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KHALET AL-JAM'A. A BRONZE AND IRON AGES NECROPOLIS NEAR BETHLEHEM (PALESTINE): RESULTS OF THE 2019 ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS

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In Spring 2019 the Italian-Palestinian joint team of Sapienza University of Rome and the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities of Palestine Dept. of Archaeology and Cultural Heritage resumed rescue excavations at the Necropolis of Khalet al-Jam'a, 2.2 Km south-east from the Church of Nativity in Bethlehem. Works were focused on Tomb A7, identified in 2015, a huge underground burial place, dating back to the Iron IIC (8th-7th century BC), but also including earlier depositions dating from the EB IVB-MB. This suggests that an original EBIV tomb was modified and re-used in the following Middle Bronze and Iron Age. A provisional report of activities and finds is offered below.

Keywords: Bethlehem; necropolis; Early Bronze Age IV; Middle Bronze Age; Iron Age II

1. INTRODUCTION

In April 2019, the joint team of the Palestinian MOTA-DACH and Sapienza University of Rome[1] resumed archaeological activities at the Necropolis of Khalet al-Jam'a, 2.2 Km south-east from the center of Bethlehem.[2] Aim of this season was the excavation of Tomb A7, in the south-western sector of Area A (fig. 1), already recognized and surveyed in 2015, when its entrance was first identified.[3]

2. TOMB A7

Tomb A7 is quite different from the majority of the tombs in the KJ necropolis. It is a huge underground complex with at least seven entrances/shafts and ten large chambers with several recesses connected by passages and arches.

The first investigated entrance of Tomb A7 consists of an irregular oval shaft (Shaft 1; fig. 2), of about 0.80/0.90 m of diameter, 1.60 m deep. The tomb is composed of two sectors (fig. 3), northern (Sector A) and western (Sector B), and Shaft 1 leads to the last one. Sector A, with south-north orientation, counts three chambers joined together (Chambers 1, 9 and 8), and two other attached chambers to the north (Chambers 10 and 6). The second sector, B, is provided with a series of 5 smaller chambers: in order from Shaft 1 to the north, Chambers 2 and 4 (which opens just onto Chamber 2), 3, 5 and 7.

In addition to Shaft 1, six other shafts were found in Tomb A7. One in Chamber 1 (Shaft 2), three in Chamber 9 (Shafts 3, 4 and 5), at short distance one from each other, and another one (Shaft 6) in Chamber 6. Another shaft that runs down (Shaft 8) has been

[1] The team was composed as follows. MOTA DATCH: Dr. Mohammed Ghayyada, responsible for the Bethlehem district and Mr. Jaber Ahmed er-Joub, archaeologist. University of Rome La Sapienza: Dr. Gaia Cecconi, field responsible; Mr. Lorenzo Indino, archaeologist and photographer; Ms. Cecilia Ripamonti, draftperson; Ms. Cristiana Liberati, draftperson.

[2] See Nigro 2015; Nigro *et al*. 2015; 2017.

[3] Nigro *et al*. 2015, 190, fig. 20.

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identified inside a small niche in Chamber 8, while a circular pit, aside the western wall of the same chamber indicates the presence of another shaft.[4] All of these shafts were sealed by the same layer of sandy brown soil and limestone chops. In Sector B, the presence of a further shaft is suggested by a cone of earth created by the collapse of the filling from the pit, but it has not been excavated yet (Shaft 7).

Chambers in Sector A have a round or oval shape with several recesses and niches carved along the walls and filled up by earth and stones of large dimensions.

Chambers in Sector B, where the excavation was concentrated during this season, are characterized by an elongated oval shape without niches or subsidiary installations, except for Chamber 2 (fig. 4). The latter one shows a more complex structure, with a height between 1.60 and 1.80 m. Immediately to the right of Shaft 1, there is a platform (Platform 18) carved in the calcareous rock, 2.34 m wide, flanked by a long channel (Channel 17), 1.50 m length and 13 cm wide, and a large niche, 1.05 cm wide, is on the southern wall, with some stones inside it (Niche 1; fig. 5). The interpretation of this installation needs further investigation.

Layers in Chamber 2 consist of an upper stratum of collapse of brown soft soil with big stones and just a few pottery fragments (Filling 3). Underneath, there is a layer of compact limestone (Filling 9), made by smashed chops collapsed from ceilings, and covering a third layer of compacted brown sandy earth, with limestone fragments and many pottery sherds (Filling 10), laying directly over the bedrock.

The other chambers of Sector B are filled up with big stones and, underneath, a layer of compacted brown sandy earth similar to Filling 10 of Chamber 2 (named Filling 11 in Chamber 3; Filling 12 in Chamber 4; Filling 13 in Chamber 5 and Filling 14 in Chamber 7). Pottery was collected only in the southern half of Chamber 3, in Chamber 4 (see below § 2.1.) and between Chamber 5 and 7.

According to the ceramic repertoire, Tomb A7 was firstly used during the Early Bronze Age IVB, and then re-excavated and re-used during the Iron Age IIB-C, as already observed in other tombs of the same necropolis (for example Tomb A1),[5] in the cemetery of Jebel Daher in Bethlehem,[6] or in the necropolis of Tell en-Nasbeh (for example Tombs 32, 54 and 5).[7]

2.1. *Pottery from Tomb A7*

The main concentration of pottery was in Chamber 2, in the southern half of Chamber 3 and in Chamber 4, while just a few fragments have been found between Chambers 5 and 7, over Burial 15a+b (fig. 2; see below § 2.4.). The ceramic repertoire consists of a few complete vessels, basically lamps, and a single cylindrical juglets of MB III. The rest of the ceramic inventory was found in fragmentary preservation state, in an Iron Age IIB-C layer of use disturbed by looters.

4 Already recognized in 2015, see Nigro *et al*. 2015, fig. 21, above on the right.
5 Nigro *et al*. 2015, 185.
6 Nigro *et al.* 2017, 16-19.
7 Mc-Cown - Wampler 1947, 77-84.

2.1.1. Pottery: Classes

The Iron Age repertoire includes the following classes: Simple Ware, Red Slip, Cooking Ware and Storage Ware. Out of 620 fragments from the pottery found in Chambers 2, 3 and 4, 31.93% belong to Specialized Production (MNV[8] 69 vessels),[9] 44.99% Simple Ware (MNV 82 vessels and 24 lamps); 1.78% Cooking Ware (MNV 3 pots) and 21.30% Storage Ware (MNV 25 jars).

Pottery found in between Chambers 5 and 7 is distributed as follows: 21.22% Specialized Production (MNV 7 vessels);[10] 60.6 % Simple Ware (MNV 8 vessels and 2 lamps); 18.18% Storage Ware (MNV 4 vessels).

2.1.2. Pottery: Classes

Most frequent vases belong to specialized productions: Red Slip carinated bowls[11] and hemispherical bowls, [12] deep bowls,[13] and kraters (fig. 6),[14].

Simple Ware enumerates plain bowls, carinated bowls, kraters (fig. 6),[15] jug and juglets,[16] sometimes with a cross incised on the handle. [17] Among Cooking Ware, pots[18] (fig. 7) show an everted grooved or an out-turned rounded rim, with two ribbon handles, sometimes with a cross incised above them.[19] Moreover, also Storage Ware jars, the so-called hole-mouth pithoi[20] and hole-mouth jars (fig. 7),[21] typical of IA IIB-C, were found. Two Storage Ware lids' pommels were also found[22] (fig. 7).

Furthermore, some stamped handles[23] were collected: two 2-winged *lmlk* specimens[24] of 0 II Type, and one[25] of X II Type (fig. 8). X II Type represents a diagnostic mark of 7th

8 Minimum Number of Vessel (Rice 1987, 292-293; Voss - Allen 2010).

9 25.52% Red Slip Ware (MNV 39 vessels) and 1.13% Simple Painted Ware.

10 9.09% Red Slip Ware (MNV 3 vessels).

11 KJ.19.TA7.11/10.

12 KJ.19.TA7.8/11.

13 They exhibit mainly an everted, cut and down-folded or outward-folded rims, as in typologies 4, 6 and 8 of De Groot - Bernick-Greenberg's classification (De Groot - Bernick-Greenberg 2012, 58-62). Sometimes the Red Slip is applied in a concentric circles pattern.

14 KJ.19.TA7.3/43 and KJ.19.TA7.7/9. Kraters are characterized by a thick profiled rim and a high rounded carination (Gitin 2015, 347). KJ.19.TA7.7/9, Red Slip krater with black painted decoration cf.: Beer-Sheba (Singer-Avitz 2016, 593, fig. 12.35:8).

15 KJ.19.TA7.3/33 (fig. 7).

16 KJ.19.TA7.11/64 and KJ.19.TA7.11/69. They are characterized by simple or everted rounded rim, flaring neck and handle extended from the rim to the shoulder (Gitin 2015, 349-350).

17 KJ.19.TA7.11/155. Some of them have also a punctuation at the center of the cross. This feature is already attested in Jerusalem/al-Quds (De Groot - Bernick-Greenberg 2012, fig. 4.30:2-3, 6) and Tel Moza/Qalunya (Brandl - Greenhut - Vainstub 2009, fig. 5.7).

18 KJ.19.TA7.4/15.

19 Gitin 2015, 347-348.

20 KJ.19.TA7.8/55. Sometimes this kind of vessels is defined "jar-krater" (Gitin 2015, 348, pl. 3.3.4:3-5). It found comparisons at Jerusalem/al-Quds (Gitin 2015, 351), Beer-Sheba (Singer-Avitz 2016, 619-620) and Tel Moza/Qalunya (Greenhut - de Groot 2009).

21 KJ.19.TA7.11/118. They are characterized by a plain rim, perpendicular to the wall (Freud 2016, 262), as also at Lachish (Gitin 2015, 349, pl. 3.3.5:10), Jerusalem/al-Quds (De Groot - Bernick-Greenberg 2012) and Tel Moza/Qalunya (Greenhut - de Groot 2009).

22 KJ.19.TA7.10/138.

23 Lemaire 1981; Lipschits - Sergi - Koch 2010; 2011; Sergi 2016.

24 KJ.19.TA7.8/42 and KJ.19.TA7.11/103.

century, that appears in hill-country sites not destroyed in the 701 BC Assyrian campaign.[26] Parallels have been found at Ramat Rahel,[27] Gibeon/el-Jib[28] or in the same area of Bethlehem, on the slope north of the Basilica of the Nativity.[29] Other two handles shows two Concentric Circles Type impression with a central dot[30] (fig. 8). Concentric Circles Type mainly spreads over Highland sites after the end of 8th century,[31] as Ramat Rahel,[32] Jerusalem/al-Quds[33] and Tel Moza/Qalunya.[34]

2.2. *Objects and other finds from Tomb A7*

Objects are distributed in Tomb A7 over the same area of the pottery. A pillar figurine[35] (fig. 9), depicting a female torso missing head and arms, belonging to Kletter's Type B ("mold-made face JPF")[36] or Type A3c of Gilbert-Peretz's classification ("pillar torso, broken hands"),[37] was found in Filling 11. This type of figurine is widely spread between the 8th and early 6th century BC [38] in Central-Southern Levant,[39] e.g. in Jerusalem/al-Quds,[40] Tell Beit Mirsim,[41] Gibeah/Tell el-Fûl,[42] Tell en-Naṣbeh,[43] Tel Moza/Qalunya.[44] Such kind of figurines is usually interpreted as votive objects for official or domestic cult of fertility, perhaps as representations of the goddess Asherah[45] or Astarte.[46] According to some scholars they could be toys,[47] or women representations, linked with some sympathetic magic properties.[48]

25 KJ.19.TA7.10/137.
26 Lipschits - Sergi - Koch 2011, 7.
27 For 0 II Type at Ramat Rahel see Sergi 2016, 333-339; for X II Type see Sergi 2016, 326-333. The handle KJ.19.TA7.8/42 (fig. 8) has also two concentric circles incised above the stamp, a common specimen in the southern sites of the Levant as Ramat Rahel (Sergi 2016, 339, figs. 151-152).
28 For 0 II Type at Gibeon/el-Jib see Pritchard 1959, fig. 12:5; for X II Type see Pritchard 1959, 18-19, fig. 8:530; photos of the University of Pennsylvania Museum nos. 60-13-110, 60-13-112, 60-13,117.
29 Lipschits - Sergi - Koch 2011, 17, tab. 1; Nigro 2015, 9.
30 KJ.19.TA7.11/101 and KJ.19.TA7.11/102.
31 Lipschits - Sergi - Koch 2011, 8.
32 Sergi - Koch 2016.
33 Prag 2001, 220-221.
34 Brandl - Greenhut - Vainstub 2009, fig. 5.5.
35 KJ.19.TA7.10.
36 Kletter 1996, 29-30.
37 Gilbert-Peretz 1996, 29.
38 Holland 1977, 137; Moorey 2001, 67. Kletter argues that the earliest figurines can be dated to the 10th-9th centuries, but the Pillar Figurines become a common phenomenon only starting from the 8th century (Kletter 1996, 40). The debate about the first appearance of these figurines is still open, see Johnston 2003, 86-87.
39 Johnston 2003, 86-87; Seevers 2016, 37.
40 Gilbert-Peretz 1996, 30.
41 Lapp 1978, pl. 32:15.
42 Albright 1939, pls. 31:7,5; 54b: 11, 12; 55:7; 56:7; 57c:5.
43 McCown - Wampler 1947, pl. 86:13,18.
44 Petersson-Solimany - Kletter 2009, fig. 4.1.
45 Kletter 1996, 29; 2001; Hadley 2000, 196-205; Yezerski - Geva 2003, 63-64; Johnston 2003.
46 Darby 2014, 35-37.
47 Johnston 2003, 99; Seevers 2016, 37.
48 Moorey 2001, 28; Meyers 2002, 286.

Three handmade zoomorphic figurines, one head of an equid, and two bodies of equid were found between Chambers 2 and 3, in Fillings 10 and 11. The head[49] (fig. 9), almost complete, preserves applied eyes and a cylindrical nose with a punctuation at the end. It is a popular typology in the Levant, sometimes with pierced muzzle to libate,[50] and found comparisons at Jerusalem/al-Quds,[51] Tel Moza/Qalunya,[52] Samaria,[53] and Beer-Sheba.[54] The two bodies are preserved in the chest and part of the neck.[55] Equid figurines are common in southern sites of the Levant during the 8th-7th centuries, as other zoomorphic figurines (sheep, horned animals, birds) and clay models of tables and chairs. They are sometimes interpreted as votive offerings or toys.[56]

Moreover, several flint cores, three fragments of stone vessels[57], five stoppers[58], six pestles,[59] one grinding stones[60] were found just inside Chambers 2 and 3, in Fillings 10 and 11, and three *marābiṭ faras* for tying animals (fig. 10)[61] inside Chamber 2, in Filling 3.

2.3. *Faunal remains*

Faunal remains from Tomb A7 were hand-collected and analyzed during the excavation. Most of the bones have been found in Chamber 2 (59.64% of NISP[62]). However, some samples were collected also in Chambers 3, 5, and 7 (tab. 1). In Tomb A7, the most represented animals are sheep and goats (*Ovis vel capra*, 11.40%, and *Capra hircus*, 3.50%), followed by donkeys (*Equus asinus*, 8.77%), equids (*Equidae*, 4.39%), cattle (*Bos taurus*, 4.39%), birds (*Aves*, 1.75%) and a few pigs (*Sus scrofa*, 1.75%). Medium mammals represents 44.74 %, large mammals 22.80 % and indeterminate 32.46 % of total.

In Chamber 2, a high concentration of mammals of medium size, including sheep, one goat, represented by four fragments of horn, and a very small percentage of pigs were

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49 KJ.19.TA7.20.

50 As in the case of Beer-Sheba (Kletter 2016, fig. 21.17:314).

51 Gilbert-Peretz 1996, 31, pl.6:6, 15.

52 Petersson-Solimany - Kletter 2009, fig. 4.2:12.

53 Crowfoot - Crowfoot - Kenyon 1957, pl. XII:4.

54 Kletter 2016, fig. 21.7:75, 21.10:101.

55 In the previous excavations of Tomb A7, a very similar statuette has been found (Nigro *et al*. 2015, 190, fig. 22:KJ.15.TA7/d).

56 Kletter 1996, 60.

57 KJ.19.TA7.9, KJ.19.TA7.22 and KJ.19.TA7.32. The first one is a basalt tripod bowl that preserve one leg with triangular section (Squitieri 2015, 209). Other two are stone bowl with a ring base, Type 2.C of Sparks' classification (Sparks 2007, 127, fig. 48:5). Both the shapes are very common in the Southern Levant during both Early Bronze and Iron Age, in the regions of Eastern Galilee, the Jezreel Valley and the northern Jordan Valley, while basalt bowls is poorly attested in southern region (Sparks 2007, 129; Squitieri 2015, 211).

58 KJ.19.TA7.24, KJ.19.TA7.26, KJ.19.TA7.27, KJ.19.TA7.29, KJ.19.TA7.31.

59 KJ.19.TA7.1, KJ.19.TA7.2, KJ.19.TA7.4, KJ.19.TA7.12, KJ.19.TA7.16, KJ.19.TA7.18. Mainly round or squared pestles with round section and two or more faces of use (Wright 1992, fig. 8:77-78). Two of them, made of flint, are probably reused nodules.

60 KJ.19.TA7.15, partially preserved, that is made of limestone with a loaf-shaped section.

61 KJ.19.TA7.5, KJ.19.TA7.6, and KJ.19.TA7.7.

62 Number of Identified Specimens (Marshall - Pilgram 1993; Connor 2004, 54-57).

found.[63] Mandibulae with teeth and fragments of long bones are the most numerous among ovine remains. Retrieved bones and especially teeth and mandibulae suggest the presence at least of to two juvenile individuals of sheep/goat.

In Chamber 3, mostly mammals of large size (cattle and donkey) were found, in particular ten donkey's teeth from the same individual.[64]

In conclusion, faunal remains from Tomb A7 follow the general trends of the southern sites of the Levant,[65] where the ovine is the most spread animal species, both for wool/milk production and meat consumption, followed by cattle, and a very small percentage of pigs and birds.

	Chamber 2		Chamber 3		Chamber 5		Chamber 7	
	KJ.19.TA7.2.FR1; KJ.19.TA7.2.FR.2; KJ.19.TA7.2.FR.4		KJ.19.TA7.2.FR3, KJ.19.TA7.2.FR7		KJ.19.TA7.2.FR5		KJ.19.TA7.2.FR6	
	NISP	MNI	NISP	MNI	NISP	MNI	NISP	MNI
Aves	1 (FR.1)	1	1 (FR.3)	1				
Capra hircus	4 (FR.4)	1			4	1		
Ovis vel Capra	4 (FR.1); 3 (FR.2); 6 (FR.4)	2			5	1	3	1
Sus scrofa	1 (FR.2) 1 (FR.4)	1						
Bos taurus		1	5 (FR.3)					
Equus asinus			10 (FR.7)	1				
Equidae	1 (FR.1), 1 (FR.4)	1	3 (FR.3)	1				
Medium mammals	8 (FR.1); 12 (FR.4)		2 (FR.3)		1			
Large mammals	2 (FR.4)				4			
Indeterminate	3 (FR.1); 9 (FR.2); 12 (FR.4)		3 (FR.3)		5		5	

Tab. 1 - Number of Identified Specimens (NISP) and Minimum Number of Individuals (MNI) of the faunal remains found in Tomb A7 of Khalet al-Jam'a.

2.4. *Burial 15a+b*

In the western half of Chamber 5, along the northern wall of the tomb (fig. 11), a burial was identified (Burial 15a+b) under a thick layer of collapsed ceiling (Filling 16, that was covered by Filling 13, see § 2.). Human bones were preserved in a scattered and mixed distribution. Due to the preservation state, it was possible to recognize (tab. 2): a skull

[63] Pig is not very common in IA II southern sites of the Levant, although a very small percentage has been found in IA IIB strata at Tel Moza/Qalunya and Jerusalem/al-Quds and a slightly big amount at Beer-Sheba (Sapir-Hen - Finkelstein 2015, 311, fig. 3; Maeir - Hitchcock - Horwitz 2013, 5, fig. 2).

[64] KJ.19.TA7.2.FR7. They are left and right molars and premolars in connection with each other, identifying a single individual (Barone 2003).

[65] Horwitz 1996, 313; Horwitz - Tchernov 1996, 298-299; Sade 2009, 202-205; Horwitz - Lernau 2018, 292-293.

fragment, some decidual teeth, a mastoid process,[66] four pelvis bones, several ribs, vertebral bodies and branches, one cervical vertebra with almost welded branches, two astragali of different size, several not-welded epiphyses. Preliminary analysis of bones, in particular of the size of the vertebrae, of the size of the two astragali and of the number of pelvis, revealed that there were two buried childhood individuals: the first one was less than 2 years old (fig. 15),[67] and the second one over 6 years old (fig. 16).[68]

Burial 15a (KJ.19.TA7.15.HR1)	Burial 15b (KJ.19.TA7.15.HR2)
	1 skull fragment
18 vertebral bodies and 6 vertebral branches	1 cervical vertebra with welded branches
	2 upper part of scapulae (left and right side)
2 pelvis	2 pelvis
5 epiphyses of long bones, of which 2 femur heads and 1 distal tibia epiphysis	1 femur head
1 astragalus	1 astragalus
13 non-welded diaphyses of ribs	12 diaphyses of ribs
7 non-welded diaphyses of phalanges	9 phalanges
	6 long bones fragments

Tab. 2 - List of human bones found in Burial 15a and Burial 15b of Tomb A7 of Khalet al-Jam'a.

The ceramic finds were laid in the eastern part of Chamber 5 and found mixed with bones. They accompanied different inhumations (figs. 12-14). Pottery vessels date back from different epochs: one EB IVB jars with combed decoration on the shoulders[69] (fig. 14); one MB I Gublite carinated bowl[70] (fig. 12), one Red Slip cylindrical juglet[71] (fig. 13), one Black Burnished piriform juglet with button base[72] (fig. 12), one Black Burnished piriform juglet with ring base[73] (fig. 12), one MB III Simple Ware platter with inner folded rim[74] (fig. 12), one Simple Ware juglet[75] (fig. 12, preserved at rim and neck), one Simple Ware dipper[76] (fig. 12), one MB II Storage Ware jar[77] and one Iron Age II jar, apparently intrusive from the upper layer[78] (fig. 14).

Then, according to the pottery repertoire, it seems to be possible that the tomb was first excavated during the Early Bronze IVB when burials 15a+b belong to, and it remained in

[66] These samples are currently being analyzed at the Dept. of Biology of the University of Florence (Prof. D. Caramelli), for the ancient DNA extraction.
[67] Burial F.15a, KJ.19.TA7.15.HR1.
[68] Burial F.15b, KJ.19.TA7.15.HR2. Age estimate is based on the fusion status of the vertebrae (Canci - Minozzi 2011, 132, tab. 8.7).
[69] KJ.19.TA7.15/7.
[70] KJ.19.TA7.15/10. For comparisons see: Nigro 1997; 2002.
[71] KJ.19.TA7.15/2.
[72] KJ.19.TA7.15/3.
[73] KB.19.B.TA7.15/5.
[74] KJ.19.TA7.15/1.
[75] KJ.19.TA7.15/4.
[76] KJ.19.TA7.15/9.
[77] KJ.19.TA7.15/8.
[78] KJ.19.TA7.15/6.

use during the whole Middle Bronze Age until the end of Middle Bronze III, similarly to what happened for other tombs of the same necropolis.[79]

3. Conclusions

Tomb A7 seems to have originally consisted of three different tombs, subsequently unified into one large underground complex during the Iron Age II. One tomb corresponded to Chambers 1, 8 and 9 with shafts 5 and 2, the second tomb to chambers 6 and 10, with Shaft 6, and the third one to Chambers 3, 4, 5, and 7, with Shaft 7.

The third tomb should represent the oldest nucleus of the structure, hewn in the EB IVB-MB I and kept in use during the whole Middle Bronze Age, as suggested by the funerary equipment. Its entrance was probably through Shaft 7. Afterward, in the 8-7th centuries BC, the three tombs were rearranged, cleaned and then joined together by means of Chamber 2 and Shaft 1. Chambers 1, 9, 8, 10 and 6 were connected, by widening rooms and straightening walls. Shafts 3 and 4 were excavated, as aeration wells or for dropping raw materials. These variation of the tomb arrangement apparently indicate a change in the use of the cave, which was transformed into an underground production and storage area, associated with the nearby Iron Age Tower.[80]

Pottery (§ 2.1.), small finds (§ 2.2.), human (§ 2.4.), and faunal (§ 2.5) remains collected in Tomb A7 provide more information about Bethlehem in Iron Age II, while the city was an administrative center related to the Jerusalem/al-Quds district,[81] as already seen in the rich assemblage found in the Barmil Tomb (D13) of Khalet al-Jam'a.[82]

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[79] A nice comparison is Tomb C5, where a fragment of jar with the same combed decoration of KJ.19.TA7.15/7 was collected (Nigro *et al.* 2015, 192; 2017, 12).
[80] Nigro *et al*. 2015, 191, fig. 36.
[81] Nigro 2015, 9.
[82] See Nigro *et al.* 2015, 191.

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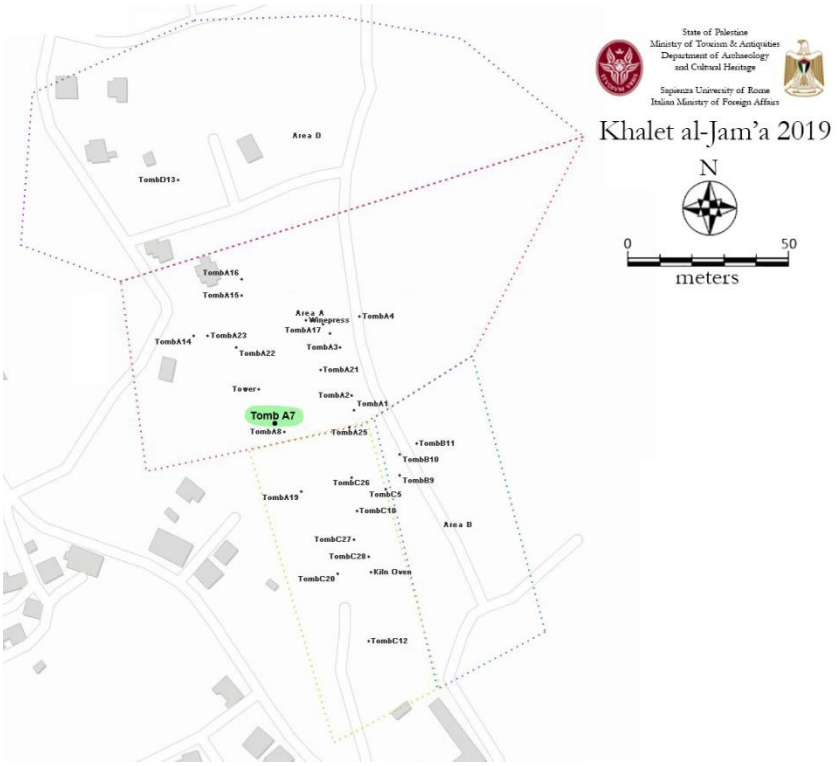

Fig. 1 - Map of the Necropolis of Khalet al-Jam'a (lasapienzatojericho.it/Betlemme/MAP).

Fig. 2 - Shaft 1 of Tomb A7 of the Necropolis of Khalet al-Jam'a, from south.

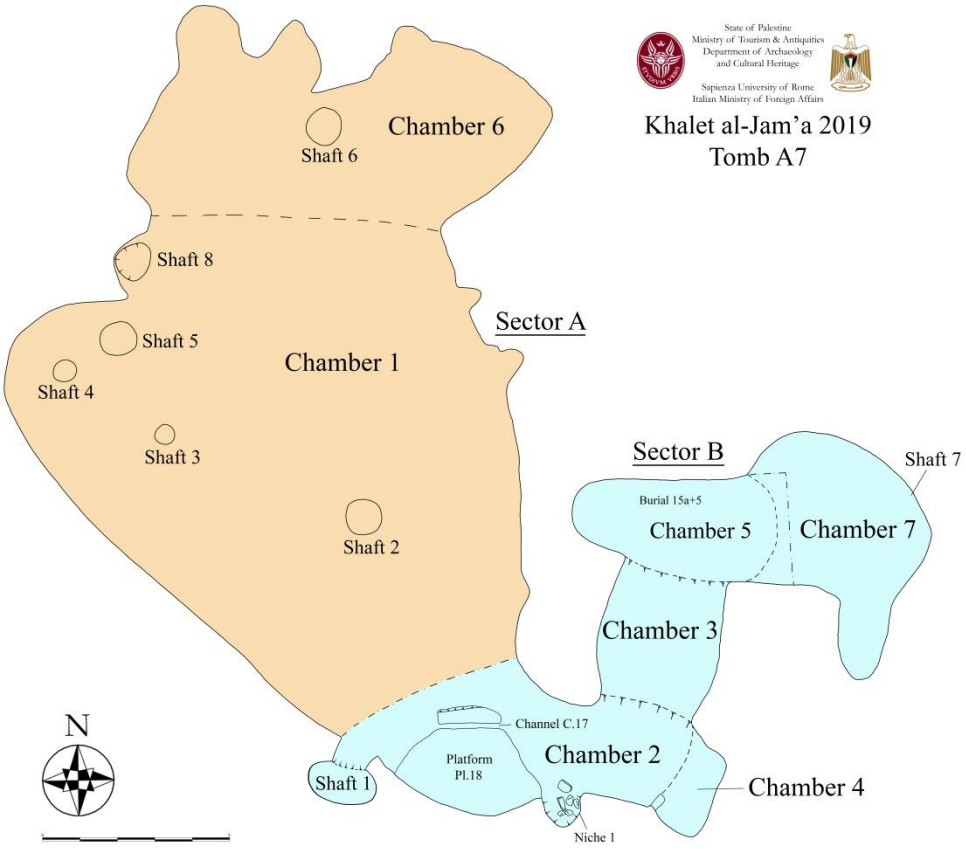

Fig. 3 - Plan of Tomb A7 of the Necropolis of Khalet al-Jam'a.

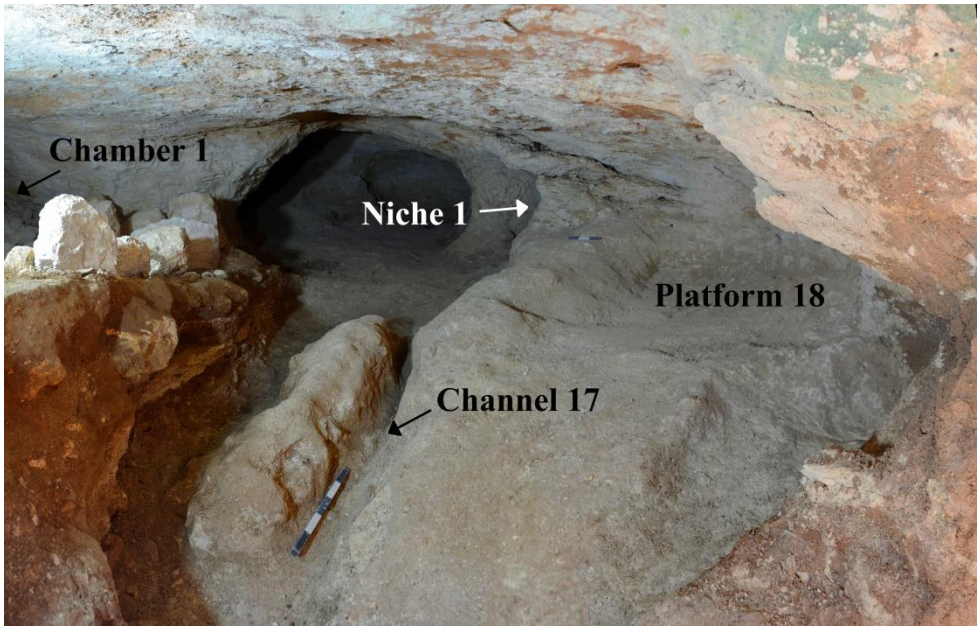

Fig. 4 - Chamber 2 of Tomb A7 of the Necropolis of Khalet al-Jam'a, view from Shaft 1.

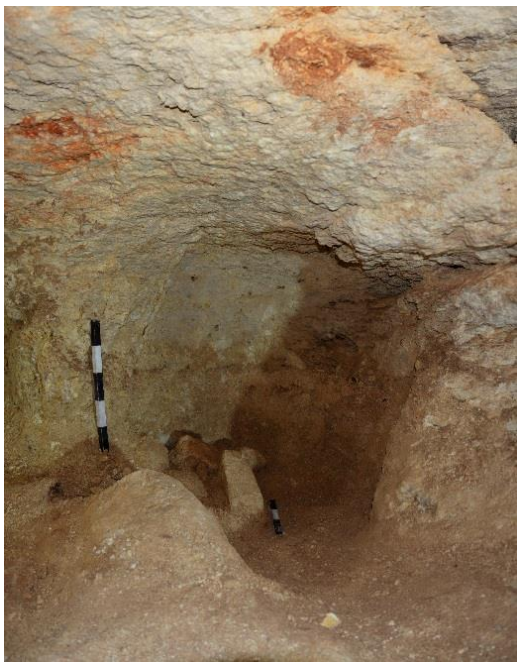

Figure 5 - Niche 1, carved inside the southern wall of Chamber 2 of Tomb A7 of the Necropolis of Khalet al-Jam'a.

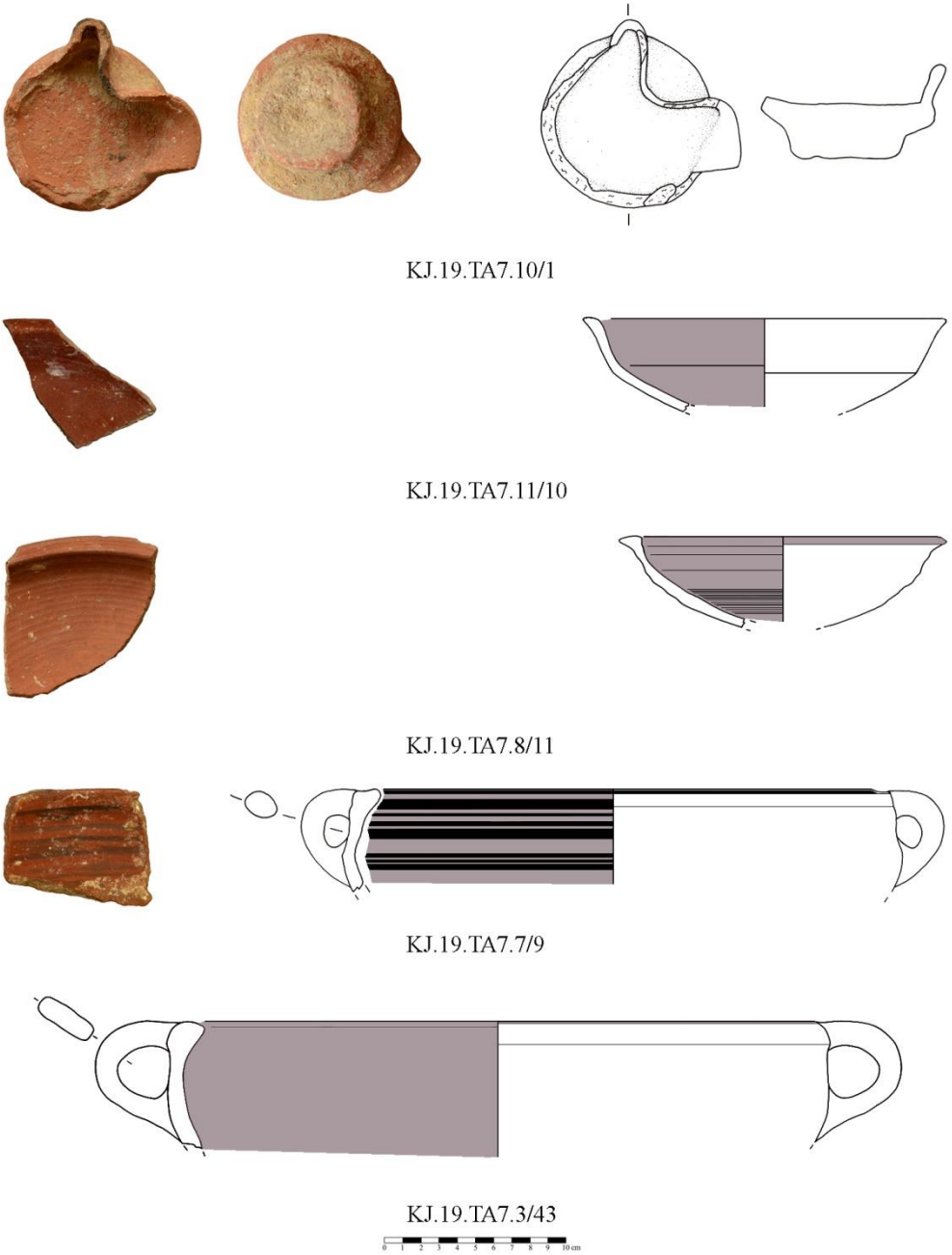

Fig. 6 - Selection of pottery from Tomb A7 of the Necropolis of Khalet al-Jam'a.

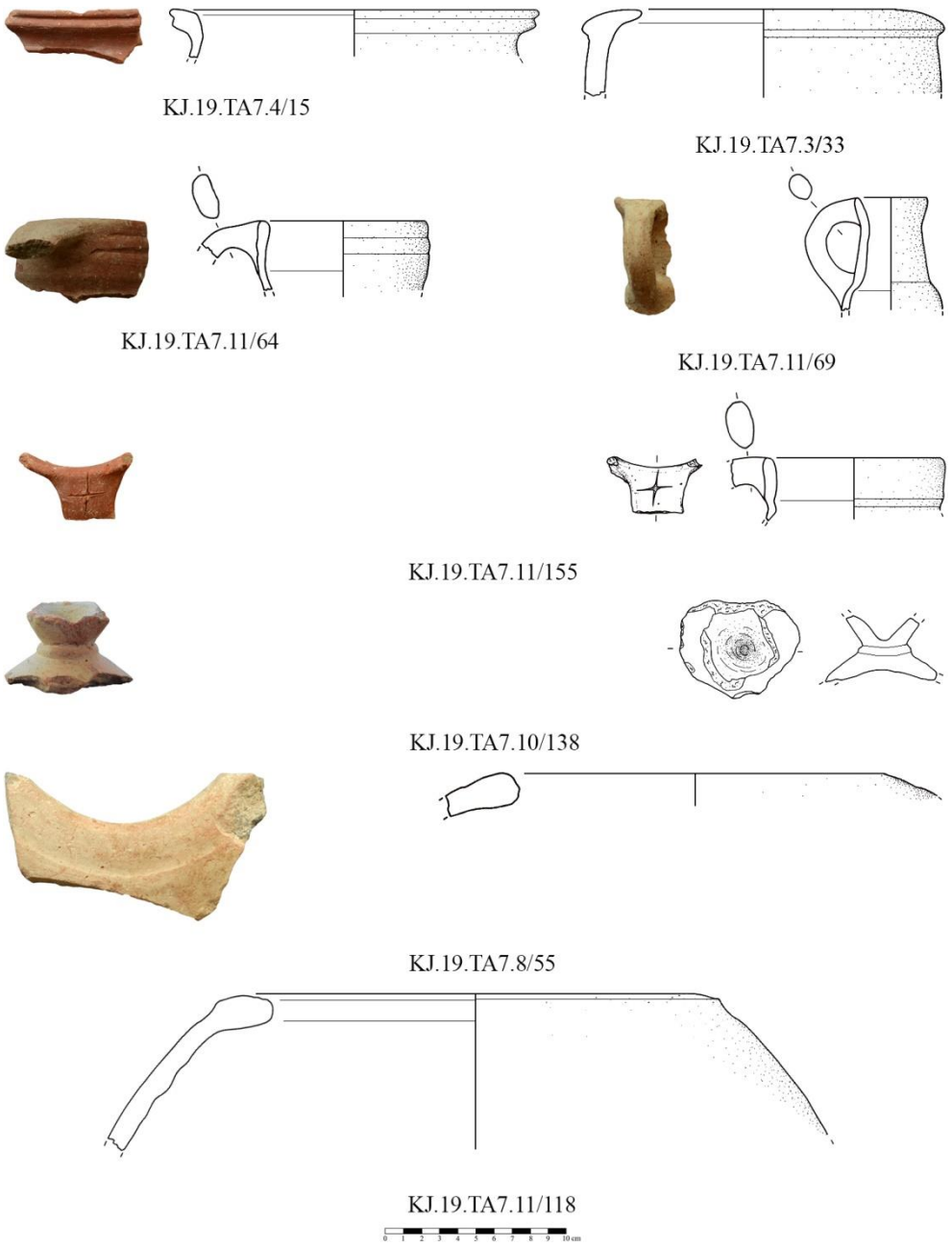

Fig. 7 - Selection of pottery from Tomb A7 of the Necropolis of Khalet al-Jam'a.

Fig. 8 - Upper line, from left to right: KJ.19.TA7.8/42 with 2-wingled *lmlk* stamp impression (0 II Type) and concentric circles; at the center, handle KJ.19.TA7.10/137 with 2-wingled *lmlk* stamp impression (X II Type), handle KJ.19.TA7.11/103, with 2-wingled *lmlk* stamp impression (0 II Type); lower line, from left to right: KJ.19.TA7.11/101 and KJ.19.TA7.11/102 with Concentric Circles Type stamp impression.

Fig. 9 - Torso of female Pillared Figurine, KJ.19.TA7.10 (left); head of equid figurine with applied eyes, KJ.19.TA7.20 (right).

Fig. 10 - Three *marābiṭ faras* found in Chamber 2 of Tomb A7: KJ.19.TA7.6 (above, left); KJ.19.TA7.5 (above, right); KJ.19.TA7.7 (down).

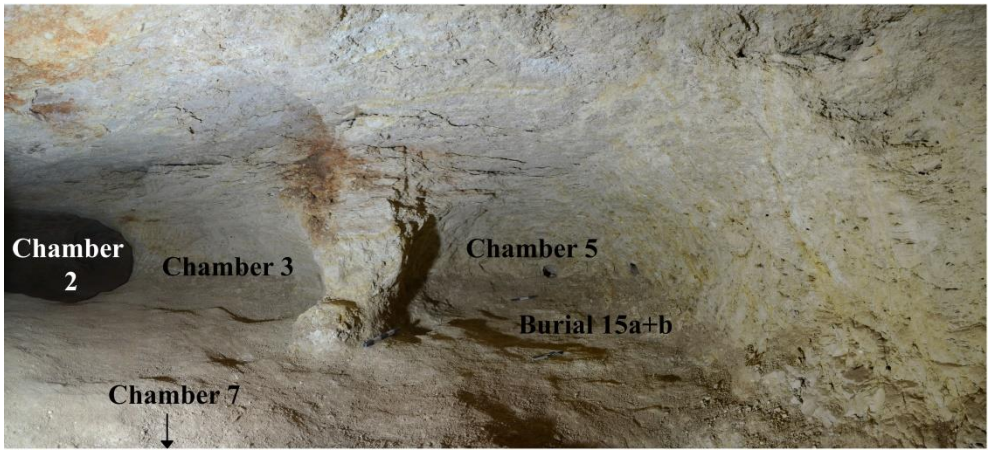

Fig. 11 - Chambers 2, 3, 5 and Burial 15a+b view from Chamber 7.

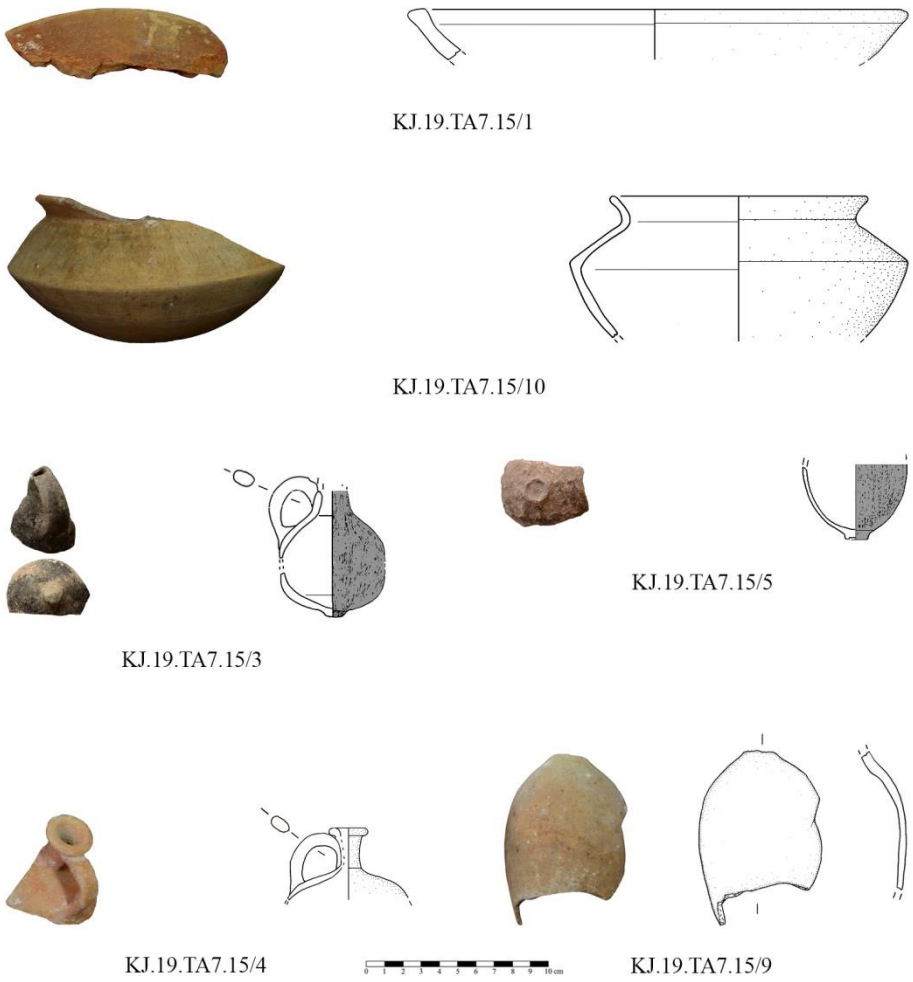

Fig. 12 - Pottery funerary equipment of Burial 15a+b of Tomb A7.

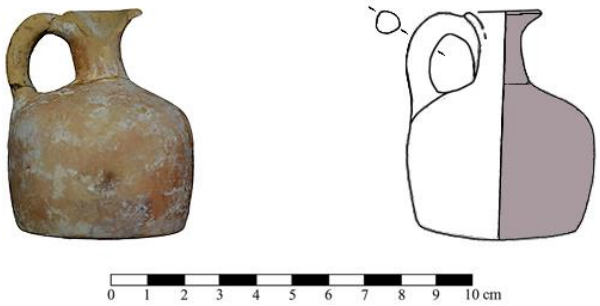

Fig. 13 - Red Slip cylindrical juglet KJ.19.TA7.15/2 found in Burial 15a+b of Tomb A7.

Fig. 14 - Pottery funerary equipment of Burial 15a+b of Tomb A7.

Fig. 15 - Human bones of Burial 15a (KJ.19.TA7.HR1) of Tomb A7 of the Necropolis of Khalet al-Jam'a.

Fig. 16 - Human bones of Burial 15b (KJ.19.TA7.15.HR2) of Tomb A7 of the Necropolis of Khalet al-Jam'a.

[Vicino Oriente XXIII (2019), pp. 23-46]

AN AMPHORA WITH PAINTED PALMETTE MOTIF FROM AREA B AT MOTYA

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An amphora painted with a palmette motif dating from the 4th century BC was brought to light during the excavation of the Area B at Motya in 1989. The shape is a popular amphora type in the Punic ceramic repertoire, while the decoration, both in design and iconography, appear as an outcome of shared and hybridized motifs between the Phoenician and the Greek elements co-habiting in Motya during its latest phase of life.

Keywords: Motya, Area B; palmette; painted decoration; Punic amphora

1. INTRODUCTION

Area B, on the south-eastern slope of the Acropolis of Motya, was investigated in a series of excavation campaigns jointly carried out between the end of the '80ies and the beginning of the '90ies of the last century by the Superintendence of Trapani and Sapienza University of Rome. Field excavations were directed by Antonia Ciasca, in her latest work in the island. The find which is the object of this note was found in 1989.[1] Area B includes the southern border of a residential quarter, that in the 5th century BC extended all over the eastern slope of the Acropolis (fig. 1).[2] The gentle slope of this towards the west was then occupied also by an industrial and commercial zone down to the Sacred Area of the Kothon.

The area gave back many noteworthy finds: metals, weights,[3] a distinguished series of terracottas[4] - which may suggest the presence of a major cult place in the area - pottery vessels among which a painted Punic amphora (fig. 2),[5] decorated with a frieze of palmette, an unique attestation at Motya for this decorative motif. The study of this vessel revealed that it was imported rather than manufactured on the island (§ 2.2). Furthermore, its presence at Motya in a post-Dionysian destruction layer[6] testifies to the continuous importation of special ceramics also during the latest Punic occupation of the island.

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1 Excavations in Area B were carried out by the Superintendence of Trapani and were directed by Antonia Ciasca on behalf of "La Sapienza" University of Rome, with the collaboration of Maurizio Necci, Pamela Toti and Maria Luisa Famà (Famà - Toti, 1997, 113, fn. 2; Famà ed. 2002, 28, fn. 17; Nigro ed. 2004, 27; 2012, 210).

2 Along the northern side of the street, which divides the residencies from the commercial zone, Sapienza Archaeological Expedition to Motya identified a wealth patrician house called "The House of the square well": Nigro ed. 2012, 210. Results of previous excavations season are summarized in Famà 1990, 13; 1995, 424; 1997, 643-644.

3 Gallo 2018, 35-41.

4 Nigro ed. 2012, 210.

5 Spagnoli 2019, 43, fig. 3.35.

6 Nigro 2018, 254.

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2. THE CONTEXT OF THE DISCOVERY

Area B was occupied from the first Phoenician foundation of Motya, at the beginning of the 8th century BC[7] to the fall of the city under the siege of Dionysius of Syracuse (397/6 BC).[8] In its latest arrangement (5th century BC, Motya VII), Area B was crossed by a large *plateia* which divided the wealthy residencies, to the north, from the row of workshops and *ateliers* running along the southern side of the street (fig. 3). Both the furniture of the houses and imported items found into the commercial block, testify to the wealth of the inhabitants due to their intense commercial activities.[9] After the conquest by Dionysius of Syracuse, many structures were re-used for industrial activities. Already existing buildings were often cut through and damaged by the excavations of wells and ovens.[10]

The amphora with palmette was found in filling US.24. This layer was affected by agricultural activities conducted in the 19th century and by the excavation of pits for vineyards which disturbed the layers of the 5th - 4th century BC.[11] The ceramic repertoire of US.24 (fig. 4) represents the twofold functional destinations of the area in the 4th century BC: residential and industrial, and basically includes Punic storage jars, Simple Ware (SW) and Attic pottery, as a fine cup with baccellation[12] (fig. 6).

Simple Ware (fig. 5) is mostly local manufactured.[13] The uppermost functional class represented is tableware, as exemplified by three jugs dating from the 4th century BC[14] (fig. 7) and two from the 5th century BC[15] (fig. 7). A basin bowl[16] (fig. 7), a miniature jar[17] (fig. 6), both dated in the 4th century BC, and a bucket of 5th century BC[18] (fig. 6) were also found. Transport jars are represented by a Lesbian amphora dated from the 5th century BC[19] (fig. 6), one Punic amphora for storage[20] (fig. 6) and one Punic amphora for transport[21] (fig. 6) of the 4th century BC, attesting the continuation of the commercial function of the area.

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7 Famà 1990, 13; 1995, 424; 1997, 643-644; Nigro ed. 2010, 276-318; Nigro - Spagnoli 2017.

8 Tusa 1967, 85-95.

9 In general, about the contacts between Motya and the Greek culture: Bondì 1989, 165-173; Nigro ed. 2010, 1-48; Spagnoli 2019, 65; concerning the Greek ceramics in the Area B of Motya: Zielli 2016, *La ceramica della "Zona B" di Mozia. Catalogo preliminare della ceramica rinvenuta nello scavo di Antonia Ciasca, 1989*, defensed on 26th September 2016, at "La Sapienza" University of Rome.

10 Ovens of Area E at Motya shows similar features, attributed to the phase between the 4th and the 3rd century BC (Famà - Toti 1997, 113-114; Famà ed. 2002, 48).

11 Famà ed. 2002, 48.

12 *Athenian Agorà XII*, 279, fig. 6:612. This type is attested from 420 BC onwards.

13 The common ceramic is the 32% of the total (fig. 5).

14 MB.89.24/21 cf.: Nigro ed. 2004, 286, MD.02.216/47, pl. LXI. MB.89.24/9 cf.: Nigro ed. 2011, 332, MF.05.1294/20, pl. CI. MB.89.24/23 cf.: Nigro ed. 2011, 238, MF.05.1268a/104, pl. LIII.

15 MB.89.24/20 cf.: Nigro ed. 2007, 208, MD.03.1036/24, pl. XLIX. MB.89.24/26 cf.: Nigro ed. 2005, 314, MC.04.701/1, pl. XC.

16 MB.89.24/24 cf.: Vecchio 2002, 227, type 57, pl. 19:1.

17 MB.89.24/25 cf.: Nigro ed. 2007, 224, MD.03.1048/9, pl. LVII.

18 MB.89.24/22 cf.: Vecchio 2002, 262, type 158, n. 5, pl. 54.

19 MB.89.24/25 cf.: Nigro ed. 2005, 312, MC.04.715/15, pl. LXXXIX.

20 MB.89.24/4 cf.: Nigro ed. 2005, 300, T35, MC.04.709/22, pl. LXXXIII.

21 MB.89.24/10 cf.: Nigro ed. 2005, 358, T20, MC.04.939/5, pl. CXII. This type isn't local, and it is spread over Area B.

2. The Amphora with palmette

The amphora with palmette, MB.89.24/3 (fig. 2), belongs to a late reformulation of the slightly "carinated shoulder" type, spreads over in the Center-Western Mediterranean, between the 5th and the 4th century BC.[22]

2.1. *Description*

The painted amphora (fig. 2; fig. 8) has a pinkish fabric (2.5 YR 8/3 Pink) covered by whitish slip (10 YR 8/2 White). The fabric is characterized by frequent minerals, limestone and mica, of little dimensions. The vase was about 40 cm tall.[23] The rim is 16 cm wide. It has a raised lip slightly enlarged towards inside; shoulder is oblique with a rounded and slightly swollen shape. The profile of the body between the handles is straight. The vertical handles are ribbed with four shallow groves about 1 cm wide, forming a wavy profile, in an irregular ovoid section.[24] The edges of the handles are characterized by four plastic quadrangular decorations.

The body has an overall a torpedo shape with a ring base. The foot has a diameter of 15.6 cm, it has a raised, moulded and rounded profile; the bottom of 1 cm is flat. The form of its foot suggests both use for middle-short range trades or conservation.[25]

The amphora can be compared with a similar vessel from Kerkouane (North Africa), held in the *Musée archéologique* of the site[26] (fig. 9), and with an amphora from Tharros (Sardinia) THT 77/146[27] (fig. 10), nowadays in the Archaeological Museum of Cabras Giovanni Marongiu. The most suitable comparison is with the carinated amphorae found in the Tophet of Carthage.[28]

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22 See Cintas 1950; Ciasca 1983, 617-622, fig. 1; Ramon Torres 1995, 242, T. 13.2.1.2, fig. 129; Docter 1997, 110-111, fig. 581 a-b; 135-139, fig. 581e; Toti 2002, 278, types 3, 5; 2003, 1205, pl. CCV:4.

23 Vecchio 2015, 140, n. 129, pl. 15, fig. 15, inv. n. 1672; Harden 1937, 59-89; Cintas 1950.

24 This detail recalls Spanish (Ramon Torres 1995, 374, T. 2.1.1.2, fig. 25; 414, T. 5.2.3.2, fig. 64) and oriental prototypes (Gitin ed. 2015, 357, pl. 3.3.4.4).

25 "Carinated shoulder" amphorae with convex or pointed bottom, spread over Levant area in the 8th century BC, were used for long trade (Lamon - Shipton 1939, 166; Bikai 1978, pl. VII:2-3; 1987, 43-44, pl. XXI:567, 575; Lehmann 1996, 430-431, pl. 69:379; Docter 1997, 110-111, fig. 581 a-b; 135-139, fig. 581 e; Hadjisavvas 2000, 1024-1025, 1052, n. 2; Doumet-Serhal 2003, 45, fig. 6). Moreover, this kind of vessel resembles oriental types used for conservation, like a phoenician storage jar (Gitin ed. 2015, 657, pl. 6.11.11.1) or a jar krater from En Jedi (Gitin ed. 2015, 357, pl. 33.4.4).

26 Cintas 1950, pl. XX:255. Motya and Kerkouane show some common features, such as their radial road system (Famà - Toti 1997, 113).

27 This specimen was an urn in the Tophet of Tharros (Cotza 1999, 54; Acquaro 1975, 213-220; 1976, 197-203; 1999, 40, fig. 1:9).

28 Harden 1937, fig. 4, class C, c type l.

2.2. *The "carinated shoulder" amphorae in the central Mediterranean: chronology and distribution*

Amphorae with "carinated shoulder" are attested from the 8th century BC, until the 146 BC at Carthage,[29] where they were used as urns in the Tophet[30] and in the necropolis.[31]

Since the 7th century BC, this kind of vase is also attested to other areas of North Africa[32] and to Sardinia,[33] Sicily,[34] Cyprus,[35] and Iberian Peninsula,[36] with the same funerary or cult destination.

Amphorae with "carinated shoulder" across centuries changed from an ovoid to a piriform profile[37] with several variants[38] (fig. 11), according with the stylistic trend in Phoenician pottery of lengthen the shapes, as testified by the morphological changes of painted oinochoai.

Three classes (A, B, C) identified by Donald B. Harden, between the Punic amphorae of the Precint of Tanit at Salammbô, are attested to Motya (fig. 11). Classes A[39] and B,[40] both ovoid with flared and enlarged rim, are differentiated by the handles, vertical in the first case and horizontal in the second. Class C[41] has a torpedo shape, with a flat rim, carinated shoulders, and vertical handles. This last type also occurs at Nora, Ibiza, Villaricos and

29 Bechtold 2007, 345, n. 2059; Niemeyer *et al.* 2007, 345, ns. 2058-2059; Myres 1897, 159, fig. 12:14-15.

30 Harden 1937, 59-89; Ciasca 1983, fig. 1.

31 Lancel (éd.) 1982, 277, n. A.190.5, figs. 383-384; 287, n. A.191.6, figs. 401-402; 291, n. A.192.2, figs. 418-419; 304, n. A.196.3, figs. 456-457; 311, n. A.183.5, figs. 480-481; Chelbi 1985, 99-100; Ciasca 1979, 215, n. 9, fig. 17.8, pl. LXXIV:6-7; Spanò Giammellaro 2000, 311, fig. 2.3; Bartoloni 2010, 65, figs. 72-73.

32 Gouraya (Cintas 1950, 137).

33 Acquaro 1999, 15-16; Whitaker 1921, 256, figs. 38:295-296; 72:297; 73:301; 77; Taramelli 1912, coll. 53-54, 101, fig. 16:3; Bartoloni 1983, 46-47, fig. 4:c; 1985, 250, fig. 5:b; 1990, 53-54, 79, fig. 12; 2000a, 115, 161, figs. 33, 99; Harden 1937, 59-89; Botto 2009, 231-232. Tharros, in Sardinia, had a central role in the distribution of this kind of vessel assimilating Carthaginian features and spreading it over in the Western Mediterranean. "Carinated shoulder" amphorae of this city are divided in slender, ovoid and crushed (Acquaro 1999, 15-16).

34 Bartoloni - Campanella 2000, 215; Bartolini 2010, 65; Spanò Giammellaro 2000, 311, 313, fig. 23; Ciasca 1983, 617-622, fig. 1; Spatafora 2010, 37, fig. 14.

35 Myres 1897, 134-173, figs. 12, 13:2, 14-15; Karageorghis 1967, 293, fig. 39; 1968, 283, fig. 47; Hadjisavvas 2012, 12, ns. 2-4, fig. 5; 21, n. 2, fig. 10; 23, n. 7, fig. 11; 25-26, n. 13, fig. 12; 29, n. 1, fig. 14; 35, ns. 11, 18, fig. 16; 38, ns. 2-3, fig. 17; 40, n. 35, fig. 18; 64, 66, ns. 1-4, fig. 34; 69, n. 1; 71, n. 17, fig. 36; 75, n. 2, fig. 41; 80, ns. 8-9, fig. 43; 90, n. 2, fig. 47; 96, n. 7, fig. 53; 105, 106, 108, ns. 2, 7, 9, fig. 61; 117, n. 2, fig. 65; 125, ns. 1-2, fig. 71; 139, ns. 2-3, fig. 79; 158, n. 2, fig. 91; 161, 163, ns. 7, 15, fig. 95; 171, 173, ns. 5, 9-10, 21, fig. 99; 193, n. 5, fig. 113; 197, n. 7, fig. 116.

