

THE STATE MUSEUM OF ORIENTAL ART
INSTITUTE OF ORIENTAL STUDIES RUSSIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

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INSTITUTE OF ORIENTAL STUDIES RUSSIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

NEW RESEARCH IN ARCHAEOLOGY AND EPIGRAPHY OF SOUTH ARABIA AND ITS NEIGHBORS

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE “RENCONTRES SABÉENNES 15” HELD
IN MOSCOW, MAY 25TH – 27TH, 2011**

Edited by Alexander SEDOV

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- A+nombbre – inscriptions from the University Museum of Şan‘ā’
AAE – “Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy”
ABADY – “Archäologische Berichte aus dem Yemen”
AfO – “Archiv für Orientforschung”
AION – “Annali dell’instituto universitario orientale di Napoli”
AM – Aden Museum
AOAT – “Alter Orient und Altes Testament”
BA – “Biblical Archaeologist”
BASOR – “Bulletin of the American Society of Oriental Studies”
B-Int – inscriptions from Barāqish-Intérieur
B-M – inscriptions from Barāqish-Muraille
BSA – “Annual of the British School at Athens”
CEPOA – Centre d’étude du Proche-Orient ancien
CIAS – “Corpus des Inscriptions et des Antiquités Sud-arabes”
CIH – “Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum ab Academia Inscriptionum et Litterarum Humaniorum conditum atque digestum, IV, Inscriptiones Ḥimyariticas et Sabaeas continens”
CRAI – “Comptes Rendus de L’Academie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres”
CSAI – Alessandra Avanzini (éd.), “Corpus of South Arabian Inscriptions”
EVO – “Egitto e Vicino Oriente”
Fa – Fakhry, Ahmed
FB – Bron, François
Gl – Glaser, Eduard
GOAM – General Organisation of Antiquities and Museums
HK – Hajar Kuḥlān
HSM – “Harvard Semitic Studies”
Ir – Iryānī, Muṭahhar al-
IsMEO – Istituto Italiano per il Medio e Estremo Oriente

Ja – Jamme, Albert
JAOS – “Journal of the American Oriental Society”
JBL – “Journal of Biblical Literature”
JCS – “Journal of Cuneiform Studies”
JNES – “Journal of the Near Eastern Studies”
JRA – “Journal of Roman Studies”
JRAS – “Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society”
 JRy – Ryckmans, Jacques
JSOT – “Journal for the Study of Old Testament”
KTU – “Die Keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit”
 LuBM – Lundin, Avraam; British Museum
 M – [Giovanni Garbini] “Iscrizioni sudarabiche, Vol. 1 Iscrizioni minee”
 MAFRAY – Mission archéologique française en République arabe du Yémen
MARI – “Mari, Annales de Recherches Interdisciplinaires”
 MM – Military Museum
 MQ – Mission Qatabān
 MuB – Musée de Bayhān
 NNSQ – Khalīl Yahyà Nāmī, “Nashr Nuqūsh sāmiyya qadīma”
OBO – “Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis”
PPiPIKNV – “Pis’mennie pamyatniki i problemi istorii kul’turi narodov Vostoka”
PSAS – “Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies”
 RES – “Répertoire d’épigraphie sémitique”
 RAI – Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale
RE – “Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft”
RIA – “Reallexikon der Assyriologie”
RSO – “Rivista degli Studi Orientali”
 Ry – Ryckmans, Gonzague
 Sab – “Sabaeica”
 SEG – Sammlung Eduard Glaser
SJOT SS – “Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament, Supplement Series”
UF – “Ugarit-Forschungen”
VT – “Vetus Testamentum”
 Y.90.B.A – Y[emen].90.B[arāqish],[chantier]A
 Y.92.B.A – Y[emen].92.B[arāqish],[chantier]A
 YICAR – Yemeni-Italian Centre for Archaeological Research
 YM – Yemen Museum
 ZM – Zafār Museum

PREFACE

International conference “Rencontres sabéennes 15”, held in Moscow between May 25th and May 27th, 2011, was organized by the State Museum of Oriental Art Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation and the Institute of Oriental Studies Russian Academy of Sciences under the title “New Research in Archaeology and Epigraphy of South Arabia and Its Neighbors”. More than 40 scholars from Russia, Austria, Germany, France, Italy, USA and Yemen participated in the conference delivering papers and taking part in the discussions. The first day of the conference was hosted by the Institute of Oriental Studies Russian Academy of Sciences (Rozhdestvenka str., 12), and two other working days were held at the State Museum of Oriental Art (Nikitsky Boulevard, 12a).

At the opening ceremony of the conference there were greetings from Prof. *Vitaliy Naumkin*, the corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, the director of the Institute of Oriental Studies Russian Academy of Sciences, and from Prof. *Alexander Sedov*, the director-general of the State Museum of Oriental Art. The opening session of the conference was dedicated to the memory of Prof. *Alessandro de Maigret* (Italy) and Prof.-Dr. *Jürgen Schmidt* (Germany), who passed away in early 2011 and late 2010. Prof. *Christian J. Robin* (France), the member of the Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, Prof. *Yūsuf M. ‘Abdallāh* (Yemen) and Dr. *I. Gerlach* (Germany) delivered their speeches in memory of these outstanding specialists in archaeology, ancient history and architecture of South Arabia.

Three papers were presented at the first working session in the morning May 25th (chair *Alexander Sedov*): *Sabina Antonini* (Italy), *A Preliminary Survey at Ghaymān (December 2010)*; *Vittoria Buffa* (Italy), *Shape Versus Ware – Which Typology for South Arabian Pottery?* and *Julien Charbonnier* (France), *Irrigation Systems from the Air: A Collection of Aerial Photographs from Ḥaḍramawt and Wādī Bayḥān*. The afternoon session on May 25th (chair *Sabina Antonini*) was occupied with five papers: *Holger Hitgen* (Germany), *Tan ‘im – A Sabaeen Center in the Khawlān*; *Sarah Japp* (Germany), *Ḥimyaritic Tan ‘im (Khawlān) in the Highlands of Yemen*; *Iris Gerlach* (Germany), *Culture Contacts Between South Arabia and Di ‘amat (Ethiopia/Tigray)*; *Mike Schnelle* (Germany), *Towards a Reconstruction of the Great Temple of Yeha (Ethiopia)*; *Pawel Wolf* (Germany), *Almaqah temple Wuqro / Tigray*.

Four contributions were presented at the morning session on May 26th (chair *Iris Gerlach*): *Michel Mouton* (France), *New Excavations at Mleiha, U.A.E.*; *Romolo Loreto* (Italy), *The Italo-French-Saudi Archaeological Mission in Saudi Arabia (Second Campaign): The First Relative Chronology Sequence for Dūmat al-Jandal (Ancient Adummatu)*; *Alexia Pavan* (Italy), *The Urban Shrine at Sumhūram: Ḥaḍrami Elements and Local Tradition*; *Eleonora Kormysheva, Svetlana Malykh* (Russia), *GPR Investigations and Excavations at Abu Erteila (Sudan)*. Five presentations were delivered at the afternoon session on May 26th (chair *Alessandra Avanzini*): *Vitaliy Naumkin, Leonid Kogan* (Russia), *Soqotri Lexical Archive: The 2010 Field Season*; *Mikhail Boukharin* (Russia), *Inscriptions in Greek Script from Socotra*; *Alessia Prioletta* (Italy), *Some Reflections on Ḥaḍramitic Documentation*; *Mounir Arbach* (France), *Sam'ī: un royaume des Haute-Terres (Nord de Ṣan'ā') au VII^e s. av. J.-C.*; *Sergey Frantsouzoff* (Russia), *Du nouveau sur l'interprétation du term sabéen 'ḥll(m)*.

Four papers were presented at the morning session on May 27th (chair *Christian Robin*): *Mohammed Maraqtan* (Germany), *Thanks for Success in a Lawsuit: A Study of Recently Discovered Sabaeen Inscription at the Awām-Temple/Maḥram Bilqīs, Ma'rib, Yemen*; *Ekaterina Gushchina* (Russia), *Quelques notes sur les inscriptions du Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum (CIH) provenant des temples sudarabiques*; *Irene Rossi* (Italy), *Reconsideration of Some Theonyms and Divine Epithets in the Minaic Corpus*; *Alessio Agostini* (Italy), *Minaean Expiatory Texts: New Data From Barāqish*. The closing afternoon session on May 27th (chair *Yūsuf 'Abdallāh*) was dedicated to the final discussion and conclusive remarks.

The present volume of the *Proceedings* of the international conference, which was supplemented with papers not presented at the symposium, is dedicated to the memory of Prof. Alessandro de Maigret, the head of the Italian Archaeological Mission to the Republic of Yemen and one of the founders of *Rencontres sabéenes*, which first session was organized in September 1993 in Aix-en-Provence (France).

Alexander SEDOV

Alexander SEDOV

PROF. ALESSANDRO DE MAIGRET AND HIS CONTRIBUTION TO THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF SOUTH ARABIA¹

This short paper is not a comprehensive and detailed study of the role of the late prof. Alessandro de Maigret in the field of South Arabian archaeology, and how much he contributed to this field – I am sure that such a research should be done in the future, when all his scientific heritage will come to light, and when, after a time, we will understand all importance of his scientific ideas and hypothesis. I would like only to remind how little about archaeology of South Arabia we knew before the Italian mission and Alessandro de Maigret as the head of this mission had started their work in Yemen, and how much we know now, after thirty years of their activity in this field.

It was the first time when the mission in Yemen studying pre-Islamic antiquities was headed by professional archaeologist, the scholar with very good and professional experience and knowledge in the Middle East archaeology. And already the first discoveries of the mission were remarkable, I mean the extensive survey of the pre-historical monuments on the high plateau, in the desert and on the coastal plain, which resulted in the really epoch-making discovery of the Bronze Age culture in the mountain region of Yemen, southeast of Ṣan‘ā’, in the Ḥawlān at-Tiyal and al-Ḥadā. More than fifty sites dated close to the 3rd – very early 2nd millennia BC were discovered. For the first time in South Arabian archaeology we got the very characteristic material culture of the ancient people who preceded the people

¹ The paper was presented at the international conference “Activity of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Yemen 1980–2010. A commemoration of the scientific and academic career of Professor Alessandro de Maigret” held in Rome, June 11th-12th, 2012

created the famous South Arabian or, using the terminology proposed by A.F.L. Beeston, “Şayhad” civilization. Of high importance there were the conclusions that the discovered culture cannot be considered as direct predecessor, of course in archaeological terms, of the South Arabian civilization, and that there was a hiatus between the Bronze Age and Early Sabaean monuments, at least on the high plateau.

From recent archaeological discoveries it's getting more and more clear that by the late or mid-second millennium BC a group of complex societies which, at that time, started to play an important role in the trade connections between the Mediterranean countries and the states on the Indian subcontinent, appeared in the south-western corner of the Arabian Peninsula. Rather soon these societies developed into the kingdoms of Saba', Awsān, Qatabān and Ḥaḍramawt, leaving for the modern scholars ruins of the great walled cities and splendid monuments, huge irrigation constructions and numerous inscriptions. They spring up suddenly, apparently without the more or less visible preparatory phase characterizing usually such a phenomena. The suddenness is above all what is surprising, and from the very beginning the hypothesis about the migration of the founders of the South Arabian civilization became popular among the scholars. Archaeologically this hypothesis was backed up by investigations of the Italian mission on the Yemeni Highlands, which revealed a gap in a few hundred years between the end of the discovered Bronze Age culture and the emergence of the first monuments, which might be considered as Sabaean or Qatabānian. And as far as I know, the “migration theory” was shared by Alessandro de Maigret: he considered that the newcomers who created the famous South Arabian civilization had arrived in the south-western corner of the Peninsula along the sea-route.

In 1985 de Maigret's research of the monuments of Sabaean period resulted in the discovery of the large complex of ruins in the Wādī Yalā, which, after Ma'rib, is considered the most important Sabaean site in Yemen. The excavations conducted at the ancient settlement Yalā/ad-Durayb provided essential data for clarifying the much debated chronology of South Arabian civilization, origin of South Arabian writing. There was quite a lot of epigraphic material from the earliest layers of the site: letters and graffiti on pottery shards and even monumental inscription. And for the first time, at least in the publication of European archaeologists, the strata of the ancient Sabaean settlement were dated with the help of archaeological (C14 dating) and not epigraphical material. Later, typological study of the early Sabaean pottery from Yalā/ad-Durayb was published in the “Arabia” journal, and since that time we must, finally, forget about the so-called “short chronology” of the origin of South Arabian writing and more general – about the “short chronology” of the South Arabian archaeology and ancient history.

In the late 1980s de Maigret and his mission investigated the necropolises located in the Yemeni desert, known as “turret tombs” (al-Makhdarah grave field). Such monuments, spread all over the Peninsula, were recorded already by the first explorers of Arabia, but Alessandro de Maigret was the first scholar who carried out their systematic scientific excavations in Yemen and proved that the tombs represent a long tradition of this type of funerary architecture, which, at least in Yemen, covered fairly a long time span including Bronze Age and South Arabian periods. They belonged to the nomadic part of the ancient population of the Peninsula. Further excavations of such monuments in different regions of Yemen by French, German and Russian scholars showed its great typological and chronological variety and proved their location beyond the agricultural oasis.

The new stage of de Maigret's research has started with the beginning of systematic investigations at the great ancient South Arabian cities Barāqish (ancient Yathill) and Tamna', Absolutely unique excavation and especially restoration works of the Naqrah temple in Barāqish, excavations of the second temple in Barāqish dedicated to 'Athtar dhū-Qabḏūm, investigation of the temple of Athirat in Tamna', as well as unfortunately short term excavations of the Sabaean temple in Yeha (Ethiopia), allowed Alessandro de Maigret to pay close attention on the religious architecture of South Arabia. His proposed division of the South Arabian temples into two main types, "the Hypostyle Temples" and "the Court Temples", although broad and, probably, too simple, works, in anyway, quite well covering practically all known South Arabian sacred buildings. Very promising is the idea of Alessandro de Maigret that the hypostyle temples is "...a genuine creativity based entirely on local inspiration and thoughts"². Moreover, in spite of the presence hypostyle temples in al-Jouf area, he considered Ḥaḍramawt as "... the birthplace of this original and important architectural form"³. It seems quite probable, in my opinion, that the last statement of the Italian scholar is rather close to the truth.

Alessandro de Maigret had a great courage to choose the right sites for his investigations, the key-sites of South Arabian archaeology. That was the case with Tamna' the capital of Qatabān. One should remember that many years ago it was an attempt to create an international consortium, a joint international archaeological mission to excavate Tamna'. The committee involving specialists from Yemen, Jordan, Germany, France, Italy, Russia and even Australia was created, several meetings took place in Rome, Lyon, Sana'a and in some other cities. Unfortunately, the project failed, and failed for several reasons including financial and political. But Alessandro de Maigret was able to organize, in collaboration with French colleagues, the extensive excavations, which brought to light, in addition to the new temple dedicated to the goddess Athirat and re-examination of the TTI building, the tower-houses in the famous 'Market Square' and number of tombs in necropolis of Ḥayd Bin 'Aqīl. Six field campaigns of excavations followed by two campaigns of research and data analyses were carried out. Hardly any capital of the ancient South Arabian states, probably with the exception of Shabwa, was so extensively and intensively investigated.

Alessandro de Maigret was lucky not only in the selection of the right sites for excavation that can shed the light on the previously unknown problems and periods of South Arabian ancient history, but was able, with the help of his colleagues and, first of all, with his co-author and wife Sabina Antonini, to publish the results of these investigations. The number and quality of these publications in different languages is really amazing. We all know how it's difficult to complete and publish final and even preliminary report of our excavations, to make it available for the public. Sometimes years if not decades have passed by between the fieldwork and the publication of the results. But the Italian Mission under the direction of Alessandro de Maigret is really the exceptional case – almost all the material revealed from the excavations is presented or will be presented in the future in form of publications in periodic or as monographs. The book of Alessandro de Maigret "Arabia Felix. An exploration of the archaeological history of Yemen", first published in Italian and

² de Maigret A., *Arabia Felix. An exploration of the archaeological history of Yemen*. London, 2002: 298.

³ *Ibidem*: 303.

then in English is, so far, the best book on the archaeology and history of pre-Islamic South Arabia and its value will be only increased in the future.

And the last thing I would like to point out in this short paper. Alessandro de Maigret was not only the outstanding scholar but also the great teacher. He was the Full Professor of Archaeology and Art History of the Ancient Near East at the Istituto Universitario Orientale in Naples and was able to create a school of South Arabian archaeology in Italy. Many of his pupils and collaborators, not only from Italy but also from Yemen, are working now in the field of South Arabian archaeology. And this is the real value of his work during the thirty years. Everybody knows what is the hard task to create a school of followers, to educate the people who will continue of what you have started, to continue the projects you have initiated, and I do hope that the Italian Mission to the Republic of Yemen, as well as the Saudi-Italian-French archaeological project at Dūmat al-Jandal (ancient Adūmatu) also created by de Maigret, will continue its work to study the South Arabian antiquities and this will be the best memory of Alessandro.

ALESSANDRO DE MAIGRET

(14.08.1943 – 14.02.2011)

Alessandro de Maigret was born in Perugia on August 14, 1943. He studied Archaeology of the Near East at the *Istituto di Studi del Vicino Oriente* at the University of Rome. After graduating in Classical Archaeology in 1971, he obtained a specialization in Oriental Archaeology in 1973. He spent several years excavating at Tell Mardikh/Ebla (1970–1976) with a team from the University of Rome as part of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Syria. This field-work included responsibility for various digs at Ebla and Tell Afiss, archaeological explorations in the region to the South of Aleppo, as well as research work relating to the Syrian-Palestinian region in the pre-Hellenistic period.

When the archaeological work at Ebla came to an end, de Maigret was able to broaden his theoretical and methodological horizons by studying the scientific approaches of both the American “New Archaeology” and the British Environmental Archaeology, gaining firsthand experience of the latter during a fellowship at the Institute of Archaeology in the University of London (1978–1979). These new experiences led him to publish in 1979 a critical reappraisal of the Danish excavations conducted at Hama in Syria (*La Cittadella Aramaica di Hama. Attività, Funzioni e Comportamento*) and, in 1981, to write an article on the paleo-environment and economic resources of Ebla (*Il Fattore Idrologico nell'Economia di Ebla*).

In 1980, following his appointment as Associate Professor at the *Istituto Universitario Orientale* in Naples, de Maigret created the ‘Italian Archaeological Mission in the Yemen Arab Republic’, with funding from the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of the University and the National Council for Research (CNR). The Italian Archaeological Mission was under the aegis of the *Istituto per l'Oriente* of Rome and, from 1983, it acquired the name of the ‘Italian Archaeological Mission in the Republic of Yemen’ and, under the patronage of the *Istituto per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente* (IsMEO, later IsIAO), continues activities in the field.

Between 1981 and 1985, de Maigret carried out extensive surveys of the rich prehistory of Yemen, on the high plateau, the desert and the coastal plains. In 1981, he made a crucial discovery

documenting the existence of a Bronze Age culture in Yemen (3rd–2nd millennium BC). More than fifty sites from this pre-Sabaeen phase were found in the mountainous region to the southeast of Ṣan‘ā’ (Khawlān at-Tiyāl and Al-Hadā). The data that emerged from the explorations and excavations carried out in four of the main settlements between 1984 and 1985, gave a clear picture of a culture that showed unambiguous affinities with the culture that flourished in Palestine in the Early Bronze Age, and that preceded the South Arabian civilization of the Classic Period.

These archaeological results and theoretical insights were published in a multi-authored monograph entitled *The Bronze Age Culture of Khawlān at-Tiyāl and Al-Hadā* (1990) that represents a landmark in the understanding of the historical and cultural development of the highland regions of Northern Yemen and the surrounding areas.

In 1985, de Maigret’s research on the Sabaeen period resulted in the discovery of the large complex of ruins at Wādī Yalā, on the eastern boundary of the desert, which, after Marīb, is considered the most important Sabaeen site in Yemen. An excavation conducted in the ancient city of Yalā (1987) provided essential data for clarifying the much debated chronology of South Arabian civilization (*Les Fouilles Italiennes de Yalā (Yémen du Nord): Nouvelles Données sur la Chronologie de l’Arabie Préislamique*, co-authored with Chr. Robin). In 1988, de Maigret published a comprehensive monograph entitled *The New Sabaeen Archaeological Complex in the Wādī Yāla*.

In the late 1980s, de Maigret investigated the necropolises located in the Yemeni desert and on the highlands, characterized, the former, by the ‘turret tombs’, and the latter, by ‘hypogean tombs’. In 2005, he published a monograph on the subject entitled *South Arabian Necropolises: Italian Excavations at Al-Makhdarah and Kharibat al-Ahjur (Yemen)* (co-authored with S. Antonini).

Between 1989 and 1992, de Maigret discovered the Temple dedicated to the tutelary god Nakrah (ca. 6th BC–1st century AD) in the Minaean city of Barāqish (the ancient Yathill, in the Jawf). The results of the first two excavation campaigns were the subject of publication in collaboration with Chr. Robin, *Le Temple de Nakrah à Yathill (aujourd’hui Barāqish), Yémen. Résultats des deux Premières Campagnes de Fouilles de la Mission Italienne* (1989).

In 1990, de Maigret became Full Professor of Archaeology and Art History of the Ancient Near East at the *Istituto Universitario Orientale* in Naples. The following year, he was elected President of ‘Arabia Antiqua’, the International Association for Studies of the Arabian Peninsula. This latter recognition, led to his appointment by the Italian Foreign Ministry as Archaeological Counsellor to the Italian Embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in 1992. During his stay in Saudi Arabia, from 1993 to 1996, de Maigret was able to establish contacts with the Universities and Cultural Institutes in various countries of the Arabian Peninsula and gain firsthand experience of the most important archaeological sites in Saudi Arabia and the neighbouring countries, including Oman, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Qatar.

In 1996, Alessandro de Maigret published *Arabia Felix. Un Viaggio nell’Archeologia dello Yemen*, translated in English in 2002 as *Arabia Felix. An Exploration of the Archaeological History of Yemen* and reissued in 2009 with an inspiring foreword by Tony Wilkinson.

In 1998, de Maigret led the archaeological excavation of a Sabaeen temple at Yeha (Ethiopia), beginning a long-lasting collaboration with the French Mission directed by Christian Robin. The report of the excavation was published with the title *Le Grand Temple de Yéha (Tigray, Éthiopie), après la Première Campagne de Fouilles de la Mission Française* (1998) (co-authored with Chr. Robin).

Between 1999 and 2006, de Maigret directed six far-reaching archaeological campaigns at Tamna‘, the ancient Qatabānian capital, followed by two campaigns dedicated to research and data analysis. These extensive excavations have so far brought to light a large temple dedicated to the goddess Athirat, ten tower-houses in the famous ‘Market Place’ and a number of tombs in Tamna‘’s necropolis of Hayd Ibn ‘Aqīl. A report of these activities was published in 2006 in a book entitled *Tamna‘, Antica Capitale di Qatabān / Tamna‘, Capitale Antique de Qatabān*, and the first exhaustive report of the excavation will be published in the volume *Gli Scavi Italo-Francesi di Tamna‘ (Repubblica dello Yemen). Rapporto Finale*, co-edited by A. de Maigret and Chr. Robin.

In 2003, the Italian Mission completed a thorough restoration of the temple of Nakrah at Barāqish and the results were published in the book *Barāqish, Minaean Yathill. Excavation and Restoration of the Temple of Nakrah*, issued in 2004. Further, between 2004–2007, de Maigret and his colleagues began a set of new excavations in Barāqish, including the great temple of ‘Athtar dhū-Qabd, a Minaean cemetery, a deep exploratory sounding outside the temple of Nakrah and an extensive extramural assessment involving geo-archaeological and bio-archaeological analyses. The results of this research were published in two articles, *Le Royaume Sudarabique de Ma‘īn: Nouvelles Données Grâce aux Fouilles Italiennes de Barāqish (l’Antique Yathill)* (2009) and *A Sabaean Stratigraphy from Barāqish* (2010).

In 2003, de Maigret inaugurated the “Yemeni-Italian Centre for Archaeological Research” (YICAR) at the National Museum of Ṣan‘ā’, sponsored by the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the General Organization of Antiquities and Museums in Yemen (GOAM) and ISIAO.

In 2008, the Saudi Arabian government invited de Maigret to work at Dūmat al-Jandal, in the Jawf Province, where he carried out a survey and, in 2009, the first archaeological excavation. The report of these studies was published in 2010 as *Joint Saudi-Italian Archaeological Project at Dūmat al-Jandal. Preliminary report of the 1st excavation campaign* (2009).

Unfortunately, the difficult political situation in Yemen has made further archaeological excavations at Barāqish and Tamna‘ nearly impossible. It is for this reason that de Maigret requested and obtained from GOAM the permission to excavate and study in the city of Ghaymān, 15 km South-East of the capital Ṣan‘ā’. It was at this site that de Maigret made a preliminary investigations in 1981 and 1982 that were published in 1982 as *Ricerche Archeologiche Italiane nella Repubblica Araba Yemenita. Notizia di una Seconda Ricognizione*. Sadly, his illness did not allow his participation in the new archaeological campaign in Ghaymān, carried out in December 2010 by the members of the Italian Archaeological Mission.

Alessandro de Maigret passed away on February 14, 2011 at his home in Pierantonio, near Perugia, at the age of sixty-seven.

Alessandro de Maigret was a member of the *Istituto Italiano per l’Africa e l’Oriente*, Rome; the *Society for Arabian Studies*, London; the *Société des archéologues, philologues et historiens de l’Arabie*, Paris; the *Deutsches Archäologisches Institut*, Berlin; the *Société asiatique*, Paris, and Correspondent Member of the *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* of the *Institut de France*. He was director of the series *Repertorio Iconografico Sudarabico* (Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres de l’Institut de France, Paris – Istituto Italiano per l’Africa e l’Oriente, Rome), co-director of the journal *Arabia* (Aix-en-Provence) and member of the Scientific Committee of the journals *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* (Copenhagen), *Annali dell’Istituto Universitario Orientale* (Naples), *Saba* (Paris), *Archeologia Viva* (Florence), and *Oriens Antiquus* (Rome).

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Sabina Antonini-de Maigret



Fig. 1. Professor Alessandro de Maigret at Barāqish in January 2005.



Fig. 2. Professor Alessandro de Maigret at Barāqish with HE Abdel Karim Al-Eryāni (January 2004).



Fig. 3. From the left: Selma ar-Rady, Marco Livadiotti, Alessandro de Maigret and Luca Bianconi at the inauguration of the restoration works of the Amariya, at Rada.

Sabina ANTONINI

SMALL FEMALE FUNERARY STELAE

The typology of South Arabian funerary stelae is rich and multifaceted, varying in relation to different contexts and in the course of different historical periods. I will limit my analysis to a particular series of small stelae depicting a feminine figure, some of which also bear an inscription. Four stelae are unpublished, while the others four are already known from the literature, but will be analyzed in view of a possible re-interpretation of their significance. Although these stelae present a rather stereotyped iconography, they diverge on the basis of the different attributes the figures hold in their hands.

The most critical issue for revealing the significance of these artworks is the identification of the feminine figure. In presenting each individual stela, I will discuss possible interpretations of the portrayed figure.

The first unpublished artwork, in white alabaster (20.5x15.5x5.8 cm; fig. 1), displays a feminine figure sculpted in bas-relief inside a niche. The woman is seated, in a frontal position. She is dressed in a short-sleeves tunic with uniform dense, vertical folds extending to her sandaled feet. The facial features are executed in relief, including a short lock of hair on her forehead, while her ears are incised. The left hand lies on her left knee, the right arm is bent and extended in front and the hand holds a spherical object, probably a fruit. The lower frame of the niche bears an incised dedication: *Memorial of Yawmna'am, daughter of the Yakhram dhū-Haztān's lineage*. Epigraphic analysis dates the stela at about the 4th century AD.¹

An alabaster stela (21x20.5x3.2 cm; fig. 2) similarly depicting a woman in frontal pose seated on a low bench was previously published by Jacqueline Pirenne (1986: 347-348). She has short hair, wears an ample cloak and her wrists are adorned with jewelry. Her left hand rests on her left thigh; her right hand is lifted and holds a round object with a handle decorated with concentric circles, resembling a mirror. According to Pirenne, the object could be a spindle, which

¹ I wish to thank Mounir Arbach for dating and interpreting the epigraphic inscriptions of this contribution.

would suggest the woman's identity as a deity similar to the Roman *Parca*, symbol of the Fate. The iconography dates back to the first three centuries AD. In spite of its wide outer frame, the stela lacks an inscription, but it is conceivable that an inscription/dedication was incised on a separate base onto which the stela was inserted.

The third artwork in alabaster (2x14.5/12.1x3.5 cm; fig. 3), also published by Pirenne (1977: 451-452) and dated close to the firsts centuries AD, has the characteristics of a proper stele – rectangular in shape, wider in the upper portion and with an inscription on the base. Again, the feminine subject, depicted almost in profile, sits on the thick pillow of a sort of curule seat. She wears a short-sleeved, ample tunic ending in rich pleats. The left hand is raised and opens, while the left arm is extended laterally and the hand holds a conic object, probably a fruit. Pirenne interpreted the object as a pinecone, and the raised arm with an open hand as a typical gesture of benediction that, according to the author, is both characteristic signs of divinity. It is worth mentioning that in South Arabian iconography, this meaning is carried out with the same gesture, but performed with the right arm. The inscription mentions the feminine name of *Haywat Damrān*.

The unpublished alabaster artwork (15x11x3.5cm; fig. 4) is roughly manufactured and the female figure is sculpted in a cursory manner. The typology of the stela is analogous to the previous examples – a frontally seated woman with a long, pleated skirt – but with gestural variants. The left arm is bent and the hand rests on the waist. The right arm is also bent and the hand reaches toward the face. The object held by the woman is not recognizable, but her gesture bears similarities with the gesture in the Figure 5 to be described below. The inscription is incised vertically and laterally on the frame, instead of on the conventional location at the base of the stele. The inscription reads: *Memorial of Abītab* (or *Abītabat*, variant of the name *Abītabwat*). Paleographic analysis sets this inscription to around the 4th century AD.

The limestone stele (unpublished; fig. 5) presents, inside a frame, the bas-relief of a woman cloaked in an ample robe enriched by deep folds. She raises her right hand to bring a small cup toward the mouth, while the left hand holds a long and thin branch carrying large leaves. The face, triangular and with deeply incised features, is framed by thick hair divided in two long and compact braids that fall onto her shoulders.

The small alabaster stela from Baynūn (14.5 cm high; fig. 6), previously published by Pirenne (1977: 445), presents the bust of a female figure in frontal view. Two long braids frame the face. This figure, presents variants in her clothing as she wears a vest with linear embroideries, jewelry and a crown on her head. The right hand holds a thin branch and the left hand a bird.

The other stele (unpublished; fig. 7) dates from the 3rd century AD and depicts the torso of a woman, her hands resting on the waist. The left hand holds a stylized object that recalls a bunch of wheat a common iconographic element in Sabaeen and Qatabānian cultures that symbolizes, according to Pirenne, the South Arabian goddess dhāt-Himyam (Pirenne 1977: 415-439). Three slightly slanted incisions follow the folds of her robe. The base is inscribed with the name of *Shan'at Khara'*.

Finally, the last object is a small alabaster stele from Baynūn (7 cm high; fig. 8) with a similar, yet simplified, iconography (Radt 1971: 19, Pl. 36, No. 100). The woman holds in her right hand a slender branch, and in her left hand, a bird.

Two of the abovementioned objects (fig. 1, 4) are called *m'mr*; a term encountered in Qatabānian funerary contexts. According to epigraphist Jacques Ryckmans (1953), *m'mr* stands

for “funerary monument or memorial” – an object that symbolizes the constant presence of the deceased devotee in the temple, or perpetuates his/her memory before the divinity. For philologist Giovanni Garbini (1980: 57), *m’mr* refers to a devotional object, strictly Qatabānian, related to the cult of the deceased who is remembered in the necropolis’ temple. To paraphrase Garbini’s definition – it is a monument that would allow the living to perceive the deceased as existing and being present. In a few cases, the term is used to identify a place of cult or a funerary chapel inside a temple (Robin 2012: 37).

Pirenne attributes to this term a purely cultic meaning and therefore identifies as votive, and not funerary, the stelae that contain *m’mr*. Obviously, Pirenne refers to the class of Qatabānian stelae identified in her numerous works as “stèles à la déesse dhāt-Ḥimyam” (Pirenne 1960; 1962; 1965). This author interprets the stereotyped woman figure as a fertility goddess on the basis of symbols such as the bunch of wheat and the raised hand in a blessing gesture, as well as the feminine figure’s formal characteristics, including the fleshy abdomen and the pronounced breasts (Pirenne 1960: 333). Pirenne extends the identification of the woman as a goddess to similar depictions on stelae, as shown on fig. 2 (“déesse en parque (?)”; Pirenne 1986; 347), fig. 3 (“Plaque à la déesse assise”; Pirenne 1977: 451), fig. 6 (“plaque à la déesse en Atargatis à la colombe”; Pirenne 1977: 445) – and to the figurative stelae with a depiction of a woman on a throne assisted by maids (“la déesse sur des reliefs sabéennes”; Pirenne 1965).

One fundamental question relates to the identity of the feminine image – whether it is the portrait of the devotee, albeit symbolic or stereotyped, or the portrait of the divinity implored by the devotee. The identification of the feminine figure with a deity is not always definitive in view of uncertainties regarding divine iconography in South Arabian cultures, where divine attributes are never specific and unvarying. The only certainty regarding these funerary stelae is provided by the inscriptions that, when present, indicate that the stelae bearing the image of a woman were commissioned exclusively by women.

As a first step at answering this question, I will analyze the significance of the women’s gestures and the objects that they hold and draw a comparison with similar iconographies in coeval and surrounding cultures, specifically in funerary reliefs from Palmyra.

A gesture of long Near Eastern tradition is the raised right arm and open hand presenting the palm to the viewer. This is an apotropaic gesture with a mixed divine/human symbolism. It symbolizes protection and blessing when performed by a divinity, or adoration by a supplicant when performed by humans.

Only the feminine character of the funerary stele shown on fig. 3 performs this gesture, and she raises the left and not the right arm. The woman holds in her right hand, according to Pirenne’s interpretation, the funerary pinecone, symbol of immortality.

Similar to the woman on fig. 3, figures seated on stools are represented on both the most ancient South Arabian reliefs, such as that on a pillar of the *propylaeum* of the *intra-muros* Banāt ‘Ād temple of al-Sawdā’/Nashshān (Jawf, 8th century BC), and on the most recent sculptures (2nd century AD), such as, for example on an alabaster stele (found in Tan‘im and presently in the National Museum of Ṣan‘ā’, YM 386), representing a hunter in the presence of the goddess Shams. However, the identification of these figures as divinities is far from being certain. Similarly, there are no elements that conclusively sustain an interpretation of the woman on fig. 3 as the image of a goddess. I suggest that the image is the representation of the deceased named in the inscription. As the pinecone, similarly the apple and the pomegranate are funerary symbols of immortality. One such fruit could be the attribute held by the woman on fig. 1.

In the reliefs from Palmyra, many attributes are specific to the gods, but others are shared between gods and humans, including for example, the containers used during ceremonial banquets. In the stelae presented here, the women depicted on fig. 4 and fig. 5 lift a small cup to their mouth. The woman on fig. 5 also holds a slender branch that in Oriental iconographic studies is at times interpreted as a branch of a palm tree. The small branch is an attribute of divinities of both genders, but also of priests and common people as a funerary symbol. In fact, the palm tree branch is held by both female and male divinities, offered to them by eagles or Victories (as in Syria and Parthia from the end of the 1st century BC), and the deceased also holds it in funerary contexts. In this case, it symbolizes victory over death, a concept of possible Middle Eastern origin and also diffused in Roman culture (Colledge 1976: 209). Occasionally, a flower or a fruit substitutes for the funerary branch. In conclusion, even for these two reliefs, it can be debated whether these images represent goddesses, rather than the deceased women.

Only the woman on fig. 6 has a distinctive crown on her head. Jacqueline Pirenne identified this figure as the Syrian goddess Atargatis based on the iconographic presence of the dove. Lucian of Samosata (2nd century AD) provides an accurate description of the cult of this divinity that was identified with Hera in the Syrian city of Hierapolis during the Roman period (Cf. Dirven 1997). The cult of Atargatis was associated with rivers and springs. The goddess appears as a tutelary deity within urban centers and is often represented on coins with a mural crown whose crenellations represent the town for which she served as protector. Iconographically, she is depicted seated on a throne, flanked by sphinxes or lions, with a variety of attributes, including sheaves of grain, a plate or cup, a scepter or staff. More often, she holds a spindle or a mirror. Also associated with this deity are doves or fish, represented close to her or actually on her. In certain communities Atargatis was associated with dolphins while in others the iconography of the eight-pointed star emphasized her association with the planet Venus. She may also be represented with her consort Hadad-Zeus who is accompanied by two bulls. Clearly, the iconography of Atargatis is complex, particularly as the goddess became identified with a number of Greek divinities, including Rhea (Cybele), Athena, Artemis and Aphrodite.

Current studies have not conclusively determined the presence of the cult of Atargatis in South Arabia or her assimilation with local divinities. As such, it would be premature to assume that the female subjects described in Figure 6 represent deities.

The women depicted on fig. 6 and fig. 8 hold a bird in their left hand and a slender branch in their right hand. A comparison with reliefs from Palmyra reveals children and adolescents holding a bird in their hand, together with a bunch of grapes, both symbols of childhood. The iconography has Greek antecedents, but it is also common in the Roman Empire. The bird does not belong to a defined species – it could refer to the protective dove of Atargatis, or simply a domestic pigeon (Colledge 1976: 158).

Other typically feminine attributes in Palmyrene funerary reliefs are the spindle and the distaff, both brandished in the left hand; the ball of threads, caskets and baskets – all reference to their terrestrial origin. It is worth mentioning other symbols, such as musical instruments for ceremonies and banquets that are depicted in a number of South Arabian figurative stelae, and toiletry objects such as the mirror shown on fig. 2.

In conclusion, there are no conclusive proofs on the association of these feminine images with divinities, as suggested in the past by Pirenne, especially if the identity of a specific goddess is not determined.

In the first century of the Christian era, Greco-Roman influences extended to South Arabia, as evident from the analysis of South Arabian iconographies and imagery in reliefs and the bronze objects. In what terms can we talk of religious syncretism in South Arabia? With what intent and in what context the Greco-Roman iconographies were transmitted to, and absorbed by the Arabian environment? The external influences could be restricted to a simple borrowing of images, to appropriation, *interpretatio* (equating foreign divinities to gods of the local pantheon) or parallelism, or assimilation of the identity of a foreign deity by a local divinity – i.e. syncretism in its various forms and expressions, as described and interpreted at length by Motte and Pirenne-Delforge (1994). Unfortunately it is difficult to give a definite answer regarding syncretic influences in South Arabia, since there are no literary sources and the inscriptions are not explicit or informative in this regard.

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Fig. 1. YM 1643, National Museum of Şan'ā', from Ma'rib area.



Fig. 2. NAM 1267, National Museum of Aden (Pirenne 1986: 347-348).



*Fig. 3. Foster Collection No. 6 (Baltimore).
Probably from Hayd Ibn 'Aqil (Pirenne 1977: 451-452).*



Fig. 4. YM 2493, National Museum of Şan 'ā'ww(unknown provenance).



Fig. 5. YM 1700, National Museum of Şan 'ā' (unknown provenance).



Fig. 6. National Museum of Şan 'ā', from Baynūn (Radt 1971: 19, No. 99, Pl. 36; Pirenne 1977: 445-446).



Fig. 7. YM 11423, National Museum of Şan 'ā' (unknown provenance).



Fig. 8. National Museum of Şan 'ā', from Baynūn (Radt 1971: 19, No. 100, Pl. 36).

Mounir ARBACH, Jérémie SCHIETTECATTE

INSCRIPTIONS INÉDITES DU JABAL RIYĀM DES VII^E-VI^E SIÈCLES AV. J.-C.

À la mémoire d'Alessandro de Maigret

Il est communément admis que la civilisation de l'Arabie du Sud est née et a pris son essor dans les Basses-Terres du Yémen, sur le pourtour du désert du Ramlat as-Sab'atayn, au début du I^{er} millénaire av. J.-C. Cette période fut marquée par la diffusion de l'écriture et le développement de cités et royaumes.

La région des Hautes-Terres est, à l'inverse, bien documentée pour l'âge du Bronze (III^e-II^e millénaires av. J.-C.), notamment grâce au travail précurseur d'Alessandro de Maigret¹, mais reste mal connue à l'âge du Fer. Ce n'est qu'à partir du tournant de l'ère chrétienne que la documentation archéologique et épigraphique y montre une multiplication du nombre de villes et de centres politiques tandis que les Basses-Terres sont progressivement abandonnées².

En 2006, lors d'une courte visite de la région située au nord de Ṣan'ā', l'un des auteurs s'est rendu sur le site du Jabal Riyām. Vingt-six inscriptions inédites entreposées dans la cour de l'une des habitations du village y ont été photographiées. La plupart proviennent du pillage du temple de Ta'lab, sur le Jabal Riyām. Seize d'entre elles datent des environs des VII^e-VI^e siècles av. J.-C. Leur publication fait l'objet de cette contribution.

Cette découverte, que nous dédions à la mémoire d'Alessandro de Maigret, montre qu'à la suite de l'âge du Bronze qui lui était si cher, la région des Hautes-Terres septentrionales connut un développement parallèle à celui des Basses-Terres dès le début du I^{er} millénaire av. J.-C. et que les deux régions étaient étroitement liées.

¹ de Maigret 1984.

² Schiettecatte 2011: 244–293.

Jabal Riyām: le site et ses vestiges

Le village de Riyām (15°47'32,5" N – 44°16'41,8" E) se trouve au cœur de la région de Arḥab, 50 km au nord de la capitale yéménite. Il s'étend sur la bordure d'un affleurement calcaire dominant d'une centaine de mètres la plaine environnante et le village d'Itwa. La douzaine de maisons du site et la mosquée remploient toutes des matériaux de construction antiques, des éléments de décor architectural et des fragments d'inscriptions sudarabiques.

Une première exploration de la région de Arḥab fut entreprise en 1884 par E. Glaser qui, dans un contexte tribal agité, ne parvint à visiter ni Riyām ni Itwa³. Il se procura néanmoins la copie de plusieurs dizaines d'inscriptions provenant de Riyām dont une partie fut publiée en 1964⁴. On doit la redécouverte du site à B. Condé qui y a photographié en 1963 plusieurs inscriptions, dont il transmet les clichés à G. Ryckmans⁵. Le site a fait l'objet d'une exploration plus approfondie par P.A. Grjaznevic à la fin du mois de mars 1971. La description qu'il dresse de Riyām est à ce jour la plus détaillée; elle est accompagnée d'un plan schématique des lieux⁶. La Mission Archéologique Française au Yémen s'est rendue sur le site en novembre 1971, 1976 puis à l'automne 1981⁷, complétant le relevé des inscriptions initié par P.A. Grjaznevic⁸. En juin 2006 enfin, J. Schiettecatte s'est rendu sur le site et y a photographié 26 inscriptions inédites récemment pillées dans les ruines du temple de Ta'lab, au cœur du village.

Riyām n'apparaît pas au premier abord comme un site archéologique de grande extension. Les principaux éléments relevés dans le village et à ses abords sont une voie d'accès aménagée, une nécropole, des citernes et un temple (fig. 1).

La voie aménagée: elle permettait de gagner le plateau depuis la vallée. Elle porte aujourd'hui le nom de Ṭarīq al-Yahūd⁹. À mi-pente, la voie traverse une concentration de gros rochers, Ḥajar Zahra. Sur l'un d'eux sont gravées les grandes inscriptions GI 1209 et GI 1210. GI 1209/7 évoque la remise en état de ce chemin d'accès au sommet du Jabal Riyām dans la seconde moitié du I^{er} millénaire av. J.-C.

La nécropole: au sud et à l'ouest du village, dans la montée et sous la bordure du plateau (au lieu-dit Ma'qara), de nombreuses cavités dans la roche servaient à l'origine de chambres funéraires. Elles ont été réutilisées par la suite comme abri de fortune pour les bergers et leurs troupeaux¹⁰. Une quinzaine d'inscriptions funéraires rupestres gravées à proximité des tombes évoquent leur aménagement ou le nom des défunts¹¹.

Les citernes: dans le village de Riyām, J. Pirenne mentionne la présence de deux citernes, l'une constituant le grand bassin de la mosquée, l'autre souterraine récupérant les eaux drainées sur le plateau¹². L'agriculture est impossible sur le plateau, la roche étant directement exposée. L'eau est exclusivement destinée à l'usage domestique des villageois. L'ancienneté de ces citernes n'est pas déterminée.

³ Glaser 1884.

⁴ Solá-Solé 1964.

⁵ Robin 1982: 13.

⁶ Grjaznevic 1994: 247-259, fig. 33-35.

⁷ Pirenne 1981; Robin 1982.

⁸ Les inscriptions relevées en 1971 ont été publiées par Bauer, Lundin 1994: 46-71 sous les cotes Gr 166 à Gr 217.

⁹ Grjaznevic 1994: 249.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*: 248.

¹¹ Solá-Solé 1964: 7-15; Bauer, Lundin 1994: 46-50.

¹² Pirenne 1981.

Le temple: P.A. Grjaznevic enfin décrit l'élément majeur du site¹³: les ruines d'un édifice implanté à 200 m au nord-ouest de la bordure du village lorsqu'il le visita au début des années 1970 mais englobé dans le village actuel (comparer fig. 1 avec Grjaznevic 1994, fig. 33-34). Il y fait état de débris de pierres formant un large anneau autour de monticules de gravats. L'anneau peut être interprété comme les ruines d'un mur d'enceinte délimitant un espace à ciel ouvert de 52 x 46 m de diamètre. Au sud-ouest de cet anneau, une habitation moderne semble implantée sur ce qui pourrait avoir été un bâtiment préislamique large de 5,5 m. Les vestiges faisaient déjà l'objet en 1971 de pillages en vue du remploi de matériau de construction.

Lors de notre visite en 2005, les constructions modernes avaient gagné le secteur de cet édifice circulaire et s'étaient partiellement installées sur ses ruines. Le pillage s'était intensifié (fig. 2), mettant au jour des murs parementés, des blocs de constructions, des chapiteaux cylindriques à denticules, des colonnes polyédriques, des éléments de décor (fig. 3) et une inscription (Jabal Riyām 2006-1). Par ailleurs, les 25 autres inscriptions photographiées dans la cour de la maison voisine provenaient toutes, d'après les habitants du village, des ruines de ce secteur.

Ces inscriptions sont toutes des dédicaces au dieu Ta'lab Riyām et permettent d'identifier les vestiges avec le temple de cette divinité, comme l'avait proposé P.A. Grjaznevic. Comme l'avait par ailleurs évoqué ce dernier, un parallèle peut être établi entre le plan de ce sanctuaire et celui du temple Awām de Ma'rib¹⁴.

Les inscriptions provenant de ce temple datent, d'après la graphie, du VII^e siècle avant au III^e siècle après J.-C., preuve de la longue utilisation du bâtiment.

Le souvenir de ce lieu de culte se perpétue dans la tradition arabo-islamique, témoignant de son rayonnement passé. Le nom de Riyām apparaît à côté de celui de la Ka'abat Najrān dans le *Kitāb al-tarbī' wa-l-tadwīr* d'al-Jāhiz¹⁵. Al-Hamdānī décrit Riyām au X^e siècle comme un lieu de pèlerinage préislamique abritant en son temps un ascète qui faisait lui-même l'objet d'un pèlerinage. La fonction du lieu se perpétue bien après l'abandon des cultes païens¹⁶.

Si Riyām apparaît comme toponyme dans l'inscription sudarabique Ir 17, il n'y est pas qualifié de *hgr* (bourgade, ville). Sur le site, on n'observe que peu de traces de structures d'habitat. P.A. Grjaznevic mentionne de possibles fondations antiques dans quelques maisons modernes, dont une imposante, qu'il associe volontiers au «palais royal» (*qaṣr al-mamlaka*) d'al-Hamdānī¹⁷. Il évoque également les restes de petites structures rectangulaires à l'ouest du village moderne interprétées comme les bâtiments destinés à héberger les pèlerins de passage¹⁸.

Le site apparaît avant tout comme un lieu de pèlerinage relativement isolé, contre lequel ont été aménagées des citernes, d'éventuelles maisons éparses et quelques sépultures. Tout au plus peut-on parler d'un hameau associé au temple. La bourgade antique la plus proche était Itwa (*ṭwt^m*), à 1 km vers le sud-ouest à vol d'oiseau.

¹³ Grjaznevic 1994: 251-252.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*: 251.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*: 251; Jāhiz/Adad 1967: § 63: «Dis-moi – que Dieu te conserve en vie – qui a bâti Ri'ām, qui a édifié la Ka'aba de Naḡrān, qui est le constructeur de Ġumdān, qui a bâti Palmyre, qui est le constructeur des deux Pyramides, à quand remonte la construction de Ma'rib...».

¹⁶ Hamdānī/Faris 1938: 46-47.

¹⁷ Grjaznevic 1994: 253.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*: 256.

Les inscriptions inédites des VII^e-VI^e siècles av. J.-C.

Nous donnons aux nouvelles inscriptions le sigle «Jabal Riyām 2006». Nous nous limitons ici aux textes que l'on peut dater, d'après la graphie et le contenu, des VII^e-VI^e siècles av. J.-C. («Jabal Riyām 2006-1 à 16»). Les autres inscriptions («Jabal Riyām 2006-17 à 26»), datant de la deuxième moitié du I^{er} millénaire av. J.-C. ou des trois premiers siècles de l'ère chrétienne, feront l'objet d'une publication ultérieure.

Les seize inscriptions que nous publions ici constituent un ensemble homogène. À l'exception du Jabal Riyām 2006-16, elles sont toutes dédiées à Ta'lab, dieu tutélaire de Sam'ī, et ont toutes une graphie comparable aux inscriptions du style B de J. Pirenne, que l'on peut dater aujourd'hui des VII^e-VI^e siècles av. J.-C. Comme toutes les inscriptions connues provenant des sites des Hautes-Terres au nord de Ṣan'a', elles sont rédigées en langue sabéenne, langue vernaculaire du royaume de Sam'ī semble-t-il¹⁹.

Jabal Riyām 2006-1 (fig. 4)

Les inscriptions Jabal Riyām 2006-1 et 2 forment un ensemble intéressant²⁰, elles attestent pour la première fois la présence d'un roi de Sam'ī et évoquent une alliance entre les deux royaumes de Saba' et Sam'ī.

Description

L'inscription de deux lignes est incomplète. Elle est gravée sur la tranche d'un bloc calcaire équerri. En face supérieure, le bloc est aplani et bordé d'un cadre lisse qui laisse penser à une table à offrande. La partie gauche de la pierre manque. Sur la face inscrite, trois éclats provoqués récemment par l'impact d'outils – probablement lors de l'extraction de la pierre au cours d'un pillage récent du site –, empêchent la lecture du début de l'inscription. L'érosion de la pierre a partiellement estompé la fin de la première ligne et le bas de la seconde sans que la lecture n'en souffre.

Dimensions: L.: 109 cm; h.: 20 cm; h. moyenne des lettres: 9 cm.

La graphie de l'inscription, du style B1 de J. Pirenne, permet de dater l'inscription du début du VII^e siècle av. J.-C.

Transcription

- 1 [S'mh]s'm['](/)[bn] Y(f)^m mlk S'm'y hqny [T'lb ...b]-
- 2 S'mhwd' w-b 'hwt S'b' w-S'm'y

Traduction

- 1 [Sumhū]samī['] [fils] de Ya(f)^{um}, roi de Sam'ī, a offert à [Ta'lab ... avec]
- 2 Sumhūwaḍa' et avec la fraternité de Saba' et Sam'ī.

Commentaire

L. 1, [S'mh]s'm['](/)[bn] Y(f)^m mlk S'm'y: le début de l'inscription comportant le nom du souverain de Sam'ī est endommagé. On voit sur la photographie au début de la ligne un

¹⁹ Robin 1996: col. 1131.

²⁰ Ces deux textes ont déjà été cités par J. Schiettecatte (2011: 256-258, fig. 123-124); ils ont également fait l'objet d'une publication par M. Arbach à paraître.

espace d'une largeur de trois lettres correspondant à un éclat, suivi de deux lettres lisibles, *s'm*, ainsi que les vestiges d'un cercle, *'ayn* ou *wāw*, et de la barre de séparation ; cette dernière serait suivie de la partie inférieure de la lettre *b*. On s'attendrait à ce que le nom manquant soit *S'mhwd'*, invoqué au début de la deuxième ligne dans la formule de fraternité entre Saba' et Sam'ī. Cependant, vue la disposition des deux lettres encore visibles, *s'm*, qui devraient être au milieu du nom et non pas au début comme dans *S'mhwd'*, nous proposons à titre d'hypothèse de restituer le nom manquant en *[S'mh]s'm[']*. Cet anthroponyme est déjà connu en sabéen (Ja 644/4-5; Ist 7630/8).

Quant au nom de son patronyme que nous restituons, *Y(f^s)^m*, on le rencontre souvent comme nom de construction et rarement comme nom d'homme (RÉS 4613).

Ce souverain de Sam'ī, *[S'mh]s'm['](/)[bn] Y(f^s)^m*, est attesté pour la première fois.

Ll. 1-2, *[b]-S'mhwd'*: cet anthroponyme n'est pas attesté par ailleurs. Sa mention dans la formule de fraternité entre Saba' et Sam'ī indique qu'il s'agit d'un personnage important, peut-être un des premiers souverains de Sam'ī, aïeul de l'auteur du texte.

w-b 'hwt S'b' w-S'm'y: formule de fraternité entre Saba' et Sam'ī que l'on retrouve dans le texte Jabal Riyām 2006-2. Elle fait écho à celle de fraternité et d'alliance entre le royaume de Saba' et celui de Nashshān utilisée aux VIII^e-VII^e siècles av. J.-C. à la différence qu'ici, il est question d'une fraternité entre deux royaumes placés sur un pied d'égalité (*b-'hwt S'b' w-S'm'y*) et non d'une fraternité avec le royaume allié, sa divinité tutélaire et son souverain (*b-'hwt 'lmqh w-Krb'l* (ou *Yd^sl*) *w-S'b'*), telle qu'on l'observe dans les inscriptions du royaume de Nashshān (as-Sawdā' 3, as-Sawdā' 5 et as-Sawdā' 89 A & B).

Jabal Riyām 2006-2 (fig. 5)

Description

Inscription de trois lignes gravée sur un bloc de pierre calcaire équarri remployé dans la maçonnerie de la mosquée d'Itwa. Le bloc a été inséré à l'envers dans la première assise du mur de la mosquée, côté cour. La partie gauche de l'inscription est couverte d'enduit.

Dimensions: L.: 63 cm; h.: 19 cm; h. moyenne des lettres: 5 cm.

Comme le texte précédent, celui-ci est à dater du VII^e siècle av. J.-C.

Transcription

- 1 *S'mhyd' bn Qyl^m d-Hs²d^m hqny [... 'm]=*
- 2 *(s²)fq bnt-hw b-'ttr w-b 'lmqh w-b T'(l)[b ...*
- 3 *b-](')hwt S'b' w-S'm'y w-wd' b-'dn T'(lb)...*

Traduction

- 1 Sumhūyada' fils de Qayl^{um}, celui de Hāshid^{um}, a consacré à [... 'Ammī=
- 2 shafaq sa fille. Avec 'Athtar, Almaqah et Ta'lab ...
- 3 Avec la fra]ternité de Saba' et de Sam'ī. Et il s'est acquitté avec l'autorité de Ta'lab...

Commentaire

L. 1, *S'mhyd'*: cet anthroponyme rare est par ailleurs attesté dans une inscription ḥāḍramawtique (MASH/79/O/5).

Qyl^m: nom d'homme également attesté dans le texte ḥāḍramawtique Ingrams 2.

d-Hs²d^m: Il s'agit de la plus ancienne attestation de cette tribu (voir également ci-dessous Jabal Riyām 2006-6, 11 et 15). Hāshid apparaît comme une composante de la confédération tribale de Sam'ī au VII^e siècle av. J.-C. Durant la deuxième moitié du I^{er} millénaire av. J.-C., à l'époque des rois de Saba', la confédération de Sam'ī était composée des tribus Yursam, Yuhaybab et Madhnaḥān (Gr 193 et CIH 37). À l'époque des rois de Saba' et de dhū-Raydān (I^{er}-III^e siècles ap. J.-C.), les principaux groupes tribaux de Sam'ī étaient Hāshid, Yursam et Ḥumlān. Enfin, durant la période ḥimyarite (IV^e-VI^e siècles ap. J.-C.), Hāshid formait avec Bakīl une vaste confédération tribale: dhū-Hamdān²¹.

Ll. 1-2, *hqny* [... 'm](s²)fq bnt-hw: on peut restituer le début du nom de personne à la fin de la première ligne soit en ['m](s²)fq, soit en ['b](s²)fq. Si la restitution de la première ligne s'avère exacte, le dédicant aurait consacré au dieu Ta'lab sa fille ['Ammī]shafaq, une pratique déjà observée à Ṣirwāḥ (inscription Ṣirwāḥ-04)²². Dans l'inscription Jabal Riyām 2006-11 (cf. *infra*), l'auteur consacre également au dieu Ta'lab une femme et sa fille dont il a fait l'acquisition. La consécration de personnes au service du temple et à la divinité était en usage en Arabie du Sud, particulièrement durant la période ancienne (VIII^e-VI^e siècles av. J.-C.)²³.

L. 2, *b-'ttr w-b 'lmqh w-b T'lb*: cette invocation divine est typiquement sabéenne, elle commence par le dieu sudarabique suprême, 'Athtar, suivi du dieu tutélaire de Saba', Almaqah, et se termine ici par le dieu de la tribu alliée avec Saba', Ta'lab, la divinité tutélaire de Sam'ī. On retrouve une autre variante de cette invocation dans l'inscription suivante Jabal Riyām 2006-3: «... w-b 'lmqh w-b T'lb w-b dt Ḥmym w-...». Le fait que le dieu Ta'lab soit rajouté à l'invocation divine sabéenne habituelle révèle les liens étroits qu'entretenait la tribu de Sam'ī avec la sphère sabéenne, dès le VII^e siècle av. J.-C.

L. 3, *b-'h]wt S'b' w-S'm'γ*: voir le commentaire de Jabal Riyām 2006-01.

w-wd' b-'dn T('lb): pour le sens de «s'acquitter d'une obligation», comparer à «*wd' b-'dn 'lmqh*» (Ja 557)²⁴.

Jabal Riyām 2006-3 (fig. 6)

Description

Inscription incomplète d'une seule ligne gravée sur la face latérale d'un bloc calcaire équarri. La pierre est remployée comme jambage droit d'une porte dans une maison du village de Riyām.

La graphie de l'inscription est comparable au style B3 de J. Pirenne, que l'on peut dater de la fin du VII^e siècle et du début du VI^e siècle av. J.-C.

Transcription

1 ...] w-b 'lmqh w-b T'lb w-b dt-Ḥmym w-[...

Traduction

1 ... et avec Almaqah, avec Ta'lab et avec dhāt-Ḥimyam et ...

²¹ Robin 1982; 1996.

²² Arbach 2005: 314-317.

²³ Voir à titre d'exemple les dédicaces de personnes au dieu Almaqah (CIH 379; GI 1128+1129); à 'Athtar (GI 1131+1132+1133; GI 1175+1130+1134); à dhāt-Ḥimyam (CIH 492 à 496; Fa 125); à Bashum et Waddum (CIH 545); à Matabnatyān (Haram 9, 11-14 et 20).

²⁴ Beeston et al. 1982: 156-157.

Jabal Riyām 2006-4 (fig. 7)

Description

L'inscription de quatre lignes est gravée sur une stèle en pierre calcaire remployée dans le dallage d'une cour de maison du village de Riyām. La stèle n'est conservée qu'en partie supérieure. Elle présente un panneau lisse sur lequel figure l'inscription, entouré d'un cadre lisse en relief. La partie supérieure de la stèle est ornée d'une frise de denticules surmontée d'un bandeau lui-même incisé de plusieurs cannelures horizontales.

Dimensions: l.: 42 cm; h.: 51 cm; h. moyenne des lettres: 6 cm.

La graphie est du style B1 de J. Pirenne.

Transcription

- 1 *Yhrd bn 'fyd hq=*
- 2 *ny T'(l)b w-rtd-hw*
- 3 *nfs'-hw w-wld-hw w-*
- 4 *qny-hw*

Traduction

- 1 Yahrad fils d'Afyad a
- 2 offert à Ta'lab et il Lui a confié
- 3 sa personne, sa progéniture et
- 4 ses biens.

Commentaire

L. 1, *Yhrd* : anthroponyme attesté pour la première fois en sudarabique.

'fyd: nom d'homme dont c'est également la première attestation.

Jabal Riyām 2006-5 (fig. 8)

Description

L'inscription de quatre lignes est gravée sur une stèle en pierre calcaire remployée dans le dallage d'une cour de maison du village de Riyām. La stèle est entièrement conservée mais la première ligne de l'inscription est partiellement érodée. La stèle présente un panneau lisse sur lequel figure l'inscription, entouré d'un cadre lisse en relief. La partie supérieure de la stèle est ornée d'une frise de denticules surmontée d'un bandeau lui-même incisé de plusieurs cannelures horizontales.

Dimensions: l.: 41 cm; h.: 76 cm; h. moyenne des lettres: 5,5 cm.

La graphie est du style B1 de J. Pirenne.

Transcription

- 1 *Mlkⁿ bn (..q)n (h)=*
- 2 *qny T'(l)b w-rtd-*
- 3 *hw n(fs')-hw w-wl=*
- 4 *d-hw (w)-qny-(hw)*

Traduction

- 1 Malikān fils de ..qn a
- 2 offert à Ta'lab et il Lui a confié
- 3 sa personne sa progéniture
- 4 et ses biens.

Commentaire

L.1, *Mlkⁿ*: nom d'homme bien connu dans l'onomastique sudarabique.
(..q)n: seule la lettre *n* est de lecture sûre. Les autres lettres sont érodées et difficile à restituer.

Jabal Riyām 2006-6 (fig. 9)

Description

L'inscription de deux lignes est gravée sur une stèle en pierre calcaire déposée dans la cour d'une maison du village de Riyām. La stèle est entièrement conservée. Sa base est simplement dégrossie et était destinée à être fichée dans le sol. La stèle présente un panneau rectangulaire lisse gravé d'une inscription en partie supérieure. Le panneau est entouré d'un cadre lisse en relief. La partie supérieure de la stèle est ornée d'une frise de denticules surmontée d'un bandeau lui-même incisé de plusieurs cannelures horizontales. La surface de la stèle est érodée en partie droite et au centre, sous l'inscription.

Dimensions: l.: 40 cm; h.: 113 cm; h. moyenne des lettres: 5,5 cm.

Graphie de style B1 de J. Pirenne.

Transcription

- 1 *Yhyt' bn Qyh^m d-*
- 2 *Hs²d^m hqny T'lb*

Traduction

- 1 Yuhaythi' fils de Qayh^{um} dhū-
- 2 Ḥāshid^{um} a offert à Ta'lab.

Commentaire

L.1, *Yhyt'*: comme le texte suivant, cet anthroponyme a la même forme que le nom sabéen *Yhyf'* (GI 1724/1); il est attesté en sabéen dans l'inscription Gr 227/1 et en qatabānite dans Pi Raḥāb 1/1 et Blaymire 3/2. L'auteur de cette inscription, Yuhaythi', pourrait être le père de Yafa'īl fils de Yuhaythi', l'auteur du texte Jabal Riyām 2006-7, comme le suggère la graphie similaire des deux textes.

Qyh^m: nom d'homme attesté en sabéen dans Jabal Riyām 2006-15 et CIH 311.

Ll. 1-2, *d-Hs²d^m*: voir le commentaire de Jabal Riyām 2006-2.

Jabal Riyām 2006-7 (fig. 10)

Description

L'inscription de deux lignes est gravée sur une stèle en pierre calcaire déposée dans la cour d'une maison du village de Riyām. La stèle est entièrement conservée. Sa base est simplement dégrossie et était destinée à être fichée dans le sol. La stèle présente un panneau rectangulaire lisse gravé d'une inscription en partie supérieure. Le panneau est entouré d'un cadre lisse en re-

lief. La partie supérieure de la stèle est ornée d'une frise de denticules surmontée d'un bandeau lui-même incisé de plusieurs cannelures horizontales.

Dimensions: l.: 43 cm; h.: 97 cm; h. moyenne des lettres: 7 cm.

Graphie de style B de J. Pirenne.

Transcription

- 1 Yf^ʿl bn Yhy=
- 2 ʾḥqny T^ʾlb

Traduction

- 1 Yafa ʾīl fils de Yuhay-
- 2 thi^ʿ a offert à Ta^ʾlab.

Commentaire

L. 1, Yf^ʿl: nom d'homme par ailleurs attesté dans Haram 11/1.

Ll. 1-2, Yhy^ʿ: voir le commentaire de Jabal Riyām 2006-6.

Jabal Riyām 2006-8 (fig. 11)

Description

L'inscription de cinq lignes est gravée sur une stèle en pierre calcaire déposée dans la cour d'une maison du village de Riyām. La stèle est uniquement conservée dans sa partie haute. Elle présente un panneau rectangulaire lisse gravé d'une inscription en partie supérieure. Le panneau est entouré d'un cadre lisse en relief. La partie supérieure de la stèle est ornée d'une frise de denticules surmontée d'un bandeau lui-même incisé de plusieurs cannelures horizontales.

Dimensions: l.: 49 cm; h.: 82 cm; h. moyenne des lettres: 7 cm.

Graphie du style B de J. Pirenne.

Transcription

- 1 Ygr bn M^ʿd^ʿT=
- 2 tr d-Yḥṣ ḥqny T=
- 3 ʾlb w-rḥd-hw nḥ=
- 4 s^ʿ-hw w-wld-hw w-q=
- 5 ny-hw

Traduction

- 1 Yagur fils de Ma^ʿad^ʿath-
- 2 tar dhū-Yaḥṣ a offert à Ta-
- 3 ʾlab et il Lui a confié sa
- 4 personne, sa progéniture et
- 5 ses biens.

Commentaire

L. 1, Ygr: cet anthroponyme apparaît en sabéen comme patronyme (DhM 404) et épithète dans l'expression ʾitr Ygr (Ja 618).

Ll. 1-2, *M'd'ttr*: première attestation de ce nom théophore. L'élément *M'd* est en revanche bien connu aussi bien dans l'onomastique sudarabique qu'en safaïtique ou lihyānite.

L. 2, *q-Yhṣ*: nom de lignage dont c'est la première attestation. En revanche, la forme *Yhṣn* est connue comme nom propre (ThUM 23).

Jabal Riyām 2006-9 (fig. 12)

Description

L'inscription de six lignes est gravée sur une stèle en pierre calcaire déposée dans la cour d'une maison du village de Riyām. La stèle semble complète malgré l'absence à la base de la partie simplement dégrossie destinée à être fichée dans le sol. Elle présente un panneau rectangulaire lisse gravé d'une inscription sur sa moitié supérieure. Le panneau est entouré d'un cadre lisse en relief. La partie supérieure de la stèle est ornée d'une frise de denticules surmontée d'un bandeau lui-même incisé de plusieurs cannelures horizontales. La surface et les bords de la stèle sont érodés rendant la lecture des ll. 4-5 difficile voire impossible.

Dimensions: l.: 44,5 cm; h.: 85 cm; h. moyenne des lettres: 5 cm.

Graphie du style B de J. Pirenne.

Transcription

- 1 *Ḥrⁿ bn Rt^ʿ hqny T^ʿ=*
- 2 *lb ywm f(d)y-hw s²m (ʿ)=*
- 3 *rd (ʿ)s^ʿy b-ts^ʿt^ʿ ʿlf^m*
- 4 *rb^m 9000 ...*
- 5 *s^ʿl-hw bn-(k) ... [ʿr]=*
- 6 *qⁿ k-fdy-hw T^ʿlb*

Traduction

- 1 Ḥirrān fils de Rata^ʿ a offert à Ta^ʿ=
- 2 lab au jour où il Lui a payé l'achat du
- 3 terrain qu'il a acquis de neuf mille
- 4 unités 9000 ...
- 5 qu'il Lui a demandé ... le
- 6 terrain, comme Ta^ʿlab l'a acquitté.

Commentaire

L. 1, *Ḥrⁿ*: ce nom d'homme, également attesté dans Jabal Riyām 2006-15, apparaît en sabéen comme anthroponyme (BR Yanbuq 2), nom de plantation (MAFRAY-ad-Dimn 1) et comme toponyme (CIH 407; CIH 608/2). Il apparaît également en minéen comme nom d'homme (RÉS 3376) et nom de clan (al-Jawf 04.34).

Rt^ʿ: nom d'homme déjà attesté en sabéen (CIH 270; CIH 851); il est aussi nom de lignage (CIH 270; RÉS 4940; MAFRAY-Hisāya 1; UAM 327). L'anthroponyme *Rt^ʿ* est également connu en qatabānite (MuB 601; Ry 461; Ja 2940g) et en minéen (M 392A/12; Ja 2288; B.05.D.O 11, etc.).

Ll. 3-4, *b-ts^ʿt^ʿ ʿlf^m rb^m*: le terme *rb^m* désigne une «mesure de capacité». La nature de cette unité est ici inconnue en raison de la lacune à la fin de la ligne 4. Dans l'inscription Haram 9, les 50 *rb^m* offerts à une divinité sont tirés du produit d'une récolte (*f^ʿ*); dans une inscription inédite de Barāqish,

1600 *rb^m* de produits agricoles (*fr^ʿ*) sont également évoqués. *Rb^m* semblerait donc désigner une unité de volume ou une unité de poids, s'appliquant le plus souvent à des produits agricoles.

Jabal Riyām 2006-10 (fig. 13)

Description

L'inscription de cinq lignes est gravée sur une stèle en pierre calcaire déposée dans la cour d'une maison du village de Riyām. La stèle est entièrement conservée. Sa base est dégrossie et était destinée à être fichée dans le sol. La stèle présente un panneau rectangulaire lisse gravé d'une inscription en partie supérieure. Le panneau est entouré d'un cadre lisse en relief. La partie supérieure de la stèle est ornée d'une frise de denticules surmontée d'un bandeau lui-même incisé de plusieurs cannelures horizontales. La stèle est bien conservée.

Dimensions: l.: 43 cm; h.: env. 110 cm; h. moyenne des lettres: 5,5 cm.

Graphie du style B de J. Pirenne.

Transcription

- 1 'ms²fq bn 'm=
- 2 tql hqny T²=
- 3 lb w-rtd-hw n=
- 4 fs¹-hw w-wld-h=
- 5 w w-qny-hw

Traduction

- 1 'Ammīshafaq fils de 'Ammī-
- 2 thaqal a offert à Ta'-
- 3 lab et il Lui a confié sa
- 4 personne, sa progéniture
- 5 et ses biens.

Commentaire

L. 1, 'ms²fq: nom d'homme bien attesté en sudarabique.

Ll. 1-2, 'm¹ql: nom d'homme dont c'est la première attestation.

Jabal Riyām 2006-11 (fig. 14)

Description

L'inscription d'au moins dix lignes est gravée sur une stèle en pierre calcaire déposée dans la cour d'une maison du village de Riyām. La stèle est partiellement préservée: la base manque et la partie conservée est brisée en deux. Une cassure en diagonale parcourt la stèle entre les lignes 4 et 7. La stèle présente un panneau rectangulaire lisse gravé sur toute la partie conservée. Le texte se poursuivait plus bas. Le panneau est entouré d'un cadre lisse en relief. La partie supérieure de la stèle est ornée d'une frise de denticules surmontée d'un bandeau lui-même incisé de plusieurs cannelures horizontales.

Dimensions: l.: 56 cm; h.: 84 cm; h. moyenne des lettres: 6 cm.

Graphie du style B de J. Pirenne.

Transcription

- 1 *Mns^{2m} bn Df^m hqny T =*
- 2 *'lb S²ht^m bnt Hmt' w-b=*
- 3 *nt-h dt fdy bn 'm 'myd=*
- 4 *'bn 'mns'm' bn 'rn w-(f)=*
- 5 *lṭ-hmy l-T'lb w-l-S'm'y*
- 6 *(h)rty S'm'y w-wld-hmy w-*
- 7 *(kr)b-hmy l-Ḥs²d^m w-l-S'mh=*
- 8 *yf' hrt Ḥs²d^m w-wld-h wr=*
- 9 *ḥm ḡ-'bhy ḡ-rs²wt ('b)...*
- 10 *...]rn s'm('m)... ...*

Traduction

- 1 Mansha^{um} fils de Dafr^{um} a consacré à Ta-
- 2 'lab Shakht^{um}, fille de Hamta' et sa
- 3 fille qu'il a payée à 'Ammiyada-
- 4 ' fils de Amansamī', de 'rn (?) et
- 5 leur concession pour Ta'lab et Sam'ī,
- 6 ainsi que les deux femmes libres de Sam'ī, leurs progénitures
- 7 et leur dû (?) pour Ḥāshid^{um}, et pour Sumhū-
- 8 yafa' la femme libre de Ḥāshid^{um} et sa progéniture. Au
- 9 mois d'Abhī, sous la prêtrise d'Abī...
- 10 ...rn témoins... ...

Commentaire philologique

L. 1, *Mns^{2m}*: nom d'homme dont c'est la première attestation. En revanche, le substantif *mns²*, de la racine NS², est bien connu en sabéen dans le sens de «opération militaire ; assemblée, rassemblement tribal» (RÉS 3945/1, 14).

Df^m: cet anthroponyme est attesté pour la première fois en sudarabique; on le retrouve en safaitique et en thamoudéen. La racine DFR est bien connue en sudarabique.

L. 2, *S²ht^m*: nom de femme dont c'est la première attestation.

Hmt': nom d'homme déjà attesté dans *CIH* 356/1.

L. 4, *'mns'm'*: l'élément *'mn* est bien connu dans l'onomastique sudarabique; quant à l'élément divin *S'm'*, il était vénéré dans le Jawf inférieur, à Jidfir ibn Munaykhir où un temple lui était consacré, et sur les Hautes-Terres dans la région de Rayda²⁵.

Ll. 4-5, *bn 'rn w-(f)lṭ-hmy*: on ne saurait dire ici avec exactitude si le terme *'rn* est un nom propre d'homme, de famille, un toponyme ou un substantif. Le contexte suggère un sens lié aux transactions dont l'inscription fait l'objet. Si on accepte la lecture d'une autre inscription provenant de Riyām, *CIH* 338/7: *w-yw[m] tqdm b-'rn dt Z(b)[yⁿ] w-ḥlqⁿ Yrt'* «au jour où il a dirigé à *'rn* celle du (sanctuaire) Zabyān et du champ de Yarta'», au lieu de *b'rⁿ* «puits», *'rn* serait un nom féminin désignant une partie ou un lieu dépendant du temple (?).

l-T'lb w-l S'm'y: la consécration d'achat de la femme et de sa fille, ainsi que leur règlement ont été réalisés pour Ta'lab, symbole de l'autorité divine suprême, et pour Sam'ī, symbole de

²⁵ Robin 1996.

l'autorité politique et administrative de la tribu de Sam'ī liée par le culte de Ta'lab. Voir également ci-dessous Jabal Riyām 2006-15. Comme Almaqah pour Saba', 'Amm pour Qatabān et Siyān pour le Ḥaḍramawt, Ta'lab était le symbole du royaume de Sam'ī.

L. 6, *(kr)b-hmy*: la lecture de ce mot est incertaine à cause de la cassure de la stèle. Le substantif *krb* est bien attesté en sudarabique dans le sens d'«obligation; offrande».

L. 7, *l-Ḥs²dᵐ*: il est à noter que Hāshid est mis ici sur le même plan que Sam'ī. Dans ce cas, dhū-Hāshid, par ailleurs mentionné dans les inscriptions Jabal Riyām 2006-2, 6 et 15, serait le nom d'une tribu qui, fédérée à celle de Sam'ī, constituait le noyau du royaume de Sam'ī. Une telle construction politique s'observe un siècle plus tard dans le royaume de Ma'īn, où les deux tribus de Ma'īn et dhū-Yathill forment le cœur du royaume, et où seule l'une d'entre elles donne son nom au royaume.

L. 8, *wld-h*: le pronom suffixe du féminin singulier revoie à *hrt Ḥs²dᵐ* «la femme libre de Hāshid».

L. 9, *d-²bhy d-rs²wt*: l'acte notifiant les transactions dont l'inscription fait l'objet est daté du mois d'Abhī, correspondant au mois de juillet, sous la prêtrise de *S'm*... Le mois sabéen Abhī était le mois de pèlerinage au dieu Almaqah dans son temple Awām de Ma'rib.

L. 10, *s'm(ᵐ)*...: des lettres *'ayn* et *mīm*, il ne reste que des vestiges. La restitution se fonde sur le contexte (cf. Jabal Riyām 2006-15/9, 11).

Commentaire général

Cette inscription est un document juridique notifiant la consécration et l'achat d'une femme et sa fille que l'auteur a payées à 'Ammīyada' fils de Amansamī'. On ne saurait dire s'il s'agit ici du versement d'une dote pour avoir la femme et sa fille ou s'il s'agit de l'achat d'esclaves, comme on en trouve un exemple dans Sirwāh-04, où l'auteur « a vendu et consacré sa fille, née de son esclave qu'il a achetée »²⁶. L'inscription rapporte également l'acquisition des deux femmes libres de Sam'ī ainsi qu'une autre femme libre de Hāshid pour le compte de Sumhūyafa'.

Jabal Riyām 2006-12 (fig. 15)

Description

Inscription fragmentaire dont seules les trois dernières lignes sont préservées et qui en comptait vraisemblablement cinq à l'origine. Elle est gravée sur une stèle en pierre calcaire déposée dans la cour d'une maison du village de Riyām. La stèle n'est préservée qu'en partie inférieure. Le panneau lisse sur lequel le texte est gravé est bordé à droite et à gauche d'un bandeau lisse en relief. Il est vraisemblable que, tout comme les autres stèles, la partie supérieure de la stèle était à l'origine ornée d'une frise de denticules surmontée d'un bandeau incisé de cannelures horizontales.

Dimensions: l.: 40 cm; h.: 34 cm; h. moyenne des lettres: 5 cm.

Graphie du style B de J. Pirenne.

Transcription

1
2 [hq]=

²⁶ Arbach 2005: 314-317.

- 3 *ny T'lb w-rtd-hw*
- 4 *nfs'-hw w-wld-hw w-*
- 5 *qny-hw*

Traduction

- 1
- 2 [a]
- 3 offert à Ta'lab et il Lui a confié
- 4 sa personne, sa progéniture et
- 5 ses biens.

Jabal Riyām 2006-13 (fig. 16)

Description

Inscription fragmentaire dont seules les trois premières lignes sont partiellement préservées. Elle est gravée sur une stèle en pierre calcaire déposée dans la cour d'une maison du village de Riyām. La stèle n'est préservée qu'en partie supérieure droite. Le panneau lisse sur lequel le texte est gravé est bordé à droite et au-dessus d'un bandeau lisse en relief. Les nombreuses cassures et l'érosion rendent la lecture de l'inscription difficile voire ponctuellement impossible.

Dimensions: l.: 49 cm; h.: 28 cm; h. moyenne des lettres: 5 cm.

Graphie du style B de J. Pirenne.

Transcription

- 1 *Lḥy'ṯt bn 'bd^(m)[ḥqny]*
- 2 *T'lb ywm ṣdq bn '(b)'l*
- 3 *(y)q'b(.) ḏt- '=*
- 4

Traduction

- 1 Luḥay'athat fils de 'Abd^{um} [... a offert à]
- 2 Ta'lab, au jour où il s'est acquitté des possessions
- 3 (y)q'b(.) ḏt
- 4

Commentaire

L. 3, (y)q'b(.): on voit sur la photo la trace d'une lettre, difficile à déchiffrer, entre la lettre *b* et la barre de séparation. Si notre lecture de la fin de la deuxième ligne s'avère exacte, (y)q'b(.) serait un nom propre désignant soit le propriétaire soit le nom de concessions dont l'auteur s'est acquitté (?).

Jabal Riyām 2006-14 (fig. 17)

Description

Fragment de dalle calcaire brisée sur ses quatre côtés, à l'origine mise en forme et aplanié sur sa face antérieure. Celle-ci est gravée d'une inscription dont 10 lignes subsistent ici. L'érosion de surface en rend la lecture difficile.

Dimensions: l.: 43 cm; h.: 45 cm; h. moyenne des lettres: 4,5 cm.

Graphie du style B3 de J. Pirenne, que l'on peut dater de la fin du VII^e-début du VI^e siècle av. J.-C.

Transcription

- 1 ...] T^olb [...
- 2 ...](wl)d-h d-wldt w-d-tld(n)[...
- 3 ...]w w-(.) (h)rr ' (h)rr S'm'y[...
- 4 ...](^o)b'ns¹ [...]h^otm[...
- 5 ... 'ms²]f^oq (w-d)[...] (t)tm [...]hy[...
- 6 ...]'r^od^m (.)m(f)(.)^m y[...
- 7 ...] w-d-'s²(r)[...]n qny b(n) [...
- 8 ...]'[...
- 9 ...
- 10 ...

Traduction

- 1 ... Ta^olab ...
- 2 ... son fils qu'elle a engendré et celui qu'elle engendra ...
- 3 ... et ... les hommes libres de Sam^oī ...
- 4 ... (A)bī^oanas ... a cultivé ...
- 5 ... ('Ammī)shafaq
- 6 ... un territoire ...
- 7 ... et la dîme de ce qu'il possède ...

Commentaire

La difficulté de lecture et les lacunes compliquent toute tentative de traduction.

Jabal Riyām 2006-15 (fig. 18)

Description

L'inscription de douze lignes est gravée sur une stèle en pierre calcaire déposée dans la cour d'une maison du village de Riyām. La stèle est entièrement conservée à l'exception de l'angle inférieur droit, brisé. Sa base est grossièrement aplanie et correspond à la partie fichée dans le sol. La stèle présente un panneau rectangulaire lisse gravé d'une inscription sur la quasi-totalité de la hauteur. Le panneau est entouré d'un cadre lisse en relief et, au sommet, d'une frise de denticules.

Deux caractéristiques la distinguent des autres stèles: l'absence de cannelures horizontales au sommet; l'usage du boustrophédon pour rédiger le texte.

Dimensions: l.: 72 cm; h.: 100 cm; h. moyenne des lettres: 5 cm.

Graphie du style B2-3 de J. Pirenne, datée vers la fin du VII^e-début du VI^e siècle av. J.-C.

Transcription

- 1 Ṣyḥⁿ bn Dhb^m hqny T^olb m=
- 2 s³ndⁿ ywm t^ody bn 'm 'lkrb
- 3 bn Hrⁿ w-bn 'm S²bmhmw bn B=

- 4 ws²'m w-yftw 'lkrb w-S²bmhm=
 5 w l-T'lb w-l-S'm'y b-s²lt m^m r=
 6 b^m 300 w-sdq Šyhⁿ fdy-hw l-'l=
 7 krb w-l-S²bmhmw w-kwnt dt ft=
 8 tⁿ ywm wq' Krb'l 'd 'rⁿ 'lw
 9 w-kwn s'm' ftt 'lkrb Qyh^m b=
 10 n Tb'krb w-M'ds'm' bn Hqrr d-
 11 Hs²d^m w-s'm' ftt S²bmhmw Dr=
 12 'n bn 'lkrb w-'l'z bn Hmdⁿ

Traduction

- 1 Šayhān fils Dhahb^{um} a offert à Ta'lab cette
 2 inscription au jour où il a payé à Ilīkarib
 3 fils de Ḥirrān et à Shibāmhumū fils de Ba-
 4 wash'amm. Ilīkarib et Shibāmhumū concèdent
 5 pour Ta'lab et Sam'ī trois cents
 6 unités — 300 — et Šayhān a confirmé son acquittement pour Ilī-
 7 karib et Shibāmhumū et cette concession eut lieu
 8 au jour où Karib'il s'est acquitté sur le mont Alāw.
 9 Témoins de la concession d'Ilīkarib : Qayḥum fils
 10 de Tubba'karib et Ma'dīsami' fils de Ḥaḍrar dhū-
 11 Ḥāshid^{um}. Témoins de la concession de Shibāmhumū : Dhar-
 12 'ān fils d'Ilīkarib et Ilī'azz fils de Hamdān.

Commentaire philologique

L. 1, Šyhⁿ: nom d'homme qui apparaît également à la ligne 6; il est déjà attesté en sabéen comme nom ethnique dans CIH 605bis/3.

Dhb^m: nom d'homme déjà connu en hadramawtique (RF-Alīm 1); en sabéen, il est attesté comme nom de temple de la divinité dhāt-Ba'dān (RÉS 3943/4) et toponyme (CIH 660+587/4).

L. 2, 'lkrb: nom d'homme bien attesté en sudarabique; il apparaît également aux lignes 6-7, 9 et 12.

fdy: première attestation de la 5^{ème} forme (tf'l) du verbe fdy, conjugué à la 3^{ème} personne masculin singulier. Le verbe fdy est attesté dans le sens de «verser de l'argent; s'acquitter d'une dette; acquérir une terre en l'achetant à qq». L'auteur semble avoir réalisé deux transactions: avec Ilīkarib fils de Ḥirrān et avec Shibāmhumū fils de Bawash'amm.

L. 3, Hrⁿ: nom d'homme; voir Jabal Riyām 2006-9.

S²bmhmw: nom d'homme; il apparaît également aux lignes 4, 7 et 11. Cet anthroponyme est connu comme nom de lignage dans Oost. Inst. 14.

Ll. 3-4, Bws²'m: anthroponyme déjà attesté dans une inscription qatabānite (Ja 2501).

L. 5, l-T'lb w-s'm'y: comme dans Jabal Riyām 11/5, l'auteur du texte évoque les autorités suprêmes, à savoir Ta'lab et Sam'ī, la divinité tutélaire et le royaume, pour lesquels les transactions ont été effectuées.

L. 5-6, s²lt m^m rb^m: «300 unités». Voir ci-dessus Jabal Riyām 2006-9/4.

L. 8, ywm wq' Krb'l 'd 'rⁿ 'lw: «le jour où Karib'il s'est acquitté sur le mont Alāw». On ne saurait établir avec exactitude l'identification de ce Karib'il. Il s'agit vraisemblablement

d'un souverain de Saba' régnant vers les VII^e-VI^e siècles av. J.-C., qui se rend en pèlerinage sur le mont Alāw. Parmi les souverains sabéens ayant régné vers le VI^e siècle av. J.-C. figure Karib'īl Watār fils de Yatha'amar, roi de Saba' (RÉS 3951). L'identification de Karib'īl, mentionné ici, avec ce souverain sabéen n'est pas exclue. Plusieurs inscriptions sabéennes mentionnent un sanctuaire d'Almaqah nommé Awām sur le mont Alāw, l'actuel Jabal Lāw, non loin de Shibām-Kawkabān, au nord-ouest de Ṣan'ā', dans la seconde moitié du I^{er} millénaire av. J.-C. (CIH 74/4, CIH 80/10, CIH 126/3, 6) et au début de l'ère chrétienne (CIAS 39.11/o 3 n° 6)²⁷. Si cette identification s'avère exacte, les auteurs du texte se seraient référés à un événement important auquel assista le souverain sabéen.

Ll. 9-10, *w-kwn s'm' fltt 'lkrb Qyh^m bn Tb'krb w-M'ds'm' bn Hqrr*: l'acte de concession de la première transaction que l'auteur du texte a effectué fut notifié en présence des deux témoins: Qayḥum fils de Tubba'karib et Ma'dīsami' fils de Haḍrar.

Qyh^m: cet anthroponyme est également attesté dans Jabal Riyām 2006-6.

L. 10, *Tb'krb*: nom d'homme bien attesté en sudarabique.

M'ds'm': nom d'homme déjà attesté dans une inscription provenant de Riyām (Gr 217).

Hqrr: nom d'homme dont c'est la première attestation.

Ll. 10-11, *d-Ḥs^dm'*: voir le commentaire de Jabal Riyām 2006-2.

Ll. 11-12, *Dr^m*: cet anthroponyme est bien connu en qatabānite; en sabéen, il était jusqu'à présent attesté comme toponyme (RÉS 3911/3).

L. 12, *Hmdⁿ*: nom d'homme, comme dans CIH 2/14, CIH 312, CIH 315/5, etc. Il se distingue de *Hmdⁿ* (dhū-Hamdān, banī Hamdān) qui formait, à l'époque ḥimyarite (IV^e-VI^e siècles ap. J.-C.) une vaste confédération constituée des tribus Ḥāshid et Bakīl (CIH 448/8, CIH 541/85, Ja 547/3, etc.).

Commentaire générale

Cette inscription, comme Jabal Riyām 2006-11, est un acte de concession dont l'auteur du texte s'est acquitté avec l'approbation de Ta'lab, le dieu tutélaire de Sam'ī, et avec l'aval de la tribu/royaume de Sam'ī. L'acte d'acquisition a été notifié en présence des deux témoins masculins pour chaque vente, une situation par ailleurs observée à Yathill (Y.90.DA 1 et 2)²⁸. Comme nous l'avons déjà remarqué²⁹, la règle générale pour valider un acte de transaction – achat/vente, concession de terrain, etc. – dans l'Arabie du Sud préislamique veut que deux témoins hommes soient présents. Cette tradition juridique s'est perpétuée dans le monde arabo-musulman.

Jabal Riyām 2006-16 (fig. 19)

Description

L'inscription d'une ligne et demie est gravée sur une dalle calcaire employée dans le pavage d'une cour de maison du village de Riyām. La dalle est grossièrement aplanie et l'inscription gravée de manière peu régulière. Aucun décor n'est visible.

Dimensions: l.: 59 cm; h.: env. 50 cm; h. moyenne des lettres: 5,5 cm.

Graphie irrégulière rappelant le style B de J. Pirenne.

²⁷ Robin 1982: 50.

²⁸ Gnoli, Robin 1992.

²⁹ Arbach 2005.

Transcription

- 1 Ḡẓw^m w-‘lhmw w-’bkr[b]
- 2 L(b)ⁿ

Traduction

- 1 Ghazw^{um} et ‘Alhumū et Abīkari[b]
- 2 La(b)u’ān

Commentaire

L. 1, Ḡẓw^m: cet anthroponyme est déjà attesté en sabéen comme nom de femme (CIH 715). ‘lhmw: nom d’homme bien connu en sabéen (CIH 549/1, CIH 379) et en hadramawtique (RÉS 4275; SOYCE 2568).

’bkr[b]: il est tentant de lire ’bkr «les premiers-nés» mais le contexte ne s’y prête pas. Il est donc vraisemblable que le graveur ait oublié la lettre «b», à moins que l’inscription soit incomplète à gauche. L’anthroponyme ’bkrb est bien connu dans l’onomastique sudarabique.

L. 2, L(b)ⁿ: la lecture de la lettre «b» n’est pas sûre; elle peut également être lue «s’». Le nom de Lbⁿ a été porté par un souverain de Nashshān.

Discussion

Le sanctuaire de Ta’lab sur le Jabal Riyām

En tant que divinité tutélaire du royaume puis de la fédération de tribu de Sam’ī, Ta’lab était vénéré dans un grand nombre de sanctuaires³⁰. Le principal d’entre eux, par le nombre d’inscriptions qui l’évoque, était celui localisé au sommet du Jabal Riyām. Il nous importe ici de voir la manière par laquelle le sanctuaire dont nous avons décrit les vestiges précédemment fut nommé dans les inscriptions.

Parmi les 16 inscriptions publiées ici, 11 sont des stèles présentant toutes la même forme et le même décor. Cette homogénéité semble confirmer l’hypothèse d’une même provenance, telle que le rapportent les habitants du village: le temple pillé en bordure du village. Dans tous ces textes des VII^e-VI^e siècles av. J.-C., le sanctuaire est consacré à la divinité Ta’lab. La divinité ne porte ni épithète, ni qualificatif. Aucun nom de sanctuaire n’est précisé.

Si l’on considère toutes les inscriptions du Jabal Riyām et de ses environs immédiats, la remarque précédente vaut jusqu’à la fin du I^{er} millénaire av. J.-C.³¹.

À partir du tournant de l’ère chrétienne et de manière systématique jusqu’au III^e siècle, le dieu Ta’lab est, dans son sanctuaire du Jabal Riyām, tantôt qualifié de «maître de Tur’at» (b’l Tr’r)³², tantôt de «maître de Raḥbān» (b’l Rḥb)³³. On pourrait faire l’hypothèse de deux sanctuaires distincts. Elle est peu probable. D’après les trois inscriptions qui mentionnent ensemble Tur’at et Raḥbān, il semble plutôt qu’il faille voir dans Tur’at le nom de la montagne

³⁰ Pour les lieux de culte de Ta’lab, voir Robin 1982: 62.

³¹ Pour les VII^e-VI^e siècles av. J.-C., aucun épithète ou nom de temple n’est associé à Ta’lab dans les inscriptions Gr 221, Gr 234, Gr 239, CIH 309; pour les V^e-III^e siècles dans les inscriptions CIH 318 et Gr 218.

³² Inscriptions A-20-888; CIH 2; CIH 184; CIH 284; CIH 306; CIH 308; CIH 312; CIH 315; CIH 333; CIH 334; CIH 335; CIH 338; CIH 340; Gr 180; Gr 183; Gr 188; Gr 194; Gr 211.

³³ Inscriptions CIH 338; CIH 350; CIH 351; Gl 1219; Gl 1229; Gr 204; Gr 236.

sur laquelle est établi le sanctuaire de Ta'lab et dans Raḥbān, le nom du sanctuaire lui-même car lorsque précision est faite, Raḥbān est décrit comme un édifice (*mḥrm* ou *ṣrḥⁿ*) et Tur'at comme un toponyme précédé de *b-*:

- CIH 338 mentionne successivement «Ta'lab maître de Tur'at» (l. 1 – *T'lb b'l Tr't*), «la construction du sanctuaire Raḥbān» (l. 3 – *w-mhy' ṣrḥⁿ Rḥbⁿ*) puis «Ta'lab à Tur'at» (l. 4 – *T'lb b-Tr't*);

- Gr 204/1-3 mentionne Ta'lab Riyām à Tur'at puis Ta'lab Riyām maître de Raḥbān (... *T'lb Ry]m^m b-Tr't hqnyt T'lb Rym^m b'l R[h]bⁿ...*);

- CIH 351 mentionne enfin Ta'lab Riyām dans son temple de Raḥbān ((*T*)'lb Rym^m 'dy [mḥ]⁽³⁾(*r*)mⁿ ḡ-Rḥbⁿ).

Tur'at est par ailleurs explicitement qualifié de montagne (*'rⁿ*) dans l'inscription Gr 200/2.

Si plusieurs inscriptions dédiées à Ta'lab dans son sanctuaire du Jabal Riyām peuvent, par leur graphie, dater des II^e-III^e siècles de l'ère chrétienne, seules trois d'entre elles sont clairement datées du III^e siècle et plus précisément du début de ce siècle, sous le règne de 'Alhān Nahfān roi de Saba' (CIH 308, CIH 312 & CIH 350). Ce nombre d'inscriptions est donc particulièrement peu élevé comparé à celui des deux siècles précédents. Or cette période correspond à l'arrivée successive sur le trône de Saba' de trois *qayls* de la tribu de Sam'ī (tiers de Ḥashid^{um}): Yarim Aymān, 'Alhān Nahfān puis Sha'r Awtar. On peut formuler l'hypothèse que la diminution sensible du nombre de dédicaces à Ta'lab au cours du III^e siècle a pu être la conséquence d'une désaffection du culte de Ta'lab de la part de ces anciens *qayls* de Sam'ī devenus roi de Saba', et dans leur sillage d'une partie de leur tribu d'origine, privilégiant alors le culte d'Almaqah, divinité tutélaire de Saba'.

Nous observons également que toutes les personnes originaires des tribus de Sam'ī qui faisaient une dédicace à Almaqah dans son temple de Ma'rib mentionnent leur divinité tutélaire Ta'lab jusqu'à la fin du II^e siècle. À partir du III^e siècle, elles cessent de le faire.

Le royaume de Sam'ī (VII^e-IV^e siècles av. J.-C.)

Au début du VII^e siècle av. J.-C., l'Arabie du Sud apparaît morcelée entre de nombreux petits royaumes (fig. 20), ce dont témoignent les deux inscriptions sabéennes DAI-Ṣirwāḥ 2005-50 et RÉŠ 3945³⁴. Les nouvelles inscriptions Jabal Riyām 2006-1 et 2 montrent que le royaume de Sam'ī faisait dès cette époque partie de cette constellation. Il voisinait alors celui de Ma'dhin (YM 8872)³⁵, au sud, et de Saba', au nord-est et à l'est. Avant la découverte de ces textes, rien ne permettait de faire remonter l'existence de ce royaume avant les IV^e-III^e siècles av. J.-C., date à laquelle Sam'ī est mentionné comme royaume indépendant centré sur la ville de Ḥadaqān (CIH 37)³⁶.

Ce royaume apparaît à la fois indépendant et étroitement lié à celui de Saba'. Les liens étroits entretenus avec Saba' transparaissent à différents niveaux:

- 1) Usage de la langue sabéenne dans les inscriptions;
- 2) Mention d'une «fraternité de Saba' et de Sam'ī» (Jabal Riyām 2006-1 & 2);

3) Association des divinités sabéennes Almaqah et dhāt-Ḥimyam à la divinité de Sam'ī, Ta'lab, dans les invocations d'inscriptions (Jabal Riyām 2006-3 et vers les V^e-III^e siècles av. J.-C.: Gr 116, Gr 130), ou à la seule divinité sabéenne Almaqah (Jabal Riyām 2006-2, Gr 226, Gr 233);

³⁴ Robin 1996; Nebes 2007: 25-33.

³⁵ Bāfaqīh 1988: 20-29; Robin 2003.

³⁶ Sur la ville antique de Ḥadaqān: Schiettecatte 2011: 254-258 et références citées.

4) Mention du mois sabéen d'Abhī (*d-'bhy*) dans les inscriptions Jabal Riyām 2006-11 et possible utilisation du calendrier sabéen à cette haute époque³⁷;

5) Mention vers le VI^e siècle av. J.-C. du pèlerinage du roi sabéen Karib'īl dans le temple d'Almaqah sur le Jabal Law en tant que référence chronologique datant l'inscription Jabal Riyām 2006-15;

6) Mention vraisemblable de *mukarribs* sabéens dans l'invocation finale du texte Gr 146, provenant de Ḥadaqān et daté du début du VII^e siècle av. J.-C. (*b-Krb'l w-b Dmrkr[b]*), ainsi que dans le texte Gr 226, provenant d'Itwa et daté du VI^e siècle av. J.-C. (*b-Yl'mr w-Y[d'']*);

7) Des habitants de la ville de Ḥadaqān, capitale vraisemblable du royaume de Sam'ī³⁸, se joignent à ceux de la capitale sabéenne Ma'rib dans l'entreprise de fondation de colonies sudarabiques en Éthiopie, sur le site de Matara pour les premiers (RIÉth 55 & 56), de Melazo et Yeha pour les seconds (RIÉth 26, 27, 30 & 39).

Les marques de l'indépendance du royaume de Sam'ī sont:

1) Des dirigeants qui portent le titre de roi (*mlk*) (Jabal Riyām 2006-1 et, trois siècles plus tard, CIH 37).

2) Un panthéon tribal qui lui est propre, dominé par la divinité Ta'lab, à qui sont adressées toutes les dédicaces publiées ici. Cette divinité demeure la divinité majeure des tribus fédérées de Sam'ī jusqu'au III^e siècle de l'ère chrétienne.

3) Un système d'éponyme qui lui est propre, fondé sur l'exercice d'une prêtrise (Jabal Riyām 2006-11).

L'indépendance du royaume de Sam'ī dura au moins du VII^e au IV^e siècles av. J.-C. Au cours de ces quatre siècles, les règnes qui peuvent être restitués sont:

VII^e s. av. J.-C.: **Sumhūwaḍa'** (?): apparaît dans la formule de fraternité «... avec Sumhūwaḍa' et avec la fraternité de Saba' et Sam'ī» (*[b]-S'mhwḍ' w-b 'hwt S'b' w-S'm'y*) (Jabal Riyām 2006-1/2).

VII^e s. av. J.-C.: [**Sumhū**]samī' [fils] de Ya(f)^{um} roi de Sam'ī (Jabal Riyām 2006-1/1).

V^e-IV^e s. av. J.-C.: **Sumhū'afaq** fils de Sumhūyafa' roi de Sam'ī; ce souverain est mentionné dans l'inscription CIH 37/3, datée vers le V^e-IV^e s. av. J.-C., comme aïeul de l'auteur du texte, lui-même roi de Sam'ī.

V^e-IV^e s. av. J.-C.: **Ilī'azz** (?): l'invocation finale de l'inscription Gr 116 (v. V^e-III^e s. av. J.-C.) comporte la mention «par 'Athtar et Almaqah et dhāt-Ḥimyam et Ta'lab et Ilī'azz leur seigneur» (*b-'ttr w-'lmqh⁽⁹⁾ w-dt-Ḥmym w-T'lb w-'l'z mr'-h⁽¹⁰⁾my*). Nous faisons l'hypothèse qu'Ilī'azz pourrait être un roi de Sam'ī.

IV^e s. av. J.-C.: **Yah'an Dhubiyān** fils de Yasma'īl fils de Sumhūkarib roi de Sam'ī (CIH 37/1).

On pourrait s'étonner de l'absence de mention de Sam'ī dans l'inscription RÉS 3945, qui rapporte les hauts faits de Karib'īl Watār *mukarrib* de Saba' au VII^e siècle av. J.-C., et mentionne la plupart des royaumes sudarabiques contemporains. Ceci ne signifie pas l'inexistence du royaume de Sam'ī pour autant. Rappelons que le royaume de Ma'īn n'apparaît pas non plus dans ce long texte alors qu'il existait dès cette époque³⁹.

Si l'origine du royaume de Sam'ī ne peut être déterminée, il est possible en revanche qu'il ait perdu son indépendance vers le IV^e siècle av. J.-C.

³⁷ Il semble toutefois qu'au début de l'ère chrétienne, les tribus de Sam'ī faisaient usage d'un autre calendrier qui leur était propre: Robin 1981: 49 et 52.

³⁸ Schiettecatte 2011: 254-258.

³⁹ Arbach 2011: 201-214.

En effet, un certain Sumhū'afak fils de Yuha'an *qayl* de Sam'ī est mentionné dans l'inscription RÉS 4624/6, vers le IV^e-III^e siècle av. J.-C. En admettant qu'il s'agisse du fils de Yah'an Dhubyān roi de Sam'ī (CIH 37)⁴⁰, nous pouvons faire l'hypothèse d'un abandon du titre de roi (*mlk*) au profit de celui de *qayl* et d'une vassalisation plus forte vis-à-vis du pouvoir sabéen. Dans cette même inscription, l'auteur mobilise ses hommes pour partir en campagne militaire aux côtés du souverain sabéen Karib'il (vraisemblablement Karib'il Watār roi de Saba' mentionné dans CIH 37). Deux autres inscriptions provenant du territoire de Sam'ī, datant des environs des IV^e-III^e siècles av. J.-C. (Gr 125 et Gr 218), confortent cette hypothèse. Les auteurs du premier texte se définissent comme «sujets de Yatha'amar [Watār]» ; celui du second texte participe aux côtés du même souverain sabéen, Yatha'amar Watār, à une campagne militaire «contre l'armée de Ya[da'ab], dans Wanāb, la ville de Qatabān». Cette campagne militaire menée par Saba' contre Qatabān serait à mettre en relation avec celle évoquée dans une inscription qatabānite (MuB 673), datée du règne de Yada'ab Dhubyān Yuhan'im fils de Shahr Ghaylān mukarrib de Qatabān, datée vers le IV^e siècle av. J.-C.⁴¹

Autre signe de cette vassalisation, l'inscription RÉS 4176 mentionne l'obligation pour les gens de Sam'ī d'effectuer le pèlerinage annuel d'Almaqah à Ma'rib. L'inscription daterait du III^e siècle av. J.-C.⁴²

Le titre de *qayl* n'est pas nouveau dans la région de Sam'ī. CIH 37/5-6 mentionne par exemple 'Ammīshafaq fils de Sarw^{um} *qayl* de Yursam ainsi que les *qayls* de Yuhaybab, oncles du roi, Yursam et Yuhaybab étant deux des tribus du royaume de Sam'ī. Deux siècles auparavant, CIH 309 mentionnait une personne qui avait la charge de la tribu Yursam (*qdm s²'b-hw Yr⁵'s'm*) et qui, s'il ne se définit pas explicitement comme tel, s'apparente fortement à un *qayl*.

La nouveauté réside toutefois dans le fait que désormais, ce n'est plus le dirigeant d'une des tribus de Sam'ī qui porte le titre de *qayl* mais celui de toute la fédération des tribus de Sam'ī. C'est également à cette même période que l'on voit apparaître des *qayls* dans le royaume de Qatabān, sur les Hautes-Terres méridionales⁴³. Le titre semble se généraliser à l'ensemble de la région des hauts-plateaux.

À partir du tournant de l'ère chrétienne, la fédération de tribu de Sam'ī fut divisée en trois entités, chacune dirigée par un *qayl*:

- les *qayls* de la tribu de Sam'ī tiers de Ḥumlān, issus du lignage de Bata' ;
- les *qayls* de la tribu de Sam'ī tiers de Ḥāshid^{um}, issus du lignage de Hamdān ;
- les *qayls* de la tribu de Sam'ī tiers de Hagar^{um}, issus du lignage de Sukhaym^{um}.

La publication à venir de dix textes inédits de la fin du I^{er} millénaire av. J.-C. et du début de l'ère chrétienne nous offrira l'occasion d'y revenir plus en détail.

⁴⁰ von Wissmann 1964: 277.

⁴¹ Pour la chronologie des souverains de Qatabān, voir Arbach 2006: 115-134.

⁴² Robin 1996: col. 1158.

⁴³ Voir tout récemment Robin 2006: 283-285; Gajda *et al.* 2009: 168-170.

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Fig. 1. Image satellite du Jabal Riyām et localisation des principaux vestiges
(© 2012 DigitalGlobe © 2012 Google)



Fig. 2. Vue des ruines pillées du temple de Ta'lab Riyām sur le Jabal Riyām (cliché J. Schiettecatte)



Fig. 3. Éléments de décor architectural issus du pillage du temple de Ta'lab Riyām sur le Jabal Riyām (cliché J. Schiettecatte)

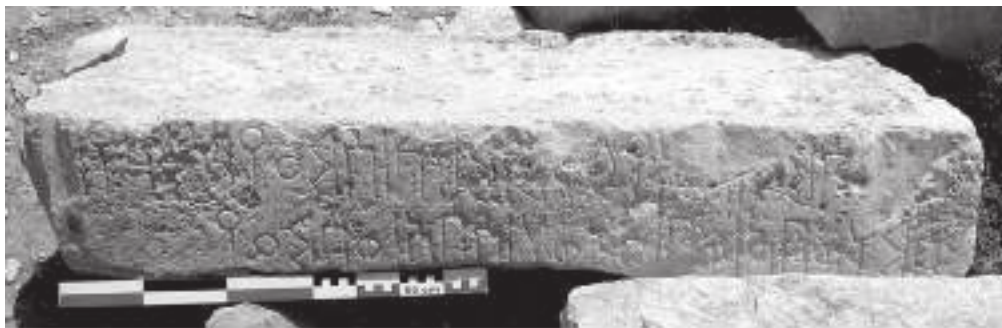


Fig. 4. Inscription Jabal Riyām 2006-1 (cliché J. Schiettecatte)



Fig. 5. Inscription Jabal Riyām 2006-2 (cliché J. Schiettecatte)

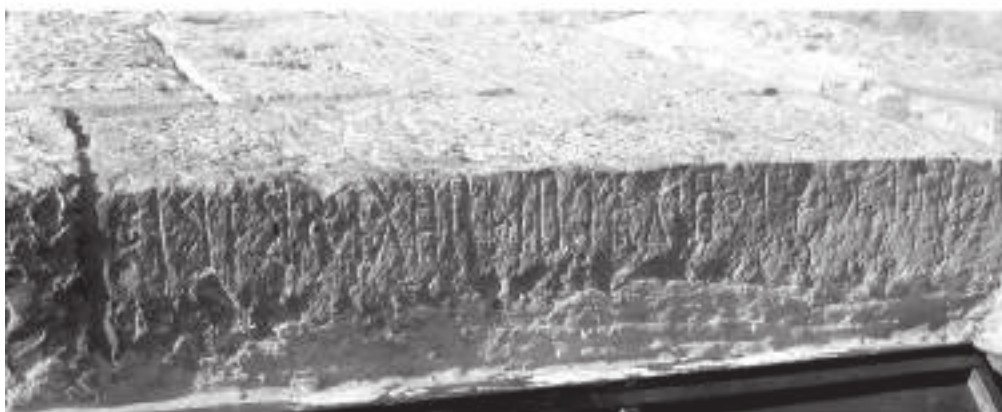


Fig. 6. Inscription Jabal Riyām 2006-3 (cliché J. Schiettecatte)



Fig. 7. Inscription Jabal Riyām 2006-4 (cliché J. Schiettecatte)



Fig. 8. Inscription Jabal Riyām 2006-5 (cliché J. Schiettecatte)



Fig. 9. *Inscription Jabal Riyām 2006-6*
(cliché J. Schiettecatte)



Fig. 10. *Inscription Jabal Riyām 2006-7* (cliché J.
Schiettecatte)



Fig. 11. Inscription Jabal Riyām 2006-8 (cliché J. Schiettecatte)



Fig. 12. Inscription Jabal Riyām 2006-9 (cliché J. Schiettecatte)



Fig. 13. Inscription Jabal Riyām 2006-10 (cliché J. Schiettecatte)



Fig. 14. Inscription Jabal Riyām 2006-11 (cliché J. Schiettecatte)



Fig. 15. Inscription Jabal Riyām 2006-12 (cliché J. Schiettecatte)

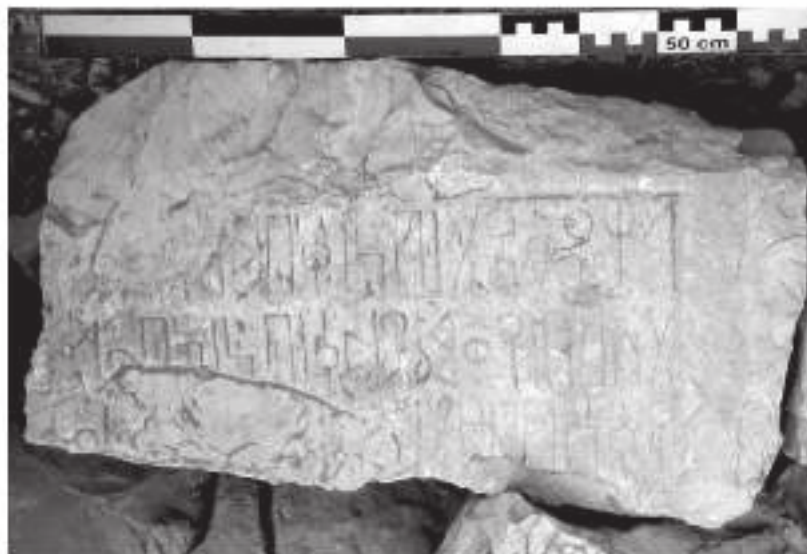


Fig. 16. Inscription Jabal Riyām 2006-13 (cliché J. Schiettecatte)



Fig. 17. Inscription Jabal Riyām 2006-14 (cliché J. Schiettecatte)



Fig. 18. Inscription Jabal Riyām 2006-15 (cliché J. Schiettecatte)

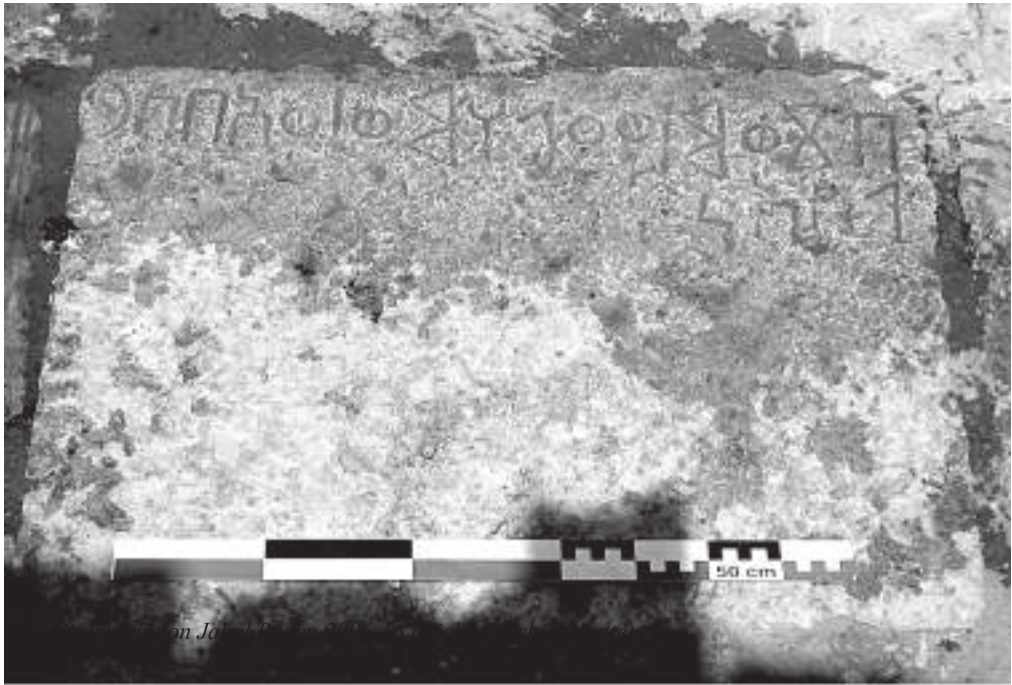


Fig. 19. Inscription Jabal Riyām 2006-16 (cliché J. Schiettecatte)

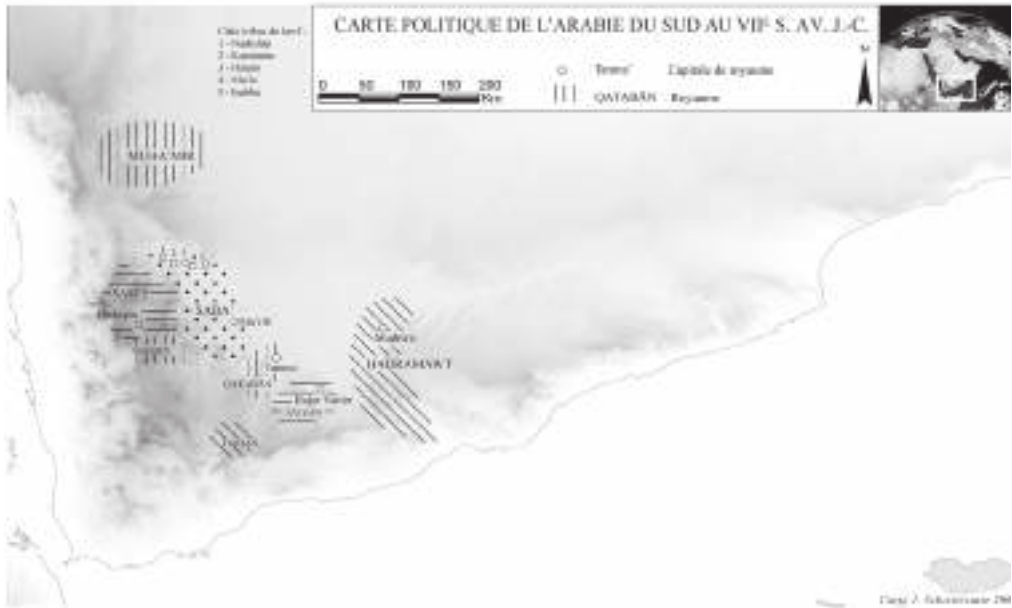


Fig. 20. Carte politique de l'Arabie du Sud au VII^e siècle av. J.-C. (J. Schiettecatte)

Anna BELOVA

IMPORTANCE DU LEXIQUE ARABO-YÉMÉNITE AUX RECHERCHES SUDRABIQUES

Les premiers auteurs arabes qui ont ouvert une série de descriptions des régions yéménites ont déjà noté certaines particularités dans la parole des habitants du Yémen de leur temps. C'était lexique local, essentiellement – dans le domaine de l'économie rurale, de la construction et de la culture matérielle. Il suffit de mentionner quelques noms très connus comme Wāḥib ibn Munabbih (+ 728 n.è.), Al-Hamdānī (+ 971 n.è.), Nashwān al-Ḥimyarī (+ 1178 n.è.). Selon la tradition arabe les termes et les locutions non-arabes incompréhensibles ont été expliqués comme «yéménites» ou bien – comme «ḥimyarites». C'est à dire, on les renvoyait à une certaine langue ancienne qui était encore répandue dans l'Yémen pendant les premiers siècles après l'islam. Il nous peut supposer que cette langue sans écriture a servi d'intermédiaire entre les langues anciennes de la civilisation sudarabique (les langues écrites qui avaient déjà été hors d'usage) et la langue des arabes du Nord¹.

La question de l'influence sudarabique sur les arabes du Nord a été déjà posée comme question de l'influence culturelle en général (de Maigret 1998: 220–224). Mais aussi cette question plus spécialisée a été posée comme question de l'influence linguistique (cf. p. ex.: Aṭ-Ta'ān 1968; Kāmil 1968; Ghul 1975; Diem 1979: 57–58. 60–61; Rabin 1984: 125–134).

Une part du lexique yéménite pénètre dans le vocabulaire arabe commun (par fois marquée comme «yéménite») grâce aux auteurs arabo-yéménites ou bien – par l'intermédiaire des contacts directs entre les yéménites et les arabes du Nord. Le vocabulaire arabe classique et post-classique inclut tel lexique d'origine sudarabique comme *tubba* '«nom commun aux anciens rois du Yémen»; *ḡirba(t-)* «champ cultivé»; *'uṭm-* «fort en pierre, édifice carré»; *maṣna* '«

¹ Les études de la langue dite «ḥimyarite» ont été commencées du XIX-e siècle et continuent à notre temps; v. l'article de synthèse du Prof. Chr. Robin (2007: 256–261).

«édifice, palais»; *ḡayl-* «cours d'eau, canal», *'uṭb* «coton»². Cependant la plupart de lexique entièrement local n'entre pas aux dictionnaires arabes classiques.

Le développement des recherches ethnographiques et dialectales en Yémen au cours de XX–XXI s. ouvre nouvelles possibilités à l'histoire linguistique de l'Yémen.

Les dialectes arabo-yéménites modernes ont un caractère marquant: à côté de leur vocabulaire arabe commun, ils conservent une couche importante du substrat local. Le lexique local présente termes culturels de traditions locales anciennes dans le domaine d'agriculture, d'irrigation, de construction, des noms d'édifices et de leur détails (cf. termes épigraphiques en Brunner 2004: 127–145; Serjeant 1981: 407–427; Fouilles de Shabwa-III, 1998: 67–70, 97–98, 135–136; Frantsouzoff 2009: Chap. III, VI et bien d'autres).

Note: Pénétration du lexique, qui reflète des coutumes et le mode de vie local dans la langue des colons nouveaux est une situation typique. On peut observer un phénomène semblable dans la vallée du Nil, où la langue copte a cédé à l'arabe: des dialectes coptes sont disparus, mais les «Fellahs» (population agricole de l'Égypte) continuent à se servir de termes agricoles et du calendrier agricole coptes (cf. p. ex. Ša'lān: 1972 — «Le peuple égyptien dans ses proverbes populaires»; Beshai 1960: 225–229). La reconstruction du calendrier local ḥimyarite, des noms de saisons en Arabie Méridionale prend aussi en considération des données yéménites lexicales (Beeston 1974: 1–6; Saliba 1985; Robin 1981: 43–51; Belova 1998: 5–15).

Certains termes locaux en dialectes arabo-yéménites ont déjà attiré l'attention toute particulière des savants dont les travaux ont été consacrés aux recherches sudarabiques (Landberg 1901; Rossi 1938; 1939–1940; 1964; Al-Selwi 1987).

Les auteurs des ouvrages lexicaux sur les langues sudarabiques épigraphiques ont commencé aussi à porter leur attention sur les données yéménites comparatives (Biella 1982; Ricks 1989). Les auteurs des dictionnaires arabo-yéménites dialectaux prennent à leur tour en considération des données lexicales comparatives des langues sudarabiques épigraphiques (Piamenta 1990; Al-Iryānī 1996; Behnstedt 1992–2006).

L'apparition des nouveaux ouvrages lexicologiques et ethnographiques sur les dialectes yéménites et le folklore permet d'élargir la liste de la terminologie locale. On y peut citer quelques exemples et les ajouter aux travaux sudarabiques lexicaux comme matériel comparatif. Il est cité ici certaines exemples du domaine d'agriculture, d'irrigation et de construction.

Sab. (n.) *ms³wr* «rigole d'irrigation» (SD: 140), Qat. *ms³wr-(s¹my)* (sub. pl.) «spouts» / tuyau, gouttière», Ethiosém. *masāwer* «spouts» (Ricks 1989: 174) – Yém. *sawārī* «rain storms» (Piamenta 1990: 238).

Sab. *fnw* (n.) *fnwt* (n.) «espace extérieur, environs immédiats, façade d'un édifice (SD: 45), Madāb. *fnw* «champ, espace extérieure; environs immédiats» (Arbach 1993: 33) – Yém. *finā'* «Tor, Tür, Eingang», *fināyin* «freier Platz vor / oder neben dem Haus» (Behnstedt: 956), *fanā'* «ground», *fināyin* – (Piamenta 1990: 380).

Sab. (n.) *mṭr* pl. *'mṭr*, Madāb. *mṭr* «champ arrosé par la pluie» (SD: 88; Arbach 1993: 63) – Yém. *maṭīrah*, pl. *maṭāyr* «sub-division of plot of land irrigated by water drawn from wells, usually used for vegetable cultivation» (Piamenta 1990: 468–469).

Sab. (n.) *ngr* (?) «terrain cultivé» «roue hydraulique (?)» (SD: 93), Madāb. (v.) *ys¹ntngrn* (?) – Yém. (v.) *naḡar* «ouvrir la terre avec un pic ou une barre en bois dur pointu» (Behnstedt 1992–2006: 1194).

² Cf. de l'histoire de ces mot et termes Al-Selwi 1987.

Sab. (n.) *s'ʿr* (pl.) *š'ʿrr* «vallée, terre cultivée le long du lit d'un torrent» (SD: 128), Madāb. *s'ʿr-m* id. (Arbach 1993: 82), Qat. (n.) *s'ʿr* pl. *š'ʿrr* id. (Ricks 1989: 163) – Yém. *sirār* «river bassin» (Piamenta 1990: 219), «Regenbecken» (Behnstedt 1992-2006: 548).

Sab. (v.) *s²rḥ* «se tenir sur la défensive» (SD: 134), Qat. (n.) *s²rḥ* «sécurité» (Ricks 1989: 171), Madāb. (v.) *s¹-s²rḥ* «delivrer, préserver» (Arbach 1993: 87) – Yém. (v.) *širiḥ* (*yišrah*) «bewachen», *šāriḥ* «Feldschütz» (Behnstedt 1992-2006: 635); (v.) id., (n.) *šarrāḥ/šāriḥ* «guard, field-guard, cattle guardian» (Piamenta 1990: 250) > Cl. Arab. *šāriḥ*- «garde-champêtre qui éloigne les oiseaux etc. des blés» (BK I: 1212). Dans l'arabe c'est un mot isolé. La racine arabe *šrḥ* a une famille de formes dérivées à la valeur «ouvrir; expliquer» etc.

Sab. (n.) *mqlđ* (pl.) –t «bassin» (SD: 104), Madāb. *mqlđ* id. (Arbach 1993: 71) – Yém. (?) *galāṭ* «Wasserbassin, Wassergraben» (Behnstedt 1992-2006: 1023), si: *g* (Yém) < *q* et *t* < *d* (ce changement phonétique est connu en Yémen). En arabe un verbe denominatif *qld(i)* «ramasser, recueillir (le lait, l'eau, le vin) dans un réservoir / vase» est attesté sous une racine homonyme *qld* d'autres valeurs (BK II: 798–799).

Sab. (v.) *s²šn* «parer de pierre le levée de terre d'un barrage», (n. pl.) *š²šn* «mur de parement» (SD: 135) – Yém. *šašnah* «mole, jetty» (Piamenta 1990: 255), Daṭina *maššan* «stone parapet at the end of the primary irrigation canal» (Biella 1982: 524 < A.K. Irvine).

Sab. (n.) *k'b-t* «élément de la structure d'un barrage» (SD: 76), Madāb. *k'b-t* «élément d'une construction» (Arbach 1993: 52) – Yém. *ka'bah / kābah* (pl. *āt*) «threshold line; wall buttress; stone-pillar (Ma'rib); door post» (Piamenta 1990: 423).

Le contexte yéménite de nos jours peut expliquer les valeurs et les fonctions de certains termes anciens. Il suffit de citer en exemple un texte ḥaḍramite «*al-bannāy*» (le maître maçon) (Landberg 1901: 394–398) où nous pouvons reconnaître tels termes de construction et de matériaux dont correspondances sont attestées dans les inscriptions sudarabiques antiques. Par exemple:

1) Sab. (v.) *zbr* «ériger une construction» (SD: 170) – cf. *zibər-* «une espèce de l'argile qui est appliquée à fabriquer des briques» (Landberg 1901: 397, 403); dans les autres vocabulaires yéménites: *zābūr-* «mud wall»; (v.) *zwbər-* «to build a wall of mud» (Rossi 1939-1940: 314, 356; Piamenta 1990: 195; Behnstedt 1992-2006: 484–485, 516; Al-Iryānī 1996: 379; Red'kin 2003: 238–242), cf. aussi en Ethiosémitiques: Guèze *šbr* (v.) «knead clay, work clay», *šabr/ḍabr* «mud, mire, clay» (Leslau 1987: 546) (où *š/d* < *z* ? irrég.)³.

Le terme yéménite *muftil/miftil*⁴ «moule pour les briques» cité dans le texte ḥaḍramite «*al-bennāy*» confirme l'interprétation du mot *fil* comme «brique» dans l'inscription de Naqḥ al-Ḥaḡar (RES 2640: Breton et al. 1987: 135–136, trad. de Chr. Robin; Sima 2000: 300) et dans quelques autres.

Il est bien connue une racine sémitique commune **ptl/fil* «twist, spin, weave»: Akk. *patāl-*, Hbr. *pātal*, Aram. Syr. *pətal*, Arab. *fil(i)*, Ethiosém. *fil(ə)* (Leslau 1987: 170; KB: 788) «tordre, tresser» etc. avec ses dérivés.

Est ce qu'il y a un rapport sémantique entre cette racine sémitique et les noms dérivés *fil*, *muftil*? Il s'explique grâce aux observations du dialectologue au milieu des indigènes, qui

³ Dans le vocabulaire arabe classique (v.) *zbr* «bâtir, élever un mur (etc.) en posant des pierres les unes sur les autres» est dénominateur < (n.) *zabr-* «pierres dures» (aussi — *ḍfr*) (BK I: 969) (NB «pierres», mais pas «argile»).

⁴ Le terme *muftil/miftil* reste en usage chez les ouvriers de construction en Šibām (Shibam 1980: 50–64).

peuvent montrer en pratique l'opération de travail: *'āmil* (ouvrier) *yihawwal* (tord) la masse argileuse dans la moule (*muftil*) pour former une brique (Red'kin 2003: 215–216).

Donc il y a lieu encore une fois de noter que le vocabulaire yéménite moderne inclut une couche considérable de lexique local, ancien d'origine. Ce vocabulaire doit être d'une grande importance, parce ce qu'il peut servir à préciser le lexique épigraphique, valeur des mots nouveaux. Le contexte ethnographique peut servir à reconstruire certaines modes d'activité professionnelle.

Il paraît évident que le vocabulaire local des dialectes modernes vivants surpasse le vocabulaire épigraphique connu en plusieurs fois. Il se peut que découvertes prochaines des inscriptions nouvelles ne donneront jamais un vocabulaire sudarabique épigraphique complet. Dans ce cas il nous reste de prêter l'attention sur les données yéménites qui sont encore d'usage courant.

L'analyse comparatif du lexique yéménite local pose deux problèmes. Ceux-ci sont:

1) établir une liste de mots sudarabiques (épigraphiques et yéménites) qui reviennent au sémitique commun (mais qui ne sont pas attesté en vocabulaire arabe classique). On peut supposer que cette couche de mots revient au héritage sémitique commun.

