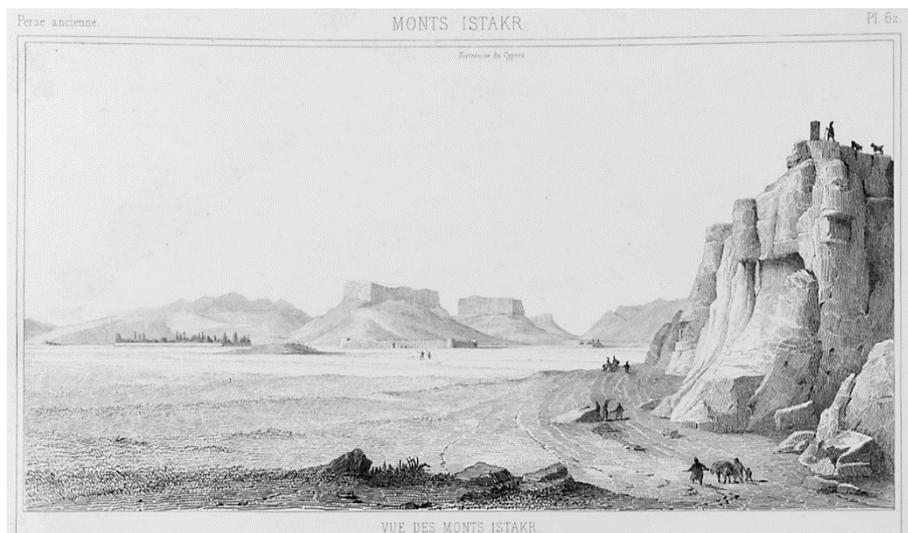


Fig. 5 - Drawing (1840) illustrating the three mounds of the Marvdasht plain in the background, on the left (Flandin - Coste 1843 [PI], pl. 62, upper).



Fig. 6 - Aerial photo (1930s) showing the rocks of Naqsh-i Rostam and, in the background, the mounts of the Marvdasht plain (Schmidt 1940, pl. 12).

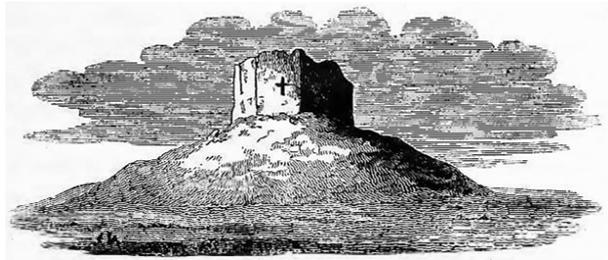


Fig. 7 - Drawing (1811) of “The rock of Istakhr” (Morier 1818, ill. [16] on p. 85).

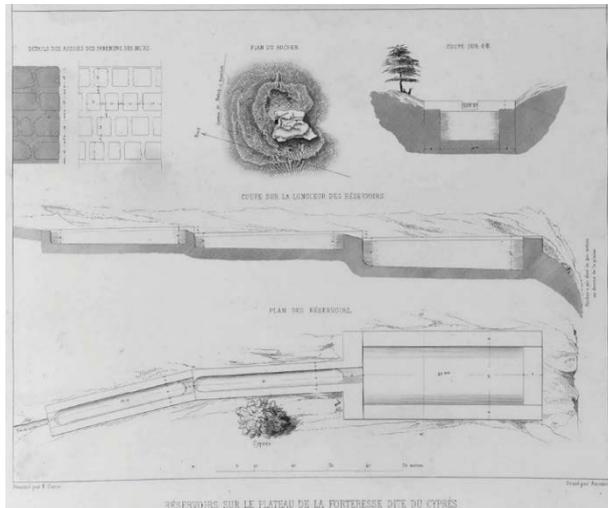


Fig. 8 - Drawing (1840) of the reservoirs on the plateau of the Istakhr fortress (Flandin - Coste 1843 [Pl], pl. 62, lower).



Fig. 9 - The mount where *Qal'a Iṣṭakhr* was located (photo © C.G. Cereti, 2017).



Fig. 10 - *Qal'a Iṣṭakhr*, the archaeological remains can be seen in the background (photo © C.G. Cereti, 2017).

A FORGOTTEN SASANIAN SCULPTURE.
THE FIFTH BUST OF NARSEH FROM THE MONUMENT OF PAIKULI *

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This paper aims to shed light on a specimen of Sasanian statuary that had been ignored for over a century and can now be considered from a more comprehensive perspective. Thanks to a new set of data collected by the MAIKI - Italian Archaeological Mission in Iraqi Kurdistan - during the documentation campaigns conducted at the Slemani Museum in the past years it was possible to analyse the fifth bust in the round belonging to the Paikuli monument, representing the Sasanian king Narseh. This piece prompts us to look further into the meaning of the figurative project accomplished by Narseh at Paikuli and the forms of the communicative strategy pursued by the Early Sasanian dynasts.

Keywords: Monument of Paikuli; Early Sasanian Archaeology; Sasanian Art; Sasanian Royal Ideology; Iranian epigraphy

Over ten years ago, in 2006, an Italian research team led by Carlo G. Cereti started collaboration with the Slemani Museum on study of the Sasanian monument of Paikuli and its epigraphic material.¹ Despite several external contingencies that hampered fieldwork over the years, researches have now converged within the field of the MAIKI activities.²

The Paikuli monument lies in the Qaradagh range, about 16 km west of the modern city of Darbandikhan (fig. 1). It was erected by the Sasanian king Narseh (293-302 CE) to celebrate his accession to the throne after a dynastic struggle.³ Narseh himself reported the events in a bilingual inscription (Middle Persian and Parthian) carved on the walls of the monument. The structure is situated next to the homonymous mountain pass and, according to the inscription, marks the spot where, on his march towards Ctesiphon, Narseh met the nobles and dignitaries of the kingdom gathered there to recognize him as legitimate sovereign.⁴ In Late Antiquity, this site was a natural gateway to the royal province of Asōristān, in which lay the capital city of the Ērānšahr, Ctesiphon. During the Sasanian dynasty Paikuli and, more generally speaking, the territory of present-day Iraqi Kurdistan

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¹ Cereti - Terribili 2012; 2014; Cereti - Terribili - Tilia 2015; Terribili - Tilia 2016; Terribili 2016.

² In the fall of 2012 MAIKI and the Department of Scienze dell'Antichità - Sapienza University of Rome, signed a new agreement with the Sulaimaniyah Antiquities Directorate for the study of the Paikuli Monument and its surrounding area (Bogdani - Colliva - Insom 2016). All the MAIKI activities are made possible thanks to the contribution of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Italian Development Cooperation, the continuous support of the Italian Embassy in Baghdad and the Italian Consulate of Erbil. We would also like to thank BraDypUS Communicating Cultural Heritage and BABUINO Unlimited S.R.L. for the fundamental sponsorship given to our activities. Deep gratitude is due to all the members of the MAIKI - Italian Archaeological Mission in Iraqi Kurdistan and particularly to the co-director Maria Vittoria Fontana and the senior advisor Carlo G. Cereti for their inestimable work. See also the site www.maiki.it.

³ For the historical events involving Narseh see Weber 2016, with references.

⁴ NPī §.32. The paragraph numbering of Paikuli (NPi) and Šābuhr I at Ka'ba-ye Zardošt (ŠKZ) inscriptions follows the edition of Humbach - Skjærvø 1978-1983, 3.1 and Huyse 1999, respectively.

were situated at the heart of a strategic road system connecting the urban settlements of Mesopotamia, the western frontier with the Roman Empire and the heart of the Iranian plateau.⁵

The renowned British Orientalist, Major Sir Henry Rawlinson, was the first scholar to visit the site of Paikuli in 1844;⁶ however, it was only several decades later that the German archaeologist Ernst Herzfeld undertook broader documentation campaigns, in 1911, 1913 and 1923. Herzfeld's attention was caught by the outstanding Narseh inscription, and his main work on Paikuli (1924) focuses primarily on philological reconstruction of its text, containing only scanty information on the architecture and its ornamented elements. The same lack of technical data characterizes both the two reports on his missions⁷ and his personal diaries, now held at the Freer and Sackler Gallery of the Smithsonian Institute of Washington D.C.⁸ In 1997, due to serious risk of looting,⁹ about a hundred inscribed blocks, as well as five monumental busts of King Narseh, were moved to the Slemani Museum, ensuring their safekeeping; meanwhile in 2006 the Italian-Kurdish team recovered some more inscribed blocks as well as decorated pieces.¹⁰

Although the original form of the monument is still a matter of debate,¹¹ the decorated pieces within the Slemani Paikuli Collection cast some light on certain features of the structure. Stepped battlements, concave blocks and three-quarter columns with huge bell-shaped bases adorned both the walls and their tops. These components, including the busts and the inscription, emphatically assert the royal status of the monument, establishing a complex visual language.¹² Currently, documentation of the different typologies of elements kept in the Slemani Collection has been carried out in collaboration with Studio 3R, applying an integrated topographic and digital photogrammetric system that has enabled production of accurate 3D renderings.

Amongst the most noteworthy elements of the Slemani Museum Paikuli Collection are the five massive busts of Narseh, all bearing the commonest features of the Sasanian royal iconography. Four of them were sculpted in high relief projecting from a background slab

⁵ Cereti - Terribili - Tilia 2015.

⁶ Rawlinson 1868.

⁷ Herzfeld 1914; 1926.

⁸ Herzfeld's diaries of the 1911, 1913 and 1923 campaigns. Respectively archived with the abbreviation S7; S10; N83.

⁹ In fact, at the beginning of this century a well-preserved Middle Persian block (E1) appeared on the antiquity market (Skjærvø 2006).

¹⁰ In 2006 the Italian team, under the direction of Carlo G. Cereti (Head of the Mission) and Barbara Faticoni (Director of the Archaeological Excavation), started a limited stratigraphic excavation of the site. The campaign focused on the study of the stratigraphy of the external area of the monument and the search for possible foundation structures. In 2007 a second campaign aimed at verifying the stratigraphy in the remaining areas was prematurely interrupted for safety reasons. During the first campaign two trenches located near the SE corner of the monument were excavated, showing a preserved archaeological stratigraphy of a few centimetres above the natural soil. Surveys of the site and the activities at the Slemani Museum led to the identification of 19 new inscribed blocks (11 MP and 8 Pth.), see Cereti - Terribili 2014.

¹¹ Terribili - Tilia 2016, 419 ff.

¹² See below § 1 and 2. On the connection between stepped-crenelation decorations and royal authority see Anderson 2015, with previous references.

with an unworked back and, according to Herzfeld,¹³ they were modelled on one and the same template (figs. 2-3). As for their location within the structure, Herzfeld took them to have been embedded in the centre of each wall;¹⁴ however, such positioning is doubtful and raises many practical issues.¹⁵ Nevertheless, one of the most innovative results of the documentation campaign carried out by MAIKI concerns the fifth bust of Narseh.

Luca Colliva - Gianfilippo Terribili

1. THE NARSEH BUST IN THE ROUND

During his campaigns, Herzfeld detected a huge fragment including part of a fifth monumental bust of Narseh located next to the northern wall of the monument.¹⁶ In his monograph on Paikuli, the German archaeologist dismissed it as a rejected piece abandoned on the spot,¹⁷ which is the main reason why this bust has not been taken into consideration by modern scholarship ever since, except for two mentions by the Italian archaeologist P. Callieri in his latest essays on Sasanian arts.¹⁸ According to the new collected data, however, Herzfeld's hypothesis needs revising.

The specimen consists in a fragment of an over twice life-size bust in the round of a male figure (fig. 3). Like all the other busts and blocks that covered the outer surfaces of the monument, the bust was carved in a local limestone. Even though badly damaged - the upper part of the face and the base are missing and almost all the surface is much abraded and chipped - traces of the garment and sumptuous hairstyle with a profusion of locks are still visible; on the back two wavy ribbons can also clearly be seen. The piece has a maximum preserved height of 113 cm; a maximum preserved width of 120 cm and a thickness between 41 and 67 cm.

The Paikuli Collection of the Slemani Museum preserves a further element that had never been examined before. This is a massive fragment of Narseh's crown and *korymbos*; *i.e.* the silk gauze that covered the Sasanian Kings' hair and topped their crowns (fig. 4). The specimen is fractured on one side but preserves its original shape intact, and part of the crown decoration is still visible. The fragment has a height of 54 cm and approximate maximum diameter of 40 cm.

With 3D rendering the contour of the leaf decoration of Narseh's crown could be detected on both the presumable right side and the front of the crown. This latter detail fits perfectly with the evidence of Narseh Type I coinage, which shows a leaf on each side of the crown.¹⁹

¹³ Herzfeld 1924, 8.

¹⁴ Herzfeld 1924, 3.

¹⁵ Terribili - Tilia 2016, 422.

¹⁶ Herzfeld 1914, 24; 1924, 2.

¹⁷ Herzfeld 1924, 3.

¹⁸ Callieri 2014, 116; 2016, 17, 21. A preliminary presentation of the sculpture was provided by Terribili - Tilia 2016, 423; Bogdani - Colliva forthcoming (Activities of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Iraqi Kurdistan (MAIKI): in Proceedings of the Eighth European Conference of Iranian Studies. St. Petersburg 15-19.09.2015, St Petersburg).

¹⁹ Alram 2012, 295-300. According to the numismatic evidence, Narseh was the first Sasanian king to adopt two crowns; the chronological order between the two typologies has recently been established by Alram (2012) following internal criteria based on the portrayal styles of the Narseh's coinage. The earlier crown has been

When Herzfeld surveyed the site, the fifth bust was already in a fragmentary state and apparently the second element escaped his attention. Be that as it may, it is quite likely that this fragment fell away from the fifth bust since no other compatible evidence has ever been found on the site and conversely the two pieces are matching. In the 3D reconstruction the two fragments were combined, conveying a fairly accurate impression of the true dimensions of the whole piece although the king's face and forehead are missing (fig. 5). The bottom of the bust is broken off, so the original sculpture should have exceeded in height the about 180 cm roughly measured after the 3D reconstruction.²⁰

Furthermore, the most distinctive feature of both fragments is that they were conceived and sculpted in the round; in fact, the care with which even the back of the bust was carved is striking. This is a key point which highlights the remarkable position this forgotten sculpture actually attained within the corpus of Sasanian art.

On the back of the lower fragment, the sophisticated hairstyle falling behind Narseh's shoulders and ending in well-carved curls is still in fair condition. A third and smaller fragment representing a curl was found on Paikuli in the 2006 campaign and seems to match, both in shape and dimensions, with Narseh's hairstyle. The fragment has a preserved height of almost 24 cm and a maximum preserved width of almost 10 cm.

Presumably, on the evidence of both its orientation and the turn of the twirls engraved on it, this fragment belonged to one of the broken long locks falling over the right shoulder of the sculpture, where several braids are now missing. The rendering of this type of hairstyle finds many parallels within Sasanian monumental art, as in the case of the portrait of the relief of the high priest Kerdīr at Naqš-e Rostam and of some dignitaries in the Wahrām II relief at Naqš-e Rostam.²¹ Closer comparison can also be made with some high-relief male busts found in the Sasanian manor house at Hājīābād, dated to the mid-4th century CE.²² Evidently, therefore, it was quite a common feature of Early Sasanian fashion as well as a well-known stylistic feature in the production of the Sasanian stonemasons' workshops.

The two ribbons tying the royal diadem (fig. 5), which fall down the centre of the King's back in the main fragment, are fashioned in horizontal folds. The way the curls and ribbons are engraved recalls, albeit somewhat more coarsely, the approach adopted for the back of the statue of Šābuhr I at the cave of Bīšāpūr. A further element of the fifth Paikuli bust reminiscent of the statue of Šābuhr are the folds in the garment, still detectable on Narseh's right shoulder and rendered with a "wet-cloth" style. They belong to the royal robe or possibly to the royal cloak, a feature widely represented on the Sasanian monumental reliefs. The similarities with the statue of Bīšāpūr cave are not merely a matter of the Sasanian craft tradition, but are probably also part of the propaganda promoted by

identified as Type I "palmette" crown (Afram 2012, 281-287). The decoration, barely visible on the other busts from Paikuli (Terribili - Tilia 2016, 422-423), possibly alludes to the goddess Anāhīd (Göbl 1971, 7 and 45; Afram 2012, 287, with references).

²⁰ Even if the comparison with the other busts from Paikuli and the volumes of the main fragment suggest a bust type for this sculpture, we cannot completely exclude, due to the lack of the bottom, a different reconstruction.

²¹ Hinz 1969, 191, 200; Schmidt 1970, pls. 86-88, 96, 98. See also the relief of Narseh at Naqš-e Rostam and in particular the details of the crown and the hairstyle of the male character behind the sovereign (Schmidt 1970, pl. 90).

²² See *infra* and Azarnoush 1994, 105-106, 110-113.

Narseh himself. Seeking to assert full legitimacy after a severe dynastic challenge, Narseh claimed his own connection with the supreme authority of his father, the great Šābuhr I, also by adopting royal iconography and visual allusions.

Some examples of royal statuary in the round are known to us especially belonging to the Seleucid and Arsacid periods.²³ In the adjacent area of northern Mesopotamia, besides the extraordinary evidence of Hatra,²⁴ two more free-standing sculpture representing enthroned royal persons, fashioned in a Parthian style and arguably belonging to the Late Arsacid era, were found outside an archaeological context and have since, unfortunately, been lost. Of both the sculptures only fragments of the bottom half were known of; the first was found at Rās al-‘ain next to the Khabur River during an archaeological campaign led by the Baron Max Oppenheim, but it had already disappeared before Herzfeld visited the area.²⁵ Of the second sculpture, all that is left to us today is a sketch.²⁶ The French archaeologist Henri Seyrig was informed of the existence of this piece by an Iraqi colleague when it had already been smuggled out of the country.²⁷ Both the *specimina* seem to reflect the local sculptural craftsmanship of the 2nd-3rd centuries CE.²⁸ This kind of royal representation, developed in areas influenced by both Hellenistic and Iranian cultures, also finds some parallels at the easternmost fringe of the Iranian world. Here the Kushan and perhaps also the Indo-Parthian kings adopted a multifaceted visual language, showing that throughout a vast territory a set of common features was exploited for the enhancement of royal ideologies.²⁹

In 3rd-century Iran the rise of the Sasanians marked a sharp political change; the ideology they fostered showed various innovative departures as well as many elements of continuity with the previous Arsacid tradition. The first monarchs of this dynasty developed a broad figurative program mostly based on monumental rock reliefs, with the clear intention to affirm their legitimation in exerting supreme authority over the Iranian kingdom, resorting to a tradition which in Iran went back at least to the Elamite period.³⁰

In the region of Fars, which was the epicentre of the Early Sasanian ideological program, two monumental sculptures in the round have been found in addition to Šābuhr’s statue at the cave of Bīšāpūr.

²³ See e.g. Kawami 1987, 51 ff.; Vanden Berge 1993, with references; Callieri 2016, with references.

²⁴ See Dirven 2008, with references.

²⁵ Herzfeld 1920, 55, pl. XXV.

²⁶ Seyrig 1939, 182.

²⁷ Seyrig 1939, 183.

²⁸ Levit-Tawil 1983, 61-62. Cf. Herzfeld 1920, 56-57 for an earlier dating to the 1st century CE.

²⁹ The evidence from Surkh Kotal and Māṭ (Verardi 1983, 229), as well as the clay sculptures from Khalchayan (Northern Bactria; Santoro 1995, with references) and the Bactrian inscription of Rabatak (Sims-Williams 1998) attest to the relevance of statuary associated with “royal” monumental contexts; a feature able to express in various forms the political ideology of these kings (see also Canepa 2015b). Possibly also in the Apsidal Temple of Taxila we may find, as early as the Indo-Parthian period, uncertain traces of royal statuary in a context connected with a possible “royal sanctuary” (Colliva 2007). Cf. also the western regions linked to the Iranian milieu, e.g. Commagene. The association between statues of gods and ancestors is also attested by literary sources in royal sanctuaries built by the Parthian rulers of Armenia, see e.g. Moses Khorenats’i II.8, II.40, II.49 (Thomson 1978, 143, 182, 190); see also Canepa 2013, 346.

³⁰ Vanden Berghe 1983.

One, representing a male head with a high headdress similar to a “Royal Arsacid miter”,³¹ was discovered at the site of Qal’ a-ye Now (near Malyan);³² it dates to the Early Sasanian or, more likely, to the Late Arsacid period.³³

The second, representing a male bust in the round carved in local limestone, was found at Tomb-e Bot, in Lamerd Valley, Southern Fars. The bust is in a bad state of preservation, but traces of an elaborate headdress and a possible diadem are still visible. The bust shows some similarities with the one from Qal’ a-ye Now and has been tentatively dated to the Late Arsacid or Early Sasanian period.³⁴

The two busts witness a remarkable statuary tradition for royal/dynastic imagery even in the heartland of the Sasanian’s dominions, while also showing how the local authorities exploited this craft in commissioning figurative programs.

A possible - albeit indirect - match for the Paikuli in-the-round piece may have been the sculpture of Šābuhr I, now lost, which originally adorned a celebrative, double-column monument in the city of Bīšāpūr. It was erected in 266 by a high functionary, a secretary (MP. *dibīr*), in the centre of the city where two main streets met and had a honorary function in perpetuating the memory of the great king; however the presence of other elements connected to the effigy may indicate a broader significance of this monument as a whole, either symbolically or at a practical level. Although we have no knowledge of the actual form of this royal image or its specific positioning, we are aware of its existence from the bilingual Middle Persian and Parthian inscription³⁵ carved on the shaft of one of the two columns flanking a three-stepped podium. Beside the podium, two smaller plinths,

³¹ Kawami 1987, 222; Callieri 2016, 20.

³² Two Parthian stone heads from Susa offer a parallel in the nearby province of Khuzistan (Kawami 1987, 138).

³³ Kawami 1987, 138-139, figs. 31-32; Sarkhosh-Curtis 1998, 65; Harper 2008, 77; Callieri 2016, 20. This head is more than twice life-size (Harper 2008, 77; Callieri 2016, 20); a dimension comparable to the similar proportion dominating Paikuli royal imagery.

³⁴ Askari-Chaverdi 2002, 277-278; 2013, 166-167; Callieri 2016, 20-21.

³⁵ Ghirshman 1936; Nyberg 1964-1974 I, 124; Back 1978, 378-383. The inscription states: MP. *pahikar ēn mazdēs̄n bay šābuh̄r...*, “this (is) the image of the Mazdean Majesty Šābuhr...” (ŠVŠ 3-4). The last paragraph of the inscription records King Šābuhr’s appreciation and the rewards he paid to the monument builder. The following statement highlights the central role the statue had in the structure, MP. *ud kū šāhān šāh ēn pahikar dād u-š dād afsā ī dibīr zarrēn ud asēmēn bandag ud kanīzag bāg ud xwāstag*, “and when the King of Kings saw this image then He gave to Afsā the scribe gold and silver, slaves and maids, a garden and a landed property” (ŠVŠ 14-15). The term *pahikar* (picture, image) was commonly used in both Arsacid and Sasanian epigraphy to introduce the figures carved in the monumental reliefs or other sculptural representations (Gignoux 1972, 32, 61). It is in fact an element of continuity with the Achaemenid tradition, where the OP *patikara-* is used in indicating the figurative components of the royal monuments, e.g. in the Darius inscriptions at Bisotun and Naqš-e Rostam; for the occurrences, Schmitt 2014. In the Old Persian version of the four-language inscription engraved upon the Egyptian statue of Darius found at Susa, the same term refers specifically to this free standing royal effigy (DSab §.2; Schmitt 2009, 146). The same association of the term with a sculpture in the round is detectable in the Parthian inscription of the so-called Heracles of Seleucia (2nd century CE; Lipiński 1993, 128-129). A particularly interesting evidence related to the same term comes from the eastern Iranian world where, in the Bactrian inscription of Rabatak (II.11-12; Sims-Williams 1998, 82), the Kushan king Kaniška orders the production of images/statues (πιδογιρβο) of gods and ancestors for his royal sanctuary (βαγολαγγο). Moreover, several royal statues of this dynasty bear an epigraphic label carved on the base of the sculpture (Sims-Williams - Falk 2014).

which might be taken to be two altars, suggest that some kind of ritual or reverential practices could also have been associated with this complex.³⁶

As a whole, the imposing, statuary programme deployed by Narseh at Paikuli also finds formal correspondence with the evidence from the manor house of Hājīābād. Here, amid a variety of stucco décor, we find two male high-relief stucco busts depicting the Sasanian King Šābuhr II.³⁷ According to the Iranian archaeologist M. Azarnoush, the two high-reliefs were located in a portico facing an *ayvān* structure (L. 149) and surmounted other busts, two of which (nos. 18 and 19), identified as the owner and his heir, were set on engaged semi-columns.³⁸ The frontal representation of all these specimens is intended as a recognizable sign of authority, while the presence of royal images must be considered part of the ideological message conveyed by this kind of structure. Here was not only stressed the majesty of the king and his figure but also the presence of the sovereign's effigy symbolised the ties between the highest authority of the kingdom and the individuals exerting power at the local level.

A similar context with royal sculptures in stucco is attested for two other structures at Tell Dahab, in the vicinity of Ctesiphon³⁹ and Kish. Here, too, the images of the Sasanian King were set into the wall and, at least in the case of Kish, possibly rested on semi-columns.⁴⁰ According to J. Kröger and other scholars, the recurrent presence of royal effigies suggests a connection of these places with some sort of ancestor honour/cult and implies "dynastic celebrations".⁴¹ Be that as it may, whatever specific function these places had or actual activities took place therein, it is clear that within their spaces a broad range of cumulative concepts were conflated, all revolving around the extraordinary status of the Iranian king and his royal household.⁴²

The original position of the in-the-round bust from Paikuli remains at the moment uncertain, given also the uncertainty about the overall form of the monument, while investigation into its possible connection with the main monument or other possible structures is impracticable on account of the missing lower part. Nevertheless, hypothesising a position on top of the monument⁴³ hardly seems justifiable as in that position, also considering the location of the monument and the presence of a battlements around its

³⁶ The typology of the Bīšāpūr monument was inspired by Roman models well attested in Syria province, but also reveals the addition of native, Iranian elements (Ghirshman 1962, 171). In the first study, Salles and Ghirshman (1936) advanced three different hypothesis on the position of the statue of Šābuhr: 1) on the lintel joining the two columns; 2) on the columns themselves, serving as pedestals; 3) on corbels on column shafts. In his essay on Iranian Pre-Islamic art, Ghirshman (1962, 151) asserted that the king's statue was set on the central plinth between the two columns and flanked by the two smaller altars.

³⁷ Azarnoush 1994, 105-110, figs. 80, 89; Callieri 2014, 106.

³⁸ Azarnoush 1994, 136-137, 153 and figs. 143, 155; Callieri 2014, 115-116, with references. The bell-shaped bases of the semi-columns recall the profile of those found at the corners of the Paikuli monument (Terribili - Tilia 2016, 420-421).

³⁹ Kröger 1982, 40-45; 1993a, with references; Callieri 2014, 117.

⁴⁰ Callieri 2014, 106, 116-117, with references; 2016, 18-19.

⁴¹ Kröger 1982, 265; 1993b, 63; Callieri 2014, 69-70, 115; Canepa 2015a.

⁴² See also below § 2.

⁴³ Cereti - Terribili 2012, 85.

top,⁴⁴ the bust would be hardly visible, and only from a considerable distance; in these conditions, it would be not easily appreciable or even recognisable.

Recently P. Callieri proposed the existence, during the Arsacid and at least Early Sasanian periods, of a monumental type called “bust-pillar” in which a bust or head of a sovereign or high dignitary was «set on the upper scape of pilasters or semi-columns»; the existence of this type suggests an intriguing hypothesis, although at present not demonstrable, also in the case of the bust in the round from Paikuli.⁴⁵ Even taking this hypothesis to be true, it would remain to be understood where this “bust-pillar” was originally positioned in relation to the main monument.

Luca Colliva

2. PAIKULI IMAGERY WITHIN ITS CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

During his relatively brief rule, Narseh established an imposing monumental programme involving both major royal sites, as in the case of Naqš-e Rostam and Bīšāpūr,⁴⁶ and new spots relevant to his career, as in the case of Paikuli. After a disputed succession, Narseh endeavoured to fabricate a new memory of the Sasanian royal history, also associating himself with sites, which in various ways commemorated the extraordinary deeds of former monarchs. In fact, gravitating around spaces like these a complex of ritual-ceremonial activities focused on the dynastic identity,⁴⁷ which should have included the extremely intricate etiquette associated with public display of the royal persona. Since the Achaemenid period and throughout the history of Pre-Islamic Iran, the ceremonies that centred on the royal persona and its visual manifestation developed into a highly codified and sophisticated system.⁴⁸ Likewise, the Sasanian sovereigns received forms of ritual deference (*namāz burdan*)⁴⁹ that required specific spaces for their fulfilment, while on certain occasions and in particular places the reverential treatment usually reserved for the living king or his ancestors could have extended to royal images.⁵⁰ As explicitly attested in

⁴⁴ A study of the architectural elements stored at the Slemani Museum confirms the presence of a crenelation consisting of a cornice pierced by circular holes with stepped pyramidal battlements on top (Herzfeld 1924, 3-8; Bogdani - Colliva forthcoming (Activities of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Iraqī Kurdistan (MAIKI): in Proceedings of the Eighth European Conference of Iranian Studies. St. Petersburg 15-19.09.2015, St Petersburg).

⁴⁵ Callieri 2016, 21-23.

⁴⁶ See the relief at Naqš-e Rostam (NRu VIII), the appropriation of Wahrām I's relief (Bi V) and perhaps the unfinished one at Bīšāpūr (Bi VI). On the disputed attribution of the latter, see Callieri 2014, 149-152, with references.

⁴⁷ Canepa 2010; 2013.

⁴⁸ For the Achaemenid royal court ceremonial, see e.g. Brosius 2007 and Wieshöfer 2014, with references.

⁴⁹ Lit. “to pay homage”, the expression refers to a codified protocol describing acts of respect towards superiors, e.g. kings and gods (Nyberg 1964-1974 II, 135; Canepa 2009, 64 and n. 41, with references). The recently found evidence of *namāz* (**SGDE**) in the Narseh inscription (Cereti - Terribili 2014, 379) occurs in a large lacuna (NPI §.75); the context alludes to the homage paid by the dignitaries towards the new King and the recognition of his royal *xwarrah*. For gesture codes in Iranian royal etiquette, see Canepa 2009, 151, with references.