36 Niemeyer-Schubart 1976; González Prats 1982, 377, fig. 376, P-6022; 1989; Rodero Riaza 1983, 874-875, fig. 2:11.1; Aubet 1986, 25, fig. 8, n. 547; Aubet *et al.* 1999, 181; Gomez Bellar 2000, 178, fig. 3:1-2; Martin Ruiz 2004, 109, fig. 130; Ramon Torres 2011, fig. 4:66.

37 Cotza 1999, 49-50.

38 Harden 1937, 59-89.

39 Dated to the 8th century BC: Harden 1927, 307, fig. 15; Cintas 1950, pl. XVII, n. 211.

40 Dated to the 8th century BC: Harden 1937, fig. 3, class B, f; Cintas 1950, pl. III:45; Whitaker 1921, 297, fig. 72.

41 Dated since the 7th to the 5th century BC: Harden 1937, fig. 3, class C, h; Cintas 1950, pl. III:230: VIII century B.C. Harden 1937, fig. 4, class C, a:e; Vecchio 2015, pl. 15, fig. 15, n. 129, inv. n. 1672: VII-VI century B.C. Harden 1937, fig. 4, class C, a:f; Whitaker 1921, 301, fig. 77; 297, fig. 72; Cintas 1950, pl. XVIII:235. Harden 1937, fig. 4, class C, a:h; Whitaker 1921, 256, fig. 38; Cintas 1950, pl. XVIII:236.

Cruz del Negro.[42] These main classes are further subdivided in subtypes, based on shape variation, and are attested since 700/650 BC to 350/300 BC.[43]

Amphora MB.89.24/3 from Motya can be included in class C, c type l,[44] according to the shape of grooved handles with plastic decorations, and it is dated to the end of the 4th century BC, for its decoration, as we will see later in detail (§ 2.3).

C type 1 is usually painted in red[45] (7.5 YR 4/4 Light Red)[46] on a white/pale yellow slip,[47] and its decorative style belongs to the Red Monochrome Ware II (RMW II) style.[48] RMW II is attested on amphorae,[49] jugs,[50] oinochoai[51] and gutti[52] from the 6th onwards, with major attestations between the end of 5th and the 4th century BC. In this mature phase, vegetal friezes and floral motifs are some of the most recurrent themes.[53] In some cases they are polychrome.[54]

Both the decorative motifs and the pictorial style recall the Phoenician painting style, such as the funerary wall paintings,[55] the stele[56] and the ostrich eggs.[57] As a general tendency, the Phoenician and Punic painted pottery shifts from the geometric patterns during the 8th to 6th century BC[58] to the phytomorphic motifs in late 5th-4th century BC.[59] Such change is also found in the amphorae with carinated shoulder at issue. The vegetable themes include

42 Harden 1937, 73.

43 These amphorae are found in the Tophet of Carthage, in the strata Tanit II (700/650 BC-350/300 BC).

44 Cintas 1950, pl. XIX:239.

45 Probably the red color evoked the image of blood and consequently of life and death. So, it had a symbolic and apotropaic value, and for this reason it was utilized on vases destined to cult or funerary contexts (Charles-Picard 1954).

46 Acquaro 1980, 173-179; Del Vais 2013, 3-64.

47 Motya (Cintas 1950, 77, n. 45=Harden 1937, fig. 3, e, class B; 129, n. 211=Harden 1927, fig. 15; 133, n. 232=Harden 1937, fig. 3, i, class C; n. 233=Harden 1937, fig. 3, h, class C; n. 234=Harden 1937, Tanit II, class C, a:e; 135, n. 235=Harden 1937, Tanit II, class C, a:f; 236=Harden 1937, Tanit II, class C, a:h; n. 239=Harden 1937, Tanit II, fig. 4, 1; 137, n. 245=Harden 1937, Tanit III, fig. 6, c; Carthage (Cintas 1950, 77, n. 45=Harden 1937, fig. 3, f, class B; 129, n. 211=Harden 1937, fig. 3, b, class A; 133, ns. 230-231=Harden 1937, fig. 3, h, class C, a; 153, n. 325=Harden 1937, fig. 3, j); Sardinia (Cintas 1950, 129, n. 217=Harden 1937, fig. 4, c, class A); Gouraya (Cintas 1950, 137, n. 254=Harden 1937, fig. 5, i, class F).

48 This style was radiated by Carthage, which borrowed the main plant motifs from coeval Greek ceramics and reused them in an original pictorial style: Nigro 2005, 727-737; Spagnoli 2019, 36-38.

49 Cintas 1950, pls. XVI:199, 200; XVII:211-212, 214, 216-219; XVIII:230, 232-235, 238 *bis*; XIX:239, 243-245, 248; XX:251-252, 254-255 *quater*; XXVII:325 a-h; XXVIII:325 *bis*, 326-332; XXIX:341, 345, 352-353; Del Vais 2013, 53, 63, figs. 12-22:SA 336, SA 31.

50 Cintas 1950, pl. VII:90-95, 97-98 *bis*. In addition, there are the specimens present in the Archaeological Collection of the Archiepiscopal Seminary of Oristano: Del Vais 2013, 45, 62, figs. 4-21:SA 194, SA 431, SA 191, SA 173, SA 171; 46, fig. 5: SA 184, SA 166, SA 163. Moreover, there is a globular flask (fig. 12:SA 285) of small size, that shows the same decoration.

51 Cintas 1950, pl. XIII:170-171; pl. XV-185-187, 189, 196.

52 Cintas 1950, pl. XXXIII:371, 373, 376.

53 Together to the funerary parietal decoration and to the paintings on the handicrafts.

54 Red is replaced with black (gray or blue) or brown matt colors: Cotza 2005, 975-981.

55 As the tombs of Sidon, mostly decorated with vegetable motifs (Amadasi Guzzo 1988, 448).

56 Amadasi Guzzo 1988, 448-455; Vento 2000.

57 Savio 2004.

58 8th-7th century BC (Cotza 1999, 50-51; Acquaro 1999, 15-16) with an impoverishment of the decorations in the middle 7th century BC (Pisano 1996, 135-136).

59 Cotza 1999, 49-57.

principally lotus flower, in frieze or at the center between two plants, myrtle leaves, ivy and fern, and palmette, as in the case of the amphora MB.89.24/3.[60]

2.3. *The painted decoration*

The vase belongs to the RMW II pictorial phase. The painted decoration is displayed on the shoulders and in the upper part of the body, specifically on the band between the handles (figs. 12-13).

On the shoulder the decoration is almost vanished, nevertheless a floral pattern - sinuous raceme ending with a lobulated leave resembling that one onto ostrich eggs[61] - can be recognized (figs. 12-13, 14b).

The principal decoration between the handles is composed by a frieze of four palmette (two on each side) with sixteen petals (figs. 12-13, 14a),[62] ending in two volutes and encircled by a raceme.

Three drops, perhaps a triglyph (figs. 14c, 15-16), are painted with the tip pointing downwards on the upper part of the handle. The foot and the bottom of the vase are not decorated.

The presence at Motya of RMW II is emphasized on pithos MF.04.1273/4, discovered during the excavations of 2004 carried out by Sapienza Archaeological Expedition to Motya in the Area F- 'the Western Fortress', in an accessory structure of the cult building, dedicated to Astarte.[63] It includes also two bowls: MC.12.4336/11 and N.12741 (159) 212, respectively from the Sacred Area of the Kothon and from the Sanctuary of Cappiddazzu. The latter was found during the excavations of 2017, and it is decorated with a line of drops, as those on handles of amphora MB.89.24/3. Another fragment of Punic amphora (MC.12.4428/6), from Area C South, shows a probable representation of stylized flowers.[64] At least, during the excavation of 2019, a portion probably of an amphora was found (US. 7057), again in the Sanctuary of Cappiddazzu, and it was decorated with a red painted palmette, quite similar to the amphora MB.89.24/3.

Outside of Motya, other examples of palmette decoration are on an amphora from Carthage,[65] showing a frieze of three vertical fern leaves. The vase from Kerkouane shows the same decorative syntax of the amphora from Motya. The main decoration is a frieze of heart-shaped leaves, probably ivy. Similarly, the "carinated shoulder" amphora from Tharros (THT 77/146), held in the Giovanni Marongiu Archaeological Museum of Cabras, can be compared with our amphora for its vegetal decoration depicted on the band between the handles.

The phytomorphic decoration recalls the parietal painting of the "Tomba dell'ureo" in the necropolis of Tuvixeddu (Cagliari) with the difference that in this case the palmette are circumscribed by a racemate terminating in a lotus flower.[66] The palmette motif is widely

60 Amadasi Guzzo 1988, 453; Cotza 1999, 49-57; 2005, 975-981.
61 Amadasi Guzzo 1988, 453; Cotza 2005, 975-981.
62 Amadasi Guzzo 1988, 453.
63 Nigro 2005, 727-737.
64 The decorative motif is like those adorning the pithos, found in 2004, in 'the Western Fortress' of Motya (Nigro 2005, 727-737).
65 Cintas 1950, pl. XIX:239.
66 Amadasi Guzzo 1988, 451; Canepa 1983, 133, fig. 3.

represented in Phoenician art, such as ivories, as exemplified by the ivories of Nimrud,[67] metallurgy[68] and stone relief.[69] Nevertheless, it appears on Punic ceramic vases only at the end of the 5th century BC-beginning of the 4th century BC, probably under the influence of the Greek painting.[70]

2.4. *Chronology*

Basing on the finding context, the style of decoration, and the comparisons previously treated, the amphora from Area B can be dated to the mid of 4th century BC. Its piriform profile, the rectilinear and moulded handles are characteristics of the late Phoenician-Punic production typical of this period. Vegetal decoration has its origin in the Phoenician decorative tradition. Nevertheless, iconographies of Punic painted pottery recall paintings on Greek vases of the 5th and 4th century BC,[71] that influenced the Punic funerary parietal paintings and ostrich eggs spread over specially during those centuries.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The amphora with palmette decorative motif MB.89.24/3 from Motya stands out for its context of recovery and for the accurate painted frieze. Indeed, the vase was exceptionally found in a residential context, while usually similar specimens are discovered in cult or funerary contexts. Moreover, this kind of vase and this decorative style are quite rare in the island during the 4th century BC.

Its retrieval in a public and residential quarters, like Area B, suggests a not exclusive use of this such vase in funerary or cult activities, at Motya, different than the other finding contexts testimony.[72] At the same time, the few attestations together with the finding in ritual contexts, in other sites, like Carthage or Tharros, profiles it as a precious or symbolic good for an élite.

As it concerns the possible place of origin of the amphora, it seems quite possible to locate the atelier of production in Carthage, or in its neighborhoods, in the 4th century BC, according to pictorial style. Indeed, in this period Carthage created a net of influences in the Center-Western Mediterranean. Western Sicily was included in this network. So, the contacts between the Sicilian city and the Punic city were prosperous and steady during the 4th century BC so as to allow the circulation of products and craftsmen, but also models, wealthy goods, and fashions.[73]

In this way, MB.89.24/3 testifies the existence of a belated occupation of the island during the 4th century BC[74] and the inclusion of Motya in the Carthaginian trades. Moreover, the amphora provides additional information about the Phoenician high-status

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67 Uberti 1988, 406-408, 413, 418.
68 Karageorghis 1988, 159.
69 As shown by the stele from Carthage: see Alaoui 1954, CIS 4044, pl. XXX:4; D'Andrea 2018, pl. XIV.
70 Ciasca 1983, 621-622; Amadasi Guzzo 1988, 451-453; Cotza 1999, 51.
71 As shown by Carthage's recovery of pictorial models from the Attic black-figure vases, from the urns of Alexandria's necropolis and from Hadra and Sciabti's *hydriae* (Guerrini 1964).
72 Cintas 1950; Vecchio 2015, 140, n. 129, pl. 15, fig. 15, inv. n. 1672; Whitaker 1921, 256, figs. 38:295-296; 72:297; 73:301; 77.
73 Acquaro 1980, 173-179; Del Vais 2013, 3-64; Spagnoli 2019, 36-38.
74 Tusa 1967, 85-95.

class, its mode and appreciation for precious goods from abroad and for Greek stylistic elements, included in own production.

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Fig. 1 - Map of Motya with the Area B highlighted in red.

Fig. 2 - The “carinated shoulder” amphora with painted palmette decorative motif from the Area B of Motya.

Fig. 3 - View of the Area B of Motya.

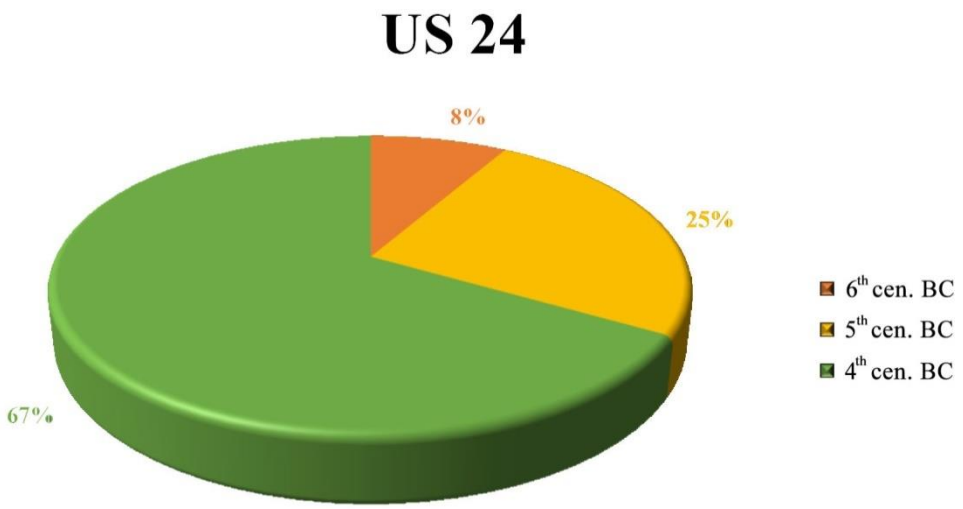

Fig. 4 - Pie chart of the ceramic classes in the repertoire of the Area B. The common Punic ceramic constitutes the majority.

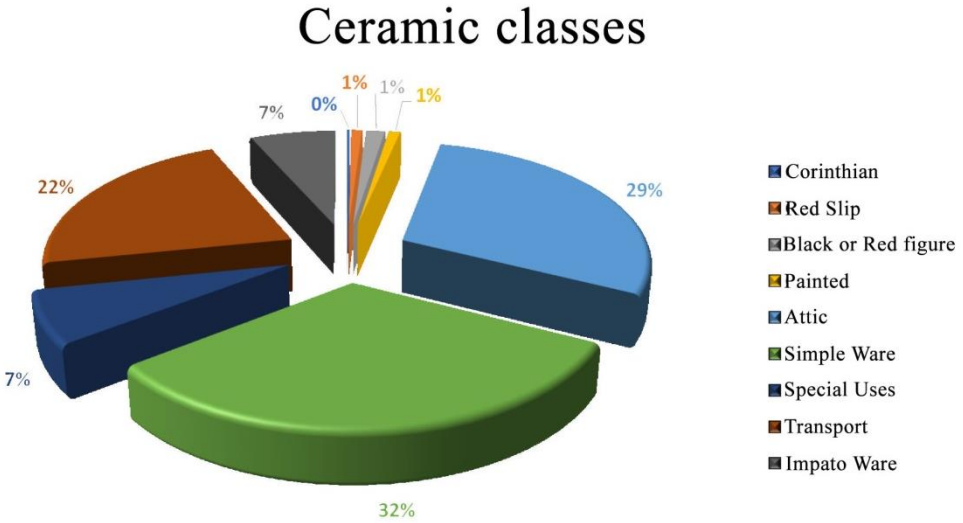

Fig. 5 - Pie chart of the ceramic classes of the US 24.

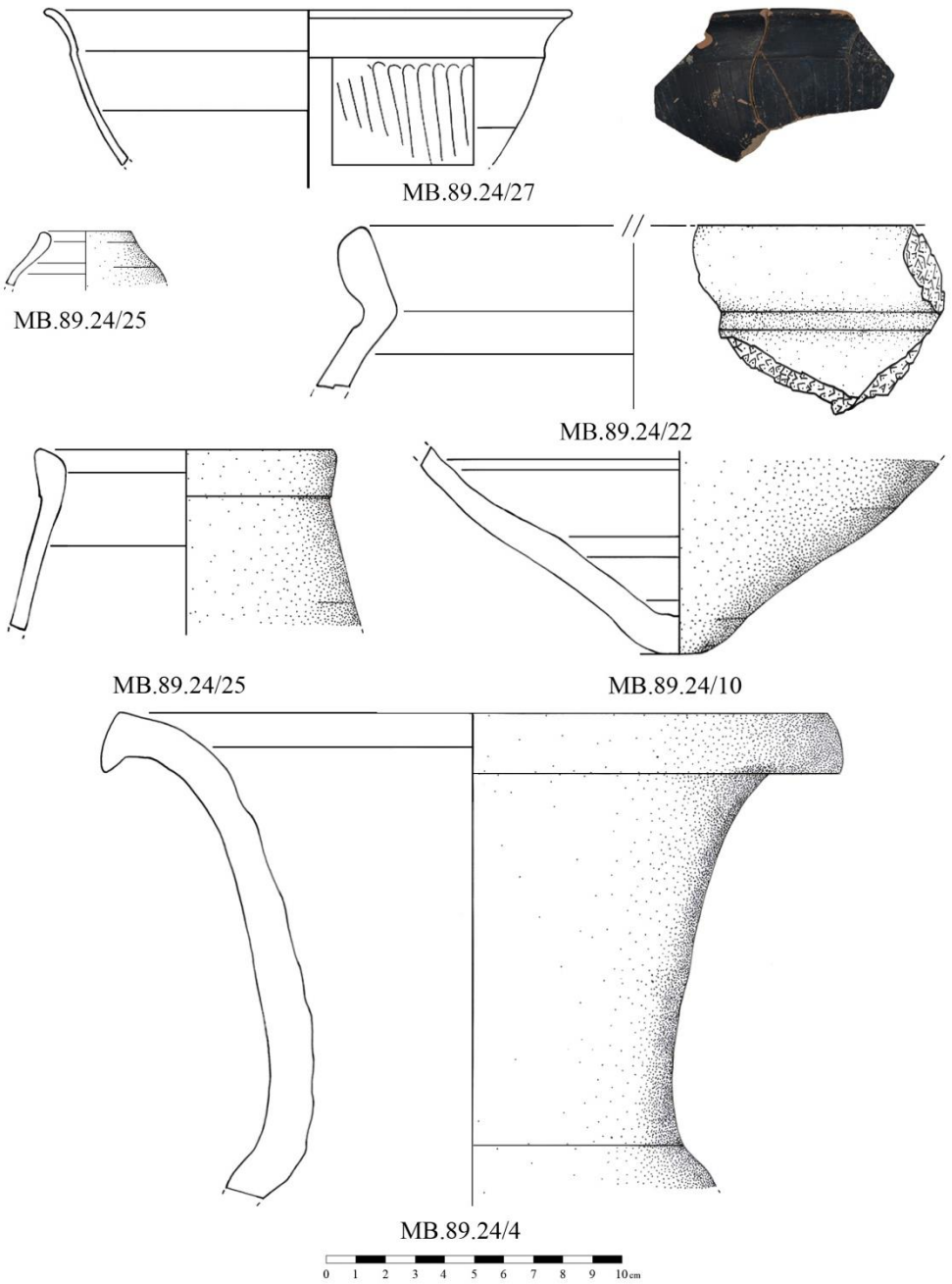

Fig. 6 - Attic pottery, special use pottery and the amphorae collected in US 24.

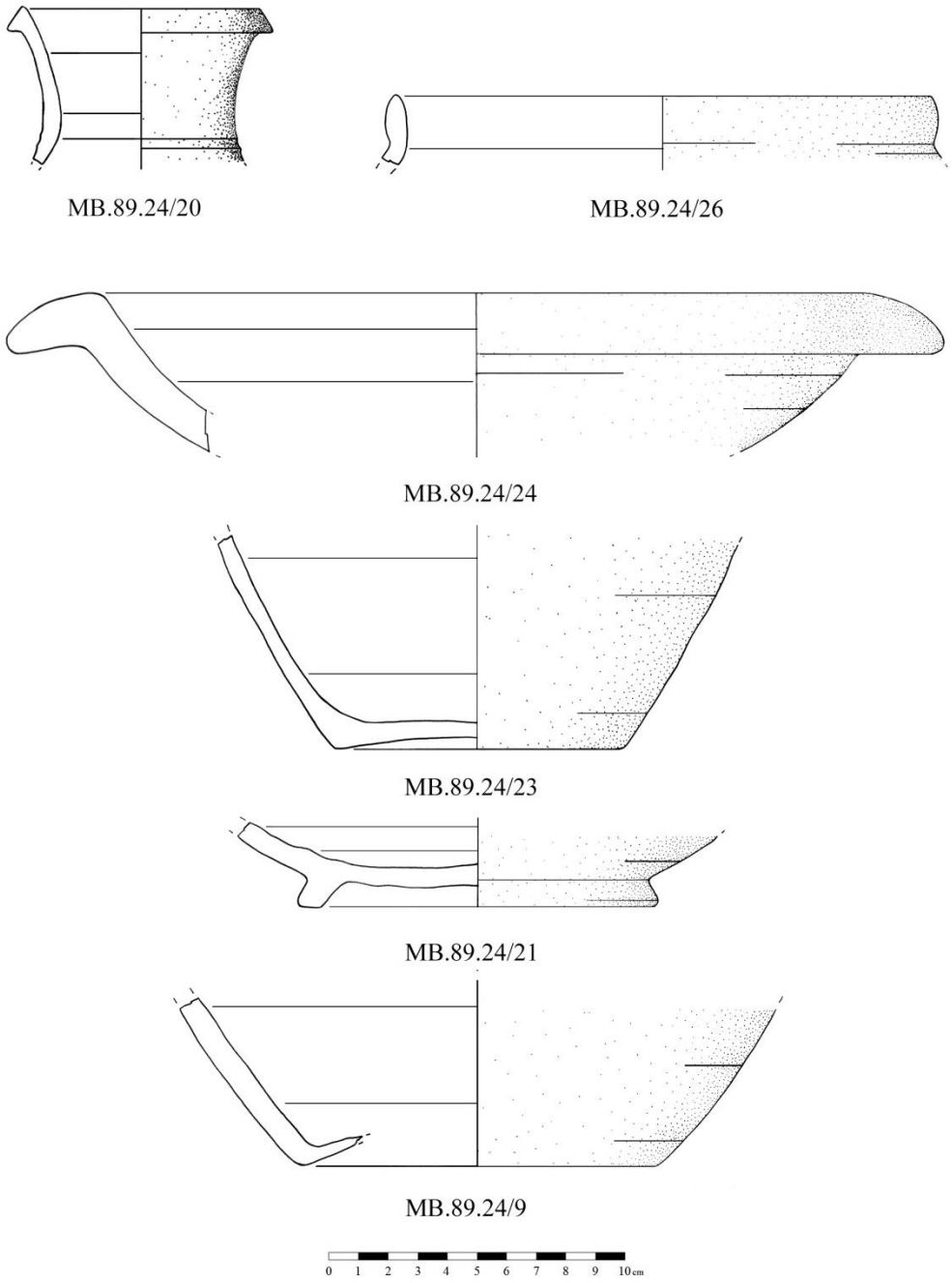

Fig. 7 - Simple Ware collected in US 24.

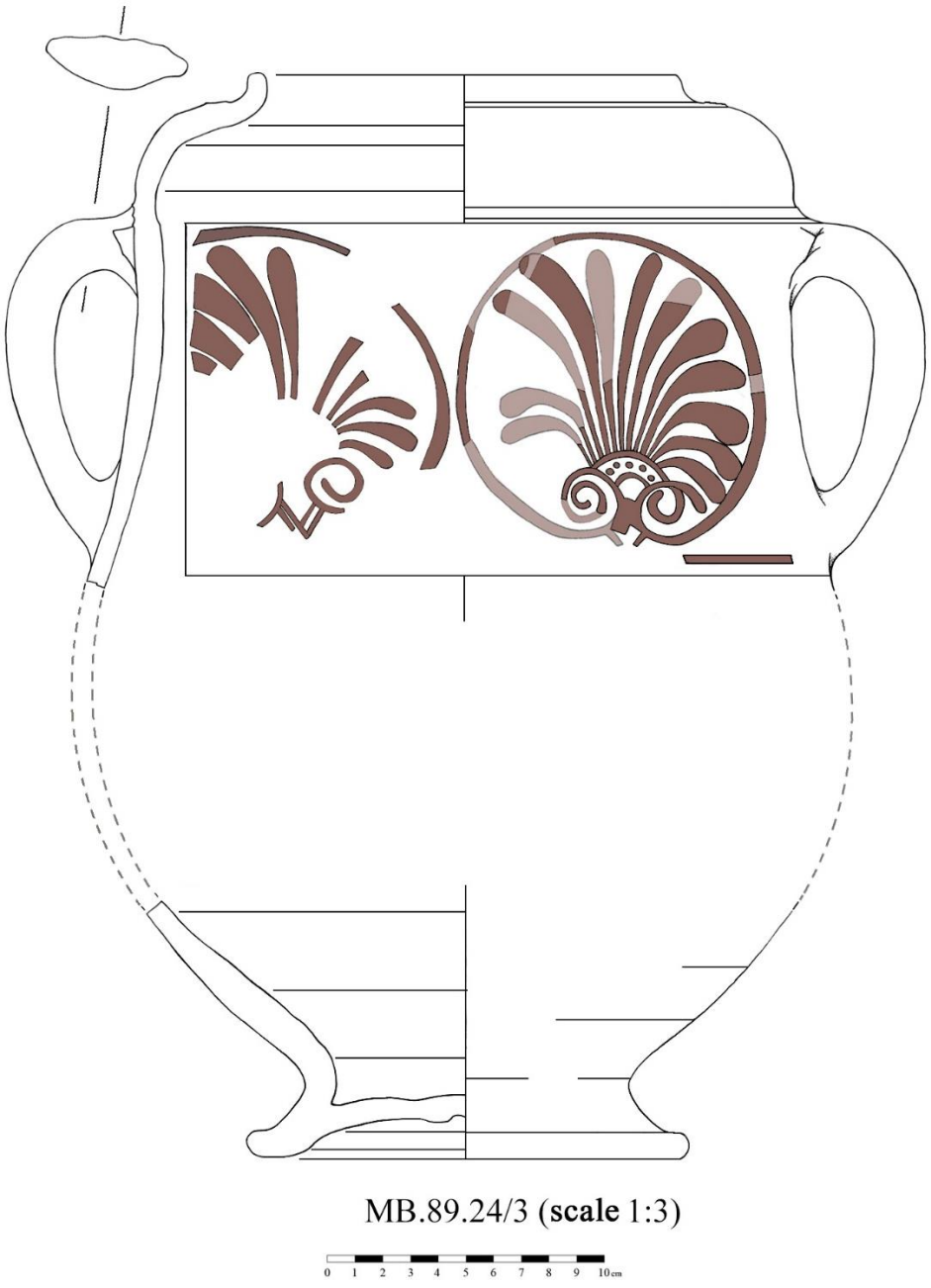

Fig. 8 - The amphora MB.89.24/3.

Fig. 9 - The “carinated shoulder” amphora of class C, from the *Musée archéologique de Kerkouane*, Tunisia.

Fig. 10 - The “carinated shoulder” amphora of class C, from the Archaeological Museum of Cabras Giovanni Marongiu, Sardinia.

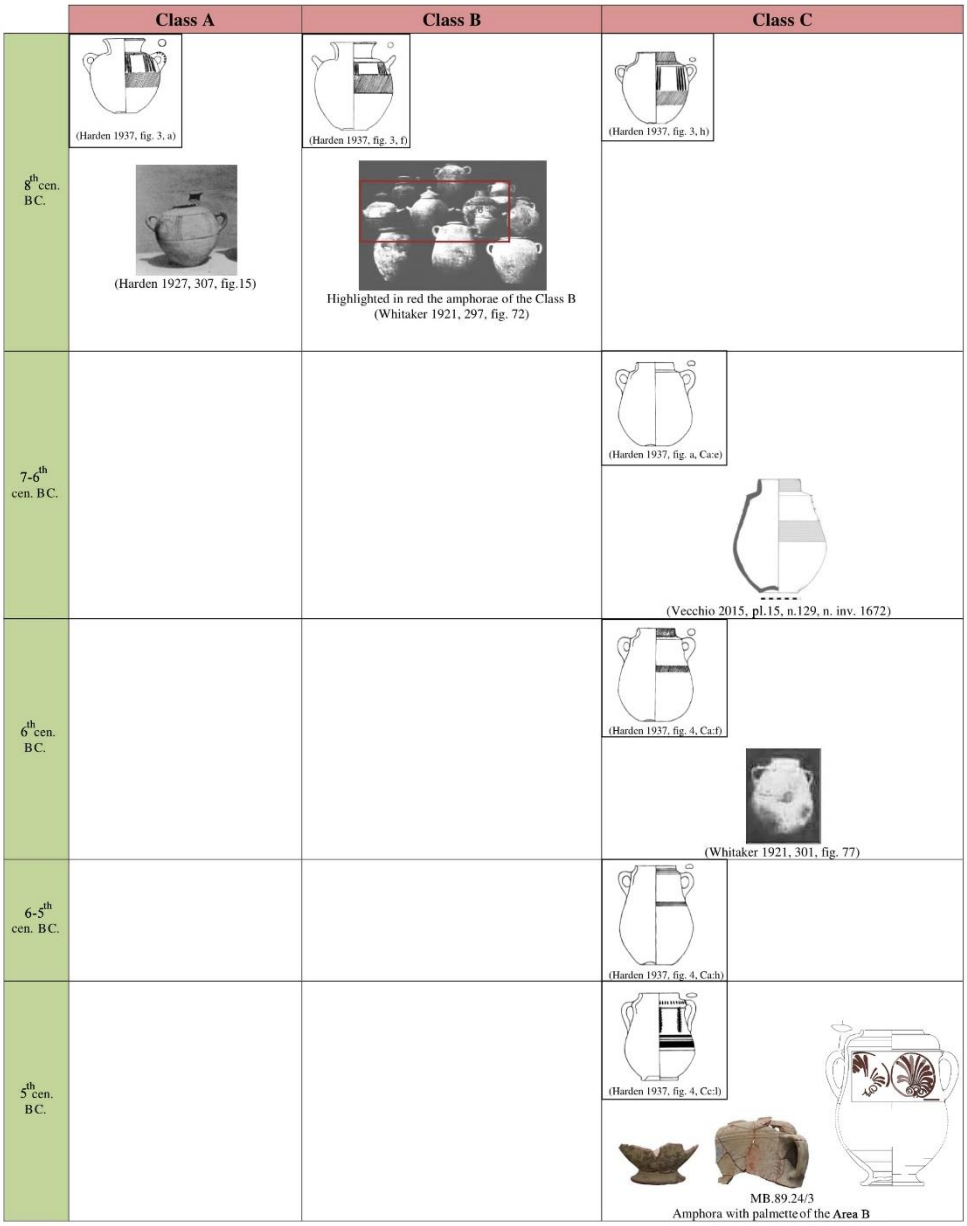

Fig. 11 - Table showing different types of the "carinated shoulder" amphorae found at Motya, based on Harden's classification.

Fig. 12 - Detail of the decoration of the amphora of the Area B.

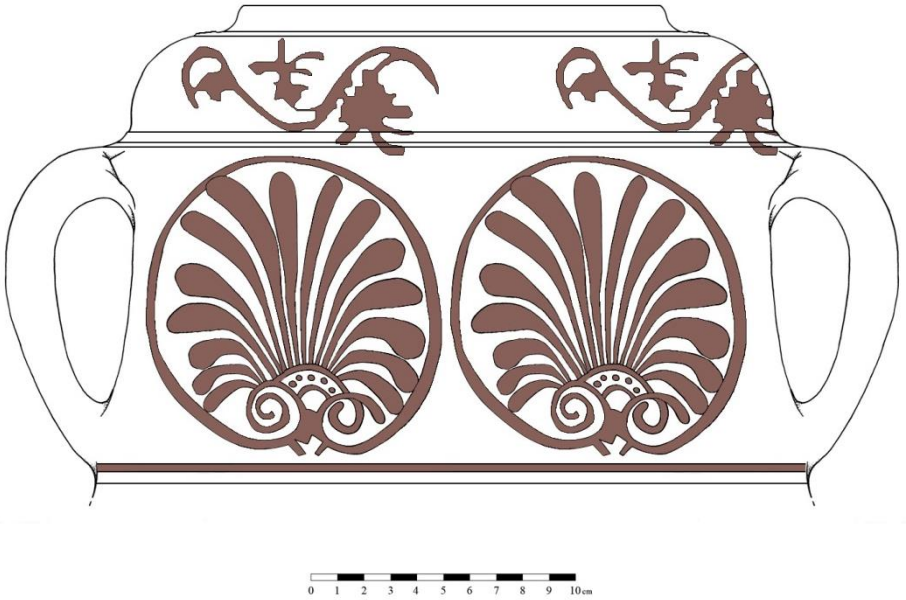

Fig. 13 - Reconstructive drawing of the central decoration of the amphora of the Area B.

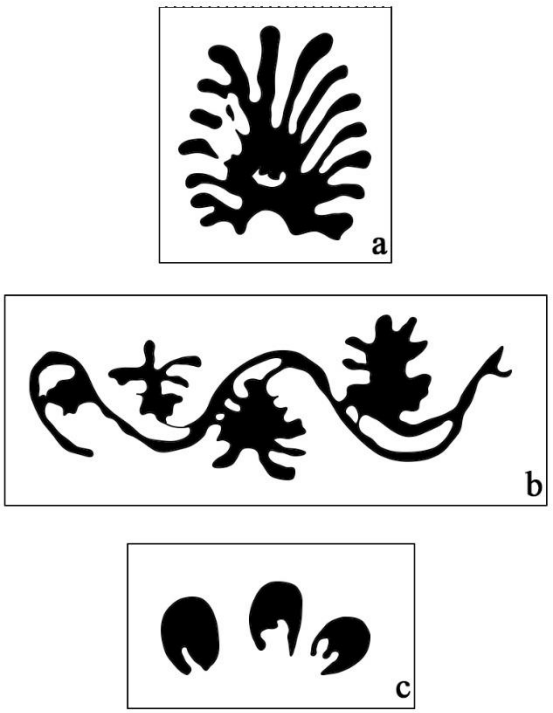

Fig. 14 - Typology of the painted decorative motifs on ostrich eggs (after Amadasi Guzzo 1988, 453). Three elements are evidenced: a) the palmetta with sixteen petals, like the palmetta of MB.89.24/3; b) the raceme hypothesized like the decoration on the shoulders; c) the triglyph with three drops, similar to the decoration on the handle.

Fig. 15 - Detail of the decoration of the handle of the amphora of the Area B.

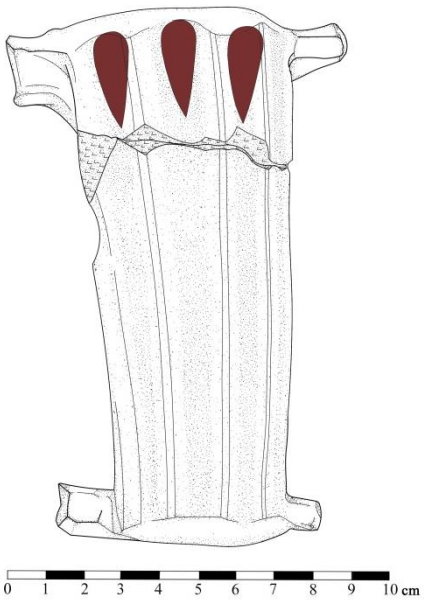

Fig. 16 - The reconstructive hypothesis of the handle of the amphora of the Area B.

[Vicino Oriente XXIII (2019), pp. 47-58]

QALET HAMRA: A MAMLUK KHAN NORTH OF ZARQA, JORDAN

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The site of Qalet Hamra was well known in Zarqa but it never attracted archaeologists and surveyors until a few years ago, possibly due to its location on a spur dominating the bifurcations between Wadi az-Zarqa and Wadi Shomar, a sort of shortcut leading straight ward to the west, in direction of the Jordan Valley. Moreover it was nearby a major ford across the river, which both banks were caravan tracks in antiquity. In 2015 and 2018 Sapienza University of Rome and the Department of Antiquities of Jordan surveyed, which allowed to identify it as a small caravanserai dating back from the Mameluk period, even though earlier pottery finds may suggest that the site was occupied at least from the Late Roman/Early Byzantine times.

Keywords: Mamluk Sultanate; Zarqa; Qalet Hamra; Haji; khan, Jordan

1. HISTORICAL FRAME

After the conquest by the Mamluks of the Ayyubid States in 1263 AD, Transjordan was divided on two provinces, the northern one from Damascus to Wadi Mujib, and Kerak, the southern one, from Wadi Mujib to ‘Aqaba (fig. 1). They were secured by means of restoration of Crusader/Ayyubid castles, building roads, and renovating holy places. In facts, Ayyubid administrative and defensive systems were inherited by the Mamluk Sultanate, troubled by the advance of the Mongol power from East.[1]

Ayyubid and Mamluk architectural features range from holy sites to fortified strongholds, typically town-based castles and fort/khans, from agricultural or industrial establishments to rural villages, in a period of reconstruction and renovation after Crusader debacle.[2]

After Crusaders, in facts, social and economic reconstruction of Jordan was concentrated on arboriculture and commercial crops, such as sugar. During Mamluk period (1263-1517 AD), the number of sites increased and a moderate prosperity based on rural economy started, specially thank to the tropical climate of Jordan Valley.[3] According to al-Maqdisī the region of Wadi az-Zarqa was populated by many villages and produced olives, various fruits, grapes, and honey.[4] Between Zarqa and Wadi al-Mujib were villages, farms, grain-fields, mills.[5]

In the modern city of Zarqa, moreover, Middle Islamic architecture is documented by the small fort of Qasr Shebib, dating back to the thirteenth century, an Ayyub foundation, probably on a preceding Roman fort or square tower, well-known in Mamluk period.[6]

1 Walmsley 2001, 521; Walker - Dotti - Nucciotti 2009, 126-127; Walker 2011.
2 Walmsley 2001, 527; Walker 2008; Walker - Dotti - Nucciotti 2009, 128-129.
3 Kafafi *et al*. 2000, 706; Munzi *et al*. 2000, 386; Palumbo *et al*. 2002, 144-145.
4 Le Strange (transl.) 1886, 56; Walmsley 2008, 4.
5 Walmsley 2001, 515-517, 523, 541.
6 Petersen 1991; Walmsley 2001, 530.

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2. THE KHAN

Qalet Hamra was in the southern sector of the Damascus' province and stood in a hinge area, along the border between Cairo and Damascus,[7] in the region named Balqā in the Medieval Islam,[8] between Wadi az-Zarqa and Wadi al-Mujib. Zarqa, a defensive post together with Ajlun, Shawbak and Kerak, was an important stop for pilgrims already in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries.[9]

The building is in the suburb of Shomar, just north to the modern city of Zarqa (32°05'00.7"N 36°03'55.5"E). It rises directly next to the joint between Wadi Shomar and Wadi Zarqa, at roughly 70 m west of it (fig. 2).

That building was reasonably erected in this place due to its vicinity to the cross of Wadi Zarqa and Wadi Shomar tracks, a shortcut used during centuries to reach es-Salt and then the Jordan Valley to the west.[10] So, it is an ideal location for two of main enterprises during the Mamluk period: rural exploitation and agricultural production, along the pilgrimage route.[11] In this perspective, the khan of Qalet Hamra should host traveling pilgrims and manage the cultivated land along the river banks, usually entrusted to military officers as grant tax in this period.[12]

The khan consists of two buildings (fig. 2). The bigger one had a pristine square plan (10 × 10 m) subdivided into two rectangular rooms (4 × 8 m) at the ground floor, covered by two vaults (figs. 3-6), and in more rooms in the first floor. This square structure was set on the top of the spur dominating the ford across the Zarqa river and the joint of it with Wadi Shomar. In front of the original building there was a fenced courtyard, and on the opposite eastern side there was a subsidiary building – one storey high – possibly serving as stable for animals. The original khan was expanded by adding another couple of rectangular rooms to the south, one of the two further subdivided into two square rooms. This structure was partly built on the slope south of the top of the spur where the original building stood. A further rectangular piece was added to the north, so that the whole western side of the square precinct of the caravanserai was occupied by buildings. In the north-eastern corner of the courtyard there was a cistern, while on the northern side of the hill, rock terraces gently sloped down to the river banks.

It is very difficult to establish the chronology of the constructive phases of the khan in absence of proper excavations. An original occupation of the site in the early Islamic period is suggested by some pottery fragments,[13] while the main building can be dated to the Mamluk period with a later addition in the early 15th century AD.

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7 Munzi *et al.* 2000, 386; Walker 2013, 184-187.
8 Sourdel-Thomine 1979.
9 Walker 2013, 184-187.
10 Nigro - Gharib 2016, 59.
11 Already in the Ayyubid period, in the area of Zarqa, fortress and watchtower performed different functions (Milwright 2006, 9). Moreover, a dual purpose is already certified for some Levantine khan (Lee *et al*. 1992, 57-60).
12 Walker 2003, 244; Walker - Dotti - Nucciotti 2009, 126-127.
13 See QH.15.0/1 in fig. 7.

The building probably was destroyed by a seismic swarm that struck the region between the late fourteenth century and the beginning of the fifteenth century,[14] and after that abandoned.

Over the centuries the khan has been looted and used as a quarry for building material, and, in recent times, it unfortunately suffered illegal excavations.

The date suggested to the Mamluk period for the khan is based on geographical information (pilgrimage itineraries) and pottery (fig. 7) collected during the survey of 2015, combined with a territorial study of the Middle Islamic period and a comparative analysis with other forts and khans.[15]

As it concerns pottery, the repertoire is represented by unglazed wheel-made ware,[16] used mainly for storing, preparing, transferring and serving food, as jars and jugs. QH.15.0/2 is a wall of a sugar pot, typical of Mamluk period, characterized by a conical body with an outward folded rim, narrow base, rounded or flat base, ribbed on the exterior.[17]

4. The khan in the Haji Pilgrimage

The pilgrimage route from Damascus to Mecca passed through Zarqa in the way to Amman, which was a major assembly place for pilgrims from Palestine and continued southward (fig. 8).[18] From Damascus the caravan route made two stops before Busra, after travelled to the Pool of az-Ziza and, then, the most suitable track to the south-east was through Zarqa.[19]

A series of khan and fortresses were displaced along such a route were progressively built during the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods. One of this major forts and towers was, in the Wadi az-Zarqa, Qasr Shebib. Mamluks, in facts, were interested in securing the major roads and the postal network.[20] Caravanserais were erected at major crossing points, especially by fords and rivers, where usually postal stations were established.[21]

Qasr Shebib was a Mamluk fort along the Haji,[22] and, as already pointed out by Petersen it is quoted variously in Ottoman sources. J.L. Burkchardt was the first European to describe the Qasr Shebib, at the beginning of the 19th century,[23] and he wrote:

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14 Walker 2003, 251.

15 Sauvaget 1939; 1940; Lee *et al.* 1992; Tavernari 2010. A similar building technique with hewn stones (figs. 3-6) is attested in the residence of the sultan in the citadel of Hisban, the administrative capital of the time (Walker 2003, 251), in the Mamluk mosque at Fahl (Walmsley 1997-1998, fig. 4), and in the Mamluk mosque at Kahf al-Raqim (Walmsley 2008, fig. 8).

16 Avissar - Stern 2005, 102, 108, figs. 42:4, 6, 45:8; Kletter - Stern 2006, 180, 184-186; Stern 2014, 73, 75, 77; Stern - Toueg - Shapiro 2019, 136-143.

17 Avissar - Stern 2005, 86, fig. 37:4-6.

18 Walmsley 2001, 518; 2009, 459.

19 Walmsley 2001, 543.

20 El-Majali - Mas'ad 1987.

21 Walmsley 2001, 555.

22 El-Majali - Mas'ad 1987, 314; Petersen 2012, 58.

23 Burkchardt 1822, 657.

> «The Hadji rests here one day, during which the Hadjis amuse themselves with hunting wild boars which are found in great numbers on the reedy banks of Wady Zerka. The castle is built in a low wadi wich forms in winter-time the bed of a river of considerable size, called Naher Ezzerqa, whose water collect to the south of Djebel Haouran. In the summer the Wadi to the E. of the castle has no water in it, but to west where there are some sources, the river is never completely dried up».

Qasr Shebib stands on a higher spur in respect of Qalet Hamra (fig. 9), and it also is far away from the river banks. Conversely, Qalet Hamra lays about 100 m far from the river banks, being an ideal watering place for caravans. Moreover, the Zarqa River flows to west of Qasr Shebib, and not to the east as it seems to be described by Burkchardt. On the contrary, Qalet Hamra lays east of the river, in a location which fits perfectly Burkchardt's description.

Furthermore, local scholars which describe Qasr Shebib[24] tell that pilgrims during Mamluk period use to camp outside of the qasr in the river valley and this might suggest - along with the above mentioned Burkchardt's description - that the site used to stop was that of Qalet Hamra.

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[24] El-Majali - Mas'ad 1987, 314, Petersen 2012, 61.

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Fig. 1 - Map of Mamluk state (after Walker 2013, fig. 1).

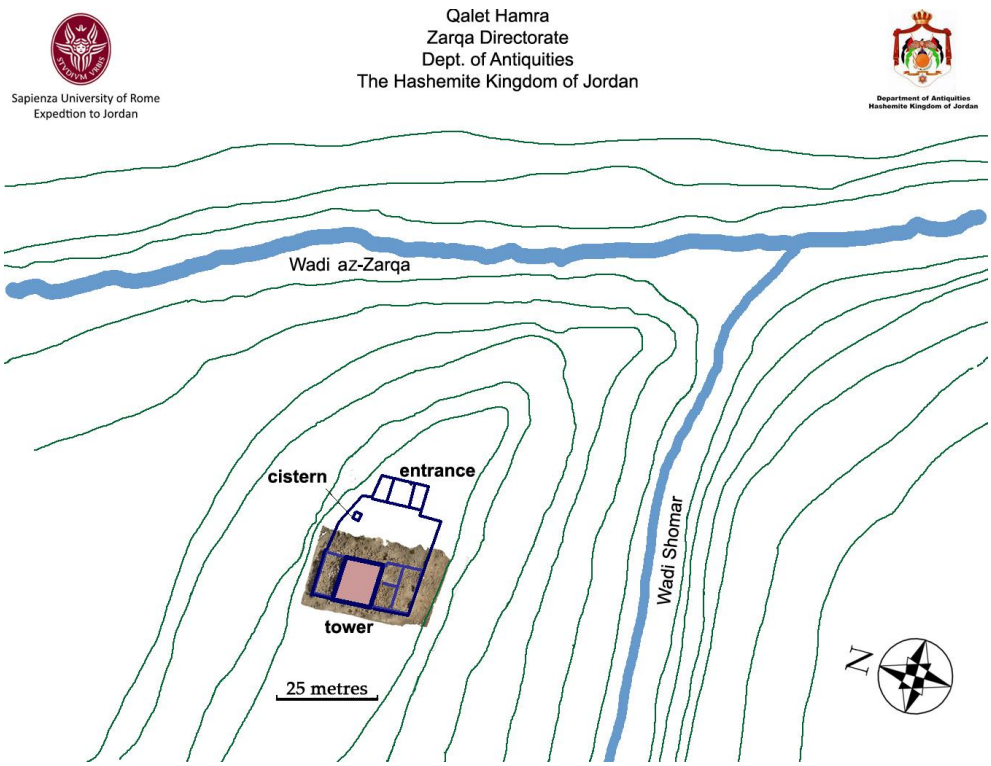

Fig. 2 - Reconstructive plan of the khan of Qalet Hamra superimposed on the orthophoto.

Fig. 3 - The collapsed south-eastern corner and the eastern wall of the khan.

Fig. 4 - The southern wall of the khan.

Fig. 5 - The southern wall and the south-western corner of the khan.

Fig. 6 - The razed remains of the khan and the Zarqa River on the right.

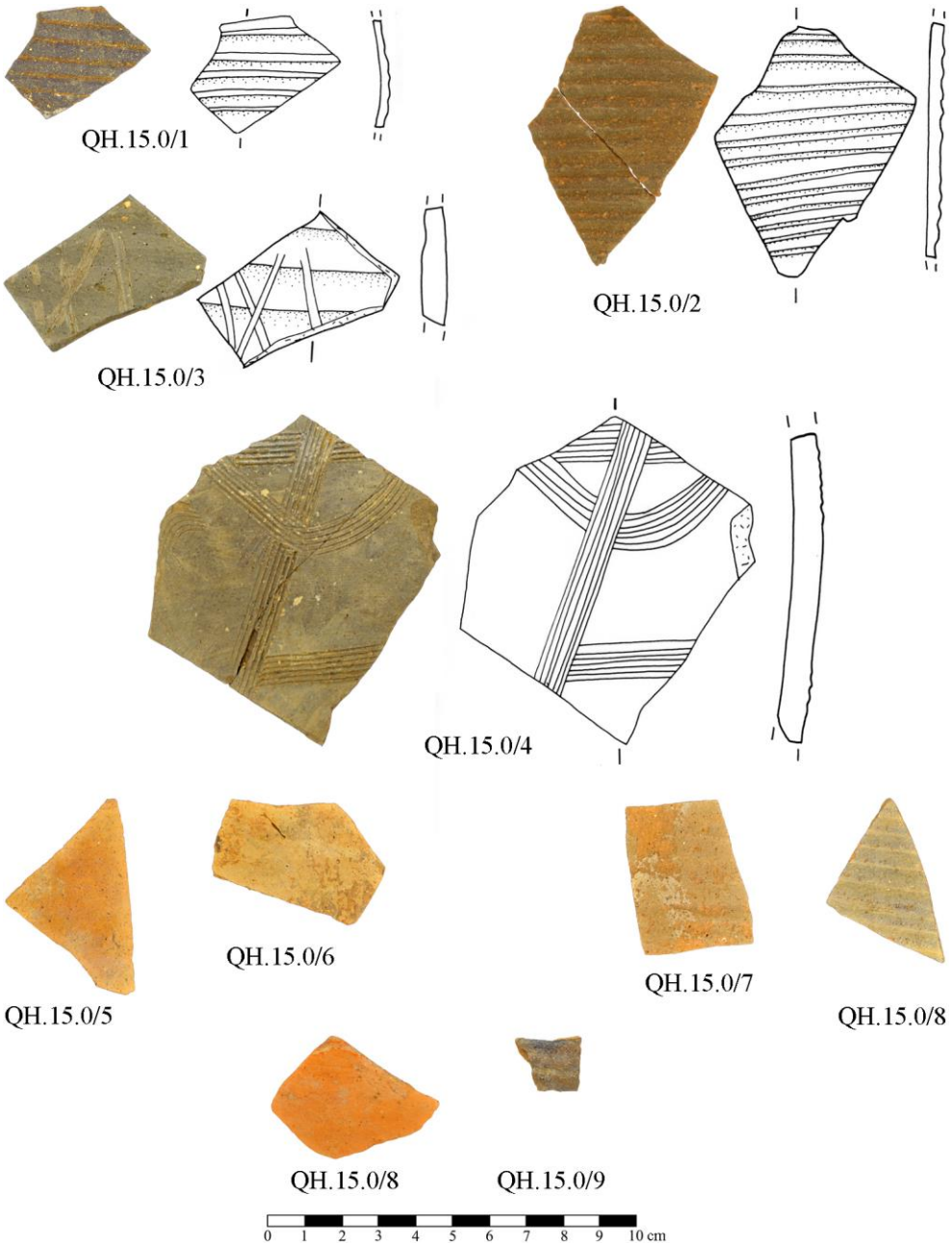

Fig. 7 - A selection of pottery collected in the site of Qalet Hamra during the survey of 2015.

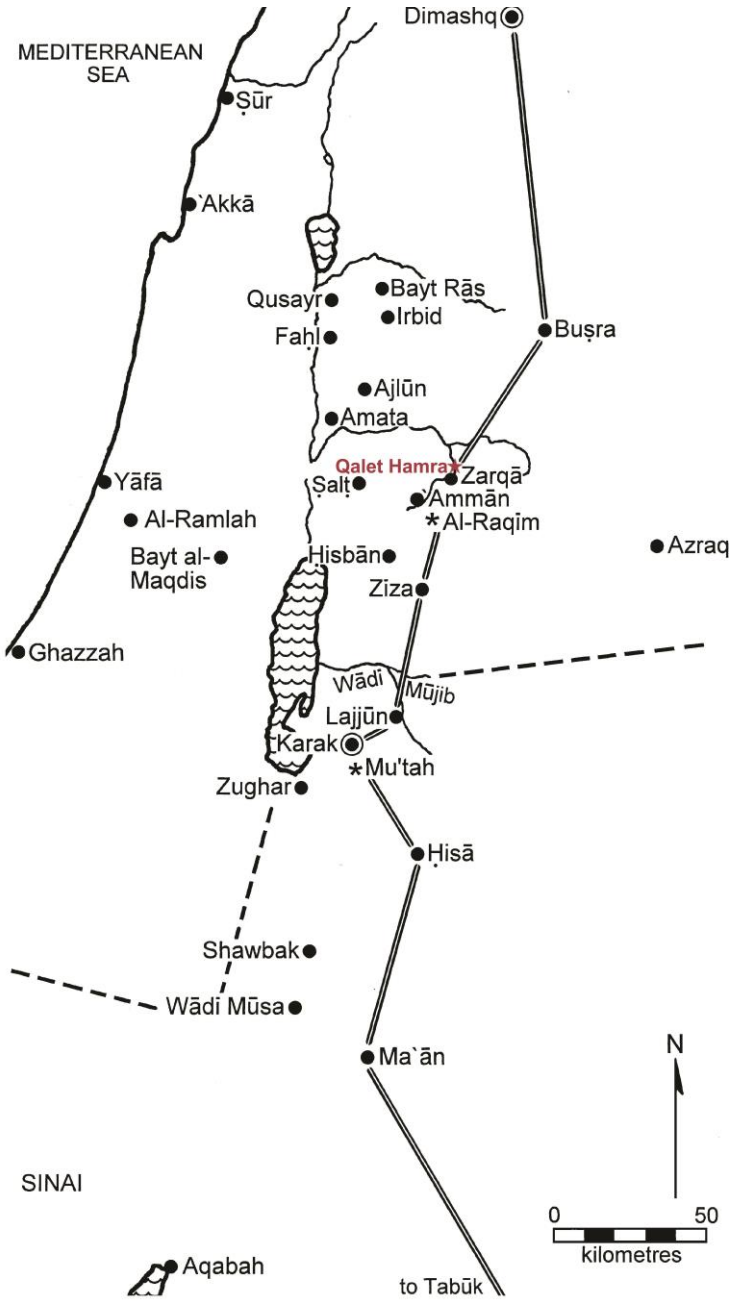

Fig. 8 - Map of Haji pilgrimage route in Mamluk period (after Walmsley 2001, fig. 15:4).

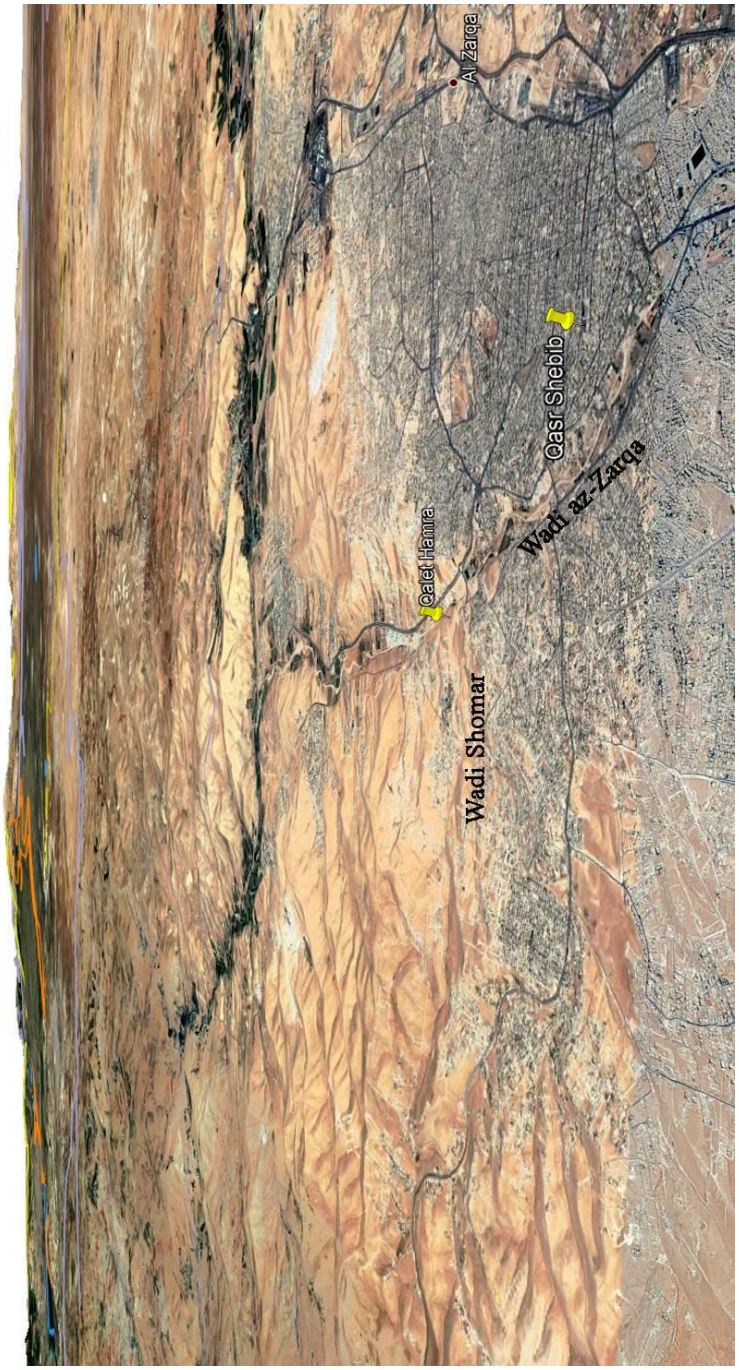

Fig. 9 - Satellite photo of the sites of Qasr Shebib and Qalet Hamra along the Wadi az-Zarqa, looking north.

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‘LE DOLCI ACQUE DEL FIUME’. RIFLESSIONI FILOLOGICHE SULL’ARABO *AL-FURĀT* E SULLA SUA RADICE *FRT*[1]

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The Arabic word furāt *occurs only three times in the Qur’an denoting the “sweet (fresh) waters” of the river in contrast to the salt waters of the see. Moreover, the adjective with the definite article,* al-Furāt, *identifies the Euphrates River. The aim of this article is to establish if an etymological relationship between* furāt *and* al-Furāt *exists. The adjective* furāt *derives from the verb form* faruta *meaning “to be sweet (referring to the water)”, therefore the problem is to establish if the qualitative verb* faruta, *and its adjective* furāt, *is related to other verbs of the root of* frt/prt *or if it originated from the adjective* furāt *as a denominative verb. The root* frt/prt *meaning “sweet in relation to the water” is not present in other Semitic languages as Hebrew and Aramaic. On the contrary, in Arabic* al-Furāt *derives from Sumerian* Buranum *and Akkadian* Purattum *indicating the Euphrates River as the river where sweet (fresh) waters flow; later the name of the river changed into the adjective* furāt *meaning “sweet waters” and* al-Furāt *refers to the Euphrate as “the sweet river”. In addition, the Greek form, Euphrates, may have originated from Old Persian* Ufrātu *where the initial* U- *could have been a reinterpretation of the Sumerian determinative* hid- (ID_2) *“river”; later it was transformed into* U- < *Persian prefix* HU- *“good, well”, so the Greeks understood* *eu-frat *“the good (sweet) river”.*

Keywords: Arabic, *al-Furāt*, Euphrates River, Qur’an, Mesopotamia

1. ARABO *FURĀT*

Nei lessici arabi la parola *furāt* è registrata con due accezioni: da una parte con il significato di “dolce” detto dell’acqua, dall’altra con il significato di Eufrate, se la parola è preceduta dall’articolo determinativo.

In questo articolo ci proponiamo di discutere in che misura esista un rapporto etimologico tra l’aggettivo *furāt* e il nome di fiume *al-Furāt*.

L’aggettivo *furāt* appare tre volte nel Corano in riferimento all’acqua dolce di un fiume in contrapposizione all’acqua salata del mare. In XXV, 53 si legge:

wa-huwa llaḏī maraǧa l-baḥrayn^{i} *hāḏā ʿaḏb*^{un} *furāt*^{un} *wa-haḏā milḥ*^{un} *uǧāǧ*^{un} *wa-ǧaʿala baynahumā barzaḫ*^{an} *wa-ḥiǧr*^{an} *maḥǧūr*^{an} “È lui che ha lasciato scorrer liberi i due Mari, questo dolce fresco, quello salmastro amaro, e ha posto fra di loro una barriera, un insormontabile limite”[2].

Si tratta della *Sura della Salvazione* o *Sūrat al-Furqān* (il Discrimine) in cui, nel versetto menzionato, i commentatori intendono o le acque dolci divise da quelle salate (i due Mari) oppure i fiumi Eufrate e Tigri e il mare del Golfo Persico. Il termine *furāt*^{un} è qui utilizzato come aggettivo col significato di “dolce” supportato anche dal precedente aggettivo, *ʿaḏb*^{un}, che significa, infatti, “dolce, squisito, potabile”.

