

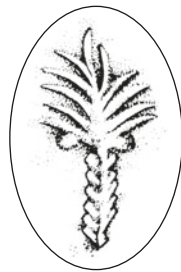
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GIOVANNI BERGAMINI*
AWAL^{KI} - YELKHI ?

ABSTRACT

Awal is known as an important city in the Trans-Tigris region from Early Dynastic to Old Babylonian period. In Ur III times it was ruled by Babati, uncle of King Šu-Sīn. The city was a key control point along the road leading from Sumer to the Upper Mesopotamia through Diyāla valley, Gasur/Nuzi, Arrapha and Aššur. Its name occurs frequently in the Old Akkadian texts from Tell Suleimah (Hamrīn Basin), so many scholars agreed on the match of that site with Awal itself. However, while other identifications for Tell Suleimah are possible, Awal may be searched for in a slightly different position. On archaeological, historical, geographical bases a new location of Awal is proposed here.

KEYWORDS

Awal; Hamrīn Basin; Tell Suleimah; Tell Yelkhi.

The impressive architectural development in post-Akkadian Yelkhi seems to mark an outstanding role of this site (in the North-central area of the Hamrīn basin) from Ur III times onwards.¹ Unfortunately, no direct evidence on the ancient site name emerged: in Levels VIII-VI (Akkadian to Ur III) no texts were recovered, and the ones yielded from Level Vb (Isin-Larsa) mention a palace (*ekallum*) but do not bear information on the local place-name.² Neither the subsequent Level IIIb (Old Babylonian) texts can help in this regard.³

As for historical sources, scholars have long been referring to the mention of the city (or land) of Awal which was freed (*andurār*) - together with Kišmar and Dēr - by the early Assyrian king Ilušuma in the 20th century BCE.⁴ By now, the first occurrences of Awal as topographical entry come from the *Early Dynastic List of Geographical Names* (LGN).⁵

The Third Millennium

Further information dates back to the age of Akkad and of the Third Dynasty of Ur. A town called Awal^{KI} occurs very frequently in the Old Akkadian administrative texts from an important site in the basin, Tell es-Suleimah, so that the editor, Fawzi Rashīd, was first led to identify this place with Awal itself, albeit only as a guess.⁶ Some scholars did relay on this hy-

pothesis and some still do according to a widespread cliché.⁷ Nevertheless, another proposal by the same Rashīd, P/Batir, emerged as more probable due to the local discovery of a brick bearing the name of a king of that very city (and realm),⁸ and to the finding of a Late Akkadian (or Ur III) seal, recut in OB times, naming a priest of the goddess Batirītum.⁹

A further study by P.Gentili¹⁰ on the economic flow emerging from Suleimah accounting documents has shown that in Old Akkadian times Awal was subordinate to a chief town, GABA or Dūrum,¹¹ perhaps corresponding to the same Tell Suleimah where what

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¹ BERGAMINI 1984*; 1985. The early levels in Tell Yelkhi date back to ED I (see BERGAMINI 1986).

² SAPORETTI 1995, 5-38; 2001, 89-102 (IL texts).

³ SAPORETTI 1984*, 246-259; ROUAULT, SAPORETTI 1985, 23-52 (OB texts).

⁴ WEIDNER 1936, 114-23; GRAYSON 1987, 16-18; VEENHOF, EIDEM 2008, 126 f.

⁵ First discovered, incomplete, in the Abū Šalābikh texts (BIGGS 1974, 71 ff.) followed by a complete duplicate from Ebla (PETTINATO 1978, 54 ff.; 1981, 217 ff.).

⁶ RASHĪD 1981; 1984*, 55 ff.

⁷ STEINKELLER 1981, 164 ff.; POSTGATE 1981; 1984*. Still in more recent years, the Akkadian texts from Tell Suleimah and Yorghān Tepe were labelled “from Awal and Gasur”, see DSHARAKIAN 1994 (“...dies ist mit großer Wahrscheinlichkeit der alte Name des Tall Sulayma”). So even EIDEM, LAESSØE 2001, 139, note to line 25 of text 65 (see below): “Awal has been identified with Tell as-Suleimah on the Diyala, south of the modern town Sa’diyah (see STEINKELLER 1981)”. The same in VEENHOF, EIDEM 2008, 127, note 581 and in POTTS 2021, 52 “...Tell Suleimah (ancient Awal) in the Hamrin valley”.

⁸ RASHĪD 1984*, 56; FRAYNE 1990, 712, E4.17.1.