2) établir une couche de lexique yéménite local qui n'a aucune correspondance ni en arabe, ni en autres sémitiques. On pourrait supposer que tel lexique revient au substrat le plus ancien et même – nonsémitique.

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Vittoria BUFFA

PLANT-PROCESSING IN A RESIDENCE OF THE EARLY SOUTH ARABIAN PERIOD: THE GROUND STONE TOOLS FROM HOUSE A IN YALĀ/AD-DURAYB (YEMEN)

*1990-2012: a long preparation, but now a good occasion
to recall the work of MAIRAY and its unforgettable director
Alessandro de Maigret*

Introduction

Alessandro de Maigret has discovered the city of Yalā in 1985 during a survey in the Eastern Khawlān al-Tiyāl region, some 30 km south-west of Mārib. Yalā is part of an imposing archaeological complex, consisting of the walled town, farms and farmhouses, a dam, defensive buildings, and a cult complex, where inscriptions on the sides of a gorge attest of sacred hunts performed by the *mukarribs* of Saba' (de Maigret 1985). In the plain surrounding the site, archaeological evidence points to intensive agricultural activities during the Sabaean period (de Maigret 1988: 18; Marcolongo, Palmieri 1988). In 1987-88 the season of excavation was carried out in the “upper” city, where a building, House A, was unearthed (de Maigret, Robin 1989; de Maigret 1996: 163-176; 2005: 10-17).

House A consisted of five rooms (L6, L2, L11, L7, L12), grouped at the sides of a central corridor (L1); from L1 a staircase led to the second floor. Additional rooms surrounded the house: L5, L4 and L3 to the south, L10 to the north, and L8 and L9 to the west (fig. 1, *a*). Rooms L4 and L8 were not dug. While the house proper and room L10 had a second floor, rooms L3, L5, L8, L9 had only the ground floor. Because of the presence of collapsed wooden pavements of the first storey, it was possible to distinguish finds of the ground floor of each room from

finds of the first floor in general. To attribute finds of the first floor to a specific room proved to be difficult, because of the collapse of many walls. Furthermore, cultural deposits from the first floor of the central rooms accumulated in some cases also over deposits of the ground and only floor of the peripheral rooms (see room L5 for instance) (de Maigret 1989; Fedele 2009; Loreto 2009; 2011)¹. Three deep soundings were also performed under the pavement in three rooms: L2, L5, L6 and charcoal samples from all strata submitted for analysis. The stratigraphic sequence unearthed in House A can be summed up as follows (fig. 1, b).

Stratum A, identified with the life of the house, is preceded by three other phases of occupation, clearly identified in the sounding in room L6. Immediately underneath the floor of the room, stratum B – almost 1.50 m thick – was marked by the presence of walls and yielded pottery² and bones. A layer of charcoal and ashes separated stratum B from stratum C below. Stratum C – about 1 m thick – also included a wall and yielded pottery. Again a layer of destruction separated it from Stratum D underneath; here no structures were present, but human occupation was proven by the pottery and ashes recovered. The sounding stopped about 3 m below the floor of room L6. De Maigret identified a layer of alluvial gravel at the base of stratum D with virgin soil on which Yalā was settled.

Calibrated ¹⁴C measurements give the following chronology³:

- stratum C c. (1300) 1200-900 BC
- stratum B c. 1050-850 BC
- stratum A c. 850-650 BC (≤ two centuries)

A. de Maigret published an account of the results of the excavation (de Maigret & Robin 1989; de Maigret 1996: 173-186; 2005: 11-17) and the typological study of the pottery assemblage (de Maigret 2003). Two recent studies have been devoted to different aspects of the archaeology of Yalā. The distribution of pottery types in the rooms of the house has been studied by R. Loreto (Loreto 2009; 2011). The archaeofaunal collection has been the subject of a publication by F. Fedele (Fedele 2009). This publication of the assemblage of ground stone tools from House A⁴ completes the picture of domestic behaviors and household organization in this Early South Arabian residence.

The ground stone tools from House A

A total of 127 tools have been recovered from excavation: 109 from the House A, 19 from the layers in the deep soundings in rooms L2, L5 and L6.

In archaeological literature the terminology used to name polished stone tools used to process food or to perform other activities linked to the household, vary a great deal. A large collection of ground stone tools from South Arabian urban context has been published recently: the assemblage from Khor Rorī (Dhofar, Oman) (Lombardi 2002; 2008). The same terminolo-

¹ R. Loreto, through the examination of A. de Maigret field diaries, was able to distinguish each *levée* (*zanbil*) as coming from the ground or the first floor. I wish to thank Romolo Loreto for sharing the result of the study of this unpublished documentation.

² Of great importance has been the finding in strata A and B of some pottery fragments with South Arabian letters incised before or after firing, the *ostraca*.

³ Dates given here refer to the revised radiocarbon chronology presented by F. Fedele (Fedele 2009: 138). I wish to thank Francesco Fedele for allowing the reproduction of his revised stratigraphic profile in fig. 2, b.

⁴ The writer studied the artifacts from Yalā in 1990. Logistic difficulties prevented further checking.

gy has been adopted here with only few changes, necessary because of the presence of artifacts with different characteristics; for the description of the parameters of each tool the terminology used is the one codified by K. Wright (Wright 1992: 58).

V. Francaviglia made the macroscopic description of the material of each tool; he also analyzed 10 samples in the C.N.R. Laboratories at Montelibretti (Rome) to establish the standard lithologic composition (rocks were classified according to Streckeisen).

Catalogue of finds

In the catalogue the finds are presented room by room, starting from the central part of the house: rooms L1, L2, L6, L7, L11, L12; finds from the peripheral rooms L3, L5, L9, L10 follow. The artifacts from the three soundings (rooms L2, L5, L6) are listed at the end. In the description of each tool, reference is made to the typology that follows the catalogue⁵.

Locus I:

Y.87.Y/ 199. Pl. 1, 2. *Grinding slab*, type A.2. Sub-rectangular shape, sub-triangular transverse section, face slightly concave, bottom not regularized, one end roughly rounded. Complete. 31x15x6 cm. Micaschist.

Y.87.Y/ 188. Pl. 1, 3. *Grinding slab* type A.3. Wedged transverse section on one break, plano-convex on the other; use surface: face and bottom, lateral sides. Probably used as upper grinding stone when already in fragment. 9x12,5x4 cm. Quartzite.

Y.87.Y/ 160. Pl. 1, 4. *Grinding slab* type A.5. Fragment of the central part of a grinding slab. The face has remains of a red substance; the fragment has been reused to grind a red stuff. 15x10,5x3,5 cm. Quartzite.

Y.87.Y/189. Pl. 1, 7. *Grinding slab* type A.5. Fragment of the central part of a grinding slab. The face has remains of a red substance. 9,5x12,5x3,4 cm. Quartzite.

Y.87.Y/ 162. No ill. *Grinding slab* type A.7. Sub-rectangular shape, triangular transverse section, concave face, one lateral side shows signs of chipping, probably from re-pecking after use; bottom smoothed and obliquely flattened, probably from secondary use as an upper grinding stone. Fragment. 17x15x3 cm. Foid-bearing latianandesite.

Y.87.Y/ 191. Pl. 1, 1; fig. 2, 7. *Grinding slab* type A.10. Oval shape, plano-convex transverse section, flat face, smoothed bottom, rounded end. Fragment. 14x12x5 cm. Andesite.

Y.87.Y/ 21, on the floor. Pl. 1, 8. *Handstone* type D.2. Sub-circular shape, ellipsoidal transverse section; use surface: broad, covering large area, leaving only two rough flat surfaces. Complete. Diam. 6,5, th. 4,2 cm. White quartz of pegmatitic origin.

Y.87.Y/ 210. Pl. 1, 5. *Handstone* type D.3.a. Sub-rectangular shape, sub-rectangular transverse section, in the middle of the face small depression showing signs of chipping; use wear as grinder on end. Fragment. 10x9x5 cm. Foid-bearing andesite.

Y.87.Y/ 32, on floor. Pl. 1, 10. *Whetstone* type I.1. Rectangular shape, sub-rectangular thin transverse section; traces of use are limited to one half of the tool where use has worn off the surface. Fragment. 5x4,5x0,5 cm. Metamorphic rock.

Y.87.Y/ 213. Pl. 1, 6; fig. 4, 6. *Whetstone* type I.1. Rectangular shape, rectangular transverse section; use surface: faces and sides. Fragment. 15,5x4,5x1 cm. Quartzite.

Y.87.Y/ 33, on floor. Pl. 1, 9. *Whetstone* type I.2. Elongated shape, trapezoidal transverse section; use surface: long faces. Complete. 12,2x3,2x1,3 cm. Metamorphic rock.

⁵ The drawings of tools are due to Pat Smith.

Y.87.Y/ 23, on floor. Pl. 1, 11. *Pestle/smoother* type 1. Elongated oval shape, lens shaped transverse section; use surface: one face and one end, flaking on other end. Fragment. 11,7x6,5x2,6 cm. Fine-grained sandstone.

Y.87.Y/212. No ill. *Polishing pebble* type J.1. Pebble with highly polished surfaces; use surfaces flat. Complete. Max. diam. 6 cm. Flint.

Locus 6:

Y.87.Y/ 184, on floor. Pl. 2, 1. *Grinding slab* type A7. Medium size, sub-rectangular shape, slightly concave face, bottom smoothed, rounded ends, notched lateral sides; the bottom flattened for one half indicates that the tool has been used as an upper grinding stone when already in fragment. Fragment. 17,5x14x5 cm. Andesite.

Y.87.Y/ 198. Pl. 2, 2. *Grinding slab* type A7. Medium size, rectangular shape with restricted end, plano-convex transverse section, concave face, bottom roughly smoothed, smooth end, rough lateral sides. Fragment. 19,5x14x6,5 cm. Foid-bearing latianandesite.

Y.87.Y/ 133. No ill. *Grinding slab* type A8. Medium size, wedged transverse section, bottom slightly smoothed. Fragment. 11x4x4,5 cm. Andesite.

Y.87.Y/ 132. Pl. 2, 6. *Upper grinding stone* type C1. Large size, rectangular shape, quadrangular transverse section; use surface: faces and sides. Complete. 20x9x5 cm. Foid-bearing alkali trachyte.

Y.87.Y/ 46. Pl. 3, 4; fig. 3, 4. *Handstone* type D.1. Sub-circular shape, rectangular transverse section; use surface: faces. Fragment. 10,5x11,5x7 cm. Quartzite.

Y.87.Y/ 135. Pl. 2, 7. *Handstone* type D.2. Truncated pyramid shape, rectangular transverse section; use surface: faces. Lacuna on one end. 8,5x6,5 cm. Metamorphic rock.

Y.87.Y/ 137. Pl. 2, 8. *Handstone* type D.2. Oval shape, sub-rectangular transverse section; use surface: ends and one side. Complete. 8,5x7x4,2 cm. White quartz.

Y.87.Y/ 138. No ill. *Handstone* type D.2. Irregular shape, sub-rectangular transverse section, rough surfaces; use surface: ends. Complete. 9x6x6 cm. White quartz.

Y.87.Y/ 139. Pl. 2, 9. *Handstone* type D.2. Irregular shape, rectangular transverse section; use surface: broad, leaving only two flat rough faces surfaces. Complete. 7,4x6x5,5. White quartz.

Y.87.Y/140. Pl. 2, 10. *Handstone* type D.2. Oval shape, irregular transverse section; use surface: one end. Complete. 8x6,5x4,7 cm. White quartz.

Y.87.Y/142. Pl. 2, 11. *Handstone* type D.2. Sub-oval shape, wedged transverse section; use surface: ends and one lateral side. 7,5x6,5x3,4 cm. White quartz.

Y.87.Y/144. Pl. 2, 12. *Handstone* type D.2. Irregular shape, sub-rectangular transverse section; use surface: ends. Complete. 7x5x3,5. White quartz.

Y.87.Y/145. Pl. 2, 13. *Handstone* type D.2. Sub-circular shape, rectangular transverse section; use surface: ends and one lateral side. Complete. 7x6x2 cm. White sandstone.

Y.87.Y/147. Pl. 3, 1. *Handstone* type D.2. Oval shape, rhomboid transverse section; use surface: ends and one lateral side. Complete. 7,8x6x4 cm. White quartz.

Y.87.Y/148. Pl. 3, 2. *Handstone* type D.2. Irregular shape, sub-rectangular transverse section; use surface: end and all sides, except one flat, rough surface. Complete. 5,3x6x3,3 cm. White quartz.

Y.87.Y/149. Pl. 3, 3. *Handstone* type D.2. Quadrangular shape, trapezoidal transverse section; use surface: ends. Complete. 6,5x5,3x4,3 cm. White quartz.

Y.87.Y/26. Pl. 3, 5. *Handstone* type D.2. Sub-circular shape, rectangular transverse section; use surface: ends and all sides. Complete. 6,3x5,8x4 cm. White quartz of pegmatitic origin.

Y.87.Y/42, on floor. Pl. 3, 6. *Handstone* type D.2. Sub-circular shape, irregular transverse section; use surface: broad, all sides, except two rough surfaces. Complete. 8x8x6 cm. Fine-grained white sandstone.

Y.87.Y/116. Pl. 2, 3. *Handstone* type D.2. Irregular shape, irregular transverse section; use surface: broad, all sides. Complete. 6x5,2x5 cm. White quartz.

Y.87.Y/130. Pl. 2, 4. *Handstone* type D.3.b. Triangular shape, thin rectangular transverse section; use surface: on faces and sides; smooth, shallow depression on one face. Complete. 14,5x10,5x3,5 cm. Quartzite.

Y.87.Y/131. Pl. 2, 5. *Handstone* type D.3.a. Sub-rectangular shape, rectangular transverse section; use surface: face; on the same face a shallow depression with chipping. Complete. 9x8x4 cm. Quartzite.

Y.87.Y/45. Pl. 3, 7. *Pounding stone* type F.1. Elongated shape, quadrangular transverse section; flaking at ends. Complete. 14x6x5 cm. Sandstone.

Y.87.Y/134. Pl. 3, 8. *Pounding stone/smoothen* type K.1. Irregular shape, sub-rectangular transverse section; use surface: broad, and flaking at one end. Complete. 8,5x5,5x3,7 cm. Metamorphic rock.

Y.87.Y/146. Pl. 3, 9. *Pounding stone/smoothen* type K.1. Rectangular shape, rectangular transverse section, flaking at preserved end and use wear on faces. Complete. 7x5x4,3 cm. White sandstone.

Y.87.Y/127. No ill. *Whetstone* type I.1. Rectangular shape, rectangular transverse section; use surface: faces and sides. Fragment. 13x4,7x5,7 cm. Quartzite.

Y.87.Y/136. Pl. 3, 10; fig. 4, 10. *Pounding/smoothen* type K.1. Rectangular shape, plano-convex transverse section; battering marks at ends, smoothing wear on faces and sides. Complete. 11,4x5,8x3,3 cm. Fine-grained sandstone.

Y.87.Y/128. No ill. *Pestle/smoothen* type J.1. Rectangular shape, lens-shaped transverse section, grinding wear on ends, smoothing wear on face. Fragment. 16,7x7,3x3 cm. Fine grained sandstone.

Locus 2:

Y.87.Y/18. No ill. *Grinding slab* type A.2. Fragment of one end, flat face, bottom not regularized. 10x9x4 cm. Fine-grained sandstone.

Y.87.Y/161. No ill. *Grinding slab* type A.3. Oval (?) shape, plano-convex transverse section, concave face, bottom roughly regularized. Fragment. 8x9x3 cm. Sandstone.

Y.87.Y/214. Pl. 3, 12. *Grinding slab* type A5. Plano-convex transverse section, face slightly concave, bottom not regularized; all sides (also on the break) are rounded; the face has traces of red colour. Fragment. 9,5x11,5x4 cm. Quartzite.

Y.87.Y/190. Pl. 3, 11. *Grinding slab* type A.8. Oval shape, plano-convex transverse section, flat face, bottom smoothed, rounded ends, smooth sides. Fragment. 18x15x6. Foid-bearing latianandesite.

Y.87.Y/209. Pl. 3, 13; fig. 3, 5. *Handstone* type D.1. Sub-circular shape, sub-rectangular transverse section; use surface: faces and sides. Fragment. 10x8x4,5 cm. Mafic rock.

Y.87.Y/24. Pl. 3, 14. *Handstone* type D.2. Irregular oval shape, trapezoidal transverse section; use surfaces: faces, and one side. Complete. 10,3x8x4,5 cm. White quartz of pegmatitic origin.

Y.87.Y/177. No ill. *Handstone* type D.2. Oval (?) shape, lens-shaped (?) transverse section; use surface: end and sides. Fragment. 5,7x3,8x4 cm. White quartz of pegmatitic origin.

Y.87.Y/207. Pl. 3, 15. *Handstone* type D.2. Irregular shape, triangular transverse section; use surface: ends and all sides. Complete. 6,5x6,5 cm. White quartz of pegmatitic.

Y.87.Y/159. No ill. *Handstone* type D.3.b. Rectangular transverse section; use surface: faces, shallow, smooth depression on one face. Fragment. 13x5,5x5,2 cm. Quartzite.

Y.87.Y/163. Pl. 3, 16; fig. 4, 1. *Handstone* type D.3.b. Sub-circular shape, rectangular transverse section; use surface: faces; shallow, smooth depression on one face. Missing one edge. 10x9,5x5,2 cm. Quartzite.

Y.87.Y/208. Pl. 3, 17. *Pounding stone/smoothen* type K.1. Rectangular shape, triangular transverse section, pounding wear on ends (some flaking), and on one lateral side; smoothing wears on faces. Complete. 12,2x6,8x4,5 cm. Fine grained metamorphic rock.

Locus 12:

Y.87.Y/164. Pl. 4, 1. *Grinding slab* type A.1. Plano-convex transverse section, flat face, bottom roughly regularized; use surface: face. Fragment. 10x14x3,4 cm. Sandstone.

Y.87.Y/216. Pl. 4, 2. *Pestle* type E1. Cylindrical shape, oval transverse section; use surface: end. Fragment. Foid-bearing andesite.

Y.87.Y/166. Pl. 4, 3. *Pestle* type E1. Cylindrical shape, triangular transverse section; wear and flaking on end. Complete? 12,3x4,4x2,3 cm. Mafic rock.

Y.87.Y/109. Pl. 4, 4. *Pestle* type E2. Rectangular shape, sub-rectangular transverse section; use surface: ends and one lateral side. Complete. 7x5,4x4,7 cm. Highly porous andesite.

Locus 7:

Y.87.Y/110. No ill. *Grinding slab* type A7. Sub-rectangular (?) shape, sub-triangular transverse section, face slightly concave, smoothed bottom, rounded ends. Fragment. 12x14,5x5 cm. Foid-bearing alkali trachyte.

Y.87.Y/108. Pl. 4, 5. *Handstone* type D.2. Truncated oval shape, oval transverse section; use surface: one end and all sides. Complete. 5x6,3x4,8 cm. White quartz.

Locus 11:

Y.87.Y/154. Pl. 4, 7. *Grinding slab* type A.1. Plane-transverse section, flat face; use surface: face; rough sides. Fragment. 21x21x12 cm. Sandstone.

Y.87.Y/178. No ill. *Grinding slab* type A.1. Sub-triangular transverse section, face slightly concave, rough sides. Fragment. 10x20x9 cm. Quartzite.

Y.87.Y/220. No ill. *Grinding slab* type A.1. Plano-convex transverse section, bottom regularized. Fragment. 9,5x13,5x5 cm. Foid-bearing latianandesite.

Y.87.Y/172. Pl. 4, 6; fig. 2, 2 (only half is drawn). *Grinding slab* type A.2. Sub-rectangular shape, plano-convex transverse section, concave face, bottom not regularized, roughly rounded ends, smooth sides. Complete. 41x13,5x4 cm. Quartzite.

Y.87.Y/179. Pl. 4, 8; fig. 2, 6. *Grinding slab* type A.7. Oval shape, irregular plano-convex transverse section, concave face, smoothed bottom, smoothed ends. Complete. 36x17x4 cm. Andesite.

Y.87.Y/180. Pl. 4, 9. *Grinding slab* type A.7. Oval shape, plano-convex transverse section, concave face, smoothed bottom, rounded ends, re-pecking on one side. Complete. 33x18x4 cm. Andesite.

Y.87.Y/202. Pl. 4, 10. *Mortar* type B.1. Circular shape, concave-convex transverse section; back not regularized. Complete. 19x17x22 cm; diam. hole 9 cm, 7,5 cm deep. Together with pestle n. 203. Andesite.

Y.87.Y/217. Pl. 5, 2; fig. 3, 2. *Mortar* type B.2. Small size, tronconical profile, concave-convex transverse section, well smoothed back. Complete. Diam. rim 8,5 cm, diam. base 6 cm, h.5 cm. Limestone.

Y.87.Y/218. Pl. 5, 4; fig. 3, 3. *Mortar* type B.2. Small size, tronconical profile, concave-convex transverse section, well smoothed back. Complete. Diam. rim 10,5 cm, diam. base 7 cm, h. 4,5 cm. Limestone.

Y.87.Y/49. Pl. 5, 6. *Handstone* type D.3.b. Fragment with circular shape; shallow, smooth depression on preserved face. 10x6x2,2 cm. Sandstone.

Y.87.Y/219. Pl. 5, 3. *Pestle* type E.1. Cylindrical shape, oval transverse section; flaking on end and one side. Fragment. 5,3x3,7x2 cm. Mafik rock.

Y.87.Y/215. Pl. 5, 5. *Smoother* type G.1. Conical shape, oval transverse section; use surface: on faces. Complete. 11,5x7x4 cm. Mafik rock.

Y.87.Y/203. Pl. 5, 1; fig. 4, 8. *Pestle/smoother* type J.1, with mortar n. 202. Cylindrical shape, sub-triangular transverse section; use surface: ends; also on faces, from use as an upper grinding stone on grinding slab. Complete. 21x7 cm. Metamorphic rock.

Locus 10:

Y.87.Y/183. Pl. 5, 7; fig. 2, 1. *Grinding slab* type A.1. Rectangular shape, plano-convex transverse section, concave face, smooth ends, rough sides. Fragment. 18x23x7,5 cm. Quartzite.

Y.87.Y/175. Pl. 5, 9. *Grinding slab* type A.2. Oval shape, plano-convex transverse section, bottom not regularized, ends not rounded. Fragment. 15x12,5x5,7 cm. Coarse-grained quartzite.

Y.87.Y/114. Pl. 5, 10; fig. 2, 3. *Grinding slab* type A.3. Sub-triangular shape, plano-convex transverse section, concave face, roughly regularized bottom, rounded ends, smooth sides. Fragment. 16x10x3 cm. Fine-grained sandstone.

Y.87.Y/194+193. No ill. *Grinding slab* type A.3. Plano-convex transverse section, flat face, bottom roughly regularized, smooth sides. Fragment. 9,5x10x4. Quartzite.

Y.87.Y/193. No ill. Grinding stone type A.3. Plano-convex transverse section, bottom well smoothed, smooth sides. Fragment, only central part. 15x11,5x4,5 cm. Quartzite.

Y.87.Y/192. Pl. 6, 3; fig. 2, 4. *Grinding slab* type A.4. Oval shape, wedged transverse section, slightly concave upper face; lower face also used for grinding; rough sides and ends. Fragment. 14,5x14x3,8 cm. Quartzite.

Y.87.Y/113. No ill. *Grinding slab* type A.4. Sub-rectangular shape, rectangular transverse section, concave faces, rounded ends; the tool has been used on both sides. Fragment. 12,5x14x3,5 cm. Quartzite.

Y.87.Y/176. Pl. 6, 1. *Grinding slab* type A.5. Plano-convex transverse section, bottom roughly smoothed; the face has traces of red colour. Fragment, only central portion. 10x11,5x4 cm. Quartzite.

Y.87.Y/173. Pl. 5, 8. *Grinding slab* type A.9. Sub-rectangular shape, plano-convex transverse section, concave face, bottom roughly regularized, rounded ends. Fragment. 23x13,5x4,5 cm. Foid-bearing alkali trachyte.

Y.87.Y/181. Pl. 6, 2; fig. 3, 1. *Mortar* type B.1. Circular shape, concave-convex transverse section, smooth base. Complete. Max. diam. 19 cm, diam. mouth 10 cm, h. 12 cm. Andesite.

Y.87.Y/195. Pl. 6, 4; fig. 3, 6. *Handstone* type D.1. Oval shape, sub-rectangular transverse section, smooth bottom. The tool is a reused fragment of a grinding slab; the sides and ends have been smoothed after the break. 7,5x12,5x4,8 cm. Coarse-grained quartzite.

Y.87.Y/111. Pl. 6, 5; fig. 3, 8. *Handstone* type D.2. Sub-rectangular shape, sub-rectangular transverse section; use surface: two ends. Complete. 7,5x6,5x4,5 cm. Gneissic rock.

Y.87.Y/112. No ill. *Handstone* type D.2. Sub-rectangular shape, rectangular transverse section; use surface: ends and two sides. Complete. 6x4x3,5 cm. Fine-grained sandstone.

Y.87.Y/196. Pl. 6, 6; fig. 3, 7. *Handstone* type D.2. Sub-circular shape, oval transverse section; evidence of grinding on most of the surface, leaving only three flat facets. Complete. Diam. 7 cm, th. 4 cm. White quartz of pegmatitic origin.

Y.87.Y/153. Pl. 6, 7. *Smoother* type G.1. Elongated oval shape, lens-shaped transverse section; use surface: faces. Complete. 14,7x6,5x3 cm. Metamorphic rock.

Y.87.Y/174. Pl. 6, 8. *Pestle/smoother* type J.1. Oval shape, lens-shaped transverse section; use surface: faces and flaking at ends. Complete. 9,5x5x3 cm. Metamorphic rock.

Y.87.Y/115. Pl. 6, 9; fig. 4, 9. *Pounding stone/smoother* type K.1. Sub-rectangular shape, sub-quadrangular transverse section; use surface: faces; pounding marks on one end. Missing one corner. 11,5x7,5x7,5 cm. Basalt.

Locus 5:

Y.87.Y/167. Pl. 7, 2; fig. 2, 5. *Grinding slab* type A.5. Plano-convex transverse section, bottom not regularized; on face trace of a red substance. Fragment. 7,5x11x3,2 cm. Quartzite.

Y.87.Y/185. Pl. 6, 10. *Grinding slab* type A.6. Rectangular shape with rounded corners, sub-triangular transverse section, slightly concave face, rounded sides, regularized bottom. Only a small lacuna. 31x20x10 cm. Andesite.

Y.87.Y/186. Pl. 7, 1. *Grinding slab* type A.8. Rectangular shape, plano-convex transverse section, flat face, smoothed bottom, chipping on one side. Fragment. 26x14,5x6,5 cm. Andesite.

Y.87.Y/204. Pl. 7, 3. *Mortar* type B.1, found together with pestle n. 205. Fragment of a mortar with irregular shape and section, flat base. 28x26x16 cm. Basalt.

Y.87.Y/168. Pl. 7, 6; fig. 3, 11. *Handstone* type D.2. Sub-circular shape, irregular transverse section; use surface: ends and all sides, leaving only two rough facets. Complete. 6,6x5,5x4,6 cm. White quartz.

Y.87.Y/206. Pl. 7, 5. *Handstone* type D.3.b. Rectangular shape, rectangular (?) transverse section; use surface: faces; shallow smooth depression on one face. Fragment. 10x9x4 cm. Quartzite.

Y.87.Y/205. Pl. 7, 4. *Handstone* type D.3.a. Rectangular shape, rectangular transverse section; use surface: one end; shallow depression with signs of chipping on the other end. Fragment. 6,5x9x4,8 cm. Granite.

Y.87.Y/170. Pl. 7, 7. *Pestle* type E.1. Cylindrical shape, oval transverse section, flaking at ends. Complete, missing a corner. 17x4,5 cm. Gneissic rock.

Y.87.Y/171. Pl. 7, 8. *Whetstone* type I.2. Rectangular shape, rectangular transverse section, use wear on faces. Fragment. 6,5x2,3x1,7 cm. Mafic rock.

Locus 3:

Y.87.Y/44. No ill. *Grinding slab* type A. 3. Plano-convex transverse section, flat face, bottom roughly regularized, rounded ends. Fragment. 9x12x5 cm. Sandstone.

Y.87.Y/182. Pl. 8, 1. *Grinding slab* type A.7. Oval shape, plano-convex transverse section, slightly concave face, smoothed bottom, round sides and ends. Fragment. 20x14,5x5,5 cm. Andesite.

Y.87.Y/187. Pl. 7, 9. *Grinding slab* type A.9. Oval shape, plano-convex transverse section, concave face, smoothed bottom, rounded ends. Fragment. 19x11x5 cm. Andesite.

Y.87.Y/197. Pl. 7, 10; fig. 2, 8. *Grinding slab* type A.10. Oval shape, triangular transverse section, flat face, smoothed bottom, rounded ends. Fragment. 21x13x5 cm. Foid-bearing latianandesite.

Y.87.Y/43. Pl. 8, 2. *Handstone* type D.2. Sub-circular shape, lens-shaped transverse section; use surface: all sides, leaving only one small, flat, rough surface. Complete. Max. diam. 7,4 cm, th. 3,7 cm. White quartz of pegmatitic origin.

Locus 9:

Y.87.Y/155. Pl. 8, 3. *Grinding slab* type A.1. Sub-triangular transverse section, flat face, rough sides, smooth ends. Fragment. 14x20x7 cm. Sandstone.

Y.87.Y/100. Pl. 8, 5. *Grinding slab* type A.3. Oval (?) shape, wedged transverse section, concave face, bottom not smoothed, rounded ends, smooth sides. Fragment. 9,5x10,5x4 cm. Fine-grained sandstone.

Y.87.Y/103. Pl. 8, 4. *Grinding slab* type A.7. Oval shape, plano-convex transverse section, concave face, smoothed bottom, rough ends and sides. Fragment. 15,5x14x4,5 cm. Foid-bearing latianandesite.

Y.87.Y/101. Pl. 8, 6. *Handstone* type D.2. Rectangular shape, rectangular transverse section; use surface: ends. Complete. 8x7x5,6 cm. White quartz.

Y.87.Y/105. Pl. 8, 7; fig. 3, 10. *Handstone* type D.2. Irregular shape, quadrangular transverse section; use surface: ends. Complete. 8,5x6x5. White quartz.

Y.87.Y/104. No ill. *Handstone* type D.2. Irregular shape, sub-rectangular transverse section; use surface: ends. Complete. 8x4,5x4 cm. White quartz.

Y.87.Y/157. Pl. 8, 8; fig. 3, 9. *Handstone* type D.2. Sub-rectangular shape, sub-rectangular transverse section; use surface: ends and one side. Complete. 7,5x3,5x4,5 cm. White quartz of pegmatitic.

Y.87.Y/106. Pl. 8, 9. *Handstone* type D.2. Irregular shape, irregular transverse section; use surface: ends and one side. Complete. 7,6x6,5x4 cm. White quartz.

Y.87.Y/156. Pl. 8, 10; fig. 3, 12. *Handstone* type D.2. Almost spherical shape, resulting from the use of all sides. Complete. 5,4x5,8 cm. White sandstone.

Y.87.Y/102. Pl. 8, 11. *Pestle* type E.2. Sub-circular shape, irregular transverse section; use surface: one end; all other surfaces are rough. Complete. 7x8x6,2 cm. Trachyte.

Sounding in room L6, level 2:

Y.87.Y/39. Pl. 9, 1. *Handstone* type D.2. Irregular shape, irregular transverse section; use surface: ends and along all sides. Complete. 7x7x4,3 cm. White quartz of pegmatitic origin.

Y.87.Y/40. Pl. 9, 2. *Handstone* type D.2. Spherical shape, resulting from the use of all the surfaces, so to leave only six rough, small, flat facets. Complete. Max. diam. 7 cm. White quartz of pegmatitic origin.

Y.87.Y/41. Pl. 9, 3. *Handstone* type D.2. Circular shape, lens-shaped transverse section; use surface: sides. Complete. Max. diam. 10 cm, th. 5,8 cm. White quartz of pegmatitic origin.

Sounding in room L6, strata B and C:

Y.87.Y/200. Pl. 9, 4. *Mortar* type B.1, together with pestle n. 201. Sub-circular shape, concave-convex transverse section, flat, smoothed back. Fragment. Max. diam. rim 18 cm, diam. mouth 13 cm, h. 10 cm. Trachyte.

Y.87.Y/34. No ill. *Handstone* type D.2. Oval shape, irregular triangular transverse section; use surface: ends and around sides. Complete. 8,5x6,4x3,8 cm. White quartz of pegmatitic origin.

Y.87.Y/35. Pl. 9, 6; fig. 4, 2. *Handstone* type D.3.b. Circular shape, concave-convex transverse section; use surface: one face; shallow, smooth depression on the other face a. Complete. Diam. 6,5 cm, th. 3,9 cm. White quartz of pegmatitic origin.

Y.87.Y/201. Pl. 9, 5; fig. 4, 4. *Pestle* type E.3, with mortar n. 200. Sub-rectangular shape, lens-shaped transverse section, all surfaces smoothed, round sides. 10x9x3,5 cm. Fine-grained metamorphic rock.

Y.87.Y/36. Pl. 9, 7; fig. 4, 5. *Smoothers* type G.1. Elongated oval shape, oval transverse section; use surface: faces. Complete. 13x7,5x3,3 cm. Diorite.

Y.87.Y/37. Pl. 9, 8; fig. 4, 7. *Whetstone* type I.2. Cylindrical shape, oval transverse section; use surface: sides; along one side also a series of notches from whetting. Missing one end. 11,5x3x1,5 cm. Metamorphic rock.

Y.87.Y/38. Pl. 9, 9. *Pestle/smoothers* type J.1. Triangular shape, lens-shaped transverse section, grinding wear (some flaking) at end, smoothing wear on faces. Complete. Height 11 cm, width base 9 cm, thick. 3 cm. Fine grained sandstone.

Sounding in room L5, level under floor:

Y.87.Y/118. No ill. *Grinding slab* type A.10. Sub-triangular transverse section, smoothed bottom, rounded end. Fragment. 3,5x10x4,5 cm. Andesite.

Y.87.Y/121. Pl. 9, 11. *Handstone* type D.1. Oval (?) shape, sub-rectangular transverse section, smooth faces. Fragment. 11,7x7x4 cm. Gneissic rock.

Y.87.Y/124. No ill. *Handstone* type D.1. Small fragment of a handstone with smooth surfaces, and use wear also on the break. 10x6 cm. Quartzite.

Y.87.Y/152. Pl. 9, 12. *Handstone* type D.2. Sub-rectangular shape, sub-rectangular transverse section; use surface: ends and all sides. Complete. 6,7x5,2x4,6 cm. White quartz.

Y.87.Y/120. Pl. 9, 13. *Handstone* type D.2. Spherical shape; use wear on all sides, so to leave only small rough facets. Complete. Max. diam. 6 cm. White quartz.

Y.87.Y/125. Pl. 9, 15. *Handstone* type D.3.a. Oval (?) shape, rectangular transverse section; use surface: on faces; on one face a shallow depression showing chipping. Fragment. 12,5x9x5,7 cm. Quartzite.

Y.87.Y/123. Pl. 9, 10; fig. 4, 3. *Pestle* type E.1. Cylindrical shape, circular transverse section; use surface: ends. Complete. 7,8x2,2 cm. Mafic rock.

Y.87.Y/119. Pl. 9, 14. *Pestle* type E.2. Irregular triangular shape, sub-triangular transverse section; use surface: one end. Complete. 6x4,5x3,3 cm. Andesite.

Sounding in room L2, under floor:

Y.87.Y/20. Pl. 9, 16. *Handstone* type D.3.b. Round shape, lens-shaped transverse section, central smooth depression, faces and sides smooth. Fragment. 11x7,5x5 cm. Gneissic rock.

Typological classification

In the typological study, shape, size, transverse section, treatment of surfaces, type of use wear and type of material employed have been taken into consideration. Type of used wear and material used – more than the overall shape of the tool – have been considered the most important factor for the understanding, when possible, of the function of such artifacts. In most cases the shape of a tool is much more the result of the continuous use rather than representing the original shape of the stone or pebble that was chosen and modified⁶. On the other hand the material chosen for the tool is strictly linked to its function; it is not surprising that in many cases a group of tools of the same type turns out to be made in the same material. Many tools proved to have been used for different purposes; they were multifunctional.

The following functional categories have been identified: A. Grinding slabs; B. Mortars; C. Upper grinding stones; D. Handstones; E. Pestles; F. Pounding stones; G. Smoothers; H. Polishing pebble; I. Whetstone; J. Pestle/smoothers; K. Pounding stone/smoothers.

⁶ The techniques in reduction of the raw material to obtain a tool have not been taken into consideration in the study.

A. Grinding slabs:

Forty grinding slabs, 27% of the total of tools, were found in the house and one – in the sounding under the floor in room L5. They can be divided in two major groups according to the lithology: 50% of the slabs were made of quartzite and sometimes of sandstone; the other 50% of slabs were made of foid-bearing latianandesite or andesite. Grinding slabs of quartzite, and sometimes sandstone, (types 1-4) were probably used to process seeds and cultivated plants to produce flour. Grinding slabs made of andesite (types 6-10) are very porous; they were probably used to process other products, but their shape nevertheless attests that grinding was the primary function. Some slabs were used as upper grinding stones when already in fragment. Another secondary use is the one attested in type A.5 where the fragments have been use to grind a red substance. According to material, size and shape they can be divided into ten types.

Type 1. Large size⁷, width 20-23 cm, rectangular shape, plano-convex or sub-rectangular transverse section, concave or flat face, rough sides. Quartzite and sandstone.

N. 155, L. 9, z. 65 (pl. 8, 3); n. 154, L. 11, z. 48 (pl. 4, 7); n. 178, L. 11, z. 48 (no ill.); n. 183, L. 10, z. 38 (pl. 5, 7; fig. 2, 1); n. 164, L12, z. 69 (pl. 4, 1).

Type 2. Medium size, width 12,5-15 cm, sub-rectangular or oval shape, plano-convex or sub-triangular transverse section, concave face, bottom not regularized, rough or smooth sides. Quartzite, sandstone, micaschist.

N. 199, L. 1, z. 15 (pl. 1, 2); n. 18, L. 2, z. 9 (no ill.); n. 175, L. 10, z. 38 (pl. 5, 9); n. 172, L. 11, z. 63 (pl. 4, 6; fig. 2, 2, only half is drawn).

Type 3. Small size, width 9-12 cm, oval shape, piano-convex transverse section, flat face, bottom roughly regularized, smooth sides. Quartzite and sandstone.

N. 194, L. 10, z. 56 (no ill.); n. 114, L. 10, z. 53 (pl. 5, 10; fig. 2, 3); n. 161, L. 2, z. 9 (no ill.); n. 100, L. 9, z. 70 (pl. 8, 5); n. 44, L. 3, z. 2 (no ill.). One fragment has the bottom well smoothed, probably for the secondary use as an upper grinding stone: n. 193, L10, z. 56 (no ill.). Another one has all the breaks rounded, probably from the secondary use as an upper grinding stone: n. 188, L1, z. 33 (pl. 1, 3).

Type 4. Medium size, width 14 cm, oval shape, rectangular, lens-shaped or wedged transverse section, face slightly concave, smooth sides. Both upper and lower surfaces have been used for grinding. Quartzite.

N. 192, L. 10, z. 56 (pl. 6, 3; fig. 2, 4); n. 113, L. 10, z. 53 (no ill.).

Type 5. Fragments of five grinding slabs of small size bear on the upper surface traces of a red colour. They were used, when already in fragment, to grind a red substance. Quartzite.

N. 189, L. 1, z. 33 (pl. 1, 7); n. 160, L. 1, z. 7 (pl. 1, 4); n. 214, L. 2, z. 12 (pl. 3, 12); n. 176, L. 10, z. 38 (pl. 6, 1); n. 167, L. 5, z. 17 (pl. 7, 2; fig. 2, 5).

Type 6. Large size, width 30 cm, rectangular shape, sub-triangular transverse section, regularized bottom, face slightly concave. Andesite.

N. 185, L. 5, z. 11 (pl. 6, 10).

Type 7. Medium size, width 14-18 cm, sub-rectangular or oval shape, plano-convex or sub-rectangular transverse section, concave face, bottom smoothed or regularized, smooth or rough sides. The sides of two samples (n. 162, 180) present signs of chipping, probably from

⁷ Because of the fragmentation of the pieces the width, and not the length, has been use as a parameter to establish the size of the slab.

re-pecking after use. The bottom of two tools (n. 162, 184) is flattened on one side, probably the result of its secondary use as an upper grinding stone. Andesite, trachyte.

N. 162, L. 1, z. 6 (no ill.); n. 182, L. 3, z. 2 (pl. 8, 1); n. 184, L. 6, z. 44 (pl. 2, 1); n. 198, L. 6, z. 44 (pl. 2, 2); n. 110, L. 7, z. 74 (no ill.); n. 179, L. 11, z. 48 (pl. 4, 8; fig. 2, 6); n. 180, L. 11, z. 63 (pl. 4, 9); n. 103, L. 9, z. 70 (pl. 8, 4).

Type 8. Medium size, width 14-15 cm, oval or rectangular shape, plano-convex transverse section, flat face, bottom smoothed. The side of one sample (n. 186) presents signs of chipping, probably the result of re-pecking after use. Andesite.

N. 133, L. 6, z. 49 (no ill.); n. 190, L. 2, z. 16 (pl. 3, 11); n. 186, L. 5, z. 17 (pl. 7, 1).

Type 9. Small size, width 11-13,5 cm, sub-rectangular or oval shape, plano-convex transverse section, concave face, bottom smoothed or regularized. Andesite and trachyte.

N. 173, L. 10, z. 38 (pl. 5, 8); n. 187, L. 3, z. 2 (pl. 7, 9).

Type 10. Small size, width 10-13,5, oval shape, sub-rectangular or plano-convex transverse section, flat face, bottom smoothed, rounded ends. Andesite.

N. 197, L. 3, z. 2 (pl. 7, 10; fig. 2, 8); n. 191, L. 1, z. 15 (pl. 1, 1; fig. 2, 7); n. 118, L. 5, z. 28, sounding under floor (no ill.); n. 220, L. 11, z. 60? (no ill.).

B. Mortars:

Five mortars were found in House A and one in the sounding in room L6. Three of them were associated with pestles. Mortars in andesite/trachyte and in limestone are attested.

Type 1. Large size, sub-circular shape, concave-convex transverse section, flat base, exterior surface smoothed, diam. rim 18-19 cm. Andesite and trachyte.

N. 200, L. 6, z. 59, sounding, str. B and C, with pestle n. 201 (pl. 9, 4); n. 202, L. 11, z. 48, with pestle/smoother n. 203 (pl. 4, 10); n. 204, L. 5, z. 17, with pestle/handstone n. 205 (pl. 7, 3); n. 181, L. 10, z. 41 (pl. 6, 2; fig. 3, 1).

Type 2. Small size, circular shape, tronconical profile, flat base, exterior surfaces well smoothen, diam. rim 8,5-10,5 cm. Limestone.

N. 217, L. 11, z. 54 (pl. 5, 2; fig. 3, 2); n. 218, L. 11, z. 63 (pl. 5, 4; fig. 3, 3).

C. Upper grinding stones:

Upper grinding stones are heavy and large tools used to grind in combination with a grinding slab.

Type 1. Large size, length 20 cm, rectangular shape, quadrangular transverse section, surfaces smoothen. Foid bearing alkali trachyte.

N. 132, L. 6, z. 49 (pl. 2, 6).

D. Handstones:

Of the many terms used to name this kind of tools, *handstone* seems the more appropriate and it is used here as “upper mobile stone in a pair of grinding tools” (Wright 1996: 67)⁸. A total of 41 handstones was found in House A (27% of the total of tools) and 10 in the soundings in L2, L5 and L6. In Yalā basically two types, very different in size and shape, are represented.

Type 1. Medium size, length/diam. 8,5-12,5 cm, sub-rectangular, rounded or oval shape, rectangular or plano-convex transverse section, smoothed surfaces. The tools were made in a number of different stones: foid-bearing andesite, sandstone, gneissic rock, metamorphic rock, quartzite. As type C.1, also the tools of this type were probably used as upper grinding stones.

⁸ In Khor Rorī, where the grinding of seeds was done mainly on rotating hand millstones, handstones must have had different functions (Lombardi 2008: 328-330).

N. 121, L. 5, z. 28, sounding under floor (pl. 9, *II*); n. 124, L. 5, z. 31, sounding under floor (no ill.); n. 46, L. 6, z. 37 (pl. 3, 4; fig. 3, 4); n. 209, L. 2, z. 23 (pl. 3, 13; fig. 3, 5); n. 135, L. 6, z. 49 (pl. 2, 7). One sample has been obtained from a fragment of grinding slab: n. 195, L. 10, z. 56 (pl. 6, 4; fig. 3, 6).

Type 2. Thirty-six handstones belong to this type; they are small in size, and vary for number of use surfaces and shape, in general irregular. They have been obtained from cobbles, mainly of quartzite, and their final shape derived from the duration of use. The same use wear, typical of grinding, appears on all samples; no flaking is present. Shape goes from the more irregular and less used (n. 101, 105, 104, 111, 138, 140, 144, 149) to the more regular, almost spherical, with only limited rough surfaces (n. 21, 40, 42, 43, 116, 120, 139, 152, 156, 168, 196).

N. 21, L. 1, z. 36 (pl. 1, 8); n. 177, L. 2, z. 18 (no ill.); n. 207, L. 2, z. 14 (pl. 3, 15); n. 24, L. 2, z. 24 (pl. 3, 14); n. 43, L. 3, z. 2 (pl. 8, 2); n. 152, L. 5, z. 25, sounding under floor (pl. 9, 12); n. 168, L. 5, z. 17 (pl. 7, 6; fig. 3, 11); n. 120, L. 5, z. 28, sounding under floor (pl. 9, 13); n. 135 (pl. 2, 7); n. 137 (pl. 2, 8); n. 138 (no ill.); n. 139 (pl. 2, 9); n. 140 (pl. 2, 10); n. 142 (pl. 2, 11); n. 144 (pl. 2, 12); n. 145 (pl. 2, 13); n. 147 (pl. 3, 1); n. 148 (pl. 3, 2); n. 149, L. 6, z. 49 (pl. 3, 3); n. 34, L. 6, z. 59, sounding, str. B and C (no ill.); n. 39 (pl. 9, 1); n. 40 (pl. 9, 2); n. 41, L. 6, z. 52, sounding under floor, str. 2 (pl. 9, 3); n. 116, L. 6, z. 35 (pl. 2, 3); n. 42, L. 6 floor, z. 44 (pl. 3, 6); n. 26, L. 6 cleaning room (pl. 3, 5); n. 108, L. 7, z. 71 (pl. 4, 5); n. 101, L. 9, z. 70 (pl. 8, 6); n. 105 (pl. 8, 7); n. 106, L. 9, z. 67 (pl. 8, 9); n. 104 (no ill.); n. 157 (pl. 8, 8); n. 156, L. 9, z. 65 (pl. 8, 10); n. 111 (pl. 6, 5; fig. 3, 8); n. 112, L. 10, z. 53 (no ill.); n. 196, L. 10, z. 56 (pl. 6, 6; fig. 3, 7).

Type 3. Eleven handstones are similar to the samples of type D.1 or D.2, but differ from them for the presence of a small depression in the middle of one face⁹. Two variants can be distinguished:

Variant a: small and medium size (length 9-12,5 cm), sub-rectangular or oval shape, rectangular transverse section, shallow depression in the middle of one face; the depression shows signs of chipping. Along with their use as handstone, the samples of *variant a* were used either as a base for percussion or as a hammerstone. N. 205 was found with mortar n. 204, implying also a use as a pestle. Quartzite, granite, mafic rock.

N. 131, L. 6, z. 49 (pl. 2, 5); n. 125, L. 5, z. 31, sounding under floor (no ill.); n. 205, L. 5, z. 17 (pl. 7, 4); n. 210, L. 1, z. 4 (pl. 1, 5).

Variant b: small and medium size (length 8,5-14,5 cm), sub-rectangular or round shape, rectangular or concave-convex transverse section, all surfaces smooth, central smooth depression. Possibly the handstones have been used also as smoothers. Quartzite, gneissic rock, sandstone.

N. 159, L. 2, z. 9 (no ill.); n. 163, L. 2, z. 14 (pl. 3, 16; fig. 4, 1); n. 130, L. 6, z. 49 (pl. 2, 4); n. 35, L. 6, z. 59, sounding under floor, str. B and C (pl. 9, 6; fig. 4, 2); n. 20, L. 2, z. 43, sounding under floor (pl. 9, 16); n. 206, L. 5, z. 17 (pl. 7, 5); n. 49, L. 11, z. 54 (pl. 5, 6).

E. Pestles:

Elongated tools with thick round ends, used for crushing in a bowl or mortar; some have less regular shape. The majority shows flaking at ends; some without flaking at ends have been found on mortars. Some might have been used also as upper grindstones on grinding slabs. Made mainly of mafic rock, but also of metamorphic rock, sandstone. Six pestles were found in the house and three in the soundings.

Type 1. Cylindrical elongated shape, sub-circular transverse section, thick round ends, flaking at ends. Length 7,8-17 cm. Mainly mafic rock, but also andesite and gneissic rock.

⁹ In literature these tools are also called: *pitted crushing stones*.

N. 123, L. 5, z. 31, sounding under floor (pl. 9, 10; fig. 4, 3); n. 170, L. 5, z. 17 (pl. 7, 7); n. 219, L. 11, z. 64 (pl. 5, 3); n. 216, L. 12, z. 69 (pl. 4, 2); n. 166, L. 12, z. 69 (pl. 4, 3).

Type 2. Rectangular, sub-cylindrical or pyramidal shape; use surface: one end; length 6-7 cm. Andesite and trachyte.

N. 109, L. 12, z. 69 (pl. 4, 4); n. 102, L. 9, z. 70 (pl. 8, 11); n. 119, L. 5, z. 28, sounding under floor (pl. 9, 14).

Type 3. Sub-quadrangular shape, lens-shaped transverse section, all surfaces smoothed; length 10 cm. Fine-grained metamorphic rock. The pestle has been found with mortar n. 200.

N. 201, L. 6, z. 59, sounding under floor, str. B and C (pl. 9, 5; fig. 4, 4).

F. Pounding stone:

One heavy tool has been used for pounding.

Type 1. Elongated tool of quadrangular transverse section, heavy flaking at two ends; length 14 cm. Sandstone.

N. 45, L. 6, z. 40 (pl. 3, 7).

G. Smoothers:

Three elongated tools do not show flaking marks at the ends, but show traces of wear on the surfaces. They could have been used for smoothing, polishing, rubbing different surfaces. They were made in different materials: mafic rock, diorite, metamorphic rock.

Type 1. Elongated shape, oval or lens-shaped transverse section, traces of wear on all the surfaces, length 13-14,7.

N. 215, L. 11, z. 54 (pl. 5, 5); n. 153, L. 10, z. 47 (pl. 6, 7); n. 36, L. 6, z. 59, sounding under floor, str. B and C (pl. 9, 7; fig. 4, 5).

H. Polishing pebbles:

Type 1. Pebble with highly polished surfaces; use surface flat, max. diam. 6 cm. Flint.

N. 212, L. 1, z. 7 (no ill.).

I. Whetstones:

Only six whetstones were found in the house. They have typical long wear marks along the faces and sides.

Type 1. Rectangular shape, flat, rectangular transverse section, use wear on the flat surfaces. Quartzite, metamorphic rock.

N. 213, L. 1, z. 5 (pl. 1, 6; fig. 4, 6); n. 127, L. 6, z. 49 (no ill.); n. 32, L. 1, floor z. 33 (pl. 1, 10).

Type 2. Elongated shape, sub-rectangular or oval transverse section, use wear on long surfaces; length 11,5-12. Metamorphic rock, mafic rock. One tool (n. 37) has a series of notches along one side.

N. 33, L. 1 floor, z. 32 (pl. 1, 9); n. 37, L. 6, z. 59, sounding under floor, str. B and C (pl. 9, 8; fig. 4, 7); n. 171, L. 5, z. 17 (pl. 7, 8).

Multiple tools

Some tools show clear traces of pounding or crushing and smoothing. They are presented here, while in other similar instances one of the two functions has appeared prevalent and the tools have been included in the related type.

J. Pestle/Smother:

Type 1. Cylindrical shape, round or lens-shaped transverse section, grinding wear at ends and smoothing wear on faces; length 9-21 cm. Metamorphic rock, fine grained sandstone. One piece (n. 203) has been found near mortar n. 202.

N. 174, L. 10, z. 38 (pl. 6, 8); n. 203, L. 11, z. 48 (pl. 5, 1; fig. 4, 8); n. 128, L. 6, z. 49 (no ill.); n. 23, L. 1, z. 32 (pl. 1, 11); n. 38, L. 6, z. 59, sounding under floor, str. B and C (pl. 9, 9).

K. Pounding stone/smoothers:

Type 1. Five tools of rectangular shape, heavier and larger than the previous ones, show battering marks on the ends and of smoothing on the faces; max. length 7-12 cm. Fine-grained sandstone, basalt, metamorphic rock.

N. 146 (pl. 3, 9); n. 136 (pl. 3, 10; fig. 4, 10); n. 134, L. 6, z. 49 (pl. 3, 8); n. 115, L. 10, z. 56 (pl. 6, 9; fig. 4, 9); n. 208, L. 2, z. 23 (pl. 3, 17).

Discussion

The distribution of the categories of tools in the various rooms of House A can complete the picture drawn by the distribution of ceramic types (Loreto 2009; 2011) and by the study of the animal remains in the rooms (Fedele 2009). Tools used for grinding and crushing cereals and other plants – grinding slabs, mortars, upper grinding stones, handstones and pestles – constitute 80% of the total of ground stone tools from the house; the percentage is higher if we take into consideration also the multipurpose tools: pestle/smoothers and pounding stone/smoothers and if we add the fragments of grinding slabs reused to grind a red substance. Smoothers, polishers and whetstones are represented by only few samples¹⁰.

Ground floor

Plant processing took place in different rooms. Judging from the distribution of ground stone tools, different functions were assigned to the northern and southern parts of the house, as already implied by the analysis of distribution of pottery functional categories and of the presence of animal remains.

In the southern part, rooms L2 and L6 acted as real laboratories where different activities were taking place. Room L6 yielded four grinding slabs, both in quartzite and in andesite, seventeen handstones, one pounding stone, three multifunctional tools, and a whetstone. Room L6 acted also as storage place and kitchen, where food was not only prepared and cooked, but also consumed, as attested by the numerous table vessels that were found together with storage and cooking vessels, and animal remains (Fedele 2009; Loreto 2011). The same multiple activities took place also in room L2, where the recorded finds, pottery, animal remains, and ground stone tools – two grinding slabs and five handstones – are less numerous than in L6.

Leaning on the wall M3, the outer, southern wall of rooms L6 and L2, the one storey rooms L3 and L5 could be reached from the “public” street. No pottery or bones were found in the L3 and L5. In L3 food processing is well documented by the presence of four grinding slabs and a handstone. Three grinding slabs, one mortar, three handstones, twelve pestles and one whetstone are recorded as coming from room L5, *levée* from the surface or “first floor”. No tools are recorded as coming from the *levée* of the ground floor¹¹. R. Loreto noted that probably the pottery found in the surface of the deposit in L5 fell down from the first floor of the center of the house (Loreto 2009). If also the tools have the same origin, we must conclude that in room L5 no food processing was taking place.

Room L1, the central corridor of the house, revealed few vessels and few ground stone tools: two grinding slabs, one handstone, two whetstones and one pestle/smoothers.

¹⁰ Eighteen tools from the soundings are not taken into consideration for statistics.

¹¹ See footnote 1.

To the north of the central corridor, rooms L7, L11 and L12 were used only as storage area, as attested by the few pottery fragments recovered. L11, with no access from the corridor, was reachable probably with a ladder from the first floor. One could enter L7 and L12 only through a passage on the wall between the two rooms. No plant processing took place in the three rooms.

At the northern end of the central corridor L1, a door gave access to room L10, another multifunctional room. Here twelve grinding slabs and handstones, together with one smoothers and one pounding stone/smoothen, were found, along with animal remains and storage jars.

First floor

It has been possible to reconstruct the plan of the first floor only partially, for rooms L2 and L11 (Loreto 2011). In room L2 only two grinding slabs and a handstone were recorded, while a quantity of storage vessels are present. In room L11 the ground floor had no entrance and was used only as a storage place. On the first floor L11 seems to have been a multifunctional room. It has yielded six grinding slabs, three mortars, a handstone and a pestle/smoothen. Cooking, food consumption and storage vessels were attested by the ceramics.

One grinding slab and three pestles were found in the first floor of room L12. The ceramic assemblage is composed of table vessels, some kitchen and storage vessels.

The plan of the space corresponding to L1 on the ground floor could not be defined with certainty. So tools (as well as pottery) recorded as coming from L1, could indeed belong to two different rooms of the first floor (Loreto 2011). In this space 4 grinding slabs, a handstone and a whetstone are recorded.

The remaining rooms yielded an irrelevant number of tools.

The ground stone tools found in House A testifies to the daily life of a wealthy community of 8th – 7th cent. BC in Eastern Khawlān al-Tiyāl region. Cereals and other agricultural produce were grown in the irrigated fields surrounding Yalā and then processed in quantity in town.

Judging from the nineteen tools found in the three soundings, it seems that the same domestic activities were shared by the predecessors of the people living in House A; the same categories of ground stone tools are represented, with the same typology.

Finally, it's worth noting that the conservatism often recalled for ground stone tools in general is well represented if we compare the Yalā assemblage with the collection from the Bronze Age site of Wādī Yanā'im, site 1 (*WY1*), in Khawlān al-Tiyāl, excavated by the Italian Archaeological Mission under the direction of Alessandro de Maigret in 1984 (Castiello, Gianni 1990). Dated to the 3rd millennium, the site yielded a set of grinding tools, that can well be compared with the ones from Yalā. A research on the vegetable imprints on pottery from thirty different Bronze Age sites in the region have proven that already by the half of the 3rd millennium wheat, barley, sorghum, millet were grown in the Eastern Highlands (Costantini 1990).

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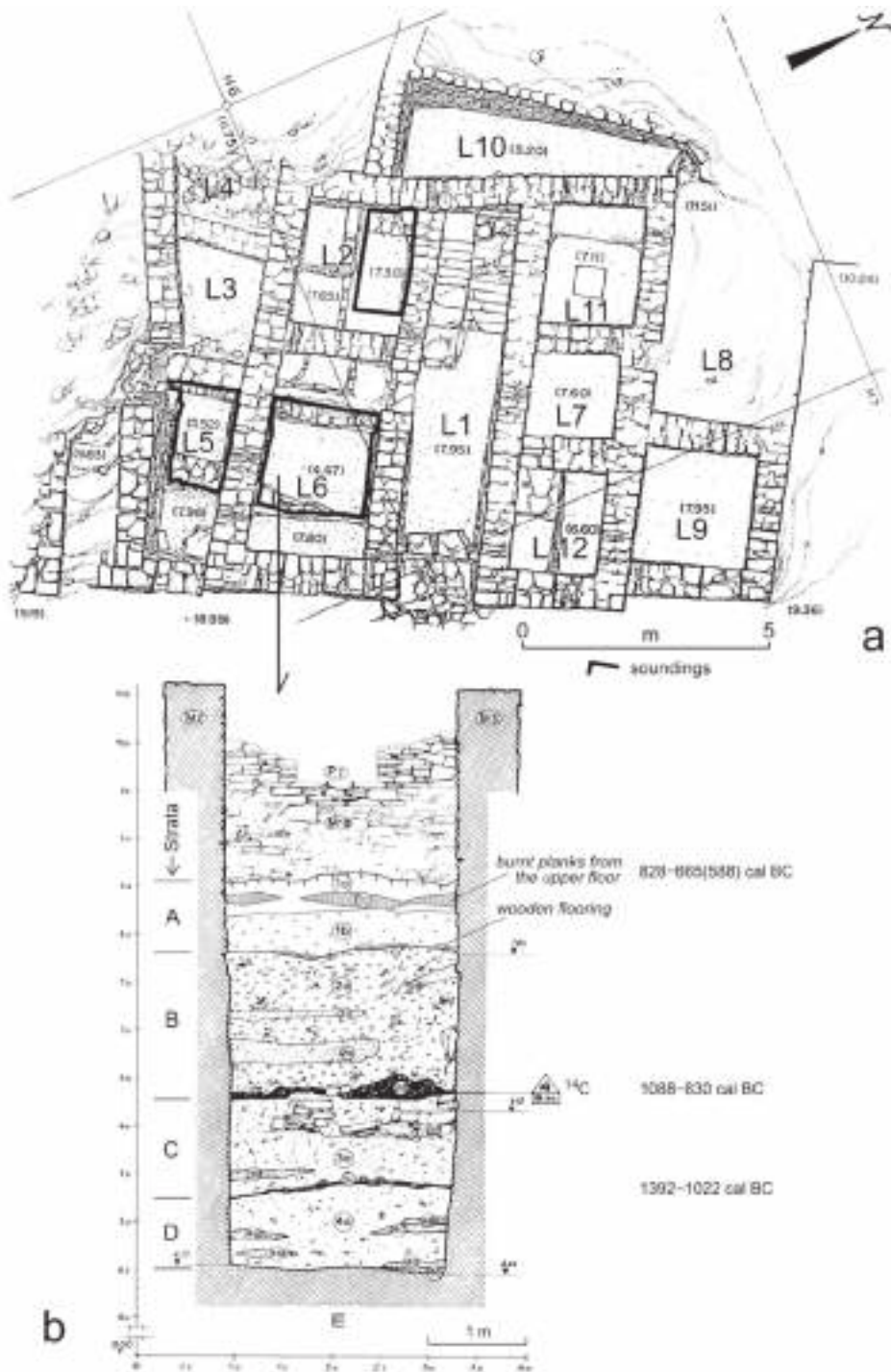


Fig. 1. Yalā (ad-Durayb): a – plan of House A; b – stratigraphic profile in room L6 (from Fedele 2009: fig. 2)

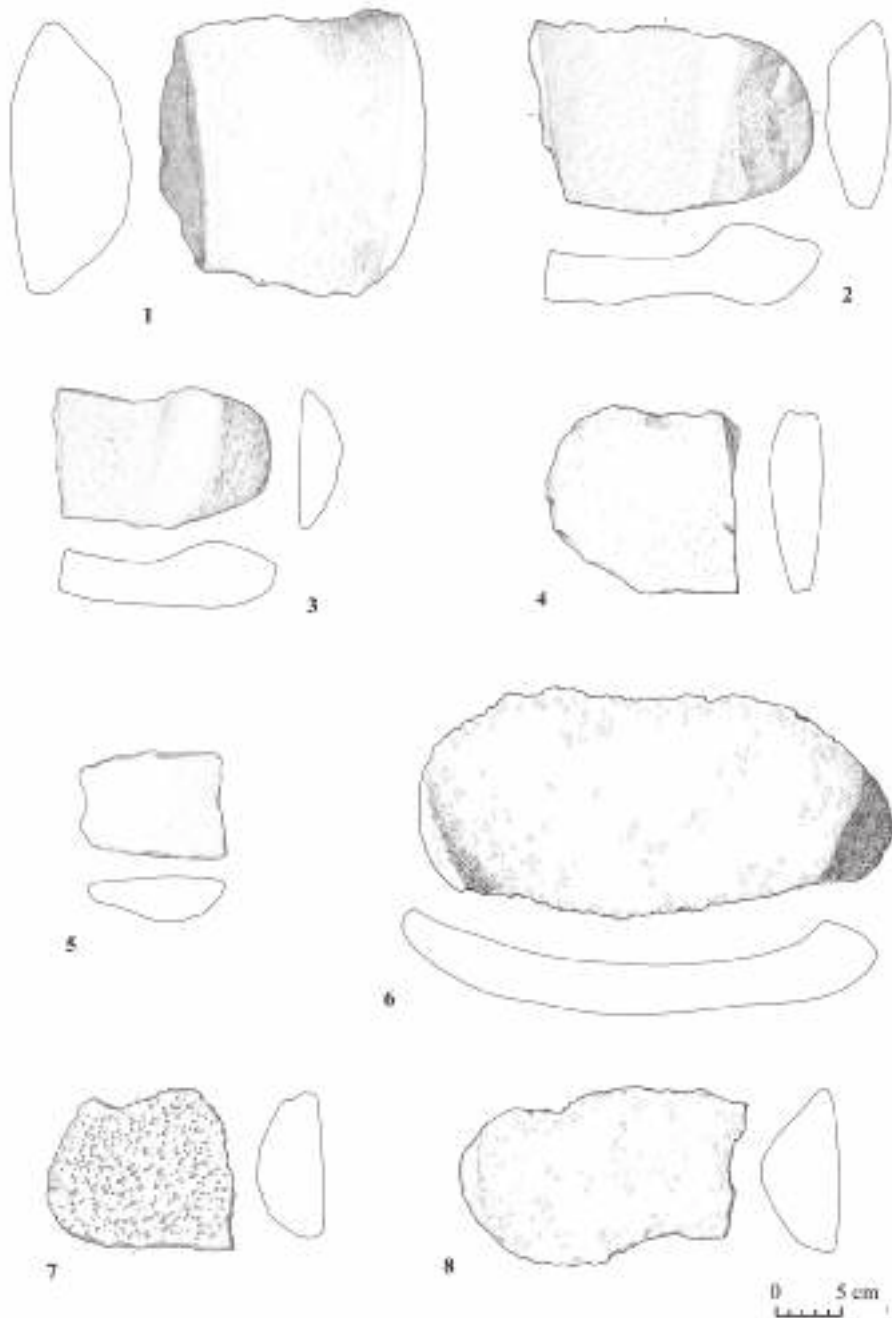


Fig. 2. Grinding slabs: 1 – type A.1; 2 – type A.2; 3 – type A.3; 4 – type A.4; 5 – type A.5; 6 – type A.7; 7 – type A.10; 8 – type A.10

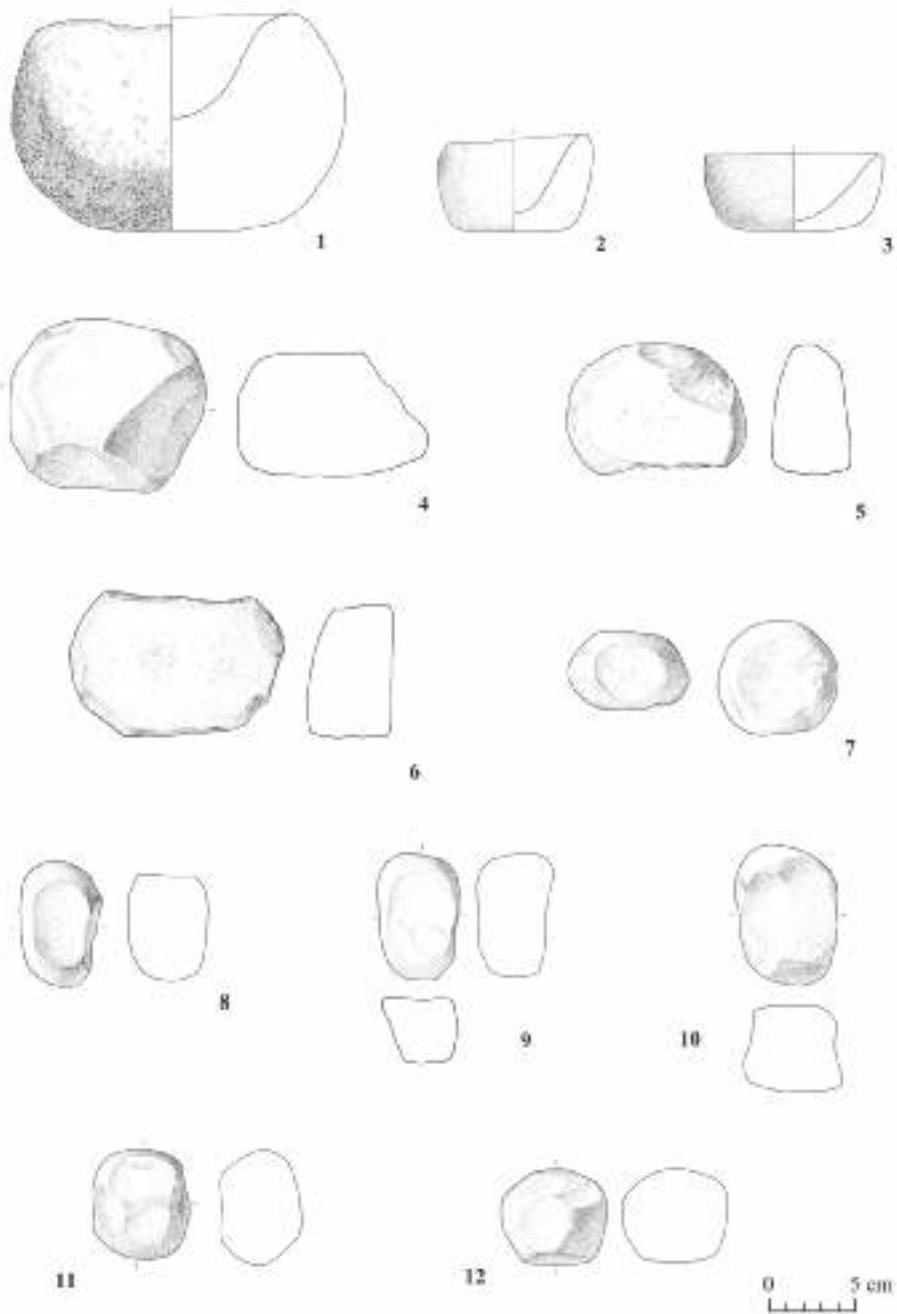


Fig. 3. Mortars: 1 – type B.1; 2, 3 – type B.2. Handstones: 4-6 – type D.1; 7-12 – type D.2

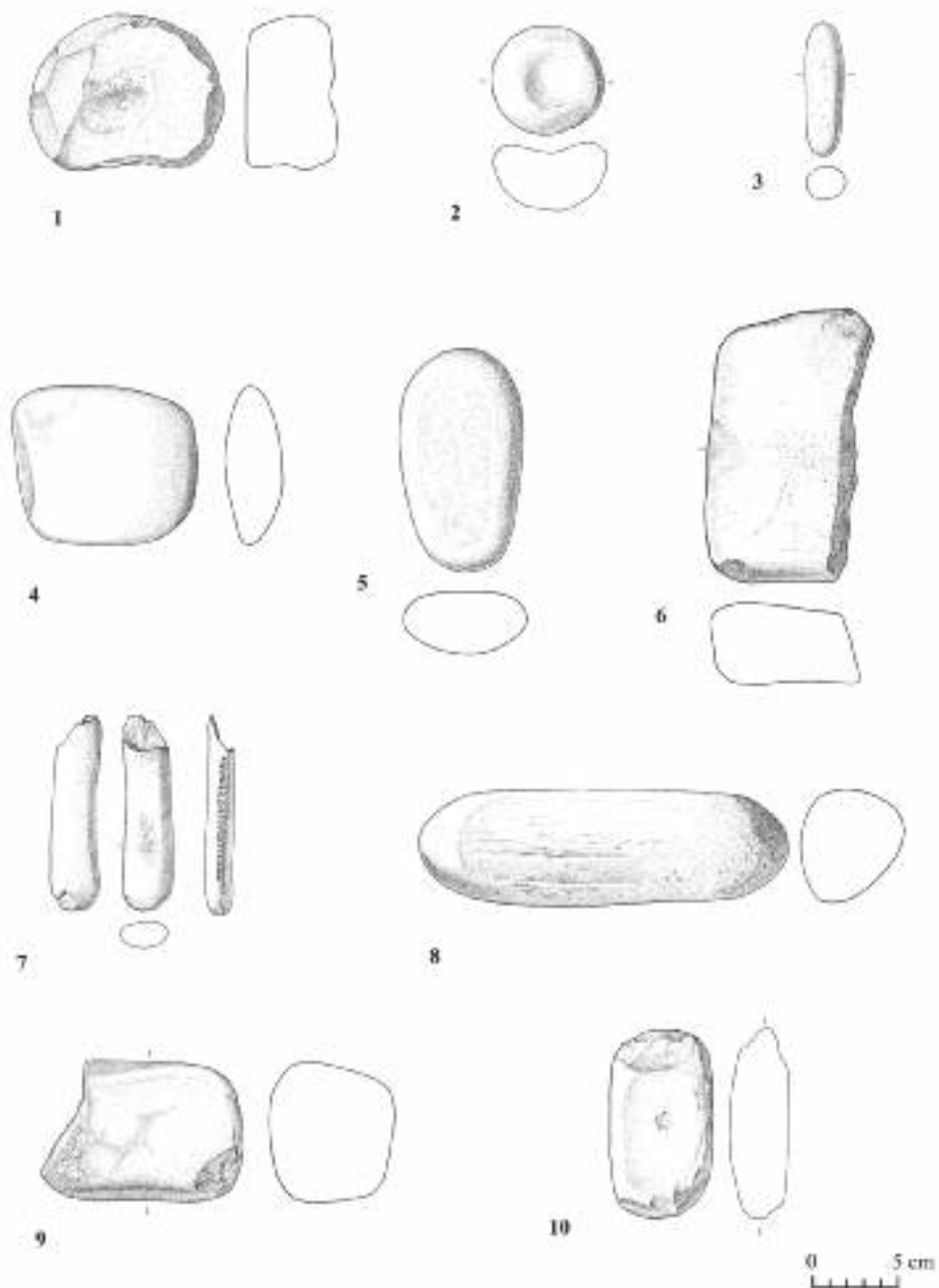


Fig. 4. Handstones: 1, 2 – type D.3.b. Pestles: 3 – type E.1; 4 – type E.3. Smoother: 5 – type G.1. Whetstones: 6 – type I.1; 7 – type I.2. Pestle/smoother: 8 – type J.1. Pounding stone/smoother: 9, 10 – type K.1

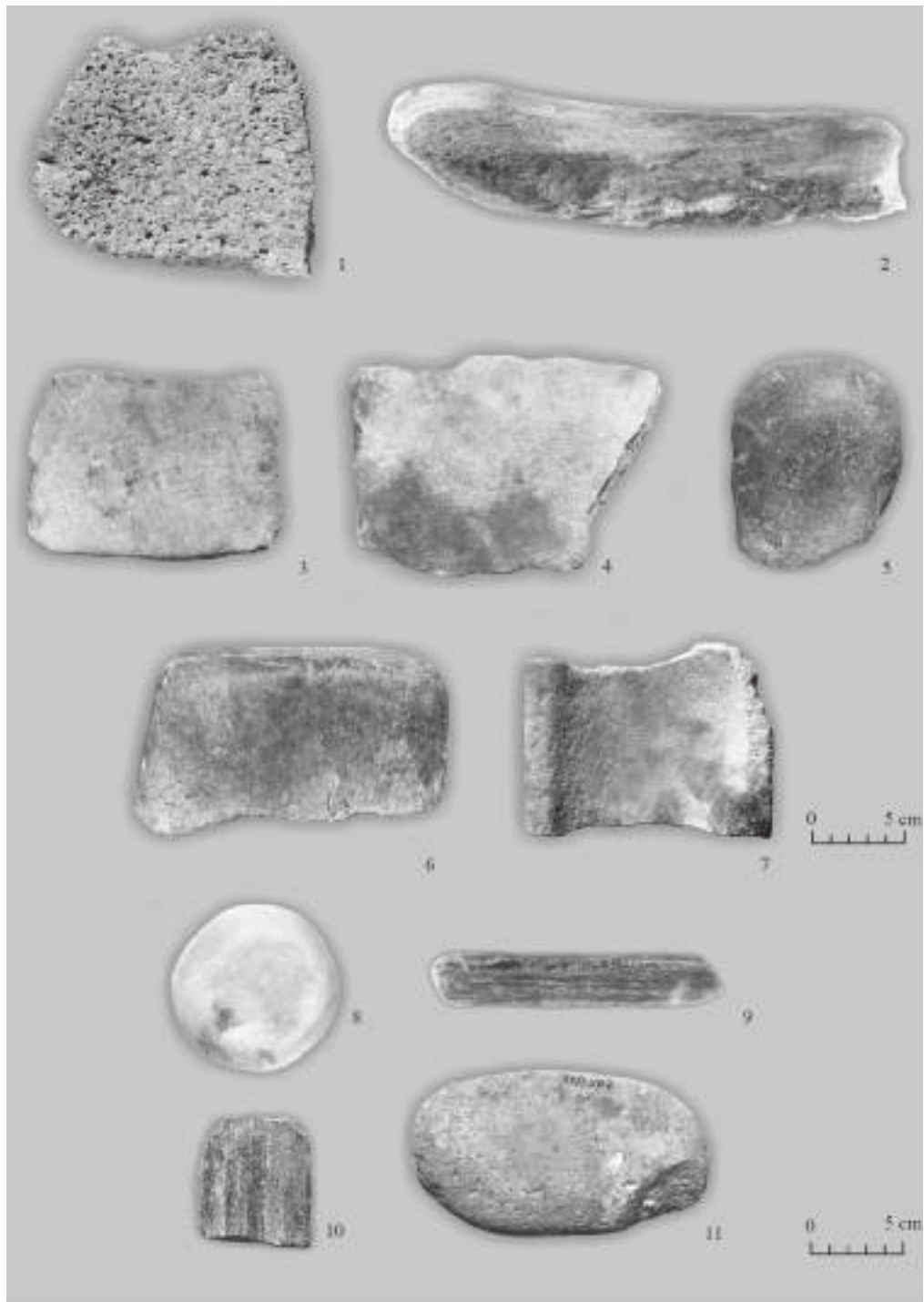


Plate 1. Room L1: 1-4, 7 – grinding slabs; 5, 8 – handstones; 6, 9, 10 – whetstones; 11 – pestle/smoother

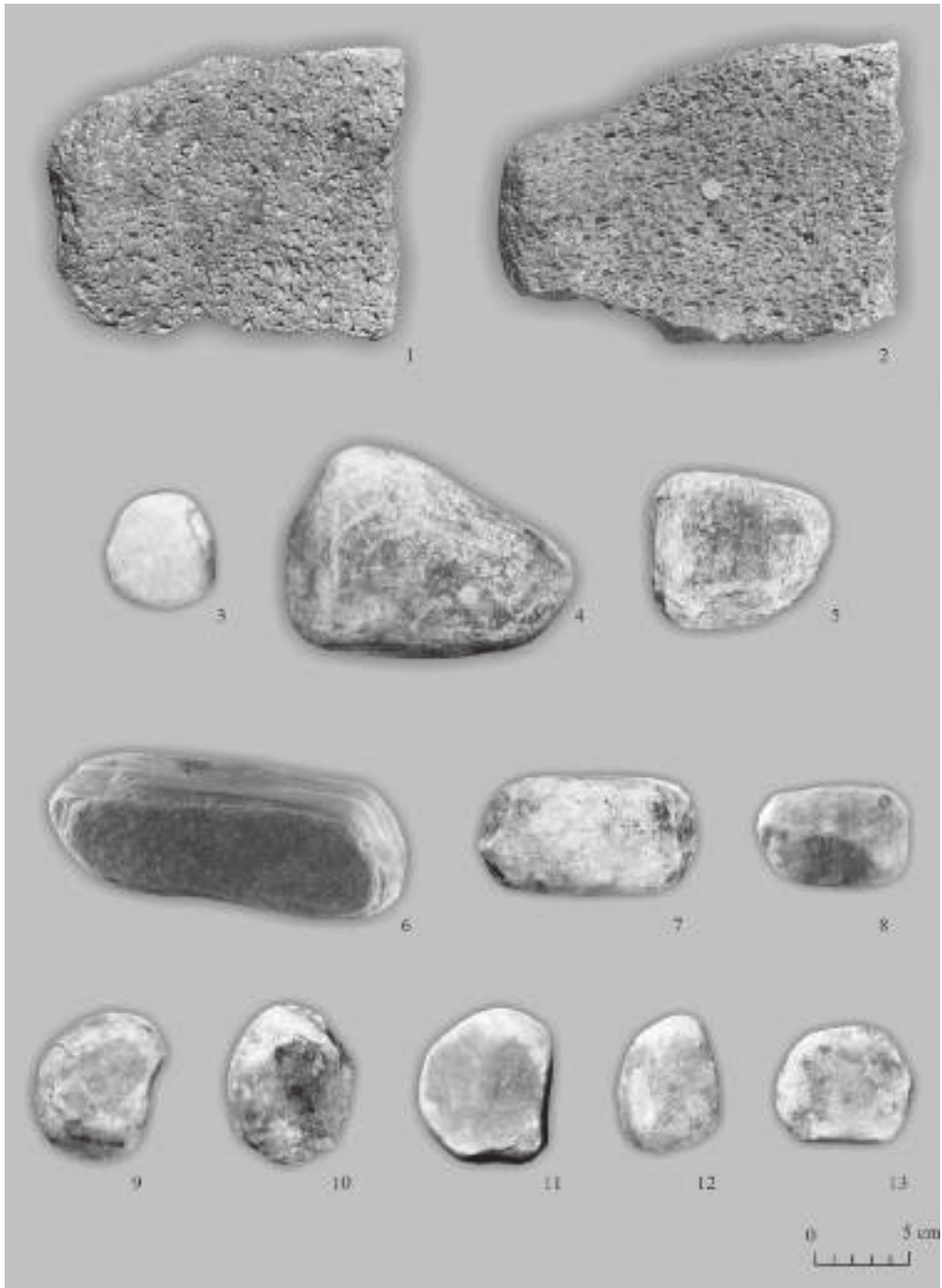


Plate 2. Room L6: 1, 2 – grinding slabs; 6 – upper grinding stone; 3-5, 7-13 – handstones

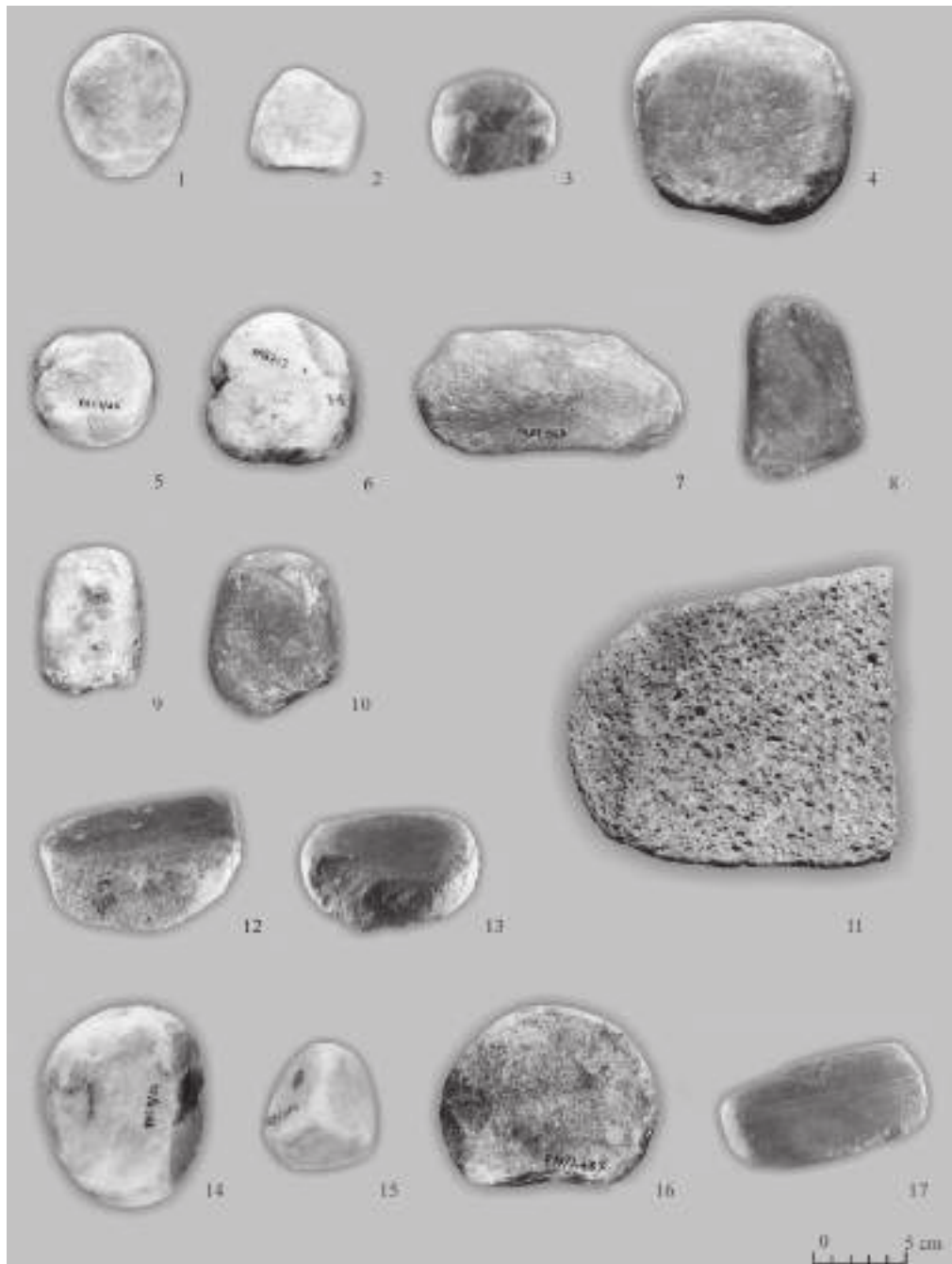


Plate 3. Room L6: 1-6 – handstones; 7 – pounding stone; 8-10 – pounding stones/smoother. Room L2: 11, 12 – grinding slabs; 13-16 – handstones; 17 – pounding stone/smoother

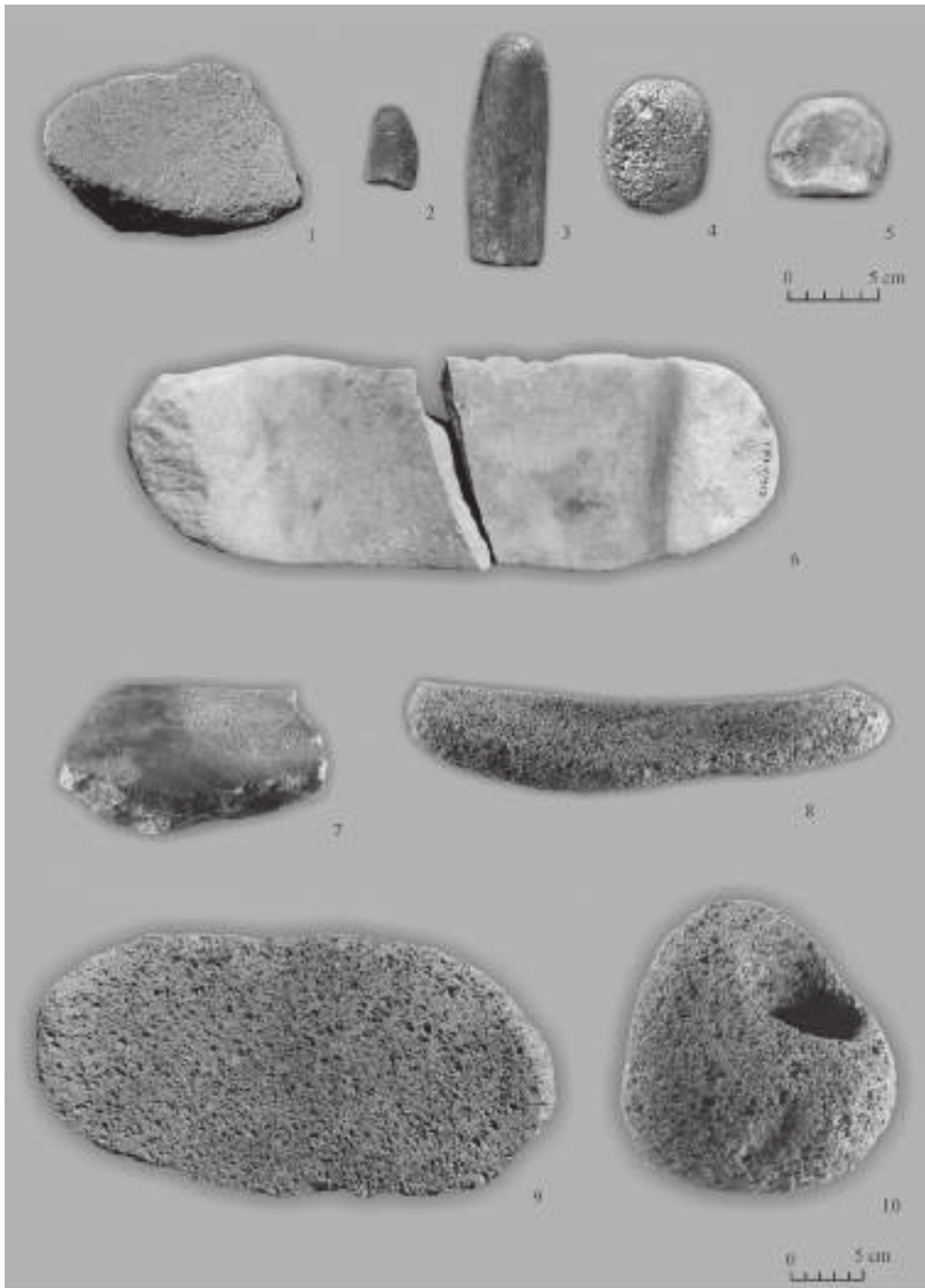


Plate 4. Room L12: 1 – grinding slab; 2-4 – pestles. Room L7: 5 – handstone. Room L11: 6-10 – grinding slabs

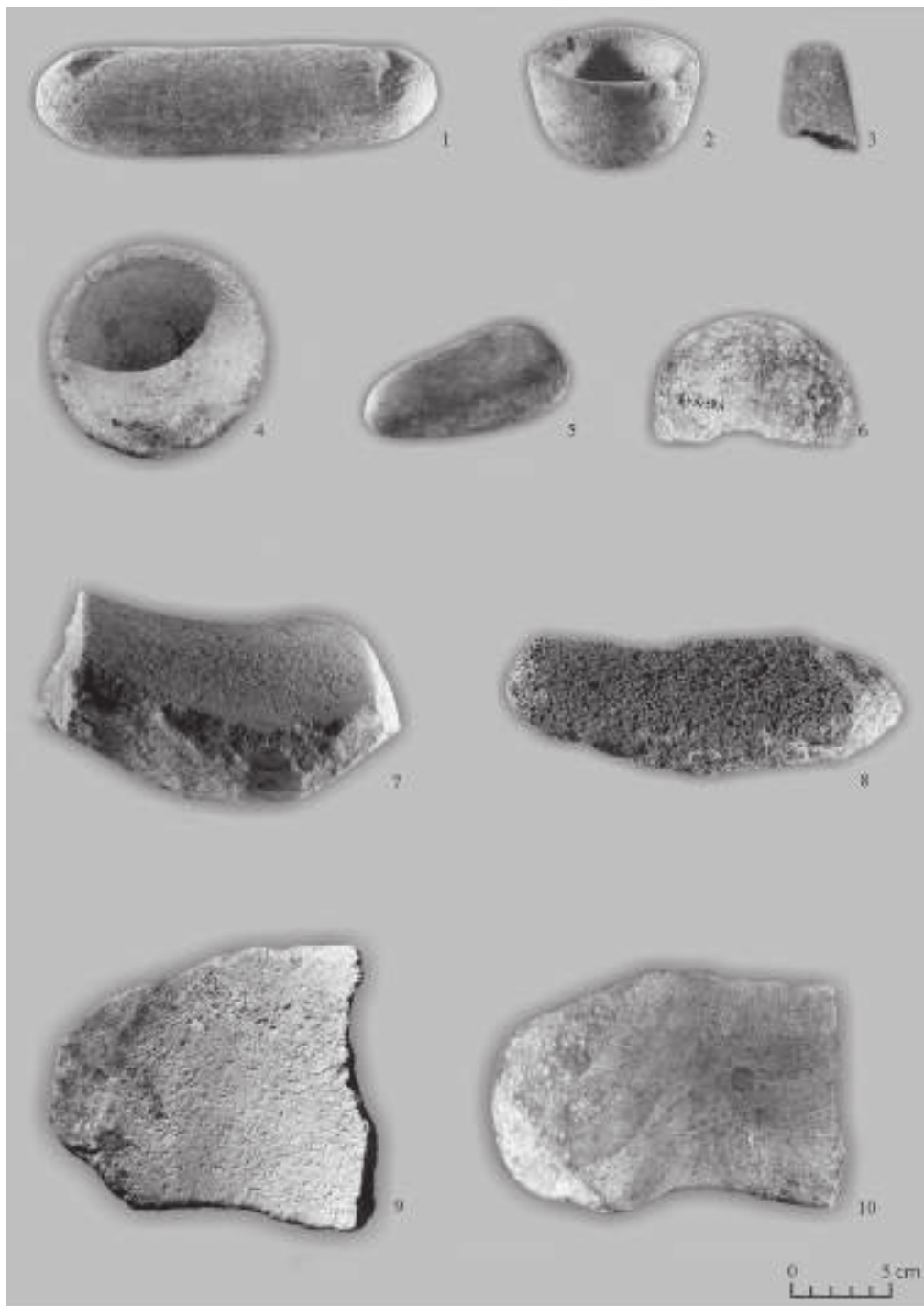


Plate 5. Room L11: 1 – pestle/smoothen; 2, 4 – mortars; 3 – pestle; 5 – smoother; 6 – handstone. Room L10: 7-10 – grinding slabs

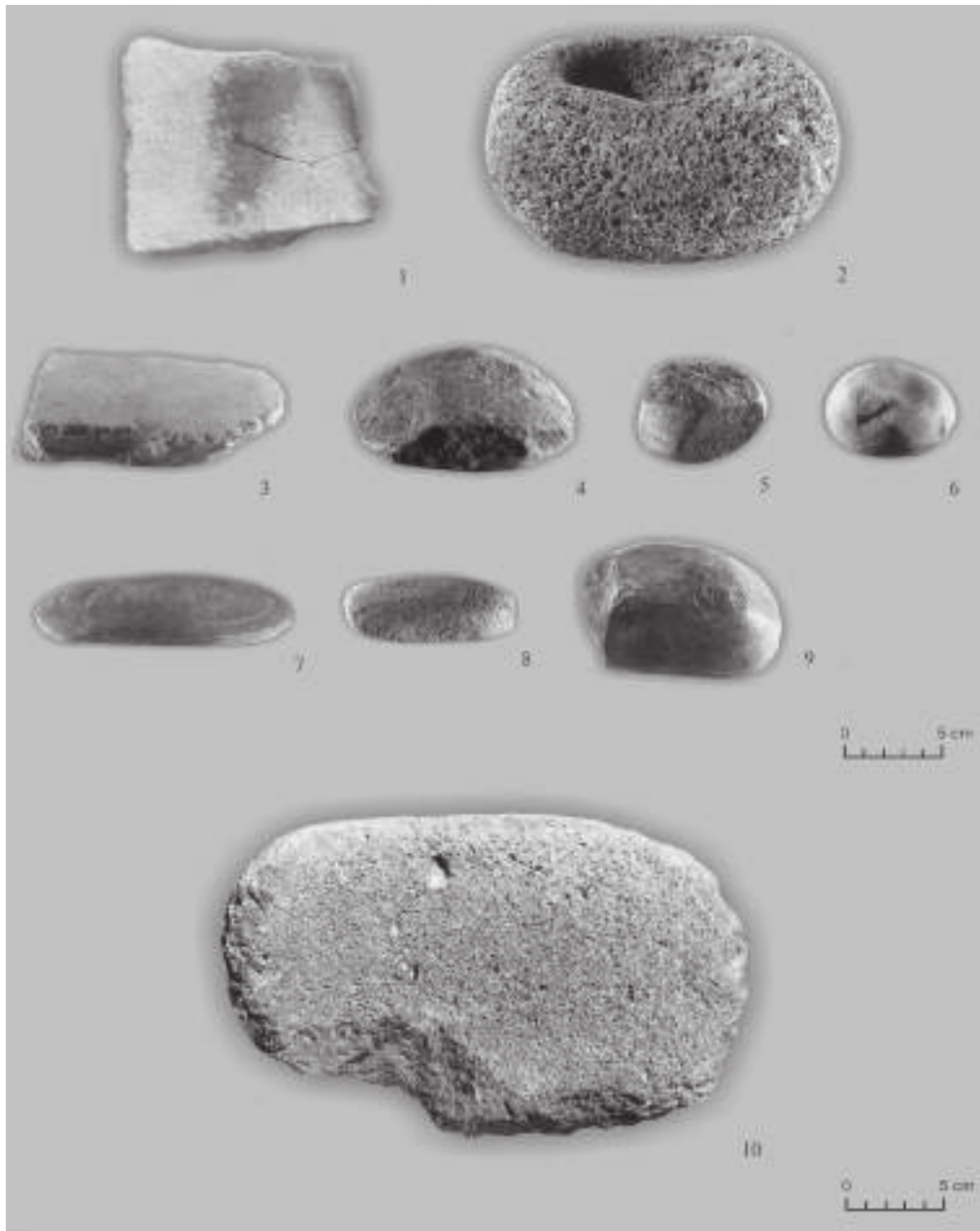


Plate 6. Room L10: 1, 3 – grinding slabs; 2 – mortar; 4-6 – handstones; 7 – smoother; 8 – pestle/
smoother; 9 – pounding stone/smoother. Room L5: 10 – grinding slab

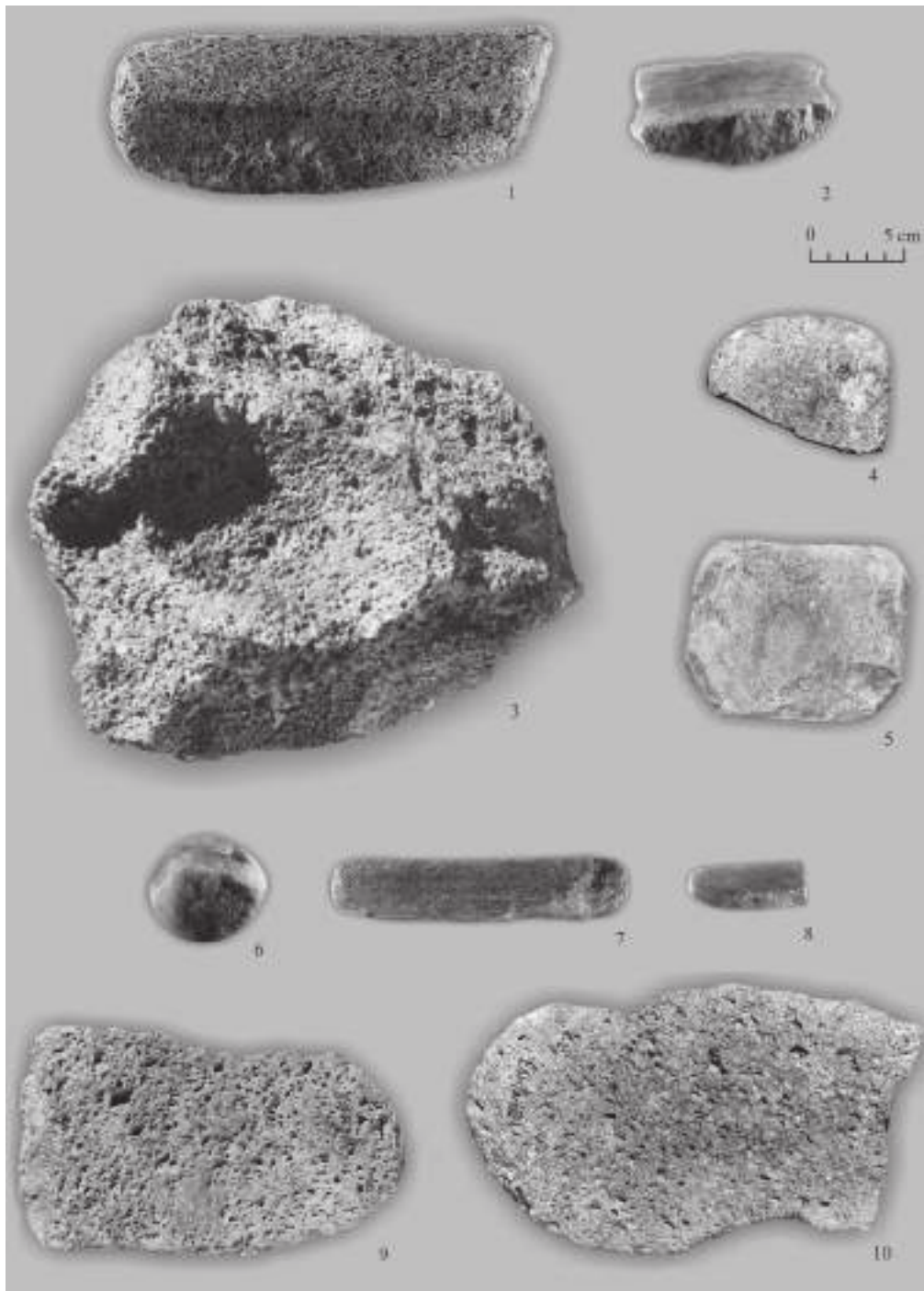


Plate 7. Room L5: 1, 2 – grinding slabs; 3 – mortar; 4-6 – handstones; 7 – pestle; 8 – whetstone. Room L3: 9, 10 – grinding slabs

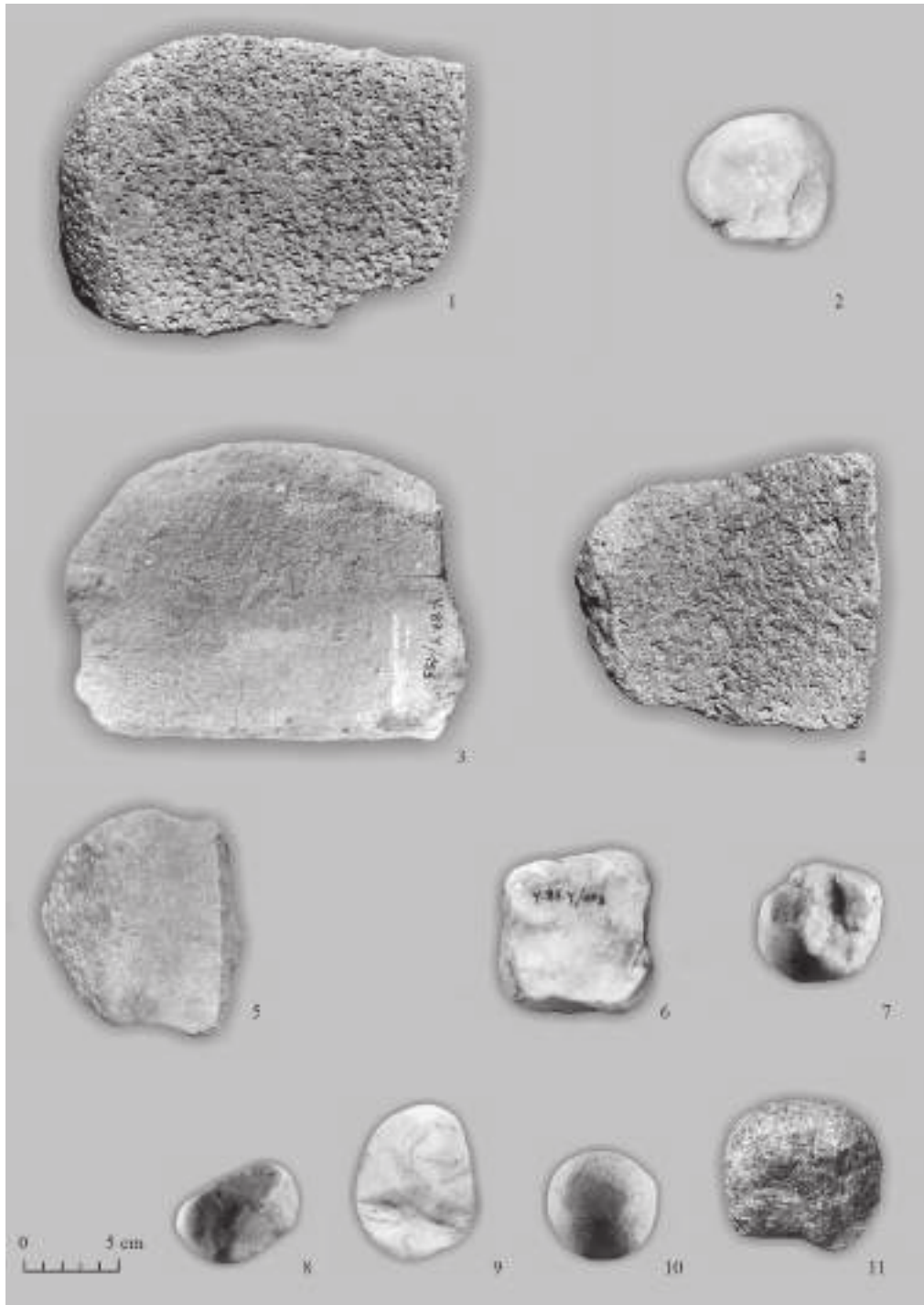


Plate 8. Room L3. 1 – grinding slab; 2 – handstone. Room L9: 3-5 – grinding slabs; 6-10 – handstones; 11 – pestle

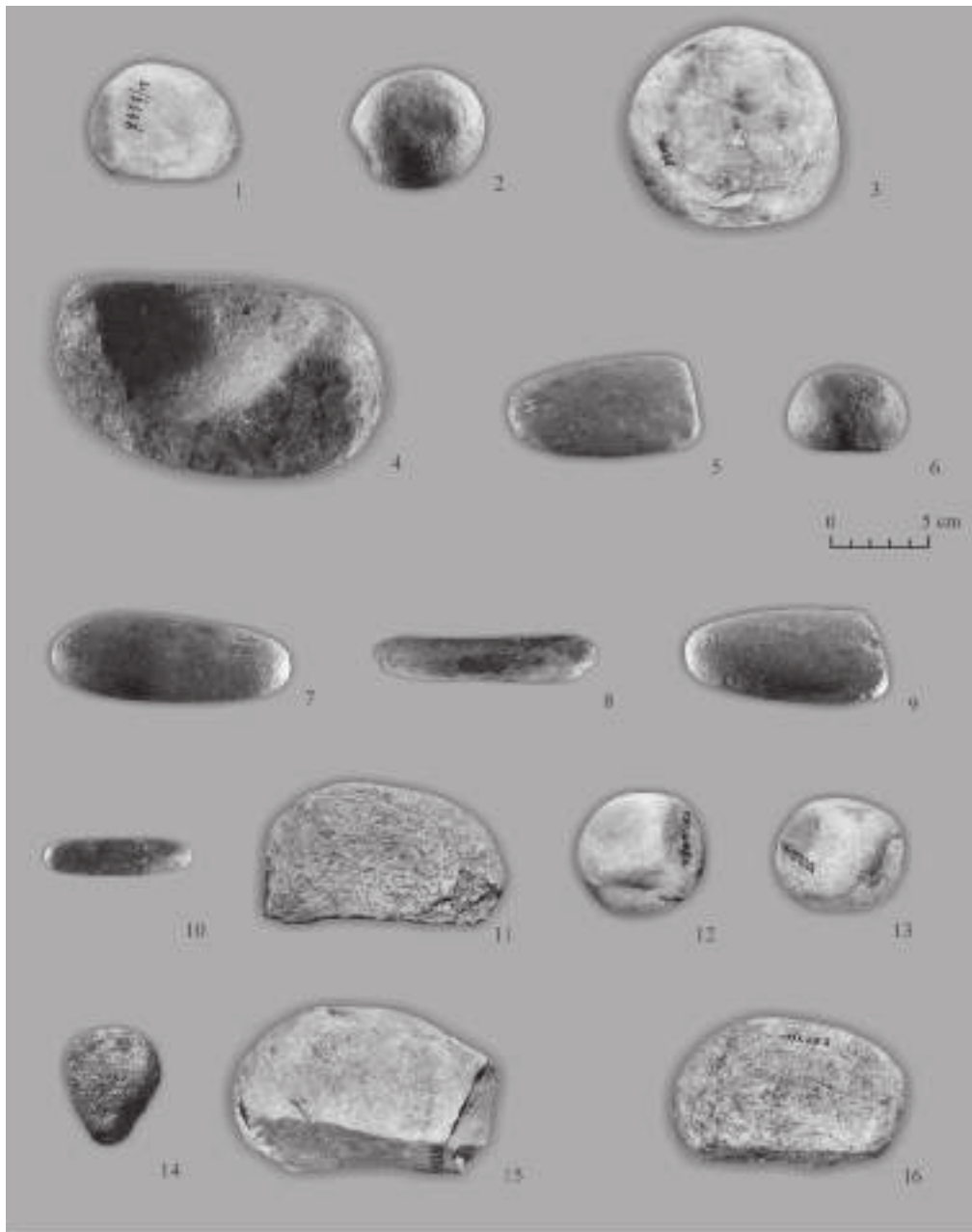


Plate 9. Room L6, sounding, lev. 2: 1-3 – handstones. Room L6, sounding, lev. B and C: 4 – mortar; 5 – pestle; 6 – handstone; 7 – smoother; 8 – whetstone; 9 – pestle/smoothing; Room L5, under floor: 10, 14 – pestles; 11-13, 15 – handstones. Room L2, under floor: 16 – handstone

Mikhail D. BUKHARIN

DESCRIPTION OF NABATAEA IN THE “PERIPLUS OF THE ERYTHRAEAN SEA” (TOWARDS THE DEFINITION OF THE SOURCES AND THE RESOURCES OF THEIR INTERPRETATION)¹

Since long ago pointing to the uniqueness of the “Periplus of the Erythraean Sea” (further on – “Periplus”) and high value of its information became a common place in the studies of this source. “Le traité grec du Périples de la mer Érythrée, l’un des plus précieux que nous ait légués l’antiquité...”, – so starts one of the studies of the “Periplus”, which is though about 150 years old, but is no less important now than in the days of its publication².

No less common is the view that inspite of the long-continued efforts of the historians and philologists of different specialisations³, this source is still poorly understood, underestimated and not enough studied. One of the earlier editors of the “Periplus” H. Frisk remarked with regret: “N’ayant aucun mérite littéraire, le Périples n’a certainement jamais été objet d’une cri-

¹ For different reasons the author could not propose for the Proceedings of the “Rencontres sabéennes 15” the article based on the oral communication held on the conference. Under the “Erythraean Sea” here the entire sea-basin, described in the “Periplus”, not only the modern Red Sea, is meant.

² Reinaud 1864: 225.

³ W. Raunig – the author of one of the summarizing studies of the “Periplus” (Raunig 1970: 232) refers to C. Salmasius, who worked in the 17th cent. yet (Salmasius 1689), as to “one of the first” researchers of this source. The work of Salmasius has been criticized still in that same 17th cent. (Dodwell 1698: 88)! The modern studies may repose on the more than 300 years of scholarly experience in dealing with the “Periplus”.

tique de la part des philologues de l'antiquité. On l'a regardé comme tel document commun, dont la valeur tenait uniquement à son contenu, sans se soucier de sa forme extérieure"⁴.

Quite a lot of studies have been published since appearance of Frisk's edition of the "Periplus", which deal with this text, however there is practically no work with the exception of the edition of the "Periplus" by L. Casson⁵, which tend to accumulate the experience of philologists and historians. Characteristic in this respect is the opinion of E. Frézouls: "Malgré une abondante littérature, le *Périple de la Mer Érythrée* n'a pas été utilisé comme il mériterait d'être. Il est même relativement peu connu, surtout dans les pays, ... où il n'est accessible qu'en grec ou dans une traduction étrangère"⁶. It could be completed by the opinion of H.-P. Ray: "The problem is one of translation and comprehension of this text which has not been adequately resolved and continues to engage the attention of philologists"⁷. An unsatisfactory edition or poor translation (a reasonable translation of the "Periplus" is always possible only basing on the historical interpretation of its information and textological critics) of the text, whose form and contents are unique in many respects, can often be of less value than the absence of any, so the situation has not changed very much at least since the edition of Frisk.

Purely practical purpose of the "Periplus" is clearly formulated by almost all the scholars, who deal with the history of the basin of ancient Erythraean Sea. The following quotations seem to be enough: "This work, the single example of its kind to have survived, is a combination of coast pilot and merchant's guide for two trade routes: one along the western shore of the Red Sea, the southern of the Gulf of Aden, and the eastern of Africa to Zanzibar or a little further, the other down the Red Sea and along the southern coast of Arabia and across the Arabian Sea to India"⁸; "The *Periplus Maris Erythraei* is a guide to the sailing conditions, ports and products of coastal East Africa, Southern Arabia and India, with passing reference to the Persian Gulf and China"⁹. The most widespread definition of this source is a kind of "guide for traders and sea-men"¹⁰.

Such formulations are generally unobjectionable. From the other hand neither these ones, nor the others take into consideration the origin of the information of the composer of the "Periplus"¹¹. It is supposed by default¹² or clearly stated¹³ that the information of this "Periplus"

⁴ Frisk 1927: 33–34.

⁵ Casson 1989.

⁶ Frézouls 1984: 305.

⁷ Ray 1996: 643.

⁸ Casson 1980: 23.

⁹ Sidebotham 1990: 16.

¹⁰ Cf. also other formulations: "The date of this merchant-sailor's guide (as it seems likely to be) lies between the late 1st and early 3rd century A.D. ..." (Chittick 1980: 117); "Le *Périple* est d'abord, comme son titre même l'implique et comme une longue tradition l'imposait à son auteur, un guide de navigation, une description des trajets..." (Frézouls 1984: 306); see also for more detailed definitions: Casson 1989: 8.

¹¹ Here and further on instead of "the author of the Periplus" the expression "the composer of the Periplus" is used; this fits better the logic of the article; earlier A. Dihle used a similar designation – "Verfasser des Periplus" (Dihle 1965: 26).

¹² Casson 1983: 164–165; Young 1997: 266–268.

¹³ "He writes from his personal experience, as is evident not only from the nature of his reporting, direct and detailed... His personal experience included the African route down to Rhapta and the Arabian-Indian at least down to Cape Comorin at India's southern tip" (Casson 1989: 8).

have been gained from personal experience of its composer or at least from the experience of the other traders during the years of their activity in the sea-basin from Egypt to South-East India. However not all the fragment of the “Periplus” can be regarded as reflecting historical realities, especially those contemporary to its presumed composer.

It was already pointed out to the fragments of the “Periplus” which seem to have had purely literary, or even pseudo-literary, origin¹⁴.

The first six paragraphs of the “Periplus” describe the way from Myos Hormos to Adulis and certain “deep bay”. The “Periplus” describes the route of a trade ship in the ancient Erythraean Sea following certain reference points. One of these was called τὸ πέρασ τῆς ἀνακομιδῆς (3: 1. 12–15), from which the distance to Ptolemais of the Hunts was given. It was generally understood as the “endpoint of return” and thought to have been identical to Berenice. In fact the phrase is to be understood as “the endpoint of sailing/delivery from (Egypt)” and the place appears to be identified with modern Anfile Bay¹⁵, where the trade ships turned back.

According to the “Periplus”, Ptolemais was 4000 stades distant from τὸ πέρασ τῆς ἀνακομιδῆς (3: 1. 13). The total of the distances from Ptolemais of the Hunts to the “deep bay”, which comes after Adulis, was namely 4000 stades: 4000 stades from τὸ πέρασ τῆς ἀνακομιδῆς to Ptolemais = 3000 from Ptolemais to Adulis + 200 from the innermost part of the bay of Adulis to the island Oreine + 800 stades from the island Oreine to the “deep bay”, which had to coincide with τὸ πέρασ τῆς ἀνακομιδῆς. The composer of the “Periplus” says that after the “deep bay” the “Arabian Gulf” “already” (ἤδη) turns east at its narrowest part (7: 3. 8–9).

He gives the distance to Ptolemais of the Hunts – i.e. to the port, following Myos Hormos and Berenice in his description of the Erythraean Sea, not from these preceding ports, as was usual in his report, but from the end-point of the voyage before turning back. It looks like as if the composer of the “Periplus” did not know the distance to Ptolemais from Berenice. However, following the requirements of the genre of *peripli*, he had to give it from a certain reference-point. As such the end-point of the delivery had been chosen, since the trade ships did not visit Ptolemais – the main point of the elephant hunt – sailing southwards. The port of Ptolemais of the Hunts itself had to be visited on the way back to Egypt. The reason was connected with the primary goal of the establishment of the port: it was much more practical to take elephants aboard on the way back to Egypt. The information on Ptolemais of the Hunts seems to be derived by the author of the “Periplus” from a late Ptolemaic source, in any way, not from his personal experience. The exact route of the ship, referred to by him, is unknown, and even the knowledge of the exact distance from the reference point does not allow us to identify the region, where Ptolemais of the Hunts is to be sought¹⁶.

¹⁴ Bukharin 2011: 219–231.

¹⁵ The identification of the “deep bay” was not paid enough attention. Its identification with the Huwakil Bay is normally being given as doubtless without any analysis (e.g. in Wendrich, Tomber, Sidebotham, Harrell, Cappers, Bagnall 2003: 59). Meanwhile it can hardly be accepted. The Huwakil Bay is located too close to Dissei Island (i.e. Oreine): the “Periplus” (5: 2. 16) gives the distance of 800 stades, which separate Dissei Island and the “deep bay”. This is too much to accept this identification even with possible distortions. Moreover, the Huwakil Bay has no entrance, which is described in the “Periplus” as “filled with sand” (5: 2. 17). In all probability, the composer of the “Periplus” meant the next (following to the south) Anfile Bay, whose stretched form can really be associated with the depth. Since, according to the “Periplus”, the bay had high sandy bottom, its “depth” must not be understood in a way that this bay was really deep.

¹⁶ Bukharin 2011: 219–231.

This conclusion can be confirmed by some other observations: description of a certain route is normally followed by a reference to the most favorable season of departure. The best time to start to the “deep bay” to the south of Adulis (The Anfile Bay) is said to have been September (6: 3. 4–7), that to the ports on the coast of modern Somalia – July (14: 5. 7–8), to Muza on the South Arabian shore – September (24: 8. 10–11), to Qana’ – the same as to Muza, i.e. September, and earlier (28: 9. 20–21), to Barygaza in West India (49: 16. 31–32) and to the ports of Limyrike – July (56: 18. 28–29).

It is noteworthy that the time of departure to the ports of different segments of the general route of the “Periplus” is different and these segments cannot be set in a straight line. So, they could hardly ever compose a united route. Sailing to the ports in modern Somalia in July, one could not visit Adulis and the “deep bay” – the principle center of the Red Sea trade, lying “on the way” to Somalia, at the same time, since the best time for sailing to Adulis and to the “deep bay” fell on September; sailing to Muza in September, one could not continue to Barygaza and Limyrike – the departure to these ports was recommended to July; sailing to Qana’ earlier than to Muza, one could not combine visits of these ports.

It is also noteworthy that the time of the recommended departure is given to all the key-points of the route of the “Periplus”, which were in different time the most distant frontiers of the penetration of the Mediterranean traders into the Erythraean Sea, with the exception of the southernmost ports on the East African coast; these are: the southernmost ports on the African and Arabian shores of the modern Red Sea, the ports in the “Barbarian land” to the south of Bāb al-mandab, which supplied them with species and aromatics, Qana’ – the only port in South Arabia outside the modern Red Sea, which seems, according to the “Periplus”, to have held regular trade connections with Mediterranean, and to the northern and southern extremities of Western Indian route. Moreover, all the above mentioned points, lying in Africa and Arabia, served, according to the “Periplus” (21: 7. 23; 57: 18. 30–57: 19. 7–8), as the points of further sailing to India! The composer of the “Periplus” has completed this list even with the port of Arabia Eudaimon (57: 18. 30–57: 19. 1), which “earlier” was a meeting point of the traders from India and Egypt (26: 8. 27–29), i.e. this information was not actual any more in his days.

The absence of such information for the most distant ports on the African coast of the Erythraean Sea looks in this context at least “strange”. From the other hand, the composer of the “Periplus” does not say with certainty that Rhapta and the places, given before it, – are the southernmost African ports. He says that in the presumptive way: “Καὶ σχεδὸν τελευταιότατά ἐστι ταῦτα τὰ ἐμπόρια τῆς Ἀζανίας τῆς ἐν δεξιούτῳ ἀπὸ Βερνίκης ἡπείρου” (18: 6. 21). However, as was earlier observed¹⁷, the classical geographers in the middle of the 1st cent. A.D. were perfectly aware of the regions to the south of Rhapta (see Ptolemy’s account of the earlier travels to the south of Rhapta in Geogr. I. 5. 1–4). One may only guess if the composer of the “Periplus” would not have found the relevant information and has summed up his exposé about South Africa at the place, the information of which was accessible for him. In other words the description of this route is not complete; consequently the composer of the “Periplus” could not give the best time for departure to Rhapta and to the ports lying to the south of it.

Some observation on the text of the “Periplus” could point to the influence of contemporary and preceding literary tradition on its composer, but not that of the local realities. Thus he does not know (or, at least, does not use) the local name of the kingdom of Ḥaḍramawt (ASA

¹⁷ Dihle 1965: 29.

Ἡδρμ(W)T), using three times its descriptive designation ἡ Λιβανωτοφόρος χώρα (27: 9. 4–5; 29: 9. 24; 31: 10. 20; the names of Qatabān and Maʿīn were not mentioned at all). It is interesting to mark out that the informant of Pliny the Elder in this question¹⁸ used two notions – the local one in Latin rendering (*A[s]tramitae*) and a literary metaphoric (purely Classical) one. However the description of the port of Qanaʾ (28: 9. 13–21) and that of delivery of the cargoes of frankincense to Šabwa leaves no doubt that its author (whoever it was – the composer of the text himself or his unknown informant) was well informed in this sphere and had, most probably, information from his personal experience. Though the denomination of Ἡδρμawt as “Frankincense-bearing Land” gets widespread in Classical geography in later times (e.g.: *Ptol. Geogr. VI. 7. 24*), its Greek version, as was earlier pointed out¹⁹, quite well corresponds to Latin *regio turifera* (*Plin. NH. VI. XXVI/104, XII. XXX/52*) regarding the same region. Both denominations were used in the 6th book of Pliny’s “Natural History” for designation of one and the same place: Κανή, βασιλείας Ἐλεάζου, χώρας Λιβανωτοφόρου of the “Periplus” corresponds to *Canen turiferae regionis* of Pliny’s work.

The description of the delivery of frankincense in the “Periplus” is also interesting in this context: “[...] ἐμπόριον ἐστὶν ἕτερον παραθαλάσσιον Κανή, βασιλείας Ἐλεάζου, χώρας Λιβανωτοφόρου [...] Ὑπέροκειται δὲ αὐτῆς μεσόγειος ἡ μητροπολις Σαββαθά, ἐν ἣ καὶ ὁ βασιλεὺς κατοικεῖ· πᾶς δ’ ὁ γεννώμενος ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ λίβανος εἰς αὐτὴν ὥσπερ ἐκδοχεῖον εἰσάγεται καμήλοις τε καὶ σχεδίαις ἐντοπίαις δερματίναις ἐξ ἄσκων καὶ πλοίοις (27: 9. 4–10)”.

L. Casson translated this fragment in the following way: “[...] another port of trade on the coast, Kanê, belonging to the kingdom of Eleazos, the frankincense-bearing land; [...] Above it inland lies the metropolis of Saubatha, which is also the residence of the king. All the frankincense grown in the land is brought into Kanê, as if to a warehouse, by camel as well as by rafts of a local type made of leathern bags, and by boats”²⁰. Casson’s interpretation implies that Qanaʾ was meant under “εἰς αὐτὴν”. In this very way this fragment was understood in the latest study of the Classical sources on Ἡδρμawt²¹: «À Kanê [...] est centralisé tout l’encense produit dans ce pays [...]»²².

However such interpretations seem doubtful and an earlier one, proposed in particular by W.H. Schoff (“all the frankincense produced in the country is brought by camels to that place to be stored, and to Cana on rafts [...]”)²³, or another – even more earlier by W. Vincent (“The metropolis in the interior is Sabbathath: here is the residence of the king, and hither is brought all

¹⁸ One may only speculate, if Pliny followed in the description of South Arabian aromatics the lost work of king Iuba on geography of Arabia, which Pliny mentioned some paragraphs earlier (*NH. XII. XXXII/39*).

¹⁹ Cuvigny 2010: 420.

²⁰ Casson 1989: 67.

²¹ Cuvigny 2010: 420.

²² Cuvigny 2010: 430. From the other hand in this very way it was interpreted much earlier, e.g.: “At Kanê is collected all the incense that is produced in the country, this being conveyed to it partly on camels, and partly by sea on floats [...]” (McCrinkle 1879: 87). Since the English translation of McCrinkle is based not on the original Greek text, but on Latin translation of C. Müller, it is not surprising that it exactly corresponds to what one may find in Müller’s translation: “Omne autem quod nascitur in hac regione thus in Canen tanquam receptaculum partim camelis infertur, partim ratibus pro loci more pelliceis ex utribus, partim navigiis” (Müller 1855: 278–279).

²³ Schoff 1912: 32. H. Cuvigny (Cuvigny 2010: 430–431), while quoting this fragment, inserts “[i.e. Saubatha]” after “place”, which is missing in the text of W.H. Schoff.

the frankincense of the country to be stored. Camels, boats, and rafts floated on inflated skins, are employed in the conveyance”²⁴) is to be preferred. Though Schoff was not very correct in rendering the sense of the ancient Greek text (there are place-names in the translation, which are absent in the original text), his translation, and especially that of Vincent, are more accurate for some following reasons.

First of all, the part, immediately preceding to the fragment in question, dealt with Šabwa; it is hardly expectable that another, an earlier mentioned settlement, would have been meant under αὐτή. Then, the delivery of frankincense to Qana’ on camels, not by water, could hardly have any sense, moreover Pliny the Elder in practically the same words, as the composer of the “Periplus”, says about the delivery of frankincense on camels namely to Šabwa: *tus collectum Sabotam camelis convehitur* (NH. XII. XXXII/63). One may see the likelihood of this phrase in terms and contents to that of the composer of the “Periplus”: «πᾶς δ’ὁ γεννώμενος ἐν τῇ χῶρᾳ λίβανος εἰς αὐτὴν [...] εἰσάγεται καμήλοις». The reference to the delivery of the frankincense by sea pointed to the existence of the sea way to Qana’ from the frankincense plantations of modern Ḍufār (ancient Sa’kalān). Thus, in quite an awkward way, the composer of the “Periplus” wanted to say that the frankincense was delivered by sea to Qana’ and from there to Šabwa by camels²⁵. It could be possible that as in the case of designation of “Qana’ of the Frankincense-bearing land”, both descriptions of the delivery of the frankincense in Pliny’s “Natural History” and in the “Periplus” go back to one and the same source. This could point to using by the composer of the “Periplus” not only personal experience (that of his own or of his informants), but to borrowing information from the other written (or even oral) sources.

The description of the “warlike Bactrians” (μαχιμώτατον ἔθνος Βακτριάνων) in the “Periplus” (47: 16. 6) could also drop some light on the foundations of this source. This definition of the Bactrians quite well corresponds to what Herodotus yet wrote about them (III. 102): «Ἄλλοι δὲ τῶν Ἰνδῶν Κασπατύρω τε πόλι καὶ τῇ Πακτυϊκῇ χῶρῃ εἰσὶ πρόσοικοι, πρὸς ἄρκτου τε καὶ βορρῆω ἀνέμου κατοικημένοι τῶν ἄλλων Ἰνδῶν, οἱ Βακτροῖοι παραπλησίην ἔχουσι δίαιταν. Οὗτοι καὶ μαχιμώτατοί εἰσι Ἰνδῶν ...»²⁶. It is hardly possible that the composer of the “Periplus” read Herodotus and borrowed information directly from his *Histories*. However the definition of the Bactrians in the “Periplus” had to reflect a kind stereotype regarding the population to the north of India²⁷. Non-authentic nature of this information may be deduced from the fact that the Bactria, as well as entire North India, was conquered by the Sakarauka²⁸ and Kuṣāṇa tribes yet at the end of the 1st cent. B.C. The composer of the “Periplus” says nothing of them, while the “latest” fragments of the “Periplus” are dated in the 70–80 of the 1st cent. A.D.²⁹

The influence of the most widespread stereotypes concerning India can be seen in the reference to the topics from the so called “Alexander Romance”: Alexander the Great set off from the Indus valley not to Mesopotamia, but having crossed entire Indian peninsula, reached Ganges (47: 16. 6–7). One may also find this story in the “Library of History” of Diodorus of Sicily (II. 37. 3).

²⁴ Vincent 1809: 88.

²⁵ Earlier, in fewer details, such an interpretation has been put forward in Bukharin 2009: 28.