⁵⁰ Canepa 2014, 64. On the Achaemenid and Seleucid legacy related to “Middle Iranian” royal spaces housing statues or images of living kings and their ancestors, see Canepa 2009, 15-17; 2015b, 72 ff. On court ceremonials in late-antique Iran, see more recently de Jong 2004; Wieshöfer 2007; Canepa 2009; Dąbrowa 2014; Panaino 2014.

the Šābuhr I' inscription at the Ka'ba-ye Zardošt,⁵¹ sacrifices in favour of the souls (i.e. *pad ruwān* rituals) and sacred fires were in fact instituted for both the departed and the living royal-clan members.⁵²

Within the religious literary context, the Avestan blessing (*āfrīn*) addressed by Zarathustra to king Wištāspa (Yt. 24. 1-12)⁵³ offered a model for popular and widespread devotional deference addressed to those who held the highest authority in the material world. Moreover, in the Zoroastrian tradition the so-called and much-observed “outer” rituals included blessing formulas addressed to the living sovereign, as in the case of the *Āfrīnagān* liturgies.⁵⁴ Discursive and liturgical performances like these contributed to define the awareness the common believer had of the royal status and the behavioural approach he was to adopt. A late Pahalvi text, the *Dēnkard III*, tells us about the appropriate attitude the subject had to have towards his king, projecting the obedience and reverential devotion paid to the sovereign into the sphere of a cosmic requirement.⁵⁵ In this work the Middle Persian term *tarsagāyīh*, “reverence, respect”, literally denoting the state of a respectful or tremulous awe,⁵⁶ expresses the deferential feeling of the pious subject (MP. *bandag*). It is an attitude that, on a different but related level, marks both the relationship between the god Ohrmazd and his spiritual creations and that of the believers towards the gods.⁵⁷ In this respect the massive frontal and hieratic effigies of the Sasanian king at Paikuli might have aimed to inspire this emotional state and related behaviours in the visitors.

In a society where sight of the king was restricted to few individuals and precluded by protocol and strict regulations,⁵⁸ the epiphany of the royal persona whether actual or mediated through figurative representations must have been perceived as something exceptional, exerting a deep impact upon the sensibility of the commoners. Some evidence may even suggest observances performed before royal effigies. A cuneiform tablet from the archive of the Ebabbar temple of Sippar attests to the fact that in the Early Achaemenid

⁵¹ ŠKZ §.33 ff. compare also with the inscription of the high priest Kerdīr (KKZ 2-3).

⁵² See Panaino 2005; 2014, 332. Similarly, the figurative evidence, both numismatic and sculptural, stresses the association between the Sasanian kings and sacred fires, as in the case of the dedicatory fire-altar found at Barm-e Delak, bearing images of Ardašīr I and Šābuhr I (Canepa 2009, 17-18, n. 63, with references); see also below § 3.

⁵³ See Darmesteter 1892-1893 II, 665-669.

⁵⁴ Darmesteter 1892-1893 II, 725. In a comparable framework, the epigraph of Šābuhr Sagān Šāh (early 4th CE), carved in the *tachara* of Darius I at Persepolis, reports that, after a communal banquet and religious services, the patron performed a long sequence of blessings addressed to the living king and his ancestors, see ŠPs I, 9-11 and Terribili forthcoming (Istakhr and its Territory; a Glance over Middle Persian Sources and Sasanian Epigraphic Evidence: in M.V. Fontana (ed.), *Istakhr (Iran)*, 2011-2015. Historical and Archaeological Contributions - Quaderni di Vicino Oriente), with references. The setting of this inscription located and surrounded by the reliefs of the Achaemenid kings must have accentuated the symbolic significance of this event, see Callieri 2003; Canepa 2010, 571 ff.

⁵⁵ Cipriano 1994, 37 ff.

⁵⁶ The verb *tarsīdan* means “to fear, be afraid” (Nyberg 1964-1974 II, 192; MacKenzie 1971, 82).

⁵⁷ According to the Zoroastrian doctrine, the concept of pietas conveyed by the term *tarsagāyīh* is associated with Ašwahišt, the Amahraspand who embodies the divine Truth and the cosmic order (Cipriano 1994, 40 ff.).

⁵⁸ Choksy 1988, 42.

period offerings were made to a statue of Darius I set in that temple,⁵⁹ although this may refer to local practices and institutions rather than exemplifying widespread customs. Possibly more relevant here is the episode narrated by Philostratus (*Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, I. 27), where a high officer in charge of the great gate of Babylon (Ctesiphon ?), or more likely of the Royal palace entrance, urged the people to pay homage (προσκυνήσειέ) to a golden image (εικόνα) of the Arsacid king. Regardless of the reliability of this account, Philostratus seems to be illustrating an actual practice of Arsacid-age protocol here, since in the same passage he specifies a rather technical point, namely that Roman ambassadors were dispensed from that commitment, while common citizens as well as foreigners were obliged to perform the act of deference. Intriguingly, we may deduce that before the king's effigy located at the city or royal palace gateways, visitors and subjects of the kingdom were expected to pay homage to the ruler.⁶⁰ If compared to the passage in Philostratus, the location of the Paikuli monument may also prove significant: it stood along a road leading to Ctesiphon, near a mountain pass that quite possibly marked the access to the "imperial" province of Asōristān.⁶¹ It is likely that in Pre-Islamic Iran, access into royal dominions or possessions required some kind of formal act of recognition of and submission to authority. In fact, royal busts adorned representative areas of palatine structures,⁶² while the archaeological evidence of the dedicatory monument at the centre of Bīšāpūr may provide a close parallel for an understanding of this and similar reverential practices.⁶³ On the other hand, an interesting case concerning the relation between communal loyalty and royal effigy occurs in the Babylonian Talmud, which refers to a statue of a third-century Sasanian king set in the synagogue of the village called Shephithibh of Neherdai.⁶⁴ Royal patronage over different religious communities, which mirrored the cosmic and universal character of Sasanian kingship, was evidently also disseminated through visual representations in places serving cultic functions,⁶⁵ as Byzantine chroniclers attest for the late Sasanian period in the case of the Husraw I's portrait decorating the doomed royal-ceremonial hall of the fire temple in Ganzak (i.e. Ādur Gušnasp).⁶⁶

Furthermore, it is also worth noting that the Paikuli monument is defined in the Narseh inscription with the term *pillag* (MP **plky**; Pa **plk**).⁶⁷ Although the term does not clarify the actual form of the monument, its semantic sphere implies a structure including a podium or steps.⁶⁸ Unfortunately, we have no direct evidence of this term associated with other known architectural structures, but the occurrences of the same term in Middle Iranian Manichaean texts⁶⁹ reveal some functional feature associated with it. Remarkably, in a fragmentary

⁵⁹ BM72747; see Wiesehöfer, 2014, 33; Rollinger 2016, 125.

⁶⁰ Cf. also the inscribed statue of Darius I standing near a monumental gate in Susa (Kuhrt 2007, 477 ff.).

⁶¹ Cereti - Terribili - Tilia 2015.

⁶² See above §1.

⁶³ The monument included a bilingual inscription and a statue of Šābuhr I flanked by small altars, see above § 1.

⁶⁴ Morony 1984, 316; see Talmud IV, *Rosh Hashana*, cap. 2 (Rodkinson 1918, 47).

⁶⁵ See Kröger 1982, 275 and above § 1.

⁶⁶ Panaino 2004, 563-564; Canepa 2009, 148.

⁶⁷ NPī §§ 2, 32.

⁶⁸ Henning 1952, 518 n. 6; Humbach - Skjærvø 1978-1983, 3.2, 20-21; Terribili - Tilia 2016, 419.

⁶⁹ Durkin-Meisterernst 2004, 289.

Manichaean Parable in Parthian language, the term *pillag* refers to an open-air, movable or permanent platform used for royal public audiences; standing upon this structure the king received the procession of dignitaries paying homage to him.⁷⁰ It is in fact a circumstance in some ways comparable to the events narrated in the Paikuli inscription; here the delegation of dignitaries met Narseh and recognized his accession to the throne in the same place where the king was later to build his commemorative monument.⁷¹ The presence in the Manichaean text of the Parthian word *šādīft* “happiness/rejoicing”, when describing the spirit of those approaching the royal platform, introduces into this account a concept that reverberates with references to the Iranian royal ideology as well as religious tradition.⁷² More generally speaking in the Manichaean literature the term *pillag* also indicates the “idol altar”,⁷³ suggesting a relation between structures of this kind and representation of a superior power and, consequently, the devotional-reverential practices performed there. Thus the term seems to have been selectively used for a material support structure for authoritative figures or images worthy of reverence,⁷⁴ while Narseh’s and Manichaean *pillags* may have shared analogies of a functional, rather than structural, nature.

2.1. *The tutelary role of the king and the Paikuli context*

When we consider the content of the inscription as part of the monument and in dialogue with Narseh’s figurative project, key elements of the Sasanian royal ideology come to light in a meaningful perspective. Although composed in a later period, Zoroastrian Pahlavi literature offers substantial terms of comparison to understand the role attributed to the King of Kings in the vicissitudes of the material existence (*gētīg*) and its sacred history. Theological texts, including the *Bundahišn* and *Dēnkard*, point out the salvific function that good kingship exerts in the cosmic battle against the Evil. In the third book of the *Dēnkard* this idea is expressed systematically:⁷⁵ the Mazdean king protects the earthly elements and the divine law by removing falsehood and disorder from the material world while ensuring

⁷⁰ M44, 167, 172; see Colditz 1987, 300-301.

⁷¹ NPī § 32. Moreover, through the rhetorical device of the epistolary dialogue between the king and the dignitaries, focused on the acceptance of the royal diadem and the throne of Ērānšahr, the inscription (NPī §§ 63-90) evokes the context of the crowning ceremony and the associated institutional speeches (Shayegan 2012, 129-132; Terribili 2016, 159-160, with references).

⁷² For this concept see e.g. Piras 1999; 2004; Lincoln 2012, 258-265. Cf. the MP expression *šād-dil*, “with a happy heart”, occurring in the quotation of a letter in which Narseh summoned Wahrām III to his court (NPī § 50), see Humbach - Skjærvø 1978-1983 3.1, 51, 124; Piras 2006; Skjærvø 2006, 120-121; Terribili forthcoming, 208-209 (Comunicazione regale e arte scribale, modelli di trasmissione fra iscrizioni achemenidi e sasanidi: J. Hämeen-Antilla - R. Mattila (eds.), Translation and Transmission in the Eastern Mediterranean 500 BC-1500 AD - The Intellectual Heritage of the Ancient and Mediaeval Near East Series, Münsterpp. 191-221).

⁷³ Boyce 1977, 76; Humbach - Skjærvø 1978-1983 3.2, 21.

⁷⁴ In the Iranian royal tradition the concept of “elevation” was already a substantial idea in Achaemenid imperial art and imagery (Garrison 2011, 66). Compare also with the ceremonial baldachin depicted on silver vessels with “enthronement” scenes (Harper 1981, 99-122); on royal platform and *takht* in Sasanian art, see also von Gall 1971.

⁷⁵ See Cipriano 1994.

the prosperity of his kingdom.⁷⁶ By asserting appropriate prescriptions and ritual rules, the king contributes effectively even to the salvation of his subjects' souls.⁷⁷ According to the Mazdean tenets, in fact, the king's prerogatives also have a mythic-ritual dimension.⁷⁸ In this respect the king's deeds assume an eschatological dimension, restoring an original condition foreshadowing the renewal of existence (MP. *frašgird*) and favouring its development. The core of these religion-based ideas is evident even in the content of Narseh's inscription; a text that aims, among other things, to extol this specific aspect associated with the ideal portrait of the good Mazdean sovereign. In fact, the inscription stresses the ethical as well as religious scope of Narseh's virtuous endeavour using concepts explicitly related to the Zoroastrian dualistic tradition and deeply rooted within the Iranian royal language.⁷⁹ Not surprisingly, the narrative section of the Paikuli inscription echoes motifs from the epic-oral tradition; in such a framework the figure of Narseh and other characters are defined on the basis of cultural archetypes and mythical patterns.⁸⁰ According to this ideological message, Narseh's political achievement actually has its own cosmological-eschatological significance, starting a new course of history and reinstating the right order established in a founding past while prefiguring the future renewal.⁸¹ From

⁷⁶ Similar ideas are also included in the deference formulas addressed by the Christian clergy to the Sasanian king and preserved in the *Synodicon Orientale*, see e.g. Chabot 1902, 320, 368 and above all 390-391. The evidence of these conventional eulogies gives us an idea of the encoded practices transversally shared by different communities in the Sasanian society, while also showing the inclusive extension of the Sasanian royal patronage, see Payne 2015.

⁷⁷ Cipriano 1994, 35. Some evidence indicates that the King maintained a prominent role in the actual performance of specific religious rituals (Panaino 2014, 333). In this case the ritual purity of the King must have been a prerogative, in order to enhance the effectiveness of the actions and prevent damage to the physical elements. Contrariwise, the tyrant causes the moral deviation of the subjects as well as the material deterioration of the kingdom, also fostering the propagation of infirmities and epidemics, see e.g. *Dēnkard* III, 36, 46, 125 (de Menasce 1973).

⁷⁸ Choksy 1988, 38.

⁷⁹ Narseh's opponents are depicted as fellows of Ahriman and his *dēws* (NPi §.4); likewise they are denoted by *daevis* lexicon, e.g. *druzān/druzīh* (liars/falsehood), *jādūgīh* (sorcery), see NPi §§ 37, 54-56 and 61. The use of such language strategies in connoting the enemies is already evident in Darius I and Xerxes inscriptions.

⁸⁰ Mori 1995; Skjærvø 1998; Shayegan 2012. The overall plot of NPi follows the Mazdean cosmological process as well as New Year-like mythical motives. The historical events of the king's accession corresponds to the struggle between the two Principles and are presented in a religion-oriented framework. The irruption of the "Lie" and unlawful behaviours of its followers starts the NPi narration (§ 4); only Narseh's endeavour, demanded by an assembly of Iranian nobles, can restore the social order. Furthermore, while referring to the "origin" time of his predecessors, the new king's deeds envisage a new era of material prosperity (§ 64 ff.). The idealistic restoration of the earth/kingdom to the perfection of the primeval, divine creation is a basic tenet of Iranian royal ideology that finds its origins in the Achaemenid legacy (Lincoln 2012). Moreover, the ritual enactment of worldly and cosmic restoration was the core of the equinox festivals, the two major Zoroastrian holidays, constantly exploited by Iranian kings for their coronations and solemn exhibitions, see Canepa 2009, 11, 12, with references.

⁸¹ NPi § 89 explicitly proclaims that the glory of the king (*xwarrah*) will contribute to keep the kingdom safe and sound until the *frašgird*. Cf. the concept of "imperial eternity" (e.g. the title αἰώνιος ἀγούστος) in the Byzantine tradition and the possible parallels with the Sasanian ideology (Panaino 2004, 566-568, 581, 584). Moreover, in the last lines of the Paikuli inscription (§ 94) it is expressed the wish to establish the realm anew. In fact, having arrested dissemination of the Lie, Narseh is recognized as possessing the sacred royal glory (§ 55; Cereti - Terribili 2014, 371, 374), and as the individual best suited to preserving the kingdom (§ 75 ff.). On these topics see also Terribili 2016, 160-161.

purely historical interpretation of Narseh's epigraphic text we are thus prompted to investigate more thoroughly its symbolic value and consequently that of the structure in which the text was physically included.

The concept of a cosmic, tutelary function of the good king along with justification of the hierarchical relationship between the higher authority and subjects were the pillars of the royal Sasanian ideological message.⁸² This cluster of ideas shaped both the variegated language involving the visual representation of kingship and the modes of its reception within Iranian society. The extraordinary position of the king within humankind was stressed in every kind of royal expression, also finding its way through the exaltation of physical perfection and prowess. The uniqueness of the King of Kings' body, his integrity and purity, was a model of human perfection; likewise, the royal *sacra persona* was conceived as a divine creation in the image of the gods, worthy of praise and source of joy and well-being.⁸³ By virtue of a sort of transitory effect, attuned to popular magical-ritual beliefs, we may suppose that the tutelary and propitiatory properties of the royal persona, as well as his sanctity, were by analogy also accorded to his two- and three-dimensional images.

It is in this broader conceptual framework that we can better appreciate the interactions among the different components of the Paikuli monument, the symbolic meaning of this structure, as well as the message of its inscription and the otherwise enigmatic, repetitive presence of Narseh statuary. Taken together, all these elements concur to render a consistent sense, forming part of a multi-layered propaganda system. In fact, the Sasanian communication strategy rested on a pattern of dichotomization, narrative/emblematic – historical/mythical,⁸⁴ which exploited the ambivalence of the messages conveyed by royal monuments and took advantage of their polysemy. Through both iconography and textual representation, the living king and his deeds were cast into an epic garb participating in the continuum of a mythologized history and benefiting from its symbolic capital. This aspect brings out the great significance of comparison between the Paikuli complex and the dynastic centres of the ancient Iranian world.⁸⁵

Recently, in a series of works M. Canepa⁸⁶ investigated the visual language of Iranian kingship and its forms of manifestation in celebrative epicentres, offering a key for interpreting both continuity and discontinuity phenomena. In all these spaces we find close dialogue between monumental inscriptions, dynastic memory, visual imagery, cultic or deference observances, discursive performances, and topographical or architectural

⁸² See e.g. Panaino 2004 and Canepa 2009.

⁸³ See Panaino 2004, 560 ff. Physical excellence as manifestation of royal dignity is an ancient and recurrent motive in Iranian royal identity, see e.g. Yarshater 1983, 405; Kuhrt 2007, 508; Llewellyn-Jones 2015. The likeness between the mirror-image figures of the god Ohrmazd and the Sasanian kings clearly emerges in the so-called "investiture" reliefs, a mimetic representation that casts light on the functional symmetry of the characters in governing the cosmic and worldly realms respectively (Panaino 2004, 579; Canepa 2009, 59 ff.; Shenkar 2014).

⁸⁴ An application of this model to the Sasanian context is inspired by Garrison's analysis of Early Achaemenid imagery, see Garrison 2011, 61 ff.

⁸⁵ Canepa (2010, 588) rightly highlights the conceptual connections between the cult of memory established by Šābuhr I at Naqš-e Rostam and Narseh at Paikuli.

⁸⁶ Canepa 2009; 2010; 2013; 2014; 2015a; 2015b; see also Shenkar 2014.

features.⁸⁷ In these contexts, conceived with the aim of building up historical memory and cultural identity, the effigy of the monarch played a primary role in enhancing the expression of power. In fact, all these constituents formed a core of socio-political and religious messages, projecting the ideal portrait of the king into a tangible and enduring dimension. A similar ideological function can be ascribed to the architectural and figurative program set by Narseh at Paikuli to assert his royal dignity. The four royal high-relief busts, whatever their exact position on the walls, with their imposing proportions dominated the scene for the visitor, accompanying him around the monument; the path followed the view of the two epigraphs engraved on the eastern and western walls, while their content narrated the king's restoration of the true order and recognition of his royal credentials. Possibly somewhat more direct and interactive may have been the rapport between visitors and the single bust sculpted in the round – a sculpture that strongly evoked the immanent manifestation of the King of Kings. Conceivably, the whole architectural structure with its plinth, corner columns and ornamented canopy simulated the royal baldachin (*pillag* ?) used in open-air audiences, as the four high-relief busts find parallel with the busts adorning the *ayvān* of the Sasanian palaces; by contrast, the sculpture in the round symbolized the bodily presence of the sovereign within the royal space. Along with the inscription that evokes the enthronement ceremony and its participants, all these components represented and condensed a topic royal event.

In reproducing a royal context, the Paikuli monument and above all the Narseh sculpture in the round may have prompted in the travellers reverential or devotional observances commonly performed at other dynastic sites or at the Sasanian court itself.⁸⁸ These acts followed a solemn etiquette, but they might also have included the recitation of blessing formulas addressed to the kings, both living and departed, and frequently associated with the performance of “outer” rituals.⁸⁹ These habits had religious purposes as well as a markedly social dimension, since they offered the opportunity, especially to high-class members, to exhibit in public their prestige, liberality, loyalty and personal ties with the primary source of authority. On the other hand, through these reverential acts the royal power achieved manifest recognition of his patronage.

From this point of view, we can arrive at a more organic appreciation of the extent of the programme established by Narseh, who conceived his celebrative monument combining a well-established tradition with innovative forms. Magnification of the living king's deeds and dignity not only legitimised the secular authority of Narseh, but also extolled the everlasting and eschatological role of this king, associating to him a soteriological function. Through the multifaceted Paikuli imagery, the good king Narseh is described as a restorer of the lineage that held the sacral royal charisma (*xwarrah*) and consequently ensured the physical integrity of the worldly creation. Likewise, in a perspective projected to the future, this programmatic message aimed to include Narseh into the inner circle of the venerable-

⁸⁷ According to Canepa these features characterised the main royal sites in the broader Iranian world such as Surkh Kotal, Rabatak, the royal sites of Commagene and Naqš-e Rostam (Canepa 2015a, 24 ff.).

⁸⁸ The occurrence of *nāmaz* mentioned in the inscription (NPI § 75) in conjunction with Narseh's royal status recognition (Cereti - Terribili 2014, 379, see also above n. 49), may have inspired analogous acts of reverence.

⁸⁹ See above § 2.

tutulary ancestors of the royal lineage.⁹⁰ In showing himself acting as a pious Mazdean and righteous king who defeated the agents of the Lie, Narseh fabricated his figure as that of an *ahlaw/ardā*, “the just; righteous” (lit. Who possesses the Truth), a concept, which conveyed manifold religious nuances as well as warrior-class ideals, including above all afterlife expectations and soteriological beliefs.⁹¹ In order to assert his claims and achieve an enduring position among the venerable ancestors of his line,⁹² Narseh exploited an integrated assortment of elements: epigraphic narrative and visual valence, hieratic portraits, architectural features and topographical location.⁹³ Accordingly, the space of Paikuli, primarily conceived for Iranian-internal consumption, was intended to preserve the memory of and catalyse ritual deference to Narseh, the living-king/blessed-*ahlaw*,⁹⁴ who saved the Iranian kingdom from devilish impostors re-establishing both the legitimate branch of the Sasanian family and the proper course sanctioned by the gods.

⁹⁰ It cannot be ruled out that the commemorative monument might represent a sort of Narseh cenotaph (Canepa 2010, 588).

⁹¹ The quality of MP. *ahlaw/ardā* (Av. *ašāvan-*; OP. *artāvan-*) is achieved during life and ensures a blissful existence in the other world (Gnoli 1987). In the Zoroastrian tradition the *fravaši ī ahlawān/ardā frawahr* (the eternal souls of the righteous) held a prominent position in safeguarding the material world as well as the community of believers from the assault of Evil (see e.g. Yt. 13), see also below n. 92.

⁹² On various occasions Narseh mentions the *ahēnag*, “forebear/s” and *niyāg/niyāgān*, “grandfather, ancestors”, always in relation to the claim to the throne and legitimate rule (see NPi §§ 18, 48, 71, 76, 80, 82, 84, 90). For analysis of the role of forefather classes in Sasanian inscriptions, see Shayegan 2011.

⁹³ Narseh built the monument in a very evocative place; surrounded by impressive cliffs it stood on the top of a hill overlooking a major communication route (Cereti - Terribili - Tilia 2015).

⁹⁴ The devotion paid to the blessed souls of the righteous (*fravaši ī ahlawān*) and the related funerary commemorations are widely attested. In the Middle Persian tradition these spiritual beings are invoked in every liturgical office and associated dedication, while one of the most important seasonal festivals, the *fravardīgān*, is dedicated to their veneration (Boyce 1995; 2000). According to the *Ardā Wirāz Nāmāg* (Vahman 1986, 198), the souls of the good kings form a group of blessed souls among the higher spheres of paradise dwellers. If the good souls of the departed were the object of widespread devotional acts, on occasions of commemorations involving souls of royal status, these practices must have had a collective dimension. Intriguingly, G. Gnoli (2009, 143, 150) suggested an association between the concept of tutelary *fravašis* and interpretation of the royal Kushan sanctuary at Rabatak. The Bactrian inscription from this site mentions statues representing the living sovereign alongside statues of deceased kings and divine entities, mostly linked to Zoroastrian *post mortem* and eschatological beliefs. A passage by Theophylact Simocatta (IV, 8) may allude to the concept of an eternal and royal *ardā frawahr* participating in the heavenly assembly that entered Sasanian official ideology; here Husraw II claims to be: “among the gods a righteous and immortal (ἀγαθὸς καὶ αἰώνιος) man” (Whitby 1986, 114; Panaino 2004, 566; Canepa 2009, 103; cf. Ciancaglini 2004, 649-650). Interestingly, in the following passage, Ciancaglini (2004, 654-657) interpreted the hapax ἄσωναϝ as derived from the learned MP. term *ašō/ašōwān* > Young Avestan *ašaon-*, Av. *ašāvan-* “righteous, just”; in this case the sentence could be read as: “the one [i.e. Husraw II] who employs/rewards (μισθοῦμενος) the righteous and preserves the monarchy for Persians” (see Whitby 1986, 114) - a sentence that closely evokes Iranian concepts. Compare Gr. μισθός “hire, pay” with the cognate Av. *mīzda-*; MP. *mīzd*, “reward, hire, wage” (Mayrhofer 1994, 358), also used in the ritual-religious sense of “boon, allotment, reward” (Bartholomae 1904, 1187). According to Yt.1.25 integrity (*Haurvatāt*) and immortality (*Amərətāt*) are the reward of the righteous (*mīzdəm ašaonqm*) in the future abode (Pirart 2007, 61). Apparently, the Pahlavi translation (*zand*) specifies the ritual/religious sense of *mīzd* in this passage adding a term as its gloss: *kē ast mīzd - *jādag - ahlawān*, “who are the reward (i.e. the share) of the righteous” (Dhabhar 1927, 97), cf. Dhabhar 1963, 182. Thus by ritually rewarding the *ardā frawahrs*, the Sasanian king granted the safeguard of his subjects.

The association between text and image has in fact been a long-lasting feature of Iranian royal art, and as early as the Achaemenid period the epigraphs are often accompanied by a figurative repertoire.⁹⁵ Following a similar pattern, the Sasanian royal inscriptions were also placed in connection with or in proximity of royal effigies.⁹⁶ This may be considered an element of continuity, corresponding to a programmatic choice aiming at extolling the symbolic capital of these components and at directing the same fruition of these awe-inspiring royal spaces. On the other hand, for the coeval and mostly illiterate audience both the textual and the iconographic evidence were conflated in a conceptual continuum operating at the level of a shared imagery. If until now the high-relief busts of Narseh could have been seen as little more than decorative elements, bearing mere aesthetic value, in our opinion the rehabilitation of the fifth bust in the round shifts interpretation of the entire figurative programme of Paikuli towards a more meaningful framework, consistent with the context of royal “epiphany”.

Gianfilippo Terribili

3. THE DEDICATORY NAME OF THE PAIKULI MONUMENT

A further, indicative element regarding the symbolic value associated with this monument is offered by its honorary name. In fact, among the recently-published blocks belonging to the inscription, the Parthian a12 sets out in the first line the compound name Narseh gave to the monument, namely: Pērōz-Anāhīd-Narseh (Npi § 2).⁹⁷ In Middle Persian onomastics, proper names composed of three elements, or even more, are well attested; however, the general rules governing these compounds as well as the semantic relationship among the different items are hard to track down.⁹⁸

In Pērōz-Anāhīd-Narseh the first element is an adjective, “victorious”, extensively used also as a person’s name, the second is a deity’s name, while the last is the name of the King himself. It is probably a possessive compound with the approximate meaning of “Narseh with a victorious Anāhīd”,⁹⁹ or alternatively we may see it as an open compound name governed by an apposition bond as Pērōz-Anāhīd+Narseh, namely “Pērōz-Anāhīd (and) Narseh”, i.e. “The Victorious Anāhīd (and) Narseh”. Be that as it may, the overall sense is clear: the dedicatory name underlines the connection between the King and the goddess, implying the importance accorded to this deity in granting victory to the legitimate heir to the throne.¹⁰⁰ A similar dedicatory, three-term name is associated with the votive fire at

⁹⁵ Garrison 2011, 58; Canepa 2014; Wiesehöfer 2014, 30.

⁹⁶ Given the places where they were carved and the status of their patron, an individual closely associated with the royal inner-court, the four inscriptions of the high priest Kerdīr can also be counted within this category, even if the definition may sound somewhat inappropriate.

⁹⁷ Written **prgwz-nhtyE-nryshw**. The passage reads: “(This is) the monument of Pērōz-Anāhīd-Narseh and we made this monument because ...” (Cereti - Terribili 2014, 355, 357).

⁹⁸ In a study published in 1979, the French scholar Ph. Gignoux, tried to analyse some of the three-term names considering the first two elements as joined in a determinative compound (e.g. Burz-Mihr + Gušnasp; Gignoux 1986, II/8). Nevertheless, the author did not pursue this path further in his subsequent studies on Middle-Persian onomastics (Gignoux 1986; 2003).

⁹⁹ Cereti - Terribili 2014, 357-358.

¹⁰⁰ Throughout Pre-Islamic Iran, the victory-bestower Anāhītā/Anāhīd had a primal role in fostering royal ideology (see e.g. Chaumont 1958; Boyce - Chaumont - Bier 1989). Apparently, Narseh was particularly

Barm-e Delak, established to commemorate the first victory of king Šābuhr I over the Romans. In this case, the patron named it Pattāy-Šābuhr-Abnōn, possibly to be understood as: “Long-lasting Šābuhr (and) Abnōn”.¹⁰¹ Apparently, according to a later Islamic source, the former Sasanian king, Ardašīr I, already employed a three-term compound, Irān-kunē-xwarrah,¹⁰² “may (he/she/it) make the glory of Iran”, in naming a monumental edifice, possibly a fire temple, built after his triumph over the last Arsacid sovereign Ardawan in his first capital Ardaxšīr-xwarrah (Gur).¹⁰³ The dedicatory denomination of new foundations including the sovereign’s name was a practice extensively followed throughout the Sasanian period becoming part of the royal language.¹⁰⁴ Narseh’s father, Šābuhr I, after the victory over the emperor Gordianus III, entitled the city of Mišike with the celebratory name of Pērōz-Šābuhr, “The Victorious Šābuhr”.¹⁰⁵ Among the commemorative denominations given to new provinces or urban foundations we find a considerable occurrence of three-term compounds. In all these formulas, expressing a wide range of concepts referring to the royal ideology, the king’s name always ranks in the third position, as in Paikuli. This pattern is highlighted by verbal-compound names as Ērān-abzūd-Husraw, Šahr-winnārd-Yazdgird or Ērān-āsān-kar-Kawād, respectively “Husraw increased Iran”, “Yazdgird arranged the kingdom”, “Kawād made Iran peaceful”. We may assume that in this position the king’s name attained a special resonance and that it was perceived as the focal element. It is also possible that a sort of general rule governed the composition of celebratory and official names – a practice which forged and disseminated royal identity within the Sasanian society.

devoted to this goddess, or at least he was compelled for political convenience to associate himself with her figure. For contrasting interpretations of the female figure represented in the Narseh relief at Naqš-e Rostam see Weber 2010 and Shenkar 2014 with references. In NPi § 19 Anāhīd the Lady (MP: *anāhīd ī bānūg*) is named at the end of a propitiatory formula that includes Ohrmazd and all the gods. The passage marks the beginning of Narseh’s march towards the Ērānšahr and his fight against the enemies. The invocation of this deity before an imminent struggle recalls a very long section of the *Ābān Yašt* (Yt. 5. 21-83; 103-118), the hymn dedicated to Aradvī Sūrā Anāhītā, where several mythical Iranian heroes sacrificed to the goddess in order to beseech her for success in their undertakings. In each instance Anāhītā chose the one to whom boon and victory were to be granted. In particular, Narseh’s circumstances may recall the passages in Yt. 5. 68-69 and 108-110 where Jāmāspa and then Wištāsp sacrifice to the goddess imploring victory over the *dāevas*-worshippers and *drugvants* (“followers of the Lie”) threatening the Aryan people (Malandra 1983, 125; Agostini 2013, 23). Narseh’s devotion to the Mazdean tradition may indeed have been a conspicuous trait of his personality since in his father’s inscription at the Ka’ba-ye Zardošt he is the only one to be distinguished by the religious-oriented title of *ēr mazdēs*n, “the Aryan worshipper of Mazda” (ŠKZ § 34). It is thus possible that part of the conceptual framework of Narseh’s account was inspired by the Mazdean textual tradition and, in this case, embedded in the Anāhīd worship.