⁹ AL GAILANI-WERR 1982, 80 no. 41; 1992, no. 87. FISHER (1997, 474), has suggested an original Ur III imagery. Mount Batir is identified by the Anubanini rock-relief itself, near Sar-Pol-e Zahab (*i-na ša-du-im Ba-ti-ir*). A toponymic study on Batir and its relation to the area is to be found in MIRGHADERI, NIKNAMI, BAGHBIDI 2019: *Batir: Research on an ancient name in Sar Pol-e Zahab*, نشریه پژوهش های باستان شناسی ایران, *Iranian Journal of Archaeological Research* no. 23, 9th Volume, Winter 1398 HA. (2019), 39-50, in Persian.

¹⁰ GENTILI 2010, 139 ff. A detailed study on the administrative framework of the archive is to be found in VISICATO 1999 (who dates the archive to Narām-Sīn’s early reign) and 2000, xvii (Chronology), 212, 222 ff. (Suleimah texts).

¹¹ On various sites called Dūrum including Dēr/Bedre/Tell ‘Aqar see DE GRAEF 2007; for the identification with Dēr see MICHALOWSKI 1977. FRAYNE (2008, 42-44.) suggested that the Dūrum quoted by the Suleimah texts was located near the Hamrīn matching the modern Deli ‘Abbās.

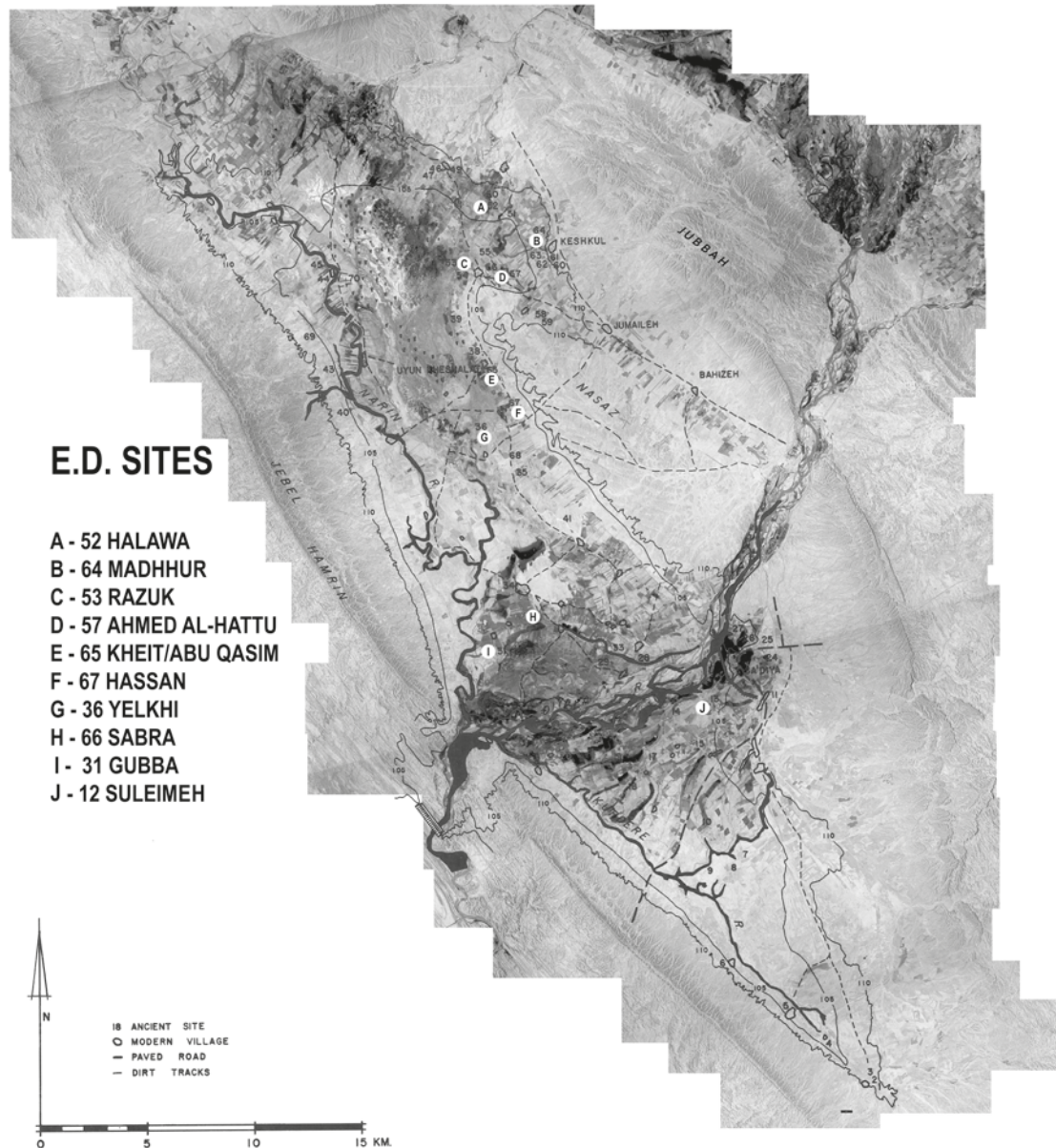


Fig. 5 - Hamrīn Early Dynastic sites. Mosaic of CORONA satellite imagery, missions 1039-2088 Aft & Fore, 1107-2170 Aft (corona.cast.uark.edu, credit CAST) / map of the basin (*Sumer XXXIV*, 1978 and GIBSON 1981), processed by the author.