²⁶ “Other Indians dwell near the town of Caspatyrus and the Pactyic country, northward of the rest of India; these live like the Bactrians; they are of all Indians the most warlike” (tr. after Godley 1928: 129).

²⁷ See in more details: Bukharin 2002: 259; 2007: 147; 2012.

²⁸ See about the identification of the Sakarauka tribes as the conquerors of Bactria in: Bernard 1987: 756–768.

²⁹ Bukharin 2007: 233–246.

The definition of the sources for composition of the “Periplus” can be continued by analyzing its information on Nabataea and on the description of the way from Leuke Kome to Petra to the court of the king Malichus (the writing of the name of the Nabataean king Malcha would seem more correct, since its has to render the Aram. *malkā*). Before “Periplus” Leuke Kome was mentioned by Strabo (XVI. 4. 23) in the description of the adventures of Aelius Gallus during his Arabian campaign. It was mentioned as an important Nabataean port: “[...] ἦκεν εἰς Λευκὴν κώμην τῆς Ναβαταίων γῆς, ἐμπόριον μέγα”. In this very chapter of his “Geography” Strabo (XVI. 4. 23) reports of the delivery of the cargoes to Petra through Leuke Kome: “πολλὰ δὲ παθὼν καὶ ταλαιπωρηθεὶς πεντεκαίδεκαταῖος ἦκεν εἰς Λευκὴν κώμην τῆς Ναβαταίων γῆς, ἐμπόριον μέγα [...] τοῦτο δ’ ἀπειργάσατο ἢ τοῦ Συλλαίου κακία τοῦ περὶ φήσαντος ἀνόδευτα εἶναι στρατοπέδοις εἰς τὴν Λευκὴν κώμην, εἰς ἣν καὶ ἕξ ἡς οἱ καμηλέμποροι τοσοῦτω πλήθει ἀνδρῶν καὶ καμήλων ὁδεύουσιν ἀσφαλῶς καὶ εὐπόρως εἰς Πέτραν καὶ ἐκ Πέτρας, ὥστε μὴ διαφέρειν μηδὲν στρατοπέδου”³⁰. Further on Strabo says (XVI. 4. 24) that loads of incenses are conveyed to Petra from Leuke Kome: “ἐκ μὲν οὖν τῆς Λευκῆς κώμης εἰς Πέτραν, ἐντεῦθεν δ’ εἰς Ῥινοκόλουρα τῆς πρὸς Αἰγύπτῳ Φοινίκης τὰ φορτία κομίζεται [...]”³¹.

The “Periplus of the Erythraean Sea” described the way from Leuke Kome to Petra in the following way: “...Λευκὴ κώμη, δι’ ἧς ἐστὶν εἰς Πέτραν πρὸς Μαλίχαν, βασιλέα Ναβαταίων, <ἀνάβασις>” (19: 6. 28–29)³². Reading of this fragment is given according to the edition of L. Casson³³; it often attracted attention of the historians as one of the fewest attestations of the existence of the port Leuke Kome³⁴, as well as an argument for the dating of the “Periplus” in connection with reference to the king Malichus³⁵ and the peculiarities of the Roman economic policy the Red Sea basin, in particular in connection with mention of a certain official in this very paragraph (19: 7. 1–2), who had to ensure the defense of the port and levying the quarter timber of the goods, imported to Leuke Kome³⁶.

Description of Leuke Kome in the “Periplus” differs from that of the majority of the ports on the Erythraean Sea: its composer gives only approximate distance to it – “in two or three days sailing from Berenice”: the route itself is given in quite uncommon way: “to the left of Berenice” and “to the east” of Myos Hormos – there is no sequence like “to the north” and “to the east”, there is no list of goods traded in the port either. This is even stranger, since a way through Leuke Kome lead to the Nabataean capital Petra. In almost all such cases the com-

³⁰ “After many experiences and hardships he (Aelius Gallus – *M.B.*) arrived in fourteen days at Leuce Come in the land of the Nabataeans, a large emporium... This was caused by the treachery of Syllaues, who said that there was no way for an army to go to Leuce Come by land; and yet camel-traders travel back and forth from Petra to this place in safety and ease, and in such numbers of men and camels that they differ in no respect from an army...” (tr. after Jones 1930: 357).

³¹ “...from Leuce Come to Petra, and thence to Rhinocolura, which is in Phoenicia near Aegypt...” (tr. after Jones 1930: 359).

³² “...Leukê Kômê [“white village”], through which there is a way inland up to Petra, to Malichus, king of the Nabataeans” (tr. after Casson 1989: 61).

³³ Casson 1989: 60.

³⁴ See: Bukharin 2005–2006: 138; 2007: 98–104; 2009: 138–145; 2010: 117, 128, map 2; Nappo 2010: 335–349.

³⁵ E.g.: Pirenne 1961: 193–198; 1961a: 444–457; Will 1962: 576–577; Vaux de 1964: 148–149; Pirenne 1970: 110–112; Shifman 1978: 136–139.

³⁶ For example, Young 1997: 266–268.

poser of the “Periplus” mentioned goods imported namely for the king: Zoskales – in Axum (6: 2. 33–35), Charibael – king of Saba’ and Ḥimyar, as well as for the “tyrant” of Ma‘afir (24: 8. 7–9), Eleazos – king of the “Frankincense-bearing land”, i.e. Ḥaḍramawt (28: 9. 17–18), Parthian kings of Indo-Scythia (39: 13. 5–6), and Manbanos (Nahāpana) – the Saka ruler of Barygaza (49: 16. 25–26). The kings of the South Indian kingdoms are mentioned, the roads to their residences are also given in the text, however the import for them was not specially pointed out. All these circumstances let us suppose that neither the composer of the “Periplus” nor his informants visited Leuke Kome, and that Roman sea-traders did not consider Nabataea as a partner in the sea-trade.

The last word in the ancient Greek phrase (ἀνάβασις) is a restoration of modern editors³⁷. In the Heidelberg manuscript (Codex Palatinus Graecus 308) the end of this phrase is read as ἀναβαταιωσ; the reading of the manuscript of the British Museum (Add. Ms. 19391) is the following one: “...δι’ ἧς ἐστὶν εἰς Πέτραν πρὸς Μαλίχαν βασιλέα ἀναβατάωσ”. There is a correction written in the CPG through the *alpha*: the correction is practically unreadable, the *alpha* is seen quite well. The difference between two manuscripts is *iota* (ι) after *alpha* in the Heidelberg manuscript. In short, the interpretations of this fragment of the “Periplus” in the studies of the last two centuries could be summarized as follows below.

W. Vincent, one of the pioneers of the study of the “Periplus”, translated the description of Leuke Kome: “For here, we are informed, was point of communication with Petra the capital of the country, the residence of Malichas the king of the Nabatēans”³⁸. This is naturally not a proper translation. In a later edition of the Greek text of the “Periplus” Vincent has given not a fully logic reading of the text with translations: “...Λευκὴ κόμη, δι’ ἧς ἐστὶν εἰς Πέτραν πρὸς Μαλίχαν βασιλέα Ναβαταίων” – “Leukè Kômè is the place where the merchants land to go up to Petra, the residence of Malikhas, king of the Nabatēans”³⁹. The editor did not pay much attention to the absence in the Greek phrase in his interpretation of what was there “δι’ ἧς”; the English translation is quite far from the sense of the original text.

B. Fabricius remains the only editor of the “Periplus”, who has published its Greek text twice. In the former of these editions the fragment in question looks like that: “...Λευκὴ κόμη, δι’ ἧς ὁδὸς ἐστὶν εἰς Πέτραν πρὸς Μαλίχαν, βασιλέα Ναβαταίων”⁴⁰. Fabricius has inserted the word ὁδός, missing in the manuscript in the text and accompanied this insertion with the following footnote: “In proximis codex ὁδός praetermisit”. Thus the editor “overcame” the difficulty, insurmountable in the preceding edition of W. Vincent.

E.A. Schwanbek did not mention the difficulties of the interpretation of this fragment of the “Periplus”. However he realized them better than his predecessors. He could not finish his article “Über den Periplus des Erythräisches Meeres” because of untimely death – it was published in a state, in which it was left when Schwanbeck died. However this publication is still actual for many reasons. Schanbeck quoted the fragment in question in the following way: “... Λευκὴ κόμη, δι’ ἧς (ὁδός) ἐστὶν εἰς Πέτραν πρὸς Μαλίχαν βασιλέα Ναβαταίων” – in any case he put the word ὁδός in the round brackets⁴¹.

³⁷ In some publications (e.g. in Young 1997: 266) this fragment is quoted, as if the word ἀνάβασις were written in the manuscript.

³⁸ Vincent 1805: 231.

³⁹ Vincent 1809: 84.

⁴⁰ Fabricius 1849: 11.

⁴¹ Schwanbeck 1850: 341 (Anm. 1).

C. Müller – an outstanding expert in the writings of ancient Greek geographers, whom Classical philology is obliged to having divided the text of the “Periplus” in paragraphs⁴², has “improved” the edition of Fabricius, having enclosed the word ὁδός in square (in contrast to Schwanbeck) brackets: “...Λευκὴ κώμη, δι’ ἧς [ὁδός] ἐστὶν εἰς Πέτραν πρὸς Μαλίχαν, βασιλέα Ναβαταίων”⁴³. There is no word in the large commentaries to the text, given by Müller, about the state of the manuscripts and the corrections in it. These comments are given in the Introduction and it is not easy to find them in the *addenda et corrigenda*. According to Müller, the manuscript reading ναβαταιώς (sic!) is to be interpreted in the following way: “...Λευκὴ κώμη, δι’ ἧς ἐστὶν εἰς Πέτραν πρὸς Μαλίχαν βασιλέα Ναβαταίων [ἀνάβασις]”⁴⁴. So, the interpretation of the corrupted manuscript reading as Ναβαταίων ἀνάβασις, used in later editions of the “Periplus” by G.W.B. Huntingford and L. Casson, appears for the first time in Müller’s edition.

E. Streubel did not discuss the manuscript reading of the “Nabataean paragraph” of the “Periplus” in his translation of the text. His translation is one of the fewest, in which the sense of “δι’ ἧς” is rendered in a correct way. In the rest it follows the earlier tradition: “Leuke Kome (Albus Vicus, zu deutsch: weißes Dorf), durch welches der Weg nach Petra zum Könige der Nabatäer, Malicha, geht”⁴⁵.

J.W. McCrindle, who devoted his scholarly activity to the translations of the Classical sources on India, could not bypass such a source like the “Periplus of the Erythraean Sea”. His translation followed those of his predecessors, mostly that of C. Müller. The translation of the 19th paragraph reminds, however, that of W. Vincent: “...Leukê Kômê, and forming the point of communication with Petra, the residence of Malikhas, the king of the Nabatêans”⁴⁶.

The second edition of the “Periplus” by B. Fabricius was considered for a long time an exemplary one⁴⁷. However H. Frisk has sharply criticized its philological component. The largest disadvantage of this edition, according to Frisk, was poor knowledge of post-Classical Greek by Fabricius⁴⁸. From the other hand, the commentaries of Fabricius to this very fragment were very detailed. He has given its following reading: “...Λευκὴ κώμη, διὰ ἧς ὁδός ἐστὶν εἰς Πέτραν πρὸς Μαλίχαν, βασιλέα Ναβαταίων”. One may see that there appeared a non shortened preposition διὰ in the original text, while the words ὁδός and Ναβαταίων were inserted in the text without any brackets. The editors remarks in a note, that he (and independently from him – E.A. Schwanbek) has additionally inserted the word ὁδός. Fabricius has also given a short list of emendations of ἀναβαταιώς in the editions of the 16th–17th centuries: ναβαταίων (S. Gelenius) and ναβαταίων (W. Stuckius).

The translation of this fragment by W.H. Schoff is not different from those of the 19th century: “...White Village, from which there is a road to Petra, which is subject to Malichas, king

⁴² Modern scholars still don’t feel shy to quote the “Periplus” according to Müller’s edition (e.g.: Habicht 1997: 128), though the ancient Greek original text has been republished with many corrections four times after the publication of the “Minor Greek Geographers”.

⁴³ Müller 1855: 272; cf. Müller’s translation: “Leucecome sive Albus vicus, unde via est in Petram urbem ad Malicham, regem Nabatæorum”.

⁴⁴ Müller 1855a: cxliii.

⁴⁵ Streubel 1861: 20–21.

⁴⁶ McCrindle 1879: 75.

⁴⁷ See enthusiastic appraisal in Berger 1907: 599.

⁴⁸ Frisk 1927: 25–26.

of the Nabataeans”⁴⁹. One may see here the use of “from” instead of “through”, a “road” and “a (king of) the Nabataeans”. The interpretation of this part of the text by Schoff is not very careful. From the other hand, Schoff was not a professional philologist and main accent was made by him on geographical commentaries.

H. Frisk is the author of the only one philological study of the “Periplus”. It is already about a century that passed since the publication of Frisk’s study. However, his keen observations and cautious conclusions are to be taken into consideration in each study, dealing with the “Periplus”.

Frisk pointed out that the initial *alpha* in the manuscript *αναβαταιως* (*ἀναβαταιῶς* in Frisk’s reading) was crossed out by a “second hand” – i.e. by one of the scholiasts⁵⁰. The examination of the manuscript itself leaves certain doubts in accuracy of this observation: indeed, a kind of strike can be seen as going down from the lower edge of *alpha*. The latter itself looks having not been crossed out at all. The nature of this strike cannot be surely explained by examination of the photocopy of the manuscript. Frisk thought that the corrections inserted into the text were based on the readings in its other parts (i.e. the “second hand” was quite experienced in textological critics). However, the only exception is the word *Ναβαταίων*, “... qui ne se lit qu’une fois mais qui était sans doute familier à tout homme un peu lettré”⁵¹. This conclusion is hardly acceptable: the level of education of the composer of the “Periplus” cannot be fixed with certainty; in any case it had to be quite low⁵². From the other hand, Frisk contradicts here to his own principle: only those corrections are acceptable which are based on the readings in the other parts of the text.

J. Pirenne found explanations of Frisk⁵³ (see above) unsatisfactory. In collaboration with Cl. Préaux she worked out the chain of possible distortions in the manuscript of the “Periplus”: *ἀνάβασις* → *ἀναβάσεως* → *ἀναβαταίως*. Pirenne herself thought the last word to have been a misprint of *ἀναβατέον*⁵⁴. In the next publications Pirenne contested again the dating of the “Periplus” as based on the mention of the Nabataean king Malichus (19: 6. 29)⁵⁵, since, in her opinion, the word *Ναβαταίων* appeared in the manuscript in the 15th cent. after *ἀνάβασις* or *ἀναβατέον* have been corrected to it and that the composer of the “Periplus” meant a “hill” or a “ascent”⁵⁶.

I.Sh. Shifamn considered the form *ἀναβαταίων* (so he read instead of *ἀναβαταιως*) as going back to “quite old tradition”, attested in the Zeno archive (PSI. IV. 406. 1. 21–22): “*συνεσκευάσατο τοῖς Ἀναβαταίους α Ναβαταίους*”⁵⁷.

G.W.B. Huntingford, while discussing the dating of the “Periplus”, gave the following reading of the part of the “Nabataean paragraph” of the “Periplus” in question: “... *Λευκή κώμη*

⁴⁹ Schoff 1912 : 29.

⁵⁰ Frisk 1927 : 30.

⁵¹ Frisk 1927: 32.

⁵² Low level of education of the composer of the “Periplus” has been also pointed out by A. Dihle (Dihle 1965: 25).

⁵³ Frisk 1927: 34

⁵⁴ Pirenne 1961: 187–189.

⁵⁵ P. Lévêque was also of the opinion that mention of the king Malichus could not be used as an argument for the dating of the text, since this was a later correction in the manuscript text (Lévêque 1962: 335; 1963: 428; 1966: 730–731).

⁵⁶ Pirenne 1961a: 450–451; 1970: 110–112.

⁵⁷ Shifman 1978: 137.

δι' ἧς ἐστὶν εἰς Πέτραν πρὸς Μαλίχαν βασιλέα Ναβαταίων, <ἀνάβασις>"; his translation is the following one: "Leukē Kōmē ('White Village') from which there is <a route inland> to Petra, to Malichas king of the Nabataioi"⁵⁸. So, αναβαταιως in his reading gave birth to two words: Ναβαταίων and ἀνάβασις.

As was pointed out above, the phrase in question of the 19th paragraph of the "Periplus" is given as in the most reputable edition of the "Periplus" by L. Casson in the following way: "...Λευκή κώμη, δι' ἧς ἐστὶν εἰς Πέτραν πρὸς Μαλίχαν, βασιλέα Ναβαταίων, <ἀνάβασις>"⁵⁹. The editor remarks in the comments that the manuscript reading αναβαταιως was changed by the "second hand" for ναβαταίων. Casson also points⁶⁰ to the same mistake in the papyrus of the middle of the 3rd cent. B.C. (PSI 406. 1. 21–22; in fact the papyrus reading is ἀναβαταιους), referring to the book of G.W. Bowersock⁶¹.

The phrase "...Λευκή κώμη, δι' ἧς ἐστὶν εἰς Πέτραν πρὸς Μαλίχαν, βασιλέα αναβαταιως" is evidently senseless. The reading βασιλέα Ναβαταίων in Casson's edition is an effort to give certain sense to the phrase. From the one hand, the manuscript reading does not say whose king was Malichus. That is why the editors naturally wanted to see in the last word the corrupted reference to his ethnic affiliation: the initial *alpha* could then appear under the influence of the final *alpha* of the preceding word. From the other hand, what passed "through" it, i.e. through Leuke Kome, was neither said. It is difficult to imagine another variant to fill this semantic gap than a word for the "road". However, ὁδός misses in the manuscript as itself as well as in any corrupted form, while a "road" or a "way" from the seashore was constantly mentioned in the description of the capitals of the kingdoms and regions, visited by the composer of the "Periplus" on his way (real or imaginary one). The majority of such cases are accompanied by the reference to the number of the days, necessary to cover the road to any capital, while the turn "king + ethnic name in genitive case" was optional. Even the name of the real Nabataean kings Malichus I and II could be interpreted simply as "king" (Aram. *malḳā*) without any ethnic background⁶²; moreover the inhabitants of Petra were often mentioned in the Classical literature without references to their belonging to the Nabataeans⁶³. Indeed, Petra was called "Petra of Arabia" (Πέτρα τῆς Ἀραβίας – not Petra of Nabataea!) in the earliest reference to Nabataean capital – in the treaty "On the Erythraean Sea" of Agatharchides of Cnidus (1st half of the II cent. B.C.) (*apud* Diod. III. 42. 5).

Besides the supposed road from Leuke Kome to Petra there were mentioned the following ways from the ports to the capitals in the "Periplus":

- a road (ὁδός) from Adulis to Koloe and further to Axum (4: 2. 6–8);
- from Muza to Save (three days) and Zafār (nine more days) (22–23. 7. 24–27), there is no word for a designation of the road in the text, the capitals are said to lie "behind" the port (ὕπερκειται...);

⁵⁸ Huntingford 1980: 8; the translation is repeated in the main body of the book in rendering the whole text of the "Periplus" on page 31.

⁵⁹ Casson 1989: 60.

⁶⁰ Casson 1989: 254. Here L. Casson repeats the observation of I.Sh. Shifman.

⁶¹ Bowersock 1983: 17 (n. 19).

⁶² A similar viewpoint was shared by M. Rodinson (Rodinson 1974–1975: 211–212) and S. Sidebotham (Sidebotham 1986: 187–188); it seems however that it has been expressed in this way for the first time by J.-T. Reinaud (Reinaud 1864: 232).

⁶³ Dihle 1965: 16.

- from Qana' to Šabwa (27: 9. 7), there is no word for a designation of the road in the text, Šabwa is said to lie “behind” Qana' (ὑπέροκειται...);
- a road (ὁδός) from Oraia (OIr *Huraiva-?) to an unsaid town where the royal court of the land of the Persians was located (37: 12. 17), to cover in seven days;
- from Barbarikos to Minnagar (the capital of Scythia) (38: 13. 3); the capital is said to lie “behind” the port on the mainland (κατὰ νότου μεσόγειος);
- the capital of Šaka Minnagara was mentioned in connection with the port Barygaza (41: 14. 8), however, no road between them was mentioned; “Periplus” only says that earlier the royal court was located in Ozene (48: 16. 12);
- a road (ὁδός) from Barygaza to Paithana (twenty days to cover) and Tagara (ten more days) (51: 17. 8–11);
- the kings of the “both markets” (the kings of Čera and Paṇḍya in South India are meant⁶⁴) on the mainland (55: 18. 11–12).

So, the word ὁδός was used three times to designate the road to the capital or to another important political or commercial centre from the sea-shore in the “Periplus”; in the other four cases the capitals were said to lie “behind” such or such port, twice in the “South Arabian part” of the “Periplus” the form ὑπέροκειται was used. The restoration ὁδός in the fragment of the “Periplus” in question could have sense; however it is not based on the manuscript reading.

The designation of a road to a settlement as ἀνάβασις was quite common if a road was going uphill (e.g.: *Strabo*. V. 2. 6) or a road to the mainland (e.g.: *Strabo*. VIII. 3. 4) was in question. Though the location of Petra on the plain (but among the rocks) was perfectly known in the Classical tradition already in the 1st cent. B.C. (*Strabo*. XVI. 4. 21⁶⁵), the use of the notion ἀνάβασις for the designation of the road to the mainland, i.e. to Petra, from the seashore was quite possible (cf. use of ἐπάνω in 20: 7. 7 in sense of “deep in the mainland”).

The text of the “Periplus” is known from only two manuscripts, while only one of them (the one from Heidelberg) is normally being given independent importance. The state of the manuscript text is quite poor. The restoration ἀνάβασις raises the following question: if the composer of the “Periplus” or his informant wanted to describe the road from Leuke Kome to Petra, why didn't he use the word ὁδός, common for the designation of a “road” in entire ancient Greek literature? To what extent are serious the efforts to find in the manuscript distortion ἀνάβασις – quite “strange” by its emotional or philosophical background in the “bare” description of Arabia? In search for the better understanding of the text of the “Periplus” concerning Nabataea one needs compare it with description of this region in the “Library of History” of Diodorus of Sicily:

“ἔστι δ' ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ τῶν Ναβαταίων⁶⁶ καὶ πέτρα καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ὄχυρά, μίαν ἀνάβασιν ἔχουσα, δι' ἧς κατ' ὀλίγους ἀναβαίνοντες ἀποτίθενται τὰς ἀποσκευὰς” (II. 48. 6)⁶⁷.

It is generally accepted that Diodorus of Sicily did not use only one and the same source on any question and besides the “History” of Hieronymus of Cardia, where the

⁶⁴ Bukharin 2007: 170 with references.

⁶⁵ The information of Strabo about Petra goes back to Athenodoros from Kanana, who personally visited the Nabataean capital (*Strabo*. XVI. 4. 21).

⁶⁶ Among the manuscript readings there occurs also ἀναβατῶν (Hackl, Jenni, Schneider 2003: 434).

⁶⁷ “There is also in the land of the Nabataeans a rock, which is exceedingly strong since it has but one approach, and using this ascent they mount it a few at a time and thus store their possessions in safety” (tr. after Oldfather 1967: 43).

wars of the diadochoi and the events till the death of Pyrrhos in 272 B.C. were described, the basic sources on Nabataea for him were the treaty of Agatharchides of Knides “On the Erythraean Sea” and the archives of the Ptolemies in Alexandria, where the documents of Ptolemaic and those of earlier times were kept⁶⁸. The editors of the “Quellen zur Geschichte der Nabatäer” in their comments to the § 48 of the book II of the “Library of History” of Diodorus of Sicily say that the sources for writing of this paragraph are not clear. In their opinion, the fragment II. 48. 6–9, as well as the other paragraphs, except the first one (II. 48. 1), i.e. the paragraph, in which the description of the “rock” and the ascent to it, go back to Hieronymus of Cardia. They also point to the likelihood of this paragraph to another one, which certainly goes back to Hieronymus (XIX. 94. 1 – 100. 3). They consider the entire paragraph II. 48 as a kind of summary of the Nabataean part of the book XIX. The editors find the following subjects, treated by Diodorus after the book II (II. 48. 2–4) in the book XIX (XIX. 94. 2–8) again: the bellicosity of the Nabataeans, their dry land and secret wells, also described in another fragment (II. 1. 4–6), mining of the asphalt and the “rock”. Under the latter the capital Petra, called in the same way in XIX. 95. 1–4, is to be meant. The information of II. 48. 5 was not repeated in XIX. 94⁶⁹.

Below follows the text with translation of the corresponding fragments of the 19th book of the “Library of History” (XIX. 94. 7; 95. 1–4; 96. 1) of Diodorus of Sicily:

“τῆς γὰρ γῆς οὐσης τῆς μὲν ἀργελλώδους, τῆς δὲ πέτραν ἐχούσης μαλακὴν ὀρύγματα μεγάλα ποιοῦσιν ἐν αὐτῇ, ὧν τὰ μὲν στόμια μικρὰ παντελῶς κατασκευάζουσι, κατὰ βάθους δ’ αἰεὶ μᾶλλον εὐρυχωρῆ ποιοῦντες τὸ τελευταῖον τηλικούτ’ ἀποτελοῦσι τὸ μέγεθος ὥστε γίνεσθαι πλευρὰν ἐκάστην πλέθρου... (1) Τὰ μὲν οὖν νόμιμα τῶν Ἀράβων τοιαῦτ’ εἶναι συμβέβηκεν. ὑπογύου δ’ αὐτοῖς οὐσης πανηγύρεως, εἰς ἣν εἰώθασιν οἱ περιόικοι καταντᾶν οἱ μὲν ἀποδωσόμενοι τῶν φορτίων, οἱ δ’ ἀγοράσοντές τι τῶν αὐτοῖς χρησίμων, εἰς ταύτην ἐπορεύθησαν, ἀπολιπόντες ἐπὶ τινος πέτρας τὰς κτήσεις καὶ τοὺς πρεσβυτάτους, ἔτι δὲ τέκνα καὶ γυναῖκας. (2) τὸ δὲ χωρίον ὑπῆρχεν ὄχυρον μὲν καθ’ ὑπερβολήν, ἀτείχιστον δὲ καὶ τῆς οἰκουμένης ἀπέχον δυεῖν ἡμερῶν ὁδόν. οἱ δὲ περὶ τὸν Ἀθήναιον παρατηρήσαντες τοῦτον τὸν καιρὸν ὤρμησαν ἐπὶ τὴν πέτραν εὐζώνον ἔχοντες τὴν δύναμιν· διανύσαντες δ’ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰδουμαίας ἐπαρχίας ἐν ἡμέραις τρισὶ καὶ νυξὶ ταῖς ἴσαις σταδίους δισχιλίους καὶ διακοσίους ἔλαθον τοὺς Ἀραβας περὶ μέσας νύκτας καταλαβόμενοι τὴν πέτραν. (3) εὐθύς δὲ τῶν ἐγκατελιμμένων οὓς μὲν ἀνήρουν, οὓς δ’ ἐζώγρουν, ἑνίους δὲ τραυματίας ἀπέλιπον καὶ τοῦ μὲν λιβανωτοῦ καὶ τῆς σμύρνης συνεσκευάσαντο τὸ πλεῖον μέρος, ἀργυρίου δὲ περὶ πεντακόσια τάλαντα. ἐνδιατρίψαντες δ’ οὐ πλείω χρόνον φυλακῆς <ἐωθινῆς> εὐθύς ἀνέστρεψαν κατὰ σπουδὴν, διαλαμβάνοντες ὑπὸ τῶν βαρβάρων διωχθήσεσθαι. διατείναντες δὲ σταδίους διακοσίους κατεστρατοπέδευσαν, ὄντες κατάκοποι καὶ ῥαθύμως ἔχοντες τὰ περὶ τὰς φυλακὰς, ὡς ἂν νομίζοντες μὴ πρότερον δύνασθαι τοὺς πολεμίους ἔλθειν δυεῖν ἢ τριῶν ἡμερῶν. (4) οἱ δ’ Ἀραβες πυθόμενοι παρὰ τῶν ἑωρακῶν τὸ στρατόπεδον παραχρηῖμα ἠθοροίσθησαν καὶ τὴν πανήγυριν ἀπολιπόντες ἦγον ἐπὶ τὴν πέτραν· παρὰ δὲ τῶν τραυματιῶν μαθόντες τὰ γεγονότα κατὰ σπουδὴν ἐδίωκον τοὺς Ἕλληνας... (1) Οἱ δὲ Ναβαταῖοι τοὺς πολεμίους κολάσαντες ἀνδρωδῶς αὐτοὶ μὲν ἐπανήλθον εἰς τὴν πέτραν τὰ σφέτερα κεκομισμένοι”.

“As the earth in some places is clayey and in others is of soft stone, they make great excavations in it, the mouths of which they make very small, but by constantly increasing

⁶⁸ Hackl, Jenni, Schneider 2003: 430–431 with references.

⁶⁹ Hackl, Jenni, Schneider 2003: 433–434.

the width as they dig deeper, they finally make them of such size that each side has a length of one plethrum⁷⁰... (1) It appears that such are the customs of the Arabs. But when the time draws near for the national gathering at which those who dwell round about are accustomed to meet, some to sell goods and others to purchase things that are needful to them, they travel to this meeting, leaving on a certain Rock their possessions and their old men, also their women and their children. (2) This place is exceedingly strong but unwallled, and it is distant two days' journey from the settled country. After waiting for this season, Athenaeus set out for the rock with his army in light marching order. Covering the twenty-two hundred stades from the district of Idumaea in three days and the same number of nights, he escaped the attention of the Arabs and seized the Rock at about midnight. (3) Of those that were caught there, some he slew at once, some he took as prisoners, and others who were wounded he left behind; and of the frankincense and myrrh he gathered together the larger part, and about five hundred talents of silver. Delaying no longer than the early morning watch, he at once departed at top speed, expecting to be pursued by the barbarians. When he and his men had marched without pause for two hundred stades, they made camp, being tired and keeping a careless watch as if they believed that the enemy could not come before two or three days. (4) But when the Arabs heard from those who had seen the expedition, they at once gathered together and, leaving the place of assembly, came to the Rock; then, being informed by the wounded of what had taken place, they pursued the Greeks at top speed... (1) When the Nabataeans had manfully punished the enemy they themselves returned to the rock with the property that they had recovered...⁷¹.

The information on Nabataea from the book XIX of the “Library of History” of Diodorus of Sicily is since long ago being driven back to Hieronymus of Cardia (2nd half of the 3rd cent. B.C.)⁷². Though there are, however, only a few works specially devoted to the borrowings from the work of Hieronymus by Diodorus⁷³, they leave no doubt that the Nabataean part of the book XIX of the “Library of History” of Diodorus goes back namely to Hieronymus.

As to the “Nabataean fragments” of the book II of the “Library of History”, it is also used to say that its entire chapter 48 also goes back to Hieronymus' work⁷⁴ or that the information on Nabataea in the first five paragraphs of the 48th chapter of the book II (i.e. before the mention of the “rock” and the “ascent” to it), as well as the fragment XIX. 94. 3 are based on unknown early Hellenistic source, since the Nabataeans are presented in these fragments as nomads, while the Nabataean society was in general sedentary at the beginning of the 1st cent. A.D.⁷⁵ Among the other sources for the work of Diodorus of Sicily on Nabataea, in particular among those for the chapters 49–53 of the book II, in which not only Nabataea, but some other regions in the North, West and South-West were described, its editor C.H. Oldfather finds with reference to F. Jacoby (Fr.Gr.Hist. No. 87, Fr. 114) Posidonius⁷⁶. Oldfather also points out that the second part of the chapter 48 shortly repeats the information, given *in*

⁷⁰ 1 plethrum = 30,83 m.

⁷¹ Tr. after Geer 1954: 85–95.

⁷² Reuss 1876: 560–562; see about Hieronymus of Cardia in Jacoby 1913: 1540–1560; Brown 1947: 684–696; Hadley 1969: 142–152; Hornblower 1981.

⁷³ Simpson 1959: 370–379.

⁷⁴ Bedal 2004: 6 (n. 7).

⁷⁵ Raschke 1978: 965 (n. 1254).

⁷⁶ Oldfather 1967: 47 (n. 3).

extenso in XIX. 98⁷⁷, i.e., having not given the name of Hieronymus of Cardia, he also drives back this fragment, beginning with the mention of the asphalt lake (i.e. modern Dead Sea), to his lost work. This gave the pretext to insert considerable changes into the book II, basing on the book XIX of Diodorus. The question of the sources of the first part of the chapter 48 of the book II remains unanswered.

One needs to take into consideration that the information of the “rock”, to which the only road leads, and that of the lake, whose description goes back to Hieronymus, are firmly connected in the book II of the Diodorus’ work: “ἔστι δ’ ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ τῶν Ναβαταίων καὶ πέτρα καθ’ ὑπερβολὴν ὄχυρά, μίαν ἀνάβασιν ἔχουσα, δι’ ἧς κατ’ ὀλίγους ἀναβαίνοντες ἀποτίθενται τὰς ἀποσκευὰς· λίμνη τε μεγάλη φέρουσα πολλὴν ἀσφαλτον...” (II. 48. 6). The conjunction τε, evidently, introduces the following object in enumeration after the “rock”.

One may also mark out the likely tonality in mentioning the “rock” in the books II and XIX of the “Library of History”: a certain rock, a kind of asylum of the Nabataeans is meant. Both fragments – II. 48. 6 и XIX. 95. 1 – are very close to each other in sense and terminology: there are used the same turns of speech, e.g. καθ’ ὑπερβολὴν ὄχυρά, the “ascent” (ἀνάβασις) in the book II corresponds to the verb of movement upwards (ἐπανέρχομαι) in the book XIX.

From the other hand, the sense of the phrase about the “rock” in the book II of the “Library of History” is not fully clear: the Nabataeans climb the “rock” by the only ascent it has in small groups, then either store (ἀποτίθενται) their belongings (τὰς ἀποσκευὰς) at the foot of the “rock”, where they remain in safety, or take them with themselves and store them on the “rock”. The second of the variants – the use of the “rock” as a storehouse – is meant in the translation of C.H. Oldfather:

“There is also in the land of the Nabataeans a rock, which is exceedingly strong since it has but one approach, and using this ascent they mount it a few at a time and thus store their possessions in safety...”⁷⁸.

Such an interpretation seems to correspond to the description of the customs of the Nabataeans and their commercial activity in the book XIX of the “Library of History” (XIX. 95. 1–4). It corresponds in this respect also to what was said in the “Periplus”: “Ἐχει δὲ ἐμπορίου τινὰ καὶ αὐτὴ τάξιν τοῖς ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀραβίας ἐξαριζομένοις εἰς αὐτὴν πλοίοις οὐ μέγαλοις” (19: 6. 29–31). Here the delivery of the cargoes from “Arabia” to Leuke Kome is meant, i.e. from the lands to the south of Nabataea till the port of Muza in South-West Arabia, which was full of the “Arabs” (Ἀράβων), as the “Periplus” reports. Then these goods had to be delivered through Leuke Kome to Petra⁷⁹. The same was reported by Diodorus of Sicily: the Nabataeans take their “things” on the “rock”, i.e. deliver them to Petra. The road to the “rock” could quite naturally be called ἀνάβασις, since the way on the rock presumes going

⁷⁷ Oldfather 1967: 43 (n. 4).

⁷⁸ Oldfather 1967: 43.

⁷⁹ Agatharchides of Cnidus also reported of the delivery of the incenses from the “so called upper Arabia” (ἐκ τῆς ἄνω λεγομένης Ἀραβίας). However he meant, most probably, the overland-routes: the Minaeans and Gerrhaeans were called the suppliers of the incenses (De mari: 89a, b, c; according to other editions (Woelk 1966: 73) this information belong to § 87), neither of them practiced sea-trade. The reference of D. Woelk (Woelk 1966: 73–74) to the delivery of the frankincense and other aromatics by the traders from Ma‘īn and Gerrha on ships as in the text of Photius, as well as in that of Diodorus (III. 42. 5) is not based on the Greek original text and is the result of misunderstanding of this source.

uphill. It would not be too rash to suppose that the author of this sentence has never visited Nabataea in general and Petra in particular himself, and even if he was there in person, the later retellers understood him in a way, given by Diodorus. In any case one may see that the information of the “Periplus” of the delivery of the goods to Leuke Kome and the “anabasis” to Petra corresponds in its contents to what was known from the “Library of History” of Diodorus of Sicily (II. 48. 6). The likelihood of these fragments permits us to interpret the distorted manuscript reading *αναβαταιως* as *ἀνάβασις*.

It were too naïve to think that the composer of the “Periplus” borrowed information directly from the text of Diodorus. The Nabataeans themselves could be his informants on the “Nabataean” question: they were active as caravan-leaders on the roads between the Red Sea and the ports on Nile. Their presence in Egypt is confirmed by the inscriptions⁸⁰. However, such an approach presumed access of the composer of the “Periplus” to more concrete information than the obscure reference to *ἀνάβασις*. The text of the “Periplus” points to the connections in sense and terminology to the data of the informant of Diodorus.

Comparing both the phrases – those of the composer of the “Periplus” and of the author of the “Library of History” – one may suppose that the composer of the “Periplus” had no first-hand information about Nabataea and that reporting of the capital of Nabataea (Petra) he referred to the information of the “rock”, which was described by Diodorus according to his own informant. The information of Diodorus about the “rock” (*πέτρα*), surely, goes back to the description of the Nabataean capital (*Πέτρα*), however the composer of the “Periplus” resorted to such unreliable rumors, since he himself never visited Nabataean coast. This supposition can be confirmed by the absence of any information about the goods’ circulation in Leuke Kome, while the information of the commodities, traded in the majority of the other ports, known better to the composer of the “Periplus”, was normally given as fully as possibly. The absence of personal knowledge of the Nabataean coast by the composer of the “Periplus” can be also confirmed by the absence of reliable information about the distance in stades to Leuke Kome from the reference points, which is the case when he has no secure data in this respect.

The supposed use of the notion *ἀνάβασις* by the composer of the “Periplus” for the designation of the way from (through) Leuke Kome to Petra, while the road to the other capitals from the sea-shore either was not designated at all, or was called in the most expected way *ὁδός*, can be explained by the fact that the composer of the “Periplus” described this region not on the foundation of the experience – his own one of that of his informants from the sea-traders or ship-owners; he described this region basing on the literary (or, better to say) quasi-literary tradition.

So, one may suppose that the senseless *βασιλέα αναβαταιως* is to be read as *βασιλέα Ναβαταίων ἀνάβασις* or, *βασιλέα ἀνάβασις* – without ethnic affiliation of the king Malichos, which seems to be justified by the manuscript reading.

The description of the way from the South Arabia thought Nabataean coast (i.e. through Leuke Kome) to Petra can be guessed in the treaty “Of the Erythraean Sea” (§ 89a) of Agatharchides of Cnidus: “Τῇ δὲ εἰρημένῃ παραλία συνάπτει μὲν τόπος, ὃν προσηγόρευσαν Νῆσσαν ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ ζώου πολυπληθείας· αὕτη δὲ ἡ Νῆσσα κεῖται μὲν ἐγγὺς ἀκρωτηρίου καθ’ ὑπερβολὴν ὑλώδους, διατείνει δὲ ἀπ’ εὐθείας θεωρουμένη πρὸς τε τὴν Πέτραν καλουμένην καὶ τὴν Παλαιστίνην, εἰς ἣν Γερραῖοι καὶ Μιναῖοι καὶ πάντες οἱ πλησίον ἔχοντες τὰς

⁸⁰ See e.g.: Zayadine 1990: 151–174; Cuvigny, Bülow-Jacobsen 1999: 154–156, 167–168.

οικήσεις ἼΑραβες τόν τε λιβανωτῶν, ὡς λόγος, καί τὰ φορτία τὰ πρὸς εὐωδίαν ἀνήκοντα ἀπὸ τῆς χώρας τῆς ἄνω κατάγουσιν”⁸¹.

The origin of this fragment of Agatharchides’ writing can hardly be fixed with confidence. However, the “Library of History” contains a fragment, which goes back to the same source as the fragment of the “On the Erythraean Sea” of Agatharchides (if not to Agatharchides himself – any comparison in the edition of “On the Erythraean Sea” by S.M. Burstein is absent⁸², the editor only refers to the fragment 89b, which repeats another fragment of the “Library of History” – III. 42. 5):

“οὐκ ὀλίγων δ’ ὄντων ἸΑραβικῶν ἐθνῶν τῶν τὴν ἔρημον ἐπινεμόντων οὗτοι πολλὴ τῶν ἄλλων προέχουσι ταῖς εὐπορίαις, τὸν ἀριθμὸν ὄντες οὐ πολλὴ πλείους τῶν μυρρίων· εἰώθασι γὰρ αὐτῶν οὐκ ὀλίγοι κατάγειν ἐπὶ θάλασσαν λιβανωτῶν τε καὶ σμύρναν καὶ τὰ πολυτελέστατα τῶν ἀρωμάτων, διαδεχόμενοι παρὰ τῶν κομιζόντων ἐκ τῆς Εὐδαίμονος καλουμένης ἸΑραβίας” (XIX. 94. 4–5)⁸³.

This fragment not only reports the same as the fragment of Agatharchides’ writing (though in other words; myrrh and frankincense were mentioned by Diodorus after Hieronymus earlier as well in XIX. 95. 3). The road to the sea is also mentioned here – obviously the same as in the “Periplus”, i.e. the road between Leuke Kome and Petra. One may also distinguish the motive of the “descent” to the seashore from the mainland and, consequently that of the “ascent” to Petra.

Agatharchides himself, probably, did not understand well the matter of description. In any case, the place-name Νῆσσα, rendered by Photius, is the result of the confusion with the word νῆσος, whose description was given by the other sources:

παρὰπλεύσαντι δὲ τὸν Φοινικῶνα πρὸς ἀκρωτηρίῳ τῆς ἡπείρου νῆσός ἐστιν ἀπὸ τῶν ἐναυλιζομένων ἐν αὐτῇ ζῶων Φωκῶν νῆσος ὀνομαζομένη ... (Diod. III. 42. 5)⁸⁴;

εἶθ’ ἐξῆς ἐστι νῆσος φωκῶν, ἀπὸ τοῦ πλήθους τῶν θηρίων τούτων ὀνομασμένη. πλησίον δ’ αὐτῆς ἀκρωτηρίον, ὃ διατείνει πρὸς τὴν Πέτραν τὴν τῶν Ναβαταίων καλουμένων ἸΑραβῶν καὶ τὴν Παλαιστίνην χώραν, εἰς ἣν Μιναῖοί τε καὶ Γερραῖοι καὶ πάντες οἱ πλησιόχωροι τὰ τῶν ἀρωμάτων φορτία κομίζουσιν (Strabo. XVI. 4. 18)⁸⁵.

⁸¹ “Adjacent to the coast just mentioned is a region people have named Duck Country because of the abundance of these creatures. Duck Country itself lies near a very thickly wooded promontory. If one sights along a straight line down through it, the line would extend to the so-called Rock and Palestine to which the Gerrhaeans, Minaeans and all the Arabs, whose settlements are nearby, bring frankincense, as is the report, together with cargoes of incense from the upper country” (tr. after Burstein 1989: 148–149). Diodorus of Sicily (III. 42. 5) mentions Arabia, rendering this fragment of Agatharchides, as ἐκ τῆς ἄνω λεγομένης ἸΑραβίας.

⁸² Burstein 1989.

⁸³ “While there are many Arabian tribes who use the desert as pasture, the Nabataeans far surpass the others in wealth although they are not much more than ten thousand in number; (5) for not a few of them are accustomed to bring down to the sea frankincense and myrrh and the most valuable kinds of spices, which they procure from those who convey them from what is called Arabia Eudaemon” (tr. after Geer 1954: 89).

⁸⁴ “After sailing past the Palm-grove one comes to an island off a promontory of the mainland which bears the name Island of Phocae from the animals which make their home there” (Oldfather 1967: 211).

⁸⁵ “Then, next, one comes to the Island of Phocae, which was so named from the number of seals there. Near the island is a promontory, which extends to the Rock of the Nabataean Arabians, as they are called, and to the Palaestine country, whither Minaeans and Gerrhaeans and all the neighbouring peoples convey their loads of aromatics” (tr. after Jones 1930: 341, 343).

Agatharchides does not say, what exactly is stretched “along a straight line” (ἀπ’ εὐθείας), though he gives an additional characteristic to this notion: θεωρουμένη.

D. Woelk translates this fragment in the following way: “Diese „Nessa“ liegt in der Nähe eines außerordentlich waldreichen Vorgebirges und erstreckt sich in gerader Linie bis Petra und nach Palästina...”⁸⁶. This is the translation by S.M. Burstein: “If one sights along a straight line drawn thought it, the line would extend to the so-called Rock and Palestine...”⁸⁷. So, in Woelk’s opinion, it is Nessa, that is stretched to Palestine “in a straight line”; according to Burstein, between the cap, Petra and Palestine nothing is stretched, except the imaginary straight line. The translation of Woelk is wrong, since no place, and especially an island, cannot be stretched out from the Nabataean coast to Palestine. The interpretation of Burstein is not fully correct either, since all the other sources (Diodorus of Sicily, Strabo and the “Periplus”) report of the road between the Red Sea coast and Petra.

It is clear that Strabo’s reference (after Agatharchides) to the “cap that stretches to Petra and Palestine” is senseless: while writing out of the original text and its copying from one source into another the sense of this phrase has been lost; the epitomator himself did not know the matter of description, the cap could not be stretched to the settlement on the mainland and region, separated from the cap by modern Sinai peninsula. Burstein blames Photius for misunderstanding the original source⁸⁸. He himself does not see that location of the Seal Island near the Nabataean coast is nonsense. Eratosthenes located this island in the Southern part of the modern Red Sea near the Hawk and Tortoise islands⁸⁹, i.e. on the latitude of the modern Farasān archipelago⁹⁰.

The island ἡ μὲν χελωνῶν is identical with *Insulae Chelonitis* of Pliny the Elder (NH. VI. XXXII/151) – this island was mentioned by Pliny further (VI. XXXIV/169) as *Halonesi*, here Pliny obviously used another source, – and to the Tortoise island (Χελωντίδες) of Ptolemy (IV. 8. 37), located at the African shore of the Erythraean Sea, a little to the north of the islands Βάκχου καὶ Αντιβάκχου (IV. 8. 38), i.e. modern islands Huwakil and the Birds’ island – Ὀρνέων νῆσος (Ptol. IV. 8. 37). *Insulae Chelonitis* are located by Pliny near *gentes ... Casani*, ... *insulae Alaea*... *insulae Pteros*, *insulae multae*, *maxima Camari*, *Scenitae Sabaei*, ... *emporium eorum Acila*. Okelis – the coastal settlement lying at the modern straits of Bāb al-mandab, made southern frontier of this fragment, the northern one passed through the territory of the tribe ḠSN (*Casani*) and Camaran archipelago (*Camari*) at the Arabian coast and the islands Huwakil (*insulae Alaea*)⁹¹ near the African one.

The island *Halonesi* was located by Pliny near the islands *Cardamine* and *Topazos*. The former is identical to Καρδαμίνη on Ptolemy’s map – the modern island of Harat (16°07’24”N; 39°27’25”E)⁹². This island belongs to Dahlak archipelago and lies at the Erythraean coast at the entrance to Massawa channel. Near *insula Cardamine* Pliny locates *mons Pentedactylos*

⁸⁶ Woelk 1966: 73 (Anm. 2).

⁸⁷ Burstein 1987: 148–149.

⁸⁸ Burstein 1989: 148 (n. 1).

⁸⁹ τῶν δὲ νήσων τινὲς τρεῖς ἐφεξῆς κείνται, ἡ μὲν χελωνῶν ἡ δὲ φρακῶν ἡ δ’ ἱεράκων λεγομένη [“Some of the islands, three of them, follow in succession: Tortoise Island, Seal Island, and Hawk Island, as it is called” (XVI. 4. 14) – tr. after Jones 1967: 331].

⁹⁰ See about this identification: Bukharin 2009: 279.

⁹¹ See about this identification: Bukharin 2009: 191.

⁹² See about this identification: Bukharin 2009: 192.

and *insulae Stenae Dirae, Halonesi*, then the islands *Cardamine* and *Topazos* follow. *Mons Pentedactylos* of Pliny is the same as Πενταδάκτυλον ὄρος of Ptolemy (IV. 5. 15); the islands *Stenae Dirae* are to be searched for in the straits of Bāb al-mandab. The islands *Cardamine* are to be identified then with Dahlak archipelago, and the Tortoise Island appears to lie practically on the same latitude with the Hawk island.

Following the information of Strabo on the Southern part of the modern Red Sea, which goes back to Eratosthenes, one may suppose that the Seal Island, mentioned as lying between the Hawk and Tortoise islands, must be searched for on the latitude of the modern archipelagoes Dahlak and Farasān. Location of the island Φωκῶν immediately after the land Φοινικῶν can hypothetically be explained by desire to put on a map similar names one near another, which says of ignorance of the geography of the Red Sea basin by such a geographer. It could be possible that Photius, having seen such a nonsense in the text of Agatharchides or in that of his epitomator, wanted to improve the text in such a way, however having supposedly deleted one mistake he had to introduce another one. It is clear that Strabo has also distorted the sense of the source. It remains to state that it was Diodorus of Sicily who rendered the original description of the Nabataean coast by Agatharchides with the least distortion of the three versions.

It is obvious that only a road, real or imaginary (drawn on a map) can be stretched out (if one looks “along a straight line”) the road between a few places, lying on different longitudes, and this road could be stretched out on a map, composed schematically, i.e. on a scheme of the sea- and overland ways. The use of the participle feminine θεωρουμένη, while the concordant substantive is missing, can point to omission of the subject in the sentence and not to the use of θεωρουμένη as substantiated subject; the noun ἀνάβασις, used in the description of the way from the coast of the Erythraean Sea to Petra in the “Library of History” of Diodorus of Sicily, whose “Nabataean parts” are going back to the work of Hieronymus of Cardia, can be regarded as such.

One may suppose with certain confidence that the three renderings of the description of the Nabataean coast in the treaty of Agatharchides of Cnidus “On the Erythraean Sea” (those of Photius, Diodorus of Sicily and Strabo) describe in fact the way from the Southern part of the modern Red Sea – from the northernmost islands in this region, lying between the Arabian and African coasts, the last ones on the way northwards and for this reason very important orientation marks – to Leuke Kome and further to Petra and Palestine. The “Periplus of the Erythraean Sea” reports of the export of the East African incenses to Arabia – they are characterized as “τὰ εἰς Ἀραβίαν προχωροῦντα” (8: 3. 29–32). The characteristic of the “Arabs”, who traded in Muza, is also peculiar⁹³. The “Arabs” from Muza, whoever were meant under them – North Arabian tribe al-ʿAṣʿar, settled down in the South Arabia (the extreme South-West of Arabia was called after them Ἐλισάρων χώρα in the “Introduction to Geography” of Ptolemy (33; VI.

⁹³ Τὸ μὲν ὅλον Ἀράβων, ναυκληρικῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ ναυτικῶν, πλεονάζον καὶ τοῖς ἀπὸ ἐμπορίας πράγμασι κινεῖται· συγχρῶνται γὰρ τῇ τοῦ πέραν ἐργασίᾳ καὶ Βαρυγάζων ἰδοῖς ἐξαρισμοῖς [“The whole place teems with Arabs – shipowners or charterers and sailors and is astir with the commercial activity. For they share in the trade across the water and with Barygaza, using their own outfits” (21: 7. 21–23) – tr. afvter Casson 1989: 63]. The reference to the trade with the Indian port Barygaza is explained further on in the “Periplus”: the island of Suqutrāʾ was a meeting place of the traders from Muza and Barygaza (31: 10. 21–22), where they could trade.

7. 7)), or the Nabataeans themselves⁹⁴, maintained trade connections with Nabataea by sea⁹⁵. Thus, the description of the “straight line” from the Seal island, supposedly lying near the Nabataean coast, to Petra and further to Palestine by Agatharchides of Cnidus, most probably goes back to a certain cartographical source, possibly to the sailing directions, in which the sea-way from the Southern Red Sea to Nabataean port Leuke Kome and further on to Petra and Palestine could be graphically presented.

One needs then to suppose that the information of Agatharchides and, consequently entire later Classical tradition about Nabataea concerning the road from Leuke Kome to Petra is based on the early Hellenistic (Hieronymus of Cardia) and, possibly a middle Hellenistic, cartographical, source. This explains that, according to the composer of the “Periplus”, the road between the coast and capital of Nabataea, whatever its designation could be, goes not “from”, but “through” Leuke Kome.

While retelling this source Agatharchides has relocated the Seal Island from the Southern part of the Erythraean Sea (this information goes back to Eratosthenes and his informants) to the Nabataean coast. In even more simplified form this entire information was incorporated into the “Periplus of the Erythraean Sea”. It mentions the port of Leuke Kome – it became known in Egypt after the Arabian misadventures of Aelius Gallus; it has preserved the description of the road “through” the coast, however not the islands in the Southern Red Sea, but Berenice, as in the entire text, was chosen as general reference point by the composer of the “Periplus”.

The information of the relevant Classical sources about the connections between the coast of Nabataea with its capital can be briefly summarized in the following way. The composer of the “Periplus of the Erythraean Sea” did not personally visit Leuke Kome, which is seen from the absence of the usual enumeration of the goods, traded there, and the absence of the concrete information about location of this port. However he knows that the goods from the more southern parts of Arabia were delivered there and that they were further transported to Petra. This information can be also found in an earlier literature. In contents its report is closer to the data, which go back to the Arabian epos of Aelius Gallus, in terms – to the informants of Diodorus of Sicily and Agatharchides of Cnidus. Both these authors used the lost writing of Hieronymus of Cardia as source of information about Nabataea, its trade with South Arabia, means of delivery of the goods – on the sea- and overland ways.

In the light of the above given considerations the restoration in the text of the “Periplus of the Erythraean Sea” (19: 6. 29) αναβαταιως > ανάβασις needs to be regarded not only as possible, but as practically necessary one. This conclusion in its turn let us suppose that the composer of the “Periplus” used for the description of the Nabataean coast of the Erythraean Sea not only the personal experience, which is hardly seen at all in this part of the “Periplus”, but resorted to the data, going back to early and middle Hellenistic traditions, reflected in the

⁹⁴ The “Arabs” were identified with the “Nabataeans” in particular in the “Historical Library” of Diodorus of Sicily: ἐπὶ τὴν χώραν τῶν Ἀράβων τῶν καλουμένων Ναβαταίων [... “on the land of the Arabs, called Nabataeans” (XIX. 94. 1)].

⁹⁵ ...Λευκὴ κώμη, δι’ ἣς ἐστὶν εἰς Πέτραν ... <ἀνάβασις>. Ἔχει δὲ ἐμπορίου τινὰ καὶ αὐτὴ τάξιν τοῖς ἀπὸ τῆς Ἀραβίας ἐξαρτιζομένοις εἰς αὐτὴν πλοίοις οὐ μεγάλοις [...Leukê Kômê [“white village”], through which there is a way inland up to Petra... This harbor also serves in a way the function of a port of trade for the craft, non large, that come to it, loaded with freight from Arabia” (19: 6. 28–31) – tr. after Casson 1989: 61].

writings of Agatharchides of Cnidus and Diodorus of Sicily. “Filling the gaps” on the map of his periplus he had to operate with the information, which was accessible to him. While describing the port of Leuke Kome – the first on the Arabian coast of the Erythraean Sea – he had to add to the contemporary information – the existence of such a port – what was said by the author of previous centuries. This does not, naturally, mean that the composer of the “Periplus” knew their writings and borrowed his information namely from them; however, this cannot be excluded either.

Information	Terminology	Author of the original source	Source of the quotation
The Rock is a place of meeting and asylum of the Nabataeans, there is an ascent to it	ὁδός, ἐπανερχομαι	Hieronymus of Cardia	“Library of History” of Diodorus of Sicily
The is only one road (ascent) to the “Rock” (Petra)	ἀνάβασις, κατάγειν	Hieronymus of Cardia	“Library of History” of Diodorus of Sicily
There is a straight (road) to Petra (“Rock”)	διατείνει δὲ ἀπ’ εὐθείας θεωρουμένη (ἀνάβασις?)	Agatharchides of Cnidus	“Library of History” of Diodorus of Sicily
The is a road to Petra (“Rock”)	ἀνάβασις (?)	Hieronymus of Cardia (?), Agatharchides of Cnidus (?)	The “Periplus of the Erythraean Sea”
The Nabataeans buy the incenses on the coast from the traders from the East and South Arabia		Hieronymus of Cardia (?), Aelius Gallus (?)	The “Periplus of the Erythraean Sea”

Possible influence of the information, going back to the misadventures of Aelius Gallus in South Arabia, on the composition of the “Periplus of the Erythraean Sea” can be also traced back in the description of the port of Arabia Eudaimon: the composer of the “Periplus” finishes it with the reference to its “conquest” (not to the “destruction”⁹⁶) “by a certain Caesar not long ago before our times”: Νῦν δὲ οὐ πρὸ πολλοῦ τῶν ἡμετέρων χρόνων Καῖσαρ αὐτὴν κατεστρέψατο (26: 8. 31–32). This reference appeared as a result of misinterpretation of the information of the supposed conquest of the South Arabia, reflected first of all in the “Deeds of the Divine August” (whose copies with the Greek translation were sent out to different part of the Empire after 14 A.D.), as well as in the poems of Vergil and Horace⁹⁷. The claims to the conquest of South Arabia could only appear in connection with the campaign of Aelius Gallus, whose army, however, did not reach the Ocean coast of Saba’ and Qatabān.

⁹⁶ This interpretation is very common. For the last time it appears in Seland 2005: 60, 65 (n. 2).

⁹⁷ Mordtmann 1890: 180; in more details: Seland 2005: 65–62; Bukharin 2007: 112–115; 2009: 66–69.

The composer of the “Periplus” seems to be aware of the story of Aelius Gallus march on South Arabia. However, this story had to be substantially changed, if one compares this sentence of the “Periplus” with the reports preserved by Strabo and Pliny the Elder. These changes are to be explained by certain primitivization and simplification of the original data. However, filling the gap on the coast of North-West Arabia the composer of the “Periplus” starts his report with the port, which was mentioned the first in the report of this Roman misadventure in the South Arabia, and not with that, which could be known to him from his personal experience (if he really were there) or from the “scientific geography” of his time. Besides Leuke Kome other ports are not mentioned in the report of Strabo about the Roman campaign in South Arabia; the next one – Aegra – was mentioned (XVI. 4. 24) only in description of the inglorious comeback of the Romans. It is also noteworthy that the way of Aelius Gallus ended, where the sea-way to Leuke Kome for the composer of the “Periplus started – in Myos Hormos (*Strabo*. XVI. 4. 24).

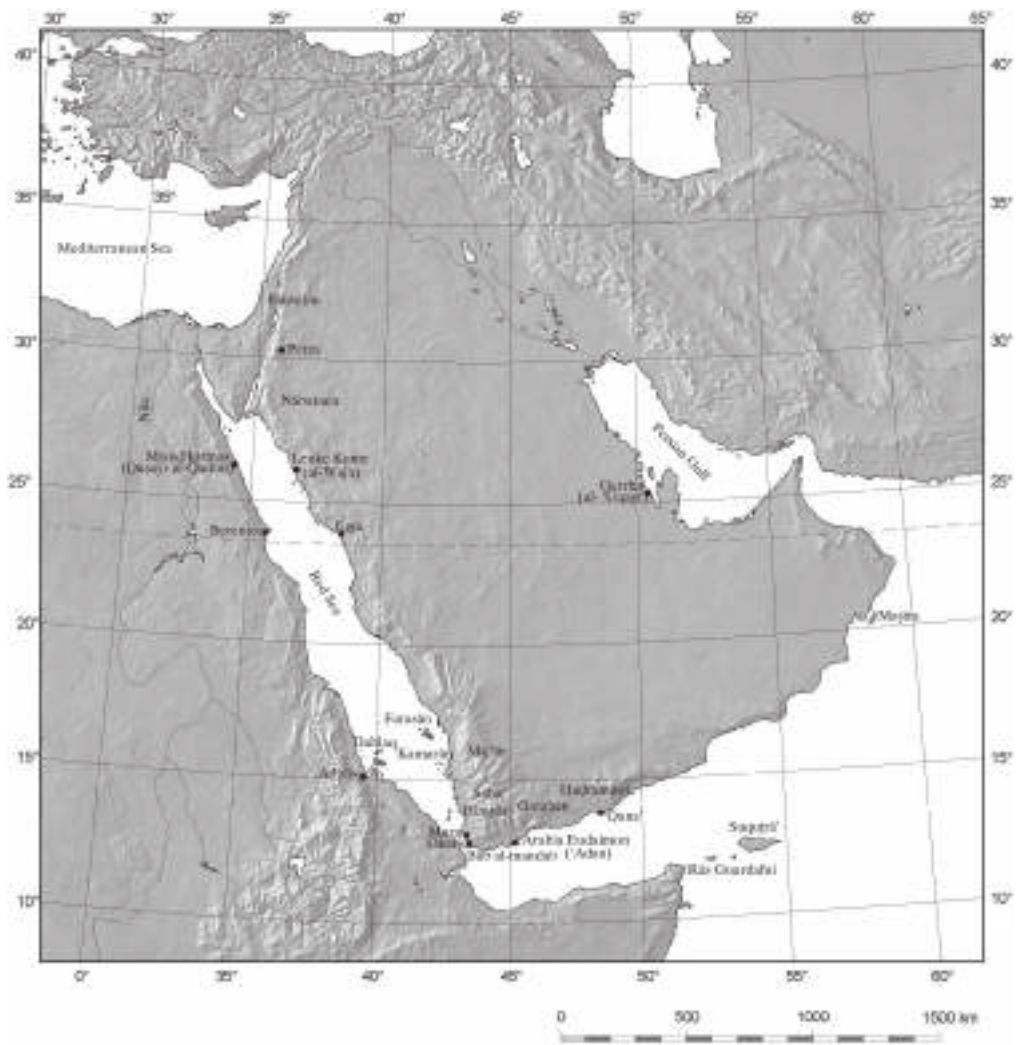
So, it is quite possible that the information of the Nabataean coast in the “Periplus of the Erythraean Sea” was influenced by two traditions: early and middle Hellenistic ethnography and cartography, in which the data of the functioning of the sea-branch of the “Incense Road” were reflected, as well as the simplified information about Roman military campaign in the South Arabia under the command of Aelius Gallus.

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G. CHARLOUX, R. LORETO, ‘A.I. AL-DÂYIL, TH.‘A. AL-MÂLIKÎ,
A. MARCOLONGO, Q. MOREL, KH.I. AL-MU‘AYQIL, A.‘A. AL-QA‘ÎD,
D.M. AL-QAHTÂNÎ, M.H. AL-QAHTÂNÎ, C.J. ROBIN, J. SCHIETTECATTE,
P. SIMÉON, ‘A.K. AL-TIRÂD

THE SAUDI-ITALIAN-FRENCH ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT AT DÛMAT AL-JANDAL: 2010 SEASON

In memory of Alessandro de Maigret

This paper attempts to summarize current knowledge on Dûmat al-Jandal (or Dûma¹) and to provide a starting-point for the activities of the Saudi-Italian-French Archaeological Project. In the following pages, we will recapitulate the historical development of the oasis and show the most significant archaeological and architectural evidences still standing at Dûma, as well as the results of the 2010 season.

The archaeological project

In June 2008 after the approval of an “Italian proposal for research at Dûmat al-Jandal” by the Research Committee of the Saudi General Organization for Tourism and Antiquities (GOTA), the Supreme Commission of Tourism in Riyâdh invited Alessandro de Maigret to carry out an archaeological survey on the site of Dûmat al-Jandal, in the Saudi province of al-Jawf. In 2009 GOTA in Riyâdh, under the direction of ‘Alî I. al-Ghabbân, granted Alessandro de Maigret permission to undertake archaeological excavations on the site, under the patronage of the Italian Institute for Africa and Orient in Rome. A formal Joint Cooperative Agreement for a period of five years was signed at Riyâdh on May 5 in the presence of HH. Prince Sultân bin Salmân bin ‘Abdulazîz and the Italian Ambassador Eugenio D’Auria. For the first time an

¹ In this paper we adopt a simplified transliteration system detailed in Charloux, Loreto forthcoming: 317.

Italian team was allowed to conduct archaeological activities in one of the most impressive sites of the Kingdom. The campaign was carried out between April 23 and May 7 2009² (fig. 1).

In 2010 the cooperation agreement between Italian and Saudi institutions was extended to a partnership involving the French Archaeological Project in Saudi Arabia, represented by Christian J. Robin and Guillaume Charloux. The excavations carried out from 30 September to 7 November 2010 (second campaign) were conducted by the new Saudi-Italian-French Archaeological Project³.

The project worked under the aegis of following scientific institutions: Italian Institute for Africa and Orient, University of Naples “*L’Orientale*”, French National Center for Scientific Research (UMR 8167, *Orient et Méditerranée*), Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities. Financing for the 2010 project was provided by Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities in Riyâdh, French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (MAEE), French Embassy in Riyâdh, *Service de coopération et d’action culturel* (SCAC), French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS) UMR 8167, *Orient & Méditerranée*, “*Composante Mondes sémitiques*”, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE/DGSP), Italian Institute for Africa and Orient of Rome.

The project is currently directed by Dr. Guillaume Charloux (archaeologist, CNRS/UMR 8167) and Dr. Romolo Loreto (archaeologist, University of Naples “*L’Orientale*”). The following specialists took part in the project in 2010: Prof. Khalil I. al-Mu‘ayqil (Jawf deputy, Majliss ash-Shura), ‘Abd al-Hâdî K. al-Tirâd (director of the al-Jawf antiquities, SCTA); Ahmad ‘A. al-Qa‘îd (director of the al-Jawf museum, SCTA); Thâmir ‘A. al-Mâlikî (historian-archaeologist, SCTA), ‘Abd al-‘Azîz I. al-Dâyil (historian-archaeologist, SCTA), Dar‘ân M. al-Qahtânî (historian-archaeologist, SCTA), Mansûr H. al-Qahtânî (historian-archaeologist, SCTA); Dr. Andrea Marcolongo (architect, CNR); Quentin Morel (land surveyor, topographer), Prof. Christian Robin (historian, CNRS/UMR 8167), Dr. Jérémie Schiettecatte (archaeologist, CNRS/UMR 8167) and Dr. Pierre Siméon (ceramologist-archaeologist, CNRS/UMR 8167).

Setting of the site

Dûmat al-Jandal lies on the borders of the wâdî al-Sirhân, linking southern Syria to northern Arabia, nowadays named “al-Jawf” province, bounded on the north-west by Jordan, on the east by the “Northern Frontiers” and in the south by the provinces of Tabûk and Hâ’il. In view of its location at the intersection of caravan trails the oasis constitutes a natural port of trade among the major routes linking the Arabo-Persian Gulf and the southern Levant (fig. 2).

Bordered to the north by the steppe-like limestone plateau of Hammad and to the south by the arid desert of Nafûd, Dûmat al-Jandal stands at the northern edge of Saudi Najd, surrounded by sandstone mountains known as “al-Gal”⁴, which define a wide depression (“al-Jawf” in Arabic) where the ancient core of the site is located with its palm groves and crops.

The toponym of the ancient and medieval oasis “Dûmat al-Jandal” derives from Assyrian name “Adummatu” and its prefix “al-Jandal” derives from an ancient attribute, which according to Yâqût referred to the local stone used to build the monuments and dwellings in the oasis⁵.

² de Maigret 2010: 67-83.

³ Charloux in press; Loreto in press.

⁴ “Gâl-Algawf” in Wallin 1854: 138; “al-‘edîlîje” in Musil 1927: 467.

⁵ Yâqût al-Hamawî 1995: 487.

Historical overview

Dûmat al-Jandal and “al-Jawf” region in pre- and proto-historical periods. Although our knowledge of the region is still preliminary, it is clear that Dûmat al-Jandal and the whole “al-Jawf” appears as one of the most rich region in history as well as pre- and proto-history of Arabian Peninsula.

The first archaeological era, dating back to the Lower Paleolithic is testified by the site of Shuwayhitîyah, located on terraces bordering a tributary stream of wâdî “ash-Shuwayhitîyah”, in the northern corner of the Sakâkâ basin, ca. 50 km east from Dûmat al-Jandal (fig. 3). A number of large pebble tools, handaxes and large flakes made of local siliceous quartz testified of a Lower Acheulean or pre-Acheulean era⁶. Some middle Paleolithic (Mousterian) tools were recorded by Nayîm in the south-east corner of the Sakâkâ basin⁷. No definitive evidence of Upper Paleolithic and Epi-Paleolithic phases came from al-Jawf.

Sites referred to the Neolithic period are very few in the northern parts of the Kingdom. Parr *et al.* refer of tools (prismatic blades, denticulates, burins, punches, bi-polar cores and hoes) found in the wâdî ‘Ar‘ar, north-east of Sakâkâ⁸. Nayîm refers of some petroglyphs related to the Neolithic era from the Sakâkâ vicinities. In particular the famous “dancing girls” form the Burnus hill near Qasr Za‘bal⁹ (fig. 4).

Evidences of the Bronze Age came abundantly from the megalithic site of ar-Rajâjîl, 10 km south-east of Sakâkâ (fig. 5), and maybe from Dûmat al-Jandal itself. In both cases there are a lot of burials: a megalithic complex made of at least 15 multi-burials from ar-Rajâjîl and stone circle burials from Dûmat al-Jandal (fig. 6).

However, no previous archaeological excavations related to pre and proto-historical period were conducted in the al-Jawf region, as well as geo-morphological studies connected to the Quaternary period. The given dates of the previous sites need for this reason further research and scientific arguments.

The 1st millennium BC. As a matter of fact the early Iron Age as well as the whole 1st millennium BC is still a *terra incognita* for the North of the Arabian Peninsula. The only traces to outline a broad timeline of the history of Dûmat al-Jandal during this period lie in the external sources of the Neo-Assyrian annals.

The most direct written source, the VA 3310 inscription, describes a military campaign led by Sennacherib against Telkhu “queen of the Arabs in the middle of the desert”, in an unspecified place, after which the Assyrian armies chased the fleeing Arabs up to the site of Adummatu, defined as “Adumu which is located in the desert”. The campaign took place in 688 BC¹⁰. Afterwards, the annals of king Esarhaddon and the ones of king Assurbanipal record that during Sennacherib’s time Telkhu, queen of “Adumu the Arab fortress”, was led to Ninive for having betrayed the Assyrian king with the Dûma’s divinity and her daughter Tabu’a, the future queen. The queen’s return (?) to Dûma, with the deported gods, by order of Esarhaddon¹¹.

Between the 8th and 5th century BC the region of Dûmat al-Jandal was in all likelihood one of the centers of the tribal confederation of Qedar¹². These two names (Adummatu/Qedar) are

⁶ Nayîm 1990: 41.

⁷ Nayîm 1990: 46.

⁸ Parr *et al.*: 36.

⁹ Nayîm 1990: 101.

¹⁰ Eph‘al 1982: 20-59, 74-165; Luckenbill 1927.

¹¹ Wiseman 1958: 4; Musil 1927: 480; Smith 1878: 138 (K3087 and K3405).

¹² Eph‘al 1982: 225; Robin 1991a: 49; 1991b: 10; 2010: 98-99.

found in association not only in the Assyrian annals but also in biblical texts. What is more, the Qedarites venerated the god ‘Atarshamein which belongs to the groups of divinities brought by Sennacherib when he captured Adummatu. This divinity is also mentioned in the Thamoudic or Safaitic graffiti found in the Jawf region, together with two other divinities Rudâ and Nuhai, also mentioned by Essarhaddon¹³.

The Nabataean and Roman periods: from 1st to 4th cent. AD. The name “Dûmat” appears for the first time in a Nabataean inscription from Jawf in the 5th year of king Malichos II (45 AD)¹⁴. The inscription mentions the construction and restoration of a sanctuary at Dûma, dedicated to the great god Dûshara. Mention of a sanctuary dedicated to Dûshara, the supreme god of the Nabataeans, indicates both a rupture with the pantheon mentioned in the Assyrian and Thamoudic inscriptions from the neighborhood or the evidence of the cohabitation of several entities in the same region.

Concerning the trade routes of Arabia, various classical authors mention Dûma in this period, which must have been a time of prosperity for the oasis: “Domatha” in Pliny the Elder’s *Natural History*¹⁵ and “Dumaetha” in Ptolemy’s *Geography* in the 2nd century AD¹⁶, featuring as a large city in Arabia.

The annexation of Arabia Petraea into the Roman Province of Arabia in 106 AD meant that Rome was encroaching on the borders of Nabataea. However, there are few written attestations of a Roman presence at Dûmat al-Jandal. The first is an undated stone stela found in the oasis, apparently from the 3rd century AD, dedicated by the centurion of the III Cyrenaic legion Flavius Dionysius¹⁷. According to Livingstone, the god Sulmus in the Latin inscription is to be linked with the Arab cult of the god *slm* also present at Taymâ¹⁸.

Finally the “*Praetensio*” stela of Qasr Azraq records work on the Roman road between Bosra and Dûma, involving several squads of the Roman legions. Considering the date of the inscription, Christol and Lenoir prefer to regard as the term “*praetensio*” applying to a military action designed to restore Roman authority during the reign of Aurelian (270 to 275), over an itinerary and territories that had been lost following the Palmyrenian conquest of Zenobia¹⁹.

The rise of Islam. Few notes are available in order to define the historical evolution of the last centuries before the Muslim conquest. Dûmat al-Jandal is mentioned in the fifth year of the Hijra. Al-Wâqidî reports on the presence of a Christian sovereign, Ukhaydir ibn ‘Abd al Malîk, of the Kinda tribe, allied of Byzantium²⁰. It appears that the oasis of Dûmat al-Jandal held out for a long time against Islam, and thereafter constituted both a place of refuge and a seat of arbitration²¹. It took no less than four campaigns by the companions of the Prophet until the independence of the oasis was finally subjugated. In the first years of the Islam conquest the so-called ‘Umar bin al-Khattâb mosque was built in the core of the village. During the Omayyad reign Dûmat al-Jandal rises as an important caravan centre, in which once a year one of the

¹³ Rabinowitz 1956; 1959; Dumbrell 1971; Lemaire 1974.

¹⁴ Savignac, Starcky 1957: 196.

¹⁵ Pliny 1848: lib. VI.XXXII.14: 824.

¹⁶ Ptolemy 1838: lib. V.C.18: 382.

¹⁷ al-Jâsir 1981: 135-138; Bowersock 1983: pl. 14; Speidel 1987: 213-221.

¹⁸ Livingstone 1989: 103.

¹⁹ Christol, Lenoir 2001: 176.

²⁰ al-Wâqidî 1989: 402.

²¹ Veccia Vaglieri 2010.

biggest market of north Arabia took place²². Its new importance as commercial and trade center dues to the link between al-Jawf and the new capital of the empire, Damascus.

We have few textual references for the medieval period up until the XIX century. Dûma gradually lost its status at the intersection of major caravan trails as the commercial trails changed to follow the pilgrim routes to Makka.

Archaeological and architectural evidences

The survey carried out in 2010 has produced an initial detailed overview of the archaeological remains in the oasis (fig. 7). According to the long and rich history of the site the variety of structures is considerable. Since 2009 the project aims equally to create a map of the archaeological remains, to contribute to protect the monuments and to develop the tourism at the site (fig. 8).

The ‘Umar bin al-Khattâb Mosque. The so-called ‘Umar Bin al-Khattâb mosque (fig. 9) is one of the main monument at Dûma. Dating back to the Umayyad period, it has roughly rectangular plan (32.5 x 18 m) (fig. 10). According to al-Sudairî and al-Mu‘ayqil, the plan of the mosque is similar to that of the Prophet’s house in Medina, although smaller. The minaret, unusual in that it does not form an integral part of the monument and because it is not in the *qibla* wall, would have been built later and its orientation could be explained by the axis of the adjacent streets and neighbourhood. The orientation and shape of the minaret led Wallin, then King to suggest that it was the bell tower of an ancient church transformed for Muslim worship. al-Mu‘ayqil however also considers the possibility that the mosque was built on the remains of an older monument, testified by a well dressed pillar reused to built the northern external wall of the building²³.

The fortresses. As Seetzen, then Musil a century later explained, the rivalry between villages and wars between clans were numerous during the XIX century at Dûmat al-Jandal. Many structures, particularly defensive ones were built in the palm groves during this period, some on top of older buildings²⁴. In 1883, Huber wrote about the existence of three fortresses at Dûmat al-Jandal. He located from the south-west to the north-west “Qasr Jawhar, Qasr Mârid, Qasr Farha et Rigm el-Burq”²⁵. The first one corresponds to the palace of the Ibn Rashîd (fig. 11), the second is well known and still stands today in the heart of the oasis (fig. 12), while Qasr Farha is more enigmatic. The last place mentioned, “Rigm el-Burq” (Rijm al-Burj), indicates the location of the ancient western fortifications of Dûmat al-Jandal. Wallin also mentioned the existence of “Alkuseir” (al-Qusayr), a small castle built to the south of Qasr Mârid²⁶.

Qasr Mârid was founded in the centre of the oasis on a limestone hill, which dominates the surrounding palm groves. In the XIII century, Yâqût reports the words of Abu Sa‘ad as-Sakûnî who tells of the existence of a castle at Dûmat, known as “Mârid”, which would have belonged to the ruler Ukaydir²⁷. The castle consists of two parts: 1) the main building, oval in shape (42 x 28 m) with four round towers; an entrance in the south-west leads to a large interior courtyard and to a long corridor on the south-east side protected by a wall and leading to a well and a sec-

²² al-Wâqidi 1989: 403.

²³ Wallin 1854: 141-144; King 1978; al-Mu‘ayqil 1994a; al-Mu‘ayqil 1994b: 108-117.

²⁴ Seetzen 1808: 387; Musil 1927: 162-163.

²⁵ Huber 1891: 49.

²⁶ Wallin 1854: 143.

²⁷ Yâqût 1995: 487.

ond entrance (fig. 13); 2) a more recent annex to the south comprising a courtyard and mosque, dominated by a round tower to the south situated on a rocky outcrop (fig. 14). Another tower protects a well on the north-west side. The results of previous small archaeological soundings are still very imprecise, and although we know that an unnamed fort was established at Dûma during the Nabataean Period, it cannot be related to it at this stage of our research. A complete architectural and archaeological study will need to be carried out on this monument in order to separate and date the various stages of its construction.

Wallin wrote about the existence of a castle known as “Alkuseir” (al-Qusayr), built later than Qasr Mârid, it stands a short distance away from it, “to the right” on the same outcrop. Wallin says that it was built of mud brick by a clan opposed to that of Qasr Mârid. Euting tells us that the small castle “Kseir” was in ruins in 1883²⁸. It seems that the stone foundations of this monument are still visible today to the north-east of the al-Jawf museum of archaeology and ethnology (fig. 15).

The enclosures. In the XIII century, Abu Sa‘ad as-Sakûnî, whose remarks were reported by Yâqût, mentioned the presence of a “fortified enclosure, and inside it, the Qasr Mârid” in Dûma²⁹. Later, in the XIX and early XX centuries, Wallin, Guarmani, Musil and Philby again described a rampart surrounding the whole oasis³⁰.

Following his field work, al-Mu‘ayqil has brought some additional details to the earlier observations; he suggests that there are two enclosures, an outer one around the oasis, and an inner one surrounding the historical area³¹. The survey carried out in 2010 reveals an even less precise picture: the existence of several unconnected sections of rampart (fig. 16) still located in and around the core of the village and the so-called “western enclosure wall”.

The western enclosure wall is in an area 3 km to the west of the historical centre (fig. 7). The site is a large bottle-neck about 340 m wide and 2.5 km long, representing the mouth of a branch of the wâdî al-Sirhân (fig. 17). The corridor is lined to the north by a plateau and to the south by an impressive orangey outcrop, which dominates the area, 70 m above the structures in the valley. The rampart is first mentioned by Wallin: made of mud brick, it was probably built by “Alukeidir”, hence its name at that time “Amara el-Okeidir”³². The itinerary used by Huber to reach the fortifications and his description corresponds to those of Euting. The latter noted that the rampart was built of stone and that there was a narrow doorway. The site was visited in 1976 by the Mc. Adams team (site numbered 201–18)³³. The pottery collected by the Saudi expedition in 1985-1986 dated to the Nabataean period³⁴.

The high sandstone outcrop to the south is called Rijm el-Burj, the “ruins of the tower” (fig. 18). Logically one can assume the presence of such an edifice on the rocky outcrop. The initial survey of the area in 2010 did indeed note the presence of wide stone walls belonging to a large structure on the edge of the outcrop, it will be excavated during 2011 season.

The hydraulic structures. Both in ancient and modern times the gardens and palm groves in the oasis were irrigated by a dense network of hydraulic features. A superficial survey of

²⁸ Euting 1896: 126–127.

²⁹ Yâqût 1995: 487.

³⁰ Wallin 1854: 145, 153; Guarmani 1866: 131; Musil 1927: 150–160; Philby 1923: 252.

³¹ al-Mu‘ayqil 1994b: 305–306.

³² Huber 1886: 48.

³³ Mc. Adams *et al.* 1977: 38, pl. 9.

³⁴ al-Dâyil, al-Shadûkhî 1986; al-Dâyil 1988.

the centre of the oasis in 2010 found 25 wells in an area of 25 hectares. These wells generally measure between 3 and 6 m in diameter, even though they are not all perfectly round. Some have the interesting attribute of a staircase integrated into their masonry, which led to openings at regular heights that provided access for cleaning, necessary repairs and probably for the *qanât* (fig. 19).

These wells indeed belong to a system of *qanât*, of which there are many in the Middle East. Wallin, who visited the oasis in 1845, described the presence of very well-built underground aqueducts of stonework, big enough for a man to stand up in³⁵. At that time they extended into areas devoid of cultivation or settlements. The aerial photograph taken in 1964 indeed shows many *qanât* and wells today not more in use or covered by modern houses and gardens (fig. 20).

The necropolises. A funerary Nabataean inscription (incorporated into a wall in the neighbouring village and stolen in 2010) was transcribed by Winnett & Reed. The text mentions the construction by Shulaitû son of Shalitû of a tomb for himself and his family in the year 35 of the reign of Aretas IV³⁶.

Only one pre-Islamic necropolis was found at Dûma during the excavations in 1985–1986 in the al-Sunamiyât quarter³⁷. It will be necessary to question the choice of this location between the historical area and the western enclosure, since the Nabataeans, like the Romans, established their cemeteries *extra muros*.

The activities of the Saudi-Italian-French archaeological project

The program of the second campaign has been structured in order to carry on with what was accomplished in 2009 and implement the Project's activity thanks to the collaboration with the French team. The points of the program are as follows:

1. Carrying on with the creation of an archaeological map of the site including Mârid Castle, the neighbouring medieval villages and the western enclosure located 3 km to the west (fig. 8);
2. Surveying of the western enclosure wall area (sector C) and opening excavation trenches (fig. 17, 21);
3. Extending of the excavation trench opened in 2009 (sector A) in order to get a wider view of the stone structures at the foot of Mârid Castle and to identify clearly the chronological phases of the Pre-Islamic period (fig. 26-29).

The western enclosure wall. Research begun in 2010 by the Saudi-Italian-French project in the western enclosure area (sector C) has revealed a wall more than 2 km long, in places preserved to more than 4.5 m high, which closes off the bottom of the valley and goes up onto the adjacent plateaux (fig. 21).

Three soundings were carried out in 2010. The first one was opened near the fortification wall, just at the limit of the modern canal, which cut the ancient fortification (fig. 22). Under the soil relate to the enclosure wall we found layers of aeolian sand, which cover a previous quadrangular structure, probably a small house or a tower, built directly on the virgin soil of the valley.

The second sounding (SD2) was conducted west of sounding 1, at the exterior of the enclosure, where stands a long stone wall perpendicular to the valley (fig. 23). It could well be a kind of retention structure protecting the enclosure from the wâdî floods.

³⁵ Wallin 1854: 145.

³⁶ Winnett, Reed 1970: 144–145.

³⁷ al-Dâyil, al-Shadûkhî 1986: 74–76; al-Dâyil 1988: 37–40.

The third sounding (SD3) was opened inside the perimeter of the western fortification wall (fig. 24). Its location was chosen according to investigate an area currently under construction of modern houses. Two levels of occupation were defined: the upper level showed the existence of a nice garden, with a wide stone paved basin, water channels, cultivation pits and walls. A more ancient level shows a wide wall 1.50 m high. Although little pottery was found related to it, it should be dated very close to the previous level (I-IV cent. AD).

Finally, a 80 m long segment of the western part of the surrounding wall, almost fully recovered by sand although al-Dâyil sounding in 1986, has also been clean (fig. 21, 25). This cleaning, the archaeological soundings and the full survey of the area show that the monumental enclosure is composed of two abutting walls, apparently contemporaneous, one of dressed stone and the other of mud brick above stone foundations. The enclosure seems to have been built in sections, according to a technique well known in the Arabian Peninsula. Seven quadrangular bastions and about fifty buttresses, which complete the defensive system, were surveyed in 2010. Only pre-Islamic pottery items were found in surface and during the excavation. Moreover, the construction techniques and the masonry allow us to date this area to a late Nabataean-Roman period.

The excavation of sector A. After the 2009 campaign we defined a very preliminary sequence of occupation in sector A, in a deep trench located at the foot of the Qasr Mârid (fig. 26). We recognized a long Islamic period during which different structures were built one above the other and, at least, a late pre-Islamic phase related to pre-Islamic pottery³⁸. After the 2010 campaign, thanks to the enlargement of the trench and the opportunity to remove the more recent structure, we were able to define different phases of the Islamic occupation of Hayy ad-Dira' village.

The first identified archaeological period may be associated with a Late Islamic era (XVIII century). It corresponds to the construction of ephemeral structures built on the surface of the hill on top of a level of aeolian sand (*level 2*) (fig. 27).

The second identified archaeological period is visible in a small oval building named L6 (3 x 4 m wide). A level of aeolian sand (*level 2*, 1.60 m thick) has gathered during the time, depositing against and on top of its walls (fig. 27). From this level of aeolian sand various objects have emerged: in particular two small stony pipes manufactured according to the Ottoman tradition, both dated to the XV-XVIII centuries AD.

Considering the large quantity of aeolian sand gathered up to the point of covering the entire L6 structure, a rather long period must have passed from the time it was in use. Building L6, therefore, might be associated with a Middle Islamic period relative to the medieval phase, middle or late, of the villages, not yet precisely dated between the VIII and the XV century AD. Building L6 is built on top of an irregular discarded stones level which extend over the whole surface of the trench, covering all ancient structures (fig. 28).

The third archaeological phase is attested by the structures laying immediately below *level 3*, which might be referred to an Ancient Islamic period. This period is strictly connected to a fourth and earlier phase ascribable Late Nabatean-Roman, whose relative structures (Building A) were reused several times during the Ancient Islamic period (fig. 28).

The so-called Building A, the most impressive structure identified up to now, appears as an imposing construction, built along the eastern flank of the hill, apparently at the foot of the

³⁸ de Maigret 2010.

“acropolis”. The building, oriented along a north-south axis, has a maximum length of 12 m and a width of 10 m (only its western side has been identified; the north, east and south sides correspond to the extent of the excavation trench). The distinctive feature of the building consists in the presence of a central area (*L8*), which appears to have been open to the sky delimited to the west by a portico (*L7*) (fig. 29).

The system of foundation reveals a preparatory level of small stones and scrap pottery with materials dated to the 1st century AD (fig. 30). The finding of Roman, Byzantine and Early Islamic (Umayyad) material compacted in the building’s ground floor suggests that Building A dates back from around the 2nd century AD and went through various periods of reuse up until its destruction in Early Islamic times.

Conclusion

The oldest occupations of al-Jawf region are testified by sporadic pre-historical evidences and proto-historical architectural elements. Although Paleolithic and Neolithic remains are still rare, the Bronze Age seems to be attested by the impressive stone complex of ar-Rajâjîl and, for example, by the tumulus necropolis west of Dûmat al-Jandal. These sites need however to be studied in detail to get a clearer understanding.

The name Adummatu appears in the Assyrian textual sources during the Iron Age. Nevertheless, from an archaeological point of view the most ancient identified period in Dûma could be attested by the presence of a Hellenistic (?) alabaster bowl from sector A dating back to the 2nd-1st cent. BC – although no structures related to it were identified –, but more surely by luxury Nabataean pottery, fragments of eastern *sigillata* A and *terra sigillata africana* coming back from the 1st century AD. The ceramic ware found here suggests links between the southern areas of the peninsula with the northern regions gravitating on Petra and the whole Mediterranean basin. It allows us to emphasize the importance of this ancient commercial centre during the first centuries AD.

From this time on, the oasis seems to have been continuously occupied till nowadays – late-Roman, Byzantine (?) and Islamic periods –, as the stratigraphic sequence showed. It will be the task of next seasons of the Saudi-Italian-French archaeological project to recognize and better understand the nature of these still unknown occupations.

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Fig. 1. Alessandro de Maigret during the 2009 campaign



Fig. 2. Location of Dumat al-Jandal along the wadi al-Sirhan



Fig. 3. The Sakaka basin, east – north-east of Dumat al-Jandal



Fig 4. Petroglyphs on the Burnus hill near Qasr Za'bal (Sakâkâ)



Fig. 5. The megalithic complex of ar-Rajâjîl



Fig. 6. Bronze age (?) stone circle burial from Dûmat al-Jandal



Fig. 7. The modern city of Dûmat al-Jandal with indication of two main archaeological areas, GeoEye-1 (© GeoEye, 2011; Distributed by e-GEOS for GE-1 and IKONOS)

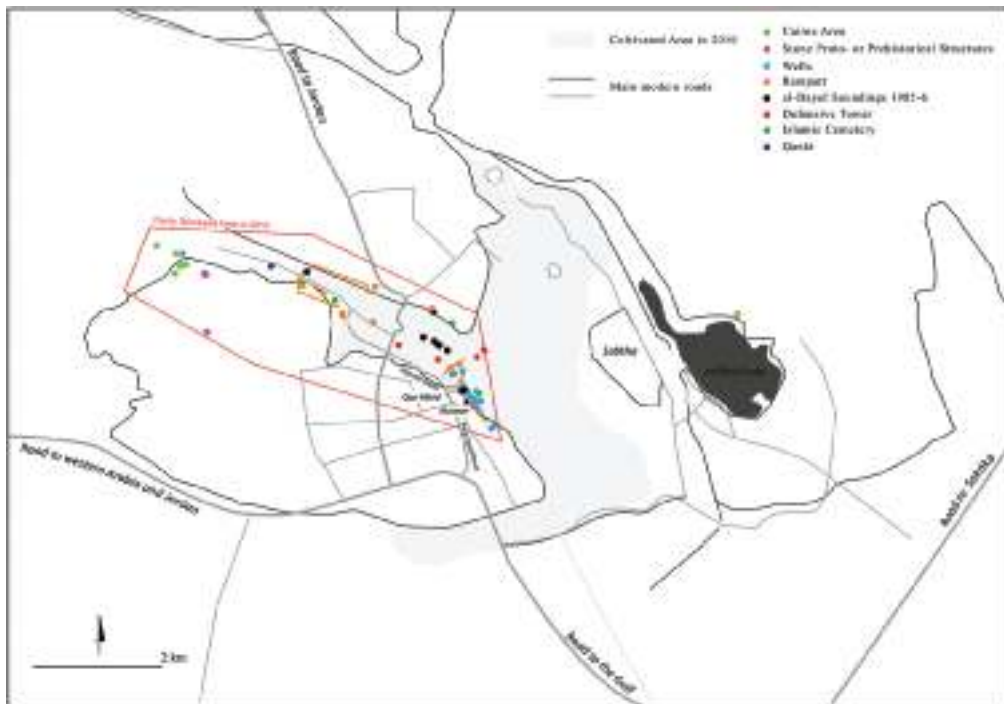


Fig. 8. The archaeological survey in 2010



Fig. 9. The so-called 'Umar bin al-Khattâb mosque, view from the Mârid Castle, looking north



Fig. 10. The central nave of the so-called 'Umar bin al-Khattâb mosque



Fig. 11. Entrance of Ibn Rashid palace (after drawing by Euting 1886: 126)



Fig. 12. Qasr Mârid, view from the north-east

Fig. 13. Qasr Mârid, view from the north-east



Fig. 14. Southern annexe of the Qasr Mârid, looking south



Fig. 15. Hypothetical location of al-Qusayr, GeoEye-1 (© GeoEye, 2011; Distributed by e-GEOS for GE-1 and IKONOS; © Dumat al-Jandal Archaeological Project)



Fig. 16. Supposed location of the enclosure in the historic centre of the oasis based on field data, aerial images and travellers' accounts (orange lines – observed on the field; green lines – still hypothetical), GeoEye-1 (© GeoEye, 2011; Distributed by e-GEOS for GE-1 and IKONOS; © Dumat al-Jandal Archaeological Project)



Fig. 17. Satellite view of the western enclosure, sector C, looking north, GeoEye-1
(© GeoEye, 2011; Distributed by e-GEOS for GE-1 and IKONOS;
© Dûmat al-Jandal Archaeological Project)



Fig. 18. The sandstone outcrop called Rijm el-Burj to the south of the western enclosure, looking south



Fig. 19. One of the wells from the ancient core of the medieval village



Fig. 20. Qanât (near red lines) located in the centre of Dūma oasis as seen on the 1964 aerial photograph (courtesy of Husayn al-Khalifā, director of the Tourism Office of Sakakā; © Dūmat al-Jandal Archaeological Project)



Fig. 21. Western enclosure (on the ground – the section, which runs along the valley; on the background – the section, which goes up on the Rijm al-Burj hill, looking south)



Fig. 22. Sounding 1, sector C, a “quadrangular structure” earlier than the fortification wall, looking south



Fig. 23. Retention wall (?) in sounding 2, sector C, looking north



Fig. 24. Sounding 3, sector C, looking north



Fig. 25. The inner part of the western section of the enclosure, looking north



Fig. 26. Sector A at the foot of Qasr Mârid



Fig. 27. Building L6 covered by level 2



Fig. 28. Early Islamic and pre-Islamic structures covered by level 3



Fig. 29. Building A covered by early Islamic structures, view from the north



Fig. 30. Pre-Islamic pottery from the foundation level of Building A. 1-2 – Roman eastern sigillata; 3-7 – Nabataean pottery

Julien CHARBONNIER

IRRIGATION SYSTEMS FROM THE AIR: A COLLECTION OF AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE ḤAḌRAMAWT AND WÂDÎ BAYḤÂN VALLEYS

Aerial pictures taken from a plane or from a satellite, are particularly relevant for the study of irrigation systems. Indeed, these photos sometimes allow identifying and mapping irrigation systems. On the edge of Ramlat as-Sab'atayn, in Yemen, they are usually well conserved. When we look closely to the photos, canals, water distributors¹ and even field boundaries are sometimes evident above the silt deposits in that region.

Maps of Ma'rib oasis were made with the help of satellite and aerial photographs (*Archäologische Berichte aus dem Yemen*, tome VI: pl. 1). They have also been used for the study of the irrigation systems located upstream of Barâqish (Marcolongo 1994: 14).

GE Infra company has in his possession vertical aerial photographs of wâdî BayḤân and wâdî Ḥaḍramawt. These pictures were taken in order to establish maps of these regions.

In the 1970's, the government of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen decided to proceed with some agricultural and hydraulic improvements in Ḥaḍramawt and wâdî BayḤân. To achieve this program of land improvement, the ministry organised a competition between several boards of engineers. The company S.O.G.R.E.A.H. – Société grenobloise d'études et d'applications hydrauliques – was chosen. As its name indicates, SOGREAH is based in Grenoble, in eastern France, and specializes primarily in hydraulic engineering. To fulfil their mission, the SOGREAH engineers contracted Lebel, Trenque & Rives (now called GE Infra), a company specialised in topography, to create the necessary maps of Ḥaḍramawt and wâdî BayḤân.

¹ Water distributors are hydraulic structures that divide a canal into several smaller aqueducts.

During the winter of 1977-1978, GE Infra organised a flight campaign above wâdî Bayhân and Ḥaḍramawt. Vertical aerial photographs (fig. 1) were taken in order to make the maps. In practical terms, the plane followed transects above valleys and took pictures at regular intervals.

Prof. Christian Darles brought the existence of this collection of photos to my attention. Negatives and pictures were kept in the storeroom of GE Infra in Toulouse. Some of them have actually already been published by Pierre Gentelle in his article “La nature et l’irrigation” from the book *Une vallée aride du Yémen antique. Le wâdî Bayhân* (Breton, Arramond, Coque-Delhuille, Gentelle 1998). In this publication, Gentelle only used a few photos to demonstrate the presence of irrigation silts with remains of fields and canals in Yemen.

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the extreme value of historical aerial photographs in the modern interpretation of water management systems using Yemen as an example. It will focus on Raybûn oasis, in wâdî Daw‘ân, to show that these pictures can help to understand the functioning of irrigation systems.

The collection

GE Infra collection comprises eighty photographs of wâdî Bayhân and more than one thousand photographs of Ḥaḍramawt valleys and its tributaries. They can be precisely relocated with the help of two sketch maps, one for wâdî Bayhân and one for Ḥaḍramawt.

I organised a one-week scanning campaign during December 2007. Unfortunately I couldn’t scan the negatives because I didn’t have the proper material at my disposal. Pictures revealed however clear enough to be used for archaeological purpose.

Each photo received a reference number composed of four numbers following a prefix, made of one letter and one or two numbers, corresponding to the flight.

Wâdî Bayhân

In the 1950’s, Richard LeBaron Bowen also employed aerial photographs, from Royal Air Force, in his study of wâdî Bayhân. Unfortunately, Bowen could not draw the entire valley because he did not have a full cover of aerial images at his disposal. Finally, he published only maps of the irrigation systems located north of the wâdî Sa‘îd area. The pictures taken by GE INFRA cover almost the entire Bayhân valley. It would therefore be possible to create a complete map of the area.

Of course, Bowen also surveyed the area and produced a very complete study of the irrigation remains he identified. It is important, as in Bowen’s study, that the use of aerial pictures always accompanies additional fieldwork. As you can imagine, there are many elements that are frequently not visible on these photographs. The altitude of the hydraulic structures and the slope between them cannot be estimated from them alone, presenting difficulties in establishing their relationship.

Raybûn in Hadramawt region

Unfortunately, Ḥaḍramawt region was not fully covered by aerial photography (fig. 2). The upstream ends of tributary wâdîs, like wâdî Daw‘ân, are not included in the photos of GE INFRA. The eastern part of wâdî Masîla was also not covered. The site of Makaynûn, studied by the French Mission Jawf-Ḥaḍramawt, is situated too far east and is unfortunately outside of the coverage range. This is unfortunate because this particular area is surrounded by identified irrigation systems. However, we do have photos of other antique sites, such as Ḥurayḍa in wâdî ‘Amd and Raybûn, the important South Arabian site located in wâdî Daw‘ân. The Russian mission, directed by Alexander Sedov, has studied Raybûn since the 1980’s. The site has been occupied

from the late second millennium BC to the first century BC (Sedov 1996: 80). Several settlements that constituted Raybûn were surrounded by three irrigation systems fed by wâdî floods. These extended out about 10 km, to the confluence of wâdîs Mîh, Na'âm and al-'Ayn. The Russian mission proceeded to a survey to establish a sketch map of these irrigation systems (fig. 3).

The southernmost irrigation system (S. 1) surrounds the biggest dwelling sites of the area, including Raybûn I, and extends out about 800 ha between wâdî Daw'an and wâdî Na'âm (Sedov 1997: 31). The water intake was located several kilometres upstream of the oasis and a long primary canal transported the water to the fields.

The second system (S. 2) is located downstream, on the right bank of wâdî Daw'an. It covers about 750 ha (Sedov 1997: 31). According to A. Sedov, it was created in the 2nd or 3rd century BC (Sedov 1997: 55).

The last irrigation system (S. 3) is located between wâdî Na'âm and wâdî Mîh, near the sites Raybûn XVII and XXI. It was possibly created at the beginning of the Christian era.

Photographs of GE INFRA also reveal the existence of irrigation systems downstream of Raybûn, along a left bank tributary of wâdî Daw'an².

The collection includes very precise photos of the Raybûn area. With the help of these photos it is possible to draw a more precise map of the irrigation systems, as well as study the hydraulic structures that are part of it (fig. 4). For this purpose, we have been using photograph numbers A17-3546 to A17-3554 and A19-3598 to A19-3606.

System 1

Unfortunately, we do not have photo of the upstream part of System 1. Its primary canal follows a sinuous course. Secondary aqueducts split from it at acute angles (fig. 5). However, tertiary canals seem to be perpendicular to the secondary ones.

Fields have an irregular shape in the upstream part of the system and become sub rectangular downstream. They can reach up to 200 m long. They were probably divided in smaller agricultural plots.

With the exception of aqueducts, hydraulic structures are not visible on the photos.

System 3

The water intake of System 3 is located in wâdî Na'âm. The primary canal that feeds this system runs, as usual, parallel to the wâdî. It first follows the edge of the limestone plateau in order to stay above the valley and the fields. 750 m north of the intake, the primary canal splits into two that remain parallel to the wâdî (D on fig. 5). The water distributor located at that place is made of several, slightly divergent walls (fig. 6). Tertiary canals are approximately perpendicular to the secondary one. The distance between them is variable, as was seen in the first system, near the settlement.

As far as we can see, fields tend to be sub rectangular. They are smaller than in System 1. They measure 90 m long for maximum 70 m wide. System 3 is therefore very similar to the first one.

System 2

Hydraulic structures from System 2 are visible on the photos from GE INFRA. This is possibly due to wind erosion. The Russian mission did not provide any further study or description of them.

² See photos n°A16-3540 to A16-3543 and A18-3595 to A18-3592.

Floods from wādī Daw‘an were diverted into a canal in a bend of the wādī (fig. 7). Water was then carried about 2 km further by a primary canal located on the edge of the valley. At about 2 km from the water intake, the primary canal splits into two secondary canals (A). A first group of fields, measuring about 80 m long, is located just north. A rectilinear canal was feeding the western side of the system. Two large water distributors are visible along the southern part of this canal. Downstream, the secondary canal feeds a succession of small canals that run perpendicular to it. In the eastern part of the system, the secondary canal adopts a more sinuous course but remain more or less parallel to the western canal. The water distributors seem larger and closer to each other than in the western part of System 2.

Irrigation structures in System 2

In the western part of system 2, the big water distributor located at ‘point B’ is rectangular in shape and about 40 m long (fig. 8). It seems to correspond to a central basin surrounded by several sluices that lead to small canals. This structure can be compared to the water distributor located at the eastern end of the primary canal of the north oasis in Ma‘rib.

The water distributor located at point C is different since it corresponds to a long basin of irregular shape (fig. 9). Lateral sluices feed small canals. Part of the flow runs to the north through two big sluices.

The water distributors seem a little bit smaller downstream of the western secondary canal. They are made of several walls, in the axis of the canals or slightly slanted, surrounding thresholds of varying width (fig. 10).

Along the tertiary canals, small stone sluices, also visible on the photos, provided an access to the fields. These sluices are perhaps made of to small stone walls surrounding a thresholds, as the one situated in the oasis of Ma‘rib (fig. 11).

The map made with the help of GE INFRA photos and the one made by the Russian team are very similar. GE INFRA photographs allow however making some statements concerning Raybūn System 2. First of all we can notice that this system is not as regular as the map of the Russian mission suggests. Canals are not exactly parallel and the distance between them varies. Few field limits are visible on the photos, but they seem to be rectangular or sub rectangular.

While the Russian sketch map suggests that both the western and the eastern parts of this irrigation system are similar, they seem considerably different. In my opinion, these different parts seem to correspond to two different building phases. It is also possible that one of them was reorganized in Antiquity.

As I noticed previously, parallel thresholds separated by elongated wall constitute water distributors from the western part of System 2. The thresholds are in the axis of the canals or slightly slanted. This organization and this type of distributor are characteristic of irrigation systems located east of the Ramlat as-Sab‘atayn and in Ḥaḍramawt. In Shabwa, canals fed by these water distributors first run parallel to the main canal and then turn at right angle (fig. 12). The irrigation system from wādī Surbān is based on a model similar to that of Shabwa (Darles 2000). The primary canal follows the entire system. Successive water distributors divert part of the flood into secondary canals (fig. 13). This type of water dividing method must be compared to another, which involves the diversion of part of the flow into smaller canals with the help of stone sluices located at right angles to the main canal axis. This last method was used in wādī Bayḥān and in Ma‘rib (Bowen 1958: pl. 64; Hehmeyer, Schmidt 1991: fig.7).

Unfortunately, Systems 1 and 3 cannot be compared with any other irrigation systems.

Conclusion

Of course, very interesting pictures can be easily obtained from Google Earth and various other Internet sites, but these photographs are generally quite recent. The landscape has changed considerably in this region over the last 30 years. Many land settlement programs have been launched, and numerous farms irrigated by wells have been built in Ḥadramawt since that time. As I described earlier, the aerial photographs used in this study were made in order to advance various hydraulic and agricultural improvement projects. Furthermore, many additional roads have been created and cities have grown.

Due to the aforementioned development, visual evidence of antique irrigation systems has often disappeared. Many hydrological structures are destroyed over time, and no longer evident on modern aerial images. GE INFRA photographs offer us the possibility to study systems that no longer exist.

A satellite image dating from 2011 – from Google Earth — reveals that modern fields now cover Raybūn's ancient irrigation system. Most canals and hydraulic structures are no longer visible at the surface of System 2.

Finally, I would like to thank Prof. Christian Darles, who brought the existence of this collection of photos to my attention and Christian Rives, who gave me access to this collection.

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Fig. 1. Aerial photograph of wādī Bayhân from GE Infra (© GE Infra).



Fig. 2. Area covered by GE Infra photographs.

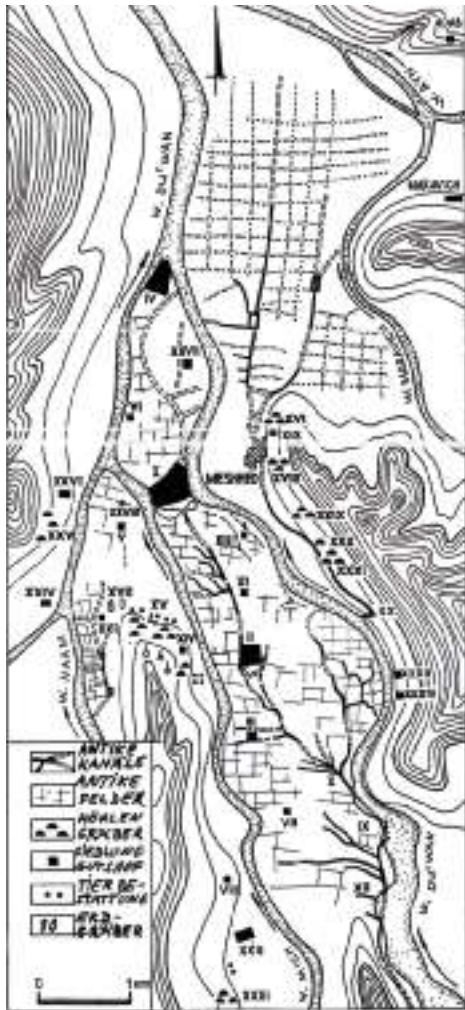


Fig. 3. Map of Raybun irrigation system made by the Russian archaeological mission (from Sedov 1997: fig.1).



Fig. 4. Map of Raybun irrigation systems made from GE Infra photographs (© Julien Charbonnier).



Fig. 5. Map of Raybun irrigation Systems 1 and 3 (© Julien Charbonnier).

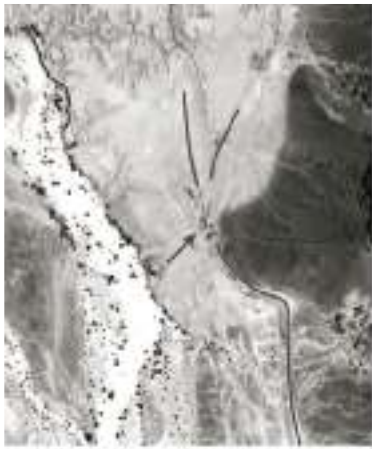


Fig. 6. Main water distributor (point D) of Raybun irrigation system 3 (© GE Infra).



Fig. 8. Water distributor (point B) of Raybun irrigation System 2 (© GE Infra).

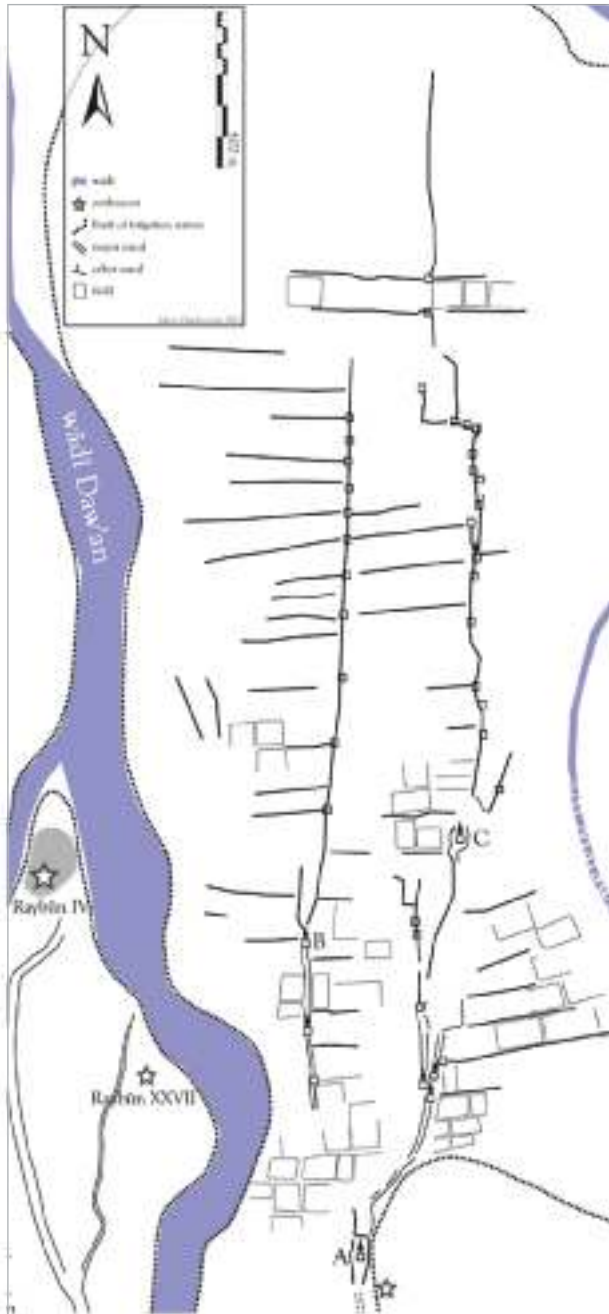


Fig. 7. Map of Raybun irrigation System 2 (© Julien Charbonnier).

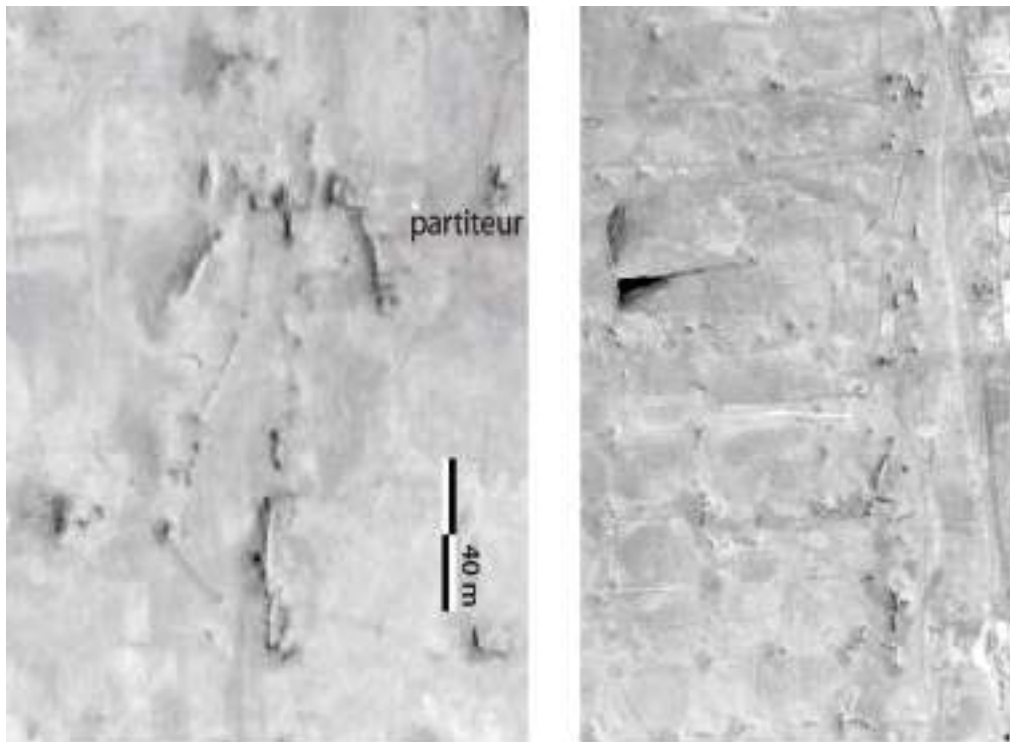


Fig. 9. Water distributor (point C) of Raybûn irrigation System 2 (© GE Infra).

Fig. 10. Water distributors along a canal of Raybûn irrigation System 2 (© GE Infra).



Fig. 11. Antique stone sluice in Ma'rib oasis (© Julien Charbonnier).



Fig. 12. Antique irrigation system in Shabwa (© Christian Darles).

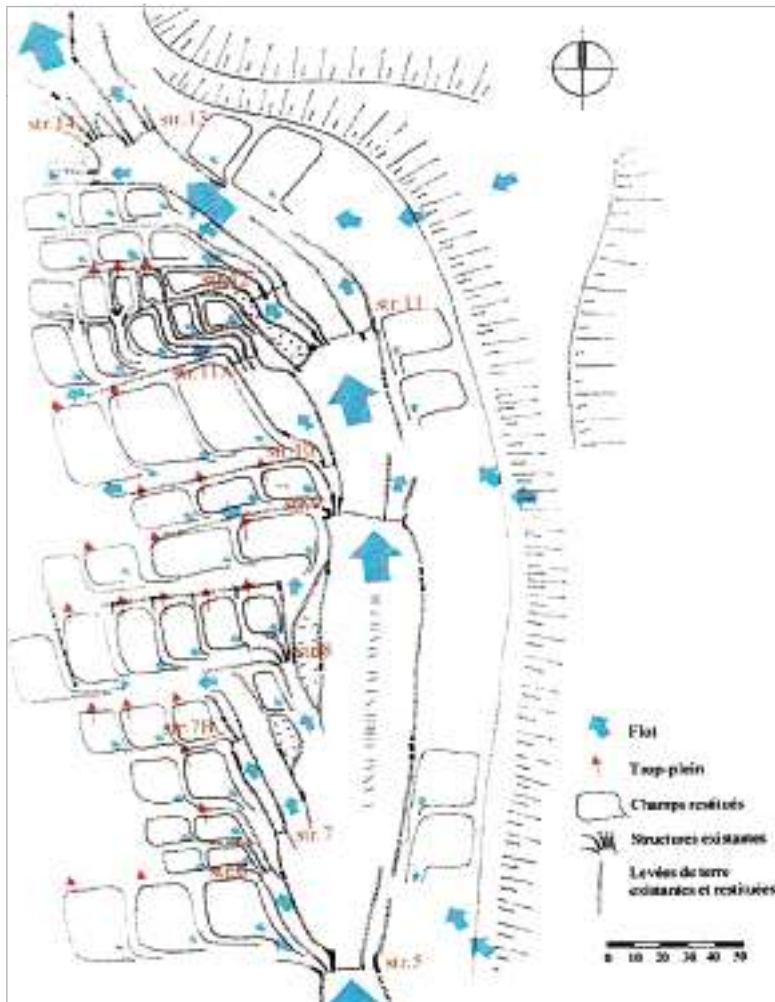


Fig. 13. Map of wādī Surbân irrigation system (© Christian Darles).

Eugenio FANTUSATI, Eleonora KORMYSHEVA, Svetlana MALYKH

GPR SURVEY AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS AT ABU ERTEILA (THE REPUBLIC OF SUDAN)

1. THE SITE ABU ERTEILA

1.1. Previous investigations

The first quotation of Abu Erteila goes up to 1911. It was J. Crowfoot who gave in such way its shortest description: “*On the opposite bank of the same valley is a small site covered with red brick belonging perhaps to a later period*”¹. After 42 years of silence P. Shinnie would have returned in extreme synthesis on the matter. He did it in form of news on the first number of the review “Kush” furnishing the coordinates of the place and adding the following elements to Crowfoot’s account: “*Three mounds covered with broken red brick and fragments of pottery. From the potsherd seen on the surface of the round, these mounds appear to belong to the Meroitic period*”². In 1959 F. Hintze shortly examined Abu Erteila inserting it among the sites of his “Preliminary Report of the Butana Expedition”, he also produced new coordinates but did not propose any more details³.

Other twenty-five years would be passed before having a new reference to Abu Erteila: Abdelkarim Ahmed effectuated two test pits there, published in 1984 an approximate planimetry of the Koms and, like his predecessors, observed that the area “*consists of four mounds*”⁴. In the

¹ Crowfoot J.W. *The Island of Meroe*, in *Meroitic Inscriptions I*, London, 1911: 12-13.

² Shinnie P.L. Notes in *Kush I*, Khartoum, 1953: 87.

³ Hintze F. Preliminary Report of the Butana Expedition 1958 made by the Institute for Egyptology of the Humboldt University, Berlin // *Kush VII*, Khartoum, 1959: 176-177.

⁴ Khidir Abdelkarim Ahmed, *Meroitic Settlement in the Central Sudan. An Analysis of Site in the Nile Valley and the Western Butana*. Cambridge, Cambridge Monographs in African Archaeology 8, BAR International Series 197, 1984: 23-25.

following years the place would still have been mentioned by Ali Hakem, David N. Edwards, Rebecca J. Bradley and Ahmed Abdalla, but even in these circumstances the reference did not overcome the quotation or several notes⁵.

After the quick experience in the field effectuated by Abdelkarim Ahmed, the French-Sudanese mission driven by Salah Mohamed Ahmed has been conducted in Abu Erteila between 7 and 27 December 2003, but the suddenly premature disappear of Patrice Lenoble, the chief of the mission, imposed the abandoning of the searches. The preliminary results of these excavations were recently published. According to him the site might be dated from Meroitic period up to Early Christian time⁶ that corresponds generally to our mind.

1.2. The Italian-Russian Mission

The new mission was organized in Abu Erteila by forces of two institutions – the Italian Institute for Africa and Orient (IsIAO) and the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences (IOS RAS). Thanks to the mutual agreement, through the signature of a scientific protocol the exploration of the site started in 2008. Co-directors of the project are: Eugenio Fantusati (IsIAO), Eleonora Kormysheva (IOS RAS)⁷.

The excavation license, granted by NCAM, foresees a research schedule starting from season 2008–2009 and concerns an approximate rectangular area of about 190 x 265 m, whose total surface reaches 5.000 sq.m of which not less than 3.000 sq.m interested by archaeological emergencies.

The concession is delimited by four reference points individualized by the Mission: to north a concrete post fixed in the ground and referable to the works linked to a new pipeline, to east and south road trucks on the ground impressed by the vehicles occasionally employed for the same pipeline and to west a well, still today regularly used by the shepherds of the village to water their cattle.

1.3. Description of the site

Abu Erteila, whose terrestrial coordinates are N 16°52'119"⁸ is situated to the north-east of Shendi town at the distance of nine kilometres from Meroe's necropolis and less than five

⁵ A.M.Ali Hakem, *Meroitic Architecture, a background of an African Civilization*, Khartoum, 1988: 330; Edwards D.N. *Archaeology and Settlement in Upper Nubia in the 1st Millennium A.D.*, Cambridge, Cambridge Monographs in African Archaeology 36, BAR International Series 537, 1989: 54; Bradley R.J. *Nomads in the Archaeological Record // Meroitica* 13, Berlin, 1992: 185; A.M.Ahmed Abdalla, *Towards a better understanding of the Meroitic settlements in Central Sudan (Shendi Area) // Acta Nubica, Proceedings of the X International Conference of Nubian Studies Rome 9-14 september 2002*. Rome, 2006: 125-126.

⁶ Salah Mohamed Ahmed, *A Short "Training Campaign" at Abu Erteila 7-17 December 2003 // La pioche et la plume. Autour du Soudan, du Liban et de la Jordanie, Hommage archéologiques à Patrice Lenoble*. Paris, 2011: 297-302.

⁷ Richard Lobban, Executive Director and Founding President Sudan Studies Association participates and contributes this mission. In the field seasons 2009-2010 Russian members were Pavel A. Morozov, Sergey V. Merkulov (Institute of earth magnetism, RAS – Geo-Radar and topographical survey), Svetlana E. Malykh (the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of the Sciences, ceramologist), Sergey V. Malykh (Moscow archaeological company, archaeologist); Italy: Maria-Rita Varriale (architect), Marco Baldi and Renato Damigo (assistant archeologists), Pierra Muretti (assistant); France: Danièle Michaux-Colombot (President of the Egyptological Association "Winged Solar Disc", Orlean). Sudan NCAM was represented by inspectors Fausi Hasan Bakiet and Omaima Abd el-Rahman.

⁸ As it was noted by Khidir Abdelkarim Ahmed, "Shinnie's reference to the site as being E 33°42'397" is found by Hintze to be incorrect" (Khidir Abdelkarim Ahmed, *Op.cit.*: 23).

kilometres from the eastern bank of the Nile, exactly in front of Kabushiya village (fig. 1). The altitude of Abu Erteila above the sea level according to data given by Salah Mohamed Ahmed⁹ corresponds to 391 m.

The small village of Abu Svetlana Bersina <svetla_ber@rambler.ru>, Erteila inhabited by shepherd's families is situated along the western limits of the site, where modern Tahadi Road runs, that unites Khartoum to Atbara, it corresponds in turn to its eastern borders. One kilometre north lies Awlib, a relevant Meroitic complex, where the Polish mission of Gdańsk Archaeological Museum worked¹⁰.

Some natives use in fact to call the site Abu Ritela explaining us, that "ritela" is the local name of an endemic kind of phlebotomists. Such insects, tireless in special way towards the animals to the pasture, would be characterized by the particularity to be destined to die shortly after having stung their victims. The inhabitants of the village, involved in the excavation activities of the mission, use to define all the archaeological area "Howsh al-Kufur" ("the unbelievers' enclosure"). They also report that one shepherd would have recovered a gold figurine destined to be sectioned in three parts and exchanged with a provision of *marissa*, the typical local beer.

The ground structure at Abu Erteila includes in prevalence sand, gravel and sediments of yellowish sandstone. The territory includes two big extended Koms oriented W-E and N-S, mentioned on our plan as Kom I and Kom II, included as well two small Koms, which were not yet excavated and specially investigated. However traces of them are visible on the topographical plan.

Between the two main hills traces of three circular structures on the ground line, were clearly observed. Their filling in this context would seem referable to plentiful rains, a phenomenon still today greatly consistent during the summer months in Abu Erteila, where the outflow of the meteoric precipitations, whose passage is quite evident on the surrounding surfaces, has been faced through the insertion of ample draws under Tahadi Road.

The surfaces of the Koms and of the whole surrounding territory appear abundantly covered by potsherds and red brick fragments, while traces of ancient buildings were concentrated especially in the northern and eastern sectors of the concession. To the time of the beginning of our works all territory of the surface was filled by large quantity of the scattered red bricks testifying to big destructions and fires, which have partly destroyed a monument.

2. GPR SURVEY

The surveying of the archaeological area, granted by NCAM, were effectuated with Russian invention GPR "LOZA-V", using new modern methodologies that were not applicated before in this area. They were realized by Pavel Morozov and Sergey Merkulov, with their own invention "LOZA-V". The Russian Geo-Radar "LOZA-V" used in Abu Erteila is a portable enhanced power ground penetrating monopulse radar, destined for studying subsurface soil structures at depths from a few meters to hundreds meters, depending on the GPR model and antenna employed.

Georadar of the series "LOZA" belong to the class of geophysical devices for sub terrestrial soil structure on depths of unit, depending on model of the device, the used aerial and parameters of the probed environment.

⁹ Salah Mohamed Ahmed, *Op. cit.*: 297

¹⁰ Paner H. Khartoum-Atbara Road Rescue Project: Shendi-Begrawiya Section Field Report // *Kush* 17, 1997: 137-155.

Mode of functioning of GPR operation is based on radiation of super broadband electromagnetic impulses without bearing in spreading environment and registration of their reflections from borders of section of layers of various firmness or objects. Results of measurements are displayed on the device in the form of radiograms, fixing time of arrival of the signal reflected from borders of section of environments, for each point of measurement.

Sounding method “ROD-IN” allows to define by means of a georadar speed of distribution of an electromagnetic wave in the environment and accordingly depth of reflecting surfaces or objects. Speed of distribution of an electromagnetic wave in the environment with constant dielectric permeability can be defined from the formula:

$$T = \frac{(S^2 + 4 \times d^2)^{1/2}}{V_g}$$

Where: S – distance between aerials; d – depth a reflecting layer; V – speed of distribution of an electromagnetic wave in a ground.

On the basis of the received data it is possible to make the system of the equations and to define speed of distribution of a wave and depth of each layer at which reflection from the bottom border is fixed. The software automates this process.

The subsurface at Abu Erteila, constituted by layers of sand, mud and gravel, occurs to be ideal for this type of research, it had allowed to find structures and to create the 3D-images of places and objects. The radar investigated 82 profiles in the area totally equal to 3.864 sq.m corresponding to the extensions of the Kom I and the Kom II with the preliminary removing from the area every big obstacle (stones and brick fragments), which could have damaged the exact positioning of the antenna on the ground during the definition of the profiles. There were created 84 special profiles with cross-section pass of each meter (according to the size of the aerial) have been created with every longitudinal “step” equal to 10 cm. The general direction of the research was north-south.

2.1. Kom I

The Kom I was inserted in an approximate square form on the topographical plan, which sides, 48 m (N-S) and 46 m (E-W). It was subdivided on 48 profiles, each one of 1 m spaced (fig. 2,3)¹¹. The radar investigated them in N-S direction.

The following results are displayed on the pictures from above to below:

1. Horizontal cross-section on the depth 57 cm (fig. 4)¹² demonstrates the investigated area of the Kom, which is marked with the red color; the blue one presents a variant of the last 3D treatment, which allows to determine the entrance.
2. Horizontal cross-section on the depth 47 cm (fig. 5) demonstrates small sections (30–40 cm), which allow to assume, that the gate could be on the north-east. North is links.
3. Sections, which were received after computer treatment (fig. 6, 7), are disposed on the depth around 2,4 m from the top of the Kom. Horizontal cuts from 30 cm up 2 m (fig. 8–11) have permitted to compare upper and lower objects and to determine preliminary the main entrance to the complex.

¹¹ By small black quadrats are marked first archaeological tests, effectuated before GPR survey.

¹² On all the pictures meters put on the coordinate net are correspond to the real size.

The 3D reconstruction of GPR data permits to see the regular structure already on the depth 50–60 cm with more or less strong wall on the north (fig. 4). This object is oriented by its longitudinal walls as north-east – south-west with a supposed entrance from the north-east side, which might be discovered even on the depth 30-40 cm.

On the depth of 2.4 m from the top of the Kom I another structure is visible between both Koms on the depth is 3.4 m (fig. 7). It is a strong wall (fig. 3 (marked with Pz1), 12), which is traced on the minimum depth 4 m from the day surface.

The results of the researching GPR profiles with the help of 3D-reconstruction on the investigated area of the Kom I permit to reveal the rectangular object in size 14 x 20 m (fig. 13). The calculated depth of the cultural layer is not less than two meters. Besides the main archaeological object more than five internal rooms have been tracked inside the revealed walls.

2.2. Kom II

Surveying zone on the Kom II has a size 34 m (south-north) and 46 m (east-west). After having selected a rectangular square, the same operation was repeated: totally there were done 34 profiles in N-S direction. Other four profiles (two in N-S direction and two in E-W direction) were finally executed on the area corresponding to structures, situated to the north-west from the Kom I.