¹⁰¹ See MacKenzie 1993, 106-108, with references. In this case Paikuli and Barm-e Delak evidence seem to follow the same pattern: attribute-tutelary figure + monument patron.

¹⁰² Attested in Ibn Ḥawqal’s *Opus geographicum*, see Chaumont 1958, 159.

¹⁰³ Chaumont (1958, 159-160) assumed it to be a temple of Anāhīd.

¹⁰⁴ This pattern is particularly evident in new administrative settlements or in the renaming of old cities. At the same time, the practice also regarded pious foundations; for example, ŠKZ (§§.33-34) gives a list of fires, each named after the member of the royal house to whom the fire was dedicated. In this case, the compound is formed by the adjective *husraw* “renowned/glorious” and the proper name of the Sasanian member: e.g. Husraw Hormizd-Ardašīr, “Distinguished (is) Hormizd-Ardašīr”.

¹⁰⁵ ŠKZ §§ 4, 8. The appellative *pērōz* is also recorded by Ammianus Marcellinus (19.2.11) in describing the Sasanian soldiers acclamation of Šābuhr II (Canepa 2009, 125).

A striking example of naming a celebrative monument after the king comes from the Kushan Bactria. The Paikuli formula can in fact be compared to the Kaniška dedication of the royal/dynastic shrine at Surkh Kotal (2nd century CE), where the syntagm $\kappa\alpha\eta\eta\beta\kappa\omicron$ $\omicron\alpha\nu\nu\delta\omicron$ $\beta\alpha\gamma\omicron\lambda\alpha\gamma\omicron$ (the sanctuary ‘Victorious-Kaniška’) occurs in the Bactrian epigraph of “Nokonzoko”.¹⁰⁶ The meaning of this open compound formed by direct-case terms¹⁰⁷ has long been debated. While it is possible to take the term $\omicron\alpha\nu\nu\delta\omicron$ either as an epithet of Kaniška (“the victorious Kaniška / Kaniška the Victor”)¹⁰⁸ or the epithet/name of an Eastern Iranian goddess known after her appellative of Oanindo/Wanind (“Kaniška and The Victorious”),¹⁰⁹ preference has generally been accorded to the former interpretation.¹¹⁰ Whatever the actual nature was of this and the other ambiguous Sasanian evidence, some sort of parallelism seems to emerge in the designation of commemorative structures. Indeed, the continuity in language strategies and dynastic habits prompts wider investigation into the meaning and features of the royal monuments in Pre-Islamic Iran and adjacent regions.

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4. CONCLUSIONS

The wealth of details characterizing the Narseh bust in the round from Paikuli definitely rules out the possibility that the fifth sculpture had been discarded by the monument builders. Conversely, on the evidence of the data we must reconsider not only the location of this bust, but also the original form of the entire structure. We may in fact consider the possibility that the fifth bust was set before the monument, possibly resting on a bust-pillar monument or a sort of podium, like the sculpture that adorned the monument of Bišāpūr, now lost. Alternatively, it may have been part of the main structure. Since the lack of convincing evidence, also a location of the sculpture into a deep niche into the wall or in a sort of *ayvān* is at the present moment impossible to prove, even though this solution would be consistent with Sasanian architectural patterns.¹¹¹ Be that as it may, the 3D rendering of the two re-joined fragments offers us one of the rare examples of Sasanian royal statuary in

¹⁰⁶ The first line of this inscription reads: “This Citadel (is) the sanctuary ‘Victorious-Kaniška’ to which the Lord King Kaniška gave its name” (Huyse 2009b, 108, with references).

¹⁰⁷ Henning 1960, 52-53.

¹⁰⁸ Interestingly, Humbach (2003, 157, 159) compares this epithet to the use in Hellenistic times of the Greek *nikatōr*.

¹⁰⁹ Starting from Henning’s observations, F. Grenet (Lazard - Grenet - de Lamberterie 1984, 200; see also Grenet 1987, 42, n. 10) suggested that the term stands for this goddess. Wanind was the embodiment of victory, a deity who in the Greco-Bactrian iconography assumed the appearance of a Nikè (Grenet 1987, 42). Postulating that apposition governed this compound, we should have a sort of *dvandva* form, i.e. “The Kaniška (and) Wanind Sanctuary”. In this case, the Bactrian evidence should be very close to the naming of the Paikuli monument, ‘Victorious-Anāhīd (and) Narseh’, and that of Barm-e Delak fire, ‘Long-lasting-Šābuhr (and) Abnōn’. However, it must be remembered that, like the Bactrian compound, also the Sasanian ones are subject to different interpretations.

¹¹⁰ Huyse 2003, 176-178. See also the adjectival function the term $\omicron\alpha\nu\nu\delta\omicron$ has in the Rabatak inscription (l.18; Sims-Williams 1998, 83).

¹¹¹ As possible terms of comparison, see the monument of Taq-e Girra (Terribili - Tilia 2016, 420) and the silver plate from Qazvin where an “enthronement” scene is framed in an *ayvān*-like architecture (Harper 1981, pl. 34). In both cases the structures are surmounted by stepped crenellations.

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the round, and with it the possibility to widen our perspective on the manifold significance of the Narseh architectural programme set in Paikuli. Viewing all the monument features in an integrated perspective highlights the consistency of the cultural and political message associated with it. This cluster of elements formed an intricate language steeped in the tradition of Pre-Islamic Iran and comparable to that expressed through other royal/commemorative sites of the Iranian world. Therefore, the fifth Paikuli bust constitutes a further piece in reconstructing royal-patronage self-imagery during the formative period of Sasanian identity. In comparison with the figurative projects of his predecessors, in Paikuli Narseh chose more static visual representation, possibly more attuned to the concepts of social appeasement and political inclusion stressed in the associated inscription. In a yet broader perspective, the Paikuli monument is a key to understand the forms in which members of this dynasty cultivated the imagery of their authority and their claim to sacral kingship.

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XXI (2017) A forgotten Sasanian sculpture. The fifth bust of Narseh from the monument of Paikuli



Fig. 1 - The Sasanian monument of Paikuli, KRG, Iraq (from Google Earth).

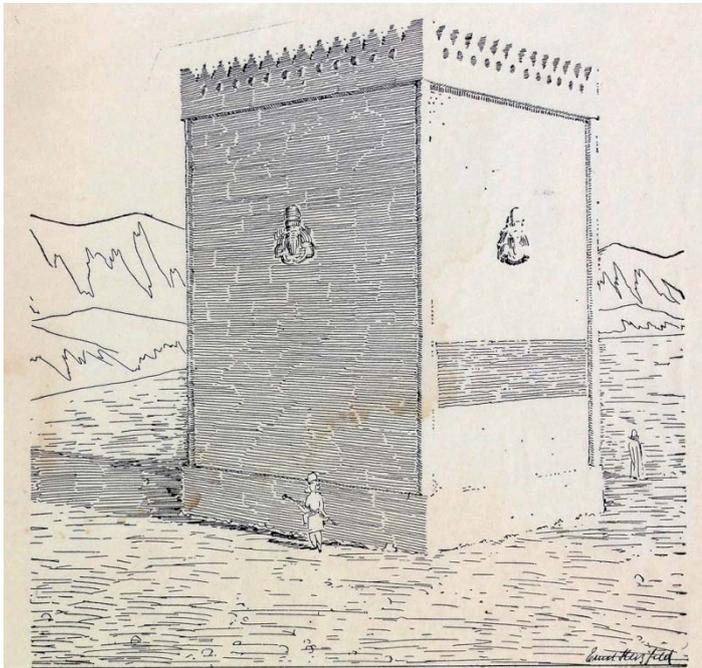


Fig. 2 - Herzfeld's reconstruction of the Paikuli monument (courtesy of The Ernst Herzfeld papers. Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives. Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.).



Fig. 3 - 3D renderings of a high-relief Narseh bust from Paikuli, now at the Slemani Museum (image DiSA-MAIKI; image processed by Studio 3R).



Fig. 4 - A fragment of the crown of the in the round bust of Narseh from Paikuli, now at the Slemani Museum (photo DiSA-MAIKI).

XXI (2017) A forgotten Sasanian sculpture. The fifth bust of Narseh from the monument of Paikuli



Fig. 5 - 3D renderings of the in the round bust of Narseh (two fragments) from Paikuli, now at the Slemani Museum (image DiSA-MAIKI; image processed by Studio 3R).

A NOTE ON AN Umayyad CARVED IVORY PLAQUE
KEPT AT THE WALTERS ART GALLERY

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This paper proposes an iconographical and stylistic analysis of a carved ivory plaque kept at the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore (acc. no. 71.62). It will show that it is not a Coptic artefact featuring a Sasanian king, as assumed until now, but an Umayyad artefact which must be contextualised within a specific tradition of imagery related to the expression of the Umayyad concept of Caliphal authority.

Keywords: Umayyad art; Sasanian art; post-Sasanian art; royal imagery; Caliphal authority

1. A COPTIC ARTEFACT

Sometime before 1931 Henry Walters acquired from Dikran Kelekian a carved ivory plaque said to have been found at Sohag, Egypt. Currently in storage at the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore, this plaque is identified by accession number 71.62 (fig. 1).¹

Though it is not entirely preserved, it can be inferred that its original dimensions were 9.8×17.6 cm.² The surface is carved in bas-relief. A frame delimits a canopy supported by two columns: only the base and part of the shaft of the left one are preserved, while on the right the whole shaft and the capital are still intact. The latter supports a reversed semi-arch - which possibly joined a similar symmetrical structure on the right, now lost - the span of which is filled by a vine-leaf bent into a semi-arch shape, thus mirroring the curve of the reversed semi-arch. This structure is inhabited by a male human figure viewed frontally and sitting on a backless and armless seat, the legs of which are vegetal in shape and curve inward where they join the stool seat. The figure sits with its arms bent outward at the elbows, its hands hold a sword - the right one just below the pommel of the hilt, the left where the cross-guard should be - positioned vertically between its legs. These are also bent outward at the knees, while the feet are turned outward at 180°, the heels joining at the point of the sword. The stool, feet and sword rest on the lower frame of the plaque. The figure's face is elongated, as is the nose, which is seen frontally and joins the eyes at the dorsal bridge. The eyes, surmounted by eyebrows, are drawn without lids with an external stroke which slightly elongates the protruding eyeballs; the pupils are pierced. The man wears a beard with a rounded bottom and an integrated moustache beneath which his full lips appear. Two curly locks of hair are preserved on the left side of the head. This is surmounted by a headgear - which is distinguished from the hair by different types of strokes - consisting of two symmetrical wing-like elements with a triangular element rising above their conjunction. Elements of the clothing are also identified by different renderings of the drapery. Parallel double short strokes curving upwards characterize the garment that covers the upper part of the body down to the waist and elbows; the sleeves, which cover the forearms down to the wrists, present shorter strokes along the inner and outer profile,

¹ Ross 1940; Brooklyn 1941, no. 107; Baltimore 1947, no. 159; <http://art.thewalters.org/detail/8959/seated-king/>.

² See footnote 1.

almost converging in a herringbone. This arrangement suggests that the figure is wearing a tight short-sleeved caftan over a long-sleeved tunic. The drapery of the garment covering the lower part of the body from the waist to the knees consists of parallel curved strokes; perpendicular to the profile of the thighs, they are arranged symmetrically to the right and left of the sword and drop downward, thus rendering the lower part of a ruffled caftan. Below the knees, the drapery changes again: it consists of parallel strokes curving downward but perpendicular to the profile of the leg. They are arranged symmetrically to the right and left of the sword and are shorter closest to the ankles, thus suggesting a pair of loose trousers narrowing at the ankles. The footwear is difficult to determine but its lower profile is “plumed” and reminiscent of the triangular upper element of the headgear.

This plaque was firstly analysed by Ross in 1940.³ He recognized the human figure as a Sasanian king through comparison with the enthroned sovereign - whom he identified as Khusraw I (531-579) or Khusraw II (590-628) - carved on the crystal rock medallion set in the middle of the so-called “Khusraw Cup”.⁴ According to Ross, the arrangement of the scene, the architectural elements and the style of drapery were features characterizing 7th century Coptic artefacts. Though the forms were rigid and simplified, in his opinion, the accuracy in their rendering revealed that the artist actually intended to portray a Sasanian king, but not for decorative purposes as in a textile found in Antinoe and kept at the *Musée Historique des Tissus* in Lyon.⁵ Thus, Ross argued that the artist was satisfying a special commission, which would have suited the period of the Sasanian occupation of Egypt (619-629). He also recalled that the provenance of the carved plaque, as stated by the dealer, seemed to be Sohag, which he deemed quite plausible. He maintained these conclusions in the brief entries published in the catalogues of the exhibitions on Pagan and Christian Egypt held at the Brooklyn Museum in 1941⁶ and on Early Christian and Byzantine Art held at the Baltimore Museum of Art in 1947.⁷

In a review of the former, Der Narsessian referred to the figure represented on the plaque as a Sasanian king, and, though maintaining it was made within a Coptic context, questioned the dating proposed by Ross. He noticed that «the pose of the seated figure, the treatment of the drapery, the manner of carving, the facial type» were «all reminiscent of silver plates of the post-Sasanian period». ⁸ He also proposed comparing the artefact with an Egyptian ivory plaque also preserved at the Walters Art Gallery, representing the Virgin and Child,⁹ and Coptic manuscripts kept at the Pierpont Morgan Library,¹⁰ thus suggesting it should be dated to the 9th century at the earliest.

³ Ross 1940.

⁴ Paris, *Bibliothèque nationale de France*, acc. no. 379; see Harper - Meyer 1981, 111 ff., n. 56 and pl. 33. See also below.

⁵ Lyon, *Musée des Tissus*, acc. no. MT 28928; see Bénazeth - Dal Prà 1991, and also below n. 17.

⁶ Ross 1940; Brooklyn 1941, no. 107.

⁷ Baltimore 1947, no. 159.

⁸ Der Narsessian 1941, 167.

⁹ Baltimore, The Walters Art Gallery, acc. no. 71.297; Brooklyn 1941, no. 108; <http://art.thewalters.org/detail/6580/virgin-and-child-12/>.

¹⁰ New York, The Pierpont Morgan Library, Mss. Morgan 612, Morgan 574, Morgan 597; Brooklyn 1941, nos. 12-14.

Later on Ghirshman mentioned the ivory plaque in question as an example of the phenomenon of imitating Sasanian models in non-Iranian areas. He observed that the «ivorie copte» did not understand the details of the sovereign's clothing and crown, and he thus produced a «faible reflet du modèle original». ¹¹ The model Ghirshman was referring to is the enthroned sovereign on the “Khusraw Cup”, whom he identified as Khusraw I. ¹²

More recently Harper, dating the plaque to the 7th century, has described it as «simple and crude in design» and - more cautiously - as portraying a “frontal image of an enthroned king wearing a crown decorated with vague, wing-like forms and superficially resembling that of a Sasanian king”. ¹³ She also observed that the king is not sitting on a couch throne (the couch throne is a typical feature of “post-Sasanian” enthronement scenes). ¹⁴

Ross' conclusions are re-proposed in the online catalogue of the Walters Gallery. ¹⁵

2. OR AN Umayyad ARTEFACT?

It is my contention that the Walters ivory plaque, whether it was made in Egypt or not, is not a Coptic artefact, nor a portrait of a Sasanian king, nor a misunderstood rendering of a Sasanian or post-Sasanian model. ¹⁶ In the following I will rather infer that it is an Umayyad artefact. Indeed, though the iconographical model that inspired the artist of the Walters plaque can be traced back to the Sasanian and post-Sasanian tradition of representations of enthroned sovereigns, the specific features of the sovereign he carved refer to a specific Umayyad tradition of representing the enthroned Caliph.

2.1. *The Sasanian and Post-Sasanian Model*

The iconography characterizing the sovereign represented in the Walters plaque – a crowned sovereign sitting on a backless and armless throne and holding his sword vertically between his legs – appears in the portrayals of Bahrām II (276-293) and Shāpūr II (r. 309-379) carved into the rock at Naqsh-e Bahrām and Bishāpūr, ¹⁷ respectively, and of the royal characters portrayed in a Kushano-Sasanian plate from Rawalpindi (London, British Museum, acc. no. 124093), ¹⁸ a plate of uncertain provenance kept at the Walters Art Gallery (Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, acc. no. 57.625), ¹⁹ a plate from Strelka, in the Perm' kraj, Russia (Saint Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum, acc. no. S250), ²⁰ the central medallion of the “Khusraw Cup” (Paris, *Bibliothèque nationale de France*, acc. no.

¹¹ Ghirshman 1962, 304.

¹² Ghirshman 1962, 304, figs. 401 and 402.

¹³ Harper - Meyer 1981, 111 ff.

¹⁴ Harper - Meyer 1981, 99-123; see also von Gall 1971.

¹⁵ <http://art.thewalters.org/detail/8959/seated-king/>.

¹⁶ A representative example of a Coptic rendering of a Sasanian king is found in two fragmentary leggings found at Antinoe and datable to the second quarter of the 6th and the first quarter of the 7th century. They are kept at the Louvre, acc. no. E. 293232) and the *Musée des Tissus* in Lyon (acc. no. MT 28928). See Bénazeth - Dal Prà 1991.

¹⁷ Harper - Meyer 1981, 102-103, and figs. 25-27. «Relief IV» in the caption of fig. 27 should be emended to «Relief VI».

¹⁸ Harper - Meyer 1981, 108-110, fig. 35.

¹⁹ Harper - Meyer 1981, 115, 119-120, pl. 36.

²⁰ Harper - Meyer 1981, 110-115, pl. 19.

379),²¹ and in a plate from Klimova, in the Perm' kraj, Russia (Saint Petersburg, State Hermitage Museum, acc. no. S43).²² However, the very posture held by the sovereign in the Walters plaque - except for the position of the feet in relation to the sword - and the stool-throne with decorated legs, only correspond precisely with the portrait of Bahrām II (fig. 6).²³ Moreover, it should be noted that the crown worn by Bahrām II, unlike those of his predecessors and successors, featured eagle wings resting directly on a diadem and surmounted by a globe.²⁴

The stylization of the crown, the facial characteristics, and the clothing of the sovereign represented in the Walters plaque are paralleled in two plates allegedly from Marw, datable from the 8th to the 9th century and kept at the Hermitage State Museum (figs. 8-9).²⁵ They feature a royal hunting and a royal banqueting scene, respectively. As for the crown: in the former the crown is rendered as two wing-like elements parting in the middle and revealing a curved headgear, and in the latter as a diadem surmounted by two wing-like elements parted by a pentagonal element, possibly a jewel, surmounted by a crescent. In neither case does the crown feature flying ribbons or fillets. As for the facial characteristics: both figures have very elongated faces, small but plump lips, moustaches and rounded beards, and locks of hair falling to their ears; in the first plate the figure has oval lidless eyes and pierced pupils, and though the head is in a three-quarter view the nose is viewed frontally and the dorsal bridge is attached to the eyebrows; in the second plate the figure features more realistic traits which are seen in the nose, and in the eyes with thick eyebrows and lids, but no pupils. Both sovereigns have a halo around their head. As for the clothing, both figures wear a neckless short-sleeved caftan over a long-sleeved tunic tied at the waist with a belt and ruffled above the knees, which are covered by loose trousers narrowing at the ankles.

From this evidence we can conclude that the iconography of the sovereign in the Walters plaque is based on the portrayal of Bahrām II, but re-adapted as it appears in the Islamic plates from Marw.

2.2. *The Umayyad Tradition*

Almost all the features of the sovereign portrayed in the Walters plaque, with small variations due to the different media, state of preservation and skill of the artist, are found in analogous representations of royal figures produced in Islamic lands during the Umayyad period. The most famous example is a carved stucco found on the exterior of the palace at Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī (727/728) and possibly located in the lunette above the main entrance (fig. 2).²⁶ Though broken into two fragments, the figure - the head of which is carved in high-relief while the rest of the body is in bas-relief - reveals traces of a crown, of

²¹ See n. 4.

²² Harper - Meyer 1981, 118-119, and pl. 35.

²³ After the recent survey and tracing by Klimburg-Salter, the painting of a figure seated on a throne found at Dukhtar-i Nūshirwān appears to be a deity holding his sword diagonally with his left hand and not a sovereign holding his sword vertically with both hands; see Klimburg-Salter 1993, pl. 87.

²⁴ See Shahbazi 1988. The crown of Hormazd II is similar, but a row of pearl or pearl-like elements is interposed between the diadem and the wings. In addition, no portrayals of Hormazd II enthroned are known so far. For the crowns of Sasanian kings see Azarpay 1972, and Erdmann 1951.

²⁵ Marshak 1986, nos. 29-32.

²⁶ Schlumberger 1986, 15, 22.

which the right wing-like element and the central pentagonal jewel still remain; traces of hair falling to the ear, part of the beard, and an eye with a big painted pupil but no lid surmounted by an eyebrow joining the nose at the dorsal bridge; the upper part of a neckless caftan or tunic with heavy drapery, ornamented in the middle by a row of pearls or a pearl-like ornament running downwards and maybe originally reaching the waist; part of the shoulders and the upper arms oriented slightly outward, thus suggesting that the arms were bent at the elbows; the lower part of the body with the legs bent outward at the knees and covered by the ruffled lower part of the tunic or caftan falling into the lap at knee height, with a pearl-like ornamented rim, and loose trousers narrowing at the heels; a fragment of the left foot in a three-quarter view with the heel lifted. The ruffling of the tunic/caftan and trousers is rendered by heavy drapery. Though the crown, posture, and clothing suggest that the figure originally held a sword between its legs, other possibilities remain. In another example of Umayyad royal imagery comparable to the Walters plaque, found in a fragment of textile datable to the 7th-8th century and kept at the David Collection in Copenhagen (acc. no. 23/2011; fig. 3),²⁷ the sovereign does not hold a sword but rather a flower in each hand. However, he sits frontally on an armless and backless throne supported by legs resting on the head of two ibexes facing each other in profile; though the angle formed by his thighs and calves is less emphasised, nonetheless the legs are bent at the knees and the arms are bent at the elbows; his face is round but has a pointed chin, the mouth is not visible though room for it is left between the moustache and beard; the nose is seen frontally and its point is quite realistic; the dorsal bridge joins the eyebrows which surmount wide oval eyes with a big pupil but no lids; the hair falls to the ears, which wear earrings; the crown on the head consists of a diadem with two wings rising above it and above them, almost floating in the air, is a jewel-like element reminiscent of the crescent that topped the Sasanian crown. The head is haloed. As for the clothing, the sovereign wears a neckless long-sleeved tunic or caftan ornamented by rows of pearls or pearl-like elements and roundels. The folding of the lower rim of the garment suggests that he is wearing trousers. His feet are turned outward at 180°, the heels are lifted and the toes point downward but they do not rest on the rectangular element placed beneath them resembling a footstool. The figure, which is repeated four times on the fragmentary textile, is placed between imaginary trees: from their trunks grapes, vine-leaves and flower-like fans studded with pearls sprout out symmetrically on either side and the trunk is topped by a composition of plume-like leaves supporting a crown-like flower studded with jewels, the petals of which are arranged like the crown worn by the sovereign. The composition of these plants - tree of life/*axis mundi*²⁸ - and their single elements - real and imaginary vegetal motifs, plumes and jewels - parallel those found in the mosaics of the Dome of the Rock (691/692).²⁹ Another example of this royal iconography belonging to Umayyad contexts consists of two images carved on ivory plaques which were found at al-Ḥumayma in Jordan, in a residence presumably belonging to the 'Abbāsīd family before its accession to the throne, and thus to the first half of the 8th century.³⁰ These two plaques (fig. 4),

²⁷ <https://www.davidmus.dk/en/collections/islamic/materials/textiles/art/23-2011>.

²⁸ Fontana 2007.

²⁹ van Berchem in Creswell 1979.

³⁰ Foote 1999; Oleson - Amr - Foote 1999; Evans - Ratliff 2012, 221-222 and no. 153 A-C.

measuring approximately 10 × 30 cm, along with another four of the same size, were furniture veneer panels, like the ones found at Ayla,³¹ as revealed by the holes left by the nails used to fix them to the surface they covered, and fragments of wood and fasteners discovered nearby.³² Although they were found burned and crushed, the essential features of the male human figures carved on each of them are quite recognisable. Four of them have been identified as soldiers - they are seen in profile with their heads haloed and their clothing consists of a helmet, tunic, possibly chain mail and loose trousers, and they hold a spear diagonally. Two have been described as identical to the previous ones, «seated frontally, on a throne (?), wearing a diadem (?), and holding a staff (?) vertically in front of themselves».³³ Their clothing has been identified as Persianate, whereas the soldiers' headgear appears to be Caucasian or Central Asian, thus suggesting that the panels were produced in Sogdia, Persia, or the Indian subcontinent. This has been interpreted as testifying to a connection between the 'Abbāsīd headquarter at al-Ḥumayma and Khurāsān on the eve of the 'Abbasid revolution.³⁴ The panels rather seem to be part of two identical scenes arranged in two triptychs: an enthroned sovereign flanked by two soldiers or guards. The iconography of the latter is quite clear, as it is that of the former. Indeed, the sovereign sits on a backless and armless seat, his arms are bent outward at the elbows and his hands hold a sword - the right hand is on its pommel, the left grips the hilt where the guard should be, as in the portrayals of Bahrām II, standing at Naqsh-i Rostam and sitting at Naqsh-i Bahrām - positioned vertically between his legs. The pearl-like ornamentation of the sword suggests that it is inserted into a scabbard - as in the portrayal of the standing Bahrām at Naqsh-i Rostam (fig. 7) and the standing Pīrūz or Khusraw II or Ardashīr III at Ṭāq-i Bustān.³⁵ The angle between the thigh and the calf is not emphasised - as in the textile from the David Collection - but nonetheless the legs are bent, as revealed by the remains of the backless and armless throne still visible in one of the panels (fig. 4, on the right). The feet are joined to the point of the scabbard and turned outward at 180°. The clothing consists of a long-sleeved caftan/tunic reaching the knees, worn over loose trousers narrowing at the ankles. A row of pearls or pearl-like elements runs along the upper and lower rims of the caftan/tunic, possibly over the belt, and along the lateral profile of the trousers - as in the portrayal of the sovereign at Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī. The head is haloed, the face elongated, with no moustache or beard, and features Central Asian traits. The hair is very thick and compressed in order to fit into the upper frame of the panel where there is a crescent attached to the diadem, in the middle, covered by pearls or pearl-like elements. The hair is parted symmetrically to the right and left of the face: the upper locks resemble wings, the lower ones spring from beneath the ears and coil upwards into a curl. The head is also haloed. One of the soldiers/guards is placed beneath a horseshoe arch resting on decorated capitals.³⁶

³¹ Whitcomb 1994, 28-31.

³² Foote 1999; New York 2012, 221-222 and no. 153 A-C.

³³ Evans - Ratliff 2012, 221 no. 153 A-C.

³⁴ Foote 1999; Oleson - Amr - Foote 1999; Evans - Ratliff 2012, 221-222 and no. 153 A-C.

³⁵ Tanabe 2003.

³⁶ Oleson - Amr - Foote 1999, fig. 20.

Another example of this royal iconography can be seen in a stucco panel found at Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Sharqī (fig. 5), in the recently excavated building E.³⁷ The panel is fragmentary but its original measurements can be reconstructed as 50 × 70 cm through comparison with the two analogous figurative panels discovered together with it along the north-western corner of the eastern court of the building.³⁸ It features a male human figure resting its feet on the lower frame and surrounded by a vegetal composition, possibly an arch, as in the panel featuring a male figure mounted on a horse and holding a falcon in his right hand.³⁹ The fragments allow us to re-construct the representation of a bearded man seen frontally, with his arms bent at the elbows, his hands holding a sword in a scabbard - the right seems to grasp the pommel of the hilt, the left possibly its grip - set vertically and falling between his feet, which are turned outward at 180°. The sitting sovereign from Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī, the standing sovereign from Khirbat al-Mafjar and the “Standing Caliph” on the coins issued by ‘Abd al-Malik (685-705) between 691/692 and 696 have been deemed as more suitable comparisons, along with representations of Sasanian kings on rock reliefs and metals, and a standing figure represented in a stone relief found in a church in Ctesiphon dating to the Sasanian period.⁴⁰ However, the standing sovereign at Khirbat al-Mafjar, of which only the lower parts of the head and body remain, holds the sword diagonally on his left side, grasping its hilt at the grip with his left hand;⁴¹ the “Standing Caliph” also holds the hilt of the sword in a scabbard or the *khuṭb* diagonally, but with his right hand;⁴² the Sasanian kings portrayed in monumental art as standing frontally and holding their sword vertically with both hands have their head seen in profile or in a three-quarter view;⁴³ the only example of a Sasanian king standing frontally and holding a sword vertically with both hands is found in a portrayal of Khusraw II on a golden coin issued by him,⁴⁴ and in his representation in the *takht-i tāqdīs* on a post-Sasanian plate from Qazwīn (Tehran, Iran Bastan Museum, acc. no. 904);⁴⁵ of the standing figure from Ctesiphon only the lower part of the body survives, the hands are also lost, and the position between the parted feet is occupied by a spear or a pike, while part of a sword in a scabbard appears behind it, set diagonally. Therefore, the closest terms for comparison with the panel from Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Sharqī seem to be the frontal representations of sitting sovereigns belonging to the Umayyad tradition. On the other hand, there is still the possibility that the bearded man was sitting on a throne and not standing. Indeed, his tunic begins to flare well beneath the waist where his knees should be: this flaring may symbolize the bending of the legs and, consequently, a sitting position. This very ambiguity between the iconography of the enthroned sovereign and the standing sovereign is found in the aforementioned post-

³⁷ Genequand 2011.

³⁸ Genequand 2011, 372-375, fig. 14.

³⁹ Genequand 2011, 362-368, fig. 12.

⁴⁰ Genequand 2011, 374-375.

⁴¹ Hamilton 1959, 100, 228-232, pl. LV, figs. 1-5.

⁴² Heidemann 2010, 175-176, figs. 21-24.

⁴³ See for example Bahrām at Naqsh-i Rostam, Shāpūr I and Shāpūr II, and Pīrūz or Khusraw II or Ardashīr III at Tāq-i Bustān.

⁴⁴ Harper - Meyers 1981, 113, fig. 39.