in the plain beyond the Jebel Hamrīn, in the area of Qara Tepe, but at the Sakaltutan Pass on the top of the Jebel itself, along the old road leading from present-day Deli ‘Abbās to Qara Tepe, a path usually followed in past centuries by travellers in transit from Baghdad to Kirkuk.³⁰

The problem is that there is no ancient site in the area, the only relevant feature is an old ruined caravanserai at a nearby place named Suhānīyah, Frayne referred to ancient LGN entry *ši-ma*.³¹ This should be correct for a standard staging and resting place, for a post station on a long-distance road, but we could hardly imagine the seat of an over-regional *énsi* and *šagina* in such a rugged site showing no trace of ancient structural remains. As usual, it was necessary

instead to design a building with representative and administrative facilities of adequate size (and with appropriate water supply).

³⁰ LGN No. 206 ‘a_x (NI)-la-lu (Awal) was not referred to Awal but (written i-la-lu) to the toponym i-lī-lī known from Suleimah texts in FRAYNE 1992, 59, on the Elam-Kismar-Dēr-Diyāla road. In FRAYNE 2008, 41, instead, the name is written ‘a_x (NI)-la-lu (Awal) at n. 206 in the list and (Awal) A’la in the map (see Fig. 3). On the old road see also GIBSON 1981, 11 ff.

³¹ LGN No. 205, referred by Steinkeller to *šu-mu* from Suleimah texts (STEINKELLER 1986, 39), FRAYNE 1992, 59, note 454. Probably, the places corresponding to ancient staging stations, simple and limited structures, can hardly have left substantial archaeological traces.

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TELL BASMAYA – A KASSITE PERIOD SITE IN TRANS-TIGRIDIAN BABYLONIA

ABSTRACT

The paper presents the key results of two short seasons of rescue excavations conducted at Tell Basmaya by the Iraqi State Board of Antiquities and Heritage in 2013 and 2014. The site, which currently lies under the modern city of Bismaya, is located to the south-east of Baghdad and consisted of eight mounds (only four of which were excavated, and of these only two revealed evidence of occupation). On Mound 7, the excavations revealed an expanse of domestic architecture that represents the largest coherent dwelling dating to the Kassite period discovered so far, not only in the trans-Tigridian area, but in Babylonia as a whole. A small group of cuneiform tablets, including two dated to the reign of Kadašman-Turgu (1281-1264 BCE), provide clear dating for the settlement in the 13th century BCE. In all, eight domestic units were found together with forty-four graves of different types, showing various degrees of richness. The grave goods included pottery vessels, faience ‘buckets’ and a quantity of jewellery. Also noteworthy is a collection of metal objects found in a single location, including daggers and chisels. The small finds include cylinder seals, including an inscribed Kassite period seal, and a number of faience objects, including a face mask and three chariot fittings. The corpus of pottery ranged across the forms found on other trans-Tigridian sites.

Evidence for occupation in the late Sāsānid and early Arabic period was found. This included a number of Aramaic incantation bowls, a small group of pottery vessels and a single coin. The remains were very badly damaged due to erosion and recent military activity, and no architectural elements were identified.

KEYWORDS

Kassite, domestic housing, burials, trans-Tigridian, cuneiform tablets, cylinder seals, metal work, pottery, faience objects, Aramaic incantation bowls.

1. Introduction

The site of Tell Basmaya consists of eight mounds and lies beneath the new city development of Bismaya, which has been under construction since 2013

(Fig. 1). It is situated to the south-east of Baghdad and the Diyala River. Ahead of development of the area, two seasons of rescue excavations (in total less than three months) were carried out at several targeted areas of the mounds in 2013 and 2014. The work was directed by Taha Karim Abod under the authority of the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage.¹

Tell Basmaya lies just south of the junction of the Diyala and Tigris rivers. The site consisted of at least eight mounds, all of which have been destroyed by the construction of Bismaya city. The mounds ranged in height from 1 to 4.5 m and covered a total area of over 4 hectares. In the limited time available, only Mounds 5, 6, 7 and 8 were excavated (Figs. 2-3).²

The principal result of the excavations was the discovery of substantial domestic architectural remains in association with burials and assemblages of finds including jewellery, metal work, faience vessels, cylinder seals, pottery and a small collection of tablets dated in the thirteenth century BCE. As such, the site provides important new evidence for Kassite occupation in the trans-Tigridian area during the thirteenth century BCE.