The following results of the investigations of the Kom II are displayed on the pictures from above to below:

1. The first section is the deepest one, and demonstrate 3D-image on the depth 330 cm (fig. 14). The traces of the object, which are seen on the depth 3.3–3.5 m. Northern side of the object is oriented on 10–15° from east direction.
2. The direction of the northern external object is seen clearly (fig. 15) on the horizontal cross-section at the depth 300 cm.
3. The direction of the northern object is clearer on the cross-section at the depth 258 cm (fig. 16). This line is a continuation of the northern limit of the Kom I.
4. The horizontal cross-section on the depth 240 cm displays a wall, situated on the distance 3–4 m from the outer surrounding wall. Angles and internal walls are also seen (fig. 17).
5. The horizontal cross-section on the depth 220 cm (fig. 18) demonstrates the existence of external and internal walls of the north-eastern and central parts of the object (building?), which become clearer on this level.
6. Internal and external walls are seen well on the horizontal cross-section at the depth 210 cm (fig. 19).
7. The horizontal cross-section on the depth 180 cm (fig. 20) demonstrates very interesting effect – within 30 cm the traces of the internal walls become equal. A new object with the orientation north-south, west-east as well as traces of the slice of the Kom (round structures) appear.
8. The horizontal cross-section on the depth 168 cm allow to see sides and shape of an object with the orientation north-south, west-east (fig. 21).
9. The horizontal cross-section on the depth 144 cm (fig. 22) demonstrates a middle part of the “upper” object.
10. Upper cut of the object is seen on the horizontal section on the depth 120 cm. On this level the connection part disappeared from the southern side (fig. 23).

The comparison of the 3D images permit to conclude the existence of two similar structures on the both Koms with the same orientation and the same position of entrances (fig. 24).

3. EXCAVATIONS

3.1. *Kom I*

During the field season of 2010 the expedition had been excavated territory in the size of 200 sq.m on the Kom I according to the received GPR data (fig. 25, 26). The general plan of the excavations on this territory is represented on the map divided on 8 squares in the size 5 x 5 m (fig. 27). In process of excavations the exact conformity of the GPR results and the real position of the objects became evident.

The stratigraphic cross-section (fig. 28) has been made on a line the north-east – the south-west and has passed on the area of squares I-2 – I-6. The following layers are revealed in it:

- a layer of a day surface from orange sand (5–10 cm);
- a layer of light brown sandy loam with the broken red fired brick (5–50 cm);
- a layer with fire traces (charcoals, ashes, gray sandy loam, capacity of 7–12 cm);
- a layer of dark gray sandy loam with the charcoal inclusions, probably formed by collapse of mud constructions (15–25 cm);
- lower, in the southern part of the section, the laying from mud brick is fixed; in its middle part the sectional cut has passed in an average part on the Room 5, in its filling from above there was a layer of sand with dark gray loam and lime (10–30 cm), lower two layers of a fire (thickness on 3–5 cm), divided by a layer of brown sandy loam with a lime particles (10 cm);
- the last thin layer of the condensed building mixture represents strong brown sandy loam with lime particles.

Leveling of a day surface from +115 cm in the southern part to 3 cm in the northern part resulted in consequent difference of heights in the excavation zone, equal to 118 cm.

According to the results of the field season of 2010, it is obvious, that two building horizons are traced on the excavated zone. Two types of constructions are distinguished on the surveyed territory of the Kom I – seven rooms from mud brick and construction from the fired red brick. The construction from a red brick falls outside the limits the zone excavated in 2010 from the south (fig. 27); constructions from mud brick adjoin it from the north. Undoubtedly all complex has suffered from strong fires; it is possible even from two: the first layer of a fire (charcoal, ashes) is fixed on the level +70 cm, the second one on the level +52 cm.

3.1.1. *Burials*

Two untouched burials were discovered at the southern part of the excavated section, which has been found in the top layer of squares I-5 and I-7 (fig. 27). Here in the south-eastern part of square I-5 from the level of +53 cm has been found a pit of anthropoid form, the size 165 x 40 cm, precisely corresponding to the body form. The inhumation was done in the south-western corner of the square in a hastily dug burial pit between two walls. The northern wall, which built earlier from mud brick, has been partially punched owing to this inhumation. In the pit there was a skeleton in the extended position, oriented east-west, and a head to the east (fig. 29a). Right hand was on pelvis, the left hand near to pelvis is extended along a body. The length of the skeleton is nearby 160 cm.

The skeleton arrangement allows to qualify it as intramural burial, made after the termination of functioning of the main construction. The burial equipment is not preserved. The comparative analysis of this type of inhumation demonstrates similarity with Late Meroitic burials (4th century AD) in El-Kadada, and burials in the area of 4th Nile Cataract¹³.

One more skeleton has been found in the south-western part of square I-7, its orientation is east-west, a head on the east (fig. 29b), and the size of the burial pit is 190 x 45 cm. Both hands are crossed on the pelvis, the left palm lies over the right. The length of the skeleton is nearby 180 cm, small pieces of fabric were found on the head and on the left foot. The burial equipment is absent. The rests of the fabric, which has remained on the body of the dead from Abu Erteila, allow to assume that the body has been wrapped in a shroud, as it can be concluded on well remained burials in the necropolis of Djebel Geili¹⁴.

This tradition of a body's disposition ascends by the Napatan period, the same position of a body is fixed also in the presence of a sarcophagus¹⁵, it is widely known in the Meroitic period in various settlements¹⁶, and in Post-Meroitic time as well¹⁷. According to the previous excavations, undertaken by Salah Mohamed Ahmed together with late P. Lenoble on the eastern plain of Abu Erteila the inhumation of a woman laid on her back was discovered, it was oriented north-east – south-west with the face turned towards the east and hands along the pelvis. Such peculiar position, according to Salah Mohamed Ahmed, could be tentatively dated to the early Christian period¹⁸.

Regarding to the burials, discovered by our mission, we can refer to the burials with such form of a body position have been found in Djebel Makbor – the area of stone deposits, used at constructions in Abu Erteila and Awlib¹⁹. Such type of the body position is revealed in two Tumuli (Tumulus 1 and Tumulus 2). Tumulus 1 is dated by Christian time, Tumulus 2 –

¹³ Lenoble P. Trois tombes de la region de Meroe. La culture des fouilles historiques d'El Kadada en 1985 et 1986 // *Archéologie du Nil Moyen*, Vol. 2, 1987: 89, 101, pl. 1. Zurawski B. Fourth cataract – Survey and Excavations in Shemkhiya, Dar El-Arab and Saffi Island // *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean* 17, 2005: fig. 5, 6.

¹⁴ Caneva I., Baracchini P., Coppa A., Francaviglia V., Fulcheri E., Gautier A., Lentini A., Marcolongo B., Palmieri A.M., Reddavid M., Scala G. *El Geili. The History of a Middle Nile Environment 7000 BC-AD 1500*, Oxford, 1988: 209.

¹⁵ Bonnet Ch. The funerary traditions of Middle Nubia // *Recent Research in Kushite History and Archaeology. Proceedings of the 8th International Conference for Meroitic Studies. British Museum, Occasional Paper Number 131*. London, 1999: 5, 12-14, fig. 4-6. Simon Ch., Maureille B. A Taphonomic and anthropological Study of some Napatan graves from Kerma and the island of Sai (Upper Nubia, Sudan) // *Proceedings of the 8th International Conference for Meroitic Studies. British Museum, Occasional Paper Number 131*, London, 1999: 39, fig. 2.

¹⁶ Näser C. Cemetery 214 at Abu Simbel North. Non-elite Burial Practices in Meroitic Lower Nubia // *Proceedings of the 8th International Conference for Meroitic Studies, British Museum, Occasional Paper Number 131*. London, 1999: 19-21, 27, fig. 2. Geus F. Meroitic Cemeteries in Sai Island // *Proceedings of the 8th International Conference for Meroitic Studies, British Museum, Occasional Paper Number 131*, London, 1999: 33, pl. 1.

¹⁷ Zurawski B. The Southern Dongola Reach Survey: First Season (1998) // In: Kendall T. (ed.) *Nubian Studies 1998. Proceedings of the Ninth Conference of the International Society of Nubian Studies — August 21-26, 1998 – Boston, Massachusetts*, Boston, 2004: 482, fig. 8, 9.

¹⁸ Salah Mohamed Ahmed, *Op. cit.*: 299-301.

¹⁹ Lenoble P. Quatre tumulus sur mille de Djebel Makbor .M.S. NE 36-0 / 3-X-1 // *Archéologie du Nil Moyen* 2, Lille, 1987: 213.

“Pre-Christian” or Late Meroitic time²⁰. The proposed dating for burials is very important for a tentative estimation of the burials dating in Abu Erteila, as far as both occur from the same region and, most likely, were done approximately one time. Similar burial places are known and in Western Arminna (Post-Meroitic time). This tradition remains in Christian burials as well. In Djebel Geili position of hands on pelvis is attested at all burials of women²¹. At the same time up to the Middle Ages the orientation of a head to the west is attested for Christian burials²².

This documentation provides with an evidence of upper chronological limit of the monument. So, the context of burial places testifies, that they have been made after the termination of an existing life-using on the Kom I. The comparative analysis of the inhumation type demonstrates similarity with Late Meroitic and probably even Early Christian period.

3.1.2. Rooms and finds

The preliminary analysis of the results of excavations on the Kom I allows to assume the existence here of the big complex including a strong building from fired red brick, and also economic and other rooms constructed from mud brick, which adjoin to it from the north-east (fig. 27, 30). The remained part of walls shows longitudinal-cross-section masonry from mud brick with spaces filled with the same material.

Rooms 1 and 2 (squares I-3, I-4 and I-7, I-8), most likely, represent a kitchen, to what the congestion of charcoal and ashes at southern walls of both rooms also testify (fig. 31, 32). They have the sizes 3.20 x 4.36 m and 2.12 x 4.32 m accordingly. In the eastern part a passage from the Room 1 to the Room 2 is fixed. Filling of rooms at the level from +37 to +27 cm displays a layer of gray-brown sandy loam. There is a layer of brown sandy loam with charcoal, broken bricks and ashes (+27 +12 cm) under it. Dark gray sandy loam is fixed lower with inclusions of ashes, charcoals and calcinated animal bones under which there is a layer of dark gray sandy loam with ashes and charcoals. In the lowermost part is light brown sandy loam (–6–15 cm). The congestion of ashes at southern walls of both rooms also testifies to destination of rooms as kitchens. Here are revealed a considerable quantity of animal calcinated bones – the rests of preparation of meat food.

Well remained walls of the Room 2, constructed by a longitudinal-cross-section mode, are characteristic for masonries in the Meroitic region. They are revealed on three rows of mud bricks and have silt layers between rows.

In the Room 1 at the eastern wall the furnace of the oval form (64 x 144 cm) was discovered (fig. 27). It was combined of a red brick; on the bottom burning traces are visible. Near the furnace twelve cylindrical beads of blue faience were found, possibly, lost by a woman working

²⁰ Ibid.: 222-226, fig. 5, 7.

²¹ Caneva I., Baracchini P., Coppa A., Francaviglia V., Fulcheri E., Gautier A., Lentini A., Marcolongo B., Palmieri A.M., Reddavid M., Scala G. *El Geili. The History of a Middle Nile Environment 7000 BC-AD 1500*. Oxford, 1988: 209.

²² Geus F. Saï: 1993-1995 // *Archéologie du Nil Moyen* 7, Lyon, 1995: 88. Geus F., Lecoite Y., Maureille B. Tombes napatéennes, méroïtiques et médiévales de la nécropole nord de l'île de Saï // *Archéologie du Nil Moyen* 7, Lille, 1995: 118, fig. 15; SN 18: 120, fig. 19, pl. VIIIA, pl. IX; SN 140: 120-121, fig. 20, pl. X; SN

¹⁸² Zurawski B. Old Dongola Cemeteries 1995 // *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean* 7, 1996: 126, fig. 4; 134, fig. 9.

at the kitchen. The furnace served, most likely, for room heating during cold time and preparations of charcoals. These charcoals were placed in pottery vessels, fifteen of which, (forming eight ceramic groups), are revealed in various parts of the Rooms 1 and 2 (fig. 27, 31). So, in the eastern part of the Room 1 four ceramic groups has been revealed consisting of nine similar vessels with a rounded bottom, driven in a ground in the north-eastern and south-eastern corners of the room. Ceramic groups 3, 4, 5 (fig. 33) have been placed in clay coating, which, most likely, intended for maintenance of heat of charcoals by which vessels have been filled. On these charcoals (inside a vessel) was, probably, put a jar or a cauldron for food preparing. The vessels-ovens were found not complete; from them there were only lower parts was discovered (fig. 34). In two cases (groups 3 and 5), vessels have been inserted one into another in such a manner that at studying of filling of vessels bottoms two more (group 3) or even three more (group 5) similar vessels (fig. 33) have been found out inside. Consequently it is possible to assume long use of the Room 1 in the identical purposes: vessels-ovens for charcoals after breakage were not taken out, they were left at place, putting over it (and, more precisely, in it) a new similar vessel-oven. In other cases (groups 4 and 6) vessels have been driven by one. Their filling was identical and consisted of a considerable quantity of charcoals and ashes with dark gray sandy loam. For this reason the interior of vessels has a soot layer.

In the south-eastern and south-western corners of the Room 2 two uncompleted furnaces from fired bricks (70 x 60 cm and 40 x 48 cm) were found (fig. 27). There were four ceramic groups here, included six vessels-ovens with charcoals (fig. 34), similar to that were found in the Room 1. They were settled down in north-western corner (group 8), south-western corner (group 7) and along the eastern wall of the Room 2 (groups 1 and 2). The groups of vessels-ovens 1 and 7 have been driven directly in the furnaces. All these vessels, as well as in the Room 1, have been filled by charcoals and ashes with dark gray sandy loam at its lower parts.

The ceramic group 1 consisted of the lower parts of three vessels (fig. 34), inserted one into another and with soot inside and outside. It is interesting that the vessel in the middle is unique among all eight groups of vessels, which belong to other morphological type of pottery – not round-bottomed, but a vessel on a ring base (fig. 34). Besides, it differs by more hard clay, beige engobe and by presence of a floral ornament (other vessels are non-ornamented). Fragments of the upper part of this vessel, including a rim, are found in debris near the southern wall of the Room 2. They are covered by polychrome ornament with floral and geometrical motives (fig. 34).

The others 14 of 15 vessels forming 8 groups of vessels-ovens belong to one morphological type of wheel-made round-bottomed pottery. Moreover, the majority of them are similar on clay fabric. Fourteen vessels were made of the clay occurring from Wadi el-Hawad²³ located in 2 km from Abu Erteila with kaolin grains, ferricreteous oxides, quartz sand and the crushed straw. Differences in clay fabric of the vessels consist in quantity of admixture and their size. Eleven from fourteen vessels have been covered outside by red engobe, two vessels were non-engobed, and the vessel on a ring base has beige engobe. Only one vessel (group 8) has been made of the alluvial clay occurring from the Nile valley, and was non-engobed. Accordingly, it is possible to assume that the settlement in Abu Erteila was a stationary one, with the adjusted extraction of necessary raw materials nearby for the everyday life organization.

²³ The determination of the origin of *wadi* clay fabrics of the region of Hamadab (the nearest parallels of Abu Erteila *wadi* clay fabrics) from Wadi el-Hawad was done by U. Nowotnick.

The fragments of vessels similar on the morphological type and wadi clay fabric, outside covered by red engobe but without soot traces, are found in the Rooms 5 and 6 (fig. 35). It allows restoring an original form of the vessels which lower parts were re-used as ovens. There were large, oblong round-bottomed vessels of 60–70 cm in height with short and enough narrow throat and the expressed shoulders which could be used for water or grain storage.

So, in corners and near walls of rooms the lower parts of large vessels containing charcoals and ashes have been driven. Taking this fact into consideration, it is possible to conclude that they were re-used as ovens: possibly, a body around shoulders was specially beaten off. Such vessels-ovens might serve as for room heating during winter time, and for cooking. In modern time there are vessels from clay (“difaya”)²⁴, according to the destination as ovens for room heating during winter time and for preparation or a warming up of a small amount of food. Probably, in Abu Erteila we have functionally similar group of pottery outwardly, however, different by the shape.

Similar vessels-ovens (by its shape, and function), were found in the houses of Meroitic settlements in Musawwarat es-Sufra and Hamadab (the latest approximately in 5 km to the north-west from Abu Erteila). At Musawwarat es-Sufra they were found outside the western corner and inside the rooms of so-called Building IB, which were interpreted as “governor’s palace”. Twenty four large vessels were filled with ashes (like in our case). F. Hintze concluded that the rooms with such vessels were “kitchens and store-rooms”²⁵.

At Hamadab vessels-ovens were settled down in corners or near the walls of rooms, sometimes up to three ovens in one room²⁶. After collapse of such ovens new ones were put on their place and the former vessel-oven was not taken out, remained on its place, the new one was inserted into it. As recent archaeological researches in Hamadab testify, the number of the inserted vessels-ovens in some cases reached one seven²⁷ (in our case no more than four were discovered).

Presence of furnaces and vessels-ovens in the Rooms 1 and 2 testifies that they were kitchens. There were revealed two whole and three fragments of small ceramic plates in the Room 2, which, judging by their shape, could be used as lids (fig. 36). They were wheel-made of clay with a considerable quantity of the mineral and vegetative inclusions, occurring of Wadi el-Hawad and outside covered by red engobe. Their form does not differ by accuracy; the bottom roughly cut with a knife has no good stability on a flat surface. Most likely, we are dealing with a version of the ordinary kitchen utensils met on Meroitic monuments and usually dated in 3rd century BC – 2nd century AD²⁸.

The considerable square of two rooms, as well as considerable quantity of kitchen utensils, evidence in turn to the importance of a main building which it has been served.

Destination of the Rooms 3, 4 and 6 is not clearly defined. However in the Room 5 (size 3.28 x 3.68 m), remained traces of a white plastering inside of its walls. As it was revealed at the Hama-

²⁴ Personal observation by Svetlana Malykh in Fayoum (Egypt). According to local potters such kind of vessels were used as ovens.

²⁵ Hintze F. Preliminary report on the Excavations at Musawwarat Es Sufra, 1960–1961 // *Kush* X, 1962: 201, pl. LXVIIb, c.

²⁶ Wolf P., Nowotnick U. Hamadab. Une zone urbaine meroitique // *Dossiers d’Archéologie. Méroé. Un empire sur le Nil*, № 18, 2010: 30.

²⁷ Personal communication of U. Nowotnick.

²⁸ Bradley R.J. Meroitic Chronology // *Meroitica* 7, Berlin, 1984: 199, 201, fig. 2 (22).

dab settlement from Meroitic period, internal walls in apartment houses could become covered by plaster of red, yellow and white colors²⁹. Fragments of wall plaster are met in other rooms of Abu Erteila as well, however in the Room 5 it distinguishes by better quality and thickness, which forces to see in it a especial object allocated from others. Now it is impossible to give the exact identification of the Room 5 in absence of sufficient comparative material, however its importance in comparison with other rooms is obvious.

In the north-eastern part of the Room 5 the vessel has been found, broken into two parts (fig. 37). It represents a bowl on the high and thick leg, which is ended with a ring base (the general height is 42 cm). The vessel was wheel-made of the clay occurring in Wadi el-Hawad, with mineral and organic inclusions, the top part covered by red engobe outside and inside. Soot traces on the vessel are absent; consequently it is possible to assume that its functions were a stand for a censer (fig. 38a,c) (i.e. a plate or a bowl with incense could be put on it).

In the filling of the Room 5 four more fragments of the similar stands were revealed, two of them belong to one vessel (fig. 38b,c). Besides it, the fragment of a small hand-made cylindrical lamp/censor with a thick layer of soot inside was found, outside it was covered with impressed geometrical ornament (fig. 39). On its style it belongs to the group of *Nubian Black Ware*, characteristic for archaeological monuments in Nubia from the Neolithic period up to Post-Meroitic time³⁰.

Representations of censers on high stands are visible on the stele of Teritekas (the end of the 1st century AD) from Meroe Royal City³¹, on the wall of the Apedemak temple in Musawwarat es-Sufra³² (3rd century BC – 1st century AD), on the bronze bowl from Gammai³³ (3rd century AD). They define the time of existing of this type of pottery – 3rd century BC – 3rd century AD. In all cases censers are placed before deities or kings that testify to ritual functions of these objects. Thus, in the Room 5 the accumulation of pottery for sacral purposes is fixed.

Such stands for censers were produced not only of clay, but also of faience – one richly decorated object has been found in the Western necropolis of Meroe Royal City and dated in the 2nd – 4th centuries AD³⁴. As some researchers consider, the shape of the stands for censers could be borrowed from metal vessels of Cyprus and Phoenicia³⁵. It testifies to wide external contacts of the Meroitic Kingdom.

During the excavations there were found 20 grindstones of two kinds – flat oval stones with deepening (15 copies) and round stones for grinding³⁶ (5 copies). Thirteen of them are

²⁹ Wolf P., Nowotnick U. *Op. cit.*: 29.

³⁰ Edwards D.N. Three Cemetery Sites on the Blue Nile // *Archeologie du Nil Moyen*, Vol. 5, Lille, 1991: 41, 46, pl. V; Shinnie P.L., Bradley R.J. The capital of Kush I. Meroe Excavations 1965–1972 // *Meroitica* 4, Berlin, 1980: 104-105, fig. 34, 35 (forms 80, 84).

³¹ Baud M. Tariteqas, la déesse Isis et la Promesse d'un long règne // In: M.Baud (ed.) *Méroé. Un empire sur le Nil*, Paris, 2010: 176, fig. 224.

³² Hintze M. *Musawwarat es Sufra I, 2. Lowentempel*, Tafelband, Berlin, 1971: Taf. 70, 71; Hintze F. et al. *Musawwarat es Sufra. Lowentempel*, Textband, Berlin, 1993: Plan 10c.

³³ Bates O., Dunham D. Excavations at Gammai // *Harvard African Studies* 8, *Varia Africana* IV, Cambridge, 1927: pl. LXV, fig. 4.

³⁴ Pierrat-Bonnefois G. Les objets de faïence // In: M.Baud (ed.), *Méroé, Un empire sur le Nil*, Paris, 2010: 120, fig. 161.

³⁵ *Ibid.*: 121.

³⁶ As it was told by local people, took part in the excavations as workers, such grindstones are used in the village up to now.

found in the Room 5; the others 7 – in other parts of the excavated area. Lack of possibility of making the chemical analysis of a surface of these tools does not allow to define their function precisely. On the shape is possible to assert that such stones were used for a grinding of solid material, may be grain, mineral paints or aromatic substances. The most part of grindstones has been found in the same room, as stands for censers for aromatic substances which, probably, were necessary to crush.

Proceeding from above mentioned facts, it is possible to assume that in the Room 5 the objects, probably, used in rituals were concentrated, that allocate the Room 5 of other rooms of the complex on the Kom I.

In the upper layer behind the northern wall of the Room 6 the blue faience base has been found (fig. 40). It has paws of an animal – a lion or a leopard. It is most likely a part of votive figurine represented a sitting animal. Such votive figurine might be connected with a lion-headed god Apedemak, whose main centers were Musawwarat es-Sufra, Naga and Meroe.

Apedemak was worshiped as the war god and god-creator and considered to be the main god of the Meroitic Kingdom. The numerous lion figurines found on all the territory of the Meroitic Kingdom are connected with his cult. Apedemak had a leading position in the enthronement ritual to what reliefs of main Meroitic temples testify, as well as king's symbolic of clothes and ornaments³⁷. Thereupon it is possible to assume that the small find of the rests of a lion figurine and censers for incense testify to the possible significance of housing estate at the Kom I as residences of a priest.

After clearing of all northern part of the excavated territory from the fallen bricks one-two rows of the red brick masonry even at the lowermost level are traced. From time to time bricks are laid under well traced corner at the level from –1 to +32 cm, width of 120 cm, the remained length of 200 cm, depth of 20 cm, the fixed thickness 33 cm. The sizes of bricks are 37 x 8 cm, width 18–19 cm. The character of the wall masonry, which has been found in this part of the excavated area, testifies that it has been constructed from parallel rows of bricks, the space between which is filled by the clay mixed with organic particles and potsherds.

Such masonry is attested in many ancient settlements of Meroe. The sizes of the found bricks are 30 x 17 x 7 cm, and even in case of its loss the traces on a plastering completely coincide to this measurement. The direction of the masonry is north-east – south-west. The form and mode of the masonry, also material and the sizes of red bricks are almost identical with that are available in the king's residence at Meroe and in the religious center Awlib³⁸. It allows to integrate the building construction at Abu Erteila into one cultural area of the investigated region. Chronologically speaking these data allow concluding confidently that the monuments may be dated in second half of Meroitic Period.

The wide passage is traced in the south-western part of the complex between the Room 7 and large construction from the red brick. Its southern borders occur outside the limits of the excavated zone. Long passage between the Rooms 5, 6, 7 and a building from red brick is revealed also. Here at the south-eastern part a door was probably put on. Absence of doorway traces in other rooms can be explained by the fact that from the construction only lower part has remained.

³⁷ E.Kormysheva, *Gott in seinem Tempel. Lokale Züge und ägyptische Entlehnungen in der geistigen Kultur des Alten Sudan*, Moskau, 2010: 262-266.

³⁸ Personal observations of the authors.

The red bricks which have been found on a line of the excavated zone in the north, the west, and the east, can belong to a layer located lower, or they are a part of a surrounded wall of all building complex.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBSERVATION OF THE AREA

4.1. Possible location of a temple

On the southern extremity of the Kom II there was found a part of a column of the white limestone which deposits presumably are in ten kilometers from Abu Erteila. 3D-reconstructions of the supposed buildings according to GPR investigation are differed from what is known for Amun temples; accordingly it is possible to assume here a temple devoted to local god or other religious construction. The fragment of a column (fig. 41), and finds of other fragments of white limestone demonstrate their origin from a deposit of Djebel ab-Amara, that in turn testifies to importance of available (or several available) constructions.

The visible part of the column is decorated by the floral ornament representing a composition of flowers and buds of lotus, Such decor is characteristic for a headdress of the god Hapi, represented in processions on columns in a number of temples of the Nile valley (in Meroe and Egypt). In all cases this composition is located strictly vertically – colors and buds upwards. Exact analogies among known columns of Meroe temples do not come to light. Similar compositions, however, are met on pottery dated in the 2nd – 3rd centuries AD. This decoration has the Egyptian origin, but it is executed in Meroitic proportions and style, thus, it became known on all Nile valley. On insignificant distance to the south from the column there is a big fragment of the same white stone squared shape with internal polished surface that can be a kind of an identification mark of a temple zone.

Taking into consideration close connections of Abu Erteila and Awlib, as well as reliable identification of the last one as the religious complex, it is possible to assume presence of a temple and a residence of priests in Abu Erteila.

4.2. Construction at the north-east from the Kom I and Kom II

To the north-east from the zone of an arrangement of the Kom I and the Kom II even during the campaign 2009 traces of object has been found. After cleaning the area two semicircular contours of a two contiguous apses construction were tracked on the level 10–15 cm from the day surface. A third apses structure was probably annexed to the two above-mentioned rooms. It is not visible from the day surface and slightly visible in underground with GPR. This object has been conditionally interpreted as the church though its orientation on parts of the world leaves some doubts in such identification³⁹.

GPR investigations (fig. 42) were made with the help of four profiles in the direction north-south, west-east. According to the data of GPR investigation, the semicircular contours and rectangular traces of a building on this surface correspond to a kind of basement, traced on depth a minimum 1 m, with good safety in the north-eastern part, but having traces of considerable collapses from the west (fig. 43). Thus, the assumption of possible finds of three apses

³⁹ Baldi M., Varriale M.R. An Hypothetical 3D Reconstruction of the So-Called Church in Abu Erteila // *Cultural Heritage of Egypt and Christian Orient, Vol. 6, Egypt and Near Eastern countries III mill. B.C. – I mill. A.D.*, Moscow, 2011: 372-379.

basilicas remains is rather probable. The approximate length of the object is 14–16 m (fig. 44). This hypothesis is correlated with finds of potsherds on the day surface; approximately half of them are dated in the Early Christian period.

It is known that in the Middle Ages the territory of Abu Erteila was integrated to a zone of the Christian Kingdom of Alwa, which northern borders grasped all “island Meroe”. They reached interflow of Nile and Atbara from the north⁴⁰. Taking this fact into consideration, considerable quantity of a red brick with traces of the fires, found on a surface of all archaeological object, might be a result of possible collapses not only at the end of Meroitic period, but also during an epoch of existence of Nubian Christian kingdoms.

5. CONCLUSION

The analysis of results of archeological excavations at Abu Erteila allows to assume a presence of the big building complex on the Kom I, which structure included residence and economic annex. Such complex could belong to the high priest and could be connected with sacral constructions as the find of a column (or its part) indicates. The radio-carbon analysis of dating (C 14), made in Rome, offers a dating of the kitchen functioning in the interval between the 1st and the 3rd centuries AD, i.e. in last blossoming of the Meroitic Kingdom, to which the first crushing blow has been struck in the beginning of the 4th century AD.

The basic problem of the identification and estimation of the whole monument is its dating. The lower tentative data of the monument is rather large and is based only on the ceramic material a part of which gives rather earliest dating. So one of the fragments of a plate (09/s/28, day surface) is very similar to that from Meroe with the dating in the 8th – 7th centuries BC⁴¹. The censer stands, as it was demonstrated above, are dated in the 3rd century BC – 3rd century AD.

The upper chronological border of a monument functioning can be prolonged to the Post-Meroitic and Christian time. The late data proves to be true by presence of Early Christian potsherds assembled from the day surface in 2009. The ideas of chronology are related with traces of a fire, possibly, resulted with wars at the end of existence of the Meroitic Kingdom attested in written sources. Large military collisions are known on the territory of Meroe with Axumite armies. So, in the Aezana inscription it is said, that after battle at merge of the rivers Seda and Takkaze Aezana has directed groups upwards the Nile in order to capture the cities “from a stone of Alwa (Meroe) and Daro”⁴². We do not ascertain that the destructions were caused by Aezana, however, the very fact that Aezana had directed to the capital of the Meroitic Kingdom

⁴⁰ On the territory of Alwa s. Monneret de Villard U. *Storia della Nubia Cristiana*, Roma, 1938: 152.

⁴¹ Bradley R.J. Meroitic Chronology // *Meroitica* 7. Berlin, 1984: 199, 201, fig. 2 (22). Referred in: Fantusati E., Kormysheva E., Malykh S. Survey in Abu Erteila: Preliminary Results // *Proceedings of the 12 International Conference for Nubian Studies*, London, 2010 (in print).

⁴² Бауэр Г.М. Надписи ранних царей Аксума. V-VI. О походе против ноба // *История Африки в древних и средневековых источниках*, Хрестоматия, Под ред. О.К.Дрейера, Сост. С.Я. Берзина, Л.Е. Куббель. М., 1990: 174-179 (on this point with precaution p. 176, note 2; Welsby, *The Kingdom of Kush*: 198); Eide T., Hägg T., Pierce R.H., Török L. (Hrsg.), *Fontes Historiae Nubiorum. Textual Sources for the History of the Middle Nile Region between the Eight Century BC and the Sixth Century AD*, Vol. III, Bergen, 1998: 1055-1072. On this point see: Dinkler E. König Aezana von Aksum und das Christertum. Ein Randproblem der Geschichte Nubiens // *Ägypten und Kush*, Berlin, 1977: 124. Eide, Hägg, Pierce, Török, *Fontes Historiae Nubiorum...*: 1098; Welsby, *The Kingdom of Kush*: 197.

somewhere to the middle of the 4th century AD forces to take it into consideration. The traces of great destruction – abnormal quantity of red bricks scattered on the entire surface are indirect evidence of such a possibility. These military operations might be reflected in Abu Erteila, considering its geographical position and affinity to Meroe. On the same reasons (geographical position and abnormal quantity of scattered red bricks) it is less probable that the destruction were caused by local military conflicts, well known from the annals of Meroitic kings, because this site was inhabited in the Post-Meroitic and Early Christian time. Another possibility of destructions might be related to the Medieval period.

Georadar data on the Kom II, where regular excavation was not spent yet, demonstrates similarity of the underground constructions to what have been noted for the Kom I. However, a cultural layer on the Kom II is stronger (to three meters), large constructions are accurately traced on underground layers⁴³. Resume of this data gives the chance to assume an existence in Abu Erteila large settlement and a temple. Similarity in material and modes of a construction between Meroe, Awlib and Abu Erteila, and also a presence of khafir “Howsh al-Kufur”, the common one for these settlements, unique finds of the vessels-ovens having analogy only in Hamadab and Musawwarat es-Sufra, allows to integrate Abu Erteila into a cultural-historical area of “island Meroe” and capital region – Meroe.

⁴³ According to analysis of GPR data, effectuated by P. Morozov and S. Merkulov.

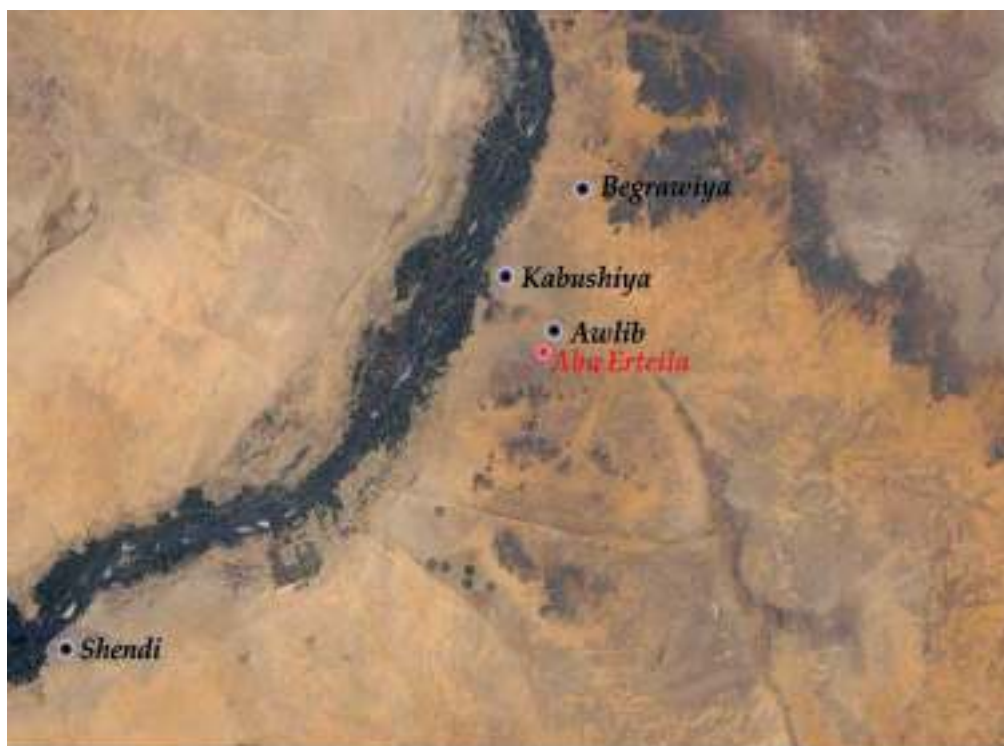


Fig. 1a. Map of the region

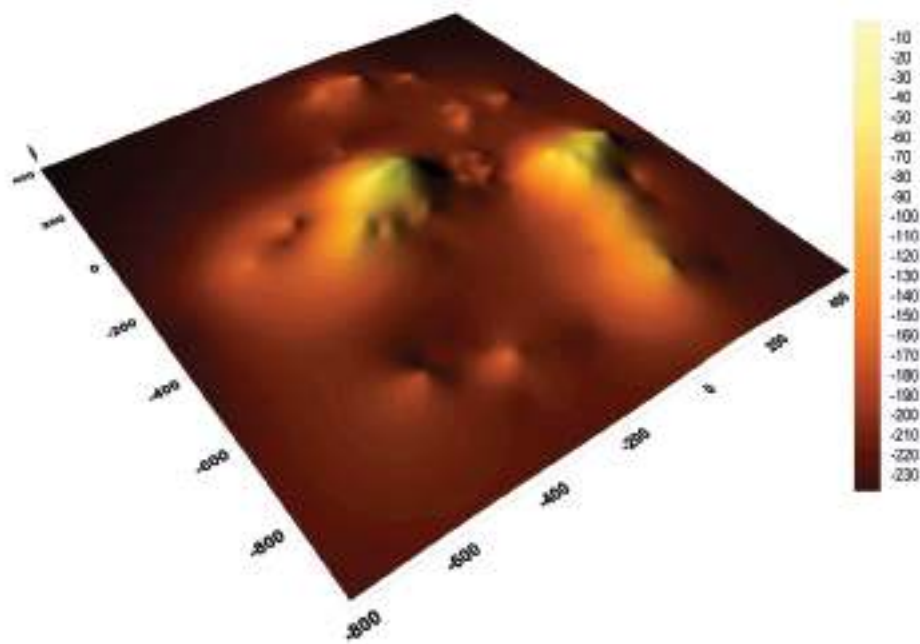


Fig. 1b. Computer 3D-reconstruction of the site

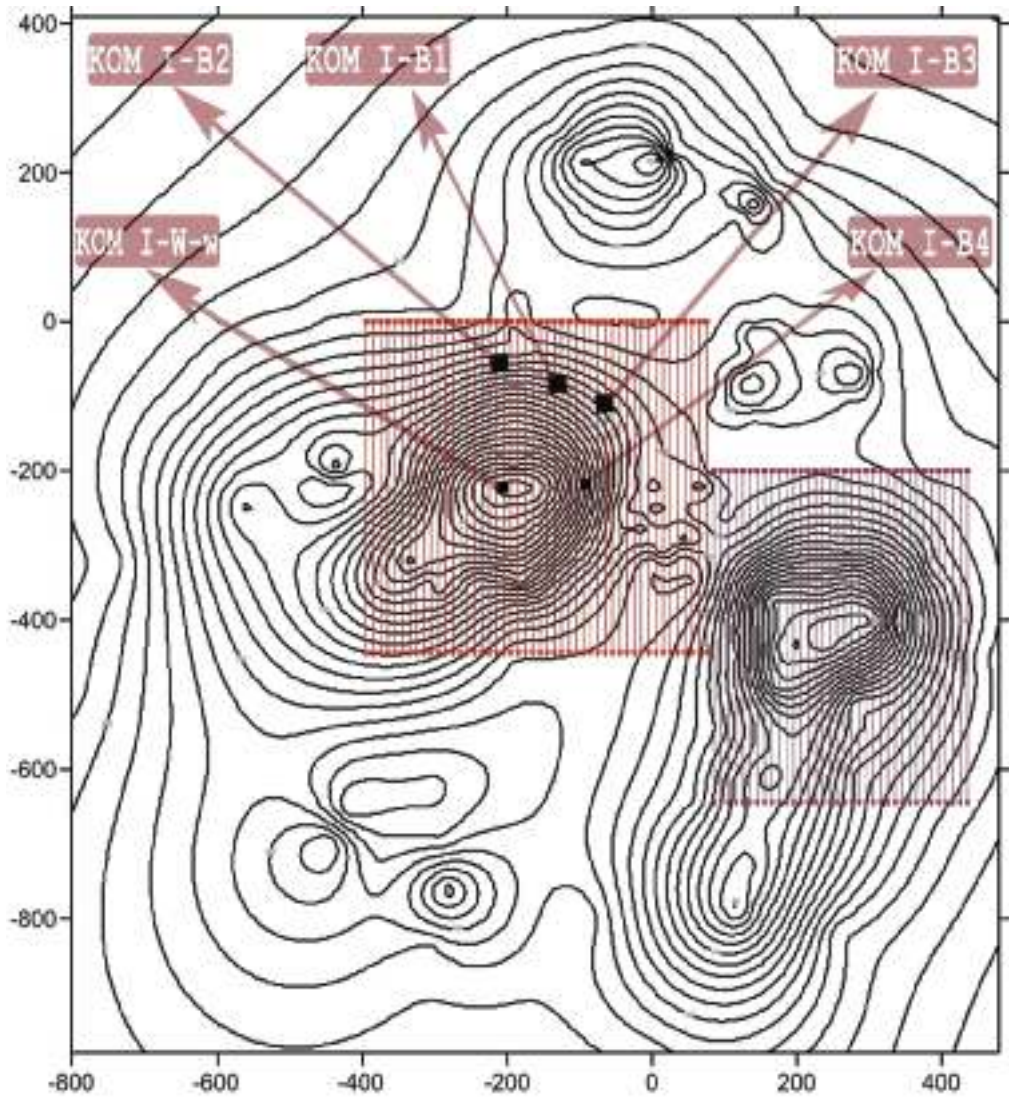


Fig. 2. Topographical plan with the indication of the archaeological tests in year 2009

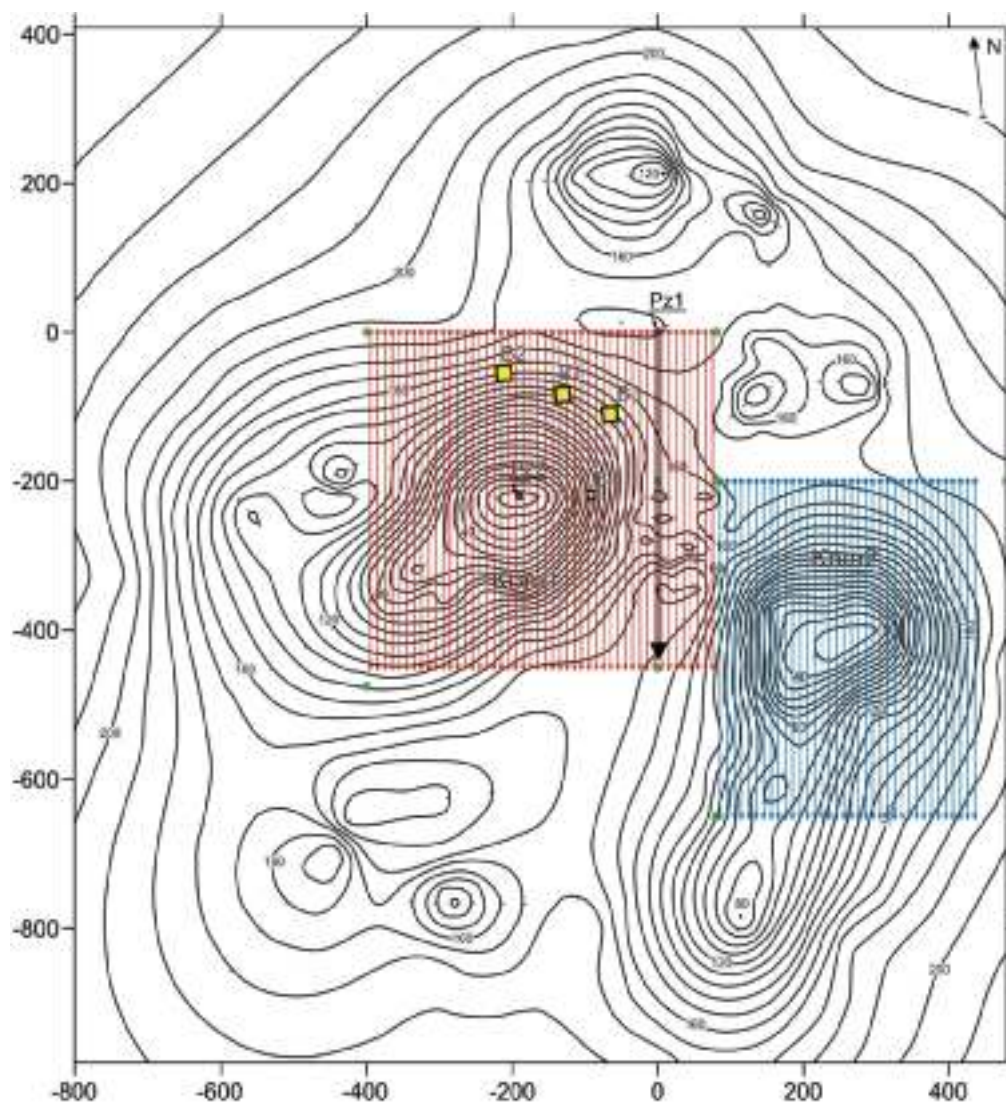


Fig. 3. Topographical plan of the area with the indication of the wall between Kom I and Kom II

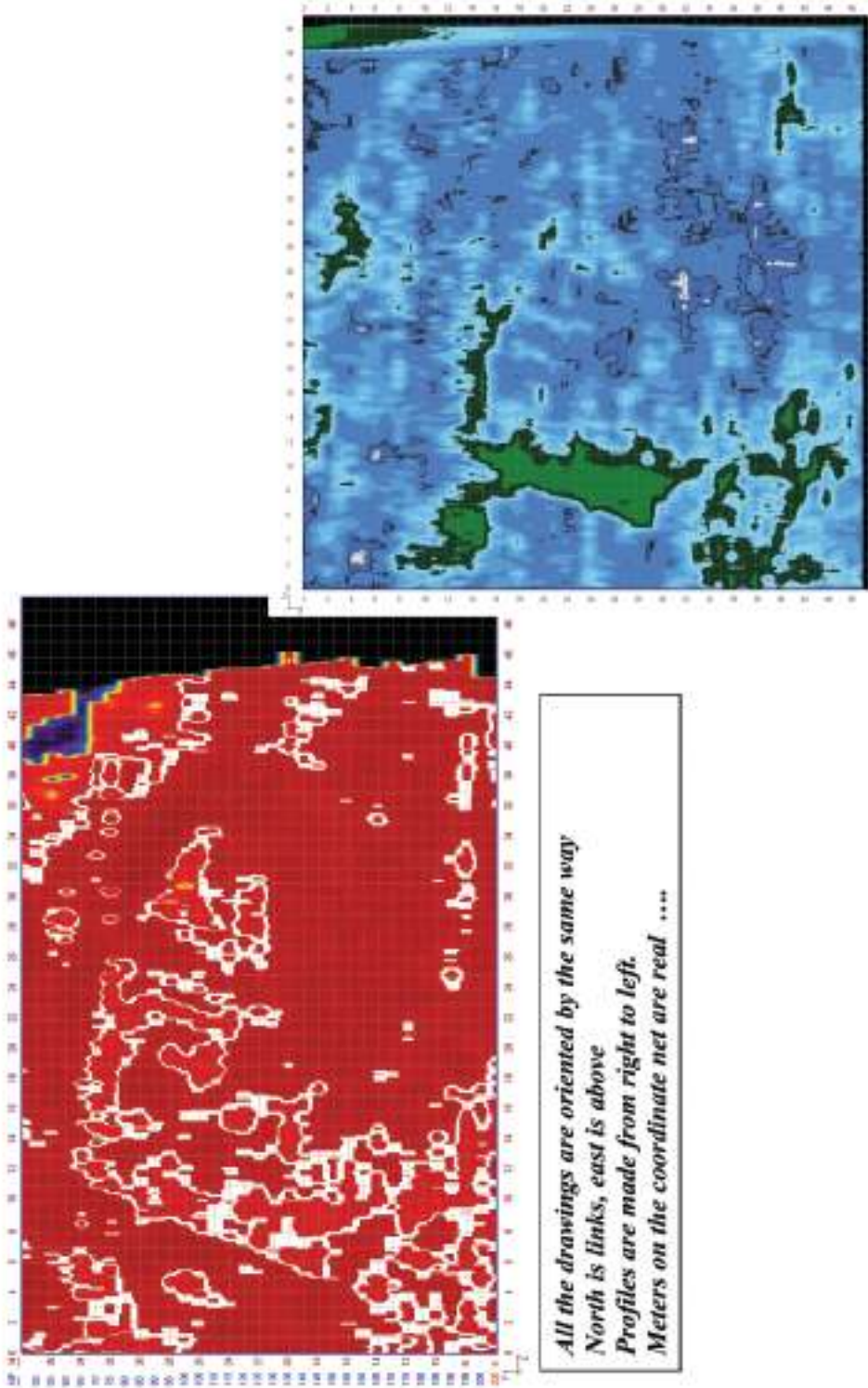


Fig. 4. Horizontal section of the Kom I on the depth 57 cm

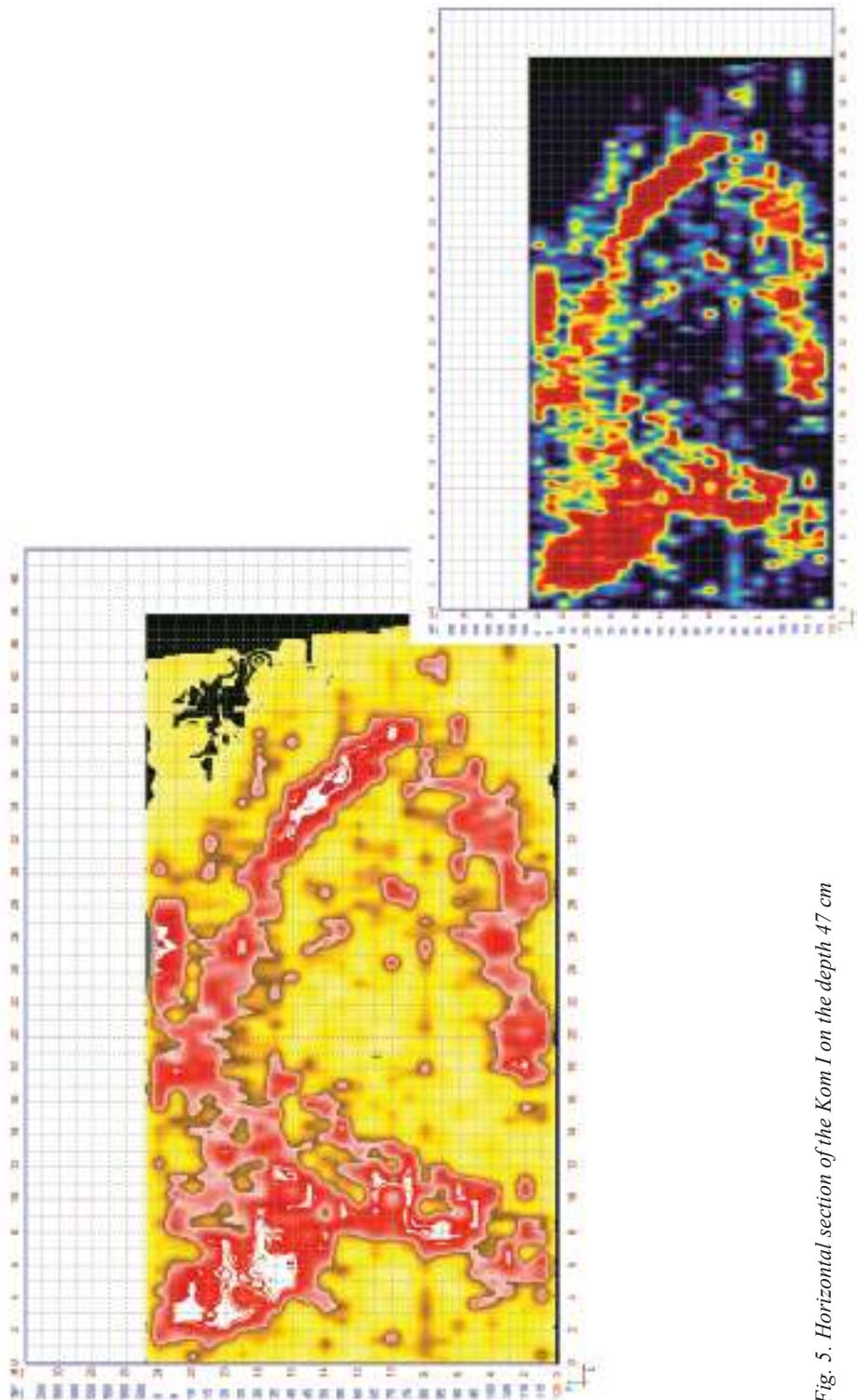


Fig. 5. Horizontal section of the Kom I on the depth 47 cm

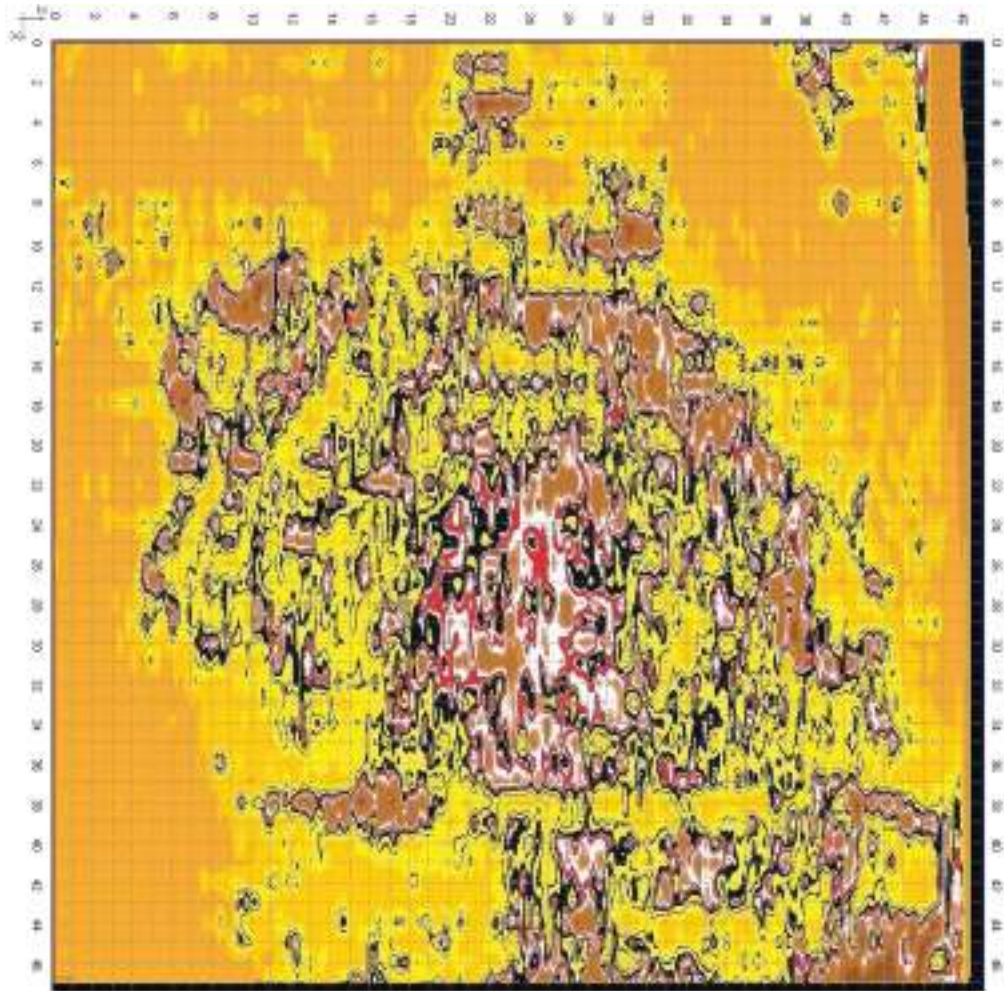


Fig. 6. 3D-image on the depth 240 cm

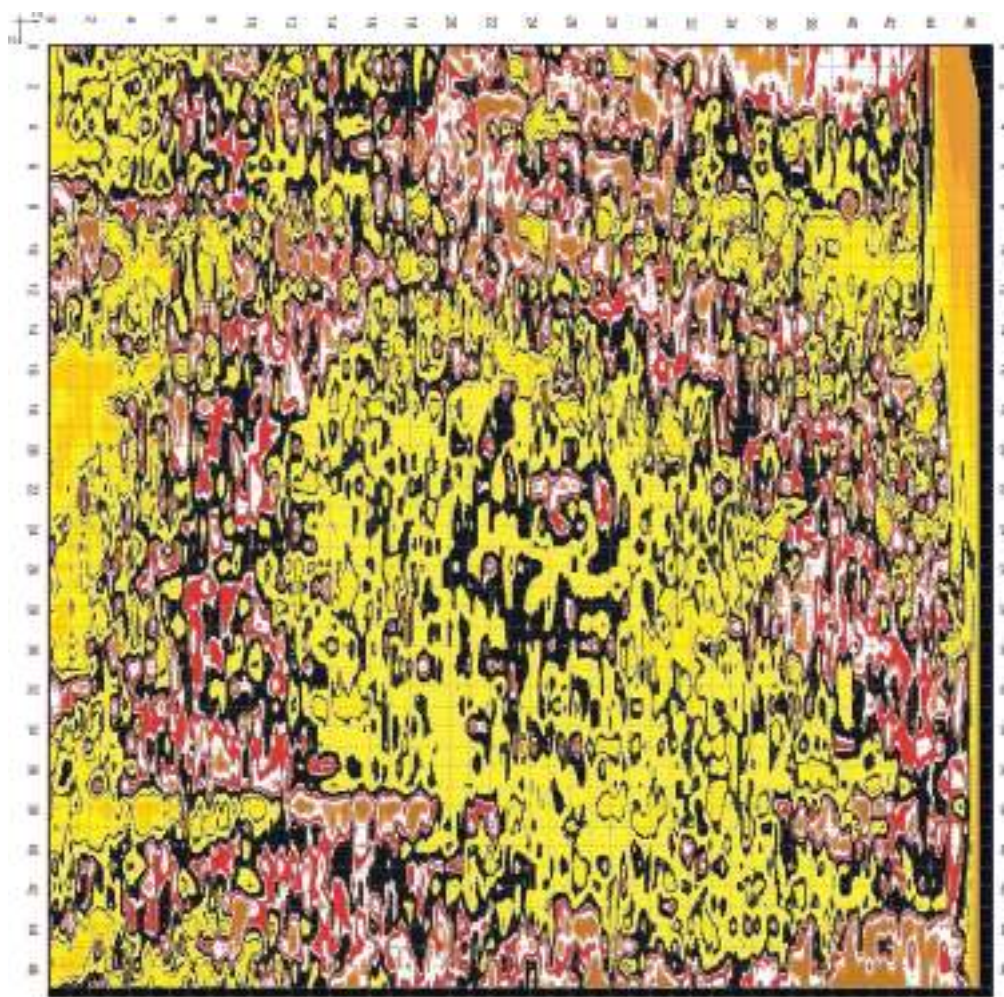


Fig. 7. 3D-image on the depth 340 cm

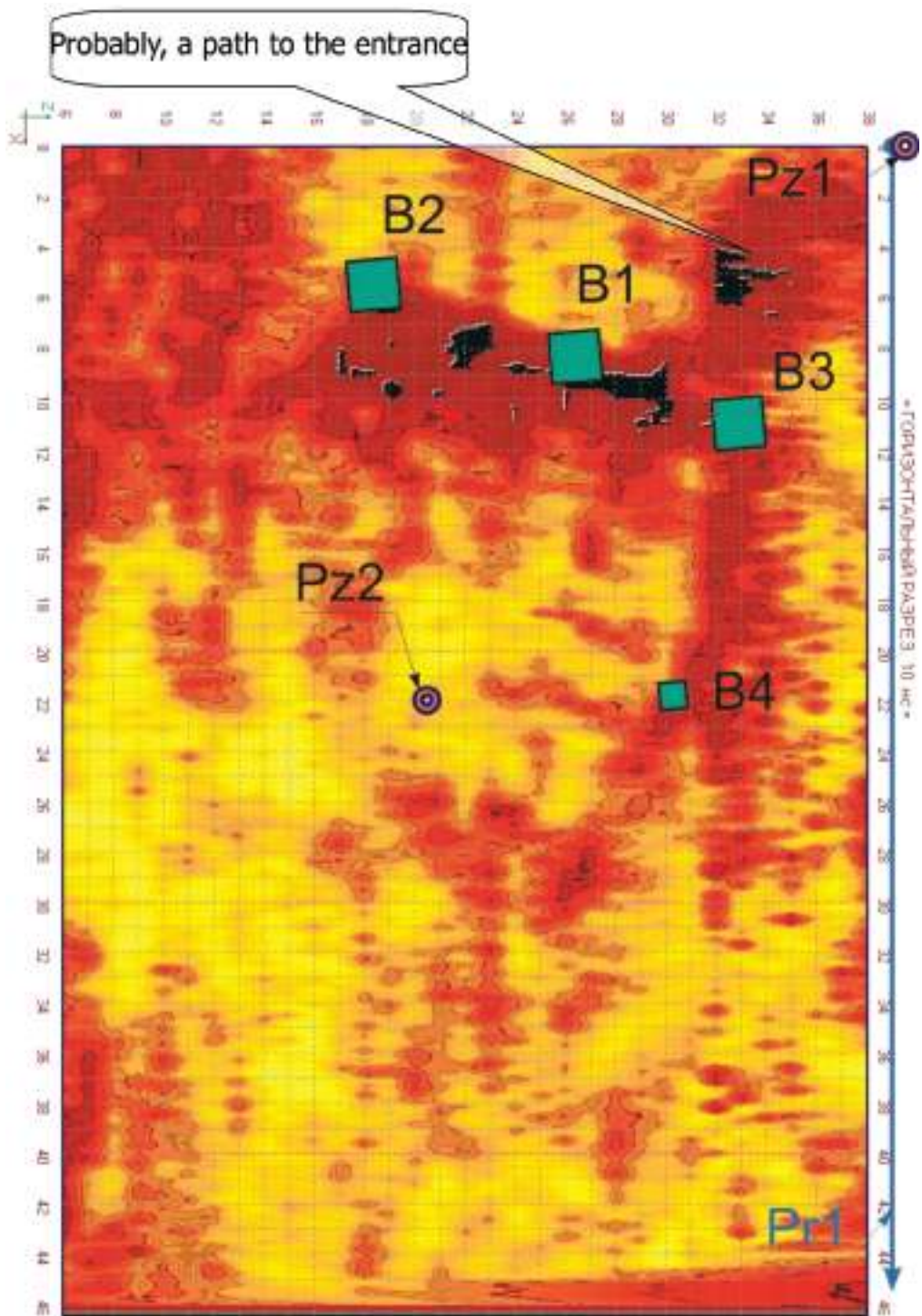


Fig. 8. Probably here is a pass to the entrance of the Kom I. Cross-section on the level 35 cm

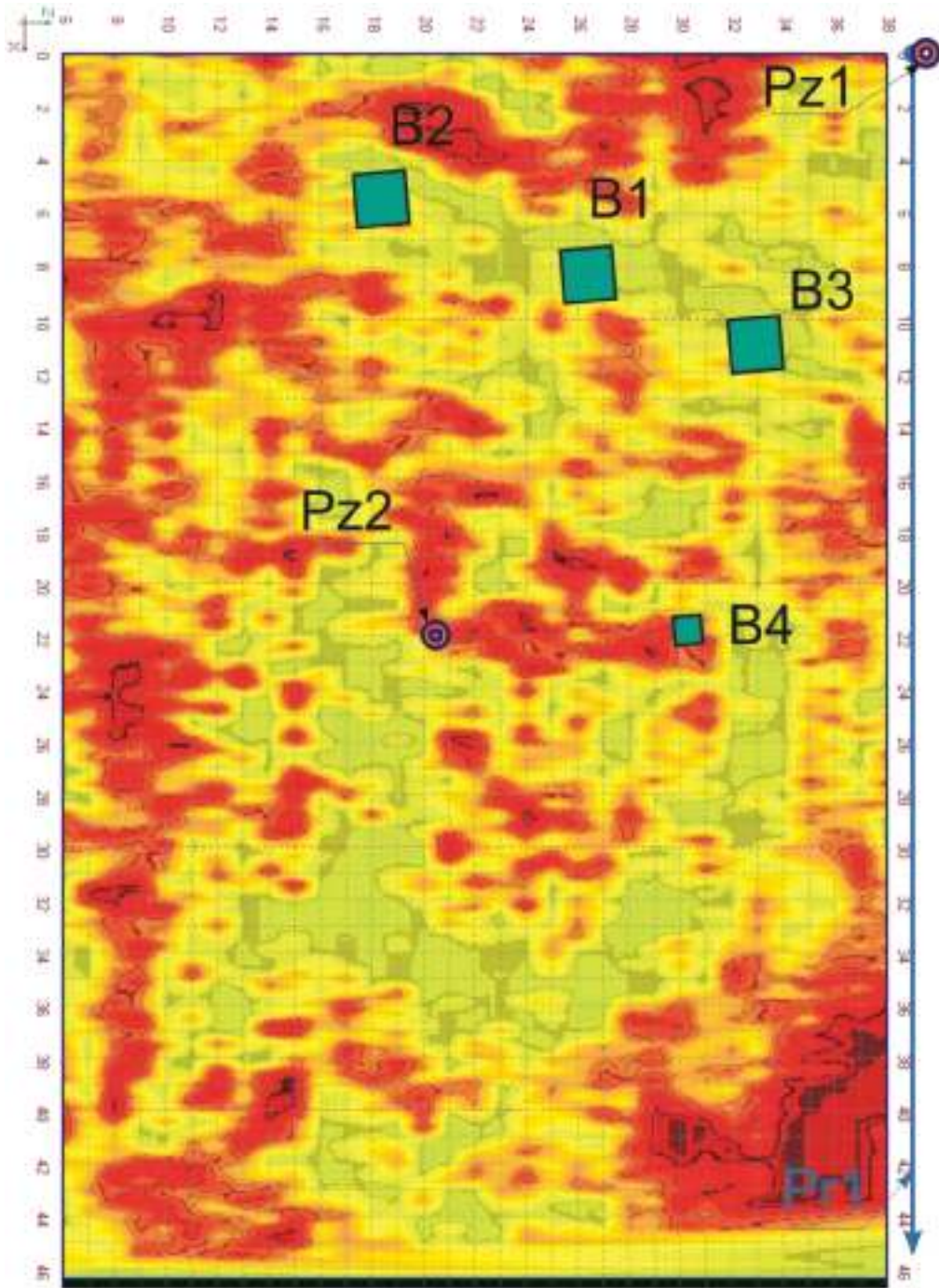


Fig. 9. Kom I. Cross-section on the level 70–80 cm

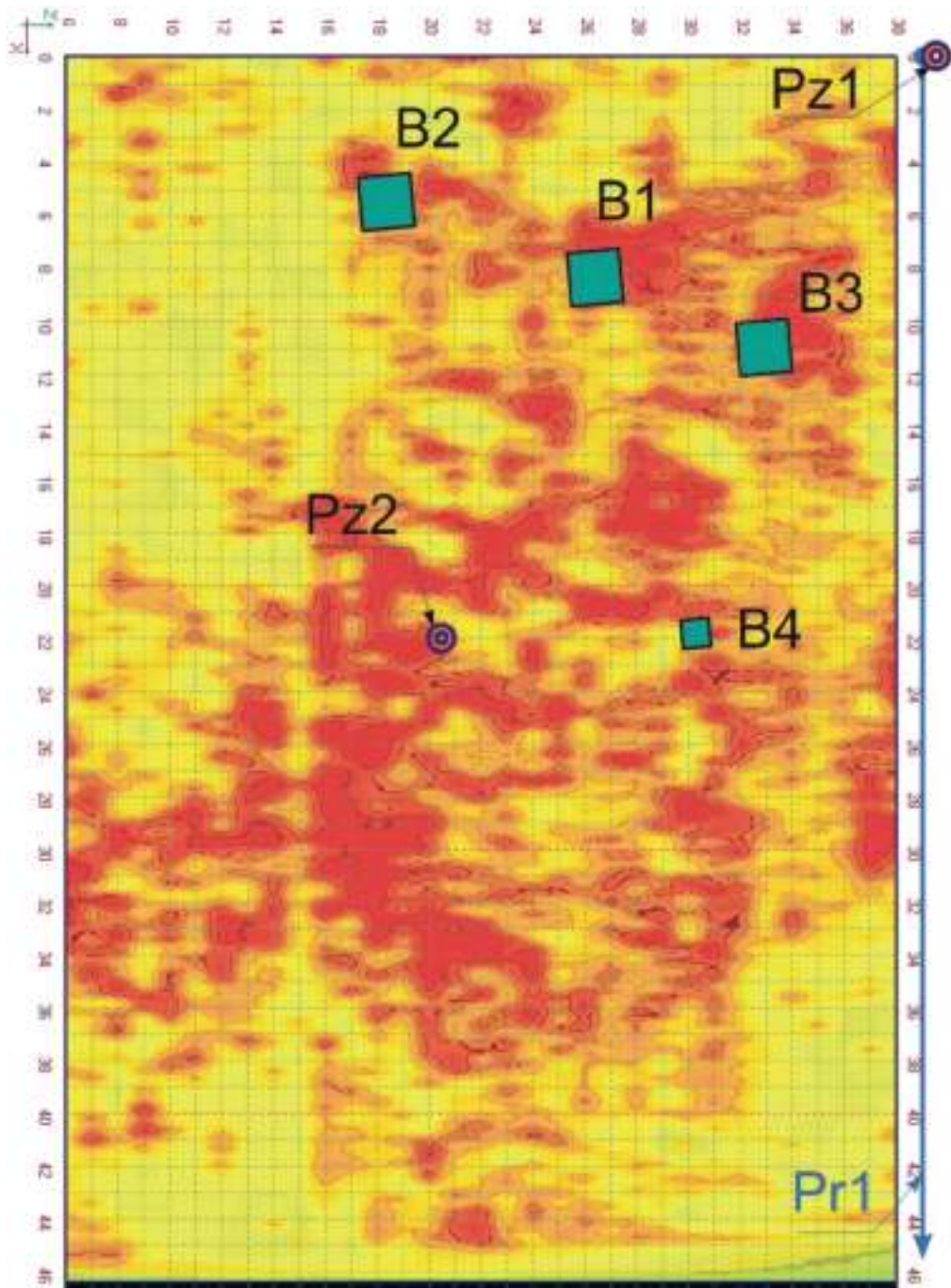


Fig.10. Kom I. Cross-section on the level 100–110 cm

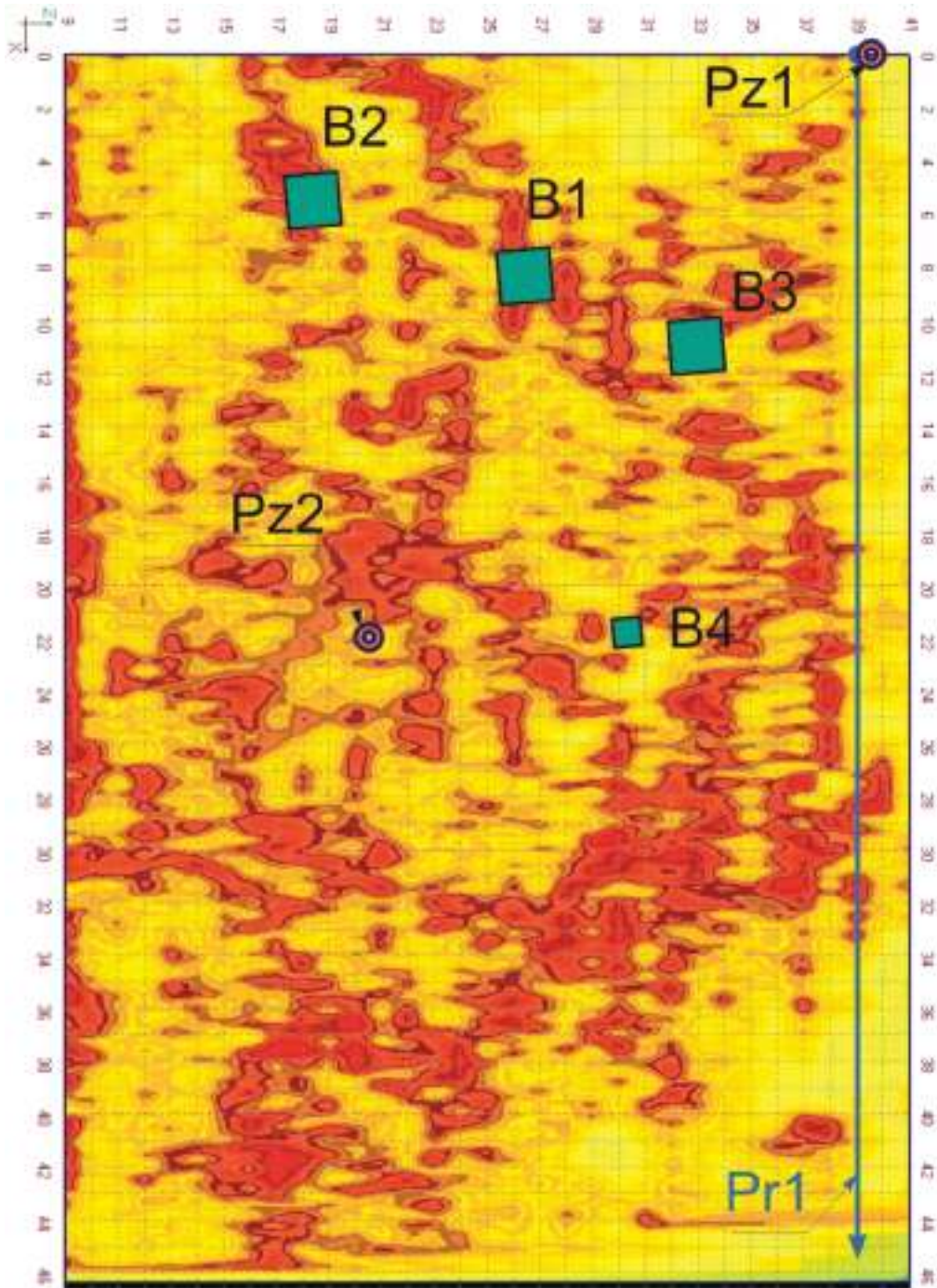


Fig. 11. Kom I. Cross-section on the level 180–200 cm

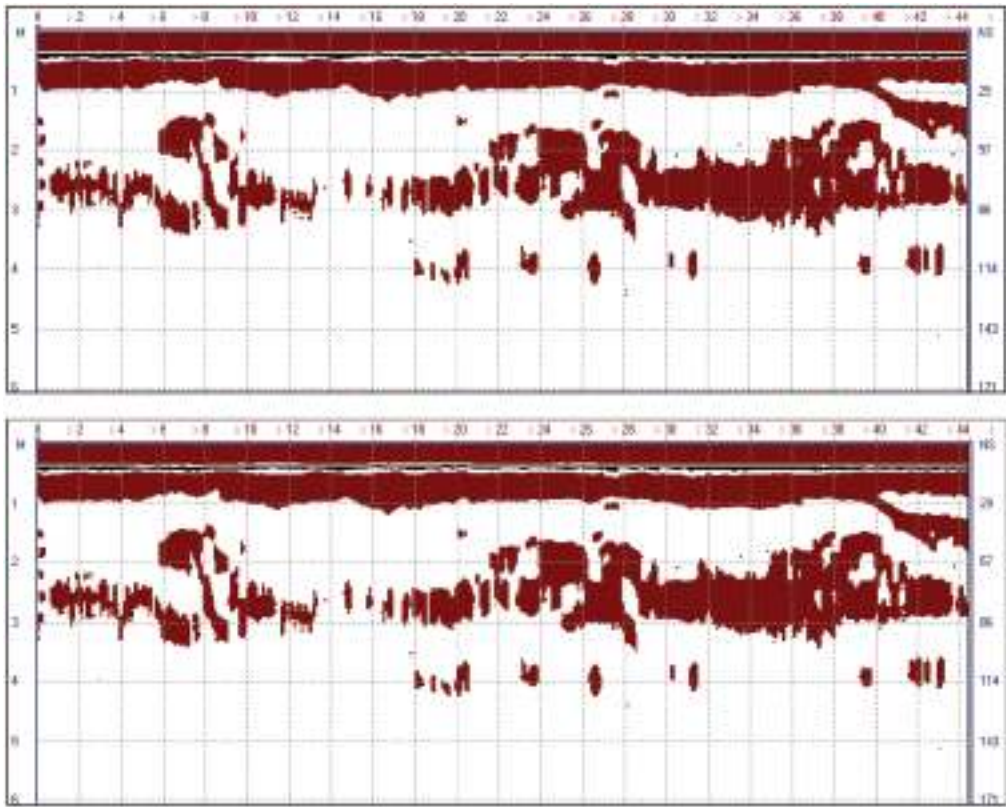


Fig. 12. 3D-image of the structure between Kom I and Kom II

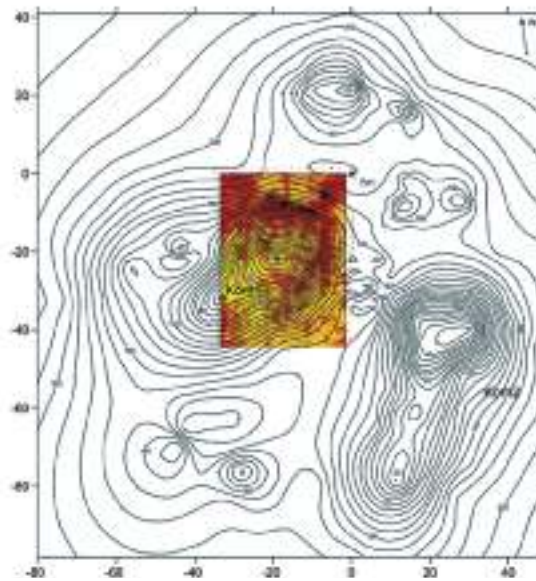


Fig. 13. Rectangular object on the Kom I

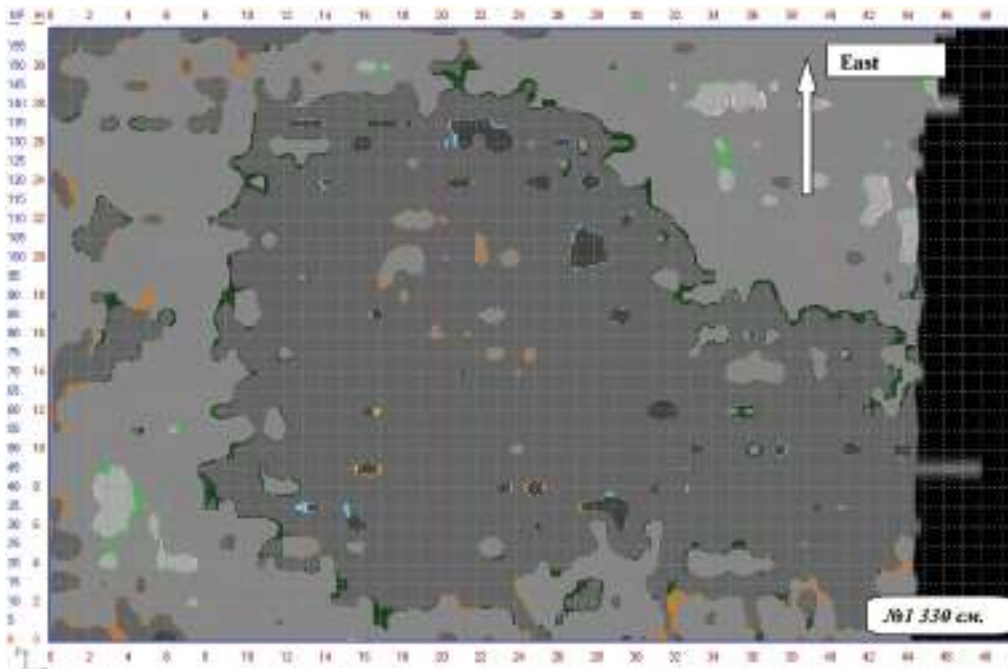


Fig. 14. Kom II. 3D-image on the depth 330 cm

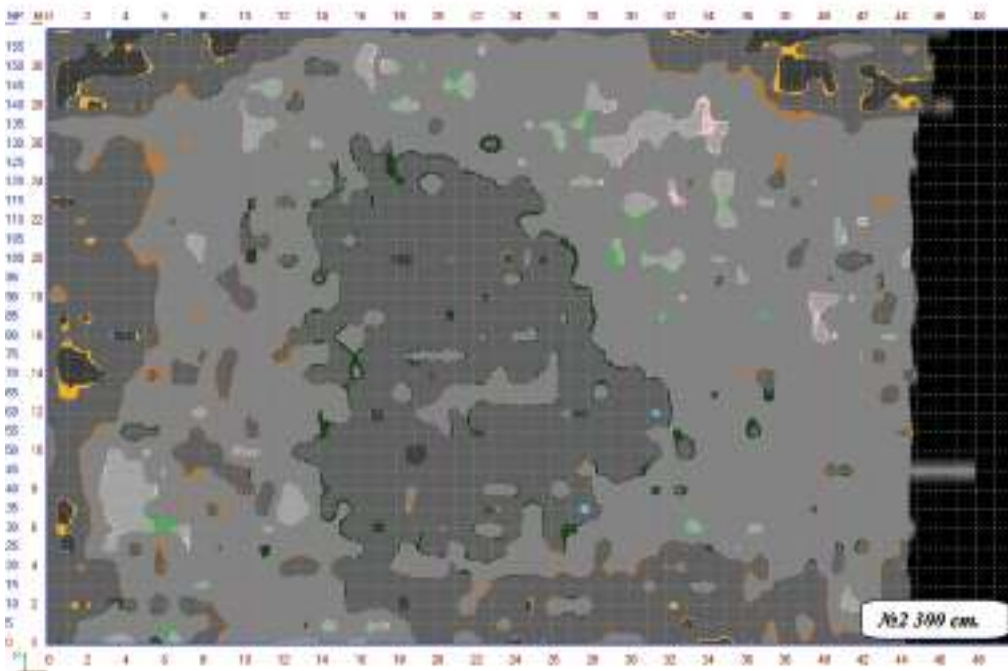


Fig. 15. Kom II. 3D-image on the depth 300 cm

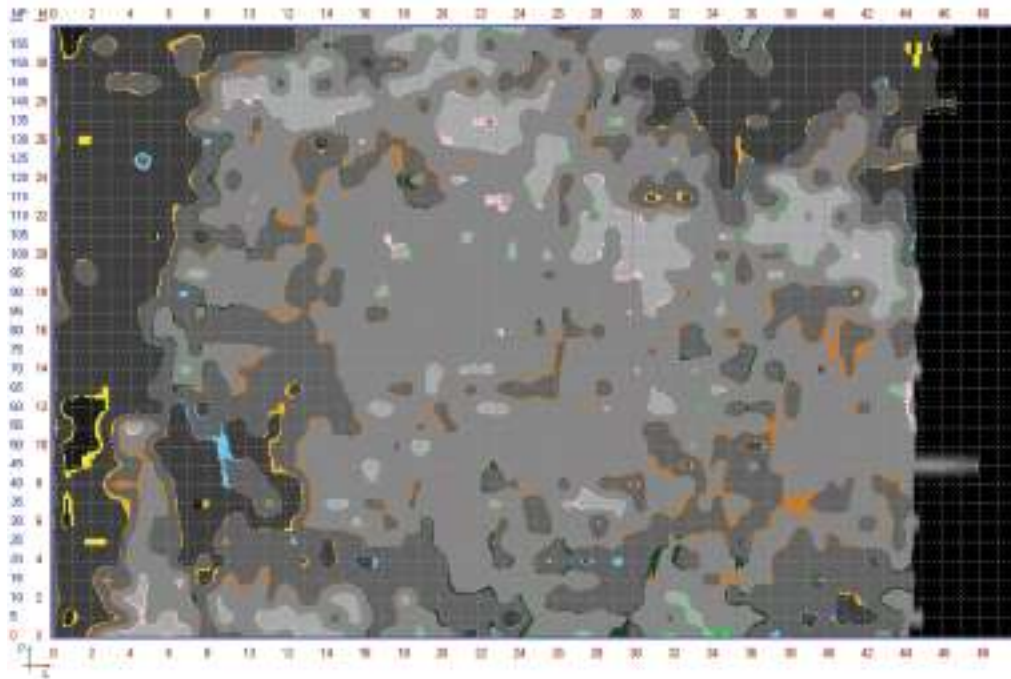


Fig. 16. Kom II. 3D-image on the depth 258 cm

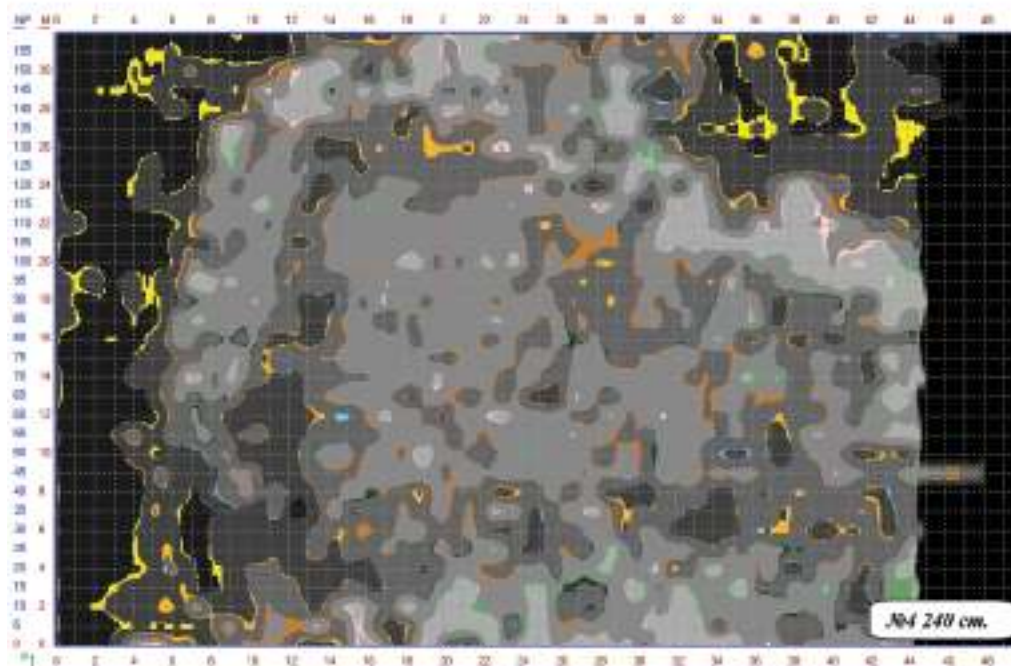


Fig. 17. Kom II. 3D-image on the depth 240 cm

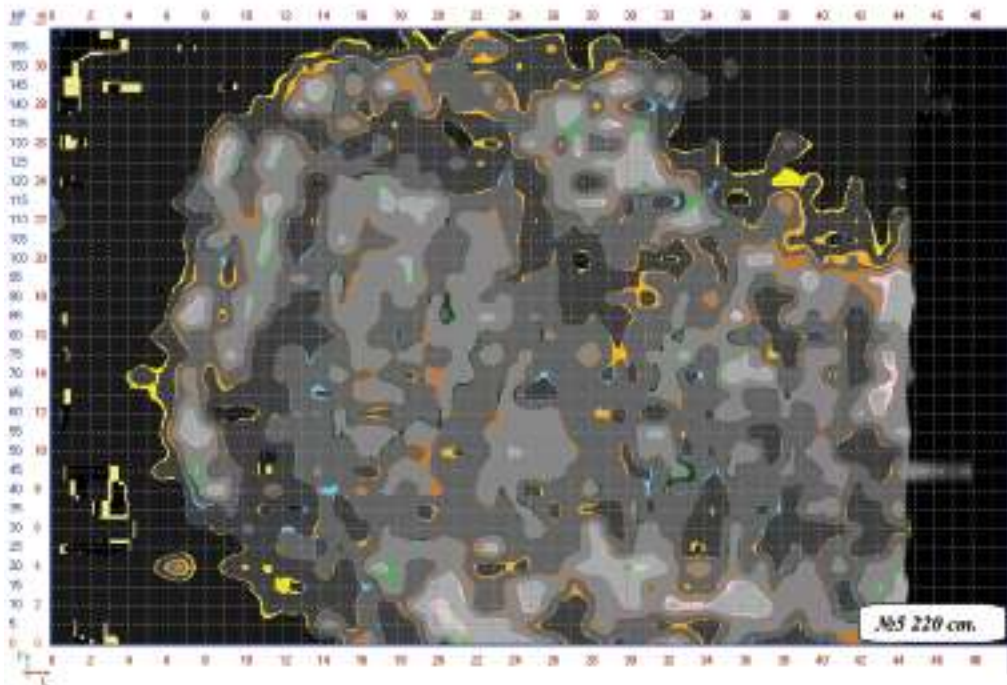


Fig. 18. Kom II. 3D-image on the depth 220 cm

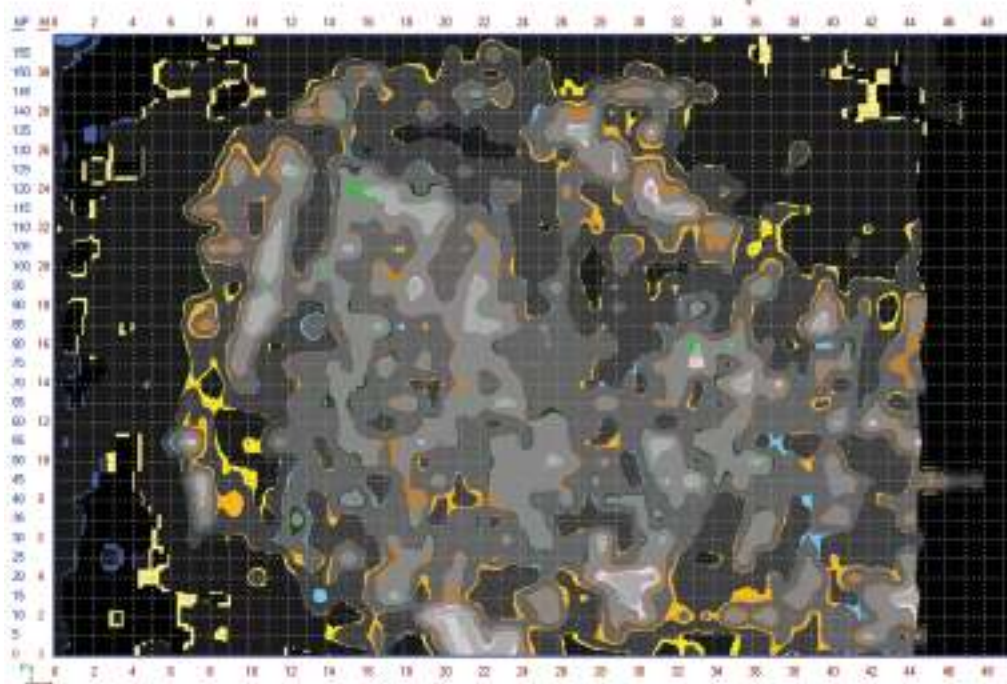


Fig. 19. Kom II. 3D-image on the depth 210 cm

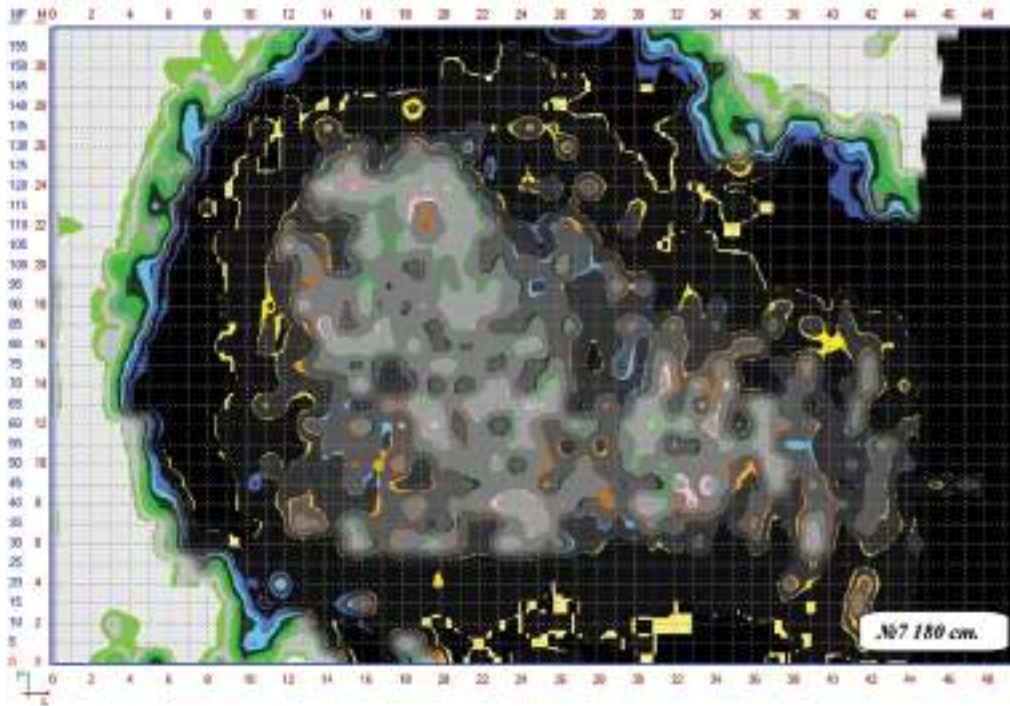


Fig. 20. Kom II. 3D-image on the depth 180 cm

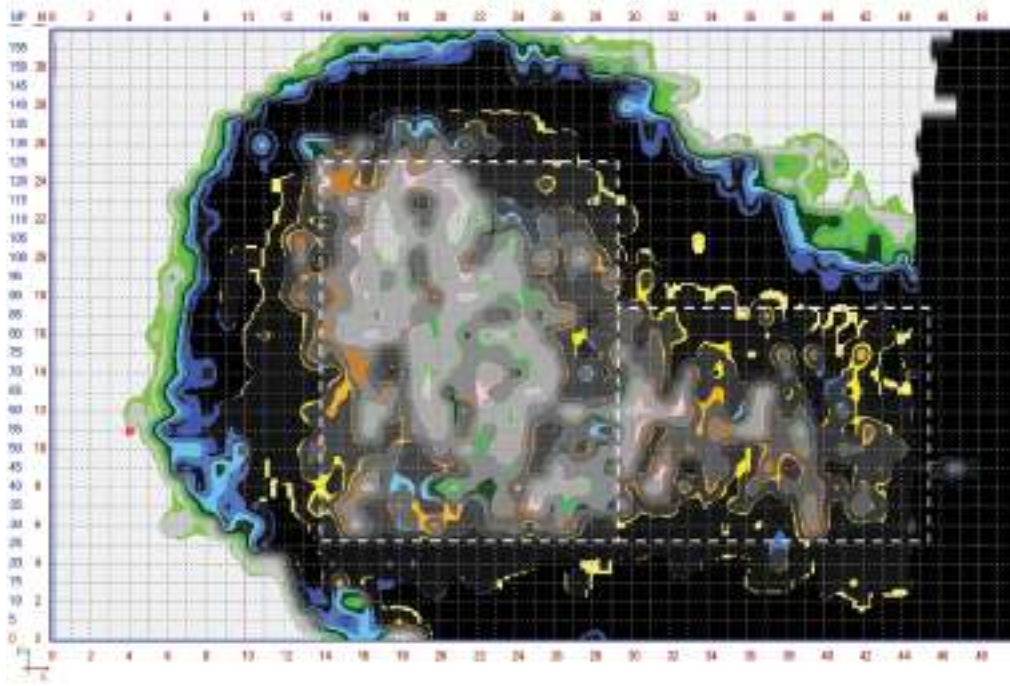


Fig. 21. Kom II. 3D-image on the depth 168 cm

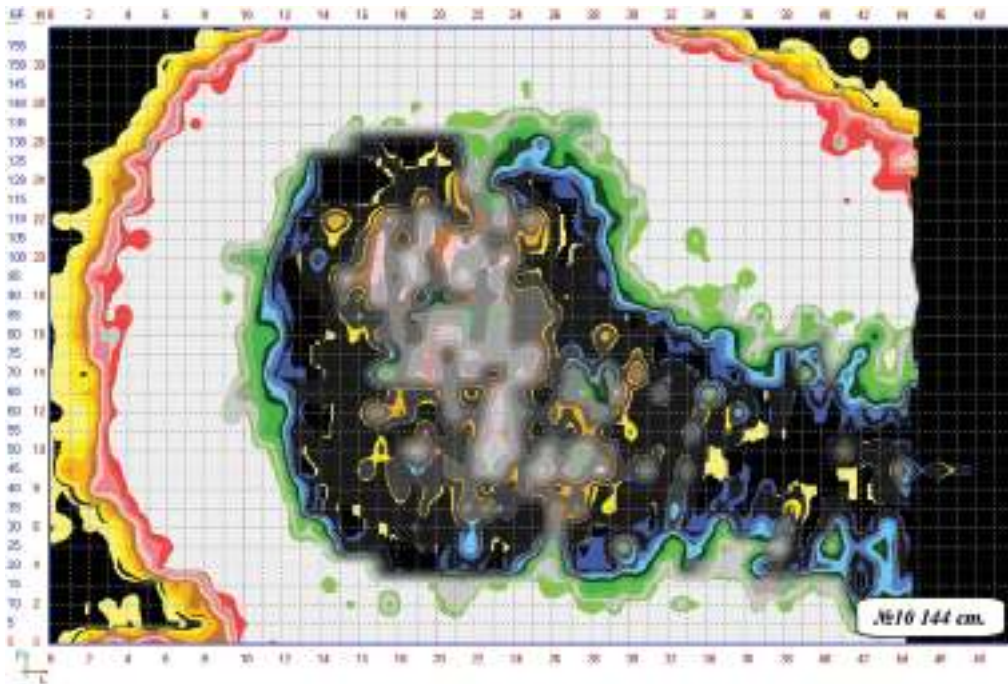


Fig. 22. Kom II. 3D-image on the depth 144 cm

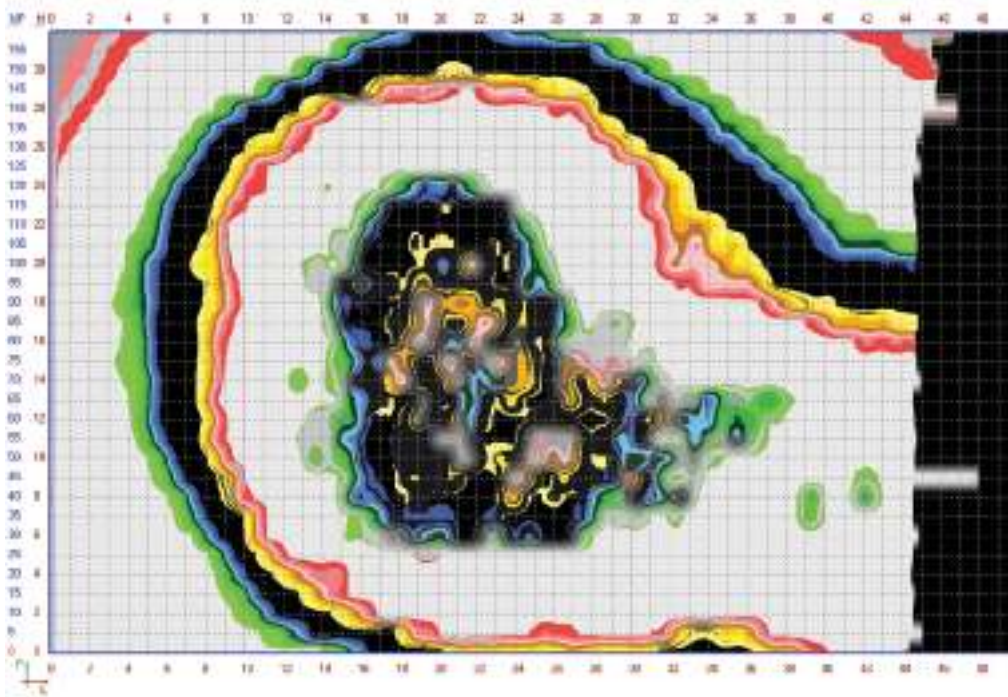


Fig. 23. Kom II. 3D-image on the depth 120 cm

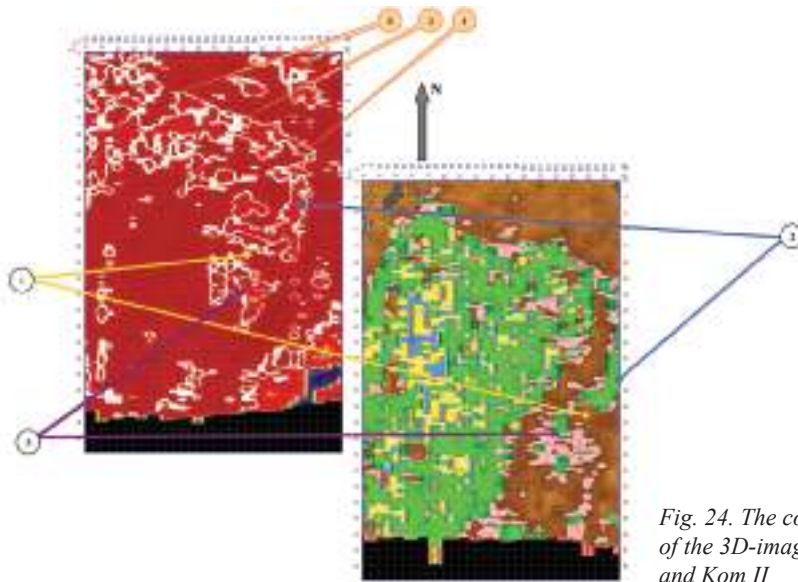


Fig. 24. The comparison of the 3D-images of the Kom I and Kom II

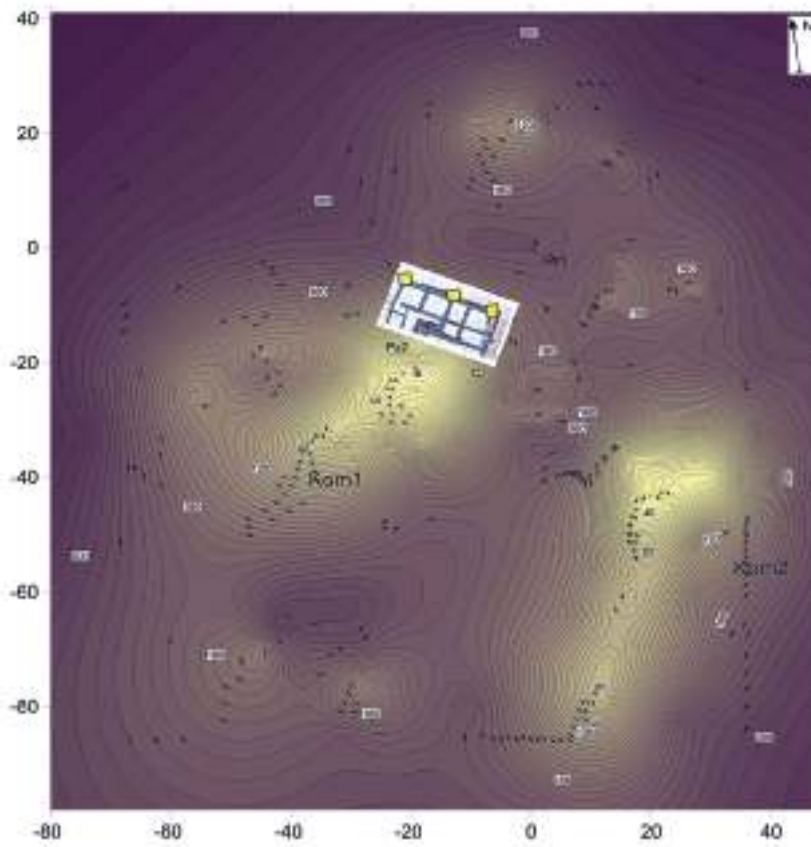


Fig. 25. Excavated area on the Kom I

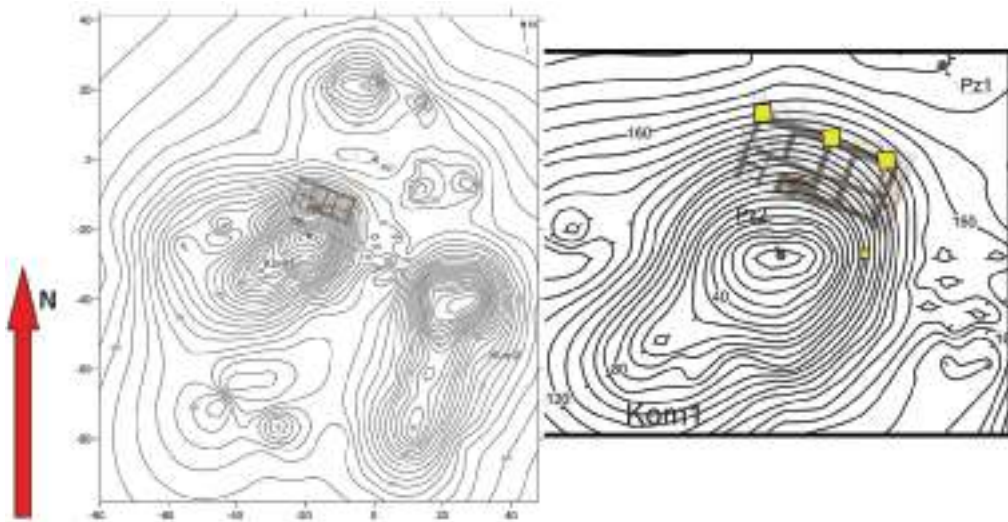


Fig. 26a. Excavated area on the topographical plan



Fig. 26b. Photo of the excavated area on the Kom I

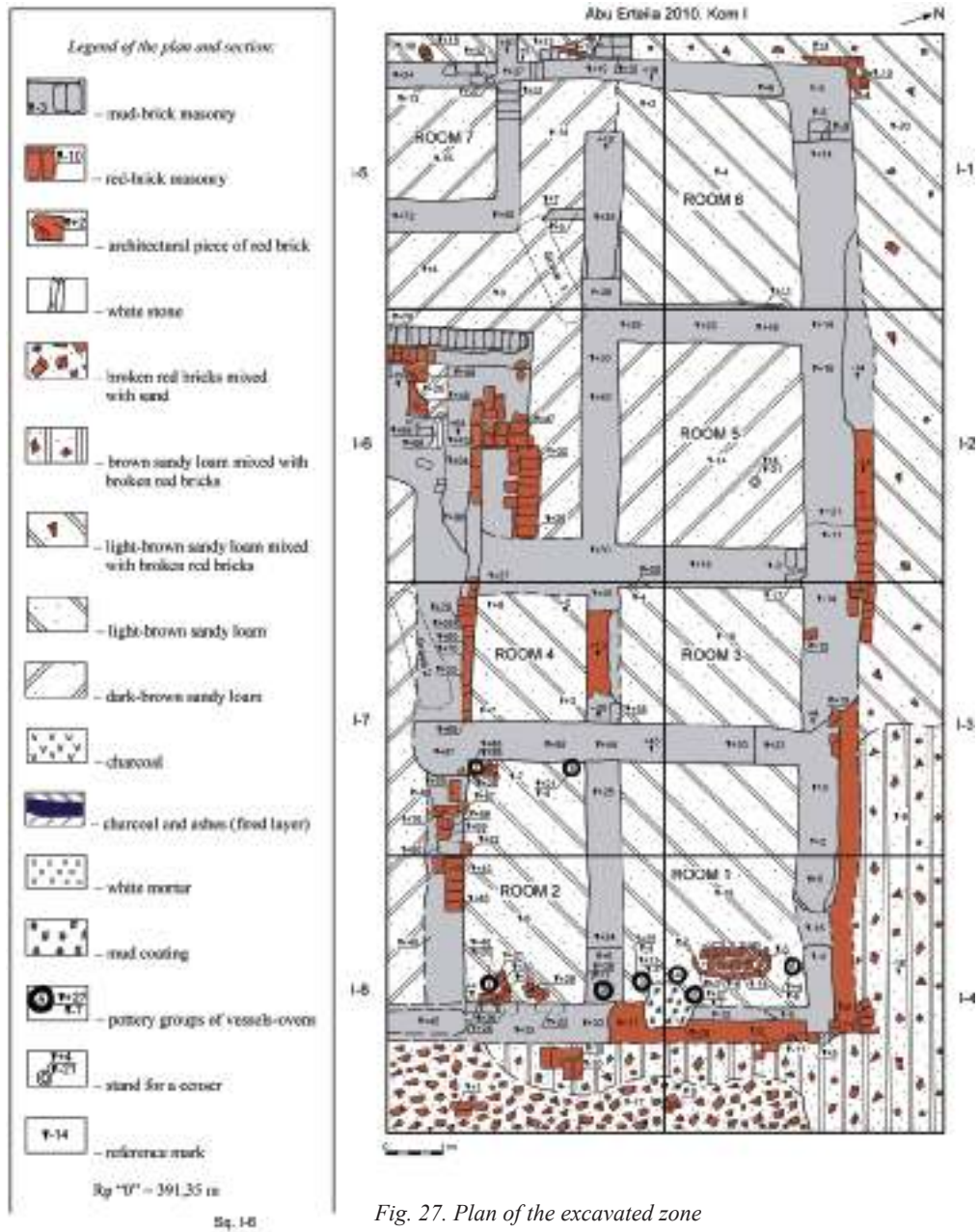


Fig. 27. Plan of the excavated zone

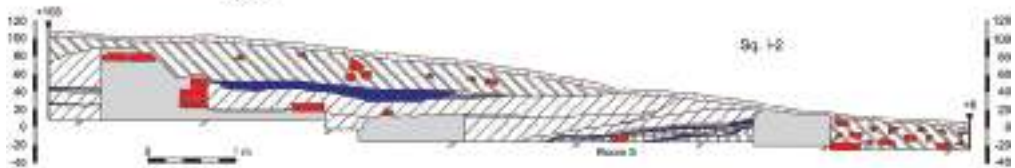


Fig. 28. Stratigraphical section of squares I-2 and I-6

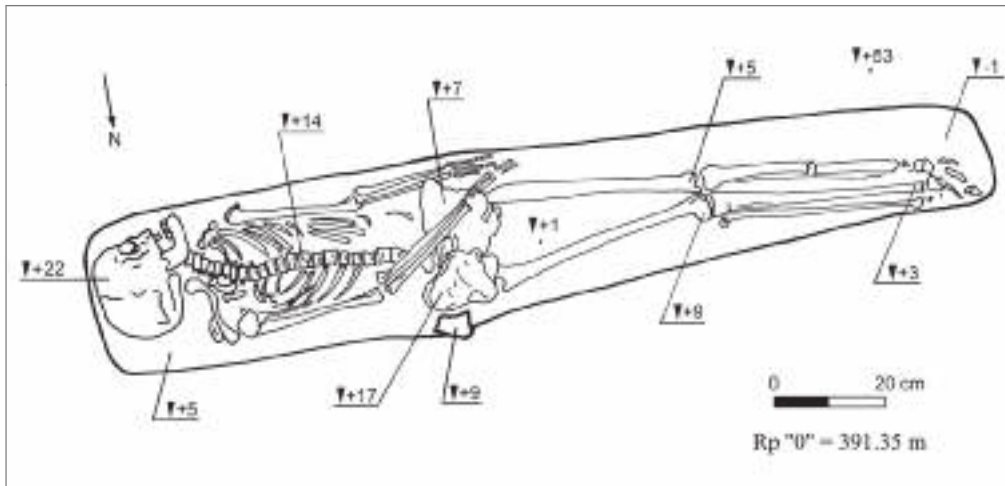


Fig. 29a. Burial 1

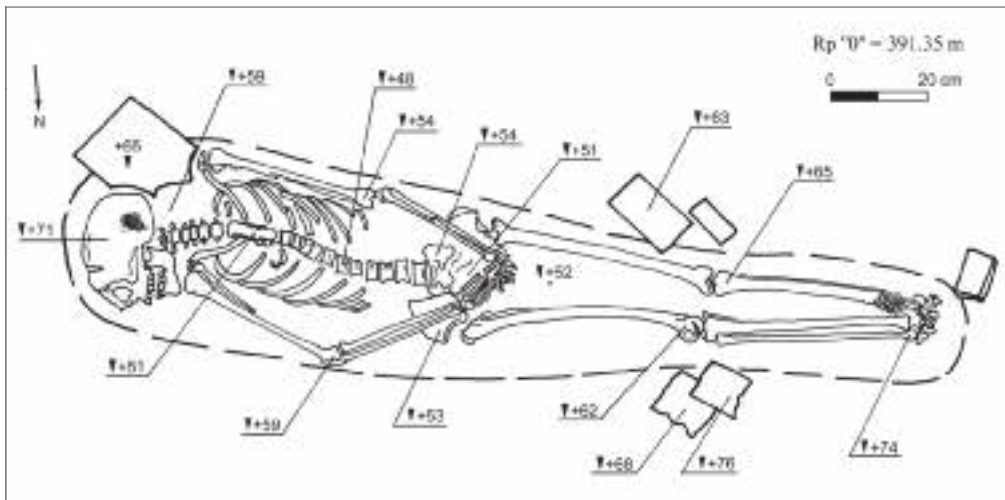


Fig. 29b. Burial 2



Fig. 30. Photo of the excavated area

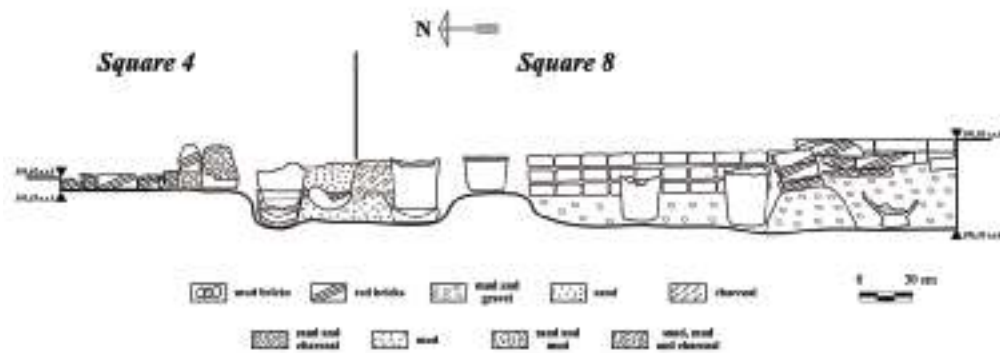


Fig. 31. Cross-section of squares I-4 and I-8. Eastward view

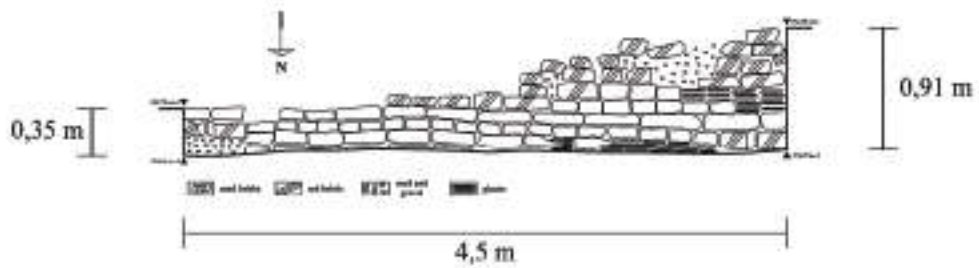


Fig. 32. Cross-section of squares I-7 and I-8. Southward view

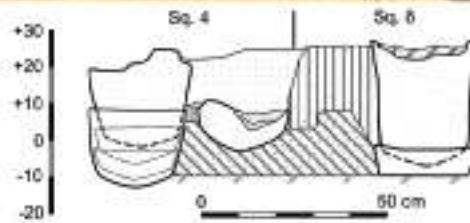


Fig. 33. Ceramic groups 3, 4, 5 of vessels-ovens in the Room 1

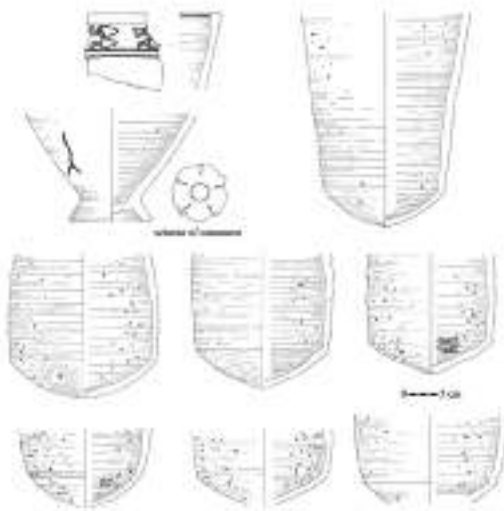


Fig. 34. Vessels-ovens from the Room 1 and Room 2



Fig. 35. Big jar with potmark from the Room 6

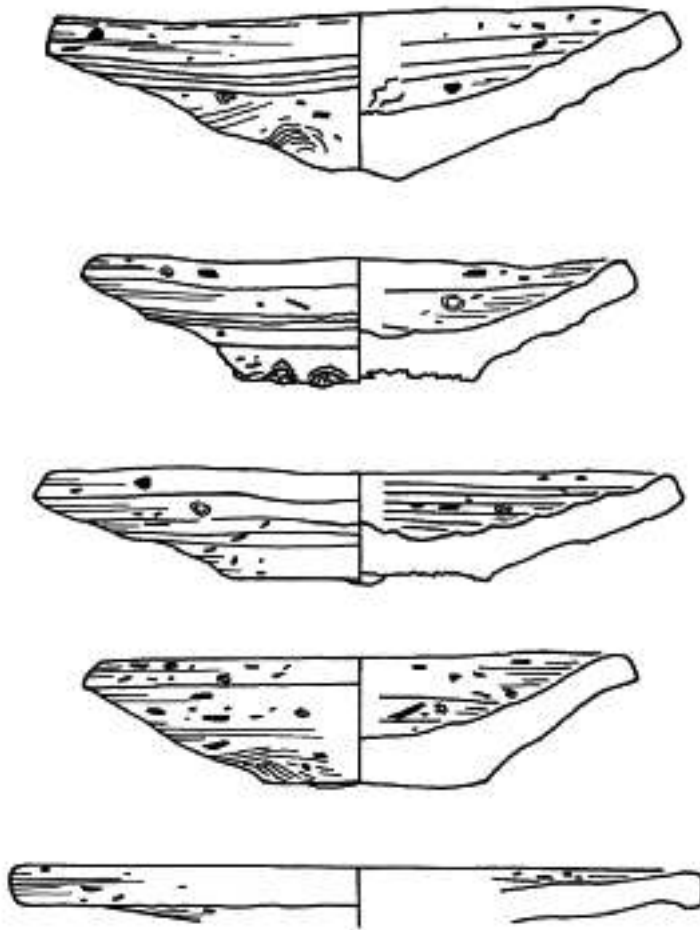
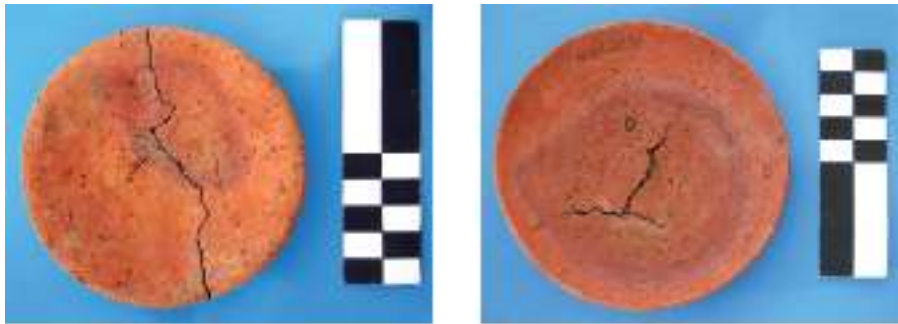


Fig. 36. Plates from the Room 2



Fig. 37. Stand for a censer in the Room 5, in situ

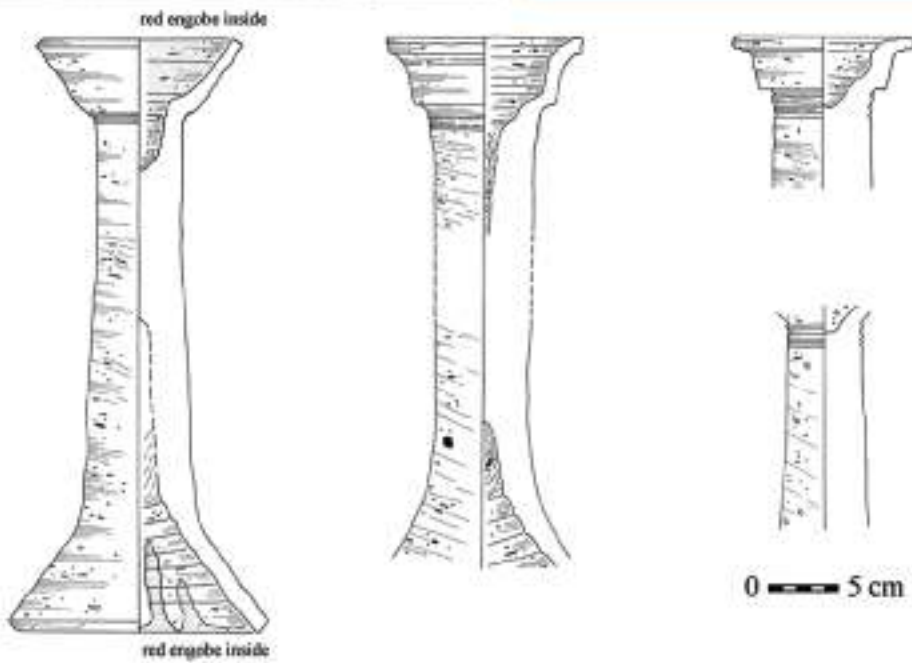


Fig. 38. Stands for censers from the Room 5

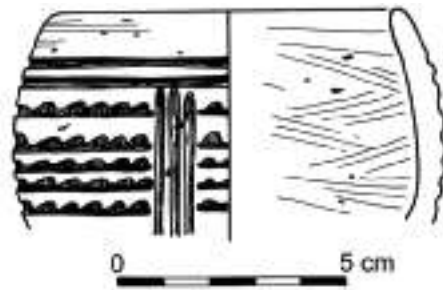


Fig. 39. Small lamp (Nubian Black Ware) from the Room 5



Fig. 40. Fragment of faience figurine (square I-1, -9 cm)



Fig. 41. Part of the column with floral ornament on the Kom II

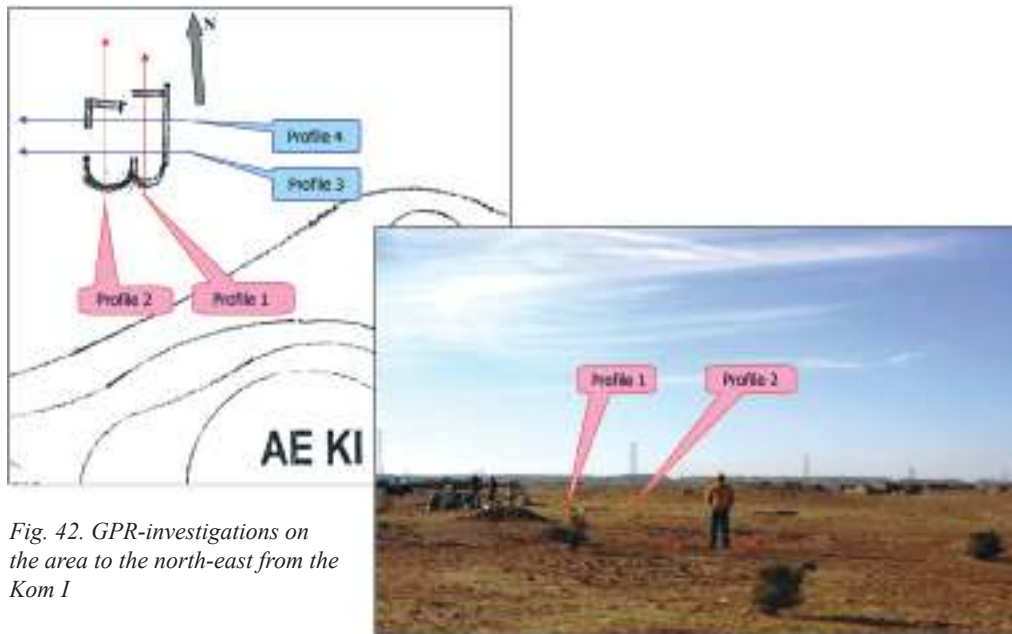


Fig. 42. GPR-investigations on the area to the north-east from the Kom I

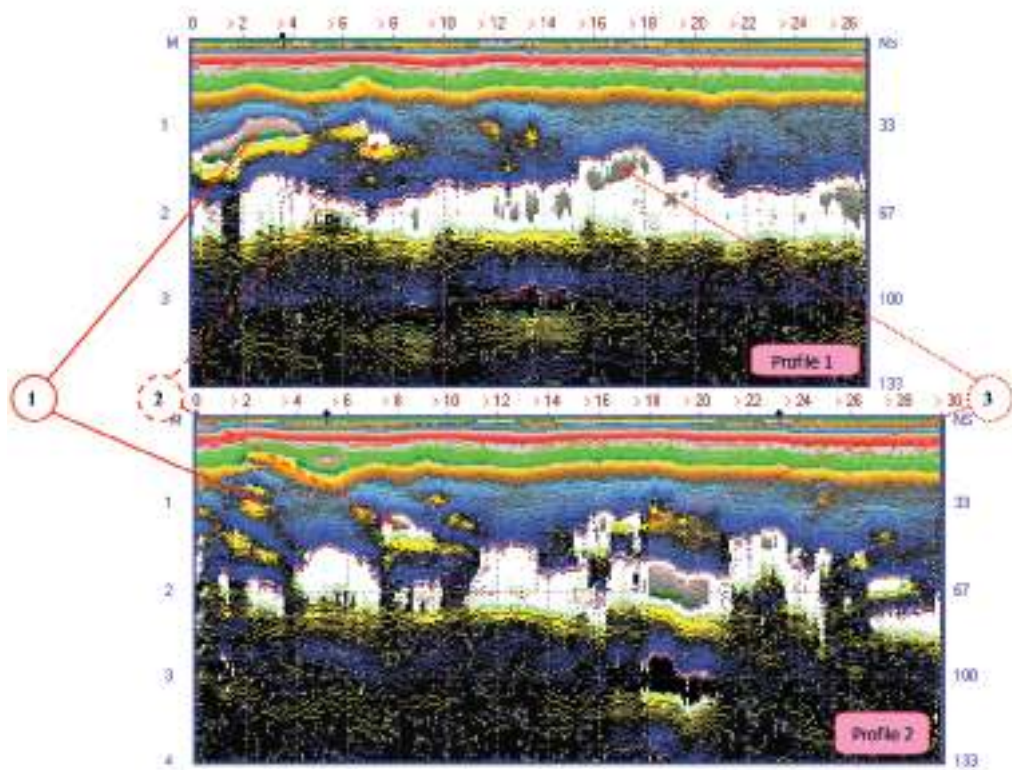


Fig. 43. GPR-diagram of the underground analysis

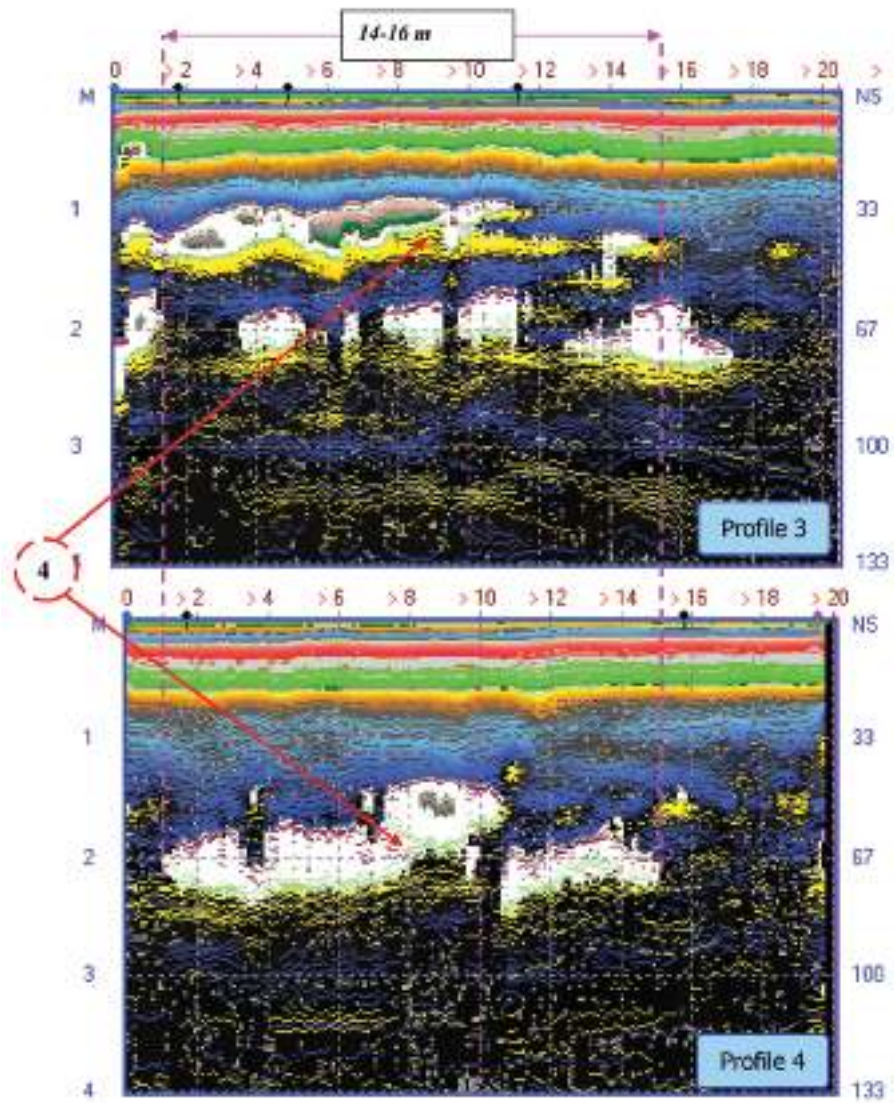


Fig. 44. The supposed shape and size of the object

Serge A. FRANTSOUZOFF

SUR L'INTERPRÉTATION DE 'HLL(^m): QUELQUES NOUVELLES SUGGESTIONS

La lexicographie des langues de l'Arabie méridionale antique soulève beaucoup de problèmes difficiles à résoudre dont la nature remonte au style lapidaire des sources épigraphiques qui constituent la tradition écrite locale, privée de dictionnaires ou même de glossaires de toute sorte. Les acceptions des mots sudarabiques sont établies grâce à leurs étymologies ou à l'analyse des contextes où ils sont attestés. Pourtant les deux méthodes ont des limites et il n'est pas rare que les lexèmes relevés dans les inscriptions yéménites anciennes soient interprétés d'une façon douteuse ou inconsistante.