⁴⁵ Harper - Meyers 1981, 115 ff., pl. 34.

Sasanian plate from Qazwīn. There a couch-throne is placed behind the figure whereas in analogous post-Sasanian representations of Khusraw II in the *takht-i tāqdīs* the sovereign is sitting on such a throne.⁴⁶

In any case, the similarities of the Walters plaque with the panel from Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Sharqī also involve the presence of vegetal elements in relation to the architectonic space framing the figure, which in both cases is an arch. We have also mentioned that one of the soldiers/guards in the al-Ḥumayma plaques is placed underneath an arch supported by capitals. Other elements characterizing the Umayyad artistic language can be detected in the Walters plaque: the vine-leaf appearing in the reversed semi-arch in the Walters plaque is identical in shape and in the rendering of the main veining to the leaves carved on an Islamic ivory pyxis kept at the Victoria and Albert Museum (acc. no. 136-1866), which is datable to the 7th-8th centuries and was possibly manufactured in Egypt or Syria;⁴⁷ the shape of the eyes of the sovereign, lidless with protruding eyeballs and pierced pupils, is typical of several human heads found at Khirbat al-Mafjar.⁴⁸

3. CONCLUSIONS

The iconographical and stylistic analysis of the Walters plaque reveals that it is an Umayyad artefact and that it should be considered along with analogous representations of enthroned sovereigns produced in the *dār al-Islām* in the late 7th and early 8th centuries. While these representations are clearly reminiscent of Sasanian royal imagery, their comparison implies that the artists did not freely rely on the latter but rather referred to a specific Islamic model shaped after the portrait of Bahrām II at Naqsh-i Bahrām. Indeed, the occurrence of such precise features, such as the stool-throne, the posture of the figure, its clothing and insignia leads to the identification of a common archetype. In addition, the shape of the crown, which appears to be a stylization of Bahrām II's crown, clearly highlights that the royal figure represented in these artefacts is not a Sasanian king: the crown worn by Khusraw II in the famous painting of the six kings in the reception hall of Qusaḡr 'Amra is shaped almost exactly like the crown worn by Khusraw II on the coins he issued, thus identifying the character as the Sasanian king.⁴⁹ Therefore, the Umayyad iconography of the enthroned sovereign with a winged crown and sword depersonalizes the Sasanian royal imagery and reduces it to its essential symbolical meaning, namely royal power divinely bestowed. Thus, the portrait of Caliphal authority emerges. This reasoning endorses the identification of the sitting sovereign at Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī – and the analogous representations – as the Caliph,⁵⁰ however not as a specific Caliph but on the contrary as the symbol of Umayyad Caliphal authority: a dynasty chosen by God to rule all

⁴⁶ Bonhams, London. Auction 19961, Lot 177, 25 Apr 2012; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, acc. no. 57.587; Saint Petersburg, Hermitage State Museum, acc. no. S43. In the second the sovereign holds a spear or a pike in his right hand and a sword in his left; in the third the sovereign has his legs crossed.

⁴⁷ Evans - Ratliff 2012, 177-17 no. 120B.

⁴⁸ See for instance Hamilton 1959, pls. XXII.1, 4; XXXV.1; LIII.2; LVI.2 and 3; LIX.3.

⁴⁹ On this topic see the contribution by C.-P. Haase, entitled "Representations of Rulers with their Regalia and Epigraphical Denominations", presented at the international conference *The Colours of the Prince: Conservation and Knowledge in Qusaḡr 'Amra*, held in Rome from 22 to 23 October 2014, the proceedings of which, edited by G. De Palma - F. Anzelmo, are currently in press.

⁵⁰ Schlumberger 1986, 15, 22; Creswell 1979, 510-511.

over the world as His deputy on earth.⁵¹ This ideological framework also constitutes a starting point for investigating the meaning and purpose of the representations of royal figures in Byzantine/Western garb found at Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī and Quṣayr ‘Amra, which are respectively paired by the representation of the Caliph and a princely figure in Sasanian/Eastern garb,⁵² which will be dealt with in a future contribution.

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⁵¹ Crone - Hinds 1986.

⁵² The case of Quṣayr ‘Amra has been recently investigated by M.V. Fontana in a contribution entitled “Quṣayr ‘Amra, ca. 740 C.E.: *amīr* al-Walīd Reclining and Dressed According to Iranian Fashion”, which will appear in the *Festschrift Prof. Adriano Rossi*, edited by S. Badalkhan - G.P. Basello - M. De Chiara, and currently in press.

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Fig. 1 - Carved ivory plaque depicting a seated sovereign, possibly from Egypt, 7th-8th century, The Walters Art Gallery, acc. no. 71.62 (<http://art.thewalters.org/detail/8959/seated-king>).



Fig. 2 - Carved stucco relief portraying a sovereign, found at Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī, 727/ 728, National Museum of Damascus (after Schlumberger 1986, pl. 64).

Fig. 3 - Samitum-woven silk textile depicting a seated sovereign, possibly made in Iran or Central Asia, 7th-8th century, The David Collection, Copenhagen, acc. no. 23/2011 (www.davidmus.dk/en/collections/islamic/materials/textiles/art/23-2011, detail).



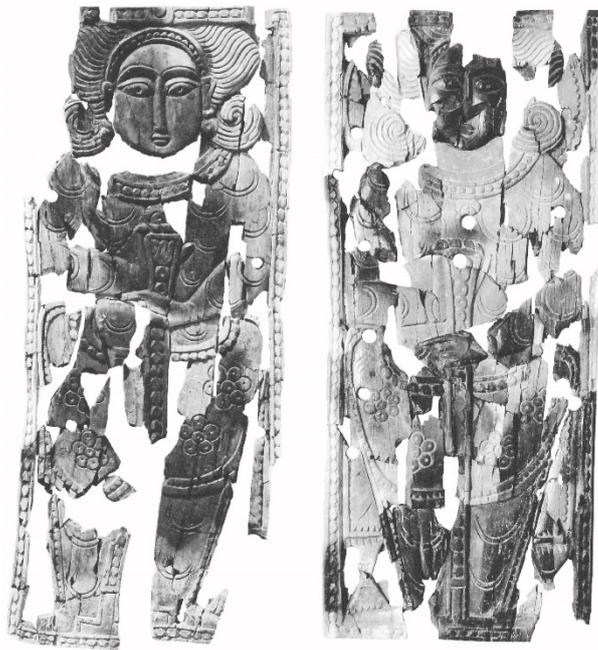


Fig. 4 - Carved ivory plaques depicting a seated sovereign, found at al-Ḥumayma, possibly made east of the Euphrates river, first half of the 8th century, under the Department of Antiquities, 'Amman (after Evans - Ratliff 2012, ills. A and C on p. 222).

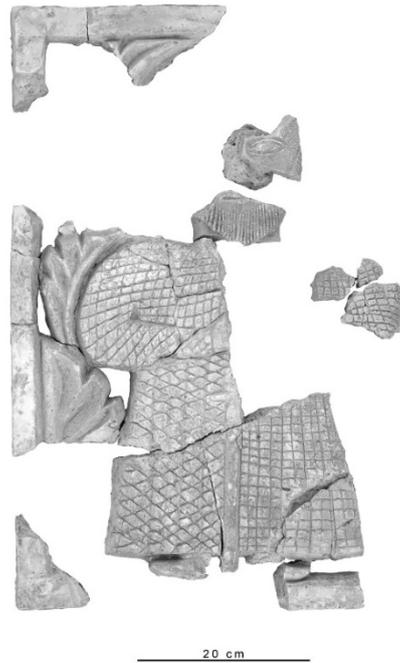


Fig. 5 - Carved stucco panel possibly depicting a seated sovereign, found at Qaṣr al-Ḥayr al-Gharbī, 727 ca., current location unknown (after Genequand 2011, fig. 14).



Fig. 6 - Naqsh-i Bahrām, rock relief portraying Bahrām II (276-293) enthroned (after Ghirshman 1962, fig. 214, detail).



Fig. 7 - Naqsh-i Rostam, rock relief portraying Bahrām II (276-293) standing (after Ghirshman 1962, fig. 213, detail).



Fig. 8 - Silver plate depicting a hunting sovereign, allegedly from Marw, 8th-9th century, Hermitage State Museum, Saint Petersburg (after Marshak 1986, fig. 29, detail).



Fig. 9 - Silver plate depicting a banqueting sovereign, allegedly from Marw, 8th-9th century, Hermitage State Museum, Saint Petersburg (after Marshak 1986, fig. 31, detail).

THE ROLE OF MADĪNA IN THE EMERGENCE OF THE
MOSQUE-DĀR AL-IMĀRA COMBINATION: A PRELIMINARY NOTE*

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This contribution aims to complete the debates concerning the Mosque of the Prophet in Madīna with a study focused on the dwelling quarters that populated the surroundings of the blessed building over time (622-711). An in-depth analysis of the sources has allowed us to sketch a reliable plan of the ensemble, finally succeeding in demonstrating that the direct link between the mosque and the caliphal residence - conceivably involving a specific ceremonial purpose - must be post-dated to the Marwānid period.

Keywords: Madīna; Mosque of the Prophet; Umayyads; *dār al-imāra*

In 1999, Jeremy Johns published a fundamental article¹ in which he peremptorily shattered one of the essential mainstays in the history of the study of Islamic archaeology: the belief that the house of the Prophet in Madīna² - modelled on the architectural prototype of the Arabic *dār*³ - provided the sound basis for the concept of the mosque. The arguments Johns proposed, partially inspired by the remarkable work of Ghazi I. Bisheh,⁴ aimed to point out the conceptual, functional and architectural independence of the “concept of the mosque” from the very first days after the *hijra*, rejecting the hypothesis that the mosque type evolved from residential architecture much in the same way that basilical churches did.⁵ This groundbreaking view - actually in accordance with the traditional Muslim address - nevertheless left a set of unanswered questions. In particular, as all studies were mostly focused on the mosque,⁶ very little attention was paid to the dwelling quarters of Muḥammad and his family in Madīna, and almost no effort at all was made to reconstruct their configuration and their relationship with the adjacent congregational building, nor to ascertain the influence of the complex⁷ on the subsequent urban and architectural

* This article follows a study developed in detail in a paper entitled “*Masjidu-hu wa masākinu-hu*, ‘His Mosque and His dwellings’, New Perspectives on the Study of ‘the House of the Prophet’ in Medina”, which the author has submitted for publication in the volume *Liminal Spaces from Sacred to Urban: The Friday Mosque and the City*, edited by A. Hilal Uğurlu - Suzan Yalman.

¹ Johns 1999.

² The so-called “domestic theory”, developed by Caetani and Creswell, claimed a purely domestic and utilitarian function for the building raised by the Prophet in Madīna, which, accordingly, was later referred to in historical and hagiographic sources as a mosque (Caetani 1905, 371-382, 432-449; Creswell 1979, 5-7).

³ «Which in Arabia at that time consisted of a series of small rooms grouped together in an irregular and haphazard fashion around an open courtyard, more or less spacious according to the number and means of the family living in it. If the family was small the rooms were all grouped together on one side, for an Arab’s private life required a private courtyard, closed all round, for the various domestic occupations of the womenfolk - weaving, cooking, washing, &c. - and for the accommodation of the domestic animals, such as dogs, donkeys, poultry, &c.; the rest of the area was enclosed by a wall» (Creswell 1979, 6-7).

⁴ Bisheh 1979, 121-128.

⁵ Cf. Ayyad 2013, 274.

⁶ Akkouch 1940; Sauvaget 1947; Bisheh 1979; Johns 1999; Abdelrahman 2010; Ayyad 2013.

⁷ I.e. the ensemble of the congregational mosque and dwelling quarters.

development of Islām. In this regard, it is important to note that Johns himself, while sharply addressing the “crude caricature” of Creswell’s primitive Islām,⁸ put forward the hypothesis that the prototype of the mosque-*dār al-imāra* combination,⁹ attested later in Baṣra, Kūfa, Wāsit and Baghdād, arose for the very first time in Madīna. To back up this suggestion, Johns affirmed that some of the apartments of the Prophet’s wives were attached to the mosque and claimed that perhaps the apartment of ‘Ā’isha had stood against the *qibla* wall.¹⁰ In an attempt to ascertain this intriguing hypothesis a thorough analysis of the sources has been carried out, which reveals interesting insights into the arrangement of the dwelling quarters adjacent to the mosque and their development over time.

1. THE MOSQUE AND THE DWELLING QUARTER FROM THE LIFETIME OF THE PROPHET TO ‘UMAR’S REBUILDING, 622-638

Although the plan of the Mosque of the Prophet published by Creswell¹¹ - along with his domestic theory - is still the most known, reproduced and quoted in literature,¹² its weak philological relevance has been widely demonstrated.¹³ Though the site of the Madīnan *ḥaram* has never been archaeologically investigated, it is possible to identify the boundaries of the earliest phases of the mosque as well as the placement of some of the dwellings raised on the spot thanks to the fundamental work of Samhūdī (d. 1506).¹⁴ The compendiums of detailed information collected by the scholar - and selected through a trailblazing critical methodology - can be verified thanks to a set of architectural elements which maintained their exact position in the mosque over time,¹⁵ allowing us to detect the location of the apartments and their architectural relationship with the adjacent mosque with a sufficient degree of precision.¹⁶

Let us start with ‘Ā’isha’s *ḥujra*,¹⁷ namely the modest *labin* house in which the Prophet lived, died and was buried. Its original position is known since even today it hosts the venerated tomb of Muḥammad. As can be observed in the modern plan of the mosque, the small building (6-7 cubits square)¹⁸ stands in the proximity of the south-eastern corner of

⁸ Johns 1999, 86-87.

⁹ Namely, the architectural device featuring a *dār al-imāra* constructed contiguous to the *qiblī* side of the mosque and with a door providing direct access to the prayer hall, the so-called *bāb al-imām*.

¹⁰ Johns 1999, 86-87.

¹¹ Creswell 1979, 8, fig. 7.

¹² Johns 1999, 74-75.

¹³ Akkouch 1940; Bisheh 1979; Johns 1999; Ayyad 2013.

¹⁴ A scholar born in Cairo in 1440 who lived in Madīna for most of his life and conducted the very first accurate reconstruction of the earlier phases of the mosque of the Prophet by collecting a wide number of ancient traditions - such as Ibn Zabāla (d. 814-5), Ibn al-Najjār (d. 1245), al-Maṭarī (d. 1340) and al-Marāghī (d. 1413) - complete with his own observations and critical remarks corroborated through a series of evaluations and measurements that the scholar himself carried out in the mosque (Abdelrahman 2010, 104-105; Lecker 1995, xii-xiv).

¹⁵ Abdelrahman 2010, 105; Sauvaget 1947, 117-118, 120.

¹⁶ Complex reconstruction work has been illustrated by the author in a previous work on the mosque of Madīna (cf. initial note *).

¹⁷ Namely the “chamber” (Lane 1968, II, 518).

¹⁸ Samhūdī I, 143.

the mosque, which encompassed it in 707-710.¹⁹ According to Samhūdī,²⁰ the apartment originally stood at a distance of 20 cubits (ca. 10 m) from the eastern wall of the mosque,²¹ which was built where the “Column of Repentance”²² stands today. The rebuilding undertaken in 628 after the battle of Khaybar gave the mosque a square form measuring 80 cubits on each side.²³ The eastern side of the mosque was shifted 10 cubits to the east, reaching the spot currently occupied by the fifth column from the *minbar*.²⁴ This means that the *hujra* of ‘Ā’isha was still separate, at a distance of approximately 5 metres from the mosque, and maintained its architectural independence - demonstrating its functional self-sufficiency - until the Marwānid period.²⁵ This information is confirmed by Ibn Sa’d,²⁶ who speaks of a path dividing the apartment of ‘Ā’isha and the congregational building. Moreover, Samhūdī informs us that the *bāb al-nabī*, i.e. the first door on the east side leaving behind the *qibla*, was opened a long time after the death of Muḥammad²⁷ and that furthermore the Prophet never used a preferential access to enter the mosque.²⁸ This fact is extremely significant for our discussion, because it provides evidence against Johns’ argument about the role the Madīnan *haram* played in influencing the formation of the mosque-*dār al-imāra* combination. Not only was there no *bāb al-nabī* during Muḥammad’s lifetime, but it seems that none of the dwellings of the Prophet’s relatives were attached to the enclosure wall of the mosque, nor did they have a private entrance to access it. For instance, we can infer from an episode reported by several sources that Umm Salama’s *hujra*,²⁹ which was close to that of ‘Ā’isha, stood separately from the mosque’s enclosure for she is reported to have built a wall of unbaked bricks in front of it in order to screen herself from public gaze.³⁰ As regards the contemporary house of Sawda, which was built

¹⁹ When al-Walīd I reconstructed the mosque (cf. below).

²⁰ Samhūdī I, 316.

²¹ This information refers to the very first phase of the mosque (622-628), predating the battle of Khaybar. At this time the building measured 63 cubits (ca. 30 m) from east to west and 70 cubits (ca. 35 m) from north to south (Samhūdī I, 238-9, 241). The dwelling quarter was exclusively composed of the chambers of ‘Ā’isha and Sawda (Ibn Sa’d I.II, 65.3; Diyārbakrī, 346; Samhūdī I, 325).

²² The fourth column from the *minbar* (Samhūdī I, 253).

²³ The measure of 97 cubits given by Samhūdī (I, 253-4) for the *qibla* wall seems should be rejected since it does not fit the accounts of early historians (Ibn Zabāla, Yaḥya al-Ḥusainī and Malīk b. Anas), who unanimously stated that after the rebuilding of 628 the side walls of the mosque reached the spot currently occupied by the fifth ranges of columns to the left and the right of the *minbar*.

²⁴ Samhūdī I, 253.

²⁵ When the mosque was enlarged towards the east for the first time.

²⁶ Ibn Sa’d I, 282.

²⁷ «The Door of the Prophet [Bāb al-Nabī] was so-called because it was located in front of the hut of ‘Ā’isha [...] and not because he [i.e. Muḥammad] used it to enter into the mosque, since it didn’t exist in his epoch». Samūdī I, 496 (transl. by Prof. Mario Casari, who I thank very much for his help in the translation of the sources).

²⁸ The *hujra* of ‘Ā’isha had just one door, opened in the northern side (Diyārbakrī, 346; Samhūdī I, 325). According to Ibn Sa’d (I, 281) «He [i.e. the Prophet] built three gates, one opposite to *qiblah* and the second was *Bāb al-Rahmat*, which is now called *Bāb al-‘Ātikah*; through the third [door, i.e. the *bāb Jibrīl*], the Apostle of Allāh, may Allāh bless him, used to enter, and this was close to the (quarter of the) children of ‘Uthmān».

²⁹ Wife of the Prophet since 624 (Roded 2000).

³⁰ Ibn Sa’d I, 429; Ibn al Nadjār, 153; Samhūdī II, 461.

close to that of ‘Ā’isha,³¹ we are informed that it was contiguous to the house of the children of ‘Uthmān, which stood some metres to the east of the mosque.³² Likewise, we have to assume that the house of ‘Alī and Fāṭima was raised at a distance of ca. 10 cubits from the eastern wall of the enclosure, because we are informed that its southern side was attached to the northern side of ‘Ā’isha’s *hujra*, and aligned with it.³³ The house of Ḥafṣa, daughter of ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb and wife of the Prophet, was placed on the *qibla* side of the *haram*.³⁴ Its distance from the mosque can be indirectly inferred, since we are informed that it was incorporated into it during the extension commissioned by ‘Uthmān in 649.³⁵ ‘Uthmān is reported to have enlarged the mosque shifting the *qibla* wall by 10 cubits (ca. 5 m) southwards with respect to its previous location.³⁶ Since the mosque, before this reconstruction, had already been extended in 638 by ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb by 10 cubits southwards,³⁷ we should argue that the house of Ḥafṣa originally stood at a distance at least equal to this value, since we know that it was not at all affected by this first enlargement. Lastly, Samhūdī adds that some of the *hujrāt* of the Prophet’s wives were on the north side of the mosque, and that they were only incorporated into the congregational space during al-Walīd’s rebuilding phase. Since both ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān enlarged the mosque northward by, respectively, 30 and 20 cubits,³⁸ we can infer that the last dwelling quarter was raised at least ca. 30 m from the north side of the building. Ṣafīya’s house, which, according to traditionalists,³⁹ was built at considerable distance from the mosque, was probably part of this compound.

Bringing all these elements together enables us, topographically speaking, to make sense of the arrangement of the complex thanks to a further indication provided by Ibn Kathīr,⁴⁰ namely that the houses of the Prophet’s wives were low structures “with near courts”, namely with their own courtyards. This information is enlightening if we consider that the apartments are always referred to as *hujra* (pl. *hujrāt*), literally “chamber”, a word which alone does not indicate a free standing architectural unit⁴¹ but rather a single element constituting the architectural model of the traditional Arabic *dār*.⁴² This terminological choice should not be undervalued as it is evidence, confirmed by Ibn Kathīr’s substantial information, that all the *hujrāt* were gathered together in different groups around private and contained courtyards. It was this very intuition which to a great extent influenced Caetani and Creswell in developing the theory of the “House of the Prophet”, for they had wrongly understood that the chambers opened onto the courtyard of the mosque, thereby

³¹ Samhūdī I, 143, 325.

³² Cf. Bisheh 1979, 146.

³³ Samhūdī I, 330, 338, 496, 497; Ibn al-Najjār, 359; al-Marāghī, 75.

³⁴ Samhūdī I, 360-361, 365, 375, 384.

³⁵ Ibn Rusta, 71; al-Samhūdī I, 360-361; 375; 510.

³⁶ Ibn Rusta, 71; Bisheh 1979, 161.

³⁷ Bisheh 1979, 157.

³⁸ Bisheh 1979, 160-161.

³⁹ Samhūdī I, 326; cf. Johns 1999, 80; Bisheh 1979, 144.

⁴⁰ Ibn Kathīr IV, 545; Abdhelrahman 2010, 89.

⁴¹ Unlike *bayt* or *dār*, for instance.

⁴² Cf. n. 3.

forming, with the latter, a great compound following the *dār* architectural type.⁴³ The foregoing instead allows us to assume that the *ḥujrāt*, far from being autonomous and isolated residential units, were part of different *dūr* of more limited dimensions, scattered all around the congregational building (fig. 1). It is important to stress that, according to the sources, at this early stage none of the houses were structurally connected with the mosque, nor did they have a preferential entrance to access it.

2. THE MOSQUE AND THE DWELLING QUARTERS DURING THE *RĀSHIDŪN* ERA, FROM ‘UMAR’S REBUILDING UP TO 661

Combining the information provided by the sources, it is possible to go further in the reconstruction of the area adjoining the mosque as it evolved in the *Rāshidūn* era (fig. 2). A good number of traditions support the assumption that after the death of Muḥammad - and perhaps already during the latter years of his life - a proper “aristocratic” district started to develop in the proximity of the congregational building. For instance, Abū Bakr, once appointed caliph, left his residence in the peripheral district of al-Sunḥ⁴⁴ to reside on the north-east side of the mosque, building a mansion in front of the door known as *bāb al-Nisā’*.⁴⁵ Through a set of details, we can also infer that the *dār* of the family of ‘Umar must have occupied the area in front of the *qiblī* wall on the east side. We have already mentioned the episode concerning the *ḥujra* of Ḥaḥṣa bint ‘Umar, standing on the *qibla* side of the mosque. Several sources⁴⁶ state that, after its demolition, Ḥaḥṣa went to dwell in the house of her brother ‘Ubayd Allāh b. ‘Umar, which was also behind the *qibla* wall but to the south of it.⁴⁷ These elements, together with the information that the same area, later known as *balāṭ al-‘adhān*, was the private property of ‘Umar,⁴⁸ would suggest that the second of the *Rāshidūn* caliphs owned a *dār* where he lived together with his family, and of which the apartments of Ḥaḥṣa and ‘Ubayd Allāh constituted just a portion. As for ‘Uthmān’s residence, we are certain that it stood to the east of the mosque, in front of the *bāb Jibrīl*⁴⁹ - which indeed is also known by the name of *bāb ‘Uthmān*⁵⁰ - and which, in all likelihood, the third rightly-guided caliph used to enter the mosque. As for ‘Alī, we have reason to believe that, before leaving Madīna for Kūfa in the last years of his troubled caliphate, he resided with his wife Fāṭima and their children to the east of the mosque,⁵¹ in

⁴³ Johns, in dealing with the building function, lists a series of details in which the ‘House of the Prophet’ departs from the ethnographic model of the Arabic *dār*: the exaggerated size of the courtyard being «far greater than any purely domestic dwelling is likely to have been» (Johns 1999, 74), the presence of three main entrances instead of the one customary in the traditional domestic architecture of *Ḥijāz*, and the fact that the houses of the Prophet’s wives - built against the exterior of the courtyard - aside from being an «architectural nonsense» (Johns 1999, 74), were inadmissibly exposed to public gaze.

⁴⁴ Ṭabarī III [1882-85], 1263; Ibn Sa‘d II, 265, 269, and III, 174-175.

⁴⁵ Although we are not directly informed about this fact, it can be inferred thanks to a statement by Samhūdī (I, 499, 528), according to which the house later built by Rayṭa b. Abdul ‘Abbās opposite the *bāb al-Nisā’* encompassed part of the *dār* of Abū Bakr.

⁴⁶ Ibn Rusta, 67; al-Marāghī, 73; Samhūdī I, 360, 361, 510.

⁴⁷ Cf. Bisheh 1979, 144.

⁴⁸ Whitcomb 2008, 20; al-‘Alī 1961, 80.

⁴⁹ Samhūdī I, 498; Ṭabarī, V [1893], 2827; Caetani 1914, 232.

⁵⁰ al-Ḥarbī, 390; Bisheh 1979, 207.

⁵¹ Cf. above, 214.

an apartment that probably, at least initially,⁵² was part of the same compound as those of ‘Ā’isha and Sawda.

The fact that all the caliphs owned a private *dār* in which they resided in the vicinity of the mosque is essential information, which has never received the attention it deserves. It testifies that the *dār al-imāra*⁵³ at this time was still a distant concept, since the caliphal residences scattered around the mosque of the Prophet had no official nor institutional relevance, constituting a private property of each caliph and their families with an essentially domestic and residential purpose. On the contrary, in this early stage the mosque was the only building in the city devoted to political and governmental purposes⁵⁴ and the closeness of the caliph’s residence was a practical requirement to meet the caliph’s need to go there several times a day to fulfil his governmental duties. This situation saw the neighbourhoods of the mosque become a highly coveted place of residence for the notables of the city. Living in the neighbourhoods of the blessed mosque of the Prophet, in fact, seemed not only to bestow extraordinary spiritual benefits⁵⁵ but also to represent a sign of social prestige.⁵⁶ We can detect at least some of the dwelling compounds constituting this noble quarter: for example, Samhūdī⁵⁷ informs us that to the west of the mosque, a few metres north of the *bāb al-Rahmān*, stood an *uṭum*⁵⁸ known as Fāri’ belonging to the Prophet’s bard, Ḥassān b. Thābit, the ruins of which were excavated in 1953 during the first Saudi expansion of the mosque.⁵⁹ Moreover, while reporting the episode of the expropriation and destruction of Ḥafṣa’s *hujra*, Ibn Rusta⁶⁰ adds the noteworthy information that, together with it, part of the mansion⁶¹ of al-‘Abbās b. ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib⁶² was also brought into the mosque.⁶³ We have reason to believe that al-‘Abbās’ house stood

⁵² We are informed that the door linking the apartment of Fātima and ‘Alī with the *hujra* of ‘Ā’isha was closed after a quarrel between the two women (Ibn al-Najjār, 359; al-Marāghī, 75).

⁵³ Here this term means an independent secular building acting as the seat of political power and the institutional residence of the governor.

⁵⁴ Pedersen 1991, 644-677; Wellhausen 1902, 6, 81.

⁵⁵ al-Tirmidhi, n. 594; Abū Dāwūd I, n. 455; al-Baghawī II, 399.

⁵⁶ The same phenomenon can be observed in coeval early Islamic urban contexts, such as Kūfa (al-Ya’qūbī, 141-145) Baṣra (Ibn al-Faqīh, 231; Massignon 1963, 69; AlSayyad 1991, 49), Fustāṭ (Kubiak 1987, 95-96).

⁵⁷ Samhūdī I, 210-211.

⁵⁸ A multi-tiered quadrangular building with open yards, enclosed by walls and equipped with fortified entrances, namely a sort of tower-house. They were symbols of Anṣārī tribal autonomy and an important component in the prestige of their tribal leaders (Ayyad 2015, 18-19; Lecker 1995, 10, 12-13).

⁵⁹ Ayyad 2015, 21, fig. 6 (with related bibliography).

⁶⁰ Ibn Rusta, 71.

⁶¹ Note that the word employed here is *dār*, namely the composite architectural type described above (cf. above, n. 3).

⁶² The half-brother of Muḥammad’s father. He gave the uterine sister of his wife, Maymūna, to the Prophet in marriage in 629 (Watt 1960). We can speculate that Maymūna’s chamber was located within the al-‘Abbās *dār* some 10 metres away from the *qibla* side of the mosque, following the model of Ḥafṣa’s *hujra* (cf. above).

⁶³ According to Balādhūrī (1919, 20), al-‘Abbās’ house was incorporated within the mosque during the enlargement ordered by ‘Umar (638) and the uncle of the Prophet would have donated it as a gift to Allah and the Muslims, refusing the caliph’s offer to purchase it. Nevertheless, this information must be considered with caution, for it may constitute one of the attempts - spread in 9th and 10th-century historical literature - of ‘Abbasid propaganda to rehabilitate the controversial figure of the eponymous ancestor of the dynasty (cf. Watt 1960).

to the right of the *qibla*, since we know that the left side was inhabited by the family of ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb.⁶⁴ In this regard it is remarkable to observe how the area adjoining the *qibla* does not appear to have been particularly valued during the *Rāshidūn* era.⁶⁵ In fact, we should bear in mind that Ibn ‘Abd al-Muṭṭālib, although a close relative of the Prophet and a member of the ancient Meccan aristocracy, was at the time a controversial character, unpopular with many *ṣahāba* and with ‘Umar himself due to his late and timeserving conversion and his previous anti-Islamic allegiance.⁶⁶ It would seem, conversely, that for the most part both caliphs and esteemed citizens preferred to reside - perhaps following the Prophet or for other topographical reasons as yet unknown to us - on the east side of the mosque. This is where the hero of the Muslim conquest, Khālīd b. al-Walīd, is supposed to have lived. According to Abū Ishāq al-Ḥarbī, his house stood not far from the *bāb ‘Uthmān*,⁶⁷ some metres in front of the oriental wall of the mosque.⁶⁸ Ṭabarī’s detailed account of the murder of ‘Uthmān⁶⁹ provides not only a vague idea of the structure of the caliph’s residence⁷⁰ but it also informs us that the residence of ‘Amr b. Ḥazan al-Anṣārī was attached to that of the caliph, and thus to the east side of the congregational building.⁷¹

The overall idea of the complex outlined above, revealing the scarce importance of the area adjoining the *qibla* and the apparent prominence of the eastern side, would seem to disprove the role of pre-Umayyad Madīna as a model for the later mosque-*dār al-imāra* combination.⁷² An interesting discussion in this regard concerns the matter of the doors. We have already pointed out that during the lifetime of Muḥammad there were no preferential doors for the Prophet to enter the mosque, since the so-called *bāb al-nabī* was opened in front of ‘Ā’isha’s *ḥujra* several years after his death.⁷³ Likewise, there is no mention of private entrances used by Abū Bakr⁷⁴ or ‘Umar, nor by ‘Uthmān, who, in all likelihood, would have entered the mosque through the *bāb Jibrīl*, the public eastern gate,

⁶⁴ Cf. above, 215.