Traces of a late Sāsānid and early Islamic settlement were also found at the site, but little of it survived, as the remains were badly eroded.

* Haider Oraibi Almamori, University of Babylon, College of Arts, Department of Archaeology; Taha K. Abod and Karim O. Swadi (excavators), State Board of Antiquities and Heritage, Iraq; Dr Tim Clayden, Green Templeton College, University of Oxford; Dr Petra Creamer, Assistant Professor Emory University; Professor Elena Devecchi, Dept. of Historical Studies, University of Turin; Dr Agnete W. Lassen, Associate Curator, Yale Babylonian Collection, Yale University.

¹ The authors are grateful to the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage for permission to publish the results of the excavations at Tell Basmaya. All the photographs were taken by the excavation team under the direction of T.K. Abod and K.O. Swadi and are published here by their kind permission.

² Plans were made only for mounds 6 and 7, and no general plan of all the mounds was prepared. In addition, a number of objects and burials were not given registration numbers; therefore, registration numbers can be indicated only for a limited number of finds. Finally, there were instances of confusion in room numbering and finds register which could be largely, but not always completely resolved.

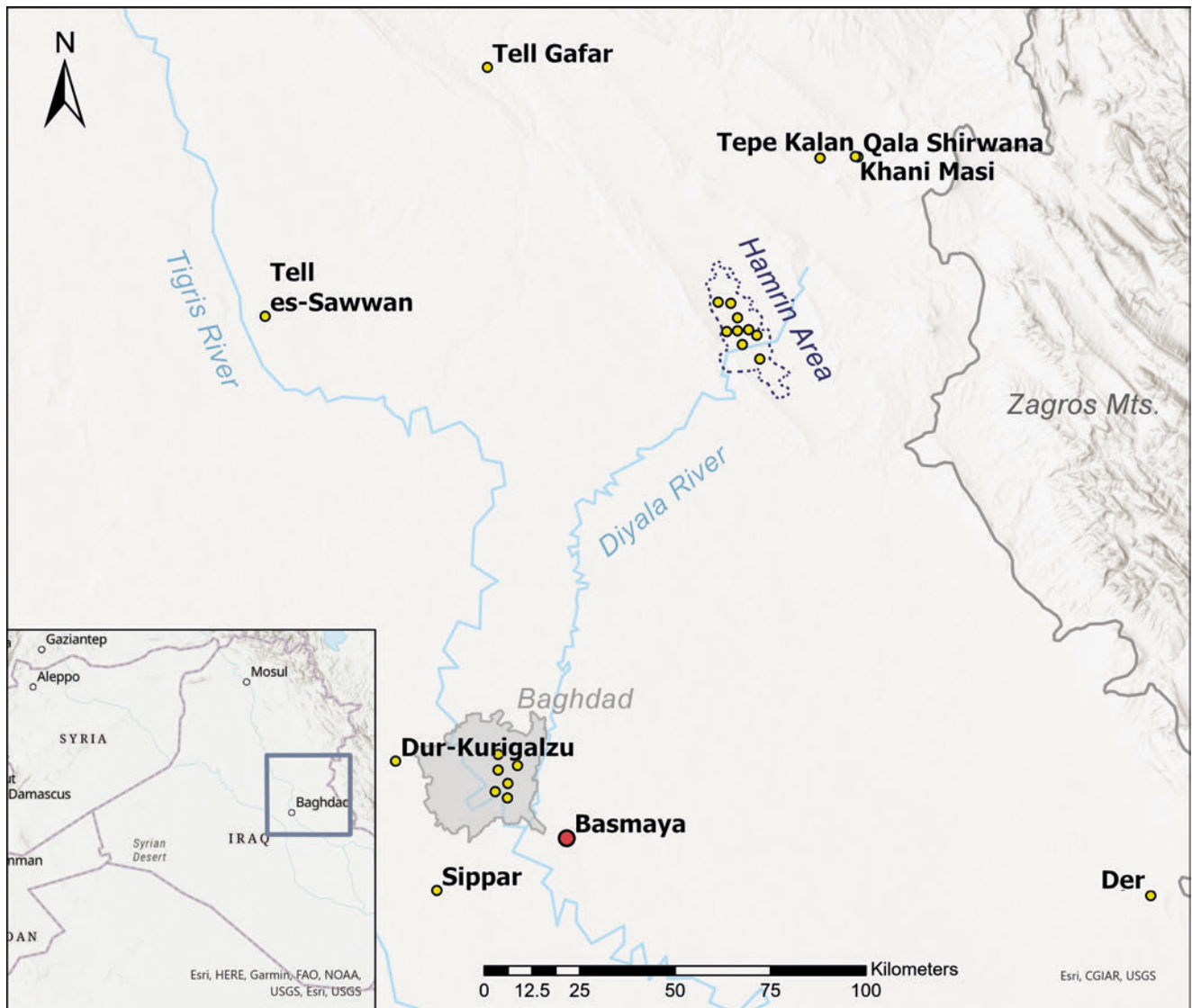


Fig. 1 - Map of Kassite Settlements in the Diyala basin and surrounding area (basemap courtesy of ESRI).