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[1] Ringrazio il Prof. Fabrizio A. Pennacchietti, dell’Università di Torino, per il prezioso e approfondito lavoro di revisione di questo articolo.

[2] *Corano*, 263.

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In XXXV, 12, ossia nella Sura del Creatore o *Sūrat Fāṭir* (il Separatore), si riscontra:

wa-mā yastawī l-baḥrān^{i} *haḏā ʻaḏb*^{un} *furāt*^{un} *sāʼiġ*^{un} *šarābuhu wa-haḏā milḥ*^{un} *uğāğ*^{un} *[…]* "E non sono uguali i due mari, questo dall'acqua potabile, dolce, piacevole a bersi, e quello salato amaro"[3].

Anche in questo passo l'aggettivo *furāt*^{un} è accompagnato da *ʻaḏb*^{un} e identifica le dolci acque di un mare rispetto alle acque salate di un altro mare. Un chiaro riferimento al versetto precedente.

Infine, la *Sura degli Esseri lanciati* o *Sūrat al-Mursalāt* (i Mandati), al capitolo LXXVII, 27, riporta:

wa-ğaʻalnā fīhā rawāsiya šāmiḫāt^{in} *wa-ʼasqaynākum māʼan furāt*^{an} "e piantato v'abbiamo montagne ferme scoscese, v'abbiamo abbeverato acqua dolcissima"[4].

In quest'ultimo versetto *furāt* è un aggettivo che ribadisce il significato di 'dolce' (*ʻaḏb*^{un}), riferito esplicitamente all'acqua, in contrapposizione con *ḥurāq* 'salmastro'[5].

Si tratta di un aggettivo formato dalle consonanti radicali *frt* e associato al verbo *faruta* "essere dolce (di acqua)", verbo che, grazie al suo vocalismo, è riconoscibile come intransitivo e come indicante il possesso permanente di una determinata qualità.

In arabo i verbi di forma *faʻula*, qual è appunto *faruta*, sono collegati di norma con aggettivi qualitativi di tipo *fuʻāl*, esattamente come *furāt*, come per esempio *kurām* "nobile" (da *karuma*), *ḥusān* "bello, attraente" (da *ḥasuna*), *šuğāʻ* "coraggioso" (da *šuğuʻa*), con l'eccezione di *ḥurāq* "salato (di acqua)", che deriva invece dal verbo transitivo *ḥaraqa* "bruciare"[6]. A ben vedere anche l'aggettivo *uğāğ*, citato nel Corano, presenta la stessa forma, *fuʻāl*, di *furāt* "dolce", infatti deriva dal verbo qualitativo *ağğa* <**ağuğa* "essere salato e amaro (di acqua)". Il nome (o *maṣdar*) di qualità del verbo qualitativo *ağğa* è *uğūğ* "salinità e amarezza dell'acqua", da cui si evince che *ağğa* deriva proprio da **ağuğa*[7]. Il *maṣdar* del verbo derivato da *furāt*, cioè *faruta*, è invece *furūtah* "dolcezza dell'acqua", forma femminile, non **furūt* (vedere *uğuğ*)[8].

Il problema che allora si pone è quello di stabilire se il verbo qualitativo *faruta*, con il suo aggettivo *furāt*, costituisca un verbo imparentato con altri verbi formati dalla radice *frt/prt*, o se *faruta* non sia invece un verbo originario, bensì un verbo derivato dall'aggettivo *furāt*, alla stregua dei verbi denominali[9].

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3 *Corano*, 319.
4 *Corano*, 455.
5 Wright 1996, 135.
6 Wright 1996, 135.
7 *al-Munğid*, 4.
8 *al-Munğid*, 573.
9 Si veda ad esempio il verbo "deaggettivale" italiano *assottigliare* dall'aggettivo *sottile*.

2. LA RADICE *FRT/PRT*

Prima di tutto si può constatare che verbi o aggettivi derivati dalla radice *frt/prt* con il significato di "essere dolce" sono assenti tanto in ebraico quanto nelle varietà aramaiche. Sono invece attestati in queste stesse lingue parole formate dalla medesima radice *frt/prt* ma riferibili al concetto di "dividere"; si veda per esempio la radice *prt*, produttiva in siriaco, come allomorfo di *prš* con il significato di "dividere, separare"[10], in forma *pa'el* "squarciare, tagliare", *etpe'el* "spalancarsi", da qui *partūtā* "frammento, briciola"[11]; in aramaico giudaico babilonese e in mandeo *prt*, *pwrt'* "porzione, parte",[12]. La stessa parola aramaica *purtā* "porzione, parte" è entrata nell'ebraico postbiblico con il significato di "poco, parziale", si veda *pūrətā, purətā* col significato di "un poco", arabo *fariṭa*, ge'ez *'afrasa.* Inoltre, in ebraico è attestato *prt* "dividersi, distaccarsi", forse come risultato di un'assimilazione con *prd*, forma *hitpa'el* "è stato diviso, si è distaccato"[13]. Più in generale, in afro-asiatico la radice **pVriʒ-* "dividere, separare"[14], anche **purVs-*[15], probabilmente da una base **pur-* "dividere"[16].

Per quanto riguarda invece l'arabo, oltre che nell'aggettivo *furāt*, la radice *frt* compare solamente nei verbi *farata* "agire da vizioso", "commettere un adulterio", quindi "essere scellerato", "vivere come un libertino"[17] e *farita* "avoir les facultés intellectuelles affaiblies et devenir bête après avoir été plein d'intelligence"[18], verbi che evidentemente non hanno alcunché in comune con il significato di "dividere".

3. L'IDRONIMO

In arabo, come già si è detto, il termine *furāt*, se preceduto dall'articolo determinativo proclitico *al-* dà luogo all'idronimo *al-Furāt* che designa l'Eufrate. A questo fiume mesopotamico il Corano non assegna un nome.

Molti commentatori hanno tuttavia identificato le acque dolci menzionate nei due versetti XXV, 12 e LXXVII, 27 con quelle dell'Eufrate e del Tigri che confluiscono nelle acque salate del Golfo Persico, nei pressi di Bassora[19].

È assai probabile che gli Arabi abbiano conosciuto il nome dell'Eufrate tramite l'idronimo aramaico *Prāt*, nome che hanno assimilato come *furāt* in base allo schema sillabico e vocalico *fu'āl* che è caratteristico dei verbi qualitativi di tipo *fa'ula*. Tuttavia l'idronimo aramaico *Prāt* e il corrispondente arabo *furāt* non presentano un'etimologia semitica, bensì un'etimologia sumerica e accadica. D'altra parte anche il Tigri, nominato in arabo *Diǧlah*, possiede un etimo di origine sumerica il cui significato è quello di "fiume che

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10 *DNWSI*, 944.
11 Sokoloff 2009, 1255-1256.
12 *DJBA*, 893a; Jastrow 1903, 1148; *DNWSI*, 936.
13 Klein, 534.
14 *HSED*, 2027.
15 *HSED*, 2014.
16 *HSED*, 2009.
17 Lane 1968, 2358.
18 Kazimirski 1860, 560.
19 Secondo la descrizione di Plinio il Vecchio, i due fiumi non confluivano l'uno nell'altro, ma sfociavano direttamente in mare probabilmente perché la linea della costa, in passato, si mostrava più arretrata rispetto ad oggi. (Plin., *Nat.*, VI, 26, 128-131).

scorre (velocemente)", contrariamente all'Eufrate, in quanto durante il suo corso non deposita molto limo nel suo alveo[20].

Il termine *Furāt* risulta essere catalogato dagli studiosi moderni tra le parole di origine 'straniera' presenti nel Corano[21]. L'Eufrate è identificato in sumerico con il termine *buranun* (< *bu*$_5$ "correre ovunque" + *ra* "esondare, inondare" + *nun* "grande, nobile")[22], che in scrittura logografica corrisponde a UD.KIB.NUN, ma anche a Íd-UD.KIB.NUN^{ki} nelle iscrizioni di Gudea. Il fiume stesso veniva considerato una divinità[23]. In accadico il fiume veniva invece indicato con i logogrammi $^{ID}{}_2$ A-ŠITA$_3$, $^{ID}{}_2$ BURANUN^{KI} e $^{ID}{}_2$ BURANUN-NA[24] e letto come *Purattum*. Tale dato linguistico ci permette di desumere che l'idronimo *Purattum* (da **Puran-tum*, con desinenza femminile) costituisce un evidente adattamento fonetico accadico dell'idronimo sumerico *buranun*[25]. Si evince, pertanto, che *Purattum* non appartiene ad una radice semitica.

In ebraico biblico l'Eufrate compare invece come *Pərāt*, in Gn. 2, 14 e 15, 18, e, in Ger. 13, 4, 6-7, mentre in Es. 23, 31 e in Dt. 1, 7 esso viene semplicemente chiamato il "fiume", ossia *han-nāhār* "il fiume (per eccellenza)". Non esiste comunque in ebraico una radice *prt* che significhi "dolce" in riferimento all'acqua[26].

Per quanto concerne l'idronimo Eufrate, esso suona *Prāt* in siriaco, in aramaico del Targum palestinese, in aramaico cristiano palestinese, in mandeo e in aramaico samaritano[27].

Si evince dunque che in aramaico, quindi anche in siriaco, la radice *prt*, con il significato di "dividere", nulla ha a che vedere con la radice *prt* di *Prāt* "Eufrate", visto che questo nome deriva dall'accadico *Purattum*.

4. Conclusioni: dal nome alla qualità

Pertanto, è lecito supporre che il nome di origine sumero-accadica dell'idronimo, **Purāt*, sia entrato nell'aramaico *Prāt* e questo successivamente sia stato interpretato dagli Arabi che per primi hanno conosciuto l'Eufrate come "corso d'acqua dolce", *al-Furāt* < *Prāt* < *Purattum* < *Buranun*. Inoltre, questo idronimo ha di seguito assunto la funzione di aggettivo con il significato di "dolce" in riferimento ad acqua corrente non salmastra; tale trasformazione sarebbe stata facilitata dal fatto che il nome *furāt* presenta lo stesso vocalismo dell'aggettivo *ḥurāq* "salato (di acqua)" e degli aggettivi afferenti ai verbi

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[20] In sumerico è conosciuto come *idigna* lett. "fiume che scorre" (Halloran 2006, 58), mentre in accadico *Idiqlat* il cui logogramma è ^{ID2}IDIGNA (Schramm 2010, 70). Il termine accadico è passato in aramaico *Diglath* da cui è stato mutuato in arabo. Il nome Tigri invece è di origine greca, ὁ Τίγρις, a sua volta dall'antico persiano *Tigrā* col significato di "freccia", probabilmente in relazione alla velocità dello scorrimento del fiume, anche se in pianura il suo corso è lento e sinuoso. Curiosamente Plinio (*Nat.*, VI, 31) riferisce due nomi per il Tigri: quando il suo corso è lento sarebbe stato chiamato alla aramaica *Diglito*, dove invece esso scorre rapido sarebbe stato denominato *Tigris* perché «ita appellant Medi sagittam».

[21] Jeffery 2007, 222-223.

[22] Halloran 2006, 52.

[23] Questo spiega la presenza del determinativo KI. Per un'analisi del nome sumerico dell'Eufrate: Woods 2005, 7-45, in particolar modo pp. 24-31.

[24] Schramm 2010, 22 e 29.

[25] L'accadico *Purattum* potrebbe derivare da **Puran-tum*, ossia la forma femminile di **Puranum* <*Buranun*.

[26] *MDGes*,1087-1088; *KAHAL*, 462.

[27] Payne-Smith 1903, 466; *TalSam*, 712.

qualitativi con vocalismo *fa'ula* e che, una volta trasformatosi in un aggettivo qualitativo, il termine *furāt* avrebbe recuperato la sua funzione di nome in veste di aggettivo sostantivato grazie all'articolo determinativo. L'idronimo *al-Furāt* sarebbe quindi stato interpretato come "il (fiume) dolce". Curiosamente, in arabo l'aggettivo *furātiyy*^{un}, nell'espressione *furātiyyat al-'irāq*, identifica il "dialetto iracheno"[28].

Notoriamente la forma italiana *Eufrate* (con i corrispondenti nelle altre lingue europee), ereditata dal greco Εὐφράτης tramite il latino, è composta dal prefisso εὐ- < εὖ "bene, cortese, gentile"[29] e dal nome di fiume *p/frāt* derivato dall'accadico *Purātu*, *Purattum*.

In antico persiano il nome del fiume veniva scritto *Ufrātu* e presumibilmente in epoca achemenide, quando i greci recepirono dai persiani questo nome, la U- iniziale potrebbe aver costituito una reinterpretazione del determinativo sumerico *hid-* (ID_2) "fiume", qualcosa come **hip-prāt* "il fiume **Prāt*". Similmente in ebraico biblico il nome per Tigri è *ḥiddeqel*, dove il segmento *ḥid-* sta per **hid* "fiume", quindi "il fiume **Degel*". Sembrerebbe dunque che quell'elemento prefisso sia stato rianalizzato, nel corso del tempo, a una sola vocale, U-, che è la resa grafica del prefisso iranico HU- "bene". I greci di epoca achemenide avrebbero quindi stabilito l'equazione U- = HU- = EY-. Come già si è sostenuto, il nome dell'Eufrate in arabo rappresenta un idronimo preceduto sempre dall'articolo proclitico, *al-furāt*, come se fosse un aggettivo sostantivato significante "il (corso d'acqua) dolce"; d'altra parte anche la coppia dei grandi fiumi mesopotamici, il Tigri e l'Eufrate, in arabo è stata definita curiosamente *al-Furātāni*, anzichè *Diǧlatāni*, con l'articolo determinativo "i due Eufrati", o meglio "i due (fiumi) dall'acqua dolce"[30].

I tre passi del Corano citati all'inizio sembrerebbero riflettere un orizzonte geografico e culturale ben più antico dell'epoca di redazione del Libro sacro dell'Islam, un orizzonte in cui prevaleva una visione ancora mitica dei due grandi fiumi della Mesopotamia, agli occhi di chi abitava nella Penisola araba, un territorio vastissimo, arido e senza corsi d'acqua perenni, dove però abbondano sorgenti di acqua salmastra, costituivano una sorprendente eccezione per l'abbondanza della loro acqua dolce[31].

ELENCO DELLE ABBREVIAZIONI

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[28] Dozy 1881, 247.
[29] *LSJ*, 704.
[30] Volendo aderire all'etimologia "coranica".
[31] Sembrerebbe anche probabile che nei due passi coranici, XXV, 53 e XXXV, 12, il riferimento alla divisione tra acque dolci e acque salate risalga ad una concezione cosmologica mesopotamica, largamente diffusa, relativa alla contrapposizione dei due oceani (terreno, salato e celeste, dolce) e che l'interpretazione dei commentatori in connessione esplicita a Tigri ed Eufrate sia probabilmente un'evemerizzazione più recente (Tesei 2015, 19-32).

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KUB 37.122: A MESOPOTAMIAN LEXICAL LIST?[*]

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In this paper, we will offer an edition and commentary of the fragment KUB 37.122, usually referred to as a Samenliste, *but generally not included among the lexical lists from the Hattusa archives. We will also discuss some peculiarities of the contents, the syllabary, and the graphemics of the text, and we will try to contextualize the text within the complex scenario of the Akkadian texts written, or copied, in the Hittite capital city.*

Keywords: Akkadian; Sumerian; lexical lists; medical texts; plant names

1. LEXICAL LISTS AND THE PERIPHERY OF THE CUNEIFORM *KOINÈ*

Lexical lists represent a peculiar genre in what - using the label in a very general fashion - we could call the Ancient Near Eastern literature. These texts usually contain a list of lexical entries that are presented in parallel columns, in one or more languages of the Ancient Near East.[1] The languages that are usually represented in Mesopotamia are Sumerian and Akkadian, while other languages (Eblaite, West Semitic, Hittite, and Hurrian) may appear in documents recovered from local archives.

In the archives from Hattusa, the main capital city of the Hittite Empire, a number of lexical lists have been recovered, most of which are in fact copies or local elaborations of traditional lists that belong to the Mesopotamian tradition. These documents were recorded by Emmanuel Laroche under the CTH numbers from 299 to 309, and the following Mesopotamian lists are represented in the sub-corpus: S^a, S^o, Diri, Erimhuš, Ur_5-ra, Ura, Izi, Kagal, Sag, Lu_2, Ea, and possible fragments of an An list.[2]

The functions of lexical lists were certainly manifold, and included transmission of scribal knowledge - as is evident from compositions that are ordered by graphemic criteria - and the transmission of the scholarly conception of the world - as indicated by compositions that are organized based on semantic fields and semantic associations. Possibly, they were also a vehicle for the teaching and learning of foreign languages - which, in a civilization in which script and language formed an inseparable unit, cannot be discussed as a process separated from scribal education.

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[1] RlA 6, 609-641, for an overview.

[2] For the publications, MSL 3, MSL 12-13, MSL 17. Most of the lists found in the Hittite archives are discussed in the dissertation by Scheucher (2012).

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2. THE ATYPICAL LISTS

Among the lists found in Hattusa, there are also cases of "atypical" lists that cannot be ascribed to a known original in the Mesopotamian collections. A number of them were discussed by Tobias S. Scheucher in his doctoral dissertation,[3] and they are, in principle, the fragments recorded by E. Laroche under CTH number 309 and the better-preserved vocabulary KUB 3.94, with duplicate KBo 26.50 (which, in MSL XIV, 108 was tentatively compared with the Mesopotamian series S^a and S^b). To what extent the atypical lists belong to a local re-elaboration of Mesopotamian tradition is difficult to tell, especially because most of the fragments listed in CTH 309 are difficult to analyse because of the poor state of preservation. However, the inclusion of the Hittite language, *e.g.* in the Hattusa version of Erimhuš KBo 1.44+,[4] easily shows that scribal re-elaborations took place in the local scribal circles of Anatolia.

The possibility of recognizing a lexical list strongly relies on the state of preservation of the epigraphic document. The presence of linguistically consistent content in parallel documents is the best indicator of the lexical nature of a tablet, while in some cases, even if the text is too fragmentary to recognize the structural correspondence, the organization of single columns may be helpful. The tablet we will discuss in the present paper, KUB 37.122, only contains a single column on the obverse and the first signs of the second column, while the reverse, judging from the preserved portion, is uninscribed. So far, it has not been labelled as a proper lexical list, nor was it included by T.S. Scheucher in the corpus he analysed in his doctoral dissertation.

E. Laroche, in his catalogue, reserved a whole CTH number to this atypical fragment: CTH 815, *liste de semences*. The tablet does indeed contain what looks like a list of names of seeds. Lines 2' to 11' and then 14' are readable on column i, while column ii only shows the initial NUMUN sign[5] - or part thereof - for lines 3' to 15'.

The resistance against classifying KUB 37.122 as a lexical list may depend on several factors. First of all, the absence of any phonographic remains of column ii prevents us from knowing whether the second column of the text was written in a strongly sumerographic Akkadian, like column i, or if a second language was represented - which in all likelihood would have been Hittite. Second, there are to our knowledge no other known cases of lexical lists entirely dedicated to seeds. However, a caveat is in order here: the characterization of the whole composition as a *liste de semences* by E. Laroche was certainly not very cautious. Other fragments of the same tablet may emerge in the future, and it cannot be excluded that the lines preserved on KUB 37.122 might be merely a section of a larger list that did not contain only seeds. This does not obliterate the fact that no Mesopotamian list containing this long list of seeds is currently attested either, which puts our text in a position similar to the Hattusa "isolated vocabulary" KUB 3.94 (CTH 306).

In our opinion there is no reason to doubt that KUB 37.122 fully qualifies as a lexical text. Firstly, the lines of the two columns seem to be vertically aligned with each other,

[3] Scheucher 2012.
[4] MSL XVII, 98-116; Scheucher 2012, 610-646.
[5] Labat no. 117; HZL no. 12.

which make a correspondence between the entries very likely to have existed when the tablet was complete.[6] Second, each line of column i contains a single entry, which is the name of a seed: there are no sentences; there are no predications; and there are no indications of a textual context, nor are there any numerals that would hint to a practical or administrative kind of list. Finally, the graphemic organization, with the sign NUMUN opening each line, is highly reminiscent of those lists that organize the contents based on the initial determinative/logogram.

3. Peculiarities of KUB 37.122

While it has been shown that the structure of the preserved portion clearly indicates that the text was in fact a lexical list, a couple of observations are in order regarding some peculiarities of the list.

The first peculiarity is the presence of a repetition in the line 8' and 10' of column i. While repetitions of entries are not impossible in lexical lists, they usually occur when the corresponding entry in the parallel column(s) differ. Examples are not difficult to find, *e.g.* in the Ur_5-ra list tablet XVII lines 286-287 (also 288?) = Ras Shamra version 173-175, for two or three repetitions of ù.luh "a small tree" with different Semitic correspondences (*ti-ia-tu*, *na-hu-ru-tu*, *ha-ša*). Note, however, that in most cases repeated entries in the Sumerian column directly follow each other, which is not the case for KUB 37.122 i 8' and 10'.

As for the criteria by which the entries are ordered, the only one seems to be the presence of a sequence of NUMUN signs; what follows in each line does not appear to be categorized according to either a graphic or a semantic rule.

The plants mentioned in these texts are edible or medical plants. All of them occur in medical and pharmaceutical texts of the Mesopotamian tradition (cf. also *Commentary* below), and some are also attested in the few medical texts from the Hattusa archives.[7] Particularly interesting is the case of the *sahlû*-plant, that in Hattusa is attested with a peculiar sumerographic rendering za_3.ah.li, *e.g.* in the Anitta text, where it seems to have a rather generic meaning of "grass/weed", but also in the collection of medical recipes KUB 37.1,[8] where it seems to have the typical meaning "cress", which is the one usually assumed for its occurrences in Mesopotamian tradition. Interestingly, this list does nor pattern with the other Hattusa occurrences in the graphemic rendering of the plant name, but rather with the standard writing that is employed in the Mesopotamian lists, za_3.hi.li. For an interpretation of this distribution and for further comments on the syllabary employed, cf. sections 4 and 6 below.

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6 While a monolingual list may also be taken into consideration (e.g. a school exercise), possible Anatolian specimina such as the so-called *Aufzählung von Soldaten* KUB 37.123 (apparently exhibiting a mixed Babylonian ductus) provide for very weak comparanda, because of the miserable condition of the available text portions.

7 Some sequences of plants in the list are reminiscent of the series of plants attested in specific texts of the Mesopotamian medical tradition, in particular u_2.šeš, u_2.kur.ra and za_3.hi.li.a.šar appear in the eye-disease text BAM 22: 4-5 (we thank Strahil Panayotov for making us aware of this occurrence); the ophtalmological texts found in Hattusa (CTH 809), however do not contain any relevant sequence.

8 Giusfredi 2012.

4. PALEOGRAPHY

Although the tablet is very fragmentary and contains only a small number of signs, with a couple hardly legible, the occurrence of some diagnostic signs allows us to state that the ductus is definitely not Hittite.

Franz Köcher classified the script of KUB 37.122 as Middle Babylonian,[9] together with those of several other tablets edited in the same volume.[10] However, based on more recent studies, most of these tablets are now identified as Assyro-Mittanian (or, in one case, Middle Assyrian).[11] Therefore, it is worth making a new palaeographic analysis also for KUB 37.122, in order to confirm or reject F. Köcher's statement.

As Elena Devecchi remarked, the major limitation of the palaeographic analysis of non-Hittite tablets from Boğazköy is the lack of adequate working tools.[12] For about 30 years, Hittitologists have relied on the *Hethitisches Zeichenlexikon* by Christel Rüster and Erich Neu (HZL), where a large collection of the different shape forms of the Hittite signs can be found. However, sign shapes occurring in Boğazköy tablets that do not show a Hittite ductus are either not recorded or, when they are, are not distinguished from the Hittite ones. Some specific works are available to us, such as Daniel Schwemer's analysis of the Assyro-Mittanian ductus[13] or E. Devecchi's study on the so-called 'mixed ductus',[14] but a complete palaeography of the Babylonian and Assyrian documents from Boğazköy is still lacking, and it is necessary to refer to the modern Mesopotamian sign lists or to specific studies, if available, since a personal investigation inside the *mare magnum* of Mesopotamian tablets is not such an easy challenge.

In what follows, we will remark on some of the signs found in KUB 37.122,[15] showing, as far as possible, differences and similarities with the Mesopotamian and Hittite ones. The comparison with the Hittite signs relies on the data collected by Ch. Rüster and E. Neu in the HZL, while those with Mittanian and Assyro-Mittanian ones are mostly based on D. Schwemer's sign list, with addenda by Mark Weeden[16] and a personal check of the photographs of the other Assyro-Mittanian tablets listed in the *Hethitologie Portal Mainz*.[17] For the ductus of the Mesopotamian tablets, we had to refer to Labat (1976) and Borger (ABZ, MZL); for the Middle Assyrian ductus, we also used the palaeographic table found in the edition of the letters from Tall Šēḫ Ḥamad provided by Eva Ch. Cancik-

[9] Cf. KUB 37, iv.

[10] KUB 37.2, 27, 44-49, 53, 54, 55, 61, 64, 69, 70, 82, 88, 100a, 105, 106.

[11] On KUB 37.2, 55, 100a, and 106, see Weeden 2012, 230-231, with references. Furthermore, also KUB 37.27, 54, 61, 64, 69, 70, 88, and 105 are now classified as Assyro-Mittanian on the *Hethitologie Portal Mainz*, while KUB 37.44-49, belonging to the same tablet, are Middle Babylonian. KUB 37.82 is regarded as Middle Assyrian by Jeanette C. Fincke (2010, 48), although on the *Hethitologie Portal Mainz* there is no indication. Therefore, among the tablets classified by F. Köcher as Middle Babylonian, only KUB 37.122, at present, remains uncertain.

[12] See Devecchi 2012, 47-48.

[13] Schwemer 1998.

[14] Devecchi 2012.

[15] All the images of the tablet are taken from the photo hethiter.net/: PhotArch BoFN04604a.

[16] Weeden 2012. See also Weeden 2016.

[17] Some of them, however, are classified as Mittanian by D. Schwemer (1998) and M. Weeden (2012).

Kirschbaum.[18] Conversely, we have been able to personally check the photographs of all the Boğazköy tablets that, according to the *Hethitologie Portal Mainz*, show a Middle Babylonian (24 tablets) and a Middle Assyrian (12 tablets) ductus, but we should note that, while Middle Babylonian tablets contain Sumerian and Akkadian magic rituals and incantations and may reflect the local copy of Mesopotamian texts, Middle Assyrian tablets are mostly letters sent from Assyria,[19] thus not attesting a local syllabary.

The sign EDIN (fig. 1, a) has the shape usually found in Mesopotamian clay tablets,[20] which also occurs in Assyro-Mittanian tablets (fig. 1, b-c),[21] whereas in the Hittite texts we find instead the "analytic" writing AM.SILA$_3$.BUR,[22] typical of the Mesopotamian monumental writing (fig. 1, d).

Some remarks are in order about the damaged sign found in i 9' (fig. 2, a). As far as can be seen, it might be a variant of DIM$_3$ (with an inscribed GAM) or, less probably, the more elaborate DIM$_8$, also occurring in the Assyro-Mittanian tablet KUB 37.102(+) l.c. 4' (fig. 2, b). Other homophones of these signs cannot be excluded;[23] therefore, we opt for the transliteration dim$_x$. As an alternative, although unlikely, it could be a Hittite LUGAL (^{d}lugal.me is a variant of the more common writing ^{d}dim$_3$.me), different from that occurring so far in Boğazköy tablets with a Middle Assyrian ductus, although all the occurrences are in letters, which do not reflect a local production (fig. 2, c-d),[24] and from that occurring in Mittanian texts, which consistently shows vertical wedges crossing the long horizontal below. In Assyro-Mittanian tablets, the sign LUGAL does not occur so far, but we could imagine that its shape was not different from the Middle Assyrian and Mittanian one, as it is derived from the sign LU$_2$, which consistently shows the four verticals.

The sign LI, occurring in KUB 37.122 i 8' and 10' (fig. 3, a), has the shape usually found in Middle Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, Assyro-Mittanian, and Mittanian, also characterising the New Hittite script (fig. 3, b).[25] A similar shape has not been found so far in Middle Babylonian tablets from Boğazköy, where only the variant with one vertical wedge is attested (fig. 3, c).[26] It also seems to be different from the LI usually found in Middle Assyrian tablets from Boğazköy, although to a lesser extent (fig. 3, d).

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18 Cancik-Kirschbaum 1996, 73-87.

19 There are only two exceptions, KUB 37.198(+), which contains oil omens and is probably an imported tablet, not a local product (cf. Anor - Cohen 2018, 206), and KUB 47.41, a small fragment of the Libations to the Throne of Hepat.

20 See Labat 1976 no. 168 and Borger, MZL no. 300.

21 See Schwemer 1998, 25.

22 HZL *sub* no. 168; cf. KBo 10.28+ v 1 and KBo 10.30+ ii 3', where EDIN.NA means 'hare', being either an haplographic writing or an abbreviation of one of the Sumerograms corresponding to Akkadian *arnabu*, all containing EDIN.NA (see Berman - Hoffner 1980, 49 with fn. 2). See also the lexical list KUB 3.94 ii 4, where EDIN.NA is written GA.SILÀ.BUR.NA and is translated by Akkadian *ṣe-e-*[*ru*] 'steppe'.

23 MZL no. 264.

24 See also Cancik-Kirschbaum 1996, 77.

25 Labat 1976 no. 59, Cancik-Kirschbaum 1996, 74, Schwemer 1998, 19, HZL no. 343.

26 KBo 36.19 l.c. 7'; KUB 30.1 i 4, 5; KUB 30.2 ii 9'; KUB 37.44+ i 15', 19', iv 8'. Despite the handcopy, LI has probably the same shape also in KBo 8.3, 6'.

The peculiarity of the sign NUMUN (fig. 4, a), occurring at the beginning of every line in our tablet, is a large *Winkelhaken* above the horizontal wedge, starting before its head. Therefore, its shape is quite different from that usually found in Hittite texts, where the first *Winkelhaken* crosses the horizontal wedge (fig. 4, d),[27] and it rather resembles the NUMUN sometimes found in Middle Assyrian (seemingly not at Boğazköy, but the sign occurs only once and it is partly broken; cf. fig 4, c), Middle Babylonian, and Mittanian tablets (the first *Winkelhaken* usually starts after the head of the horizontal, but variants where it slightly precedes the horizontal are attested, as in the photo of the Middle Babylonian sign in fig. 4, b).[28]

The writing of $numun_2$ is quite peculiar: it is usually written ZI&ZI.LAGAB,[29] but in our tablet we find the writing ZI&ZI.LAGAB&LAGAB (fig. 5, a), a variant that, so far, is not recorded in any modern sign list. As far as we know, this variant seems only to occur at Emar[30] and in another tablet from Boğazköy, KUB 29.58+ iv 28 (fig. 5, b),[31] a medical text containing Akkadian prescriptions against fever, whose ductus is so far undetermined (fig. 5).[32] However, despite this peculiar writing of $numun_2$, a relationship between the scribal school that produced KUB 37.122 and the one that produced the medical text KUB 29.58 is unlikely, since, besides the different ductus, there are also spelling discrepancies between the two texts (see especially the typical Hittite variant ZA_3.AH.LI for the *sahlû*-plant in KUB 29.58 v 13, while in KUB 37.122 we find the usual Mesopotamian spelling za_3.hi.li.a).

The sign RA is also very peculiar (fig. 6, a): it is different from the common Hittite one (fig. 6, e),[33] and its shape is more similar to that sometimes found in Middle Assyrian (fig. 6, b), Assyro-Mittanian (fig. 6, c), and Mittanian tablets.[34] According to modern sign lists, the same shape also occurs in Middle Babylonian, but it is not found in any of the Middle

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27 HZL no. 12.

28 Labat 1976 no. 72, Borger, MZL no. 117, Schwemer 1998, 20.

29 See Labat 1976 *sub* no. 66, Borger, ABZ no. 66c, MZL no. 102.

30 Cf. Msk 7481h (= Emar 554 A; uncertain ductus), but not in Msk 74156a (= Emar 548 M, uncertain ductus) and Msk 731030 (= Emar 543-545 A; Syrian ductus) where gug_4 and aški, respectively, are written as ZI&ZI.LAGAB.

31 Edited by Meier 1939.

32 The ductus of KUB 29.58 is quite puzzling and a brief look at the tablet reveals some remarkable peculiarities: the sign NA sometimes shows a small vertical wedge above the horizontal one, AH has usually the same shape of the "aleph"-sign (but there are also two occurrences of the Hittite variant), ANŠE and AZ show a subscribed PA, and the signs LI and TI have two different variants. The commixture of Hittite and non-Hittite signs in an Akkadian medical text, as well as the occurrence of the typical Hittite spelling ZA_3.AH.LI for the *sahlû*-plant (with a Hittite AH), may point either to a scribe with double training in Akkadian and Hittite, or to an attempt at writing an Akkadian text by a scribe usually employed for the drafting of Hittite documents (see the remarks by Devecchi 2012, 55-56 and Mora - Giorgieri 2004, 38 with regard to other texts).

33 See the variants in the HZL (no. 233): the last two are quite similar, although not identical, to that found in KUB 37.122, but unfortunately there is no indication about the tablets in which they are attested.

34 Labat 1976 no. 328, Borger, MZL no. 511, Cancik-Kirschbaum 1996, 81, Schwemer 1998, 30.

Babylonian tablets from Boğazköy, which consistently show a RA closer to the Hittite one (fig. 6 d).[35]

The shape of ŠEŠ, typically Middle Babylonian and very similar to a Middle Assyrian variant (with less initial *Winkelhaken*, cf. fig. 7, b),[36] which also occurs in texts from Boğazköy, is different from the variants recorded in the HZL (n. 79) for this sign, even the more complex ones, and the Hittite scribes usually preferred a simpler sign shape (fig. 7, c). The same variant also occurs in Mittanian letters, while in Assyro-Mittanian the sign is not attested so far.

The sign UM occurs twice in our tablet (i 11', 14') and has the shape found in Middle Assyrian and Assyro-Mittanian.[37] Although variants with a similar shape also occur in Hittite,[38] the common Hittite UM is usually simpler, strongly resembling the sign AB (HZL n° 97, cf. fig. 8, c). Conversely, in our tablet, the two signs are kept distinct (fig. 8, a-b).

The sign ZA_3 (fig. 9, a), occurring twice in our tablet (i 8', 10'), has the shape usually found in Hittite, Assyro-Mittanian, and Mittanian tablets,[39] corresponding to one of the Old Babylonian and Middle Assyrian variants.[40] The sign is rarely found in Middle Babylonian and Middle Assyrian texts from Boğazköy, where it shows a different shape (fig. 9, b-c), but the data cannot be regarded as conclusive.

Finally, the sign occurring in i 2' after the break (fig. 10, a) is probably a Middle Assyrian or Assyro-Mittanian variant of ZU (fig. 10, b),[41] although it is not particularly diagnostic. We can also compare our sign to an Assyro-Mittanian SU (fig. 10, c), which differs from ZU in having one further wedge.

Summing up and trying to reach a provisional conclusion, we can be fairly sure that the script of KUB 37.122 does not correspond to the Middle-Babylonian ductus shown by Sumerian and Akkadian compositions found at Boğazköy (see particularly the signs RA and LI), nor to the Middle-Assyrian one characterising some letters and other documents imported into the Hittite capital (see *e.g.* LI, NUMUN, and ZA_3). As emerges from the data collected, the script of our tablet mostly resembles the Assyro-Mittanian one, although evidence for some important diagnostic signs is lacking, because they do not occur so far in Assyro-Mittanian documents ($NUMUN_2$ and ŠEŠ).

[35] KBo 36.13 r.c. 4'; KBo 36.19 l.c. 8'; KBo 36.30, 7', 8'; KBo 40.104, 3'; KUB 30.1 i 3, iv 10'; KUB 30.2 ii 5'-8'; KUB 30.3, 3'; KUB 37.19, 4'; KUB 37.44 i 6', 20', 23', ii 4', 15', 16', iii 9; KUB 37.98, 5', 7'; KUB 37.110+, 5'.

[36] Labat 1976 no. 331 and Cancik-Kirschbaum 1996, 81.

[37] Labat 1976 no. 134, Cancik-Kirschbaum 1996, 76, Schwemer 1998, 23.

[38] Cf. *e.g.* KBo 9.82 obv. 2 and see the variants recorded in the HZL (no. 98).

[39] HZL no. 238, Schwemer 1998, 30.

[40] Labat 1976 no. 332.

[41] See also Weeden 2012, 247.

5. TEXT AND COMMENTARY

5.1. *Transcription*

col. i

1' [ ]x-x
2' numun a$^{?}$ x[ ] ZU$^{?}$
3' numun *nu-ṣa-ab*[42]
4' numun u_2.numun$_2$
5' numun šim.gam
6' numun u_2.šeš
7' numun u_2.kur.ra
8' numun za_3.hi.li.a.šar
9' numun u_2.^{d}dim$_x$.me$_?$[43]
10' numun za_3.hi.li.a.šar
11' numun šim(-)*nu-um* edin.na
12']
13']
14' *a*]*n*$^{?}$*-nu-um*[44]
15']x[

col. ii

1' [ ]
2' [ ]
3' n[umun
4' num[un
5' num[un
6' numu[n
7' numun[
8' numun[
9' numun x[
10' numun x[
11' numun x[
12' numun x[
13' numun x[
14' numun u_2[
15' [numu]n[

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[42] The sign ZA is not readable on the photos from the Vorderasiatisches Museum in Berlin, available on the *Hethitologie Portal Mainz* (http://www.hethiter.net) The unreadable sign seems to be shorter than 1 cm, which makes the ZA drawn by F. Köcher very likely. On the interpretation of *nu-ṣa-ab* and its occurrences in lexical lists and medical texts, see below, *Commentary*.

[43] The sign is poorly readable as the expected DIM$_3$. A variant of it appears, however, to be the only possible candidate. The attested variant of this writing with LUGAL instead of DIM$_3$ is unlikely given the shape of the sign. For discussion, see above, *Paleography*; for the interpretation, see below, *Commentary*.

[44] The sign before NU might be AN, but it is only partly recognizable.

5.2. *Commentary*

3': *nuṣabu* corresponds to ^{u2}a-a-ar-ku$_3$-babbar in MSL XVII, 188 (= An-ta-gal$_2$ Tablet A, line 198). The alternative Semitic correspondence *ajar kašpi* is also attested in several medical texts.[45] In this case, we may be dealing a pseudo-sumerographic writing (NU.ZA.AB). One should, in any case, compare the Aramaic *nṣb* ("to plant"), which makes it reasonable to assume that *nuṣabu* was the West-Semitic form, and *ajar kašpi* the Akkadian one. It is significant that the variant used in this document is the former, not the latter.

4': *šikkurratu*-plant: According to Wolfram von Soden[46] this plant may have been "ein Teil des Schilfrohres(?)". Is the writing u$_2$.numun$_2$ different from u$_2$.a.numun$_2$ (Akkadian *elpetu mê* in Ur$_5$-ra Tablet XVII, lines 9[47])? Other possible readings of the sequence, however, may be u$_2$.ašgi or u$_2$.gug$_4$, which would correspond to Akkadian *kuštu, urbatu* (Diri Tablet IV 11ff.), *šišnu* (Uru-an-na I 92), *umṣatu* and *šubbatu* (Ur$_5$-ra Tablet XVII, lines 6ff.).[48]

5': following MSL V, 102 (= Ur$_5$-ra Tablet III, line 113), Sumerian šim.gam could correspond to Akkadian *ṣumlalû*.

6': In MSL X, 83 (Ur$_5$-ra Tablet XVII, line 37) Akkadian *lardu* (also *laradu*) corresponds to u$_2$-šeš-gal, but in other lexical lists Akkadian *lardu* corresponds to other Sumerian entries: u$_2$.ki.kal, u$_2$-hi-ri-in, u$_2$.kun.gal (Ur$_5$-ra Tablet XVII, lines 34-36; also MSL XV, 150 = Diri Tablet IV line 21).

7': Sumerian u$_2$.kur.ra corresponds to 3 different Akkadian words in the lexical lists: *maltakal* in MSL X, 88 (= Ur$_5$-ra Tablet XVII, 131; in the texts from Hattusa also KUB 37.43 i 9: u$_2$.kur.ra; ib. i 8: u$_2$.kur.kur.ra[49]); *ninû*[50] and *azupiru*[51] in MSL X, 114 (= Ur$_5$-ra Ras Shamra, 188).

8': Akkadian *sahlû*, edible and medical plant. Cf. numun za$_3$.hi.li.šar MSL X, 95 (= Ur$_5$-ra Tablet XVII, 326); also in Old Babylonian Nippur Ura 4 Seg.5, 5: numun hi.li.a sar-ra. The writing za$_3$.ah.li is also attested in Hattusa, *e.g.* in the medical text KUB 37.1, *passim*;[52] also in different context in Anitta text CTH 1.A = KBo 3.22 rev. 48 with Hittite phonetic complementation ZA$_3$.AH.LI-*an*.[53] Furthermore, in the Akkadian medical text KUB 29.58 v 13, which is palaeographically puzzling, the "Hittite" writing ZA$_3$.AH.LI is found, and the sign AH shows the typical Hittite shape, occurring only one other time in this tablet (iii 30), while the scribe uses in other contexts the "aleph"-sign with the value

45 CAD, s.v.
46 AHw. s.v.
47 Cf. also Rodin 2014, 200ff.
48 On gug$_4$ cf. also Campbell-Thompson 1949, 3ff.; 11.
49 Edition in Abusch - Schwemer 2011, Nr. 1.
50 AHw. s.v.: „Ammi, Zahnstockerdolde"; also attested in KUB 37.43 and duplicates, cf. Abusch - Schwemer 2011, Nr. 1.
51 On this plant in Hattusa, see Giusfredi 2012 with further references.
52 Cf. the edition in Giusfredi 2012.
53 The vocabulary Or. 95/3 from Ortaköy provides us with the Hittite name of this plant, *maraššanha-* (cf. Süel - Soysal 2003, 353).

Vh.[54] Here in KUB 37.122, the occurrence of the standard Mesopotamian writing, which in Hattusa also occurs in the Assyro-Mitannian KUB 37.23 ii? 4', may hint to the text closely depending on the re-elaboration of Sumerian and Akkadian lexical materials.

9': ^{d}dim$_{x}$.me is graphic variant of u$_{2}$.^{d}dim$_{3}$.me, which, in turn, is the Sumerian writing corresponding to Akkadian *Lamaštu*.[55] Thus, the sequence u$_{2}$.^{d}dim$_{3}$.me$_{?}$ is apparently written for the *šamme lamašti* also attested in the list MSL X, 89, 103 (= Ur$_{5}$-ra Tablet XVII line l, Ur$_{5}$-ra Tablet XVII rec. B, line 182) and in Boğazköy in KBo 21.20 obv. 16'. This unidentified plant is also attested in the Mesopotamian medical texts (*e.g.* BAM 4, 379 ii 8f., BAM 5, 423 i 18 and 438 r. 10).[56]

10': see above, line 8'.

11': very unclear line, with an obvious Akkadian ending *-nu-um*, which may be compared to several plant names.

14': the signs *-nu-um* are relatively well readable at the end of line 14'; they could, however, be the Akkadian termination of a number of Akkadian plant names. As double entries exist in this column of the list, it cannot be excluded that the line is a repetition of the šim(-)*nu-um* in line 11', without the Sumerian genitive edin.na at the end.

6. SOME CONCLUSIVE REMARKS

While its contents have been quite clearly described in the previous pages, the text KUB 37.122 triggers some reflections on both the composition of lexical lists in Hattusa and the role(s) played by the Akkadian language in the Hittite capital city.

As is well known, although sometimes forgotten, the Akkadian language employed in the Hittite kingdom was anything but a unitary and homogeneous reality. This means that, within the Akkadian texts found in the Hittite tablet collections, different types of Akkadian can be identified, which differ according to the origin of the texts - that is, whether they were a local production or imported materials - the genre to which they belong, the functions they had, as well as the origin and the training of the scribes in charge of drafting them. We will not try to cover the problem of the Akkadian language in the Hittite world entirely, but we wish to add a contribution to the topic by commenting on the position of KUB 37.122 in the context of the Hattusa textual and lexical production.

The Akkadian writing world was, beyond any reasonable doubt, the cultural source of the introduction of Cuneiform writing in the Hittite Anatolia. Regardless of the position one wishes to take on the date of the first Hittite texts written by the Hittites - and excluding texts that were certainly composed by or following the habits of non-Anatolian scribes as the Tikunani letter and the Uršu text[57] - the Akkadian employed in the texts that were traditionally labelled as paleographically Old Hittite[58] represents a variety that should, reasonably, have played a role in the definition of the inventory of Akkadograms that will

[54] The same writing ZA$_{3}$.AH.LI is also employed in the Hittite ritual with Akkadian sections CTH 432, edited by Gary M. Beckman (2007). According to the CAD S, 62, the writing ZA$_{3}$.AH.LI.A allegedly occurs in the Old Babylonian letter CT 52, 5: 11; however, based on the handcopy of the tablet, the second sign is probably HI.

[55] Campbell-Thompson 1949, 24ff.

[56] See also Wiggermann 2000, 238.

[57] van den Hout 2009 and Archi 2010.

[58] OH in the CHD system, aheth. in the HW^{2}.

be employed for the later texts. Akkadian was famously also employed as a *lingua franca* for Ancient Near Eastern diplomacy. It is however evident that more technical Akkadian traditions existed as well. This is testified by literary texts, oracles, wisdom texts, ritual compositions, and also by medical texts, all of which go back directly or indirectly to the Mesopotamian literature. The language of specific rituals has undergone investigations, *e.g.* the CTH 718, edited by G.M. Beckman,[59] or the KBo 36.29 with related fragments, edited by D. Schwemer.[60] in these two cases, the shape of the signs employed generally differ, with CTH 718 being NH and KBo 36.29 being Assyro-Mittanian, but the language is, in both cases, the result of a commixture of Assyrian, Babylonian and "West peripheral Akkadian" elements.

When dealing with an atypical lexical list such as KUB 37.122, it is reasonable to wonder to what extent it derived from the lexical materials from the Mesopotamian world, and, as a consequence, whether it was related to the presence of Mesopotamian scribes in the Hittite capital city. There is clear evidence that Mesopotamian scholars - scribes, physicians, and other experts - with different schooling backgrounds lived permanently at Hattusa with their families, also being employed in the royal administration,[61] and this can easily account for both the presence of foreign materials in the Hittite capital and their lack of homogeneity in language and writing. Indeed, coming to Hattusa, these scribes probably brought some tablets with them, and, once established in the Hittite capital, they certainly produced new tablets, in close contact with other scribes, either Hittite scribes or those coming from different places.

In this complex scenario, the evaluation of a fragmentary document such as KUB 37.122 can be a very difficult task. As outlined above, the ductus of the text is close to the Boğazköy Assyro-Mittanian one. We should note that all the documents showing this kind of ductus are magic or medical texts,[62] while no lexical list, at least so far, seems to display an Assyro-Mittanian ductus. This may represent a counter-argument to the hypothesis that our fragment is a lexical list, unless we imagine that this document could have served some useful purpose either for a ritual practitioner or for a scribe in charge of drafting medical texts. Indeed, since, as far as we know, there are no Mesopotamian parallels for the text contained in this small fragment, we may provisionally suggest that KUB 37.122 could represent a local lexical list produced for such a specific practical purpose. Unfortunately, the lack of the second column is a major obstacle to a full understanding of the text, and does not allow us to determine, for instance, if the scribe was a Mesopotamian, as the writing za_3.hi.li.a for the *sahlû*-plant may suggest, or belonged to a different Cuneiform tradition, and therefore wanted to record that the za_3.hi.li.a-plant, unusual to him but sometimes occurring in the texts that he used to deal with, corresponded to the more familiar za_3.ah.li / *sahlû* / *maraššhanha*-.

[59] Beckman 2014.
[60] Schwemer 1998.
[61] Cf. Beckman 1983, Schwemer 2013, and Gordin 2015, 123-145.
[62] According to the *Hethitologie Portal Mainz*, there are also some letters showing an Assyro-Mittanian ductus, but their ductus should be regarded as Mittanian (cf. Weeden 2012, 231-232).

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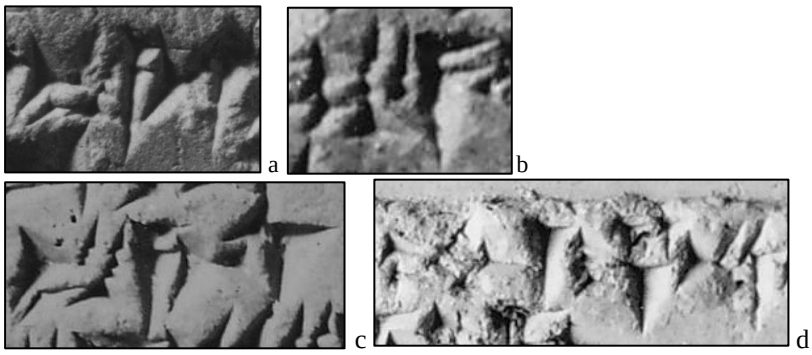

Fig. 1 - EDIN.NA: a, KUB 37.122 i 11'; b, KUB 37.198+ rev. 4 (EDIN, Middle Assyrian ductus, photo: hethiter.net/: PhotArch BoFN02807); c, KUB 37.9 i 5' (Assyro-Mittanian ductus, photo: hethiter.net/: PhotArch BoFN04147a); d, KBo 10.28+ v 1 (= AM.SILA$_3$.BUR.NA, Hittite ductus, photo: hethiter.net/: PhotArch Phb00307c).

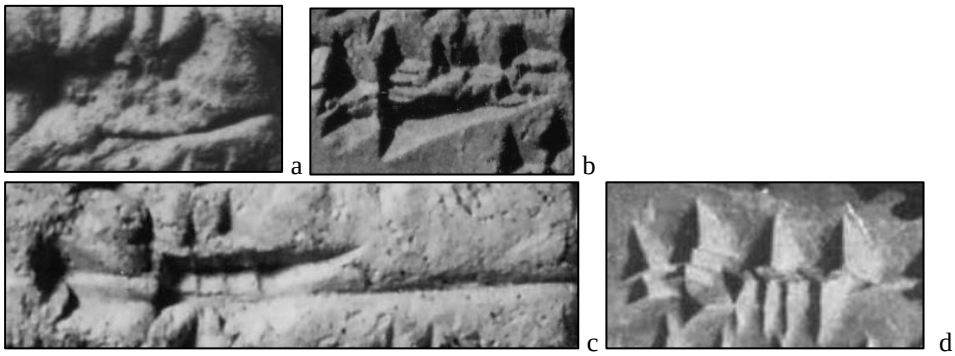

Fig. 2 - a, dim_x in KUB 37.122 i 9'; b, DIM_8 in KUB 37.102(+) l.c. 4' (Assyro-Mittanian ductus, photo: hethiter.net/: PhotArch Phb09660); c-d, LUGAL in KBo 28.59 obv. 1 and KBo 1.20 obv. 12' (both Middle Assyrian ductus, photos: hethiter.net/: PhotArch b6818 and hethiter.net/: PhotArch BoFN01271).

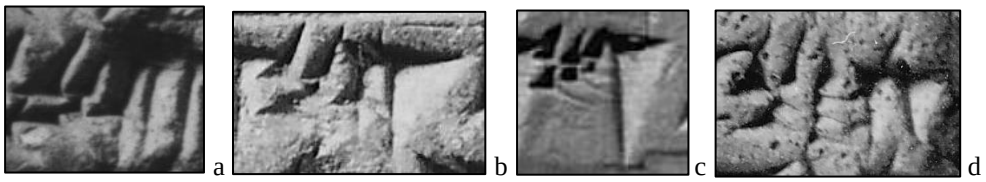

Fig. 3 - LI: a, KUB 37.122 i 8'; b, KUB 37.10, 8' (Assyro-Mittanian ductus, photo: hethiter.net/: PhotArch BoFN04483b); c, KUB 30.1 i 5 (Middle Babylonian ductus, photo: hethiter.net/: PhotArch N12751); d, KBo 28.61 obv. 17' (Middle Assyrian ductus, photo: hethiter.net/: PhotArch BoFN04184).

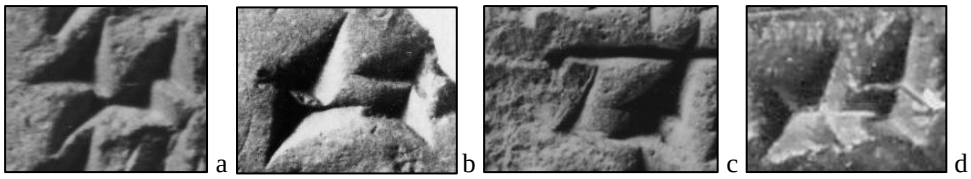

Fig. 4 - NUMUN: a, KUB 37.122 i 7'; b, KUB 37.98, 4' (value *kul*, Middle Babylonian ductus, photo: hethiter.net/: PhotArch BoFN12918a); c, KBo 28.62+ obv. 12' (Middle Assyrian ductus, photo: hethiter.net/: PhotArch BoFN07155); d, KUB 26.12+ i 11' (Hittite ductus, photo: hethiter.net/: PhotArch BoFN01437).

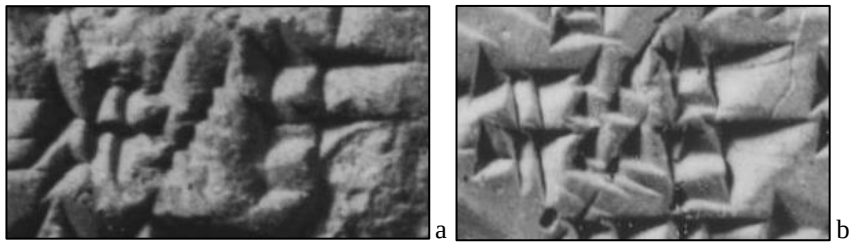

Fig. 5 - $numun_2$ (ZI&ZI.LAGAB&LAGAB): a, KUB 37.122 i 4'; b, KUB 29.58+ iv 28 (unclear ductus, photo: hethiter.net/: PhotArch BoFN06372).

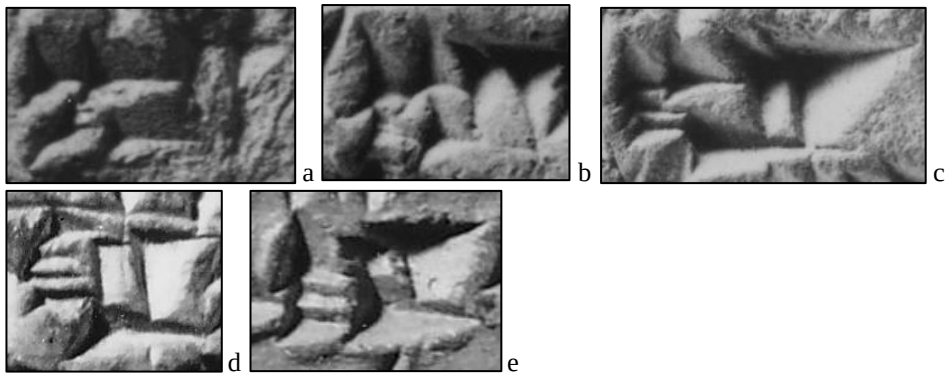

Fig. 6 - RA: a, KUB 37.122 i 7'; b, KBo 28.62(+) obv. 12' (Middle Assyrian ductus, photo: hethiter.net/: PhotArch BoFN07155); c, KUB 37.43 i 8' (Assyro-Mittanian ductus, photo: hethiter.net/: PhotArch BoFN07222); d, KUB 37.47+ ii 4' (Middle Babylonian ductus, photo: hethiter.net/: PhotArch BoFN04543c); e, KBo 27.149, 9' (Hittite ductus, photo: hethiter.net/: PhotArch BoFN04478a).

Fig. 7 - ŠEŠ: a, KUB 37.122 i 6'; b, KBo 28.73, 6' (Middle Assyrian ductus, photo: hethiter.net/: PhotArch BoFN07779b); c, KUB 23.102 i 5' (Hittite ductus, photo: hethiter.net/: PhotArch BoFN01188).

Fig. 8 - a, UM in KUB 37.122 i 11'; b, AB in KUB 37.122 i 3'; c, UM in KUB 36.37+ iii 14' (Hittite ductus, photo: hethiter.net/: PhotArch BoFN09654).

Fig. 9 - ZA_3: a, KUB 37.122 i 8'; b, KBo 36.33, 3' (Middle Babylonian ductus, photo: hethiter.net/: PhotArch Phb03244a); c, KUB 34.5(+) rev. 4' (= 25) (Middle Assyrian ductus, photo: hethiter.net/: PhotArch BoFN02706b).

Fig. 10 - a, $ZU^?$ in KUB 37.122 i 2'; b, ZU in KUB 37.115+ rev. 15' (Assyro-Mittanian ductus, photo: hethiter.net/: PhotArch BoFN05415); c, SU in KUB 37.107, r.c. 10' (Assyro-Mittanian ductus, photo: hethiter.net/: PhotArch BoFN04826b).

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SOME REMARKS ON THE ACCUSATIVE IN OLD PERSIAN*

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The most important functions of the accusative in Old Persian are consistent with those in other ancient Indo-European languages: it marks the direct object of transitive verbs, and can express the spatial notions of goal and path, as well as the temporal notion of duration. Besides these functions, there are other, in some way 'rare' or 'particular' occurrences of the Old Persian accusative that have not yet been explained, or not explained convincingly. This paper aims to investigate two interesting uses of the accusative: the double accusative construction and the mām kāma *construction. The following conclusions are reached regarding the semantic roles and the functions of the accusative case in the constructions under consideration: a) a higher degree of affectedness may account for the use of the double accusative in ditransitives with some classes of verbs; b) the* mām kāma *construction, in turn, is a construction with a modal function, and there are some indications that in this instance the accusative could be a non-canonical subject.*

Keywords: Old Persian; accusative; double accusative; ditransitives; non-canonical subject

1. INTRODUCTION

The ancient varieties of Indo-European (henceforth IE) languages are considered by most scholars to be "nominative-accusative" languages, that is, languages where, within the case system, the nominative encodes the function of syntactic subject of both a transitive and an intransitive verb, while the accusative expresses the direct object of a transitive verb. On the basis of syntactic and semantic parameters, these three functions are labelled in the literature on the topic as A, S and P respectively, i.e., Agent, Subject and Patient.[1]

Old Persian (henceforth OP) is a nominative-accusative language, as is clearly shown in examples 1 and 2, where the nominative case in preverbal position encodes S (with the intransitive verb form *ašiyava*, from *šiyav-*)[2] and A (with the transitive verb form *avājanam*) respectively, as well as controlling the verbal agreement.[3] In turn, the accusative is the direct object (*Gaụmātam*, in example 2) of the transitive verb *ava-gan-*.[4]

(1) *pasāva* ***Kambŭjiya*** **(S)** *Mudrāyam ašiyava*
"Afterwards Cambyses (S) went off to Egypt" (Schmitt 1991, *DB* 1.32-33);[5]

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* In the present paper, sections 1 and 3 are authored by Maria Carmela Benvenuto, while sections 2 and 4 are authored by Flavia Pompeo; section 5 is in common.

1 The term 'alignment' is generally used to refer to the different ways in which A, S and P are encoded in the grammar of a given language.

2 Schmitt 2014, 248.

3 Even though OP inscriptions generally attest a rather free ordering of words, as is consistent with ancient Indo-Iranian languages, the basic word order is SOV, that is, Subject/Object/Verb (Schmitt 2004, 736).

4 Cf. Schmitt 2014, 179.

5 The OP texts and translations of the examples quoted here are taken from Schmitt's editions of Achaemenid inscriptions (Schmitt 1991; 2000; 2009).

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(2) *avaθā* ***adam*** **(A)** *hadā kamnaiβiš martiyaiβiš avam* ***Gaumātam*** **(P)** *tayam magum avājanam*
"Then I (A) with a few men slew that Gaumāta the magus (P)" (Schmitt 1991, *DB* 1.56-57).

Since Avestan also attests this kind of alignment system, it has been reconstructed for the proto-Iranian linguistic stage.

2. An overview of the main functions of the Old Persian accusative

From a brief overview of the literature on the topic, the most important functions of the accusative in OP appear to be consistent with those shown by other ancient IE languages. In particular, on the one hand the accusative has a proper "grammatical function", since it encodes the direct object of a transitive verb, as mentioned above (example 2); on the other, this case can express the more concrete notions of goal ("to") and path ("through"), thus functioning as a "local case" (*Bābirum,* example 3), in addition to the temporal notion of duration ("for x time"), which is generally considered as a metaphorical extension of the spatial meaning of the case.

(3) *pasāva adam* ***kāram*** *frāišayam* ***Bābirum***
"Afterwards I sent forth an army to Babylon" (Schmitt 1991, *DB* 3.84).