Dans le patrimoine épigraphique de l'Arabie du Sud préislamique les textes sabéens de la moyenne époque qui embrasse l'intervalle du 1^{er} au milieu du 4^{ème} siècle de l'è. chr. sont considérés, à juste titre, parmi les plus intelligibles. Leur grande majorité a rapport aux opérations militaires dont les événements paraissent d'habitude assez clairs, surtout par comparaison aux péripéties des situations juridiques. Néanmoins même le lexique de base propre à cette catégorie des inscriptions est loin d'être compris d'une manière satisfaisante. Un nom commun dérivé de la racine *HLL* et employé principalement au pluriel, sous la forme de 'hll(^m), en offre un exemple significatif. D'après une remarque de François Bron, «le sens exact de ce mot pose un irritant problème et a été discuté dès les origines de l'épigraphie sudarabique». Il prêta aussi attention à son «rapprochement avec ar. *ḥullat*, «dépouilles»» qui «a été proposé dès 1872 par F. Praetorius et maintes fois repris depuis» (Bron 1998: 20). Il faudrait préciser que le sens «dépouilles» n'est point propre au mot arabe *ḥullat^{un}* (pl. *ḥulal^{un}*) qui signifie originellement «vêtement complet comprenant deux morceaux, *izār^{un}* qui couvre la partie inférieure du corps et *ridā^{un}* qui couvre sa partie supérieure» (parfois on y ajoute encore *qamīṣ^{un}* «longue che-

mise»¹. D'autre part, on ne peut pas totalement ignorer la traduction «animaux» qu'Albert Jamme a retenue pour 'hll (Jamme 1962: 62-63)².

C'était Alfred F.L. Beeston qui a fait une nette distinction entre ḡnm «butin» et 'hll «dépouilles» et a établi leur corrélation avec les termes arabes *ghanīma* (ou *fay'*) et *salab* respectivement (Beeston 1976: 14-15). Le second d'entre eux a été défini d'une manière exhaustive: «It is the personal property of a slain enemy warrior (Latin *exuviae*), i.e. clothes, weapons and sometimes his riding beast; these became immediately the property of the man who killed him, and were not thrown into the pool for sharing out like the 'booty'» (Beeston 1976: 15). Cette opinion est devenue généralement admise et le *Dictionnaire sabéen* y donne une référence³. Pourtant Walter W. Müller n'a reconnu aucune différence entre ḡnm et 'hll et a traduit tous les deux comme «butin» (Müller 2010: 162, 168: «Beute»).

L'une des plus anciennes occurrences de 'hll^m dans la documentation épigraphique sabéenne est relevée dans Ja 644 qui «rapporte la révolte de la tribu Shaddāād contre Yuhaqīm, fils de Dhamar'alī Dhariḥ, roi de Saba' et de dhū-Raydān» (Bron 1997: 94) et donc peut être datée de la fin du 1^{er} siècle de l'è. chr. (Bron 1998: 21). Dans sa réédition Fr. Bron a démontré que la seule acception de 'hll^m qui correspondait au contexte était «(guerriers) tués»⁴. À cette occasion il a établi un parallèle avec *ḥālāl* «tué au combat, victime» en hébreu, mais a souligné que ce mot devait dériver de la racine *HLL* «transpercer» (Bron 1998: 20-21). Il faut remarquer que le sens «guerrier tué et dépouillé» a été déjà attribué à la forme du duel *ḥlly^m* attestée uniquement dans deux expressions identiques (*tny/ḥlly^m*) de RES 4148/6, 7 (Beeston et al. 1982: 68) qui d'après ces particularités paléographiques remonte aux 1^{er}-3^{ème} siècle de l'è. chr⁵. Pourtant rien dans ce contexte fragmentaire ne témoigne qu'il s'agissait des combattants non seulement tués, mais aussi dépouillés.

Encore une signification de 'hll, différente de celles considérées ci-dessus, est relevée dans CIH 571, rééditée et réinterprétée par A.F.L. Beeston: *w-l/yšdn/S²r|h'l/hmt/ym^m/f-w/'qb-h|w/dr^m/dr^m/b-'hd/hrf^m/l-|bdd/hrf^mhn/l-ws³f-hmw/S²m|[s^{1m}]//'bd-h/S²rḥ'l/w-'dm-h/bn|[Bt']/n'm^m/w-'hll^m/* «And let the hunt of these days be performed by ŠRH'L or his deputy, turn by turn in each year alternately over two years, in order that ŠMSm may grant them, (namely) her servant ŠRH'L and her servitors the beni BT', bounty and **booty**»

¹ Voir, par exemple, Guirgass 1881: 180. Franz Praetorius a attribué à *hulla*, pour le moins, deux acceptions: «vêtements» et «armes» (Praetorius 1872: 746: «Kleider und auch Waffen») ce qui est un peu inexact, puisque par rapport aux armements ce mot arabe n'était utilisé que pour désigner «armure» (de Biberstein Kazimirski 1846, 1: 474). Il est intéressant de remarquer que dans l'expression «die von Erschlagenen abgelösten Rüstungen» proposée par Fr. Praetorius pour interpréter 'hll (Praetorius 1872: 746) le mot-clé Rüstungen signifie à la fois «armes» et «armure».

² Comparer avec le contexte de CIH 571 qui est examiné ci-dessous.

³ Voir Beeston et al. 1982: 67, où la traduction «spoils of battle | dépouilles du combat» est donnée. L'interprétation plus détaillée, mais en général la même est proposée dans Biella 1982: 177: «booty, perhaps specifically garments or weapons stripped from a fallen foe = spoils».

⁴ Ja 644/24-25: *w-kwn/kl/mhrg/lfyw/s²'bⁿ/Ġymⁿ/b-kly/t'dmynhn/b|n/s²'bⁿ/S²dd^m/s¹dt/m'n/'hll^m/w-'rb/'frs^{1m}/* «Et le massacre qu'obtint la tribu de Ġaymān lors de ces deux actions aux dépens de la tribu de Shaddādum, fut de **six cents tués** et quatre chevaux» (dans le présent article les mots dans les citations sont mis en gras par son auteur). C'est par mégarde que «trois cents tués» sont indiqués dans la traduction (Bron 1998: 13).

⁵ Voir sa photographie publiée dans Mordtmann & Mittwoch 1932: Taf. IX: 31.

(Il. 8-13)⁶. Donc le mot en question désigne ici des gibiers pris à la chasse⁷. On peut en déduire qu'à l'origine le sens de *'hll* serait «tués au cours du combat (guerriers) ou de la chasse (animaux)». La première de ces deux acceptions alternatives est devenue prédominante grâce à l'occurrence beaucoup plus fréquente des contextes liés aux opérations militaires. Quant aux «dépouilles», on pourrait en dériver ce sens par extension.

Dans les inscriptions sabéennes moyennes le mot *'hll^m* apparaît, quand on dresse le bilan des batailles ou des campagnes. On l'énumère soit directement devant *'s^lby* (CIH 79/6) ou *s^lby^m* (Ġarf an-Na'imīya, l. 7; Ja 635/30; Ja 636/9; Iryani 13, § 14; Ja 574/9; Ja 577/3, 6; Ja 586/12; Iryani 19, § 1; Iryani 20, § 1; Ja 650/22-23)⁸ «captifs», *'frs^lm/w-s^lby^m* «chevaux et captifs» (Iryani 13, § 3), *'h(y)ḏt^m* «prisonniers de guerre» (Ja 635/42-43; Ja 616/29-30), *'hyḏt^m/w-s^lby^m* «prisonniers de guerre et captifs» (Ja 658/26-27)⁹, soit de pair avec *ḡnm^m* «butin» (Ja 632/5-6) ou *mlt^m* «rapines» (Iryani 12, § 8)¹⁰. Il y a même un contexte, où *'hll^m* est employé entre *ḡnm^m* et *s^lby^m* (Ja 635/18-19). En plus, derrière *s^lby^m* précédé par *'hll^m*¹¹ on atteste souvent *ḡnm^m* (Ja 636/9; Iryani 13, §§ 3, 14; Iryani 20, § 1; Ja 658/26-27 et vraisemblablement CIH 334/22-23), *ḡnm^m/w-mlt^m* (Ja 577/3; Iryani 19, § 1; Ja 650/22-23) ou *mlt^m/w-ḡnm^m* (Ja 635/30-31; Ja 574/9; Ja 577/6; Ja 586/12; Ja 616/29-30). Donc quand on interprète *'hll^m* dans tous ces contextes, il est difficile de faire le choix entre «tués au combat» et «dépouilles». Néanmoins l'inscription fragmentaire Gr 124 est privée de cette ambiguïté grâce au verbe *hrg* «tuer» utilisé juste derrière *'hll*:<'>*hll/hrg/bn/s²'b'/H*<m>*yr^m/w-Hḏrm<wt>/w-'rbⁿ/|-ḏr/ḏrrw/ 'mlk/S^lb''ln/|<'>s²'b'/* «les (combattants) **tués** qu'il (l'auteur de l'inscription – S.F.) tua de la commune de Ḥimyar^{um}, du Ḥadramawt et des bédouins pendant la guerre que les rois de Saba' menaient avec ces communes» (Il. 3-6)¹². Il est évident que le mot *'hll^m* attesté dans Gr 124/8 ait conservé la même signification: *w-l/s^l'd-hw/n<mt<sup>m>|w-bry/'ḏn^m/w-mqymt^m/w-<'>|s^lm/'hll^m/w-ḡnmt^m/w-ml[t]=<sup>m>/* «et qu'Il (le dieu auquel ce texte est dédié – S.F.) lui accorde de la prospérité, de l'abondance de facultés, des moyens, **des** (ennemis) **tués**, du butin et des rapines en grandes quantités» (Il. 6-9).

Il paraît fort probable que *'hll^m* puisse désigner à fois des guerriers tués au combat et les dépouilles qui en ont été enlevées. C'est le contexte d'al-Mi'sāl 2/5-6 datée de juillet de 253

⁶ La lecture et la traduction de cette partie du texte sont données selon Beeston 1948: 187, 188-189. Sa datation du 3^{ème}–4^{ème} siècle de l'è. chr. peut être estimée sur la base des critères paléographiques.

⁷ D'une manière assez étonnante cette acception est complètement ignorée dans le *Dictionnaire sabéen* (voir Beeston et al. 1982: 67-68).

⁸ Selon toute vraisemblance, il faut y ajouter CIH 334/22-23, où ce mot est restitué.

⁹ Sur la différence entre *'h(y)ḏt^m* et *s^lby^m* voir Beeston 1976: 14; Beeston et al. 1982: 3, 124.

¹⁰ Il n'est pas facile d'établir une distinction entre *ḡnm* et *mlt*. Il semble que le premier d'entre eux doive désigner le butin régulièrement partagé après des batailles, tandis que le mot *mlt* s'applique aux objets pillés plutôt chez la population civile (comparer avec Beeston 1976: 14-15).

¹¹ Dans certains cas *'hll^m* et *s^lby^m* sont divisés par d'autres mots, tels que *'frs^lm* (Iryani 13, § 3), *'hyḏt^m* (Ja 658/26-27) ou *'hyḏt^m/w-mhrgt^m* (Ja 616/29-30).

¹² Il n'est pas possible de dater ce texte sabéen moyen avec précision. Pourtant son contenu témoigne qu'il a été rédigé au cours de l'existence indépendante des royaumes de Saba' et de Ḥimyar^{um}: soit à la première moitié du 2^{ème} siècle de l'è. chr., soit pendant une période plus large qui durait de la fin du 2^{ème} siècle jusqu'à l'annexion finale de Saba' par les Ḥimyarites dans les années 70 du 3^{ème} siècle.

de l'è. chr. qui suggère cette idée: *w-bn-hw/t'wlw/b-'hllm/w-mhrgtm/s'dm/w-'frs^{1m}/bd^m/w-'hyw^m/* «Ensuite, il s'en revinrent **avec de bonnes prises et des victimes**, hommes et chevaux, **tués au combat et vivants**». Les résultats de la bataille de dhū Hurma vus du côté himyarite sont décrits dans la même inscription encore une fois, en bas: *w-bn-hw/t'wlw/'dy/hgr^m/Hkr^m/b-hwblt^m/s'd^m/w-'frs^{1m}/hyw^m/w-mhrgtm/* «puis ils revinrent à la ville de Hakir **avec des trophées**, hommes et chevaux **vivants et tués**» (ll. 10-11)¹³. Selon toute probabilité, les mots *'hllm*, *mhrgtm* et *hwblt^m* sont des synonymes dont chacun signifie «victimes et trophées». En même temps *mhrgtm* et *bd^m* ont le sens plus limité : «tués au combat». Il faut souligner que tous ces mots ne sont pas des termes spéciaux et que leur emploi assez libre correspond au style de ces inscriptions dédicatoires pleines du lexique quotidien.

Mais les Sudarabiques, qu'entendaient-ils concrètement par les dépouilles ou trophées? La partie finale d'al-Mi'sāl 2 y donne une réponse détaillée: *w-s¹tr/dn/ms³ndⁿ/Lhy't/'wkn/d-t'hd^m/b-'rh/w-mqm/dt/'y-mw/knt/s³'tⁿ/w-mhrgtm/b-qdmy/dn/ywmⁿ/f-k-'lywm/'tw/hyb^m/dkb-mw/mhrgtm/w-'hllm/w-hwblt^m/w-b-'ndw/'hrb^m/w-'gw^m/w-'qsd^m/w-dglm^m/tyb^m/w-šrf^m/w-tyb^m/d-'zfi^m/w-gmwd^m/kl/d-ygtr'nn/'hbs²ⁿ/b-'r's¹-hmw/* «Lahay'at Awkan écrivit cette inscription pour s'acquitter de l'engagement (qu'il prit), puisque tout conflit et massacre qui ont eu lieu avant cette bataille, quelles que fussent leurs circonstances et leur place, se passaient de telle manière qu'il ne revint jamais désespéré, **sans dépouilles des tués, trophées et bonnes prises, mais** (toujours) **avec** des pointes de lances, des boucliers, des arcs, des bracelets d'or, d'argent et de laiton (?), des cordes (?) – tout ce que les Abyssins portaient¹⁴ sur eux-mêmes» (ll. 11-13).

Ce contexte ne laisse aucun doute sur la nature de *mhrgtm*, *'hllm* et *hwblt^m*. Pour la plupart, c'étaient des objets d'armes enlevés aux combattants tués. Quant à *dglm^m*, ce mot est emprunté au guèze¹⁵, où 𐩦𐩢𐩨𐩠𐩨: signifie «collier, bracelet» (Leslau 1987: 126). Pourtant de quels bijoux s'agit-il? Dans l'armée de l'Éthiopie traditionnelle les bracelets des types spéciaux désignés par les termes amhariques 𐩮𐩢𐩨: et 𐩮𐩢𐩨: étaient utilisés comme décorations militaires. Dans son commentaire à une chronique éthiopienne de la fin du 18^{ème} siècle Herbert Weld Blundell qui voyageait beaucoup en Afrique du Nord-Est à la fin du 19^{ème} – au début du 20^{ème} siècle¹⁶ les a caractérisés d'une façon exhaustive : «Chufā is a bracelet of gold or silver worn on the arm and given by the King as a military decoration to soldiers who have killed more than one enemy, and may accumulate with the numbers killed. The Māldyā is a similar decoration. The Bitāwā is a higher decoration as is also one called Yarborā» (Blundell (Chronicle) 1922: 241, n. 1). Les analogues de ces décorations devaient donc exister déjà à l'époque axoumite. Le sens de *gmwd^m* demeure énigmatique et sa traduction proposée ici ne se fonde que sur l'acception du mot 𐩠𐩮𐩢: en guèze (Leslau 1987: 193)¹⁷. S'agirait-il des insignes de grade?¹⁸

¹³ La traduction de ces deux fragments est donnée selon Robin 1991: 22.

¹⁴ Comparer avec *jar'āh* «woman's dress» en arabe yéménite (Piamenta 1990-1991: 65). La traduction «(um)binden» (Müller 2010: 160) n'a rapport qu'à *gmwd^m*, ce qui ne correspond pas à la syntaxe de ce passage.

¹⁵ Voir déjà Müller 2010: 151.

¹⁶ Sur cet explorateur voir Ofcansky 2003.

¹⁷ Comparer avec «(Stim)band» dans Müller 2010: 160.

¹⁸ Il est bien connu que les chrétiens de l'Éthiopie portaient des cordes autour de leurs cous pour démontrer leur appartenance confessionnelle, mais cette inscription remonte sans aucun doute à l'époque pré-chrétienne en Arabie du Sud ainsi que sur la Corne Africaine.

L'absence de vêtements dans cette liste est remarquable et permet de rejeter définitivement tout parallèle entre *ʿhll(m)* en sabéen et *hilla* en arabe.

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SIGLES D'INSCRIPTIONS

1. Pour la résolution des sigles et la bibliographie des inscriptions sudarabiques, voir Kitchen 2000. Seuls les textes qui ne sont pas traités dans cet ouvrage ou dont la bibliographie doit être complétée sont mentionnées ici:
2. Ġarf an-Na‘īmīya – Müller 2010: 13 (translittération du texte sans photographie ni traduction).
3. Gr 124 – Bauer & Lundin 1998: 29-30, pl. 120 a-b.
4. Ja 644 – Bron 1997: 94-95; 1998.
5. al-Mi‘sāl 2 – Müller 2010: 25-27 (translittération du texte sans photographie ni traduction).

Iris GERLACH

YEHA: AN ETHIO-SABAEAN SITE IN THE HIGHLANDS OF TIGRAY (ETHIOPIA)¹

This article is dedicated to the memory of our friend and colleague Alessandro de Maigret, who excavated and documented the Great Temple of Yeha in 1998 and in this way led to the foundation of our project at that site. He accompanied and followed the research of the German Archaeological Institute always with great interest, and on our part it was always a pleasure to gain his knowledgeable and wise advice. We will always remember Alessandro de Maigret as a good friend and a wonderful colleague!

Latest the 9th century BC intense cultural contacts existed between South Arabia and the areas of northern Ethiopia (Tigray) and south-eastern Eritrea (Akkälä Guzay). The characteristics and reasons for this interaction have still not been explicated, and much remains speculation, even though important and advancing results have been made in recent new fieldwork² as well as

¹ Here I wish to express my sincere gratitude to H.E. Amin Abdulkadir, Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, and to H.E. Lieselore Cyrus, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Ethiopia, as well as to Ato Yonas Desta, Director of the Authority of Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage (ARCCH), and Ato Jara Mariam, former Director of ARCCH, to Dr. Till Blume, First Secretary for Economic and Cultural Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany to Ethiopia for their support of our project. I would also like to thank my Ethiopian cooperation partners in Tigray, Ato Kebede Amare, Director of Tigray Culture and Tourism Agency (CTA) and Ato Teowodros Abreham, former Director of the CTA Branch in Aksum and his colleagues for the successful cooperation of our joint projects in Yeha and Hawelti.

² See, for instance, Fattovich 2004; 2009; Phillipson 2009; Manzo 2009; D'Andrea *et al.* 2008; Harrower *et al.* 2010; Wolf, Nowotnick 2010a; 2010b; Japp *et al.* 2011; Lindstaedt *et al.* 2010; Weiss *et al.* in print.

epigraphic studies³. These results confirm that South Arabians from the territory of Saba⁴ contributed towards establishing a polity in the Abyssinian highlands that bore the name “Di‘amat”. This polity endured approximately until the middle of the 1st millennium BC. Its socio-political structures as well as material culture displays distinct signs of South Arabian influence. This concerns culture and technology as well as the form of rule, writing and language⁵, religion and cult practices (fig. 1)⁶, architecture and building techniques⁷, as well as the spheres of arts and crafts such as metalworking⁸ (fig. 2), relief art and statuary⁹. South Arabian contacts led to an enduring process of commingling and fusion of Sabaeen and African elements. The emergence of a new cultural landscape, as a conglomerate of initially completely different societies, is called “Ethio-Sabaeen”¹⁰.

The cultural acculturation process of the Sabaeen immigrants with the societies of the local people must have been realized quite quickly and definitely before the appearance of written sources. According to Norbert Nebes, already in the oldest Ethio-Sabaeen inscriptions known so far, dating to the 8th/7th century B.C., apart from the Sabaeans also indigenous inhabitants are named, to whom the claim to power extends¹¹. Furthermore, terms come to light that are not found on the Arabian Peninsula¹², showing an adjustment to existing social structures. For instance, the quoting of women’s names in ruler filiations in royal inscriptions speaks in favour of an already longer acculturation process with the local population: unlike South Arabia, not only the father of the ruler is named, but also the father and mother or even the grandparents¹³. This matrilineal element appears to have played a significant role for the rulers in Di‘amat.

Economical motives for the Sabaeen interest in the African continent are – in my opinion – far more imaginable than strategic-military motives for expanding the Sabaeen empire’s power.

³ Nebes 2010a; 2010b; 2011b.

⁴ Nebes 2010a: 232-233. See a different approach by Robin, de Maigret 1998: 793–794.

⁵ Bernand et al 1991-2000; Nebes 2010a.

⁶ In fact, the main Sabaeen pantheon was adapted by the Ethio-Sabaeen polity. Further, for instance incense burners bearing the symbols of the moon and star are comparable with South Arabian types. These cult objects as well as miniatures vessels as votive offerings demonstrate similar cultic practices.

⁷ This feature is mainly attested by the monumental architecture of Di‘amat. Concerning the secular architecture, major excavations in domestic quarters are still lacking. Tomb architecture differs from South Arabian types, yet the burial customs with collective burials and grave goods are similar. See, for instance, the collective burials of the ʿAwām cemetery of Mārib: Gerlach 2002.

⁸ For example, bronze stamp seals from graves in Yeha (see Anfray 1963: 191, pl. CLIII-CLIV; Manzo 2009: 294-295) are the earliest evidence of this kind of metalworking at the northern Horn of Africa. See also footnote 64.

⁹ See for instance the so-called shrine or throne of Hawelti, exhibited in the National Museum of Addis Abeba, with the depiction of a priest and a woman, most probably the female dedicator, and a typical South Arabian frieze of ibexes: de Contenson 1963: pl. XXXII-XXXIII.

¹⁰ In order to underscore the phenomenon of “interaction, differentiation and assimilation” (Anfray 1967: 49–50), in the year 1964 Anfray introduced the term “Ethio-Sabaeen” (Anfray 1964; 1967; 1968; 1990), at the same time suggesting the term “South Arabian period”, which would emphasize the strong influence at that time. See also the terminological discussion about the “pre-Aksumite” period by Philipson 2009; Schmidt 2009: 309 and Curtis 2009: 347.

¹¹ In the first instance the so-called *Di‘amat Formula*, which refers also non-Sabaeen population groups, is in support of this: Nebes 2010a: 230-231.

¹² The Ethio-Sabaeen term for “female partner/companion” *ʿrkytn* is a local term that could not be found in the languages and dialects of the Arabian Peninsula: Nebes 2010a: 218 with further references.

¹³ Nebes 2010a: 219, 233.

The exploitation of resources¹⁴ as well as in some cases securing trade routes by controlling the region in which incense was cultivated¹⁵ could have played a decisive role in cultural contacts. Particularly the last point mentioned – the extent of trade in incense that was controlled by Saba’ on the Arabian side at the latest in the 8th century BC¹⁶ and would become regulated on the African continent in order to meet the increasing demand for this aroma – needs far more systematic research. An indication that the expansion of trade was one factor in cultural contacts is reflected by known settlements that display South Arabian influence, located on old trade roads or at least in their vicinity (fig. 3). They continue most probably from the ideally protected harbour of Adulis (Eritrea) and the bay of Zula¹⁷ into the highlands of Akkälä Guzay and in southerly direction to the region of Addigrat (Ethiopia, Tigray), then to the West to the area around Aksum or on the southern route farther into the area of Mäkälä. Sites to mention there – starting from Adulis – are above all ‘Addi Kramaten, Mätära, and Käskäse; in a westerly direction via Yeha to the area around Aksum are the sites of Hawelti, Gobocheha/Mälazo, Abba Pântälewön and Seglamen¹⁸; going South via ‘Addi Gälämo to the region around Wuqro is the hitherto southernmost site in Di‘amat: ‘Addi Akaweh¹⁹.

From the most recent research results it can be concluded that some sites in Di‘amat were in close contact and that they possessed a central administrative seat and a religious centre. This is attested – among others – by the altar inscription found in ‘Addi Akaweh²⁰, in which the Ethio-Sabaeen ruler Wa’ran is named, who dedicated the altar to the god ‘Almaqah, when he was proclaimed as the “lord of the temple of ‘Almaqah of Yeha”²¹. This not only reflects the close relations between sites located 90 km in a direct line from one another, but also mirrors the superior cultic role of Yeha, whose ancient name is evidenced here for the first time.

The Ethiopian-German cooperation project in Tigray was initiated in 2009 by the Sanaa Branch of the Orient Department of the German Archaeological Institute and the Authority of Research and Conservation of Cultural Heritage (ARCCH), together with the Tigray Culture and Tourism Agency (CTA). The major emphasis of the Ethiopian-German cooperative project lies upon our investigations on the material and epigraphic remains of the polity of Di‘amat in northern Tigray as well as on the reconstruction of the original palaeo-environment of the region. Thereby, work is concentrated in Yeha, located 35 km northeast of Aksum and formerly almost certainly the religious and likewise political centre of Di‘amat²², and in Hawelti²³, located some 5 km southeast of Aksum (fig. 4).

The temporal focus of the archaeological explorations covers the closing 2nd millennium BC to the end of the 1st millennium BC. The project’s endeavours are to search for still not well

¹⁴ Gold, for instance, is still exploited today in Yeha.

¹⁵ Incense is still harvested today in the region of Tigray.

¹⁶ For the South Arabian incense and its trade, see Müller 1978; Groom 1981.

¹⁷ Unfortunately, a systematically archaeological research of the early periods of Adulis is still lacking: Paribeni 1907; Anfray 1974; Peacock, Blue 2007.

¹⁸ In 2010 the University of Naples “L’Orientale” under the direction of R. Fattovich started an Ethiopian-Italian archaeological project in Seglamen.

¹⁹ The Ethiopian-German project of the Orient Department of the German Archaeological Institute started at ‘Addi ‘Akaweh 2008, directed by Pawel Wolf; see Wolf, Nowotnick 2010a; 2010b.

²⁰ Wolf, Nowotnick 2010a: 177-178; Nebes 2010a: 216-226.

²¹ Nebes 2010a: 216.

²² See already Beckingham, Huntingford 1961: 140-142.

²³ Japp et al 2011: 11-12. For earlier research at that site see: Leclant 1959; de Contenson 1963; 1981.

known indigenous components in the emergence of the polity of Di'amat, further to estimate the so-called "phenomenon" of South Arabian influence upon this region, and finally to trace the development of the Ethio-Sabaeen culture. Namely, today these questions still remain unexplained or are approached basing solely on hypotheses concerning the cause(s) for and the extent to which Sabaeans crossed the Red Sea to settle on a different continent, some 700 km in a direct line from their capital city of Mārib. The time span directly following the last archaeological and epigraphic relics of Di'amat is also obscure: It is completely unclear, therefore, when, how and why Di'amat came to an end.

Di'amat was not an expansive, clearly defined ruler's territory, but rather a kind of union of different localities, important above all for trade-and-exchange and/or cult. These localities stood under the hegemony of one ruler, or possibly several, who bore the title *malik* or *malik* combined with the title *mukarrib*²⁴. Parallel in time indigenous communities also existed in this region, which were not influenced or only indirectly affected by contact with the South Arabian settlers²⁵.

Included in our archaeological, epigraphic, ethno-historic, architectural and conservation work in Yeha are extensive geological, geomorphological and botanical surveys, and soil studies²⁶ (fig. 5). These investigations have been carried out in the surroundings in search of sources of raw materials as well as possible trade goods, traces of ancient agricultural and irrigation strategies and evidence of the history of the former landscape and climate.

Here the question arises as to whether terrace cultivation (fig. 6 a and b), as practiced in Yemen since the 3rd millennium BC²⁷, was present in the Ethiopian highlands through cultural contacts, or whether this development emerged independently²⁸.

The ancient site and present-day village of Yeha lies in a fertile basin (fig. 7), surrounded by mountains, upon which terrace cultivation is still practiced today. High plateaus interrupt the steep mountain chains in many places, allowing the establishment of flat fields on fertile soils; they were settled intensively ever latest since the 1st millennium BC. Year-round flowing water guaranteed at least partially agricultural activities during the dry seasons as well as the supply of water for humans and livestock²⁹.

The site of Yeha, whose ancient name is identical with the modern name³⁰, is marked by until now two known monumental structures: the Great Temple, probably dedicated to the major Sabaeen deity 'Almaqah and dated to the middle of the 7th century BC, and by the edifice called Grat Be'al Gebri, which stands some 250 m northwest of the Great Temple. There is furthermore a burial ground, designated 'Abiy 'Addi, with shaft graves, where investigations are also being conducted. More excavations are planned in the settlement and production areas in Yeha for the future, so that an as complete as possible reconstruction can be made of this pre-Aksumite society.

²⁴ Nebes 2010a.

²⁵ See, for instance, the results of the field work of Phillipson 2000; Phillips 2004; D'Andrea *et al.* 2008; Sernicola 2008; Phillipson 2009a; 2009b.

²⁶ In addition to scientific research, a further important aspect of our work in Yeha is the development and achievement of a masterplan for tourism there as well as the construction of a site museum.

²⁷ Winkinson 1999: 186; Pietsch, Mabit 2012: 53-55.

²⁸ See also D'Andrea *et al.* 2008: 159; Sulas *et al.* 2009: 7- 8.

²⁹ During our surveys aside from Yeha, until now 21 further sites were identified, which attest intensive use of the land. See also for an earlier survey Michels 2005: 55-81.

³⁰ Nebes 2010a: 223.

Grat Be'al Gebri

One of the monumental buildings in Yeha – the Grat Be'al Gebri – is located a mere 200 m away from the Great Temple (fig. 8). After a rather small excavation by the Deutsche Aksum-Expedition in 1906³¹, it was partly examined in the late 1960s by the Ethiopian Institute of Archaeology under the direction of Francis Anfray³². In the year 2009 excavations of the Ethiopian-German cooperation project were resumed and parallel to that restoration work was carried out on this singular timber-frame building.

Rectangular in ground plan with corner- and lateral risalites, the timber-frame structure stands upon an almost 6 m high podium, erected with rough stones from the nearby occurrence of phonolith (fig. 9). It was accessed on the south side through a propylon with six pillars of sandstone. The front façade has a width of 48.50 m. Hence, it is the largest ancient timber-frame structures known so far in East Africa and South Arabia.

Fortunately, parts of charred wooden floor boards are preserved in front of the entrance behind the pillars and allowing radiocarbon dating (fig. 10). They date to around 800 BC, while a second building phase dates in the 8th–6th century BC³³. It is, thus, the oldest wood-stone-timber structure in the region³⁴ and stands at the beginning of a long tradition of timber-frame construction, a technique that continued in Aksumite architecture³⁵, imitated in stone like the renowned stelae at Aksum (fig. 11) or in churches³⁶. The podium is like the Five-Pillar building at Širwāḥ³⁷ and other comparable podia in South Arabia (for example, TT1 in Timna³⁸, the administrative building at Širwāḥ³⁹, and the palace at Shabwa⁴⁰): it is not a massive socle, but instead a platform divided by a system of walls that enclose cells, which were filled directly after the construction. The walls create the foundation for the upper storeys of a timber framework construction.

Neither the architecture nor the finds are sufficiently specific so that the function of the structure could be determined. Yet, miniature vessels and miniature incense burners as well as fragments of larger-than-life-sized plastic or high-relief horns or symbol of a half-moon in stone (fig. 12), is the point to its function as a sacred building. Conversely, the ground plan with many, mostly interconnected rooms but as of yet without a visibly larger area for cultic use, at least on the ground floor, suggests an interpretation as administrative building maybe in combination with regal representation.

Inscriptions that might indicate a specific function, however, are still absent. The only written document is the stamp seal with the inscribed name of the Ethio-Sabaeen ruler, Wa'rān Haywat, which

³¹ Krencker 1913: 87-89.

³² Anfray 1972a: 49-52; 1972 b; 1973: 40-44; 1990: 27-30; 1997: 5-23. For the pottery analysis see Fatovich 1971; 1972a; 1972b; 2009.

³³ The charcoal samples were analyzed by the Poznan Radiocarbon Laboratory; the calibration was made with OxCal software. The assignment of the timber framework to the late first millennium BC (Fatovich 2009: 278-279) can be excluded in view of to the new 14C results.

³⁴ The identification of the wood utilised is still undergoing by the Natural Department of German Archaeological Institute. Possibly it is a kind of juniper.

³⁵ Phillipson 1998: 84-86.

³⁶ See for instance Krenker 1913: 7-10.

³⁷ Gerlach, Schnelle in print.

³⁸ de Maigret 2003: 259-270; de Maigret, Robin 2006: 27-30; Van Beek 1952: 10-13; Breton et al 1997.

³⁹ Gerlach 2005a: 262-263, fig. 11; Gerlach 2005b: 37-38.

⁴⁰ Seigne 1992.

was discovered by Francis Anfray⁴¹. Whether the seal is indicative of an administrative structure or, rather, it was an offering in a cultic context, must remain unsolved at present. To contemplate here is the extent to which we can assume whether in early South Arabian or Ethio-Sabaeen history a building used for administrative–representative purposes⁴² could have possessed sacred aspects as well.

Numerous details of the Grat Be‘al Gebri reflect South Arabian influence: two letters of the South Arabian alphabet raise mirror-inverted in the mortar, in which the wooden beams are installed (fig. 13). They were cut by the builders and meant to indicate the position of beams in the framework. Stonemasons’ marks likewise attest the participation of South Arabian craftsmen in the planning and erection of the temple. That South Arabian stonemasons from the region of Mārib were involved in the construction of monumental buildings of Di‘amat is attested by different votive inscriptions dedicated by this group of specialized craftsmen⁴³. Nonetheless, in the process of erecting the Grat Be‘al Gebri, no hitherto known South Arabian prototypes were adapted precisely one-to-one: Architectural solutions attest far more an independent transformation of South Arabian elements. The structure is best comparable with the distinctly smaller Five-Pillar building in Širwāḥ⁴⁴ (fig. 14 a and b), which is dated to ca. 900 BC and, thus, some 100 years older. Nonetheless, the corners of both buildings differ considerably. Whereas the Five-Pillar building has simple risalites that project on all corners, the corners of the Grat Be‘al Gebri are each defined by two lateral risalites. Apparently this form was implemented in order to retain current schemes in proportion, while attaining room sizes that could not be covered by a roof. The recessed corners might also have been a reaction to the substantially larger basic size of the structure, in contrast to the Five-Pillar building – independent of local influencing factors.

The interior division of the Grat Be‘al Gebri has already been investigated in several trenches and can be well compared with structures in South Arabia: the edifice is structured in primarily symmetric halls and rooms. Some of these were representative partly as three-aisled, pillar-supported halls. Preserved in several rooms are the bases, embedded in the floor, upon which wooden columns were set. Charred remains of these roof supports have been restored. The unique timber-frame system of the wall consists of wooden beams with rectangular cross-section, positioned horizontal to the wall axes, and set alternately at right angles, one above the other; their rounded front end protrudes partly and visibly from the wall⁴⁵. In some places the walls still display the original clay mortar plaster, which was covered with geometric painting, like stripes in white, orange-brown and red colours (fig. 15 a and b).

As part of the research on building-history of the Grat Be‘al Gebri, the monumental architectural fragments, some several tons in weight, found at the entrance of the large open stairs to the building, were documented by means of 3D-laser scanning and restored. Two fragments of door frames could be ascribed to the respective buildings, and several parts of the roof beams of the propylon as well as the fragment of an architrave were identified.

⁴¹ Anfray 1997: 20 (RIÉ 289).

⁴² The existence of South Arabian representative buildings used as ruler’s seats in the beginning of the 7th century BC at the latest is confirmed, for example, by the inscription of Karib’il Watar in Širwāḥ (Müller 1985: 651-668; Nebes 1999: 66-69), in which the ruler praises himself for having built the upper of the house Salḥum in Mārib; Nebes 2011a: 370-371, footnote 153.

⁴³ Nebes 2010: 226-227; Nebes 201a.

⁴⁴ Gerlach, Schnelle in print.

⁴⁵ A good comparison for these rounded beam ends is found imitated in stone on stelae in Aksum.

Together with the measurements of the pillars it is now possible to undertake an axionometric 3D-reconstruction of the entire building (fig. 16). Basing on known Sabaean proportion schemes, it can be stated that with the pillar height of 10.50 m, the propylon alone reached a total height of ca. 13 m. At least three, if not four, storeys can be assumed.

Building structures of this large size also required a highly developed organisation and administration. Assuming a certain temporal advantage in the process of settling and the corresponding acquisition of land as well as in the development of an “infrastructure” for building such monumental architecture, we may assume that contacts between South Arabians had already existed quite a time before the erection of the Grāt Be‘al Gebri. That such a huge building project was not possible with merely a small number of immigrants and certainly not by a few craftsmen and traders, who had been fetched by a local elite⁴⁶. The extent to which the process of acculturation had advanced at the time of the erection of the Grāt Be‘al Gebri is difficult to deduce; however, a large number of local workers would have been drawn together for building such a monumental structure.

*The Great Temple*⁴⁷

The much more renowned monumental structure in Yeha, the Great Temple, measures 19x15 m in ground plan and was most likely dedicated to the god ʾAlmaqah. Despite the lapse of 150 years after the erection of the Grāt Be‘al Gebri and increased acculturation, the structure still displays construction following South Arabian traditions. The Temple is situated upon an elevation with a church directly next to it, at the highest place (fig. 17). The church inside the Temple, partly built of spolia from the ancient structure, was already in ruins one hundred years ago⁴⁸. Photographs taken in 1906 by the *Deutsche Aksum-Expedition* under the direction of E. Littmann show that it was already in desolate condition. In the 1940s the debris inside the temple was used to build the new church to the north⁴⁹. Excavations at the Great Temple of Yeha were carried out in the 1960s by the Ethiopian Institute of Archaeology under the direction of Francis Anfray⁵⁰. In the 1990s, under the French archaeological mission directed by Christian Robin, Alessandro de Maigret commenced with the comprehensive cleaning and architectural documentation of the building⁵¹.

The exterior walls are constituted by a two-shell masonry, whose building blocks were set without mortar in the compression-joint technique. The façade surface of the stones displays the typical South Arabian tradition of marginal drafting encircling a fine pointed inner surface. The doubtless employment of Sabaean craftsmen is also mentioned in inscriptions, for example, dedications made by stonemasons from Mārib⁵². Basing on the identical techniques in

⁴⁶ As the first Curtis 2004; 2005 proposed – and all later publications by Phillipson 2009: 269; Fat-tovich 2009: 286; Manzo 2009: 300-301; Wolf, Nowotnick 2010a: 378; Wolf, Nowotnick 2010b: 191, take on these thoughts – that the pre-Aksumite elite, consciously adopted foreign symbols of authority, “to legitimate rule by stressing relationship to wider cultural and economic network of the southern Red Sea” (Curtis 2008: 342).

⁴⁷ For the history of research of this monument see Robin, de Maigret 1998: 740.

⁴⁸ Krencker 1913: 84.

⁴⁹ Robin, de Maigret 1998: 740.

⁵⁰ Anfray 1972a: 47-49; 1990: 18-19.

⁵¹ Robin, de Maigret 1998: 737-798. In addition, a sounding was made in front of the propylon. For further details, see the contribution by M. Schnelle in this volume.

⁵² Nebes 2010a: 226.

stonework employed in Yeha and the 'Almaqah Temple in Şirwāḥ, built under the Sabaeen ruler Yada'īl Darih, in all likelihood the Great Temple dates to the middle of the 7th century BC⁵³.

Not only the masonry techniques, but also the building material corresponds to South Arabian norms. It was important – and this was surely not meant as a demonstration of political power alone, but based on cultic-religious concepts founded on the building material – that the temple walls were composed of limestone and that specific decorative elements were made with calcite sinter (fig. 18)⁵⁴. Nevertheless, the calcite sinter that was documented during our investigations⁵⁵ did not derive from Ethiopia, but from the quarries near al-Mahdarah, located 15 km north of Şirwāḥ in the province of Mārib⁵⁶. Similarly, the limestone employed for the high temple walls was not at the site or from the vicinity of Yeha. The ca. 950 m² of stone material needed for the walls stems from the limestone quarries (still exploited today) near Wugro, some 90 km directly southeast of Yeha. The logistical and human efforts required for the transport of this stone material over a distance of 150 km, over high mountain passes to Yeha, must have been enormous.

In some places the exterior walls of the temple are preserved as high as the terminating double row of denticulate frieze, reaching a total height of ca. 14 m. This detail – just as the ibex-frieze built into the new church – is well confirmed by comparisons with Saba', such as the 'Almaqah Temple in Şirwāḥ, which are likely parallel in date⁵⁷. The building is divided into three areas⁵⁸. At first the participants in cult crossed the propylon, constituted by six monolithic pillars leading to a wooden door; then they entered an inner hall-like area paved with sandstone. This area was subdivided into two lateral, roofed aisles and one open central aisle that had no supportive pillars. The side aisles were again divided by six pairs of pillars arranged in regular intervals. Of these eleven bases are preserved, which allow it to be reconstructed as a hypostyle building. Two rectangular impressions in the floor evidence the position of altars⁵⁹, which possibly had the same form as the altar recovered in 'Addi Akaweḥ near Wugro and whose inscription, furthermore, makes reference to Yeha (as described above). The system of channels at one of these altars served to conduct the libation or blood of the sacrificial animal away from the altar and out of the Temple, perhaps also the cleaning water used to wash the surface of blood and other liquids following the sacrifice. Both altars stood on an axis in front of the most sacred part of the Temple: the central chamber of three adjacent chambers.

The cemetery 'Abiy 'Addi

A further place in Yeha, where investigations were undertaken, is the newly discovered burial ground at 'Abiy 'Addi, located some 400 m south of Great Temple on the northern slope

⁵³ The Great Temple was dated by the French-Italian archaeological mission to the 7th or 6th century BC (Robin, de Maigret 1998: 775-778). R. Fattovich favours a date between the 7th and 5th centuries BC, on the basis of pottery assemblages (Fattovich 2009: 282).

⁵⁴ Weiss et al 2008.

⁵⁵ The identification of the stone material, including all laboratory analyses were carried out by Chr. Weiss, Friedrich Alexander University Erlangen-Nürnberg, Institute of Palaeontology: Weiss *et al.* in print.

⁵⁶ Gerlach, Hitgen 2004: 216; de Maigret, Antonini 2005: 29-30, pl.20-21; Weiss *et al.* 2008; Weiss *et al.* in print.

⁵⁷ Röring 2008: 136-137, 140; Kinzel, Schnelle 2011: 38-41; Gerlach, Schnelle in print.

⁵⁸ See also de Maigret's description of the building in: Robin, de Maigret 1998: 739-771.

⁵⁹ See paper M.Schnelle in this volume. One impression was already recognized as an altar by de Maigret: Robin, de Maigret 1998: 756, figs. 22, 28, 29.

of the hill of 'Abiy 'Addi (fig. 19). Unlike the so-called South Tombs, which were already excavated in the 1970s by the Ethiopian Institute of Archaeology under the direction of Francis Anfray⁶⁰, excavations in this necropolis first began with the Ethiopian-German Project in 2010. The numerous shaft graves cut into the native phonolith rock were not recognisable prior to excavations, for they were covered by a layer of humus earth, a few centimetres in thickness.

During the investigations of an area of ca. 500 m² nine graves were localised and partly excavated. They lay close together in irregular order and did not differ greatly from one another (fig. 20). Each had a rectangular shaft ca. 2x0.6 m in area and between 2 m to 3 m deep. Located at one narrow side was usually an entrance to the grave chamber, which was originally closed by a large, coarsely hewn stone slab. The low, scarcely more than 80 cm high chambers were irregular rectangular ground plan, partly oriented towards the hewn edges of the native phonolith rock.

The upper part of two graves could be reconstructed, basing on the preserved find contexts. They were closed by an initial layer of slabs placed crossways over the shaft. Upon the slabs was a tumulus-like cover consisting of ca. fist-sized rough stones. Each individual grave was enclosed by a two-shell wall, likewise built of rough rocks. Presumably this encirclement formed an open space that might have served for burial- and grave rituals.

All of the graves were collective burials; they had already been plundered. Due to this plunder and poor preservation, very little can be stated about funerary customs there. The deceased were probably buried in extended supine position next to the chamber walls, but a specific orientation could not be confirmed. Skeletal remains that were found in the middle of the chamber or near the entrance were probably in secondary position, displaced during looting activities. The spectrum of grave goods can only be conjectured as well, basing upon the few objects left behind by the looters. Aside from occasional pieces of pottery, most of which was strongly fragmented, only objects have been found thus far that can be considered as part of the dress of the deceased. Among these objects are beads of necklaces made of stone or glass, sometimes gold as well. Typical also are bronze bracelets or foot rings, without any decoration.

Comparisons with the South Tombs⁶¹ excavated in the 1960s as well as with the repertory of ceramic forms⁶² found there indicate a dating of the graves between the 8th and 4th centuries BC with secondary burials of the Christian era. Due to plunder and the poor state of preservation of the skeletal material⁶³, unfortunately until now it has not been possible to make any exact statement about the temporal assignment of the graves in 'Abiy 'Addi. The archaeological material retrieved from the South Tombs reflects both South Arabian as well as indigenous influences, as attested, for example, by the bronze seals⁶⁴, whose forms have no parallel in South Arabia, yet

⁶⁰ Anfray 1963; see also Fattovich 1990; 2009.

⁶¹ Anfray 1963.

⁶² Anfray 1963: pl. CXXVIII. The type 4100 jar, or 'torpedo-shaped jar', dated by Alexandra Porter (Porter 2004; 2010) into the first half of the 1st millennium BC.

⁶³ The preservation of the bone collagen is so bad that it has not been possible so far to date them via 14C dating. We hope to be able to get better results with tooth samples.

⁶⁴ Similar perforated metal stamps are known in South Arabia, but most bear a name and not zoomorphic motifs (Seipel 1998: fig. on page 203, kat. nr. 201). These zoomorphic motifs, conversely, were borrowed from South Arabian iconography, as the choice of the ibex motif illustrates. The closed plaster cover of a vessel was stamped with a seal, thereby probably not only marking the owner, but also warranting the intactness of the contents. The presence of seals in graves strongly implies that seals found in the Ethio-Sabaean cultural landscape also possessed an individual character, just like name seals.

which bear a typical South Arabian ibex. In Early Sabaeen times Sabaeen graves almost exclusively have the form of tower-like mausolea, as in the cemetery of the Awām Temple in the oasis of Mārib⁶⁵, whereas shaft graves are completely absent in the culture landscape of Saba’.

The intensive process very appropriately termed ‘acculturation’ (fig. 21 a and b), which circumscribes the mixture of the thus far foreign cultural elements of Sabaeen population groups with those of indigenous peoples and led to new societal structures and religious concepts⁶⁶ is in my opinion the most plausible explanatory model for the phenomenon of the Ethio-Sabaeen cultural landscape until now. Therefore of special importance, when interpreting the formation process of the new culture is to determine the respective affecting and merging Sabaeen and East African components. We are still standing at the beginning in northern Ethiopia.

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⁶⁶ The interpretation of the terminus ‘acculturation’ in ancient cultures see, for instance, in Mayer 2007.

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Fig. 1: Incense burner from Yeha (DAI, Irmgard Wagner)

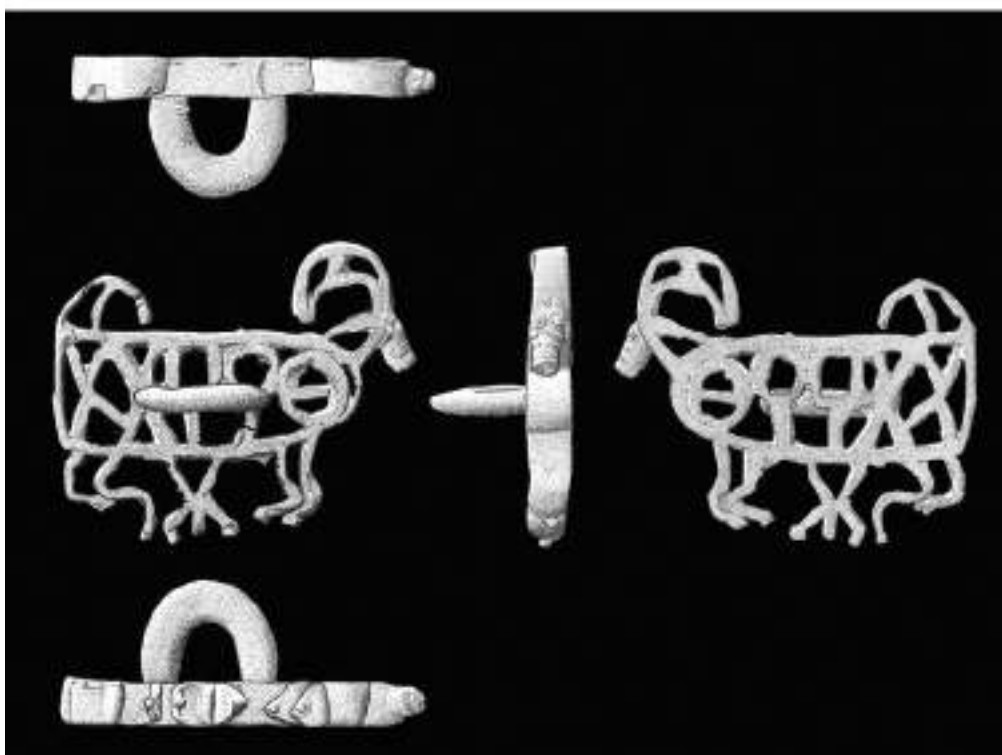


Fig. 2: Bronze stamp seal from Yeha-Museum (DAI, drawing Marianne Manda)

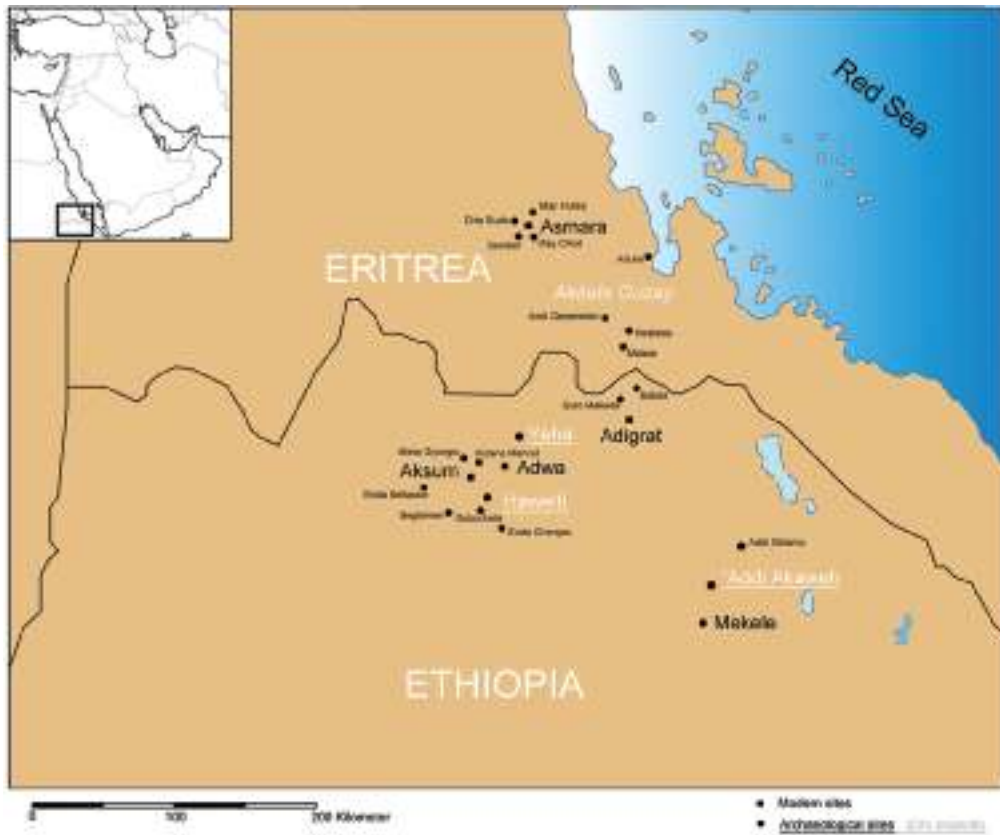


Fig. 3: Map of Ethio-Sabeaen sites in Eritrea and Ethiopia (DAI, Mike Schnelle after R. Szydlak, © University of Tübingen)



Fig. 4: Landscape surrounding of Yeha (DAI, Irmgard Wagner)



Fig. 5: Paleosols in a field terrace near Yeha (Dana Pietsch)



Fig. 6a: Field terraces in the highland of Yemen near the Jabal al-^ʿAwd (DAI, Holger Hitgen)



Fig. 6b: Field terraces in the highland of Tigray near Yeha (DAI, Irmgard Wagner)



Fig. 7: Topographic map of Yeha (DAI)



Fig. 8: The monumental building Grat Be'al Gebri, around 800 BC (DAI, Irmgard Wagner)



Fig. 9: Schematic plan of the Grat Be'al Gebri (DAI, Mike Schnelle)



Fig. 10: Burnt wooden floor boards behind the pillars of the propylon of the Be'al Gebri (DAI, Irmgard Wagner)



Fig. 11: Detail of one of the stelae of Aksum (DAI, Iris Gerlach)



Fig. 12: Miniature pottery found in the Grat Be'al Gebri (DAI, Irmgard Wagner)



Fig. 13: Two letters of the South Arabian alphabet raise mirror-inverted in the mortar, in which the wooden beams of the Grat Be'al Gebri are installed (DAI, Mike Schnelle)



Fig. 14a: View to the front façade of the Five-Pillar building of Sirwāh, around 900 BC (DAI, Irmgard Wagner)

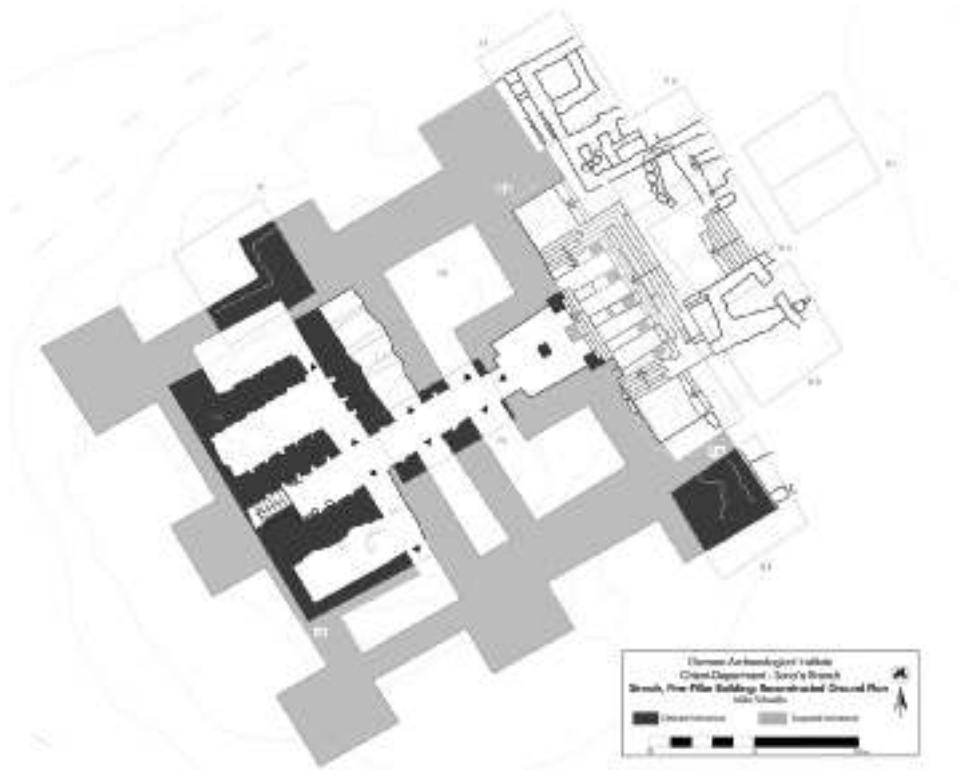


Fig. 14b: Schematic plan of the Five-Pillar building of Sirwāh



Fig. 15a: One room of the Grat Be'al Gebri after the restoration of the timber-frame construction (DAI, Irmgard Wagner)



Fig. 15b: Clay mortar plaster from the walls of the Grat Be'al Gebri (DAI, Daniela Geyer)

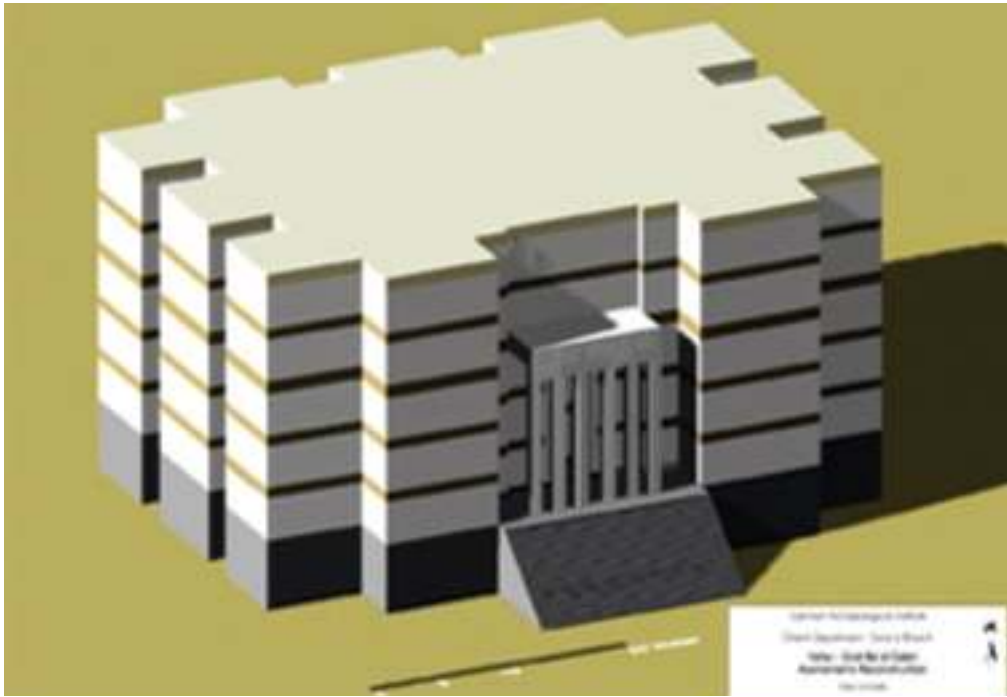


Fig. 16: Axionometric 3D-reconstruction of the Grat Be'al Gebri (DAI, Mike Schnelle)



Fig. 17: Great Temple of Yeha (mid of 7th century BC) next to the church (DAI, Irmgard Wagner)



Fig. 18: Decorative architectural element made of calcite sinter (DAI, Irmgard Wagner)

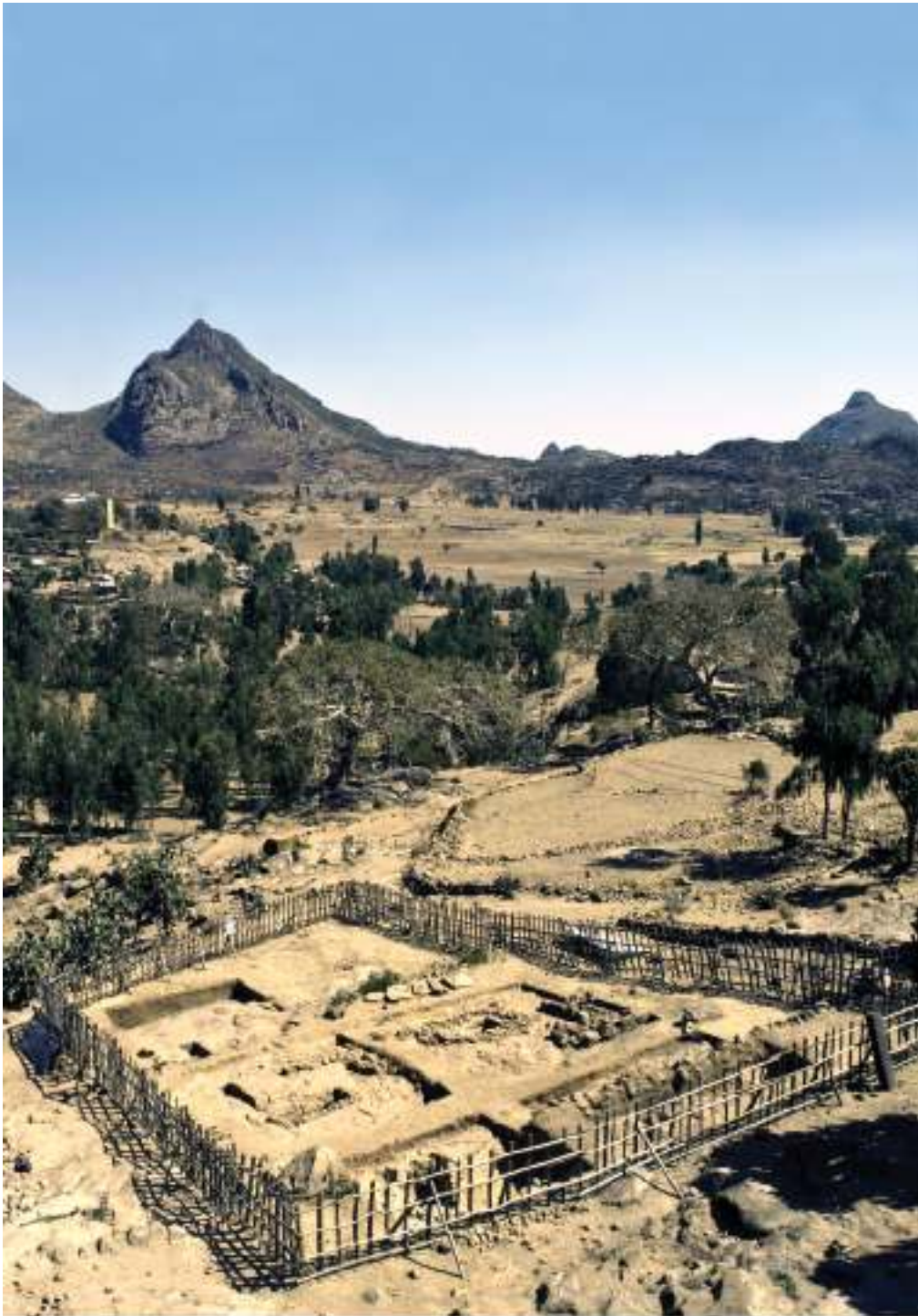


Fig. 19: The cemetery of 'Abiy 'Addi in Yeha (DAI, Irmgard Wagner)



Fig. 20: Two shaft graves of 'Abiy 'Addi (DAI, Irmgard Wagner)



Fig. 21b: Ibex frieze rebuilt into the church of Yeha (DAI, Irmgard Wagner)



Fig. 21a: Ibex frieze of the Almaqah temple of Sirwāḥ (DAI, Irmgard Wagner)

Ekaterina GUSHCHINA

QUELQUES NOTES SUR LES CULTES SUDARABIQUES RÉFLÉCHIS DANS LES INSCRIPTIONS DU CORPUS INSCRIPTIONUM SEMITICARUM (CIH)¹

A l'intérieur des études de la civilisation de l'Arabie du Sud antique la religion reste toujours un argument essentiel. Les textes épigraphiques en provenance des temples sudarabiques sont toujours considérés comme une source fondamentale. Toutefois, la discussion de cet argument serait incomplète sans nommer Alessandro de Maigret, un grand savant et une grande personne, dont les recherches scrupuleuses aussi que les découvertes considérables font une contribution précieuse à l'exploration du Yémen antique. Nous dédions cette contribution à sa mémoire.

La domination des inscriptions dédicatoires est une des caractéristiques de l'héritage épigraphique sudarabique. En même temps, ces documents ne nous éclairent guère sur la nature et le contenu des fonctions particulières des divinités. Comme le notait J. Ryckmans: «Le paganisme sudarabique présente une unité fondamentale dans le domaine du culte, mais beaucoup moins nette en ce qui concerne le panthéon»². L'insuffisance de détails descriptives, des lacunes textuelles aussi des clichés dédicatoires bien formelles font une barrière bien perceptible aux études des cultes religieux. C'est pourquoi l'analyse comparative et l'identification des régularités du contenu des inscriptions dédicatoires reste toujours actuelle comme une des possibilités d'avancer le déchiffrement des fonctions particulières de l'institut des temples et de la civilisation sudarabique antique.

¹ *Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum, Pars Quarta: Inscriptiones Himyariticas et Sabaeas continens*, I–III, Paris, 1889–1932. Ensuite nommé CIH.

² Ryckmans J. 1984: 91.

Dans ce contexte c'est le culte de Ta'lab³ qui attire notre attention. Encore J. Ryckmans avait noté un trait particulier des inscriptions dédiées à Ta'lab avec le phénomène de sa présence autonome dans les invocations finales et la nomination d'autres divinités seulement dans les cas spéciaux⁴. Le réexamen des inscriptions sabéennes du CIH a permis d'approuver cette hypothèse à l'intérieur des limites chronologiques⁵. En même temps, une riche documentation épigraphique élaborée par P.A. Griaznevich⁶ évoque des cas aussi rares qu'importantes des invocations finales où Ta'lab est nommé avec d'autres divinités (Gr 226/1-2⁷: «[... b]- 'ttr w-b-'lmqh w-b-//T'lb w-b Yl'mr w-Y[d'']l»); Gr 233/3⁸: ««[... b-'ttr w-b-'lmq]h w-b-T['lb]»»⁹). A notre avis, ces inscriptions peuvent être considérées comme une preuve indirecte de l'alliance politique entre Saba' et Sam'ī. Une découverte récente épigraphique de J. Schiettecatte affirme décidément ce fait, portant une nouvelle exemple des invocations à Ta'lab avec son association aux divinités sabéennes 'Athtar et Almaqah et évoquant pour la première fois la présence du souverain de Sam'ī¹⁰ et la fraternité de Saba' et Sam'ī au VII^e siècle av. J.-C.¹¹.

La définition des ensembles tribaux primitifs se basaient probablement sur l'ordre religieux avec des limites territoriales. La reconnaissance d'un même panthéon et le culte des divinités principales qui le composent semblaient être la condition suffisante de l'appartenance à un ensemble tribal. Ainsi, Sam'ī possède dès la période ancienne son propre panthéon qui regroupe des divinités dont l'audience est limitée à Sam'ī, mais peut aussi déborder le cadre

³ Pour les sanctuaires de Ta'lab, se reporter à Robin 1982b: 17–25, 51–53; pour la description la plus détaillée à ce jour du cite de Riyām, se reporter à Griaznevich 1994: 247–259, fig. 33–35, pour l'identification probable du cite antique de *Mdrm* avec ses sanctuaires de Ta'lab: *T'lb/Rymm/b'l/Tr't/w-Mrbdn/d-hgrn/Mdrm* (CIH 340/4; CIH 5/2), *T'lb/Rymm/b'l/Mrbdn/d-Mdrm* (CIH 339/2-4; CIH 339bis/3), se reporter à Griaznevich 1994: 245–246.

⁴ Voir comme exemple des dédicaces à T'lb: Gr 167/3-4; Gr 170/4-5, etc. Pour les dédicaces à Ta'lab avec d'autres divinités voir Bauer, Lundin 1998: 47, Gr 166: notes.

⁵ La chronologie des textes épigraphiques de notre recherche, y compris l'article ici présent, est basée sur celle proposée par A. Avanzini (Avanzini 2008) et acceptée aussi à l'intérieur du projet CASIS: *Cataloguing and Fruition of South Arabian Inscriptions through an Informatic Support* (dirigé par A. Avanzini et coordonné par A. Priolella). Pour d'informations antérieures sur l'édition digitale du Corpus Sabéen (*Ancient/Middle/Central/Raydanite/Late/Undated Sabaic Inscriptions*) consulter le web-site CSAI: <http://csai.humnet.unipi.it/csai/html/index.html>

⁶ Griaznevich 1994; Bauer, Lundin 1998.

⁷ Bauer, Lundin 1998: 78–79, foto 196 a,b.

⁸ *Ibidem*: 82-83, foto 198.

⁹ Voir aussi Gr 179 dans Bauer, Lundin 1998: 52, foto 162 a,b: [... b-] 'lmqh w-b dt H[mym]: «un fragment de l'invocation finale avec, probablement, 'ttr au début. La nomination de 'lmqh parallèlement avec le culte déjà de T'lb. Ordinairement dans les invocations de ce genre provenues de la région de 'rhb c'est le nom de T'lb qui suit celui de 'lmqh (voir Gr 226/1; Gr 233/3). dt Hmym, la divinité du panthéon sabéen officiel, est nommée à 'rhb pour la première fois. Avec le temps T'lb comme le dieux suprême du pays de 'rhb et des Sam'ī supplante dt Hmym du liste obligatoire des divinités sabéennes.

¹⁰ Schiettecatte 2011: 256–257, fig. 123 «Un roi de Sam'ī y est attesté au VII^e siècle av. J.-C. dans le texte photographié sur le jabal Riyām (fig. 123), non publié. Il permet d'envisager la présence d'un centre politique sur le site de Ḥadaqān dès le VII^{ème} siècle av. J.-C., en admettant que le siège des souverains n'ait pas changé entre les VII^{ème} et IV^{ème} siècles av. J.-C.».

¹¹ *Ibidem*: 257, fig. 124 (texte non publié), 258.

de cet ensemble tribal¹². Nous voulons présenter ici quelques aspects d'évolution du statut de Ta'lab comme une divinité suprême de Sam'ī dans le contexte de ses rapports avec les divinités sabéennes, en particulier avec Almaqah¹³.

Les divinités n'appartenaient pas nécessairement à un panthéon tribal, mais en particulier celles qui faisaient l'objet d'un culte collectif ou officiel. Il semblerait que le panthéon regroupe avant tout les divinités majeures des groupes tribaux dont l'association a constitué le noyau initial de la tribu. En sens inverse, quand la divinité d'une fraction n'est pas admise dans le panthéon tribal, c'est l'indice d'une intégration (volontaire au par conquête) relativement récente. La tribu de Sam'ī présente dans ce contexte une évolution prolongée. Aux débuts de la civilisation sudarabique, elle est indépendante, avec ses propres institutions: «le panthéon très original (*T'lb*, *Nws²m*, *Qynn*), ses propres rois (CIH 37); son calendrier et son système de datation (éponymes *Yhs³hm*)»¹⁴. La fonction du centre politique et cultuel est accumulé à Ḥadaqān, la capitale vraisemblable du royaume de Sam'ī. «Durant la seconde moitié du I^{er} millénaire av. J.-C. la fonction religieuse à Ḥadaqān se polarise autour du sanctuaire de Ta'lab, seigneur de Zbyn, ce dernier terme désignant le sanctuaire lui-même. Les inscriptions (CIH 338, RES 4176) mentionnent ce sanctuaire, son mur d'enceinte, son puits et ses prêtres (*rs²w*). Cette structure peut être identifiée avec celle décrite par P.A. Griaznevich au nord-est du site. Les décombres d'une structure laissent entrevoir la présence de deux murs de clôture rectangulaires successifs entourant une plate-forme percée en son sommet d'un puits de 60 cm de côté. Le temple est en activité au plus tard vers les IV^{ème}-III^{ème} siècles av. J.-C. (CIH 37¹⁵). Il est toujours attestée vers les II^{ème}-III^{ème} siècles après J.-C. (CIH 357, Gr 137)»¹⁶.

Quand vers le III^{ème} siècle avant l'ère chrétienne, Sam'ī s'intègre à Saba', apparemment sans violence, elle décide de participer désormais à la célébration de Almaqah: un décret du dieu Ta'lab ordonne «que Sam'ī ne néglige pas en *du-'bhy* de faire le pèlerinage de Almaqah à Ma'rib»¹⁷. L'inscription RES 4176¹⁸ nous parle du décret de Ta'lab qui stipule que Sam'ī ne doit pas négliger le pèlerinage de Almaqah à Ma'rib¹⁹, lorsqu'elle perd son indépendance et passe sous la domination des rois sabéens. L'entrée dans l'ensemble

¹² Robin distingue trois niveaux de la structure tribale de Sam'ī: «petite communauté de territoire, fédération et confédération; seuls le premier et le troisième ont un répondant dans l'organisation religieuse» (Robin 1982a: 25). Sur la tribu de Sam'ī voir aussi Robin 1982b: 71–77, 101–109.

¹³ Robin 1982b: 21–25, 49–50, 61–63, 95–96, etc.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*: 95.

¹⁵ «La stèle CIH 37, provenant de Ḥadaqān et datée des IV^{ème}-III^{ème} siècles av. J.-C., est un des rares témoignages offrant un aperçu de la situation politique du site de Ḥadaqān, et plus largement de la confédération tribale de Sam'ī au I^{er} millénaire av. J.-C. Ce texte indique la présence sur le site du palais du souverain (*mlk*) de la tribu de Sam'ī, le palais Ya'd. Il s'agit vraisemblablement du vaste complexe architectural que décrit P.A. Griaznevich au centre du site, formé de deux monticules dont l'un masque une structure de 20 m de côté» (Schiettecatte 2011: 255).

¹⁶ *Ibidem*.

¹⁷ RES 4176/1-2; pour les aspects divers de cette inscription, voir aussi Beeston 1937: 62-74; 1984: 261; Ghul 1984: 33-38; Jamme 1947: 135; Ryckmans J. 1973b: 37; 1987: 109; 1989: 162-163; Serjeant 1976: 116; Pirenne 1982: 86-89; Robin 1982a: 79-80; 1982b: 18-21, 42, 50, 79-81, 96; 1991: 29, fig. 7; Korotayev 2003: 68-69, etc. Voir aussi Pliny (Plinius): XII, ch.32, sec. 63.

¹⁸ L'inscription RES 4176 (= Gr 174) fait part du complexe textuel avec Gr 175 (= RES 4175): «*wṭn s'rn Qm*» et Gr 176: «*ḥrm*» (Bauer, Lundin 1998; voir aussi Lundin 1973: 34).

¹⁹ RES 4176/2.

tribal s'accompagne donc de l'obligation de participer à un certain nombre de rites religieux communs, ce qui signifie l'adoption des principales divinités du panthéon de la tribu dominante. Ce «décret de Almaqah et Ta'lab»²⁰ peut être probablement considéré comme une preuve documentaire de la conservation de Ta'lab de sa position particulière et autonome malgré l'annexe des Sam'ī à Saba'. Après son incorporation à Saba', Sam'ī n'avait pas pratiqué localement le culte de Almaqah; Ta'lab, pas intégré dans le panthéon sabéen, reçoit un statut particulier: fait unique dans une tribu annexée par Saba'. Son culte n'est pas supplanté par celui de Almaqah dont le nom n'apparaît que dans certaines invocations finales. Les deux divinités, semble-t-il, ont été plus ou moins assimilées. «Peut-être cela s'explique-t-il par la subordination de Ta'lab à Almaqah: Ta'lab serait en quelques sorte un substitut de Almaqah dans le pays de Sam'ī»²¹.

La différence entre les vénération de Ta'lab et Almaqah se présente dans le formulaire dédicatoire. Comme nous l'a montré l'analyse comparative des textes avec des dédicaces finales à Ta'lab et Almaqah du CIH, la formule des dédicaces à Ta'lab reste constante en particulier à l'intérieur des périodes C et D (voir le Table 1a, b), au temps que celles-ci consacrées à Almaqah vont de subir des mutations (voir le Table 2a, b, c). Si pour les Sam'ī, Ta'lab Riyām reste toujours le «patron» (*s²ym*)²², le seul dieu qui reçoive ce titre, les Sabéens ne commencent à donner un titre à Almaqah qu'au III^{ème} siècle de l'ère chrétienne, narrant leur dieu «seigneur» (*mr'*). Dans les régions de Saba' et de Sam'ī notamment, il semble même qu'on évolue vers un hénouthéisme païen: Almaqah à Saba'²³ et Ta'lab à Sam'ī. L'argument contraire est que les Sabéens donnent ce titre aussi à d'autres divinités (CIH 436/10, par exemple). Il est à noter également que dans leurs dédicaces à Almaqah dans le temple de Awām à Ma'rib les Sam'ī mentionnaient leur divinité tutélaire Ta'lab jusqu'à la fin du II^{ème} siècle de notre ère. Dès le III^{ème} siècle, cette pratique se cesse.

La chronologie des dédicaces à Ta'lab nous présente un autre fait. A l'intérieur de la documentation épigraphique assez vaste il n'y a que trois inscriptions datées du III^{ème} siècle (du début de ce siècle, plus précisément), sous le règne de 'Alhān Nahfān roi de Saba' (CIH 308, CIH 312, CIH 350). Donc, le nombre d'inscriptions est fort limité par rapport à celui des deux siècles précédents. Ce phénomène du changement si évident du formulaire dédicatoire peut être considéré comme réflexion des changements politiques: trois *qayls* de la tribu de Sam'ī (tiers de Hshdm), Yarim Aymān, 'Alhān Nahfān et Sha'r Awtar, arrivent successivement sur le trône de Saba'. La réduction notable de dédicaces à Ta'lab au cours du III^e siècle peut être considérée probablement comme la conséquence d'une désaffection du culte de Ta'lab par des anciens *qayls* de Sam'ī devenus roi de Saba', aussi que de quelque groupe de leur tribu d'origine, privilégiant le culte de Almaqah, divinité tutélaire de Saba'. Par la suite, les mentions les plus nombreuses des souverains sabéens, le caractère de plus en plus formel de la confédération bientôt éclaté en trois fractions: Hs²dm, Hmln et Yrs¹m, la participation enfin de grands lignages de Sam'ī à toutes les querelles qui déchirent le royaume sabéen, relevant l'intégration progressive de Sam'ī dans la confédération sabéenne. Cette intégration était en fait prévisible de longue date dans la mesure où

²⁰ RES 4176/9-10.

²¹ Robin 1982b: 96.

²² CIH 2/3; CIH 335/2; CIH 344/2 et CIH 353/2, etc.

²³ Calvet, Robin 1997: 61-62.

Sam'ī formait une sorte d'enclave autonome entre deux régions sabéennes, celles de Hwlan al-Ālya et Bklm²⁴.

Dans la période en question, Almaqah, le grand dieu sabéen, déborde de plus en plus le cadre de la tribu et s'étend à une grande partie de l'Arabie du Sud. Plus nous nous avançons vers le monothéisme, plus des invocations finales à Almaqah à l'état isolé augmentent (voir la Table 2 a,b,c et la Table 3). Une vaste image de cette évolution est présente dans les inscriptions provenues du temple de Awām, où vers le IV^{ème} siècle de l'ère chrétienne les inscriptions dédicatoires polythéistes se disparaissent²⁵. Comme l'avait noté M.B. Piotrovskiy²⁶, il a eu lieu une certaine évolution du concept sudarabique avant l'apparition du monothéisme qui se manifestait dans le processus de domination dans les dédicaces d'une divinité principale qui avec le temps est devenue unique²⁷.

L'accord bien équilibré des cultes des deux divinités se présente dans des exemples iconographiques des symboles²⁸ aussi que des noms de Ta'lab et de Almaqah²⁹ mis ensembles sur le même objet ou texte dédicatoire. La «couple» Ta'lab et Almaqah³⁰ montre ses liens culturels dans l'iconographie par fois «croisée». Ainsi, le bouquetin (ibex) est déterminé par A. Jammé³¹ et G. Garbini comme animal-attribut de Almaqah. Dans son étude de l'évolution de l'image de Almaqah aussi que des parallèles iconographiques le savant italien a déterminé Almaqah comme un dieu solaire dont l'iconographie avait subit depuis les siècles une influence étrangère, reflétant et conservant des motifs culturels jusqu'à la période hellénistique et romaine, quand l'identification (partielle) de Dionis avec Almaqah s'est manifestée. «Almaqah è un dio nazionale, [...] dio della regalità, [...] è anche un dio della vegetazione e degli animali, come Dioniso [...]. La solarità di Almaqah in questo senso complesso, viene ulteriormente confermata dall'attributo dello stambecco, animale la cui natura solare è dimostrata dalla sua associazione, sulle raffigurazioni iraniche e mesopotamiche della tarda preistoria, con la svastica; e così trova finalmente una spiegazione la forma a disco delle corna, che richiamano la sfera solare»³². J. Ryckmans, au contraire, le considérait comme animal-attribut et probablement une signification même du nom divin de Ta'lab Riyām³³, dieu dispensateur de pluie, protecteur des troupeaux, auquel était consacrée une chasse ri-

²⁴ Robin 1982b: 96.

²⁵ Robin 2004: 292.

²⁶ Piotrovskiy 1985: 105-106.

²⁷ Voir, p. ex., CIH 407.

²⁸ Le symbole de Almaqah à droite de RES 4994 qui fait pendant au «T» sudarabique, symbole de Ta'lab.

²⁹ A Nā'it, un graffiti a été tracé sur les rochers qui servent de soubassement au temple par un individu qui se déclare *mṛtd T'lb w-'lmqh*: RES 5001, par rapport avec les textes ou l'auteur se déclare *mṛtd T'lb*, comme p. ex. dans RES 4041; RES 4042; Robin-Kāniṭ 1; Robin-Bayt al Jālid 6a et 7; RES 4998; RES 5002; RES 5003; CIH 319; CIH 574, etc.

³⁰ A propos de «l'exclusion réciproque de Ta'lab et Almaqah», voir Robin 1982b: 63-66.

³¹ Jammé 1947: 146. Voir aussi Grohmann 1914: 44-46.

³² Garbini 1974: 22. A propos des représentations de Almaqah-Dionis, l'iconographie hellénistique avec des attributs solaires et dionysiaques, voir Costa 1973, 1976; à propos des motifs dionysiaques de Almaqah voir aussi Ryckmans J. 1989: 162-163; 1987: 107.

³³ Ryckmans J. 1989: 166; voir aussi Ryckmans J. 1987: 108 («Several tribal groups had their own divine "patron" (*shym*). In Saba, Ta'lab, "ibex (?)", was the patron of the tribal federation of Sum'ay, to the north-east and west of Ṣan'ā'»).

tuelle³⁴ au bouquetin A.F.L. Beeston associait lui-aussi le bouquetin avec la pluie³⁵, considérant pourtant Almaqah est pas Ta'lab comme dieu-donateur de la pluie³⁶. Dans le conteste des parallèles des cultes de Ta'lab et Almaqah nous voulons citer un détail curieux noté encore par P.A. Griaznevich sur l'homologie architecturale des temples principaux de ces deux divinités: sur le plan une forme presque ronde (52 x 46 m) du sanctuaire de Riyām simule bien fort à celle de Awām du oasis de Ma'rib³⁷.

Le fidèles honoraient les divinités en leur consacrant des offrandes dans les temples et les sanctuaires. A l'époque ancienne, les inscriptions mentionnent principalement des offrandes de personnes. Le CIH contient quelques exemples documentées de cette pratique (CIH 307/2-3, CIH 309/2-3 à *T'lb*, avec la formule de dédicaces de soi-même et ses enfants «*nfs^l-hw w-wld-hw*»³⁸); CIH 379/3 à *'lmqh*; CIH 492/1-2, CIH 493/2-3, CIH 494/4, CIH 495/3, CIH 496/4 à *dt-Hmym*; CIH 545/2 à *Bs²mm* et *Wdm*)³⁹. Dès le début de l'ère chrétienne environ, les offrandes de personnes sont remplacées par des dédicaces de statuettes, présentées en permanence dans le temple comme une preuve durable de la reconnaissance du fidèle. Le dédicant est habituellement représenté par une statuette, notamment dans les sanctuaires de Ta'lab⁴⁰ (CIH 308, CIH 308bis, CIH 315⁴¹, etc.). Le remplacement progressif des dédicaces de personnes par les offrandes de statuettes est appuyée par une évolution de même type: la substitution d'une image à l'organe. Le symbole de la «main droite» nous en donne une exemple soit du processus en question que des liens iconographiques complexes à l'intérieur des cultes de Ta'lab et de Almaqah.

La «main droite» est un des symboles le plus puissant et vénéré dans de plusieurs cultures sémitiques jusqu'à nos jours. Parmi ces significations actuellement connues et déchiffrées est celle de protection. Outre cela, la «main» symbolise l'activité de l'indi-

³⁴ A propos de la chasse rituelle et la cérémonie de *istisqā'*, voir RES 3946/7; RES 4177/4; Ja 735 (Jamme 1956; Ryckmans J. 1973a: 379-388; 1976: 259-308; 1987: 110-111; Beeston 1984: 265-266; Serjeant 1976: 36, etc.).

³⁵ «The “divine symbols” and symbolic animals are of little help. The curved club symbol characteristic of *Ilmqh* marks him as a warrior-god. The lightning flash and “Doppelgriffel” characteristic of Ta'lab and Dhu-Samawi signalize them as rain-bringers. The ubiquitous bull or bucranium is everywhere a symbol of strength and fecundity, and so in principle applicable to any divinity. The crescent and disc motifs is difficult to associate with any particular deity, and is probably simply a notation for the sky in general, regarded as the source of rain. As for the ibex (almost as common as the bucranium) have the association with rain” (Beeston 1984: 264). A propos des aspects divers des rites et vénérations divines voir, p. ex. Ryckmans 1960: 315-332; Lundin 1972: 98-102; 1990: 95-100; Robin-Breton 1982: 590-629; Ryckmans 1987: 107-110; 1993a: 125-142; 1993b: 355-380, etc.

³⁶ “It seems difficult to attribute to the various deities, about the functions – certainly the most important was that of providing the life-giving rain. 'Attar was certainly a rain-giver, but so too was *Ilmqh*. The difference between them it is respect lies not in the basic function of rain-giving, but in their sphere of operation: tutelary deities being responsible for the irrigation of the village, tribal and federal deities for that of the tribal land, 'Attar for the whole world” (Beeston *op.cit.*: 264).

³⁷ Griaznevich 1994: 251; voir aussi Fontaine, Arbach 2006: 130-135.

³⁸ Comme les inscriptions du même genre, voir Gr 218/2-3; Gr 234/2-3 (Bauer, Lundin 1998: 72-73, 83).

³⁹ Comme d'autres exemples de dédicaces des personnes aux divinités, voir aussi Gl 1128+Gl 1129 à Almaqah; Gl 1131+ Gl 1132+ Gl 1133; Gl 1175+ Gl 1130+ Gl 1134 à 'Attar; Fa 125 à *dt-Hmym*, etc.

⁴⁰ Pour les dédicaces des statues de bronze à Ta'lab, voir aussi dans Bauer, Lundin 1998: 55 (Gr 183/4-6; Gr 184/1-3), 56 (Gr 185/1-2; Gr 186/2-4), 57 (Gr 188/1-), 58 (Gr 189/1-), 63 (Gr 198), 77-78 (Gr 224/3-4), etc.

⁴¹ Pour les détails de la lecture et sa comparaison avec celle de Solá Solé 1964: 50-51, voir les notes de Griaznevich in Bauer, Lundin 1998: 52, foto 161 (Gr 178).

vidu, c'est un signe du contact avec les dieux. L'héritage iconographique exceptionnelle du temple des «Banāt 'Ād» d'as-Sawdā présente ce symbole⁴² aussi que la représentation de 'Athtar et de Almaqah avec son attribut-symbole figurant aussi dans des scènes de culte. La possibilité que ce soit le premier cas de la présence de ces deux symboles avec des images des divinités sabéennes sur le même «champ» iconographique de l'Arabie du Sud antique n'est pas exclue. Contrairement aux représentations de ces deux symboles sur les monuments épigraphiques plus récents, dans ce cas-là ils semblent plutôt des symboles indépendants, liés seulement par le contexte du message sacré commun.

Aucun texte n'établit qu'on ait coupé la main du voleur en Arabie du Sud préislamique. Deux textes épigraphiques Le décret tribal MAFRAY-al-'Adan 10+11+12⁴³ et l'*ex-voto* Robin 1⁴⁴ = BM 139442 suggèrent cependant que l'ablation de la main a pu être pratiquée pour racheter un manquement grave à l'égard d'une divinité. Ces deux documents proviennent de la même confédération tribale de Sam'ā, et datent approximativement de la même période. Selon Chr. Robin, le décret pourrait dater de la fin du II^{ème} ou début du III^{ème} siècle de notre ère, la main de bronze pourrait remonter au I^{er} siècle de notre ère. Cependant, l'analyse complexe épigraphique et culturel effectué par Chr. Robin a prouvé que la dédicace de la main droite de bronze s'explique par le décret du Jabal-al-'Adan qui prescrit «la remise de sa main» à quiconque transgresse l'interdiction de pâture, où «la remise de sa main» signifie la dédicace d'une image de la main du coupable. Donc, il existait en Arabie du Sud préislamique, aux premiers siècles de l'ère chrétienne, une pénalité consistant à offrir une image de sa main. Il est vraisemblable qu'à plus haute époque, ce n'était pas une image de la main du coupable qui était offerte mais la main elle-même, représentant symboliquement l'activité de l'individu.

L'évolution de substitution d'une image à l'organe est à remplacer dans un mouvement plus général d'adoucissement de pratiques dont on a d'autres exemples pour l'Arabie du Sud antique. Il semble qu'en Arabie préislamique, à haute époque, on ait coupé la main de la personne coupable de certaines transgressions. La pénalité dont le Coran⁴⁵ frappe le voleur ne serait donc pas une innovation. Mais elle ne vise pas le même délit: dans le Coran, c'est le vol qui est puni alors qu'en Arabie du Sud, c'était la violation de certains interdits.

Nous ignorons la variété et le contenu des rites des cultes sudarabiques antiques. Des rares monuments d'art complétés aussi du matériel épigraphique permettent de faire des hypothèses sur des parallèles et de la continuation des cérémonies sacrées. Ainsi, la fameuse «plaque de procession»⁴⁶ sabéenne, datée du V^{ème} siècle avant J.- C. qui commémore une cérémonie effectuée en honneur de la divinité vénérée dans le temple de *N'mn*, représente la «main droite» comme attribut rituel, porté dans une des mains de chaque participant de procession. Dans leur autre main nous voyons un serpent (?) ou un objet arrondi dont la forme est similaire à l'arme-attribut de Almaqah. Soit la composition de la procession que les attributs rituels remontent à la scène culturelle des «Banāt 'Ād»⁴⁷: les personnages marchantes (dansantes?) portent dans une main un objet arrondi bien ressemblant à l'arme de Almaqah, dans l'autre main il y a un objet

⁴² Audouin, Arbach 2004: 20, 39, fig. 15, 16; 42, fig. 18, 20, 21, 22.

⁴³ MAFRAY-al-'Adan 10+11+12/11-12 (Robin 1985: pl. IV).

⁴⁴ Robin 1985: pls. V, VI; Robin 1991: 143, fig. 37, etc.

⁴⁵ Le Coran 1966, 1990: V/43 (38).

⁴⁶ Musée de Ma'rib, inv. n. BAR 949070.

⁴⁷ Audouin, Arbach 2004: 35, fig. 8.

obscur. Le style du relief des «Banāt ʿĀd» est fort primitif. Toutefois, la similitude de l'objet triangulaire avec la «main droite» est présente.

L'identité de la divinité vénérée dans la procession du BAR 949070 est inconnue. La localisation du temple n'est pas certaine. Pourtant, parmi ses significations variées⁴⁸, *Nʿmn* est aussi mentionné dans le CIH 74 de ʿAmrān, dans les appellations cultuelles telles que *ʿlmqh d-Nʿmn* (avec *ʿlmqh d-Hrwt*), correspondantes, à notre avis, à un lieu de culte déterminé. Il est à noter à ce propos que selon A. Jamme, la «main» est un des symboles de Almaqah⁴⁹. Le CIH contient quelques autres présences du symbole de la «main droite» dans le CIH 76, CIH 79 provenus comme CIH 74 de ʿAmrān (*ʿmrn*) et dédiés à *ʿlmqh*. Nous trouvons aussi ce symbole dans le Maʿīn 82=RES 2831 =M85, provenu de Maʿīn (*Qrnw*) dédiée à *ʿttr d-Qbdm*. Ainsi, nous pouvons noter la présence bien stable du symbole de la «main droite» dans l'iconographie sudarabique dès la période la plus antique avec sa signification complexe de protection, contact avec les divinités et aussi d'avertissement divin contre la violation de certains interdits.

Les panthéons sudarabiques se renouvelaient et se transformaient en fonction des changements politiques: les anciennes divinités, reléguées au second plan par celles qu'imposait la nouvelle tribu dominante, disparaissait progressivement, soit en se réduisant au rang de simples sanctuaires, ce qui pouvait être le cas des montagnes ou des phénomènes naturels strictement localisés, soit en s'associant jusqu'à devenir une simple épithète apposée à l'une des nouvelles divinités. A partir du tournant de l'ère chrétienne, de profonds bouleversements commencent à s'opérer en Arabie du Sud. Dans le domaine religieux, on constate que les nombreux panthéons locaux tendent à se réduire à quelques divinités majeures ou même disparaissent complètement. Parallèlement à la désagrégation progressive du paganisme arrive le renouvellement du système tribal: des ensembles tribaux fondés désormais sur l'allégeance aux chefs des grands lignages (ce principe n'a porté de stabilité). «On constate une redistribution complète de la carte tribale, intervenue entre le III^{ème} et le X^{ème} siècles. Les causes et les modalités de ce bouleversement restent à étudier»⁵⁰.

Les informations fragmentaires portent de nouvelles demandes au lieu de faire la lumière sur les lacunes informatives déjà existantes. Ainsi, le temple principale de Taʿlab Riyām⁵¹ localisé sur le mont Turʿat (*Trʿt*), est le seul à avoir survécu pendant les siècles à l'introduction des religions monothéistes, n'ayant pas encore complètement disparu même au X^{ème} siècle de l'ère chrétienne. «Pilgrimages, both communal and private, were a regular feature of ancient Yemeni life, just in mediaeval and modern times (the pilgrimage to the “Tomb of Hud” has lasted into the XIX century). Mediaeval Arab writers tell us of pilgrimages still be in made to Riyām, the site of the ancient shrine of Taʿlab»⁵². La fidélité constante des Sudarabiques antiques et médiévales à Taʿlab s'exprimée dans la continuation de la tradition antique de sa vénération et

⁴⁸ *Nʿmn*: comme construction (CIH 154; CIH 339; CIH 339bis), groupe (CIH 203+CIH182+CIH183; CIH 432), toponyme (CIH 37), etc.

⁴⁹ «Les symboles divins de *ʿlmqh* sont: la massue, le foudre (double faisceau de trois rayons), l'étoile (ou le cercle) et la main, et comme ses emblèmes: le bouquetin, le taureau, le lion et le sphinx» (Jamme 1947: 146).

⁵⁰ Robin 1978: 49.

⁵¹ *Rymm*, deuxième nom du dieu *Tʿlb*, se retrouve aujourd'hui dans Riyām, nom arabe de la montagne où était le temple principal de ce dieu. Or cela se comprend mieux si *Rymm* était ressenti comme un véritable nom divin et non comme une simple épithète de *Tʿlb*.

⁵² Beeston 1984: 266. Voir aussi Giaznevici 1994: 251, 254, 257, etc.

le pèlerinage à sa sanctuaire après la chute du polythéisme est intrigante. A notre avis, il n'est pas exclue la manifestation de la tendance sudarabique de dissimuler des noms des divinités antiques et rites anciens⁵³ derrière des innovations politiques et religieuses pour protéger et conserver les traditions archaïques.

Il nous semble ici opportune une brève observation de l'hypothèse de A. Jamme⁵⁴ sur le nom divin RHM et son lien possible avec Ta'lab. A son avis, RHM, «doux», est un dieu «doux» sabéen, dont le CIH 40 donne jusqu'à présent son unique attestation⁵⁵. Il pourrait être le dieu «qui rassemble» les nuages et «qui donne la pluie» : YHRHM⁵⁶, épithète postposé au nom divin de Ta'lab. On comprend que, dispersant la pluie dans ces régions arides, Ta'lab soit appelé «bon»: YRHM⁵⁷. Cette épithète appartenant au même radical que le nom divin RHM, il n'est pas impossible que RHM soit une appellation de Ta'lab⁵⁸. Au cas où l'hypothèse de A. Jamme soit acceptée, elle nous laisse supposer la reconstruction probable du statut de Ta'lab dans le contexte du Raḥmanisme⁵⁹ sudarabique comme un des substituts païens du Dieu unique monothéiste. On peut formuler l'hypothèse que sur le fait du mélange linguistique du RHM⁶⁰ sudarabique avec RHM arabe à l'aube de l'infiltration des Arabes nomades dans les Basses-Terres et puis dans l'Arabie du Sud toute entière. Cette pénétration avait bien entraîné l'arabisation du Yémen antique ayant facilité son islamisation.

L'histoire de la tribu Sam'ī est une des exemples frappantes de la stabilité des aspects religieux bien résistants aux variations, si caractéristique pour la civilisation de l'Arabie de Sud antique. Sur les Hautes-Terres seule Sam'ī est attestée explicitement aux périodes les plus anciennes, dont la documentation épigraphique est fort restreinte. La Sam'ī de cette

⁵³ D'après Robin 1981: 273, les deuxièmes noms dans les noms doubles comme 'lmqh Thwn, T'lb Rymm, Hgrm Qhmm ne seraient-ils pas, dans certains cas tout au moins, le souvenir d'anciennes divinités, réduites et assimilées au point de devenir de simples épithètes, tout comme 'lw z'ln est devenu une simple épithète de 'lwr? Il nous autorise à le penser des exemples de réduction de ce type, comme: a) celui de T'wr B'lm, qui de divinité autonome: voir 'lmqh Thwn w-T'wr B'lm b'ly Hrwnm, «'lmqh Thwn et T'wr B'lm, deux maîtres de Hrwnm» (CIH 581/4-5) est devenu une simple épithète de 'lmqh, en un premier temps dans l'expression: 'lmqh Thwn w-T'wr B'lm b'l Hrwnm, «'lmqh Thwn et T'wr B'lm, maître (au singulier!) de Hrwnm» (CIH 409/2-4), bientôt réduite en: 'lmqh Thwn-T'wr-B'lm b'l Hrwnm, «'lmqh Thwn-T'wr-B'lm, maître de Hrwnm» (RES 3929/4).

⁵⁴ Jamme 1947: 134-135.

⁵⁵ Voir: CIH 338/2 (Jamme *op.cit.*; l'opinion répétée in: Biella 1982: 481).

⁵⁶ Voir aussi: Arbach 2002: 222; http://csai.humnet.unipi.it/csai/html/all/TEON_onomastics.html

⁵⁷ RES 4176/1.

⁵⁸ Jamme 1947: 134-135.

⁵⁹ "In the 4th-5th century A.D. the picture presented by the inscriptions changes radically, in that all mention of deities of the pagan pantheon virtually disappears, to be replaced by a monotheistic cult in which the unique God is called "the Merciful" (Raḥmān-ān), with the epithets "lord of heaven" or "lord of heaven and earth". This needs a slight qualification, for we do in fact have two inscriptions, one mentioning the tribal deity Ta'lab and dated c.397 A.D. [note 36: MAFY/Bani Zubayr 2, in Robin 1977: 395], the other mentioning 'Aṭṭar and dateable to about the middle of the 5th century [note 37: Gr 27/4 in Griaznevich 1978: 37]" (Beeston 1984: 267).

⁶⁰ Dictionnaire sabéen (Beeston, Ghul, Muller, Ryckmans 1982: 116) contient seulement le radical RHM et omette RHM et RHM; Biella 1982: 481 ne parle que du radical RHM. Toutefois, à notre avis, ces trois radicaux ont plutôt une certaine chaîne synonymique RHM-RHM-RHM: RHM «doux» — YRHM «bon» // YHRHM — «ce qui donne la pluie=la vie abondante [des cieux]» // RHMNN — «mi-séricordieux».

époque «représente l'état le plus ancien que nous connaissions avec quelque détail d'une tribu des Hautes-Terres. Sam'ī (et aussi le Ma'īn) illustrent un état ancien de la société tribale sudarabique»⁶¹. Les nouvelles données épigraphiques nous prouvent que le royaume de Sam'ī faisant dès le début du VII^{ème} siècle av. J.-C. partie des royaumes indépendants sudarabiques antiques. Avant la découverte des inscriptions du jabal Riyām⁶² rien ne permettait de faire remonter l'existence de ce royaume avant les IV^{ème}-III^{ème} siècles av. J.-C., date de l'attestation de Sam'ī comme royaume indépendant avec son capitale de Ḥadaqān (CIH 37/5)⁶³. Ainsi, l'analyse du culte de Ta'lab, et avant tout des significations de son «isolement» à l'intérieur du panthéon sabéen, devient encore plus important dans le contexte de la politisation bien évidente du système religieux sudarabique qui reflète aussi la répartition des forces politiques à travers la domination divine.

Les observations ici présentes ne sont que des notes préliminaires pour les recherches ultérieures dont l'objectif final serait de s'approcher au déchiffrement des inscriptions dédicatoires sabéennes présentes en particulier dans le CIH.

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⁶¹ Robin 1982a: 24.

⁶² Schiettecatte 2011: 256-258, fig. 123, 124 (textes inédits).

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Table 1a: "Les inscriptions dédicatoires à T[°]lb dans le CIH"

INDEX	Provenance d'inscription, nom du toponyme		Type d'objet avec inscription; Chronologie	Temple	Invocation finale	Q-té des divinités dans le texte	Noms divins dans l'invocation finale
	antique	moderne					
CIH 335	Rymm	Riyām	<i>Base de statue avec une inscription dédicatoire</i> Chronologie: C	T [°] lb Rymm b [°] l Tr [°] t	b-T [°] lb Rymm	1	T [°] lb Rymm
CIH 349	°knt	Kāniṭ	<i>Inscription sur pierre</i> Chronologie: C	T [°] lb Rymm b [°] l Ḥḏ [°] tn	[b-T [°] l] ^(°) b Rymm	1	T [°] lb Rymm
CIH 351	Tr [°] t	jabal Riyām	<i>Base de statue avec une inscription dédicatoire</i> Chronologie: C	T [°] lb Rymm °dy mh- rmm d-Rḥbn	b-T [°] l[b ...]	1	T [°] lb
CIH 2	Rymm	jabal Riyām	<i>Base de statue avec une inscription dédicatoire</i> Chronologie: D	T [°] lb b [°] l Tr [°] t	b-T [°] l[b Rymm]	1	T [°] l[b Rymm]
CIH 197	Ḥzym	Ḥāz	<i>Base de statue avec une inscription dédicatoire</i> Pas datée	T [°] lb Rymm b [°] l S [°] šrm	b-T [°] l ^(°) [b] Rymm	1	T [°] lb Rymm
CIH 308	Rymm	Riyām	<i>Base de statue avec une inscription dédicatoire</i> Chronologie: D	T [°] lb Rymm b [°] l Tr [°] t	b-T [°] lb Rymm	1	T [°] lb Rymm
CIH 308bis	Rymm	Riyām	<i>Base de statue avec une inscription dédicatoire</i> Chronologie: D	T [°] lb Rymm b [°] l Tr [°] t	b-T [°] l[b Rymm]	1	T [°] lb Rymm
CIH 315	Rymm	Riyām	<i>Inscription sur pierre</i> Chronologie: D	T [°] lb Rymm b [°] l Tr [°] t	b-T [°] lb Rymm	1	T [°] lb Rymm
CIH 333	Tr [°] t	jabal Riyām	<i>Base de statue avec une inscription dédicatoire</i> Chronologie: D	T [°] lb Rymm b [°] l Tr [°] t	[T [°] lb R](ymm) b [°] l [Tr [°]](t)	1	T [°] lb Rymm

Table 1b: "Les inscriptions dédicatoires à T^olb dans le CIH"

INDEX	Provenance d'inscription, nom du toponyme		Type d'objet avec inscription; Cronologie	Temple	Invocation finale	Q-té des divinités dans le texte	Noms divins dans l'invocation finale
	antique	moderne					
CIH 334			<i>Inscription sur pierre</i> <i>Cronologie: D</i>	T ^o lb Rymm b ^o l Tr ^o t	b-T ^o lb Rymm	1	T ^o lb Rymm
CIH 343	Dmhn	al-Ḥuqqa	<i>Base de statue</i> <i>avec une inscription dédicatoire</i> <i>Cronologie: D</i>	T ^o lb Rymm b ^o l Qdimn d-Dmhn	b-T ^o lb Rymm	1	T ^o lb Rymm
			<i>Cronologie: D</i>	b ^o l Rhbn	(b ^o)l Rhbn		
CIH 352	N ^o ṭm	Nā ^o ṭ	<i>Base de statue</i> <i>avec une inscription dédicatoire</i> <i>Cronologie: D</i>	T ^o lb Rymm b ^o l Ḥdtinn	T ^o lb Rymm b ^o l Ḥdtinn	1	T ^o lb Rymm
CIH 353	N ^o ṭm	Nā ^o ṭ	<i>Base de statue</i> <i>avec une inscription dédicatoire</i> <i>Cronologie: D c. 275-286 après J.-C.</i>	T ^o lb Rymm b ^o l Ḥdtinn	T ^o lb Rymm b ^o l Ḥdtinn	1	T ^o lb Rymm
CIH 357		Shibām al-Ghirās	<i>Base de statue</i> <i>avec une inscription dédicatoire</i> <i>Cronologie: D</i>	T ^o lb Rymm b ^o l Zbyn	(b-T ^o)lb Rymm	1	T ^o lb Rymm

Table 2a: "Les inscriptions dédicatoires à 'lmqh avec d'autres divinités dans le CIH"

INDEX	Provenance d'inscription, nom du toponyme		Type d'objet avec inscription; Cronologie	Temple	Invocation finale	Q-té des divinités dans le texte	Noms divins dans l'invocation finale
	antique	moderne					
CIH 423			Inscription sur pierre Cronologie: A (Boustrophedon)		b- ^ε tr w-b 'lmqh w-b dt Ḥmym w-b Yd ^ε l	3	^ε tr 'lmqh dt-Ḥmym
CIH 439		Abyan	Table à libations (mālm) Cronologie: A (Boustrophedon)		b- ^ε tr w-b-'lmqh	2	^ε tr 'lmqh
CIH 493	Ktilm	Kharibat Sa'ūd	Inscription sur pierre Cronologie: A (Boustrophedon)		b- ^ε tr w-b 'lm- (qh) w-b dt Ḥmy±- m w-b dt B ^ε dn w-b S ^m w-b Yd ^ε - 'l w-b Yd ^ε mr w-b Ktlm	5	^ε tr 'lmqh dt Ḥmym dt B ^ε dn S ^m
CIH 494	Ktilm	Kharibat Sa'ūd	Inscription sur un fragment de pilier Cronologie: A (Boustrophedon)		b- ^ε →tr w-b 'lm[qh] [w]-b dt Ḥmym w→b dt B ^ε dn-w- b S ^m w-b Y→d ^ε l w-b Yd ^ε - 'mr w-b Yd ^ε b→ w-b Ktlm	5	^ε tr 'lmqh dt-Ḥmym dt-B ^ε dnn S ^m
CIH 496	Ktilm	Kharibat Sa'ūd	Inscription sur un fragment de pilier Cronologie: A VII-ème s. avant J.C. (Boustrophedon)		b- ^ε tr w-b 'lmqh [w-b dt→ Ḥmym w-b dt B- ^ε dn w-b S ^m w→b Yd ^ε] w-b	5	^ε tr 'lmqh dt-Ḥmym dt-B ^ε dnn S ^m
CIH 498	Ktilm	Kharibat Sa'ūd	Inscription sur pierre Cronologie: A (Boustrophedon)		(b)- ^ε tr [w]-b ['lmq]h w- b dt Ḥm[ym w-b Krb ^ε] w-b Yd ^ε b w-b (b)[krb] w-b Ktlm].	3	^ε tr 'lmqh dt Ḥmym

Table 2b: "Les inscriptions dédicatoires à ʿImq̄h avec d'autres divinités dans le CIH"

INDEX	Provenance d'inscription, nom du toponyme		Type d'objet avec inscription; Chronologie	Temple	Invocation finale	Q-té des divinités dans le texte	Noms divins dans l'invocation finale
	antique	moderne					
CIH 410	Mryb	Mārib	Base de statue avec une inscription dédicatoire Chronologie: C	ʿImq̄h bʿl ʿw̄m	b-ʿ[r w]-(H)wbs' w-ʿ[mq̄h]	3	ʿttr Hwbs' ʿImq̄h
CIH 429	Mryb	Mārib	Inscription sur pierre Chronologie: C environ 120 après J.C. de l'ère créétienne	ʿttr bʿl Bhr H̄t̄bm	b-ʿ(w-b-ḏ[m w-b-ḏ- w-b-S²ms' (m)[lkn Tnf]	6	ʿttr Hwbs' ʿImq̄h dt-H̄mym dt-Bᶜdnm S²ms'
CIH 519			Inscription sur pierre Chronologie: C		b-ʿ- ttr w-Hwbs' w-b ʿImq̄h w-ḏt H̄mym w-ḏt-Bᶜdnm w-d-S²mwy	6	ʿttr Hwbs' ʿImq̄h dt H̄mym dt-Bᶜdnm d-S²mwy
CIH 573	Mryb	Mārib	Inscription sur pierre Chronologie: C v. 80-100 après J.-C.	S²ms'-h̄mw Tnf bʿlt Ġḏrn	[b-ʿ[S²ms'-h̄mw Tnf bʿlt Ġḏrn]	3	ʿttr ʿImq̄h S²ms'-h̄mw Tnf bʿlt Ġḏrn

Table 2c: "Les inscriptions dédicatoires à ʾlmqh avec d'autres divinités dans le CIH"

INDEX	Provenance d'inscription, nom du toponyme		Type d'objet avec inscription; Cronologie	Temple	Invocation finale	Q-té des divinités dans le texte	Noms divins dans l'invocation finale
	antique	moderne					
CIH 398	Šrwḥ	Širwāḥ- Ḥawlān	<i>Inscription sur pierre</i> <i>Cronologie: D</i>	ʾlmqh b ^c l w ^c l Šrwḥ	b- ^c tr w-Hwbs ^l w- ³ lmqhw w-b-Ṭr B ^c lm w-b-ḏt Ḥmym w-ḏt B ^c d(n)m w-b- ^c tr S ² ymm w-rb ^c -hmm w-s ² ms ^l -hmm	7	^c tr, Hwbs ^l ʾlmqhw Ṭr B ^c lm ḏt Ḥmym ḏt B ^c dnm ^c tr S ² ymm
CIH 409	Mryb	Mārib	<i>Base de statue avec</i> <i>une inscription dédicatoire</i> <i>Cronologie: D</i>	ʾlmqh Ṭhwn w-Ṭwr B ^c lm b ^c l Ḥrwmm	b- ^c tr w-ʾlmqh	2	^c tr ʾlmqh
CIH 581	^c mrr	^c Amrān	<i>Base de statue avec</i> <i>une inscription dédicatoire</i> <i>Cronologie: D</i>	ʾlmqh Ṭhwn w-Ṭwr B ^c lm b ^c ly Ḥrwmm	b- ^c tr w-ʾlmqh	2	^c tr ʾlmqh

Table 3: "Les inscriptions dédicatoires à ʿImq̣h à l'état isolé dans le CIH"

INDEX	Provenance d'inscription, nom du toponyme		Type d'objet avec inscription; Cronologie	Temple	Invocation finale	Q-té des divinités dans le texte	Noms divins dans l'invocation finale
	antique	moderne					
CIH 545			<i>Inscription sur pierre</i> <i>Cronologie: A</i>		b-ʿImq̣h	1	ʿImq̣h
CIH 93	ʿmrm	ʿAmrān	<i>Plaque de bronze avec décoration</i> <i>Cronologie: D</i>	ʿImq̣h d-Hm	b-ʿImq̣h d-Hm	1	ʿImq̣h d-Hm
CIH 95	ʿmrm	ʿAmrān	<i>Plaque de bronze avec décoration</i> <i>Cronologie: D</i>	ʿImq̣h d-Hm	b-mqm w-by ʿImq̣hw d-Hm	1	ʿImq̣hw d-Hm
CIH 314+ CIH 954	Mryb	Mārib, ʿAl-ʿAmāyid	<i>Base de statue avec une inscription dédicatoire</i> <i>Cronologie: D</i> <i>environ 223-253 après J.-C.</i>	ʿImq̣h bʿl- Mskt- w-Ytw-Brʿn	b-ʿImq̣h-bʿl-Mskt-w-Ytw-Brʿn	1	ʿImq̣h
CIH 407	ʿwm (Mryb)	Mahram- Bilqīs (Mārib)	<i>Base de statue avec une inscription dédicatoire</i> <i>Cronologie: D</i> <i>environ 287-296 après J.-C.</i>	ʿImq̣h Thwn bʿl ʿwm	b-ʿImq̣h-Thwn-bʿl-ʿ(w)m	1	ʿImq̣h
CIH 411 + VA 5311	Mryb	Mārib	<i>Base de statue avec une inscription dédicatoire</i> <i>Cronologie: D</i> <i>environ 250 après J.-C.</i>	ʿImq̣h bʿl ʿwm	b-ʿImq̣h-Th w h-(b)- 12 ʿl-ʿwm	1	ʿImq̣h

Holger HITGEN

TAN‘IM – A SABAEOAN CENTER IN THE ḤAWLĀN

Besides the systematic inventory of ancient find contexts, the aim of the survey, which the Oriental Department of the German Archaeological Institute in Ṣan‘ā’ has conducted since 2009 in Ḥawlān (fig. 1), is foremost the study of Iron Age settlement of this mountainous region¹. Thereby particular interest is in the early period of the Old South Arabian cultures as well as the question of continuity and hiatus in settlement history during the time span from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age².

Alessandro de Maigret had already followed similar lines of inquiry in his field surveys in the 1980s in the southwestern Ḥawlān. And so he prefaced his monograph about the Bronze Age in Yemen as follows: “Prospecting at Ḥawlān at-Tiyāl was originally planned to identify the cultural background and examine the historical conditions that gave rise to the great Southern Arabian states of Saba’, Ma‘īn and Qatabān in the 1st millennium B.C. ...”³. Yet it was not the roots of the Old South Arabian kingdoms that de Maigret discovered during his survey, but the first traces of the Bronze Age in Yemen. The enormous significance of this discovery need not be further emphasised or discussed here; nonetheless the consequences that resulted from it are still a point in controversy today.

¹ We are most grateful to the General Organization for Antiquities and Museums (GOAM) and its president Dr. Abdullah Bawazir for the issuance of research permission. Special thanks go to our colleagues in the Ṣan‘ā’ office of the GOAM, their director Mohammed al-Seyani, his co-workers Abdullhamid al-Hanisch and Nadia Ali al-Sheiba as well as university professor Dr. Mohammed Ali al-Salami, all of whose committed participation measured greatly in the success of the field work. Furthermore, my gratitude is extended to the former governor of Ṣan‘ā’, H.E. Noman Duwait, as well as to Sheikh Mohammed Sholan, who made our hospitable reception and unproblematic work in Ḥawlān possible.

² Hitgen in press.

³ de Maigret 1990: XI.

Following de Maigret's studies, there has continued to be great interest in archaeological field surveys on the Bronze Age (3rd–2nd millennium BC) in South Arabia. The varied and different specificities of Bronze Age cultures in the respective regions of South Arabia are indeed remarkable⁴. Regional differences can be noted not only in the various geographic regions and climatic zones, the desert and its peripheral areas, the highlands and the coastal stretches along the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, but also within these individual areas themselves⁵. Especially the research carried out by Tony Wilkinson and Christopher Edens of the Oriental Institute of Chicago have shown that despite dense settlement⁶, the dissemination of cultures in the southern Yemen highlands is regionally very limited. Evaluation of the archaeological material has confirmed that there were no noticeable cultural contacts with settlement areas farther away⁷.

Comparison of the material culture of the Bronze Age in the Ḥawlān, studied by Alessandro de Maigret, with that of the southern highlands illustrates the different character of these respective cultures⁸. The dating of the individual Bronze Age cultures is notably varied. While the cultures of the Ḥawlān already came to an end during the first half of the 2nd millennium BC, cultures in the Dhamar region are still evidenced around until ca. 1000 BC⁹. Bronze Age contexts of the Sabir culture on the Gulf of Aden even last into the 1st millennium, dating until the 6th century BC¹⁰. Find contexts in the Tihāma, in al-Midaman¹¹ and al-Hamid¹², can be similarly assessed. Thus, it seems that here a continuous cultural transition took place from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age – a phenomenon, which, however, cannot be conclusively decided yet, and which is connected only indirectly, if at all, with the genesis of the Old South Arabian cultural landscape of the desert periphery.

Of special interest for research is the question of the emergence of the Old South Arabian kingdoms, and there are quite contrary opinions basing on the evaluation of the respective find contexts. Points of debate are whether the formation of the kingdom of Saba', Ma'in, Qatabān, Ḥaḍramawt und Awsān occurred as an indigenous development, the result of the metamorphosis of Bronze Age to Iron Age cultures, or whether external factors triggered by the migration of population groups from the Levant stimulated the emergence of this entity.

Alessandro de Maigret took a clear position in this particular discussion many times. He presented arguments in favour of an external stimulation of the South Arabian genesis, with references to the Levantine, old Oriental influence on early South Arabian art and architecture and to the connections of the South Arabian pantheon and the South Arabian language to those

⁴ See, for instance, Edens 2002a; Wilkinson 2003; Buffa 2007: 191–203.

⁵ Edens 2002a: 85.

⁶ Wilkinson 2009: 59.

⁷ Edens 2002a: 82.

⁸ Despite the regional differences that can be observed among the individual findspots in the Yemen highlands, however, Vittoria Buffa emphasises the great commonalities as well, for example, in the ceramic production and in the architecture (Buffa 2007: 207–231).

⁹ In their paper “Sociopolitical Organization and Trade in Early Historic Highland Yemen”, held on June 8, 2012, in Pisa during the Rencontres Sabéennes 16, Krista Lewis and Lamya Khalidi set the beginning of the Iron Age – and with that the end of the Bronze Age – in the 9th century BC.

¹⁰ Buffa, Vogt 2001: 447–448.

¹¹ Keall 2005.

¹² Phillips 1997.

of the Palestine area during the late Bronze Age¹³. De Maigret summarised this standpoint as follows: “If ... it is true that the bearers of South Arabian culture settled in Yemen from the second half of the second millennium BC, we must assume that they could not put down ethnic and cultural roots in the same part of Yemen as the Bronze Age culture covered. At this point, we must opt for an external origin for the South Arabians”¹⁴.

Further scholars support this theory explicitly, emphasising the fundamental differences of the cultures of the closing Bronze Age of South Arabia and the subsequent Iron Age oasis cultures¹⁵. These observations also comply with linguistic studies, which support the theory of migrations emanating from the (present-day) northwest Levant and reaching as far as South Arabia¹⁶. This premise, however, is a subject of debate, not only from the philological side¹⁷, but also in archaeology. Although evidence of an indigenous and continuous development of cultures from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age has not been found until now, the theory of “external influences” or “immigration” (which lacks any detail) is absolutely rejected¹⁸. Ultimately, it becomes apparent that the opponents of an autochthonous development of the Old South Arabian culture have a different understanding of a “migration of groups of foreign peoples” into the South Arabian area and subsequent course than the proponents of an “external influence”. None of the publications use the term ‘migration’ in the sense of a *Völkerwanderung*, in which many and large population groups collectively left their original homeland and settled anew elsewhere like in the Medieval period in Western Europe¹⁹. Furthermore, no mention is made of the expulsion or replacement of older or original population groups.

Alessandro de Maigret’s assignment of the end of Bronze Age cultures in the southwestern Ḥawlān to the 16th century BC solely means that there was no continuity of settlement into the Iron Age there. Hence, the Bronze Age culture of the highlands cannot count as the forebears of the Iron Age Old South Arabian kingdom. The aforementioned emergence of new cultural features in the spheres of religion, script, building techniques and art on the desert periphery in the late 2nd millennium BC are linked, as research results in the oasis of Mārib have shown, with the clearly expanding practice of field irrigation, whose origins are earlier, already in the 3rd millennium BC²⁰. With that it becomes evident that old traditional methods were further developed with the aid of new technologies. This observation thus points far more to an acculturation of indigenous and until now ‘foreign’ population groups, from which the formation of highly complex societies emerged. Any statement concerning the size of these new population groups that entered South Arabia has not been estimable until now, yet their profound influence upon the emergence of a new society and its cultural features is clearly recognisable.

Turning to the Sabaeen cultural landscape of the 1st millennium BC, the present state of research allows very little to be said about the transition from the Bronze Age to Proto- or early Sabaeen period. The occasion Bronze Age structures that were documented during the survey in the oasis of Mārib cannot be firmly dated due to the lack of excavations and finds, and the

¹³ See, for example, de Maigret 2002: 184–186.

¹⁴ de Maigret 2002: 184

¹⁵ See, for example, Sedov 1996: 86; 1997: 50; Nebes 1996: 21; Hitgen 2005: 25–27; Gerlach 2010: 51.

¹⁶ Nebes 2001: 429–433.

¹⁷ Avanzini 2003: 141; 2009.

¹⁸ See, for example, Edens 2002a: 85.

¹⁹ See, for example, Avanzini 2009: 205–206; Edens 2002b: 52.

²⁰ Brunner 1983: 108, 123; Vogt 2004: 98–99; Gerlach 2010: 52.

same applies to turret tombs (fig. 2), which are present by the hundreds in the hills and mountain slopes flanking the *wādīs*. Dating is also difficult in the case of turret tombs, because some were often reused well into the 1st millennium BC, or perhaps even erected at that time. This was indicated by the investigations by Alessandro de Maigret in al-Makhdarah near Ṣirwāḥ. Similarly, few traces of use during the late Bronze Age can be attested in both Sabaean centres, Mārib (fig. 3) and Ṣirwāḥ. Single 14C samples, however, bear witness to their occupation already before the proto-Sabaean times: Mārib city appears to have been inhabited at least temporarily in the late 4th millennium BC²¹, and the 14C sample obtained in excavations in the 'Almaqah temple in Ṣirwāḥ likewise indicates some form of settlement since the 16th century BC²².

The only evidence of continuous settlement in the oasis of Mārib from the Bronze Age into the Sabaean phase is massive irrigation sedimentation, which as mentioned before, attests the practice of irrigation and, hence, agricultural practices from the late 3rd millennium BC until the end of the Sabaean Kingdom. Yet precisely these sediments, some reaching up to 30 metres in height (fig. 4), present a hindrance to detailed investigations on pre-Sabaean times, as they presumably cover all traces of settlement remains of that period²³. Nevertheless, it can be stated that the features of the Bronze Age material culture on the desert periphery of Mārib differs distinctly from that of the following Sabaean period²⁴, and that in view of recent research the theory of a culturally indigenous continuity should be rejected. If this applies to the centre of the Sabaean Kingdom, then the situation in the bordering mountain region west of Ṣirwāḥ should be examined, for it likewise stood under the control of Saba' in early Sabaean times.

The Ḥawlān survey

Geographically speaking the region of Ḥawlān, extending over some 5000 square kilometres, can be divided into two areas, namely the highlands with their mountain range that is more than 3000 m high in parts (fig. 5), and the transitional areas between the mountains and the region on the periphery of the desert. These eastern sections of Ḥawlān are climatically influenced by the desert-edge areas that were the seat of the South Arabian kingdoms during the 1st millennium BC. The highland areas, which feature two rainy seasons, are again divided into western and south-eastern sections, separated by the mountain range of the Ġabal al-Lawz. This mountain region forms the watershed of Ḥawlān. Almost all areas to the east and south of it drain into the Wādī Dhana towards Mārib, whereas the western areas, on the other hand, drain in the direction of the high plateau of Ṣan'ā'.

During the first phase of our survey, the examinations extended to the last-mentioned area that today corresponds with the tribal territory of the Bani Buhlul. Several large *wādīs* flow here in an east-westerly direction. They are separated by high mountain ranges that are only cut through by a few connecting routes running in a north-south direction. Both in antiquity as well as today, these mountain ranges formed the border of the dominions of individual tribes. In this connection the areas of Tan'im and Ghaimān, both of which belong to the domain of Saba', deserve particular mention.

²¹ Vogt 1998: 182.

²² The excavation results from Ṣirwāḥ are being prepared for publication in ABADY.

²³ Edens, Wilkinson 1998: 96.

²⁴ Edens, Wilkinson 1998: 71–92.

More than 60 sites could be localised that extend on the time scale from the Bronze Age up to the South Arabian era. The majority of these are settlement sites, whereas only a few are water management structures, burial sites and storage sites with rock inscriptions. While a great number of sites like cities, agricultural communities, irrigation structures, sanctuaries and grave complexes are known in the central area of the Kingdom of Saba' around Mārib in proto- and especially in early Sabaeen times, only few have been documented in the mountainous region of the Ḥawlān. Although numerous Iron Age settlements of regularly modest size could also be identified during the survey in addition to manifold Bronze Age contexts, most of the settlements were of middle Sabaeen and likely also late Sabaeen time. Their dating can be achieved solely by means of comparisons with small finds, architectural ornamentation and ceramics. Until now no excavations have been conducted at any of these sites, and, consequently, no 14C samples are available. The same applies to the few Iron Age sites that differ distinctly from those described above: one distinction is the presence of pottery, whose ware as well as formal spectrum are clearly different from pottery of the southern Sabaeen Kingdom. Secondly, no small finds or architectural décor that can be linked with Old South Arabian kingdoms have yet been found in these settlements, which display a rather rural character.

One of the most interesting settlements in this regard is the site of Lakmat Qays, located in the Wādī al-Zubīb. It almost completely covers the crest of a hill, measures about 80×50 m in size, and protrudes to a maximal height of 30 m above the *wādī*. The beginnings of the site lie in the Bronze Age. Discovered there are the remains of more than a dozen randomly situated buildings (fig. 6). These are mostly single-room buildings; rarely are side rooms added on to them. The walls of the usually round- or oval-shaped buildings in layout are mostly built of quarry stones. Only seldom are any details found that indicate doors or other construction elements. Particularly remarkable about the settlement is the fact that it manifests two different phases. In some sections there are the remains of more solid rectangular superstructures above the simple circular ones, which represent the Early Iron Age. These buildings, also made of assembled quarry stones, often have several rooms, double case walls and altogether larger dimensions. This phase appears to include a type of fortification system; parts are still easy to recognise, where the mound has not slide away. Even though a precise dating for this site is still lacking, it nevertheless appears that here we have the settlement remains of an Iron Age culture that follow directly upon the Late Bronze Age inhabitants, and whose connection with South Arabian oasis cultures is not clear²⁵. Excavations at this site are planned in the future to verify the contexts.

Several other one-phased settlements of the Iron Age exhibit comparable finds, both in architecture as well as in material culture. Therefore, it can be formulated preliminarily that parallel to the oasis cultures on the desert periphery, in the highlands of the Ḥawlān one or perhaps several Iron Age cultures evolved out of Bronze Age predecessors. The material culture does not show any notable correspondences with that of the South Arabian kingdoms. Yet, the observations that could be made there are similar to those gained during the survey in the Dhamar region, carried out by the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. The interpretation of the latter, however, seems to go so far as proposing that the highland

²⁵ Iron Age superimposed constructions upon older Bronze Age settlement sites are not unusual. Cp. examples in Wādī Surbān (Breton 2000: 56). However, it seems that here longer breaks in time are more the rule, and Iron Age settlement begins there only with the 8th century BC.

itself was possibly the earliest centre of settlement, from which the oasis kingdoms later developed²⁶. Yet, there as well no correspondences could be noted in the material culture. Nonetheless the American researchers emphasise the political predominance of Saba' during the 1st millennium BC in that region²⁷. In my opinion, their substantiation for this claim of Sabaeen presence remains unclear: does it base on the evaluation of inscribed sources, or do archaeological observations play a role?