This paper presents the excavation report, the finds register for objects not found in burials, and preliminary comments on key groups of excavated objects and features (architectural remains, burials, cuneiform tablets, seals, jewellery, metal and faience objects, pottery and ground stones). Future reports by the authors (also to be published in this journal) will provide detailed studies of each of these aspects of the site.

2. Historical context

Archaeological excavations and detailed historical studies have shown that the region east of the Tigris along the Diyala corridor was important during the whole Kassite period in Babylonia, from the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the sixteenth cen-

turies BCE up until the twelfth century BCE.³ Its importance laid in the fact that it straddled a key route into the lands to the east of Babylonia. Because of its strategic position, it was also a conflict zone which often witnessed armed disputes between Babylonia and Assyria as well as between Babylonia and Elam.

The most extensive period of settlement in this region was during the thirteenth and twelfth centuries BCE.⁴ The reasons for this phenomenon are unclear, and the limited epigraphic evidence from sites in the area does not contribute to clarify this issue. It is ap-

³ FUCHS 2011 and 2017, and CLAYDEN forthcoming.

⁴ See CLAYDEN forthcoming for a review of the history of Kassite occupation in the trans-Tigridian region.



Fig. 9 - General view of Units 1-4, Mound 7.



Fig. 10 - General view of Units 1-4, Mound 7.



Fig. 11 - Unit 1, Mound 7.



Fig. 38 - Chariot fittings excavated at Basmaya.



Fig. 39 - Bowl (Bas. 1).



Fig. 40 - A collection of the pottery excavated at Basmaya.

Register of objects excavated at Tell Basmaya from non-burial contexts

Bas No.	IM No.	Description	Dimensions.	Mound	Square	Level	Context
1	230056	Flat based bowl with yellow and green glaze decoration on the interior surface, exterior surface unglazed	H. 6.8; Rim dia. 22.2; Base dia. 6.2	6		I	
2	230057	Ovoid glass bottle	H. 14; Rim dia. 2.2; Base dia. 3.0	6		I	
3	230058	Square body and flat base glass bottle	H. 9.4; Rim dia. 2.3; Base dia. 3.0	6		I	
4	-	Small glass bottle with neck and rim broken and lost	H. 5.0; Rim dia. -; Base dia. 1.8	6		I	
5	230059	Glass ovoid bottle	H. 10.8; Rim dia. 2.7; Base dia. 2.0	6		I	
6	230060	Blue glazed lamp		6		I	
7	230061	Jug with handle, broken rim		6	G11	I	Rm. 2
8	-	Broken jar, rim and handle missing		6	G11	I	Rm. 2
9	-	Broken jug, rim and handle missing		6	G10	I	Rm. 3, filling
10	230062	Small globular round base jar	H. 10.0; Rim dia. 3.8; Base dia. -	7	B11	II	Unit 1, Rm. 1
11	230063	Ring base jar, flaring rim	H. 11.0; Rim dia. 7.3; Base dia. 3.2	7	B11	II	Unit 1, fill of Rm. 1
12	230064	Ring base jar, flaring rim	H. 11.0; Rim. Dia. 7.0; Base dia. 3.6	7	B11	II	Unit 1, fill of Rm. 2
13	-	Ring base jar with flaring rim (partially broken)	H. 12.2; Rim dia. 6.2; Base dia. 3.6	7	B11	II	Unit 1, fill of Rm.2
14	-	Ring base jar with flaring rim (partially broken)	H. 10; Rim dia. 6.4; Base dia. 3.2	7	B11	II	Unit 1, fill of Rm.2
15	230066	Ring base jar with flaring rim (partially broken)	H. 11.8; Rim dia. 7.0; Base dia. 3.7	7	B11	II	Unit 1, fill of Rm.2
16	-	Jar with ovoid body, neck and flaring rim (broken)	H. 17.4; Rim dia. 5.4; Base dia. 2.0	7	B11	II	Unit 1, fill of Rm. 4
17	-	Ring base jar with broken rim	H. 20.0; Rim dia. 5.2; Base dia. 3.5	7	B11	II	Unit 1, Rm. 4
18	-	Ring base jar with broken rim	H. 18.2; Rim dia. 5.0; Base dia. 3.5	7	B11	II	Unit 1, Rm. 4
19	-	Ring base jar with broken rim	H. 18.5; Rim dia. 4.8; Base dia. 3.5	7	B11	II	Unit 1, Rm. 4
20	-	Open straight sided bowl	H. 5.5; Rim dia. 13.8; Base dia. 6.5	7	B11	II	Unit 1, fill of Rm. 5
21	-	Open straight sided bowl	H. 6.3; Rim dia. 14.6; Base dia. 5.0	7	B11	II	Unit 1, Rm. 5
22	-	Open straight sided bowl	H. 6.4; Rim dia. 19.0; Base dia. 7.0	7	B11	II	Unit 1, Rm. 5
23	-	Open straight sided bowl	H. 7.5; Rim dia. 18.6; Base dia. 6.7	7	B11	II	Unit 1, Rm. 5
24	-	Open straight sided bowl	H. 5.6; Rim dia. 14.6; Base dia. 6.0	7	B11	II	Unit 1, Rm. 5
31	230072/1	Chariot fitting, with central hole and upper surface - chipped. White material (calcite?)	H. 5.3; Upper dia. -; hole dia. 1.7; Base dia. 6.8	7	B10	II	Unit 2, fill of Rm. 9