Finally, it is worth mentioning that within the OP case system, the accusative is the case which occurs with the greatest number of adpositions, *i.e.*, twelve.[6]

Given that, there are other, in some way "rare" or "particular", occurrences of the OP accusative that have not yet been explained, or, in our opinion, not explained convincingly. In this paper we will take into account two of these occurrences: the ditransitive double accusative construction (§ 3) and the *mām kāma* construction (§ 4).

3. The Double Accusative Construction

3.1. *Introduction*

Old Persian boasts various double accusative constructions (henceforth DAC) that differ semantically and syntactically. They include ditransitive constructions (4), object complement constructions (5) and transitive motion verbs (see example 3 above):[7]

(4) ***xšaçam=šim*** *adam adinam*
"I despoiled him of the kingship" (Schmitt 1991, *DB* 1.59);

(5) (*Auramazdā*) ***mām xšāyaθiyam*** *akunauš*
"Me he made king" (Schmitt 2000, *DNa* 33-34).

[6] For an analysis of the accusative expressing "goal" and an explanation of the differences between occurrences with or without an adposition, cf. Pompeo - Benvenuto 2008.

[7] Some aspects of the constructions in question are discussed in Pompeo - Benvenuto (2008).

The literature pays little attention to differences between these types of DAC in OP, discussing neither to the verbal semantics nor the properties of the accusative arguments.

As a comprehensive discussion of DACs in OP is beyond the scope of this paper, the aim of this section is to provide a description of the main properties of ditransitive constructions with a double accusative in OP. Clearly, caution is required in any such analysis due to the scarcity of textual material.

According to typological studies, the DACs are considered here as constructions consisting of ditransitive verbs with Agent (A), Theme-like (T) and Recipient-like (R) arguments.[8] Given this, a DAC where the two non-agent arguments are not R and T cannot be considered a ditransitive construction. On the other hand, ditransitive constructions do not necessarily behave uniformly cross-linguistically, and differences in encoding properties (both flagging and indexing) can be found within languages.

Indeed, OP distinguishes two types of ditransitive constructions: the genitive ditransitive construction (see example 6) and the double accusative ditransitive construction (see example 4 above).

(6) *Auramazdā=**maį*** **(R)** ***upastām*** **(T)** *abara*
"Auramazdā brought me aid" (Schmitt 1991, *DB* 1.55).

The differences between these constructions, which I have recently investigated,[9] seem to be determined by a lexical split.[10] In particular, prototypical transfer verbs have a genitive-accusative alignment, with the Beneficiary/Addressee surfacing as genitive/dative case,[11] similar to various other IE languages. On the contrary, with verbs of asking and depriving the R and the T are encoded in the same way as the Patient (P) argument of monotransitive verbs.[12] In particular, the R argument of this kind of ditransitive indicates a higher degree of affectedness, and is consequently marked by the accusative case.

This latter construction has been observed in previous studies,[13] but it has not been examined in great depth. In the traditional view, this argument structure is simply described as a syntactic construction made up of two accusatives: one generally relating to a human entity and the other corresponding to an inanimate entity.

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8 Malchukov - Haspelmath - Comrie 2010, 1.

9 This as yet unpublished study (A constructional approach to Old Persian argument structure) was presented at the *STAS2018 Conference, The shaping of transitivity and argument structure: theoretical and empirical perspectives*, Pavia (Italy), October 25th-27th, 2018.

10 In the simplest case, a language has just one ditransitive construction, but it is not uncommon for languages to show splits or alternations. A split is the situation where different verbs use different constructions, while an alternation is the situation where one and the same verb can occur in different constructions with roughly the same meaning (Malchukov - Haspelmath - Comrie 2010, 18).

11 In OP a syncretic process occurred merging the genitive and dative cases, with regard to their functions, in the retained genitive case (Benvenuto - Pompeo 2015).

12 Such constructions are known in the typological literature as *double object constructions* or *neutral alignment* (Malchukov - Haspelmath - Comrie 2010, 4).

13 Meillet - Benveniste 1931, 184-185; Kent 1953, 79-80; Skjærvø 2009, 106.

In this study we consider the syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, and information structural restrictions on DACs in order to understand the factors that condition the choice between the ditransitive constructions available.

3.2. *Ditransitive verbs with double accusative*

With a limited set of verbs, both the indirect and the direct object may surface with a morphological accusative case used without a preposition. These verbs include verbs of asking and demanding, as in the verb *jadiya-* "to implore, ask for" (from the root *gad-*)[14] in example (7), or depriving, as in the verb *dī-* "deprive, take by force" (from the root *diyā-* "to rob")[15] in examples (8) and (4) above. They can take two accusatives, one denoting the affected person and the other the Theme.

(7) [Upon this country may not come an (enemy) army, nor crop failure nor Falsehood]
***Aita* (T)** *adam* (A) ***yānam* (T)** *jadiyāmi* ***Auramazdām* (R)**
"This I pray as a favour of Auramazdā together with all the gods" (Schmitt 2000, *DPd* 20-22);[16]

(8) *pasāva Gaumāta* (A) *haya maguš adinā* ***Kambūjiyam* (R)** *utā* ***Pārsam* (T)** *utā* ***Mādam* (T)** *utā aniyā dahyāva*
"Afterwards Gaumāta the magus despoiled Cambises of Persia as well as of Media and the other countries" (Schmitt 1991, *DB* 1.46-47).

The example (7) presents a verb of asking, *jadiya-* "to implore, ask for". The situation is typical of a verb indicating a request ("ask for something"): both the Addressee of the request, *Auramazdā-*, and the requested thing, *aita yāna-* "this favor, gift", are in the accusative. The verb *jadiya-* appears another three times in the entire corpus in formulary occurrences with *Auramazdā-* as Addressee, sometimes with *yāna-* (*XSc* 4) and sometimes without it (*DNa* 54, *XPh* 59).

In (8) the verb *di-* "to take away, rob" indicates the act of depriving with a Maleficiary accusative in a situation in which an Agent takes something away from somebody.

In our examples, the DAC tends to be selected when the R is a definite, but not focused, noun phrase, and when the required/stolen object is the focus. Indeed, the R is either represented by proper nouns or, to a large extent, by personal pronouns, that is, elements that denote well-defined, generally human, entities, which have been previously mentioned in the discourse.

The factor which probably contributes to the use of asking and depriving verbs in a DAC is the asymmetry in prominence (animacy/referentiality) between the two object

[14] Schmitt 2014, 178. The occurrences are: *DPd* 21, *DNa* 54, *XPh* 59f and *XSc* 4.
[15] Schmitt 2014, 170. The occurrences are: *DB* 1.44, *DB* 1.46, *DB* 1.59, *DB* 1.66.
[16] In this case we have a kind of hyperbaton, namely, a discontinuous phrase in which the noun is preceded by its modifier, which is clearly associated with strong focus.

arguments. In fact, «in situations where the respective roles of the two objects are disambiguated through animacy, case marking becomes dispensable»[17] because the distinguishability of the argument can be indicated in other ways. In particular, it has been pointed out that «the Double Object construction is favored in cases where indirect object outranks direct object on the prominence scales, and is disfavored otherwise».[18] In other words, from a cross-linguistic point of view, the asymmetry between the R and T in prominence may have played a role in determining the preferential use of neutral alignment with ditransitives.

Apart from the examples already seen above, there are other occurrences quoted in (9) and (10), which illustrate the behavioral properties of DACs as regards relativization.[19]

(9) *aita xšaçam* ***taya*** **(T)** *Gaumāta* (A) *haya maguš adinā* ***Kambūjiyam*** **(R)**
"That kingship, of which Gaumāta the magus despoiled Cambises, [that kingship from ancient times had belonged to our family])" (Schmitt 1991, *DB* 1.44-45);

(10) [I restored to the people the farmsteads, the livestock, the menials and (together with) the houses]
tayā **(T)=*diš* (R)** *Gaumāta* (A) *haya maguš adinā*
"Of which Gaumāta the magus had despoiled them" (Schmitt 1991, *DB* 1.65-66).

Despite the fact that it is not possible to generalize when drawing on a limited corpus, these occurrences betray a tendency towards a relativization of the T argument.

3.3. *The meaning of the construction*

Ditransitive constructions normally express a transfer event which presupposes a Recipient-like argument, given that the construal implies «a scene in which an agent participant causes an object to pass into the possession of an animate Receiver (= Recipient)».[20]

On the contrary, expressions involving verbs of asking or dispossession, while behaving like ditransitives, do not imply that the Agent causes the potential R to actually receive the T argument. Indeed, these kinds of verbs imply that "one causes someone to give something", not receive it. While transfer is still implied, the direction is different.

The central meaning of this construction, where R is marked by the accusative, is that of a "reversed transfer". What the set of "obtaining"-verbs (both asking as well as depriving) have in common is that their semantics imply some action of obtaining something from

[17] Malchukov - Haspelmath - Comrie 2010, 50.
[18] Malchukov - Haspelmath - Comrie 2010, 20.
[19] Of the various behavioral properties of ditransitive constructions (such as incorporation, nominalization, passivization and relativization) identified by Malchukov - Haspelmath - Comrie (2010, 25), this is the only significant property of DAC observable in OP. We have found no evidence for passivization with DACs except for the controversial occurrence of the past participle *dītam* in *DB* 1.48-50. Regarding the latter, the reader is referred to Filippone (2015) for the *status quaestionis*.
[20] Malchukov - Haspelmath - Comrie 2010, 2.

somebody, a sort of "human Source", either by taking it or asking for it. Indeed, the DAC involves the proposition of R not possessing T after the verb event. In this respect, R appears to be a sort of Maleficiary that ranks higher than Recipients or Beneficiaries on a scale of affectedness.[21] Consequently, functional factors like the affectedness of the Maleficiary, or rather, of the malefactive-source, can explain the predisposition of obtaining verbs in a double-object construction.

4. THE ACCUSATIVE IN THE *MĀM KĀMA* CONSTRUCTION

4.1. *A description of the construction and previous studies*

The *mām kāma* construction occurs 22 times in the Achaemenid inscriptions in three main variants exemplified in (11), (12) and (13).

(11) *ava akunava, yaθā* ***mām kāma āha***
"that they did, as was my desire" (Schmitt 2000, *DNa* 37-38);

(12) *naiˑ=****mā*** *ava* ***kāma****, taya tunuvā skauˑθaiˑš rādī miθa kariyaiˑš*
"(and) that (is) not my desire that the strong one might be treated wrongly for the weak one's sake" (Schmitt 2000, *DNb* 10-11);

(13) ***Auramazdām*** *avaθā* ***kāma āha***
"Ahuramazdā war so der Wunsch" (Schmitt 2009, *DSf* 15-16).

Apart from small variations, the items in the construction are generally the same, and occur in a fixed order with the obvious exception of the enclitic form *-mā*. The first element in the construction is an accusative, denoting the entity that has the "desire/wish". In 18 occurrences of 22 this is a 1st person personal pronoun, *mām* (example 11) or, if enclitic, *-mā* (example 12), "me". This pronoun always refers to the king commissioning the inscription. In the remaining four occurrences we find the accusative of the god's name *Auramazdām* (example 13).[22] Interestingly, the accusative is always at the beginning of the sequence and always occupies the topical position in the *mām kāma* construction.[23]

The second element of the sequence is *kāma*, "wish, desire",[24] the nominative singular form of a relational abstract noun, attested only in this construction and in the same form, always immediately before the verb. This noun is comparable with the Avestan *kāma-* and

[21] See Luraghi - Zanchi (2018, 31) and Malchukov - Haspelmath - Comrie (2010, 50).

[22] The occurrences are as follows: *mām* (10 times) in *DB* 4.35-36, *DB* 5.17, *DB* 5.29, *DB* 5.33, DNa 37-38, *DNb* 11-12, *DNb* 26-27, *DZc* 12, *XPl* 12-13, *XPl* 29; *-mā* (8 times) in *DNb* 8, *DNb* 10, *DNb* 19, *DNb* 20, *XPl* 9, *XPl* 10-11, *XPl* 21, *XPl* 22; *Auramazdām* (4 times) in *DSf* 15-16, *DSj* 3, *XPf* 21-22, XPf 29-30.

[23] There is general agreement among scholars that the choice of a word order system in OP is in part pragmatically determined. The basic word order is largely stable with the topical element largely found in the initial position, while the focal material is associated with the immediate preverbal position and the verb is generally placed at the end of the sentence; cf., among others, Hale 1988; Schmitt 2004; Skjærvø 2009.

[24] Kent 1953, 179.

Vedic *kā́ma-* ("Wunsch, Begehren, Verlangen")[25] which, as noted by Kent, do not occur in constructions equivalent to the OP *mām kāma*.[26] Even though the basic meaning that we can reconstruct for these forms is "wish, desire", it is worth noting that *kāma* is best translated as "will" for the OP inscriptions. This is due to the specific context marked by the authority and sacredness of the entities involved.[27]

Finally, in seven of the occurrences, the verb form *āha* "was" (impf. of the verb *ah-* "to be") immediately follows *kāma*, while in the remaining passages *āha* or *asti*, "is", are usually implied.

Despite there being a general consensus among scholars on the meaning of the sequence, the issue becomes more complex when we consider the morpho-syntactic level. In this respect, the most significant investigation is provided in Kent's article "The accusative in Old Persian *mām kāma*".[28] Kent convincingly excludes that the accusative can be an argument of the noun *kāma*, and explains the use of an accusative (of Goal) by assuming a diachronic replacement of an original verb of motion by a verb of state, eventually also implied, as in OP. Apart from this article, subsequent studies have only marginally touched on the construction as a whole, and on the status of the accusative in particular. In short, the accusative has been interpreted as an accusative of direction[29] or of respect,[30] a sub-constituent of the noun phrase which has *kāma* as its head,[31] or, on the contrary, a clause constituent.[32]

4.2. *A new interpretation*

Given this situation, a different approach based on recent linguistic research[33] should be adopted in order to understand the construction better. Particularly useful studies are those on experiential expressions, which regard the broad and heterogeneous cognitive domain of experience.[34] This conceptual variety is mirrored by the multiplicity of possible encodings at different levels.

It is therefore not surprising that experiential constructions constitute one of the most frequently investigated areas of research into the so-called "non-canonical" marking of arguments, which in our case, regards subjects.[35] According to the description given in

[25] Cf. *EWA* 338-339.
[26] Kent 1946.
[27] See also Schmitt (2014, 198), who translates «Wunsch, Verlangen»; for a detailed analysis, see Pompeo (2018, 245-246).
[28] Kent 1946, also for other references.
[29] Kent 1946.
[30] Jügel 2017, 550.
[31] Meillet - Benveniste 1931, 206-207.
[32] Kent 1946.
[33] Danesi (2014) has already considered the *mām kāma* construction from this perspective, but without examining OP occurrences.
[34] For an overview of this topic and bibliographical references, cf. Verhoeven 2007.
[35] In recent years the heterogeneous literature devoted to various aspects of non-canonical subjects has increased considerably; see, among others, Seržant - Kulikov (2013), to whom the reader is referred for references on the topic.

Seržant and Kulikov,[36] albeit considerably simplified, we consider that a subject – conceived as a prototypical category involving properties of "subjecthood"[37] – is non-canonically marked when the argument that scores highest regarding its pragmatic and semantic properties is encoded in a different way than what might be expected on the basis of the general alignment pattern found in a given language. In other words, the most salient argument in ancient IE languages is non-canonically marked when it is not expressed by the nominative case and does not trigger verbal agreement. Interestingly, a great variety of "subjecthood" tests have been developed,[38] mostly concerning the syntactic level.[39]

Now let us reconsider the OP *mām kāma* construction. First of all, we can observe that since this construction involves a "wish/desire/will" and a human entity, it can be initially classified as an experiential expression belonging to the subdomain of volition, and in particular, to that area which involves "psycho-physical meanings", and shows an affinity – and perhaps even an overlapping – with the experiential subdomain of emotion:[40] the accusative encodes the Experiencer (henceforth EXP)[41] and the sequence "*kāma* (*āha/asti*)" constitutes the "expertum" (that is, the situation core which is generally expressed by the experiential predicate).[42] The Stimulus[43] is represented by a subordinate clause or, at least, by the propositional content.[44]

In fact, the EXP-accusative in the construction under investigation presents many characteristics of a "non-canonical subject": it refers to a [+ HUMAN] entity, and, being (largely) a 1st person personal pronoun, is a highly individuated, definite topical element occupying the highest position in Silverstein's animacy hierarchy.[45] Moreover, it is in clause-initial position and does not trigger the verbal agreement. As far as the semantics is concerned, as we will see, it is very likely that – at least at the beginning – the EXP-accusative lacked control over the event, and was actually in some way affected by it.

In order to better understand the status of the accusative in question, it is important to observe that in OP the *mām kāma* construction is probably involved in an ongoing process of grammaticalization resulting in a modal predicate. This can also be observed in Middle Persian.[46] Indeed, this construction is always linked to a subordinate clause/propositional content, and consequently expresses the "will" for something to be done (see example 12

36 Seržant - Kulikov 2013.
37 There are coding properties, behavioural properties and pragmatic and semantic properties; cf. Keenan 1976.
38 Cf. *Introduction* in Seržant - Kulikov 2013.
39 Among the criteria most frequently applied are word order, agreement, control structures, coordination patterns, anaphoric references, constraints on coreferential deletion and reflexivization (cf. *Introduction* in Seržant - Kulikov 2013).
40 See Verhoeven 2007, 47-49.
41 The Experiencer is «the sentient being that experiences an internal bodily or mental state, process or event» (Verhoeven 2007, 23).
42 Verhoeven 2007, 52.
43 The Stimulus is «the entity or proposition that triggers the experience or to which the experience is directed» (Verhoeven 2007, 23).
44 Cf. Pompeo 2018.
45 Silverstein 1976, 122.
46 For an analysis of the grammaticalization path, cf. Pompeo 2018.

above). As laid out in table 1, it is plausible that the original structure was an existential or copular sentence, where *kāma* constituted the syntactic subject of the verb "to be", could be modified by a dependent genitive,[47] and triggered verbal agreement. Later, the construction underwent a process of reanalysis resulting in a compositional predicate "*kāma* + (*ah*-)", meaning "wish"/"want". During this process, the syntagmatic variability probably progressively decreased. However, given the restricted and formulaic nature of the corpus, this must remain a hypothesis. In any case, many indications – and, in particular, the fixity of the structure and the total absence of genitive as Stimuli in OP – suggest a "more verbal" – or less nominal – status of the noun *kāma* at that stage.[48]

	mām	*kāma* 'wish, desire'	*(ah-)*	
(stage a) Existential/copular clause	Accusative [+ HUMAN] entity$_{\text{ADJUNCT}}$	Nominative abstract noun$_{\text{SUBJECT}}$	existential or copular verb	*genitive/subordinate clause or propositional content
(stage b) Compositional predicate, with an ongoing modal function	Accusative LOGICAL SUBJECT	Compositional predicate (expressing modality) "wish, want"		subordinate clause or propositional content

Tab. 1 - A hypothesis of grammaticalization.

Let us briefly look at other interesting aspects. First of all, with reference to linguistic data from a comparative-historical perspective, it is important to note that constructions formally comparable to *mām kāma* are also attested in other ancient IE languages, although they are very rare.[49] In this respect, it is worth highlighting that EXP-accusatives are comparatively less widespread than datives, just as compositional predicates are rarer than lexical verbs with an EXP-accusative, such as the Latin *me pudet*.[50] Interestingly, as in our case, the accusative mostly occurs with intransitive predicates or when characterized by a low degree of transitivity. This is why some scholars surmise that the accusative in Proto-Indo-European was also used to encode "inactive subjects".[51]

47 Genitive modifiers are attested, for example, for Vedic *kā́ma-* (Kent 1946).

48 Babylonian and Elamite "translations" provide useful data to support this hypothesis, as I show in a recent paper (Il persiano antico tra conservazione e innovazione: considerazioni sulle costruzioni impersonali nelle iscrizioni achemenidi: S. Badalkhan - G.P. Basello - M. De Chiara (eds.), *Iranian Studies in Honour of Adriano V. Rossi*, I, Napoli, in press).

49 For examples, cf. Kent (1946) and Pompeo (2018). According to Kent (1946), this kind of construction is documented in Homeric Greek, and in some of the earliest Germanic languages. Actually, this construction is also attested in Old Church Slavonic and Old Russian, even if it is quite rare; cf. Seržant - Kulikov (2013, 328-329, and references therein). In contrast, prepositional phrases with an EXP-accusative noun are used in Celtic (Viti 2016). For a possible occurrence in Latin, cf. Lazzeroni (2002, 153).

50 To quote only some of the more recent papers, see Fedriani 2014, Viti 2016 and Dardano 2018, and respective references.

51 Cf. Lazzeroni (2002) and references therein.

Secondly, from a synchronic perspective, in OP, where there are generally few experiential predicates, EXP-nominatives prevail over oblique Experiencers,[52] and there is only one other experiential verb, *vaṛnav-* "believe", always middle voice, constructed with the EXP-accusative.[53]

Thirdly, from a cognitive point of view, the construction with a nominative abstract noun as syntactic subject and the verb "to be" (*stage a*) presents quite a clear profile: indeed, the cognitive focus of the sequence is on the process, on the assertion that "something exists/is". Consequently, we can plausibly assume that the involvement of a sentient entity as an EXP is not at all essential, and, when an EXP is involved, it is seen as affected by the event, lacking control over it, and not volitional. This kind of conceptualization of the event well matches the type of sentences – quite widespread crosslinguistically – that Moreno[54] calls «internal agentless impersonals». These show a tendency toward encoding through nominal sentences, and iconically reflect the lack of control over the event by the animate participant involved in it.

Given the type of event that this construction probably expresses, it seems reasonable to assume that the accusative constituted a syntactic adjunct rather than an argument. The use of the accusative in this context can, in our opinion, be explained by the interplay of semantic features – in an intransitive context the accusative encodes an "inactive participant" highly affected by the event since the accusative denotes an entity pervaded by desire – and pragmatic features, since in the construction in question the accusative expresses the human participant conceptualized as a reference point of the existential/copular expression.[55]

Finally, some characteristics of the Elamite "translations" allow us to exclude with some certainty that the OP structure is due to external contact.[56]

To conclude, the data illustrated above, and the fixity of the *mām kāma* construction, might well suggest the "relic" status of this construction in OP, which can be probably traced back to Proto-Indo-European.

Let us now consider the status of the accusative at *stage b*, that is, within the OP construction with an ongoing modal function. In this respect, we can observe that the development of the modal function might relate to the meaning "wish/want" that the compositional predicate "*kāma + (ah-)*" conveys in the OP texts. Interestingly, this meaning implies a certain degree of control and volition of the human entity over the event: in other words, the accusative with a modal verb "wish/will" could have been conceived as "more subject". Unfortunately, this hypothesis cannot be proved effectively. In fact, apart from the fact that the personal pronoun is always in clause-initial position, other syntactic

[52] On this topic, see Viti 2016, 38-41.

[53] Skjærvø (2009, 106) classifies the *mām kāma* construction and *var-* as «impersonal verbs», both occurring with a «personal accusative».

[54] Cf. Moreno 1990.

[55] On the reference point model, see, for example, Langacker 2009.

[56] This issue is discussed in a recent paper (Il persiano antico tra conservazione e innovazione: considerazioni sulle costruzioni impersonali nelle iscrizioni achemenidi: S. Badalkhan - G.P. Basello - M. De Chiara (eds.), *Iranian Studies in Honour of Adriano V. Rossi*, I, Napoli, in press).

tests for "subjecthood" cannot be usefully applied to the Achaemenid inscriptions, given the quantitative and qualitative scarcity of the documentation, and the textual characteristics of ancient IE languages in general.[57] Nevertheless, the sequence in *DNb* 26-27 (cf. 14), which is almost identical in *XPl* 28-31, may provide some hints regarding the "subjecthood" of *mām*. Indeed, the passage considered is a paratactic chain made up of four sentences. Among them, the first, the third and the fourth have an implied nominative 1st person subject *adam* "I", while the second sentence is an instance of the *mām kāma* construction. Interestingly, although this occurrence is not strictly of great use in syntactic tests of "subjecthood", the structure of the passage clearly reveals that *mām* was considered "equivalent" to the other (nominative) subjects of the passage, at least at the semantic level. In other words, *mām* can be considered a logical subject.[58]

(14) *avanā xšnuta bavāmi utā mām vasaḷ kāma, utā uθanduš ami*
utā vasaḷ dadāmi agriyānām martiyānām.
"By that I become satisfied, and it is very much my desire; and I am pleased and give generously to loyal men" (Schmitt 2000, *DNb* 26-27).

5. Conclusion

On the basis of our analysis, the following generalizations can be made regarding the semantic roles and the functions of the accusative case in the constructions considered: a) a higher degree of affectedness may account for the use of the double accusative in ditransitive constructions with some classes of verbs; b) the *mām kāma* construction, in turn, is a construction with a modal function and there are some indications that the accusative could be a non-canonical subject.

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[57] On the feasibility of syntactic tests for ancient IE languages, see Viti 2016, fn. 1 and references therein.
[58] On the overall possibility of a developmental cline from an adjunct to a non-prototypical subject, cf. Seržant - Kulikov 2013, 324-331.

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FROM MIDDLE TO NEW PERSIAN: WRITTEN MATERIALS FROM NORTHERN IRAN AND KHORASAN

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The linguistic situation in Iran at the beginning of the Islamic era is described in a famous passage going back to Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ that has been discussed at length by scholars. Here new evidence based on Middle Persian inscriptions from the northern regions of historical Iran are introduced. These texts show that literacy was comparatively widespread in Late Sasanian and Early Islamic Iran, opening the way for a new understanding of linguistic developments in the years that have been dubbed do qarn-e sokut *"two centuries of silence".*

Keywords: Middle Persian; New Persian; Pahlavi; Pārsi; Dari

1. The languages of Early Islamic Iran

When studying Middle Persian written documents, the focus is generally on the south-western part of the Iranian expanse, where most inscriptions are found. However, a more attentive analysis reveals that the northern areas of the plateau also preserve a rich treasure-house of documents. Here inscriptions found in the northern regions will be studied and compared with what we know about the languages spoken in Iran in early caliphal years.

The linguistic situation in Iran at the start of the Islamic era was studied by G. Lazard in a number of important articles, the main ones being later gathered in the *La formation de la langue persane* printed in 1995. In the article *Pahlavi, Pârsi, Dari. Les langues de l'Iran d'Après Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ*,[1] the French scholar studies a passage describing the linguistic situation in Iran at the beginning of the Islamic era, which has traditionally been assigned to the pen of the renowned Persian intellectual and translator Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ (m. 139 H. \ 757 CE). The passage is found with lesser variants in Ibn al-Nadīm's *Fihrist* , in the *Mafātiḥ al-ʿulum* written by Ḫᵛārazmī and in Yāqūt's *Muʿǰam al-buldān.*

Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ tells us that the *pārsi* (*al-fārisiya*) language includes a number of variants: *pahlavi* (*al-fahlaviya*), *dari* (*al-dariya*), *pārsi* (*al-fārisiya*), *ẖuzi* (*al-ẖūziya*) and *soryāni* (*al-suryāniya*). Pahlavi is the language spoken in the north-western area of the plateau, a region called *Fahlah* (*Pahla(w)*),[2] including Isfahan, Ray, Hamadan, Māh Nihāvand and Azerbaijan; *dari* is the language spoken in the cities of Madāʿin, by the many that are at the court of the (Sasanian) monarch and it is also spoken in Khorasan and in the East, the language of Balkh being its purest variant; *pārsi* is the language of the *mobad*s, spoken by the people of Fars; *ẖuzi* is spoken in the private quarters of the court; while *soryāni* is the language spoken by the inhabitants of the Sawad.[3] Let us for the time being leave aside the latter two that may be non-Iranian languages, though this remains to be

1 Lazard 1971.
2 On which see Gyselen 1989, 73.
3 Lazard 1971, 49-50.

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proved,[4] focusing on the three names that quite certainly define languages or dialects belonging to West-Iranian: *pārsi*, *dari* and *pahlavi*.

Some years later, Istaḫri, writing around 932 CE, tells us that the inhabitants of Fars used three languages. They used *fārsi* (*pārsi*) to speak, *pahlavi* being the language in which the works speaking of the Persians of ancient were written and which was still used by the Zoroastrian clergy, and Arabic.[5] Here the difference between *fārsi* and *pahlavi* is quite clear, the former being the spoken language, the latter the written variant, still using the old writing system.

On the contrary, the passage by Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ is not immediately clear. The opposition between *pārsi* and *dari* is not easy to explain, except if one imagines that the court already used a sort of *koine* including different inflections. The difference between these two languages or variants and *pahlavi* has generally been understood as reflecting the linguistic division between southern and northern West Iranian. In this interpretation the terms *pārsi* and *dari* define variants of Persian, the south western Iranian language that will later evolve into classical Persian including an important number of north western lemmata, while *pahlavi* defines a north-western language.

In Lazard's interpretation, at the time of Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ the name *pahlavi* points to Parthian and\or to similar north-western dialects spoken in the vast region of the Zagros later known as Jibāl.[6] Only much later but earlier than Ferdowsi's time, will this name be used to define Middle Persian. On the opposite, *pārsi* defines both the dialect of Fars of Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ's time and the older literary Middle Persian.[7] As already said, the difference between *pārsi* and *dari* is more difficult to define. According to Lazard the latter may be a northern variant of *pārsi*, characterized by the fact that it had developed in an area where earlier north-western languages close to Parthian were spoken.[8]

Following on what written by Perry in his relatively recent description of New Persian,[9] who systematized the work of earlier authors, we now have enough evidence to conjecture an important dialectal diversity in the New Persian spoken in the early Islamic epoch. On the one hand the linguistic variety that will develop in the literary language bound to spread over the entire territory characterized by "Persephony" [10] on the other a southern variant, attested in minor traditions, among which Judaeo-Persian and other documents such as the 11th century Persian *tafsir* known as *Qorʿan-e Qods*, that was discovered in Mashhad by

4 See Lazard 1971, 363, though the status of *ḫuzi* is far from certain.

5 Perry 2009, 47.

6 The Zagros range and more in general mountain areas of the Iranian highlands witnessed the survival of ancient political, linguistic and cultural traditions well into the Islamic area. On this complex and fascinating phenomenon see Crone 2012.

7 Perry 2009, 48-49.

8 Perry 2009, 48-49, with reference to Lazard 1971, 373-380; 1990, 239-242; 1993, 28-30. Lazard has discussed this subject in a number of articles, most recently in 2003.

9 Perry 2009, 50.

10 B. Fragner used the name «Die Persephonie» to describe the predominance of the Persian language and its culture in a vast area stretching from Istanbul to Delhi (Fragner 1999).

ʿAli Ravaqi.[11] This text was possibly written in Sistan and shares some linguistic traits with a few of the best Pāzand works though we ignore where the latter may have been written.[12]

In the given framework, be it that suggested by Lazard or the one put forward by Perry, one would expect to find some traces of linguistic variety in the Middle Persian texts, though dialectal variations may be hidden behind historical spellings and heterographies which were characteristic of the most common way of writing Middle Persian.[13] Though this may well be the case, we shall not deal with the Middle Persian books of the Zoroastrians in this paper, nor shall we discuss economic documents such as ostraka, papyri and parchments that basically share the same writing system with the Zoroastrian documents. Rather, in the following pages we shall focus on inscriptions in western Middle Iranian languages found in the northern half of the Sasanian Empire.

However, before turning to the texts themselves, let us dwell a bit longer on the linguistic situation in Iran in the early Islamic centuries. In his contribution to the fourth volume of the *Cambridge History of Iran*, focusing on the Persian language, Lazard states:[14]

> «During the first two centuries of Islam, the medium for written expression and literature in Iran was provided by two languages of unequal importance, one of them declining and the other on the ascendant – Middle Persian (called Pahlavī) and Arabic. It is well known that at first the conquerors were necessarily dependent on the former Iranian civil service and that its officials continued to keep the financial registers in Middle Persian until 78/697-8 (or 82/701-2) in the west and until 124/741-2 in Khurāsān, the years in which Arabic replaced Middle Persian as the administrative language. Although it is fairly safe to assume that during the same period Middle Persian continued to be the medium by which the intellectual activity of the cultivated Iranian was expressed, its use became increasingly restricted with the progress of Islamic influence and the vigorous development of Arab culture».

One cannot deny the fact that Middle Persian – or maybe Persian written using the Pahlavi alphabet and heterography – was still alive until the 9th, 10th and even early 11th century albeit possibly only in restricted circles. Leaving aside Zoroastrian literature mostly (re)written by Zoroastrian clergy in the 9th and 10th century on older models, we have a number of inscriptions, economic documents, letters, coins, etc. dating well into the early years of the spread of Islam. Moreover, one should not forget that Middle Persian and Parthian were used by the Manichaeans in Central Asia up to the eighth century.[15]

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11 Ravaqi 1364-1365.

12 These texts may well have been written in Sistan or elsewhere by persons originating from this region, where Zoroastrian communities were found still in Islamic times. On the importance of Pāzand for the linguistic history of New Persian see de Jong 2003.

13 See Henning 1958, 58-72.

14 Lazard 1975, 602.

15 Skjærvø 2009, 197. On Manichaean literature written in New Persian see Sundermann 2003, 242-243, where the German scholar writes “Die manichäischen Texte in neupersischer Sprache gehören zu den ältesten

Remarkably, by far the greatest number of Middle Persian inscriptions, both private and official, are found in what was the south-western part of the Sasanian Empire, while a significant number of ostraka and parchments, written in an extremely cursive variant of the Pahlavi script and dating from the late Sasanian or Early Islamic period were found in northern Iran (Qom, Ray, Varamin, Tabarestān).[16] To some exception, the inscriptions from Fars are linguistically more homogenous, while the ones found in the northern areas reveal a more nuanced reality.

While Zoroastrian priests were busy preserving at a great effort their ancient literature in the eastern courts something totally new saw the light, the ancient language and lore took new forms that were soon to reach unprecedented heights: Persian literature dawned around the half of the ninth century at the Saffarid court in Sistan, only to blossom less than a century later in Khorasan. However, the earliest known documents were written in Judeo-Persian in Central Asia, these being the inscriptions discovered at Tang-e Azāo in Afghanistan and the letter fragment found at Dandān Öilïq, not far from Khotan.[17]

This witnesses to a period when different communities lived one by the side of another, each with its own linguistic tradition. In fact, the earliest attestations of New Persian date from the 8th century, while the Pahlavi alphabet was still used to write Persian in the early 11th century as witnessed by the inscriptions of Lājim and Rādekān that date to the beginning of the 11th century, when Ferdowsi was completing his *Šāhnāme*. A similar phenomenon is attested in Qalʿe-ye Bahman (see below) and in an inscription found in Kāmfiruz in the Marvdasht district, Fars that has not been included in this paper.

2. Western Middle Iranian inscriptions from Northern Iran

Turning now to the focus of the paper, let us see what western Middle Iranian inscriptions from northern Iran are known today. Most interesting of all, these inscriptions belong to different linguistic registers and traditions. On the whole, texts written in the heyday of Sasanian power at the initiative of government officials or members of the élites are written in proper Middle Persian, while graffiti reveal that Parthian was still in use in the countryside. As we shall soon see, some later texts show a new linguistic reality. By far the greatest number of known inscriptions dating to the Sasanian period or to the years immediately thereafter were found in Fars, the cradle of the dynasty, a number that is steadily growing. Recently, new collections of parchments and ostraka from the northern regions of the Empire have come to light and no doubt more will be found, revealing a country more literate than what was once thought. Here follows a list of the inscriptions known to exist in these regions, which will be described moving from west to east. The

Zeugnissen dieser Sprache. Das ist deswegen schon so, weil der Manichäismus im islamisch gewordenen Iran früh erloschen ist." (Sundermann 2003, 242).

16 For a recent synthesis see Huyse 2009, 101-105, cf. also Sundermann 1989, 140-141 and Skjærvø 2009, 197.

17 Lazard 1989, 263-264, cf. Henning 1958, 79-80. The ancient Judaeo-Persian texts (10th-11th century AD) that were found mainly in the Cairo Geniza are very interesting from a dialectological point of view (see Paul 2003 and Shaked 2003), the so called Afghanistan Geniza also seems to be very promising. The Persian glosses in Syriac texts dating to the 8th-10th century are also interesting from this point of view (Maggi 2003), while the manuscripts studied by Orsatti (2003) are probably later.

inscriptions from Semirom and the nearby Qalʿe-ye Bahman are at the border between Fars and Isfahan provinces and have been included for the sake of completeness.[18]

2.1. *Darband*

Thirty two short Middle Persian inscriptions dating to the sixth century were discovered over the years on the walls of the important fortified city of Darband in the Caucasus; the first to pay any attention to them was Prince Dmitrii Cantemir, who headed Tsar Peter I's field chancellery during the emperor's Persian campaign in 1722-1723,[19] this imposing fortification was meant to guard the northern frontiers of the Sasanian Empire. Only one of the inscriptions of Darband is dated and the reading of the date is disputed,[20] should one follow Henning's suggestion to read 37 or 27,[21] considering also the evidence of Islamic authors, one should assign them to the reign of of Husraw I (531-79) or Kawād I (484-531), less probably Husraw II (590-628). The language of the inscriptions is clearly Middle Persian written in an alphabet close to what found in the Pahlavi books, though some letters such as **š** and **k** show forms that are closer to the script of older inscriptions.

2.2. *Khumara*

In the valley of river Kuban, to the north of the city of Karačayevsk, on the northern slope of the Caucasus lies the fortress of Khumara where Erdelyi discovered a short Middle Persian inscription, later published by Harmatta[22] and no more to be seen. The Hungarian scholar read **ZNH bḷlʾn krt'** "This was constructed by Bahrān", a formula similar to some of the inscriptions found in Darband. On palaeographical grounds, Harmatta thought this inscription to be older than the ones in Darband, dating it to the reign of Pērōz (457-484) but this needs not be the case and this short text may well be contemporary to the Darband inscriptions.

2.3. *Meshkinshahr*

An important Middle Persian inscription dated in the 27th year of reign of Šābuhr II (309-379) son of Ohrmazd II (302-309) was discovered in Meshkinshahr in Ardabil province, Iran.[23] Written in Middle Persian in an alphabet that still preserved many of the letter forms characteristic of royal inscriptions, this text presents some stylistic parallels with the inscriptions of Šābuhr Sagānšāh at Persepolis and with that of Mihrnarseh near Firuzabad in Fars.[24]

[18] On Middle Persian private inscriptions see now Nasrollahzādeh 1398. I have seen the book only when this article was in press, so I could not extensively use it.
[19] Gadjiev - Kasumova 2006; Gadjiev 2016 with earlier bibliography.
[20] See further Gadjiev 2016 with earlier bibliography.
[21] Henning 1958, 58.
[22] Harmatta 1996, 82-83.
[23] Frye - Skjærvø 1996.
[24] Frye - Skjærvø 1996, 55.

2.4. *Semirom*

Three funerary inscriptions were found near Semirom in the province of Isfahan. These inscriptions were found in the area of Cešmenāz not far from a gorge known by the name of Tang-e Jelow near to an Islamic graveyard where remains of older, possibly pre-Islamic buildings were also to be found. The first one was published already in Gropp - Nadjmabadi 1970.[25] The other two were discovered much later by Mohsen Jāveri and then made available to the learned public by Syrus Nasrollahzāde and Jāveri.[26] These inscriptions are written in the cursive script common in late Sasanian and early Islamic times and show no specific linguistic peculiarity.

2.5. *Qalʿe-ye Bahman*

Not far from this area, but already in the province of Fars, in the district of Abadeh, one can visit the large castle known as Qalʿe-ye Bahman. Here A. Hassuri[27] discovered a group of about seven Kufic inscriptions, one of which also had a Pahlavi version commemorating the foundation of a castle (**klʾt**) by a *Hāzim* son of *Mohammad* (**hʾcym Y mhmt\d**). This inscription carries a date that in my opinion should be read 206 or much less likely 2(4)6, rather than 165 as suggested by Hassuri.[28] This is probably the earliest attestation of the word *kalāt* "castle, citadel" apparently corresponding to Ar. *qalʿa*, Pers. *qalʿe* that knows no certain etymology in the Semitic language.[29] Nonetheless, the language of these inscriptions may well be compared to that used in the dedications found on the tomb towers in Tabarestān, attesting a language that includes Arabic loanwords and is thus well on its way to New Persian, though here the loanwords are limited to personal names and the dubious *kalāt*, which is however not otherwise attested in Middle Persian.[30]

2.6. *Bandiyān*

Mehdi Rahbar's discovery of the important and disputed Sasanian complex of Bandiyān in North Khorasan, on the border with Turkmenistan[31] also brought to light some Middle Persian inscriptions read by R. Baššāš and Ph. Gignoux.[32] The interpretations offered by the two scholars differ markedly one from the other, since Baššāš believes to have found the name of the Hephtalites (*optalīt*) in the inscriptions while Gignoux reads otherwise. Moreover, according to Baššāš some of the inscriptions make up a coordinated text, while Gignoux thinks that all inscriptions are independent one from the other. In my opinion the French scholar's interpretation is on the whole to be preferred,[33] however, this does not

[25] Gropp - Nadjmabadi 1970, 203-204; Nasrollahzādeh 1393.
[26] Nasrollahzāde - Jāveri 1381, 71-76.
[27] Hassuri 1984, 94-97.
[28] With a discrepancy between transcription (100 50 5) and translation (165), Hassuri read the Pahlavi digits 165 because the Kufic inscription that accompanies it carries this exact date written in Arabic (Hassuri 1984, 96).
[29] For a possible Iranian etymology see Hasandust 1393, 4, 2222.
[30] A similar inscription, written in Pahlavi with one extra line in Arabic, was recently found a bit further South in the district of Kāmfiruz (Asadi - Cereti 2018, 95-97).
[31] Rahbar 1376; 1378; 1998; 2004; 2007.
[32] Baššāš 1997; Gignoux 1998; 2008, 168-171.
[33] See further Cereti 2019 suggesting possible new interpretations of these texts.

need to concern us here. More importantly, both agree that on account of the alphabet used, similar to that of the royal inscriptions, though more cursive[34] and of the content of the inscriptions themselves, these may be assigned to the 5th century CE. Rahbar[35] goes one step further. Following Baššāš, he considers the monument to have been erected to celebrate the victory of Wahrām V over the Hephtalites, possibly in 425. According to the same author, Bandiyān was pillaged and destroyed by the eastern Huns in 484 and therefore the monument had a relatively short life span, less than sixty years. From a linguistic and paleographic point of view the inscriptions belong fully to the Middle Persian tradition.

2.7. *Kāl-e Jangāl*

The inscriptions from Kāl-e Jangāl near Birjand in Southern Khorasan, written in Parthian, were first made known by J. Rezāi and S. Kiyā (1320). Inscription n. 1 was then studied by W.B. Henning.[36] who dated it to the Sasanian Period since the first line includes the toponym *Gar-Ardaxšīr* (**gryʾrthštr**) that contains the name of the first Sasanian king. More specifically, Henning suggested that these inscriptions should be dated to the early years of the Sasanian Empire[37] in the first half of the third century CE.[38] Many years later V. A. Livshits and A.B. Nikitin,[39] published inscriptions 2-8; in their opinion these texts are all later than n. 1, two of them being written in cursive script (2-3) and one "in a later, though not cursive script".[40] Consequently, we can infer that the Parthian language was still used in the area for a considerable amount of years in Sasanian times.[41]

2.8. *Lāḫ Mazār*

The Parthian graffiti of Lāḫ Mazār on an isolated boulder not far from the village of Kuc, 29 kilometers from Birjand, were discovered in 1992 by a team of the Iranian Cultural Heritage Organization led by Rajab ʿAli Labbāf-e Ḫāniki. The vast majority of the text are Parthian, though Rasul Baššāš suggests that a few short Middle Persian inscriptions may also be found. Kufic writings can also be observed on the Lāḫ Mazār rock. The inscriptions were first published by Labbāf-e Ḫāniki and Baššāš in 1994, the volume is complete with drawings of the inscriptions but accompanying photos are of a very low quality. According to the two Iranian scholars these texts should date to the late fifth or early sixth century**,** possibly to the reign of Kawād I whose coins were found on site. The reading of a few of the inscriptions were radically revised by Livshits in 2002, who showed them to have been written by three lads working in the area. Nonetheless, he confirmed the late 5th or early 6th century date suggested by Labbāf-e Ḫāniki and Baššāš though denying any possible

[34] Comparable to the script of the Middle Persian inscriptions from Dura Europos, though more conservative.
[35] Rahbar 2004, 19.
[36] Henning 1953, 132-136; 1958, 42.
[37] Henning 1953, 135.
[38] Henning 1958, 42; Weber 2010, II, 588.
[39] Livshits - Nikitin 1991, 117-119.
[40] Livshits-Nikitin 1991, 119.
[41] Two Parthian inscriptions dating to the early third century were found at Dura Europos together with other Parthian documents and a number of early Middle Persian texts dating to the Persian occupation of the city in 252-3 AD (Henning 1958, 41-42 and 46-47).

connection between the contents of the inscription and the name *drist-dēnān* "(having) the right faith", which would link them up to the Mazdakite movement.[42]

2.9. *Lājim and Rādekān*

Two important bilingual Middle Persian Arabic inscriptions are found still today on the tomb towers of Lājim and Rādekān respectively in Mazandaran and Golestan. These mausoleums were built upon the order of members of the princely Bavandid family (*Āl-e Bāvand*) at the beginning of the eleventh century. Though the script used in the two inscriptions is somehow closer to the one used in Pahlavi books, both are meant to be official documents and the towers on which they are written were most probably used as tomb-towers by members of noble families of Tabarestān that still valued their pre-Islamic tradition high. The style of writing used, especially in Rādekān, is unique having been deeply influenced by the Kufi tradition that was developing in those years. The language is substantially a form of New Persian still written using the Pahlavi alphabet, though this is more evident in Rādekān than in Lājim. In the latter inscription the only non-Iranian words are found in the name of the dedicatee, *Abulvari(s) Šahryār bin Abbās bin Šahryār* , while the former presents the name of the prince: *Abu Jaʿfar Moḥammad b. Vandarīn Bāvand* and his honorific title **mwly** ʾ**mlwmwmnyn** corresponding to Ar. *mawlā amīri l-muʾminīna*.[43] Also interesting is the use of the numeral **tylyst** (*tīrīst*, three hundred) attested by Manichaean Middle Persian **tyryst**, **tyryst** and **tylyst**[44] as well as in New Persian, though rarely[45] showing that this text is written in a regional variant of New Persian.[46]

2.10. *The Holy Cross from Herat*

Further East, but still in the area covered by the present article, we find the Cross from Herat carrying a Middle Persian inscription[47] written in an alphabet that is very close to the one used for the Pahlavi Psalter discovered in Central Asia.[48] The inscription carries a date tentatively read 507 or 517 by Ph. Gignoux that according to the French author[49] should be understood as being counted according to the Bactrian era as attested in the Tochi inscriptions, which following Sims-Williams begins in 233 CE[50] thus dating the cross to 740\750 CE. Except for some loanwords from Syriac[51] and a possible but doubtful persianism,[52] this inscription seems to be written in a good standard Middle Persian, though

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42 Livshits 2011.

43 On Arabo-Sasanian coins we find the Middle Persian translation ʾ**myl wlwyšnyk**ʾ**n** (*amīr (ī) wurrōyišnīgān*), cf. Rezāʿi Bāġbidi 1384, 26-33.

44 In the forms **tylyst** /tīlēst/, **tyryst**, **tyryst** /tīrēst/, see Durkin-Meisterernst, 332, cf. Andreas - Henning 1932, 33.

45 Lazard 1961, 23; for further bibliographical references see Hasandust 1393, vol. II, 930.

46 Cereti 2015; Cereti 2018.

47 Gignoux 2001.

48 Andreas-Barr 1933.

49 Gignoux 2001, 292-293.

50 Sims-Williams 1999, 246.

51 Such as **knyšy** < syr. **knwšy** "assembly, church" and personal names, cf. Gignoux 2001, 295-296.

52 The phonetic spelling ʾ**prydgl** instead than the older form ʾ**plytkl**, which according to Gignoux may suggest NP *āfaridegār* "God, creator".

using the more conservative alphabet adopted by the Central Asian Christian community. Other documents belonging to the Christian community have survived in India but the inscriptions of the Iranian diaspora in Asia such as the bilingual from Hsian, the two short inscriptions found in the Upper Indus and the texts from India will not be discussed in this paper.[53]

3. Conclusions

Leaving aside *ẖuzi* (*al-ẖūziya*) and *soryāni* (*al-suryāniya*) that may not be Iranian languages at all, the three different variants that according to Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ belong to the *pārsi* (*al-fārisiya*) language are: *pahlavi* (*al-fahlaviya*), *dari* (*al-dariya*), *pārsi* (*al-fārisiya*). The inscriptions that have been presented here all belong to the northern areas of inner Iran, spanning a region that goes from the Caucasus to Khorasan. Four groups of inscriptions, those found in Darband, Khumara, Meshkinshahr and Bandiyān, all due to the will of members of the Sasanian élite or to officers of the Sasanian Empire, probably militaries, working for the king, date to the middle or late Sasanian period and are written in a correct Middle Persian that could well correspond to the *pārsi* language that according to Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ was spoken by the people of Fars and still used by the Zoroastrian *mobad*s. The Parthian texts dating from the Sasanian period found at Kāl-e Jangāl and Lāẖ Mazār, both in today's South Khorasan province may well witness the Pahlavi language spoken in the north-western area of the plateau, in *Fahlah* (*Pahlaw*), an area including Isfahan, Ray, Hamadan, Māh Nihāvand and Azerbaijan. Finally, inscriptions such as those found in the Alborz mountains, Lājim and Rādekān, as well as in the Zagros, Qalʿe-ye Bahman, show a language well on its way to New Persian, that may be the one called *dari* by the great Persian intellectual and translator. A language spoken in the cities of Madāʿin, by the many that were at the court of the sovereign and that was also spoken in Khorasan and in the East, where it was soon to develop into classical Persian.

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[53] On which see Harmatta 1971; Sims-Williams 1992, 27; Cereti 2009; Cereti - Olivieri - Vazhuthanapally 2002.

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FROM ZOROASTRIAN TO ISLAMIC IRAN: A NOTE ON THE CHRISTIAN INTERMEZZO

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This essay discusses several Iranian copper coins with Christian symbols and slogans in the context of the transition period from Sasanian to Islamic Iran in the 7th century CE. It is suggested that these coins demonstrate the power of the local Christian community in the province of Pārs and their ability to mint these coins which were circulated in the local economy. It appears that the Christians were able to mint coins, either with the invasion of the Roman Emperor, Heraclius in the late 620s, or during the period of Arab Muslim conquest. While the first possibility would suggest the capability of the Christians to mint coins in a time of chaos in Ērānšahr, the latter choice suggests the working of the local Christian community with the conquerors in the province of Pārs.

Keywords: Pārs; copper coinage; Išō; čalī(p); Heraclius

1. INTRODUCTION

The Muslim conquests in the 7th century CE is one of the most decisive and important events in Eurasian, Near Eastern and Iranian history. It was once thought that with the Muslim victories and the death of Yazdgerd III, the last Sasanian King of Kings in 651 CE, *Ērānšahr* (The Empire of the Iranians) came directly into the possession of the Arab overlords. This idea of a sudden collapse and the way in which the Muslim armies conquered Iran and the Near East was mainly read via the *futuḥ* (conquest) literature, composed centuries after the events they purport to describe. These texts provided a narrative of what should have happened according to the taste and world-view of these later authors.[1] These narratives of conquest were accepted due to a perceived lack of alternative sources from the 7th century CE, as well as the staying power of the traditional narrative. Nowadays, through detailed work on historiography of late antiquity[2] and non-Islamic sources,[3] and such finds as the new Pahlavi documents,[4] our understanding of the events is much more nuanced.[5]

Certainly, the conquest of all the provinces of *Ērānšahr* did not occur in the same way or had the same effects in each region.[6] Of course, we are less informed about some of the Provinces/*Šahrestān*s, such as Sīstān[7] versus Pārs,[8] but we know that the aftermath of the conquest in these two provinces was also different, even in terms of Muslims settling. While most of the conquerors stationed themselves in such garrison towns as Kufa and Basra, the question that comes to mind is how were they able to control the many villages and cities on the Iranian Plateau? Taking the province of Pārs as diagnostic, I would like to

1 Sizgorich 2004, 13.
2 Pourshariati 2017.
3 For Jewish, Christian and Zoroastrian perspectives see Hoyland 1998.
4 Gignoux 2004, 37-48.
5 On the tropes of futuḥ literature, see Noth 1994.
6 Morony 1982; 1987; Choksy 1997; see now Donner 2005; Hoyland 2014.
7 Bosworth 1968.
8 Daryaee 2002.

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make some observations and suggestions as to the way in which the collapsing Sasanian world changed in the 7th century CE, not through a direct change of authority from the Sasanians to the Muslims, but rather through a much more complex picture that included intermediaries and local functionaries.

The main data source of this study is the lesser used copper coinage from the 7th and early 8th centuries CE, minted in the many cities of Pārs. These coins have been studied and catalogued by a number of scholars, most importantly R. Curiel and especially R. Gyselen.[9] However, the next step is to contextualize these coins and place them in a historical context, so that they can be used in understanding this important juncture in the history of the region in the absence of other sources, especially for the period between 627/628 CE and 700 CE.

Based on the historical and archeological data the province of Pārs is thought to have been the stronghold of Zoroastrianism. There are some 40 Chahar-Tāghīs which are thought to have been fire-temple in the province of Pārs alone.[10] Textual sources also attest to the number and importance of fire-temples in the province. But different sets of sources provide us with an alternative view and realities in regard to the religious life and makeup in the province of Pārs. Based on the epigraphical evidence, we now know that somewhere between forty, and sixty bishoprics existed in the province of Pārs,[11] and Syriac literature provides a rich description of Christian life in this province. These Christians were part of the Church of the East, but from the 6th century onward new deportees from Mesopotamia, Syria and Cappadocia were brought to Pārs.[12] These were Christians who had entered from the time of Kawād I, Khosrow I and Khosrow II.[13] While the numbers of deportees described by ancient sources are no doubt typographical and exaggerated, they still suggest that the deportations were relatively large.[14] Based on the sylligiographic evidence also (style, legends), it appears that the Christians from the Church of the East had assimilated in the Sasanian Empire well,[15] many of whom were likely multi-lingual (Persian and Syriac). We are unfortunately less informed of the Hellenized Roman Christians.

Todd Godwin in his book, *Persian Christians at the Chinese Court, The Xi'an Stele and the Early Medieval Church of the East*, has recently drawn a new picture of what we may call "Persian Christianity." According to him, if the appearance of Persian Christians in the early 8th century China is predicated on a strong Persian Christianity in sixth and seventh centuries in *Ērānšahar*. That is, when in the Tang Chinese records, "The Persian Religion" (*Bosi jiao*) is mentioned, as Antonio Forte has shown, it is a reference to Christianity, indicating a strong correlation between Christianity and Iran at the Tang court.[16] Those who had come with this religion were member of the Sasanian royal family and elites, whose

9 Curiel - Gyselen 1980; 1984a; 1984b.

10 For these, see the classical study by Schippmann 1971; Huff 1975; 1990; "Ātašdaeh va čāhārtāghīha-ye Fārs, Foundation for the Study of Fārs," (Fire-temples and Chahar-Tāghīs of Fārs), http://ffs.ir/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1084:1395-02-23-08-42-33&catid=13:tourist-attractions&Itemid=7.

11 Payne 2015, 10.

12 Gyselen 2006b, 6.

13 Jullien 2006, 113.

14 Jullien 2006, 115. See also Kettenhofen 2011.

15 Gyselen 2006a, 18.

16 Godwin 2018, 15.

names have been identified by Carlo Cereti in his important work on Alouhn/Wahrām in both the Chinese and Pahlavi text, *Abar Madan ī Wahrām ī Warzāwand* (On the Coming of the Miraculous Wahrām), the son of Yazdgerd III.[17]

What I would like to add to this discussion is in regard to the dating and the relation of Christianity to the province of Pārs vis-à-vis some of the copper coinage that exists for the seventh and early 8th centuries CE. What might these coins tell us about the situation on the ground in the 7th century and early 8th century CE? This essay purviews five copper coinage which have been identified as Christian copper, and some new readings for the legends will be proposed. Having these interesting legends at hand, one can make some suggestions as to their meaning and significance for the late Sasanian - early Islamic period in the province of Pārs.

2. CHRISTIAN COPPER COINS[18]

The first copper coin (Copper Coin I) is a Byzantine type with the Heraclius style.[19] Gyselen's coin does not reveal the third line of the legend on the obverse, but this new copy supplied by Gholami gives us the possibility to read the following (fig. 1):

'twrgwšnsp
y'nbwt' SRM
cly(p)

Ādur-Gušnasp /
**Giyān/Gehān-bed drōd /*
**čalī(p)*
"Ādur-Gušnasp
Salutations to Chief of the World
Cross"

While before we were not sure about the legend on the third line, with this new coin my suggestion is to read the last line as *čalīp or čalīpā*, Sogdian *clyb'*, which derives from Aramaic. Furthermore, I take *Gehān-bed*, not as a proper name, but rather a slogan which may be tied to Christian propaganda.

Copper Coin II (fig. 2) is Gyselen type 81 with a four step Byzantine cross, although with some differences.[20] Based on Gignoux's reading, Gyselen suggests: *pn'hyzd*… / *panāh-yazd*… is provided.[21] My reading of the legend is as follows:

[17] Cereti 1996. For the latest translation of the text, see Daryaee 2012.
[18] I thank K. Gholami for supplying these coins.
[19] Gyselen 2000, 168-169.
[20] Gyselen 2000, 67.
[21] Gyselen 2000, 173.

MRWḤY
PWN yyš ʻpwstʼn

xwadāy
pad Iš abēstān

"Lord
Refuge in Jesus"

I believe the first word is clearly written with two strokes, giving us the heterogram PWN, while the second word should be read as Jesus. Admittedly, the word in Middle Persian should be written as *yyšw*, as it is written in the Manichaean book of Living Gospel (ms. M 17 verso, i ll. 4-6):

ʾn mʾny prystg ʿyg yyšwʿ ʾryʾmʾn
"I am Mani, the apostle of Jesus Aryāmān"[22]

Furthermore, the use of *xwadāy* also appears as an appellation for Jesus in Parthian (*xwdʾy yyšw mšyh[ʾ]*), though here too Jesus is spelled with two y's (*yyšw)*.[23]

Coin III (fig. 3) is type 90 according to Gyselen's catalogue where on the obverse there is the legend *lwbʼk / rawāg* or "current," which is found on early Islamic coinage. The legend on the reverse is a bit more complex. According to Gignoux, the reading of the legend is: *ʾpskwpws* from Greek επισκοπος as "bishop."[24] I would like to provide another reading which is as follows:

lwbʼk
PWN lʼst(y)

rawāg
pad rāst(y) …

"in Circulation
in Truth"

Coins IV and V (figs. 4-5) are Byzantine type coinage without legend, but with a number of crosses, with Heraclius type obverse and various crosses on the reverse. These coins are of much better specimen that what has been presented so far. On the obverse of the coins V, we see an artificial attempt providing a Pahlavi-legend, along with the four-

[22] Middle Persian ms. M 17 verso, i ll. 4-6; cf. Müller 1904, 26; Cirillo - Concolino Mancini - Roselli 1985, 66:4-5; all reference from Sundermann 1991.
[23] Henning 1947, 50:l-2.
[24] Gyselen 2000, 177.

step cross. However, what the coin attempts to portray on the obverse is the sovereignty of the Byzantine Empire against that of the Sasanians. Certainly, the Christians would not have been allowed under normal circumstances to mint such a coin in the Sasanian Empire.

3. DATING

We can provide two suggestions for the dating of these coins: 1) Heraclius' conquest and its aftermath (627-628 CE); 2) Muslim Conquest and its aftermath (651 CE). Both were periods of political disarray. It is clear that by 628 CE, the Sasanian Empire was in chaos and could have given the chance to the Christian community, namely the deportees and their decadents to celebrate the victory of Heraclius by 624 CE. After all, the Sasanians would not have allowed the Christian community to mint copper coins with the image of the Byzantine Emperor, with the legend reads *pad īš abēstān* / "refuge in Christ". Hence the minting of Byzantine imitation copper coinage may be an important suggestion as to the loyalties and aspirations of some of the population of Pārs vis-à-vis the Byzantine and Sasanian monarchy. Heraclius, after 614 CE had used such religious propaganda and the Christian population in the Sasanian Empire were certainly affected by it.[25]

Alternatively, these coins may have been minted following the Arab conquests, which may have brought at least temporary to the Christian community.[26] During this precarious time, Christians may have been allowed to take it upon themselves as one of the religious communities of *Ērānšahr* to mint coins, especially such low value coins that were mostly for local use. Evidence for such cooperation between the Muslims and the Christians may come from another series of copper coinage which has joint Iranian/Zoroastrian and Muslim themes. It appears that the early Muslim rulers were much more flexible in the encounter with the Iranians of various religious persuasion and often cooperated with the local elites. These coins, which show Zoroastrian cooperation with Muslims, are difficult to interpret, but are mainly from the province of Pārs, where such figures as Manṣūr, who may have acted as the *ʿāmil* "governor" or "subordinate governor" of al-Hajjāj b. Yūsuf, support this idea of cooperation.[27] In a similar vein, a local potentate named Farroxzād minted copper coins during the time of al-Muḥallab b. Abī Sufra (82-82/703-703 CE) as the governor of Pārs. On his coins we find the image of the fabulous Iranian bird, Sēnmurw/Simorgh, which has specific affinities with the Iranian world, but lack overtly Zoroastrian connotations.[28] Clearly, then, the early conquerors were less discriminate about coin iconography, and may have therefore tolerated local Christian iconographic expressions. This may have lasted through the periods known as *fiṭna*s or civil wars, until Muslim rule had become much firmer, perhaps following the reforms of Abd al-Malik,

[25] Howard-Johnston 1999, 39.