The work of the German Archaeological Institute, therefore, has concentrated foremost on the question, whether and in which form can the influences of cultures on the desert periphery be demonstrated in the Ḥawlān. Further, to what extent can archaeological indicators be drawn, which attest that the oasis cultures had already expanded its influence in this region to a measurable degree? This is particularly significant for the kingdom of Saba', which borders directly on the Ḥawlān, and also for Ṣirwāḥ one of Saba's most important centres, lies directly in the eastern foothills of this mountainous region.

The fact that in the early 7th century BC at the latest Saba' expanded its power politically and militarily in other regions of present-day Yemen, beyond the core areas of the oasis kingdoms, is confirmed not only by the famous accounts of the deeds of Karib'il Watar of Ṣirwāḥ²⁸, but also by numerous Sabaeen inscriptions in the South Arabian highlands²⁹.

Oppositely, however, archaeological substantiation of this expansion is extremely difficult. Sabaeen settlements or cities of the early Sabaeen period are almost unknown, except for sites like al-Hamid in the coastal region of the Tihama. Here the questions arise as to whether only field campaigns to conquer the highlands took place, whether the Sabaeans secured power over the conquered areas on the long term by means of founding settlements and cities, and whether here a continuity in settlement can be attested that reaches back into the Bronze Age? In order to answer these inquiries the German Archaeological Institute has expanded its research with excavations in the urban complex of Tan'im, which run parallel to surveys in the mountains of Ḥawlān. Tan'im is one of the few sites that can actually be designated as a "Sabaeen" settlement of the 1st millennium BC, basing on inscriptions and finds. Hence, evidence of cultural continuity and/or hiatus in settlement history can be anticipated.

Tan'im

Tan'im or the village al-Qarya³⁰ (fig. 7) is located in the western Ḥawlān, not far from the central massif of Ġabal al-Lawz. The site is situated at the eastern end of Wādī at-Tanā'im and protected from behind by the steep rock faces of the Ġabal al 'Ābid. These rock formations belong to a big volcano, which at this spot blocks the east-west oriented *wādī*, leaving only a small passage for the watercourse. Today, the surrounding area is densely populated. The centre of the ancient city is buried under the recent village of the same name, showing continuous settlement since Old South Arabian times. Other areas *intra muros* are used solely as pastures for

²⁶ Wilkinson 2003: 167.

²⁷ For example, Barbanes 2000: 209.

²⁸ Müller 1985; Nebes 1998; cp. also Nebes 2011.

²⁹ Al-Salami 2011.

³⁰ Tan'im was already visited by the French researchers Thomas Arnaud and Joseph Halévy on their trips to Yemen, cf. Müller 2012: 38. In 1970 it was also among the destinations of the German expedition to Yemen. Cf. Radt 1971: 255–257.; Radt 1973 listing some of the objects (Nr. 101, 108, 109, 124); Müller 1973: 155–156.; Al-Salami 2011: 47–53, 143–148.; Müller 2012.

livestock, while some parts were later turned into *khat* fields. The plains to the east and west of Tan‘im were used intensively for agriculture, especially for grapes and grains. Only recently have fields there been used increasingly for growing *khat* too.

In antiquity, the city’s favourable geographical location combined with fertile lands, which made intensive agriculture possible, must have been decisive for its founding³¹. It was possible with little effort to control this strategic key position in the east-west network connecting Saba’ with the Ṣan‘ā’ Plain. North of the small *wādī* passage, on a flat hilltop below the steep slope of a mountain is a small, but unfortunately poorly preserved settlement (fig. 8). Although today there is no longer any wall to be found, some of the remnants could be reconstructed, forming massive towers that suggest the wall’s fortifying function. The main part of the city is situated on a mountain slope south of the *wādī*; the western part is protected by a wall of more than one kilometre in length, which joins the steep slope of the volcano and, thus, offers a natural means of protection.

The wall was built of huge, hardly finished quarry stones from the native volcanic rock (fig. 9). Particularly in central areas near the *wādī* exceptionally large rocks were employed, in contrast to preferred small rocks in the fringe zones. As far as still preserved, towers could be observed at regular intervals that reinforced the fortification. It is noteworthy thereby that the towers were subsequently attached to the already completely erected wall with the construction showing no direct interlocking joins. The wall is well preserved only in the sections that are far away from the recent village, whereas larger sections in the surroundings of the recent settlement are nearly completely damaged; therefore, the wall’s course cannot be sufficiently reconstructed. The same is true when trying to localize the accesses to the city complex. It can be assumed that originally there had been three gateways providing access to the central part of the city. Two of these gates, which mark the entrance to the recent village, were of rather small dimensions (fig. 10). The third gate, located farther to the east, was presumably the main entrance to the city. As far as anything can be stated without excavations or surface cleaning, the complex was a monumental structure, for the wall exhibits a significant projection at this place. The entry way is formed by a broad staircase, flanked by two huge towers.

The gate provides access to different areas of the ancient city plan. Located in the south, on a prominent slope were living and presumably working areas. Only few built structures are visible on the surface, composed mainly of simple dry stone walls, but the surface itself is covered with pottery fragments, working tools, such as grinding stones and semi-finished products, which allow the different spheres to be designated according to the aforementioned functions. The centre of the city, on the other hand, is found north of the residential area, where presumably public buildings like administrative buildings and sanctuaries were situated. Although most of this area is covered by the recent village still today, parts of the ancient structures being buried under 4-5 m high heaps of rubble, there are numerous findings that support the public function of this district.

³¹ For Avanzini 2003, 143 the main reason for the power expansion of Old South Arabian oasis empires to the highlands was their general ability to secure agriculturally productive areas, which were meant to supply the population on the desert fringes, because, according to Avanzini, the high seasonal fluctuation of monsoon rains made their irrigation systems, unreliable. However, it should be noted that rain-fed agriculture in the highlands was equally dependent on monsoon rains as the irrigation systems of the desert peripheries.

In this context, the large number of ashlars should be mentioned, which were reused as *spolia* in modern buildings. In view of the dimensions and differing quality as well as surface treatment of the rocks, it is quite obvious that they were gathered from many different buildings. The high quality of stone work is particularly notable, implying that there must have been an extensive building programme in ancient times. The same is true for fragments of architectural decoration like denticulated friezes, fragments of pillars and wall facing slabs (fig. 11).

Ancient building structures can be recognized only in a few places inside the village, above all those that came to light in the process of earth works or illegal excavations. Aside from a few sections of walls, the ancient vestiges consist primarily of paved areas of courtyards and pathways (fig. 12). These are consistently made of carefully polished and hewn slabs. The great difference in altitude becomes particularly noticeable in the various paved areas: it seems as if the entire centre of the city had been designed due to an architectural concept, compensating for the gradient of the slope with terracing. As can be deduced from the foundation walls, larger structures were built directly upon the natural bedrock, which demonstrates that several metres thick layers of alluvium on the slope were removed for the construction.

The hitherto largest ancient structure of Tan'im, located in the centre of the recent village and focus of the first excavations is a podium accessed by a stairway from the western long side. As can be seen from the differing, but in both cases high-quality stonework as well as some constructional details, the podium and staircase mark two different building phases (fig. 13). The banister rail is decorated with denticulated friezes, whereas the sides of the stairway display a false window (fig. 14).

In the vicinity of this building several fragments of monolithic pillars were found. The relatively high concentration of finds in this area as well as the pillars' enormous weight suggest that the pillars were originally situated close to their present findspot and constituted part of the podium, which can – in all likelihood be reconstructed at its southern narrow side with a colonnaded propylon as entrance.

Both, layout and workmanship of the stone blocks together with the architectural ornamentation speak in favour of a genuine Sabaean building, presumably a temple dating to the first half of the 1st millennium B.C. Inscriptions in the nearby mosque support this theory, reporting of an 'Almaqah temple. According to inscription finds, the principal Sabaean god 'Almaqah was not worshipped in one temple alone. It can be assumed that at least one other sanctuary was dedicated to this same god. Other inscriptions provide evidence of deities, who have to be seen in a rather local context³².

A further indication of the Sabaean character of the city is presented by the cemetery situated in the southeast, in the higher-lying undeveloped part of the enwalled city (fig. 15). Extending over a hilly ridge are several burial structures, unfortunately poorly preserved and almost completely plundered. The remains constitute rectangular chambers built in the two-shell technique, the wall lengths of which hardly exceed 2 m. The chambers were built in a row, directly connected with each other, in some cases in architectural conjunction, in others only loosely abutted. Found inside the chambers were numerous fragments of human bones, which allows the presumption that concerned here are collective burials.

³² Mohammed al-Salami, personal communication.

The archaeological find contexts in Tan‘im provide a sufficient basis for a typological comparison with the cemetery of the Awām temple in Mārib³³. Even though the tombs in Mārib are far more monumental and richly decorated, they display distinct similarities to those in Tan‘im. This pertains, in typological regard, especially to the more modest tombs, located at the cemetery wall in Area D: a conglomerate of plain but multi-storey chamber-like constructions, closely related to each other (fig. 16).

Further find contexts that were successfully documented in Tan‘im so far do not date to the Early Sabaeen period, but instead clearly later, to the Middle or Late Sabaeen period. These findings include rich architectural decoration, characterized by inscriptions, several cemeteries with single graves³⁴ and two structures for water management³⁵. All of these temporally late finds illustrate the long settlement history of Tan‘im and the lasting importance of the city, which enabled such extensive building programmes.

Conclusion

In summing up the preliminary results of the surveys in Ḥawlān and the excavations in Tan‘im, the following picture emerges: there are numerous Bronze Age sites, which in view of their small size, form of organization and architecture, and also archaeological material, particularly pottery, seem to belong to the same cultural and time horizon, just like those documented for the region by Alessandro de Maigret. Yet, in addition to these findings are also sites of a different nature, which attest a two-phased existence lasting from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age without any disruptions in settlement history. One example is the site of Lakmat Qays³⁶. The two phases differ both in their pottery as well as architecture. Whereas the earlier phase can be dated to the Bronze Age, basing on comparisons with findings made by Alessandro de Maigret, the later phase apparently already belongs to the Iron Age. Several other sites display the same architectural forms and comparable pottery, yet they do not possess any analogies with Sabaeen sites. Hence, it can be presumed that local Iron Age communities developed in the western Ḥawlān in direct succession to the Bronze Age in the highlands. These early Iron Age sites are expansive in the area. Until now no built structures have been identified, which could be interpreted as public or sacred buildings. It seems, far more, that early Iron Age settlements are associated with an agricultural context without any far-reaching supra-regional contacts, not even to the newly forming Sabaeen cultural sphere.

The evidence in Tan‘im must be interpreted differently. There the earliest documented phase of the 8th century BC can be denoted as Sabaeen urban complex. Not only do architecture and ornamentation display Sabaeen characteristics, but inscriptions, the worshipped gods and the tribal names as well.

The situation with pottery, by contrast, is different. Apart from occasional, rather vague parallels, the pottery differs distinctly in form, décor and texture from the pottery known in

³³ Gerlach 2002: 50–54. See also Röring 2002: pl. 2.

³⁴ For additional information on findings from the Middle and Late Sabean period see contribution by Sarah Japp in this volume.

³⁵ Of special interest are cistern facilities found above the barrage wall in the wadi, east of the city; cf. Radt 1972: 255–256 and Siewert 1979: 174–176.

³⁶ These rural settlements, in their dimensions comprising hardly more than a dozen buildings, cannot be compared with urban structures, like those Tony Wilkinson and Christopher Edens were able to document for the Dhamar region.

oasis kingdoms on the desert fringes; it corresponds more or less to the Early Iron Age in the Dhamar region, as far as results of studies there until now show³⁷. However, at present, the interpretation of this fact still remains open. In any case it can be stated that since the 8th century BC as the latest Tan'im possessed a fully developed urban structure, with living and working spaces as well as fortifications.

Thus, it can be assumed that Tan'im was founded in western Ḥawlān in the course of Saba's expansion policy in order to secure Sabaeen regional power. But how exactly this 'sabaeanization' was achieved during the following centuries, is the subject for further research. It seems, at least, that sooner or later coeval, local Iron Age cultures became evolved into one united Sabaeen cultural horizon. Conversely, some individual forms in art, pottery production being one of them, continued to follow local traditions, even under Sabaeen predominance.

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³⁷ Wilkinson et al. 1997: 100. Thus far, no pottery has been documented in Tan'im, which displays clear parallels to early Sabaeen material found in Mārib. Comparable forms appear only in the middle and late Sabaeen times. Personal communication from Sarah Japp, who is responsible for the study of pottery in Tan'im.

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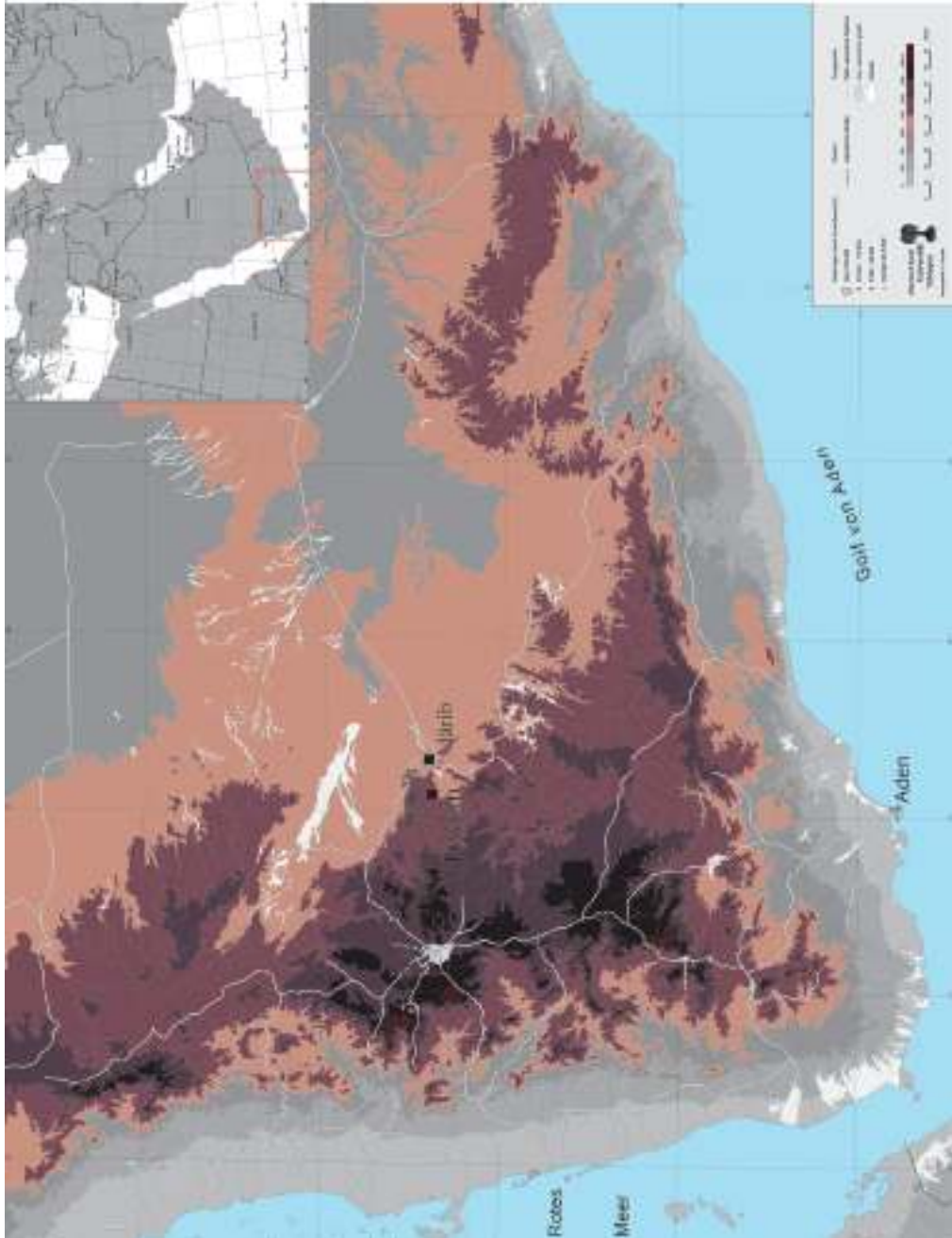


Fig. 1.
Map of Yemen



Fig. 2. Turret tombs near Mārib (photo H. Hitgen, DAI)



Fig. 3. The Sabaean capital of Mārib (photo H. Hitgen, DAI)



Fig. 4. Sediments covering huge parts of the ancient oasis of Mārib (photo H. Hitgen, DAI)



Fig. 5. View over the central parts of the Ḥawlān (photo H. Hitgen, DAI)



Fig. 6. Lakmat Qays: single-room building of the Bronze Age (photo H. Hitgen, DAI)



Fig. 7. The village of Tan'im (al-Qarya). General view (photo M. Schnelle, DAI)



Fig. 8. Remains of a fortified settlement controlling the road (photo H. Hitgen, DAI)



Fig. 9. Parts of the ancient city wall (photo H. Hitgen, DAI)



Fig. 10. Remains of the northern city gate (photo H. Hitgen, DAI)



Fig. 11. Fragments of Sabaeen architectural decorations (photo M. Schnelle, DAI)



Fig. 12. Ancient courtyard covered by a recent building (photo I. Wagner, DAI)



Fig. 13. Podium and staircase of an early Sabaeen temple (photo I. Wagner, DAI)



*Fig. 14. Detail of the staircase
(photo M. Schnelle, DAI)*

*Fig. 15. Early Sabaean cemetery
(photo H. Hitgen, DAI)*



*Fig. 16. Tombs of the Sabaean Awām
cemetery in Mārib
(photo J. Kramer, DAI)*



Sarah JAPP

ḤIMYARITE TAN‘IM (KHAWLAN) IN THE HIGHLANDS OF YEMEN – PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

This contribution is in commemoration of Alessandro de Maigret, a warm-hearted colleague always open for discussion. We will miss him.

Tan‘im is situated in the vicinity of Ṣan‘ā’, about 25 air kilometres to the east¹. The modern city is located at the foot of a massive basalt range which abuts on the ancient settlement. Tan‘im is one of the oldest settlements in Yemen continuously used from ancient until recent times. In the Sabaeen period it was obviously one of the few centres in the highlands of South Arabia. Due to political changes since the 2nd century BCE Tan‘im became part of the Ḥimyarite realm, and remained an important and probably wealthy city.

In autumn 2010 the Ṣan‘ā’ branch of the Oriental Department of the German Archaeological Institute started an intensive research project in Tan‘im after a preceding survey in the Khawlan region². During the first campaign a survey was conducted which gained information on several archaeological remains of the Sabaeen as well as Ḥimyarite periods of the settlement. Moreover, items of later periods of Tan‘im were investigated such as the traditional tower houses, cemeteries and agricultural installations. During the spring 2011 campaign excavations started, this time concentrating on architectural remains of the Sabaeen period, nevertheless fragments of Ḥimyarite building decoration were brought to light also.

¹ See article of H. Hitgen on the earlier periods of Tan‘im in this volume.

² This survey was carried out by Holger Hitgen (DAI, Ṣan‘ā’ Branch) and Mohammed Al-Salami (University Ṣan‘ā’). See Hitgen 2012.

Until now Ḥimyarite architecture in Tanʿim has remained unknown. Only some decorative elements have been observed rebuilt in the modern houses or scattered on the surface inside the village. Fragments of typical capitals with a horizontal division into stepped areas, sometimes adorned with dentil friezes and a horizontal lamellar decoration were found at different spots in the settlement (fig. 1)³. They could stem from the Sabaean as well as from the early Ḥimyarite periods as these architectural components had a long life-span. A limestone fragment with a vine branch and an alabaster fragment with an egg and dart and a wheel-like design⁴ (fig. 2) came to light in the surface layer of the excavation area and in the debris layer adjacent to it. During the excavation around the supposed Sabaean temple several elements of wall revetment panels were uncovered. They show the typical field arrangement with smoothed margins and pecked fields. As material slabs of limestone and a local stone (rhyolithe) were used. The fields were surrounded by incised lines or unframed while the interior of the fields were filled with deep short chisel strokes (fig. 3) or smoother and sometimes longer strokes.

Several elements of high-quality Ḥimyarite building decoration were rebuilt in the mosque of Romana in Tanʿim. The mosque itself is a rather impressive complex comprising the mosque building, a courtyard, and water tanks, washing facilities and storage buildings as well as the tomb chamber of the benefactress Romana.

Inside the prayer hall four octagonal columns and one hexadecagonal column are used as piers and divide the room into three aisles (fig. 4). One of the octagonal columns is still equipped with its original capital showing three rows of dentil friezes. They can be dated into the earlier Ḥimyarite period as they illustrate the beginning of the transformation of Sabaean rectangular pillars into Ḥimyarite polygonal columns⁵.

At the small side courtyard in front of the prayer room two capitals standing upside down were inserted at the corners of the adjoining walls (fig. 5)⁶. They are nearly identical in size and decoration; therefore it can be assumed that both of them belong to the interior structure of one and the same building, in former times most probably situated not far away from this location. The general shape of both capitals is rectangular but with rounded edges. The beginning of the column with eight edges is preserved on the lower part, where underneath a rectangular/circular dowel hole is visible. The height of the capitals amount to around 33 cm as the upper part is unmeasurable while covered by mortar. Therefore the upper diameter cannot be scaled either. The adjacent octagonal column has a cross section of about 22 cm in diameter. The transition between column and capital is accentuated through a twisted horizontal rod. Two rows of thick and fleshy leaves emerge from this rod. At the corners

³ Tan 11 SO Haus 6 23: fragment of a limestone capital with horizontal lamellar decoration; Tan 10 FS 47 13: fragment of a limestone capital with dentil friezes; Tan 11 SO 20: fragment of a limestone capital with dentil friezes; Tan 11 SO 19: fragment of a limestone capital with two rows of dentil friezes; Tan 10 SO A 1: fragment of a limestone capital with one dentil frieze and one area with lamellar decoration.

⁴ For comparison see Costa 1976: pl. 8, no. 132 (egg and dart).

⁵ The columns presenting an octagonal cross section can be estimated to be the first step of the transformation process followed by hexadecagonal columns. In the course of Ḥimyarite times then circular columns with and without flutes were produced. Furthermore the stepped capitals show that development in terms of decoration as well as in the transformation of the rectangular shape into a circular shape. See Hitgen 2005: 53-54; Radt 2008: 229-233. C. Rathjens judged the rectangular capitals to be younger than the circular ones (1955: 33, 67), which can be doubted.

⁶ Published by W. Radt (1973: 20, no. 124, pl. 41).

the leaves of the first row are depicted in full, the others are partly hidden behind them. The leaves of the second row are situated directly behind their counterpart of the first row obviously displaying the same length. They are broad but no lobes are separated, nevertheless leaf veins and so called leaf eyes are illustrated. The leaf eyes are accentuated graphically by framing them with a carved line. The veins are bordered by carved lines also. In general the composition and style of the capitals display a defined contour; they are rather flat concerning the interior composition but altogether curved. The decoration of the upper section and the abacus are unknown due to the already mentioned mortar covering.

This style is untypical for South-Arabian pillar capitals⁷. Therefore a foreign influence has to be suggested. The most convincing parallels are Corinthian capitals of Hellenistic-Roman art⁸. An acanthus can be assumed to be depicted on the Ḥimyarite pieces by comparing the leaves. However, typical elements of the acanthus leaf of Corinthian capitals such as several lobes, a vivid shape and protruding tips are missing. The arrangement of the leaves is different as well. On Corinthian capitals the leaves of the first row are touching each other – if at all – only at the lower tips. The leaves of the second row are situated behind the junction of the ones of the first row. Comparisons regarding the design of the leaves – confined contour, restrained use of deep carving – can be found within Hellenistic and Roman architectural decoration, for example on capitals of the 1st century BCE from Asia Minor⁹ or from the northern area of the Arabian peninsula¹⁰.

Aside these two rows of acanthus leaves a typical Corinthian capital consists of volutes adorning the corners and interior helices, both accruing from the leave rows. An abacus with curved sides and a central blossom forms the upper closing. This system is almost never observable on South Arabian capitals. As the upper part of the Tan‘im pieces is missing similar complete capitals could help to reconstruct it. A capital in the "National Museum" in Ṣan‘ā’ displays above the acanthus a short zone with grapes and a rosette-like flower¹¹. The same system is known from a capital in the Archaeological Museum in Istanbul¹². Here above the leaves tendrils with vine leaves and grapes are depicted starting at a rosette-like flower and joined in a *nodus Herculis*. Sometimes there are not only two rows but three rows of leaves, above which

⁷ There exist several other capitals with similar composition, a lot of them stemming from Zafar and its surroundings. See Costa 1973: pl. 23,1; pl. 25,2-3; pl. 26,1-2; 1976: pl. 23, no. 163-165; Radt 2009: 237, fig. 9.

⁸ See on Corinthian capitals in general Heilmeyer 1970; Bauer 1973; Gans 1992; Börner 1996; Scahill 2009.

⁹ Ephesos/Turkey: Rumscheid 1994: 20, nos. 53-54, pl. 45 (1st half of 1st century BCE); Lagina/Turkey, temple of Hekate: Rumscheid 1994: 33, no. 122, pl. 69 (1st century BCE); Milet/Turkey: Rumscheid 1994: 48, no. 164, 166, pl. 107 (early Imperial period). Capitals with a similar design are known from Kyzikos/Turkey also, personal communication by M. Söldner (University Münster, Germany).

¹⁰ Seeia/Syria: Freyberger 1998: pl. 31a (late 1st century BCE); pl. 22c; Suwaīda’/Syria: Freyberger 1998: pl. 35c; Alexandria/Egypt: McKenzie 1990: pl. 200e, no. 100; Petra/Jordan: Radt 2009: 239, fig. 13. The latter is amazingly similar to several Ḥimyarite capitals, therefore the question arises whether this example is a product of South Arabian influence or vice versa. Apart from the leave contour the design of the main leaf is strikingly related to Ḥimyarite capitals, see Radt 2009: 228, fig. 1; 237, fig. 10a; 239, fig. 11.

¹¹ Radt 1973: 9, no. 23, pl. 8. A similar piece is known from Baynun, see Radt 1973: 20-21, no. 124, pl. 41. At this piece above the twisted rod a scallop is visible.

¹² Radt 2009: 228, fig. 1.

the grapes are hanging¹³. The closing abacus is always without a curve and often adorned with a relief decoration such as a meander or an Ionic *cymatium*¹⁴.

This kind of arrangement is unknown in Hellenistic-Roman art. It could be possible that South Arabian artists – aside from some very few copies – took over only the lower part of Corinthian capitals while excluding the upper part or changing it into something new. On the other hand the northern area of the Arabian Peninsula offers some parallels from the Hellenistic-Roman period for this composition, not only regarding the leaf form but also the combination of acanthus leaves and tendrils sometimes equipped with grapes¹⁵. Even the idea of the uncommon lower part of the Ḥimyarite capitals with the simple or twisted rod separating capital and column could stem from building decoration of the northern Arabian Peninsula¹⁶.

Summing up it can be stated that the later Ḥimyarite capitals are influenced by Hellenistic-Roman specimen. However, most of them are no mere copy but represent a unique local composition. Models could have been capitals from the northern area of the Arabian Peninsula as there the canonical form of a Corinthian capital was already changed in various aspects. Giving a date for these capitals is rather difficult. It is probably safe to say they do not belong to the earliest examples influenced by foreign models, so perhaps a date in the 2nd to 3rd centuries CE would be appropriate but presumably not later than the 4th/5th centuries.

One pier inside the prayer hall is a relief pillar (height 185 cm, width 28 cm, depth 26.5 cm), which was originally part of a doorway. Two sides are covered with reliefs, the others are blank (fig. 6)¹⁷. In the mosque the pillar was placed upside down. Both ends seem to be incomplete; however, this is not certain because of its modern covering. At the edges narrow plain frames are visible. Between them one of the most prominent motifs of Ḥimyarite reliefs is depicted: vine scrollwork with leaves and grapes. A single wavy-like tendril is adorned with palmately compound vine leaves and rather small grape bunches. The tendril is not differentiated at all. The leaves show a central vein, from which the side veins outgrow. The grapes are of triangular shape. Several birds are standing inside the windings of the tendril and nibble at the grapes. They are depicted with closed wings in side view. Their body is accentuated by carved lines and bulges¹⁸. The whole depiction is not very realistic or naturalistic but schematic and it seems that the artist working on this relief was not familiar with the original motif.

Two other blocks with vine reliefs are used as doorposts at the entrance of the mosque (fig. 7)¹⁹. The left one (height 149 cm, width 29 cm, length 27.5 cm) originally was used obviously as door lintel because of the position of the birds: three of them are standing on the lateral border partly surrounded by the tendril. One side of the tendril looks like it ends in two elongated taper-

¹³ Radt 2009: 234, fig. 6; 237, fig. 10a.

¹⁴ Radt 2009: 237, fig. 10b; 238, fig. 11. The latter looks like a closer kind of copy than the other ones. Here two rows of leaves in the canonical Corinthian composition are depicted. Moreover, volutes seem to accrue from the acanthus rows and in the centre of the upper part helices – even though extremely miniaturised – can be observed.

¹⁵ Petra/Jordan, al-Khazne: Freyberger 1998: pl. 14; Qasr al-Darih/Jordan: Freyberger 1998: pl. 20b (early Imperial period); Hirbat al-Tannur/Jordan, temple of Qos: Freyberger 1998: pl. 23c (early Imperial period).

¹⁶ Seeia/Syria: Freyberger 1998: pl. 31a (leave wreath with central medallion), pl. 32c (twisted rod); Palmyra/Syria, »Fondation T«: Freyberger 1998: pl. 61c (Ionic *cymatium*); Palmyra/Syria, temple of Nebo: pl. 61b (twisted rod); Hatra/Syria: pl. 65b (twisted rod). All these pieces stem from the 1st century BCE/1st century CE.

¹⁷ Published by W. Radt (1973: 19, no. 108, pl. 39).

¹⁸ Their heads had been carved off due to iconoclasm (Paret 1976-1977; Allen 1988).

¹⁹ The left one was published by W. Radt (1973: 19, no. 109, pl. 39).

ing leaves with several internal veins; whereas the other side is broken. The left side of this block is blank; the others are hidden by the wall construction. Birds, leaves and grapes are depicted in the same way as on the pillar inside the mosque. The relief at the right frame of the door has only one visible side and is preserved at a lesser height (height 83 cm, width 28.5 cm, depth 27 cm). The long sides are surrounded by narrow plain frames. Here the birds are standing inside each winding of the tendril. Therefore the relief was used probably as door or window frame in ancient times. Birds, leaves and grapes are depicted in the same stylistic way as on the pillar inside the mosque. All these reliefs stem presumably from the same workshop and therefore belong to the same period. It is conceivable that they were used at the same architectural complex.

Even though the vine was known and cultivated in South Arabia since very ancient times²⁰, its use as an ornament was developed relatively late, perhaps during the 1st century CE. However, then it became one of the most common motifs placed on Himyarite pillars, frames, screens and arches. A lot of more or less fragmented objects were found in Zafar and its neighbourhood²¹. These pieces display different stylistic ways of depicting vine scrollwork, which can be ascribed to diverse craftsmanship as well as to chronological distinctions²².

As in old South Arabia similar subjects are not extant the idea was transferred obviously from foreign cultures, and Hellenistic-Roman art appears to be a good candidate. There the motif of plant scrollwork was used since Hellenistic times and underwent a remarkable improvement in the 1st century BCE²³. This motif was popular, especially on pillars and friezes. However, several different kinds of scrollwork such as acanthus, ivy, olive, vine and mixed ones were depicted²⁴. Inserted animals are known from the late 1st century BCE onwards, while sitting or nipping songbirds are common over a long period²⁵. The Roman East as well as the northern area of the Arabian Peninsula offer several parallels for vine tendrils with and without birds. Their production started also in the late 1st century BCE and lasted until the late Roman and Byzantine periods. Naturalistic or realistic depictions are not always a chronological hint as there are rather stylized, simplified or rough examples of vine scrolls extant in the 1st century BCE as well as in later times²⁶. The question arises whether the motif was brought to South Ara-

²⁰ Maraqtan 1993; 2000: 70; Sima 2000: 250-262.

²¹ Those items are now stored in the site museum of Zafar, some of them are on display after a re-arrangement done by the Zafar expedition of the University of Heidelberg/Germany under the leadership of Paul Yule. The stone reliefs and building decoration will be published by the author.

²² See examples from Zafar in Costa 1973: pl. 4,3; pl. 5,1-4; pl. 6,1-4; pl. 7,1-4; pl. 8,1-2; pl. 9,1-2; pl. 10,2-3,6; 1976: pl. 3, no. 116; pl. 4, no. 117; pl. 5, nos. 118-119; Seipel 1999: 381, no. 445; Yule 2007: 110, fig. 72; 125, fig. 84; 133, fig. 92. Several other vine scroll reliefs are known from the collection in the Šan‘ā’ Museum, see Radt 1973: pl. 4, no. 11; pl. 5, nos. 12-13; pl. 6, nos. 14-15; pl. 7, nos. 18-20; pl. 17, no. 45. And some were acquired by C. Rathjens (1955: 261, phot. 472-475).

²³ Schörner 1995; Mathea-Förtsch 1999: 28-43. The Ara Pacis in Rome is often said to be a kind of catalyst for the stylistic expression of scrollwork. See Kraus 1953; La Rocca 1986; Castriota 1995; Cohon 2004.

²⁴ Mathea-Förtsch 1999: 6-16.

²⁵ Toynbee, Ward Perkins 1950: 1-43; Dauphin 1987: 183-212; Schörner 1995: 105-117; Mathea-Förtsch 1999: 17-21. The bird depicted on the Himyarite reliefs is probably a common blackbird.

²⁶ See for example delicately and vividly worked vine tendrils at the Khazne in Petra/Jordan (Freyberger 1998: pl. 7a-d, pl. 14a-d) and in contrast rougher and more woodcarving-like tendrils on the relief at the Zeus Temple in Gerasa/Syria (Freyberger 1998: pl. 18c) or vine scrollwork of the Baalshamin Temple in Seicia/Syria, where it seems the single elements were put on the background (Freyberger 1998: pl. 30b). The examples stem from late 1st century BCE. Another specimen is the frieze at the pteron door frame of the Bel Temple in Palmyra/Syria from the 1st century CE, that was carefully executed with several details but with a less naturalistic appearance (Freyberger 1998: pl. 55c).

bia in the early Roman period and underwent local changes until the late Ḥimyarite period or whether models came to South Arabia throughout time. Especially with the examples of Zafar in mind it seems that during a substantial period of time models found their way to Ḥimyarite South Arabia. Nevertheless the friezes with peopled vine scrolls in the mosque of Tan‘im seem to stem from a later period because of the reduction in detail and the woodcarving-like execution. They could belong to the 5th/6th centuries CE. A later date probably can be ruled out as the typical Byzantine/early Islamic kind of predominant symmetry, stylization and dissection of elements is not visible on these reliefs.

It is not a very convincing idea that complete pillars with vine tendril decoration or Corinthian capitals were brought from the Hellenistic-Roman sphere to South Arabia but rather that smaller models, sketchbooks and artists moved²⁷. Inside South Arabia travelling artists from the Mediterranean region are known at least through the bronze statues of two Ḥimyarite kings where the Greek name of an artist is inscribed²⁸. It is not impossible that even South Arabian artists were travelling to the Mediterranean area, perhaps “only” to the northern parts of the Arabian Peninsula studying new types of art and taking back home selected impressions. However it happened the transfer of artistic ideas and ways of expression had already commenced during the 1st century CE. The foreign prototypes arrived in South Arabia and were adopted immediately. In case of scrollwork an intentional selection took place choosing predominantly vine scrolls. The artists applied to a more or less accurate copy of the models. On the other hand with the capitals the craftsmen tried obviously from the very first to transform the models while adding new (grapes and tendrils) and traditional elements (arrangement in horizontal zones and the stretched shape).

While the transfer and transformation of foreign elements since the early Ḥimyarite period is certain the reason for this behaviour has still to be defined. It seems that extensive transitions during this period such as the expansion of the realm to include the former old South-Arabian kingdoms, concentration on one ruler and economic and religious changes caused several modifications of Ḥimyarite society²⁹. For these modifications new forms of expression were needed to show the difference to the older kingdoms. This need caused a receptiveness on the part of the formerly traditional and conservative South Arabia and gave the chance for observing, accepting and taking over new elements.

In addition to the decorative elements of Ḥimyarite buildings a necropolis with underground tombs was examined stemming from the same period. It is situated outside the city wall to the west of the ancient settlement. Four tombs were uncovered displaying the same layout. At the surface a rough framing made of bigger stones was barely visible as the frame was not complete any more (fig. 8). It cannot be said whether the interior of the frame was filled with stones or soil to build a kind of mound or whether another form of aboveground identification mark was used. Below the frame oval-shaped narrow pits had been dug into the ground (fig. 9). At the bottom of each tomb the skeleton was placed at a depth of about 1 m (fig. 10). The body

²⁷ During the early Ḥimyarite period trade routes along the Arabian Peninsula were still in use and therefore the caravan cities of the northern areas such as Palmyra or Petra played obviously an active role in this transfer. Since the 1st century CE the sea trade became more and more important, nevertheless in the 1st and 2nd centuries imports from the Nabataean realm are still common: Sedov 1992: 120; 1999: 277.

²⁸ Weidemann 1983; Seipel 1999: 385-387, nos. 455-457. Moreover, the Bronze hoard in the settlement of the Jebel al-‘Awd comprised pieces of foreign craftsmen that had been fabricated locally (Hitgen 2000: 250).

²⁹ See Gajda 1999; Robin 1999; Will 1999; especially Hitgen 2005.

was laid on its right side with the head in the south-east and the feet in the north-west. No burial objects were found with one exception. One of the deceased was adorned with two finger rings, one made of bronze, the other one of iron, and two bronze bracelets, one around each wrist. Only one bracelet shows ornamentation, being decorated with carved motifs of horizontal lines, rectangles and v-like designs. Remains of white woven cloth could be identified only on this skeleton because the cloth was bonded to the corroded metal objects. At the other tombs nothing similar was observed, but it is highly plausible that the dead bodies were wrapped in cotton cloth also. Tombs within this area excavated by the inhabitants of Tan'im consist – as we were told – of stone slabs around and on top of the deceased; most probably this can be interpreted as a chest made of stone slabs. These burials were equipped with pottery vessels and personal belongings such as weapons, jewellery or metal vessels. Hierarchic differentiation seems to be observable as the chest tombs are the more elaborated ones.

From the period after the 1st century BCE onwards different kinds of burials are known in South Arabia³⁰. The tombs in Shuka and the necropolis of Jebel Hajjaj are comparable to the Tan'im ones insofar as they consist of rectangular burial pits hewn in the soft rock and covered by stone slabs³¹. In Sha'ub simple pits were dug into the ground and covered by mud bricks, the elaborate ones consisted of a box made of limestone slabs inside the pit³². The orientation varies; some of them are north-south, others east-west. Some of the bodies that lay on their backs were wrapped in cloth and leather and the deceased were preserved by a kind of mummification. Almost no grave goods were found except a few vessels and individual objects such as finger rings or amulets³³ – a situation comparable to Tan'im. The cemetery was dated around the 1st/2nd century CE or a little later. A similar layout and chronology is assumed in Raybūn XVII cemetery where several corpses were placed in pits or in niches that were dug alongside the pit and closed with stone slabs³⁴. The position of the body differs. They were found stretched out on their back or placed on one side either stretched out or in a crouched position. Iron weapons, bronze bracelets and pierced shells were the only grave goods. The individual tombs in Wadi Dura' – oriented east-west and sometimes furnished with stone slabs – display one significant difference: the equipment with precious objects³⁵. They are dated between the 2nd and 3rd centuries CE.

The date of the Ḥimyarite tombs in Tan'im should be placed into the same chronological frame that is offered by comparable cemeteries in South-West Arabia.

Another area that was said to hold burials with grave goods, especially pottery vessels, is situated west of the ancient settlement in the neighbourhood of a new school. However, the tombs visible on the surface can be identified as Muslim with a framing made of small rubble stones and one marking stone oriented east-west (fig. 11). North of the modern road and partly destroyed by the road construction a cemetery is situated which was identified as the Jewish cemetery of Tan'im. Here the tombs are framed by small rubble stones; however, the

³⁰ Vogt et al. 1999; Vogt, de Maigret 2000; Vogt 2002: 183; Hitgen 2005: 54-60.

³¹ Shuka: Vogt et al. 1999: 240; Jebel Hajjaj: Hitgen 2005: 56.

³² Vogt, Gerlach 2002; Gerlach, Vogt 2003; Hitgen 2005: 56.

³³ Vogt, Gerlach 2002: 195-196; Nebes 2002.

³⁴ Sedov 1997.

³⁵ Breton et al. 1993; Audouin 1999. Those tombs were equipped with vessels and household objects made of clay, metal, glass and stone, jewellery, metal weapons and ivory objects, some of them of non-South Arabian provenience.

individual tombs are hard to detect on the surface (fig. 12). Their general orientation seems to be north-south. The distinction of Muslim and Jewish tombs in Yemen can be done by the help of orientation. Both practice inhumation burial. Jews are normally buried on their back facing straight to Jerusalem whereas Muslims are buried while lying on their right side with the viewing direction towards Mecca.

Due to the fact that all these cemeteries are located in the same area and not far away from each other the hypothesis can be proposed that all of them once belonged together. Perhaps there was a nucleus stemming from the Ḥimyarite period and the occupancy extended to different areas over time.

There exist other hints referring to a Jewish community in Tan'im aside the cemetery. The inscription on one of the ancient octagonal columns in the mosque speaks in favour of an ancient Jewish community in Tan'im³⁶. The mentioned place of prayer – originally an Aramaic word – was interpreted as synagogue. The date of the inscription is Ḥimyarite but could not be specified. M. Al-Salami has suggested that in former times a synagogue was situated at the place of the mosque³⁷. Another evidence for an ancient Ḥimyarite Jewish community in Tan'im was an inscription originating from digs in the ground near the Ḥimyarite(?) / Muslim cemetery. M. Al-Salami interpreted the unfortunately battered and therefore incomplete remains of the inscription as there being another ancient synagogue probably situated near this location³⁸. This thesis has to be confirmed as the settlement is supposed to be further east and a synagogue normally is located inside a settlement. One possible explanation could be, that in Ḥimyarite times smaller settlements outside the city walls spread over the western plain still belonging to the community of Tan'im. Already known is an inscription found in Bait al Hadir situated 5 km west of Tan'im which contains the list of the 24 classes of priests in Judaea³⁹. The inscription was dated to the 4th/5th century CE. Inscribed on a capital it was placed without doubt inside a synagogue that presumably stood in Tan'im. Whether it belonged to one of the already supposed ones or another still unknown building remains open. Nevertheless, the Ḥimyarite Jewish community presumably was not a small one. Jews were living in Tan'im until 1949⁴⁰. It is said that the Jews of Tan'im had a considerable social position among the Jewish communities of Yemen and held a religious court. Even if the building of the synagogue of the last Jews in Tan'im is not preserved the place is still known. Another synagogue and an open-air *miqwe*, a ritual bath, as well as the already mentioned cemetery are reported. It can be assumed that the community existed from the Ḥimyarite period throughout the early Islamic period until the modern era.

The site Tan'im displays not only continuous settlement from at least the 8th century BCE until today but also different historical, cultural and religious elements such as Sabaeen and Ḥimyarite, polytheistic, Jewish and Muslim.

³⁶ Müller 1973: 154-155.

³⁷ Personal communication by M. Al-Salami (University of Ṣan'ā'/Yemen).

³⁸ Personal communication by M. Al-Salami (University of Ṣan'ā'/Yemen).

³⁹ Müller 1973: 155; Degen 1974: 111-116, 166-167; Robin 2004: 843, 888-890.

⁴⁰ In 1949 the project "Magic Carpet" started flying out 55.000 Yemenite Jews to Israel (Ahroni 1986: 166-167; 2001).

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Fig. 1. Fragment of a stepped capital with dentil's frieze, rebuilt in a modern house in Tan'im (photo S. Japp, DAI)



Fig. 2. Fragment of an alabaster relief (photo I. Wagner, DAI)



Fig. 3. Fragment of a wall revetment slab with field decoration (photo M. Schnelle, DAI)



Fig. 4. View into the prayer hall of the Romana mosque in Tan'im (photo I. Wagner, DAI)



Fig. 5. One of the capitals in the courtyard of the Romana mosque in Tan'im (photo I. Wagner; DAI)



Fig. 6. Relief pillar with vine scrollwork in the prayer hall of the Romana mosque in Tan'im (photo I. Wagner; DAI)



Fig. 7. Two reliefs with vine scrollwork at the door to the prayer hall of the Romana mosque in Tan'im (photo H. Hitgen, DAI)v



Fig. 8. Stone setting on top of a pit tomb in Tan'im (photo S. Japp, DAI)



Fig. 9. Surface of two pit tombs in Tan'im (photo H. Hütgen, DAI)



Fig. 10. Open pit tomb with skeleton in Tan'im (photo H. Hitgen, DAI)

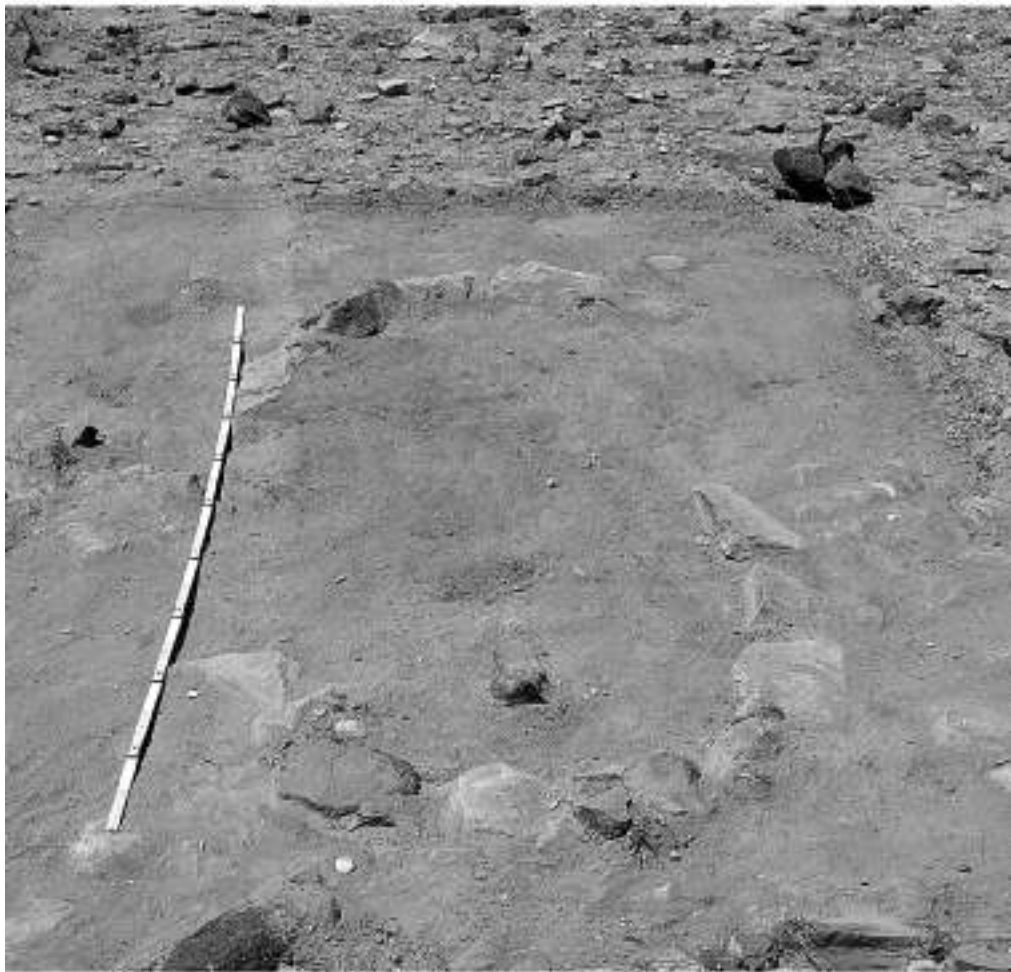


Fig. 11. Surface of a Muslim tomb in Tan'im (photo H. Hitgen, DAI)



Fig. 12. View from the southwest on the Jewish cemetery in Tan'im (photo H. Hitgen, DAI)



Fig. 13. Octagonal pillar with inscription in the prayer hall of the Romana mosque in Tan'im (photo I. Wagner; DAI)

Vitaly Naumkin, Leonid Kogan

TOWARDS A COPRUS OF SOQOTRAN ORAL LITERATURE: 1902–2012

1. Introduction

The study of the Soqotran folklore had a glorious beginning. During the first decade of the twentieth century, the Austrian Semitist David Heinrich Müller published about six hundred printed pages of Soqotri texts, carefully transliterated and translated into German (1902, 1905, 1907). A smaller part of Müller's corpus, published in the 1902 volume, was collected, from several individuals, in the course of his visit to the island in the framework of the *Südarabische Expedition* organized by the Austrian Academy of Sciences in 1899. Its larger part, recorded during a six-month working season in Vienna in 1902, comes from one single informant, ʿAlī ʿĀmir an-Nubhānī¹.

In both size and variety, Müller's Soqotri corpus looks amazing to the modern reader. The same is true of the quality of his recordings: numerous attempts to read Müller's texts with our own Soqotran informants have almost always yielded extremely positive results². Nevertheless, for almost eight decades Müller's challenging initiative had no continuation whatsoever: to the best of our knowledge, not a single line of Soqotran oral literature was published from 1907 till 1981. But even Müller's corpus itself attracted surprisingly little attention from Semitists: it was

¹ In 1904, ʿAlī came to Vienna for the second time and stayed there five months, providing more texts (published in the 1907 volume) and helping to give a final touch to Müller 1905. The chronological background of the Soqotri translation of the first six chapters of the Gospel of Mark, carried out by Müller and published posthumously by M. Bittner (1918b), remains to be clarified. All in all, the label "Vienna corpus" applied to Müller's texts below in this article and elsewhere in the publications of our team, appears quite appropriate.

² In a great majority of cases, Müller's texts turn out to be well understandable to our informants, and his interpretation of these compositions (including some exceedingly difficult poetic pieces) has been, in most cases, enthusiastically approved.

only the vocabulary that received a thorough treatment in Wolf Leslau's monumental *Lexique Soqotri*. Conversely, neither the grammatical nor the folkloristic aspects of the Vienna Soqotri corpus have been systematically investigated so far³. The reasons behind this deplorable situation are hard to ascertain, but one prominent factor is evident: Müller's publications consist of transliterations and translations only, glosses pertaining to the meanings of individual words and grammatical phenomena are rare and laconic (sometimes even cryptic), let alone more extensive explanations affecting the interpretation of a given composition as a whole⁴.

All in all, it was only at the beginning of the 1970s that a systematic inquiry into the Soqotran folklore was again undertaken by one of the present authors. Some of the results of Naumkin's long-term fieldwork project were made known to the scholarly audience in a series of publications, usually written in collaboration with Victor Porkhomovsky (Naumkin–Porkhomovsky 1981, 1995, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2003; Naumkin 2001). Most of the folklore material collected and published by Naumkin is impressively archaic in contents, language and style. To be singled out is the presence of scores of new lexical items completely missing from the Vienna corpus – in itself displaying an amazing lexical variety! – and, consequently, from *Lexique Soqotri*. Regrettably, the impact of these publications on the development of the Modern South Arabian philology proved to be relatively modest, probably because some of the most important texts were published only in Russia (and in Russian), being thus difficult to access for the Western Semitological community.

The past four decades have witnessed several successful fieldwork projects connected with the Soqotri language (T. M. Johnstone, M.-C. Simeone-Senelle, A. Lonnet)⁵ and traditional healing practices/ethnoflora (M. Morris)⁶, but nothing similar can be said about the study of the Soqotran oral literature: Simeone-Senelle's publication of one, admittedly very interesting, legend with historical implications (2002b) seems to be the only exception worth mentioning in the present context⁷.

In 2010, a large-scale project of collecting, analyzing and publishing the Soqotran folklore was launched by Naumkin in the framework of the Russian Interdisciplinary Expedition in Yemen run by the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences and supported by the Russian Foundation for the Humanities⁸. On the Russian side, the members of the team are Leonid Kogan, Dmitry Cherkashin and Maria Bulakh (Russian State University for the Humanities/Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences). On

³ This is not to deny the merits of M. Bittner's important *Vorstudien* (1913, 1918a, 1918b), nor those of the Soqotri portions of E. Wagner's survey of the Modern South Arabian syntax (1953). However, if only because of their modest size, these valuable contributions can scarcely be congenial to Müller's titanic enterprise.

⁴ Indeed, personal experience shows that a truly fruitful use of Müller's corpus can be best achieved after a sufficiently deep preparation with the help of native speakers. A systematic perusal of the Vienna corpus with the assistance of a well-trained informant will undoubtedly become one of the most challenging and rewarding tasks for the future generations of Modern South Arabian philologists.

⁵ A useful bibliographic summary can be found in Simeone-Senelle 2002a:394-400.

⁶ Miller–Morris 2004 (with references to Morris' further publications on the subject on p. 731).

⁷ Morris 2005 is a valuable annotated edition of a lengthy modern poem in Soqotri, yet by its genre and contents this composition is very far from the text types dealt with in the framework of our project.

⁸ Today, the project is also supported by the Russian Foundation for Fundamental Research (РФФИ, project No. 12-06-00182-a) and the Foundation for Fundamental Linguistic Research (ФФЛИ, projects Nos. A-17/2011 and B-55/2012). Both institutions deserve our sincere gratitude for their financial help.

the Soqotran side, the team includes two native speakers, ʿĪsā Gumʿān ad-Daʿrḥī (40 years old, a teacher in a primary school) and Ahmad ʿĪsā ad-Daʿrḥī (23 years old, a student of English in the Soqotra branch of the University of Hadramaut in Mukalla), both stemming from the bedouin tribe Daʿrho (central-eastern part of the island). So far, the project has been carried out in four fieldwork seasons (ca. seven weeks altogether) in Soqotra and Sanaa, as well as two lengthy stays of our Soqotri colleagues in Moscow (two months in 2011, four months and a half in 2012). A similar working schedule is planned for a few coming years.

A detailed exposition of the nature of the project, its principles, goals and methods can be found in several forthcoming publications of the team and will not be repeated here. Instead, we would like to offer to the readers' judgment an annotated catalogue of the texts collected and analyzed up to this moment, together with a preliminary sketch of their typological classification. As an addendum, two samples of Soqotri folklore texts will be published in transliteration (standard Semitological and Arabic) and translation, accompanied by a detailed philological commentary. These samples are intended to illustrate the main principles of the organization of the *Corpus*.

2. Texts processed by the end of 2012: an annotated catalogue

Text 1. *A faithful wife*. An impoverished man is forced to leave his country in search of a profitable job overseas. He eventually succeeds and becomes a rich man. When the rumors about his new situation reach his native place, three of his former friends become envious of him and decide to seduce his wife. The clever woman pretends she is willing to surrender, but then cheats the men, lulls them asleep and cuts away their testicles. The men, angry and humiliated, decide to travel to the country the woman's husband is now residing in order to deprive him, through a dirty trick, of his possessions. But the faithful wife, disguising herself as a man, follows them and saves her husband from the disaster.

⇒ Preliminary publication: Naumkin–Porkhomovsky 1995. A similar story was known to D. Müller (1902:149-161, 1907:73-87).

Text 2. *The end of Makon*. In former times, the island was dominated by a few men headed by a certain “Swahili”, who built the fortress Makon on the top of the central plateau. The Lords of Makon once established a rule: every uncircumcised boy who passed by the fortress had to produce a riddle, which, during a one-year time-span, was to be solved by the Swahili and his servants. If they succeeded, the boy was to be killed, but if they failed, Makon had to be destroyed. Many boys were slaughtered by the blood-thirsty Lords of Makon as they did not succeed to pass the test. But finally one very intelligent boy from the tribe Rig-diho managed to produce three riddles which proved to be unassailable. As a result, the Swahili found his violent death and Makon was destroyed. In this glorious feat, the boy was assisted by his wise grand-father and a magic she-goat endowed with supernatural powers.

⇒ Preliminary publication: Naumkin–Porkhomovsky 1995. A shorter version of the story was recorded by D. Müller (1905:107) as *Mébb̄hel ʿeẓ* (“Der starke Sklave”). In spite of its smaller size, Müller's version reflects with a high degree of precision the principal motifs of our text and even some of its lexical and stylistic features.

Text 3. *Rehabhen and a European woman*. A narrative about the origin of the tribe Kishen, one of the largest tribal communities in the island. A group of European invaders⁹ try

⁹ Presumably the Portuguese, although one may wonder whether such a remote past can still be reflected in the oral tradition.

to colonize Soqatra, but the hero Rehabhen decides to get rid of the “Franks” with a clever trick. He succeeds to catch two of them – a man and a woman “who used to walk together” – and then makes the man believe that his partner is slaughtered, cooked and eaten. Then he releases the man, who rushes to his friends and tells them the awful story. The horrified Franks quickly leave the island, whereas Rehabhen marries the European woman. It is from this union that the present-day tribe Kishen is thought to originate. According to our informants, the story has a clear etiological meaning, as it explains why there are many people with European-like features among the Kishen tribesmen.

⇒ Preliminary publication: Naumkin–Porkhomovsky 1995.

Text 4. *The moon helps to punish the murderers.* In the time of famine, two men deprive a poor woman of the miserable foodstuffs she has been able to collect (some nuts and some edible bulbs) and are about to kill her in order to get rid of the only witness of the crime. Shortly before her death, the woman addresses the moon, tells it about what has happened to her and entrusts to it her only son, whom she presents as the moon’s “nephew”. When the boy grows up, the murderers accidentally pass by his house. During an open-air dinner, the full moon attracts the attention of one of the visitors and prompts him to remember the story of the poor woman, which he proudly relates to his host. The man immediately recognizes the name of his mother and kills the murderers. The story develops a well-known motif: natural forces can help people to detect criminals.

⇒ A kind of brief prayer to moon can be found in Müller 1905:168 (No. 52).

Text 5. *How a boy reconciled his father with his wife.* A man’s wife died. The man married again, but the new wife got a lover. The man’s son from the first marriage discovers this and is willing to denounce his step-mother, but, by mere accident, finds his father copulating with a she-ass in his palm-grove. Since both parties are now equally guilty, the boy decides to prevent the divorce and, incidentally, to make his parents drop their bad behavior.

Text 6. *Fisher or herdsman? Try both if you can!* There were two brothers. One of them followed the ancestral tradition and worked with goats, whereas the other went down to the coast and worked as fisherman. When the fisherman died, his son decided – as was (and still is) the custom – to marry the daughter of his uncle. But the girl’s father was slow in answering: how could he get sure that this youth, with all probability educated outside the traditional bedouin values, was a suitable husband for his daughter? The girl’s family puts the boy to hard tests involving the most intricate aspects of the shepherd’s profession, but his behavior is always blameless: either the shepherd’s skills can be inherited and not just learned, or the deceased father was wise enough to give his son a proper education even outside the traditional habitat. All in all, the two jobs, so much opposed to each other in the traditional mentality of the islanders, can be successfully combined.

⇒ To some extent related motifs can be found in the introductory part of the story published in Müller 1905:50-57. The motif of bringing one’s future son-in-law to a desert place for a pre-marriage trial can be found in Müller 1905:93. Cf. also *ibid.* 67 (“Fischfang ist ein niedriger Dienst”) and 139 (herding and fishing practiced by one individual in a biographical story). The poetic insertion finds interesting precedents in Müller 1905:328, 337 (Nos. 655, 669) and 1902:167 (No. 14).

Text 7. *A charitable woman and an angel.* In former times there was an area in the island where water was extremely scarce: there was one single water-source in the whole region, and its water was sufficient for just one person, one who was able to come the first early in the morning.

One morning it was a poor woman who came the first. As soon as she filled her water-skin, the “angel” Diheko came and started to test her, asking for more and more water, first for himself and then for his donkey. The requests looked bold to the woman, but after some vacillation she generously shared with the unknown visitor her scarce water resources. The angel’s reward was generous as well: since that day the source became perennial and a big palm-grove grew around it in just one night. All this was given as an eternal possession to the woman and her descendants.

⇒ Preliminary publication: Naumkin–Porkhomovsky 1981.

Text 8. *A boy and an ogre.* A lengthy narrative framework encompassing a highly archaic poetic dialogue between a boy and an a female ogre named di-Izhamitin. For many years, the ogre was decimating the population of the island and their cattle, but thanks to the help of the “angel” Diheko, a clever and brave boy managed to exterminate the “Lady of Darkness”. Perhaps one of the most archaic texts in our collection, with several words and expressions unknown even to the eldest generations of Soqotrans.

⇒ Preliminary publication: Naumkin–Porkhomovsky 1981. No direct parallel in the Vienna corpus, but the poetic dialogue between the boy and the ogre has excellent precedents in Müller 1905:181 (No. 96) and *ibid.* 197 (No. 157).

Text 9. *Himbobe.* An archaic poetic composition. A wild goat who has lost its kid pronounces curses against people of different professions and age categories supposedly responsible for the disaster.

⇒ Preliminary publication: Naumkin–Porkhomovsky 1981. An almost exact parallel is found in Müller 1905:346. The description of the guilty man falling into the precipice is rather similar in its wording to that of the goats “falling from one rock to another” in Müller 1905:358 (No. 746) and 1902:170 (No. 22).

Text 10. *Tawise.* An archaic poetic dialogue between two protagonists, a male and a female. The male character “follows” the girl, who appeals to her protectors (father, mother, brother, God) who, as she hopes, “will not give her up”. The male protagonist replies that he has already met each of these individuals, and all of them “have agreed to give her up”. Moreover, he has already “seen” the goats shut in for the funeral meal, and also the girl herself – “in a pit of red clay”.

⇒ Preliminary publication: Naumkin–Porkhomovsky 1981. The text published in Müller 1905:348 is very similar in structure and content, but considerably longer.

Text 11. *A grand-father’s advice about a running goat.* An archaic poetic admonition of an old man to his grand-children: do not slaughter a goat (no matter one belonging to other people or your own) if you meet it running in an open country. The animal must be trying to reach its home, and it is a crime to kill it in such a situation. One who violates the prohibition will bring God’s punishment on himself, his house and his livestock.

⇒ A slightly different version of the poem was known to D. Müller (1905:358).

Text 12. *A crazy tourist.* “Modern folklore”. A European tourist is making a trip through the island in the company of two Soqotrans – a camel-driver and an interpreter. When they make a halt, the European rushes to a lime-tree, takes one fruit, peels it and gulps it down without chewing, but the lime gets stuck in his throat. The tourist is about to be choked and tries to cut his throat with a knife in order to take away the lime, but the Soqotrans prevent him from this terrible operation and help him to get rid of the fruit using less drastic measures. For our informants, “a real story” (*qiṣṣa ḥaqīqiyya*).

Text 13. *The right husband.* An archaic poetic exaltation of the shepherd's profession over the remaining two types of economic activity of the Soqotrans (fishing and palm-cultivation). A girl who is looking for a future husband has nothing against either fish or dates, yet what she likes the most is a "strong young he-goat, bleating at the morning star and kicking out the bucket from the hands of the owner of the herd" – undoubtedly an allegoric description of a young shepherd.

⇒ Some of the poetic clichés comprising this composition were known already to D. Müller (1902:162-163, 180; 1905:336). For a girl's unwillingness to marry a fisher see also Müller 1905:227 (No. 262).

Text 14. *A wonderful goat.* A short couplet praising a crippled goat whose only teat gives so much milk that a guest party can never miss its pen. Closely related to Text 21 ("A wonderful palm") and sung immediately after it in the recording.

⇒ Somewhat remotely (yet unmistakably) related to No. 726 in Müller 1905:346.

Text 15. *A stupid thief from the continent.* "Modern folklore". A stupid visitor to the island steals an unlocked car belonging to one of the Soqotrans, but fails to realize that he cannot go too far away with his new acquisition. The Soqotrans quickly spot the criminal, but the owner of the car forgives him and asks the police to cancel the case. For our informants, "a real story" (*qiṣṣa ḥaqīqiyya*).

Text 16. *ʿAlī Botʿil helps a poor boy.* A poor boy bets with a group of merchants that he will spend a whole night standing in the chilly water of the sea. The boy wins, but the rich men refuse to deliver what they promised because the boy's mother lit a fire on the seashore. ʿAlī Botʿil decides to help the boy and invites the merchants to a dinner. When everybody is present, he starts to prepare the rice, but puts the cooking pot a few meters away from the fire. Everybody wonders: how could the rice get ready? ʿAlī's reply is straightforward: exactly in the same way as the fire lit on the seashore could have warmed the boy who was standing amid the sea!

⇒ Preliminary publication: Naumkin–Porkhomovsky 1995. A very widespread Middle Eastern motif. In the Modern South Arabian area, cf. the Mehri versions recorded by A. Jahn (1902:2-3), T. M. Johnstone (1999:94-97) and A. Sima (2009:426-431).

Text 17. *Three clever brothers.* One man had a wife and two sons. When the man grew old, his wife died and he decided, against his sons' will, to take a second, very young wife. During the wedding night, the old man suddenly dies on the spot, but the woman conceives and gives birth to a boy. When the boy grows up, the elder brothers refuse to acknowledge him as a legitimate heir, pretending that his mother was a whore and their father was not the one who begot him. In order to establish the truth, the three brothers have to travel to a famous wise man and to submit the case to his judgment. In the course of the trip, it becomes clear that the young boy's intelligence is not inferior to that of his brothers. It was, therefore, not too difficult for the wise man to take the right decision: the younger brother is a legitimate heir of his father!

⇒ Undoubtedly a reminiscence of No. 19 in Müller 1905:97 ("Der Teufelsjunge"): a man has three sons, but suspects that the younger one is not his own; on his deathbed, the old man advises the two boys not to give their younger brother any share in the inheritance; the three brothers go to a wise man in order to decide their case; after a simple ordeal, the wise man detects that the younger brother was begot by a demon. A drastic revision of the apparently more original plot was likely conditioned by the strong aversion to demonology among the present-day Soqotrans.

Text 18. *A fatal kiss.* A detailed account of a man's encounter with a jinni woman. Differently from many of his predecessors, the protagonist managed to survive, but the consequences of

the kiss the jinni woman gave him as greeting were fatal: from that very night, he started to feel severe pains in his mouth, and then all of his teeth fell out one after another. The text is presented by the narrator as a “real story” (*qiṣṣa ḥaqīqiyya*) and is also perceived as such by our informants.

⇒ Deciphered from the recording made by Naumkin in mid-seventies of the 20th century.

Text 19. *Two brothers.* There were two brothers who loved each other very much. But everything changed when the elder brother got married: when her husband was away, the woman approached the young boy and asked him to have sex with her. When the boy refused, she got angry and decided to take revenge by persuading her husband that it was his brother who wanted to fornicate with her. The man asks his wife about the kind of punishment she would wish for the evil-doer, and she proposes that he should cut away his penis. The man follows the suggestion, cuts away the boy’s penis and throws him out from the family house. After several years of a troublesome life, the boy marries the daughter of the sultan in a different country, but his physical state creates serious problems for the couple. Eventually his genitals are restored to him by a group of “old men”, but at a high price: the first child to be born to his wife must be delivered to the “old men” and slaughtered by them.

⇒ One of the most popular fairy tales on the island, known already to D. Müller (1902:125-134, 1905:89-95).

Text 20. “*I will die for you, oh my sweet little foot...*”. A lullaby for a boy. The mother proudly describes the glorious future of her son (of whom “a sweet little foot” is a metonymic description), but strongly advises him to marry a poor girl from the neighborhood. Only such a wife (rather than a strange beauty, embellished with necklaces and other jewels) will assure the family’s happiness and prosperity.

⇒ Partly known to D. Müller (1905:353). Notoriously similar, with all probability related admonitions for a future bridegroom are found in Müller 1905:332 (No. 332) and 1902:180 (No. 47), but, curiously enough, the advice of these these two compositions is exactly the opposite: take a bride from a well-to-do family, which will save you from any calamity.

Text 21. *A wonderful palm.* A poetic description of a marvelous palm-tree whose owner watered it with milk and cream. As a result, the palm grew in just one night and already in the morning brought delicious fruits. One of its clusters is sufficient to feed nine men, and even a sick one regains the appetite as soon as he looks at the wonderful dates.

⇒ The poem was partly known to D. Müller (1905:352).

Text 22. *A sincere friend.* Muhammad, the son of the sultan, and Saleh, his friend, go to hunt wild goats. When they reach the top of the hill, they see a ship in the sea, and a beautiful girl looking at them from the ship. Muhammad falls in love with the girl and wants to marry her at every cost. The friends start to look for the girl here and there. When Eyna is finally spotted, it turns out that she is the daughter of the local ruler. The girl’s father, who lives in a castle made of human skulls, imposes difficult tests on his future son-in-law, but thanks to Saleh’s cleverness Muhammad wins the girl’s hand. However, further troubles emerge during the return trip, which force Saleh to sacrifice himself in order to save the newly-married couple. When Eyna becomes aware that Saleh was transformed into a stone, she decides to bring him back to the world of the living. But in order to do that, the woman has to slaughter her own first-born son and to smear the stone with his blood.

Text 23. *A prayer for rain.* A fifty lines long prayer asking for rain (*duʿāʾ al-istisqāʾ*), accompanied by sacrifice of goats. Every line is closed with the invocation *ḥanīnhin ʾalla*

‘Lord God’. The prayer abounds in archaic words and forms pertaining to the natural phenomena and animal husbandry. The presence of rather numerous Arabisms (mostly of religious nature) is also noteworthy.

⇒ Preliminary publication of a similar text can be found in Naumkin–Porkhomovsky 1995. The 1995 version is much shorter, but more explicit as far as the sacrifice is concerned, whose mention is carefully avoided in the 2012 text due to its contradictory status in the present-day Islamic community of the island. While rather detailed descriptions of the rite can be found in Müller 1905:73 and 109, the prayer itself is not reproduced (except, perhaps, for a few introductory words).

Text 24. *A devouring snake.* A small but clever boy kills a gigantic snake which, many years ago, occupied his native village and forced his father to migrate to a remote place. In its motifs and structure, the text is partly similar to Texts 8 (“A boy and an ogre”) and 2 (“The end of Makon”).

⇒ Preliminary publication: Naumkin–Porkhomovsky 2000.

Text 25. *Your money or your life!* A lengthy narrative about a poor man who wanted “either to die, or to become rich”. To his amazement, the first option proved to be inaccessible: even throwing himself into a precipice did not produce any serious result. Thanks to a clever advice of a wise man, the second option turned out to be more feasible, but whenever the man acquired the desired wealth, the Angel of Death came to take away his soul. After several attempts, the man succeeded to cheat the angel and, with God’s permission, to stay in peace for some years.

Text 26. *A woman who did not want to marry.* A lengthy story about a beautiful woman who did not want to marry. Three powerful men, the sultan, the judge and a merchant, begin to spread rumors about a secret vice which was, allegedly, the reason behind the woman’s strange behavior. In an attempt to defend herself, the woman cheats the men, devises for them a humiliating punishment and successfully carries out her plan.

Text 27. *God helps.* A poor man is wrongfully deprived of his palm-grove by one of the sultans’ favorites. Every hope in the human justice being lost, the man farewells his palms with a passionate elegy, announcing his approaching death and obliquely threatening the sultan and his favorite with the divine judgment beyond the grave. The couplet becomes known to the sultan who, out of fear before God, returns the palms to the man in spite of his friend’s desperate protests.

Text 28. *A terrible revenge.* An orphan boy lives in the family of his paternal uncle who, together with his sons, constantly humiliates him and wastes his inheritance. The boy decides to feign madness and, though an elaborated stratagem, exterminates his cousins, his uncle and a good part of his fellow tribesmen – at the cost of his own life. Even the only cousin whom the orphan spared could not finally escape a violent death: a splinter from the boy’s bone which he inadvertently smashes hits him in the eye.

⇒ A splinter from the skull of the last member of the Eter tribe kills his murderer also in Müller 1905:119¹⁰. The two stories are otherwise quite different in their plot, yet it is highly significant that in both cases the motif of the “Last of the Mohicans” is involved.

Text 29. *Fisher or herdsman? Once again...* “Modern folklore”. A poor herdsman tries to save his wife and his daughters from the famine occasioned by a severe draught, but his ef-

¹⁰ The story of the exterminated tribe Eter is still quite popular on the island.

forts prove to be of no avail. When his wife prevents him from slaughtering their last ten goats, a previously unthinkable solution comes to his mind: he will go to fish in the sea using an improvised raft, with no former maritime experience whatsoever. With God's help, the new enterprise turns out totally successful: the man is now able not only to maintain his own family, but also to help the neighbors. But on the very day the goats regain their milk the fish is thrown away with disgust.

Text 30. *The botfly*. A detailed description of the effects of the botfly's (*di-ʿáṣar*) attack on men and animals, together with the corresponding healing practices.

⇒ Both the contents and the wording of the description are strikingly similar to Müller 1905:301¹¹.

3. An attempt at typological classification

The texts described in the catalogue are heterogeneous in their genres, topics and motifs. A certain kind of typological stratification immediately suggests itself, but let us emphasize that the following brief remarks are hardly more than a preliminary approximation to this exciting, yet very complicated task, whose eventual completion must be reserved for better trained specialists in the Near Eastern oral literature.

1. **Archaic poetry (texts 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 20, 21, 23).** Texts belonging to this group are easily distinguishable from the rest of the corpus because of their poetic shape. Another remarkable peculiarity of these compositions is a high concentration of rare, undoubtedly very archaic, lexical items¹². Nearly each of the nine texts has immediate parallels in the Vienna corpus, which presupposes at least 120 years of uninterrupted transmission¹³.

2. **Court narrative (texts 1, 16, 22, 26, partly also 17, 19, 25, 27).** This is a conventional label for a group of texts whose motifs more or less strongly connect them with the urban milieu and, more concretely, with the sultan's court. Tales belonging to this group often have straightforward external parallels (notably, in the Mehri text corpora collected by the Austrians), and there are good reasons to believe that most of them are not genu-

¹¹ The reasons behind Müller's translation *Eidechse* are as obscure as they are intriguing. A simple mistake is unlikely, one has rather to suspect a kind of misunderstanding on the level of the medium language (that is, a kind of dialectal Arabic koine).

¹² This is, of course, a hallmark of many other poetic traditions in the Semitic-speaking world, from Ugarit to pre-Islamic Arabia.

¹³ There is another striking fact connected with these texts. During ʿAlī ʿĀmir an-Nubhānī's stay in Vienna, it was decided to record a few samples of the Soqotri speech for the *Phonogrammarchiv* of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. The technical facilities of the epoch allowed the Austrian team to process a very restricted body of sound material, out of several hundred pages of narrative and poetic materials collected and published by Müller. Which compositions were to be selected for recording? That must have been a hard dilemma for both ʿAlī and his Austrian hosts, but the final output immediately pertains to the problem which interests us now: four out of eight poetic compositions from our corpus found their way into the tiny archive of Soqotri sound files preserved in the *Phonogrammarchiv* (our warm thanks go to Dr. Gerda Lechleitner for her kind permission to use these precious materials and her efficient help in a variety of scholarly and technical issues). There are all reasons to believe that this choice was not accidental: these texts apparently belong to a narrow and much cherished poetic canon whose elements – no matter today or 120 years ago – were (and are) considered valuable enough to impress an interested outsider.

ine to Soqotra (which does not preclude, of course, a relatively early date of their introduction to the island).

3. Bedouin narrative (texts 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 24, 28, partly also 17, 19, 25, 27). Here belong narrative compositions whose motifs and *realia* are closely connected with the everyday life of the Soqotran pastoralists. Most of the texts belonging to this category are not only genuinely Soqotran, but also pertain to a geographically restricted tribal lore: in this sense, it is very remarkable that practically none of these compositions has any parallel in the Vienna corpus¹⁴. A typical feature of these texts is the presence of poetic insertions (only texts 3 and 7 are exceptions to this rule), a feature which distinguishes them sharply from the court narrative analyzed in the preceding paragraph (always entirely prosaic).

4. “Modern folklore” (texts 5, 12, 15, 18, 29, 30). Since listening stories is still a prominent part of the Soqotrans’ leisure, the narrative art remains in high esteem, and it is not surprising that all sorts of curious events from people’s everyday life quickly become subject to literary elaboration. As a result, even very young individuals are capable of producing stories whose compositional and stylistic features – let alone the genuine, colorful Soqotri language – successfully imitate the old narrative canons.

The borders between the four groups are, of course, not impenetrable. As already mentioned above, most of the compositions classified as “bedouin narrative” have more or less substantial poetic insertions and, at least for some of them, there are all reasons to suppose that this poetry is, in fact, the primary nucleus of the composition, to which a narrative framework was added later (and not always very skillfully). Furthermore, texts essentially belonging to the “court narrative” can be more or less seriously “bedouinized”. Thus, much of the plot of Text 17 (“Three clever brothers”) develops around the sultan’s court, but elsewhere (especially in the description of the brothers’ trip to the sultan) the *realia* of the story are characteristically bedouin. A similar analysis can probably be applied to texts 19, 25 and 27. Let us mention, finally, that some of the texts attributed by us to “modern folklore” could probably be more correctly qualified as ethnographic narrative rather than oral literature in the strict sense.

4. Two samples

4.1. A grand-father’s advice concerning goats

4.1.1. The Soqotri text: transliteration and transcription

miráṭe di-máʿa e-ʿábrəhoy bə-ʿérhon

- (1) ʿómor šíbeb e-ʿábrəhoy
 - (2) əmaráṭkən e ʿábrəho * e tənédər bə-ṭahére
 - (3) dəš di-təḥosíbin ʿəbtək * ʾóʾo təkár ʾóʾo təghóm
 - (4) təkósə rákab di-yhéžar * təbálaš wa-tənzégzəg
 - (5) təkósə lim di-tənlémləm * tənéšof məy wa-tənráʿraʿ
 - (6) taʿákal mášən di-bal šher * wa-metéḵhor di-bal érhon
- (1) An old man said to his grand-children:

¹⁴ A noteworthy exception is, of course, Text 2 (“The end of Makon”) = Müller’s “Der starke Sklave”.

- (2) I advise you, oh my grand-children: beware of one who is running,
 (3) One who counts its steps – where it could spend the night and the day.
 (4) One who finds a green hill, nibbles from it and runs away gently,
 (5) One who finds a pool full of water, drinks a bit from it and bleats.
 (6) It will leave the house without people, and the pens without goats!

4.1.2. The Soqotri text in Arabic script

میراطه دماغه آبرھیہ بارهن

عامر پسیب آبرھیہ:
 أمارطکن آبرهو ×× أتندر بطهاره
 داش دتخاسیین أبتق ×× آه تقار آه تجهام
 تکاسی راقب دیباضر ×× تبالص میه وتترجرج
 تکاسی لم دتلملم ×× تناپف مس وتترعرع
 تعافل ماپین دبال شغار ×× وماتقهر دبال آرهن

4.1.3. Philological notes

(2) The only attestation of *nédar* (*yānédor/lyāndér*) ‘to pay attention, to care’ in the Vienna corpus is in the corresponding line of the parallel text. A few additional illustrations have been provided by our informants: *ʕámok e-di-ho sáyək tənédor bə-šígher* ‘I said to my driver: “Beware of the mountain passes!”’, *ṭeródki ho wa-ṭad míʕsar wa-ʕámok həy tənédor həyki bəy al-lyəghózkí*¹⁵ ‘A friend of mine and me were pursuing a billy-goat, and I said to my friend: “Be attentive! Let it not escape from us!”’.

For *ṭahére* ‘one who is going’ v. Müller 1905:121, 358.

(3) Note the jussive after *óʕo* ‘where’, presumably with conditional implication (‘where could it...?’).

(4) In the Vienna corpus, the verb *bólaš* (*yəbálaš/lyəbláš*) ‘to eat (about animals)’ is attested only in the corresponding line of the parallel text. Here are some additional examples provided by our informants: *góʕor bəʕér wa-ʕénkaʕk həy ákše wa-bólaš məy ánṭe wa-ʕal-ʕad ʕégəb* ‘One of my camels fell ill. I brought to it some branches of the *ákše*-tree¹⁶, it ate a bit, but did not want to eat more’, *tə he ṭəy hižáre*¹⁷ *əkniyo mən káʕar ʕaf təgáʕar wa-ʕəgdahk həs duwá ken dáḥtar béyṭari wa-ʕámok həs wa-stáḥsanat wa-kobk tos di-bustán kor stə kóšho wa-bəlášo wa-ʕádo šḥayéro* ‘A house-goat of mine used to eat the food from the house and, as a result, fell ill. I brought to it a medicine from the veterinary doctor, gave it to it and it became better. Then I brought it to the garden in order to let it eat some grass. It ate and started to improve more and more’.

¹⁵ *géhéz* (*yəgóhoz/lyəghóz*) ‘to escape’ (= انفلت), not in the Vienna corpus.

¹⁶ *Commiphora ornifolia* (Miller–Morris 2004:466-468).

¹⁷ A goat kept in the living compound is called *hižáre* (= اليفة). The point of this example is that such a goat ate too much human food (such as rice) instead of grass and eventually fell ill because of this.

(5) A large natural water reservoir (بركة طبيعية) is called *lim* (*limi/élmhom*). This very common word, missing from the Vienna corpus, has been illustrated by the following examples: *áyhork mən ʿag di-yəḥórə mən əlhítan wa-tóʿo eráḥki lim díksam kséyki əlləhe ḥíouro di-šámə défe di-lim boḵ-náʿa* ‘I was accompanying a man who was looking for his cows. When we reached the Diksam reservoir, we found one black cow who died there, near the reservoir’¹⁸, *liso mése mən sədhétan il-šérəb ʿaf təmoléʿan élmhom wa-kən šérəb di-šker* ‘There was rain because of the s.-stars in spring. The reservoirs became full of water and the spring was beautiful’¹⁹.

According to our informants, the verb *lémləm* (*yəmlémləm/lyəmlémləm*) means ‘to be filled’, as in the following examples: *tóʿo gédaḥk mənəl sfork wa-ʿéḵdomk di-ho lə-ḥalf lemlémo ménhi ʿáyni bə-ʿédmaʿ* ‘When I came back from the trip and looked at my place, my eyes were filled with tears’, *liso mése ʿaf yənlémləm əḳálət* ‘It rained and the pools became full of water’. Presumably the same verb is once attested in the Vienna corpus: *lemlémo ménhi ʿáini ken nekírhin letúwyo* ‘Es blinzeln meine beide Augen, aus Sehnsucht trafen wir zusammen’ (Müller 1905:303), commented upon as ‘Die Augen blinzeln demjenigen oder derjenigen zu, die man nach langer Trennung getroffen’. Since the general meaning of this text is strikingly similar to one of the examples provided by our informants, one wonders whether Müller’s interpretation ‘blinzeln’ (= ‘cligner (les yeux)’, LS 233) is the correct one and should not rather be replaced with ‘to be filled with tears’.

The verb *nésəf* (*yənésəf/lyənésəf*) ‘to sip’ is missing from the Vienna corpus. A few additional examples illustrating its meaning: *ḥáyhe lal yíroy šéhi yənésəf bə-réféy* ‘When someone drinks tea, he sips it slowly’, *gehémki ho wa-tad di-mišḥar mən šérəb wa-ḥíleb háyki wa-šənéšifki díki šḥaf ʿaf yətétə* ‘Once in spring²⁰ a friend of mine and myself entered a pen, and they milked for us. Then we sipped the milk in turns until it was finished’.

According to our informants, the verbal form *tənráʿraʿ* describes the goat’s nervous behavior: it bleats and, simultaneously, wags its tail (تحرك الذيل وتصيح).

(6) The second phoneme in the word *másən* ‘house, family’, etymologically a lateral sibilant *š*, can be pronounced differently from the normal *š*: the laterality is preserved, but the place of articulation shifts from the middle of the tongue to its tip. The outcome is thus slightly affricated (*č*). The acoustic difference between the two sounds is obvious to the speakers, and it was undoubtedly the same sound that Müller often rendered as *š* (with no further explanation). The spread of this phenomenon and its diachronic background remain to be investigated, but *máčən* is only one of several conspicuous coincidences between our informants and Müller’s texts, cf., e. g., *di-ḳáčən* ‘thief’ (cf. Müller 1905:76-77, 295).

For *yhéḥar* (pl. *šher*) ‘man’ v. LS 210-211.

¹⁸ The *lim* of Diksam is one of the largest and best known in the central plateau.

¹⁹ Certain stars predict rainfall, v. Serjeant 1988 as well as Müller 1905:228 (No. 266, with the informant’s explanations).

²⁰ This is a conventional rendering of *šérəb*, the rainy season approximately corresponding to October, November, December and January.

4.1.3. Comparison with SAE VI, No. 745, with some considerations on the meaning of the poem

Not unlike most of the archaic poetic compositions at our disposal, the present text has a straightforward parallel in the Vienna corpus. On p. 358 of Müller 1905, one finds a three-couplet poetic text whose main body almost exactly corresponds to what we were able to record from our informants. To make easier the comparative analysis of the two versions, we will reproduce Müller's text in its entirety, together with the editor's German translation.

wa-âl di-bé rihel díye	Nicht ist dort guter Gruß vorhanden,
lišóriḳ wu-litnón a-ḥâmd	Daß man wandere, Ruhe finde und Gruß.
wu-lómriṭénken ʔébrehó	Ich lege euch ans Herz, meine Kinder:
wu-tenédír be-taháreh	Gebet acht auf die Gehende,
be-di telḥosiben ibtéḳ	Die jetzt noch die Schritte zählt,
hóʔo teḳár wa-hō tighóm	Wo sie (dann) den Tag und die Nacht zubringt.
tígdah id ráḳab id-héẓar	Sie wird zu einem moosgrünen Felsen kommen,
tebálaṣ mes wu-tinzígzig	Sich davon Blätter holen und davoneilen,
wu-tigdáh másen di-bol šḥer	Sie wird nach einem menschenleeren Ort kommen,
di-ból méteḳhór di ʔéran	Wo keine Ställe für Schaf sind.

The general information about this text provided by Müller is extremely laconic. Thus, the poem's title *Lied bei Unterhaltungen gesungen* says virtually nothing about its background. The same is true of the editor's remark "Hier liegt nur ein kleines Fragment des Liedes vor": since the hypothetic additional couplets were not recorded (or at least never published), their impact on our understanding of the text cannot be evaluated.

As far as the second couplet of the Vienna text is concerned, its similarity to lines 2-3 of our version is striking. The only remarkable difference is of purely grammatical order: instead of the straightforward present *amarátkən* in our text, the Vienna version displays the jussive form *lómriṭ-én-ken*, with a curious *n*-augment before the pronominal suffix (cf. Wagner 1953:152)²¹.

The differences in the third couplet are more noteworthy and pertain to the very essence of the poem's meaning.

On the one hand, there are two lines in our text that are missing from the Vienna version: *təkósa lim di-tánlémləm * tánéšof məy wa-tənráʔraʔ* 'It finds a pool full of water, drinks a bit from it and bleats'. At first sight, this addition is rather insignificant, but in fact the opposite is true: precisely this line makes certain that the couplet's protagonist (*tahére* 'one who goes') is a goat and not a human. This clarification is not superfluous:

²¹ In summer 2012, a slightly different version of the text was spotted among Naumkin's early recordings and, to our perplexity, the verbal form used there was an exact match of that produced by Müller's informant.

as one can infer from Müller's (admittedly rather obscure) footnote 3²², for him (and, presumably, for his informant) *die Gehende* was not a goat, but rather a girl!²³

On the other hand, the closing lines of the Vienna version are formulated in a rather neutral style: the poet wishes *die Gehende* to reach a calm place, not visited by either people or goats. Conversely, the corresponding segment of our text becomes a true climax of the poem: if the running goat is disturbed (presumably, slaughtered), its offenders will incur a severe (obviously, divine) punishment, affecting both their houses and their pens.

What does the short initial couplet²⁴ of Müller's text mean is a thorny question which can be touched upon only briefly here. In spite of several attempts, our informants did not succeed to make any coherent sense from *wa-āl di-bé riḥel diye * lišōriḳ wu-litnón a-ḥámd*. Müller's own translation 'Nicht ist dort guter Gruß vorhanden, daß man wandere, Ruhe finde und Gruß' is hardly more than a literal word-by-word rendering whose real sense escapes us²⁵.

4.2. A crazy tourist

4.2.1. The Soqotri text: transliteration and transcription

frāngi manḳáynaʿ

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) gédaḷ ṭad frāngi di-saḳóṭri kor yəḥélən | One European man came to Soqotra for sightseeing. |
| 2) wa-zéʿe nḥəfš məšómtil wa-ṭad di-yəšóniṣ órəm wa-yəzáʿa həy d-yhe bíššol bə-bəʿér | He took with him an interpreter and one who was showing him the way and carrying his things on a camel. |
| 3) wa-ṭéhər wa-ʿal-ʿad bələg ʿaf yəʾórəḷ ʿamḳ di-ḥalf ʿéžəf | They went and after a while they reached the middle of the way. Then they made a halt. |
| 4) wa-tóʿo ʿéžəf éḳdəm frāngi šérhom lim soḳotriyya wa-ríʿiṣ d-yhe məšómtil | When they made a halt, the European saw a tree called "the Soqotran lime" and asked his interpreter about it. |
| 5) ʿómor həy iném də šérhom di-boḳ ʿómor həy lim soḳotriyya | He said: "What is that tree?". He said: "The Soqotran lime". |

²² "yahāreh ... جائرة سائرة Mädchen".

²³ It is hard to say to what extent the remaining part of the text as recorded by Müller is compatible with such a reading. Of course, a girl could *zu einem moosgünen Felsen kommen*, but why should she *davon Blätter holen und davoneilen*? Moreover, as pointed out by our informants, the verb *bólaṣ* can only be used about animals (cf. Müller's اخذ ورقات).

²⁴ As explained by Müller, "diese zwei Zeilen sind der Refrain, der nach je zwei Versen wiederholt wird".

²⁵ Müller's explanatory footnotes pertaining to this segment are mostly obscure to us. Thus, one can only wonder about the meaning of the following observation by his informant: "Auf einen starken Stamm sagen die Bedu *wa-āl di-bé riḥel diye*, wie die Araber *labbaika allā*". As is well known, the Arabic expression means 'I am at your disposal, oh God!' – but how to connect this with *nicht ist dort guter Gruß vorhanden...?* And what is the "strong tribe" doing here? Perhaps the readiest understanding that comes to mind is that these two lines are intended as a warning: it is not appropriate for a young girl to wander alone and her male relatives should be careful about this. A little girl's movement may look deceitfully slow ('die *jetzt noch* die Schritte zählt'), but, step by step, she eventually (*dann*) gets into uninhabited and dangerous places.

- 6) ʕómor jóute mæs əkniyo ʕómor jóute
 7) wa-ʔáher dəs fráŋgi wa-ʕádo šəy ʕággi
 8) wa-tóʕo érəḷi boḵ édoʕ fráŋgi ʔəy lim
 wa-ḵərəšəs wa-ḵálaʕ bəs di-ḷe wa-ʕáʕə
 9) wa-tóʕo ərəḷo ʕamḵ di-ḵar ləḷágo ʔal-
 se nehéro id-mer wa-ʔal-se šərḵóḷo di-ter
 10) ḷérə lyəmʕášəš kor toʕókəb di-ḵáne
 di-mer al-se əkébo wa-ʔal-se šərḵóḷo
 11) wa-ʕan yhe šərḵéḷiḥš kóyhem wa-
 ʕédmaʕ
 12) wa-ʕəḵdémə ʕəy ʕággi wa-fizóʕo wa-
 ʔal-bíto íful lyəšgóʕo
 13) wa-yhe édoʕ d-yhe lə-šəre kor yəšáʕar
 nhəʕš ḵar
 14) wa-lóuyo bəy ʕággi kor al-lyəšʕar
 nhəʕš ḵar
 15) lə ʔad bə-ʕidi wa-ʔad dəkéməš di-ʕárəb
 ʕaf nəfok məy mən ḵar
- He said: “Is it edible?”. He said: “Yes, it is”.
 The European went to the tree, and the
 two men went with him.
 When the European came to the tree, he
 grasped one lime, peeled it, threw it into
 his mouth and gulped it down.
 When it reached the middle of his throat,
 it stuck there: it could not penetrate into
 his stomach, nor could it go outside.
 He made some efforts to push it down to
 the stomach, but it did not enter it, nor did
 it come out.
 As for the man, the sweat stood out on his
 forehead and the tears started to his eyes.
 The two men looked at him and became
 scared: they did not know what should they do.
 And he took his knife in order to cut his
 throat.
 Then they caught him in order to prevent
 him from cutting his throat.
 One held his hands and the other kicked
 him on the nape of his neck so that the
 lime quickly went out from his throat.

4.2.2. The Soqotri text in Arabic script

فرنجي منقنع

1. جادح طاد فرنجي دستقري كار بحالن
2. وزاعي نهفش مشمتيل وطاد ديبينيش آژم ويزاعي هيه دأياه بيشل بعار
3. وطاهر وألعاد بالج عاف يوارح عمق دحلف عاضف
4. وتو عاضف أقدم فرنجي شرهم (لم سقطرية) ورييش دأياه مشمتيل
5. عاثر هيه إنام داه شرهم ديقو عاثر هيه ليم سقطرية
6. عاثر يوق مس أقنيو عاثر يوق
7. وطاهر دس فرنجي وعادو شيه عجي
8. وتو أرح بوق آذف فرنجي طيه ليم وقرانشس وقالع بس دحاه وأعري
9. وتو أراحو عمق دقار لحاجو آل ساه نهارو إدمار وآل ساه شرقاحو دتار
10. حاري لجماصص كار توكب دقانه دمار ال ساه اكابو وآل ساه شرقاحو
11. وعن يهاه شرقاحيش كيهم وأدمع
12. وأقدامو عيه عجي وفيزاعو وآل بيتو إقول لبشجاؤو
13. ومياه آذف دأياه لصاره كار يبساطر نهفش قار
14. ولويو بيه عجي كار آل لبساطر نهفش قار
15. لي طاد بايدي وطاد دكامش دعارب عاف نافك ميه من قار

4.2.3. Philological notes

1. The verbal meaning ‘to be mad, crazy’ is expressed by *ənḵánaʿ* (*yənḵanīʿin/lyənḵánaʿ*). The corresponding noun is *mənḵáynaʿ*, fem. *mənḵinīʿo* (pl. masc. and fem. *mənḵināʿhétən*). Cf. LS 377.

The verb *ḥel* (*yəḥélən/lyəḥél*) ‘to turn, to go around’ has been aptly applied to the modern concept of sightseeing. In the Vienna corpus, cf. already Müller 1905:140-141: *ʿaig ... izóʿom ḥišš wa-ʿábleṭ ihélen min ḥalf id-ḥálf we-iráḥaḏ* ‘Ein Mann ... [d]er wohnte ganz allein und machte bisweilen die Runde von einem Orte zum anderen und kurierte’.

2. While *šémtəl* (*yəšmétol/lyəšémtəl*) ‘to talk’ is abundantly attested in the Vienna corpus (LS 253), the specific meaning ‘to translate’ does not seem to be present there. The same is true of the substantivized participle *məšómtil* ‘interpreter’.

The morphological opposition between ‘to see’ and ‘to show’ was intriguing already for Müller, who briefly deals with it in 1905:110: *šini*, imperf. *išóni* = شاف ‘sehen’ vs. *šéne* (*šénne*), imperf. *išóni* (*išónni*) = شوف. In the speech of our informants, the two sets of forms are opposed as *šini* (*yəšóni/lyəšné*) vs. *šané* (*yəšóni/lyóšni*). For this verb in connection with showing the way cf. already Müller 1905:318-319: *ál ʿóʿod ho ke di-ḥtan lošniš ʿórim* ‘Ich gehe nicht mit einem, der [erst] beschnitten worden ist, um ihm den Weg zu weisen’.

8. For *árə* (*yárə/lyárə*) ‘to gulp down’ in the Vienna corpus v. *wu-likén allāh bélog léhem ʿeḏ ḵehór yáʿre Yūnān* ‘Gott aber beorderte einen großen Fisch Jona zu verschlingen’ (Müller 1905:25), *ʿaig di-moténe ḵehór iken žúmdeh wa-ʿázeh tken šóde wa-tgódihēn wa-tárriš* ‘Ein Mann wünscht dich, daß er eine Lockspeise und die (geliebte) Frau ein Fisch sie, daß sie herankomme und ihn verschlinge’ (ibid. 209). Leslau’s translation ‘dévorer’ (LS 327) is inexact.

10. The verb *əmʿášiṣ* (*yəmʿášiṣin/lyəmʿášaṣ*) ‘to try to gulp down’ (= يدخل شيئاً من الحلق إلى الداخل / حاول) is missing from the Vienna corpus. Its meaning has been illustrated by the following examples: *šátik ṭay di-te mən ḵáʿyāher tóʿo šátik əmʿášiṣk di-ho ḵar* ‘I caught the smell of the meat from the houses and gulped down the saliva’, *šínik ḥálwi wa-əmʿášiṣk di-ho ḵar mən tóʿo ʿáyyak ḥálwi* ‘I saw some sweets and gulped down the saliva as I was willing to taste these sweets’, *šalóbən óʿoz wa-ʿétom šin suwáhili wa-tóʿo ḥəšálan ḥétar bə-ḥiṣále ḥérə lyəmʿášaṣ wa-ʿal-ʿakébo ʿatáf keb ʿas ašbáʿi wa-ḵe* ‘We slaughtered a goat and there was one Swahili who shared with us the meal. When we started to cut the meat and eat it, he choked over one piece. He tried to gulp it down, but it did not go through. Eventually he had to put two fingers into his throat and spewed it away’, *ḵénomk ṭay di-ho óʿoz šaʿír wa-léfo di-se šaʿír di-máḥle wa-ḥiṭáro wa-ḥiróʿo təmʿášaṣ al-ʿékob ʿatáf ḵalólho* ‘I gave some barley to one of my goats, and it started to eat very quickly. Then it choked over it and tried to gulp it down, but it did not go through and it had to spew it away’.

11. For *kíme* (pl. *káyhem*) ‘sweat’ and related forms (missing from LS) v. Simeone-Senelle–Lonnet 1991:1461.

One wonders whether *ʿan* in this passage is identical to *ʿáneḥ/ʿanéḥ* ‘vielmehr’ in Bittner 1918:35-36 (= Arb. *bal*).

15. The verb *énfək* (*yənéfok/lyánfək*) ‘to go out quickly’ (= خرج بسرعة) is missing from the Vienna corpus. Its meaning has been illustrated by the following examples: *ṭad tērod óʿoz wa-nehéro ʿéki ho wa-ṭad wa-ʿálahi diki kor əlóuyo bəs wa-ʿámok e-ʿag šək néfok di-ḥarf fisaʿ bal*

təkdómk ‘One man was running after his goat, and it passed by us – me and a friend of mine. The man shouted to us that we should catch it, and I said to the man who was with me: “Rush to the slope before it bypasses you!”’, *anfəko siyára šágre máhle* ‘The car quickly climbed the slope’. Note that this verb is not identical to *néfog* ‘sortir, paraître’ (LS 270) whose numerous attestations in the Vienna corpus are entirely restricted to heavenly bodies.

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Alessia PRIOLETTA

A NEW MONOTHEISTIC INSCRIPTION FROM THE MILITARY MUSEUM OF ŞAN‘Ā’

1. Introduction

In 2005 I. Gajda published the inscription YM 1950, which is conserved at the National Museum of Şan‘ā’. Dated 473 or 483 Ĥim, this text was at the time the earliest document testifying to a belief in monotheism by an ancient South Arabian population. In recent years, thanks to research conducted by her and other scholars, the historical, cultural and religious background to the last two centuries of ancient South Arabian civilization has been systematically studied and analysed¹. The present article will refer to these important studies, to which it will add some elements for discussion stemming from the discovery of a new document which, as so often happens in South Arabian studies, could contribute to a reassessment and reinterpretation of historical data previously thought to be well established.

In 2009 and 2010, thanks to a cooperation agreement signed with the Ministry of Defence of Yemen, which is responsible for the Military Museum of Şan‘ā’, the CASIS project was allowed to compile an inventory of the entire epigraphic collection of this museum². Among the nearly eighty inscriptions found in the museum’s storerooms was a Late Sabaic (SAB) inscription containing a monotheistic invocation that is dated 464 of an unspecified era. If, as it seems, the dating system used was that of *Mbḥd bn ’bḥd*, this would make B 8457 the earliest monotheistic document produced after the era of Ĥimyar. However, another hypothesis, though less

¹ In particular, Gajda 2009; Robin 2003: 97-172; Robin 2004: 831-908; Robin 2008: 1-124.

² The inscriptions that are on display to the public have been published on the CSAI website (<http://csai.humnet.unipi.it/>), while the epigraphs in storage remain unpublished, with three exceptions; Frantsouzoff 2010: 161-170, Arbach 2011: 177-188 and Arbach, Rossi forthcoming.

likely, is that this inscription can be associated with the dating system of *Nbṭm bn Ḥrf*, which would make it the latest document after the era of Maḏḥī.

The inscription, which still has only a provisional siglum, is of unknown provenance. It is engraved in relief on a stone 40 cm high, 49 cm wide and 7 cm thick. The letters are about 3 cm high.

Text:

- ¹ [..]md w-ḥs²kt-hw Mrtd(t)
² w-bn-hmy 'fzlm mqtwt (m)-
³ (lk)n br 'w w-hwṭr w-ḥs²qrn
⁴ gyrt-hmw T(k)rb b-rd' ['ln]
⁵ b 'l-s' myn w-b-rd' mr'-hmw
⁶ Ḍr''mr 'ymn wrḥ-hw d-Ḥrf-
⁷ n (d-b)-ḥryfn d-l-'rb 't w-s¹ty w-(r)[b']
⁸ m'(tm)

Translation:

- ¹ [..]md, his wife Mrtd
² and their son 'fzlm, assistants to the
³ king, constructed, laid the foundations and completed
⁴ their gyrt — construction Tkrb, with the help of 'ln,
⁵ Master of the sky, and with the help of their lord
⁶ Ḍr''mr 'ymn, in the month d-Ḥrfn
⁷ of the year four hundred and
⁸ sixty-four

2. *Commentary*

L. 1. In accordance with the well-documented custom of Late SAB inscriptions, the author of the text joins his wife and son in the commemoration³. Since the stone is damaged on its upper side, there are some missing letters that cannot be recovered but which must have been two in number. The most likely reconstruction of the author's name appears to be *Yḥmd*, a very common name during the late SAB period⁴. The woman's name is the unusual female version of the common name *Mrtdm* (more rarely, *Mrtd*).

L. 2. Curiously enough, the official title is given in the plural form and therefore includes all the family members. The form *mqtwt* (from *mqtwy*) is a plural pattern that came into general use during the Late SAB period; in Middle SAB, however, it was proper only to the southern dialects, as opposed to the Central SAB *mqt*⁵.

L. 3. In the sequence of the construction verbs, *hwṭr* appears without the *-n* ending of derived stems. Unless this is an epigraphic mistake, it represents an exception to the Middle SAB rule known in documents from the southern highlands⁶.

³ Cf. Gar NIS 4: ¹*Whbm Ytf w-ḥs²kt-hw[bt]* ²*Lqyṭt w-'lwd-hmy ... br'w w-hq⁶s²bn byt-hmw S²b 'n* “*Whbm Ytf* and his wife, daughter of *Lqyṭt*, and their children constructed and finished their house *S²b 'n*”.

⁴ E.g., BR-Yanbuq 14.

⁵ Cf. MAFRAY-al-Mi'sāl 2/7 and MAFRAY-al-Mi'sāl 5/11. In inscriptions from Maḥram Bilqīs, only the plural *mqt* is used. The sole exception is the form *[mqt]wt* that has been proposed to fill a lacuna in Ja 661/2-3.

⁶ Stein 2002: 395-398.

L. 4. The word *gyrt* might be a *f^lt* pattern from the root GYR, usually to be found elsewhere in the form of the verbal noun *mgyrt* “plastering”⁷. However, the word here is preceded by the verb *br’* and the proper noun form is used. This indicates that we are dealing with a specific building rather than some generic construction activity referred to in the abstract, such as “plastering”. We could then assume that the form *gyrt* indicated a specific construction related to the production of the lime plaster it self⁸. Another option is that the noun might derive from another root with a weak letter. The root GWR is the most likely candidate, especially in the context of a comparison with Semitic. Although rarely found in Ancient South Arabian inscriptions⁹, one of the meanings of GWR in Semitic is “foreigner” or “foreign guest”¹⁰. The word *gyrt* could therefore refer to a room or house for foreign guests. There is one occurrence in another Late SAB inscription, Arbach 1, although in the context of a lacuna, where the word appears associated with a hall (*ms³wd*)¹¹. The name given to this construction – *Tkrb* – is interesting. The root KRB is widely known in onomastics to have been in use since the dawn of ancient South Arabian history, but it was almost exclusively associated with the names of individuals or social groups. In the Late SAB period, however, a noun such as *Ykrb* came to be used to designate a house (*byt*)¹².

Ll. 4-5. The integration with *’ln* “god” seems certain. The name, together with its variant *’lhn*, appears with different epithets in other monotheistic invocations: *’ln b’l s^lmyn*, *’ln mr’ s^lmyn*, *’ln mr’ s^lmyn w-’rdn*¹³.

Ll. 6-7. The inscription YM 1950 was also written in the month *Ḥrḥfn* (August) of the Ḥimyarite era.

L. 7. The plene writing of *ḥryfn* “year” has been found most frequently in southern Middle SAB, particularly in documents from the region of Dhamār and Zafār¹⁴; elsewhere, including in the south, the defective writing *hrfn* prevails.

3. The provenance of the inscription and the issue of its dating

The inscription contains little data on its geographic and cultural origins and context. In all events, it appears to be private in nature; although the authors define themselves as “assistants to the king”, they were probably not of high social rank since their onomastic formula, somewhat surprisingly, omits the family and tribe names and no monogram is inserted in the inscription¹⁵.

Although the exact place of origin cannot be identified, it undoubtedly can be maintained that the text came from one of the regions lying to the south, south-east of Ṣan‘ā’. As has been

⁷ VL 25/3 (Beeston *et al.* 1982: 52). Cf. the Arabic *jūr* “plaster”.

⁸ This meaning has been also recently suggested by Robin (forthcoming).

⁹ Cf. Beeston *et al.* 1982: 51, which gives the verb *gr* in CIH 548/1 the meaning of “to visit a sanctuary”. Cohen 1994-1999.

¹¹ Cf. l. 6: *m]s³wd byt-hmw ḏ-Zwrm w-gyr[... ...]*.

¹² There are three Late SAB inscriptions, in which *Ykrb* indicates a house: DhM 204/2, Fa 74/1, 6, Gar Bayt al-Ashwal 1/1. The noun *mkrb* also becomes the SAB noun indicating “the synagogue” (Robin 2003: 122).

¹³ See the tables in Gajda 2009: 227; Robin 2003: 170-173; Gajda 2002: 625-628.

¹⁴ Cf. CIH 46/6: *ḏ-b-ḥryfn ḏ-l-ḥms^lt w-ḥnyy w-ḥl m^ltm bn ḥryf Mbḥḏ bn ’bḥḏ*; Av. Būsān 4/5: *ḏ-b-ḥryfn ḏ-l-s^lb^lt w-ḥrb^l m^ltm bn ḥryf Mb]ḥḏ bn ’bḥḏ*.

¹⁵ Even in the most private contexts of inscriptions commissioned by individuals and their family members, a monogram of the author or his family often adorns the central part of the epigraphic frame. Two examples are Ibrahim al-Hudayd 1 (monogram of the banū *Ḥryfn*) and Gar NIS 4 (monogram of the author, *Whbm*).

noted above, some of its linguistic traits can in fact be linked to the southern dialects of Middle SAB. These peculiarities include the broken plural pattern *mqtwt* (l. 2), the unaugmented infinitive *hwtr* (l. 3), and the marked singular noun *hryfn* (l. 7).

If we try to narrow even further the area of origin on the basis of this data, it may be noted that the first two features, being common to almost all of the southern territories, do not point to any specific geographic origin. On the other hand, the marked singular noun *hryfn* allows us to rule out, at least hypothetically, the area of Radmān (banū Ma'āhir and dū-Hawlān) along with Hakir and Maḏhī, because in the documents from these regions the most commonly used form is the unmarked script *hrfn*. Consequently, this would make another southern area, such as Zafār or Dhamār, more likely as the provenance of this inscription.

Moreover, it is important to note that the complete formula *d-b-hryfn*, which follows the name of the month and introduces the date, is most typical of inscriptions that are dated using the systems of *Mbḥd bn 'bḥd* (era of Ḥimyar) or *'b'ly bn Rt'* (era of Radmān) –, although in the latter, as has been said, it appears as *b-hrfn* – whereas it is extremely rare in inscriptions that are dated using the system of *Nbṭm bn Hrf* (era of Maḏhī)¹⁶. This fact, joined to the morphological observation concerning the unmarked noun *hrfn*, makes highly unlikely not only a provenance from the area of Maḏhī but, what is most significant, a date based on the system of *Nbṭm bn Hrf*.

It should be recalled that, on the basis of what is currently known, beginning in the middle of the 4th century AD the era of Ḥimyar became the only reckoning system used in South Arabia, since the latest inscription using the system of *Nbṭm bn Hrf* is dated 388 (Ḍayq Bura' al-'Alā' 2)¹⁷. Taking the year 464 of inscription B 8457 to have been computed according to the system of *Nbṭm* would mean that, after a temporal span of seventy-six years, the era of Maḏhī was reused to date a document that in all likelihood was not written in the homeland of the tribe of Maḏhī.

Despite the difficulties raised by positing the rule of a royal personage named *Dr''mr 'ymn* in the middle of the 4th century AD (see section 5), I would prefer to assume that the inscription under discussion may be dated to after the era of Ḥimyar and originate somewhere between Ṣan'a' and Zafār.

Finally, concerning the provenance of the inscription, we should not gloss over the fact that the authors hold the title of *mqtwt mlkn*, which indicates that they are closely linked to the

¹⁶ The only two examples are RES 4197bis/4-5: *b-hrfn tny w-s'b'hy w-m't hrys'fm* and MQ-al-Jifjif 1/8-9: *b-hrf d-l-hms't w-s'b'h'y w-m'tnyw*.

¹⁷ Concerning this inscription, Robin has convincingly demonstrated the reasons why the date of the text should be calculated based on the system of *Nbṭm bn Hrf* (2005-2006: 73-74). First of all, the era of Ḥimyar must certainly be excluded, since it would produce a dating of 278 AD, which is not only too early for a monotheistic text, but also refers to the reign of the king *Ys'rm Yhn'm I*, at which time the qayl of Maḏhī was *Fr'n Yzl* (MQ Ḥayd Mūsa 1=RES 4196), an entirely different personage from that of Ḍayq Bura' al-'Alā' 2.

The hypothesis of a dating to the era of Radmān, which would mean 462 AD, is intriguing because it would place the inscription in the reign of *S'rḥb'l Y'fr*, for which we have texts documenting restoration work on the royal palace *Hrgb* (ZM 1A/3). This is consistent with the contents of the inscription from Bura', which refers to similar work on the same palace, *Hrgb*. First of all, however, it would be risky to posit so late a date as 388 for the era of *'b'ly*, which ceased being used in the year 198 (al-Mi'sāl 5). Moreover, the inscription Ḍayq Bura' al-'Alā' 3, commissioned by the father of the author of the no. 2, invokes a personage, *S'dm Yhs'kr*, who appears in other inscriptions dated 345 and 365 Maḏhī.

royal court. This would support the hypothesis that this text originated from the capital itself, Zafār, which seems to be corroborated by an evaluation of sources concerning the diffusion of the earliest monotheistic tendencies (see the section below).

4. Religious elements and the beginnings of monotheism in Ancient South Arabia

If the hypothesis proposed above can be substantiated, then inscription B 8457 becomes the earliest monotheistic document dated after the era of Ḥimyar.

Little more can be said about the religious nature of the text. After the protracted dispute regarding exactly what type of religion was being expressed in South Arabian documents from the monotheistic period¹⁸, today the prevailing opinion is that at least up until 530 AD in ancient South Arabia there was a Judaizing – though not openly Judaic – form of monotheism¹⁹.

As far as the terminology used is concerned, the inscription contains the formula *'ln b 'l-s'myn*. Up to now scholars thought that the unique god began to be referred to as Ilān only around the middle of the 5th century AD. The complete formula appears to be identical in inscriptions dating to the reign of the king *S'rḥb 'l Y'fr*, son of *'bkrb 's' 'd'*²⁰. However, this expression has also been found in the inscriptions *Ḍayq Bura' al-'Alā' 2* and *Ḍayq Bura' al-'Alā' 3*. These examples, combined with the text from the Military Museum of Ṣan'ā', constitute proof that since earliest times the monotheistic god could receive the appellative of *'ln*.

Regarding the epithet *b 'l*, since this word closely resembles the one used in pagan invocations – pagan deities were commonly referred to as the “Master” (*b 'l*) of a sanctuary – it had been regarded as typical of the transition phase from paganism to monotheism and the period of “unspecified monotheistic religion” that was seen between 450 and 509 AD. Nevertheless, this seems to be a rather tenuous hypothesis as well, because the “pagan” *b 'l* is actually combined with *'ln*, which is thought to be a Judaizing word²¹.

In view of the very ancient date of the text, the question of its provenance acquires considerable importance, because it could provide some hint as to how the earliest monotheistic notions spread in Ancient South Arabia. It is useful to pass in review here the epigraphic sources that reflect the shift from polytheism to monotheism and their geographic origins.

After the unification of Yemen by Ḥimyar at the end of the 3rd century AD, the abandonment of the pagan cult and the adoption of the monotheistic religion was preceded by a period during which a form of henotheism prevailed. It has been seen in fact that, at least in the northern areas of the former Sabaean kingdom, the invocations to multiple tribal deities were replaced in inscriptions by appeals to Almaqah alone.

The transition phase between the two religions is known to have taken place in the middle of the fourth century, during the reign of the king *T'rn Yhn 'm*, while the official adoption of the monotheistic faith by the Ḥimyarite crown is attributed to *T'rn Yhn 'm*'s son *Mlkrb*

¹⁸ Concerning the differing positions of previous scholars, see Robin 2003: 98-101.

¹⁹ Gajda 2009: 239; Robin 2004: 859-860.

²⁰ Cf. RES 5085/7-8 (560 Ḥim) and Dostal 1/4 (566 Ḥim). Other invocations mentioning the god *'l* — *'ln* — *'lhn* can be found in Ry 534+MAFY/Rayda 1/2 (543 Ḥim): *'l mr' s'my w-'rdn*; CIH 540/81-82 (565 Ḥim): *'lhn b' 'l s'myn w-'rdn*; MAFY-Bayt Ghufr 1/3 (without date but certainly commissioned during the reign of *Ḍr''mr 'mr II*): *'ln mr'-s'myn*. On the tables listing the religious terminology employed in monotheistic inscriptions, see fn. 13.

²¹ Robin 2003: 117-119.

Yh'mn. The two royal inscriptions commissioned by the latter in fact invoke the unique god with the identical formula *mr'-hmw Mr'-s'myn* (RES 3383/3-4 and Gar Bayt al-Ashwal 2/3-4, both dated 493 ʕim).

Sources show that the reign of *T'rn Yhn'm*, under which the first monotheistic texts appeared, was characterized by a varied religious profile, in which invocations to the polytheistic gods still persisted in various regions of Yemen²².

It seems clear that the first traces of the monotheistic faith must be sought for in the south of Yemen. A partially published group of rock inscriptions²³ originating from the region of Bura', south of ʕaṣī, which at the time was under the rule of the powerful tribe of Maḏhī (banū ʕaṣbaḥ), provide the earliest evidence of the acceptance of the new faith by the families of *Ḍrn*, *Gmln* and *'hrm*, whose members were administrators (*'qb*) or governors (*wz'*) of the district. Dated 388 of an unspecified era, Ḍayq Bura' al-'Alā' 2 invokes the "God, Master of the sky" (*'ln b'l s'myn*). Since, as has been said above, the year was in all likelihood calculated using the local dating system of *Nbtm bn Hrf*, this inscription could be the earliest dated monotheistic text known, dating back to 355±10 AD. Furthermore, the same formula is used in the inscription Ḍayq Bura' al-'Alā' 3 (incised above Ḍayq Bura' al-'Alā' 2), which was commissioned by the father of the author of that text. This inscription therefore pre-dates the other, which implies an even earlier adhesion to the new cult.

The identical monotheistic formula is to be found in the almost contemporaneous (354 AD) inscription B 8457 from the Military Museum of Ṣan'ā', which was commissioned by a family from the southern highlands.

Alongside this evidence of monotheism, however, we continue to find invocations to ʕimyarite gods in inscriptions from the south, not only at the beginning of the reign of *T'rn Yhn'm* (Maṣna'at Māriya, 434 ʕim²⁴), but also years later when the king formally added his son's name *Mlkkrb* to the royal title (Kh-Balās 1²⁵). In the lengthy inscription 'Abadān 1 (470 ʕim) from the valley of 'Abadān, which was governed by the Yazanites, it is noted that the members of a large, aristocratic Yazanite family still prayed to the pagan gods when they commemorated the victorious battles that they had fought all over Arabia²⁶.

Concerning data from the northern regions of Yemen, inscription YM 1950 reports the adhesion to monotheism by the princes of the tribe of Sam'ī belonging to the section of dū-Ḥumlān (*'qwl s'bn S'm'y tlt'n d-Ḥmln*), who invoke their "lord, Master of the sky" (*mr'-hmw B'l-s'myn*). The date is partially lost, but has been hypothetically set at 473/483 of the ʕimyarite era, placing the inscription 'Abadān 1 as the *terminus post quem* since the pagan formula used by the Yazanites appeared to make the dating of YM 1950 to 463 ʕim unlikely²⁷.

²² The reign of *T'rn Yhn'm* also saw the mission of Theophilus the Indian, who was sent by the emperor Constantius II to convert ancient South Arabia to Christianity (Fiaccadori 1992).

²³ The inscriptions from Bura' are mentioned in Robin 2005-2006: 57-58, 73-74, 95 and Gajda 2009: 39, fn 69. I am also grateful to C. Robin for having provided me with a transcription of the texts.

²⁴ Ll. 12-13: *b-'hyl w-rd' 'ly-hm¹³w 'ttr d-S'm'n w-'ttr d-Tmm*.

²⁵ The inscription, unedited, contains an invocation to *'ttr S'rqn*. Another unedited inscription from the region of Dhamār that must be almost contemporary with Kh-Balās 1, since it is probably dated 477 ʕim, is Kh-'Albaj 1, which is also a polytheistic text invoking the god *'ttr S'rqn* (see section 5).

²⁶ L. 43: *b-'ttr S'rqn w-Wdm b'l Myf't w-S'yn d-'lm*.

²⁷ Gajda 2005: 21-29. However, in view of the evidence that has now come to light of monotheism at an earlier date, it is no longer necessary to maintain this argument.

Nevertheless, in the north as well sporadic examples of dedications to 'Almaqah by private individuals dating to the latter part of the reign of *T'rn Yhn'm* (MQ-Ma'rib 1²⁸ and possibly BynM 1²⁹) have been found.

Taken together, these data suggest that monotheism first spread across the southern regions of Yemen around 350 AD, most probably from the capital Zafār and the area east of it (see Table 1). Those who first adhered to monotheism were personages close to the Ḥimyarite court, as is shown from the inscriptions from Bura' and the text from the Military Museum of Ṣan'ā'. In the following twenty years (and possibly up to 373 AD according to YM 1950), the *qayls* representative of the tribes from the other regions of Yemen (Ma'rib, Hamdān, Dhamār, 'Abadān) continued to commission inscriptions with polytheistic invocations.

However, after a period of about thirty years during which monotheism co-existed with traditional beliefs, the new cult was finally adopted in 383 AD (RES 3383) by the Ḥimyarite court, when they recognized that it could be used as a political tool to maintain unity in the vast and diverse country of South Arabia over which they held control.

5. On the identity of the king *Dr''mr 'ymn*

In addition to its monotheistic character, inscription B 8457 is interesting because it contains the invocation to a personage, the lord (*mr'*) of the authors of the inscription, whose name is *Dr''mr 'ymn*. Although cited without patronymic or royal title, *Dr''mr 'ymn* was probably a king or royal prince.

As far as we know, there were two different kings bearing this name: the first was *Dr''mr 'ymn*, the son of *Ys'rm Yhn'm* (II), who reigned from 315 to 320 AD ca. (Ir 29, Ja 665), and the second, *Dr''mr 'ymn*, was the son of *Mlkkrb Yh'mn* and the brother of *'bkrb 's' 'd* (377-420 AD). About sixty years separate these two kings, so they were necessarily two different personages.

The earlier *Dr''mr 'ymn* is acknowledged to have started, together with his father *Ys'rm Yhn'm*, the second Ḥimyarite war against Ḥaḍramawt, which was won by a subsequent sovereign, *Dmr'ly Yhbr*, who conquered the eastern part of Ḥaḍramawt³⁰. The reign of *Ys'rm Yhn'm* and *Dr''mr 'ymn* must be dated to after 310 AD, when King *S²mr Y'rs²* was still on the throne (Pi. Baynūn 3, 420 Ḥim), and was quickly followed by the dynasty of *Dmr'ly Yhbr*, who associated his son *T'rn Yhn'm* with his title during the conflict – the latter is first mentioned in 324 AD (Maṣna'at Māriya, 434 Ḥim)³¹.

Concerning *Dr''mr 'ymn* II, it has been recognised that this king (who did not himself leave any testimony to his reign) is invoked alone in the inscriptions commissioned by pri-

²⁸ Originating from the temple of Maḥram Bilqīs, the text bears a dedication addressed to Almaqah in 461 Ḥim. Cf. Robin 1998: 125 and Müller 2010: 49.

²⁹ Conserved in the museum of Baynūn, BynM 1 is a dedication to Almaqah, Master of *S²b'n*. In the text, *T'rn* – without the epithet – and his son *Mlkrym*, kings of Saba', dū-Raydān, Ḥaḍramawt and Yamnat, are referred to. The absence of the royal epithet and the mention of a son, *Mlkrym*, who is elsewhere unknown, makes it not absolutely certain that this *T'rn* should be identified with *T'rn Yhn'm*.

³⁰ Robin 2005a: 140-145. The inscriptions reporting these events are: Ja 665, CIH 397, Ir 32, Ir 31, Schmidt-Ma'rib 28+Ja 668.

³¹ Between these two dynasties, the brief interval of *Krb'l Wtr Yhn'm* has been hypothetically inserted by Robin (2010: 377; *contra* Robin 2005a: 150, where this king is listed before *Ys'rm Yhn'm*). A revolt in the Ḥimyarite capital Zafār during *Krb'l Wtr Yhn'm* is also mentioned in Ja 667+Ja 826A.

vate individuals³². Otherwise, in royal inscriptions he only appears in co-regency with his father *Mlkkrb Yh'mn* or his brother *'bkrb 's' 'd*. Apparently an agreement regarding the division of the royal duties was reached, allowing the *Dr''mr* to deal exclusively with the management of the kingdom and the administration of internal affairs, while *'bkrb 's' 'd* may have been engaged in military enterprises and religious reform. Another peculiar feature regarding this *Dr''mr 'ymn* is that in the texts he is always cited without his patronymic, as if he were of secondary rank and not the king's legitimate son³³.

The identification of the king *Dr''mr 'ymn* cited in inscription B 8457 is closely linked to the issue of the reckoning system used to date the text. If B 8457 was dated using the system of *Nbṭm bn Ḥrf*, then the year would be 431±10 AD. This would appear to support the hypothesis that the king referred to is *Dr''mr 'ymn* II, with the implication that the co-regency of *'bkrb 's' 'd* and *Dr''mr 'ymn* lasted slightly longer than is generally supposed³⁴.

However, the preferred hypothesis, for the reasons explained above, that the inscription should be dated 464 Him (corresponding to 354 AD) makes somewhat possible the identification of the king either with *Dr''mr 'ymn* II or with the earlier *Dr''mr 'ymn*, son of *Ys'rm Yhn'm*.

In both cases, a personage who may have ruled at this date (354 AD) raises some questions, because his reign would fall in the middle of the period of *T'rn Yhn'm*, whose chronological endpoints are 324 AD (Maṣna'at Māriya, 434 Him)³⁵ and 377 AD (Shu'lān-Shibām K., 487 Him)³⁶. In fact, there are various elements that provide support for this assumption, in addition to the likelihood of the Himyarite era as the dating system for the inscription. One argument concerns *T'rn Yhn'm* who, although he ruled for a long period of time, was apparently a king lacking in charisma who relied on a number of individuals of high rank (princes who also held the title of king) to help him govern.

In the long inscription 'Abadān 1, it is reported that the numerous military expeditions in which the author, his sons and his nephews participated were led not only by *T'rn Yhn'm*, but also by two other sovereigns or rulers, *T'rn 'yḥ'* and *Dmr'ly 'yḥ'*. Based on a calculation of the number of years that may have passed between these military campaigns, it has been deduced that these two latter personages would have led the operations between approximately 340 and 357 AD, when *T'rn Yhn'm* would have been quite aged. *T'rn 'yḥ'* and *Dmr'ly 'yḥ'* may have been relatives of the king who were never officially associated with the royal throne, although they both were referred to as "king" (*mlkn*) in the text³⁷. Recently, it has also been suggested that *T'rn 'yḥ'* might be identified as the co-regent (brother or son) of *Ys'rm Yhn'm* II³⁸.

This could provide support that *Dr''mr 'ymn* was the son of this very *Ys'rm Yhn'm* II. Assuming that *Dr''mr* was very young when he was associated with the royal title by his

³² Cf. Gar Bayt al-Ashwal 1, MAFY-Bayt Ghufri 1 and Aḡbarī-as-Sayla al-Baydā' 1.

³³ On the kings *'bkrb 's' 'd* and *Dr''mr 'ymn*, see Robin 2005b: 371-379.

³⁴ In fact, *Dr''mr 'ymn* appears associated with his brother's title (together with *'bkrb*'s sons) in two undated inscriptions (Gar BSE and Gar FES 7), but he is absent from the inscription Ry 534+MAFY-Rayda 1 (433 AD).

³⁵ Ll. 13-14: *T'rn Yhn'm mlk S'b' w-d-Rydn bn Dmr'ly Yhbr mlk S'b' w-d-Rydn*.

³⁶ The inscription is unpublished: [... ...] *'bkrb 's' 'd w-Dr''mr 'ymn mlky S'b' w-d-Rydn w-Ḥdrmwṭ w-Ymnt*. For a list of the Himyarite kings of this period, see Robin 2010: 377-378, on the basis of which table 1 of the present article has been compiled.

³⁷ Robin 2005a: 145-147.

³⁸ Robin 2010: 377.

father around 320 AD³⁹, it would be plausible to find him once again, about 30 years later, in this inscription holding a royal function (as witnessed by the official title of the authors – “assistants to the king”). Incidentally, the fact that there is no mention of *Dr''mr* in ‘Abadān I does not disprove this hypothesis, because the sharing of royal functions that has been hypothesized for *'bkrb 's' d* and *Dr''mr 'ymn* II could also have applied in the case of other kings, and therefore for the reign of *T'rn Yhn 'm*.

Another element that bears out this historical reconstruction concerns the palaeographic style of B 8457. The general appearance of the inscription, which is carved in relief, and the shape of certain letters, such as the *'*, *b* and *w* are similar to the relief inscriptions dating to the period of *Ys'rm Yhn 'm* II and his son *Dr''mr 'ymn*, i.e., DhM 290 (fig. 2) and Kh-Adra'a 1 (fig. 3).

In addition to B 8457, a second piece of evidence supporting the existence of a ruler named *Dr''mr 'ymn* during the reign of *T'rn Yhn 'm* comes from an unedited document, Kh-‘Albaj 1, originating from a site in the region of Dhamār. The inscription, incised in relief on a stone and quite difficult to decipher, is a text reporting construction activities conducted by members of the local tribes. The interesting fact is that, although chronologically the inscription is quite late, the authors defined themselves as priests of the sanctuary *'lm*, the temple of the tribal god *'tr d-Gwftm*, who had been venerated in the region since the most archaic times⁴⁰. Kh-‘Albaj 1 was produced during the reign of *Dr''mr 'ymn*, the king of Saba', *dū-Raydān*, *Ḥaḍramawt* and *Yamnat*; the portion of the text reporting the date, using the system of *Mbḥd bn 'bḥd*, is not very legible, but on the basis of the letters deciphered it seems that the text may have been written in 477 Ḥim⁴¹. Therefore, it is very likely that the *Dr''mr 'ymn* mentioned must be identified with the same personage of B 8457.