⁶⁵ Note in fact that, besides the Prophet, three of the four rightly-guided caliphs chose to live on the east side of the mosque. The only caliph who settled on the *qibla* side, ‘Umar, in all likelihood owned that plot before being appointed to lead the *umma*, as his daughter Ḥafṣa is said to have lived there since 624 when the prophet married her (Bukhārī VII, 62, n. 55).

⁶⁶ He fought against the Muslims at Badr and he joined Muḥammad in 630 as he marched on Mecca (Watt 1960).

⁶⁷ al-Ḥarbī, 391.

⁶⁸ We can infer that it stood some distance from the mosque since it was not affected by the enlargement ordered by al-Walīd I, who extended the east side some 15 metres eastwards (cf. below).

⁶⁹ Ṭabarī VI [1898], 3000-3004.

⁷⁰ Conceivably a *dār*, since we can infer, judging by the successful siege conducted there, that it was not fitted with fortifications and it could not therefore fall into the category of an *āṭām*, the fortified tower-houses found in the city at the time (see above, n. 59; cf. al-‘Alī 1961). Moreover, we are indirectly informed by some details in the account that the building should have had a courtyard and a wooden *saqīfa* (Ṭabarī VI [1898], 3013, 3018), both constituting elements of the *dār* architectural type (above, note 3).

⁷¹ Ṭabarī VI [1898], 3005, 3009.

⁷² This particular device features the presence of the palace leaning against the *qiblī* wall.

⁷³ Cf. n. 27.

⁷⁴ As noted by Bisheh, the existence of a private entrance owned by Abū Bakr cited in some sources may be a later invention, for the news refers to the time of the death of the Prophet, i.e. when Abū Bakr still lived in al-Ṣuhn, as pointed out above.

for it became known as *bāb ʿUthmān*.⁷⁵ It is interesting to note that the very first private door we have information about was a *khawkha*⁷⁶ in the *qiblī* wall opened as a sort of compensation after the demolition of Ḥafṣa's *hujra*.⁷⁷ Although this seems to represent a plausible prototype of the mosque-*dār al-imāra* combination - in the form of a residence⁷⁸ situated on the *qibla* side of the mosque and somehow directly connected with the sanctuary - we should remember that this particular complex, besides having been built without true programmatic intent, was never devoted to caliphal use since ʿUmar was already dead by the time the door was opened and the link created.⁷⁹

Conversely, it is remarkable to observe how this programmatic will began to emerge with the advent of Umayyad authority and reached its peak with the rebuilding of the mosque by al-Walīd I (707-10). Marwān b. al-Ḥakim, Muʿāwiya's governor of Madīna (661-668 and 674-677),⁸⁰ was the very first representative of caliphal authority to create a door in the sanctuary for his exclusive use, although not in the *qiblī* wall. This door, originally known as *bāb Marwān* and later as *bāb al-Salām*,⁸¹ was located on the west side of the mosque⁸² and connected the prayer hall with a paved path⁸³ leading to Marwān's residence⁸⁴ which, according to the sources, stood south-west of the congregational building.⁸⁵

3. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, although the emergence of a private connection serving the governor's visits to the great mosque can be dated to the Sufyanid period, we cannot yet talk about a proper mosque-*dār al-imāra* combination. Rather, we have to assume that Marwān's *hiṣn* stood separately from the congregational building, at a distance of ca. 20 cubits, as this was the amount by which it was enlarged westwards under al-Walīd I in 707-710 and which, based on the silence of the sources on the matter, presumably did not affect the structure of

⁷⁵ Cf. above, 215, 217.

⁷⁶ A window-like aperture opened onto the mosque (Bisheh 1979, 140; Lane 1968, II, 518).

⁷⁷ Ibn Rusta, 71; Samhūdī I, 360-361, 375, 510.

⁷⁸ The *dār* of the descendants of ʿUmar.

⁷⁹ I.e. in 649, during ʿUthmān's caliphate.

⁸⁰ Bosworth 1991, 621.

⁸¹ It is noteworthy that the *bāb al-Salām* was still part of the mosque rebuilt by al-Walīd, who enlarged the building westwards reconstructing the west side *ex-novo*. As suggested by Sauvaget, we have reason to believe that this door, much like other historical architectural elements in the mosque, «répond à une entrée ancienne, refaite sur un nouvel emplacement voisin de sa position originelle, et ayant retenu le nom sous lequel elle était connue antérieurement aux travaux d'al-Walīd» (Sauvaget 1947, 77; cf. Bisheh 1979, 158).

⁸² Sauvaget 1947, 77; Bishesh 1979, 158, 323, n. 152.

⁸³ Bisheh 1979, 94.

⁸⁴ It is worth noting that Marwān's residence became known as *al-ḥiṣn al-ʿatīq*, namely "the ancient fortress" (Whitcomb 2008, 20). We therefore have reason to believe that it was a fortified place, although it is not clear from the sources whether it was already equipped with fortifications during Marwān's *wilāya* or whether it acquired the appearance of a *hiṣn* at a later stage. For a thorough analysis of the *hiṣn* architectural type, see Terrasse (1986).

⁸⁵ Significantly, what happened in Madīna during Marwān's *wilāya* reflects the phenomenon attested in both Kūfa and Baṣra in the same period (i.e. during Muʿāwiya's caliphate), when Ziyād b. Abīhi realised a connection between the congregational mosque and his residence.

Marwān's *dār*.⁸⁶ We could speculate, conversely, that one of the aims of this enlargement was to create the structural connection between the mosque and the palace which, over the years, had become the official seat of the city government and, most remarkably, the place where the caliph himself resided during his visits to Madīna.⁸⁷ It is not coincidental that the first *bāb al-Imām*⁸⁸ was created in the building at the same time, which, together with the *mihrāb* and the axial transept, seems to act as part of a royal device with a specific ritual purpose. Reading between the lines of Ṭabarī's account of al-Walīd I' first inaugural visit to the congregational building⁸⁹ may in fact seem to suggest elements of a well-defined ceremonial fitting the architectural frame of the Marwānid mosque and involving a connection with the palace. An etiquette which - to some extent following that of the caliphal audiences - was conceivably linked to the *bay'a* (pledge of allegiance) and precisely when it was pledged to designated successor of the caliph probably in the congregational mosque.⁹⁰

The concept of the ritualized paying of allegiance to the *walī al-'ahd*⁹¹ acquired substance in the context of the bloody fratricide wars over succession that characterized the Umayyad era, and that probably to a large extent influenced the architecture of the mosque and the *dār al-imāra*.

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⁸⁶ al-Walīd enlarged the mosque by 44.5 cubits from east to west (Bisheh 1979, 211); since we know that he added five columns in the sanctuary to the right of the *mihrāb* (Bisheh 1979, 214; cf. Sauvaget 1947, 71-73), we can calculate that the western side was shifted westwards by ca. 25 cubits (calculating an approximate value of 5 cubits for each intercolumniation).

⁸⁷ Indirect information on this comes from an episode related by Ibn al-Najjār according to which the caliph Sulaymān b. 'Abd al-Malik ordered the demolition of the south-western minaret because it overlooked the house of Marwān, where the caliph resided during a visit to Madīna in 97 A.H. (Bisheh 1979, 211-212, 331, n. 188).

⁸⁸ I.e. a door flanking the *mihrāb* and giving access to the *maqṣūra* reserved for the exclusive use of the caliph or the governor during the Friday prayer (Sauvaget 1947, 85).

⁸⁹ Ṭabarī II [1881-82], 1233-1234.

⁹⁰ For an in-depth discussion of the ritual of the *bay'a* and its development throughout the Umayyad era, see Marsham 2009.

⁹¹ Designated heir to the throne (Marsham 2009, 113-122).

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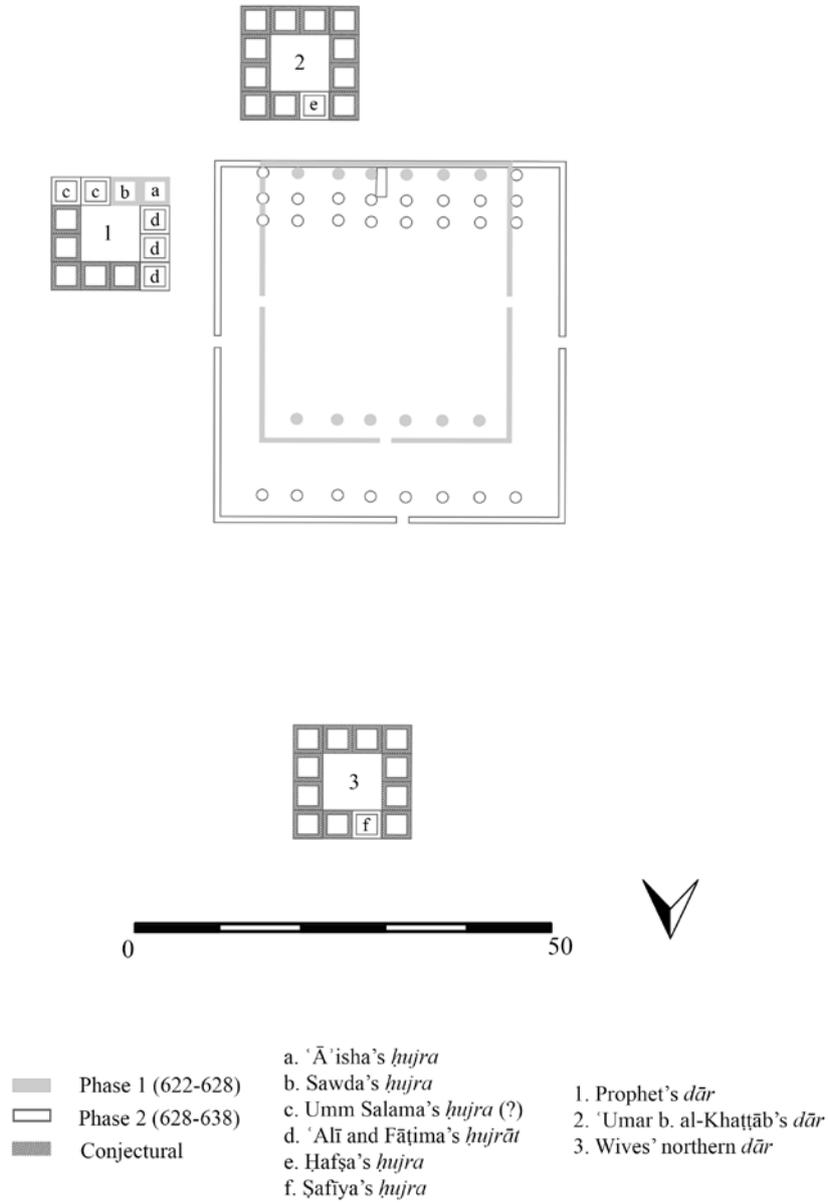


Fig. 1 - Madīna: Mosque of the Prophet and adjoining dwelling quarters during Muḥammad's lifetime (622-638 AD; drawing by the author).

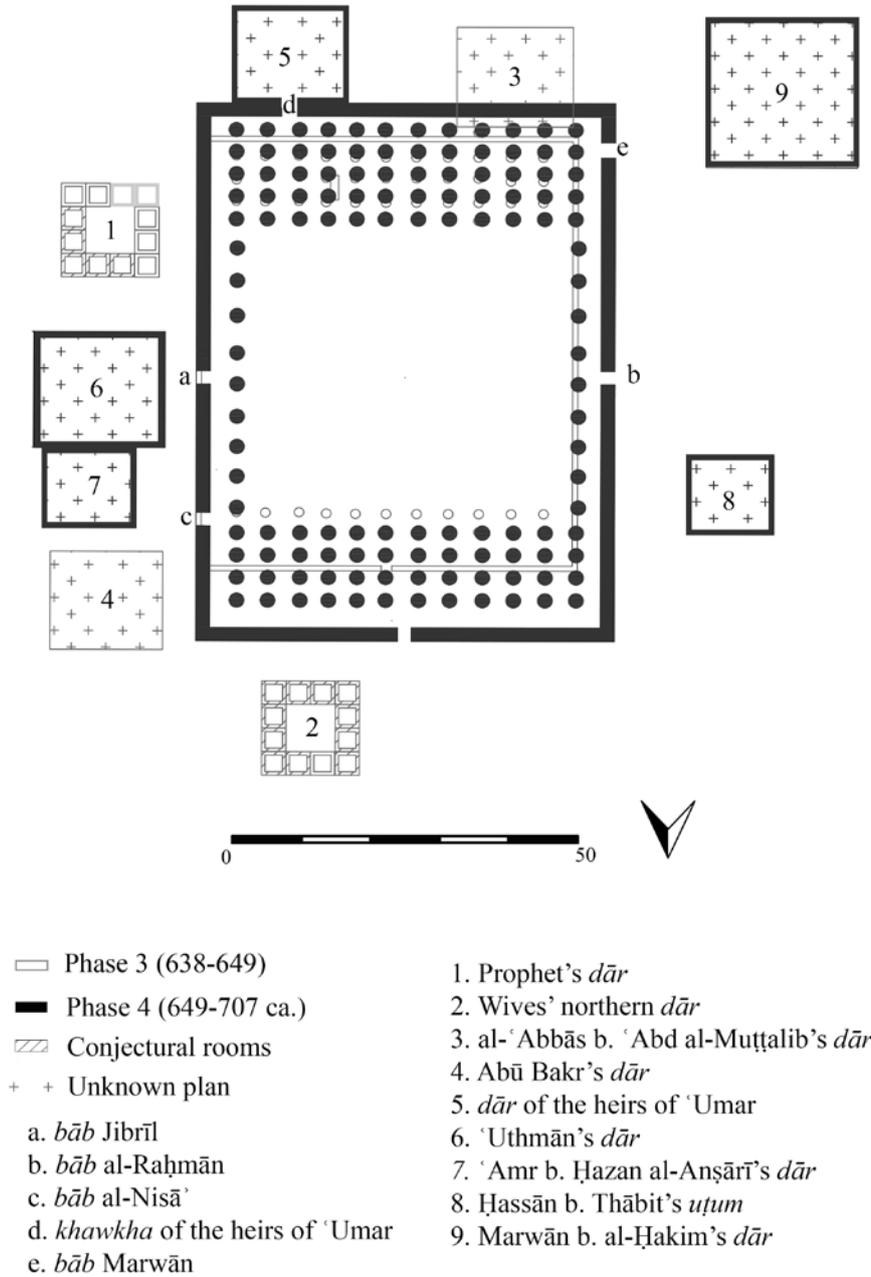


Fig. 2 - Madīna: Mosque of the Prophet and adjoining dwelling quarters after the rebuilding by the caliphs 'Umar and 'Uthmān (ca. 638-707 AD; drawing by the author).

THE EL-ATAN TOMB:
AN EARLY BRONZE IVB FEMALE BURIAL IN THE HEART OF BETHLEHEM

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An Early Bronze IVB tomb was discovered by the MOTA-DACH on June 2009 in the city of Bethlehem, nearby the Milk Grotto. Its architectural features, burials and associated funerary equipment are here considered and compared with those of other Early Bronze IV cemeteries and necropolises of Southern Levant to grasp the historical-archaeological meaning of this discovery.

Keywords: Bethlehem; el-Atan; Early Bronze IV; necropolis; shaft-tomb

1. INTRODUCTION

This study stems from the project of rescue archaeology in the district of Bethlehem started in 2015, which is part of the cooperation agreement between Sapienza University of Rome and the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities of Palestine - Department of Archaeology and Cultural Heritage concerning the protection of sites in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem.¹ The Aim of this paper is to contextualize the el-Atan Tomb in a regional frame, and to appraise it within the funerary customs of Early Bronze IV central Palestine, also in the light of the recently discovered cemeteries of Khalet al-Jam'a and Jebel Dhafer at Bethlehem itself.²

2. THE EL-ATAN TOMB

On 18th June 2009 a tomb was discovered during some construction works for a private house, 400 m east of the Nativity Church, along el-Atan street, in the city of Bethlehem (fig. 1).³ In the same day, the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (MOTA) and the Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage (DACH) of Bethlehem, directed by Mohammed Ghayyada, with the participation of the Palestinian Tourist Police, started rescue excavations. Works were carried out under pressure of ongoing building activities in a week. A summary of the discoveries is offered in this article.

2.1. *The tomb*

The tomb consisted of a large round burial chamber and one vertical shaft (fig. 2). The shaft was explored partially due to its location in a nearby land belonging to a different owner which had already built on it. The bulldozer opened accidentally an entrance on the eastern wall of the chamber, luckily without damaging neither human remains nor the associated funerary equipment (figs. 3-4). This allowed for the excavation of the chamber and for the description of its structure as follows. The tomb consisted of a rock-cut underground chamber (Chamber 1), oval-shaped, 4.9×3.8 m, with the main axis oriented north-south. The domed roof was 1.7 m high, hewn in the yellowish friable limestone

¹ Nigro *et al.* 2015, 185.

² Nigro *et al.* 2015; 2017, 16-21.

³ Nigro *et al.* 2017, 21-22.

bedrock typical of the eastern slopes of the Nativity Church hill. The shaft and the entrance were to the north of the chamber, closed by a roughly carved limestone slab. On the tomb walls traces of hewing were visible (fig. 5), made by a 4 cm-wide tool (adze?),⁴ especially on its western and southern sides. Two niches, circa 30 cm wide, were cut into the northern (Niche 1) and the western (Niche 2) walls of the cave, the former just aside the entrance.

Debris and soil collapsed from the roof, named filling F.1, covered the northern half of the chamber. Under this debris layer, there was a red-brownish silty layer (F.2) spread almost all over the tomb, probably originated by natural drainage and erosion. The first depositional layer was, thus, filling F.3, represented by a dark red sandy soil 17-20 cm thick, with Burial 1 in the middle and its funerary set all around it. Further goods had been displaced along the western wall of the chamber, including some piled-up pottery vessels. Over the flattened bedrock floor (Locus L.4), almost in the middle of the chamber, a complete adult female skeleton⁵ (Burial 1; fig. 6) laid, flexed on the right side, north-west oriented and facing west; nearby another fragmentary skull (Burial 2) was found, possibly a relic of an earlier use of the chamber.

2.2. *The funerary assemblage*

The funerary set (fig. 7) comprised 16 pottery vessels: 4 four-spouted lamps, 5 bowls, 4 jars, 2 amphoriskoi, and a beaker, belonging to types dating back to the Early Bronze IVB. Several items accompanied the dead, namely a copper pin, 5 carnelian beads and a flint scraper.⁶

Four-spouted lamps with flat base retrieved in the tomb belong to the wheel made type (figs. 8-11). They were manufactured with a fine fabric and fired at a high temperature (more than 800°), with thin walls, suggesting a later date in the Early Bronze IV.⁷ The high number of lamps might indicate that the tomb had hosted more burials before.

Five simple wide shallow bowls show slight carination and combed decoration below the rim (figs. 12-13); they belong to a type common in southern Palestine.⁸

Amphoriskoi exhibit a large base, rounded body and small handles (they were made from a lump of clay applied and then pierced with a stick; fig. 14).

Jars are of medium size and have a flat base and ovoid shaped body (figs. 15-16). The body was hand-coiled and inside not always smoothed, the neck is wheel made built separately, and then added to the body, as usual in EB IVB vessels.⁹ The decoration, on jars and amphoriskoi, was obtained with a comb, with 5, 6 or 7 teeth, on the shoulders. Incised lines sometimes overlap in order to produce a thicker band. Jar BL1246 presents also a diagonal row of comb indentations. Jar BL1237 (fig. 21) is characterized by a very fine fabric and shows high firing, with a deeply engraved horizontal and wavy combed

⁴ These traces are comparable to those from Jebel Qa'aqir (Dever 2014, 20-21, fig. 2:19) and Khirbet el-Karmil (Dever 1975, 20-21).

⁵ Human remains were studied by Dr. Mohammad Al-Zawahra of the Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage of Bethlehem.

⁶ Nigro *et al.* 2017, 21-22.

⁷ Nigro 1999, 39.

⁸ D'Andrea 2014, vol. 2, 193.

⁹ D'Andrea 2012, 24.

decoration.¹⁰ Its capacity is 992-1130 cc.¹¹ It has been classified as ‘outsize cup’¹² or ‘small biconical jar’¹³ and has some possible parallels in a jar from Jericho¹⁴ and in two jars retrieved in Cave II of ‘Araç en-Na‘sanah (Wadi ed-Daliyeh).¹⁵

2.2.1. Pottery catalogue

BL1229, lamp (fig. 8). Context: Chamber 1, Filling 3. Class: Simple Ware (for special uses). State of preservation: complete. Technique of manufacture: hand and wheel made. Firing: medium-high. Outer colour: 2.5 YR 8/4 (pink); inner colour: 2.5 YR 8/4 (pink). Temper/inclusions: mineral and vegetal; dimension: small; frequency: medium. Rim diameter: 17 cm; base diameter: 8 cm; height: 4.5 cm; rim width: 0.4 cm; wall width: 0.8 cm; base width: 0.5 cm. Dating: EB IVB. Bibliography: Dever 2014, fig. 2.97:7

BL1230, lamp (fig. 9). Context: Chamber 1, Filling 3. Class: Simple Ware (for special uses). State of preservation: whole form, soot on one spout. Technique of manufacture: handmade. Firing: medium. Fabric colour: 2.5 YR 7/4 (light reddish brown); outer colour: 2.5 YR 7/4 (light reddish brown); inner colour: 2.5 YR 7/4 (light reddish brown). Temper/inclusions: mineral and vegetal; dimension: small and medium; frequency: medium. Rim diameter: 11 cm; base diameter: 7 cm; height: 4.7 cm; rim width: 0.5 cm; wall width: 0.5 cm; base width: 0.6 cm. Dating: EB IVB. Bibliography: Dever 2014, fig. 2.90:1.

BL1231, lamp (fig. 10). Context: Chamber 1, Filling 3. Class: Simple Ware (for special uses). State of preservation: complete, soot on one spout. Technique of manufacture: hand and wheel made. Firing: high. Outer colour: 2.5 YR 7/6 (light red); inner colour: 2.5 YR 7/6 (light red). Temper/inclusions: mineral and vegetal; dimension: small; frequency: low. Rim diameter: 15.1 cm; base diameter: 8 cm; height: 4.5 cm; rim width: 0.35 cm; wall width: 0.5 cm; base width: 0.4 cm. Dating: EB IVB. Bibliography: Gonen 2001, fig. 31:10.

BL1234, lamp (fig. 11). Context: Chamber 1, Filling 3. Class: Simple Ware (for special uses). State of preservation: complete, soot on two spouts. Technique of manufacture: hand and wheel made. Firing: medium-high. Outer colour: 5 YR 5/8 (yellowish red); inner colour: 5 YR 5/8 (yellowish red). Temper/inclusions: mineral and vegetal; dimension: small and medium; frequency: medium. Rim diameter: 15.8 cm; base diameter: 8.5 cm; height: 3.5 cm; rim width: 0.4 cm; wall width: 0.5 cm; base width: 0.5 cm. Dating: EB IVB. Bibliography: Smith 1962, pl. X:6-8; Dever 1975, fig. 4:16; Gonen 2001, fig. 21:6.

BL1244, beaker (fig. 12). Context: Chamber 1, Filling 3. Class: Simple Ware. State of preservation: complete. Technique of manufacture: hand and wheel made. Firing: low. Outer colour: 2.5 YR 7/8 (light red); inner colour: 2.5 YR 7/8 (light red). Temper/inclusions: mineral; dimension: small; frequency: medium. Rim diameter: 8.5 cm; base diameter: 5 cm; height: 9.5 cm; rim width: 0.3 cm; wall width: 0.5 cm; base width: 0.5 cm. Dating: EB IVB. Bibliography: Prag 1995, fig. 23:11; Gonen 2001, fig. 19:4.

BL1228, bowl (fig. 13). Context: Chamber 1, Filling 3. Class: Simple Ware. State of preservation: complete. Technique of manufacture: hand and wheel made. Firing: high. Outer colour: 7.5 YR 8/4 (pink); inner colour: 7.5 YR 8/4 (pink). Temper/inclusions: mineral and vegetal; dimension: small; frequency: medium. Decoration: combed. Rim diameter: 17.8 cm; base diameter: 10.5 cm; height: 6.4 cm; rim width: 0.4 cm; wall width: 0.7 cm; base width: 0.4 cm. Dating: EB IVB. Bibliography: Dever 2014, fig. 2.96:10.

BL1232, bowl (fig. 13). Context: Chamber 1, Filling 3. Class: Simple Ware. State of preservation: complete. Technique of manufacture: hand and wheel made. Firing: medium-high. Fabric colour: 7.5 YR 6/8 (reddish yellow); outer colour: 7.5 YR 8/4 (pink); inner colour: 7.5 YR 8/4 (pink). Temper/inclusions: mineral; dimension: small; frequency: medium-high. Decoration: combed. Rim diameter: 20.8 cm; base diameter: 11.5 cm; height: 7.3 cm; rim width: 0.5 cm; wall width: 0.5 cm; base width: 0.5 cm. Dating: EB IVB. Bibliography: Tufnell 1958, pl. 66:430; Dever 2014, fig. 2.89:12.

BL1233, bowl (fig. 13). Context: Chamber 1, Filling 3. Class: Simple Ware. State of preservation: complete. Technique of manufacture: hand and wheel made. Firing: medium. Outer colour: 7.5 YR 6/6 (reddish brown);

¹⁰ D’Andrea 2014 vol. 1, 102, fig. 3.62.

¹¹ Shaub - Rast 1989, 493-494, fig. 285.

¹² Dever 1974, 38, pls. 12:6, 13:3.

¹³ Nigro 2003a, fig. 20:5.

¹⁴ Kenyon - Holland 1982, fig. 94:10.

¹⁵ Dever 1974, 38, pls. 12:6, 13:3. These two can be compared especially for combed decoration and S-shaped profile, but not for the rim, pointed in the el-Atan specimen and flattened in the other two.

inner colour: 7.5 YR 6/6 (reddish brown). Temper/inclusions: mineral and vegetal; dimension: small; frequency: medium. Rim diameter: 17.7 cm; base diameter: 10.7 cm; height: 6 cm; rim width: 0.3 cm; wall width: 0.6 cm; base width: 0.4 cm. Dating: EB IVB. Bibliography: Dever 2014, fig. 2.91:10.

BL1235, bowl (fig. 12). Context: Chamber 1, Filling 3. Class: Simple Ware. State of preservation: complete. Technique of manufacture: hand and wheel made. Firing: high. Outer colour: 7.5 YR 7/4 (pink); inner colour: 7.5 YR 7/4 (pink). Temper/inclusions: mineral and vegetal; dimension: small; frequency: medium. Rim diameter: 15.8 cm; base diameter: 8 cm; height: 6.4 cm; rim width: 0.3 cm; wall width: 0.7 cm; base width: 0.5 cm. Dating: EB IVB. Bibliography: Dever 2014, fig. 2.97:8.

BL1236, bowl (fig. 13). Context: Chamber 1, Filling 3. Class: Simple Ware. State of preservation: complete. Technique of manufacture: hand and wheel made. Firing: medium-high. Outer colour: 7.5 YR 8/3 (pink); inner colour: 7.5 YR 8/3 (pink). Temper/inclusions: mineral and vegetal; dimension: small and medium; frequency: medium. Rim diameter: 26.7 cm; base diameter: 9.5 cm; height: 10 cm; rim width: 0.5 cm; wall width: 0.6 cm; base width: 0.8 cm. Dating: EB IVB. Bibliography: Dever 2014, fig. 5.10:4.

BL1227, amphoriskos (fig. 14). Context: Chamber 1, Filling 3. Class: Simple Ware. State of preservation: complete. Technique of manufacture: hand and wheel made. Firing: medium. Fabric colour: 5 YR 7/6 (reddish yellow); outer colour: 5 YR 7/6 (reddish yellow); inner colour: 5 YR 7/6 (reddish yellow). Temper/inclusions: mineral; dimension: small; frequency: high. Decoration: combed. Rim diameter: 8.3 cm; base diameter: 8 cm; height: 15.5 cm; rim width: 0.4 cm; wall width: 0.4 cm; base width: 0.5 cm. Dating: EB IVB. Bibliography: Dever 2014, fig. 2.88:5.

BL1245, amphoriskos (fig. 14). Context: Chamber 1, Filling 3. Class: Simple Ware. State of preservation: whole form. Technique of manufacture: handmade. Firing: medium-high. Fabric colour: 10 YR 7/6 (yellow); outer colour: 10 YR 7/6 (yellow); inner colour: 10 YR 7/6 (yellow). Temper/inclusions: mineral; dimension: small and medium; frequency: medium-high. Decoration: combed. It was made after the application of handles, as it also at Efrata.¹⁶ Rim diameter: 10 cm; base diameter: 7 cm; height: 15 cm; rim width: 0.3 cm; wall width: 0.4 cm; base width: 0.5 cm. Dating: EB IVB. Bibliography: Dever 2014, fig. 2.89:7.

BL1246, jar (fig. 15). Context: Chamber 1, Filling 3. Class: Simple Ware. State of preservation: whole form. Technique of manufacture: hand and wheel made. Firing: medium-high. Fabric colour: 2.5 YR 7/6 (light red); outer colour: 2.5 YR 7/6 (light red); inner colour: 2.5 YR 7/6 (light red). Temper/inclusions: mineral and vegetal; dimension: small and medium; frequency: medium. Decoration: incised and combed. Rim diameter: 11 cm; base diameter: 13 cm; height: 24.5 cm; rim width: 0.4 cm; wall width: 0.6 cm; base width: 0.5 cm. Dating: EB IVB. Bibliography: Sa'ad 1964, pl. XXXV:1; Gonen 2001, fig. 21:1.

BL1237, jar (fig. 16). Context: Chamber 1, Filling 3. Class: Simple Ware. State of preservation: complete. Technique of manufacture: hand and wheel made. Firing: medium-high. Fabric colour: 2.5 YR 6/6 (light red); outer colour: 7.5 YR 7/2 (pinkish gray); inner colour: 7.5 YR 7/2 (pinkish gray). Temper/inclusions: mineral and vegetal; dimension: small; frequency: low. Decoration: combed. Rim diameter: 14.7 cm; base diameter: 13.5 cm; height: 19 cm; rim width: 0.4 cm; wall width: 0.9 cm. Dating: EB IVB. Bibliography: Kenyon - Holland 1982, fig. 94:10; Dever 1974, 38, pls. 12:6, 13:3; Aharonovich 2016, fig. 11:2.