[26] As Michael Morony has suggested, many Christians, wearied by the incessant wars of the 7th century and exhausted by punitive taxation, welcomed the Arab conquerors. He states that «Christianity, along with other minority faiths such as Manicheism, enjoyed a brief period of expansion in the early centuries of Islam, only to suffer diminution later on through conversion and attrition in times of strife, after which the faith survived only precariously in Iranian lands». Morony 1984, 384-385; see also Russell 2012.

[27] Daryaee 2015a, 75.

[28] Daryaee 2015b, 65.

where the language of the *Dīwān* was changed from Pahlavi to Arabic.[29] These copper coins were of course minted for local consumption and did not circulate very far, but many of them such as Khuzistān provide the closest set of copper coins with similar themes.

4. Conclusion

Thus, we find interesting Christian material culture from the late Sasanian - early Islamic world, far more complex than what existed before for the seventh century, between the time of Heraclius' campaign and that of the first century of Hijra. I would like to suggest that between the time when the Sasanian Empire was in power, till the fall of Khusro II and the coming of Hajjab b. Yusuf and his reforms, the Christians were able to create a world for themselves which I call the "Christian Intermezzo". This Christian intermezzo, to use V. Minorsky's terminology[30] for the Iranian ascendancy between the decline of the Abbasids and the coming of the Turkic tribes, can be used in a lesser form for the situation in the province of Pārs in the 7th century CE. It appears that when the Sasanian central government was shaken due to the defeat of Khusrow II at the hands of Heraclius and the events which ensued between 627/628 CE and 631, but also with the Arab Muslim victories in Mesopotamia,[31] Khūzīstān[32] and Pārs[33] and the rest of the Iranian Plateau. The power of the Christian community should be emphasized, as they were able ability to mint coins in *Ērānšahr*, either during the late Sasanian or early Islamic period. In the greater scheme of discussion of the transition period from Zoroastrian to Islamic Iran, then we can add a caveat, and that is the Christian intermezzo.

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[29] On his actions in Iraq and in general, see Grierson 1960, 244.
[30] Minorsky 1953.
[31] Morony 1981.
[32] Jalalipour 2015.
[33] Daryaee 2002, 3-18.

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Fig. 1 - Copper coin I.

Fig. 2 - Copper coin II.

Fig. 3 - Copper coin III.

Fig. 4 - Copper coin IV.

Fig. 5 - Copper coin V.

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MIIROSAN TO KHURASAN: HUNS, ALKHANS AND THE CREATION OF EAST IRAN

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Khurasan emerged in the medieval Islamic world, particularly after the 'Abbasid Revolution' of 750, as one of the major centres of power and influence in the domains of the Abbasid Caliphate. While most studies consider this from the point of view of Islamic history, the roots of the rise of this region goes back to the late antique period. This article studies the emergence of the region throughout the first millennium by considering the history of the region under the Kushan, Kushano-Sasnaian, Kidarite, Alkhan, Hephthalite, and Western Turk rule. By considering numismatic evidence, Bactrian documents, and epigraphic sources, the article develops the idea that the region emerged as an independent and culturally central area during the Kushan and immediate post-Kushan period and became the center of a political and cultural production, which eventually entered the pages of history in the early Islamic period.

Keywords**:** East Iran; Khurasan; Miirosan; Islam; Kushans

Defining geographical spaces and their role in historical processes is an essential part of almost all historical enquiries. In many cases, the assumptions made about a historical region are based on understanding of that geography in a modern, nation-state based, context. In the study of medieval Islam and the Iranian/Persianate world, the term Khurasan and the geography it refers to has occupied a special place. Its importance in the medieval Islamic context is noted by a few monographs and studies,[1] although the origins of the term and the conceptualisation of its geography is less scrutinised. The following, by providing a survey of historical references to the term Khurasan, as well as positing its borrowing from Bactrian *Miirosan*, provides a narrative of the development of the region as an autonomous centre of power. By also studying a few of the sources and contextualising them, it also hopes to bring attention to non-textual evidence such as the coins and their importance in understanding the development of the concept of Khurasan as a geo-political term.

1. INTRODUCTION

Khurasan and *Khurasani* as geographical and historical terms dominate the early medieval Islamic sources. This is mainly because of the presence of the troops of Abu Muslim, a sometimes governor of Marv, the capital of Islamic Khurasan, who in 750 CE, swept through Iran and decimated the Umayyad armies, bringing the Caliphate to the 'Abbasid house. The rise of the Abbasids then is practically synonymous with the entry of the Khurasani soldiers into the politics of the Abbasid court and their dominance in the first hundred years of the dynasty's control.[2] Similarly, Khurasan's exit from the direct control

[1] See Daniel 1979; 1995, as well as Rante 2015 for a fresh archaeological view.

[2] Various studies of the revolt of Abu Muslim and the rise of the Abbasids are available. Among these, Shaban 1970 was a novel approached, paying special attention to the local Khurasani context, although he gets much of the Hephthalite history wrong, probably because most of his information was based on Gibb 1923. Since Shaban, great studies on Khurasan and its place in the Abbasid Revolution, have become available, including

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of the Caliph of Baghdad, under the leadership of the Samanids in the 10th century, contributed in a major fashion to the decline of the Caliphate and its decay as the puppets of the Buyids, Hamdanis, and other 'Iraqi political units.[3] Against this political background, the question that begs answering is the one about the origins of *Khurasan.* This is an ill-defined geographical and political region on the extreme northeast of the Iranian Plateau and Transoxiana, touching the Pamirs, and at various times encompassing different parts of the 'Islamic East'. What, indeed, was the process through which various regions of Central Asia and East Iran became part of the uniform concept of Khurasan, representing soldiers and leaders of numerous ethnicities, languages, and religious and political identities? Perhaps not less importantly, where did the term *Khurasan*, and thus the identity associated with it, come from?[4] The present paper, relying on advancements made in the historical studies of this region, will try to answer aspects of these questions and suggest interpretations. These might eventually lead us to better understand the origins of Khurasan as a geographical and historical unit and its role in the medieval Islamic world.

2. KHURASAN IN EARLY ISLAMIC GEOGRAPHY

1. Ibn Khurradadhbih, author of perhaps the oldest extant Arabic geographical treatise (middle of the 9th century AD) began his description of the regions of the east with the province of Khurasan: "the East, which is a quarter of the domain, and starts with a description of Khurasan".[5] In this account, Ibn Khurradadbih divides Khurasan itself into four quarters - perhaps reflecting the Sasanian quadripartite division of their empire (al-Tabari, I.894). He also tells us that the entire province is governed by a "Bādūsbān who is its *Isfahbid*".[6] According to Ibn Khurradadbih, each quarter of Khurasan has one *Marzbān* (marcher lord/military governor),[7] and these are as follows:

> «…a quarter is under the control of the Marzban of Marv Shahijan[8] and its environs, one quarter under the control of the Marzban of Balkh and Tukharistan, one quarter under the control of the Marzban of Harat and Bushanj and Badghish (sic.) and

Daniel 1979; 1995, as well as Marin-Guzman 1994. De la Vaissière 2007a is the most recent work on Central Asian actors in the Abbasid state.

3 For the period of Abbasid power and centralised control of the lands of the east, see Bennison 2014. Kennedy 1986 covers the same turf in a classical study, but also tackles the following period, particularly after 861, and rise of powers such as the Hamdanids and the Buyids as well.

4 De la Vaissière (ed.) 2008 addresses the presence of the different communities and groups in the region and the different processes through which they converted to Islam Similarly, in his 2007 contribution, he addresses the presence of Central Asians in the Abbasid court and cuts through the regular understanding of them under the general rubric of the "Turks".

5 De Goeje 1889, 18.

6 Baduspan here is the Arabic rendering of Middle Persian pādūspān, mentioned by al-Tabari (I.894) and others as the alternative name for the commander of each of the four quarters. It is also the name of the ancestor of the Paduspanid ispahbids of Tabaristan in the early Islamic period (Madelung 1988).

7 Cf. Hudūd al-Alam, where the Maliks (kings) of Khurasan, of the Sāmān family, have their "margraves" (*mulūk al-Atrāf*) around Khurasan (Minorsky 1937, 102).

8 This is the more famous of the two Marv/Mervs both located in the Bactro-Margiana region. The other one, further east and south, is Marv-ur-Rūd, present day *Bala Murghab*, in north-western Afghanistan.

> Sajistan… and one quarter under the control of the Marzban of Mawara un-Nahr/Transoxiana».[9]

Ibn Khurradadbih's definition of Khurasan, then, reflects at a maximalist position, considering even Sajistan/Sīstān, the area to the south of the Hindukush and on the delta of the Helmand River, as well as the entire Transoxiana, to be part of Khurasan. In contrast, the anonymous author of the Persian geography, *Hudūd al-Ālam*, specifies that "the king (pādšāh-i) Khorāsān in the days of the old was distinct from that of Transoxiana, but now they are one",[10] showing the recent addition of Transoxiana to the concept of Khurasan. Almost all authorities consider Balkh and Tukharistan as one of the four divisions of Khurasan; something that will be elaborated upon further below.

2. Another geographer, Ibn Hauqal, a famous traveller and geographer and writing a century after Ibn Khurradadbih, considers Khurasan to be the name of one of the seven climes (Ar. *iqlīm*) and provides a detailed description of what he considers to be part of Khurasan. In this description, however, Sajistan/Sīstān and Transoxiana are not counted.[11]

3. In these cases, and in other Medieval Middle Eastern references, the use of the term *Khurāsān* for the region, linguistically harkens back to the Sasanian use of the term *Xwarāsān* "East, Rising Sun" as the name of one of their four military *Kust* "sides" matching the cardinal points.[12] The use of the term is confirmed by the seal evidence.[13] These four *kusts* were established following the reforms of Kavad I and Khusrow I Anushervan in the early to mid-sixth century,[14] after almost a century of Hephthalite threat against the eastern borders of the Sasanian Empire and the loss of much of the east at the end of the fifth century.[15] But the use of the term in a Sasanian context itself is probably the result of the defeat of the Hephthalites at the hand of the Western Türk empire and the Sasanian recovery of the control of Balkh/Tukharistan, at least for a while. However, long before the use of the term by Muslim geographers, or even its use as a Sasanian administrative division, a similar term seems to have been used in the region, one that perhaps provides the background for the Sasanian *Xwarāsān*.

3. The birth of the East

1. Even prior to the Sasanian quadripartite division of their empire (MP. *Eranšahr*), another political entity had adopted the name of a cardinal direction for itself. This is specifically the case for the issuers of a coin series, part of the Alkhan series, who called themselves "the King of the East" (Bact. μιροσανο βαο).[16] The idea of designating the "East", the place of the rising sun, as the name of a political entity is quite intriguing. For one thing, claiming that one is the king of the "east" implicitly acknowledges that there is

[9] De Goeje (ed.) 1889, 18.
[10] Minorsky 1937, 102.
[11] Kramers 1938, 308-309.
[12] Gyselen 2001, 13-14.
[13] Gyselen 2001; 2007, 248-254.
[14] Rubin 1995.
[15] Rezakhani 2017, 140-143.
[16] Vondrovec 2014, 202.

also a "west" with its own king, whatever and whoever that might be.[17] Consequently, it seems obvious that the issuers of these series had an idea of themselves as controlling the eastern portions of a certain territorial whole. How this domain comes to embody the concept of Khurasan in the later Sasanian history and particularly in the early Islamic period is then the object of our enquiry.

2. Accordingly, understanding the place of the Alkhans as a whole, and particularly the Alkhan "East" issues, is crucial in picturing the development of the concept of Khurasan. While older scholarship in general referred to the entire class of post-Kushan conquerors of Transoxiana and Bactria as "the Hephthalites", the King of the East issues in fact belong to the Alkhan emissions and are clearly distinguished in modern scholarship from the "genuine Hephthalites".[18] Indeed, it is indisputable that "genuine" Hephthalites are purely those whose coins, using the coins and coin style of Sasanian Peroz (459-484), bears the countermark εβ(ο)δαλο in Bactrian. The coin evidence also suggest that the Hephthalites kept themselves purely to the region of northern Hindu-Kush, eventually advancing to parts of Transoxiana (Menander Protector, Fragment 9.1) and further east to the Takla Makan desert.[19] This is then widely used to separate the activities of the Alkhans and the Nezak, active to the *south* of the Hindu-Kush, from those of the "genuine" Hephthalites to the *north*, and to unburden the term "Hephthalite" from representing the entire "Iranian Huns" group.[20]

With our increasing understanding of the Hephthalite political system in Bactria as an urban culture (Procopius, *Wars*, I.3), differentiating the invading forces of the Alkhans from the "genuine" Hephthalites is perhaps a useful corrective (fig. 1).[21] This differentiation helps to disabuse historians of the notion that the activities and military conquests of various groups, including the Alkhans, in the 5th and 6th centuries were somehow centrally organized and executed by a collective "Hephthalite" entity. In considering the transition from the Kidarite dominance to Hephthalite control north of the Hindu-Kush, this is indeed crucial. However, over-stressing this point can also lead to active disregard for the close relationship between historical events that affected the entirety of the region from Transoxiana to northwest India, a point that a further inquiry about the East series can help illustrate. In the following section, we will consider the

[17] This is the reason for my use of the term *East Iran* to designate the entire region that emerges out of the territories united by the Kushans in the earlier centuries. I suggest that East Iran here designates the political and cultural entity that develops to become the nucleus of the early Islamic "Persianate World," namely the Khurasan under discussion here. Through this usage, the designation *Iran* is taken out of its exclusive use either in the sense of the modern nation-state, or the late antique Sasanian *Ērānšahr*, both of which assume a necessarily "western" center for the political and cultural unit of Iran.

[18] See Kuwayama 1999. The distinction is made explicitly with the coin issues, first established by Göbl 1967 and followed by numismatists such as Vondrovec 2014, and historians like de la Vaissière 2007b. See below for further discussion of this and its implications for historiography.

[19] Kuwayama 1999, 38.

[20] We owe the grouping of the Iranische Hunnen coins into Kidarites, Alkhans, Hephthalites, and Nezak to Göbl and his monumental work on these coins, Göbl 1967, now continued by Pfisterer 2013 and Vondrovec 2014.

[21] All illustrations from das Antlitz des Fremden are taken from the project's online portal (http://pro.geo.univie.ac.at/projects/khm/) and are used with kind permission. Illustrations from the Classical Numismatic Group (CNG) are taken from their website (www.cngcoins.com), with kind permission.

relationship between the Hephthalites and the Alkhans and the utility of the famous Schøyen Copper Scroll inscription in placing the two in relation with each other.

4. THE SCHØYEN COPPER SCROLL AND ITS GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT

1. In one of the more sensational discoveries of primary material about the history of east Iran, an inscription on a copper scroll, dedicating a Buddhist stupa in *Tālagānika*, and naming several donors at the end of the 5th century CE, surfaced in a private Norwegian collection.[22] The text of the inscription is in Sanskrit and includes several sutras, as well as a dedicatory segment providing the names of several donors, making it a valuable historical source. The majority of these donors are known to us from either the Bactrian Economic Documents (henceforth BD)[23] or various coin issues.[24] The dedication part of the inscription's translation is as follows:

> (33–39) In the sixty-eighth year on the seventh day of the bright half of the month Kārttika [corresponding to October-November]: On this day this caitya of the Realized One containing relics (*dhātugarbha*) was established by:
>
> 1. the lord of a great monastery (*mahāvihārasvāmin*), the son of Opanda, the Tālagānika-Devaputra-Ṣāhi, ...,
> 2. together with [his] father Opanda,
> 3. together with [his] wife, the daughter of the Sārada-Ṣāhi, [named] Buddh. ...,
> 4. together with the mistress of a great monastery Arccavāmanā,
> 5. together with [her] father Ho..gaya,
> 6. [and] with [her] mother, the queen (*mahādevī*) ...,
> 7. together with the spiritual friend (*kalyāṇamitra*), the religious teacher (*ācārya*) Ratnāgama,
> 8. together with the great ṣāhi (*mahāṣāhi*) Khīṇgīla,
> 9. together with the god-king (*devarāja*) Toramāna,
> 10. together with the mistress of a great monastery Sāsā,
> 11. together with the great Ṣāhi Mehama,
> 12. together with Sādavīkha,
> 13. together with the great king (*mahārāja*) Javūkha, the son of Sādavīkha;
> during the reign of Mehama.[25]

2. From those named above, Khīngīla, Toramāna, Javūkha, and Mehama – who is named twice – are known from their coins, as well as textual evidence of their presence in various parts of the Hindu-Kush region and northern India. Geographically, Melzer locates *Tālagānika*, the place of the monastery and the domain of the Tālagānika-Devaptura-Ṣāhi ("the Divine Son, the King of Talagān"), in northern Afghanistan, perhaps the city of

[22] Melzer 2006.
[23] Sims-Williams 2001; 2007.
[24] Vondrovec 2014, 159-226.
[25] Melzer 2006, 274.

Talaqan[26] in eastern Bactria/Tukharistan, east of Qunduz.[27] This identification, and the name of the authorities all of whom issued coins in the "Alkhan" series, already presents us with a challenge in contextualising the inscription.

The first response to this challenge was by Étienne de la Vaissière who, in an influential note, suggested that the identification of Tālagānika as Tālaqān needs to be abandoned.[28] His suggestion for a replacement is the small town of Talagang in the Salt Range.[29] The poignancy of de la Vaissière's arguments, and his reasoning – despite his own careful caution – has been influential enough that the suggestion has been taken as definitive, with the result that most subsequent publications have adopted this idea. In fact, de la Vaissière himself offers generous points of dispute with his own argument, including the presence of Iranian names, as well as the Buddhist context of the inscription.[30] So below, I shall pick up some of de la Vaissière's doubts and elaborate on the issue.

3. De la Vaissière's suggestion seeks to persuade us to abandon the idea that the inscription could be a produced anywhere Bactria, or even refer to a Bactrian locale. His reasoning essentially consists of two main points:[31]

1- That we have to distinguish between the Alkhans in southern Hindu-Kush/India and the Hephthalites in the north (as suggested above and elsewhere).
2- That the context of the inscription is purely "Indian" and does not show any Bactrian influence. This would then make it necessary for us to look outside Bactria/Tukharistan in order to identify *Tālaqānika*.

In order to support these two suggestions, the author provides evidence from the Alkhan coin series (fig. 2), as well as the account of the Buddhist traveller, Song Yun from 520 CE. In the first instance, de la Vaissière posits that considering Alkhans and Hephthalites to be related would compel us to equate Khingila with Axšunwar, the Hephthalite king who in 484, defeated and killed the Sasanian king of king Pēroz.[32] By correctly pointing out that Khingila, as well as Javūkha and Toramāna, only appear in an "Indian" context, de la Vaissière then leads us to his own solution, that the donors in the list need to be located in a southern Hindu-Kush/Indian context, and thus in the Salt Range town of Talagang. We will pick up this issue further below, but at this point, it helps to remember that apart from Khingila, Javūkha, and Toramāna, the main authority in the text, in whose domains the

[26] On Talaqan, see Markwart 1931, 80.
[27] As Sims-Williams has pointed out in his note – quoted in Melzer 2006, 256 – there are two locations known as *Tālaqān* in the vicinity of Balkh. The better known location is the one of our concern here, while a lesser known town to the west of Balkh is also known under this name. In Hudūd al-Ālam, the more easterly town is "on the frontier of Gūzgānān and belongs to its king" (Minorsky 1937, 107).
[28] De la Vaissière 2007b.
[29] De la Vaissière 2007b, 129.
[30] Reading the dedication segment of the inscription in the context of the rest of the inscription makes it quite clear that the entire text was composed in a Buddhist setting and that the dedication is in fact forming a continuous part of the text, following religious texts and being followed by them. See Melzer 2006, 255 for a list of the sutras quoted in the text.
[31] De la Vaissière 2007, 128.
[32] Axšunwar is mentioned as the king of the Hephthalites by al-Tabari, I.874. Ferdowsi, in his normalising style, gives his name as Xušnawāz. For a discussion of possible etymologies, see Rezakhani 2017, 126-127.

stupa is located, is in fact Mehama, and as a matter of fact, we do have enough evidence to place Mehama to north of the Hindu-Kush range.

But first, let us provide a rebuttal for the suggestion that the text is in fact purely Indian and does not bear any signs of Bactrian influence. In fact, the very name of the place, *Tālagānika* itself can only be explained through a Bactrian connection. As quoted by Melzer from a correspondence with Nicholas Sims-Williams, the suffix *-ika* is best explained by a reference to Bactrian *-igo*, which "forms adjectives from nouns, including ethnica from names of places and people".[33] So, in fact the name of the place, even if it is Talagang in the Salt Range, has been rendered in the Sanskrit text with a Bactrian suffix, establishing a Bactrian connection indeed.

4. To return to the suggestion of distinguishing between the Alkhans and the Hephthalites in a strict sense, as asserted by de la Vaissière, we must consider the consequences of such distinction for historical purposes. In the present case, the distinction in fact forces a reading on the Schøyen scroll that is not necessarily supported by the text. The proposition, instead of being based on the text at hand, is prompted by a concern that positing any connection between the two group would necessarily mean assuming a 'unity' between them, across the Hindu-Kush. This, in de la Vaissière's reckoning, would presuppose some manner of unified rule, requiring, for example, the identification of Khingila with *Axšunwar*, the Hephthalite ruler who defeated Pērōz in 484.[34]

However, there is in fact no reason to be concerned with such assumptions or equations when considering the history of the region in the late 5th and early 6th centuries. A case in point is the assumption that the donors mentioned were contemporaries, an idea initially suggested by Melzer who proposed that this would require a reassessment of Alkhan chronology.[35] However, as de la Vaissière mentions,[36] there is no need to assume that all the mentioned donors were in fact contemporary. The text seems to only mention "the lord of a great monastery (*mahāvihārasvāmin*)," his wife Buddh… (incomplete name), and most importantly *Ṣāhi Mehama*, during whose reign the dedication was made, as the persons actually living and perhaps present. The rest of the donors, including the three mentioned by de la Vaissière as having only an Indian context, are in fact not mentioned to be present or even alive. Consequently, there is no reason to assume that the donors to a monastery, making donations at different times, were even contemporaries, let alone acting in unity or within the context of political alliances.

5. We would perhaps never know the identity of the "Tālagānika-Devaputra-Ṣāhi" or his wife, but the *mahāṣāhi Mehama*, as is has been pointed out, is relatively well-known from other sources. He is originally introduced to us in a Bactrian document as "Meyam, the king of the people of Kadag, the governor of the famous (and) prosperous king of kings Peroz" (BD, 2007, docs. "ea" and "ed"). Document "ea" is dated to the year 239 (year 461 CE), and Document "ed" is dated either 242 or 252, respectively either 465 or 475 AD. In the latter case, "ed" would be placed after Peroz' first defeat at the hand of the Hephthalites

[33] Melzer 2006, 256, quoting Sims-Williams.
[34] De la Vaissière 2007, 128.
[35] Melzer 2006, 262.
[36] De la Vaissière 2007, 128, note 5. *Contra* Alram - Pfisterer 2010.

in 474 and perhaps show Mehama's continued fealty to the disgraced Sasanian king of kings. Apart from the dating, the Kadag people, and their territory of Kadagstan (mentioned in BD 2012, doc. "T", dated 478) were most likely located in eastern Bactria, in the high and middle valleys of Qunduz-Ab, quite close to Talaqan.[37] These sources then would put Mehama's territory to the north of the Hindu-Kush and eastern Tukharistan.

Mehama, or Meyam, is also known from his coin production in both gold and silver.[38] Significantly, his coins bear both Bactrian and Brahmi inscriptions and "according to numismatic methodology it is likely they were not only struck at the same place but also that the coin dies were manufactured by the same person".[39] Stylistically, the silver issues of Mehama are within the Alkhan coin series, and are thus attributable to the area south of the Hindu-Kush. His gold issues, type 84A, however, bear some characteristics of the dinars carrying the name of Kidara.[40] The type 84 of Kidara were found mostly in the Buddhist site of Tepe Maranjan in the Kabul region, along with coins of Sasanians Shapur II, Ardashir II, Shapur III, as well as a dinar of Kushano-Sasanian king, Wahram 6.[41] As explained by Vondrovec, there is a high possibility that these coins were issued in the "Eastern" mint of the Sasanians, provisionally located in Kabul by Göbl.

Based on historical reasons, Vondrovec[42] doubts that the dinars of *Mehama* (fig. 3) could have been issued in the city of Balkh, in the area of the supposed control of the Hephthalites. Proceeding from this, he then suggests that «the Alkhan were a confederation rather than a monolithic empire, but as of now we have insufficient proof for thus hypothesis».[43] Despite the fact that the hypothesis sounds true enough, it is yet another example of historical suppositions forcing a particular reading on the available sources, this time the numismatic records.

6. The above then leads us back to the group of Alkhan style coin issues labeled the "Eastern" Alkhan by Vondrovec and bearing the Bactrian inscription of μιροσανο βαο (*miirosano šao*) which can be translated as "the King of the East".[44] Among the issuers of the "Eastern" coins is a certain ruler named Adomano whose coins include gold, silver, and copper issues, all bearing the title of the King of the East. Adomano is also mentioned in the Schøyen Copper Scroll inscription among the four authorities who dedicated the foundation of a stupa. A second donor of the stupa named on the Schøyen scroll is Javūkha, whose coins too bear the inscription that marks him as the "King of the East".[45] While this does not place Mehama in a southern Hindu-Kush context, it still provides the possibility that the area of Mehama's rule around Qunduz/Tālaqān was in communication with the

37 Inaba 2010, 447.

38 See Vondrovec 2014, 142-145 for his gold issues and Vondrovec 2014, 187-190 for the silver issues and in depth discussion.

39 See Vondrovec 2008, 29. The name Meyam, Bact. *Μηαμο* (or the shortened version μη) also appears on two seals, AA 6.3 & AA 6.4 (Lerner - Sims-Williams 2011, 82-83). The crown depicted on the seals, however, bears no resemblance to the crown of Mehama on the coins.

40 Vondrovec 2014, 189.

41 Vondrovec 2014, 141.

42 Vondrovec 2014, 143.

43 Vondrovec 2014, 143.

44 Vondrovec 2014, 202.

45 Vondrovec 2014, 204-207; Melzer 2006, 261-262.

Kabul and Peshawar region further south and southeast through another way, perhaps a route which did not pass through the areas of Hephthalite control.

If we reconsider the strict assumption that the political division between the "Alkhan" and "Hephthalite" coin authorities would have meant a complete separation between the two polities, as de la Vaissière, and Vondrovec following him, maintain,[46] we might be able to contextualize these coin issues, and the Schøyen scroll, in a different manner. This is specifically the possibility that an area to the east of Tukharistan, perhaps the region of Qunduz and Tālaqān, could have had direct contact with the regions of Kabul and Peshawar. This would present an alternative for the connections between the Alkhans with polities north of the Hindukush. Here, we return to the scene set up by the Schøyen scroll and can now draw a different picture of the region's political and social setting, and create a less segregated picture of the period.

5. The Alkhan kings of Eastern Tukharistan?

1. By returning to Melzer's original location of Tālagānika as Tālaqān in eastern Tukharistan, a new view of the history of the region emerges in the contexts of both Sasanian, and local, histories. The successful campaigns against the Kidarites that allowed Pērōz (459-484) to build on the successes of his grandfather Vahram V (420-438) was supported locally by rulers such as Meyam who named himself the "governor of king of kings Peroz" while maintaining local authority as "the King of the People of Kadag".[47] This hierarchy is completely consistent with established patterns of authority in world history and is likely presenting the formation of local, secondary states.[48] The location of Tālaqān, across the mountains to the north of Kabul/Kapisi, puts it not only in eastern Bactria, but also close to the zone of early Alkhan power in the east. At the same time, Chinese sources tell us that Hephthalite authority in the sixth century extended as far east as the Takla Makan desert, which would indeed include the area of eastern Tukharistan.[49]

Considering the dating of the Schøyen scroll to 492/493 CE,[50] which is, despite the problems of equating it with the Laukika Era, generally accepted, the rule of Mehama gains

[46] Of course, the main proponent of this was Shoshin Kuwayama, for which see, among others, Kuwayama 1999, 37-40 who proposes that there were no Hephthalties in Kapisi, Bamiyan, or Zabul, south of the Hindu-Kush. A strict separation of the two would lead us to look for "conflicts" – as Vondrovec indeed looks for and does not find (Vondrovec 2014, 143).

[47] Peroz has previously asked for help from the Hephtalites against his brother, Hormizd III (al-Tabari, I.872) before ascending the throne in 459 (Daryaee 2009, 24). While Meyam/Mehama is not explicitly mentioned, his general association with Peroz is evident from the Bactrian documents ea and ed. Perhaps this alliance needs to be considered as part of the general alliance of Peroz with the Hephthalites, which could have included Mehama before the ascent of Hephthalites to power and the need for Mehama to find new, ie Alkhan, allies.

[48] I do not wish to enter the discussion of "Iranian Feudelism" here, the classical study of which is Widengren 1969. A new work on the subject in the Seleucid period perhaps illuminates a few aspects of competing authorities in the wider Middle Eastern context (Engels 2011). In the European context, this is obviously well studies, with Hurt's study of Louis XIV (Hurt 2002) and Henshall's revisionism setting up a new tone (Henshall 2014). For the Iranian context, perhaps, the title of Shahanshah itself is the most illuminating, for which see Shayegan 2011, 228-292.

[49] Kuwayama 1999, 38-39.

[50] Melzer 2006, 263-264.

a new meaning. The year 492/493 places the foundation of the Stupa, and the rule of Mehama as an independent *mahāṣāhi*, within the first period of the reign of Kavad I (488-496/498-531). This is the apogee of the Hephthalite rule in Bactria, to the west of Qunduz and Tālaqān, Mehama's territory.[51] In this context, we can speculate that Mehama/Meyam, the former "governor" of Peroz, Kavad's father and the enemy of the Hephthalites, was quite naturally at odds with the rising power of the Hephthalites further west. As such, allying himself with an Alkhan authority further south in Kapiśi and providing patronage to a known Buddhist site, as well as issuing Alkhan style coins, would have been the natural course of action for Mehama/Meyam to show his alliance. This would also bring new meaning to the term "King of the East", as this "East" naturally suggests the existence of a "West" as well, it being the westerly territories of the Hephthalites in Balkh and beyond. Additionally, the discontinuation of the Mehama/ Eastern coin series[52] and a shifting of the issues to those of Khingila and others in Gandhara and Uddyana are evidence for the conquest of this "Eastern" kingdom by the Hephthalites. It is in fact after 492/493, and in the sixth century, that we can talk about the separation of Alkhan and Hephthalite zones of control, as mentioned by Chinese sources and taken as a fact by Kuwayma, de la Vaissière, Vondrovec. Mehama, and the rest of the Eastern series, in fact show a short period of rule in eastern Tukharistan by forces allied to the Alkhans, later snuffed by the rising power of the Hephthalites. Their designation of the East (μιροσανο), however, might have had a longer life in the geopolitics of the region, as we see below.

6. Sasanian Khurasan

1. The fate of the *Miirosan* kingdom, of course, cannot be fully gazed, except for its loss to the growing power of the Hephthalite state and its expansion to the east. Subsequently, following the Western Türk destruction of the Hephthalite power in the latter half of the sixth century, parts of the former Hephthalite territories south of the Oxus River fell to the Sasanian, at least temporarily.[53] If we assume that the Hephthalite territories by this time encompassed the former Miirosan as well, the Sasanian control of the area coming to embrace the designation as well.

In the sixth century, the reforms of Khosrow I (531-579), perhaps started at the time of his father Kavad I (488/494-527), included a major overhaul of the empire's military structure, in essence dividing the defenses among four different Generals or Ispahbids, each

[51] See Rezakhani 2017, 125-140 for a general history of the Hephthalites. Details of Hephthalite rule in the region are not well known due to a lack of sources, although the famous passage of Procopius of Cesarea (*Wars* I.3, vv. 1-7) marking them as "White Huns" has been instrumental in connecting them to other sources such as the Spēd Xyōn mentioned in Zand-i Wahman Tasn 2.58-59 (Cereti 2010, 64-65).

[52] Vondrovec 2014, 208-209 includes a series of Anonymous "Eastern Alkhan" which can be contemporary or subsequent to the Eastern Alkhan issues previously mentioned. The rest of the Alkhan coinage, however, are continuing the style that earns the name of "Alkhan in India" (Vondrovec 2014, 211-219).

[53] See Sinor 1990 for the history of the Western Türk empire and its expansion. Grenet 2002 provides a very interesting, if synoptic, view of the greater Bactria/Tukharistan region after the fall of the Hephthaltie empire and the continuation of sub-Hephthalite kingdoms in the region. Rezakhani 2018 identifies the battle in which the Western Türk vanquish the Hephthalites.

assigned to a cardinal direction and ruler by a Spāhbed or general.[54] The names, Xwarāsān (Sun-rise/East), Xwarawarān/Xwarōfrān (sun-down/West), Nēmrōz (Mid-day/South) and Abāxtar (Behind/North),[55] all point to various positions of the sun. Among these, the name of *Kust-i* Xwarāsān/Khurasan[56] (fig. 4) is a direct parallel to Bactrian *Miirosan*, the place of the "sunrise," or the east, although there is no way for us to tell if this was the inspiration for the naming of the three other generalships as well. The he division most likely happened after the Sasanians managed to control the former Hephthalite territories after the victories of the Western Türk.

Apart from the evidence of the seals, the clearest reference we have to the position of the Spāhbed is in reference to the murderer/executioner of Khosrow II, Mihr-Hormuz, the son of Mardānšāh, who «was the Fādhūsbān over the province of Nīmrūz and one of Kisrā's most obedient and trusty retainers.»[57] The rest of the Kusts are mentioned in the Geographie of pseudo-Moses of Khorene, where Khurasan most significantly does not include the regions of Sistan and Zabulistan, which are included in Nēmrōz.[58]

The name of Xwarāsān also appears prominently in the famous *Shahristānī-hā ī Ērānšahr* "the Book of the Provincial Capitals of Ērānšahr" (ŠĒ).[59] The final redaction of the text most likely occurred in the late eighth century, but it in fact mainly enumerates the divisions of the Sasanian Empire and a few areas outside of it.[60] The description starts from the east, the *Kust ī Xwarāsān*, and includes *Samarkand* (in Transoxiana), *Sugd ī Haft Āšyān* (unclear, but in Transoxiana), *Nawāzag* in the Balkh area, the *Shahristan* of Khwarazm (presumably Jurjaniya of the Muslim sources), *Marwrōd* (Islamic Marw-ar-rūd), *Marw* (Islamic Marw-ī Šāhījān), *Herat*, *Pošang*, *Tūs*, *Nēshapur*, *Kāyēn* (Qāen), *Dehestān* of Gurgān, *Qumis*, and the Five Cities built by Khusrow I.[61]

It is particularly in the early post-Sasanian documents that we see a proliferation of the name of Khurasan as the designation for the rule over the eastern quarter. A document dated to the year 503 of the Bactrian era (727 CE), mentions a "Prince of Khurasan," Bact.

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[54] See Gyselen 2001 for a discussion of the sigillographic evidence for this quadripartite division known already through historians such as al-Tabari. The title *Spāhbed* is ubiquitous on these seals, but other titles should also be considered, including *hujadag-Khusrō* ("good-omened/augured of Khosrow," as opposed to hujadag-Ohrmaz) which attributes certain seals to the period of Khosrow I (531-579) (Gyselen 2007, 50).

[55] Abaxtar or North, because of its association with demonic forces, was often replaced with Ādūrbādagān (as it is mentioned on the seals, Gyselen 2007, 48), which probably was a clearer indication of its actual territorial extent.

[56] Markwart 1931, 25.2 for the explanation of Kust as "side" and also the Xwarāsān as "sun-rise."

[57] Al-Tabari I. 1058 (Bosworth 1999, 395).

[58] Marquart 1901, 1-136, with the description of Khurasan, 47-93. Sakistan and Zabulistan are discussed as part of the Quarter of the South/Nēmrōz (35-40). This is also consistent with the later use of the name of Nīmrūz as the territory of the later Saffarid maliks (Bosworth 1994).

[59] Daryaee 2002; Markwart 1931.

[60] Daryaee 2002, 1-7.

[61] *ŠE* 20-20, Daryaee 2002, 18-19, see extensive commentary by Markwart 1931, 24-59. The five cities, as Markwart points out (Markwart 1931, 58-59) "are wholly unknown." I do wonder whether the "Five Cities" is not an MP translation, quite literal, of *Panjkent*, the famous Sogdian city to the east of Samarqand, and if these are in fact names of its five constituent parts. I await the publication of MK manuscript, including the text of ŠĒ, by Almut Hintze later this year in order to check out certain details that might confirm or dismiss this idea.

υωρσανο οισβορο.[62] At the same time, a local authority of Kabulistan (and perhaps Zabulistan) issued coins on which he identifies himself as the "Tegin, Khurasan Shah".[63] These coins, in both silver and copper, are based on earlier Arab-Sasanian coin types and incorporate the usual Sasanian coin legends and their dating system follows that of the Yazdgirdi Era, mostly issued around 728 CE and later.[64] The title of *hwl's'n MLK'* is written in Pahlavi on types 329 and 208 of Tegin (fig. 5), while the Bactrian inscription simply marks the king as the Exalted King σρι ταγιν(ο) βα(υ)ο. The use of the title of the King of *Khurasan*, and the Pahlavi inscription, can perhaps be attributed to the strong local context of the term and its descent from Bactrian *Miirosan* in East Iran, or a direct adoption of the Sasanian title of the Spahbēd of *Khurasan*.[65]

Another occurrence of the term, still prior to the activities of Abu Muslim in 750 and beyond, is the mention of an Ispahbid of Khurāsān among the court records known as the Tabaristan Archive. This is a Middle Persian document to 728/729 CE which identifies an *Ispahbid of Khurasan* in the southern Caspian coast:

> «(1) Māh Hordād abar sāl 77 rōz Xwar, mardān ī (2) Xwāst-Dēlān nām Hormiz pus, ī az ān *Haspān-raz deh (3) ī pad xānag Dēl-Dēlān pad dar-espās ī yazdān-bānag (4) Xorāsān-Spāhbed (hwl's'n-sp̄'hp̄ṭ') ī pad Halīg…».
>
> «Month *Khordād* in the year 77 day *Xwar* (728/729 CE), the people of Xwāst-Dēlām by name, son of Hormiz, from that village of *Haspīn-raz, in the house of Dēldēlān, in the service of the General of the East, protected by the gods…».[66]

Assuming that Weber's geographical identification of *Dēl ī Dēlān* as Deilam[67] and as a district of Tabaristan[68] is correct,[69] the presence of an Ispahbed of Khurasan/East in the region of Tabaristan, with an agent in a village in the region of Deilam/Daylam, is most unusual. We know that in later periods, the rulers of the Tabaristan called themselves by the name of Ispahbid (from MP Spāhbed) and continued to rule the area until the Timurid period (14th century).[70] It is also worth remembering that Ibn Khurradadbih, even in the ninth century, names an *Ispahbid* – incidentally named Badusban – and possibly related to the Dabuyid Ispahbids, as the ruler of Khurasan.

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62 Sims-Williams - de la Vaissière 2011, UV2 and commentary, 40.
63 Vondrovec 2014, 538-543.
64 Vondrovec 2014, 537-539.
65 As Vondrovec 2014, 537 points out, however, there is no direct link between the coins of the Alkhan East series and the coins of Tegin, Khurasan Shah. Perhaps we should consider the inscription on Tegin's coins in the context of the use of Pahlavi, already in the fifth century, by the Nezak Shah rulers of Kabul and Zabul (Vondrovec 2014, 449-500).
66 Weber 2017, 155, doc. tab. 17; Macuch 2017, 189.
67 See Markwart 1931, 126-127 for how Deilam is traditionally understood.
68 Tabaristan itself is traditionally part of the *Kust of Adurbādagān*, Markwart 1931, 129-135.
69 Weber 2017, 131.
70 See Ibn Isfandiyar 90ff, also Bosworth 1996, 162-165 were the *Dabuyid* and *Bawandid* Ispahbads (sic.) are listed.

In the first half of the seventh century and before the rise of Abu Muslim and his Khurasani army, then several authorities claimed the rule of Khurasan. While the ruler of Tabaristan identifies himself as the Spāhbed of Khurasan, the ruler of Khish thinks of himself as the "Prince" of Khurasan,[71] and the Tegin claims the title of the "King" (Shah) of Khurasan. All these sources date to the third and fourth decades of the seventh century and are very active signs of the popularity of the concept of Khurasan prior to the rise of Abu Muslim in 750.

7. Conclusion

Our knowledge of the regional history of the Sasanian and early Islamic empires is quite limited. The proliferation of geo-political designations such as Khurasan in the medieval period, are useful in understanding the regional history and its interactions with the larger imperial politics and administration. However, the history of the development of such concepts are often vaguely known, and many modern studies use anachronistic measures for understanding these territorial and cultural designations. With our increasing knowledge of the political geography of the "Eastern" provinces of the Sasanian Empire, and its development as a region in the periods before Sasanian domination, a study of Khurasan appears necessary and timely. Through such study we can begin to understand the rise of the region as a source of power in the medieval Islamic world and the way its shaped polities from the Abbasids to the Samanids, Seljuqs, Mongols, and the Timurids.

This article presents a survey of the available material for the history of what it calls East Iran. This designation is not a way of possessing the region as part of a modern "national" concept, but as an independent cultural zone which in the medieval period which was itself the core of the concept of Iran or what some modern historians call the Persianate World. By tracing the idea of *East* Iran through Bactrian *Miirosan* and Middle Persian *Xwrāsān*, the article suggests that Khurasan as the core of the medieval Persianate World was in fact a long time in the making. In both its cultural and political aspects, the Khurasan of the Islamic period was the product of a long process of state-creation, starting with the forging of a territorial unity under the Kushans and proceeding through the Kidarite, Hephthalite, and Sasanians periods. The immediate precedence of the Abbsid Khurasan, however, needs to be sought in the rise of the concept of Khurasan as a coherent political unit in the early Islamic period and in the competing claims of the Ispahbids, Princes, and Kings who claimed the title of rule in the area.

[71] Sims-Williams - de la Vaissière 2011, 43.

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Fig. 1 - a “Genuine” Hephthalite issue, countermarked on a coin of Sasanian Pērōz (Photograph courtesy of das Antlitz des Fremden).

Fig. 2 - Alkhan “East” coinage: a coin of Javukha (Photograph courtesy of das Antlitz des Fremden).

Fig. 3 - Silver issue of Mehama (Photograph courtesy of das Antlitz des Fremden).

Fig. 4 - Sasanian seal-impression, attributed to the Spāhbed of Xwarāsān (Private collection).

Fig. 5 - Coin of Tegin, Khurasan Shah (Classical Numismatic Group 390, Lot 381).

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EXCAVATIONS AT ISTAKHR IN 2012: A DEEP STRATIGRAPHICAL INSIGHT*

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This paper deals with the matrix of the excavation carried out in 2012 at Istakhr, west of the site of the mosque. The results of the archaeological campaign, already published, are integrated here with the matrix in order to highlight stratigraphic unit relationships and clarify the succession of the phases.

Keywords: Istakhr; Iran; excavation; matrix; Islamic period

During the second archaeological campaign of the joint Iranian-Italian Archaeological Mission at Istakhr,[1] in the autumn 2012, the area west of the site of the mosque was investigated by digging a trench.[2] The digging area was selected after the first campaign in the spring of 2012 when an archaeological survey was carried out and a DTM of the area west of the site of the mosque was produced.[3] A linear depression parallel to the West Wall was observed,[4] and after the excavation the depression was found to correspond to a paved street (WSU 131-203, SU 163-152-159) and a sewer below WSU 182. Furthermore, a trace of vegetation, connected with an opening in the West Wall, was detected.[5]

As the Iranian counterpart requested, extensive digging was not allowed, so the team opened several tests which were later unified into a single trench with a narrow and elongated shape. The latter (figs. 1-2) was oriented E-W and measured 20.90 × 2 m, with an extension of 4.50 to 4.90 m close to the west wall of the 'mosque', identified by Whitcomb as the *qiblī* wall, namely the West Wall.[6]

1. PHASE 9

The excavation area was completely covered by humus (SU 101), which also covered the structure of the 'mosque' (WSU 1-2-7) by a few centimetres on the east side of the trench.[7]

On the west side of the trench, SU 101 filled several plough traces (from the east SU -126, -127, -128, -103, -104, -105, -106, -107, -108, -109) dating to a very recent past but

* This paper is a systematic stratigraphic analysis on matrix, not published in Fontana 2018. For the phases see Jaia 2018 and Ebanista 2018.

1 The mission was directed, on the Italian side, by Maria Vittoria Fontana. I am grateful to her for the opportunity to study this interesting archaeological context. The excavation was conducted in the field by Ahmad Ali Asadi, Martina Rugiadi, Alessandro M. Jaia, Alessandro Blanco, Valentina Cipollari and the author.

2 For the excavation report see Chegini *et al.* 2013, and Fontana 2013; see also Fontana *et al.* 2012 and Fontana *et al.* 2016. For a more exhaustive discussion about the excavation see Jaia 2018 and Ebanista 2018.

3 See in particular Fontana *et al.* 2012.

4 On the West Wall see below and n. 5.

5 See Jaia 2018, 322, fig. 2.

6 Whitcomb 1979, 367. On the site of the mosque, see Di Cesare - Ebanista 2018.

7 The site of the mosque was partially investigated during the last century (cf. Fontana 2018; Rugiadi - Colliva 2018; Di Cesare - Ebanista 2018).

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before the present prohibition of cultivation in order to preserve the Istakhr site. Pit SU -111 (filled by SU 110) could also be linked to these modern anthropic activities which covered a rather uniform layer SU 118 = 113 = 102, including very few fragments of pottery and some stones.

On the east side of the trench, SU 118 covered WSU 6, the closing device of the door of the West Wall. All these activities could be connected to phase 9.[8]

2. PHASE 8

The rather homogeneous layer SU 118 = 113 = 102 (fig. 2) covered a complex sequence of layers related to a re-occupation of the area whose chronology is difficult to indicate. The remains of the walls WSU 147, made of local stone shards and bricks re-used and set without mortar, were unearthed; this wall was founded on WSU 197 and 196.[9] WSU 147 was covered by several layers of decay of this WSU and related structures, as several bricks and stones testify: SU 112 on the east side, while on the west the area of fire SU 116 (related to a pastoral activity?) covered SU 124 and 129. Close to the east end of WSU 147 an irregularly shaped pit SU -144 (approximately 0.90 E-W × 1.00 N-S, fig. 3) was brought to light; it was filled (SU 142) by several nearly complete wares (10th - early 13th centuries).[10] It was likely a dump for material, recovered at a later stage, to fill a pit or depression in order to level the floor coeval to WSU 147; pit SU -144 cuts SU 133, a great levelling layer related to phase 7.

Although there is no reliable stratigraphic connection, the door in the West Wall was probably closed during the same phase by roughly cut limestones joined by the whitish mortar WSU 6, which seems to be founded on the quite compact layer SU 8.[11]

3. PHASE 7

A great levelling layer (from west SU 133 = 114 =140, fig. 2) was detected on the west side of the trench. It was made in order to cover older structures (the recovered pottery testifies a chronology between the 9th - early 13th centuries).[12] The levelling activity also intended to unify both the levels on the east and west sides of the trench, close to the West Wall door, as a consequence of the sliding of the collapsed materials from the West Wall (WSU 1-2-7) towards the west (SU 135-141-119-125-120, phase 5).

4. PHASE 6 [A-C]

The great levelling layer SU 133 = 114 =140 (fig. 2) in the central area of the trench covered a clear sequence of street levels related to a period when the paved street WSU 131-203, parallel to the West Wall, was in use on its west side only (for a width of 2.05 m), bordered by reused slabs. From the top, three levels, covered by both the levelling layer SU 140-114 and SU 138-139, have been recognised: SU 159 (phase 6c), 152 (phase 6b) and

8 Jaia 2018, 312.
9 See Jaia 2018 and Ebanista 2018, 343-344, figs. 32-33.
10 Chegini *et al.* 2013, 12, 20, fig. 11; Fusaro 2018, 356.
11 See Jaia 2018 and Ebanista 2018, 324, figs. 4-5.
12 On the pottery chronology see Fontana *et al.* 2016; Fusaro - Mancini 2018.

163 (phase 6a, fig. 2). SU 164 was determined in order to keep separate the pottery found just across the street WSU 131-203.

5. PHASE 5

The stratigraphy covered by the great levelling SU 118 (Phase 7) on the east side of the trench consisted of several layers sloping towards the west: two great sliding layers SU 135 and 141 (fig. 2), and other layers (SU 119-125-120) related to the same collapse activity (phase 5).

These layers most probably originated from the destruction of the West Wall, as their finds (fragments of stones, clay) would seem to attest. A grey stone element belonging to a Persepolitan-style capital came from SU 141.[13] The accumulation of material, in particular SU 141, covered the east side of paved street WSU 131. The chronology of the materials recovered spans the 11th and 12th centuries.[14]

6. PHASE 4

SU 141 covered two *tannūr* abandoned close to the door of the West Wall,[15] one is just east of WSU 7, and completely excavated (SU -178 and 179), and one is south-west of WSU 2 (SU -189 and 185), just partially excavated as it is at the edge of the trench. The pottery from *tannūr* is datable to the 11th century.[16] This was probably the moment when the mosque site was destroyed and abandoned.

7. PHASE 3-3A

In the central area of the trench, corresponding to the free area in phases 1-2 between the paved street WSU 131-203 and the western block WSU 196-155, a room was brought to light.[17] It is defined by WSU 115 (N-S oriented) and 197 (E-W oriented, fig. 1). WSU 115 (thickness 0.63 m), covered by SU 114 (fig. 2), is composed of shards of local stone of different sizes and irregular cuts, mostly reused. A stone slab inserted into the wall (fig. 4a) is similar to the slabs used to narrow the street SU 159-152-163 (fig. 4b). The large foundation pit SU -204 was produced in order to build WSU 115 (fig. 4a-b).[18] On the east side the pit cuts the remake of the street WSU 203. The most reliable layer for dating the wall WSU 115 is SU 165,[19] i.e. the filling of the foundation pit containing pottery datable to the 10th century.[20] On the west side the foundation pit SU -149 cuts SU 150-151[21]-160, and it is filled by SU 148. WSU 197, supported by WSU 115, is 0.54-55 m wide; in addition it is slightly misaligned (towards the south-east) compared to other buildings. This wall, covered by SU 133 (= SU 114, fig. 2), is also made of shards of local stone (in many cases

[13] See Jaia 2018 and Ebanista 2018, 343-344, figs. 32-33.
[14] On the pottery chronology see Fusaro - Mancini 2018; Fontana *et al.* 2016.
[15] See Jaia 2018 and Ebanista 2018, 331, fig. 15.
[16] On the pottery chronology see Fusaro - Mancini 2018; Fontana *et al.* 2016.
[17] See Jaia 2018 and Ebanista 2018, 335, fig. 20.
[18] See also Jaia 2018 and Ebanista 2018, 341, fig. 28.
[19] It is under SU 132, a soft layer with some finds: stones, pottery and glass.
[20] On the pottery chronology see Fusaro - Mancini 2018; Fontana *et al.* 2016.
[21] SU 150 and 151 are very compact soil layers.

wedge-shaped). Due to the lack of any kind of binder for both the walls, it is possible to hypothesise that the upper part of the building was built in mud-bricks or, more probably, in *pisé*. The stratigraphic context inside the room defined by SU 115 and 197 is rather complex, where the in-depth test SU 160 (fig. 5)[22] was carried out on the east side in order to investigate the foundation pit SU -207 of the northern wall WSU 197. Along the west side, SU 160 corresponds to three SU:[23] SU 200, i.e. the levelling layer (clean and almost inclusion-free soil), SU 201, i.e. the surface of that levelling layer (this could be considered the first-floor layer related to WSU 197) and SU 199,[24] a second levelling layer, which covers both the previous SU (fig. 5).[25] Pottery found in these layers related to the wall WSU 115 and 197 can be dated to the 11th century.[26]

On the west side of the trench, just east of the room defined by WSU 155 and 196, covered by SU 198,[27] in turn covered by the levelling SU 133 (= 140 =114), the narrow wall WSU 154 (width 0.48 m, N-S oriented), located just east of WSU 155, was brought to light.[28] It was built with shards of local stone set without mortar (as WSU 115 and 197) and is probably relate to a room built in the free area between the street and the west block which determines a narrow passage between WSU 155 and 154 (phase 3A).

8. Phase 1-2a

In the east area of the trench[29] the West Wall[30] is the oldest element,[31] identified by Whitcomb as the *qiblī* wall,[32] and consists of WSU 7 (north of the opening closed by WSU 6),[33] WSU 1 (just south of the opening), and WSU 2 (south tower). It is rather thick (1.82 m) and is preserved for a maximum height of 1.20 m. The facing is made up of shards of local stone of different sizes, joined with small amounts of mortar; the core of the wall is built in concrete with small stone elements. The excavation of a test, close to the opening in the West Wall, brought to light the threshold of the door WSU 195, built in the very compact layer SU 194, covered by SU 141. A limited test near the threshold identified the red soil with mortar and pottery SU 193, covered by SU 194.

In the western part of the trench[34] the main block to the west of the mosque site[35] was brought to light just for a small portion, the eastern corner of a room defined by WSU 196 (E-W oriented) and WSU 155 (N-S oriented), parallel to the West Wall (WSU 1-7). WSU

22 See also Jaia 2018 and Ebanista 2018, 341, fig. 28.
23 It is clearly visible from the west section of the SU 160 test.
24 SU 199 is composed of a compact soil with several inclusions, including some stone shards.
25 See Jaia 2018 and Ebanista 2018, 341, fig. 28.
26 On the pottery chronology see Fusaro - Mancini 2018; Fontana *et al.* 2016.
27 On the northern facade of the trench a floor was highlighted (?) WSU 206 which covers SU 198.
28 See Jaia 2018 and Ebanista 2018, 341, fig. 29; 344 fig. 33.
29 Sector 1 in Jaia 2018, 304-306.
30 See Jaia 2018 and Ebanista 2018, 324, figs. 4-5.
31 For a more extensive discussion about the West Wall see Jaia 2018, Ebanista 2018 and Di Cesare - Ebanista 2018.
32 Whitcomb 1979.
33 On the door, see Jaia 2018, 305; Di Cesare - Ebanista 2018, 268-271.
34 Sector 2 in Jaia 2018, 306-307.
35 See Jaia 2018 and Ebanista 2018, 343, fig. 32.

196 is the most preserved wall. It is built with both local stones, set in a very compact way, and quadrangular baked bricks (0.20-0.22 per side) set with good mortar.[36] During phase 8 WSU 196 was used as the foundation for the wall WSU 147. WSU 155, built in shards of local stone, leans against wall WSU 196. Only a small portion of the inner part of the building (room?)[37] was excavated due to the limited dimensions of the trench. The concrete ground level SU 168-169 was brought to light, covered by SU 198 (the levelling layer following the abandonment of both the floor levels and the walls 196 and 155 – phase 3), SU 161 (the filling of the pit SU -162) and 158, which can be attributed to the abandonment of the room. It is composed of cementitious conglomerate mixed with minced ceramic sherds and could be considered the floor preparation of the west room defined by WSU 196 and 155. The pottery found can be dated to the 10th century at the latest.[38]

Despite the limited size of the excavation in the western corner of the trench, it is significant that the height of the concrete floor (whose preparation is constituted by SU 168 and 169) is the same as the door threshold WSU 195 of the West Wall.

In the middle area of the trench,[39] between the West Wall WSU 1-7 and the western block WSU 155-196, covered on its eastern side by SU 141 (phase 5) and on its western side by the sequence of levels SU 159-152-163-164 of use of the street (phase 6), the large paved street WSU 131, N-S oriented, was unheated (preserved width of 4.67 m).[40] In its 1st phase the street (re-constructible width of approximately 6.25 m)[41] was paved with local stone slabs (0.21-0.25 m per side) oriented S-SW/N-NE.[42] On the east side of the paved surface soil slumping was recognised under a layer composed of large fragments of slabs and shards (SU 180),[43] which can be interpreted as the collapse of the street on its east side. The removal of the layer unearthed the sewer WSU 182 (0.36 m wide and 0.41 m high), built of concrete material and coated with mortar.[44] The water flowed southwards (inclination: 2.2%). On its southern side a large fragment of the cover of the sewer, made of local stones put in place dry, is preserved. The filling of the sewer is composed of a very compact clayey material with only a few ceramic fragments (SU 184), covered by a clayey layer with a few ceramic fragments related to a period following the abandonment of the infrastructure SU 183. The few materials found in the two layers are datable to the 9th-10th centuries.[45]

36 The backed bricks are above all in the upper part of the wall.
37 See Jaia 2018 and Ebanista 2018, 341, fig. 29.
38 On the pottery chronology see Fusaro - Mancini 2018; Fontana *et al.* 2016.
39 Sector 3 in Jaia 2018, 307-308.
40 See Jaia 2018 and Ebanista 2018, 344, fig. 34.
41 See Jaia 2018, 307-308.
42 The orientation is different from that of the contemporary buildings WSU 1-7 and WSU 155-196.
43 This layer is covered by a sequence of layers SU 153, 166, 167, 171, -170, 172 in turn covered by SU 140. A sub-quadrangular trench SU -174, covered by SU 141, which covers SU 180, was probably dug in order to remove blocks in a following phase. See Jaia 2018 and Ebanista 2018, 344 fig. 35.
44 See Jaia 2018 and Ebanista 2018, 330-331, figs. 13-14.
45 On the pottery chronology see Fusaro - Mancini 2018; Fontana *et al.* 2016.

On its west side the paved surface was rearranged twice[46] after digging SU -202 of the foundation pit for WSU 115 using fragments of the same street and fragments of the same kind of stones (SU -204, WSU 203).

The area between street WSU 131 and western blocks WSU 155 and 196[47] was probably free of buildings in phase 1, at least as far as can be ascertained from the excavated trench. Foundation pit SU -207 of the east-west wall WSU 197 cuts a very compact and smooth clay surface (SU 176, fig. 6), found during the excavation of test SU 160. This level (0.16-0.22 m, under the street WSU 131 level) is probably the most ancient level of use identified in the trench, preceding the paved street. Half of floor SU 176 is preserved and was in use in phase 1; it was also cut by *tannūr* SU 188 (diameter 0.92 m),[48] and by foundation SU -207. During phase 3 the floor was raised (SU 201) and the *tannūr* fell out of use, as demonstrated by the filling of pottery fragments in SU 200.

9. List of SU/WSU[49]

The stratigraphic units (SU-WSU) follow, together with the excavation date, a short description and the related phase[50] (see the general excavation matrix, fig. 7).

SU/WSU Numbers	Excavation Date (2012)	Description	Phase
WSU 1	20 October	Part of the West Wall (thickness 1.82), N-S oriented, just south of the door (closed with WSU 6) and north of the tower WSU 2. Made up of local stone elements of different sizes, joined with a thin layer of mortar.	Phase 1
WSU 2	20 October	Semi-circular tower (diameter 1.85 m) of the West Wall, just south of the door between WSU 1 and 7. Made up of fragments of limestone bound with very firm white mortar, found more abundantly between stones close to the façade (west side). It contains a filling of loose materials.	Phase 1
SU 3	24 October	Greyish layer with mortar and stones, fills SU -4, covered by SU 118.	Phase 9
SU -4	24 October	Probable pit, approximately round, set in the SE corner of trench. Cuts SU 118, filled by SU 3.	Phase 9
WSU 6	24 October	Closing device of the door in the West Wall (between WSU 1 and 7), consists of roughly cut limestone joined by whitish mortar, seems to be founded on SU 8.	Phase 8
WSU 7	24 October	Part of the West Wall (thickness 1.82), N-S oriented, just north of the door (closed with WSU 6). Made up of local stone elements of different sizes, joined with a thin layer of mortar.	Phase1
SU 8	24 October	Clay layer, beige colour, quite compact on which WSU 6 seems to be founded.	Phase 8
SU 101	22 October	*Humus* covering the whole trench.	
SU 102	23 October	Layer of soil with very few pottery sherds and some stones. Covered by SU 101, cut by SU -103, -104, -105, -106, -107, -108, -109 and -111. = SU 113-118.	Phase 9
SU -103	23 October	Cut of the plough, NW-SE oriented. Covered by SU 101, it cuts SU 102.	Phase 9
SU -104	23 October	Cut of the plough, NW-SE oriented. Covered by SU 101, it cuts SU 102.	Phase 9
SU -105	23 October	Cut of the plough, NW-SE oriented. Covered by SU 101, it cuts SU 102.	Phase 9

[46] See Jaia 2018 and Ebanista 2018, 344, fig. 34.
[47] Sector 4 in Jaia 2018, 308-309.
[48] The *tannūr* is filled by SU 188 and covered by SU 186 (an ash layer).
[49] SU: stratigraphic unit; WSU: wall stratigraphic unit.
[50] See Jaia 2018.