Alongside the hypothesis that *Dr''mr 'ymn* I is the personage referred to in B 8457, the alternative assumption that this must instead have been *Dr''mr 'ymn* II is also chronologically plausible. If so, the ruler was first mentioned, without a royal title, in 464 Ḥim (B 8457), then he is cited alone as king in 477 Ḥim (Kh-‘Albaj 1)⁴², then as a king with his brother *'bkrb 's' d* in 487 Ḥim (Shu‘lān-Shibām K.), and finally as king together with his father *Mlkkrb Yh'mn* and his brother *'bkrb 's' d* in 493 Ḥim (RES 3383 and Gar Bayt al-Ashwal 2). In fact, it is the chronological succession of these documents all together that gives weight to the identification of the personage of B 8457 with this *Dr''mr 'ymn*.

Obviously, this reconstruction implies that *Dr''mr 'ymn* II was not the real son of *Mlkkrb*, but a personage belonging to an older generation who held royal duties even before the *Mlkkrb* himself and who was probably first associated with the royal title by the king *T'rn Yhn 'm*⁴³.

³⁹ The unedited inscription Kh-Adra'a 1, written by *Ys'rm Yhn 'm* II and one of his sons (most probably *Dr''mr 'ymn*) is dated 426 Ḥim.

⁴⁰ Prioletta 2008: 193-211.

⁴¹ The inscription Kh-‘Albaj 1 was discovered, photographed and deciphered by K. Noman, who has kindly provided me with a photo and a transcription of the text. “Despite the difficulty in reading this text, it seems to be more likely to read 477 than 499 as suggested by him. In any case, either date does not change much the historical frame.”

⁴² *Dr''mr 'ymn* also appears alone as king in three other inscriptions without a date: MAFY Bayt-Ghufri 1 (northwest of Ṣan‘ā'), Aḡbarī-as-Sayla al-Bayḏā' 1 (northeast of Aden) and Gar Bayt al-Ashwal 1 (Zafār).

⁴³ I owe this suggestion to C. Robin, whom I must thank for having provided illuminating remarks on every section of this paper. He also pointed out the close links between this *Dr''mr 'ymn* and the Judaic communities in Yemen, and suggests that inscription B 8457 may actually have been commissioned by Jews.

There are other elements in our inscription that support the identification of the personage in this text with *Dr''mr 'ymn* II: B 8457 was in fact commissioned by private individuals and the king is cited alone, with no patronymic or title.

To conclude, the newly discovered inscription in the Military Museum of Ṣan'ā', together with other epigraphic evidence, seems to prove the existence of a ruler named *Dr''mr 'ymn* who carried out royal duties during the reign of *T'rn Yhn'm*, the son of *Dmr'ly Yhbr*. This *Dr''mr 'ymn* could have been either the son of *Ys'rm Yhn'm* II or the “son” of *Mlkkrb Yh'mn*; both options are chronologically tenable, although a general consideration of the data makes the identification with the later *Dr''mr 'ymn* preferable⁴⁴.

The surviving documentation on the South Arabian royal dynasties is scarce and our picture of the administration of the kingship remains somewhat confused. In the case of *T'rn Yhn'm* – and even of *Mlkkrb Yh'mn* – what emerges are the figures of apparently weak kings, alongside whom there were other personages holding royal prerogatives. These may have been princes and members of the ruling dynasty, but also descendants of collateral branches, former ruling dynasties or powerful families close to the royal house. It could have been in part due to this difficulty experienced by the Ḥimyarite kings in maintaining their power that, soon after the reign of *T'rn Yhn'm*, the very *Mlkkrb Yh'mn* decided to embrace monotheism as the official religion of Ancient South Arabia.

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⁴⁴ The possibility that we may be dealing with a third *Dr''mr 'ymn* is not considered, because it is preferable to avoid multiplying homonymous kings and personages when studying South Arabian royal genealogies.

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INSCRIPTION SIGLA⁴⁵

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'Abadān 1:
Robin, Gajda 1994: 113-137, pls. 49-57.
Arbach 1:
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- Dostal 1:
Müller 1974: 139-144, fig. 37, pl. XI.
Dayq Bura' al-'Alā' 2 and 3:
Robin 2005-2006: 57-58, 73-74, 95.
Fa 74:
Müller 1976: 62-67, pl. IV 5, 6.
Gar Bayt al-Ashwal 1, Gar Bayt al-Ashwal 2:
Garbini 1970: 153-161, pl. I a.; 161-163, pl. I c.
Gar BSE:
Garbini 1970: 163-164, pl. II b.
Gar FES 7:
Garbini 1973b: 590, pl. I d.
Gar NIS 4:
Garbini 1973a: 45-46, pl. IV.
Gar SF V:
Garbini 1978: 34, pl. 5.
Graf 5:
Müller 1972: 100-101, pl. XIII, 38.
Ibrahim al-Hudayd 1:
Gajda 2004: 197-202, fig. 1.
Ir 29:
J. Ryckmans 1975: 203-208.
Ir 31:
J. Ryckmans 1975: 209.
Ir 32:
Müller 1981: 225-256 (photo).
Ja 520:
Jamme 1955: 117-118, pl. II.
Ja 661, Ja 664, Ja 665, Ja 667+Ja 826A, Ja 669, Ja 670, Ja 671+Ja 788:
Jamme 1962: 166-167, pl. 18; 168-169; 169-172; 172-173, pl. 19; 174-175; 175-176; 176-178; pl. 42.
Ja 856:
Jamme 1960: 3-5, pl. I.
Kh-Aḍra'a 1:
Inscription in Noman 2012.
Kh-'Albaj 1:
Inscription Noman 2012.
Kh-Balās 1:
Inscription Noman 2012.
MAFRAY-al-Mi'sāl 2:
Müller 2010: 25-27.
MAFRAY-al-Mi'sāl 5:
Müller 2010: 28-31.
MAFY-Bayt Ghufr 1:
Robin 2005b: 375-376, fig. 2.

- MAFY-Banū Zubayr:
Müller 2010: 60.
Maşna‘at Māriya:
Müller 2010: 44-45.
MQ-al-Jifjif 1:
Müller 2010: 23.
MQ Ḥayd Mūsà 1=RES 4196:
Müller 2010: 37.
MQ-Ma’rib 1:
Müller 2010: 49.
MQ-Minkath 1:
Inscription unedited.
Pi. Baynūn 3=YM 1695:
Pirenne 1987: 103-108, pl. 8 a.
Pi. Raydān 3:
Pirenne 1980: 238, pl. VI c.
RES 3883, RES 4197bis, RES 5085:
Inscription in *Répertoire d'épigraphie sémitique. V-VIII. Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1928-1968.*
Ry 534+MAFY/Rayda 1:
Robin 1996: 703-706, figs. 4-5.
Schmidt-Ma’rib 28+Ja 668:
Nebes 1996: 279-297 (photo); Jamme 1962: 173-174, pl. 19.
Shu‘lān-Shibām K.:
Inscription unedited.
VL 25=Ja 2354:
Ghul 1959: 425-429, pl. 3.
YM 1950:
Gajda 2005: 22-26, fig. 1.
ZM 1A:
Müller 2010: 75-76.

Table 1: Chronological list of the most relevant inscriptions related to the *Dr''mr'ymn I and II* and their religious character

Text	Date	King	God
DhM 290	[42]4 H̄im	Ys1r[m Yhn'm] II (?LT: Long Title – King of Saba', d̄ū-Raydān, Ḥadramawt and Yamnat)	
Pi. Raydān 3		Ys1rm Y[hn'm] II	
Ja 664		Ys1rm Yhn'm II + T'rm 'yf' (LT)	'lmqh
Ir 29 Ja 665		Ys1rm Yhn'm II + his son D̄r''mr'ymn (LT)	'lmqh
Capuzzi		Ys1rm Yhn'm II + his son [D̄r''mr'ymn] (LT)	
Kh-Aḡra'a 1	426 H̄im	Ys1rm Yhn'm II + his son [D̄r''mr'ymn] (LT)	
Ir 31 Ir 32		D̄mr'ly Yhbr (LT)	'lmqh
Schmidt-Ma'rib 28 + Ja 668		D̄mr'ly Yhbr + his son T'm Yhn'm (LT)	'lmqh
Gar SF V		[D̄mr'ly] Yh[br] + his son [T'rm Y[hn'm]	
Graf 5		[D̄mr'ly Yhbr] + his son T'rm Yhn'm	
Maṣna'at Māriya	434 H̄im	T'rm Yhn'm (KSR: King of Saba' and d̄ū-Raydān)	'ṭr d-S'm'n and 'ṭr d-tmm
DhM 201		T'rm Yhn'm (KSR)	'ṭr S ² rqn
MQ-Ma'rib 1	461 H̄im		'lmqh
Dayq Bura' al-'Alā' 2	388 Maḡhī		'ln b'j s'myn
B 8457	464 H̄im	D̄r''mr'ymn	'ln b'j s'myn
'Abadān 1	470 H̄im	T'rm Yhn'm, T'rm 'yf', D̄mr'ly 'yf'	'ṭr S ² rqn, Wdm b'l Myf't and S'lyn d-1m
Kh-'Albaj 1	[4]7[7] H̄im	D̄r''mr'ymn (LT)	'ṭr S ² rqn
BynM 1		T'rm (Yhn'm ?) and his son Mlkrym	'lmqh
Kh-Balās 1		T'rm Yhn'm + his son Mlkrb Y'mn (KSR)	'ṭr S ² rqn

Ja 669 Ja 670 Ja 671+ Ja 788	[365-375 AD]	T ^o rn Yhn ^o m + his son Mlkkrb Yh ^o mn (LT)	'lmqh
DhM 204		T ^o rn Yhn ^o m + his sons Mlkkrb Yh ^o mn and Dmr ^o ly Yhbr (LT)	
MQ-Minkath 1		T ^o rn Yhn ^o m + his sons Mlkkrb Yh ^o mn and Dmr ^o ly Yhbr (LT)	
YM 1950	[47]3/[48]3 Him	T ^o rn Yhn ^o m + his son(s) (LT)	B ^o l-s ^o myn
Ja 856		Mlkkrb Yh ^o mn + his son [b ^o krb s ^o l ^o d] (LT)	
Shu 'lan-Shibām K	487 Him	[Mlkkrb Yh ^o mn] + his sons b ^o krb s ^o l ^o d and Dr ^o mr ^o ymn (LT)	
Gar Bayt al-Ashwal 2 RES 3383	493 Him	Mlkkrb Yh ^o mn + his sons b ^o krb s ^o l ^o d and Dr ^o mr ^o ymn (LT)	mr ^o -hmw Mr ^o s ^o myn
Gar Bayt al-Ashwal 1		Dr ^o mr ^o ymn ^o n (LT)	mr ^o -hw d-br ^o nfs ^o -hw mr ^o hyn w-mwtn mr ^o s ^o myn w- ^o rqn
MAFY Bayt-Ghufr 1		Dr ^o mr ^o ymn (LT)	'ln mr ^o -s ^o myn
Aġbarī-as-Sayla al-Baydā' 1		Dr ^o mr ^o ymn (LT)	
MAFY-Banū Zubayr	512 Him		T ^o lb
Gar BSE		b ^o krb s ^o l ^o d + his brother Dr ^o mr ^o ymn + his sons Hs3n Y ^o mn, M ^o dkrb Y ^o m and Hgr ^o yf ^o (LT)	
Ja 520		[b ^o krb s ^o l ^o d + his brother [Dr ^o mr ^o ymn] + his sons [Hs3n Y ^o mn, M ^o dkrb Y ^o m] and Hgr ^o yf ^o (LT?)	
Gar FES 7		[b ^o krb s ^o l ^o d + his brother Dr ^o mr ^o ymn + his sons Hs3n Yh ^o [mn]]	



Fig. 1. Inscription B 8457



Fig. 2. Inscription DhM 290



Fig. 3. Inscription Kh-Adra 'a 1 (fragment)

Christian Julien ROBIN

‘*TTR* AU FÉMININ EN ARABIE MÉRIDIONALE¹’

Les fouilles étatsuniennes ont mis au jour à Tamna², au début des années 1950, un texte mentionnant une curieuse titulature de la déesse dhāt Ḥimyam: *ḏt Ḥmym ‘ttr Yġl*³. Elles confirmaient que, dans l’inscription RES 4332 d’al-‘Ādiyya, il fallait bien lire la même chose, alors qu’on avait cru nécessaire d’introduire une correction: «bei der Dāt-ḤMY^m <und> (bei) ‘Attar YĠL».

Cette titulature a été interprétée diversement, mais toujours avec l’idée que *‘ttr* désignait le dieu suprême (en tout cas mentionné en premier) des panthéons des principales communes de l’Arabie méridionale.

L’éditeur du texte de Tamna⁴, Albert Jamme, rendait *ḏt Ḥmym ‘ttr Yġl* par «Dât-Ḥimiyâm ‘Attar Yaġul», avec ce commentaire: «The intimate association of the sun-godess with her son the star is already mentioned in RES 4332»⁴. A. Jamme n’expliquait pas ce qu’il entendait par cette «association intime».

Maria Höfner, qui croyait reconnaître «derrière ce nom de la déesse solaire une représentation mythologique», s’est tout d’abord lancée, comme à son habitude, dans des spéculations étymologiques hasardeuses. Si *Yġl* était rapporté à *ĠWL*, sa signification serait «Destructeur» ou «Pillard» (Zerstörer, Räuber), plutôt que «Vengeur» comme le proposait A. Jamme; dans ce cas, *ḏt Ḥmym ‘ttr Yġl* signifierait une caractérisation combative de ‘Athtar (l’étoile du matin). Mais si on retenait la racine *WĠL*, on obtiendrait quelque chose comme «‘Athtar qui entre (près du Soleil?)», ce qui serait en relation avec l’étoile du soir⁵.

¹ Alessia Prioleta, Irene Rossi et Mounir Arbach ont bien voulu relire cette contribution et me faire part de leurs observations. Qu’ils trouvent ici l’expression de ma gratitude.

² Se reporter à la carte Robin, Brunner 1997 pour la localisation des toponymes et ethnonymes.

³ CIAS 47.11/o1/F72=Ja 122=CSAI I, 125.

⁴ Jamme 1958: 191-192.

⁵ Höfner 1965: 532, sous l’entrée «Šams».

Dans un article publié en 1983, Maria Höfner a penché finalement pour une autre interprétation, celle d'un «mariage sacré», modifiant légèrement sa traduction initiale: «*dāt Hamyim* auprès de laquelle 'Attar entre»⁶.

Jacqueline Pirenne adoptait comme traduction «*Dāt-Ḥamīm* (Fortune de) 'Attar», avec ce commentaire: «Nous avons proposé de reconnaître en cette déesse: *dāt hamīm*, “celle à l'ardente sollicitude protectrice” ... Il est impossible de supposer que cette déesse est en même temps «'Attar». Elle est la déesse du dieu 'Attar. Nous proposons de la reconnaître comme la «Fortune de Vénus», connue par Fr. Cumont dans le culte syrien ... Depuis, l'apparition d'un relief publié par J. Ryckmans [le relief Ingrams] ... et représentant la déesse en Fortune, avec une corne d'abondance, est venue corroborer cette hypothèse»⁷.

Jacques Ryckmans, traitant de *dāt Ḥmym 'ttr Bs³rm* dans JR-WBrashear 1, commentait: «pour autant qu'on puisse en juger, 'ttr bsr^m est ici assimilé à *dāt Ḥmym*, puisqu'aux lignes 3-4 le dédicant confie ses facultés à la seule *dāt Ḥmym*. ... Ces appellations ont donné lieu à des interprétations contradictoires, qui nous paraissent pouvoir être résolues à condition de tenir compte: (1) du genre ambivalent de 'Attar dans le monde sémitique en général; (2) du fait que l'attribution des appellations féminines uniquement ou principalement à la seule divinité solaire n'est nullement établie; (3) du phénomène – dûment constaté – de la fusion en une seule des appellations de deux divinités primitivement différentes, honorées dans le même sanctuaire»⁸.

Je cite enfin le site sur la Toile du CSAI: «According to J. Ryckmans the mention of *dāt Ḥmym 'ttr Yǧl* (also attested in CSAI II, 4=Ja 1096, whereas in CSAI I, 154 =JRy.WBrashear 1 we have *dāt Ḥmym 'ttr Bs³rm*) is an example of religious syncretism. Another possibility is to see here a relationship between gods, a particular link (perhaps the wife) of the goddess *dāt Ḥmym* with 'ttr. However, a mere coupling of the two divine names «*dāt Ḥmym* of 'ttr» does sound rather curious»⁹.

Il y a quelques années¹⁰, j'avais proposé de reconnaître dans le terme 'ttr non pas le nom du dieu 'Attar, mais une catégorie de divinités féminines. Dans cette contribution, je voudrais reprendre l'ensemble du dossier qui s'est récemment enrichi de plusieurs textes publiés en annexe et le traiter de manière plus approfondie.

Il se confirme tout d'abord que 'ttr peut se mettre au duel, ce qui s'accorde dans une certaine mesure avec l'hypothèse que ce théonyme est employé comme un nom commun, à la manière d'*ʿil* et de *shams*. Je ferai ensuite l'inventaire de toutes les attestations de 'ttr en position intermédiaire dans des appellations divines. Puis j'examinerai la nature des termes qui qualifient 'ttr dans ces titulatures, ainsi que leur distribution géographique et chronologique. Enfin, je me demanderai si certains théonymes du Jawf yéménite et deux divinités d'Arabie du Nord (Atarsamain et Atarqaruma) n'illustrent pas un emploi similaire de 'ttr. Ma conclusion est que 'ttr peut souvent s'analyser comme un théonyme féminin plus ou moins substantivé, qui dérive probablement de l'Ishtar mésopotamienne.

A. Deux textes de la commune de Sufār^{um} (Hautes-Terres méridionales) dans lesquels le mot 'ttr est employé au duel

Dans deux inscriptions mentionnant les mêmes divinités, 'ttr est employé au duel. La première attestation se trouvait dans Bāfaqīh-Bāṭāyi' al-Ḥadd II-2, où j'avais signalé cette

⁶ Höfner 1983: 164.

⁷ CIAS I, 1: 132.

⁸ Ryckmans J. 1987: 168.

⁹ <http://csai.humnet.unipi.it/csai>

¹⁰ Robin: 2005: 70-71.

particularité; malheureusement, le texte était trop mutilé pour permettre une bonne compréhension du passage. On dispose désormais d'un texte de lecture incontestable, Lahj n° 61, publié ci-dessous en annexe.

– Lahj n° 61 (fig. 1)

Dans ce texte, qui commémore la construction d'un puits par les princes de la commune de Sufār^{um} (à situer dans le Haut-Yāfi'), les invocations se lisent:

- 4 ... *b-(hy)l-s'*=
 5 *mw w-²h_{yl} 'lht-s'¹m 'm d-Mbrq^m w-¹ttr/*
 6 (*d*)-²*mr^m w-d_{ty} Hmym 'ttry Bs³r^m w-²=*
 7 *dhn^m w-b-rd' w-h_{yl} s²b-s'¹m S'fr^m*

«... avec leurs propres for[ces et toutes celles de leurs divinités 'Amm dhu-Mbrq^m, 'Athtar | dhu-²mr^m, les deux dhāt Hīmyam, les deux 'ithtar¹¹ de Bs³r^m et de ²dhn^m, et avec l'aide et les forces de leur commune Sufār^{um}»

Le texte date très probablement du I^{er} siècle de l'ère chrétienne. Dans *d_{ty} Hmym 'ttry Bs³r^m w-²dhn^m*, il n'est guère contestable que *d_t Hmym* et *'ttr* sont au duel. Cette formulation peut s'analyser comme une manière ramassée de mentionner deux déesses homonymes, *d_t Hmym 'ttr Bs³r^m* et *d_t Hmym 'ttr 'dhn^m*. La nature des noms propres *Bs³r^m* et *'dhn^m* sera examinée dans le paragraphe consacré à l'ensemble des termes qui qualifient *'ttr* dans les formules de ce type.

– *Bāfaqīh-Bātāyi' al-Ḥadd II-2* (Šanā' Āl Zayn, non loin de Banū Bakr, à l'ouest de Baydā'-Ḥašī) (fig. 2)

Les éditeurs n'avaient pas déchiffré en entier les invocations divines. Après m'être rendu à Šanā' Āl Zayn, j'avais proposé de lire:

... *b-¹ttr S²r^qm w-b-⁵m d-Mbrq^m w-[b-²n](b)y [... 'ttry Bs³r^m w-⁶'dhn^m w-b s²ms'¹-h_{mw}*

Je faisais alors remarquer qu'on trouvait ici pour la première fois, malheureusement dans un contexte mutilé, le nom de *'ttr* au duel¹². Grâce à Lahj 61, il est désormais possible de proposer une restitution complète:

... *b-¹ttr S²r^qm w-b-⁵m d-Mbrq^m w-[b-d_t]y (H)[mym 'ttry Bs³r^m w-⁶'dhn^m w-b s²ms'¹-h_{mw}*

«... avec 'Athtar Šhāriqān, avec 'A|mm dhu-Mbrq^m, [avec les] deux [dhāt Hīmyam], les deux 'ithtar de Bs³r^m et de ²dhn^m, et avec leur *shams*»

Ces deux textes mentionnent donc un même théonyme complexe dans lequel dhāt Hīmyam et *'ttr* apparaissent au duel. Pour dhāt Hīmyam, c'est le pronom qui porte la marque du duel (*d_{ty} Hmym*), tandis que pour *'ttr* c'est le théonyme lui-même. Ce n'est pas la première fois qu'un théonyme se présente ainsi au duel. On connaît un précédent avec *S²ms'¹m*, «Soleil», qui se trouve très souvent au duel ou au pluriel, *s²ms'¹y-* ou *'s²ms'¹*. Il est clair que dans ce cas, *s²ms'¹* est employé pour désigner une catégorie d'êtres surnaturels, chargée de la protection des personnes et des lignages¹³.

Le théonyme Īl (*'l*) offre également un précédent intéressant. Attesté fort rarement et seulement à l'époque ancienne (si on excepte l'onomastique), il est utilisé très fréquemment comme appellatif, avec le sens de «dieu», au singulier, au duel ou au pluriel. Le pluriel de cet appellatif, *'l_l*, formé par redoublement du radical, est unique en Arabie méridionale: il signale le caractère singulier de ce mot.

¹¹ Je rends le théonyme féminin *'ttr* par *'Ithtar*, ou par *'ithtar* quand il est substantivé. La vocalisation, évidemment hypothétique, mais plausible, est celle de la déesse mésopotamienne Ishtar.

¹² Robin 2005: 70.

¹³ Un bon exemple est offert par FB-al-Baydā' 1/32-33, où c'est la déesse *d_t-B'¹dn^m* qui est qualifiée de *s²ms'¹* (*w-b s²ms'¹-h_{mw} | d_t B'¹dn^m*).

Pour évaluer la signification du duel de *ʿttr*, on peut également se tourner vers l'arabe, la seule langue apparentée qui offre d'intéressants parallèles. Un nom propre peut y être employé au pluriel pour désigner l'ensemble des personnages portant ce nom ou un nom semblable.

Al-Ḥasan al-Hamdānī, dans son traité sur les homographes et les homonymes, s'intéresse ainsi aux «al-Aʿārib» (pluriel de Yaʿrub, Aʿrab et ʿArīb), «al-Hamāsiʿ» (pluriel d'al-Hamaysaʿ), «al-ʿAbāshim» (pluriel de ʿAbd Shams), «al-Ashāriḥ» (pluriel d'Ilī Sharaḥ, dhū Sharaḥ), «al-Zuraʿāt» (pluriel de Zurʿa) etc.¹⁴

J'ai aussi relevé le nom d'un prince au duel pour désigner deux de ses descendants. Dans son commentaire du vers de Jarīr qui mentionne «les deux al-Jawn» (*al-Jawnayn* au cas direct), Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Yazīdī indique: «al-Jawnān sont ʿAmr et Muʿāwiya, fils de Sharāḥīl b. ʿAmr b. al-Jawn»¹⁵.

Quand les lexicographes traitent de deux tribus homonymes, le duel peut être employé pour les désigner: on dira ainsi al-Azdān pour nommer ensemble Azd al-Sarāt et Azd ʿUmān¹⁶.

Le fait qu'un mot comme *ʿttr* soit attesté au duel ne signifie pas nécessairement qu'il soit employé comme nom commun, mais c'est un premier indice.

Je mentionne incidemment le texte YM 24 905 (fin du VIII^e ou début du VII^e siècle avant l'ère chrétienne) dans lequel apparaît aussi un terme dérivant selon toute vraisemblance du théonyme *ʿttr*. L'inscription est gravée sur les parois latérales d'une table à libations:

ʿttryhn bhn ʿwhn nt#ḍr k-ʿhn b-hn l-#yḍbhn-sʿ w-(ʿl) ʿrb nḍ-sʿ

«Les *ʿttryhn*, fils de *ʿwhn*, ont fait pénitence envers *ʿhn* parce que, si (?) ils Lui offrent des sacrifices, ils n'obtiennent (?) pas Son assentiment (?)»¹⁷

La traduction de ce texte énigmatique, que je ne discute pas ici, est très incertaine. *Bhn* est le pluriel de *bn*, «fils». Il en résulte que le premier mot, *ʿttryhn*, désigne un groupe. On sait que plusieurs inscriptions du Jawf (Haram 10/1, 18/[1], 38/1 et Kamna 26/1), datant du VI^e siècle ou des II^e-I^{er} siècles avant l'ère chrétienne, mentionnent des *ʿhl ʿttr*, apparemment une confrérie religieuse, «la communauté de ʿAthtar»¹⁸. On peut donc se demander si *ʿttry* ne serait pas la *nisba* de *ʿttr* avec un sens comparable. Quant à *-hn*, ce pourrait être la désinence d'un pluriel externe. Notre proposition est d'interpréter *ʿttryhn* comme une *nisba* plurielle, «les adeptes de ʿAthtar».

B. Inventaire des théonymes dans lesquels apparaît le mot *ʿttr* en position intermédiaire

Six caractérisations de dhāt Ḥimyam

On connaît désormais six caractérisations de la déesse dhāt Ḥimyam avec le mot *ʿttr* en position médiane. Cinq sont qatabānites et une est sabéenne. Relativement tardives, elles se répartissent entre le III^e siècle avant l'ère chrétienne et le III^e après. Ce sont dans l'ordre alphabétique:

– *ḍt Ḥmym ʿttr Bs³r^m*

JRy WBrashear 1=CIAS I, 154/2 (Qatabān, I^{er} s. av. è. chr. env.)

... *s¹qny ḍt Ḥmym ʿ(t)tr Bs³r^m 3 bḥt blqⁿ ...*

¹⁴ Hamdānī 1953: 15-17.

¹⁵ Cité par Olinder 1931: 217.

¹⁶ Caskel 1966-II: 217.

¹⁷ Le substantif *nḍ* est également attesté dans un texte minéen d'al-ʿUlā, tout aussi obscur, M 355/10, *w-thb-sʿ nḍ ʿmh-sʿ Nfyt* (référence que je dois à Irene Rossi).

¹⁸ On ne saurait exclure une autre interprétation de *ʿhl*, non pas le substantif («le clan, la communauté»), mais le pluriel du pronom *ḍ-*, «ceux de».

«... a dédié à dhāt Ḥimyam, la *'ithtar* de *Bs^{3r}m* une dalle (?) de calcaire ...»

Auteur: *'qrb^m ḡ-Dr(h)[ⁿ]l^{kⁿ} ...*

Moussaïeff 12/1-2 (Qatabān?; I^{er} s. av. ou ap. è. chr.)

[... ... *ḡt Ḥmym ḡ²tr Bs^{3r}m ḡ d* [...

«[... ... dhāt Ḥimyam, la *'ith*]|*tar* de *Bs^{3r}m* dans [...»

Auteur: *'lbhr w-'ln'(d)[...*

Le nom de *ḡt Ḥmym* peut être restitué de façon assurée puisque la déesse est mentionnée dans la formule de protection: ... *r]³tdw ḡt Ḥmy[m]*

Qurayḡa 1/2-4 (Ḥimyar, commune de Khawlān; II^e ou I^{er} s. av. è. chr.)¹⁹

... *s¹qny ḡt³ Ḥ(m)m ḡ²tr B⁴s^{3r}m ḡ mḡ⁵rm-s¹ B³ry^m ḡ s¹qnyt ḡhb⁷ⁿ ...*

«... a dédié à dhāt | Ḥimyam la *'ithtar* de *B|s^{3r}m* dans son sanc|tuaire *B³ry^m* (ou à *'rym*) l'offrande de bronze ...»

Auteur: *'m bn [...]²r*

— *ḡty Ḥmym ḡtry Bs^{3r}m w-'dhn^m* (Ḥimyar, commune de Sufār^{um})

Lahj n° 61/6 (I^{er} s. è. chr.)

... *b-(hy)l-s¹⁵mw w-'hlyl ḡht-s¹m ḡm ḡ-Mbrq^m w-'ḡtr⁶ (ḡ)-'mr^m w-ḡty Ḥmym ḡtry Bs^{3r}m w-'²dhn^m*

«... avec leurs propres forces et celles de leurs divinités *'Amm dhu-Mbrq^m*, *'Athtar | dhu-'mr^m*, les deux dhāt Ḥimyam, les deux *'ithtar* de *Bs^{3r}m* et de *'dhn^m*»

Auteurs: *'m(°)mn w-Wtr^m w-Dws^{1m} bnw Ys^{2rn} w-'b²ns¹ bny ḡ-S¹fr^m ḡqwl s²bⁿ S¹fr^m*

«Ammī'aman, Watār^{um} et Daws^{um} fils de Yasrān et d'Abī'anas, banū dhu-Sufār^{um}, princes de la commune de Sufār^{um}»

Bāfaqīh-Bāḡāyi' al-Ḥadd II-2/5-6 (début du II^e s. è. chr.)

... *b-'ḡtr S²r^qm w-b-'⁵m ḡ-Mbrq^m w-[b-ḡt]y (Ḥ)[mym ḡ²try Bs^{3r}m w-⁶dhn^m w-b s²ms¹-hmw*

«... avec *'Athtar Shāriqān*, avec *'A|mm dhu-Mbrq^m*, [avec les] deux [dhāt Ḥimyam], les deux *'ithtar* de *Bs^{3r}m* et de *'dhn^m*, et avec leur *shams*»

Auteurs: *M^cd¹ w-Drhⁿ w-'m¹mn bnw ḡ-S¹fr^m ḡ²qwl s²bⁿ (ḡ S¹)fr^m*

«Ma'ad'īl, Dharḡān et *'Ammī'aman* banū dhu-Sufār^{um}, | princes de la commune de Sufār^{um}»

Le syntagme *ḡty Ḥmym ḡtry Bs^{3r}m w-'dhn^m* désigne soit deux divinités du panthéon de la commune de Sufār^{um} soit des divinités propres aux princes de cette commune.

— *ḡt Ḥmym ḡtr hlf Rd^c* (Ḥimyar, commune de Maḡhā^m)

MQ-Nakhlān 1/6-7 (I^{er} s. è. chr.)²⁰

... *b-rd¹ b⁴n-hw Lhyw^m ḡbs²b w-'s²ms¹⁻⁵hmy w-ḡt Ḥmym ḡtr hlf Rd^c w-ḡt Ḥmym ḡtr Yḡ¹l b-Yḡwr*

«... avec l'aide de son | fils Liḡayū^m (fils de) Abīshib, de leurs *sha|ms*, de dhāt Ḥimyam la *'ithtar* de la por|te de Radā^c et dhāt Ḥimyam la *'ithtar* de Yagh|īl à *Yḡwr*»

Auteur: *'bs²(b)m ḡ-Hḡbh w-S¹r^{5m} Lhy*

«Abīshibām dhu-Haḡbah et *S¹r^{5m}* (fils de) *Lhy*»

— *ḡt Ḥmym ḡtr Rdḡ^m* (Qatabān, wādī Ḍura', III^e-II^e s. av. è. chr.)

Ḍura' 1=Pirenne Ḥuwaydar B=CSAI I, 20/5-7

... *b-'ḡt[r] ḡ⁶ [w-b-'(m) w-b ḡny w-b ḡ(t) [Snt^m w-b](ḡ)t Zhrⁿ w-b Ḥwk^m w-b ḡt [Rḡb]'ⁿ w-b](Wb) ḡ-(R)ḡh^m w-b Bl[w ḡ-Rymⁿ w-b ḡt Ḥ]my^m ḡtr Rdḡ^m ...*

¹⁹ Texte inédit publié ci-dessous, Annexe 2.

²⁰ Texte inédit publié ci-dessous, Annexe 2.

«avec ‘Athta[r,] [avec ‘A]mm, avec Anbī, avec dhāt [Šnt^m, avec] dhāt Zhrⁿ, avec Hwk^m, avec dhāt [Rhb] [n, avec] Wb dhu-Rdḥ^m, avec Bl[w dhu-Rymⁿ, avec dhāt Ḥi]myam la ‘ithtar de Rdḥ^m...»

Auteurs: des habitants de la ville dont le nom a disparu.

Dura’ 2=Pirenne-Ḥuwaydar A=CSAI I, 19/7-10

... b-‘ttr w-b ‘m w-b ‘nby w-b dt Šnt^m w-b dt Zh⁸rⁿ w-b dt Rhbⁿ w-b ‘lhw Rdḥ^m w-b Blw d-Rymⁿ w-⁹b Wb d-Rdḥ^m w-b dt Hmy^m ‘ttr R¹⁰dḥ^m

«... avec ‘Athtar, avec ‘Amm, avec Anbī, avec dhāt Šnt^m, avec dhāt Zh|rⁿ, avec dhāt Rhbⁿ, avec les dieux de Rdḥ^m, avec Blw dhu-Rymⁿ, avec Wb dhu-Rdḥ^m, avec dhāt Ḥimiyam la ‘ithtar de R|dḥ^m»

Auteur: le moukarrib de Qatabān (Y)d[‘]b Dby(n) Y(h)n ‘m/² bn S²hr

– dt Hmy^m ‘ttr Ygr (Saba’, commune de Tan‘im^{um} et Tan‘imat^{um}; c. 260-270)

Ja 618/35-36

... b-‘ttr w-‘lmqh b‘l-‘wm³³ w-b-s²ym-hmw ‘lmqh b‘l S²whṭ w-b-d³⁴t Hmym w-b-dt B[‘]dn^m w-b-s²ms‘y-hmw³⁵ b‘lty qyf Rs²m w-b-rb[‘]-hmw dt Hm³⁶ym ‘ttr-Ygr

«... avec ‘Athtar et Almaqah maître d’Awām, | avec leur patron Almaqah maître de S²whṭ, avec dhāt|t-Ḥimiyam, avec dhāt Ba‘dān^{um}, avec leurs deux shams maîtresses du mémorial de Rs²m et avec leur rabī[‘] dhāt Ḥimiyam la ‘ithtar de Ygr»

Auteurs: Rtd[‘]lw ‘zk[n w-b]ny-[hw Hy]²w^m bny Kb[s‘y^m ‘]qw[l s²bⁿ] Tn[‘]m^m w-Tn[‘]mt^m

«Rathad‘alāw Azka[n et ses f]ils [Ḥay]ū^m banū Kb[s‘y^m p]rin[ces de la commune de | Tan‘im^{um} et Tan‘imat^{um}»

Noter que dt Hmy^m ‘ttr Ygr est qualifiée de rabī[‘], «protecteur».

– dt Hmym ‘ttr Yḡl

CIAS 47.11/o1/F72=CSAI I, 125/2 (Qatabān, Tamna[‘]; I^{er} s. è. chr.)

... s¹q²nyt dt Hmym ‘ttr Yḡl slmt d³hbⁿ

«... a dédié à dhāt Ḥimiyam la ‘ithtar de Yaghīl la statuette de b|ronze»

Auteur: Br‘t dt byt Rtd[‘]l bn S²hz

«Bar‘at de la maison de Rathad‘īl fils de S²hz»

RES 4332=Ja 1096=CSAI II, 4/2 (Ḥimiyar, commune de Maḏḥā^m; c. I^{er} s. av. ou ap.)

... b-‘m w-b ‘nby w-b-dt Hmym ‘ttr Yḡl

«... avec ‘Amm, avec Anbī et avec dhāt Ḥimiyam la ‘ithtar de Yaghīl»

Auteur: Lhy[‘]m bn Zwbⁿ Y[‘]b

«Lahay‘amm b. Zwbⁿ (fils de) Ya‘ūb»

MQ-Nakhlān 1/6-7 (Ḥimiyar, commune de Maḏḥā^m; I^{er} s. è. chr.)

... b-rd[‘] b⁴n-hw Lhyw^m ‘bs²b w-‘s²ms¹-⁵hmy w-dt Hmym ‘ttr h^lf Rd[‘] w-dt Hmym ‘ttr Yḡ⁷l b-Ydwr

«... avec l’aide de son | fils Liḥayū^m (fils de) Abīshib, de leurs sha|ms, de dhāt Ḥimiyam la ‘ithtar de la por|te de Radā[‘] et dhāt Ḥimiyam la ‘ithtar de Yaghīl à Ydwr»

Auteur: ‘bs²(b)m d-Hšbh w-S[‘]r[‘]m Lhy

«Abīshibām dhu-Ḥašbaḥ et S[‘]r[‘]m (fils de) Lhy»

Le toponyme Ydwr n’était pas attesté. On ne saurait dire s’il faut le rapporter à une racine DWR ou NDR.

Le nom du puits (Taghīl, Tḡl) dont l’aménagement est commémoré dans ce texte est apparemment formé sur la même racine que le complément de ‘ttr (Yaghīl, Yḡl)²¹.

²¹ C’est la racine du cours d’eau (ghayl), qui convient naturellement pour un puits. On ne saurait exclure cependant que Yḡl dérive d’une autre racine comme le supposent Albert Jamme et Maria Höfner (voir ci-dessus).

Une hypothétique caractérisation de dhāt Zahrān

Elle se trouve dans un texte qatabānite du wādī Thā¹:

– *dt (Z)[hr^m 'j]tr bytⁿ Yfⁿ*

CSAI I, 206 (relu et réinterprété ci-dessous, Annexe 1) (Qatabān, wādī Thā¹, II^e-I^{er} s. av. è. chr.)

... 'šd^m rtd rb^c-s¹ 2 dt Zhrⁿ w-dt (Z)[hr^m 'j]tr bytⁿ Yfⁿ w-^{c3}tr d-Mqwl^m ...

«... 'šd^m a confié à son rabī^c | dhāt Zahrān, à dhāt [Zahrān 'i]thtar du temple Yfⁿ et à 'A|thtar dhu-Mqwl^m ... » ou « ... 'šd^m a confié à ses rabī^c | dhāt Zahrān, dhāt [Zahrān 'i]thtar du temple Yfⁿ et 'A|thtar dhu-Mqwl^m ... »

Auteur: 'šd^m bn 'm'ns¹ bn '[... ...]

«'šd^m fils de 'Ammī²anas ibn '[... ...]»

Une caractérisation de dhāt Nashq^{um}

Une troisième déesse, dhāt Nashq^{um}, est également attestée avec un titre comportant 'itr en position médiane. Son nom dérive apparemment de celui de la ville de Nashq^{um} (aujourd'hui al-Bayḏā'), possession du royaume de Nashshān jusqu'au début du VII^e siècle avant l'ère chrétienne, puis dépendance sabéenne.

– *dt Ns²q^m 'itr Byhⁿ 22*

Cette caractérisation apparaît dans un texte beaucoup plus ancien provenant du royaume de Nashshān dans le Jawf. Les éditeurs supposent que ce texte est originaire du site d'al-Bayḏā' à cause du nom de la déesse. En réalité, dhāt Nashq^{um} n'est pas une divinité propre à la ville de Nashq^{um}; elle est l'une des divinités majeures du royaume de Nashshān. Comme, de plus, l'inscription invoque Malikwaqih, un roi de Nashshān, et est flanquée par le bā', hypothétiquement le symbole du dieu Aranyada^c, elle peut très bien provenir de la ville de Nashshān (aujourd'hui al-Sawḏā') et peut-être même du temple d'Aranyada^c découvert par Rémy Audouin et Mounir Arbach²³.

al-Jawf 04.8 (Nashshān; fin VIII^e ou début VII^e s. av. è. chr.)

... s³l' dt Ns²q^m 'i²tr Byhⁿ dt byt-hw Gn't w-kl wld-hw ...

«... a dédié à dhāt Nashq^{um} la 'ith|tar de Bayḥān Gn't, celle de sa maison (= son épouse) et ses enfants...»

Auteur: Dmd^m d-'šbⁿ 'bd Mlkwaqih

«Dmd^m dhu-'šbⁿ serviteur de Malikwaqih» (le nom 'šbⁿ est répété sous forme de monogramme en bas à gauche).

Dans cet inventaire, je ne retiens pas l'inscription Ry 622=686 (Huṣn al-'Urr). Aux lignes 1-2, Gonzague Ryckmans avait restitué le théonyme 's³tr^m Ygl: ...[... ... 's³]tr^m Ygl b-rd' mr'-s¹[m ...²⁴

Cette restitution paraît peu vraisemblable. Tout d'abord, il semble difficile de reconnaître un rā' entre le tā' et le mīm de ['s³]tr^m (fig. 3). Par ailleurs, la structure du texte est défavorable à la présence d'un théonyme à cet endroit. Il s'agit d'une inscription de construction, comme le montre la formule b-rd' ... qui suit Ygl et introduit les invocations. Avant ces invocations, on

²² Je dois cette référence à Alessia Priolella.

²³ Arbach *et alii* 2004. Irene Rossi me fait observer que le bā' se trouve sur deux monuments en relation avec d'autres divinités. Il n'est donc pas sûr qu'il soit le symbole d'Aranyada^c. Cependant, aucune autre identification ne se dégage : il n'est pas possible de le voir être le symbole du monarque et encore moins celui d'une autre divinité. Je fais donc l'hypothèse que le symbole est bien celui d'Aranyada^c et qu'il peut se trouver sur tout objet appartenant au dieu, directement ou indirectement.

²⁴ «On lit nettement au début de la ligne [2] trm; l'arc du cercle du r est lisible» (Ryckmans G. 1962b: 453).

attend plutôt la mention de ce qui est construit : les lettres *tā'* et *mīm* qui subsistent suggèrent de restituer ...*by]²t-[s']m*.

Cet inventaire appelle quelques observations préliminaires:

a. C'est uniquement dans la titulature de déesses que *'ttr* se trouve en position intermédiaire.
 b. Ces déesses sont diverses caractérisations de dhāt Ḥimyam, de dhāt Nashq^{um} et peut-être de dhāt Zahrān.

c. Les termes qui déterminent *'ttr* sont désormais *Bs³rᵐ*, *Bs³rᵐ w-'dhnᵐ*, *Byhᵐ*, *hlf Rd'*, *Rdhᵐ*, *Ygr*, *Yḡl* et peut-être *byrᵐ Yf'n*.

d. Un texte sabéen (Ja 618) et peut-être un qatabānite (CSAI I, 206) indiquent que les divinités étudiées se rangent dans la catégorie des *rabit'*, une classe d'êtres surnaturels inférieurs aux divinités dont la fonction, si l'on se fonde sur les parlers arabes contemporains, est de protéger²⁵.

e. Trois sanctuaires des dhāt Ḥimyam sont mentionnés:

– *ḡt ³ H(m)m 'ttr B⁴s³rᵐ 'd mḥ³rm-s' B'ryᵐ* (Qurayḍa 1)

– [... ... *ḡt Ḥmym 't]²ttr Bs³rᵐ 'd [...* (Moussaïeff 12)

– *ḡt Ḥmym 'ttr Yḡ'l b-Yḡwr* (MQ-Nakhlān 1)

On dispose également de deux indications topographiques dans MQ Nakhlān 1 (*ḡt Ḥmym 'ttr hlf Rd'*) et CSAI I, 206 (*ḡt (Z)[hrᵐ 'ttr byrᵐ Yf'n*). Aucun de ces monuments et toponymes n'est encore localisé.

C. La signification du dernier terme dans les théonymes comportant le mot *'ttr* en position médiane

Afin de mieux cerner la signification du terme *'ttr*, il faut s'interroger sur la nature du terme qui le complète.

'dhnᵐ

Ce nom propre est attesté dans *ḡty Ḥmym 'ttry Bs³rᵐ w-'dhnᵐ*, mais aussi dans les théonymes *ḡt' Ḥmym ḡt 'dhnᵐ* (Van Beek 1=BA=CSAI I, 41/7) et *ḡ³t 'dhnᵐ* (FB-Qatabān 1/2-3). Le mot *'ttr* alterne ici avec *ḡt*. Dans les théonymes, les pronoms *ḡ-* et *ḡt* peuvent introduire un toponyme (*'lmqh ḡ-Mryb* dans Ja 533=Fa 52), une vague provenance (*ḡ-S'mwyy*) et peut-être un caractère propre à la divinité.

Le nom propre *'dhnᵐ* se trouve encore sur un fragment d'autel du Musée de Bayhān, MuB 679 (fig. 4), qui comporte deux lignes:

1 *'dhnᵐ Rf...*

2 *'b'ns' ḡ-Sf...*

Sur ce monument, on ne saurait dire quelle est la signification de *'dhnᵐ*, pas même affirmer qu'il s'agit du même mot que dans les titulatures divines. La racine DHN est encore attestée dans le nom de lignage sabéen *ḡ-Dhnᵐ* (RES 3911/1 et 4). Avec ces données, il n'est pas possible de préciser quelle est la nature de *'dhnᵐ*.

Bs³rᵐ

À côté de *ḡt Ḥm(y)m 'ttr Bs³rᵐ* et de *ḡty Ḥmym 'ttry Bs³rᵐ w-'dhnᵐ*, on connaît un dieu qatabānite nommé *B'l Bs³rᵐ*, «le Maître de *Bs³rᵐ*» (CIAS 95.11/p8 n°1=CSAI I, 171; AM 60.1478=CSAI I, 168; Doe 2=CSAI I, 129).

²⁵ Robin 2001: 135-136.

Dans ce cas, *'itr* semble alterner avec *B'l*. Le terme *b'l* introduit d'ordinaire un nom de sanctuaire. Il faut remarquer cependant que le «Maître de *Bs^{3r}m*» n'est pas vénéré uniquement dans l'hypothétique *Bs^{3r}m*, mais aussi dans d'autres lieux, notamment *'tm* et *Šn'*: voir AM 60.1478 (*B'l Bs^{3r}m 'd 'tm*) et Doe 2 (qui évoque un pèlerinage des habitants de la ville de Khudhrā à *B'l Bs^{3r}m 'd mħrm-s' Šn'*).

Noter enfin que les noms propres *Bs^{3r}* (qui est une graphie simplifiée de *Bs^{3r}m*) et *Yġl* sont gravés sur la paroi d'un petit brûle-parfums, Ja 2443. On lit d'ordinaire sur les brûle-parfums des noms d'aromates à brûler²⁶. Mais la vraisemblance qu'il en aille de même ici paraît faible.

Byħⁿ

Dans *dt Ns^{2q}m 'itr Byħⁿ*, Bayhān, nom propre dont on a de nombreuses attestations dans l'épigraphie sudarabique, n'est pas la grande vallée au cœur du royaume de Qatabān, mais sans doute le nom d'un territoire, à rechercher dans le royaume de Nashshān: voir RES 3945/14 (... *w-ywm mħd Ns²ⁿ w-wft 'hgr-hw w-gbd 's^{2r} w-Byħⁿ w-kl 'dħb-hw ...*, «quand il frappa Nashshān, brûla ses villes, dévasta 'Ashr, Bayhān et toutes ses vallées en une seule campagne ...»).

Dans al-Sawdā' 75/3 (...*]w-Byħⁿ w-b-dt[...*), le contexte est trop fragmentaire pour qu'on puisse déceler de quoi il retourne.

Le Bayhān de la titulature de *dt Ns^{2q}m 'itr Byħⁿ* est donc selon toute vraisemblance un territoire aux alentours de la ville de Nashshān²⁷.

by^m Yfⁿ

Selon Aylward 1=CSAI I, 122 de Tamna', un brûle-parfums est offert à un dieu nommé *B'l Yfⁿ*. Comme je l'ai déjà dit, le terme *b'l* introduit d'ordinaire un nom de sanctuaire. Si on identifie le *Yfⁿ* de *by^m Yfⁿ* avec celui de *B'l Yfⁿ*, on en déduit que *by^m Yfⁿ* signifie bien «le temple *Yfⁿ*» et non «le palais *Yfⁿ*». Sans doute connaît-on un palais royal de Tamna' qui se nomme *Yfⁿ* (MQ-HK 11=CIAS I, 38), mais il est douteux que le théonyme ait un rapport avec ce palais, notamment parce que *Yfⁿ* est un nom de monument assez fréquent.

ħlf Rd'

Le substantif *ħlf* signifie la «porte» d'une ville et par extension la «région» qui s'étend autour de cette ville. *Rd'* évoque évidemment la ville actuelle de Radā', mais il n'a pas encore été possible de démontrer que l'un des divers *Rd'* mentionnés dans les inscriptions puisse être identifié avec elle.

Rdħ^m

Le mot *Rdħ^m* qu'on trouve dans le théonyme *dt Hmy^m 'itr Rdħ^m* apparaît également dans le syntagme «les divinités de *Rdħ^m*» (*'lhw Rdħ^m*) et dans une caractérisation de la divinité *Wb* (*Wb d-Rdħ^m*). L'expression «les divinités de *Rdħ^m*» conduit à formuler l'hypothèse que *Rdħ^m* était le nom d'un sanctuaire, peut-être consacré à *Wb*. En effet, le substantif «les divinités» est déterminé d'ordinaire par le nom de la ville ou de la commune locales, ou par celui d'un sanctuaire. Or il est assuré que, dans Dura' 1 et 2, *Rdħ^m* n'est pas le nom de la ville ou de la commune, qui sont mentionnés par ailleurs. Comparer avec:

²⁶ Ce sont principalement *'bm*; *dħb*; *drw^(m)*; *ħdk*; *kmkm*; *lbny*; *ldn*; *n'm*; *qlm*; *qs'^t(^m)*; *qtr*; *rnd^(m)*; *tyb*; *tyb'l*.

²⁷ D'après une suggestion d'Irene Rossi.

– Höfner-Tamna²⁸=CSAI I, 130: *S²r^m Hr^m s'qny mr²-s' w-'l-s' 'itr w-'m w-'lhy bytⁿ B(n)²* ... «Sha^{r^{um}} Hirrān a dédié à son seigneur et à son dieu 'Athtar, à 'Amm et aux divinités du temple Bana^l ...»;

– MuB 409=CSAI I, 144: *'bḥmd ḏt Hbr^m s'qnyt Rbs² w-'hlⁿ[w-s²ms' R]²bs² w-'lhy bytⁿ ...*, «Abīḥamad dhāt Hibrā^{um} a dédié à Rbs², à 'hlⁿ, au *shams* de Rbs² et aux divinités du temple ...»;

– Waddingham 1: *Yḥm^l ḏ-S²(ḏ)t Hwf s'qny Blw ḏ-Hḏ^m w-²lhy byt-s' Hḏ^m s'qnyt ḏhb^m ...*, «Yahm^l dhu-S²(ḏ)t (fils de) Hawfā a dédié à Blw dhu-Ḥadath^{um} et aux divinités de son temple Ḥadath^{um} l'offrande de bronze ...» etc.

Ygr

À Saba², le mot *Ygr* n'est guère attesté. C'est le nom d'une habitation dans Fa 112+113+114+115 et celui d'un homme dans Jabal Riyām 2006-8 (voir la contribution de Mounir Arbach et Jérémie Schiettecatte dans ce volume). Cela ne nous éclaire guère sur la nature du *Ygr* de Ja 618.

Yḡl

En plus de *ḏt Ḥmym 'itr Yḡl*, on connaît un dieu nommé *B'l Yḡl*. La seule attestation de ce dieu se trouve dans l'inscription qatabānite Ja 2195=CSAI I, 138, inscrite sur une tablette de bronze à laquelle est fixée une main portant une lampe: *Hmt^{em} Drḥⁿ ḏ-Dhbⁿ s'qny² 'l-s' w-mr²-s' B'l Yḡl yd^m ³ ms'^lsbḥt^m w-s'qny^m ...*, «Himtā^{um} Dharḥān dhu-Dhahabān a dédié | à son dieu et à son seigneur Maître de *Yḡl* une main qui éclaire et une offrande...». Le nom de *B'l Yḡl* se retrouve dans la formule de protection du même texte, ligne 4: *rḏ B'l Yḡ⁵l ...*

Cette pièce présente l'intérêt tout particulier d'avoir été trouvée en fouille à Tamna², dans la maison D²⁸, avec la statue de «Dame Bar'at» et son inscription qui commémore une offrande à *ḏt Ḥmym 'itr Yḡl* (CIAS 47.11/o1/F72=CSAI I, 125).

Si nous supposons que ces deux pièces (CSAI I, 125 et 138) appartenaient bien à la maison D (et ne se trouvaient pas là par hasard, par exemple dans l'attente de leur transport vers un autre endroit), il en résulte que *ḏt Ḥmym 'itr Yḡl* et *B'l Yḡl* sont deux divinités domestiques de cette Maison D, constituant sans doute un couple divin²⁹.

On peut ajouter que *Yḡl* n'est pas le nom de la maison D puisque des inscriptions ayant une provenance différente invoquent également *ḏt Ḥmym 'itr Yḡl*.

Enfin, *Yḡl* se lit avec *Bs³r* sur la paroi d'un petit brûle parfum, Ja 2443, comme je l'ai déjà signalé à propos de *Bs³r^m*.

Comme pour *Bs³r^m* (dans *B'l Bs³r^m*), nous supposons que *Yḡl* (dans *B'l Yḡl* et dans *ḏt Ḥmym 'itr Yḡl*) est un nom de sanctuaire.

²⁸ Voir le plan des habitations proches de la porte méridionale de Tamna², fouillées par les États-Uniens, dans Breton 2000: 858. La maison D se trouve à l'est de la maison Yafish.

²⁹ Une identification de *ḏt-Ḥmym 'itr Yḡl* et de *B'l Yḡl* (comme me le propose Alessia Prioletta) n'est pas exclue, puisque le qatabānite donne fréquemment des titres masculins aux divinités féminines (voir FB-Van Lessen 5=CIAS I, 123, commentaire, dans Bron 1992, pp. 21-22); par ailleurs, l'inscription Ja 2195=CSAI I, 138 comporte une phrase avec un verbe *s'^lmnt* qui pourrait être accordé au féminin (*ḥg ts²ft-s' w-s'^lmnt-s'^l*). Cependant, *ts²ft* et *s'^lmnt* peuvent aussi s'analyser comme des noms d'action, solution qui présente l'avantage de donner une phrase plus fluide, sans changement intempestif de sujet. Au total, l'identification me paraît moins vraisemblable que l'hypothèse de divinités complémentaires constituant peut-être un couple.

Les données factuelles qui se dégagent sont peu nombreuses:

a. *ttr* alterne avec *dt* (féminin).

b. Deux fois au moins, le terme qui détermine *ttr* est également attesté dans un théonyme du type *B'l* (masculin) X: voir *dt Hm(y)m ttr Bs³rm* et *B'l Bs³rm*; *dt Hmym ttr Ygl* et *B'l Ygl*. Le nombre peut être porté à trois si on ajoute *dt (Z)[hrn ttr bytn Yfn* et *B'l Yfn*.

Dans un cas tout au moins, celui de *dt Hmym ttr Ygl* et *B'l Ygl*, il semblerait que les deux théonymes soient complémentaires. Je fais donc l'hypothèse que, aux déesses *dt Hm(y)m ttr Bs³rm*, *dt Hmym ttr Ygl* et *dt (Z)[hrn ttr bytn Yfn*, sont associés des dieux qui s'appellent *B'l Bs³rm*, *B'l Yfn* et *B'l Ygl*.

c. Trois des six compléments de *ttr* (*dhn^m*, *Bs³rm* et *Ygl*) sont mentionnés seuls sur deux autels (comme le sont certains produits odoriférants à brûler).

d. Si notre restitution de l'inscription CSAI I, 206 est exacte, l'un des sept termes utilisés comme complément de *ttr*, *Yfn*, est explicitement qualifié de *byt*, «temple» plutôt que «palais». Pour trois ou quatre autres (*Bs³rm*, *Rdh^m* et *Ygl*; peut-être *dhn^m*), des indices suggèrent qu'il pourrait s'agir d'un sanctuaire. Nous supposons donc que les compléments de *ttr* sont souvent des noms de sanctuaire.

Dans un cas enfin, celui de Bayhān, *ttr* semble déterminé par un nom de région.

	Formulation suggérant un nom de sanctuaire	Noms portés sur un autel
<i>dt Hm(y)m ttr Bs³rm</i>	<i>B'l Bs³rm</i>	<i>Bs³r Ygl</i>
<i>dt Hmym ttry Bs³rm w-'dhn^m</i>	<i>dt Hmym dt 'dhn^m</i>	<i>'dhn^m</i>
<i>dt Hmym ttr Rdh^m</i>	<i>'lhw Rdh^m</i>	
<i>dt Hmym ttr Ygr</i>		
<i>dt Hmym ttr Ygl</i>	<i>B'l Ygl</i>	<i>Bs³r Ygl</i>
<i>dt (Z)[hrn ttr bytn Yfn</i>	<i>B'l Yfn</i>	
<i>dt Ns²qm ttr Byhⁿ</i>		

D. La distribution géographique et chronologique des attestations

La distribution géographique et chronologique des attestations de déesses qualifiée de *ttr* donne quelques indices supplémentaires.

Siècle ³⁰	-VIII/-VII...	-III	-II	-I	+I	+II	+III
<i>dt Hmym ttr Bs³rm</i>				Q	Q		
<i>dt Hmym ttry Bs³rm w-'dhn^m</i>					Sf	Sf	
<i>dt Hmym ttr hlf Rd'</i>					M		
<i>dt Hmym ttr Rdh^m</i>		QQ					
<i>dt Hmym ttr Ygr</i>							S
<i>dt Hmym ttr Ygl</i>			Kh	M	M Q		
<i>dt (Z)[hrn ttr bytn Yfn</i>			Q				
<i>dt-Ns²qm ttr Byhⁿ</i>	N						

Kh: Khawlān-Hidū; M: Maḏhā^m; N: Nashshān; Q: Qatabān; S: Saba[?]; Sf: Sufār^{um}.

³⁰ Plusieurs de ces dates, tout particulièrement celles des III^e-I^{er} siècles avant l'ère chrétienne, sont très approximatives et donc purement indicatives.

La pratique de qualifier une déesse de *'ttr* est attestée en premier dans le Jawf yéménite, au tout début de la civilisation sudarabique. Elle l'est ensuite dans le royaume de Qatabān. On en a cinq ou six attestations à partir des III^e-II^e siècles avant l'ère chrétienne. Deux proviennent du wādī Ḍura' et une au moins de Tamna'.

Trois communes des Hautes-Terres (Khawlān, Maḏḥā^m et Sufār^{um}) semblent avoir adopté cette appellation qu'on relève dans cinq textes qui se répartissent entre le II^e s. av. et le début du II^e s. ap.

Une seule mention provient d'une tribu pleinement sabéenne, c'est-à-dire d'une commune dont la divinité principale est une caractérisation d'Almaqah. C'est la plus tardive puisqu'elle date des années 260.

F. Les divinités du Jawf yéménite avec un nom comportant l'élément *'ttr*

Pour compléter le dossier, il faut également prendre en compte les divinités dont le nom se compose de *'ttr* et d'un second terme accolé³¹. Aujourd'hui, on en compte neuf dans les inscriptions du Jawf du Yémen en langue ma'īnique.

– La déesse *'ttr 'ntt^m*

L'inscription GOAM 313 commémore la dédicace d'une table d'offrande à une divinité nommée *'ttr 'ntt^m*. Ce nom, en partie restitué à la ligne 2, se retrouve à la ligne 5, ce qui confirme la lecture³².

'ntt^m peut être un nom propre. Mais comme ce mot est bien attesté comme nom commun, avec le sens de «femme; épouse; de sexe féminin», c'est cette traduction que nous retenons: «*'ttr* Femme». On peut supposer qu'une telle appellation permettait de distinguer le dieu 'Athtar d'une déesse au nom homographe.

On observera cependant que l'appellation *'ttr 'ntt^m* n'est attestée que dans ce seul texte. Elle est donc très exceptionnelle. On peut en déduire que le risque de confusion entre le *'ttr* masculin et la *'ttr* féminine était faible grâce aux autres éléments de la titulature divine et du fait – selon toute vraisemblance – que les deux théonymes se prononçaient différemment. Hypothétiquement, ce pouvait être 'Athtar et 'Ithtar.

– La déesse de Haram *'ttr B's^{ln}*

Sept inscriptions³³ mentionnent une divinité nommée *'ttr B's^{ln}* (Haram 12=RES 2743/15-16; Haram 57; FB-Haram 1; YM 28 823; YM 28 975; YM 28 976) ou *tr B's^{ln}* (Haram 11=RES 2742/4-5, texte qui n'est connu que par une copie de Joseph Halévy). Il n'est pas impossible que la graphie *'tr B's^{ln}* résulte d'une erreur de copie.

La provenance de Haram 12 et divers caractères de ces textes conduisent à la conclusion que *'ttr B's^{ln}* est une divinité propre à Haram. YM 28 975 permet d'ajouter que *'ttr B's^{ln}* est une déesse, à cause de l'accord d'un verbe au féminin³⁴.

– La déesse de Kaminahū *'ttr Hgr* ou *'t^m Hgr*

³¹ Je remercie Alessia Priolella qui a attiré mon attention sur ces théonymes.

³² Les photographies de l'édition première ne permettaient pas de vérifier la transcription (qui comporte plusieurs erreurs). Mounir Arbach a bien voulu me confier les photographies originales de ce document qui confirment sa lecture: 'l'z d-Rkl w-'mr^m d-Qydⁿ s³l² ' [ttr] 'ntt^m mšr(b)ⁿ ywm qdm³ (w)-bny byt-s^l w-b-'dn 'ttr 'ntt^m [t^m] s'my w-'wld-s'my w-'qn-s'my. Début de la ligne 4: on ne saurait dire s'il faut restituer [t^m] ou [t].

³³ Je remercie Irene Rossi qui me signale plusieurs références que j'avais omises.

³⁴ J'emprunte cette conclusion à François Bron (2010: 42-43). YM 28 975 se lit: ... s³l' 'ttr # B's^{ln} 'l'z krb s'b#rrt b-ywm Wtr'l, «... a dédié à *'ttr B's^{ln}* Ilī'azz avec l'offrande qu'Elle a acceptée au temps de Watār'īl». Comparer avec LuBM 2 et Kamna 8, où le verbe *s'brtt* s'accorde avec les théonymes féminins *'trt* et *S'm't*.

Cette divinité n'est attestée qu'à époque ancienne (première moitié du 1^{er} millénaire avant l'ère chrétienne), dans sept inscriptions: Kamna 9/3; Kamna 14 A/4; Kamna 19/4; Kamna 20/10; Kamna 22/2-3; Şan'ā MM 3630; YM 8 871/9-10.

Alessia Prioleta a découvert le nom de cette déesse dans une inscription de provenance inconnue, Şan'ā 2004—1³⁵. La graphie de ce texte sur tablette de bronze est apparentée aux plus anciennes inscriptions pénitentielles de Haram (c. 200 avant l'ère chrétienne). La formule de confession (... *tnhy*² *w-tnḍrn l-mr't-hw* *'t³r^m Ḥgr* ...) et le verbe *t³wbn* (l. 7, inaccompli 3^e p. fém. sing.) indiquent sans ambiguïté que *'t³r^m Ḥgr* est une déesse. Il est plausible que *'t³r Ḥgr* et *'t³r^m Ḥgr* soient une seule et même divinité; la différence de graphie s'expliquerait par la chronologie, *'t³r Ḥgr* étant la forme ancienne et *'t³r^m Ḥgr* la graphie après l'arrivée des Amīrites dans le Jawf du Yémen.

– La divinité de Nashshān *'t³r Mtb Ḥmr*

De la divinité *'t³r Mtb Ḥmr*, attestée dans une ou deux inscriptions de Nashshān (al-Sawdā' 3/1 et peut-être al-Sawdā' 18/2, [*'t³r Mt*[... ...]], on ne connaît que le nom. Mais ce nom rentre dans une série de théonymes composés avec l'élément *mtb*, comme *Mtbqbḍ* et *Mtbntyn*. Le terme *mtb*, qui ne s'explique pas aisément en sudarabique, pourrait être un emprunt à l'araméen *mytb* ou *mōtab* (dérivés de la racine YTB, dont l'équivalent sudarabique est WTB), «siège».

– La divinité de Qarnā (aujourd'hui Ma'īn) *'t³r Mtbqbḍ*

Le nom de *'t³r Mtbqbḍ* a été relevé dans trois ou quatre inscriptions de Ma'īn. La plus significative est YM 24 942+24 943: ... (*s³l*)²[*'*] *'t³r Mtbqbḍ* *'l 'whn w-(wh)n ms'lm w-mfḥmy ḍhb*ⁿ, «... a dédié à *'t³r Mtbqbḍ* le dieu de *'whn* et à *'whn* la table d'offrandes et les deux braseros de bronze»³⁶. Le terme *'l* suggère que *'t³r Mtbqbḍ* est un dieu, même si le terme «déesse» ne semble pas attesté pour l'époque très haute du texte.

L'offrande commémorée par YM 24 942+24 943 n'est pas dédiée à une seule divinité, mais à deux qui se superposent: «*'whn*» et «*'t³r Mtbqbḍ* le dieu de *'whn*». On ignore quelle est la nature de *'whn*. Cette superposition n'est pas sans évoquer *'t³r 'l Yhrq* et *Yhrq* dont il va être question, ou *Rbs*² et la *shams* de *Rbs*² déjà rencontrés (MuB 409=CSAI I, 144).

Les autres attestations de *'t³r Mtbqbḍ* sont Sab 139+151/2; YM 30 135 (Ma'īn) et peut-être Sab 147 (...*tbqb(ḍ)*[...]).

Le nom *Mtbqbḍ* comporte l'élément *mtb* déjà évoqué. Il est lui-même un théonyme avec la graphie *Mtbqbḍ* (Ma'īn 18/2; Ma'īn 33 et Ma'īn 39/1). On connaît enfin une divinité *Qbḍ* (Kamna 20/5) ou *Qbḥ* (Ma'īn 18/3; Kamna 9 22; Kamna 23; peut-être Ma'īn 68). Il semblerait qu'on ait ici une superposition non pas de deux, mais de trois divinités: *Qbḍ*, *Mtbqbḍ* et *'t³r Mtbqbḍ*.

– La divinité *'t³r Nkrḥ*

On ne dispose encore que d'une seule attestation de cette divinité: YM 30 135 (Ma'īn): ... *b-'l't M'n⁵ w-b 't³r Nkrḥ w-b ḍt-Ḥ⁶mym* ..., «... avec les divinités de Ma'īn, avec *'t³r Nkrḥ* et avec *ḍt Ḥmym*». Il n'est pas sûr que *'t³r Nkrḥ* soit une divinité de Ma'īn, puisqu'on ne saurait dire si l'invocation mentionne deux noms parmi les divinités du royaume ou au contraire deux divinités étrangères. En faveur de la seconde option, on observera que *ḍt Ḥmym* n'était pas attestée jusqu'à présent à Ma'īn³⁷.

³⁵ Je la remercie de m'avoir confié une copie de ce texte avant sa publication.

³⁶ Dans YM 24 905, déjà cité, on relève *'whn* comme patronyme et *'hn* comme théonyme. On peut en conclure que *'whn* est probablement l'ancêtre d'un lignage (appelé les *bhn* *'whn*) qui a été divinisé.

³⁷ Dans le Jawf du Yémen, dhāt Ḥimyam n'est attestée qu'à Haram: voir Haram 12 et 23.

– La déesse de Nashshān *ʿttr Ns²q^m*

Le nom de *ʿttr Ns²q^m* apparaît dans les invocations de six textes de Nashshān, tous de date ancienne (première moitié du I^{er} millénaire avant l'ère chrétienne), quatre fois sans *mīmatīon* (al-Sawdā' 3/2; al-Sawdā' 5/3; al-Sawdā' 88/9; al-Sawdā' 89 A et B/2-3) et deux fois avec (al-Sawda' 6/2 et YM 23 250/1-2).

Une déesse dhāt Nashq^(um), en général avec la *mīmatīon*, mais aussi deux fois sans (al-Jawf 04.8 et YM 11 191), est attestée dès une époque ancienne (al-Jawf 14.08), mais surtout à la période suivante (seconde moitié du I^{er} millénaire avant l'ère chrétienne), aussi bien dans le royaume de Nashshān encore indépendant (YM 11 191) que dans celui de Maʿīn.

Dhāt Nashq^(um) signifie «Celle de (la ville de) Nashq^(um)». On sait que Nashq^(um), à l'origine une dépendance de Nashshān, est conquise par Saba' vers 700 avant l'ère chrétienne. Malgré ce changement politique, la déesse dhāt Nashq^(um) continue à être vénérée à Nashshān, puis à Maʿīn qui annexe Nashshān vers la fin de l'époque perse.

Dans le royaume de Maʿīn, dhāt Nashq^(um) représente ou symbolise Nashshān, tout comme 'Athtar dhu-Yhrq représente Yathill (aujourd'hui Barāqish).

Il apparaît plausible que *ʿttr Nashq^{um}* et dhāt Nashq^{um} soient deux noms d'une même divinité. Il est également vraisemblable que dhāt Nashq^{um} *ʿttr Bayḥān* en soit un troisième: on observera qu'al-Jawf 14.08 est une dédicace à dhāt Nashq^{um} *ʿttr Bayḥān*, qui est invoquée sous la forme plus brève de dhāt Nashq^{um} à la fin du texte³⁸.

On aurait donc ici un nouvel exemple de l'alternance *ʿttr / dt*, déjà observée à Qatabān (dans *dt Ḥmym ʿttr ʿdhn^m* et *dt Ḥmym dt ʿdhn^m*).

– La divinité de Kuhāl^{um} *ʿttr-Sʿm^c*

Deux inscriptions de Jidfir ibn Munaykhir (l'antique *Khlm*), Gl 1523 et Gl 1524, ont pour auteur un certain «Laḥay'athat fils de 'Ammī'ahar b. Ḥayw^{um}» qui se déclare «prêtre d'Almaqah, de dhāt Ḥimyam, de Sami' dhu-Zabyāt et de *ʿttr-Sʿm^c*» (*Lḥy'tt w-Hlk'm²r bn 'm'hr bn Hyw^{3m} rs²w 'lmqh w-dt-Ḥm⁴ym w-Sʿm^c d-Zbyt w-ʿttr-Sʿm^c; [Lḥy]ʿtt bn 'm'hr² bn Ḥywm r[s²w 'l]mq³h w-[dt Ḥmy]m w-Sʿm^c d-ʿZbyt w-ʿttr-Sʿm^c*). Elles présentent l'intérêt de citer successivement une caractérisation du dieu Sami' et une divinité (apparemment inférieure ou complémentaire) dont le nom se compose de ce théonyme précédé par *ʿttr*.

À l'époque qui nous occupe, *Khlm* est une ville sabéenne, mais depuis peu: son grand dieu n'est pas Almaqah, mais Sami' dhu-Zabyāt. Le temple de Sami' est situé à l'extérieur de l'enceinte, comme c'est la norme pour la grande divinité locale, tandis que celui d'Almaqah est au centre, comme si la ville venait d'être conquise par Saba'.

– La divinité de Yathill *ʿttr(h) Yhrq*

Le nom *ʿttr(h) Yhrq* est attesté avec trois graphies, *ʿttr Yhrq*, *ʿttrh Yhrq* et *ʿtr Yhrq*³⁹. Cette divinité n'est attestée qu'à Barāqish (l'antique Yathill). Elle doit être distinguée du dieu *ʿttr d-Yhrq* (attesté une fois avec la graphie *ʿtr d-Yhrq* dans M 245=RES 3020=B-M 276/3): il n'est pas rare que ces deux divinités soient mentionnées ensemble.

³⁸ *b-Wd^m 3 w-b-ʿrnyd' w-b d-Grb w-b dt Ns²q^m*.

³⁹ Pour *ʿttr Yhrq*, voir B-M 26+M 253=B-M 23/3 (... *ʿttr d-Y[hr]q w-ʿttr Yhrq* ...); M 434=B-M 119/1 (... *w-ʿttr d-Y[hr]q w-ʿttr Y[hr]q* ...). Pour *ʿttrh Yhrq*, voir B-Int 32/1 (... *ʿttr d-Yhrq w-ʿttrh Yhr[q]* ...), 2 (... *ʿttr trh Yhrq*); B-Int 35/26 (... *w-b ʿttr (d-)²⁶Yhrq w-b ʿttrh Yhrq* ...); Y.92.B.A 4/7 (... *b-ʿmrh w-mrd[w]ʿhy[ʿ] ʿttr d-Yhrq w-ʿttrh Yh(r)[q]* ...); Y.92.B.A 10 B/2 (... *ʿttr d-Yhrq w-ʿttrh Yhrq* ...), 3 (*ʿttrh Yhrq*). Pour *ʿtr Yhrq*, voir M 197 = B-M 1/3 (... *w-ʿttr d-Yhrq w-ʿtr Yhrq* ...); M 283 = B-M 56/3 et 4-5 (*w-ʿttr d-Yhrq w-ʿtr Yhrq*); M 437 = B-M 121/2 (... *ʿtr Y[hr]q* ...). Plusieurs de ces textes sont inédits.

'*ttr d-Yhrq*, dont les attestations sont beaucoup plus nombreuses que celles de '*t(t)r(h) Yhrq*, est le dieu emblématique de Yathill, aussi bien dans les inscriptions de cette ville que dans celles de Qarnā, la capitale du royaume. Une confrérie culturelle le vénère tout particulièrement, on lui dédie des offrandes et plusieurs individus portent le titre de «prêtre de '*ttr d-Yhrq*». Son nom se trouve une fois sous la forme '*ttr 'l Yhrq* («'Athtar dieu de *Yhrq*»), avec '*l* à la place du pronom *d-* habituel⁴⁰.

'*t(t)r(h) Yhrq* au contraire est une divinité locale d'importance mineure. Cette divinité, presque toujours mentionnée après '*ttr d-Yhrq*, paraît être son complément, son pendant féminin, peut-être son épouse.

La nature du mot *Yhrq* ne nous est pas vraiment connue. C'est le nom d'un lieu ou d'un sanctuaire dans le texte sabéen RES 4176/9 ('*ttr w-'l'lt b-Yhrq*). Il s'agit peut-être du même sanctuaire dans les syntagmes '*ttr d-Yhrq*, '*ttr 'l-Yhrq* et '*t(t)r(h) Yhrq*. On notera enfin que, dans Shaqab 1/16, *Yhrq* est traité comme un nom de divinité (*w-dḅ¹⁷h Yhrq [...]*). Faut-il supposer que le nom du sanctuaire se substitue à celui de la divinité?

Une telle substitution s'observe en tout cas dans l'onomastique sabéenne, où le nom d'Almaqah est souvent remplacé par Awām, le grand temple d'Almaqah à Marib. Elle suggère qu'il existait une certaine réticence à nommer la divinité par son nom et qu'on préférerait des substituts, comme le nom d'un temple ou des appellations telles que «le dieu», «la déesse», «Oncle ('*m*)», «la Plus Puissante (*al-'Uzzā*)», etc. Cette réticence, qui s'accorde bien avec celle de représenter la divinité sous forme humaine ou animale, s'explique sans doute par le fait que la divinité n'est pas conçue à l'image de l'homme, mais distante, diffuse et insaisissable.

– La divinité de Yathill *Khlⁿ Nbt^t 'ttr*

Irene Rossi, dans sa contribution au même volume, met en évidence une divinité de Yathill qui s'appelle *Khlⁿ Nbt^t 'ttr*, avec le nom de '*ttr* en position finale: voir M 227=B-M 223 (...]*rq w-Khlⁿ Nbt^t['ttr...*); M 253=B-M 23/2 (...]*q w-'ttr Yhrq w-Khlⁿ Nbt^t 'ttr w-kl 'l'lt M'n^m w-Y[*l* ...); Y.92.B.A 28/5-6 (... *s³l' Khl^m Nbt^t-'ttr hw⁷r^m*). Le nom de cette divinité paraît énigmatique, à moins de comprendre *nbt^t* comme un nom commun dont nous ne pouvons pas encore préciser le sens, «*Khlⁿ*, le *nbt^t* de 'Athtar».*

Au total, quatre de ces divinités sont certainement ou probablement des déesses: '*ttr 'ntt^m*; '*ttr B's^m*; '*ttr Hgr* et '*ttr Ns²q^m*. Pour deux autres, '*ttr-S'm'* et '*t(t)r(h) Yhrq*, c'est plausible. Pour trois divinités, '*ttr Mtb Hmr*; '*ttr Nkrh* et *Khlⁿ Nbt^t 'ttr*, on ne sait rien. Pour une seule, enfin, '*ttr Mtbqbd* il existe un indice en faveur du genre masculin.

L'hypothèse retenue dans l'examen des théonymes comportant l'élément '*ttr* en position médiane – selon laquelle '*ttr* pourrait être un théonyme féminin substantivé – offre une interprétation satisfaisante dans la plupart des cas. Les seules exceptions, semble-t-il, sont '*ttr Mtbqbd* et *Khlⁿ Nbt^t 'ttr*.

La nature du terme qui complète '*ttr* n'apporte guère d'éclairage supplémentaire. C'est:

- peut-être un nom commun en apposition dans '*ttr 'ntt^m*;
- un nom de ville dans '*ttr Ns²q^m*;
- un nom de divinité dans '*ttr Mtbqbd*; '*ttr Nkrh* et '*ttr-S'm'*; peut-être dans *Mtb Hmr⁴¹*;

⁴⁰ Gnoli 1993: 47-51.

⁴¹ L'inscription MuB 409=CSAI I, 144 citée ci-dessus mentionne plusieurs divinités, notamment *Rbs²* et la *shams* de *Rbs²* (*Rbs² w-'hlⁿ w-s²ms¹ Rbs²*). Elle offre une équivalence supplémentaire entre *s²ms* et '*ttr* puisqu'on peut vénérer ici une divinité et sa *shams*, et là une divinité et sa '*ithtar*. Il est également intéressant de noter qu'on peut vénérer à la fois une divinité et un être surnaturel qui en émane.

- un nom de lieu ou de sanctuaire (apparemment divinisé) dans *ʿttr Yhrq*;
- un terme de signification inconnue dans *ʿttr B's^m* et *ʿttr Hgr*.

G. Deux divinités d'Arabie du nord avec un nom comportant l'élément *Atar* (*ʿttr*)

L'existence supposée d'un substantif féminin *ʿttr* dans les langues de l'Arabie méridionale conduit à réexaminer ce que l'on sait de deux divinités d'Arabie du nord, plus précisément d'Adumatu (aujourd'hui Dūmat al-Jandal, dans le Jawf séoudien) et de Qedar, qui portent un nom composé dont le premier élément est «Atar-» en graphie akkadienne, analysé comme une transcription de *ʿttr*:

Atarsamain

Le nom d'Atarsamain apparaît dans deux chroniques royales assyriennes. La chronique d'Esarhaddon (681-669) rapporte que ce roi restitua aux gens d'Adumatu les simulacres divins que son père, le roi Sennacherib (704-681), avait enlevés:

«La ville d'Adumutu, forteresse des Arabes, ² Sennacherib, le roi du pays d'Assur et le père qui m'a élevé ³ l'avait prise, capturant ses possessions, ses biens et ses dieux. ⁴ Et la prêtresse (*apkallatu*), reine des Arabes, ⁵ il l'emmena au pays d'Assur. ⁶ Hazaël roi des Arabes avec son cadeau somptueux ⁷ s'est rendu à Ninive, la ville de ma souveraineté, ⁸ il a baisé mes pieds ⁹ pour me supplier de lui donner ses dieux. J'ai eu pitié ¹⁰. Atarsamain, Dâa, Nuhâa, ¹¹ Ruldâau, Abirillu ¹² et Atarquruma, les dieux des Arabes, ¹³ je les ai rénovés. Les victoires d'Assur mon seigneur ¹⁴ et l'inscription de mon nom je les y ai écrites. Puis je les lui ai retournés. ¹⁵ Tabuwa qui avait grandi dans le palais de mon père ¹⁶, je l'ai installée reine sur eux et avec ses dieux je l'ai retournée dans son pays»⁴².

Le nom d'Atarsamain apparaît à nouveau sous le règne suivant, celui d'Assurbanipal (668-630/627), fils d'Esarhaddon⁴³, dans l'expression *ālu Atarsamain* qui signifierait «la confédération d'Atarsamain»:

A VIII 65-IX 8: selon cette chronique, Assurbanipal traverse l'Euphrate, chasse les troupes d'Abiate⁴⁴ et d'Uate⁴⁵ «roi du pays arabe». Il défait ⁴⁶*l-sa-am-me-e'*, la «confédération» d'Atarshamain et Nabayati⁴⁶.

À son retour, il défait encore la «confédération» d'Atarshamain, le peuple de Qedar⁴⁷ avec Uate' fils de Birdada «roi du pays arabe». Ce dernier est capturé et emmené à Damas.

A IX 9-52: Assurbanipal quitte Damas et saisit la «confédération» d'Abiate' fils de Te'ri de Qedar⁴⁸; un immense tribut est emmené à Assur.

⁴² Prisme A IV, traduction Stéphanie Anthonioz, qui donne les références suivantes. Le Prisme A (dont la version est connue par plusieurs autres prismes ninivites) est daté vers 673. En parallèle au Prisme A on trouve encore le Monument B, un prisme de Tel Barsip et le fragment B de Ninive ainsi que deux autres fragments F et G datés vers 670. La source plus ancienne, le Prisme B (dont la version est aussi connue par le prisme Heidel), daté vers 676, est moins détaillée. Pour ces textes voir Borger 1956: 53 et suivantes (Prisme A); 100 sv. (Monument B); 110 sv. (Fragment B); 111 sv. (Fragment F); 113 (Fragment G); Heidel «1956: 9-37. Les noms des divinités sont écrits: ^dA-tar-sa-ma-a-a-in, ^dDa-a-a, ^dNu-ha-a-a, ¹¹ ^dRu-ul-da-a-a-ū, ^dA-bi-ri-il-lu, ¹² ^dA-tar-qu-ru-ma-a.

⁴³ Les diverses sources du règne sont éditées dans Borger, Fuchs 1996. Pour le Prisme A, voir Borger, Fuchs 1996: 113-117. À nouveau, je dois cette référence et son analyse à Stéphanie Anthonioz.

⁴⁴ *A-bi-ia-te-e'*, transcription de *'byl'*.

⁴⁵ *Ū-a-a-te-*. L'original arabe n'est pas aisément identifiable.

⁴⁶ ^{li}*GIŠ-DA / a'-lu ša dA-tar-sa-ma-a-a-in*; ^{li}*Na-ba-a-a-ta-a-a*.

⁴⁷ *Qid-ra-a-a*.

⁴⁸ ^{li}*a'-lu ša mA-bi-ia-te-e' mār mTe-e'ri māt Qid-ra-a-a*.

Ces textes indiquent explicitement qu'Atarsamain est la divinité majeure du panthéon d'Adumatu. Mais s'agit-il d'un dieu ou d'une déesse? Nos textes ne donnent pas de réponse explicite. Deux indices conduisent cependant à formuler l'hypothèse qu'il s'agit d'une déesse. Le premier se trouve dans la chronique d'Esarhaddon. Avec les simulacres divins, le roi Sennacherib déporte «la prêtresse (*apkallatu*), reine des Arabes» (l. 4). Or les prêtresses sont d'ordinaire au service de déesses. On peut ajouter que la déesse que sert cette prêtresse est sans doute l'une des divinités majeures du panthéon d'Adumatu.

Le second indice est donné par un texte d'Assurbanipal, K.3405. Ce souverain dédie un disque ailé (*kakkabtu*) à la déesse [des Arabes] à l'occasion de la défaite et de la capture d'Uate', le roi du Pays des Arabes. Dans ce texte, il rappelle le passé et indique notamment que «Hazaël, roi des Arabes, vint devant lui (son père Esarhaddon) avec de [riches] cadeaux, embrassa ses pieds, et se tourna vers lui pour la restitution de sa déesse» (avers, lignes 9-11). Cette déesse a justement pour prêtresses les reines Te'elḥunu et (probablement) Tabuwa (avers, ll. 1, 12 et 14). Morton Cogan⁴⁹ conclut de manière convaincante que la déesse des Arabes est Atarsamain⁵⁰.

Cette déesse est logiquement attestée dans quelques graffites (du type thamoudéen B) des environs de Taymā' et jusque dans le sud de la Syrie, avec la graphie *'trs'm*⁵¹. Elle serait également la divinité fédérale du petit royaume de Shumu'il dans le nord-ouest de la Syrie, au début du I^{er} millénaire avant l'ère chrétienne (*'tršmn*).

On s'accorde à considérer que le nom d'Atarsamain est composé de deux termes, *Atar* et *samain*, interprétés comme le théonyme *'Athtar* et le substantif *samain* «cieux» en araméen; Atarsamain serait donc «'Aṭtar des cieus» (Knauf: «Himmels-'Aṭtar»⁵²). Cette interprétation, qui suggère une origine araméenne, se heurte cependant à une difficulté: *Atar* renvoie plutôt, semble-t-il, au dieu *'Athtar* qu'à la déesse dont le nom se distingue par un changement vocalique ou par l'ajout d'un suffixe *-t* (voir la contribution de Stéphanie Anthonioz ci-après).

Le nom de la déesse Atarsamain entre dans une série de théonymes comportant le terme «Cieus». Un dieu syrien s'appelle Ba'alshamīn, «Maître des cieus». Ce dieu très populaire n'était pas inconnu des auteurs d'inscriptions safa'itiques qui transcrivaient son nom *B'ls'mn* (d'après l'araméen) ou *B'ls'my* (sa transposition en nordarabique). Il faut aussi évoquer dhu-('l)-Samāwī (*d-S'mwy*), le grand dieu de Nagrān dont le nom signifie «Celui des Cieus», avec le pronom relatif *d-* employé comme synonyme de *ba'al* ou de *rabb*. C'est enfin une déesse du Golfe Arabo-persique, *dt-b-S'mwy*, «Celle qui est aux Cieus» (A 20-216/2 et 4; Sa'īd-«Min Tadmur»/7).

Il se pourrait donc que, de nouveau, nous trouvions un théonyme féminin composé, avec *'ttr* (ici *Atar-*) comme premier terme, faisant pendant à un théonyme masculin dans lequel *'ttr* est remplacé par *ba'al-*. Comme *'ttr* au Yémen, *Atar* pourrait être un théonyme féminin substantivé.

Atarquruma

Le dieu ou la déesse Atarquruma⁵³ est beaucoup plus mystérieux. À cause de son nom, Axel Knauf⁵⁴ y voit une «manifestation de 'Attaršamain». Walter Müller l'a rapproché des

⁴⁹ Cogan 1974: 15-21.

⁵⁰ Knauf 1989 est d'un avis semblable (p. 83).

⁵¹ Macdonald *et alii* 1996: 477-480.

⁵² Knauf 1989: 82.

⁵³ *dA-tar-qu-ru-ma-a*.

⁵⁴ Knauf 1989: 86.

deux divinités qui patronnent les chasses rituelles en Arabie méridionale, 'Athtar et *Krwm*. La formule la plus fréquente est du type: ... *ywm šd šyd 'ttr w-Krwm*, «... quand il a accompli la chasse de 'Athtar et *Krwm*». Mais il arrive aussi que *Krwm* soit mentionné seul: ... *qf qy²f 'ttr w-Krwm ywm šd šyd Krwm*, «... il a érigé un mémorial en l'honneur de 'Athtar et *Krwm* quand il a accompli le chasse de *Krwm*» (Schm Ma'rib 23)⁵⁵.

Le Yémen distinguerait donc deux divinités qui seraient identifiées à Adumatu. On notera cependant une petite difficulté: l'akkadien présente un *qāf*, et le sabéen un *kāf*, ce qui n'est pas une correspondance régulière.

Les deux théonymes d'Arabie du Nord ne donnent donc pas de réponse claire. Le premier, Atarsamain, nommerait une déesse dont le nom pourrait s'analyser comme un substantif féminin suivi du terme pour «Cieux». Le nom d'Atarsamain est araméen si on se fonde sur l'élément *-samain*, ce qui conduit à envisager trois schémas explicatifs: les théonymes comportant le mot 'ttr seraient un emprunt des Arabiques aux Araméens; ou bien le contraire; ou encore ces théonymes seraient un trait culturel partagé par plusieurs peuples sémitiques. La chronologie n'est pas décisive: les plus anciennes attestations de théonymes en 'ttr se trouvent dans le monde araméen, mais elles ne sont antérieures que d'un siècle ou deux à celles d'Arabie méridionale. L'hypothèse la plus vraisemblable est que nous ayons là un type de divinités commun à plusieurs régions du Levant et d'Arabie, attesté dès les premiers siècles du I^{er} millénaire avant l'ère chrétienne. Le premier élément *Atar-* peut être identifié avec 'ttr, mais sa vocalisation semble le distinguer d'Ishtar.

En revanche, le second théonyme, Atarqaruma, ne semble pas conduire à la même conclusion. Si on le rapproche des divinités sabéennes de la chasse 'Athtar et *Krwm*, il serait un dieu plutôt qu'une déesse.

F. Essai de conclusion

Au terme de cet inventaire qui révèle un monde divin de plus en plus complexe, il importe de rappeler les déductions assurées auxquelles nous sommes arrivés et de proposer, de façon plus hypothétique, un schéma explicatif.

Le dieu 'Athtar

Rappelons tout d'abord que 'Athtar est d'ordinaire une divinité masculine dont le nom apparaît dans la plupart des panthéons d'Arabie méridionale, toujours à la première place:

– Saba': par exemple CIH 519: *b-³ttr w-Hwbs¹ w-b 'lmqh w-dt⁴ Ḥmym w-dt-B⁵dn^m w-d-S¹mwy*;

– Qatabān: par exemple 'Aqabat Bura' 1: *b-'ttr w-b-'m w-b 'nby w-b-dt Šnt^m w-b-dt Zhrⁿ*;

– Ma'in: par exemple Y.90.B.A 7: *b-rd¹t 'ttr d-⁷Qbd w-Wd w-Nkrh w-'(ttr d-Y)hrq*;

– Ḥimyar: par exemple Ir 40: *b-rd¹ 'ttr-S²rqⁿ | w-Wgl w-S¹myd⁴*.

'Athtar est également un dieu important du panthéon du Ḥaḍramawt, puisque Sayīn, le dieu national, serait son fils, selon RES 2693/4-6: «avec l'assentiment de Sayīn dhu-Alīm, de 'Athtar son père, des déesses de son temple Alīm et des dieux et des déesses de la ville de Shabwat» (*b-²dn⁵ S¹yn d-'lm w-'ttr 'b-s¹ w-'lhty mḥrm-s¹ 'lm⁶ w-'lhy w-'lhty hgrhn S²bwt*).

'Athtar est un dieu parce que, dans de multiples contextes, il s'accorde toujours au masculin. Ses caractérisations sont introduites par *b¹l* ou *d-* (et non par *b¹lt* ou *dt*); ses épithètes sont

⁵⁵ Müller 1986: 101-107, pl. 15d.

masculines (comme dans *'ttr S²rqⁿ*); enfin les verbes dont 'Athtar est le sujet sont au masculin, comme les pronoms suffixes qui renvoient à lui.

La déesse 'ttr / 'ttr^m / 's³tr^m (vocalisation proposée : 'Ithtar)

Serge Frantsouzoff a récemment mis en évidence que, à côté du dieu ḥadramawtique *'ttr*, il existait une déesse *'ttr^m* ou *'s³tr^m*. La forme *'s³tr^m* est une simple variante graphique illustrant la confusion des phonèmes /t/ et /s³/. Présentement, cette mise en évidence se fonde sur un seul texte, dans lequel *'s³tr^m* s'accorde au féminin:

– Rb I/83 No. 30: ... *bnt 'rwd s¹²qny^t 's³tr^m dt Ḥḍrⁿ 3 ms³ndhn ḡ-rḡwt 's³tr^m*, «... fille de 'rwd a | dédié à 'Astar^{um} dhāt Ḥaḍrān | l'inscription que 'Astar^{um} a agréée».

Dans les autres mentions de *'ttr^m / 's³tr^m*, il n'est pas possible d'établir le genre du théonyme. Voir par exemple:

– Rb I/83 No. 32a-e: ... *[s¹qny(t)]/'ttr^m*

– RES 4065=By 660=Beeston, Mashhad, Siqāya (c)=Gl A 790: *s¹qny 's³tr^m*

L'existence d'une déesse nommée *'ttr* dans le Jawf paraît également vraisemblable. C'est l'explication la plus plausible d'un nom tel que *'ttr 'nt^m*.

Le théonyme féminin 'ttr employé comme substantif

Plusieurs déesses portent un titre comportant le mot *'ttr* suivi par un complément (qui serait souvent un nom de temple). Ces déesses sont dhāt Nashq, dhāt Ḥimyam et peut-être dhāt Ḍahrān. Il ne fait guère de doute que *'ttr* est alors le théonyme féminin substantivé, à comparer avec *ishtarātu*, terme générique désignant «les déesses» dans les inscriptions néo-assyriennes de Mésopotamie, qui dérive du théonyme Ishtar (voir la contribution de Stéphanie Anthonioz ci-après). D'ailleurs, *'ttr* alterne parfois avec le pronom féminin singulier dhāt, comme dans *ḡty Ḥmym 'ttry Bs³r^m w-'dhn^m* à comparer avec *ḡt Ḥmym ḡt 'dhn^m* et *ḡt 'dhn^m*; ou dans *'ttr Ns²q* à confronter avec *ḡt Ns²q*.

Cet emploi substantivé de *'ttr* rappelle l'histoire compliquée du mot 'l en Arabie méridionale et ailleurs: 'l peut être le nom propre d'un dieu comme dans Haram 11/4 (... *qy³n Yḡmr<m> lk w-Wt⁴r²l w-'l w-'tr⁵ B³s^m w-Hrm^m*) ou RES 3943/4 (*w-ywm bny Mrs²w^m byt Ns⁴wr w-byt 'l w-byt ḡ-b-Rydⁿ*), mais c'est surtout le nom commun désignant la divinité. On notera à ce propos que les anthroponymes théophores en -'l et en -'tt(r) sont les plus communs.

On pourrait encore comparer *'ttr* avec *s²ms¹*, terme qui désigne une catégorie d'êtres surnaturels chargée de veiller sur les personnes et qui dérive du théonyme *S²ms¹* «le Soleil». On rappellera que le substantif *s²ms¹* retrouve parfois son statut de nom propre. Le sanctuaire d'al-Mi'sāl en offre un bel exemple dans des inscriptions qui remontent approximativement à la même époque:

– al-Mi'sāl 1/2: *mqf S²ms^{1m} 'lyt b-'r-hw S²ḥrr^m*, «lieu du *qyf* de Shams^{um} très-Haute sur son piton Shihḥār^{um}»;

– al-Mi'sāl 2/2: *b-mḥrm s²ms¹-hw 'lyt b't 'rⁿ S²ḥrr^m*, «dans le sanctuaire de sa *shams* très-Haute, maîtresse du mont Shihḥār^{um}».

La frontière entre les catégories «nom propre» et «nom commun» est manifestement ténue.

Il existe cependant une petite différence: 'l et *s²ms¹* sont devenus de vrais substantifs qui peuvent être au singulier, au duel ou au pluriel, qui reçoivent des pronoms suffixes etc. En revanche, si *'ttr* est attesté une fois au duel, on ne connaît ni pluriel ni emploi avec un pronom suffixe. La transformation de *'ttr* en nom commun n'a pas été conduite à son terme.

Quel sens donner à 'ttr employé comme substantif?

Dans un texte (Ja 618/35-36) et de manière hypothétique dans un second (CSAI I, 206), la déesse dont le nom comporte l'élément 'ttr est qualifiée de *rb'*, classe d'êtres surnaturels qui serait chargée de la protection.

D'autres textes confirment que la 'ttr est une divinité mineure, comparable à la *shams* (*s'2ms'*), puisque les deux sont parfois invoquées successivement (Bāfaqīh-Bāṭāyī' al-Ḥadd II-2 et MQ-Nakhlān 1). Comme la *shams* est spécialisée dans la protection des personnes et des lignages, la 'ttr a probablement une autre fonction. On pourrait penser à la bonne garde des monuments, comme le *mndh* qui est fréquemment mentionné dans les inscriptions sabéo-raydānites, mais qui est plus rare à Qatabān. De manière très hypothétique, certaines 'ttr seraient spécialisée dans la protection des temples.

Quelques théonymes comportant l'élément 'ttr (voir *dt Ḥm(y)m 'ttr Bs³r^m, dt Ḥmym 'ttr Yḡl* et *dt (Z)[hrⁿ 'ttr byrⁿ Yfⁿ]*) semblent faire pendant à des théonymes masculins en *B'l*, «Maître» (voir *B'l Bs³r^m, B'l Yfⁿ et B'l Yḡl*). Ici, un sens telle que «Maîtresse» pourrait convenir.

Dans d'autres théonymes, la 'ttr est déterminée par un nom de divinité. Il en va ainsi dans 'ttr *Nkrh*, 'ttr-*S'm'* et 'ttr(h) *Yhrq* qui font pendant aux dieux *Nkrh*, *S'm'* et *Yhrq*. Dans ce cas, on retire l'impression que la 'ttr est l'épouse du dieu.

Puisqu'il faut donner une traduction, je propose «Dame» qui convient aussi bien à la protectrice d'un temple qu'à l'épouse ou à la parèdre d'un dieu.

Une origine mésopotamienne?

L'histoire des noms divins se perd dans un passé très reculé, sur lequel nous n'avons guère de prise. On a souvent essayé de recourir à l'étymologie pour pallier au manque de données, mais sans emporter la conviction⁵⁶.

La forme araméenne d'Atarsamain pourrait suggérer que les théonymes composés en 'ttr ont une origine syrienne. De fait, c'est en Syrie qu'on trouve les plus anciennes attestations. Cependant, les textes découverts récemment au Yémen changent la donne puisque, désormais, les théonymes en 'ttr- sont beaucoup plus nombreux en Arabie méridionale qu'en Syrie et remontent très haut dans le temps.

Par ailleurs, le fait que, dans de nombreux cas, 'ttr soit du genre féminin oriente plutôt vers l'Ishtar mésopotamienne.

Il reste à se demander comment organiser tous les théonymes en 'ttr que nous avons en Arabie. Tout d'abord, il ne fait guère de doute qu'il faut isoler un dieu et une déesse, dont le nom s'écrivait avec les mêmes consonnes, mais qui se distinguaient sans doute par la vocalisation, de façon hypothétique 'Athtar et 'Ishtar. Ensuite, il semble assuré que le nom de la déesse, 'Ithtar, était également employé comme nom commun pour désigner certaines divinités féminines, identifiées par leur lien avec un dieu ou un temple.

Le mouvement le plus naturel serait de supposer que le nom propre est originel et qu'il a été progressivement substantivé. Mais l'hypothèse inverse qui a été récemment proposée (voir la contribution de Stéphanie Anthonioz, ci-après) ne saurait être écartée: dès les débuts des civilisations arabiques, en Arabie méridionale, mais aussi à Adumatu, on trouve des théonymes dans lesquels l'élément 'ttr- peut être considéré comme un substantif.

⁵⁶ Voir les études de G. Ryckmans (1962a) ou de G. Garbini (1974).

Comme le même débat pourrait être ouvert à propos de 'l, on a peut-être un indice que, à l'origine, 'l masculin et 'ttr féminin nommaient deux classes de divinités, les unes masculines et les autres féminines⁵⁷.

Spéculations sur les noms des déesses 'm'ttr et 'm'ltm

Incidentement, je voudrais encore évoquer la déesse nommée 'm'ttr, qui est attestée dans deux inscriptions sabéennes de l'époque des rois de Saba' et de dhu-Raydān. La première commémore l'offrande de quatre statues à cette déesse par des gens de Širwāh:

[Ys]b(h) 'rym bn Mwqš^m w-Bws^{lm} w-'tt-hw Krbt dt M²[wq](š)^m 'srhⁿ 'dm mlkⁿ hqnyw mr't-hmw 'm'ttr b³[l](t) Bnn 'rb't 'šlm^m 'ly d^hb^m hmd^m b-dt hmr^{t-4}[h]my 'm'ttr ḡlm^m w-ll^l bnr^m ...

«[Yaš]baḥ Aryam ibn Mawqas^{um} et Baws^{um} et sa femme Karibat dhāt-[Mawq]aš^{um}, Širwāhites, gens du roi, ont dédié à leur maîtresse 'm'ttr, [maî]tresse de Banān, quatre statues de bronze, en action de grâce parce que 'm'ttr | leur a accordé un garçon et trois filles ...»

Ces gens ne dépendent pas du prince de la commune locale (Khawlān), mais du roi: ils sont originaires d'un territoire conquis, à rechercher probablement dans le Jawf voisin. Leurs noms ne sont pas très caractéristiques: [Yaš]baḥ et Kharīf (*Hrf*) pour le père et le fils; Karibat, *Mgd'l*, *Rbbt* et 'm'tq pour la mère et les trois filles.

'm'ttr est remerciée pour avoir accordé des enfants en bonne santé et priée de continuer à accorder de beaux enfants et de bonnes récoltes. Elle a donc une certaine spécialisation comme déesse de la fécondité.

Le second texte, Nāmī NNSQ 19, provient de Nā'it. Son objet principal est de commémorer une offrande à Ta'lab, mais il évoque aussi d'autres événements, principalement une alliance entre Saba' et le Ḥaḍramawt conclue au début du III^e siècle de l'ère chrétienne et une cérémonie en l'honneur de 'm'ttr:

... w-b-hwt hr⁸ f-hlfw 'm'tt(r) ⁶ [l-wf]y qs'd T'lb w-wfy kl hm(t) ⁷ [...] (lt)ⁿ b-wfy^m w-b-mw hwt hr⁸ [fⁿ wl](dt) Qlkh^l dt Hmdⁿ ḡlm⁹ [m] tny^m hgr^m ...

«... Et cette année-là, ils ont prêté serment à 'm'ttr ⁶ [pour le salu]t des fidèles de Ta'lab et le salut de tous ces ⁷ en bonne santé. Et cette même an⁸[née], Qlkh^l dhāt Hamdān, [a mis] au monde un deuxième ⁹ garçon placé sous la protection divine ...»

Malgré les incertitudes que présente ce texte, du fait des lacunes et de plusieurs termes de sens incertain (comme *qs'd* et *hgr*), il semblerait que le dédicant établisse une relation entre le serment fait à 'm'ttr et la naissance d'un deuxième garçon dans la maison princière (puisque le nom donné à *Qlkh^l* implique qu'elle est l'épouse – ou l'une des épouses – d'Ibn Hamdān).

Cette déesse 'm'ttr, sollicitée dans deux régions différentes du royaume sabéen, peut-être pour la fécondité des femmes, porte un nom qui peut se comprendre de deux manières. L'interprétation traditionnelle considère que 'ttr est le complément du substantif 'm, ce qui

⁵⁷ Cette conclusion ne s'accorde pas avec l'opinion des chercheurs qui doutent que les divinités arabiques aient été perçues comme sexuées. De fait, comme je l'ai déjà indiqué, divers indices suggèrent que le monde des dieux, avec des divinités distantes et diffuses, qu'on ne savait pas représenter, n'était pas conçu à l'image de celui des humains. Par ailleurs, les inscriptions qatabānites emploient souvent une terminologie masculine quand il s'agit de déesses. Cependant, en dehors d'exceptions somme toute assez rares, les inscriptions font une claire distinction grammaticale entre dieux et déesses. Par ailleurs, les raisons pour lesquelles les fidèles se tournaient vers les divinités avaient souvent un rapport avec des activités propres à un sexe, ce qui entraînait mécaniquement une certaine spécialisation de ces divinités.

donne Umm'athtar/Umm'ithtar, «Mère de 'Athtar/'Ithtar». On aurait donc une déesse définie par son lien de parenté avec le dieu suprême 'Athtar ou avec la déesse 'Ithtar.

Si on prend en compte que 'ttr peut être féminin, une autre analyse est désormais possible: une phrase nominale du type «Ummī'ithtar», «'Ithtar est ma mère», devient envisageable.

Une seconde piste s'ouvre également, celle d'une identification de la déesse sabéenne 'm'ttr avec la déesse ḥimyarite 'm'ltm dont on a trois attestations: MAFRAY-al-Maktūba 1; JRY Plaque Beeston; ZM 999. La déesse 'm'ltm porte un nom qui signifierait soit «Mère d'une déesse» soit «Mère de déesses». En effet, on ne saurait dire si 'lt est ici le féminin singulier ou le féminin pluriel du substantif 'l, «dieu». Si on retenait «Mère d'une déesse», 'm'ttr et 'm'ltm pourraient donc avoir un sens très voisin et peut-être même nommer une même divinité.

Annexe 1

Un réexamen de CIAS I, 206

Le rocher sur lequel ce texte est inscrit a été brisé en deux parties avant qu'Alessandra Avanzini et moi-même nous soyons rendus dans le wādī Tha'. Quand nous l'avons vu, il manquait un éclat portant quelques lettres au centre des ll. 1-3. Cependant, une photographie (in-édite) avait été prise par Yūsuf 'Abd Allāh quand le rocher était encore intact.

Je reproduis les premières lignes selon l'éditeur, Alessandra Avanzini:

- 1 'šdm bn 'm'ns' bn [... ...] 'šdm rtd Rb'-s'
- 2 w-dt Zhrn w-dt Zhrn [...] w-'ttr bytn Yf'n w-='
- 3 ttr d-Mqwlm kl 'rdm zrbm w-'bytm s²'m w-qny ...

«'šdm son of 'm'ns' of [... ...]'šdm has committed to his Rb' | and dt Zhrn and dt Zhrn [... ...] and 'ttr the house Yf'n and (committed) to 'ttr d-Mqwlm any land as a property, and the houses which he purchased and possessed ...»

Sur plusieurs points, ce déchiffrement ne s'accorde pas avec ce qui se lit sur les photographies des deux fragments (fig. 5 et 6):

- l. 2: le w- du début de la ligne ne se voit nullement sur la pierre.
- l. 2: avant les lettres ttr, il y a un vide d'au moins trois signes.

– l. 2: l'écart entre dt Zhrn w-dt et ttr bytn Yf'n équivaut à dix caractères si on se fonde sur la ligne 3. Si on tient compte du vide de trois signes avant ttr, la restitution ne peut pas être dt Zhrn w-dt Zhrn [...] w-'ttr bytn Yf'n.

La lecture sur les photographies disponibles est donc:

- 1 'šdm bn 'm'ns' bn [... ...] 'šdm rtd Rb'-s'
- 2 dt Zhrn w-dt (.)[...] 'ttr bytn Yf'n w-='
- 3 ttr d-Mqwlm kl 'rdm zrbm w-'bytm s²'m w-qny ...

La restitution qu'Alessandra Avanzini propose pour le centre de la l. 2 se fonde sur la lecture de la photographie de Yūsuf 'Abd Allāh, faite par Walter Müller, qui signale une répétition du théonyme dhāt Zahrān. De manière évidemment hypothétique, la lecture de ce passage me semble être:

- 1 'šdm bn 'm'ns' bn [... ...] 'šdm rtd rb'-s'
- 2 dt Zhrn w-dt (Z)[hrn 'ttr bytn Yf'n w-='
- 3 ttr d-Mqwlm kl 'rdm zrbm w-'bytm s²'m w-qny ...

«'šdm fils de 'Ammī'anas ibn [... ...] 'šdm a confié à son rabī' | dhāt Zahrān, à dhāt Zahrān la 'ithtar du temple Yf'n et à 'A|thtar dhu-Mqwlm etc. ...»

L'expression «la *'ithtar* du palais *Yf'n*» peut être rapprochée du théonyme *B'l Yf'n* (voir ci-dessus), tout comme *dt Hmym 'itr Bs³r^m* et *dt Hmym 'itr Ygl* peuvent l'être de *B'l Bs³r^m* et de *B'l Ygl*.

De nombreux monuments sont appelés *Yf'n*. C'est notamment un palais royal de Tamna⁶ (MQ-HK 11=CIAS I, 38). Il paraît cependant peu vraisemblable que *Yf'n* soit ici le nom de ce palais; il s'agit plutôt d'un temple non identifié.

Annexe 2

Christian Julien Robin, Mounir Arbach, Aḥmad Bātāyi⁶,
Iwona Gajda, Khālīd al-Ḥajj, Muḥammad Sālīm, Jérémie Schiettecatte

Trois inscriptions inédites des Missions Qatabān et Haut-Yāfi⁶

MQ-Nakhlān 1 (fig. 7-10)

Nakhlān est le nom d'un petit wādī, à proximité du village d'al-Rūmiyya, à 12 km environ au nord de Ḥaṣī. L'inscription, qui compte sept lignes, est remployée dans la maison de Ṣālīh 'Abd Allāh al-Ḥādhiq; elle a été trouvée en recrusant deux puits antiques jumelés.

Hauteur: 37 cm; largeur: 48 cm; hauteur des lettres de la l. 1: 4,2 cm. La graphie situe ce document vers le I^{er} siècle de l'ère chrétienne.

1 (')bs²(bm) ḡ-Hṣbh w-S'rsm Lḥy h's²=

2 q w-hqs²b w-hnbṭ b'r-hw Tḡl/

3 l-wyny-hw ḡy b-s'r^m b-rd' b=

4 n-hw Lḥy^{wm} 'bs²b w-'s²ms¹-

5 hmy w-dt Hmym 'itr ḥl=

6 f Rd⁶ w-dt Hmym 'itr Yḡ=

7 l b-Yḡwr Wd-'b

«Abīshibām dhu-Ḥaṣbah et S'rsm (fils de) Lḥy a fo|ré, fait de neuf et creusé son puits Taghīl | pour ses deux vignes qui sont dans la vallée, avec l'aide de son | fils Liḥayū^m (fils de) Abīshib, de leurs *sha|ms*, de dhāt Ḥimiyam la *'ithtar* de la por|te de Radā⁶ et dhāt Ḥimiyam la *'ithtar* de Yaghīl à Yḡwr – Wadd est Père»

1. 1, (')bs²(bm): lire ainsi et non 'bs²(s)r comme dans Robin 2005: 91 etc.

S'rsm: nom de lignage inconnu par ailleurs. Il ne doit pas être identifié avec la vallée S'rsm (aujourd'hui le wādī Sāri⁶) à al-Mi'sāl (MAFRAY-Sāri⁶ 6/3-4).

Lḥy: c'est probablement la forme abrégée du nom du père d'Abīshibām (voir ci-après).

1. 4, 'bs²b: c'est la forme abrégée du nom du père (l. 1, 'bs²bm)

1. 5, -hmy: le lapicide a corrigé un wāw en yā⁷.

11. 6-7, Yḡ|l: il est possible que cet élément du théonyme soit formé sur la même racine que le nom du puits (Tḡl).

Qurayḍa 1 (fig. 11)

La mission du Haut-Yāfi⁶ s'est rendue dans le petit village de Qurayḍa (13,98732 N, 45,34002 E) à deux ou trois kilomètres au sud de Hadīm le 1^{er} mai 2006. Chez Muḥammad

⁵⁸ La Mission du Haut-Yāfi⁶ (dirigée par Iwona Gajda, avec la collaboration de Khālīd al-Ḥajj et Jérémie Schiettecatte) a prospecté les régions entre Hadīm et Laḥj au printemps 2006.

‘Abd al-Karīm, elle a pu examiner une tablette en bronze inscrite qui provient, selon toute vraisemblance, de Hadīm, l’antique Hidū (*Hdw*), capitale de la commune de Khawlān.

La tablette est complète, si on excepte les angles supérieur gauche et inférieur droit. Elle est oxydée, légèrement corrodée et cassée en deux morceaux. Elle comporte encore deux trous de fixation, l’un en haut à droite entre la 2^e et la 3^e ligne, un en bas à gauche, entre les deux dernières lignes.

Le texte se développe sur neuf lignes. Les lettres sont en relief. D’après la graphie, ce document pourrait remonter au I^{er} et peut-être même au II^e siècle avant l’ère chrétienne.

Hauteur totale: 17 cm; hauteur du fragment supérieur, 9,5 cm; hauteur du fragment inférieur, 7,5 cm; largeur: 10 cm; hauteur des lettres: 1,4 cm.

1 . ‘*m bn* [...]

2 *r. s’qny dt-*

3 *H(m)m ‘ttr B=*

4 *s³r^m ‘d mḥ=*

5 *rm-s’ B’ry^m/*

6 *s’qnyt dḥb=*

7 ⁿ *b-dtm tkr=*

8 *b-s’ rtd dt-H=*

9 [*mm*] *nfs’<-s’> w-qny-s’*

« ‘*m* fils de [...]|*r.* a dédié à dhāt | Hīmyam la ‘*ithtar* de *B|s³r^m* dans son sanc|tuaire *B’ry^m* (ou à ‘*rym*) | l’offrande de bronz|e avec ce qui lui était demandé. Il a confié à dhāt H| [*imyam*] <sa> personne et ses biens»

ll. 1-2, . ‘*m bn* [...]|*r.*: la première et la dernière lettres de cette séquence qui donne l’identité du dédicant sont incertaines.

ll. 2-3, *dt* | *H(m)m*: la quatrième lettre est empâtée de sorte qu’on ne saurait dire s’il faut lire ici *dt* | *H(m)m* ou *dt* | *H(y)m*. Le nom de la déesse est répété ll. 8-9 avec une lacune dont la longueur correspond au même nombre de lettres. On a donc ici une graphie inhabituelle de la déesse *dt Hmym*. Je retiens *dt H(m)m* puisque c’est une graphie qui s’explique plus aisément que *dt Hym*.

ll. 3-4, *B|s³r^m*: on connaissait déjà deux attestations de *dt Hmym ‘ttr Bs³r^m*, dans JRy WBrashear 1=CIAS I, 154/2 et Moussaïeff 12. Cette caractérisation de dhāt Hīmyam peut être rapprochée du théonyme qatabānite *B’l Bs³r^m*, «le Maître de *Bs³r^m*» (CIAS 95.11/p8 n°1; AM 60.1478=CSAI I, 168; Doe 2=CSAI I, 129). La nature du nom *Bs³r^m* n’est pas connue. L’hypothèse la plus vraisemblable est qu’il s’agit d’un sanctuaire, même si les inscriptions mentionnent désormais trois lieux de culte où *B’l Bs³r^m* était vénéré: ‘*tm* (AM 60.1478: *b’l Bs³r^m ‘d ‘tm*); *Šn’* (Doe 2 qui rapporte que des habitants de la ville de Khudhrā font un pèlerinage au «Maître de *Bs³r^m* dans son sanctuaire de *Šn’*», *B’l Bs³r^m ‘d mḥrm-s’ Šn’*); et maintenant *B’ry^m* (voir ci-après).

l. 5, *B’ry^m* ou *b-’ry^m*: même si deux lectures sont possibles, l’hypothèse que nous avons ici un nom de sanctuaire (*Br’ry^m*) paraît plus vraisemblable que celle d’un nom de lieu (*b-’ry^m*, «à ‘*rym*»): toutes les occurrences connues de *mḥrm-* sont suivies par le nom propre d’un sanctuaire.

l. 9, sur la plaque, *nfs’ w-qny-s’*: il est vraisemblable que l’omission du pronom suffixe *-s’* après *nfs’* résulte d’un oubli, dû au fait que le mot se termine précisément par un *s’*.

Lahj n° 61 (fig. 1)

Ce texte de sept lignes a été vu par la Mission du Haut-Yāfi en 2006, dans un dépôt d’antiquités près de Lahj, où il avait le numéro 61. Il est gravé sur une dalle calcaire complète, sauf un éclat perdu en haut à gauche.

Largeur: 54 cm; hauteur: 43 cm; épaisseur: 20 cm; hauteur des lettres: 5 cm.

- 1 'm(?)mn w-Wtr^m w-Dws^{lm} bnw Ys^{2rn} w-'b=
- 2 'ns^l bny d-S'fr^m 'qwl s²'bⁿ S'fr^m b(r')=
- 3 w w-ndb w-hqs^{2b} w-br^t w-hml b'r-s'(m)[..]=
- 4 t kl mbs^{2rt-s'} bn mwtr-s' 'd 'ly-s' b-(h^y)l-s^l=
- 5 mw w-'hyl 'lht-s'm 'm d-Mbrq^m w-'ttr/
- 6 (d)-'mr^m w-dty Hmym 'ttry Bs^{3r^m} w-'=
- 7 dhn^m w-b-rd' w-hyl s²'b-s'm S'fr^m

«Ammī'aman, Watār^{um} et Daws^{um} fils de Yasrān et d'Abī'anas, banū dhu-Sufār^{um}, princes de la commune de Sufār^{um}, ont édifié, bâti, achevé, muni de ses équipements (?) et mis en service (?) leur puits [...], avec toutes ses installations (?) depuis sa base jusqu'à son sommet, avec leurs propres forçes et toutes celles de leurs divinités 'Amm dhu-Mbrq^m, 'Athtar | dhu-'mr^m, les deux dhāt Hīmyam, les deux 'ithar de Bs^{3r^m} et de 'dhn^m, et avec l'aide et les forces de leur commune Sufār^{um}»

Date: la graphie, encore très influencée par le modèle qatabānite, présente des caractères propres au I^{er} siècle de l'ère chrétienne. On peut noter encore que les noms des princes diffèrent de ceux qui sont mentionnés dans Bāfaqīh-Bāṭāyi' al-Ḥadd II-2, qui date du début du II^e siècle de l'ère chrétienne puisque le roi 'Amdān Bayān Yuhaqbiḍ (c. 100-c. 120) y est invoqué.

Commentaire

l. 1, 'm(?)mn w-Wtr^m w-Dws^{lm} bnw Ys^{2rn} w-'b²'ns^l bny d-S'fr^m 'qwl s²'bⁿ S'fr^m: ces personnages étaient déjà connus par l'inscription Robin-Bron Masjid al-Nūr I=al-Ḥadd I/6, ll. 1-2, lue par les derniers éditeurs ('bn^m) w-Wtr^m w-Dws^{lm} bnw Ys^{2rn} w-'b²'ns^l w-'l.[.]²w 'bd'm w-Hwf'm bnw d-S'fr^m 'qwl s²'bⁿ S'fr^m. Il faut restituer désormais ('m'mn) w-Wtr^m w-(bn)-[s'm]w 'bd'm ...

l. 3, br^t: première attestation de ce verbe. Le substantif br^t signifie «lieu, endroit, emplacement». De manière très hypothétique, nous traduisons: «munir de ses équipements».

hml: ce verbe est attesté avec les sens de «amener ~ faire entrer qqn p. ex. dans une ville; refouler qqn dans (acc/'dy) un endroit». De manière très hypothétique, nous traduisons: «mettre en service».

l. 4, mbs^{2rt-s'}: ce substantif, dont c'est la première attestation, désigne probablement des installations pour le puisage ou l'utilisation de l'eau.

ll. 5-7, 'm d-Mbrq^m w-'ttr⁶ (d)-'mr^m w-dty Hmym 'ttry Bs^{3r^m} w-'dhn^m: nous avons ici la liste des quatre divinités du panthéon officiel de la commune de Sufār^{um} – ou de celui de ses princes – au I^{er} siècle de l'ère chrétienne. Dans Bāfaqīh-Bāṭāyi' al-Ḥadd II-2, qui date du début du II^e s., on constate deux différences: le remplacement de 'ttr⁶ (d)-'mr^m par 'ttr S^{2r^m} et sa mention en tête de liste.

l. 5, 'm d-Mbrq^m: le dieu 'Amm dhu-Mbrq^m est attesté dans de nombreuses inscriptions des Hautes-Terres méridionales. Dans le cœur du royaume de Qatabān, on ne le trouve que dans deux inscriptions:

– Van Beek 1 (BA=CSAI I, 41), trouvé par les archéologues étatsuniens dans la fouille de la porte méridionale de Tamna'. Le nom du dieu est mentionné dans la formule de protection: r¹dw mhfd-s'my Ġylⁿ 'ttr⁶ d-S'¹ll w-'m d-Mbrq^m w-'lh-s'ww w-dt⁷ Hmym dt 'dhn^m, «ils ont confié leur tour Ghaylān à 'Athtar | dhu-S'¹ll, à 'Amm dhu-Mbrq^m et à ses⁵⁹ dieux, et à dhāt

⁵⁹ Le pronom -s'ww renvoie apparemment à Mbrq^m, probablement le nom d'un sanctuaire qui a donné son nom à un quartier de Tamna' (voir ci-après).

| Himyam dhāt 'dhn^m». L'une de ces divinités, 'ttr d-S'Il n'est mentionnée que dans ce texte. Une autre, dt Hmym dt 'dhn^m, est probablement étrangère à Tamna' (voir ci-dessous). Les auteurs du texte, les banū Hnzt, ne semblent pas être des Tamna'ites puisque le lignage Hnzt n'est guère représenté dans les inscriptions provenant de la nécropole de Ḥayb b. 'Aqīl.

– MuB 533 du wādī Khirr: 'm d-Mbrq^m 'm d-Dwn^m 'df... Ce texte provient d'une vallée qui, dès le I^{er} siècle de l'ère chrétienne, a été rattachée à une commune des Hautes-Terres, Radmān, dont 'Amm dhu-Mbrq^m était le grand dieu.

On peut en déduire que 'Amm dhu-Mbrq^m n'est pas un dieu de Tamna' ou des basses vallées de Qatabān.

De fait, 'Amm dhu-Mbrq^m est le dieu majeur de deux communes qatabānites des Hautes-Terres méridionales, Radmān et Sufār^{um}. À Radmān, il était vénéré sous l'appellation 'm d-Mbrq^m b'l S'lym w-Lmm^m: il y avait donc deux sanctuaires appelés S'lym et Lmm^m dont on ignore la localisation. À Sufār^{um}, on ne connaît pas le nom de son temple⁶⁰.

Cependant, il est possible que 'Amm dhu-Mbrq^m ait eu un temple à Tamna', de manière hypothétique dans le quartier voisin de la porte méridionale. En effet, l'inscription Van Beek 1 déjà citée, commémore la construction de «... la tour Ghaylān, dans la région de d-Mbrq^m» (... mḥfḏⁿ Ġylⁿ b-bd^t d-Mbrq^m).

Il existe aujourd'hui un bourg nommé Mabraq dans le wādī Tuban supérieur, à 95 km au nord-nord-ouest de 'Adan (13° 32' N et 44° 35' E, voir la carte du Yémen-Nord en 8 feuilles, feuille 8). Il n'est pas impossible qu'il existe une relation entre ce bourg et la caractérisation de 'Amm.

Il. 5-6, w-'ttr/⁶ (d)-'mr^m: première attestation de cette caractérisation de 'Athtar. Il ne semble pas que 'mr^m soit ici la tribu Amīr^{um} de Nagrān et de ses environs. Il s'agit plutôt d'un sanctuaire de 'Athtar. Quelques textes mentionnent de fait un sanctuaire nommé 'mr probablement localisé à Tamna': voir Ja 868, 869 et 872 (dédicaces à bnty-'l 'd 'mr); Ja 870 (dédicace 'd 'mr). Dans les inscriptions qatabānites, on relève par ailleurs plusieurs expressions comportant le terme 'mr: voir bkr 'nby w-Hwkm d-'mr w-s²mr (élément de la titulature royale) et Wrfw 'mr-'m; on ne saurait dire si 'mr est ici un nom propre ou un nom commun (à traduire peut-être par «oracle»).

Il. 6-7, dt Hmym 'ttry Bs³r^m w-'dhn^m: cette expression insolite, avec dt Hmym et 'ttr au duel, peut s'analyser comme une manière ramassée de mentionner deux déesses presque homonymes, dt Hmym 'ttr Bs³r^m et dt Hmym 'ttr 'dhn^m. Elle n'était attestée précédemment que dans l'inscription Bāfaqīh-Bāṭāyi' al-Ḥadd II-2/5-6, b-'ttr S²r^q w-b-'s⁵m d-Mbrq^m w-[b-dt]y (H) [mym] 'ttry Bs³r^m w-'dhn^m w-b s²ms¹-hmv. On a ici la première attestation du duel de dt avec cette graphie.

I. 6, Bs³r^m: voir Qurayḍa 1/3-4 et commentaire, ci-dessus.

Il. 6-7, 'dhn^m: cette caractérisation de dhāt Himyam n'est pas nouvelle. Elle se trouve à l'identique dans Bāfaqīh-Bāṭāyi' al-Ḥadd II-2/5-6 et sous une forme un peu différente dans Van Beek 1 (BA=CSAI I, 41)/7 (dt ' Hmym dt 'dhn^m) et FB-Qatabān 1/2-3 (d³t 'dhn^m). Voir aussi l'énigmatique MuB 679 ('dhn^m). Notre inscription et celle d'al-Ḥadd établissent que dt Hmym dt 'dhn^m était une divinité de Sufār^{um}, peut-être propre à cette commune.

⁶⁰ Voir déjà Robin 2005: 69.

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26. YM 24 942+24 943: *Ibidem*: 68-69.
27. YM 28 823: *Ibidem*: 44-45.
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29. YM 28 976: *Ibidem*: 42-43.
30. YM 30 135: *Ibidem*: 60-61.
31. ZM 799: Yule P. 2007: *Spätantike im Jemen – Late Antique Yemen*, Aichwald: Linden Soft Verlag: 90, fig. 58 (plaquette de bronze inédite dont la première photographie a été publiée dans un bulletin confidentiel par Raymond Tindel).



Fig. 1. L'inscription Laḥj 61, qui commémore la construction d'un puits par les princes de la commune de Sufār^{um} (I^{er} siècle de l'ère chrétienne). Noter aux lignes 6-7 la curieuse expression *ḏty Ḥmym 'ttry Bs³r^m w-²⁷dhn^m* (photographie Mission du Haut-Yāfi').



Fig. 2. L'inscription Bāfaqīh-Bāṭāyi' al-Ḥadd II/2 qui commémore la construction d'un barrage par les princes de la commune de Sufār^{um} (début du II^e siècle de l'ère chrétienne). On y retrouve aux lignes 5-6 l'expression *[ḏt]y (H)[mym 'ttry Bs³r^m w-⁶dhn^m* (photographie Mission Qatabān).



Fig. 3. L'inscription ḥadramawtique Ry 622=686 (Ḥuṣn al-‘Urr). Aux lignes 1-2, Gonzague Ryckmans restitue [... ... ‘s³]²tr^m Yḡl b-rd’ mr’-s¹[m ... La lecture [... ...by]²t-[s¹]m ... paraît plus vraisemblable (photographie Mission Qatabān).



Fig. 4. Le fragment d'autel qatabānite MuB 679 du Musée de Bayḥān, sur lequel on lit ‘dhn^m à la première ligne (photographie Mission Qatabān).



Fig. 5. Fragment principal de l'inscription qatabānite CIAS I, 206 du wādī Thā’ (II^e ou I^{er} siècle avant l'ère chrétienne). La restitution proposée est: ... ‘ṣd^m rīd rb’-s¹² dt Zhr^m w-dt (Z)[hr^m ‘]tr byr^m Yfⁿ w-^{s³}tr d-Mqw^lm ... (photographie Mission Qatabān).

Fig. 6. Petit fragment de l'inscription qatabānite CIAS I, 206 du wādī Thā’ (II^e ou I^{er} siècle avant l'ère chrétienne). La restitution proposée est: ... ‘ṣd^m rīd rb’-s¹² dt Zhr^m w-dt (Z)[hr^m ‘]tr byr^m Yfⁿ w-^{s³}tr d-Mqw^lm ... (photographie Mission Qatabān).



Fig. 7. L'inscription MQ-Nakhlān 1 qui commémore la réalisation d'un puits par un Ḥaṣḥaḥide (I^{er} siècle de l'ère chrétienne environ). On y relève aux lignes 5-6 et 6-7 deux caractérisations de dhāt Ḥimyam comportant le terme 'itr: ... ḍt Ḥmym 'itr ḥl⁶f Rd' et ḍt Ḥmym 'itr Yg⁷l b-Yḍwr (photographie Mission Qatabān).



Fig. 8. L'inscription MQ-Nakhlān 1 qui commémore la réalisation d'un puits par un Ḥaṣḥaḥide (I^{er} siècle de l'ère chrétienne environ). Photographie en lumière rasante des trois premières lignes (photographie Mission Qatabān).