2.2.2. Personal items catalogue (fig. 17)

BL1238, copper pin. Context: Chamber 1, Filling 3. State of preservation: complete. Material: copper. Technique of manufacture: moulded. Length: 12 cm; width: 0.6 cm (head); diameter: 0.2 cm; weight: 3 g. Description: copper pin with rolled head and circular cross section belonging to a well-known type.¹⁷ Dating: EB IVB. Bibliography: Lapp 1966, fig. 2:8.

BL1226, flint scraper. Context: Chamber 1, Filling 3. State of preservation: complete. Material: flint. Technique of manufacture: chipped. Fabric colour: 5 YR 4/6 (yellowish red). Length: 4.2 cm; width: 2 cm; thickness: max 0.8 min 0.2 cm. Description: flint scraper with trapezoid cross section, cortex on the tang, retouched along the blade. Dating: EB IVB. Bibliography: Ellis 2010, 255, fig.13.1:1.

BL1225, bead. Context: Chamber 1, Filling 3. State of preservation: complete. Material: carnelian. Technique of manufacture: smoothed, pierced. Fabric colour: 5 YR 7/8 (reddish yellow). Thickness: 0.3 cm; diameter: 0.8 cm. Description: donut shaped carnelian bead. Dating: EB IVB. Bibliography: Kenyon 1965, figs. 25:2; 33:5.

¹⁶ Gonen 2001, 31.

¹⁷ Gernez 2008, 247-248, type Ep.1, fig. 8, pl. 11.

BL1239, bead. Context: Chamber 1, Filling 3. State of preservation: complete. Material: carnelian. Technique of manufacture: smoothed, pierced. Fabric colour: 2 YR 7/8 (light red). Thickness: 0.2 cm; diameter: 0.6 cm. Description: donut shaped carnelian bead. Dating: EB IVB. Bibliography: Kenyon 1965, figs. 25:2; 33:5.

BL1240, bead. Context: Chamber 1, Filling 3. State of preservation: complete. Material: carnelian. Technique of manufacture: smoothed, pierced. Fabric colour: 5 YR 7/8 (reddish yellow). Thickness: 0.3 cm; diameter: 0.9 cm. Description: donut shaped carnelian bead. Dating: EB IVB. Bibliography: Kenyon 1965, fig. 25:1.

BL1241, bead. Context: Chamber 1, Filling 3. State of preservation: complete. Material: carnelian. Technique of manufacture: smoothed, pierced. Fabric colour: 5 YR 7/8 (reddish yellow). Thickness: 0.2 cm; diameter: 0.7 cm. Description: donut shaped carnelian bead. Dating: EB IVB. Bibliography: Kenyon 1965, figs. 25:2; 33:5.

BL1242, bead. Context: Chamber 1, Filling 3. State of preservation: complete. Material: carnelian. Technique of manufacture: smoothed, pierced. Fabric colour: 2.5 YR 7/8 (light red). Thickness: 0.2 cm; diameter: 0.7 cm. Description: donut shaped carnelian bead. Dating: EB IVB. Bibliography: Kenyon 1965, figs. 25:2; 33:5.

3. EARLY BRONZE IV CEMETERIES IN THE AREA OF BETHLEHEM

The district of Bethlehem and especially the rocky flanks of the mountains of the Judean Deserts hosted several cemeteries during the Early Bronze IV/Intermediate Bronze Age, possibly referring to tribes of semi-nomadic shepherds living in the radiant valleys descending down to the Dead Sea from the central highlands.¹⁸

Numerous attestations are indicative of the presence of Early Bronze IV cemeteries in the area of Bethlehem, on rocky plateaux and hills all around the town.¹⁹

A group of tombs was excavated in the easternmost fringe of the Beit Sahur hill in 1908-1909,²⁰ on the slopes of the nearby “Shepherds’ Field”, and some pottery vessels, said to come from these tombs, are nowadays preserved in the St. Mary’s Dormition Museum in Jerusalem.²¹ EB IV tombs in the area of Bethlehem are reported as the sources of a group of vessels in the Herbert E. Clark Collection of ancient pottery presently in the YMCA of Jerusalem, recovered in 1912 and published by G.E. Wright.²²

An Early Bronze IV amphoriskos said from Battir (fig. 18), acquired in 1957, is in the Museum of the Flagellation Monastery at Jerusalem. It has a flat base, round body and a decoration on the shoulders composed by an upper line of diagonal grooved incision (as a comb stamping) and a combed band.²³ Moreover, in the Flagellation Museum there is an Early Bronze IV jar (fig. 19), with combed decoration on the shoulder, ovoid body and flat base, found in Bethlehem and brought to the same museum in 1957.²⁴ Both vessels might come from the cemetery of Beit Sahur.

To these sparse data it is now possible to add new records from the recently discovered cemeteries of Khalet al-Jam’a²⁵ and Jebel Dhafer,²⁶ both located within a radius of 2.5 km south of Bethlehem.

¹⁸ Nigro 2003a, 138-139; D’Andrea 2014 vol. 1, 231.

¹⁹ Nigro 2015, 5.

²⁰ Hänsler 1908; 1909; Vincent 1909, 116-117.

²¹ Saller 1962, 160-162.

²² Wright 1938, figs. 1:1-4, 2:1-4; Bagatti 1952, 265-267.

²³ Saller 1962, 166, figs. 1:10; 3:3.

²⁴ Saller 1962, 162-163, fig. 2:16.

²⁵ Nigro *et al.* 2015.

²⁶ Nigro *et al.* 2017.

The shaft-tombs necropolis of Khalet al-Jam'a was in use since the Early Bronze IV, throughout the Middle Bronze until the Iron Age. In Tomb C12 of the Early Bronze IV a single primary deposition is documented.²⁷

The shaft-tombs of the necropolis of Jebel Dhaher were also first excavated during the Early Bronze IV and remained in use during the Middle Bronze and, some of them, also in the Iron Age.

The el-Atan Tomb, being included within the elongated burial area surrounding to the east and to the south of the Nativity Church,²⁸ might, nonetheless, represent a north-western ramification of the Beit Sahur cemetery.

4. BETHLEHEM IN THE FRAME OF THE EARLY BRONZE IV CEMETERIES OF THE CENTRAL HILLS AND JUDEAN HILLS OF PALESTINE

Due to the fragmented knowledge and the lack of a clear profile of Bethlehem's history in the Bronze Age IV/Intermediate Bronze Age, it is perhaps useful to observe the regional scenario in an area circa 30 km to the north, up to Dhahr Mirzabaneh in the Central Hills, and to the south, down to Khirbet el-Karmil in the Judean Hills (fig. 20).²⁹

A northern cluster of cemeteries has been identified in the area between Dhahr Mirzabaneh³⁰ and 'Ain Samiya.³¹ At this site D.G. Lyon recognized in 1906-1907 more than one-hundred plundered tombs, dating from the Early Bronze IV until the Middle Bronze II. They had round shafts with one or more circular or oval chambers with domed roof. Funerary sets were composed by pottery vessels, like four-spouted lamps, bowls, ovoid jars, bottles, teapots, as well as pins, dagger, javelins, and personal items. The necropolis of Dhahr Mirzabaneh was excavated in the sixties of the twentieth century by P.W. Lapp, who uncovered more than 150 graves.³² It was a necropolis with single- or multi-chambered shaft tombs. Shaft were round and usually show a step at their bottom introducing into the underground chamber, a feature also occurring at el-Jib, Jebel Dhaher, and Khirbet el-Karmil.³³ Chambers were domed and circular in plan, sealed by large blocking stones.³⁴ As it concerns human remains, none of the burials seems to be a primary articulated deposition; they usually are single, but some multiple-burials are also attested.³⁵ Funerary sets include medium and small jars, amphoriskoi, cooking pots, bowls and cups. Dating features can be distinguished in small jars with flat base, rounded handmade body and attached wheel made neck: the decoration is represented by incised, combed and finger-

²⁷ Nigro *et al.* 2017, 16.

²⁸ Bagatti 1952, 261-262; Saller 1963, 325; 1964, 287; 1968; Gutman - Berman 1970, 585; Prag 2000, 177, fig. 3.

²⁹ Finkelstein 1991, 23-26.

³⁰ Lapp 1966; Dever 1972.

³¹ Lyon 1907, 46-48; Finkelstein 1991, 24-25. An "anchor" axe from Kefar Malik (Nigro 2003b fig. 8), 3 km west to 'Ain Samiya, should be related to the same net of cemeteries.

³² The necropolis appears to be connected to a nearby shrine/place of worship and to an ancient Bronze Age village located in correspondence of a rocky spur of the promontory, Khirbet Marjame (Finkelstein 1990).

³³ Pritchard 1963, 4; Nigro *et al.* 2017, 17-18; Dever 1975, 20.

³⁴ Lapp 1966, 30-39.

³⁵ Lapp 1966, 40.

moulded elements, as it is typical of Early Bronze Age IVB.³⁶ The pottery collected in these cemeteries have been ascribed to the ‘Central Hill Family’.³⁷

The tomb types established by K.M. Kenyon³⁸ after the study of the Jericho necropolis,³⁹ one of the largest of the whole Levant,⁴⁰ may be also used to classify the el-Atan Tomb, which falls into the so-called “Dagger Type”, although it hosted a female primary deposition.⁴¹

Some parallelisms can be established also with the shaft-tombs cemetery of el-Jib.⁴² Here tombs had round shaft and one round or elliptical chamber and a funerary equipment represented by a limited ceramic repertoire, small and medium globular jars, often with combed decoration, four-spouted lamps, and weapons.

Moreover, a pattern of burials on hill slopes around the boundaries of Jerusalem can provide convincing comparisons to the el-Atan Tomb. A cemetery on the Mount of Olives was discovered and excavated by K.M. Kenyon during the 1965.⁴³ Eleven tombs in three areas, Area A, B, and C, were identified.⁴⁴ They were rock-cut tombs with round shaft and roughly round chamber, showing architectural features similar to those of Jericho’s “Dagger Type”, but quite larger, like the tomb of el-Atan.⁴⁵

Another possible comparison is the tomb discovered in the village of Silwan (Hablat al-Amud), in September 1941.⁴⁶ This tomb had square shaft and two chambers. The funerary equipment was composed by seventeen Early Bronze IV vessels, as medium jars, bottles and four-spouted lamps, four plain pins, some rivets, and numerous beads made of different semiprecious material, including carnelian.⁴⁷ The neighbourhood of Jerusalem was populated by EB IV cemeteries⁴⁸ used by semi-nomadic tribes, a scenario parallel or similar to that reconstructed in the area of Bethlehem (fig. 1).⁴⁹

³⁶ Furthermore, also material from Sinjil (Dever 1971) should be add to try to propose a more complete reading of the funerary equipment related to that net of cemeteries.

³⁷ Dever 1972, 109-110. According to D’Andrea (2014 vol. 1, 38, 125-126, 201-206; vol. 2, 91-95) this pottery horizon can be ascribed to the ceramic province of South-central Palestine (with previous literature).

³⁸ Tomb types were distinguished on the basis of location, shape of the rock-cut chamber and shaft, burial custom and funerary assemblage (Kenyon 1960, 180-185; 1965, 33-38).

³⁹ Nigro 2003a, 134-138.

⁴⁰ J. Garstang discovered it during the first British Expedition of the Thirties (Garstang 1932; 1934; 1936).

⁴¹ E.g. Tomb A105 shows the same skeletal displacement of el-Atan (Kenyon 1960, 197; Palumbo 1986, 292). The presence of female burials within the “Dagger Group”, characterized by the presence of copper pins has been already pointed out (Palumbo 1987; Nigro 2003a, 135).

⁴² Pritchard 1963. Some other Early Bronze IV shaft-tombs were found at Giv’at Ze’ev, north-west of el-Jib, in 1990 (Dadon 1997; The West Bank and East Jerusalem Searchable Map - <http://digitallibrary.usc.edu/cdm/map/collection/p15799coll74>).

⁴³ Kenyon 1966.

⁴⁴ Prag 1995. Some EB IV vessels found by Captain Charles Warren in 1867 possibly derive from the same cemetery (Wilson - Warren 1871, 306, 475-477). Another four spouted lamp was found in the vicinity by H. Vincent (Vincent 1914, fig. 9:e).

⁴⁵ Funerary assemblages of these tombs, however, are characterized by pottery, including bottles and four-spouted lamps; no weapons, beads or personal ornaments are present (Prag 1995, 234-235).

⁴⁶ Sa’ad 1964.

⁴⁷ Sa’ad 1964; Rahmani 1981, 230.

⁴⁸ An Early Bronze IV shaft-tomb cemetery was uncovered north of Jerusalem, at Geva Binyamin (Aharonovich 2016), and at Ras Abu Ma’aruf/Pisgat Ze’ev (Seligman 1993, 52; 1995). This cemetery exhibits similar

South of Bethlehem and between it and Hebron, other two cemeteries may belong to groups connected with those using the cemeteries of Jebel Daher and Khalet al-Jam'a: Efrata and Kirbet Kufin. The necropolis of Efrata is extended on the southern slope of a hill over an area of 0.2 hectares. Tombs have round or square shafts, and one or more chambers.⁵⁰ In all of the seven intact caves dating from Early Bronze IV, burials were secondary and disarticulated, as it was also in the case of Silwan, Dhahr Mirbaneh and Jebel Qa'aqir. The pottery repertoire was limited and included jars, amphoriskoi, carinated bowls, cups, and lamps, but teapots are missing, as in the case of el-Atan.⁵¹

It is worth recalling the site of Tequ'a, south-east of Bethlehem. A group of vessels dating back to the Early Bronze IV is kept in the collection of the Museum of Flagellation in Jerusalem. They are said to come from the neighbourhood of Tequ'a.⁵² A recent survey has in fact shown that a cemetery of round shaft tombs did exist also on this prominent mound,⁵³ and it seems quite probable that material in the Flagellation Museum came from this cemetery.

The western slope of the Khirbet Kufin was occupied by a necropolis of shaft-tombs dating back to from the beginning of the Early Bronze Age to the Middle Bronze II, terraced with orchards at the moment of discovery in 1962. Combed globular jars of Tomb 2 and of Lower Stratum of Chambers 3-4, in Tomb 3 of Khirbet Kufin,⁵⁴ present general features similar to two jars of the el-Atan Tomb.

Three cemeteries dated to the Early Bronze IV were identified in the site of Jebel Qa'aqir, under the direction of W.G. Dever between 1967-1971.⁵⁵ They were characterized by shaft-tombs with round shaft and one circular, sometimes irregular, single chamber, just occasionally double chamber. The roofing was frequently domed and some tombs had a decorative incision around the doorway. Several tombs had a lamp niche in the walls near the entrance, like Niche 1 in the el-Atan Tomb.⁵⁶ Burials were secondary and disarticulated, and the funerary set was limited to ovoid jars, small amphoriskoi, both often with band

features to those observed at Nahal Ref'aim (Eisenberg 1993; Edelstein - Milevski 1994; Weksler-Bdolah 2017, 19-22), and Giv'at Massuah (Edelstein - Eisenberg 1984, 51-52). Near site of Manahat two different cemeteries were identified (Negbi 1964; Zehavi 1993, 67; Edelstein - Milevski - Auran 1998). These are adjoining the site of er-Ras, where an Early Bronze IV necropolis was discovered (Hänsler 1909, 33-36; Saller 1962, 160). Moreover, a shaft-tomb cemetery was uncovered east of Jerusalem, during the construction of the Holyland Compound (Ben-Arieh 2000; Zelinger - Golan 2005; Milevski - Ben Or 2007; Milevski - Greenhut - Agha 2010; Prag 2013, 105; Eirikh-Rose 2016). A group of Early Bronze IV vessels found in the site of 'Ain Karim, west of Jerusalem, now in the YMCA (two medium jars with combed decoration; Wright 1938, 29, fig. 1:5-6) and in the Flagellation Museum (an amphoriskos with combed decoration; Saller 1962, 166, fig. 1:9) should be mentioned. At Motza, near 'Ain Karim, an Early Bronze IV shaft-tomb was excavated by Bahat (1975).

⁴⁹ Prag 2013, 105.

⁵⁰ Gonen 2001, 17-19.

⁵¹ Gonen 2001, 30-33.

⁵² Saller 1962, 164-165.

⁵³ Lapp 1963, 124; 1966, 67; Saller 1964, 288; Nigro *et al.* 2017, 22.

⁵⁴ Smith 1962, 9, 14, pls. X-XI, especially pls. X:1-2, 4-5; XI:2.

⁵⁵ Dever 2014, 9-65.

⁵⁶ Nigro 1999, 34.

combed decoration, bowls, cups, and four-spouted lamps, seldom copper daggers, javelins, and pins.⁵⁷

The southernmost site taken into account in this article is Khirbet el-Karmil. Here one of the largest Palestinian necropolis of the Early Bronze Age was identified at the end of Sixties, displaced on five different areas, unfortunately heavily looted.⁵⁸ Shaft-tombs were in use during the Early Bronze IV, only occasionally reused during the Middle Bronze Age, and had both single round chamber or double chamber; round shafts were widespread, even if square shapes were distinguished just in one area. Chambers had low domed roof and often lamp niches. The repertoire is represented by four spouted lamps, cups, bowls, ovoid jars, amphoriskoi, teapots, and pitchers, often decorated with a peculiar concentric incision or combing. Funerary sets were sometimes completed by copper daggers and javelins.

A seemingly recurrent feature in the Central Hills (Dhahr Mirzabaneh, 'Ain Samyia, and Sinjil), the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, and Judean Hills (the Bethlehem region) is the displacement of cemeteries in clusters, grouped e.g. on both sides flanks of wadis flowing towards the Jordan Valley, suggesting the use of nearby sites by tribes living and moving up and down the wadis. These clusters are often not clearly connected with a settlement, except for the case of Jericho, and seem to fit a pastoralist spatial organization and way of life.

5. FINAL REMARKS

The Bethlehemite tomb uncovered at el-Atan exhibits architectural features common to Early Bronze IV tombs known from several cemeteries, especially those of the Mount of Olives for shape and dimensions, and to those of Jebel Qa'aqir and Khirbet el-Karmil for the hewing technique of the underground chamber.

As regards the treatment of dead, and their funerary sets, Burial 1 of el-Atan, differently from what happens in numerous tombs at Dhahr Mirzabaneh, Silwan, Efrata, and Jebel Qa'aqir, is a female primary deposition in crouched position, similar to some burials of the "Dagger Type" at Jericho. Such a treatment for a female individual is barely attested, and may suggest to re-appraise several burials from the above mentioned cemeteries, with special focus on the gender of the inhumations.⁵⁹

As it concerns the pottery repertoire, that of the el-Atan Tomb follows the same composition of other Early Bronze IVB shaft-tombs, with a somewhat limited typological variety. The presence of given vessel types with their specific ceramological features (§§ 2.2.-2.2.1.; lamps, bowls with slight carination, amphoriskoi, and small jars) as well as the absence of other shapes (teapot) point to a date late in the EB IVB and place the tomb's pottery repertoire within the southern tradition (presence of shallow carinated bowls, lack of squat jars, bottles, and teapots).⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Dever 1993, 665-666.

⁵⁸ Dever 1975.

⁵⁹ Palumbo 1986, 300.

⁶⁰ D'Andrea 2014 vol. 1, 201.

In conclusion, the funerary custom and tomb equipment (with special reference to the wheel fashioned pottery), fit well the el-Atan Tomb into the central-southern pattern of Palestinian Early Bronze IVB.⁶¹

The presence of a copper pin and five carnelian beads highlight the female gender of the inhumation (Burial 1).

As regards the connection of the el-Atan Tomb to a cemetery, as it is commonly attested for such tombs, it seems reasonable to relate it to the nearby necropolis of Beit Sahur, located about 1.6 km east of it.

In conclusion, in spite of its partial destruction, the el-Atan Tomb adds one more tessera to the variegated mosaic of 3rd millennium BC Bethlehem⁶², especially illustrating the funerary custom of the semi-nomadic tribes living in the area during the Early Bronze IV.

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⁶¹ Greenhut 1995.

⁶² Nigro 2015, 4-5.

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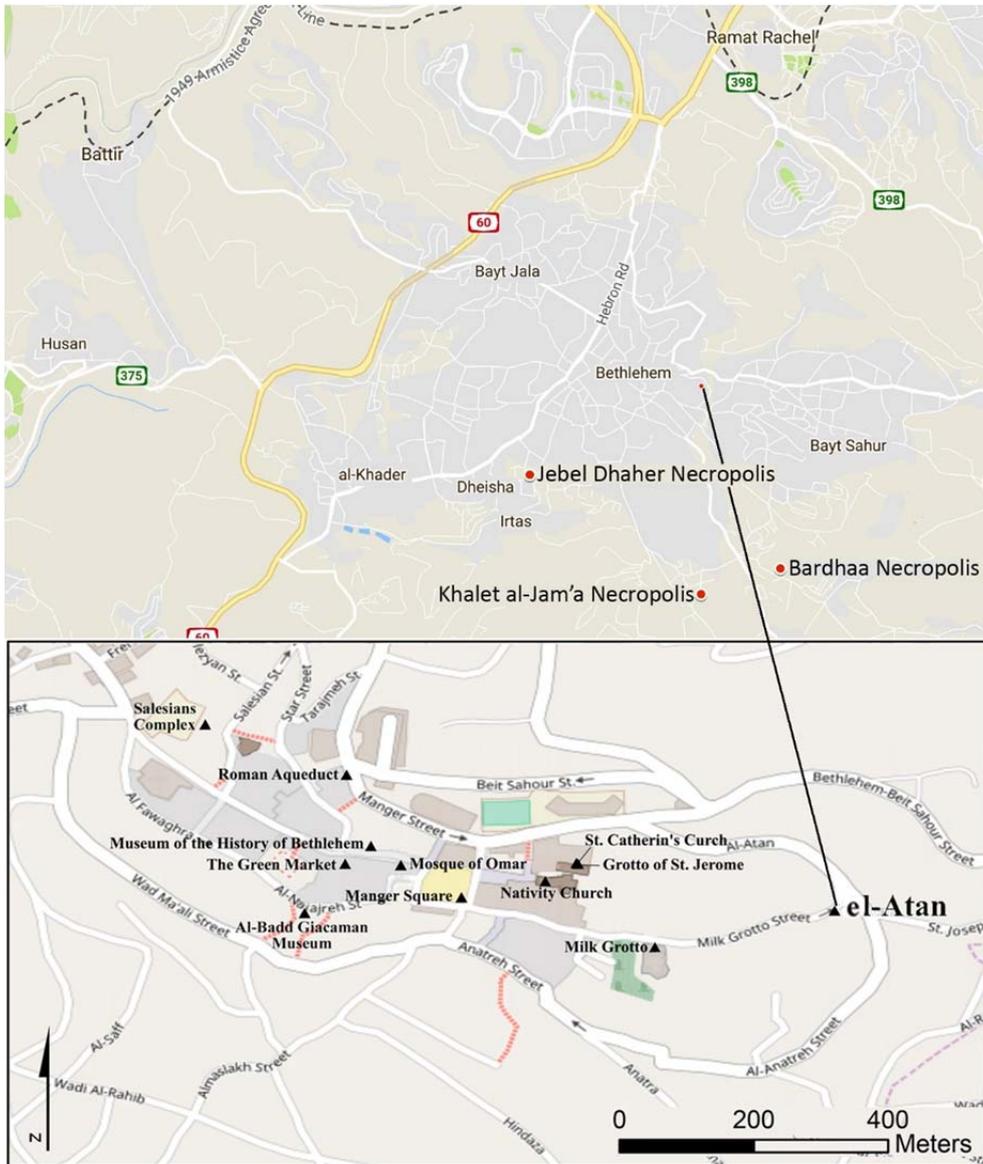


Fig. 1 - Map of the area of Bethlehem with cemeteries cited in the text (up), and a detail of the city centre and the position of el-Atan Tomb (down).

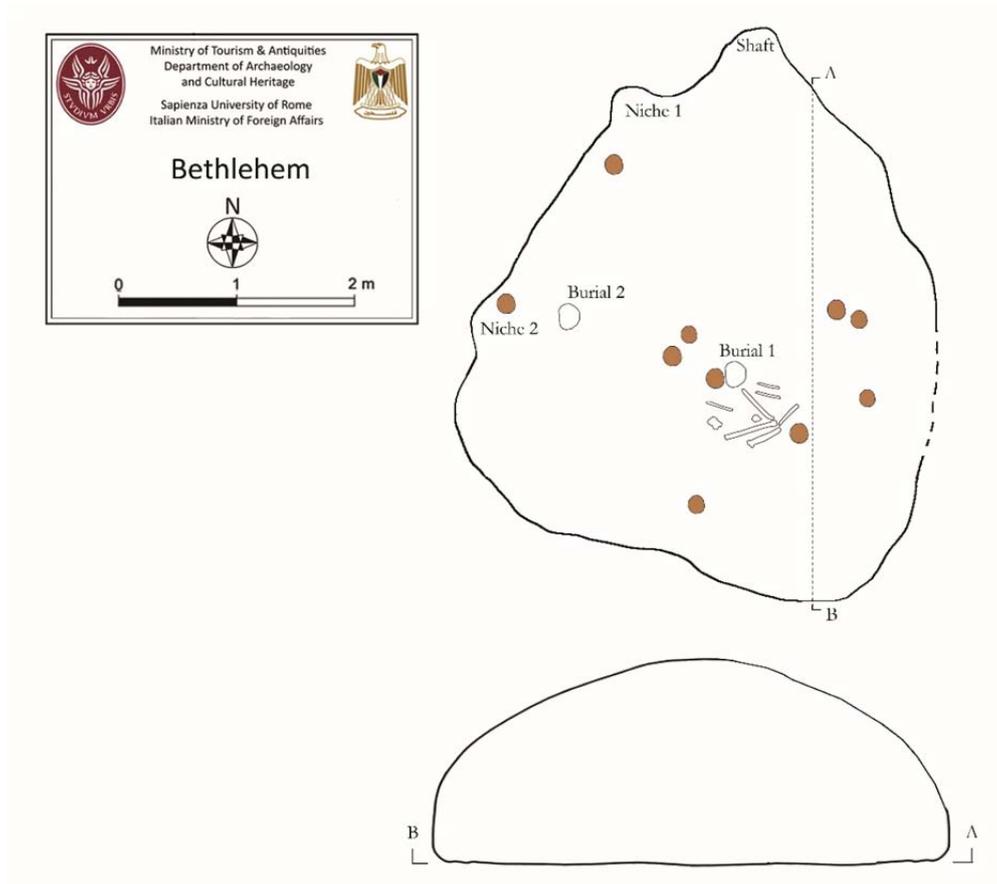


Fig. 2 - Plan of el-Atan Tomb.



Fig. 3 - On the left, the entrance to el-Atan Tomb at the moment of discovery in June 2009; on the right, the same place under construction in November 2016.



Fig. 4 - Entrance to the el-Atan Tomb at the moment of discovery on June 2009.



Fig. 5 - Tool marks in southern and western walls of the chamber of el-Atan Tomb.



Fig. 6 - A detail of Burial 1 in the el-Atan Tomb during excavations on June 2009.



Fig. 7 - The Early Bronze IVB funerary equipment of el-Atan Tomb.

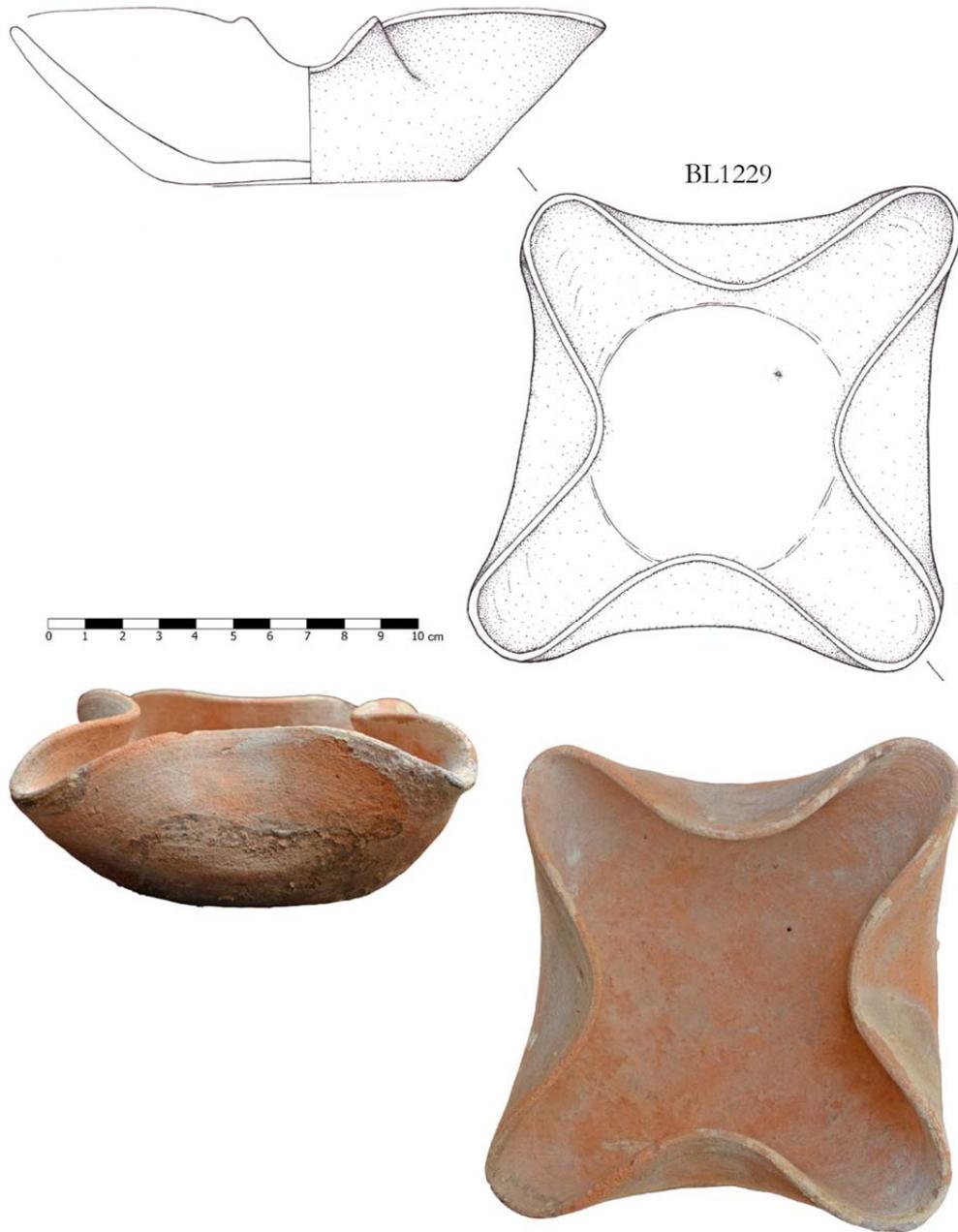


Fig. 8 - The four-spouted lamp BL1229 of el-Atan Tomb (ratio 1:2).