HASAN PEKER

WRITING OUTSIDE THE BIG CITY: TWO NEW FUNERARY STELAE FROM THE NECROPOLIS OF YUNUS AT KARKEMISH

ABSTRACT

An update on all the inscribed material retrieved both in the old British and in the new Turco-Italian excavations at Yunus, the necropolis of Karkemish, is presented in the paper. Two inscribed stelae are published here for the first time, allowing us to begin reassessing the role of verbal communication in the main burial ground of the city during the 8th century BCE. In addition, an inscribed fragment from the northwestern border of the state of Karkemish is published here as well, adding an element for the evaluation of the spread of monumental writing within peripheral centers.

KEYWORDS

Yunus; Karkemish; Luwian; Anatolian hieroglyphs; inscribed funerary stelae

Introduction

The public use of Anatolian hieroglyphic writing at Karkemish is of course well known from hundreds of complete as well fragmentary attestations, highlighting a verbal monumental landscape that had few equals in contemporary urban centers. On the other hand, the dearth of inscribed pieces from the main necropolis of the city, the Yunus cemetery, seems surprising in view of such a degree of literacy.

During the excavations carried out by the British Museum in 1911-1914 and 1920, five inscribed fragments of funerary stelae were recovered from the Iron Age cemetery located approximately 800 m to the northwest of the main mound. The renewed excavations by the Turco-Italian Archaeological Expedition have added four additional examples to that repertoire plus an addition (one of the new pieces probably belongs to the same monument as one of the earlier series). This paper offers an edition of two new Anatolian hieroglyphic inscriptions on funerary stelae from Yunus as well as a summary of our current knowledge of all the inscribed pieces from that area (Fig. 1).¹

A new geographical label (YUNUS) had already been created for designating the inscriptions from the necropolis.² Table 1 presents an updated list of the nine texts known thus far. While the whereabouts of YUNUS 5 are still currently unknown,³ we can now confirm that another stela inscription thought to be lost, YUNUS 4, was rediscovered in 2019 in the ruins of the old British Museum Dig House in

the Inner Town. All the inscribed specimens can be attributed to the 8th century BCE and they all have been dedicated by individuals not belonging to the royal family, which is a very interesting indication of how in that period the elites had the desire and the ability to produce inscribed monuments that were visible (and could presumably be read by a sufficiently large local audience) in the burial grounds possibly reserved to their own kin.

Name of Inscription	Publication reference	Current location / Inventory No.
YUNUS 1	PEKER 2014	Gaziantep Museum
YUNUS 2	TK I.30	Gaziantep Museum / YU.12.O.2
YUNUS 3	TK I.31	Ankara MAC KARKAMIŠ A15c ⁴ + YU.12.O.3
YUNUS 4	KARKAMIŠ A16f	Karkemish, at the entrance of the ruined British Museum Dig House in the Inner Town / KH.19.O.527
YUNUS 5	KARKAMIŠ A18b	Lost
YUNUS 6	KARKAMIŠ A19b	Ankara MAC 10914 = TR001009310
YUNUS 7	KARKAMIŠ A5b	Ankara MAC 10961 (10104)
YUNUS 8	See § II below	Expedition's House Storeroom / YU.17.O.122
YUNUS 9	See § III below	Karkemish, at the entrance of the archaeological park / YU.20.O.31

Table 1 - List of the inscribed funerary stelae from Yunus.