Fig. 9. L'inscription MQ-Nakhlān 1 qui commémore la réalisation d'un puits par un Haṣbaḥide (1^{er} siècle de l'ère chrétienne environ). Photographie en lumière rasante des lignes 2-5 (photographie Mission Qatabān).



Fig. 10. L'inscription MQ-Nakhlān 1 qui commémore la réalisation d'un puits par un Haṣbaḥide (1^{er} siècle de l'ère chrétienne environ). Photographie en lumière rasante des lignes 4-7 (photographie Mission Qatabān).



Fig. 11. L'inscription Qurayḍa 1, qui provient certainement de Hadīm (l'antique Hdw, chef-lieu de la commune de Khawlān), II^e ou I^{er} siècle avant l'ère chrétienne (photographie Mission du Haut-Yāfi').
Noter aux lignes 2-5 le théonyme $dt^3 H(m)m \text{ '} \text{tr} B^4 s^3 r^m \text{ '} d m h^5 r m \text{ -} s^1 B^7 r y^m$.

Stéphanie ANTHONIOZ

ISHTAR-ASTARTE, UN USAGE GÉNÉRIQUE DANS LA BIBLE?

À l'origine Inanna-Ishtar?

Le nom d'Ishtar est un nom sémitique, même si son étymologie n'est pas clairement établie¹. Anciennement prononcé Eshtar, son nom dérive du sémitique commun *'ttr*, divinité masculine à Ougarit, et dont la forme féminine, attestée en Arabie est beaucoup plus répandue en Mésopotamie et au Levant² (avec la marque du féminin *'ttrt*), à Ougarit, en Phénicie et dans la Bible.

En Mésopotamie, la déesse sumérienne Inanna³ a vraisemblablement été assimilée à la déesse Ishtar dans le courant du III^e millénaire même s'il est difficile de savoir ce qui a provoqué cette assimilation: les deux déesses présentaient-elles d'emblée les mêmes caractéristiques ou bien s'agit-il d'un processus syncrétique? Identifiée à la planète Vénus⁴, elle est symbolisée en cunéiforme akkadien par le nombre 15 (soit la moitié de 30 attribué à son père Sîn, dieu Lune).

Ougarit offre une situation particulière où, et la forme masculine et la forme féminine sont attestées. Mais la déesse *'ttrt*, quoique mentionnée 46 fois dans les sources, l'est rare-

¹ H.-P. Müller considère qu'il s'agit de la racine sémitique «être riche» mais que paradoxalement la divinité existe dans les langues où la racine verbale n'est pas attestée. Cf. Müller 2001: 423-434.

² À Ébla, le nom est noté ^dAš-tár. Comme l'a souligné P. Mander, la déesse a trouvé à Ébla moins d'espace «en raison de la concurrence de la déesse du substrat Ishhara». Cf. Mander 2008: 58.

³ L'étymologie exacte d'Inanna reste inconnue, même si l'on s'accorde à la mettre en rapport avec l'expression *Nin.ana.ak* «la maîtresse du ciel», devenue Ina(n)na par chute du *n-* initial et du *-k* final. Une autre étymologie proposée par Jacobsen est celle de *nin.ana.ak* «Dame des régimes de dattes». Cf. Jacobsen 1976: 36 et 135.

⁴ La forme masculine serait liée à l'astre qui apparaît à l'aube tandis que la forme féminine à celui qui est visible le soir. Cf. Yahuda 1946: 174-78; Buccellati, Heimpel 1982: 9-22; Archi 1993: 71-78.

ment dans les textes mythologiques: on la connaît donc assez mal⁵. Le lien qui l'unit à Anat doit sans doute être considéré comme une étape dans un processus de syncrétisme des deux déesses, puisque leur iconographie est similaire: elles apparaissent toutes deux armées⁶. Elles sont toutes deux des consœurs de Baal. Enfin, *'ttr* apparaît dans les listes du panthéon comme l'équivalent d'Ishtar⁷, mais aussi comme déesse mariote⁸.

En Phénicie, bien que la déesse Astarté ait été une déesse d'importance durant tout le I^{er} millénaire, on trouve paradoxalement peu d'attestations⁹.

Les aspects de la déesse sont nombreux: divinité des pluies, de la guerre, de l'amour, étoile du matin et du soir¹⁰. Ils semblent communs aux différentes divinités identifiées à l'Est comme à l'Ouest. Ainsi, dans le cycle ougaritique de Baal, lorsque le dieu *'ttr* est proposé pour le trône de Baal (dieu de l'orage) mort, il n'en est pas reconnu digne. Quant à la divinité féminine *'ttr*, l'étoile du soir, elle est reconnue comme déesse à la fois de la guerre et de l'amour. La personnalité d'Inanna-Ishtar, mieux connue par l'abondance de la littérature mythologique la concernant, est riche et complexe, voire ambivalente.

Mais l'usage de son nom comme nom commun «déesse», particulièrement employé comme un générique au pluriel *ištarātu* «les déesses» dans les inscriptions néo-assyriennes, résulte-t-il de cette richesse et de cette complexité? Là aussi la réponse n'est pas aisée. Si l'on considère d'ordinaire que c'est la divinité qui a donné son nom pour désigner toute déesse¹¹, rien n'empêche de faire l'hypothèse inverse: le nom commun signifierait «déesse»¹² et aurait servi à désigner la déesse par excellence. Cette dernière hypothèse, proposée par Jean-Marie Durand¹³, est à comparer au Baal qui signifie avant tout «maître» et désigne la (ou les) divinité(s) majeure(s) de l'orage au Levant. Ceci explique alors les différentes manifestations ou hypostases d'Ishtar (dans le panthéon de Mari mais aussi à Ninive, Assur, Arbèles)¹⁴. Cette dernière hypothèse est aussi parfaitement cohérente avec les résultats de la *'ttr* comme nom commun désignant une catégorie d'êtres surnaturels en Arabie méridionale.

Astarté dans la Bible

Il a parfois été remarqué qu'Ishtar était absente de la Bible¹⁵. Cependant, il ne faut pas oublier que l'épithète «Reine du ciel» pourrait la désigner (Jr 7,18; 44,18-19.25)¹⁶. D'autre part, n'est-elle pas Astarté, ou pour la prononcer sous sa forme massorétique 'Ashtoret (עשתרת)¹⁷?

⁵ Dans le cycle de Baal (KTU 1.2 i 7-8.40; iv 28-30), de Keret (KTU 1.16 vi 54-57; 1.14 iii 41-44 = vi 26-30); KTU 1.92 fragmentaire; KTU 1.100 dans des incantations de paire avec Anat; KTU 1.108 comme toponyme; KTU 1.114 de paire avec Anat.

⁶ Voir Cornelius 2004: 92-93.

⁷ KTU 1.47 25 = KTU 1.118 24.

⁸ Bordreuil 1989: 545-547.

⁹ Le sarcophage de Tabnit à Sidon datant du VI^e s. (KAI 13) le roi où est «prêtre de *'ttr*», peut-être patronne de la ville; celui d'Eshmunazar à Sidon (KAI 14) dont la mère est aussi «prêtresse de *'ttr*»; enfin, un trône votif à Tyr datant du II^e s (KAI 17). Voir aussi Bordreuil 1998: 1153-1164. Noter aussi que la divinité phénicienne est bien attestée en Égypte. Noter enfin l'attestation non pas cette fois phénicienne mais «ammonite» de la déesse sous la forme Shagar-et-'Ashtar dans l'inscription de Deir 'Alla, cf. Puech 2008: 39.

¹⁰ Jacobsen 1976: 135s; voir aussi Bruschweiler 1989; Wilcke 1976: 74-87.

¹¹ Müller 2001: 425.

¹² Comme l'atteste d'ailleurs l'article *ištaru* dans le *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*, cf. pp. 271s.

¹³ Durand 2008: 198-201.

¹⁴ Lambert 2004: 35-39; Porter 2004: 41-44.

¹⁵ Assman 1999: 854.

Les occurrences de la déesse dans la Bible n'étant pas nombreuses, il paraît utile de les rappeler ici dans leur forme vocalique précise ainsi que dans leur contexte immédiat. Nous les présentons dans l'ordre d'apparence du Texte Massorétique:

1) Juges 2,13

Et les fils d'Israël firent ce qui est mauvais aux yeux de Yhwh, ils servirent les Baals (הבעלים).¹² Et ils abandonnèrent Yhwh, le Dieu de leurs pères, qui les avait fait sortir du pays d'Égypte. Ils marchèrent après d'autres dieux (אחרים אלהים אחרי), d'entre les dieux des peuples qui étaient autour d'eux, et se prosternèrent devant eux. Et ils mirent Yhwh en colère. ¹³ Ils abandonnèrent Yhwh, et servirent (ויעבדו) le Baal (לבעל) et les (ou la) 'Ashtarot (ולעשתרות) (Jg 2,11-13).

Notons tout de suite plusieurs points importants. Toutes les occurrences divines dans ce passage qu'elles concernent Baal ou Astarté sont précédées de l'article en hébreu : il s'agit du (v.13) ou des Baals (v.11), de la ou des (?) 'Ashtarot (v.13). Pourquoi hésiter entre le singulier et le pluriel concernant 'Ashtarot. La vocalisation 'Ashtarot est apparemment un féminin pluriel et généralement analysée comme tel. Cependant, N. Wyatt a proposé de revoir cette solution et de considérer autrement la vocalisation du nom. Car, pour l'auteur, il est possible qu'il s'agisse d'une simple évolution phonétique 'Ashtarot(u) devenant 'Ashtarot ('*astārôt*) comme, ailleurs, Dagan est devenu Dagon¹⁸. Mais il n'exclut pas la possibilité d'un pluriel (dans l'usage du moins). Il est clair que cette hypothèse ne peut être vérifiée : les racines quadrilatères en hébreu biblique sont rares et présentent des schèmes vocaliques aléatoires. Mais, en Jg 2,13, l'hypothèse de N. Wyatt se trouverait confirmée par le fait que Baal qui précède 'Ashtarot (v.13) est aussi un singulier. On aurait donc mis en exergue dans ce grand chapitre deutéronomiste¹⁹ un couple divin, cause de la faute d'Israël mais aussi de la compassion de *Yhwh* puisque c'est cette faute même qui provoque l'envoi des juges (Jg 2,16). Dans la construction deutéronomiste de l'histoire d'Israël (qui s'étend du livre du Deutéronome au 2^e livre des Rois), c'est une ère nouvelle qui est introduite, construite comme toutes les autres sur le principe d'une faute d'apostasie de son peuple que *Yhwh* vient sauver.

2) Juges 3,7

Et les fils d'Israël firent ce qui est mauvais aux yeux de *Yhwh*, et ils oublièrent *Yhwh*, leur Dieu, et servirent les Baals (הבעלים) et les Asherot (האשרות).⁸ Et la colère de *Yhwh* s'enflamma contre Israël, et il les vendit en la main de Kushan-Rishatayim, roi d'Aram-Naharayim. (Jg 3,7-8)

Il faut remarquer ici que les Baals (au pluriel) sont associés aux Asherot. Comme ailleurs l'association des Baals avec les 'Ashtarot est systématique, les exégètes ont souvent proposé d'émender le texte. Mais quelques remarques s'imposent: les occurrences bibliques concernant Astarté sont maigres (nous les donnons toutes ici) et celles sans doute plus nombreuses concernant Ashera sont encore moins significatives à cause de l'usage pluriel et de la référence à l'objet cultuel qui n'est plus la déesse en tant que telle. D'autre part, l'usage idéologique de la référence, dans l'un comme dans l'autre cas, ôte toute indication pouvant préciser un culte quelconque. Il ne me paraît pas nécessaire d'émender le texte; il montre

¹⁶ Smith 2002: 182; Olyan 1987: 161-174; Delcor 1982: 101-122.

¹⁷ Mais noté Ash-tar-[tum ?] en Akkadien. Cf. Wyatt 1999: 204.

¹⁸ Wyatt 1999: 210.

¹⁹ Depuis la thèse de Martin Noth, on considère que les discours Dt 1-30; Jos 1; 23; Jg 2,6-3,6; 1 S 12; 1 R 8; 2 R 17 et 25 constituent les grands piliers de l'histoire deutéronomiste qui tente de rendre compte du passé et des origines d'Israël mais surtout d'éclairer l'échec final de la monarchie en Israël. Cf. Noth 1981.

simplement que dans l'esprit du rédacteur Astarté et Ashera ont finalement été confondues dans une même polémique sur laquelle on va revenir.

3) Juges 10,6

Et les fils d'Israël firent de nouveau ce qui est mauvais aux yeux de *Yhwh*, et ils servirent les Baals (הבעלים) et les 'Ashtarot (העשתרות), et les dieux de Syrie, et les dieux de Sidon, et les dieux de Moab, et les dieux des fils d'Ammon, et les dieux des Philistins. Ils abandonnèrent *Yhwh* et ne le servirent pas. ⁷La colère de *Yhwh* s'enflamma contre Israël, et il les vendit en la main des Philistins et en la main des fils d'Ammon, qui opprimèrent et écrasèrent les fils d'Israël cette année-là. (Jg 10,6-7)

On voit maintenant se profiler le contexte des occurrences bibliques avec le même couple divin, les mêmes expressions typiques («faire ce qui est mauvais aux yeux de *Yhwh*», «servir les autres dieux», «abandonner *Yhwh*», «enflammer sa colère» etc...), enfin le même schéma théologique de rétribution divine. Ici le couple Baals et 'Ashtarot semble bien être au pluriel ce que confirment la succession et l'accumulation d'autres dieux d'autres pays. Cela ne rend pas nécessairement caduque la théorie de N. Wyatt. Effectivement, quelle aurait pu être la forme plurielle d'un singulier vocalisé 'Ashtarot (dont l'allongement du o est déjà marqué par la mater lectionis waw?).

4) 1 Samuel 7,3-4 et 12,10

Et il arriva que, depuis le jour où l'arche demeura à Qiryat-Yéarim, il se passa un long temps, vingt années, et toute la maison d'Israël se lamenta après *Yhwh*. ³Et Samuel parla à toute la maison d'Israël, disant : Si de tout votre cœur vous retournez à *Yhwh*, ôtez du milieu de vous les dieux étrangers (הנכר אלהי) et les 'Ashtarot (העשתרות), et attachez fermement votre cœur à *Yhwh*, et le servez lui seul, (alors) il vous délivrera de la main des Philistins. ⁴Et les fils d'Israël ôtèrent les Baals (הבעלים) et les 'Ashtarot (העשתרות), et servirent *Yhwh* seul. (1 S 7,2-4)

Ici 'Ashtarot fonctionne aussi comme un pluriel si l'on considère le double parallélisme d'une part avec les «dieux étrangers» et, d'autre part, avec les Baals. Signalons au passage que la mater lectionis *waw* n'est pas notée dans la seconde occurrence de 'Ashtarot. Signalons aussi que la LXX a traduit ici «les Baals et les bosquets-'Ashtarot» (τα αλση Ασταρωθ), combinaison pour le moins étrange de 'Ashtarot et de Ashera, ce qui montre de fait qu'à époque tardive ni 'Ashtarot ni Ashera ne sont clairement identifiées d'où l'hypothèse vraisemblable d'une confusion volontaire et polémique. C'est aussi pratiquement le même discours que l'on retrouve quelques chapitres plus loin (1 S 12), autre grand discours deutéronomiste qui clôt l'ère de Samuel et des juges et ouvre celle des rois:

Quand Jacob fut entré en Égypte, vos pères crièrent vers *Yhwh*, et *Yhwh* envoya Moïse et Aaron. Et ils firent sortir vos pères hors d'Égypte, et les firent habiter dans ce lieu-ci. ⁹Mais ils oublièrent *Yhwh*, leur Dieu, qui les vendit en la main de Sisera, chef de l'armée de Haçor, et en la main des Philistins et en la main du roi de Moab qui leur firent la guerre. ¹⁰Ils crièrent vers *Yhwh* et dirent: Nous avons péché, car nous avons abandonné *Yhwh*, et nous avons servi les Baals (הבעלים) et les 'Ashtarot (העשתרות). Et maintenant, délivre-nous de la main de nos ennemis, et nous te servirons. ¹¹Et *Yhwh* envoya Jerubbaal, et Bedan, et Jephthé, et Samuel, et il vous délivra de la main de vos ennemis tout autour, et vous avez habité en sécurité. ¹²(Puis) vous avez vu que Nahash, roi des fils d'Ammon, venait contre vous, et vous m'avez dit: Non, mais un roi règnera sur nous, — et *Yhwh*, votre Dieu, était votre roi. ¹³Et maintenant, voici le roi que vous avez choisi, que vous avez demandé, et voici, *Yhwh* a mis un roi sur vous. (1 S 12,8-13)

C'est ici la quatrième (ou la cinquième si l'on inclut Jg 3,7) et dernière occurrence dans laquelle apparaît au pluriel le couple Baal et 'Ashtarot. La sixième occurrence (1 S 31,10) est

importante puisqu'on apprend que l'armure de Saül mort a été suspendue au mur du temple de 'Ashtarot (עשתרת בית). Ici encore la théorie de N. Wyatt se verrait confirmée, puisqu'il s'agirait plus vraisemblablement d'un singulier d'autant plus que le nom ne porte pas l'article : «le temple (littéralement, la maison) de 'Ashtarot». On notera aussi que la déesse n'est pas ici celle des Sidoniens mais celle des Philistins.

5) 1 Rois 11,5.33 et 2 Rois 23,13

Enfin, les trois dernières références ont en commun d'être sans article: en 1 R 11,5.33 'Ashtoret (עשתרת), déesse des Sidoniens, est introduite à cause des épouses de Salomon. En 2 R 23,13 elle est détruite par Josias en tant qu'abomination. On s'accorde généralement sur le fait que le schème vocalique de la forme singulière 'Ashtoret ('*āštōret*) a été calqué sur celui de *bōšet* qui signifie la «honte» par les Massorètes²⁰. Cela participe encore de la polémique anti-idolâtrique qui évite de nommer les divinités afin de ne leur donner aucune existence²¹.

6) Deutéronome 7,13 ; 28,4.18.51

D'autres occurrences bibliques sont liées aux troupeaux (Dt 7,13; 28,4.18.51) ou à des toponymes (comme 'Ashtarot Qarnayim en Gn 14,5 ou le nom d'une ville de Bashan en Dt 1,4; Jos 9,10; 12,4; 13,12.31; 1 Chr 6,71; 11,44). Dans le premier cas, J. Hadley a proposé le concept de «dé-déification»²² c'est-à-dire l'utilisation de noms divins comme noms communs particulièrement dans le livre du Deutéronome. Les «'Ashtarot du troupeau» seraient à comprendre en réalité comme les «troupeaux de moutons»: la divinité plus que dé-déifiée ayant été chosifiée selon sa fonction et son aspect de fertilité. Ce processus est à comparer à celui de Dagan avec le grain et de Tirosh avec le vin. Les divinités dé-déifiées deviennent alors les bénédictions de *Yhwh*.

Hypothèse conclusive

Que retenir en conclusion? L'hypothèse de N. Wyatt paraît vraisemblable et la forme du singulier 'Ashtarot pourrait être originale. Mais elle ne peut être vérifiée et, comme l'admet l'auteur lui-même, cela n'empêche pas son usage pluriel dans le texte biblique. Ce qui s'est passé alors, au vu des occurrences restreintes, c'est que les rédacteurs deutéronomistes ont joué sur le nom de cette divinité féminine (à la sonorité plurielle) pour l'accoupler aux Baals (parèdre qu'elle n'est jamais dans la littérature ougaritique). Ils ont ainsi forgé une expression typique de leur polémique envers les autres dieux qu'ils ne nomment que très rarement évitant ainsi de leur attribuer toute existence réelle.

Mais s'agit-il alors d'un générique au même sens que l'akkadien *ilāmu u ištārātu*²³? Rien n'est moins sûr dans la Bible. Effectivement les sources ougaritaines et d'autres extrabibliques montrent que le générique commun pour désigner une déesse au Levant est הלא, le féminin de *el* (לא). Aussi est-il employé pour désigner la déesse Ashera à Lakish²⁴. Il est donc possible que les rédacteurs deutéronomistes se soient inspirés de l'expression courante akkadienne pour la critiquer et détourner le sens commun vers un sens polémique et anti-idolâtrique. Cette stratégie serait alors un exemple

²⁰ Jastrow 1894: 19-30. À comparer à d'autres exemples bibliques comme Ishboshet pour Ishbaal, Meriboshet pour Meribaal ou encore Molek.

²¹ Notons les rares occurrences où Milkom, dieu ammonite, et Kemosh, dieu moabite, sont citées dans la Bible: pour le premier, 2 S 12,30; 1 R 11,5; 1 Chr 8,9; 20,2; Is 3,15; Jr 30,9; 49,1.3; Os 3,5; Am 1,15; Mi 2,13; pour le deuxième, Nb 21,29; Jg 11,24; 1 R 11,7.33; 2 R 23,13; Jr 48,7.13.46.

²² Hadley 1996: 115-133; 2007: 157-174.

²³ Lenore Perlman 1979: 183.

²⁴ Cross 1954: 20; 1967: 16.

nouveau de contre-propagande biblique. Aussi aurait-on affaire, au-delà d'un générique, à un autre *terminus technicus* de la polémique deutéronomiste, comme du reste les Baals²⁵. Ce qui me paraît aller dans ce sens, en dehors du nombre très restreint des occurrences, c'est leur présence dans des chapitres clés de l'histoire deutéronomiste, les discours de jonction entre les grandes périodes que les historiens deutéronomistes ont créés afin de donner à Israël son passé, mais un passé cyclique de crise et de salut²⁶ qui conduira et finalement rendra compte de la plus grande des crises selon cette histoire: l'exil. Mais, cette conclusion reste biblique et entièrement circonscrite à l'idéologie deutéronomiste qui y est à l'œuvre. Que la forme du féminin pluriel au Levant *'trt* ait été en usage comme générique est loin d'être impossible au vu de la documentation akkadienne, mariote et sud-arabique, mais les arguments et les documents au Levant sont trop maigres et quand on les possède, ils apparaissent souvent trop idéologisés pour justifier leur usage de simple générique.

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Irene ROSSI

NOTES ON MINAIC EPIGRAPHY: RECONSIDERATION OF SOME THEONYMS AND DIVINE EPITHETS

The systematic study of the Minaic inscriptions made considerable advances in the 1990s¹, and since then a large number of new texts from the Jawf region has come to light and has been published². The digital archive of the Ancient South Arabian texts is continuously being updated on the CSAI website³, and this involves the study of the previous editions of the texts and the publication of the new inscriptions recorded by the CASIS project in the Yemeni Museums⁴. A philological reappraisal of the Minaic texts is therefore particularly apposite. This paper is concerned with some aspects of the theonomastics and the significance of some formulae relating to religion in these inscriptions.

In the first place, it must be said that the political fragmentation of the Jawf, which it is now clear persisted in different degrees throughout the first millennium BC⁵, was not matched as much as might be expected by a linguistic fragmentation. Especially in religious matters, the language employed was highly standardized and the same formulaic expressions are found repeated for centuries at different sites in the valley. To provide better readings of difficult passages in the texts and to understand the true significance of some phrases, it is thus essential to

¹ Arbach 1993; Robin 1992; Gnoli 1993; Avanzini 1995; Bron 1998.

² Besides the numerous articles, for the collections see in particular Arbach, Schiettecatte 2006; Arbach, Audouin 2007; Arbach, Schiettecatte, al-Hādī 2008.

³ *Corpus of South Arabian Inscriptions*, directed by A. Avanzini; <http://csai.humnet.unipi.it>.

⁴ *Cataloguing and Fruition of South Arabian Inscriptions through an Informatic Support*; the project was directed by A. Avanzini and coordinated by A. Priolella.

⁵ Arbach, Rossi forthcoming.

concentrate our philological study of the Minaic corpus on groups of inscriptions with the same textual typology and to focus on their structure.

An example of this are the so-called “penitential texts” of the Jawf, whose typical textual features differ completely from their equivalents from Saba’ and Ḥaḍramawt. In fact, the latter are dedicatory texts celebrating a successful expiation, demanded because a sin had been committed. In contrast, the penitential inscriptions from the Jawf are not dedicatory texts, but constitute a peculiar textual typology. Their phraseology and pattern remained fixed from the 7th cent. BC in royal expiation texts, through the second half of the millennium with the inscriptions from the sanctuaries of the god *Nkrh* in Barāqish and Darb aṣ-Ṣabī, until the last centuries BC with the texts from Haram and the wādī Shuḍayf, written in Sabaic language. Their structure is centred on the formulaic expression *nthy w-ntdr*, which has usually been translated as “confessed and did penance”. This difference of textual typology, which contrasts with the dedicatory texts from Saba’ and Ḥaḍramawt, is surely a sign of cultural difference which needs to be investigated further and is a witness to the social importance attributed to the expiation ritual, with which the religious and the legal aspects of the lives of individuals and communities were closely involved.

The first point in this paper concerns the penitential text al-Jawf 04.9 (fig. 1)⁶. It conforms to the pattern of the penitential inscriptions from the sites of Barāqish and Darb-aṣ-Ṣabī, all of which are dedicated to the god *Nkrh*. This text is very badly preserved and the difficulties caused by the damage led to a misreading in the publication, where the name of the god *Nkrh* was shown with mimation and followed by an unknown word *tmhqm*, which, it was suggested, could be a name (ll. 6-7). However, in the other penitential texts to *Nkrh*, the theonym is always followed by the epithet *s²ymh-s¹* or *s²ymh-s¹m* (“his/their patron”). This restoration seems to be confirmed also in al-Jawf 04.9 by the still, though scarcely, readable letters. The verb after the formulaic expression *nthy w-ntdr* is most probably *ht*, well attested in this type of text when following the preposition *b-dt* (“because he committed a sin”):

⁵ [... ...] (w)-M²thn nt-

⁶ [hy] (w-n)t²dr (k-Nk)r²h (s²)-

⁷ ymh-s¹m b-dt (h)t [.]

“[...] and M²thn confessed and did penance to *Nkrh*, their patron, because they had committed a sin [... ...]”.

In Ancient South Arabian, parallel to *s²ym*, which is used to identify the tutelary divinity of a specific group or town, we find the noun ‘l “god”⁷. The pattern ‘l plus the name of a sanctuary (e.g. ‘*tr d-Qbd* ‘l *Rsf* in Ma‘īn) or of a group (e.g. *Mtbntyn* ‘l *Tbrn* in Haram) is frequent in Minaic in the formation of divine epithets.

An example of this use can be found in M 407 (fig. 2)⁸, which unfortunately has a lacuna in place of the verb of dedication and part of the name of the god, only the two final letters

⁶ Arbach, Schiettecatte 2006: 22-23, pl. 5 (fig. 10). Only the most recent bibliographical reference for each text will be given.

⁷ ‘l is rarely attested as a theonym itself: it is found only in quite archaic texts, namely on the pillars inside the Banāt ‘Ād temple of Haram and in the inscriptions Ma‘īn 99 and 100 (Robin, Antonini, Bron 2005-2006: 273-279, figs. 170-171) where it is followed by the epithet *Qdhm*, and it is restored in one panel of the pillars of the *intra muros* temple of Nashshān; in this temple, it appears also in the name of the goddesses *Bhnt* ‘l “Daughters of ‘l”. See also RES 3943, l. 4: *byt* ‘l.

⁸ Garbini 1974: 126 (for the figure, see Rathjens 1955: 561-562).

of which, *y* and *n*, are readable. The name of the god is followed by *'l-Hs²s²* “god of *Hs²s²*”, reminiscent of the cases seen above as it can be inferred from the first line that *Hs²s²* is the name of a group:

¹ *Ddkrb bn Mrr ḡ-Qwbn ḡ- 'hl Hs²[s² s³l']–*

² *yn 'l-Hs²s² mšrbn*

“*Ddkrb* son of *Mrr ḡ-Qwbn* of the clan *Hs²[s²* dedicated to] *yn* god of *Hs²s²* the altar”.

J. Pirenne⁹ restored the theonym as [*S'*]*yn*, since according to her the typology of the object was Ḥadramitic. A.F.L. Beeston¹⁰ suggested restoring [*ḡ-Rw*]*yn*, which he considered to be the name of a god, though we now know that it is the name of a Minaean group. In 2006 a new text from Haram was published which is a dedication of an altar to *Mtbnṭyn* by a member of the same family *Hs²s²*¹¹. This was a strong indication that M 407 also could come from Haram and that the theonym *Mtbnṭyn* has probably to be restored in the lacuna, a possibility which was already considered by M. Höfner¹².

Regarding the use of *'l* in the Minaic theonomastics, in the fragmentary text Kamna 22 (fig. 3)¹³ the words *'l-Dll* were tentatively considered to be the epithet, “god of Dll”, referring to *Nb 'l*, mentioned in the previous line:

[... ...]

¹ *(b)-r'z (Nb)['l]*

² *'ldll [w- 't]–*

³ *tr Hgr b-[Nb]–*

⁴ *t'ly w-b-[...]*

⁵ [... ...]

“[... ...] Sur l'ordre de Nab'[al] dieu-de-Dalīl (?) [et de 'Ath]tar Hagr, par [Nabaṭ]'aly et par [... ...]”¹⁴.

Up until now, only a few fragmentary inscriptions have been known from Kamna. However, more and more texts are now being discovered and they shed more light on the history and religion of this site. The Military Museum of Ṣan'ā' 3650, recorded by the CASIS project¹⁵, is a dedicatory inscription on a pillar addressed to the god *Mdhww* by a brother of *Nbṭ'ly*, a typical name of the kings of Kamna. Comparing this text with Kamna 22, both the inscriptions record the same name of the king and the same final sequence of divinities:

¹⁰ *(b-r)–*

¹¹ [*'z N*](*b*)*'l w-'ldll*

¹² [*w-'ttr H*](*gr*) *b-ywm*

⁹ Pirenne 1956: 263-264.

¹⁰ Beeston 1962: 454-455.

¹¹ This inscription (Tairan 2006: 7-26) is very interesting. Firstly, it shows that the Banāt 'Ād sanctuary in Haram, which was originally called *Hdm* in its foundation texts Haram 3 and 4 on the temple's gate, did not change its name to *'rṭt* when it was consecrated to *Hlfn* towards the end of the first millennium BC, as had been supposed (Robin 1992: 21, 28). It was already called *'rṭt* when it was dedicated to the cult of *Mtbnṭyn*. Secondly, it proves that both *'lkbr 'mr* and *Ys²hrmlk Nbṭ*, known separately from al-Kāfir 3 and Haram 2, were kings of Haram and ruled together. Recently, another text from Haram attesting their joint reign has been published (FB-Haram 1 in Bron 2010: 163-165).

¹² Höfner 1966: 39.

¹³ Robin 1992: pl. 57a.

¹⁴ Robin 1992: 194.

¹⁵ My thanks go to Prof. A. Avanzini and Dr. A. Prioretta for allowing me to consult this unpublished document.

¹³ [... ...]

“by the command of *Nbʿl* and *ʿldll* and *ʿttr Hgr* at the time of [... ...]”¹⁶.

In the second place after *Nbʿl*, we found *ʿldll*. On the basis of the comparison with this complete text, we can restore in the lacuna in Kamna 22, l. 1 a conjunction *w-* before *ʿldll* and we can thus consider *ʿldll* as the name of a god, although it possibly born as an epithet: *ʿl Dll*¹⁷.

Another question related to the fluctuation between theonyms and divine epithets is that of the god *Khln*, attested relatively rarely in the Minaic corpus: once in the inscription M 227 (l. 2: *w-Khln nbʿt*[... ...])¹⁸, twice in Maʿīn 62 in the phrase “the two priests of *Khln*” (ll. 3,5: *rs²wy Khln*)¹⁹ and restored only from the initial letter in the same text Maʿīn 62 (l. 2: *rs²wy K[hln]*) and in Maʿīn 44 (l. 1: *rs²wh K[hln]*)²⁰.

I would propose here to identify in the Minaic corpus new attestations of this god, appearing with a previously unknown epithet, on the basis of a new reading of two texts.

In 1993, Ch. Robin published the inscriptions of the temple of *Nkrh* in Barāqish. Among these, the dedicatory text Y.92.B.A 28 (fig. 4)²¹ was particularly interesting because it attested the new name *Nbʿtʿttr*:

⁵ *s³lʿʿh(l)–*

⁶ *n Nbʿtʿttr hw–*

⁷ *rn*

“ont consacré au clan (?) Nabaʿathtar ce pilier”²².

The problem emerged on how to consider the words *ʿhln* and *Nbʿtʿttr*. *ʿhln* is found in Minaic meaning “clan”, a sense which is preferable to disregard here, because the word appears with an unusual nunation. Even if *ʿhln* meant “the clan”, we would have to accept that a dedication could be made to a clan, in this case *Nbʿtʿttr*. Ch. Robin suggested an alternative interpretation which was to take the problematic word as an aberrant form of *ʿlhn* “the god”, with metathesis of the letters *l* and *h* (“dedicated to the god *Nbʿtʿttr*”). Although both interpretations remain problematic, the latter seemed recently to be confirmed by the inscription Dhamar Museum 386, recorded by the CASIS project²³, where *Nbʿtʿttr* is unquestionably the name of a god:

³ *s³lʿ Nbʿtʿttr b]–*

⁴ *hln*

“dedicated to *Nbʿtʿttr* the votive object”.

¹⁶ The name of the king *Nbʿtʿly* is a plausible restoration on the basis of its mention at the beginning of the text.

¹⁷ Thanks to the courtesy of Prof. F. Bron, it has been possible to verify that the theonym *ʿldll* also appears in the closing section of two new inscriptions from Kamna (Kamna 24 and 25) which are currently in the press. This confirms that he was indeed part of the institutional pantheon of the tribe.

¹⁸ Garbini 1974: 65.

¹⁹ Bron 1998: 77-79.

²⁰ Bron 1998: 71-72. This theonym has been associated with an Arab infiltration into the Jawf, since it is more widely attested in the Thamudic inscriptions as *Khl* (Bron 1998: 30). *Khl* is the main god of Qaryat al-Fāw and theophoric names containing *-khl*, as brought to my attention by Prof. Ch. Robin, are attested in the graffiti of the area of Najrān. M.C.A. Macdonald has argued that the identification of the two deities *Khln* and *Khl*, while possible, is not without difficulty given that the South Arabian name has the definite article (expressed by nunation) and the Thamudic one does not, and this hypothetical connection should not be used as the basis for demographic theories (Macdonald 2002: 125-126).

²¹ de Maigret, Robin 1993: fig. 23.

²² de Maigret, Robin 1993: 486-487.

²³ <http://csai.humnet.unipi.it/csai/html/yem/index.html>.

Some light on this issue is shed by the text M 253²⁴. This is an inscription on the walls of the town of Barāqish, for which no photo has been published. Two different renderings were proposed for a part of the text in the middle of those lines which are difficult to read. G. Garbini (on the basis of the edition published in the *Répertoire d'Épigraphie Sémitique*) records *(hl)n (nb) b- 'ttr* while M. Arbach in his PhD thesis reads: *w-thgn nbṭ 'ttr*. The first reading is rather obscure, but the second presents a possible connection with our case, as here we find a sequence of two words *nbṭ* and *'ttr* in a context of divine names, reminiscent of our *Nbṭ 'ttr*²⁵. A possible sequence *hln nbṭ* is particularly interesting in the context of our discussion since it is also found in the text M 227, l. 2: [... ...]rḳ w-Khln nbṭ[... ...], where we actually find a mention of the god *Khln*.

In the light of these comparisons, I suggest that we should reconsider the text from the temple of *Nkrh*, where the *alif* of *'hln* is an uncertain reading and could be a *k*, and read “*s³l*’ *(K)h(l)n Nbṭ 'ttr*”, thus restoring the same theonym plus epithet found in M 227 and probably in M 253. If this is correct, *Nbṭ 'ttr* would be one more of the many cases of fluctuation between theonyms and divine epithets in the Minaic corpus.

The question of an alleged relationship with North Arabia concerns Ma‘īn 9 (fig. 5)²⁶, a dedicatory inscription on the walls of *Qrnw*, the capital of the kingdom of Ma‘īn. This text is engraved in an elegant and regular script and is, in general, well preserved. However, a small lacuna has engendered an interpretation which requires discussion.

The inscription records the presence of the goddess *Mnwt* in this context:

³ *ywm whb mṭ'y Wd w-rb 's¹*

⁴ *[M]nwt*

“lorsqu’il a offert des offrandes à *Wadd* et à sa divinité tutélaire *[Ma]nawāt*”²⁷.

As the editor of the text F. Bron pointed out, this theonym is a *hapax* in the South Arabian corpus and the earliest mention at all of this divinity, which is found in later North Arabian inscriptions²⁸.

The restoration of the name of the goddess was connected with an alleged North Arabian origin of the man who dedicated the inscription, an origin which was supposed to be apparent in the name *S'm* ‘*m*’²⁹ and in the inclusion of *ḏ-S'mwy ḏ-Rgmt* in the final list of gods³⁰. However, the idea that the name *S'm* ‘*m*’ is typically North Arabian can now be disputed for two reasons. Firstly, the dedicant of the text belongs to the clan *Gb'n*, one of the main Minaean groups attested as early as the 8th century BC³¹ and actively involved in Ma‘īn’s trading activities. Secondly, the name *S'm* ‘*m*’ is well attested in the South Arabian, and especially Minaic, documentation³². This sole mention of the god *ḏ-S'mwy* in the Minaic texts does not look so odd: he was the god of the tribe

²⁴ Garbini 1974: 72-73.

²⁵ The different readings of the sequence of letters are due to the similarity of their shapes. Thanks to Prof. Ch. Robin, it has been possible to verify on the unpublished photograph by the MAFRAY (Mission Archéologique Française en République Arabe du Yémen) the reading *[.](hln) Nbṭ 'ttr*.

²⁶ Bron 1998: pl. 15.

²⁷ Bron 1998: 49-51.

²⁸ Bron 1998: 30.

²⁹ *S'm* ‘*m*’ in l. 1, while *S'm* ‘*m*’ in l. 5.

³⁰ Bron 1998: 31.

³¹ See the text Ma‘īn 112, dated to the end of the 8th century BC (Arbach, Rossi forthcoming).

³² On a wider level, as stated by M.C.A. Macdonald, “personal names provide a most unreliable criterion for identifying ethnicity” (Macdonald 2002: 125; see also the previous pages for the question regarding supposed North Arabian names). This has also recently been re-affirmed by A. Agostini (2010: 49) on the basis of his study of the onomastics of funerary stelae.

'*mr*m, living north of the Jawf and engaged in trade. His epithet *d-Rgmt* explicitly recalls his cult in Najrān (*Rgmtm*), the oasis that was part of the Minaic trading system in the second half of the 1st millennium BC³³. Therefore, the mention of this deity here seems unproblematic.

Turning now to the reading of the text on the photograph, the context is quite fragmentary: not only is the first letter of the name of the goddess in a lacuna, but also the reading of the word *rb* ' is difficult. As this kind of texts is highly standardized, we can use some of the cases in which we find the same context for comparison. We see that the formula '*rb* (or) *whb mṯ'y*³⁴ plus the name of the god is always followed by the phrase *w-rḏw-s' fnwt*. As the *d* is very similar to the *b* and the *w* is easy to be confused with the ' , I suspect an accidental misreading in Ma'īn 9. On the base of the comparison above, I would propose to read here *rḏw* instead of *rb* ' and therefore restore the first word of l. 4 as [*f*]nwt. The re-reading *ywm whb mṯ'y Wd w-rḏw-s' [f]nwt* would thus remove the mention of the goddess *Mnwt* in the Minaic texts, at least for the present.

The value of the conventional phrases I have just mentioned requires a note.

The first one ('*rb mṯ'y* or *whb mṯ'y*) means "to make an offering to". The verb '*rb* itself contains the meaning of "offering", while *whb* simply means "give"; the only comparison for the noun *mṯ'y*, whose use seems to be strictly Minaic in South Arabia, is the Ugaritic verb *ṯ'y*, meaning "to present an offering"³⁵. This noun is also attested in the form *mṯ'yt*, which, according to F. Bron, is the singular of *mṯ'y*. However, its occurrence in the text Shaqab 1 (fig. 6)³⁶, which is the only one with a numeral, seems to suggest the contrary (*ḥms't mṯ'yt*, "five offerings").

This text was claimed to contain the first and only mention of the Arabs in South Arabia ('*rb* in l. 8); for a second one, we have to wait five or six centuries³⁷. This interpretation was suggested by the context, which mentions the whole of the tribe of Ma'īn, specifying its components:

⁶ w-
⁷ *fqd kl M'n ḥr w-[]*-
⁸ [*g*]r w-*gbr w-'rb ḥm*-
⁹ *s't mṯ'yt Wd b-s'm w*-
¹⁰ (*r*)*ḏw-s'm fnwt*

"Et a contribué toute (la tribu) de Ma'īn, nobles et [cli]ents, agriculteurs et nomades, aux cinq cérémonies (en l'honneur) du (dieu) Wadd pour elle et pour qu'il soit satisfait d'elle à l'avenir (?)"³⁸.

³³ Robin 2010: 47.

³⁴ Leaving aside the fragmentary occurrences, the inscriptions where the context is complete are Ma'īn 99, 105, 107, 109, MŞM 3645 and MŞM 3650 (both recorded by the CASIS project in the Military Museum of Şan'ā'), M 246, Shaqab 9.

³⁵ Bron 1998: 40.

³⁶ Robin 1991/1993: fig. 22; Gnoli 1993: pl. 6.

³⁷ Ch. Robin, editing the text twenty years ago, dated it to the 6th century BC. The sanctuary of Shaqab al-Manaṣṣa near Barāqish, where Shaqab 1 was dedicated, contains some of the oldest attestations of Ma'īn expanding outside its original territory of *Qrmw*. This text in particular, with the contemporaneous Shaqab 2, is by now the most ancient attestation of Barāqish as a Minaean, and no more Sabaeen, town: we propose to date it to the end of the 7th century BC, probably more or less at the same time of the Sabaic historical inscription RES 3943 that relates the Sabaeen campaign against Ma'īn and the siege of Barāqish (Arbach, Rossi forthcoming).

³⁸ Robin 1991/1993: 72-73, followed by Gnoli 1993: 69-72. The two scholars restore only [*g*]r between ll. 7 and 8; al-Said 1994 restores a letter ' before the *g* of [*g*]r as in Ma'īn 6: the first two letters on the first line, the *r* on the following; however, from the photograph of the inscription it seems that the *g* is rather in the second line.

In 1994, S. al-Saïd noted that *w-ʿrb* in this context is actually bound to the following words, i.e. it starts a new sentence and is the verb of our well known phrase *w-ʿrb mīʿy*³⁹, a remark that is to be clarified with respect to the connection between the sentences and to their meaning. Ch. Robin’s interpretation suits the observation that the social parts of the tribes are usually mentioned even-numbered; moreover, the presence of the nomads seems rather justified as counterpart of the settled people, the peasants (*ḡbr*) mentioned before. However, if we consider the other references to the social groups of Maʿīn⁴⁰ there is no hint of a nomadic component. That nomads were considered to be a distinct and recognized part of Minaean society (for example, in collective sacrifices as in this text) is a fascinating idea, but there is no evidence for it. The meaning of the verb *fqd* is also problematic. In Robin’s and Gnoli’s editions of the text, the sense of *fqd* was stretched to fit the syntactic requirements of their interpretation of the word *ʿrb* and it was translated “to contribute to”, governing the object “five offerings”. The generally agreed interpretation of *fqd*, which is always attested as a noun, is that it is a title indicating an official function, like “administrator, appointee”⁴¹. As a hypothesis, we could apply this meaning also to our case: the author or authors of the texts, who are describing the sacrifices they made, would have recorded that they were those put in charge – by the whole tribe of Maʿīn, nobles and clients and peasants – of making the offerings on behalf of these social groups⁴². If this is correct, we would have to accept an unusual threefold division of the tribe.

The approximate sense of the second fixed phrase, *w-rḏw-sʿl fḥwt* (or, *w-rḏw-sʿl m fḥwt*), seems plain: it is the record of the god’s satisfaction with the offerings received. The meaning of the root *rḏw* is clear: “satisfaction, approval, favour”. However, its exact translation within the context of this phrase is more difficult to establish. It seems now to be accepted that the god is the unexpressed subject of the verb *rḏw*⁴³. It is probable that the pronominal suffix refers back to the subject of the dedication (but it is not impossible that it refers to the offerings)⁴⁴.

³⁹ al-Saïd 1994: 263.

⁴⁰ The one in Maʿīn 6, l. 3 is the closest: *kl Mʿnm ḥrm w-ʿgrm w-msʿkm w-dbr fḡdm*.

⁴¹ Höfner 1976: 9; Garbini 1988: 22. For the meaning of the words indicating the social parts, see lastly Gnoli 1993: 63-65 and Bron 1998: 35-36 (with the references cited).

⁴² We could literally translate: “and they were the appointees of all Maʿīn – free men, salaried and settlers – and they made five offerings on behalf of them”.

⁴³ As the two phrases are coordinated, the subject should be the same as in the proposition before, to say the dedicant. Therefore, the suffix pronoun *sʿl* should refer to the god and the verb should have an active sense: “he satisfied (the god)”. However, in Sabaic the active “satisfied” is expressed by the causative form *hrḏw*; in Ḥaḏramitic, the basic stem *rḏw* is found in a context which is very similar to the Minaic one, e.g. Rb I/89 n. 291 etc.: *(ʿ)krb bn Ḥmyhmw sʿl qnʿy ḏt Ḥmym ḏt Rhbn bhʿt rḏwt ḏt Ḥmym ʿlh-ʿn ʿkrb*; “*krb* son of *Ḥmyhmw* dedicated to *ḏt Ḥmym ḏt Rhbn* the votive object, of which *ḏt Ḥmym* was pleased towards *ʿkrb*” (CSAI translation; for the edition see Frantsouzoff 1995: 18-19, 22, 24-25). It is evident from this example that the goddess is the subject of the verb. We can apply this sense also to the Minaic texts and the proof seems the very text Shaqab 1, where the plural suffix pronoun of *rḏw* cannot be referred to the one god (we recall that Minaic verbs at the perfect tense do not mark the plural: *rḏw* would stay unvaried either with a plural subject).

⁴⁴ In Ḥaḏramitic the three parts of the exchange are clearly pointed to: the goddess expresses to the dedicant her satisfaction for the very object of the dedication (the *bḥt*, which is not repeated because the author uses an asyndetic relative clause). Unfortunately, in the only Minaic example (again Shaqab 1) where the dedicants are many, also the offerings are plural. Some clues can be deduced from these lines of M 177 (Garbini 1974: 51-52): [... ..] *ḏy q(h)[lt ʿttr d-Y[hrq] k-byg w-[... ..] ʿl[... ..] rḏw-sʿl mn Wdm*. Here the dual suffix *-sʿl mn* corresponds to the dual pronoun *ḏy* referring to the subjects (“the two of the community

The adverb *fnwt* specifies how the satisfaction is expressed by the god: as the basic meaning of the root is “front, space outside”⁴⁵, “face, oppose”⁴⁶, the translation “manifestly”⁴⁷ has been proposed. The unexpressed subject in this formulaic phrase suggests a considerable standardization and conciseness in some expressions in Minaic texts, especially those recording ritual performances.

The newly discovered Minaic texts are contributing new information leading to the revision of previous readings and interpretations. In the present study, some aspects of religion emerging from the inscriptions have been discussed from a lexical and onomastic perspective, but this is surely one of the fields that deserves a deeper study, thanks to the amount of data which are now at our disposal.

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of ‘*tr d-Yhrq*’). Nevertheless, the part of text relating about the offerings lacks, so we cannot exclude that they also were two.

⁴⁵ Beeston *et al.* 1982: 45.

⁴⁶ Biella 1982 specifies that *fnwt* adverbially takes the sense of “in the direction of, in front of”.

⁴⁷ Gnoli 1993: 70 (“perché Egli sia soddisfatto di loro manifestazione”). But see Robin, Antonini, Bron 2005-2006: 73-75: “et (le dieu) en a été pleinement satisfait”.

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Fig. 1. Inscription al-Jawf 04.9



Fig. 2. Inscription M 407



Fig. 3. Inscription Kamna 22



Fig. 4. Inscription Y.92.B.A 28



Fig. 5. Inscription Maʿīn 9



Fig. 6. Inscription Shaqab 1

Mike SCHNELLE

TOWARDS A RECONSTRUCTION OF THE GREAT TEMPLE OF YEHA (ETHIOPIA)

Introduction

The Şan‘ā’ Branch of the German Archaeological Institute in cooperation with the *Authority of Research and Conservation of the Cultural Heritage (ARCCH, Addis Aaba)* and the *Tigray Culture and Tourism Agency (TCA)* started in autumn 2009 under the direction of I. Gerlach a new multidisciplinary archaeological project in northern Ethiopia with a focus on the capital of the kingdom of D‘MT– the Ethio-Sabaeen city of Yeha¹.

One focus in this project is on the so called Great Temple of Yeha, which has been over the last more than 100 years the subject of repeated archaeological and architectural historical investigations (Fig. 1). Beside these investigations and their documentation – even the restoration of this endangered monumental complex is a major exercise and is embedded in the project of the touristic site planning of Yeha.

The sanctuary is the tallest preserved Southern Arabian temple currently known. The good conservation state of the sanctuary is due to the fact that it has been continuously utilized – even today it is a location of Christian ceremonies.

Intensive examination of the sanctuary in the course of the archaeological and architectural exploration and documentation in preparation for its consolidation and restoration, allows also an attempt at a reconstruction of its original design and later modifications. This reconstruction is still a *work in progress*; nevertheless there are initial results from the architectural investigations.

¹ A first preliminary report has already been published: Japp et al 2011: 145-160.

Research History

In the publications of Jean Doresse, Francis Anfray, Alessandro de Maigret and Christian Robin the early research history is fully explained and can be followed there².

In 1893, James Theodore Bent visited Yeha and published a description of the ancient structure with some sketches of the ruin and a first schematic ground plan³. In 1906 the temple was within the German Axum Expedition (hereafter DAE) under the direction of Enno Littmann and was for the first time comprehensively documented⁴. The team created a lot of drawings of the inventory of the temple and its later additions, which can be related to the utilization as a church, and made detailed descriptions and interpretations of their findings. They made photographs, some reconstruction proposals, and four small sondages inside and in front of the temple, documented architectural fragments through drawings and photos and published this material in 1913.

In the 1940ies the inhabitants of Yeha removed the recent but ruinous architectural additions inside and outside the temple, to build a new church nearby⁵. In the 1950ies Jean Doresse excavated a baptismal font in the south eastern part inside the temple, which supposedly dates to the early Christian period of utilization of this building⁶.

The Great Temple remained extensively disregarded during the following decades, because the archaeological investigations of the only archaeologist working in Yeha up to the late 1990ies – Francis Anfray – were concentrated in the 1960ies at the Cemetery of Da‘ro-Mikael in the south east of the Great Temple and in the 1970ies at the monumental complex Grat Be‘al Gebri, 200 meters to the northwest of the sanctuary.

After a long period of absence – in 1998 – the investigations were resumed by a French / Italian mission under the direction of Christian Robin with participation of Alessandro de Maigret and others⁷.

The intensive and accurate archaeological investigations comprised the complete exposing of the temple floor as well as archaeological excavations at the Propylon area, which was not possible for the DAE in 1906 because of the extant later additions inside and in front of the temple and the short duration of their visit. In addition to numerous photos and specifications, a detailed ground plan and an axonometric view of the remains of the architecture were published very promptly, as well as some suggestions of A. de Maigret for reconstructions and for the dating of the temple⁸. Since this time there has been – except for a record by 3D-Laserscanning under the direction of Rodolfo Fattovich in 2009 – as far as I know – no further archaeological investigation or documentation at the Great Temple⁹.

² See in detail: Doresse 1956a: 42-43; 1957: 68-92; Anfray 1990: 17-33; Robin, de Maigret 1998: 738-798.

³ Bent 1893: 134-151. In addition he recorded some inscriptions in Yeha, which were published by D. H. Müller in the same publication: Müller 1893: 231-238.

⁴ Krencker 1913: 78-86.

⁵ Robin, de Maigret 1998: 740.

⁶ Doresse 1956b: 209-224. The big size of the font allows for submergence of adults, which could hint at an early Christian dating.

⁷ Detailed archaeological investigations of the French / Italian mission were published in the same year: Robin, de Maigret 1998: 738-798, and later with additions: de Maigret 2002: 184-190; 2010: 773-781; 2011: 121-132.

⁸ The suggestions of A. de Maigret for the reconstruction will be discussed later on: de Maigret 2002: 184-190; 2010: 773-781; 2011: 121-132.

⁹ The documentation by terrestrial 3D-Laserscanning of the Great Temple of Yeha was part of a survey around Yeha. A preliminary report was published recently: Fattovich 2009: 104-105.

Operations of the German- Ethiopian mission

Activities started in autumn 2009 with a careful cleaning of the entire area inside and outside of the temple to deliver the building from plants, fallen stones and earth. Extensive documentation with 3D-Laserscanning¹⁰ and hand drawings were prepared as well as an ambitious consolidation and restoration program for the building, which was shown by static analysis¹¹ to be in danger of collapse. Within these investigations several trenches were excavated, which uncover the NE and SE-Corner of the temple and for the first time the entire propylon area including the original threshold¹². In addition to archaeological and architectural investigations geological analysis was undertaken, which for the first time diagnosed the identification and provenience of the stone material used in the temple¹³. The investigations already mentioned now allow – based on the published results of the DAE and the Mission under C. Robin and A. de Maigret – an examination of a reconstruction of the original building.

However some short specifications of the temple should at first be given¹⁴.

Location:

The temple (A) is located inside the church compound of Yeha, which is surrounded by two curtain walls (fig. 2). It is located around 20 meters in the south of the contemporary church (C), which is accessible from the west through two gate-buildings (B) and over a monumental flight of steps.

The temple is based on an in-situ rock-peak at a height of 2148 meters slightly beneath the adjacent church and – as the excavations of the French / Italian mission showed — this rock drops down more or less to the east and to the west¹⁵. This remote position of the temple was a hint for the DAE to believe, that an ancient predecessor existed under the contemporary church, which was partly or completely removed at the time the church was build. Unfortunately this could not be explored in the absence of excavations¹⁶.

Condition:

Despite its preserved height of almost 14 meters the Great Temple is in extremely bad condition (fig. 3). In preparation for the consolidation and restoration program the first task was to analyse, record and monitor this damage, resulting in important findings for the reconstruction and the ‘Temple’ materials¹⁷. Specific ashlar show signs of peeling and crack-

¹⁰ For the 3D-reconstruction of the Great Temple see: Lindstaedt, Mechelke, Schnelle, Kersten 2010: 50-57.

¹¹ The static analysis was made by W. Brettschneider, who has cooperated for many years in numerous projects with the Sanaa Branch of the DAI.

¹² The threshold, which was excavated by the French / Italian team, was a later addition (see page 389).

¹³ The geological investigations inside and around Yeha will be conducted by Christian Weiss from the Institute Geozentrum Nordbayern in Erlangen (Germany). For the provenance of the stone material from the Great Temple see: Weiss 2012; Weiss (in progress); Weiss, Koch, Gerlach 2012: 52-54. This information will be explained later on.

¹⁴ Many of the following observations have been made and published by the DAE and by the French / Italian team. The new findings by the German-Ethiopian cooperation-project will be made clear in the text.

¹⁵ Robin, de Maigret 1998: 748.

¹⁶ The former existence of an ancient building under the contemporary church is ambiguous. Our surveys inside the church compound never found any architectural structure in situ close to the church, which can be dated surely to the Ethio-Sabaeon period.

¹⁷ Analyzing of the damages and the monitoring of the perimeter wall was done by the geologist C. Weiss and the surveyor K. Mechelke. For the monitoring of the movement of the perimeter wall terrestrial 3D-Laser Scanner and a full automatic total station were used. This method and the results will be published soon separately.

ing, which suggest extensive damage by fire¹⁸. It seems that essential supporting building elements were made of wood, because the fire damage is remarkably always located at the contact-zones between masonry and the supposed constructions in wood. This topic will be later explained in detail more.

Exterior:

The temple is oriented in a NW-SE-direction and its entrance – located in the NW — is accentuated by a propylon (fig. 4). In the past, 6 monumental pillars which are not preserved stood on top of the propylon. The bases of the pillars were made of local sand stone¹⁹.

The external dimensions of the rectangular, in the past two stories²⁰ high building, measures in the main axis 18.90 meters and in the second axis 15.20 meters. The propylon in front of the temple has in addition to this extension a width of 10.60 meters and a depth of 5.10 meters. The whole propylon-construction is not connected to the walls of the temple made of limestone. A small joint separates the walls of the temple and the propylon made of local sandstone.

During the recent excavations in the propylon area it was possible to excavate and to record the still covered contact areas of the pillars on top of the pillar bases. On these surfaces of the pillar bases tool marks of the masons are preserved, which are abraded directly beside the contact zones (fig. 5). This strongly indicates that in the past on top of the contact zones pillars stood for a long time and the construction of the temple was really completed²¹. Directly beside the contact zones for the pillars on top of the bases (southeast of the contact zones) rectangular artificial depressions can be recognised at three bases of the propylon (fig. 6)²². Whether these depressions are grooves from altars which stood there, or may be from an older pillar-array cannot be answered with certainty.

At several places the embracing wall of the temple is preserved up to the double-row dentil frieze at a height of approximately 14 meters.

As the DAE had already noticed²³ the dentil frieze starts not in the corners of the building – but about 2.05 meters away from the corner of each façade – this may be to avoid a conflict at the corner with the frieze from the other façade.

At the outside the lower layers of the masonry are stepped each 2.5 cm. Notable at the site and also in the 3D-Scans is a slight curving of the longer outer façades. That means that the temple is widening at the corners and is tapering at the middle parts²⁴.

The masonry of the embracing walls of the temple is made of limestone, which was specially brought to Yeha over a distance of 90 kilometres air-line distance from quarries in the re-

¹⁸ The damage by fire was already noticed by Bent: Bent 1893: 139 and later by the DAE: Krencker 1913: 82.

¹⁹ Thanks for his information to C. Weiss. In opposition to this information is the explanation of A. de Maigret, who identified the stone material as volcanic rock (propylon girders, the pillar bases inside and the foundation of the *ádyton*), and as a basalt rock (flooring inside): de Maigret 2011: 125-126.

²⁰ This was already recognised by the DAE: Krencker 1913: 79.

²¹ This statement is opposite to the recent explanations of A. de Maigret, who acts on the assumption that the Great Temple was never finished: de Maigret 2011: 131.

²² At the pillar bases Ta, Tb and Tc after Robin/de Maigret: Robin, de Maigret 1998: 754.

²³ Krencker 1913: 83, Abb. 174 and 175.

²⁴ The reason for this deviation of the straight line could be aesthetic: The curved line suggests a slimmer, larger and more rectangular shape of the outer line of the façade.

gion of Wuqro²⁵. This is evidence for the magnitude of the building material *balaq* (limestone) as precious and – as recent investigations have shown²⁶ – a sacred material, used for specific elements of sanctuaries and brought there sometimes over long distances with great complexity and – as the Great Temple illustrates – even in the Ethio-Sabaeen kingdom of D‘MT²⁷.

In ancient times when the entrant crossed the 6 pillared propylon at the north-western side, he reached a monumental temple gate. This gate has nowadays a width of 3.80 meters – the closest distance between the flanking walls of the entrance.

During our cleaning work we discovered under the current threshold²⁸, which is constructed of two rows of ashlar, the original, ancient threshold with several mortises and two phases of door hinges side by side (fig. 7).

The passage way had in ancient times not at all today’s width, but differentiated with offsets to a narrow passage way of only 1.20 meters – and this narrow passage contained a double wing door – each door wing not wider than 60 cm!²⁹

The offsets were apparently assembled of wood³⁰ and the sidewise overhang stone headers were integrated into the wooden door frame construction as supporting elements – like header bricks.

For amplifying the effect of deepness, the 1.40 meters thick embracing walls were extended at the area of the reveal up to 2 meters, which can be recognised only on the inside.

The strange depression, which looks like a channel and which follows outside the course of the door frame I tend to reconstruct as a drip moulding – to drain off from the wooden door frame the driving rain, which is not exceptional in the Ethiopian highlands³¹.

4 shallow round depressions, which can be interpreted as door hinges, document a modification of the door construction in later times with the aim to broaden the passage width from 1.20 meters to 1.45 meters³².

Already from the DAE two joints at the upper part of the front façade of the temple were recognised, but it was the later French / Italian mission which correctly identified these joints as the contact zones for the beams between the propylon and the main building³³. But these

²⁵ This information comes from the lecture Weiss 2010; see in addition: Weiss 2012; Weiss (in progress) and Weiss, Koch, Gerlach 2012: 52-54.

²⁶ See Gerlach, Schnelle 2012 (in print)

²⁷ In a couple of Southern Arabian building inscriptions *balaq* is explicitly mentioned as the building material emphasising its special meaning at that time – e.g.: J 557/1; CSAI I, 5; R 3880/6=CSAI I, 26/6 and R 3943/4’.

²⁸ The current threshold belongs to a later – probably Christian – utilization phase of the temple. This finding will be discussed in the chapter „The reconstruction of the temple-phases“, in this paper.

²⁹ The staging of entrances is a typical topic in Southern Arabian monumental and sacral architecture. See Gerlach, Schnelle 2012 (in print). This feature was obviously used in the kingdom of D‘MT for temples and monumental buildings – it is also detectable at the main entrance of the monumental complex of Grāt Be’al Gebri in Yeha – there with a single door and an even narrower passage width of only 1.10 meters.

³⁰ See also: de Maigret 2011: 129, fig. 14.

³¹ C. Robin and A. de Maigret interpreted the channel as a removable construction to close off the section: Robin, de Maigret 1998: 771 and later de Maigret 2011: 129.

³² This happened in Sabaeen times. Maybe it was necessary to guide the large pieces of the later, monumental altar throughout the narrow door. See building phase 3 in the chapter „The reconstruction of the temple phases“.

³³ Robin, de Maigret 1998: 750. The DAE contradicted their idea of an interpretation of the joints as beam holes of a prostylos, because of their big height and because they were not informed of the existence of a propylon: Krencker 1913: 82.

contact zones have one specific feature: They are not in the same axis as the contact area of the outermost pillars, but displaced by 13 cm each in direction to the outside (fig. 8)³⁴. This phenomenon could on the one hand have static reasons, because the inclined beams above the pillars provide a greater stability for the propylon. On the other hand it would be possible that the architraves project over the pillars and with them the beams between the propylon and the main building. A third explanation could be that the propylon belongs to an earlier building phase than the perimeter wall³⁵.

There is a huge conspicuous disruption in the masonry at the front façade above the gate (fig. 1). This disruption shows in my opinion the collapse scenario during the conflagration of the whole building: The burning massive wooden door and the door frame cracked the overlying stony architrave. The collapsing architrave then pulled the overlying propylon beams down. These building elements all fell in a forward movement and as a reaction the propylon including the pillars also collapsed.

Unfortunately it is difficult to excavate in the church compound in front of the propylon area to find fragments of the pillars because of the countless Christian graves all around.

Interior – ground floor:

In the inside the temple is divided in two extended, consecutively differentiated main areas (fig. 4).

To the first the entrant reached a columned hall with a floor made of local sandstones³⁶, which was originally separated into respectively two narrow side aisles and one broader, probably column-free and open central-aisle.

The back third of the column-hall was increased by a transverse oriented and 20 cm high stair. The side aisles were structured by in each case 6 pillars arranged in pairs, which are unfortunately not preserved. But 11 of 12 preserved bases of these pillars are reference for this former composition³⁷.

A channel system in the floor, which drains from the column-free central aisle through an outlet in the SW-façade and the conspicuously wider central aisle, could be evidence that this central aisle was never roofed³⁸.

A rectangular depression inside the floor of the central aisle could be – as already proposed by the French / Italian-mission – the platform of an altar, from which liquids were drained off through the channel system³⁹.

Inside the temple — at the foot of the embracing wall — a circular bench offers participation ceremonies⁴⁰.

³⁴ This characteristic feature was apparently not noticed by the French / Italian mission: de Maigret 2011: 127.

³⁵ This theory will be discussed in the description of building phase 1 in the chapter: „The reconstruction of the temple phases”.

³⁶ In opposition to A. de Maigret see footnote 19.

³⁷ de Maigret 2011: 125.

³⁸ C. Robin and A. de Maigret did not want to state, whether the ceiling was completely closed or not: Robin, de Maigret 1998: 750. The arguments for an open ceiling will be discussed in detail below.

³⁹ See: de Maigret 2011: 125. The altar and its design will be discussed in the chapter „Second Sabaeen building – the Great Temple – 7th century B.C”.

⁴⁰ As can be observed at numerous old South Arabian temples such as at the Bar’ân-Temple in Mārib.

The rear closure of the temple was arranged originally with three adjoining rooms (*ádyton*) of the same size. On the interior these rooms had an almost square ground area of 3.5 meters and — as we follow South Arabian prototypes — cultic functions. Unfortunately there are no more precise statements possible belonging to its different functions, because of its transformation during a long period of use: The remains of the baptismal font in the south western room is a reminder of this use⁴¹.

Construction holes on the insides of the embracing walls mark the connections of the inner walls, which separate the three rooms from the column-hall and from each other.

The walls themselves are only preserved in the ground as foundation strips made of spoils — probably from a predecessor⁴². Hints for the construction of the walls of the three adjacent rooms come from beam-holes and mortises⁴³ and also here there is detectable strong damages on the ashlar based on a conflagration. These findings allow a reconstruction of the walls as wooden half timber constructions. The cut holes can always be observed in horizontal pairs:

There are large, deeply cut square beam holes, which carried the horizontal beams, and small rectangular mortises which fixed the vertical beams (fig. 9).

Between these beams were further horizontal beams assembled across the axis — according to South Arabian half timber constructions — for instance the "five-pillar building" in Širwāḥ or the "Royal Palace of Shabwa"⁴⁴. Remarkably the horizontal beams, which are faced to the column hall, had much larger dimensions. This could have representative reasons: Possibly the façades of these beams were especially decorated⁴⁵.

One special feature attracts attention in the middle of one of these three rooms: There the foundation of the half-timber was interrupted by a more abundant — already as Robin/de Maigret mentioned — foundation — made of crosswise laid slabs of limestone (fig. 10)⁴⁶.

It can be observed clearly, that this foundation was subsequently cut into the existing foundation strips of the walls of the three adjoining rooms (*ádyton*) making a new massive construction. Appropriate to this fact a deep and wide rectangular cut depression at the back side has preserved.

Additionally a line and a cross are chiselled by masons on top of the slabs of the third layer of this foundation, which could be interpreted as the assign of the centre point of this rectangular construction. These findings suggest a reconstruction of a later built in massive

⁴¹ Doresse 1956a: 42-43; 1957: 68-92; Anfray 1990: 17-33; Robin, de Maigret 1998: 738-798.

⁴² de Maigret 2011: 126.

⁴³ These were already in my opinion correct interpreted by Krencker: Krencker 1913: 82, and later by C. Robin and A. de Maigret: Robin, de Maigret 1998: 758 and recently by A. de Maigret: de Maigret 2011: 126. Krencker proposed there stone walls separated the three adjoining rooms (*ádyton*), whereas the French / Italian Team made no statement about the type of construction or the materials of these walls.

⁴⁴ The "five-pillar building" in Širwāḥ will be investigated by the Šan‘ā’ Branch of the German Archaeological Institute and the archaeological, historical and restoration work is not finished. For the half timber constructions of the Royal Palace of Shabwa see: Seigne 1991; Darles 2010: 149-160.

⁴⁵ Conceivable would be a covering with decorated sheet, carvings or as well an inscription. Inscriptions on wooden architectural elements (for example lintels) are known in Southern Arabia — Kamna 5: Robin 1992: 172-5, pls. 48b-49 and YM 19608: Arbach, Audouin 2007: 96.

⁴⁶ Robin/de Maigret have identified in contrast to this statement a volcanic stone material: Robin, de Maigret 1998: 758.

altar or a base of a cultic statue, with approximate measurements of 2.00 meters wide and 3.60 meters long (fig. 11)⁴⁷.

At all façades – except the back side – there would be enough free space to the adjacent rooms or entrances to these rooms.

If the second channel — which is partially preserved at the water outlet – were to be elongated, an area would be reached, which is far away from the altar of the second phase.

Possibly this channel belongs to a predecessor drain system, where the initial altar – certainly of smaller size – stood on top of the elevated zone of the column hall (fig. 12).

But unfortunately nothing is preserved of this initial altar. With this supposition of the original design it is certain that the unit of the 3 adjacent rooms was closed and – as already observed at other South Arabian temples equipped with three doors.

The size of the reconstructed altar of the second phase (fig. 11) may be a little bit astonishing – it is reminiscent rather of Axumite throne constructions. However it is hard to assume this for the Great Temple of Yeha. But the question has to be asked, whether and how the temple was used in the Axumite time and how it appeared at this time.

Interior – Second floor:

A circular wall projection of the masonry at the inner façade of the embracing temple walls at a height of 6.20 meters is evidence for the ceiling, which separated the ground floor from the upper floor⁴⁸. The masonry of the embracing wall beyond the wall projection is preserved partly another 5.80 meters, which illustrates that the upper wall – which is strongly damaged by fire – belongs to a second storey.

A water outlet about 5 courses above the wall projection assigns the top edge of the ceiling between the two storeys⁴⁹. Therefore an entire height of the ceiling above the wall projection of 1.15 – 1.20 meters can be reconstructed⁵⁰.

On top of the wall projection numerous small rectangular mortises are preserved⁵¹. According to our documentation and investigation of these construction details we can determine that the mortises are not arranged in constant intervals – as it could be expected for the bedding of ceiling beams. So it is rather supposable, that wooden beams were connected through the mortises with the ashlar of the wall projection – but in the axis of the embracing walls. Into this beams the ceiling beams were assembled transverse to the wall-axis.

Because of the small size of the mortises and the nearby visible signs of damage by fire on the ashlar at the areas of the ceiling- all beams assigned to the ceiling were probably made of wood⁵².

⁴⁷ A massive altar construction seems to me more supposable, because of the finding of the still existing fragments of the second channel in the flooring. For this reason in the following, this finding will be mentioned as a base of an altar construction. For the necessary measures to build in the new altar or base, and its utilization and building phase, see the chapter “Third Sabaean building phase – modification of the three adjoining rooms (*ádyton*) and installation of a large altar construction”.

⁴⁸ This was already noticed by D. Krencker, later by C. Robin/A. de Maigret and A. de Maigret: Krencker 1913: 82; Robin, de Maigret 1998: 750; de Maigret 2011: 123-124.

⁴⁹ This was already observed by Krencker: Krencker 1913: 82 and C. Robin / A. de Maigret: Robin, de Maigret 1998: 750.

⁵⁰ It was even proposed by C. Robin / A. de Maigret: Robin, de Maigret 1998: 750.

⁵¹ Robin, de Maigret 1998: 750.

⁵² The French / Italian team do not state, whether the beams of the ceiling were constructed of wood or stone: Robin, de Maigret 1998: 750.

With this statement the question about the arrangement of the support system of beams arises.

On top of the embracing walls — which are assigned to the propylon⁵³ we found in the axis of the pillars large beam-holes with mortises, which lie about 35 cm below the circular wall projection (fig. 13).

With this finding it can be supposed that the first order of the system of the ceiling beams was assembled in the long axis of the temple and the second order corresponding transverse to it — from the wall projection to the beams of the first order (fig. 14).

The longer distance (*intercolumnium*) between the middle pillar bases and the alignment of the first order implies that the central aisle most likely was not roofed and the channels in the temple floor not only drained off waste water from the altars but also rainwater from the open central aisle⁵⁴.

The amplification of the temple enclosure walls in the direct vicinity of the propylon⁵⁵ is evidence of a brilliant design concept of the South Arabian architects.

It satisfies just two functions: On the one hand it shortens the distance of the main supporting girder from the one support to the other. And on the other hand it allows a suggestion of a greater thickness of the entire wall — like scenery in a theatre. With this arrangement the master builders differentiated and orchestrated the entrance — beginning from a 5 meters width — to a narrow passage way of only 1.20 meters.

The reconstruction of the temple phases

With the previously known and these new results and observations from the archaeological and historical building investigations proposals for the construction and utilization phases of the Great Temple can now be differentiated and explained.

First Sabaean building – predecessor of the Great Temple – before the 7th century B.C.

As we have seen spoils in the foundation strips of the three adjoining rooms (*adyton*) inside the Great Temple are hints for a predecessor — which may have stood at the same place⁵⁶. The fact that the propylon is not connected in a constructive way⁵⁷ with the embracing walls of the temple on the one hand, and the different used materials for the walls (limestone) and for the pillar bases of the propylon, the pillar bases inside the temple and the flooring (all sand stone) on the other hand, could point to a different chronological classification of these elements. That could mean that all these mentioned elements⁵⁸ belong to an earlier phase or an earlier build-

⁵³ Meant are the walls M 4 and M 5 after: Robin, de Maigret 1998: 754, fig. 22.

⁵⁴ The French / Italian team made no commitment to the question, as to whether the ceiling between the lower and upper storey was open or closed: Robin, de Maigret 1998: 750. In opposition to this the DAE reconstructed the roof with an uncovered open central area in two sketches (axonometric projection and ground plan): Krencker 1913: 80, Abb. 165 and 166.

⁵⁵ Meant are the walls M 4 and M 5 after: Robin, de Maigret 1998: 754, fig. 22.

⁵⁶ In addition to this architectural hint the French / Italian team found at the excavation outside of the temple (Sondage 1) a stone fragment with a so-called *Banāt Ād*-décor, which could be dated earlier than the 7th century B.C. This kind of decoration is known from many temples from the Jawf and it could be also be a hint for a predecessor at the same place. See: Robin, de Maigret 1998: 775-780.

⁵⁷ Static reasons for a separate construction of the propylon and of the perimeter wall are not very conclusive, because of the foundation of both on top of the natural rock. Differential settlements of the two structures should therefore not be expected and not be accepted, because of the static connection of the girders from the architrave to the perimeter wall.

⁵⁸ Propylon, flooring, pillar bases, bench and architectural elements of the foundation strips inside the temple.

ing at the same place and only the perimeter walls of the temple and the three adjoining rooms (*adyton*) were new additions⁵⁹. This suggestion could also be an explanation for the different axis of the joints of the beam holes in the front façade and the contact zones of the pillars of the bases. But this is just an idea and it will be hard to prove this and to find more evidence. But if we follow this thought, was the predecessor construction already equipped with a propylon of six pillars and with a column-hall of twelve pillars and an embracing wall – albeit made of less representative materials (fig. 15)⁶⁰.

Second Sabaeen building – the Great Temple – 7th century B.C.

To establish the second Sabaeen temple at the site only the former walls of the temple were dismantled and the new walls of the Great Temple were erected – maybe without removing the built-in components of it⁶¹. To implement these measures the following provisions were necessary: To save the propylon with all the architectural elements from the predecessor *in situ* for reusing in the new perimeter wall, at first supporting masonry walls left and right of the flanks of the propylon were erected below the surface⁶². Then the spaces between the pillars and the whole space of the propylon were perhaps filled up to the bottom edge of the girders between the architraves and the perimeter wall temporarily with a supporting filling masonry⁶³. Only now the embracing wall of the predecessor was removed and the erecting of the new perimeter wall began (fig. 16)⁶⁴.

The new temple was designed with two stories. Its entrance had a large wooden door frame with a double wing door and a narrow passage width (fig. 17)⁶⁵. It was embraced by the up to now preserved perimeter wall, made of limestone brought from the area of Wuqro⁶⁶. The interior was designed with two altars, which stood successively in the central aisle (fig. 18). In search of parallels for the design of such altars we can maybe compare them with the altar construction from the 'Almaqah-Temple of Mekaber Ga'ewa close to Wuqro⁶⁷. However the design of the altar in the column hall of the Great Temple differs: It is larger and

⁵⁹ Parallels for such a selective rebuilding of only some elements of an existing sanctuary, can be observed at the 'Almaqah-Temple in Şirwāh, where only the perimeter wall and some built-in components were erected in later periods.

⁶⁰ In this earlier phase masonry of roughly broken stones mortared with clay may have been used, analogous to the podium of the nearby monumental complex Grat Be'al Gebri, which dates after recent ¹⁴C-dates to at least 800 BC. Masonry like this could also be an explanation for the “lost” building material of these former walls.

⁶¹ Motivation for a rebuilding could be renovation of a decrepit structure or – more supposable – demonstration of power of a new ruler.

⁶² One of these supporting walls was excavated by the French /Italian Team (Sondage 1): Robin, de Maigret 1998: 767, fig. 13; the other one can be assumed.

⁶³ As an alternative solution a massive wooden scaffold is presumed to fix the girders and the pillars with the architraves *in situ*.

⁶⁴ The dating of the perimeter wall based on comparisons of the masonry-techniques and especially the kind of dressing of the facades of the stones to Sabaeen temples is from the 7th century BC. It is very close to the finest dressed stone surfaces we have at the perimeter walls of the Awām-temple in Mārib and of the 'Almaqah-temple in Şirwāh, which were built both under the Mukarrib Yada'īl Darih.

⁶⁵ See the chapter „exterior“.

⁶⁶ Following the geostratigraphic analysis of C. Weiss: Weiss, 2010; 2012; (in progress) and Weiss, Koch, Gerlach 2012: 52-54.

⁶⁷ See: Wolf, Novotnick 2010a: 164-213; 2010b: 363-376; Nebes 2010: 214-237.

had variant proportions⁶⁸. After the investigations of the altar of the 'Almaqah-Temple of Mekaber Ga'ewa, some architectural elements found in the Great Temple or close to it can with relative certainty, be related to an altar construction which maybe stood in the Great Temple. This includes a fragment of a stepped socle, two fragments of covering plates with inscriptions and one fragment of an altar wall panel (fig. 19)⁶⁹. As the measures of the two fragments of the covering plate and the one from the socle demonstrate, the altar construction was larger than the one of Mekaber Ga'ewa – and could fit with our traces in the temple floor, which contained even a larger altar.

The back end inside was designed with three adjoining rooms (*ádyton*) each with an entrance to the column hall. The central aisle was unroofed. At the front, the Propylon with 6 pillars accentuated the entrance.

The question arises, which principal initiated the modification at the Great Temple. We know that the building material deliberately was brought to Yeha with great effort. In addition the inscription from the altar from Mekaber Ga'ewa, close to Wuqro, informs us, that a king named Wa'rān, was appointed to be a master of the 'Almaqah-Temple of Yeha⁷⁰. It is likely, but not proven, that the Great Temple of Yeha is dedicated to the goodness of 'Almaqah and it is the same temple mentioned in the inscription of the altar from Mekaber Ga'ewa⁷¹. So it cannot be excluded that the king Wa'rān – mentioned in the altar inscription of Mekaber Ga'ewa – rebuilt the embracing wall of the Great Temple of Yeha with the limestone, brought by himself to Yeha. The reason for this investment could be the cementing and celebration of his inauguration in an architectural way by using a more representative and sacral building material. Surely he is not identical with the king Wa'rān, mentioned in the altar inscription of Yeha⁷².

⁶⁸ The ground plan of the altar of the 'Almaqah-Temple of Mekaber Ga'ewa measures: 0.91x1.12 meters. The rectangular depression in the flooring of the Great Temple measures about 1.90 meters in the long axis of the temple and 1.20 meters transverse to it. From the second altar at the rear of the column hall of the Great Temple we only have the evidence of the second channel in the flooring. There are no statements possible about the size of the second altar in absence of any mark or hint.

⁶⁹ The fragment of the stepped socle was found in 2009 during our excavations at the propylon of the Great Temple. Its proportions are a little bit larger than the socle, which presents the lower closure part of the wall panels of the altar of the 'Almaqah-Temple of Mekaber Ga'ewa. The two fragments of covering plates with inscriptions (RIÉ 36) had already been documented by Salt, later by Müller: Müller 1893: 237 (Yeha 6 and 7) later from the DAE in 1906: Littmann 1913b: 59 (inscriptions 28, 29) and by Bernard, Drewes, Schneider 1991: 114-116, pl. 33. The close contextual, palaeographic and stylistic affinity was already accentuated by N. Nebes: Nebes 2010: 219, footnote 26. The height of these covering plates (14.4 cm) is only slightly larger than the covering plates of the altar in Mekaber Ga'ewa (13.5 cm). Comparable to it in size, decoration and style is the fragment RIÉ 37, which supposedly also came from Yeha (Bernard, Drewes, Schneider 1991: 116, pl. 34) and which according to N. Nebes, seems to belong to another altar (personal communication).

The fragment of a wall panel of the altar could be identified in the sketch of Bent: Bent 1893: 141. The fragment is very analogous to the wall panels from the altar in the 'Almaqah-Temple of Mekaber Ga'ewa: Even the straight edge at the right side exactly along the end of the "false window" can be recognised on wall panels of Mekaber Ga'ewa. There the master builders used this feature of setting joints to minimize the counts of disruptions of the plain facades by vertical joints.

⁷⁰ Nebes 2010: 214-237.

⁷¹ There is no sure epigraphic evidence *in situ* at the Great Temple of Yeha which attests its dedication to the god 'Almaqah.

⁷² Nebes 2010: 218-219.

Unexplained also, is whether the altar inside the Great Temple was already in use during the time of the rebuilding and so belongs to an earlier phase of utilization. Or, the other possibility would be that it belongs to a later phase. Because of the stylistic and palaeographic similarities of the fragments of the altar of Yeha on the one hand, and of the altar of the 'Almaqah-Tempel in Mekaber Ga'ewa on the other, the time span between them cannot be as large.

Third Sabaean building phase – modification of the three adjoining rooms and installation of a large altar construction

The third phase is characterised by the assembling of a large altar construction in the middle area of the *ádyton*. For this measure a changing in access to the three rooms of the *ádyton*, a modification of the middle room and the deconstruction of the second, backmost altar were necessary. After the removal of the backmost altar, the central part of the half timber wall which separated the column hall from the *ádyton*, was deconstructed including its foundation. Also deconstructed were the foreparts of the interior walls between the three rooms of the *ádyton* up to the wall M10⁷³. Then a massive foundation of crosswise laid blocks, made of limestone was build. Maybe to bring in the large altar pieces the passage width of the main temple entrance was widened then from 1.20 meters to 1.45 meters (fig. 11)⁷⁴. Behind the large new altar construction – of its design we are not informed – at the very backend of the central room of the *ádyton* we may suppose a higher platform than the altar in front of it was erected⁷⁵. The two outer rooms were now only accessible on the side, flanking the large altar (fig. 20)⁷⁶.

First verifiable Christian utilization phase — a large column hall

Almost nothing is well-established from the post-Sabaean, post-ancient history of use of the Great Temple although this period contains a space of time of more than 1000 years.

But some findings at the Great Temple allow a fundamental statement: The early Christian conversion phases of the Great Temple concerning the whole interior of the temple and not only the surely later built small ruinous church inside, located by the DAE in 1906.

These findings allow a differentiated consideration of the modifications in – respectively – two Christian utilization phases⁷⁷.

After the destruction of the whole temple by fire – which we can unfortunately not date but which may date to the late Sabaean or the late Axumite time – the ruinous structure was probably soon reconstructed as a large Christian church.

Evidence for this statement are masonry fragments of an upper inner wall case above the circular wall projection made of mortared spoils, with a filling masonry made of small rubble stones⁷⁸. In addition numerous spoils from the Great Temple complete lost parts of the

⁷³ The situation is similarly displayed on the schematic plan of C. Robin / A. de Maigret: Robin, de Maigret 1998: fig. 22.

⁷⁴ Evidence for the widening of the passage is the two phases of door hinges, which lay side by side.

⁷⁵ Conceivable would be a libation facility, which drains fluids from a highest point (backend of the *ádyton*) multileveled over offering tables through the drainage system. For this construction maybe the foundation wall M 10 (Robin, de Maigret 1998: fig. 22) was used.

⁷⁶ Further accessibility of the two outer rooms from the column hall is at this time not longer supposable.

⁷⁷ Krencker had already proposed two Christian utilization phases of the Great Temple: Krencker 1913: 83-84.

⁷⁸ Detectable in some pictures taken by the DAE in 1906 and published recently by A. de Maigret: de Maigret 2011: 138 (DAE 386 = MBA 2252.12; DAE 382 = MBA 2252.08 and DAE 384 = MBA 2252.10). These later added masonry fragments show no more a separation into two stories, which can be a hint that the central hall was open and its roof was supported by large (wooden?) pillars or columns.

upper outer wall case of the perimeter wall – detectable at the south western façade⁷⁹. This means that the whole structure of the temple was maybe rebuild as a large roofed church hall without separation into two stories (fig. 21). Not only was the inner wall case supplemented recently, but also parts of the wall, which separated the *ádyton* from the column hall⁸⁰. To this first Christian utilization phase belongs also the outer large *narthex* construction, made of spoils from the Great Temple, which seems not be so suitable to the small divided later church building displayed in the pictures of the DAE⁸¹. In this utilization phase the quarried out cross in the south eastern façade could be dated, which fits well with the great central hall and the enormous *narthex*. Also the later added threshold, with its huge width of 3.80 meters implies a significant wider gate from the *narthex* into the column hall, in contrast to the narrow passage width in ancient times, belongs to this phase. In the latest phase of Christian utilization the *narthex* had already been in ruins for a long time. Also the baptismal font, excavated by Doresse, belongs probably to this phase⁸².

The question arises whether this church was the one 'Abbā 'Afšē – one of the nine priests from Egypt – founded in Yeha around 600 A.D., as the legend tells⁸³.

Second verifiable Christian utilization phase — the small church, documented in the late 19th an early 20th century

Here it is difficult and not the place to establish a chronology of the church buildings of Yeha. But it seems to be clear, that not only the Great Temple housed more than one church building, but also the church nearby had at least one predecessor at the same location⁸⁴.

The small church building inside the Great Temple, which Bent⁸⁵ saw already in ruins, stood free and was divided in two small rooms⁸⁶. Fortunately it was rather well documented by the DAE because of its central position, encircled by the more significant and monumental ancient architecture. The rectangular one-storied building was supposable erected exclusively from spoils from the Great Temple⁸⁷. The space between the small and low-ceilinged church and the high perimeter wall of the temple was used as a circumferential and most likely unroofed courtyard. Its access was – like its predecessors – to the North West and it seems to be founded directly on top of the ancient flooring

⁷⁹ The additions to such a height only would be possible and make sense, if larger parts of the building are still preserved and the building needs to be roofed again and therefore the height of the outer walls has to be preserved. Detectable for instance are dentil frieze elements, which were placed upside down.

⁸⁰ This was already noticed by Krencker, who detected fragments of a later addition of this wall (e) during his sondage at the *ádyton*: Krencker 1913: 80, Abb. 167; 81, Abb. 168 and 82, Abb. 172. That Krencker did not find any evidence of the ancient wall there *in situ* could be a hint for the thesis that this wall was constructed as a half timber – as explained in the chapter “Interior – ground floor” – and was also destroyed completely by the big conflagration of the temple.

⁸¹ This was already proposed by Krencker: Krencker 1913: 83-84. He also mentioned, accurately, that the temple already had to have a ruinous stadium, when this *narthex* was built.

⁸² Doresse 1956b: 209-224.

⁸³ See: Bent 1893: 142. Krencker disbelieved that in that early time the temple was already reused as a church: Krencker 1913: 84.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Bent 1893: 137-138.

⁸⁶ Krencker 1913: 78, Abb. 162 and 80, Abb. 167.

⁸⁷ Already Bent 1893: 140; later Krencker 1913: 79, Abb. 164; later de Maigret 2011: 136 (DAE 381 = MBA 2252.02; 137, DAE 384 = MBA 2252.10, 138, DAE 385 = MBA 2252.09).

(fig. 22). It measured at the front (façade with access) 5.30 meters and at the other side 9.60 meters⁸⁸. The thickness of the walls varies between 1.15 – 0.65 meters. The probably mud mortared spoiled double cased walls were covered by a roof, constructed of raw trunks⁸⁹.

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⁸⁸ Krencker 1913: 80, Abb. 167.

⁸⁹ de Maigret 2011: 138 (DAE 385 = MBA 2252.09).

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Fig. 1. View of the front façade of the sanctuary after the final excavation of the propylon by the Ethiopian/German project.

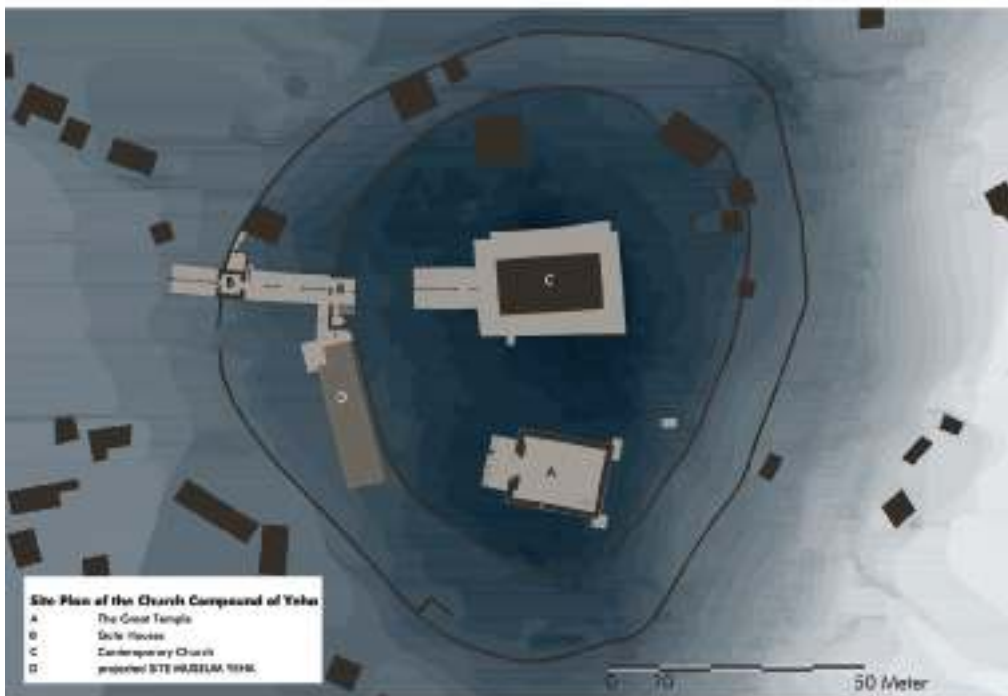


Fig. 2. Current site plan of the church compound of Yeha with the Great Temple (A), the gatehouses (B), the contemporary church (C) and the location of the projected SITE MUSEUM YEHA (D).



Fig. 3. The inner façades of the Great Temple and its damage caused by conflagration.

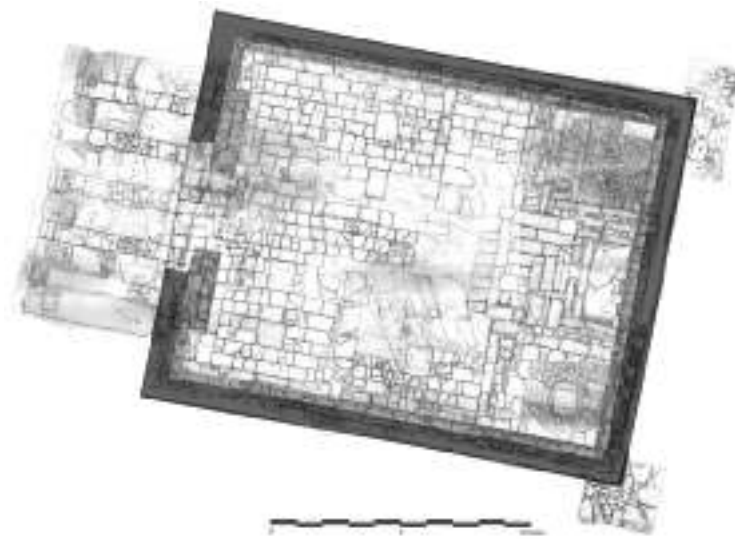


Fig. 4. Current ground plan of the Great Temple.

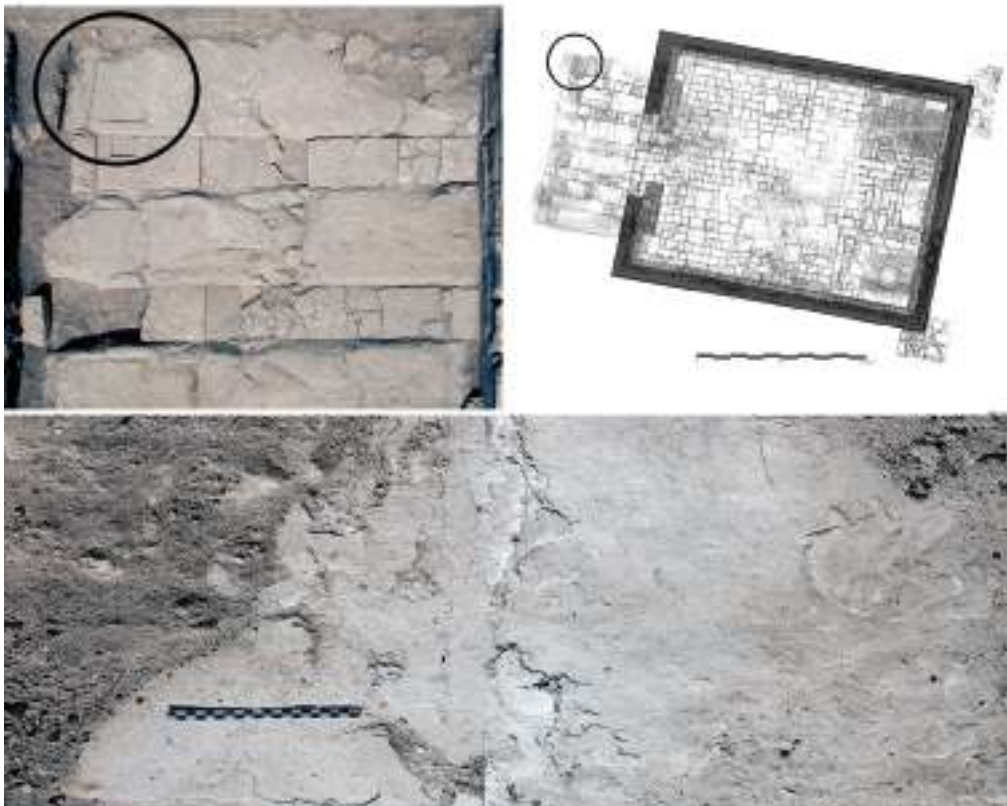


Fig. 5. Close-up view of the contact zones of the pillars on top of the pillar bases, with the preserved surface under the former pillars and adjacent to the abraded surface.

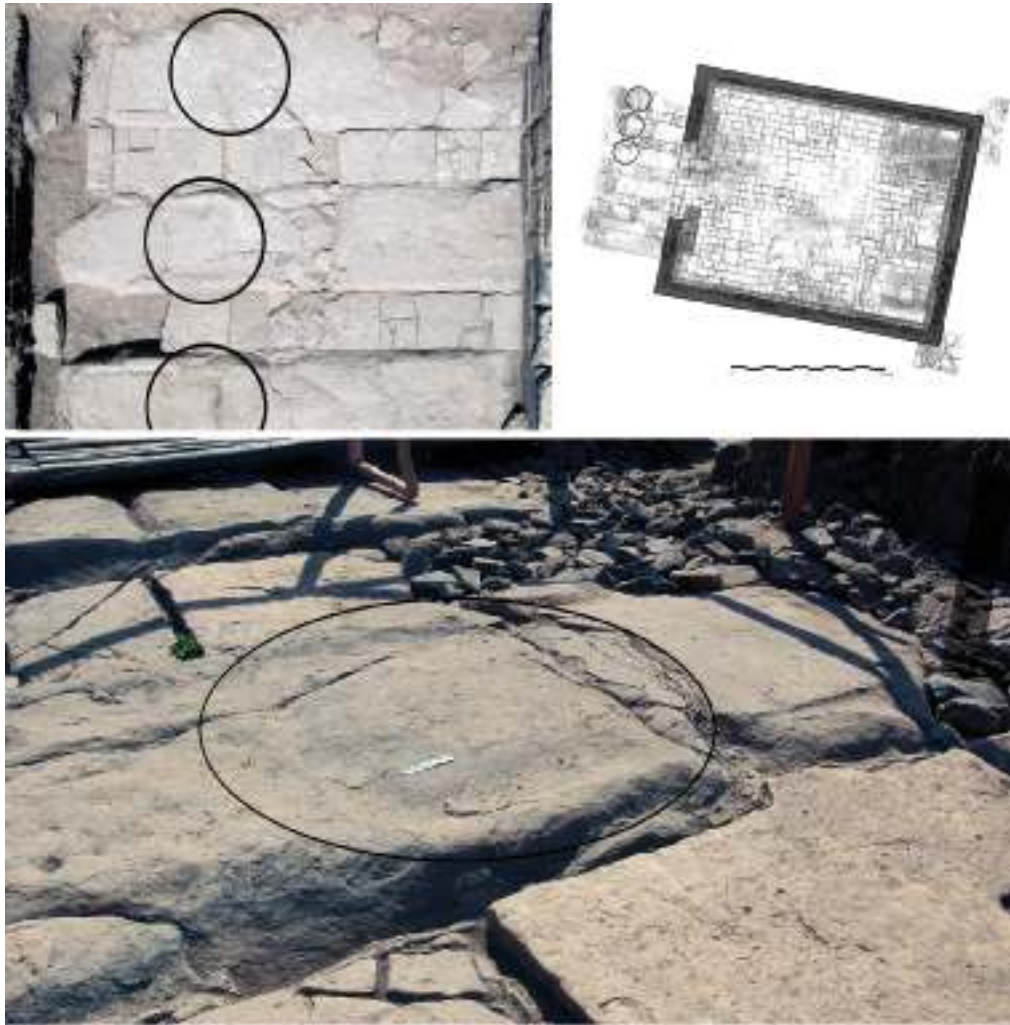


Fig. 6. Artificial rectangular, but abraded depressions at some pillar bases.

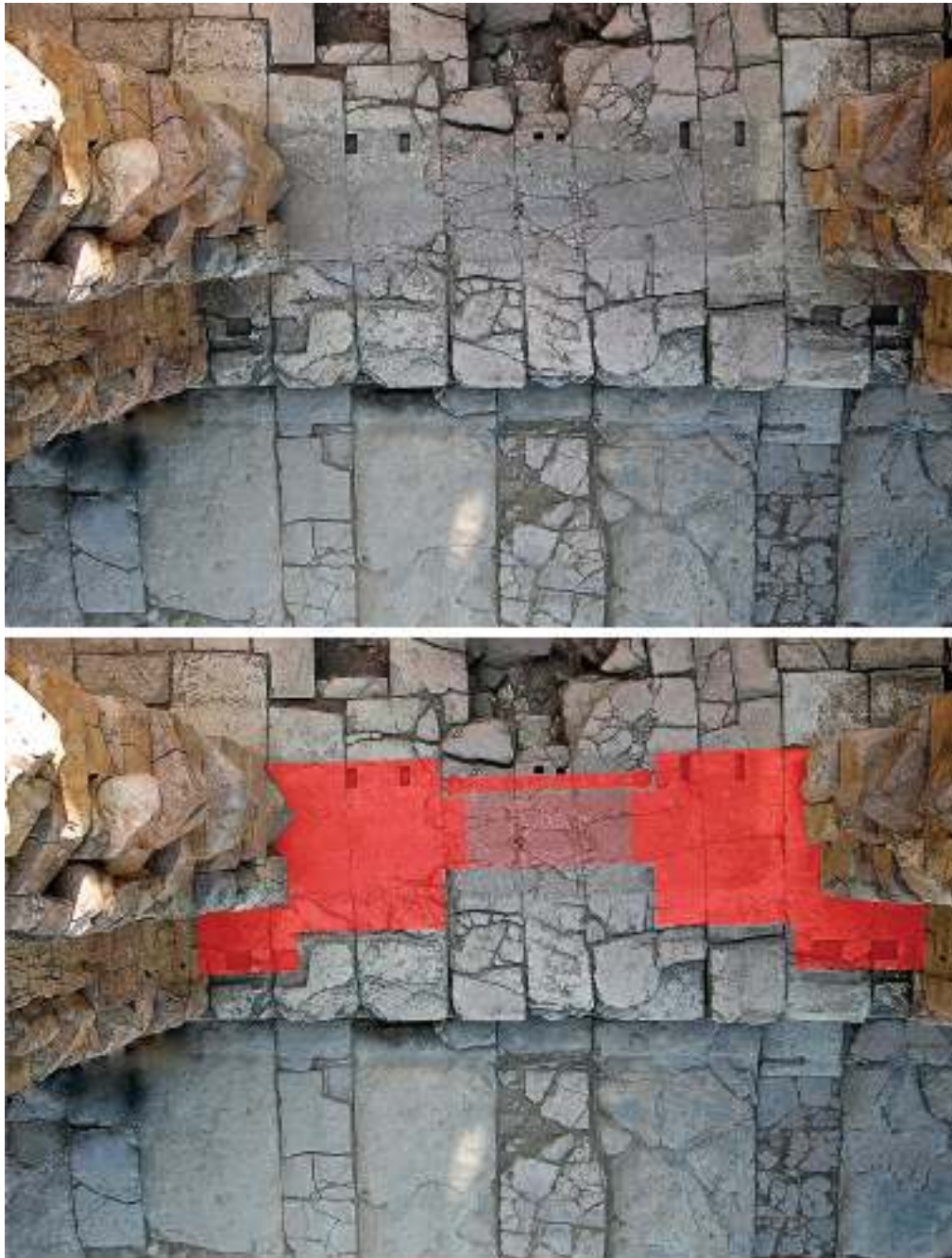


Fig. 7. The original, ancient threshold after the removal of the recent, later addition (above). The four journals for door hinges, which establish there a double wing door in two phases, are visible. The reconstruction of the ground plan of the ancient threshold (below).

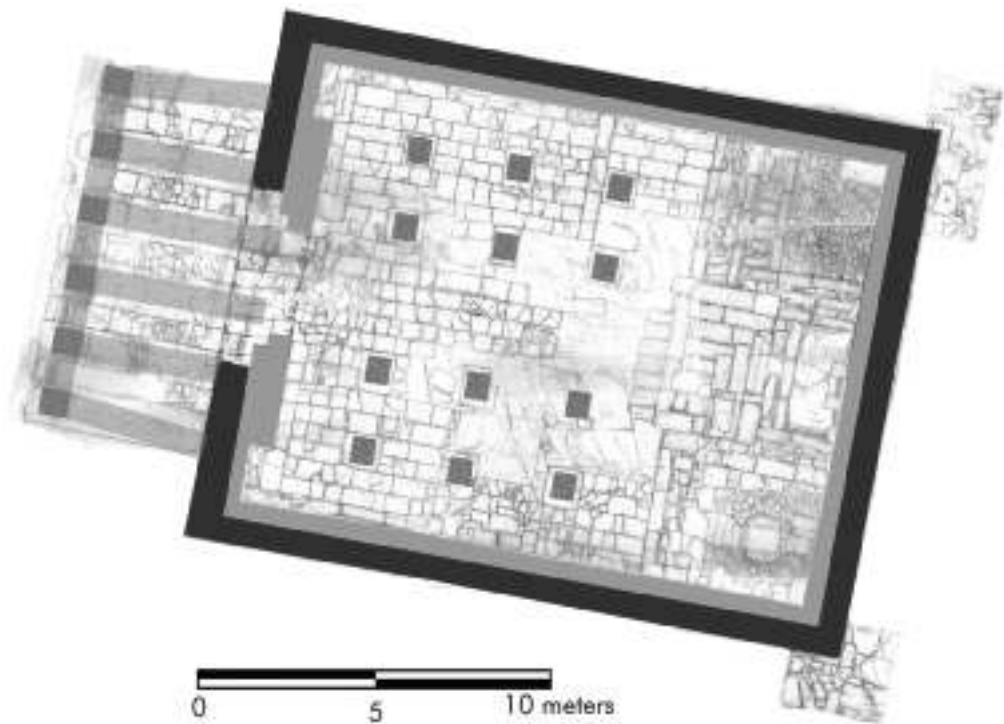


Fig. 8. Ground plan of the propylon with the projected architraves and the girders between the architraves and the front façade of the temple. Note the displaced axis of the pillars and the contact zones of the horizontal girders at the perimeter wall.

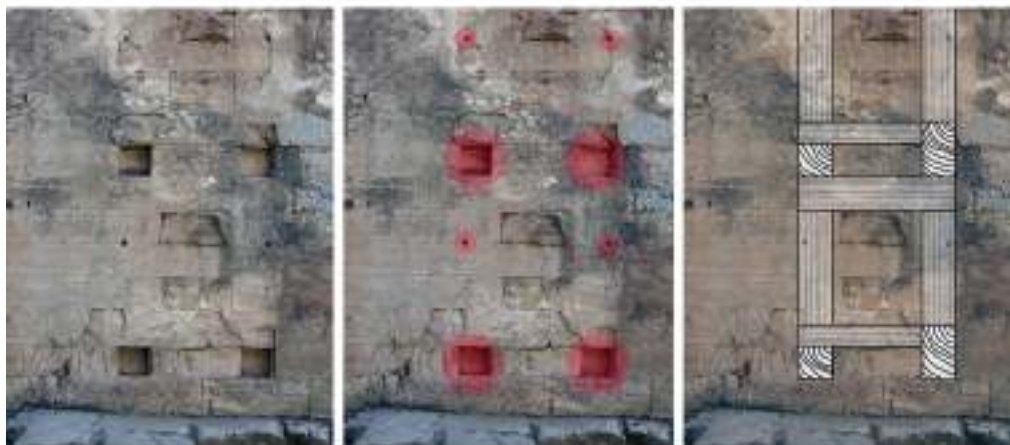


Fig. 9. Reconstruction of the half timber constructions of the inner walls as a result of the findings of the mortises and beam holes.



Fig. 10. The subsequently broken-in foundation of the later altar construction.

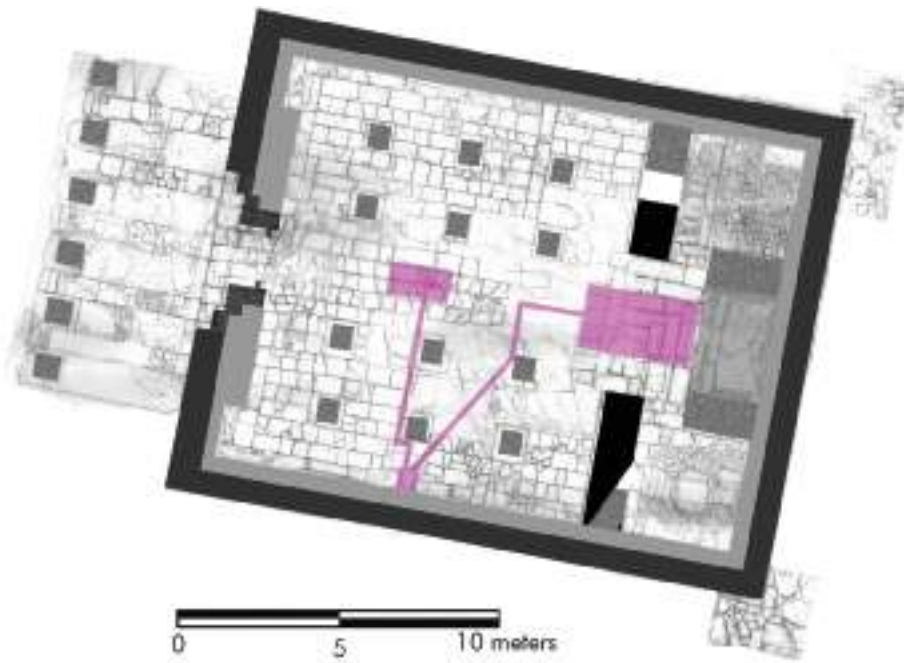


Fig. 11. Reconstructed ground plan of the Great Temple with the later, monumental altar construction.

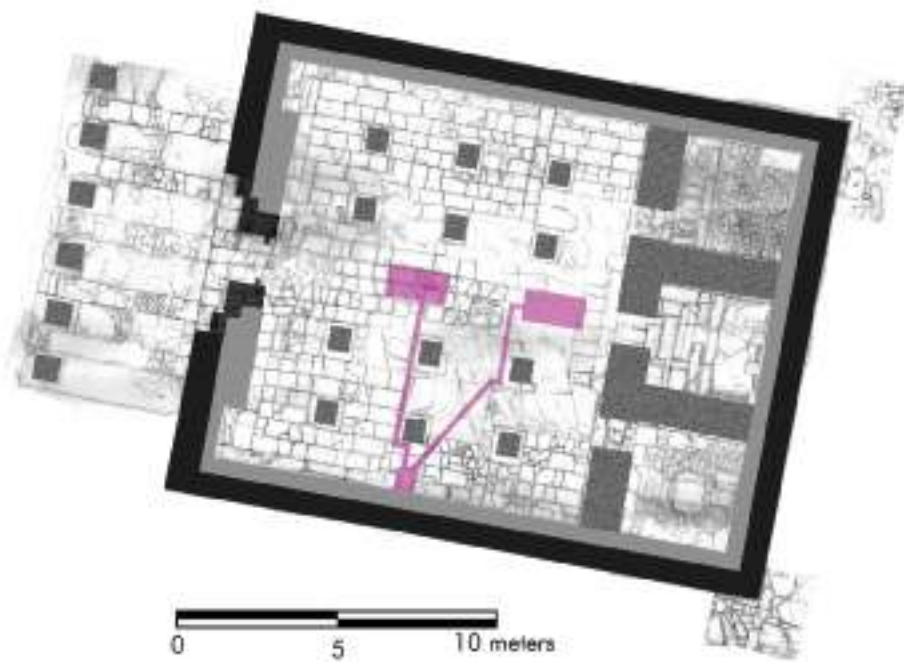


Fig. 12. Reconstructed ground plan of the Great Temple with the earlier, smaller altar construction.



Fig. 13. Large beam holes (1) in the walls M4 and M5, lying below the circular wall projection, mark the position of the first order of the ceiling beams.

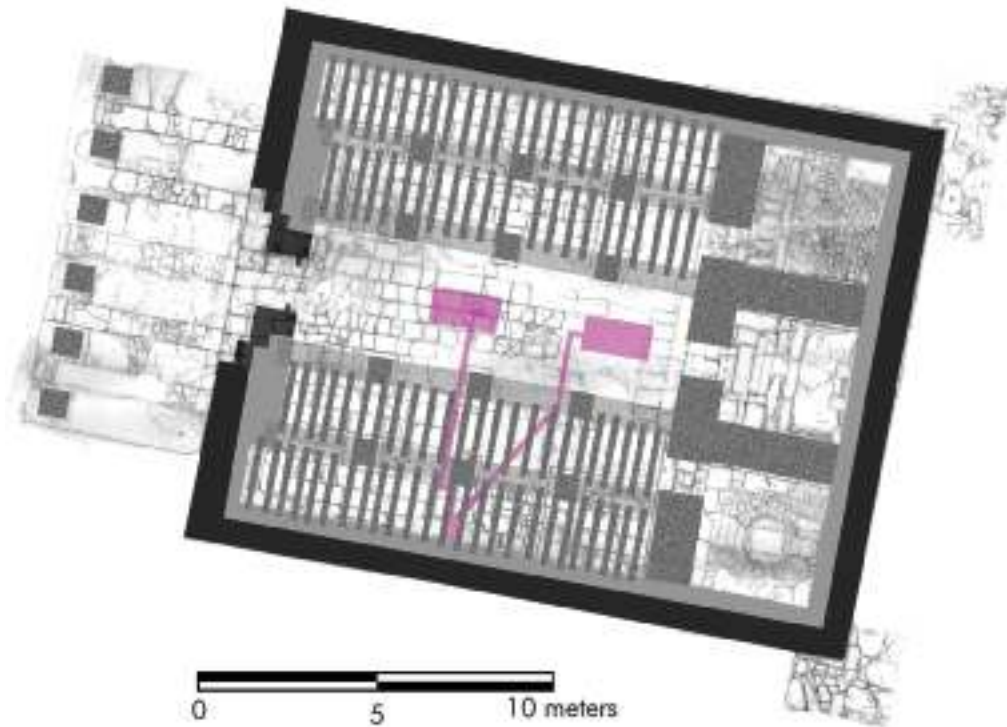


Fig. 14. Reconstruction of the first and the second order of the ceiling beams in the ground plan.

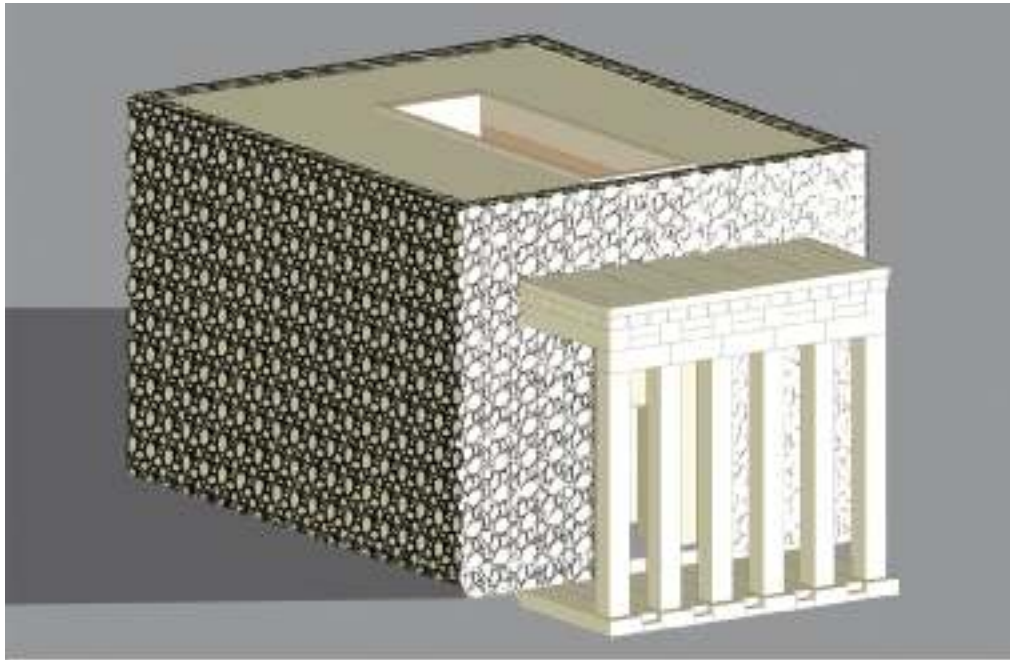


Fig. 15. Reconstruction of the exterior of the predecessor of the Great Temple (The first Sabaeen phase - before the 7th century B.C.).

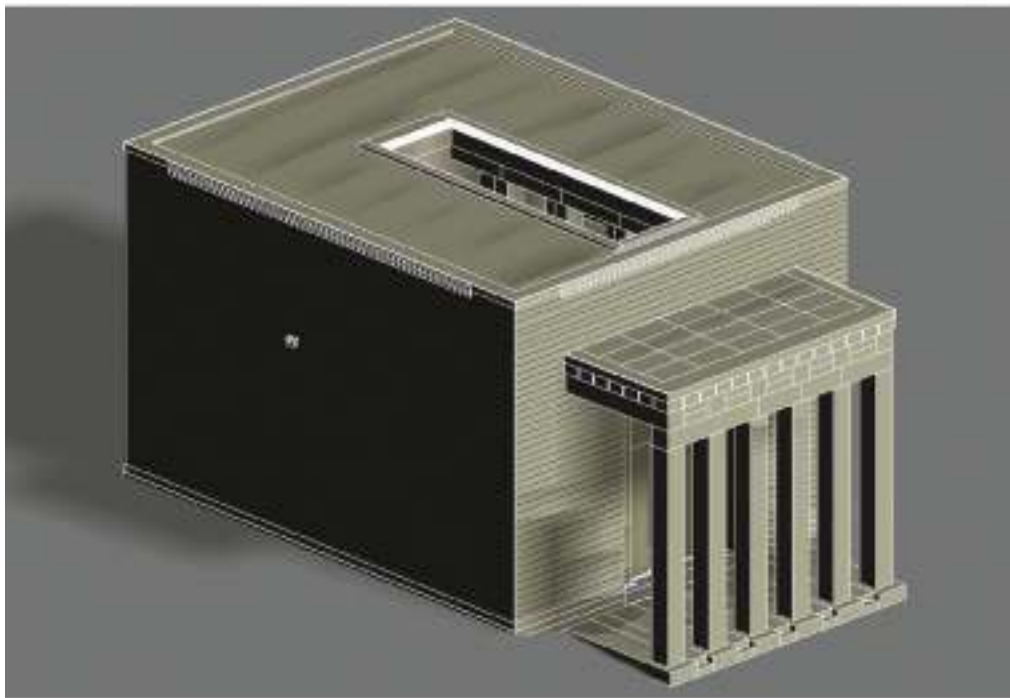


Fig. 16. Reconstruction of the exterior of the Great Temple in the second Sabaeen phase (7th century B.C.).

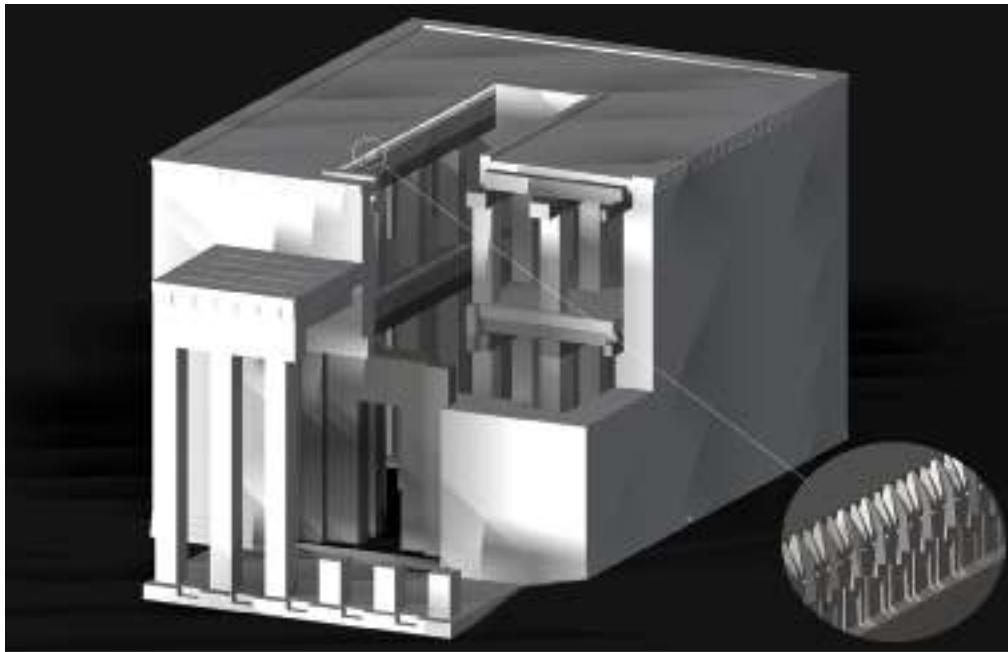


Fig. 17. Reconstructed detail of the entrance with the narrow passage way in the second Sabaean phase (7th century B.C.).

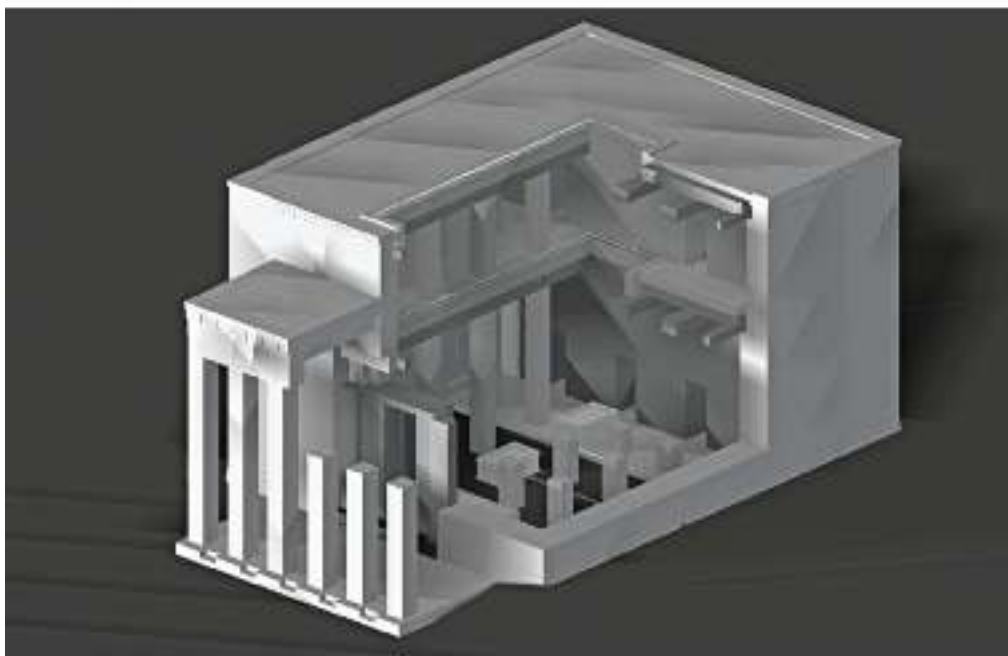


Fig. 18. Reconstructed interior of the Great Temple in the second Sabaean phase (7th century B.C.) with the two successively arranged altars.



Fig. 19. Some architectural fragments (right: above: RIÉ 36), found inside and around the Great Temple, belonging to an altar construction comparable to the altar of the 'Almaqah-Temple of Mekaber Ga'ewa (left).

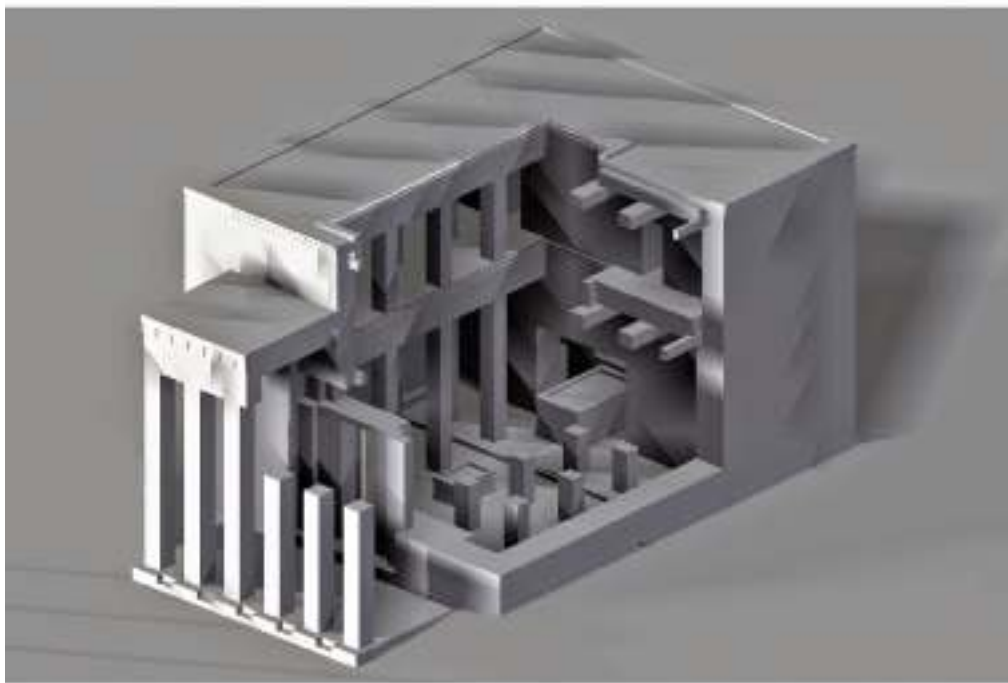


Fig. 20. Reconstruction of the interior of the third Sabaean phase (after the 7th century B.C.).

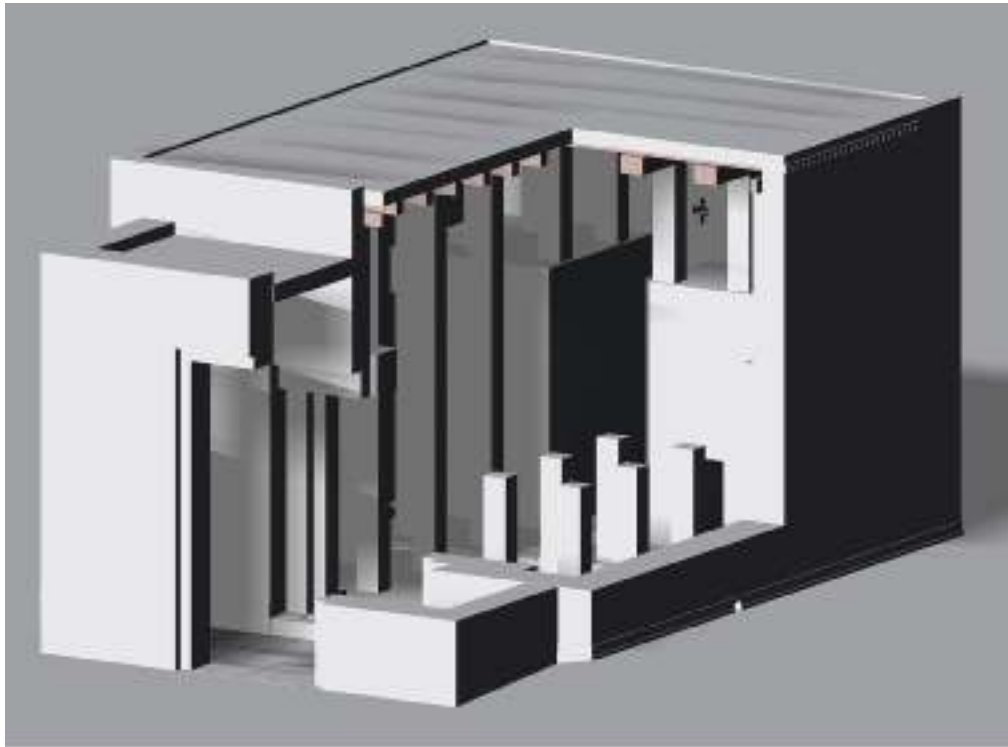


Fig. 21. Reconstruction of the Great Temple as a large Christian church.

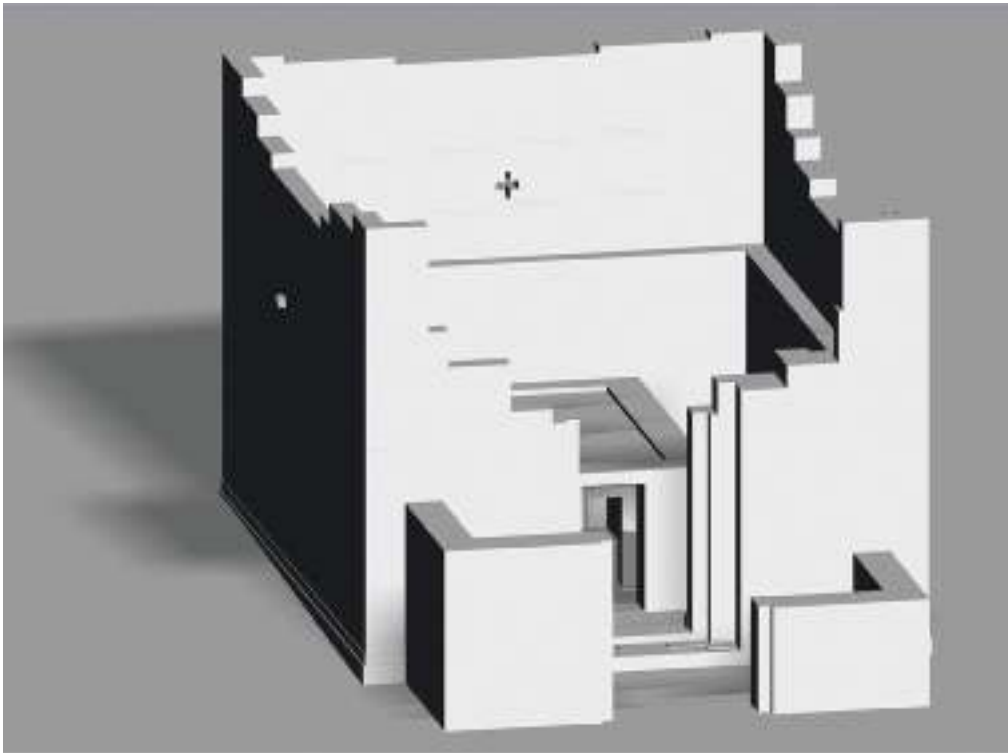


Fig. 22. Reconstruction of the second Christian church inside the Great Temple.



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NEW RESEARCH IN ARCHAEOLOGY AND EPIGRAPHY OF SOUTH ARABIA AND ITS NEIGHBORS

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE “RENCONTRES SABÉENNES 15” HELD
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