SU/WSU NUMBERS	EXCAVATION DATE (2012)	DESCRIPTION	PHASE
SU -106	23 October	Cut of the plough, NW-SE oriented. Covered by SU 101, it cuts SU 102.	Phase 9
SU -107	23 October	Cut of the plough, NW-SE oriented. Covered by SU 101, it cuts SU 102.	Phase 9
SU -108	23 October	Cut of the plough, NW-SE oriented. Covered by SU 101, it cuts SU 102.	Phase 9
SU -109	23 October	Cut of the plough, NW-SE oriented. Covered by SU 101, it cuts SU 102.	Phase 9
SU 110	23 October	Filling of the pit SU -111.	Phase 9
SU -111	23 October	Irregular-shaped pit, set on the west side of the trench, on its south limit. It cuts SU 102, filled by SU 110.	Phase 9
SU 112	23 October	Layer of soil with several limestones and bricks in the north corner of the trench. Covered by SU 102.	Phase 8
SU 113	24 October	Layer of soil with very few pottery sherds and some stones. Covered by SU 101, it covers SU 114 = SU 102 -118.	Phase 9
SU 114	23 October	Levelling layer with pottery and stones, covered by SU 113 = SU 133 – 140.	Phase 7
WSU 115	25 October	Wall set in the middle of the trench, oriented N-S (thickness 0.63 m), composed of shards of local stone of different sizes and irregular cuts. Covered by SU 114, it fills - SU 204 and -149.	Phase 3
SU 116	25 October	Layer of blackish, dusty soil (probably ash), covered by SU 102, it covers SU 124.	Phase 8
SU 117	25 October	Layer of soil, west of WSU 115, with some limestone and pottery, covered by SU 114, it covers SU 122 and 123.	Phase 2
SU 118	25 October	Layer of soil with very few pieces of pottery and some stones. Covered by SU 101, it covers WSU 6, cut by SU -126, -127, -128 = SU 102-113.	Phase 9
SU 119	26 October	Layer of greyish soil, hard, with small pieces of stones, covered by SU 118, it covers SU 120.	Phase 5
SU 120	26 October	Layer of grey clay with many pottery fragments, glass, iron and bones, covered by SU 119-125, it covers SU 135.	Phase 5
SU 121	25 October	Layer of light brown soft soil covered by SU 119 and 125, it covers SU 135.	Phase 7
SU 122	26 October	Layer of soil, west of WSU 115 and south of SU 123, with many blocks of limestone, bricks and pottery. Covered by SU 117, it covers SU 130.	Phase 2
SU 123	26 October	Layer of soil, west of WSU 115, north of SU 122 with few bricks and limestone, covered by SU 117, it covers SU 130.	Phase 2
SU 124	26 October	Layer of soil, west of SU 112, covered by SU 116, it covers SU 129.	Phase 8
SU 125	26 October	Layer of greyish soil, with small pieces of stones, covered by SU 118, it covers SU 120.	Phase 5
SU -126	26 October	Cut of the plough, NW-SE oriented. Covered by SU 101, it cuts SU 118.	Phase 9
SU -127	26 October	Cut of the plough, NW-SE oriented. Covered by SU 101, it cuts SU 118.	Phase 9
SU -128	26 October	Cut of the plough, NW-SE oriented. Covered by SU 101, it cuts SU 118.	Phase 9
SU 129	26 October	Layer of soil covered by SU 124, it covers SU 133 and WSU 147.	Phase 8
SU 130	26 October	Extremely compact layer of soil with some stones, covered by SU 122 and 123, it covers WSU 131.	Phase 2
WSU 131	27 October	Large paved street N-S oriented (preserved width of 4.67 m). Paved with local stone slabs (0.21-0.25 m per side), covered by SU 141, 130, 180 and 164. Cut by SU -202 on the west side.	Phase 1
SU 132	27 October	Layer of soft soil, with some stones, pottery and glass, it covers SU 165, fills SU -204.	Phase 3
SU 133	27 October	Levelling layer with large quantity of pottery, covered by SU 129, cut by SU -144. = SU 114 - 140	Phase 7
SU 135	27 October	Layer of quite soft grey soil with many pieces of pottery, glass, iron and bones, covered by SU 120, it covers SU 141-146-140.	Phase 5
SU 138	28 October	Layer with many limestone blocks (medium and small size), covered by SU 114, it covers SU 139.	Phase 6
SU 139	28 October	Layer with pottery, some glass and bones covered by SU 114 and SU 138, it covers SU 159.	Phase 7

SU/WSU NUMBERS	EXCAVATION DATE (2012)	DESCRIPTION	PHASE
SU 140	28 October	Quite hard levelling layer with small pieces of stones, mortar and pottery, covered by SU 135 = SU 114 – 133.	Phase 7
SU 141	28 October	Layer of soil covered by SU 135, cut by SU -145, it covers WSU 131.	Phase 5
SU 142	28 October	Filling of the pit SU -144, west of WSU 147, with several nearly complete vessels. Covered by SU 129.	Phase 8
SU 143	28 October	Layer of extremely compact soil, with mortar, small stones and pebbles, set west of WSU 147, cut by SU – 144, covered by SU 129.	Phase 3
SU -144	28 October	Pit, it cuts SU 143, filled by SU 142, set west of WSU 147.	Phase 8
WSU 147	28 October	Wall oriented E-W on the western side of the trench made of local stone shards and bricks set without mortar. Covered by SU 129, it is founded on WSU 196 and 197.	Phase 8
SU 148	30 October	Filling of SU -149.	Phase 3
SU -149	30 October	Foundation pit of WSU 115 on its west side, it cuts SU 150-151-160, filled by SU 148.	Phase 3
SU 150	31 October	Layer of extremely compact soil with mortar inside, covered by SU 143, it covers SU 151.	Phase 3
SU 151	31 October	Layer of compact soil, covered by SU 150, it covers SU 199 and 157.	Phase 3
SU 152	31 October	Layer of beige soil, with pebbles and pottery, covered by SU 159, it covers SU 163. It could be considered one of the levels of use of the street.	Phase 6b
SU 153	31 October	Layer of soil set in the east side of Trench, covered by SU 140, it covers SU 166.	Phase 2
WSU 154	1 November	Wall (width 0.48 m), N-S oriented, located just east of WSU 155. It is built with shards of local stone set without mortar. Covered by SU 198.	Phase 3a
WSU 155	1 November	Wall set on the west side of the trench, N-S oriented, built with shards of local stone. Covered by SU 198, it leans against WSU 196.	Phase 1
SU 156	1 November	Layer of soil between WSU 154 and WSU 155, covered by SU 198, it covers SU 192.	Phase 3a
SU 157	1 November	Layer of ash, set in the middle of trench 1, east of WSU 154, covered by SU 151, it covers SU 160.	Phase 3
SU 158	1 November	Layer of soil, set on the West side of the trench, cut by SU -162, covered by SU 161, it covers SU 168.	Phase 3
SU 159	1 November	Layer of beige soil with small stones, pebbles and pottery, covered by SU 140 and 114, it covers SU 152. It is one of the levels of use of the street.	Phase 6c
SU 160 (test)	1 November	In-depth test conducted on the east side in order to verify the foundation pit SU -207 of the wall WSU 197. Layer of very compact soil, covered by SU 157, it covers SU 176.	Phase 3
SU 161	1 November	Filling of pit SU -162 set on the west side of the trench, with several bricks. Covered by SU 198.	Phase 3
SU -162	1 November	Cut set in the west side of the trench, filled by SU 161, it cuts SU 158.	Phase 3
SU 163	1 November	Layer of compact soil, with very few stones and pottery. It was covered by SU 152, it covers SU 164. It is one of the levels of use of the street.	Phase 6a
SU 164	2 November	Layer of soil named to keep separate the pottery just across the street WSU 131, covered by SU 163.	Phase 6a
SU 165	2 November	Layer of extremely compact yellowish soil with pottery and bones, covered by SU 132, it fills SU -204.	Phase 3
SU 166	2 November	Layer of soil set on the east side of the trench, east of SU 164 and 163, covered by SU 153.	Phase 2
SU 167	2 November	Layer of soil set on the east side of trench 1, east of SU 164 and 163, covered by SU 166, it covers SU 171.	Phase 2
SU 168	2 November	Compact layer set on the west side of the trench made of cementitious conglomerate mixed with minced ceramic sherds. Covered by SU 158, it covers SU 169.	Phase 1
SU 169	2 November	Compact layer set on the west side of the trench made of cementitious	Phase 1

SU/WSU NUMBERS	EXCAVATION DATE (2012)	DESCRIPTION	PHASE
		conglomerate mixed with minced ceramic sherds. Covered by SU 168.	
SU -170	3 November	Sub-rectangular pit set on the east side of the trench, it cuts SU 172, filled by SU 171, covered by SU 167. Due to its shape, it seems to be the hole made by the roots of a tree.	Phase 2
SU 171	3 November	Yellowish soft soil, filling of pit SU -170, covered by SU 167.	Phase 2
SU 172	3 November	Layer of greyish, extremely compact soil, set on the east side of the trench, cut by SU -17, it covers SU 180.	Phase 2
SU 173	3 November	Filling of SU -174, covered by SU 141 with many pieces of pottery and bones.	Phase 2
SU -174	3 November	Sub-quadrangular cut set west of SU 175, covered by SU 141, filled by SU 173. Trench probably created to remove blocks.	Phase 2
SU 175	3 November	Layer of soil with much mortar, east of SU -174. Covered by SU 141, it covers SU 180.	Phase 2
SU 176	3 November	Very compact clay layer set west of WSU 115, covered by SU 160 (test) and 200, cut by SU -207 and -205.	Phase 1
SU -178	4 November	Cut of the *tannūr* west of WSU 2, covered by SU 141, filled by SU 179.	Phase 4
SU 179	4 November	Filling of *tannūr* SU -178.	Phase 4
SU 180	4 November	Layer composed of large fragments of slabs and shards (collapse of street WSU 131), covered by SU 172. It covers SU 183.	Phase 2
SU 181	4 November	Layer of soil, east of WSU 115 and west of WSU 131, covered by SU 165, it covers SU 183.	Phase 2
WSU 182	4 November	Sewer (0.36 m wide and 0.41 m high), built in concrete material and coated with mortar, oriented N-S. The water flowed southwards (incline: 2.2%). Covered by SU 180, filled by SU 183-184.	Phase 1
SU 183	4 November	Clayey layer with few ceramic fragments, it fills WSU 182, covered by SU 180.	Phase 2
SU 184	4 November	Very compact clayey material with only a few ceramic fragments, it fills WSU 182, covered by SU 183, it covers SU 184.	Phase 1
SU 185	4 November	Filling of *tannūr* SU -189 on the west side of WSU 2, it fills SU -189.	Phase 4
SU 186	4 November	Layer of ash, it covers SU 188, cut by SU -207.	Phase 1
SU 188	4 November	*Tannūr* set in SU 176, fills SU -205, covered by SU 186, cut by SU -207 (foundation of wall WSU 197).	Phase 1
SU -189	4 November	Cut of *tannūr* SU 185.	Phase 4
SU 192	6 November	Hard and compact layer with much pottery, mortar, glass and bricks between WSU 154 and 155, covered by SU 156.	Phase 3a
SU 193	5 November	Layer of red soil, covered by SU 194, with plaster and mortar inside.	Phase 1
SU 194	5 November	Layer of brown soil, compact, within which the threshold WSU 195 is built. Covered by SU 141, it covers SU 193.	Phase 1
WSU 195	6 November	Threshold of the opening in the West Wall, built of limestone blocks, covered by SU 141.	Phase 1
WSU 196	6 November	Wall set in the western corner of the trench, oriented E-W, composed of elements of local stone and baked bricks set with mortar. Covered by WSU 147, it leans on WSU 155.	Phase 1
WSU 197	6 November	Wall (E-W oriented) set in the central area of the trench (0.54-55 m wide) made of shards of local stone (in many cases wedge-shaped). Covered by SU 133.	Phase 3
SU 198	6 November	Layer of compact soil, set on the west side of the trench covered by SU 133, it covers WSU 154-155, SU 156-161.	Phase 3
SU 199	6 November	Layer composed of a compact soil with several inclusions, including some stone shards, visible from the west section of the SU 160 test. Covered by SU 151, it covers SU 201.	Phase 3

SU/WSU NUMBERS	EXCAVATION DATE (2012)	DESCRIPTION	PHASE
SU 200	6 November	Layer composed of clean and almost inclusion-free soil, visible from the west section of the SU 160 test, covered by SU 201.	Phase 3
SU 201	6 November	Surface of the levelling SU 200 (floor), covered by SU 199.	Phase 3
SU -202	6 November	Cut on the western side of WSU 131 made in order to build WSU 115, filled by WSU 203.	Phase 3
WSU 203	6 November	Remake of the street WSU 131 built using fragments of the street and fragments of the same stone.	Phase 3
SU -204	6 November	Foundation pit of WSU 115 on its east side, it cuts WSU 203, filled by SU 165 and 132.	Phase 3
SU -205	6 November	Cut filled by the *tannūr* SU 188, covered by SU 186 and cuts SU 176.	Phase 1
WSU 206	6 November	Floor (?) visible in the northern section of the trench, it covers SU 198.	Phase 3
SU -207	6 November	Foundation pit of WSU 197, it cuts SU 176.	Phase 3

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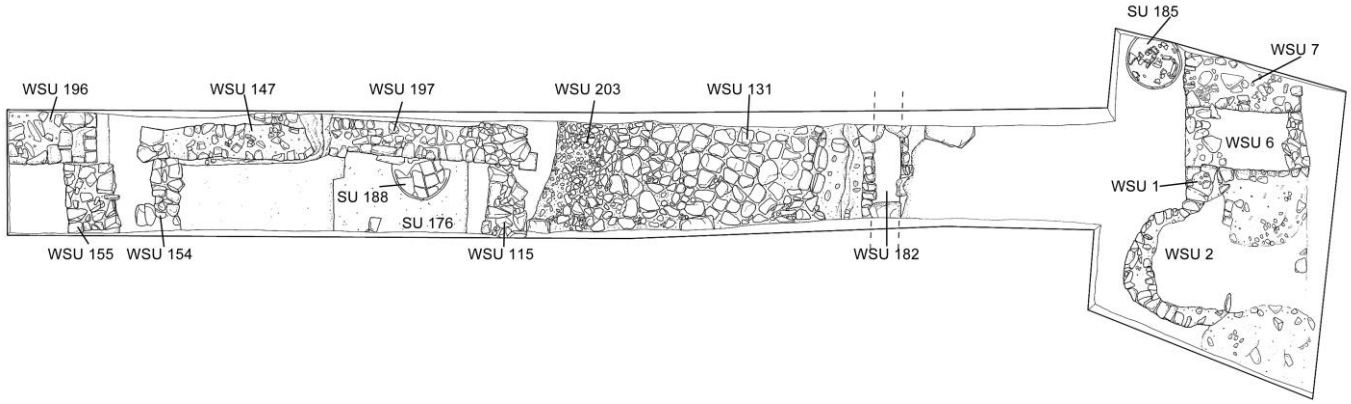

Fig. 1 - Istakhr, plan of the trench excavated west of the 'mosque' site where the main SU/WSU are reported (rendering A.M. Jaia and L. Ebanista 2012).

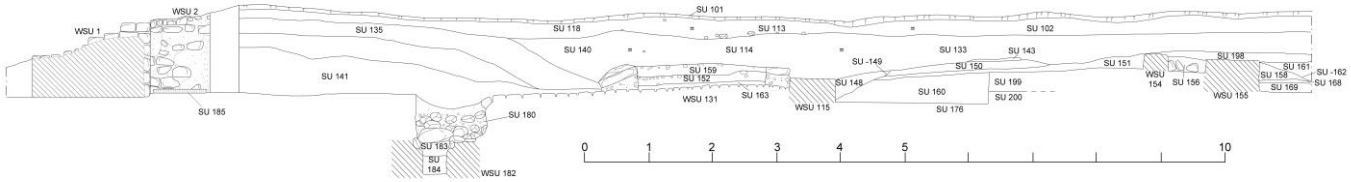

Fig. 2 - Istakhr, east-west section of the trench (rendering A.M. Jaia and L. Ebanista 2012).

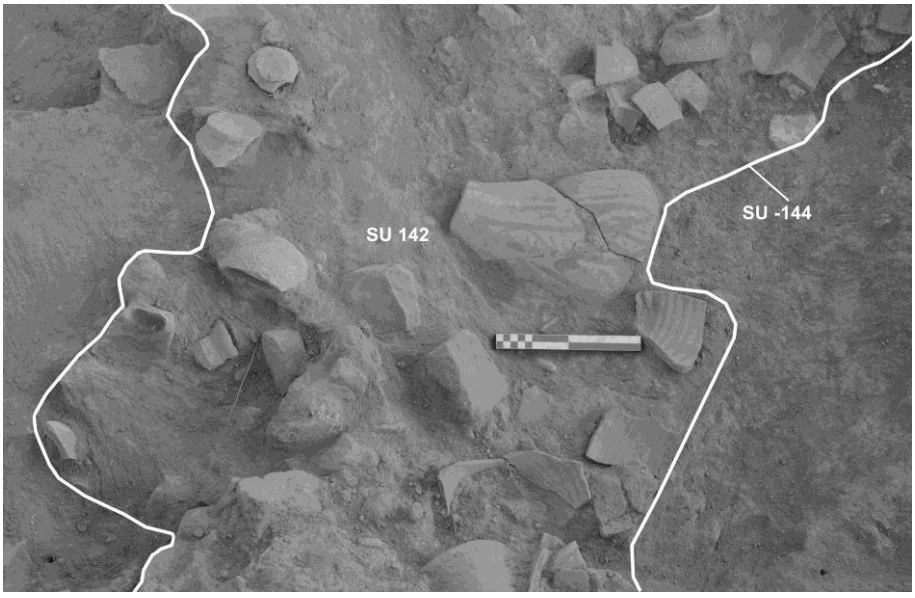

Fig. 3 - Istakhr, pottery dump SU 142, view from the north (© L. Ebanista 2012).

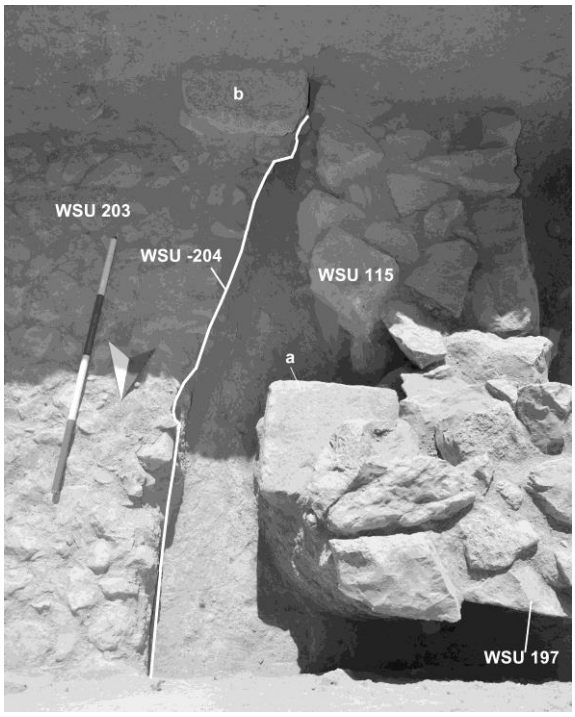

Fig. 4 - Istakhr, WSU 115 and 197, foundation pit of WSU 115 SU -204; the stone slab inserted into the wall WSU 115 (a) similar to the slabs used to narrow the street (b), view from the north (© L. Ebanista 2012).

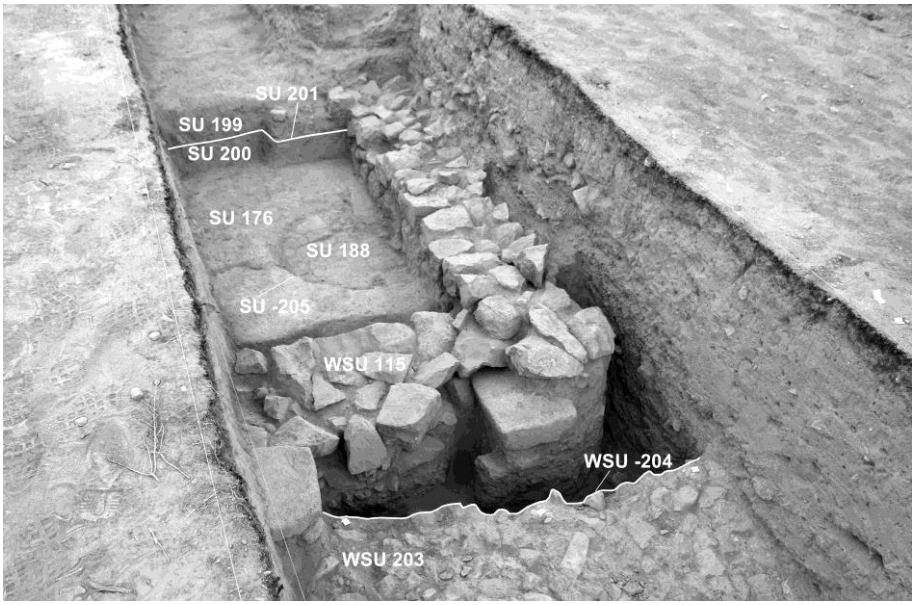

Fig. 5 - Istakhr, central area of the trench with the floor SU 176 and the *tannūr* SU 188, view from the south-west (© A. Blanco 2012).

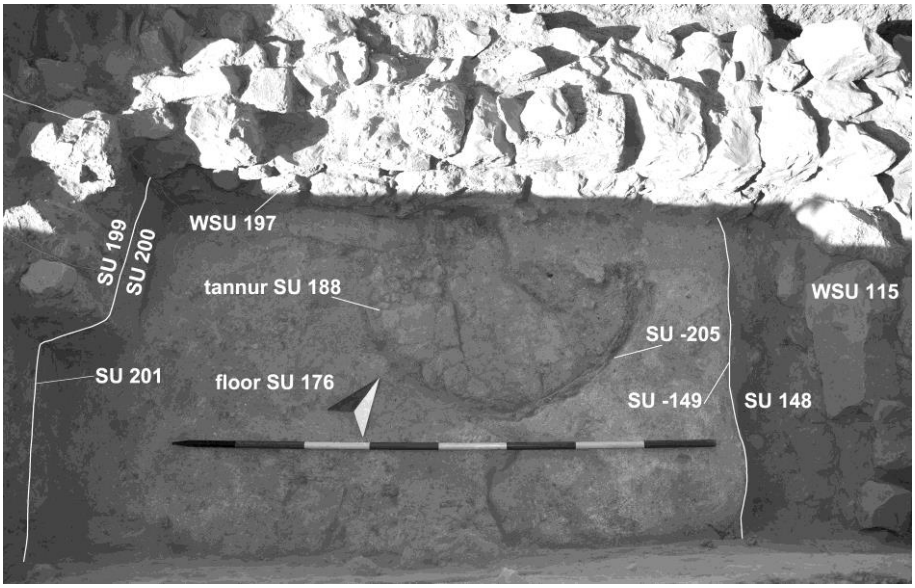

Fig. 6 - Istakhr, the ground floor SU 176 with the *tannūr* SU 188 (photo A. Blanco 2012, rendering L. Ebanista 2017).

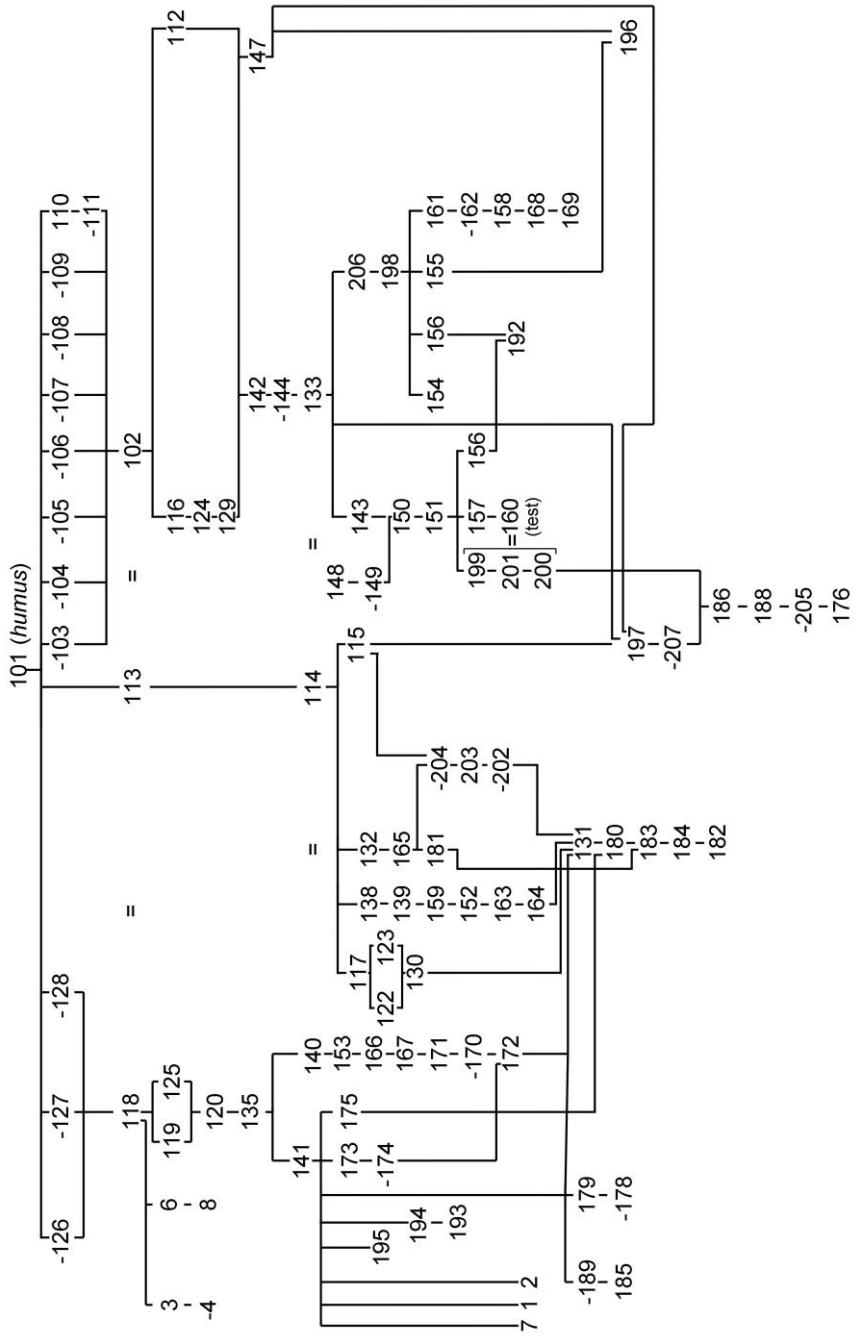

Fig. 7 - Istakhr, general matrix of the trench excavated in 2012.

[Vicino Oriente XXIII (2019), pp. 155-184]

ISLAMIC CLAY FIGURINES FROM EXCAVATIONS AT ISTAKHR AND A SUGGESTED USE OF THE ANIMAL-SHAPED SPECIMENS*

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This paper deals with the Islamic hand-modelled clay figurines from the excavations carried out at Istakhr (Fars region, Iran) by the Oriental Institute of Chicago in the 1930s and the Joint Italian-Iranian Archaeological Mission in 2012. S. Mancini presents detailed descriptions of these artefacts, including some technological notes relating to fabrics, as well as a few comparisons help to propose their chronological attribution. M.V. Fontana suggests that the animal specimens can be understood as figurines which children usually placed on the roofs of their houses pending the end of panjī-mas *and to welcome in the New Year at the end of a long-lasting ritual of Zoroastrian tradition, as can also be seen in some Seljuk glazed ceramic "house models".*

Keywords: Istakhr; Seljuk period; hand-modelled clay figurines; animal-shaped specimens; ceremony of Zoroastrian tradition

1. THE ISLAMIC HAND-MODELLED CLAY FIGURINES FROM EXCAVATIONS CARRIED OUT IN THE 1930S AND 2012 AT ISTAKHR

The archaeological area comprising the mound of the "historical city" of Istakhr is located in the Fars province, roughly 60 km north of Shiraz and approximately 5 km north of Persepolis.[1]

This contribution discusses an interesting group of fifteen Islamic hand-modelled clay figurines brought to light during excavations carried out at Istakhr in the 1930s and 2012 (figs. 1-4),[2] which will be analysed in detail hereafter.

1.1. *The Islamic clay figurines from Istakhr: description*

The three figurines from the 2012 excavations (nos. 3-4 and 15, figs. 2 and 4) and just two of the twelve figurines from the 1930s excavations (nos. 7 and 14, figs. 2 and 4), respectively preserved in storage at the Persepolis Museum and the Oriental Institute Museum of Chicago, have been directly examined by the author. Consequently only the fabrics of these figurines have been described here, while information on the fabrics of the

* Three fragments were uncovered in 2012 by the joint Italian-Iranian Archaeological Mission at Istakhr (sponsored by Sapienza University of Rome, Rome - the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation - the Max van Berchem Foundation, Geneva); twelve fragments were retrieved in the 1930s by the Archaeological Mission of the Oriental Institute of Chicago. The authors are deeply grateful to Jean Evans, the Chief Curator and Deputy Director of the Oriental Institute Museum of the University of Chicago, and Donald S. Whitcomb and Tasha Vorderstrasse, respectively Associate Professor and Research Associate at the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, for allowing Serenella Mancini to view the materials and all related data preserved at the Oriental Institute Museum, as well as the publication of photos and drawings.

1 For a comprehensive history of the field works carried out at Istakhr, starting with Herzfeld's first surveys in 1923, see Fontana ed. 2018 and, in particular, Rugiadi's paragraph "§2.2. *Historical trenches on the ground*" in Rugiadi - Colliva 2018, 133-138, and Di Cesare in Di Cesare - Ebanista 2018, 257-267.

2 On behalf of the Oriental Institute of Chicago (1930s), and Sapienza University of Rome and ICHHTO of Tehran (2012), respectively.

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other figurines found during the 1930s excavations (nos. 1-2, 5-6, 9-13, figs. 1-4) - whose location is presently unknown - is provided in the final table 1, as taken from the descriptive cards accompanying the drawings of the figurines and currently kept in the Oriental Institute Museum.[3] The fabrics examined range from light yellow to brown. The figurines inspected are solid rather than hollow.

The final table 1 also contain all the available information on dimensions and find spots.

1.1.1. Nos. 1-2 - Two saddleless horses with riders (fig. 1)

Two figurines portray saddleless horses with riders (the so-called horse-and-rider type); they were modelled separately and then assembled. Only no. 1 is almost complete and features a rider holding the horse's mane, whereas in no. 2 only part of the rider's legs have been preserved and the rest of the body has been completely lost.

Three legs of horse no. 1 have been lost, the neck is short and bent forward and the tail is missing. The rider, which seem to be merely sketched, is small and has no remarkable features. The head of horse no. 2 has also been lost and its two left legs and tail are missing.

1.1.2. Nos. 3-9 - Seven horses (or six horses and a giraffe) (fig. 2)

The horse-shaped figurines are the most numerous and are characterised by several small details; in most cases they are fragmentary. The backs of those that have been preserved are fitted with saddles. The latter are made of two clay fillets - placed transversely or centrally - which were modelled separately and then applied, except for the saddles of figurines 5 and 7 which were modelled during the manufacturing process.

Only one horse still has its head (no. 5), while only the head remains of horse no. 8. Two small clay buttons with a central circular impression have been applied to form the eyes of both figurines; horse no. 8 also has triangular ears.

Nos. 3-5 and 8-9 have modelled and incised manes (nos. 3, 5 and 9 also feature painted lines). Specifically, the considerable length of the neck of figurine no. 9 could lead to the identification of this animal as a giraffe. The stylised legs, which are missing from most of the artefacts, have rounded or flat ends. The tails, recognisable in only four specimens (nos. 3, 6-7, 9), have been applied on horses nos. 3, 6 and 7.

The fabrics of nos. 3-4 and 7 are described below.

Figurine no. 3 was made with a grey/buff quite fine fabric of medium/high compactness and a chalky feel to the touch. This fabric has few mineral inclusions which are most likely found in the clay matrix in its natural state. It has a porosity of 2%; the voids have an elongated sub-angular shape and range in size from 0.1 to 0.4 mm. Figurine no. 4 has a reddish/pinkish fabric and elongated sub-angular dark red-brown mineral inclusions,[4] probably argillaceous rock fragments.[5] Figurine no. 7 has a medium/coarse dark brown fabric with sparse black mineral inclusions; this very hard fabric is highly compact.

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[3] The author wishes to express her special gratitude to three staff members of the Oriental Institute Museum of Chicago: Helen McDonald and Susan Allison, respectively Registrar and Associate Registrar, and Anne Flannery, Head Archivist, for helping her in the research and archive consultation.

[4] These fabrics were widely used to produce most of the unglazed wares found at Istakhr and a few pieces of kiln furniture brought to light during the excavations (Fusaro 2016, 87).

[5] See Whitbread 1986 for the characterisation of argillaceous rock fragments (ARF).

1.1.3. Nos. 10 and 11 - Two camels (figs. 3-4)

Two figurines have been identified as camels (*camelus dromedarius*). Camel no. 10 (fig. 3) is preserved in its entirety with a long-curved neck, the lower part of which is thicker; the muzzle juts out and the two ears are triangular, the body is very stylised and the four legs have been finished with a flat tool.[6] A saddle composed of two projecting elements has been applied on the back of the animal.

Only the head of camel no. 11 (fig. 4) remains. It is more detailed than that of no. 10 and has a round shape, a protruding muzzle, an open mouth, and small ears placed horizontally.

1.1.4. No. 12 - A horned animal (fig. 3)

Figurine no. 12 is preserved in its entirety and represents a horned animal, probably a gibbous ox (*bos indicus*).[7] The two horns are very thick and arch back slightly, the muzzle is stylised, and the neck is short and stocky. The body is medium size, the legs were finished with a flat tool, and a hump has been placed on its back.

1.1.5. No. 13 - Cat or lion (fig. 4)

Only the front part of figurine no. 13 is preserved. This quadruped is very stylised: its ears are arched back, its eyes are formed by two small applied clay buttons with a central circular impression and its small nose is merely outlined. The descriptive card identifies it as a cat, but it could also be a lion.[8]

1.1.6. Nos. 14-15 - Two unidentified quadrupeds (fig. 4)

Figurine no. 14 is partially preserved and features an unidentified quadruped. The back part has a well-worked body and the two rear legs are broken at their tips. The short tail seems to have been modelled during the manufacturing process, as it is positioned horizontally and slightly upturned. It is very interesting to note that a clay fillet has been applied to the animal's back also around its tail, suggesting it could be a sort of harness. This figurine was made with a medium/coarse buff fabric with irregular and elongated black temper. The fabric has a porosity of 5/7% and the voids are rounded and irregular.

The only remaining part of figurine no. 15 is a quadruped's leg, which, as usual, is highly stylised. The fabric is the same as that used for horse figurine no. 4, i.e. a medium/ coarse reddish/pinkish fabric with dark red-brown mineral inclusions.

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6 See Schmidt 1939, fig. 85 and https://oi.uchicago.edu/gallery/istakhr-islamic-city-mound#9F12_72dpi.png; cf. also Gibson 2010, I, 54, fn. 44.

7 See Schmidt 1939, fig. 85 and https://oi.uchicago.edu/gallery/istakhr-islamic-city-mound#9F12_72dpi.png; cf. also Gibson 2010, I, 54, fn. 44. For Iran as one of the zoological contexts of the *bos indicus*, see Brunner 1980, 35.

8 Cf. Fontana, below, and figs. 8-10.

NOS.	FINDSPOTS	IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS	EXCAVATION DATES	SIZES	NOTES
1	FH - 50	Saddleless horse with rider I 2 779	1930s	6.4 × 7.4 cm	Fabric and pigments not examined; «grey medium fabric, medium/ hard»
2	GL - 45 N side OW	Saddleless horse with rider I 2 163	1930s	6.2 × 6.8 cm	Fabric and pigments not examined; «buff colour»
3	SU133	Horse -	2012	5.8 × 5.4 cm	Grey/buff quite fine fabric of medium/ high compactness and a chalky feel to the touch. This fabric has few mineral inclusions which are most likely found in the clay matrix in its natural state. It has a porosity of 2%; the voids have an elongated sub-angular shape and range in size from 0.1 to 0.4 cm. Red painted lines on body.
4	SU102	Horse ES31	2012	6.4 × 7.7 cm	Reddish/pinkish fabric and elongated sub-angular dark red-brown mineral inclusions, probably argillaceous rock fragments
5	FH - 50	Horse I 2 780	1930s	6.7 × 6.9 cm	Fabric and pigments not examined; «yellow/grey colour, red painted lines on neck»
6	GL-15 NO	Horse I 2 120	1930s	6.3 × 8.5 cm	Fabric and pigments not examined; «buff medium/fine fabric, medium/ hard»
7	IL-16	Horse I 2 1389-m	1930s	3.6 × 8 cm	Medium/coarse dark brown fabric with sparse black mineral inclusions; this very hard fabric is highly compact
8	FH-30	Horse I 2 135	1930s	5.3 × 1.9 cm	Fabric and pigments not examined; «yellow/brown fine fabric, medium/ hard»
9	GL-35 NW	Horse or giraffe I 2 101	1930s	9.2 × 6.8 cm	Fabric and pigments not examined; «red/grey colour, red paint»
10	-	Camel I 2 437	1930s		Fabric and pigments not examined
11	GL - 45	Camel I 2 701	1930s	4 × 3.8 cm	Fabric and pigments not examined; «grey medium/coarse fabric, medium/hard»
12	-	Horned animal I 2 427	1930s		Fabric and pigments not examined
13	GL - 24 Sherd pile	Cat or lion I 2 362	1930s	3.8 × 4.3 cm	Fabric and pigments not examined; «light yellow colour, medium/ hard»
14	HL-76	Unidentified quadruped I 2 1383-o	1930s	3.3 × 4.7 cm	Medium/coarse buff fabric with irregular and elongated black temper; the fabric has a porosity of 5/7%, the voids are rounded and irregular
15	SU129	Unidentified quadruped -	2012	4.6 × 2.2 cm	Reddish/pinkish fabric and elongated sub-angular dark red-brown mineral inclusions, probably argillaceous rock fragments

Tab. 1 - Description of figurines found during the 1930s excavations.[9]

[9] The descriptions of fabrics and pigments in quotation marks in the 'notes' column were taken from the descriptive cards preserved at the Oriental Institute Museum of Chicago.

1.2. *The Islamic clay figurines from Istakhr: comparison and dating*

Clay figurines in the shape of both humans and animals have been found at numerous archaeological sites in Iran, Iraq and Central Asia,[10] nevertheless it is quite complicated to find meaningful comparisons. At Istakhr only two clay figurines of the so-called and widespread horse-and-rider type have been found.[11] As for the Sasanian and Islamic periods we can cite the Sasanian finds from Vēh Ardashīr and Merv[12] and the Islamic specimens found at Wāsiṭ and Fusṭāṭ.[13]

The clay figurines from Istakhr have a distinct stylised character which also seems to be a dominant feature in clay figurines from other sites. This aspect is highly recognisable in most clay animal figurines from Islamic Susa. These usually represent quadrupeds and especially horses which have simply modelled bodies (fig. 5a), four legs shaped together in an extended position, and legs that are often rounded or flat at the end. Paint has also been used to highlight some parts of the animals' bodies, in particular the manes.[14] The chronological attribution of clay animal figurines from Susa is based on ceramic findings: a dating between the 7th and 9th centuries has been suggested.

The figurine found at Tell Abū Sarīfa, whose dating is uncertain but certainly not before the 9th century,[15] also has some elements in common with the Istakhr specimens: the hand-modelled stylised horse with outspread legs also bears traces of decorative bands of red paint (fig. 5b).[16] A wide range of figurines found at Wāsiṭ have been dated to the 13th century. They are made with «fine-grained clay, buff in colour or slightly pink according to firing»[17] and have a strongly stylised character seen especially in the quadrupeds with sketched features: their bodies and muzzles share characteristics with the specimens from Istakhr (fig. 5c).[18] Black and/or red paint was also found on some parts of the animals' bodies.[19]

Another comparable feature is the saddle. The saddles of the animal figurines from Istakhr, Susa (fig. 5a) and Wāsiṭ were made by applying two clay fillets across the back of the quadrupeds: they are composed of two rounded or pointed shaped pieces.[20]

The three clay figurines from Istakhr unearthed during the excavations carried out in 2012 (nos. 3-4 and 15, figs. 2 and 4) can be dated to the Seljuk period. In fact, they were found in phases 5, 7 and 8, and date from the 11th to the early 13th century on the basis of

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10 Especially for animal figurines, see below, Fontana 2.1.

11 The horse-and-rider theme was widely represented during the Sasanian period and in some cases, as we can see at Istakhr, it even survived in the Islamic period.

12 On Vēh Ardashīr Cellerino and Messina (2013, 124) stated «[...] conforming to a trend already attested from the Hellenistic to the Sasanian period, figurines of horses largely prevail, for they were used for the most, to support riders [...]». For Merv see Simpson 2004, 324 and Herrmann *et al.* 1997, 9 (cf. also fn. 57, below).

13 See Safar 1945, pl. XXI*a* for Wāsiṭ; Scanlon 1968, 2, text fig. 2a on p. 4, and fig. 1c for Fusṭāṭ (cf. also fn. 25, *in fine*, below).

14 Rosen Ayalon 1974, figs. 248-249, 254-255.

15 Cf. Wells (2015, 55-57), who has postdated the finds from Tell Abū Sarīfa (Adams 1970, 118).

16 As for the Istakhr red painted horse (and giraffe) figurines cf. nos. 3, 5 and 9 (table 1).

17 Safar 1945, 36.

18 Safar 1945, pl. XXII*a*.

19 Safar 1945, 36.

20 See Rosen Ayalon 1974, figs. 247-250, Kervran 1977, fig. 49.6, pl. XII.1; 1984, fig. 30.5 for Susa; Adams 1970, pl. 8, fig. 16*e* (*here*, fig. 5b) for Tell Abū Sarīfa; Safar 1945, pl. XXII*a* (top left) for Wāsiṭ. Similar saddles can be seen on horse figurines from Nishapur, dated to the 9th-12th century (Wilkinson 1973, ill. 130 on p. 354) and Tell Abū Ṣkhayr, dated to the 13th-mid-14th century (Shammri 1986, fig. 33d).

pottery finds.[21] We can also suggest a similar date for the figurines found during excavations carried out in the 1930s, for which we do not yet have precise information on the stratigraphy.[22] This dating corresponds to that attributed to figurines with similar features found in Wāsiṭ, i.e. the so-called Seljuk revival that occurred in Iraq during the 12th-13th centuries.[23]

Serenella Mancini

2. The Islamic animal-shaped clay figurines from Istakhr, and Late Sasanian and Islamic specimens from some archaeological sites in Iran, Iraq and Central Asia, and their suggested use

This contribution deals with the Islamic animal-shaped clay figurines found during excavations carried out at Istakhr in the 1930s and 2012 (figs. 2-4).[24] The figurines include different kinds of quadrupeds, along with saddled horses and camels - and perhaps also a giraffe - with no rider. The figures with horsemen (which may have originated from the so-called horse-and-rider type), on the contrary, are portrayed riding without saddles. As discussed below, the saddles may indeed be pack saddles, which would indicate that the quadrupeds wearing them were pack animals.

As Serenella Mancini has illustrated, the Istakhr finds include, in addition to two saddleless horses with riders (nos. 1-2, fig. 1), five saddled horses (nos. 3-7, fig. 2), a saddled horse or giraffe (no. 9, fig. 2), a saddled camel (no. 10, fig. 3), a horned animal, most probably a gibbous ox (no. 12, fig. 3), a cat or lion (no. 13, fig. 4), a horse's head (no. 8, fig. 2), a camel's head (no. 11, fig. 4) and two unidentifiable quadrupeds (nos. 14-15, fig. 4).

2.1. *Late Sasanian and Islamic clay animal figurines from Iran, Iraq and Central Asia*

Some clay animal figurines have been found from the Late Sasanian and Islamic strata of archaeological sites in Iran, Iraq and Central Asia.[25]

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21 Serenella Mancini, *La ceramica di Estakhr (Iran): classificazione, studio e confronti*, PhD Thesis, Sapienza University of Rome, Rome, in progress. Some figurines are certainly of local production, cf. above, fn. 4.

22 Donald Whitcomb and Tasha Vorderstrasse are currently working on the documentation of those excavations.

23 Safar 1945, 37; cf. Adams 1970, 116.

24 See the previous contribution by Serenella Mancini, in particular fns. 1 and 2. The animal specimens constitute the overwhelming majority of unearthed figurines from Istakhr.

25 Only these three great areas (included in Greater Iran) have been taken into account and all comparisons with clay animal figurines dated prior to the Late Sasanian era have been omitted. In fact, the oldest Sasanian animal figurines - such as those from the excavations of the so-called Artisan Quarter of Vēh Ardashīr (in the al-Madāʾin area in Iraq, 3rd-5th century, investigated by the Italian Expedition in Iraq of the Centro Ricerche Archeologiche e Scavi di Torino per il Medio Oriente e l'Asia; cf. Invernizzi 1979; 1985, figs. on p. 193; Cellerino - Messina 2013) -, although for the most part also hand-modelled, with very few exceptions (cf. fn. 95, below) show iconographic features and stylistic renderings markedly different from those exhibited by the more recent samples, since the former share the characteristics of specimens extremely widespread in the Ancient Near East from the Neolithic period onwards. Even their intended uses - including ritual, magic-cult, funerary, and so on - do not allow comparisons (cf. Parayre 2003). As for the "other" areas of origin, Gibson (2010. I, 54 and fn. 43) reported a figurine in the form of a horse from Fusṭāṭ (Egypt), but in fact it belongs to the widespread horse-and-rider type (Scanlon 1968, 2, text fig. 2a on p. 4, and fig. 1c).

2.1.1. Animal figurines from Iran

Among the Iranian finds, Donald S. Whitcomb said of the clay animal figurines found during the excavations carried out by the Oriental Institute of Chicago at Qaṣr-i Abū Naṣr (old Shiraz, located in the Fars region like Istakhr): they are numerous and include «mainly ambiguous quadrupeds» and two fragmentary saddles, dating to the Sasanian-Early Islamic period.[26]

In Susa (present-day Shush, in the Khuzistan province), one of the most ancient cities of the region, the Délégation Archéologique en Iran brought to light a very impressive quantity of clay figurines dating from the 4th millennium BCE onwards,[27] 755 of them were animal specimens, the dating of which was sometimes contested.[28] Myriam Rosen-Ayalon dated some twenty clay animal figurines found during the excavations carried out in the royal city to the Islamic period: they were divided among the Louvre Museum, the National Museum in Tehran and the former storerooms of the French Archaeological Mission in both Susa and Tehran.[29] Most of them are horses, and those whose bodies are preserved are fitted with saddles (fig. 5a).[30] All that is left of other two horses are their heads.[31] Two unidentifiable quadrupeds and two birds are also found.[32] Some figurines are painted red and/or black.[33] As for their attribution to the Islamic period and, more specifically, to the 7th-9th century, I would suggest caution, as some figurines could still be dated to the Sasanian period while others could be dated later than the 9th century.[34] During subsequent excavations of the sector between the royal city and the Apadana only a few fragments of animal figurines were found, namely horses also dated to the 8th-9th century, of which Monique Kervran published a saddled horse.[35]

[26] Whitcomb 1985, 190 and fig. 72d-i. Unfortunately the poor conditions of the artefacts prevent us from recognising their morphological features and, consequently, the animal species to which the quadrupeds belong.

[27] Martinez-Sève 2002; see also Spycket 1992.

[28] Martinez-Sève 2003.

[29] Rosen-Ayalon 1974, 113-121.

[30] The saddles are applied (Rosen-Ayalon 1974, figs. 247-252, 256; pls. XXV.a, c, XXVI.c), a part of in two cases where it seems that they were modelled together with the body of the animals (Rosen-Ayalon 1974, figs. 254-255). Even a two-headed horse with a saddle should be reported (Rosen-Ayalon 1974, figs. 259-259a), while another two-headed horse ridden by a naked woman does not have a saddle (Islamic?, cf. fn. 34, below; Rosen-Ayalon 1974, fig. 258-258a).

[31] Rosen-Ayalon 1974, fig. 253 and pl. XXV.b. The heads of another three horses have very different features, stressing that they were most likely produced for artistic purposes (Rosen-Ayalon 1974, figs. 264-266, pl. XXV.e; cf. Joel - Peli 2005, fig. 317 on p. 231; see also fn. 34 below).

[32] Rosen-Ayalon 1974, figs. 262-263; fig. 268 and pl. XXV.g, respectively. Another bird is most likely a rattle (Rosen-Ayalon 1974, fig. 269, cf. also Joel - Peli 2005, cat. and ill. 319 on p. 232).

[33] Rosen-Ayalon 1974, figs. 251-256.

[34] In addition to the previously mentioned two-headed horses, one of which also ridden by a naked woman (cf. fn. 30, above), the three horse heads of horses have very different modelling, which is much more complex and refined (cf. fn. 31, above; Rosen-Ayalon 1974, figs. 264-266, pl. XXV.e; for the last one cf. also Joel - Peli 2005, cat. and ill. 317 on p. 231, where it is also specified that « ce petit cheval présente la particularité d'être creux »). Rosen-Ayalon herself pointed out that the last horse figurine, published in 1954 by Jean David-Weill, was dated by this scholar to the Sasanian period (Rosen-Ayalon 1974, 120, fn. 1). Whereas, the provenance of an opaque-glazed and lustre painted figurine of a probable lion from the « niveau 2 », attributed to the 8th-9th century, is sufficient evidence to resort to a new and later dating of that layer, from which not many clay figurines were found.

[35] Kervran 1977, 150, no. 6, fig. 49.6, pl. XII.1; 1984, 142, fig. 30.5.

Charles K. Wilkinson reported that clay modelled figurines of uncertain date (9th-12th century) had been found during excavations by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in the Nishapur area in the Khurasan region, along one of the most important trade routes. These figurines are preserved in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the National Museum of Iran in Tehran. A horse figurine equipped with a saddle «formed from two added pieces of clay» was found on the surface at Sabz Pushān.[36] A «hen» figurine was uncovered at Qanāt Tepe.[37]

Some clay figurines, belonging to the Islamic period but again of uncertain date, were found in Siraf, the famous ancient port of the Persian Gulf, and Rayy, the well-known manufacturing centre in the current province of Tehran, respectively. In her archaeological study of the ceramics (8th to 15th century) from Siraf preserved in the British Museum in London,[38] Moira Tampoe referred to clay animal figurines, likely horses or mules, one of which is fitted with a saddle, while she suggested that a figurine with a «heavy rounded shape» might be an elephant.[39]

The excavations undertaken by Erich F. Schmidt (The Boston Museum of Fine Arts / University Museum Expedition to Rayy), which started in the spring of 1934 and concluded in the fall of 1936,[40] unearthed around 35 clay animal figurines which are now preserved in the Penn Museum in Philadelphia;[41] six of them are painted.[42] Their entries in the Museum website are not accompanied by illustrations and the animal species are not described, except in three cases: possibly a ram, a ram's head and the horn of an animal.[43]

Lastly, Muhammad Yussuf Kiani dated from the 10th to 13th centuries some running or standing clay animal figurines from the excavations he directed in Gurgan between 1970-1977.[44]

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36 Wilkinson 1973, 325, no. 130, ill. 130 on p. 354. It is kept in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (MMA 38.40.102), also quoted by Gibson 2010, I, 54, fn. 44; for colour images showing it from four different sides and its 9th-century suggested dating see https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/449314 (last access: 18/06/2019).

37 MMA 40.170.206. It was curiously described as having three legs «one at the front, two at the back» (Wilkinson 1973, 324, no. 119). Other two assumptive figurines were found in Nishapur, but Wilkinson was doubtful whether they were really such or applied ornaments: an elephant's head (in the National Museum, Tehran) and a monkey [or sheep]'s head (MMA 40.170.162): the former from Qanāt Tepe and the latter from Village Tepe (Wilkinson 1973, 324, no. 120; and 325, no. 126, ill. 126 on p. 354, respectively).

38 The excavations at Siraf began in 1966 and were carried out for seven seasons. They were directed by David Whitehouse under the co-direction of Gholam-Reza Masoumi, and sponsored by the British Institute for Persian Studies in London.

39 Tampoe 1989, 18, respectively nos. 731, 733 [or 735?], 736, and no. 734, illustrated at fig. 13 on p. 187.

40 See Schmidt 1940, 29 and ff.

41 https://www.penn.museum/collections/objects/site.php?irn=26&object_name%5B%5D=animal+figurine (last access: 18/06/2019).

42 Object nos. CG842811-5020, CG842811-4281, CG842811-3612, CG842811-0154, CG842811-8515, 35-8-133.

43 Object nos. 35-8-74, 35-8-70 and 37-11-381, respectively.

44 Gurgan, the former Astarābād, is the capital of the homonym historical province - recently re-named Gulistan - adjoining the south-east corner of the Caspian Sea. As far as the dating of the figurines, Kiani (1984, 79) did not propose a stratigraphic reference, but only affirmed: «In general these figurines are datable to the 4th-7th centuries A.H. (10th-13th AD)». No description was given of the animal species or their forms, no illustration is available.

2.1.2. Animal figurines from Iraq

Some clay animal figurines have also been found in Iraq. In Tell Abū Sarīfa (in the Nippur area, southern-east Iraq) one clay figurine was uncovered (from level IV, but near the bottom of level V) during the excavations jointly sponsored by the Oriental Institute of Chicago and the American Schools of Oriental Research. This figurine is a saddled horse with outspread legs, and its saddle has «an exceptionally high cantle and pommel»[45] (fig. 5b). As some scholars have suggested, the dating to the 7th-late 8th century proposed in 1970 by Adams should be shifted to the 9th-10th century due to the contextual findings of "Samarra Horizon" ceramics.[46]

During the excavations at Samarra directed by Friedrich Sarre and Ernst Herzfeld in 1911 and 1912-13 on behalf of the Islamic Department of the former Kaiser Friedrich-Museum in Berlin, two clay modelled animal figurines were uncovered from the 9th-century House VIIa, namely a cow - with carved details - and a fragmentary horse with applied saddle and bridle.[47]

A large amount of clay figurines were found in Tell Abū Ṣkhayr (al-Dawra, 2 km from Baghdad on the road to Babylon-Karbalāʾ) and Wāsiṭ (in eastern Iraq, half way between Kūfa and Bassora on the west bank of the Tigris). During the three excavations campaigns carried out at Tell Abū Ṣkhayr in 1976-1978 by the State Organisation of Antiquities and Heritage of Baghdad, only animal figurines were brought to light. Hussain Abdul Amir Muhammad Shammri, the Deputy Director of the archaeological works, assigned them to two different periods: two quadrupeds (one might be a dog, no. 43) belong to Period I (early 13th century),[48] and ten pieces are dated to Period II (13th to mid-14th century). Shammri identifies these ten animals as a lioness, a lion, two dogs, a duck, a giraffe, a mythical animal, a bear (?), a horse, and a hyena.[49] It is noteworthy that the horse has a saddle, «formed from one added piece of clay».[50]

A large number of clay figurines came from excavations, that started in 1936 and lasted until 1942, carried out at Wāsiṭ by the "Directorate General of Antiquities" of the Government of Iraq. The corresponding finds were housed in the Baghdad Museum. Fuad Safar specified that it was «one remarkable group of over four hundred pieces, found among the scanty remains of a building in the Ilkhânid levels of Sounding (shaft) No. 15, which we assume to have been a toy shop».[51] Many of them are human figurines, however a considerable number of animal specimens were also unearthed. Unfortunately, Safar did not list the recognised animal species, but merely reported: «there are also riderless horses».[52] Nevertheless, from the illustrations he published, several quadrupeds (including

[45] Adams 1970, 116, 118 (for the level's dating), pl. 8 (fig. 16e). This figurine was also quoted by Gibson 2010, I, 54 and fn. 44. Cf. also Mancini, above, § 1.2.

[46] See Wells 2015, 55-57.

[47] Nos. 64 and 65, respectively (Sarre 1925, 18, figs. 52-53 on p. 17); both figurines are currently preserved in the Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin, Inv. Sam 160 [64] and Sam 168 [65].

[48] Shammri 1986, 190, 192-193, no. 43, fig. 16d, pl. XLb on p. 536; no. 44, fig. 16e.

[49] Shammri 1986, 268-269, 273-276, nos. 202-211, fig. 32 c-f on p. 480 and fig. 33 on p. 481, pl. LVIIIa-b on p. 554.

[50] Shamri 1986, 276, no. 210, fig. 33 d.

[51] Safar 1945, 36. Instead, Ernst J. Grube suggested it was likely the storeroom of a potter who specialised in manufacturing figurines (Grube 1966, 173; cf. also Graves 2008, 246, and 2010, I, 73).

[52] Safar 1945, 36.

some gibbous oxen, fig. 5c) and birds, counting at least one nightingale, can be identified.[53] The horse recognisable at the top left of pl. XXII*a* of Safar's volume wears a saddle. On the contrary, the horses with riders appeared not to be wearing saddles.[54]

2.1.3. Animal figurines from Central Asia

Finally, this next section discusses some clay animal figurines from Central Asia.[55] All the animal figurines from Merv, a major oasis-city of Central Asia (in present-day Turkmenistan), have been dated to the Sasanian period (5th-7th century).[56] They are hand-modelled and «occasionally covered with a red slip or decorated after firing with a water-soluble red and/or black pigment».[57] Many animal figurines were brought to light during the 1993 and 1994 campaigns from the «sixth-seventh century AD contexts».[58] More specifically, St John Simpson referred to nineteen animal figurines, «mostly consisting of broken legs and/or hindquarters of quadrupeds, but including three recognizable horse figurines, two ovicaprids, a dog and a distinctive monkey-like creature».[59] Only a few illustrations of animal figurines from Merv have been published, including those of three horses found in Area 5 of Gyaur Qalʿa: a sufficient part of the body of one of them still remains, allowing us to observe its saddle.[60] The «marks on the back where the riders sat» of two horse figurines - part of some surface findings from the "Chilburj" area - are most probably also saddles remains.[61]

In the National Museum of Samarkand some ceramic animal figurines found in Samarkand/Afrasiyab are preserved and dated to the 9th-12th century. The catalogue of a 1992-1993 touring exhibition held in three French museums illustrates two modelled specimens: a horned quadruped and a saddled horse.[62]

Three modelled animal figurines of quadrupeds found in Binket, the medieval capital of Shāsh (the Tashkent oasis), were illustrated in the catalogue of a 1991 exhibition in

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53 Safar 1945, pl. XXII*a*, right.

54 Safar 1945, pl. XXI*a*. However, the quality of the photograph does not permit an optimal reading of it. M. Gibson reported a hand-modelled horse with red pigment and a large saddle, excavated at Kish (I think she was referring to Kish in Iraq, 12 km east of Babylon), dated to the 9th-11th century and preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, Inv. no. C.245.1931 (Gibson 2010, I, 54, fn. 44, and fig. 2 on p. 380).

55 For the long Central Asian tradition of clay figurines up to the 6th century cf. Lo Muzio 2010.

56 During the 1996 campaign in Gyaur Qalʿa, in the northern extension of Qalʿa Area 4, «several figurine fragments» were found, in association with slip-painted wares, thus they could be dated to the Islamic period (up to the 10th-11th century). Firstly, however, it is not specified whether the lot also included animal figurines, and secondly, this finding was referred to as «residual small finds from earlier [?] periods» (Herrmann *et al*. 1997, 15). For a history of the archaeological work accomplished at Merv, see Puschnigg 2006, 9-16.

57 Simpson 2004, 324. Some specimens of Sasanian horse-and-rider types, some modelled (Simpson 2004, 324) and some moulded (Herrmann *et al*. 1997, 9), have also been found in Merv.

58 Simpson - Herrmann 1995, 141-142.

59 Simpson in Herrmann - Kurbansakhatov *et al*. 1994, 67; their date is uncertain.

60 «1: Head of red-slipped horse figurine with bridle (SF 10242 [Pl. Ia, ht. 7,6 cm], 2: body of horse figurine with saddle (SF 4978), 3: rear end of horse figurine (SF 10283)»: Herrmann *et al*. 2000, caption of fig. 1 on p. 3.

61 Gaibov *et al*. 1990, 29; cf., above, the fragmentary saddles found at Qaṣr-i Abū Naṣr, and also Wilkinson 1973, 325, no. 130. Both Gaibov *et al*. 1990 and Herrmann - Kurbansakhatov *et al*. 1994 mentioned other examples known from earlier investigations, citing Pugachenkova 1962, 143, 168, fig. 32.

62 Inv. nos. A-37-26 and A-490-2, respectively (Samarcande 1992, 109, cat. nos. 250 and 251, ills. on p. 48). A moulded horned quadruped with rider is also displayed, Inv. no. A-530-I, dated to the 8th century (?; Samarcande 1992, 109, cat. no. 249, ill. on p. 48).