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¹ I am especially grateful for his comments on this paper to Nicolò Marchetti, director of the Turco-Italian Archaeological Expedition to Karkemish by the Universities of Bologna, İstanbul and Gaziantep, which is supported by the University of Bologna, the Italian Ministry of Universities and Research (PRIN 2007 project) and that of Foreign Affairs (DGSP directorate – 6th Office) and the Sanko Holding, in partnership with the Directorate General for Cultural Heritage and Museums of the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Gianni Marchesi offered appreciated criticisms on this manuscript as well. All images of this article are the copyleft of the Turco-Italian Archaeological Expedition at Karkemish.

² PEKER 2014.

³ CHLI, 199.

⁴ Following an established convention, the Karkemish inscriptions identified by a capital letter and a number/letter refer

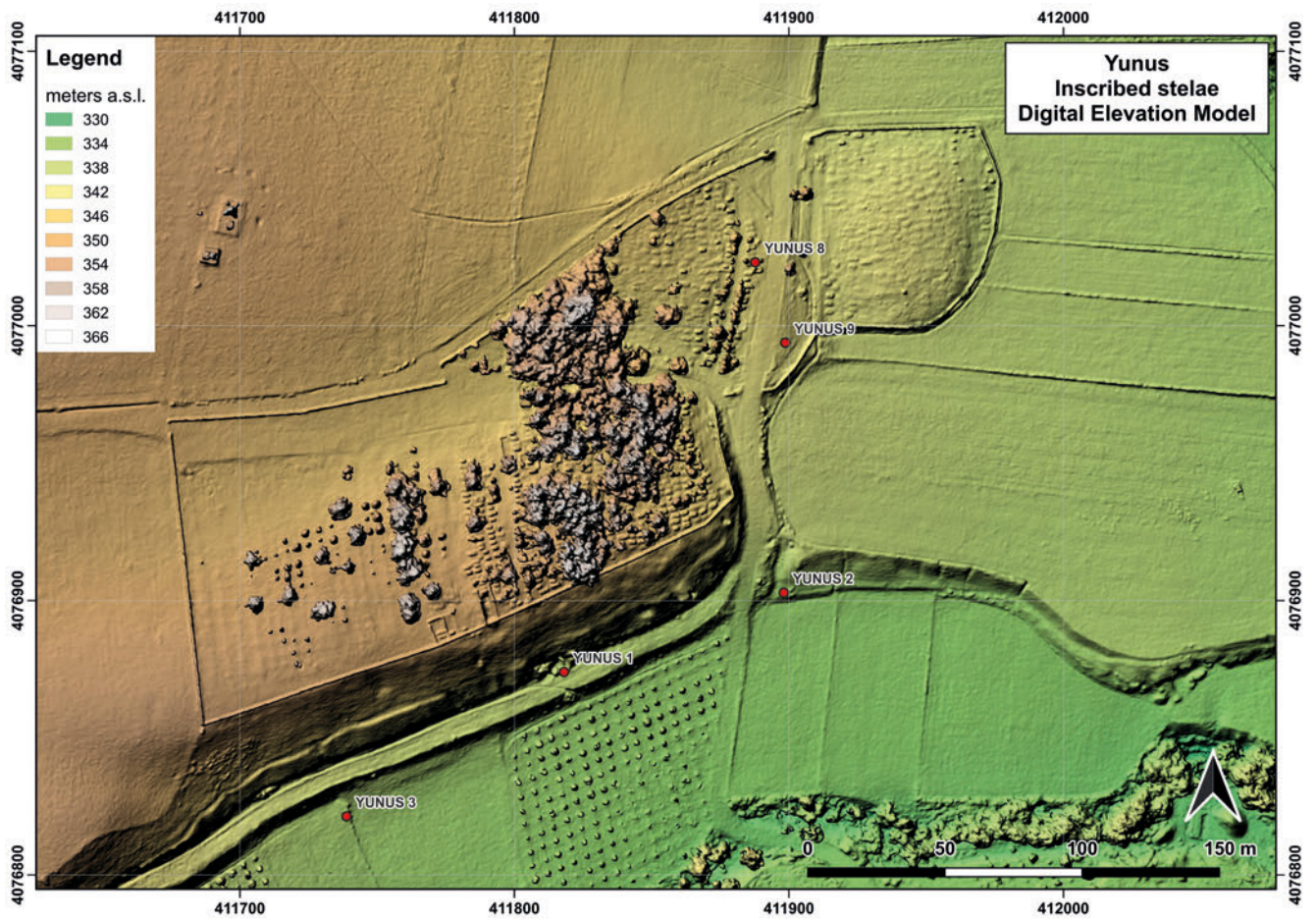


Fig. 1 - Distribution of inscribed stelae in the Yunus necropolis (graphics by M. Valeri).



Fig. 2 - Perspective and front views of YUNUS 8.



Fig. 5 - Front view of YUNUS 9.