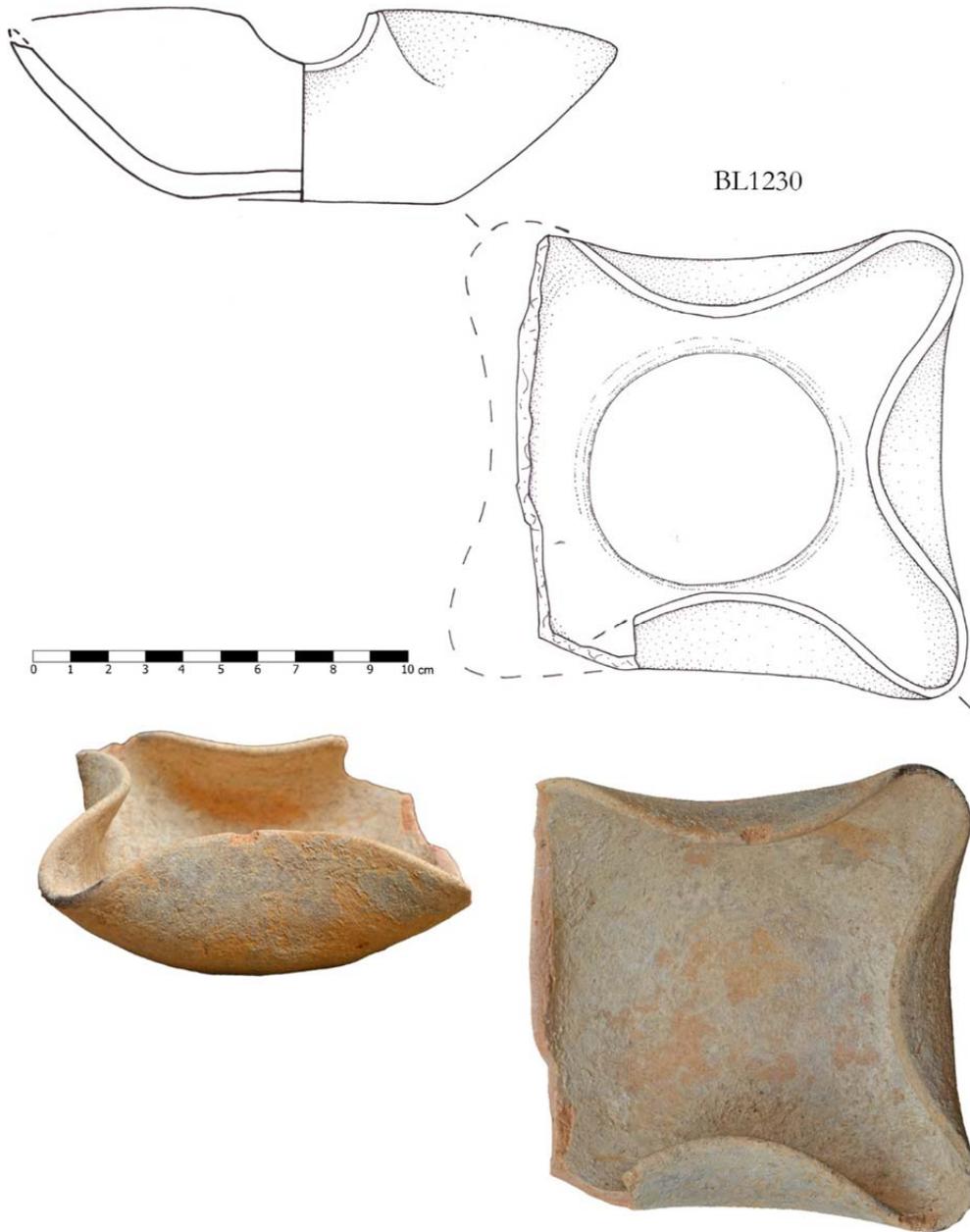


Fig. 9 - The four-spouted lamp BL1230 of el-Atan Tomb (ratio 1:2).



Fig. 10 - The four-spouted lamp BL1231 of el-Atan Tomb (ratio 1:2).

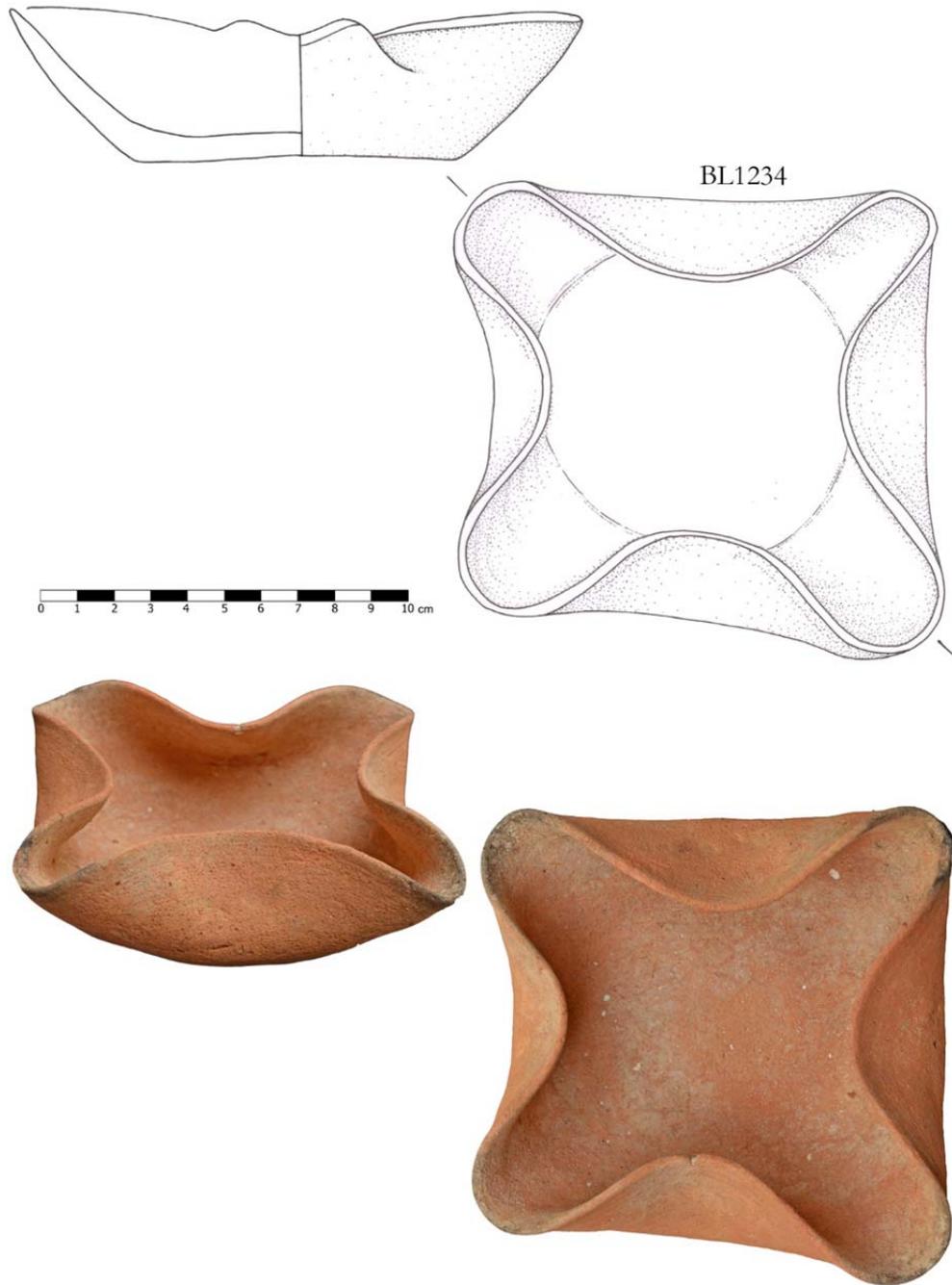
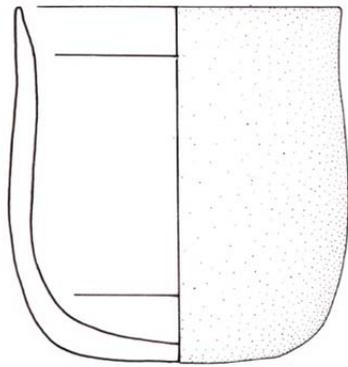
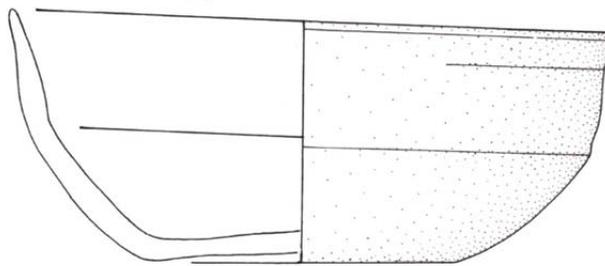


Fig. 11 - The four-spouted lamp BL1234 of el-Atan Tomb (ratio 1:2).



BL1244



BL1235



Fig. 12 - The beaker BL1244 and the carinated bowl BL1235 of el-Atan Tomb (ratio 1:2).



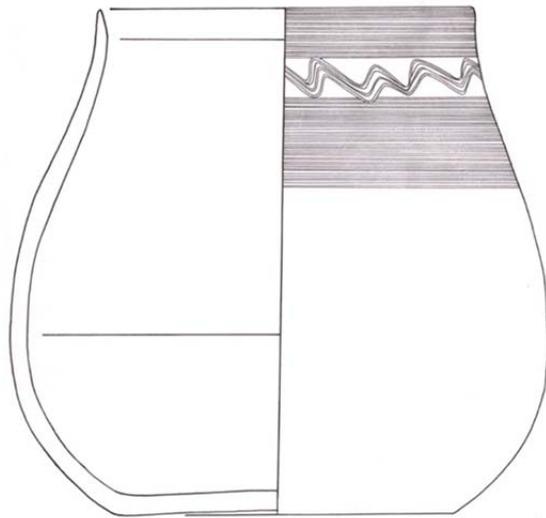
Fig. 13 - Carinated bowls of el-Atan Tomb: BL1228 and BL1232 with grooved decoration under the rim; BL1233 and BL1236 carinated bowls (ratio 1:4).



Fig. 14 - Amphoriskoi BL1227 and BL1245 of el-Atan Tomb (ratio 1:2).



Fig. 15 - Jar BL1246 with combed decoration of el-Atan Tomb (ratio 1:4).



BL1237



Fig. 16 - The 'oversize cup' BL1237 with band and wave combed decoration of el-Atan Tomb (ratio 1:3).

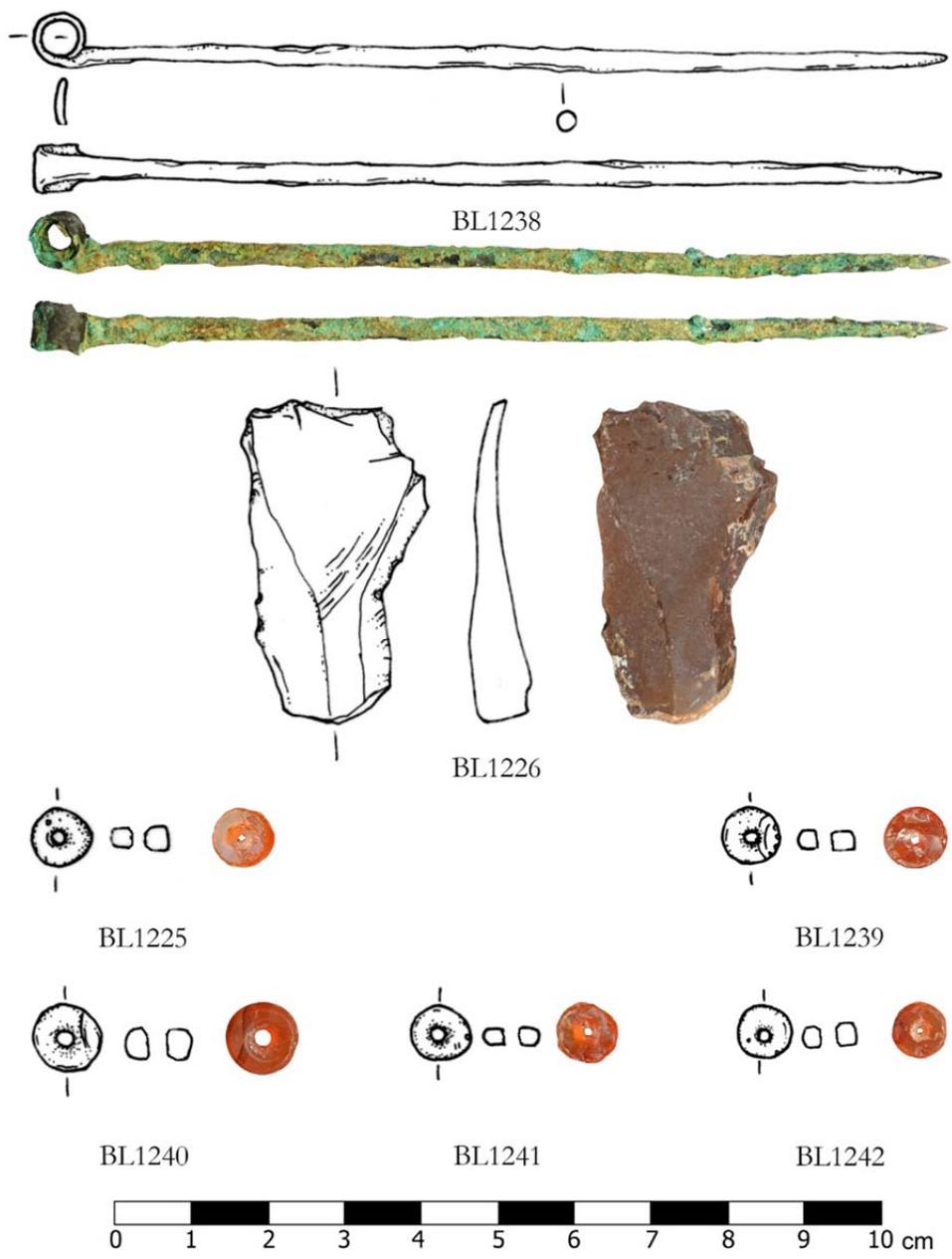


Fig. 17 - Rolled pin BL1238, flint scraper BL1226 and carnelian beads of el-Atan Tomb (ratio 1:1).



Fig. 18 - Early Bronze IV amphoriskos from Battir in the Flagellation Museum (after Saller 1962, fig. 1:10).



Fig. 19 - Early Bronze IV jar with combed decoration in the Flagellation Museum (after Saller 1962, fig. 2:16).

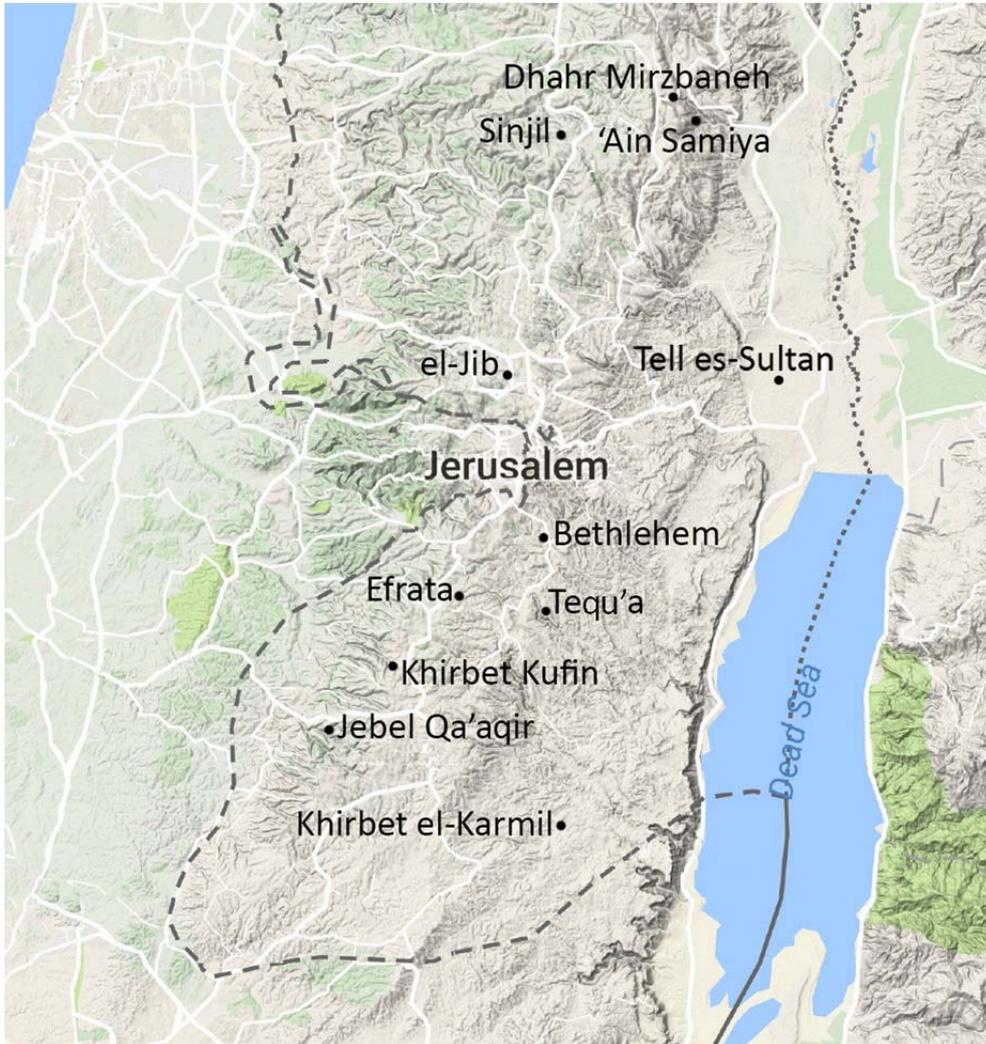


Fig. 20 - Map of Central Hills and Judean Hills with cemeteries quoted in the text.

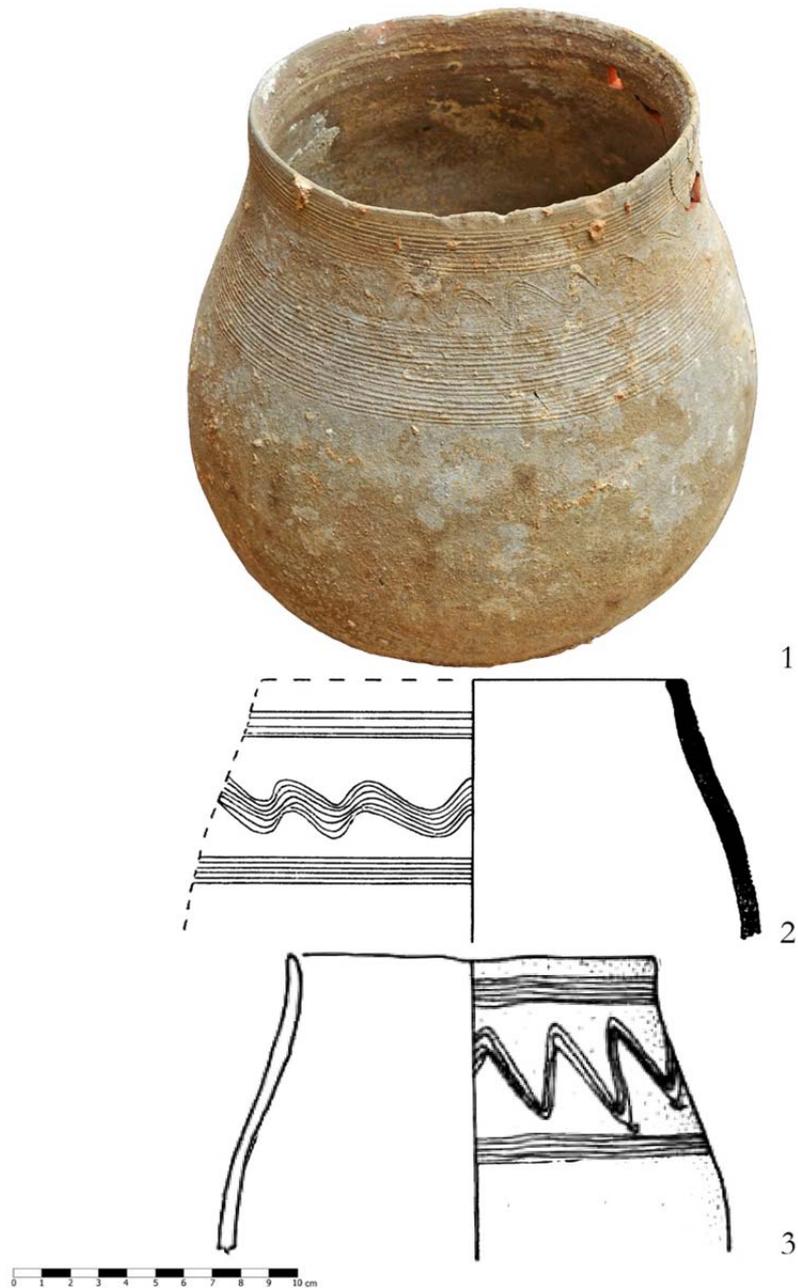


Fig. 21 - Biconical jar of el-Atan (1); (2) from Wadi ed- Daliyeh (after Dever 1974, pl. 13:3); (3) from Tell es-Sultan (after Nigro 2003, fig. 20:5).

ARABIC ABSTRACT

قبر العطن

اعمال التنقيب : في 18 حزيران عام 2009، بينما كان السيد نصري البندك يقوم بتسوية قطعة الارض التي تعود اليه لبناء بيت جديد، والواقعة في منطقة العطن الى الشرق من كنيسة المهدي ومغارة الحليب والتي تبعد عنهما شرقا نحو 400 متر تقريبا. كما انها تقع على سفح الشرقي لتل بيت لحم القديم. وخلال اعمال التجريف فقد ضربت الاليات بالجدار الشرقي من القبر عاملة فتحة فيه، ولحسن الحظ ان القبر بقي سليما لم يتأثر. وعليه فقد قام البندك صاحب الارض بالاتصال مع شرطة السياحة والآثار والتي بدورها اعلمت دائرة اثار محافظة بيت لحم بهذا الاكتشاف، وعلى الفور توجه طاقم من دائرة الآثار وعلى راسه كاتب هذا التقرير الى الموقع. حيث قام بتصوير الموقع قبل البدء في اعمال الحفر والتنقيب، تجدر الإشارة الى ان العمل في القبر تم من خلال الفتحة التي أحدثتها الاليات وليس من خلال مدخل القبر الاساسي الذي كان يقع في ارض الجبران وتحت البيت مباشرة مما جعل من الصعب التنقيب فيه.

وصف القبر :

يحتوي هذا القبر على حجرة دفن واحدة ببيضاوية الشكل قطعت في الصخر الجيري وكان ذلك في العصر البرونزي المبكر الرابع مستخدمين في قطعه الازميل العريضة والفؤوس و لكون الصخر من النوع الجيري الطري حيث ساعدهم في تشكيله بالشكل الذي عليه الان. يبلغ طول القبر من الشمال الى الجنوب حوالي 490 سم وعرضه من الشرق الى الغرب 380 سم، اما المدخل فيقع في الزاوية الشمالية الشرقية وهو عمودي (بنري الشكل) ينتهي في اسفله بمدخل صغير يفضي للحجرة الدفن وقد اغلق بواسطة بلاطة مستطيلة الشكل 80 سم 60X سم

سمكها 22 سم وضعت في وضع رأسي، ووضع حولها حجارة صغيرة من اجل احكام الاغلاق، الا انه مع ذلك وجدت فيه كمية من التربة الحمراء الناعمة والتي ربما تسربت اليه من تلك المنطقة عبر الزمن، بالإضافة الى كمية من التربة الحورية التي تشكلت بفعل تساقط اجزاء من السقف وكذلك بقايا من فتات الصخور اثناء عملية قطع القبر، تجدر الإشارة الى ان لها سقف مقبب وجدرانها منحوتة جيدا خاصه الجدار الغربي والجنوبي حيث استخدمت الازميل في اعداده، اما الارضية فهي مستوية، غطيت بطبقة من التربة الحمراء التي تميل الى اللون البني الداكن. ومن الملفت للنظر الى انه قطعت كوات صغيرة في جداره الغربي والجنوبي والتي كانت تستخدم لوضع الأسرجة الفخارية. حيث كانت ترافق المتوفي وكذلك استخدمت اثناء عملية الدفن للإنارة.

المعثورات الاثرية :

عثر في هذا القبر على العديد من الاواني الفخارية والتي اشتملت على زيادي وجرار وقد ظهرت عليها زخارف تتألف من اشربة تحزير غائرة ربما نفذت بواسطة اداة مسننه وحادة حينما كانت الانية لدهن وقيل عملية حرقها. بالإضافة الى العديد من الأسرجة الفخارية، كما اشتملت المرفقات الجنائزية التي عثر عليها، والتي هي عبارة عن ممتلكات شخصية للمتوفي مثل الخرز والتي كانت تستخدم كاحلي مثل العقود، ومشبك من البرونز، وادوات صوانيه ربما استخدمت كمكاشط. وقد دلت هذه اللقى الاثرية على تاريخ هذا القبر الذي يرجع الى فترة العصر البرونزي المبكر الرابع الحقبية (ب)، تجدر الإشارة الى ان جميع المعثورات وجدت في موقعها الاصلي في الاغلب مع وجود القليل منها في مكان قريب وليس في مكانه الاصلي، وربما تحرك بفعل تراكم التربة عليها.

تجدر الإشارة الى انه تم العثور على بقايا لعظام شابة كانت في وضع الانتناء وعلى جانبيها الأيمن ووجها يتجه نحو الغرب، بالإضافة الى عظام اخرى ربما تمثل شخص ثاني دفن بجوارها ان هذا الاكتشاف يضيف لبنه جديدة في فسيفاء تاريخ وحضارة مدينة بيت لحم، ولكن يبقى العقد ناقصا مالم يتم الكشف والعمل على معرفة اماكن الاستقرار البشري القديم في محافظة بيت لحم والتي تعود اليه هذه

المدافن سواء في منطقة العطن او منطقة خلة الجامع وجبل ظاهر او خلايل اللوز وهذه المنطقة تعتبر بكر
وبحاجة الى مسح اثري شامل وكذلك اجراء المزيد من الحفريات العلمية وبناء على ما تقدم فان هذا النشر
العلمي لهذه الاكتشافات والتي ستصيف سفرا جديدا في تاريخ المحافظة من قبل دائرة الاثار الفلسطينية
وبالتعاون مع جامعة لا سابينزا الايطالية في روما ضمن مشروع مشترك يهدف الى تطوير المواقع الاثرية
والتاريخية في محافظة بيت لحم
محمد غياظة
مدير دائرة محافظة بيت لحم

UNPUBLISHED ISLAMIC BRONZE CAULDRONS FROM PRIVATE COLLECTIONS: TWO EARLY AND ONE VERY LATE SPECIMENS

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Along with stirrups, cauldrons embody the cultural influence played by nomadic populations on early Islamic metalwork. Not much can be added about a largely investigated class of objects, except for some unpublished items (two from Herat, one from Central Asia) from private collections.

Keywords: cauldrons; Islamic metalwork; Herat; Central Asia; nomadic populations

What else can be said about a largely investigated class of metalwork such that of Islamic cauldrons is? Apparently nothing, if not letting speak specimens hidden so far in private collections.¹ Much has been written searching the origin of cauldrons in Caucasus, Khurasan or Transoxiana, and about the evolution of the different existing models.² This brief note will be in no way the occasion to reopen the discussion about theories elaborated by far more experienced scholars. It will just uncover three unpublished cauldrons to see confirmed a continuity extending from early specimens to modern imitations.

1. TWO CAULDRONS FROM HERAT (figs. 1-2)

In 2014, the author had the chance to be admitted to a small private collection in Herat, which gathers especially Islamic metalwork: among these, two cauldrons, said to come from the city itself, drew the attention. Both belong to the hemispherical model, the most spread in the Khurasan region; measures are on average and the condition is fair. The dark grey surface shows a whitish patina on some areas; traces of verdigris appear inside one of the vessels (no. 2, fig. 2).

The first cauldron (fig. 1) is smaller³ and gentler in its plain morphology and delicate decoration. The rim is quite short, while flanges are well developed ending in pointed corners, one of which is broken. The pouring channel is completely flat and defined by two raised mouldings, bearing some incisions reminding of a zigzag motif. Eight pairs of nicks run on the edge of three flanges; four pairs dispose on sides of the spout, while a continuous series of nicks runs along the pouring margin. Fixed vertically raised handles are cast on their top in a pronounced three-petalled flower; two horizontal lines are engraved on each side of handle's arch, as an ornamental strip.

The decoration is very simple, but designed on the base of symmetry and regularity. The modest motifs probably indicate an early date, and being typical of stone, they could

¹ I express my gratitude to the collectors, who consented me to study and publish the cauldrons. I also wish to thank Serenella Mancini, who took pictures of the cauldron in Rome.

² See in particular Scerrato 1964, 687-696 (2nd ed. 2014, 1000-1008); Allan 1976, 190-196; and more recently Ivanov 1996a; 1996b; 2003. A very small cauldron, whose sizes lead to imagine a use different from cooking, was found in the excavation of Istakhr (see Schmidt 1939, 118, fig. 84). The presence of such a metalwork in Fars could surprise, but it would be worthy to remind that the site was on a major commercial way, so that the cauldron could have been imported as many of the retrieved ceramic items were (see Fontana *et al.* 2016, 89).

³ Ø max 49 cm, Ø without flanges 36 cm, h. max 31 cm, h. without handles 22 cm.

also be claimed in support to the Iranian origin of hemispherical cauldrons, since a possible prototype in stone was found in Nishapur and dated by Wilkinson to the 9th century.⁴

The second cauldron (fig. 2) is larger⁵ and bolder in its shape. One foot is detached, but still preserved; the back flange looks significantly smaller than others do. A great prominence is given to the pouring one, which protrudes with a large, almost rectangular perimeter. A fillet covers the sunken pouring channel at both its ends. Groups of three nicks appear on the edge of the back flange and in a continuous series on the pouring one. Lateral flanges, instead, are undecorated. The strong handles are topped by a stylized squarish element.

Similar cauldrons from the region are known: one of them is currently preserved in the Herat National Museum;⁶ other two, once part of the now lost Kabul National Museum's collection, came from Maimana.⁷ Herat, close to the present-day Afghan northern border, may have easily represented a place of interaction with populations from Central Asian steppes. Cauldrons, in fact, clearly designed to stand over an open fire, most likely originated in the nomadic context.⁸

2. A CAULDRON IN ROME (figs. 3-8)

An old private collection in Rome houses a hemispherical cauldron coming from Central Asia (fig. 3).⁹ The object is in a good state of preservation; a small patch was added to the inner bowl. The colour is a homogenous brown, with few greenish areas inside the vessel where the surface looks scratched, presumably because of use. The inner surface is polished, while the outer one is quite raw. The pouring flange is slightly smaller. Three-petalled flowers top the fixed handles (fig. 4).