Moscow. They are a camel, a harnessed horse and a saddled donkey, the last one also showing stripes painted with black engobe, all dated to the 11th-12th century and preserved in the Museum of History of the Peoples of Uzbekistan.[63]

The rather wide chronological span from the 5th to 13th(-14th) centuries, which covers the production of the above-mentioned clay hand-modelled animal figurines, and their different models and renderings do not always enable close global parallels with Istakhr specimens.[64] Nevertheless, some features, such as fairly coarse modelling, the outspread legs of the quadrupeds, the regular occurrence of saddles - mostly added - on the backs of both horses and, in some cases, other four-legged animals - camels, donkeys, mules, namely pack animals -, can be found not only on animal figurines from Istakhr but also in a large number of finds from other sites, especially Iran and Iraq.

2.2. *Discussion*

Medieval Islamic clay figurines, both human and animal, are usually interpreted as toys. In particular, the animal specimens would have been toys intended for children during festivities (cf. below). The better known and finest moulded and glazed - sometimes also lustre painted - ceramic figurines produced in Iran during the Seljuk period[65] have also been compared with the former, even if they were unlikely to have been intended as toys. In recent years Margaret S. Graves dedicated very important and in-depth studies to these small figures, especially the glazed specimens which also include the smaller human and animal glazed figurines placed in those ceramic representations of buildings in miniature commonly referred to as "house models", coeval to the above mentioned Seljuk luxurious figurines.[66]

The alternative hypothesis suggested here is that the clay animal figurines from Istakhr and some others from other archaeological sites could be figurines that were intended not as common toys for children made and sold during festivities, but as special animal-shaped artefacts for children to "play with", made and sold during specific festivities for exclusive use during special ceremonies. More specifically, they may be the figurines that children usually placed on the roofs of their houses pending the end of *panjī-mas* and to welcome in the New Year, at the end of a long-lasting ritual of Zoroastrian tradition.[67] A photo from the

[63] Inv. nos. 296/47, 296/48 and 296/49, respectively (Abdullaev - Rtveladze - Shishkina 1991, II, 185, cat. and figs. 722-724). Some clay animal figurines, which J.-C. Gardin (1957, 59-60, 62-63) dated within a very wide period between the 1st and 15th centuries, came from Balkh, in present-day Afghanistan. Among them a horse (Gardin 1957, pl. XI.5), with a muzzle and saddle similar to those of an exemplar from Tell Abū Ṣkhayr (Shammri 1986, fig. 33d), and a camel (Gardin 1957, pl. XI.4) have some features - such as cylindrical and out-spread legs - quite similar to those of late Sasanian and Islamic specimens.

[64] These figurines should be considered products of local craftsmanship, sometimes also with different features even if they come from a single site, and this does not only depend on their dating. See the comparisons previously made by S. Mancini, § 1.2.

[65] On these "sculptures" see Grube 1966; Bloom 1975; Treptow 2007, 29-30; Gibson 2008-2009; 2010; 2012; Graves 2008; 2010; 2018.

[66] Graves 2008; 2010; 2018.

[67] Cf. Boyce 1977, 49, 51 (see also Fontana 2019).

mid-twentieth century, taken by the famous Zoroastrianism specialist Mary Boyce,[68] illustrates this occurrence very well (fig. 6).[69] Boyce was also prodigal with information and in particular she described how the ten-year-old Gushtasp, the youngest member of the Belivani family that hosted her,

> «had began to carry the whitened clay [animal] figures[70] up on to the roof while it was still light. [...] Gushtasp was able to carry out [...] his task of taking all the figures up on the roof and arranging them in a quaint row overlooking the courtyard».[71]

Children used to assemble one (or more) row(s) of clay animal figurines along the perimeter of the central open area of the roof corresponding to the courtyard below, as displayed in some Seljuk ceramic house models (figs. 7-10).[72]

The Zoroastrian origin of this ceremony - arguably dating back to earlier times - is likely the reason why a precise prohibition was established[73] and al-Ghazālī[74] seems to refer to it twice. M.S. Graves translated a passage from his Arabic work titled *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn* (The Revival of the Religious Sciences):

> «Other objectionable practices include selling musical instruments and **models of animals** [أشكال الحيوانات المصورة, *ashkāl al-ḥayawānāt al-muṣawwara*[75]] made for children during the religious festivals [العيد, *al-ʿīd*[76]]. These latter must be broken and, like musical instruments, their sale must be prevented».[77]

al-Ghazālī returned to this subject later in his *Kīmiyā-yi saʿādat* (The Alchemy of Happiness), in Persian, when discussing the science of earning a livelihood according to the law, and presenting the correct characteristics of goods that are subject to *bayʿ* (sale and purchase):[78]

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68 She spent twelve months in Sharīfabād (a village in the Yazdī plain) in 1963-1964 as a guest of the Belivani family and in 1977 published a volume recounting her experiences during this year living in that Zoroastrian community.

69 Boyce's caption reads: «A group of Panji figurines on the Belivani roof, with wind-towers in the background» (Boyce 1977, pl. IVa).

70 As for the whitewashing of the figurines cf. fn. 109, below.

71 Boyce 1977, 224. «[The day after] his [= of Gushtasp] sisters meantime had gone up to the roof again to fetch the clay figures (which had gazed down on us, white against the blue sky, while we breakfasted below)» (Boyce 1977, 226). Cf., *here*, fig. 6.

72 See Fontana 2019. Cf. also fn. 89, below.

73 Cf. fn. 87, below.

74 He was born in Ṭūs, eastern Iran, in 1058, and died in 1111.

75 al-Ghazali, *Iḥyaʾ*, II, 333.

76 al-Ghazali, *Iḥyaʾ*, II, 333.

77 Graves 2008, 246; emphasis added.

78 al-Ghazālī's *Kīmiyā-yi saʿādat* is an abridged Persian version of his *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*. More precisely, Ian Richard Netton, reviewing a revised and annotated translation by Elton L. Daniel (1991) of Claud Field's (incomplete) 1910 translation from an Urdu version into English of the original Persian *Kīmiyā-yi saʿādat*, reported «Daniel tells as that 'in the introduction to the Persian text, Ghazzālī explicitly states that he wrote the *Alchemy* as an epitome of the Arabic *Revivification* and some of his other writings, simplified and written in Persian in order to reach a broader, popular audience'» (Netton 1993, 117). Cf. also Bilal ed. 2001, xxii-xxiii.

> «As for the clay **figurines** (صورتها, *ṣūrathā*) for children to play with: for any of these that has the shape of an animal, its sale is invalid, its value is **unlawful** (حرام, *ḥarām*), and it is mandatory to destroy it; but the shape of trees and plants is **lawful** (روا, *ravā*). [...]».[79]

In another passage of this work, he dwells on the "misdeeds of the markets" (*munkarāt-i bāzārhā*):

> «[...] and they sell **animal figurines** (صورت حیوانات, *ṣūrat-i ḥayvānāt*) for children during the ʿ*ayd* (عید), and they sell wooden swords and shields for Nawrūz, and earthen trumpets for Sada. [...] Among these things, some are **unlawful** (حرام, *ḥarām*), some are **execrable** (مکروه, *makrūh*). As for the animal figurines, they are **unlawful** (حرام, *ḥarām*). As for what they sell for Sada and Nawrūz, such as wooden shields and swords, and earthen trumpets, these **are not unlawful** (حرام نیست, *ḥarām nīst*) in themselves, but the display of emblems of the **Zoroastrians** (گبران, *Gabrān*) is **unlawful** (حرام, *ḥarām*) […]».[80]

Furthermore, Graves mentions a passage, already cited by Irwin,[81] in the sixth chapter of the *Maʿālim al-qurba fī aḥkām al-ḥisba*[82] by al-Shāfiʿī Ibn al-Ukhuwwa (Egyptian, d. 1328-9), entitled «Forbidden Commercial Transactions»:

> «It is not permitted [...] to sell **figurines** (الصور, *al-ṣuwar*) made from clay in the form of animals, which are sold during the festivities (الاعیاد, *al-aʿyād*) for children's play, and it is legally mandatory to destroy them, while the figurines of trees are tolerated;[83] as for the clothes and dishes with images of animals on them, their sale is lawful (فیصح, *fa-yaṣiḥḥu*), as is the case for curtains[84]».[85]

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79 The English translation from al-Ghazālī's Persian text (*Kīmiyā*, I, 330) is by Mario Casari (I am deeply grateful to him); emphasis added.

80 The English translation of Ghazālī's *Kīmiyā*, I, 522 is by Mario Casari (emphasis added). For both al-Ghazālī's Persian passages, cf. also Bilal's translation (Bilal ed. 2001, 471, 474, 694). As regards the latter passage see also Lambton 1968, 277 - even quoted below -, and cf. also Gibson 2010, I, 53 and fn. 39.

81 Graves 2008, 246; 2010, I, 74; Irwin 1977, 173. Cf. also Gibson 2010, I, 54.

82 This work is «a manual for the guidance of persons invested with the office of the ḥisba ("Censorship") or charged with the duty of maintaining public law and order and the supervision of market dealers and tradesmen» (Levi's introduction to Ibn al-Ukhuwwa 1938, 1).

83 On the tolerance of figurines in the form of trees, cf. the first Persian passage by al-Ghazālī, above. As for trees connected to Zoroastrian ceremonies, also performed in Islamic times and mentioned by Islamic sources - especially Ḥamza Iṣfahānī (10th century) recounting special festivals focusing on a cypress in the Nishapur area - see G. Terribili, Relocating the Prophet's Image. Narrative Motifs and Local Appropriation of the Zarathustra Legend in Pre-/Early Islamic Iran: *Iran and the Caucasus* 24 (forthc. 2020), in part. fns. 29-36.

84 For a similar sentence concerning the lawfulness of animals depicted on clothes, dishes and curtains, see what was reported earlier by al-Ghazālī (*Iḥyaʾ*, II, 334-335; *Kīmiyā*, I, 330); cf. also Graves 2018, 61 and note 5. For other literary sources discussing this topic see Talbi (1954, 304), who quoted the *qāḍī* of Cordova Ibn Rushd (d. 1233) as reported by Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Qāsim b. Saʿīd al-ʿUqbānī Tilimsānī (d. 1467); and Ghabin (2009, 210, and fn. 117), who mentioned both the Ḥanbalī jurist Ibn Qudāma al-Maqdisī (d. 1223) and the *imām* al-Muʾayyad bi-llāh Yaḥyā ibn Ḥamza (d. 1344). In my view the lawfulness of these depictions is to be ascribed not only to the use in the private sphere of the objects that reproduce them - on the use of generally figured textiles during prayer see, instead, Flood (2018, 62) - but also to the fact that they do not

Graves properly concluded her argument by saying that «modelled figures of animals in clay, intended for children, were made and sold in medieval Iran and other parts of the Islamic world, were associated with festivals, and were popular enough to require formal laws forbidding their manufacture» and also noted that «these *ḥisba* citations do not mention human figures at all».[86]

In my opinion, the fact that human figures are not mentioned among the "forbidden things", which only include animal figurines, confirms that these prohibitions should be understood not as having an iconoclastic purpose, but rather to discourage those ceremonies related to rituals performed by Zoroastrian communities which only involve animal figurines.[87] As a matter of fact, al-Ghazālī's texts, both Arabic and Persian,[88] talk not about "toys" but "animal-shaped figures" with which children usually "play" on the occasion of religious festivities (almost certainly Nawrūz in the Persian text).[89] Thus, I would argue that

have a shadow (and therefore lack realism), as much as they do not deal with those (unlawful) animal figures intended for objectionable Zoroastrian ceremonies, with which, in fact, they are compared.

85 The English translation from Ibn al-Ukhuwwa's Arabic text (1938, 56, at the end of passage no. 78) is by Mario Casari (I wish to express my sincere gratitude to him once again); emphasis added. Cf. also the English translation by Levi in Ibn al-Ukhuwwa 1938, 19. Klein (2006, fn. 15) generically referred to the prohibition of «children's **toys** [emphasis added]» in other literature; instead, more precisely Ghabin (2009, 210, and fn. 118) mentioned the *ḥisba* treaty by al-ʿUqbānī Tilimsānī, who, reporting Ibn Rushd, related what occurred in the 12th-13th-century Cordoba (cf. previous fn.). A summary of this passage can be found in Talbi (1954, 304, emphasis added): «En outre, il [= Ibn Rushd] réprouvait les **jouets en forme d'animaux** [الصور الحيوانات, *al-ṣuwar al-ḥayawānāt* (figurines of animals), after Chenoufi 1965-1966, 243 (٩٨) - l. 15], telles les girafes qu'on avait coutume de fabriquer au Nouvel An (*nayrūz*) en Espagne. ʿUqbānī note à ce propos que la même coutume existait à Tlemcen au mois de janvier et ajoute que, d'une manière générale, on fabriquait des **jouets** du même genre à l'occasion de toutes les fêtes, coutume qui, à son avis, ne pouvait dénoter qu'une origine chrétienne». This passage is also reported by Casanovas 2001; cf. also Gibson 2010, I, 53-54.

86 Graves 2008, 246 (cf. also Graves 2010, I, 72-73). It is not clear, moreover, what exactly Abū 'l-Qāsim al-ʿAzafī (governor of Ceuta, d. 1278) referred to in his *Kitāb al-durr al-munaẓẓam fī mawlid al-nabī al-muʿaẓẓam* (a text on Christian festivities in al-Andalus), regarding the «figuras prohibidas que ce hacen en el *nayrūz*, [...]» (de la Granja 1969, 48). As for dolls, see again Graves (2010, I, 74 and fns. 250-251), who referred to Ibn al-Ukhuwwa and al-Ghazālī's *Iḥya*, both reporting the tale of ʿĀʾisha and her dolls. See also al-Māwardī, a jurist who was born in Bassora in 972 and died in 1058, who stated: «As for dolls, playing with them does not constitute religious disobedience, but trains girls in bringing up children and in household managements. They do contain an element of sin in that they portray living beings and have some similarity to idols. There are occasions for permitting their handling, and other occasions for preventing it, depending on the evidence in each case. The Prophet, may God bless and grant him peace, entered [a place] where ʿĀʾisha, may God approve of her, was found playing with dolls, and let her be, not objecting to her conduct. [...]» (al-Māwardī 1996, 272).

87 Particularly in the Iranian world these animal figurines were likely purchased for children who did not necessarily belong to solely Zoroastrian communities, as supported by the significant production of many Seljuk ceramic house models which could hardly have represented ceremonies performed exclusively within Zoroastrian communities (cf. above, fn. 72 and figs. 7-10). Nevertheless, the incidence and diffusion of the phenomenon must have been such as to justify on the one hand al-Ghazālī's Persian version of his work which could have reached a «broader, popular audience» (cf. above, fn. 78) in his homeland, and on the other hand the requirement of more all-encompassing «formal laws forbidding their [i.e. of the animal figurines] manufacture» (Graves 2008, 246; cf. above).

88 Besides, Ibn al-Ukhuwwa and al-ʿUqbānī Tilimsānī's texts (for the latter see fns. 84 and 85, above) would seem to be perfectly in accordance with those of al-Ghazālī.

89 Arranging the clay animal figurines in one or more rows on the roof could certainly have appeared as a game to children.

these animal figures were intended as an inherent part of the above-mentioned Zoroastrian ceremony performed by children, as Ann K.S. Lambton postulated:

> «Ghazālī has a curious passage in the *Kīmiyā al-saʿāda* on forbidden things (*munkirāt*) in a bazaar, which gives a glimpse of the life of the people. Among the items which should not be sold he mentions effigies of animals for children at the holiday (*ʿīd*), swords and wooden shields for the Nau-Rūz (the festival of the vernal equinox), and clay pipes for Sada (the festival of the autumnal equinox). These things were not in themselves forbidden but they were a manifestation of Zoroastrian customs, which were contrary to the sharīʿa and for this reason unseemly. Further, excessive decoration of the bazaars, making much confectionery and extravagance on the occasion of the Nau-Rūz were not fitting: Nau-Rūz and Sada should be forgotten[90]».[91]

Mary Boyce witnessed this ceremony in the 1960s.[92] At least three saddled quadrupeds can be identified among the clay animal figurines portrayed on the roof of the Belivani house (fig. 6): a camel, a giraffe, and a donkey or mule carrying loads.

> «[...] and on that day [i.e. when children modelled the clay figurines[93]] in the Belivani household Pouran [Gushtasp's fifteen-year-old sister] stitched tiny panniers of homespun cotton to put on the little clay camel, and also some cotton bags. [...]».[94]

Almost all the animal figurines depicting quadrupeds usually intended for riding or carrying loads - found during excavations carried out in the above-mentioned sites, especially from Iran (including Istakhr) and Iraq - wore saddles but were riderless, thus we can assume they were pack animals.[95] Furthermore, the presence of birds such as the

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90 A *ḥadīth* is reported in Abū 'l-Qāsim al-ʿAzafī's work mentioned above (see fn. 86, above), preceded by a long series of transmitters: «Quien se educa en tierra de no árabes y celebra su *nayrūz* y su *mahraŷān*, será juntado con ellos el día del juicio final» (de la Granja 1969, 51). Previously al-ʿAzafī also stated: «No puede aceptarse de nadie un regalo en el día de *nayrūz*, ni en la noche del *mahraŷān*, ni en la noche que llaman "noche de la vieja". El que acepte regalo en esas tres innovaciones, de cualquier persona que sea, se asocia en ellas con los innovadores en el pecado y oprobio que suponen» (de la Granja 1969, 48; for the «noche de la vieja», see de la Granja 1969, fn. 5 on p. 42).

91 Lambton 1968, 277. Cf. also Whitcomb 1985, 190. Furthermore, musical instruments - the sale of which, in close connection with clay animal figurines, al-Ghazālī denounces as prohibited - are held by figures of musicians attending the banquets portrayed in some house models (cf. Graves 2008, 243; 2010, 39, 66-67; 2018, 96; and Scerrato 2014, 16). In a number of al-Ghazālī's passages, Graves seems not to distinguish the prohibition of the sale of musical instruments - together with animal figurines - on the occasion of festivities, from the prohibition of their use, commonly combined with drinking wine (in this regard see also al-Māwardī 1996, 272; cf., *here*, fns. 86 and 108), she also cites some of Ibn al-Ukhuwwa's passages on the latter interdiction (Graves 2008, 244-245; 2010, I, 68-70).

92 Real people, instead, took part in the following sequence of the ceremony inside the houses, as some house models testify (fig. 7 and cf. fn. 71, above).

93 See fn. 109, below.

94 Boyce 1977, 215. Should the packages represent gifts?

95 As for the horse clay figurines from Vēh Ardashīr (cf. fn. 25, above), dated to the period of the first Sasanian kings, Antonio Invernizzi stated: « Il est donc possible que nos chevaux sassanides de terrecuite, sellés mais sans aucune trace de chevalier, soient à considérer en général complets, sauf que le chevalier ne fût exécuté

nightingale is also remarkable on both the roof of the Belivani house and among some archaeological finds. Therefore, in my view the reference to the mentioned Zoroastrian ceremony should be carefully considered.

As for some special quadrupeds such as the lions and hyena found at Tell Abū Ṣkhayr, or a possible cat or lion from Istakhr, as well as oxen or other horned animals from Istakhr, Rayy, Samarra and Wāsiṭ,[96] and dogs from Tell Abū Ṣkhayr,[97] it is reasonably necessary to again refer to the very probable representation of this ceremony in the glazed pottery house models. Lions or cats (it is very difficult to distinguish between domestic and wild felines) are placed on the roofs of some house models: two such models were auctioned by Christie's and Sotheby's, while another is preserved in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (figs. 8-10). The exemplar once housed at Sotheby's also features some species of horned quadrupeds and possibly dogs too (fig. 10).

The human figures usually seated around a table (in most cases the latter may be set with the *haft sīn*)[98] in the courtyards or inner parts of these house models - sometimes both human (inside) and animal (on the roof) figurines are displayed (fig. 7)[99] - corroborate the hypothesis that most house models represent the events that took place during this celebration of the end of *panjī-mas*, according to the Zoroastrian ceremony for the New Year.[100]

Moreover, M.S. Graves recently rightly referred to the topic of "sweet" citadels or castles populated with figures made on the occasion of festivals and intended as gifts, which she compared to the house models,[101] actually perfectly fitting the hypothesis proposed herein. In fact, she mentioned the treaty of Abū 'l-Qāsim al-ʿAzafī[102] where cakes in the form of citadels populated with figures baked by Andalusians for the Nawrūz are mentioned:

> «En estas fiestas se hacen unos a otros preciosos regalos que han elegido de antemano, y "ciudades" [*madāʾin*[103]] en las que forman e inventan diversas figuras (fn. 2: De estas ciudades, prodigio de la repostería [i.e. patisserie]

avec du matériau différent » (Invernizzi 1979, 242). It is also interesting to note the fragment of a third-century clay animal figurine (a horse?) with an attached clay piece on its back (probably the remains of a saddle) from Ardashīr I's (224-241) palace in Qalʿa-yi Dukhtar (Huff 1976, 173, fig. 7c and pl. 46.3).

96 Cf. also Merv and Samarkand, above.

97 Cf. also Merv, above.

98 Literally, "seven *sīn*" (the letter *sīn* in the Persian alphabet is "s"), i.e. seven objects whose names begin with "s". In this regard and for the number of objects on the tables displayed in the house models, see Graves 2008, 248,; 2010, I, 78; Scerrato 2014, 14, 18, 25.

99 Majda 1989, p. 184, fig. 3; cf. also Fontana 2019, fn. 17 and fig. 2.

100 This interpretation suits the different features which instead characterise some quite coeval (13th-14th century) clay figurines from Islamic India. The clay horses found during excavations in the Punjab village of Theh Polār, in fact, do not have saddles: they were most likely intended for other purposes (toys also?), according to local ancient traditions (see Banerji 1966, 150-151 and figs. 1-2). As for the intended use of the house models, different opinions are offered by Grube (1976, 174; 2003, 461) and Scerrato (2014), who assumed the ceramic representations of buildings in miniature were wedding gifts; on the intended uses of the house models suggested by Graves, see in particular her last publication on the matter (Graves 2018, 15 ff.).

101 Graves 2018, 15, and fn. 42.

102 See fn. 86, above.

103 Pérès 1937, 304. The latter pointed out: « On donnait à ces gâteaux la forme de villes (*madâʾin*) et on les appelait *madâʾin min al-ʿağin* : "villes de pâte" » (*ibid*.).

> andaluza, nos ha dejado una buena descripción Abū ʿImrān Mūsà, poeta de Triana del siglo XI […])».[104]

These sweet citadels populated with figures were perhaps not so different from those presented during the banquet in Cairo to celebrate the end of *ramaḍān* 380/December 990, as mentioned by the Egyptian historian al-Maqrīzī (d. 1442) in his famous *al-Khiṭaṭ*:

> «châteaux de sucre ainsi que les images (en sucre) et les assiettes où étaient des images en confitures (ou pâtisseries). […] On avait déjà fait dans dâr al fiṭrat deux châteaux de pâtisserie […] de forme élégante, vernis de feuilles d'or et dans chacun y avait des figures en relief qu'on aurait dites fondus dans des moules, pièces par pièce».[105]

A similar banquet was described for the end of *ramaḍān* 415/December 1024 by ʿIzz al-Malik Muḥammad al-Musabbiḥī al-Kātib (Egyptian, d. 1029-30) in his *Akhbar Miṣr*:

> «On Friday at the end of Ramaḍān in 415/1024, a diorama, made of sugar candy and depicting a banquet (*simāṭ*) with figurines (*timthāl*), decorations (*tazwīn*), and castles (*qaṣr*), was paraded through the city streets. Wazir Najīb al-Dawla Abū al-Qāsim ʿAlī al-Jarjalāʿī supervised the display, which boasted 152 figurines and 7 big castles. Officials on horseback and a Sudanese drum corps led the parade, and the people gathered to see it».[106]

Furthermore, in particular these sweet figurines call to mind the animal-shaped hanging sugar candies sold in Cairo as gifts for children, as al-Maqrīzī recounted:

> «In the month of Rajab, a beautiful sight appeared in this market: hanging sugar candies (*ʿilāqa*) shaped like horses (*khayl*), lions (*sabʿ*), cats (*quṭṭa*), and more, were hung from threads in front of the shops. They all sold out, as gifts for children, every size of candy, [...] Other markets in Cairo and al-Fusṭāṭ, and even in the suburbs (*al-aryāf*), were full of similar sugar candies. These same candies were also produced in the month of Shaʿbān, a custom that continued until quite recently. [...] When sweets production began each Ramaḍān, the markets of al-Fusṭāṭ, Cairo, and the suburbs were full of these kinds of sweets».[107]

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[104] de la Granja 1969, 34. In the introduction to his translation of al-ʿAzafī's treaty, de la Granja (1969, 2) stated that «del *nayrūz* en al-Andalus tenemos sólo unos pocos datos inconexos: la noche que le precedía era considerada por los andaluces como la más propicia para la consumación del matrimonio; en ese día se cocían bolos [i.e. cakes] en forma de ciudades, se cruzan regalos y […]». Pérèz (1937, 303) specified that « la fête du *Nairûz*, fête d'origine persane, ne tombe pas le 1er mars comme en Orient, mais les premiers jours de janvier et tend à se confondre, en Espagne musulmane, avec le premier jour de l'année ou mieux, avec le jour de l'Epiphanie », namely the day dedicated to gifts, especially for children.

[105] Makrizi 1920, 109-110 [Arabic text in al-Maqrīzī 1854, I, 387]; cf. Ashtor 1968, 1027.

[106] Translation by Sato 2015, 58 [Arabic text in al-Musabbiḥī 1978-1984, I (1978), 65].

[107] Translation by Sato 2015, 167 [Arabic text in al-Maqrīzī 1854, II, 99-100]; cf. also Sato 2015, 59, 123, 139, 178. On the subject of sweet figures, Mary Boyce can be mentioned again in referring to what went on in the 1960s in the Yazdī plain: «on the last day of *Panjī mas* the dishes baked for consecration included little men made of a sweet dough and animals, stars and the like» (Boyce 2005, 24). For other Muslim sources on both

2.3. *Final remarks*

Except for cases in which clay animal figurines are dated to the late Sasanian or early Islamic period (up to the 9th-10th century), the 11th-13th centuries are chronological references for the very large quantities of more homogeneous finds. The stratigraphy of the 2012 excavation campaign in Istakhr related to the findings of the figurines would suggest a period up to the 12th century (including at least the beginning of the 13th century) and this date fits well with the period in which al-Ghazālī was writing and reporting on the prohibition of these figurines.

It is interesting to note that al-Māwardī of Bassora - who died when al-Ghazālī was born - did not mention a ban on the sale of figurines or musical instruments at public feasts; yet he provided precise rules for the market supervisor with regard to the «use in public of the forbidden musical instruments».[108] Is it possible that the wide diffusion of the above mentioned ceremony among the Muslim community and the consequent extensive sale of clay animal figurines and musical instruments - the latter accompanying the banquet of *Nawrūz* and the former to be placed on the roofs of houses by children the night before - did not begin until the second half of the 11th century, that is, in the same Seljuk era when the production of ceramic house models also began? It is likely that, just after the Mongol conquest - and with their ongoing prohibition, as Ibn al-Ukhuwwa's passage demonstrated - the industrial production of these clay animal figurines slowed down, and they may have been produced not only in lesser quantities and in Zoroastrian-majority areas, but also in small local and seasonal workshops or - as attested for the most recent periods - at home.[109]

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sweet and vegetal essence figures, cf. Graves 2010, I, 80-81, and fns. 274-275; cf. also Gibson 2010, I, 53 and fn. 38. For human and animal figurines «made of gold, silver, and amber, all ornamented with pearls, sapphires, and crysolite» which filled golden trays and were brought on the west bank of the canal in Cairo during the procession ceremony to cut the canal in 517/1123, see Sanders (1994, 105-106 and fn. 47), who cites al-Maqrīzī 1854, I, 473.

[108] al-Māwardī 1996, 272; cf., *here*, fns. 87 and 91. The French translation of al-Māwardī's text is actually slightly different: « L'usage public d'instruments de jeu ou de musique prohibés » (Mawerdi 1915, 536).

[109] In this case, they were most likely not baked. Boyce reported her experience: «[...] it was usually on the first day of Panji-kasog [i.e. the Lesser Pentad], Ruz Aštad of Isfand (Spendarmad) Mah, that boys fetched clay to model figurines for the gahambar-e Panjivak. The figurines were actually shaped on the following day, Ruz Asman, when the worked clay had hardened sufficiently; [...] On the first day [of *panjī-mas*, i.e. the Greater Pentad] Tahmina Khanom [Rustam Belivani's wife] whitewashed the little clay figures, and she and her daughters spread out a white cloth on the clean new floor of the *ganza-pak*, and arranged all the proper objects beside it: [...] and the charming group of little white figures, the camel with its head to one side, as if craning to see itself in the mirror. The nightingale had a fragrant gourd, striped red and orange, in the hollow of its back, and grapes between its cane legs» (Boyce 1977, 215, 217; see also 220 and 223); «so during *Panjī kasōg* fine clay was kneaded and shaped into figurines of familiar objects such as camel, donkey and nightingale, with easier, but highly symbolic sugar-cones; and during *Panjī mas* these were whitewashed and placed in the *ganza-pāk*, the 'pure room' prepared for the visiting souls» (Boyce 2005, 24). More information about the two Pentads are to be found in Boyce (1977, 213 and ff.); for the Iranian festivals of Zoroastrian origin, see also Boyce 1999. Cf. Gibson (2010, I, 55), who mentioned Boyce stating: «Mary Boyce [...] found that yet another of the annual festivals, the sixth *gāhambār* which celebrated creation and took place just before *Nawrūz*, was also celebrated with the production of figurines».

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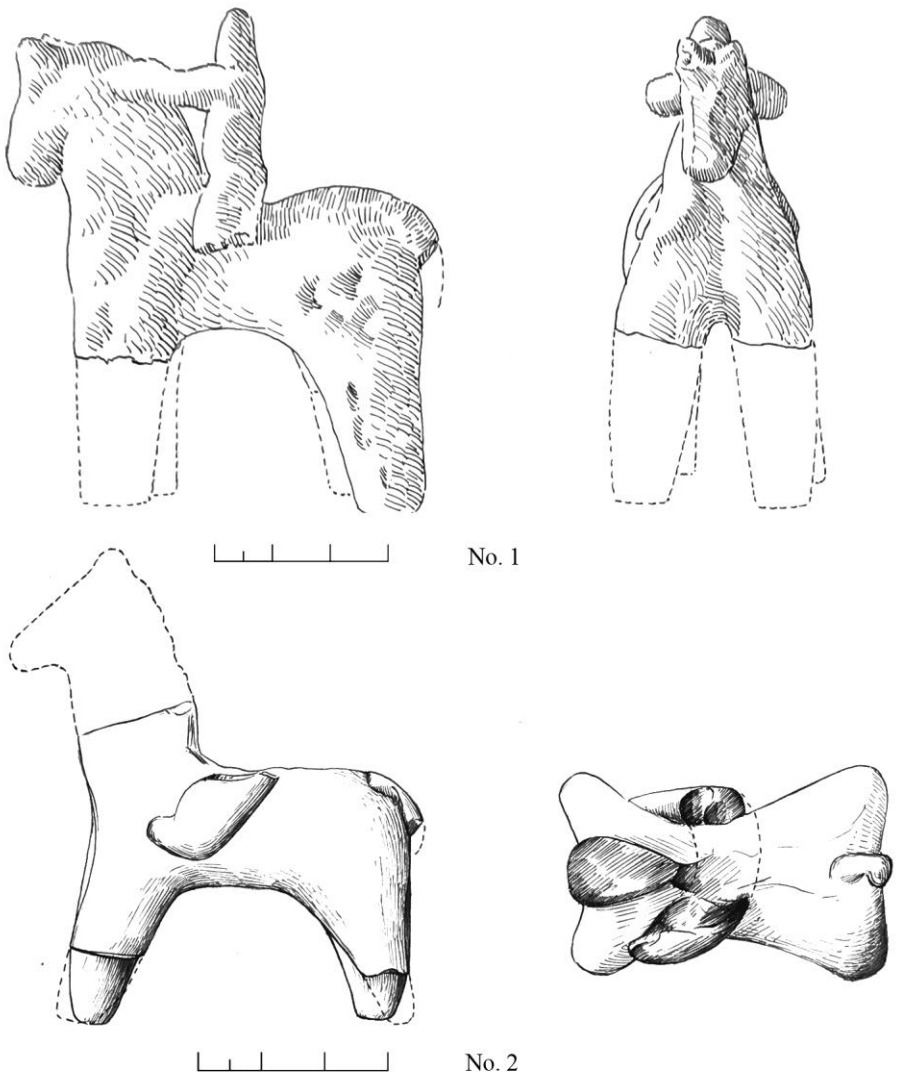

Fig. 1 - Clay figurines from the 1930s excavations at Istakhr: two saddleless horses with riders (nos. 1 and 2), 11th-early 13th century (© Oriental Institute Museum, Chicago).

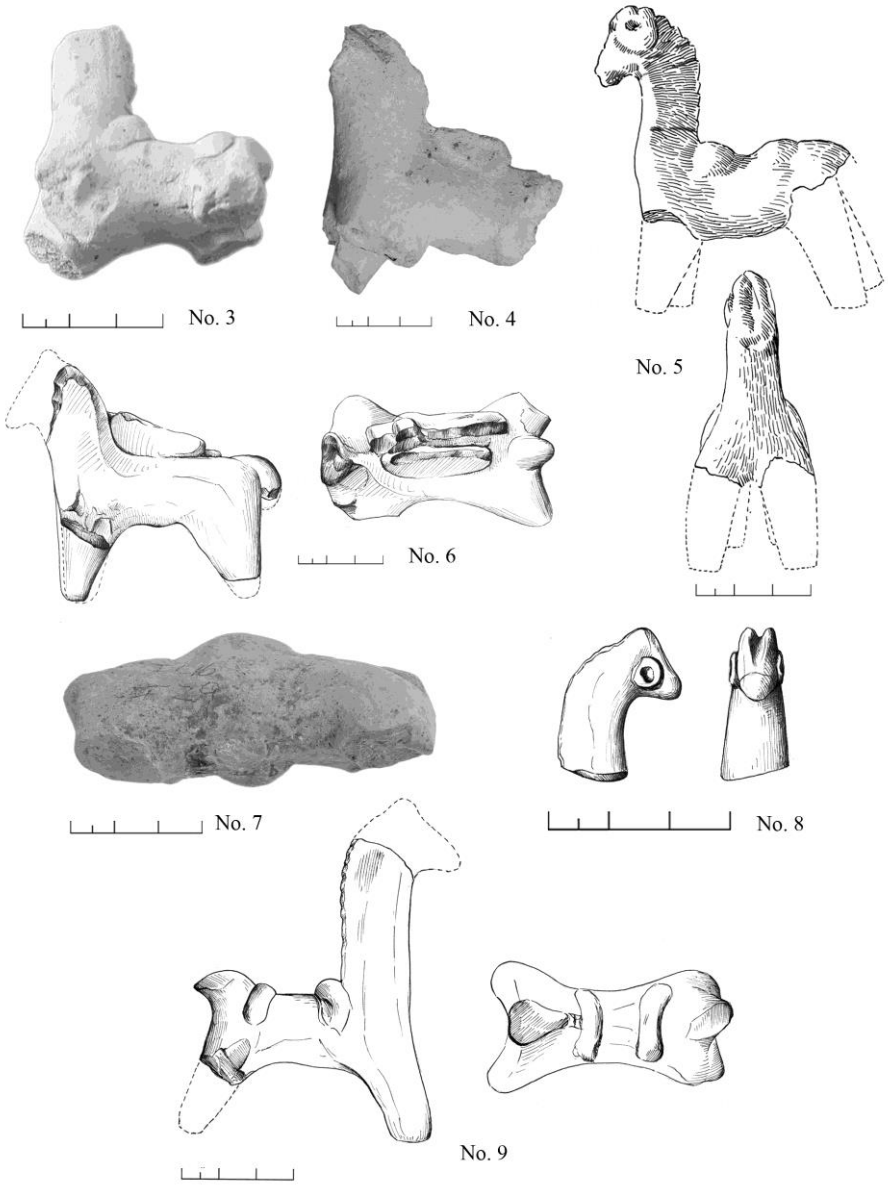

Fig. 2 - Clay figurines from excavations at Istakhr: two saddled horses (nos. 3 and 4) unearthed in 2012; three saddled horses (nos. 5, 6 and 7), a horse's head (no. 8) and a saddled horse or, most likely, a giraffe (no. 9) unearthed in the 1930s, 11th-early 13th century (nos. 5-9 © Oriental Institute Museum, Chicago).

Fig. 3 - Clay figurines from the 1930s excavations at Istakhr: a saddled horse (no. 10) and a horned animal (probably a gibbous ox, no. 12), 11th-early 13th century (after Schmidt 1939, fig. 85).

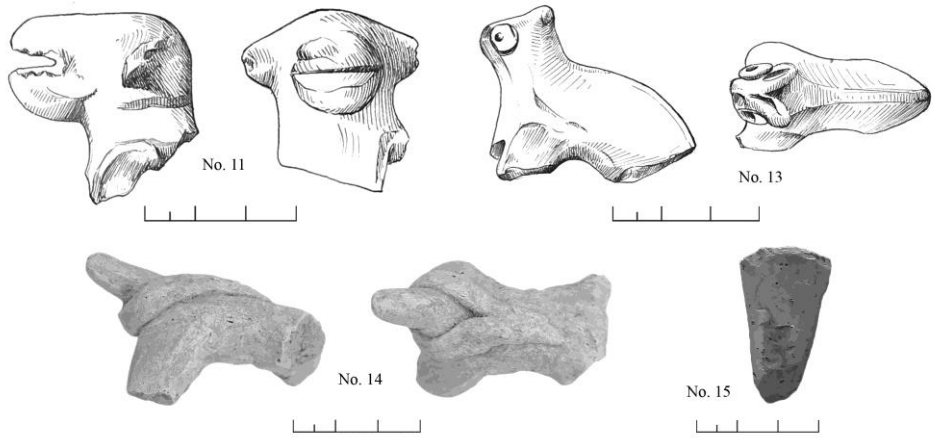

Fig. 4 - Clay figurines from excavations at Istakhr: a camel's head (no. 11), a cat or lion (no. 13), an unidentified quadruped (no. 14) unearthed in the 1930 excavations, and a quadruped's leg (no. 15) unearthed in 2012, 11th-early 13th century (nos. 11, 13 and 14 © Oriental Institute Museum, Chicago).

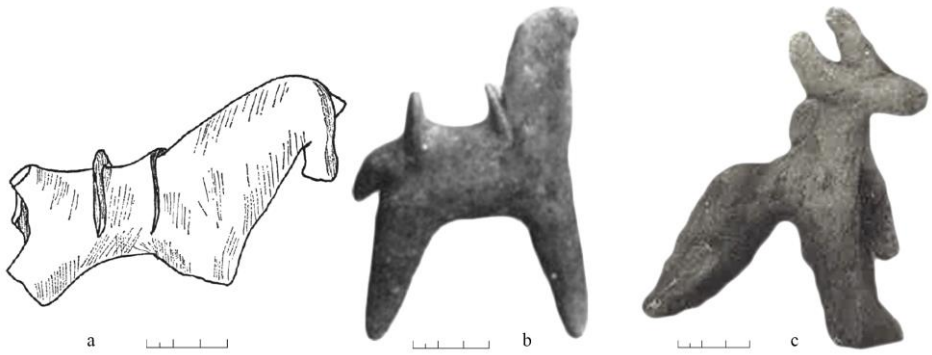

Fig. 5 - Clay figurines of quadrupeds from Susa (Iran; saddled horse, after Rosen-Ayalon 1974, fig. 248), Tell Abū Sarīfa (Iraq; saddled horse, after Adams 1970, pl. 8, fig. 16e) and Wāsiṭ (Iraq; gibbous ox, after Safar 1945, pl. XXII*a*), dated to the mid-7th-8th century, 9th-10th century, and 13th century, respectively.

Fig. 6 - A row of clay figurines in the shape of saddled quadrupeds and a nightingale on the roof of a Zoroastrian house in the Yazdī plain, overlooking the courtyard (after Boyce 1977, pl. IVa).

Fig. 7 - House model showing a row of (damaged) quadrupeds on the roof and some people attending a banquet inside, stonepaste glazed in transparent turquoise with blue painting, Iran, 12th-early 13th century, Warsaw, National Museum, Inv. SKAZsz 2263 MNW (http://masterpieces.asemus.museum/masterpiece/detail.nhn?objectId=14188).

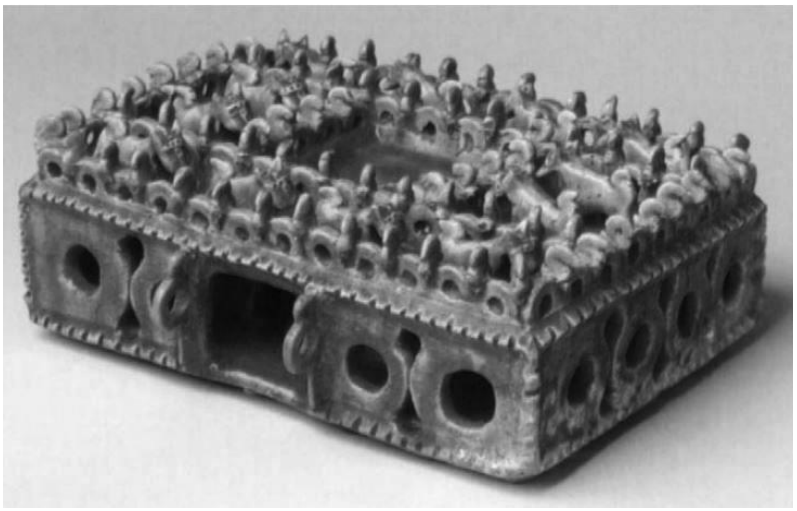

Fig. 8 - House model showing a row of lions or cats on the roof, stonepaste glazed in transparent blue, Iran, 12th-early 13th century, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Goldman Sachs Gift, 2007, Inv. 2007.354 (once Hadji Baba Gallery, London)
(after Fehérvári 1996, ill. on p. 151).

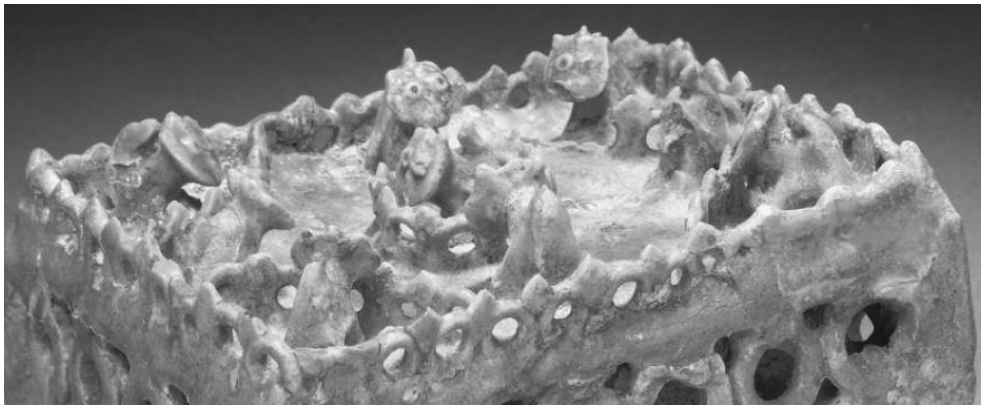

Fig. 9 - House model showing lions or cats on the roof, stonepaste glazed in transparent turquoise, Iran, 12th-early 13th century, detail (after *Christie's* 2008, lot 274).

Fig. 10 - House model showing lions or cats, horned animals and perhaps dogs on the roof, stonepaste glazed in transparent turquoise, Iran, 12th-early 13th century (after *Sotheby's* 2013, lot 19).

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THE BIRD-SHAPED FINIAL ON ISLAMIC ROYAL PARASOLS: A GHAZNAVID OR FATIMID INNOVATION?

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This paper aims at investigating when and why the bird-shaped finial made its appearance on Islamic parasols through the analysis of written sources and miniature paintings. Evidence attest to the trans-regional and diachronic use of the parasol as a royal insignia whose meaning and value grew wider to symbolise the seat of government, was it the royal tent, palace or throne.

Keywords: parasol; Islamic royal insignia; Iran; Ghaznavids; Fatimids

1. THE LONG-LASTING TRADITION OF THE PARASOL

The parasol, a device to provide shadow repairing from the sun (or snow), is alternatively referred to as *miẓalla*, *shamsa*[1] or *shamsiyya* in the Arabic-speaking context,[2] and *chatr*[3] in the Persian-speaking areas. It is attested as a royal insignia in almost every Islamic dynasty, but the Islamic period was not at all its starting point. In fact, the history of the parasol is far more ancient. The device has been in use throughout a very long period extending from Antiquity to the Modern Age, and in different cultural areas.

Evidence come from Egypt,[4] Assyria, Achaemenid and Sasanian Persia,[5] where the parasol is usually held by an attendant standing behind the figure of the king as an attribute of royalty;[6] a further spread concerned Asia from China[7] to the west.[8]

Though it majorly spread in the Eastern lands, the parasol (σκιάδειον) was known in Late Archaic and Classical Athens as well. Greece seems to be the only territory where it was not reserved to men.[9] The depiction of a parasol-bearer attending someone other than a

1 In some Islamic contexts such as the Abbasid and Fatimid courts, the term *shamsa* might indicate a crown suspended above the caliph's head, not to be confused with the parasol (see Halm 1995; 1997).

2 Bosworth 1993, 191-192.

3 The Persian term *chatr* is borrowed from the Sanskrit, thus attesting a very ancient origin of the device and alluding to its use in the Indian context. Monneret de Villard (1968, 270) reports that, before the Hellenism exerted its influence on the Indian art, Buddha was represented through symbols: among these, there were the parasol and the throne. From the term *chatr* derive the variations *shitr* or *jitr*, demonstrating that the oriental origin of the device was still perceived (see Korn 2012, 149). In addition, the term *ṭayyāra* indicated the sunshade placed above the throne of Rustam in Ṭabarī (d. 923; see Friedmann 1992, 82).

4 The parasol was known in Egypt since the 3rd millennium BCE (McDonald 1999; cf. also Miller 1992, 93).

5 See Muscarella 2013, 817-824, with related bibliography. About the parasol portrayed in the Sasanian reliefs of Ṭāq-i Bustān, see Ghirshman 1962, fig. 237.

6 Sims 1992, 77.

7 A figure wearing a tiara and carrying a parasol (*chattra*) is depicted on a stone pedestal from the Indian Museum of Calcutta (inv. no. A 25157 B.G. 51): the scene probably refers to a divine episode (see Bénisti 1981-1982, 212, fig. 3). A fragmentary parasol of Han production has been found; both royal and devotional uses are attested in the Buddhist context, and recalled by the stupas as well (for both information see Andrews 1993, 192).

8 Two parasols are portrayed in a religious scene on a coin struck by Caracalla (r. 211-217; see Andrews 1993, 192).

9 The parasol is depicted as part of the feminine equipment in 4th-century funerary iconography (a maid holds the parasol above the seated lady; see Miller 1992, 92), 6th-century vases (Miller 1992, 95) and in the divine

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king in Late Archaic Lycia might be explained as a custom resulted from the cultural influence of Persia.[10]

There is no reference to the parasol under the Umayyads; conversely, its use is attested in the Umayyad caliphate of al-Andalus[11] and under the Normans[12] that is to say in the western extremities of the Islamic and Islamic influenced territories.

2. The royal parasol and its bird-shaped finial in the Iranian lands during the Islamic period

The presence of a bird-shaped finial on top of royal parasols is confirmed for the first time by historical sources during the Ghaznavid period. Fakhr-i Mudabbir (d. 1236) in his *Ādāb al-ḥārb waʾl-shajāʿa* writes about the finial topping Sultan Masʿūd III's parasol:

> «In the year 503 [1109] the Sulṭān-i Karīm ʿAlāʾud-Dawla Masʿūd son of Raḍī Ibrāhīm (May God purify their dust!) marched toward Bust. An exquisite, precious and unique pearl fell down from the beak of **the falcon surmounting the Sultan's umbrella**».[13]

This passage provides an information that let the reader to imagine the parasol's finial as a true jewel. It is reminiscent of the Sasanian crown worn by Hormuzd II (r. 303-309) that featured not only the typical spread wings but a complete bird of prey, portrayed by the profile, holding in its beak a drop-shaped element (possibly a pearl).[14] Thus, the presence of a jewelled falcon on top of the royal insignia - attested also under Ibrāhīm (r. 1059-1099) -[15] may have been inspired to the ancient Iranian tradition.[16]

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context on the Parthenon eastern frieze (Eros holds the parasol above Aphrodite; Miller 1992, 103); in fact, the parasol was a mark of social and political distinction for Athenian ladies since it was reserved to citizens. Few exceptions are attested in the Islamic context. As narrated by Clavijo (ambassador to the Tīmūr's court), in 1404 Tīmūr's first wife Sarāy-Mulk Khātūn made her entry into the court under a white silk parasol (Andrews 1993, 193). A painting (probably Samarakand, 15th century, Istanbul, Sarayı Topkapı Library, Ms. H. 2153, fol. 165r, cf. Haase 1981, fig. 250) illustrates a scene probably drawn from the history of Solomon transposed into a Timurid setting: a large parasol, held by an angel, shadows a couple carried inside a platform by *jinn*s. Moreover, Shīrīn appears shadowed by a parasol in "Shirin on her way to Farhad", Niẓāmī's *Khamsa*, Herat, 1491, Moscow, The Museum of Oriental Art, Ms. 1659 II, fol. 66r, cf. Karpova 1981, not numbered ill. See also fn. 36 about the parasol used by the royal family among the Qarakhanids.

10 Miller 1992, 94.

11 Flood - Necipoğlu eds. 2017, 242. On portable canopies see Chalmeta 1993.

12 Byzantines and Fatimids represented the royal prototypes Roger II of Sicily (r. 1130-1154) looked at. Depictions in the Cappella Palatina in Palermo show a set of insignia of sovereignty: a variety of headgear, the parasol, which always matched the fabric of the caliph's costume, a sceptre, sword and shield (see Tolar 2011, 32). A parasol (*al-miẓalla*) would have been sent to the Norman kings as a gift from the Fatimid caliph (see Flood - Necipoğlu eds. 2017, 379).

13 Shafi 1938, 200 (emphasis added).

14 See Fontana 2012, 95; cf. Erdmann 1951, 99, fn. 47, and also fn. 38, fig. 18; Göbl 1971, pl. 5:14. See also Halm 1995, 131.

15 Bosworth 1963, 280, fn. 23.

16 Such a continuity of customs can be traced in the use of a jewelled, suspended crown in vogue among the Sasanian kings as well as under the Abbasid and Fatimid caliphs. See above, fn. 1. Moreover, on the drachms

The court-poet Sayyid Ḥasan (d. 1161) confirms that the parasols of Masʿūd III and his son Bahrām Shāh (r. 1117-1150; 1152-1157) featured a falcon on their top:

مبارک اوج تخت او فلک را بر کنار آرد خجسته **باز چتراو** جهان را زیر بردارد[17]
«Blessed be the top of his throne that brings the firmament closer
Fortunate be **the falcon of his parasol** that raises the world below».[18]

Miniatures produced from the mid-14th century onward show episodes related to the Ghaznavid history which can be held as a demonstration of the custom. The bird-shaped finial appears two times in a *Shāhnāma*'s miniature (Iran, 1446) on top of both the throne where Sultan Maḥmūd (r. 998-1030) is seated and the wide parasol above him (fig. 1).[19] It must have been a well-established role to justify such a pleonastic repetition.

A further detail concerning the colour of the Ghaznavid parasol comes from the *Tārīkh-i Masʿūdī* by Bayhaqī (d. 1077), who reports an episode occurred in the aftermath of the defeat of Dandānqān (1040),[20] when the Sultan had to flee to Ghazni leaving everything behind:

> «Before the Amir left Rebāṭ-e Karvān, a trusty messenger arrived from the castellan Bu ʿAli. He brought two **black** ceremonial **parasols**, a black banner and short spears, all placed in a black satin brocade bag, an elephant litter and a mule litter, together with other pieces of equipment, since all these insignia of royalty had been lost (i.e. in the flight from the battlefield)».[21]

A Safavid miniature could confirm the choice of a dark colour: it illustrates a convivial meeting of Firdowsī with three among the Ghaznavid court's poets, ʿUnṣurī, Farrukhī and ʿAsjudī; on the background, there is a man carrying a closed black parasol (fig. 2).[22]

Episodes mentioning the parasol without providing any specific detail about its finial abound. The *chatr-dār* was one of the highest tasks a *ghulām* could attain to, along with the standard bearer, the master of the wardrobe, and the armour-bearer;[23] and still before the

issued by the Persian king Phraates IV (r. 40-3 BCE) was depicted a falcon holding a diadem in its beak (see Daryaee - Malekzadeh 2018, 247).

17 Khan 1949, 83.

18 I wish to thank Viola Allegranzi for translating from Persian.

19 The majority of miniatures mentioned as examples in this paper are drawn from this manuscript and the Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmiʿ al-Tawārīkh*, Herat, 1430 ca., Bibliothèque nationale de France, Supplément persan 1113, since they are among the oldest ones attesting bird-shaped finials and fully accessible online.

20 The defeat of Dandānqān cost the Ghaznavids the loss of Khurasan in favour of the Seljuqs.

21 Bosworth 2011, II, 338 (emphasis added).

22 The miniature belongs to a *Shāhnāma*'s manuscript started under Shāh Ismāʿīl (r. 1501-1524) and completed in 1535 under Shāh Ṭahmāsp (r. 1524-1576), thus known as the "*Shāhnāma* of Shāh Ṭahmāsp". It is currently preserved in Toronto, Aga Khan Museum, Ms. AKM 156, fol. 7r. The isolated figure standing on the right and dressed in yellow might represent Sultan Maḥmūd; he seems to wear a falconer's glove. The poet Masʿūd-i Saʿd (d. 1121-2) mentions the black canopy of Bahrām Shāh as well (see Khan 1949, 82-83).

23 Bosworth 1963, 105. On the occurrence of the parasol already under the Samanids, cf. below and fn. 28.

prince Mawdūd ascended the throne, his *ghulām*s were entrusted to carry the ceremonial parasol.[24]

With regard to the warfare context, the already mentioned *Ādāb al-ḥārb waʾl-shajāʿa* (late 12th-early 13th century) by Fakhr-i Mudabbir narrates the fight between Bahrām Shāh and Muḥammad-i Bā Ḥalīm, who revolted against him:

> «The drums were beaten and the army ranged itself in battel order. The ungrateful Moḥammad-i-Bā Ḥalīm spread his **umbrella** and delivered an attack in the centre».[25]

During the attack led to Lahore, the «*chatar*» (umbrella) is the insignia held above «the infidel pretender» riding a horse on the battlefield.[26] Both these passages attest that the parasol was used as an official signal to set the battle starting and that its value of royal insignia was recognised as such beyond the Islamic field. Moreover, during the reign of Masʿūd III, carrying off the enemy's standard or *chatr* on the battlefield was regarded among the actions that might earn a special reward in the plunder's share.[27]

The *chatr* must have entered the Ghaznavid court along with the administrative and royal protocols acquired from the Samanids, among those it is attested in the 10th century.[28] The custom spread in the Iranian lands so that, in the aftermath of 1092, the *chatr* had become such a highly symbolical device in the Seljuq protocol that a son of Niẓām al-Mulk gave Sultan Berkyaruq (r. 1092-1105) «the *sarāparda* and the royal umbrella which are royal insignia (*ālāt-i salṭanat az sarāparda wa chatr*)» in the attempt of obtaining the vizierate.[29]

The Seljuq prince Qāwurd (d. 1073) tried to act as an independent ruler by adopting «the royal insignia of a parasol (*chatr*), stamping on documents a *tughra* or official emblem […] and assuming the regal titles».[30]

Among the episodes most frequently illustrated in miniatures there is the meeting of the Seljuq Sanjar (r. 1097-1118) with an old woman: the Sultan is always portrayed mounting a horse and shadowed by a large parasol, which is sometimes topped by a golden bird-shaped finial (fig. 3).[31] The story is drawn from the first poem of Niẓāmī's *Khamsa*, the *Makhzan*

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24 Bosworth 1977, 12.

25 Shafi 1938, 226 (emphasis added).

26 Shafi 1938, 214.

27 Bosworth 1963, 126. The loss of insignia corresponded to a loss of power: «the capture, appropriation, or usurpation of a royal standard or parasol could mean defeat or rebellion». To protect the royal insignia was a point of honour on the battlefield; otherwise, the king would be deprived of the visible signs of his authority (see Flood 2009, 122).

28 Bosworth 1963, fn. 23; see also Andrews 1993, 193.

29 See Durand-Guédy 2013, 168.

30 Bosworth 1968, 88.

31 For other miniatures illustrating this episode and featuring parasols fitted with bird finials, see, for instance, other paintings from manuscripts of Niẓāmī's *Khamsa*: Herat, 15th century, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Diez A fol. 7, fol. 19r (cf. SBB website); Iran, 1529, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Edwin Binney, 3rd, Collection of Turkish Art, Ms. M.85.237.16 (cf. LACM website); Tabriz, 1539-43, London, British Library, Ms. Or. 2265, fol. 18r (cf. Sims - Marshak - Grube 2002, fig. 127). The episode is portrayed in other miniatures, which do not include the bird-shaped finial (cf. Minissale 2000, 61, 107 and followings.).

al-asrār (the *Treasury of Secrets*) but, curiously, Niẓāmī makes no mention of the parasol in his text,[32] while many miniatures include this detail.[33] A possible explanation could be found in a contamination derived from another episode narrated in Niẓāmī's *Dīwān* about the Prophet Muḥammad and the [Turk] king of the Kaʿba, who appears under a black parasol:

سلطان کعبه را بین بر تخت هفت کشور دیبای سبز بر تن، **چتر سیاه** بر سر
او بر سریر شاهی چون خسروان مربع پرگار حلقهٔ او چون آسمان مدور
ترکیست تازی اندام و ز بهر دلستانی بر عارض سپیدش خال سیه ز عنبر[34]

«Look at the Sultan of Ka'ba, on the throne of the seven lands
Green silk on his body, a **black parasol (čatr-i siyāh)** on his head /
He, sitting on the royal throne, cross-legged like the kings
The compass of his ring circular like the sky /
It's a beloved (Turk) with an Arab body, due to snatching hearts
On his white face, there is a black mole of ambergris».[35]

As seen above, black was the colour of the Ghaznavid insignia.[36] Since the Seljuqs as much as the Ghaznavids were Sultans of Turkic origin, the black parasol may have been inserted in miniatures to connote the Turkic lineage of Sultan Sanjar. It would thus represent a figurative link between the two dynasties.

[32] See Dārāb 1945, 167-169.
[33] Cf. above, fn. 31.
[34] Nafīsī 1959, 232.
[35] The first and third lines are taken from Lornejad - Doostzadeh 2012, 116, with few corrections by the author. The second line has been translated by Viola Allegranzi.
[36] The parasol's colour was probably a communicating detail. Ayyubids and Mamluks used yellow parasols (see Andrews 1993, 193). References in the Persian literature provide images of great impact: the golden parasol, *chatr-i zarrīn*, was intended as a metaphor of the sun, as well as the *chatr-i simīn*, as a metaphor of the full moon with its silvery colour, and the *chatr-i ʿambarīn* means the darkness of night. Kings of Persian culture were certainly well aware of such poetical imageries and probably considered them in choosing their parasols' fabric (see Sims 1992, 78). The Seljuq Tughrïl Beg (r. 1037-1063) is known to have entered Nishapur under a red parasol after his conquest. Red tents and standards were in use among the Qarakhanids as well (see Andrews 1993, 193; Durand-Guédy 2013, 171). Among the Qarakhanids a black silk, curved parasol was part of the *ʿalāmāt al-ḥarb*, emblems of war on the battlefield and the single emblem of rank attributed to the chief minister, while the orange one was reserved for the sovereign and his family. The Khitan parasol was red with a gilt finial. The Seljuq of Rum Ghiyath al-Dīn Kay Khusraws II (r. 1237-1246) changed the colour from black to blue to mark his opposition against the Abbasids. Chingis Khān had a yellow and red parasol; red was that of the Ilkhans. Tīmūr (r. 1370-1405) is portrayed in a miniature entering Samarkand under a parasol (from a copy of Sharaf al-Dīn ʿAlī Yazdī's *Ẓafarnāma*, Shiraz, 1434-36 ca., Washington D.C., Freer Gallery of Art, inv. no. 48.18, cf. Gray 1961, 97) of dark red brocade decorated with small, gold motifs. A Safavid parasol with arabesque brocade, sometimes a fringe, maybe a gilded bird on top, is depicted in painted outdoor scenes (for all these informations see Andrews 1993, 193). Nevertheless, the parasols portrayed in miniatures not always respect the historical colours.

According to Ibn al-Athīr (d. 1233), the Seljuq Sulaymān Shāh (the nephew of Malik Shāh, r. 1159-1160) entered Baghdad under a parasol to pay visit to the Abbasid caliph.[37] The same historian reports that the Ghurid ʿAlāʾ l-dīn Ḥusayn *Jahānsūz* (r. 1141-1169) adopted some of the royal features in use among the Ghaznavids and the Seljuqs, such as the title of *al-sulṭān al-muʿaẓẓam* and the ceremonial parasol (*chatr*).[38]

Later on, the Ilkhanid Jalāl al-Dīn (r. 1412) surrounded the encampment of a rebellious relative, who recognised him as the Sultan thanks to the parasol held over his head.[39]

During the Timurid and Safavid periods many miniatures illustrating scenes drawn from history and literature, related to the Iranian epic as to coeval events, were produced. Some of them show parasols provided with a bird-shaped finial.[40]

3. The royal parasol and its bird-shaped finial in Islamic Egypt

The use of the parasol is testified in Fatimid Egypt, but the presence of a bird-shaped finial on its top is attested only during the reign of the Fatimids' successors. Moreover, while the use of the parasol in the Iranian Islamic lands is attested by both written sources and images, its tradition in the Islamic Mediterranean emerges merely by historical sources.

As well as under the Ghaznavids, at the Fatimids carrying the parasol corresponded to a high rank. In the 11th century, though Slavs became less prominent in the army they nevertheless continued to be the favoured ones for such task. The *ṣāḥib al-miẓalla* occupied the fourth level in the administrative-military hierarchy after the vizier, the head chamberlain or *ṣāḥib al-bāb*, and the commander-in-chief or *isfahsālār*.[41]

Gold seems to have been the favourite colour for parasols: in 990, al-ʿAzīz (r. 975-996) rode to the Azhar Mosque under a *miẓālla mudhahhaba*,[42] while the parasol used by al-Ẓāhir (r. 1021-1036) in 1024 had heavy gold fringes.[43]

Numerous references relate the role of the parasol to the royal lineage. The amir ʿAbd Allāh, son of the caliph al-Muʿizz (r. 953-975) returned to Cairo in 973-4 after the successful fight against the Qaramatians. He made his entrance shaded by a parasol (*miẓalla*), which was «ordinarily a caliphal prerogative». Al-Muʿizz received him sitting under a dome (*qubba*) over the gate of the palace.[44] The amir is granted with a great honour as a recognition of his military merit; still the caliph stands higher than anyone else does.

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37 Richards 2016, 77-78.

38 Bosworth 1965, 1100.

39 Boyle 1968, 326.

40 A bird finial appears on top of a closed parasol in a scene drawn from Niẓāmī's *Khamsa* portraying "Khusraw arriving at the palace of Shīrīn" in a manuscript from Baghdad, 1386-88, London, British Library, Ms. Or. 13297, fol. 80r (cf. Canby 1993, 43, fig. 23) and another one from Tabriz, 1410, Washington D.C., Freer Gallery of Art, inv. no. 31.36 (cf. Grube 1995, fig. 67). See also "The execution of Farāmurz in front of Bahman", *Bahmannāma*, Shiraz (?), 1397, Ms. Or. 2780, fol. 163v, London, British Library, cf. Stchoukine 1954, pl. XV. From Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmiʿ al-Tawārīkh*, Herat, 1430, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Supplément persan 1113, fols. 177r and 217v (cf. BnF website). For a bird-shaped finial on a canopy see from the same manuscript "The funeral of Ghāzān", fol. 245v (cf. BnF website).

41 Bosworth 1995, 879.

42 Sanders 1994, 48.

43 Sanders 1994, 26.

44 Sanders 1994, 22.

The *qubba* - a fixed structure located in an upper position - answers to the *miẓalla* granted to his son, so that the hierarchic order is maintained through its visible symbols.

Moreover, when al-Muʿizz died the event was only revealed as his successor al-ʿAzīz rode in procession to the mosque for the *ʿīd al-naḥr* under the parasol and then pronounced the *khuṭba* in his own name: thus, the parasol was such strong a symbol to equalise the Friday sermon, traditionally considered the way through which the ruler demonstrates his power along with the coinage (*sikka*).[45]

Another episode attests that the parasol was carried over al-ʿAzīz's heir apparent Manṣūr during the Ramaḍān procession in 993. On that occasion, even the caliph rode without its shade: the impression made on the public must have been great, the caliph renounced to his own insignia in favour of his successor, so to show him officially as the next ruler.[46]

A further interesting aspect emerges from the sources: the parasol was only employed in outdoor settings during processions for festivities and celebrations and it was never carried within the palace walls.[47] By the analysis of the sources, the same can be said for the Ghaznavids; and after all, this was the custom in the Antiquity.[48] According to Sanders, this choice in the Fatimid context can be explained by the identification of the parasol with the palace itself.[49] The parasol thus becomes a sort of synopsis of the royal palace that can follow the king when he is outdoor. The relation between the *qubba* and the parasol highlighted in the episode about the caliph al-Muʿizz[50] is revealing: the two highest ranks in the reign are marked by two elements (*qubba* and parasol) that become interchangeable.

Most references to the Fatimid court concern official ceremonies of various kind, and in particular those linked to the Nile occurring twice a year: perfuming the Nilometer and cutting the canal when the Nile reached sixteen cubits. The latter occurred in 1122: «the caliph emerged from the Gold Gate […] The parasol was unfurled and the caliph [al-Āmir] began the procession while the Qurʾan was being recited».[51]

Ibn al-Ṭuwayr (d. 1220) describes the preparation that preceded the celebration of the New Year.[52] The royal insignia were usually kept in the palace treasuries under the responsibility of high officials; the parasol was selected together with the caliph's outfit so that the elements match one another.[53] «After the caliph mounted his horse […] the three

45 Sanders 1994, 25-26.

46 Sanders 1994, 25-26.

47 «The parasol had been opened to the caliph's right as he exited from the Festival Gate» proceeding to the *muṣallā* (see Sanders 1994, 77).

48 Assyrian, Achaemenid and Sasanian kings portrayed under a parasol invariably appear in outdoor scenes. See above and fn. 5, and cf. also below and fn. 61.

49 Sanders 1994, 26.

50 See above and fn. 44.

51 Sanders 1994, 108.

52 Ibn al-Ṭuwayr does not specify the caliph's name. Taking into account his life's extent, it should be one of the last four Fatimid caliphs: al-Ḥāfiẓ (r. 1130-1149), al-Ẓāfir (r. 1149-1154), al-Fāʾiz (r. 1154-1160), or al-ʿĀḍiḍ (r. 1160-1171).

53 In his list of the royal instruments («On Royal Instruments Especially for Grand Processions») al-Qalqashandī (d. 1418) confirms that the parasol (*miẓalla*) always matched the fabric of the caliph's costume (see Sanders 1994, 25, who nevertheless denounces that al-Qalqashandī's list reflects Mamluk categories which appear anachronistic related to the Fatimids).

main insignia, the parasol, sword, and inkstand, were brought out and given to their porters. The porter unfurled the parasol with the assistance of four Ṣaqlabī eunuchs, and he placed it firmly in the stirrup of his horse, holding the pole with a bar over his head».[54] This passage describes the high care devoted to the parasol and proves that it was as important as better-known insignia. To this respect, Sanders stresses: «all things associated with the caliph were accorded the same reverence as the caliph himself».[55]

The presence of a bird-shaped finial is attested only under the Ayyubids and Mamluks by al-Qalqashandī who includes the parasol in his chapter entitled «On the protocols and instruments of royalty»:

> «called al-jitr, described as a yellow silk dome brocaded with gold that has a **gold-plated silver bird** at its apex. It is carried above the sultan's head during [the processions of] the two feasts. This item was carried over from the Fatimid era».[56]

He also reports that the Mamluk *dār al-ṭirāz* produced parasols topped by a bird-shaped jewel. The device, shaped on a Fatimid prototype, became known as *al-qubba waʾl-ṭayr*, the dome and the bird.[57]

The custom spread southward: in his travel's report Ibn Baṭṭūṭa (d. 1368-9) attests the persistence of the parasol in the African region during the mid-14th century as a reminiscence of the Fatimid protocol.[58] He also stresses in further occasions the jewelled nature of the parasol.[59]

In 1514, according to Ibn Iyās, the Mamluk Sultan Qānsūh al-Ghūrī (r. 1501-1516) replaced the bird that had traditionally topped the *qubba* or royal parasol with a gold crescent, the symbol of Islam.[60] The importance of this passage is twofold: first, it confirms that the term *qubba* was used to indicate the parasol as well; second, it provides us with the date until which the parasol's finial was still bird-shaped.

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54 Sanders 1994, 88-90.

55 Sanders 1994, 88-90.

56 El-Toudy - Abdelhamid eds. 2017, 239 (emphasis added). As already mentioned, to the state of our knowledge such a heritage from the Fatimids is not attested by written sources.

57 Holt 1993, 192.

58 He reports in particular about the sultan of Maqashaw (Mogadishu; see Gibb ed. 1959, 377). Ibn Baṭṭūṭa guided a Moroccan embassy to the empire of Mali and describes the local Sultan holding audience seating under «a parasol, that is to say, something like a silken cupola […] On top of it is a gold bird the size of a falcon» (see Gibb - Beckingham eds. 1994, 959). In Morocco, where the orientalist painter Eugène Delacroix (d. 1863) portrayed the ruler under a royal parasol (see Dakhlia 2005, fig. 1), still in the early 1980s high state awards counted a gold star plaque (to be worn over the shoulder from right to left) bearing on the second side «the representation of the royal parasol, red in colour» (Pellat 1995, 62).

59 Gibb ed. 1971, 651, 666, 712, 753, 760.

60 Alhamzah 2009, 41, 132. A crescent, *hilāl-i rāyat*, was already in use on top of the Ghaznavid banner's pennon (see Khan 1949, 81-83; Bosworth 1977, 99).

4. THE BIRD-SHAPED FINIAL AND ITS MEANING

Numerous evidences, coming from cultural contexts earlier than the Islamic period, show parasols provided with a vegetal or geometric finial or without any finial. In the stone reliefs of Sargon II (r. 721-705 BCE) at Khorsabad the parasol is topped by a vegetal finial that can be identified with a lotus; in Persepolis' reliefs (in the Council Hall, the palaces of Darius and Xerxes, in Xerxes Haram) a fruit resembling a pomegranate probably with a good wishing role tops the parasol.[61] It was a symbol of fertility by virtue of its thousand red 'seeds',[62] thus largely represented in royal contexts.[63]

The introduction of an ornithomorphic finial must have occurred in the Islamic period, but what led sovereigns to shift from a vegetal symbol to a zoomorphic one is still to be understood. Most reliable sources place the introduction of the bird-shaped finial under the Ghaznavids.[64] As far as we know, there is no coeval evidence from Egypt. References to this kind of finial date back to a later period when, according to the opinion of al-Qalqashandī, it was possibly adopted imitating a Fatimid prototype.[65]

It is not easy to infer the bird species from miniatures, but whenever the historical sources are specific in this regard, a falcon is mentioned. Taming falcons for hunting was regarded among the divertissements worthy of a king, as attested also in the *Shāhnāma*;[66] but the symbolic meaning of such practise goes far beyond the pleasures of court. As written sources such as the *Avesta* (sacred Zoroastrian hymns) and the *Bundahishn* (the *Book of Primal Creation*, a Middle Persian encyclopaedic text) attest, in the Zoroastrian understanding of good and evil the falcon was a heavenly creation, entitled to hunt down and eliminate the evil creatures.[67] The task of the (Persian) king was pretty much the same, so that martial arts and hunting skills had a similar role among the king's occupations.[68] Moreover, since the falcon was associated with Verethraghna - the deity of offensive war and victory -[69] and *xwarrah* - the heavenly fortune and glory -,[70] it became strictly linked to the Persian ideology of kingship.[71] Even after the fall of the Sasanians and the decline of Zoroastrianism, the falcon enjoyed the position of royal companion in the framework of hunting. The Persian poet and mathematician ʿUmar Khayyām, in his *Nawrūznāma* (12th

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61 See Botta - Flandin 1849-1850, II, pls. 63, 71, 107, and in particular 113; and Schmidt 1953, pls. 75, 76, 138, 139, 178-181, 194, respectively.

62 The finial could also be identified with the amalaka, a fruit employed as a finial on Hindu temples (see Rosser-Owen 1999, 28, fn. 2).

63 On the pomegranate in the ancient Near East, see Nigro - Spagnoli 2018.

64 The Turkish term *lachïn* for falcon was also adopted as a personal name, according to the Turkic custom. Bosworth (1977, 61) mentions the amir ʿAḍūd al-Dīn Lāchīn Khāzin as the addressee of a poem by ʿUthmān Muktārī.

65 Cf. above and fn. 56.

66 Daryaee - Malekzadeh 2018, 251.

67 Daryaee - Malekzadeh 2018, 245.

68 Daryaee - Malekzadeh 2018, 247, 252.

69 One of Verethraghna's avatars is a falcon, which possibly became a symbol of good luck on coins, crowns and seals (Daryaee - Malekzadeh 2018, 246).

70 The glory, *xwarrah*, is described flying to or away from kings as a falcon (Daryaee - Malekzadeh 2018, 246-247).

71 The falcon connection with the Sasanian crown has already been pointed out (see above, fn. 14).

century), stresses the «nobility and immaculacy» of falcons.[72] In the *Manṭiq al-ṭayr* (1177), a Persian mystical poem by Farīd al-Dīn ʾAṭṭār, the falcon, fast and sharp-eyed, is described in an attitude full of dignity and conscious of its rank, since its distance from the common people entitles it to lay on the kings' shoulder.[73] In the same way, as a symbol of royal archetype, the falcon is represented in front of Solomon - the king of the beasts - to symbolise the victorious heavenly kingdom just as lions beside him represent the terrestrial government.[74] The term *ṣaqr*,[75] falcon, thus seems to be a universal symbol of victory, linked by Tamari to the concepts of *al-ʿizz* (the glory), *al-sulṭān* (the sultan), and *al-nāṣir* (the victorious).[76] «Ṣaqr Quraysh» is the nickname attributed to the Umayyad ʿAbd al-Raḥmān I (r. 756-788) by his rival the Abbasid caliph al-Manṣūr (r. 754-775).[77]

The parasol finial is often referred to as a jewel, probably because of its shiny appearance, because it crowned a device already distinguished by prised fabrics, and maybe because of refined manufacture. It was likely made of metal, and in particular precious metals as suggested by al-Qalqashandī who writes of a «gold-plaited silver bird».[78] Lastly, miniatures always show it as a golden finial. The presence of a pearl revealed by the Ghaznavid sources[79] opens the chance that the bird was embellished by the addition of precious stones or inlay. The Persian traveller Nāṣir-i Khusraw (d. 1088) reports that during the Nile procession of al-Mustanṣir in 1047 the «parasol itself was covered with precious stones and pearls».[80]

Zoomorphic, often bird-shaped, finials are largely employed on Islamic metalwork especially on top of handles, lids and spouts, sometimes with an apotropaic role. Unfortunately, relating fragmentary preserved items to a specific artefact is all but easy. Furthermore, it is likely that once a parasol was damaged or deteriorated its finial was melt down.[81] How the finials were fixed on top of the parasol can be tentatively inferred by observing the miniatures. Usually, the bird stands on a globular or spade-shaped pedestal. A couple of bronze artefacts might provide hypothetical examples similar to such finials. The first, ascribed to the 10th-century Iran, features a conical and flat-based pedestal;[82] the second and far later one (17th-18th century) is inlaid with silver and presents a concave, sloping base possibly fitting a domed shape.[83]

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72 Daryaee - Malekzadeh 2018, 254.

73 Saccone 1999, 35-36, 48.

74 Tamari 1996, 99.

75 According to Ibn Hishām al-Lakhmī (12th century), the term *ṣaqr* indicates any bird of prey employed in falconry, thus both eagles and falcons (see Martínez Enamorado 2011, 160-161).

76 Tamari (1996, 31 and fn. 46) recalls the role embodied by the falcon and the eagle as well for the Umayyad dynasty, both in Damascus and Cordova.

77 Tamari 1996, 113-114, fn. 68.

78 See above and fn. 56.

79 See above and fn. 13.

80 Cf. fn. 59.

81 A pre-Islamic finial found at Gordion, approximately dated to the 8th century BCE and attributed to a parasol, was wooden made (see Simpson 2014).

82 The artefact is mentioned by Allan (1976, II, 834, no. 4) and Rosen-Ayalon (1972, 180, fig. 33), who published the picture.

83 The item was auctioned: https://www.liveauctioneers.com/item/24665592_islamic-bronze-bird-finial-with-silver-inlay (last access: 19/06/2019).

5. Contexts of employ and socio-political implications

The high number of miniatures and written sources including the parasol offer the chance to observe a wide range of situations and contexts this insignia was employed in. The parasol acted as a sign: it signalled the presence and position of the king on the field and distinguished his figure from the rest of his retinue, since the parasol was reserved to the king, not to his family members (with due exceptions).[84] Beyond celebrative and military occasions, sometimes the parasol appears in funerary contexts.[85]

Miniatures show either historical kings or literary heroes shaded by the parasol, which always marks the prominent figure in the scene thus becoming an «expanded royal symbol» that embodies different values; such freedom of employ can be observed in late Islamic representations, while on ancient stone reliefs its role was much more restricted.[86]

The role of the parasol as a royal insignia deserves further analyses; in fact, the landscape should be enlarged to include other elements typical of the royal 'equipment' and regarded to embody the seat of the government: the palace, the tent and the throne. The relationship between them and the parasol is closer than it could seem.

As already stated, in the Fatimid context «the parasol clearly symbolised the palace».[87] The expression *al-qubba waʾl-ṭayr* names the parasol, by virtue of its domed shape, through the term usually adopted for domed structures covering throne halls and entrance gates in Islamic civil architecture. Unfortunately, royal palaces built by the Ayyubbids and Mamluks in Cairo survive insufficiently; just few information are provided by the sources.[88] Still, it can be assumed that the parasol was intended as a portable *qubba* on behalf of the actual *qubba*, the royal palace. The link between parasol and *qubba* is observed in miniatures on an iconographic ground through the addition of the falcon above both of them. Some of these miniatures show sloping domes on top of buildings. It could be hypothesised that they were made of fabric, as tents covering a terrace.[89] In this case, the

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84 Cf. fns. 9 and 36.

85 Parasols, like standards, were placed by the Seljuqs on the tomb of the deceased ruler as a mark of respect (see Andrews 1993, 193). Since the possession of the *chatr* corresponded to the possession of the throne, it accompanied the king even after his death. Ibn al-Athīr recounts about the succession of Berkyaruq (r. 1092-1105) that in 1104 the atabeg Ayaz brought back to Isfahan, along with the deceased sultan, «the *sarāpard*as (*surādiqāt*), tents (*khiyām*), royal parasol (*chatr*) and royal diadem (*shamsa*) and all that was required for a sultan and put it at the disposal of his son Malik-Shāh» (Durand-Guédy 2013, 168). Occasionally, the parasol was retaken to be used in the investiture of the successor ruler. It occurred in 1206, when a parasol was taken from a Ghurid tomb in Ghazni and carried to Firuzkuh (see Flood 2009, 122). See the parasol, topped by a bird-shaped finial, standing beside the dead Shīrīn in "The suicide of Shīrīn", Niẓāmī's *Khamsa*, Tabriz, 1505, Keir Collection (on loan with the Dallas Museum of Art), Ms. K.1.2014.739, cf. Canby 1999, 30, fig. 18. For a bird-shaped finial on a canopy in a funerary scene, see fn. 40, *in fine*.

86 Sims 1992, 78. A miniature of a mid-15th century *Shāhnāma* from Iran (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 20.120.242, cf. MET website) displays Gav and Ṭalḥand appearing inside canopies mounted on elephants and shadowed by domed-shaped parasols. The latter obviously serve no function, since the canopies have their own covers, if not marking the personages on the field.

87 Sanders 1994, 94. See above and fn. 44.

88 O'Kane 2017, 587.

89 See Firdowsī's *Shāhnāma*, Iran, 1446, London, British Library, Ms. Or 12688, fols. 130v (cf. Titley 1977, pl. 20), and 28v, 135r, 150v (BL website - images online); and a copy of Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmiʿ al-Tawārīkh*, Herat, 1430 ca., Bibliothèque nationale de France, Supplément persan 1113, fols. 28v, 130v, 135r and 150v (BnF website).

link with the parasol would be even closer. A fabric-made tent would have covered the personage appearing inside a building as the parasol covers him outdoor. The falcon represents the *trait d'union* between the two devices.

A Safavid miniature consents to observe a morphological evolution: the parasol (without the bird-shaped finial) on a step forward toward the shape of an architectonic *qubba* according to the shape in use under the Safavids (fig. 5).[90]

The term *qubba* could be used to indicate a dome-shaped tent as well.[91] Thus, another conceptual link between royal devices is established. The tent is the absolute portable structure but also the closest one to the role of the royal palace, being the king residence and his audience hall. Some Muslim sultans are known to have preferred spending much of their time in nomadic tents. Seljuqs, for instance, were not sedentary rulers; even the long-reigning Malik Shāh (r. 1072-1092), along with his activity as a patron of new buildings, lived also in tents (*sarāparda*). This custom consented to move from one place to another according to the change of seasons and to keep close relations with the army at any time, thus ensuring the power, and with the Turkmens as well. The value of the royal tent as the official seat of power was fully acknowledged. In the Seljuq court, the parasol is often associated to the tent - sometimes referred to as the red *qubba* - as a symbol of kingship.[92]

A further link between royal symbols concerns the parasol and the throne. The number of miniatures showing a falcon on top of the throne is revealing; some of them include it on both the throne and the parasol as the already mentioned miniature portraying the Ghaznavid Maḥmūd (fig. 1). Probably more numerous are the miniatures illustrating only the throne topped by a bird finial: among these it can be mentioned one from a Timurid manuscript of Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmiʿ al-Tawārīkh* (Herat, 1430) showing the throne of the Mongol Chingis Khān surmounted by a falcon, thus attesting the persistence of the custom during the Timurid period (fig. 4).[93]

Finally, Maḥmūd al-Kāshgharī in his famous *Dīwān lughāt al-turk* (1072) provides the Khāqāni term for the parasol, *chowāch*, which interestingly denotes the crown - or the vault of heaven - as well.[94] The domed shape - of either the *qubba* or parasol - ideally crowns the

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90 Fig. 5 shows "Anūshīrvān and Buzurgmihr", Niẓāmī's *Khamsa*, Khurasan, 1575, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, inv. no. 14.594.

91 Durand-Guédy 2013, 170-171.

92 For all these informations, see Durand-Guédy 2013, 172-180, 183.

93 "The proclamation of Chingis Khān", Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Supplément persan 1113, fol. 44v, cf. Blochet 1929, pl. LX. For miniatures illustrating the throne with a bird finial, see Firdowsī's *Shāhnāma*, Iran, 1446, London, British Library, Ms. Or 12688, fols. 22r (Brend - Melville eds. 2010, ill. 4), 186r (Meri ed. 2006, front cover ill.), 19r, 37r, 45v, 84v and 197v (cf. BL website - images online); *Jāmiʿ al-Tawārīkh*, Herat, 1430 ca., BnF, Supplément persan 1113, fols. 91r, 114v, 204 v (BnF website); "Giv brings Gurgin before Kay Khusrau", Firdowsī's *Shāhnāma*, Iran, 1493-4, Washington DC, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Inv. no. S1986.160, cf. Canby 1999, fig. 4. A bronze beaker (Iran, dated to the early 1st millennium BCE) shows a throne featuring an upward pointing protome in form of bird head (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 54.5; cf. Muscarella 1974, fig. 4). From the Elymaean complex in Tang-i Sarvak (eastern Khuzistan province, 1st-3rd centuries) comes a relief showing a bird-shaped footed throne (see von Gall 1971, fig. 1). These ancient prototypes may have influenced the choice of a bird-shaped finial during the Islamic period.

94 Andrews 1993, 193.

king and reproduces the vault of heaven over his head.[95] When such a device is carried above the king the latter is marked as an *axis mundi* between the Earth and the Sky, paralleling the order granted by the ruler to the cosmic one established by God.

6. Conclusive remarks

The fact that no reference to the use of the parasol in the Islamic context predates the Abbasid period might possibly indicate that such a device entered the Islamic royal protocol along with the introduction of Persian customs, given its ancient origin.

As demonstrated above, the parasol was a royal insignia: great attention was paid to the choice of its fabric, often a precious silk, its colour and decorative pattern, usually matching the caliph's robe. Nothing was left to chance in the Islamic royal protocol, and highly scenographic processions were common especially under the Fatimids.

The addition of a bird-shaped finial on top of the parasol helped enhancing its meaning and it must have been chosen carefully so to convey the right message. The falcon, whose first introduction can be historically retraced to the Ghaznavid period, enjoyed a royal connotation among the birds of prey. The varied contexts of employ indicate it as a flexible and inclusive symbol, proper to convey authority of the king as well as the role of the main character in the story. Evidence in Egypt point to the Mamluk period; still al-Qalqashandī believed that the *al-qubba waʾl-ṭayr* was a Fatimid heritage.[96]

The inclusion of the bird-shaped finial in so many miniatures attests its communicating strength and its historical persistence through centuries as a trace of the influence exerted by early Islamic rulers on the following dynasties. Miniatures' painters clearly drew from an iconographic repertoire that necessarily reflected the common awareness.

Since its employ in the crown that rested on the Sasanian kings' head, the bird of prey alluded to the concepts of glory and victory. The falcon added on top of the Islamic parasol retained the same meaning, being perceived as a mark of royalty enriching the insignia on a decorative as well as symbolic ground.[97] The expression «in the service of the parasol (*chatr*) of the imperial stirrup», attested under the Seljuqs, equalises the parasol to kingship itself.[98] It demonstrates the physical transfer of authority and representativeness from the ruler to one of his insignia.[99] In Flood's words, «as signs of sovereignty, inalienable objects often refer metonymically or synecdochically to the body politic […] by the very act of possessing such sign, their possessor becomes what they embody».[100]

To conclude, a modern stone relief in Chashma ʿAlī, near Rayy, where the Qajar Fatḥ ʿAlī Shāh (r. 1797-1834) appears in two scenes can be mentioned. In the first one, he is seated on his throne; in the second scene, on the right, he stands with a falcon on his

95 See Lehman 1945 (cf. Mathews 1982); Soper 1947; Smith 1950, in particular 81-83.
96 See above and fn. 56.
97 The Egyptian god Horus, who embodied the royal patron god, was also portrayed as a falcon (see Daryaee - Malekzadeh 2018, 246).
98 Deny 1995, 529.
99 A similar phenomenon occurred during the aniconic period with regard to Buddha; see above fn. 3.
100 Flood 2009, 122.

forearm while an attendant holds a parasol behind him (fig. 6).[101] The falcon, which used to top the parasol in earlier Islamic representations, comes back to its original function of hunter and its original position on the arm of the king. The intention of the two scenes seems to portray the king in his official duty and then in a more informal situation; still in the latter the parasol and the falcon are present, even if not together as in the traditional iconography analysed above.

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[101] The relief's photo by the photographer Antoin Sevruguin (d. 1933), glass negative numbered FSA A.4 2.12 GN.00.11, is available in Myron Bement Smith Collection, ca. 1910-1970 (Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.). https://learninglab.si.edu/resources/view/177753#. See Luft 2001, 32-33.

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Fig. 1 - “The enthroned sultan Maḥmūd of Ghazni”, Firdowsī’s *Shāhnāma*, Iran, 1446, London, The British Library, Ms. Or. 12688, fol. 15v (courtesy of the British Library).

Fig. 2 - "Firdowsī meets the Ghaznavid court's poets ʿUnṣurī, Farrukhī and ʿAsjudī", Firdowsī's *Shāhnāma*, Iran, 1535, Toronto, Aga Khan Museum, Ms. AKM 156 (ex M185), fol. 7r (after Bahari 1996, fig. 117).

Fig. 3 - "Sultan Sanjar and the old woman", Niẓāmī's *Khamsa*, Herat, 1494-95, London, The British Library, Ms. Or. 6810, fol. 16r (after Bahari 1996, fig. 72, detail).

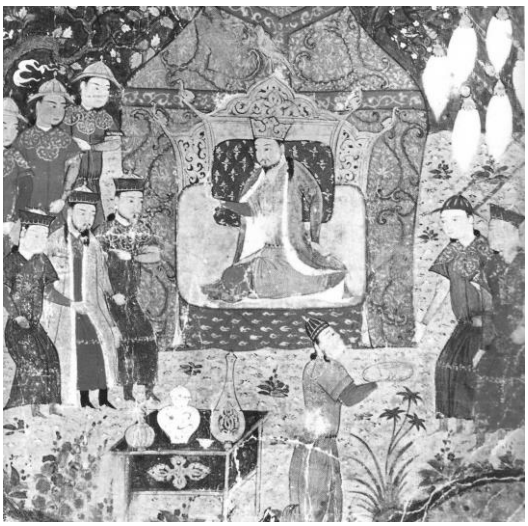

Fig. 4 - "The proclamation of Chingis Khān", Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmiʿ al-Tawārīkh*, Herat, 1430, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Supplément persan 1113, fol. 44v, detail (after Blochet 1929, pl. LX).

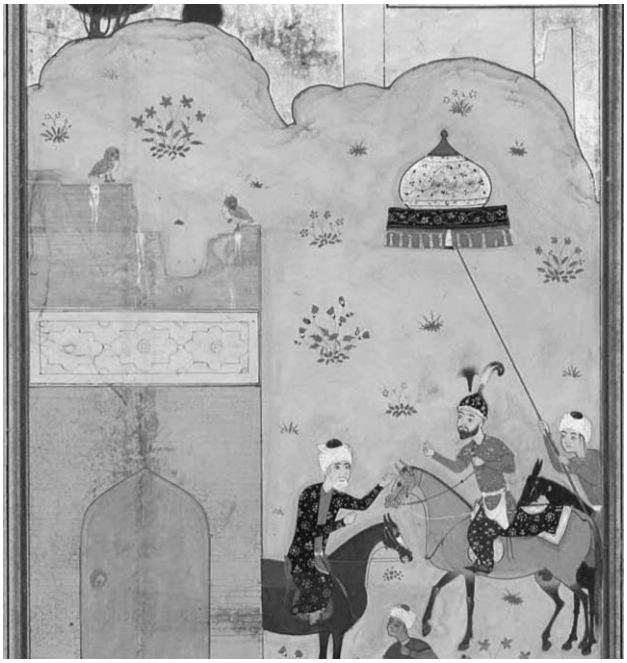

Fig. 5 - "Anūshīrvān and Buzurgmihr", Niẓāmī's *Khamsa*, Khurasan, 1575, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, inv. no. 14.594 (after Coomaraswamy 1929, pl. XL:70, detail).

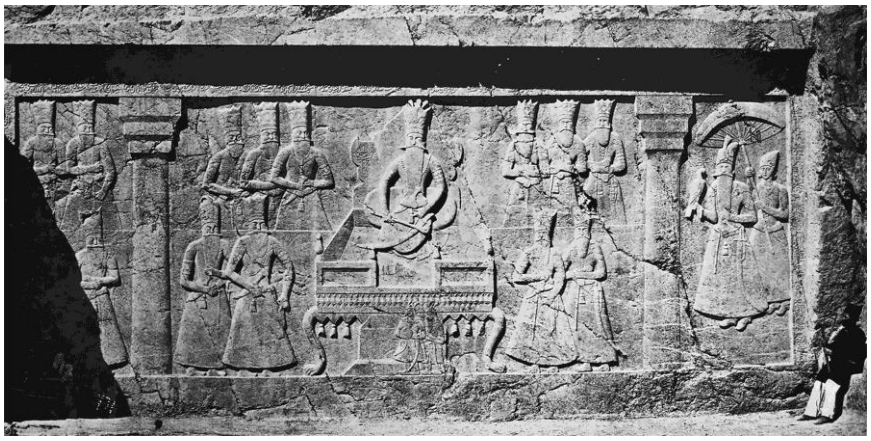

Fig. 6 - Stone relief in Chashma ʿAlī, near Rayy, showing the Qajar Fatḥ ʿAlī Shāh (r. 1797-1834), photo FSA A.4 2.12 GN.00.11, M.B. Smith Collection, ca. 1910-1970 (Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.) https://learninglab.si.edu/resources/view/177753#.

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HYDRAULIC INFRASTRUCTURES IN SOUTH-WESTERN IRAN DURING THE SASANIAN PERIOD: SOME ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMARKS

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On account of the peculiar geomorphological and geographical features of the Iranian territory, water has always been a fundamental element of the Iranian landscape. Surface water and groundwater reserves were extensively exploited during the Sasanian period - for freshwater supply and to enhance the agricultural productivity - by means of public as well as private programmes of management of the hydraulic issues. Focusing on archaeological evidence from South-western Iran and stressing the extent to which the cultural landscape of Sasanian Iran was influenced by the importance of water, this paper deals with topics related to the architecture and chronology of some hydraulic infrastructures in Fars and Khuzestan.

Keywords: South-western Iran; Sasanian period; water management; irrigated farming; hydraulic infrastructures

1. WATER MANAGEMENT IN SOUTH-WESTERN IRAN DURING THE SASANIAN PERIOD

From a hydrological point of view, the area of South-western Iran, including the modern Iranian Provinces of Khuzestan,[1] Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad (only to a limited extent), Fars and Bushehr (fig. 1), mainly falls within the large Persian Gulf exorheic drainage region,[2] with the exception of some territories in the north-eastern sector of the Fars Province, pertaining to the Niriz endorheic drainage basin.[3]

This area can be considered as a hydrologically favoured one due to the presence of major river catchments areas (e.g. those of the Karkheh, Dez and Karun - the latter being the longest river in Iran and the only navigable one, albeit partially), of rich groundwater reserves as well as of an average annual amount of rainfall reaching approximately 500-600 mm per year.[4]

During the Sasanian period (*c.* 224-651 CE), South-western Iran was administratively subdivided into the Provinces of Xūzistān and Pārs. The latter, 'cradle' of the Sasanian dynasty, was an administrative entity much larger than the modern Iranian Province of Fars,[5] possibly encompassing coastal areas of the Persian Gulf and some islands in front of those.[6]

In the archaeological literature on the Sasanian empire, great emphasis has always been given to the agricultural intensification and maximisation of agricultural output attested in

1 Toponyms, hydronyms, oronyms and personal names are reported according to the variants more commonly used in the international scientific jargon.

2 In this area, therefore, surface water is mostly collected and discharged through exterior drainage, whilst most of the Iranian territory is characterised by interior drainage (Ehlers 1996, 527, fig. 27; 2004, 596).

3 Beaumont 1985, fig. 3.

4 Ehlers 2004.

5 On the evolution of the geographical concept of Pārsa/Pārs/Fars see de Planhol 1999.

6 On the administrative geography of Sasanian Pārs see Gyselen 1989, 70-73 (mainly based on sigillographic evidence); Miri 2012 (taking into account epigraphic and numismatic evidence as well).

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that period. As stressed also in some recent syntheses,[7] these results have been often considered as a direct consequence of the fruitful policies pursued by the dynasty in the field of water management, testified by the realisation of a huge number of hydraulic infrastructures in several areas of the empire, particularly South-western Iran.

In this frame, the tradition of studies about socio-economic issues in the Sasanian empire started to attribute - especially after the mid-twentieth century - an excessive role to a supposed dynastic 'centralisation', allegedly attested in every administrative and economic aspect of the empire. Such 'paradigm' of the 'Sasanian administrative centralisation' was retained as extremely convincing, especially when scholars compared the results achieved by the Sasanians in terms of agricultural productivity and management of the agricultural policies with those attained by the Arsacid dynasty (considered by far less 'centralised') or with the ones documented in the same economic fields during the first centuries after the Islamic conquest of Iran. In short, the Sasanian period was considered as a sort of 'golden age', when agricultural productivity, settlement and population density reached an unparalleled zenith. That was followed by a period of marked decline - especially in the areas formerly representing the empire's agricultural backbone - due to natural disasters (plagues and huge destructive floods), over-exploitation of resources as well as the 'collapse', after the Islamic conquest, of the Sasanian 'apparatus' in charge of the irrigation-based farming strategies.[8]

Without going into further details about these long-debated issues, one should stress that such a somewhat 'distorted' view of both the 'Sasanian administrative centralisation' and the following 'collapse' during the Islamic period basically originates from two main reasons. On one hand, it derives from an overestimated confidence in the written sources at disposal - the majority of which are from the Islamic centuries, thus quite late with respect to the Sasanian period and therefore not completely reliable.[9] On the other hand, it probably stemmed from the popularity gained in the past decades by the notorious theories about the 'Oriental Despotism', developed by the German sociologist and sinologist K.A. Wittfogel.[10]

During the last two decades, however, thanks to advancements in the historical reconstruction and archaeological research, the idea of an alleged centralised and 'monolithic' Sasanian empire, reverberated in all its socio-economic and socio-political achievements, has come under a strong criticism. In particular, the results of some

7 See e.g. Mousavi - Daryaee 2012, 1082-1083; Farahani 2013, 6465-6466.

8 See especially Adams 1962, 116-120; 1965, 80-85; Wenke 1975-1976, 131-139; Christensen 1993, 67-112.

9 In those written sources, the effectiveness of the Sasanian agricultural and water resource policies tends to be somewhat exaggerated (see Soroush 2014, 72).

10 Although making reference to geographic and chronological contexts different from that of the Sasanian empire, Wittfogel postulated that the ancient 'oriental autocracies', developed by virtue of the prosperity of their artificial irrigation systems, represented a model of 'hydraulic societies' based on major hydraulic infrastructures, which were directly planned, built and maintained by the central administration through specific bureaucratic organisations and the utilisation of forced labour. Such model required the firmness of a highly centralised state power, with an absolute sovereign at its top, provided with the necessary authority, strength and economic resources to manage large-scale and labour-demanding activities connected to hydraulics (Wittfogel 1957).

archaeological researches carried out in south-western areas of Iran partially dismissed the traditional chronological attribution to the Sasanian period of some hydraulic infrastructures, moreover testifying, at least to a certain extent, for a continuity of investments in the hydraulic issues during the Parthian, Sasanian and Islamic periods. A similar continuity was also attested (albeit partially) in the settlement as well as in the population density, thus weakening the idea of a 'peak' reached during the Sasanian period.

For instance, recent researches carried out by M. Soroush on the area of the Miyanab Plain, south of the city of Shushtar, in the Khuzestan Province (fig. 1), pointed out that the Sasanian investments in the hydraulic issues were probably followed by similar investments during the first centuries after the Islamic conquest.[11]

In the same area, moreover, Iranian archaeological activities carried out in 2001-2002 revealed two settlement peaks during the Parthian and Early Islamic periods (*c.* 7th-11th century CE), divided by a rather striking shrinkage during the centuries of the Sasanian political control over the area.[12] In the light of the archaeological evidence, moreover, the construction of the Darioon irrigation system (a major hydraulic feature of the area) was attributed to the Parthian period on the basis of «the linear distribution pattern which the Parthian settlements exhibit along the irrigation canals that emanated from Shushtar in antiquity».[13]

Also the area east of the Karun river (i.e., the so-called 'Eastern Corridor') revealed «the lack of substantial occupation […] during the Sasanian period», while, during the Islamic centuries, it featured a peculiar development of *qanat* irrigation networks.[14]

Other researches, moreover, outlined a less rigidly centralised picture, in which investments for hydraulic infrastructures built for agricultural productivity were carried out not only by the dynasty but also by some members of the aristocracy as well as private entrepreneurs, sometimes provided with a noticeable degree of autonomy and often with the participation (to different extents) of local farmers.[15] This aspect was particularly stressed in a paper summarising the scholarly views emerged during a workshop organised in 2011 at Durham University by D. Kennet and T. Wilkinson. From the talks delivered on that occasion, it became clear that «just because a system appeared large in scale, it was not necessarily a product of imperial management» and «many hydraulic systems were probably local enterprises resulting from local investments, for purpose of tax-farming, or simply […] representing the continuation of long-held practices that were then incorporated into the economic regimes of whatever empire held sway at the time».[16]

A more remarkable 'centralisation', indeed, would seem documentable only during a later phase of the Sasanian history (between the end of the 5th and the beginning of the 6th

[11] Soroush 2014.
[12] Moghaddam - Miri 2003, 103-104, figs. 7-9.
[13] Moghaddam - Miri 2003, 103.
[14] Moghaddam - Miri 2007, 51.
[15] For a different view, more adherent to the paradigm of the centralised Sasanian dynastic control over irrigation systems, see Montakab 2013. Moreover, a paper with a rather provocative title was recently published by M. Vidale, who, partially following C.C. Lamberg-Karlovsky, stressed the possible necessity to re-evaluate, although to a limited extent, some of Wittfogel's intuitions (Vidale 2018).
[16] Wilkinson *et al.* 2012, 172-173.

centuries CE),[17] coinciding with the agricultural reforms part of a wider fiscal renovation probably initiated already by Kavad I (r. *c.* 488-531 CE) and completed to a fuller extent by Khosrow I Anushirvan (r. *c.* 531-579 CE).[18]

Unfortunately, however, the overall archaeological picture of South-western Iran during the Sasanian period is far from being completely clear and homogeneous. For instance, in a recent publication about the American archaeological activities carried out during the 1960s in the Deh Luran Plain of Khuzestan (sponsored by Rice University and directed by F. Hole), a noticeable growth in the number of sites during the Sasanian period was evidenced. Moreover, an expansion of canal and *qanat* systems in nearly all portions of the plain was registered during the same period, to such an extent that «Sasanian and 7th Century Islamic times appear to have been the apex in terms of the total amount and intensity of land use as well as the maximum population density on the plain».[19]

In the 2000s, archaeological surveys were carried out in the Kur River Basin, i.e. the area around Persepolis (Fars Province; fig. 1), by a joint team of the Iranian Center for Archaeological Research, the Parsa-Pasargadae Foundation and the University of Chicago. Results of those activities suggested that the exploitation of the area's agricultural potential began only during the Sasanian period, as the result of the creation of a wide irrigation network created under the patronage of the dynasty and the consequent development of related sites.[20]

A similar picture of increased settlement and population density, as well as of major 'centralised' agricultural investments during the Sasanian period, seems to be provided also by the results of other archaeological researches carried out in the hinterlands north of the Persian Gulf, recently reappraised by a team of Iranian scholars.[21]

2. Hydraulic infrastructures in South-western Iran during the Sasanian period

Due to the peculiar geographic and climatic features of South-western Iran, the farming model predominantly adopted in that area has always been based on irrigation techniques aimed at managing the surface water at disposal.[22] Unfortunately, the torrential character of rivers in South-western Iran (as well as of the Iranian rivers in general) has always represented a major obstacle in this regard. In fact, the noticeable seasonal fluctuations in

[17] Even during the late Sasanian period, however, some forms of cooperation in the management of the hydraulic issues between the monarchy, aristocratic landowners and local farming 'managers' seem to be attested, at least in some areas of the empire (see Campopiano 2017, with related bibliography).

[18] Rubin 2009.

[19] Neely 2016, 246.

[20] Hartnell - Asadi 2010; Hartnell 2014. The hypothesis put forward by the surveyors was firmly criticised by S. Gondet, since it did not take into due account the evidence for an Achaemenid canal system (fed by the Kur river) discovered in the area and pointing to a much earlier exploitation of its water resources for agricultural productivity (Gondet 2013). In the same area of the Kur River Basin, moreover, albeit closer to the site of Pasargadae (fig. 1), a series of five dams attributed to the Acheamenid period (firstly documented in the 1980s) were the subject of a recent geo-archaeological study carried out by Iranian, French and Belgian scholars (De Schacht *et al.* 2012).

[21] Asadi *et al.* 2013, with related bibliography.

[22] Spooner 1985.

the rivers' flow rate[23] have always been in stark contrast with the specific water needs during sowing, growing and harvesting periods,[24] especially as far as cereals are concerned.[25] Therefore, irrigation strategies have been mainly aimed at obtaining the seasonally desired amount of water and preventing the excessive salinisation of the soils, a phenomenon caused by intensive irrigation, significantly worsened in arid and semi-arid climates as the Iranian one.[26]

During the Sasanian period, therefore, hydraulic infrastructures as canals, *qanat*s,[27] watermills,[28] dams, weirs and weir-bridges[29] represented intertwined elements of a complex irrigated landscape, specifically designed and built in order to mitigate the torrential nature of the Iranian rivers, to minimise silting, to avoid avulsions, to prevent salinization of soils, etc.; i.e. with a main hydrogeological concern and an ultimate economic goal related to agricultural productivity.

However, although human impact has always affected many rivers in Iran, fluvial landscapes in the region have always remained areas prone to more or less radical changes,[30] as demonstrated by some recent geo-archaeological researches concerning Lower Khuzestan.[31]

Among the hydraulic infrastructures considered to be of Sasanian date, bridges (in fact 'weir-bridges')[32] have particularly attracted the scholarly interest,[33] especially because they have been often considered as the most glaring example of the direct activity of Roman captives (military engineers and architects, as well as common legionaries) deported to Iran

[23] Rainfall does not represent the main source for the majority of Iranian rivers' flow rate. Their water is provided to a larger extent by the seasonal melting of the snow on the mountains during mid- and late spring, producing discharge peaks in March, April and May (Beaumont 1985, 32).

[24] Ehlers 2004.

[25] Bagg 2012, 263.

[26] Over-irrigation may often raise the level of the aquifer in an area. In arid environments, when the aquifer is too superficial, the evapotranspiration index increases enormously and a noticeable quantity of mineral salts is left in the upper soil layers. A concentration of salts in the soil around 0.1-0.2 % can be already dangerous for the crop, while a concentration near or over 0.5 % can threaten it irremediably (Bagg 2012, 264).

[27] The technology of underground water channels used for irrigation - known as *qanāt* or *kāriz* on the Iranian territory - represents one of the main subjects extensively discussed in the scientific literature concerning ancient water management in Iran and adjacent areas. For brevity's sake, only two prominent works recently published on that topic are mentioned: (Angelakis *et al.* (eds.) 2016; Charbonnier - Hopper (eds.) 2018).

[28] For an overview of water milling techniques in Late Antique Iran see Neely 2011, dealing with Sasanian gristmills in the Deh Luran area.

[29] See *infra*.

[30] Fluvial landscapes are 'ever-changing environments', continuously disturbed by river dynamics. Flooding, bank erosion, silting up of channels, avulsions, may occur on annual to decadal time scales. All these issues have always required human adaptation, like shifting production areas, changing land-use practices and methods of subsistence or even abandonment of settlements and of cultural practices.

[31] Mainly based on two Iranian-Belgian geological campaigns carried out in 2004 and on remote sensing analyses, those researches were able to identify and map the shifting paleochannel belts of the Karun, Karkheh and Jarrahi rivers, the networks of ancient irrigation canals, avulsions and ancient field patterns (Heyvaert - Verkinderen - Walstra 2013; Woodbridge *et al.* 2016, with related bibliography).

[32] See *infra*.

[33] Publications about Sasanian bridges in Iran are rather scanty, limited to a few main works (Kleiss 1983; 2015, 157-160; Bier 1986; Huff 1990, 450-452).

after the famous battle of Edessa in 260 CE and supposedly forced to build those infrastructures[34] from that moment onwards, during the reign of Shapur I (*c.* 239-270 CE).[35]

Unfortunately, the majority of the alleged Sasanian bridges (not only in South-western Iran, but also elsewhere in Iran as well as in other neighbouring areas subject to the Sasanian political control during Late Antiquity) was heavily restored or rebuilt during the Islamic period, thus making the chronological attribution of their original layout a very questionable issue,[36] especially since building inscriptions are usually unattested. The only exception in this respect seems to be represented by the bridge (nowadays in a very poor state of preservation; fig. 2) crossing the Tang-e Ab river in correspondence of the famous rock relief of Ardashir's investiture near Firuzabad (Fars Province; fig. 1), accompanied by a building inscription of Mehr-Nareseh, *wuzurg framādār* ('grand vizier') of Yazdgerd I (r. *c.* 399-421 CE), Bahram V (r. *c.* 421-439 CE), Yazdgerd II (r. *c.* 439-457 CE) and Peroz (r. *c.* 459-484 CE). The architectural features displayed by the remains of this infrastructure have therefore become 'paradigmatic' of Sasanian bridge architecture: its only extant pier - on a pentagonal plan, by virtue of the presence of a triangular cutwater pointing upstream[37] - shows a mortared rubble core, faced with cut stone blocks held together by metal clamps.[38]

The majority of Sasanian bridges, however, were not built solely for traffic,[39] but were mostly designed for reasons related to water management, being in fact 'weir-bridges', i.e. bridges laid on weirs provided with adjustable sluice gates. The construction of similar hydraulic infrastructures, representing a partial barrage of a watercourse, had the purpose to produce a limited hydric 'regurgitation' within the riverbed (without overflowing the river embankments), with the aim to raise the upstream water level and thus facilitating the derivation of water for irrigation. Being very versatile, they represented the perfect 'tool' to

[34] See e.g. Huff 1990, 450. The Polband-e Shadorwan (also known as Band-e Kaisar, i.e. 'Caesar's Dyke') at Shushtar, in Khuzestan Province, is commonly cited as the alleged most prominent example of Sasanian bridge built in Iran by Roman prisoners.

[35] The direct involvement of engineers, architects and masons from eastern areas of the Roman Empire in the Sasanian building activities had already started, instead, during the reign of Ardashir I (*c.* 224-240 CE), as testified by the peculiar masonry technique documented by D. Huff at the Takht-e Neshin of Ardashir-Xwarrah (Huff 1972), i.e. the fire temple of the famous capital city built by Ardashir I near present-day Firuzabad, in Fars Province (Bosworth 1987; Huff 1999). This important point was stressed by P. Callieri in a paper specifically devoted to the use dressed stone masonry in Sasanian architecture (Callieri 2012). The same scholar, moreover, hypothesised an earlier and direct involvement of sculptors from the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire also in the change of style detectable in the last rock reliefs (four out of five) carved under the reign of Ardashir I (Callieri 2017).

[36] Kleiss 1990, 453.

[37] Piers on a pentagonal or hexagonal plan, by virtue of the presence of triangular cutwaters pointing upstream and, in later examples, also downstream, seem to be typical of Sasanian bridges, although they are attested on Islamic examples as well; on the other hand, rounded projections or semi-circular buttresses seem to appear only during the Islamic period (Huff 1990, 452).

[38] Bier 1986. Metal clamps are still visible at some Sasanian bridges, as the one close to the north-western gate of Ardashir-Xwarrah (fig. 3), considered of Sasanian date, although possibly «overbuilt by another bridge with hexagonal piers in later Sasanian or, more probably, Islamic times reusing ancient material» (Huff 1990, 451).

[39] Huff 1990, 452.

control the extremely variable flow rate of torrential rivers, ensuring the possibility to keep a sufficiently raised upstream level during periods of water shortage and, conversely, with their gates entirely open, ensuring the discharge of huge hydric volumes during flooding periods.

In one of the articles summarising the results of the aforementioned joint Iranian-American archaeological project carried out in the 2000s in the area of the Kur River Basin, T. Hartnell stressed that Sasanian irrigated farming «relied on weirs or other methods that maintained the flow of water, rather than on reservoir dams that seek to contain bodies of water behind large dam walls».[40] On the basis of the evidence at disposal, he hypothesised that the main reasons for the alleged absence of reservoir dams during the Sasanian period and, conversely, the remarkable number of weirs or weir-bridges, were to be found in the religious prescriptions concerning the cult of Ardwīsūr Anāhīd,[41] a Zoroastrian *yazatā* celebrated as the river-goddess and water-divinity in *Yašt* 5 (so-called *Ābān Yašt*: 'Hymn to the Waters').[42] In Hartnell's opinion, Sasanian irrigation networks were based on weirs because these allowed a constant water flow (thus mimicking Anāhīd's attribute of flowing), while reservoir dams, 'entrapping' water and causing stagnation, were instead abhorred from a religious point of view.[43]

However, at the present stage of our archaeological knowledge, at least two ancient reservoir dams, both in South-western Iran, seem to be possibly attributed to the Sasanian period, although their chronology is still somewhat debated.

The first one is the Jarreh dam, located on the Zard river, in the Ramhormoz County of Khuzestan Province (fig. 1). This hydraulic infrastructure (fig. 4) was the subject of a salvage archaeological project carried out in the early 2000s, in view of the construction of a huge modern dam in the area.[44] The archaeological activities consisted of a survey in the whole area of the Zard River Basin as well as the excavation of seven trenches located at strategic points around the ancient monument. On the basis of preliminary studies carried out on the archaeological finds retrieved during those activities, the dam was tentatively dated to the Early Islamic period.[45] Very recently, instead, a chronological attribution to the Sasanian period was established in the light of more in-depth studies of the same materials[46] and by virtue of 14C analyses.[47]

A second possibly Sasanian barrage is the Gompu dam, located at about eight kilometres south-west of the city of Fedagh, in the Gherash County (Fars Province; fig. 1). Although a significant portion of its western section is missing, this hydraulic infrastructure is rather well-preserved (figs. 5-6) and displays evident signs of rebuilding activities during

40 Hartnell 2014, 203.
41 Boyce 1985b; Chaumont 1985.
42 Boyce 1985a; Darmesteter 1882, 52-84.
43 Hartnell 2014, 203-206. The deep ideological and religious roots of the relationship between water sources (rivers and springs) and several artistic and architectural achievements of the Sasanians had been already highlighted in previous years (Callieri 2006).
44 The ancient dam and the area surrounding it are nowadays completely submerged.
45 Sharifi - Motarjem 2013; personal communication by M. Sharifi (April 2016).
46 Sharifi 2018, 215.
47 Approximately 1800 BP; personal communication by M. Sharifi (June 2018).

the Islamic period. The overall height of the dam reaches 15 metres, while its thickness tapers from 6 metres at the base to 4 metres at its middle-upper section. The core is made by a rubble concrete of sandstones and lime mortar, although some parts reveal the absence of a binding agent. The structure is faced with cut blocks of sandstone, apparently without the use of metal clamps.[48] An important feature of the dam is represented by the presence of three rectangular outlets aligned along its vertical axis, roughly in correspondence of its central section. In the downstream side, these outlets are sealed with stone blocks in dry masonry, possibly to facilitate their removal in case of need.[49] The chronological attribution to the Sasanian period of the Gompu dam was retained as unquestionable by M.J. Malekzadeh, who visited the monument in May 2010.[50] More cautiously, instead, A. Askari Chaverdi, on the basis of the ceramic evidence collected during a survey carried out in the area of the dam and surrounding sites, prefers to date this impressive infrastructure to the first centuries of the Islamic period, without excluding, however, the possibility that further studies and stratigraphic excavations may reveal an earlier dating to the Sasanian period.[51]

In any case, the contrast between the alleged evidence for only two examples of Sasanian dams in Iran and, on the other side, plentiful archaeological attestation for other types of Sasanian hydraulic infrastructures is rather striking and raises serious doubts and several questions about the actual level of our knowledge about Sasanian technologies of water management. Although a series of hypotheses can be put forward in this respect, taking into account different arguments (e.g. possible archaeological biases,[52] erroneous chronological attributions of the attested evidence, different hydrological, environmental or socio-economic needs in some specific areas of Iran), those questions are likely to remain unsolved until further evidence is available.

48 Malekzadeh 2013, 2.
49 Malekzadeh 2013, fig. 4.
50 Malekzadeh 2013, 1.
51 Askari Chaverdi 2013, 283-284, tab. on p. 391.
52 As stressed by M. Vidale, we should keep in mind that «the archaeology of canals, dams and reservoirs is made difficult by the very scale of observation, by the burial of hydraulic constructions under later flood events and violent destructions […]. In short […] relevant evidence is destroyed by abandonment and deflation, or remains sealed under meters of silt, and […] results of surface surveys may be totally biased by large-scale environmental transformations» (Vidale 2018, 36-37).

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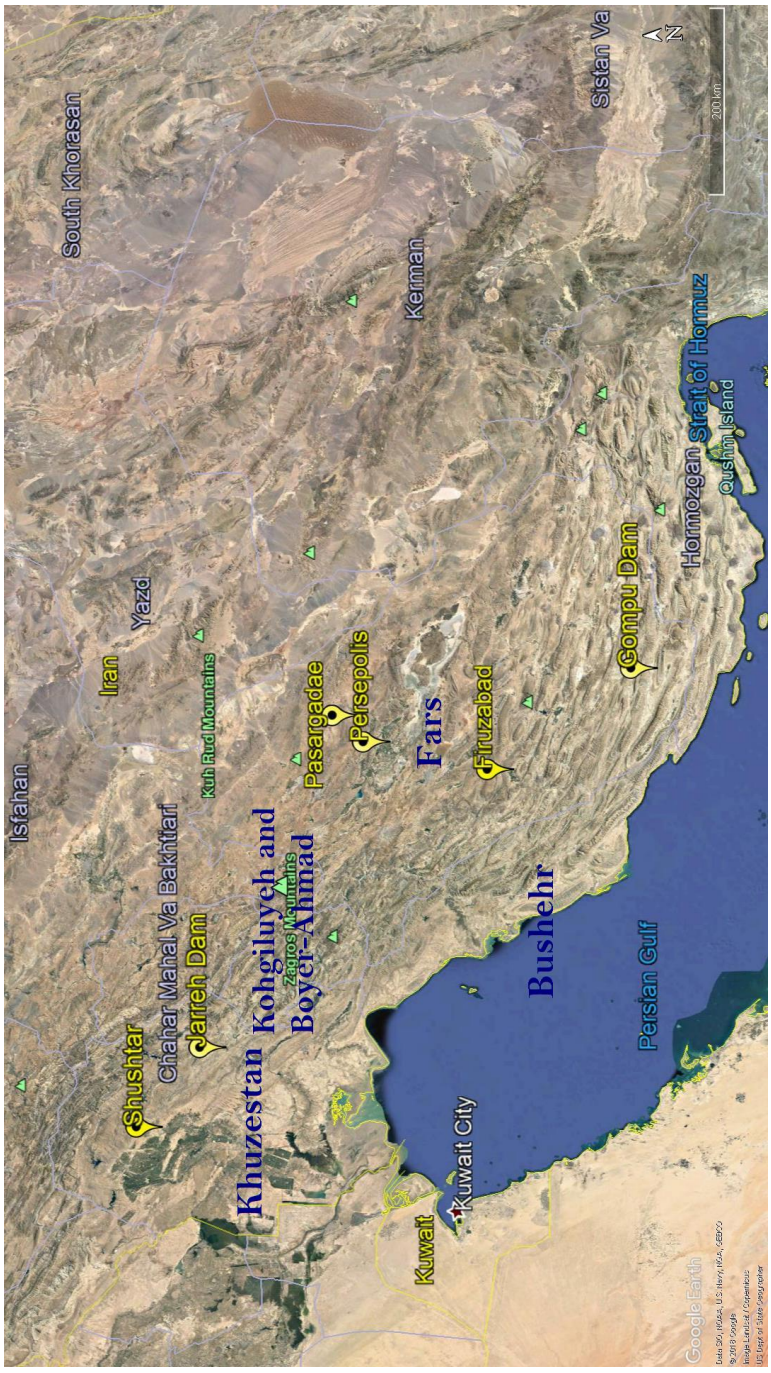

Fig. 1 - Map of South-western Iran showing the location of major archaeological sites mentioned in the text (satellite view after Google Earth™)

Fig. 2 - Remains of a pier of Mehr-Narseh's bridge on the Tang-ab River, Firuzabad County, Fars Province (photo by the author).

Fig. 3 - Remains of a pier of the ancient bridge located west of Ardashir-Xwarrah, Firuzabad County, Fars Province; in the red frame: detail of a socket with traces of a metal clamp joining two cut-stone blocks (photo by the author).

Fig. 4 - Panoramic view of the Jarreh dam in the Ramhormoz County, Khuzestan Province (after Sharifi 2018, fig. 9).

Fig. 5 - Panoramic view of the Gompu dam in the Gerash County, Fars Province (after Askari Chaverdi 2013, fig. 73).

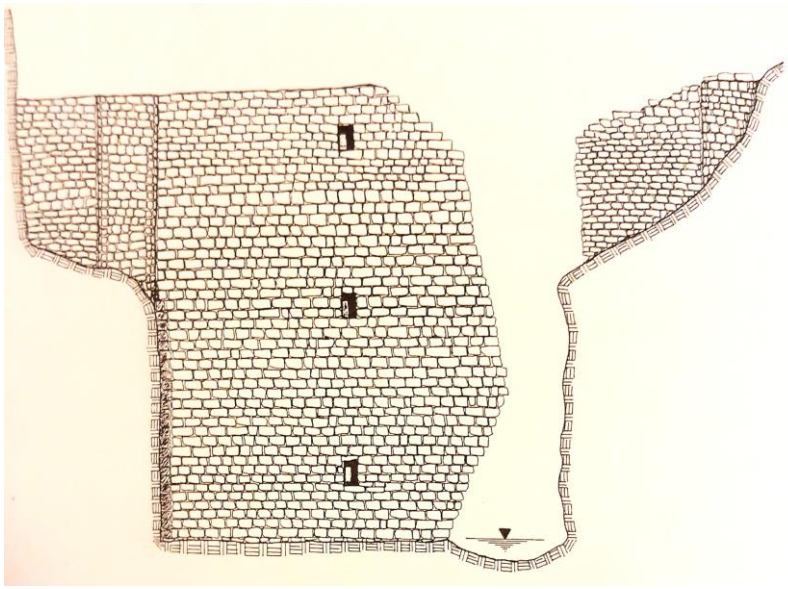

Fig. 6 - Drawing of the Gompu dam in the Gerash County, Fars Province; not to scale (after Askari Chaverdi 2013, ill. on p. 313).