Lateral flanges are thematically paired from a decorative point of view as the back flange is with the pouring one. The latter, defined by two mouldings on high relief, is flat: a grill motif made of crossing strips decorates the spout, flanked by two zoomorphic roundels (fig. 5).¹⁰ A bird portrayed on the profile, with turned back head and the beak pointing to its body, appears in each one of them. In the general arrangement, the bodies of the two birds are affronted.

The back flange bears a trapezoidal cartouche with concave short sides: it frames a kufic pseudo-inscription (fig. 6). Letters dispose on two lines; some of them are identifiable: a pair of *hastae*, a mirrored *wāw*, a knotted group, a possible *dāl* and a *lām*. Most of letters show rounded apices, but the lower terminal in the final *lām* is sharply concave-cut, in

⁴ See Wilkinson 1944, 288. Taken for good the chronology proposed by Wilkinson, the stone cauldron would precede copper alloy items (see Allan 1976, 195).

⁵ Ø max 58 cm, Ø without flanges 46 cm, h. max 31 cm, h. without handles 20.5 cm.

⁶ Inv. No. HNM 03.10.86e (see Müller-Wiener 2016, Cat. No. M32, fig. 19). The Museum's collection nowadays counts many cauldrons, attesting also different models.

⁷ See Scerrato 1964, 687, nos. 6-7, figs. 18-22, pls. IX-X (2nd ed. 2014, 1000, figs. 18-22); Allan 1976, 680. See also V. Laviola, *Islamic Metalwork from Afghanistan (9th-13th c.)*. *The Italian Archaeological Mission Archives*, Leiden 2018, § 2.2. At the time of finding cauldrons still preserved a soot crust on their bottoms.

⁸ See Scerrato 1964, 688-689 (2nd ed. 2014, 1002).

⁹ Ø max 44.5 cm, Ø without flanges 33.6 cm, h. max 21 cm, h. without handles 14 cm.

¹⁰ The grill motif could be a reminiscence of a real filter, which used to be applied on the spout of vessels related to liquids such as ewers as well.

contrast with the bilobed terminal of the previous letter, to let space for the vegetal motif that fills the end of the cartouche. The inscription makes no sense as a whole. Two roundels flank the cartouche, each one including a bird that differs from the above-mentioned ones in the erect head and the big beak.

The decoration of the lateral flanges is limited to elongated triangular cartouches in the corners (figs. 7-8). Their peculiar shape forces letters to lay one down the other, generating a tight confused composition that makes difficult even to distinguish them. *Wāw*-shaped letters, some of which are mirrored, show pointed sloping bodies and terminals with apices: a general tendency to the vegetal motif is evident. As far as it is possible to understand, letters look disposed outward, but no meaningful word can be recognised. Furthermore, the script diverges from that observed on the back flange.¹¹

The cauldron is standard as far as morphology and cast details are concerned; its decoration instead reveals some inaccuracies, maybe due to an inexperienced hand. Geometrical lines defining cartouches often end overlapping each other; cartouches on the lateral flanges are inexplicably asymmetrical in size. The decoration is partially executed in *champlevé* (the birds and the grill motif), partially engraved with a thin single or double line (the pseudo-epigraphical cartouches and birds' details). On birds' body is well visible the mark where the compass point stood to trace the roundel (fig. 6).

The two pairs of birds differ from each other. Moreover, birds are hardly ever attested on cauldrons:¹² running or hunting quadrupeds generally occur, along with vegetal, geometrical or even symbolic motifs. Still, some of birds' features such the up-ended tail(s), the neck collar, the wing shape attest that the artisan had in mind medieval models.

The epigraphical cartouche on the back flange occupies the correct position traditionally held on cauldrons, echoing the trapezoidal shape of the flange itself. Usually artisan's signatures appears there,¹³ while good wishing terms are rare.¹⁴ No element in the pseudo-inscription can suggest it was meant to fake a signature, while the *hastae* and *wāws* point to a benedictory expression. The presence of mirrored letters betrays that whoever wrote them had only a vague idea of what he was handling.

Finally, the decoration on cauldrons usually disposes toward the vessel inside. Awkwardly, in this case, the two pairs of roundels look toward the outside, careless of the fact that it is inconsistent with cartouche direction.

¹¹ Considered the difference between the two scripts, it cannot be excluded that the pseudo-inscriptions on lateral flanges and that on the back flange were executed in different moments.

¹² Birds (and beasts) appear on a 12th century cauldron from the Hermitage Museum of Saint Petersburg signed by Maḥmūd al-Qazwīnī (see Ivanov 2003, 481).

¹³ Cauldrons seem to have been signed more frequently than other classes of metalwork: the reason could be the expertise necessary to create such an object that led artisans to mark their works (see Scerrato 1965, 231 [2nd ed. 2014, 1054]).

¹⁴ An interesting example can be found in a small cauldron in the *Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale 'G. Tucci'* of Rome (Inv. No. 5862): a benedictory term repeats on three of its flanges. The cauldron comes from Ghazni and was donated to the Museum by Umberto Scerrato in 1970.

3. CONCLUSIVE REMARKS

Anthropological studies led in Daghestan (north Caucasus) - one of cauldrons' production areas - report that these objects were involved in rituals and held a relevant position in the domestic context, as symbols of the wife entering her husband house and family. These vessels embodied the hearth; in fact, they were employed in cooking wedding and funeral banquets, then being part of any important event. Their remarkable value (even used to pay tributes) easily led families to preserve them.¹⁵ All these reasons have fostered a continuity of production across the centuries and a strongly conservative style, which consent today to have at disposal examples so different and chronologically far as those presented here.

The barely undecorated cauldrons from Herat probably represent the ancient production of Khurasan: two early specimens datable at the latest within the 12th century.

The already mentioned peculiarities, along with the discrepancy in pseudo-epigraphical cartouches, make difficult to date the cauldron in Rome. The overall opinion one can obtain is that the object was inspired to the golden age Islamic production but incapable to meet the expectancies on the ground of quality. Nevertheless, its bizarre decoration is far from the scripts and zoomorphic figures employed in later metalwork as well, so that it cannot be compared to Timurid or Safavid works.¹⁶ Then, reasons are enough to risk in proposing a 19th century dating: most likely, its manufacturing meant to imitate medieval specimens, but a deceiving intent is to exclude, since only a fake artisan's signature would have enhanced the object value.

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¹⁶ For an extensive overview on late Iranian metalwork, see Ivanov 2014.

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Fig. 1 - Herat cauldron no. 1 (photo by Valentina Laviola).



Fig. 2 - Herat cauldron no. 2 (photo by Valentina Laviola).



Fig. 3 - Rome cauldron, upper view (photo by Serenella Mancini).



Fig. 4 - Rome cauldron, profile (photo by Serenella Mancini).



Fig. 5 - Rome cauldron, pouring flange (photo by Serenella Mancini).



Fig. 6 - Rome cauldron, back flange (photo by Serenella Mancini).



Fig. 7 - Rome cauldron, left lateral flange (photo by Serenella Mancini).

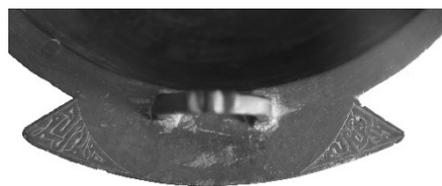


Fig. 8 - Rome cauldron, right lateral flange (photo by Serenella Mancini).

[Vicino Oriente XXI (2017), pp. 265-271]

BOLLETTINO DELLE ATTIVITÀ DEL MUSEO DEL VICINO ORIENTE,
EGITTO E MEDITERRANEO DELLA SAPIENZA,
ANNO 2017

Daria Montanari - Sapienza Università di Roma

Museum VOEM organized during 2017 exhibits, activities, workshops, conferences and seminars, for the wide public, for scholars and researchers. MVOEM has been monitoring collections and has promoted numerous research projects, studies and analyses on items and objects kept.

Keywords: museum management; cultural policy; research; exhibition; training activities

Durante il terzo anno di vita il Museo del Vicino Oriente, Egitto e Mediterraneo ha promosso una serie di attività dedicate ad un ampio pubblico (fig. 1), bambini, studenti, amatori e studiosi, ed ha partecipato alle numerose iniziative organizzate dal Polo Museale Sapienza.

La conservazione e il monitoraggio delle collezioni sono stati portati avanti parallelamente ad alcuni progetti di ricerca (§§ 4.-5.).

Contemporaneamente si è svolta l'ordinaria attività di ricerca sulle collezioni che lo costituiscono, con la partecipazione di studiosi, studenti, tesisti, specializzandi e dottorandi.

Le tre missioni, la divulgazione (§ 1.), la formazione (§ 2.) e la ricerca (§ 3.), sono state perseguite con la partecipazione dello staff del Museo, composto da studenti, laureandi, studenti della Scuola di Specializzazione in Beni Archeologici e della Scuola di Dottorato in Archeologia.

1. DIVULGAZIONE E *OUTREACH*

Nel corso del 2017 una serie di conferenze, seminari, visite guidate ed eventi sono stati organizzati, per un pubblico amatoriale ed esperto, per le scuole inferiori e superiori, nonché per studenti universitari e studiosi.

Numerosi laboratori didattici (fig. 2), incentrati su alcuni temi fondamentali nelle culture del Vicino Oriente e dell'Egitto antichi, quali le prime scritture e l'alfabeto, l'agricoltura e la navigazione, sono stati organizzati con forme interattive di apprendimento ludico.

Per gli studenti delle scuole elementari sono state effettuate nel corso del primo semestre dell'anno 2017 cicli di visite guidate, con percorsi tematici attagliati ai programmi didattici.

Il MVOEM ha aderito nel maggio 2017 all'iniziativa promossa dal Polo Museale Sapienza 'Sabato al Museo', nei giorni di sabato 6, 13, 20 e 27, proponendo un calendario speciale di visite guidate e laboratori didattici, destinato ai bambini tra i 6 e i 12 anni.

Lunedì 8 maggio è stata ricevuta la delegazione cinese THUS Holding.

Sabato 20 maggio, in occasione della "Notte dei Musei" è stata inaugurata l'esposizione intitolata *Lost in the Shell*. Tale evento è stato dedicato alla presentazione della scoperta di una *cachette*, da parte della Missione archeologica della Sapienza a Gerico in collaborazione con il Ministero del Turismo e delle Antichità della Palestina. Gli oggetti tesaurizzati nel nascondiglio sono cinque conchiglie nilotiche, queste sono state portate nel MVOEM per lo studio, il restauro e la documentazione.

In occasione di *Porte Aperte alla Sapienza 2017 - XXI Edizione*, 11-13 luglio, sono state proposte alcune visite guidate tematiche.

Lunedì 18 settembre è stato accolto il *Tour Erasmus Sapienza* dedicato a tutti gli studenti stranieri e sabato 23 settembre il Museo ha partecipato con un'apertura straordinaria alla *Giornata Europea del Patrimonio - #GEP 2017*. Giovedì 28 settembre il team di studiosi del DNA antico, composto dal Prof. Pierre Zalloua (Harvard University) e dalla Prof.ssa Lisa Matisoo-Smith (University of Otago), sono stati ospitati nel MVOEM per una *lectio magistralis*.

Sabato 21 ottobre, infine, il MVOEM ha partecipato alla *Giornata Internazionale dell'Archeologia*, promossa dal *Penn Museum* di Filadelfia.

2. FORMAZIONE

Durante l'anno 2017 sono stati rinnovati i percorsi formativi destinati agli studenti delle scuole superiori, con due progetti *Alternanza Scuola Lavoro 2017* (§ 2.1.) e agli studenti universitari, grazie a seminari e conferenze (§ 2.2.), proseguendo le attività inaugurate durante l'anno 2016¹.

2.1. *Alternanza Scuola Lavoro 2017*

Il Museo VOEM ha aderito al progetto *Alternanza Scuola Lavoro 2017* promosso dalla Sapienza Università di Roma con la realizzazione di due progetti dal titolo *I giovani detectives dell'archeologia. L'indagine archeologica 2.0* [P0025], e *Passato e futuro si incontrano: archeologia e geomatica. Tecnologie per comprendere il passato* [P0115] (fig. 3).

Il primo progetto si inquadra nell'attuale dibattito riguardante le strategie sostenibili per la gestione delle collezioni archeologiche vicino-orientali, ponendo come obiettivo l'accrescimento della consapevolezza nei giovani nei confronti del tema del traffico illecito di antichità. Questo ha riguardato 36 studenti di 9 licei, Liceo Classico Anco Marzio, Liceo Classico Ugo Foscolo, Liceo Classico Bertrand Russel, Liceo Classico Cornelio Tacito, Liceo Classico Augusto, Liceo Classico Orazio, Liceo Scientifico Stanislao Cannizzaro, Liceo Artistico di Tivoli, e l'Istituto Superiore di Via Sarandì, maturando 40 ore per ciascun studente ed è stato svolto nei mesi di gennaio, febbraio e marzo 2017. Tale progetto è stato articolato in dodici incontri, teorici e applicativi, durante i quali sono stati introdotti i concetti di patrimonio culturale, bene archeologico e salvaguardia, conservazione e musealizzazione, e sono state svolte le ricerche tematiche e compilate le schede di salvaguardia. Gli studenti in tali attività sono stati guidati dal Prof. Lorenzo Nigro come tutor Sapienza e delle Dott.sse Daria Montanari ed Elisabetta Gallo come referenti interni Sapienza.

Il secondo progetto, realizzato in collaborazione con il Dipartimento di Ingegneria Civile, Edile e Ambientale (DICEA) della Sapienza, Prof. Mattia Crespi, si è concentrato sulla realizzazione di modelli tridimensionali metrici dei reperti archeologici conservati nel MVOEM con metodi e tecniche di Geomatica e computer vision, in vista della definizione di un protocollo operativo per la documentazione museale e in funzione di forme di musealizzazione e divulgazione 2.0 e dinamica. Questo ha avuto luogo nei mesi di gennaio,

¹ Montanari 2016, 123-124.

febbraio e marzo 2017 ed ha riguardato 8 studenti di tre licei, Liceo Scientifico Stanislao Cannizzaro, Istituto Superiore Giuseppe Colasanti, Istituto Tecnico Giovanni Giorgi.

2.2. Seminari universitari

L'anno 2017 si è aperto con una commemorazione della Professoressa Antonia Ciasca grazie ad una conferenza del ciclo a lei dedicato, tenuta il 10 gennaio dalla Prof.ssa Serena Maria Cecchini (Università di Bologna), “Dal Levante all’Occidente Trasmissione di “modelli” e “disegni” nel Mediterraneo nei primi secoli del I millennio a. C.”.

Il giorno giovedì 16 febbraio ha avuto luogo la *Brown Bag Lecture* “‘Endangered Archaeology’ two years on: past and future of the EAMENA project - ‘Endangered Archaeology’ due anni dopo: passato e futuro del progetto EAMENA, presentata dal Dott. Andrea Zerbini (University of Oxford).

Mercoledì 12 aprile è stato presentato dal Prof. Lorenzo Nigro il corso COURSERA *Alle origini delle civiltà mediterranea: archeologia della città dal levante all’Occidente – III-I millennio a. C.*

La Prof.ssa Elisabetta Boaretto (Weizmann Institute of Science) ha tenuto la conferenza *La nuova cronologia del Bronzo Antico nel Sud del Levante: integrare metodi di scavo con micro-stratigrafia e radiocarbonio*, il giorno martedì 9 maggio.

Mercoledì 10 maggio il Prof. Israel Finkelstein (Tel Aviv University) ha tenuto la *Brown Bag Lecture* “Megiddo in the Bronze Age. The View from 2017” (fig. 4).

3. RICERCA

Gli studi multidisciplinari, analisi di tipo chimico, fisico e archeometrico, su alcuni reperti del Museo, inaugurati nell’anno precedente², sono stati continuati e ampliati. Nuovi progetti di ricerca per l’implementazione di applicativi per la scansione 3D dei reperti sono stati avviati in collaborazione con il Dipartimento di Ingegneria Civile, Edile e Ambientale (DICEA) della Sapienza³.

Inoltre, alcuni studi e ricerche sono stati condotti all’interno delle attività didattiche curriculari, per le tesi di Laurea Magistrale, della Scuola di Specializzazione in Beni Archeologici e per i progetti del Dottorato di Ricerca.

3.1. Lo studio delle prime produzioni ceramiche levantine

Alcuni frammenti ceramici, provenienti dai siti di Gerico, Khirbet al-Batrawy e Mozia, sono stati sottoposti ad analisi petrografiche, diffrazione a raggi X e scansione al microscopio elettronico, al fine di indagare i processi di produzione e lavorazione. Tale attività di ricerca si inquadra nel progetto di ricerca dedicato all’analisi e alla definizione delle produzioni e degli impasti delle ceramiche nel Levante e nel Mediterraneo⁴.

² Montanari 2016, 124-125.

³ Ravanelli *et al.* 2017a; 2017b.

⁴ De Vito *et al.* 2014; Medeghini *et al.* 2016. Lo studio è svolto in collaborazione con la Facoltà di Scienze Matematiche, Fisiche e Naturali della Sapienza, nella fattispecie con il Corso di Laurea in Tecnologia per la Conservazione e il Restauro dei Beni Culturali, Professoressa Caterina De Vito.

3.2. *Lo studio dei corredi della necropoli di Achziv*

Nella prima metà dell'anno, è stato effettuato un riesame sistematico dei corredi e delle ceramiche rinvenute nella necropoli di Achziv (vetrina 6) durante gli scavi degli anni 1963 e 1964, condotti dalla Sapienza in collaborazione con *Israel Antiquity Authority* e diretti da Sabatino Moscati e Moshe Prausnitz⁵.

3.3. *Il pugnale del Bronzo Antico IV da Gerico*

Grazie alla collaborazione con il Centro per le Nanotecnologie Applicate all'Ingegneria (CNIS) della Sapienza, diretto dal Prof. Ruggero Caminiti, è stato possibile sottoporre un pugnale rinvenuto nella necropoli di Gerico esposto nella vetrina 1 del Museo⁶ ai raggi X in scansione di energia (E.D.X.D.) con un diffrattometro non commerciale e all'analisi del Microscopio a Scansione Elettronica (SEM). Tali esami hanno rivelato la composizione metallica dell'arma: rame 93,57%, stagno 5,87%, ferro 0,66. Il pugnale da Gerico, dunque, è stato prodotto con una lega di bronzo e costituisce uno dei primi esemplari di tale lega rinvenuti nel sito⁷.

4. CURATELA DELLE COLLEZIONI

Nel corso dell'anno 2017 il programma di documentazione impostato nel 2016⁸ è stato proseguito. Le collezioni sono state monitorate e salvaguardate, con interventi mirati di pulizia e restauro, e le nuove acquisizioni sono state censite e catalogate (§ 5.).

5. NUOVE ACCESSIONI

Sono state registrate nuove accessioni nella Collezione Vicino Oriente del Museo, grazie alla collaborazione con la *Rome La Sapienza Expedition to Palestine & Transjordan* (ROSEPAJ), missione archeologica attiva nel 2017 nei siti di Tell es-Sultan/Gerico, e Betlemme⁹, in Palestina, e nel sito di Khirbet al-Batrawy, in Giordania. I reperti acquisiti sono vasellame ceramico, oggetti in pietra e ceramica, e lame di selce, d'età neolitica, del Bronzo Antico e Medio per il sito di Gerico, del Bronzo Antico per il sito di Batrawy.

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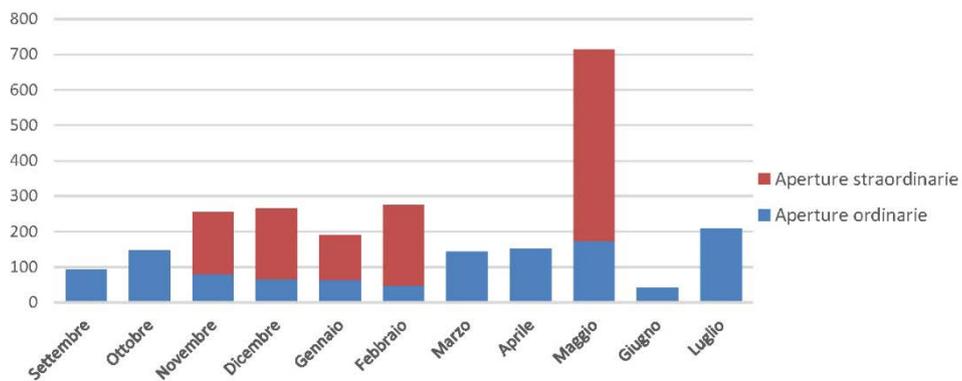


Fig. 1 - Istogramma del numero dei visitatori del Museo VOEM nel periodo Settembre 2016- Luglio 2017.



Fig. 2 - Il laboratorio didattico per i ragazzi tra 6 e 12 anni.



Fig. 3 - Un momento dell'ASL 2017 durante la scansione ottica 3D di uno dei reperti del MVOEM.



Fig. 4 - Il Prof. Israel Finkelstein durante la *Brown Bag Lecture* del 10 maggio.

[Vicino Oriente XXI (2017), pp. 273-277]

ROMA, IL CULTO DI ISIDE E SERAPIDE IN CAMPO MARZIO: ALCUNI AGGIORNAMENTI

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This paper summarises some results arising from the research on the greatest Egyptian sanctuary in Rome, which was consecrated to Isis and Serapis and placed in the central Campo Marzio. The reading of Renaissance drawings and remains mentioned in that area made it possible to add a piece to the knowledge of that context which made a deep mark on the religious and urban history of the city.

Keywords: Rome; Egypt; Campo Marzio; temple of Isis and Serapis; sacred architecture

Com'è noto la localizzazione del più importante luogo sacro alle divinità egizie Iside e Serapide a Roma è un'acquisizione molto precoce nella storia degli studi archeologici. Essa fu dedotta essenzialmente sulla base dell'impressionante concentrazione di rinvenimenti architettonici e scultorei egizi ed egittizzanti compiuti nel tempo in tutta l'area attualmente racchiusa dall'asse Via del Seminario-Via S. Stefano del Cacco, rispettivamente a nord e a sud, e da quello costituito da via di S. Ignazio-Via del Gesù-Chiesa di S. Maria sopra Minerva a est e ad ovest¹. Esiti più puntuali circa la configurazione e l'articolazione del complesso in questo settore furono acquisiti negli anni Quaranta del secolo scorso da Guglielmo Gatti che, grazie ad alcuni frammenti della pianta marmorea severiana e alle integrazioni ricavate dalla documentazione archivistica, attribuì in modo definitivo la pertinenza dei pochi resti ricadenti nell'area all'Iseo-Serapeo del Campo Marzio, noto dalle fonti letterarie². Gli studi successivi hanno sempre accolto questa interpretazione; partendo dalle fonti iconografiche e dalle cronache dei rinvenimenti effettuati nel corso dei secoli, l'attenzione degli studiosi si è così spostata sulla definizione dei luoghi di culto veri e propri, sulla loro tipologia e dislocazione nell'ambito della vasta area attribuita al santuario, giungendo a conclusioni diverse anche in ordine ai suoi possibili modelli di origine³. Più recentemente lo studio diretto e la restituzione dei resti effettivamente conservati nel quadro topografico di riferimento hanno dimostrato la criticità di alcuni aspetti sostanziali nella ricostruzione proposta da G. Gatti: essi riguardano principalmente i due ingressi al grande organismo, l'arco di Camilliano e il cosiddetto arco di Giano alla Minerva, fondamentali per l'aggancio della ricostruzione alla topografia moderna. Gli approfondimenti dello studio su quest'ultima testimonianza, condotti dopo la scoperta e l'analisi dei suoi resti in uno scantinato del corrispondente palazzo moderno, restituiscono un quadro molto più articolato rispetto a quello prospettato nell'interpretazione tradizionale⁴. La collocazione, la denominazione e la ricostruzione dell'arco di Giano alla Minerva proposte da G. Gatti derivano, com'è noto, da uno schizzo realizzato da Antonio da Sangallo sicuramente dopo

¹ Lanciani 1883. Per la rassegna complessiva dei rinvenimenti nell'area cfr. Malaise 1972, 112-245; Lembke 1994, 37-273. La sintesi dei rinvenimenti di importazione è in Lollo Barberi - Parola - Toti 1995.

² Gatti 1942; 1943-1944; Carettoni *et al.* 1960, 97-102.

³ Su questi temi cfr. Malaise 1978, 683; Roulet 1972, 24, 30; Lembke 1994, 23, 25; Ensoli 1998, 413-417; Lollo Barberi - Parola - Toti 1995, 63-65.

⁴ Lanciani 1881, 279-280; Gatti 1942; De Maria 1988, 299-300; Lembke 1994, 183-184; Ten 2011, 735-736; 2015, 51-59; 2017; Attilia 2015.

il 1515 (fig. 1)⁵. Non ci si è mai soffermati sul fatto che l'architetto fu attivo nei lavori di progettazione intrapresi per modificare la cappella absidale della chiesa di Santa Maria sopra Minerva, incarico al quale fu chiamato tra il 1530 e il 1540⁶. I resti della grande costruzione romana da lui riferita ad un arco quadrifronte erano e sono tuttora collocati in parte subito all'esterno dell'estremità meridionale del transetto della chiesa, una circostanza che spiega innanzitutto le ragioni che portarono l'architetto a rilevare queste strutture. Dello studio preliminare al progetto si conserva uno schizzo planimetrico misurato della cappella maggiore, realizzato dal fratello di Antonio, Giovanni Battista, per documentare lo stato di fatto⁷. Osservando questo documento non si può fare a meno di notare come la distanza tra i pilastri di testata della cappella absidale sia molto vicina a quella annotata da Antonio da Sangallo per il grande spazio centrale del Giano (fig. 1): 48 palmi nell'abside, presi presumibilmente a partire dai rivestimenti, 49 nell'aula a crociera del *Giano acanto ala Minerva*, come riferiscono le glosse che accompagnano lo schizzo. Il rilievo del Peruzzi, realizzato poco tempo prima⁸, si discosta leggermente da quello dei Sangallo, registrando una distanza di 47 palmi, ma anche in questo caso sussiste la possibilità che le misure tengano conto dei rivestimenti. La larghezza della navata centrale nella chiesa attuale è di 11,13 m, molto vicina alla luce del fornice centrale (11,06 m) ricostruito da Gatti per l'ingresso occidentale all'Iseo-Serapeo. Se è difficile pensare ad un caso per la corrispondenza tra queste misure, è altrettanto difficile interpretare questa ricorrenza, tenendo conto soprattutto della prossimità fra le due strutture (distanti poco più di 18 m) e della loro dislocazione sullo stesso asse. Partendo però dalla constatazione che il transetto insiste su murature antiche, isolate e descritte in occasione di uno studio capillare della chiesa⁹, e che queste presentano caratteristiche molto simili per la tecnica edilizia a quelle rintracciate nello scantinato che ingloba i resti dell'arco di Giano, è forte la tentazione di immaginare una ripetizione dello stesso schema planimetrico, quindi una successione di grandi ambienti coperti a crociera, particolarmente sviluppati in elevato e disposti sullo stesso asse. L'eventualità di questa lettura configurerebbe un organismo estremamente imponente, sfuggito finora ai tentativi di ricostruire la fisionomia del grande santuario egizio a Roma; e acquisterebbero così un senso anche la testimonianza circa l'esistenza di un *palatium Camilli*, che ricorre già nella redazione più antica dei *Mirabilia* e che viene ribadita dall'Anonimo Magliabechiano, con l'indicazione del sito: *Palatium Camilli fuit ubi nunc est arcus Camilliani retro Minervam*¹⁰. Nei *Mirabilia* il termine *Palatium* distingue sempre organismi architettonici imponenti e nel caso in questione la natura e l'estensione dei resti sembra dare e, allo stesso tempo trovare, una spiegazione proprio in questa denominazione.

⁵ Antonio da Sangallo il Giovane, Uff. 1152; Bartoli 1917, vol. III, tav. CCLXVI, fig. 451, arch. 1152; Gatti 1943-1944, 137-150; De Maria 1988, 299-300; Lembke 1994, 183-184; Ten 2015, 51.

⁶ Palmerio - Villetti 1994, 34-38.

⁷ G.B. da Sangallo, Uff. 1661v A. Cfr. Palmerio - Villetti 1989, 122-132, fig. 23; Palmerio - Villetti 1994, 34-35, fig. 25.

⁸ Palmerio - Villetti 1989, 125-126, fig. 20.

⁹ Palmerio - Villetti 1989, 74-76.

¹⁰ Su questo aspetto cfr. Roncaioli 1979, 86.

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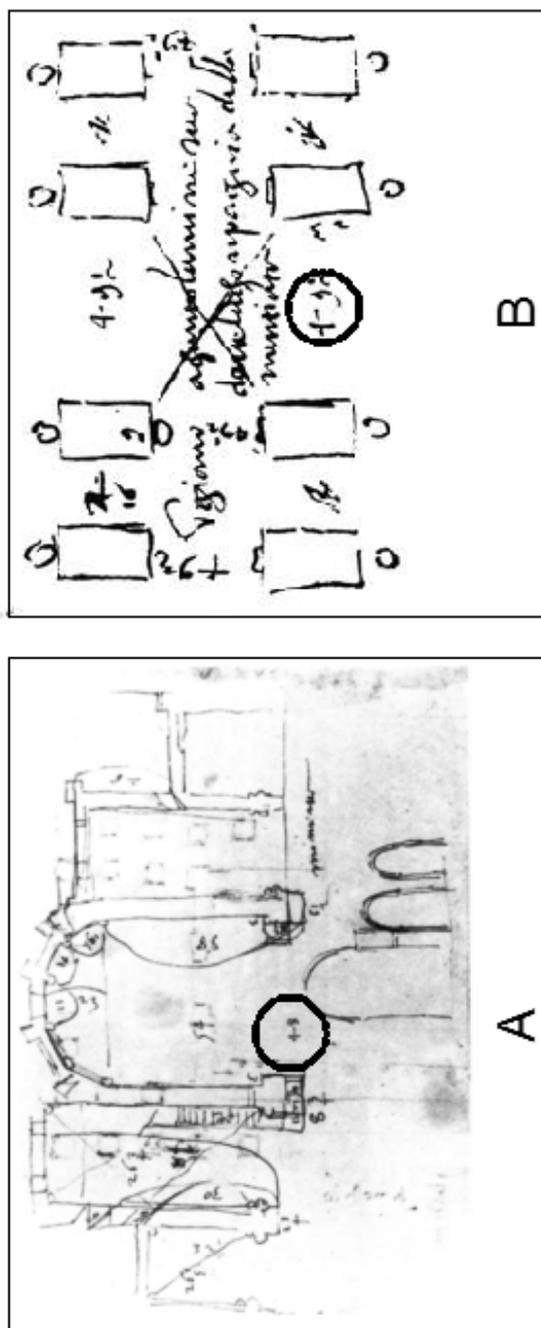


Fig. 1 - A: schizzo planimetrico della cappella absidale in Santa Maria sopra Minerva (Giovanni Battista da Sangallo, Firenze, Uffizi, Dis. Archit. n. 1661 v A); B: i resti dell'arco di Giano alla Minerva (Antonio da Sangallo, Firenze, Uffizi, Dis. archit. n. 1152). Nei cerchi l'indicazione delle distanze.