II. Edition of YUNUS 9 (YU.20.O.31)

II.1 Description

The stele YU.20.O.31 is a rectangular block of limestone with crenellations on top and measures 201 cm in height, 95 cm in width and 72 cm in depth (Fig. 5).⁸ One line of an incised inscription (measuring 10 cm in height) runs sinistrowise (Fig. 6). We may

note the cursive sign-forms of *ma* and *u*, the plain semicircular form of *sa* (at Karkemish, a peculiarity of the inscriptions of the ruler Kamani and of later specimens),⁹ and no use of word dividers and personal name determinatives. The text can be attributed on a paleographic basis to the 8th century BCE.

II.2 Transliteration and translation

Funerary inscription of Sanai, son of Amaza. The text (Fig. 7) has been traced directly on the stone and on the photographs.

§ 1 [...] *sa-na-i-sa á-ma-za-sá* (VIR₂)FILIUS-*za-sa*
 § 2 *za-sa* CAPUT-*ti-sa* REX-*ti u-ni-mi-i-sá* [...
 § 3 x x [... ...] x [...

§ 1 [This stele (is)] of Sanai, son of Amaza.
 § 2 This loyal (noble)man, known to the king, [...
 § 3 [...]

II.3 Commentary

§ 1: The personal name Sanai may derive from the verb *sannai-*, “to overturn, to turn upside down,”¹⁰ in cuneiform and hieroglyphic Luwian.¹¹ The name Amaza may be an abbreviated theophoric name connected with the deity Amaza.¹² Both names were hitherto unattested.

§ 2: CAPUT-*ti-sa* (N.c.sg.): As a title, CAPUT-*ti-* should be an indicator of the social status in the Late period inscriptions. This title can be equated with L254, “loyal (noble)man”,¹³ and/or CAPUT. VIR, “headman”,¹⁴ from the Empire period. The epithet REX-*ti u-ni-mi-i-sá*, “known to the king,” is formed with the participle of the verb *uni-* “to know”. The form *unimis* is attested with ablative forms in MARAŞ 1 §1h¹⁵ and LÍDAR bullae;¹⁶ and with dative forms in PALANGA § 7.¹⁷

⁸ The stele was found lying in a Hellenistic pit pertaining to the later phase of use of the necropolis, in an area where we had already noted disturbances and graves from the Classical period (see BOLOGNANI, GIACOSA, ZAINA 2021, pls. LIII-LIV). For type S1b, to which our gravestone stele belongs, see *ibidem*, 75, pl. XLVIII.

⁹ See CHLI, 194.

¹⁰ Or “to remove” see YAKUBOVICH 2015.

¹¹ See MELCHERT 1993, 187; CHLI, 89.

¹² See HAAS 1994, 113.

¹³ See PEKER forthcoming.

¹⁴ PEKER apud ÖZYAR *et alii* 2022, 147-149.

¹⁵ CHLI, 263.

¹⁶ CHLI, 575.

¹⁷ CHLI, 325.

ROBERTO DAN - PRISCILLA VITOLO - ANDREA CESARETTI
ZEINAB HADI DASTJERDI - ARTUR PETROSYAN*

URARTIAN METAL ARROWHEADS IN CONTEXT THE LEAF-SHAPED ARROWHEADS FROM THE SOLAK-1/VARSAK EXCAVATION (ARMENIA) IN THE FRAME OF URARTIAN ARCHAEOLOGY

ABSTRACT

This article presents a group of arrowheads recently discovered at the Solak-1/Varsak, a site located in the central part of the River Hrazdan valley in Armenia. These arrowheads, defined as “leaf-shaped with wide stem and long tang”, pertain to a particular type which a series of archaeological contexts suggest were used by the army of the state of Bia/Urartu. The paper analyses the arrowheads of Solak-1 with reference to their contexts of discovery and also considers other specimens found not only in Urartian archaeological sites, but also in sites related to areas adjacent to Urartu, such as for example Assyria.

KEYWORDS

arrowheads; Solak-1; Armenia; Urartian army; Assyria; typology.

Introduction

Among the numerous classes of object found in archaeological excavations certainly one of the most interesting – but at the same time problematic – are the arrowheads¹. There have not been many attempts to systematize these finds and the few efforts made have been concentrated above all on cataloguing the arrowheads from a single site. The main problem concerns the attempt to classify not all the finds related to a certain phase, but just those from a single site comparing them with specimens of the same typology from other archaeological contexts. This contribution, in which unpublished finds are also described, is part of new research aimed to analyze and categorize arrowheads from Urartian archaeological sites. In fact, a particular category of bronze arrowhead known as “barbed-arrowheads” has already been analysed; these were found to be characteristic of the royal sphere of Urartu and (among other things) the only type to present short royal inscriptions². The recent discovery of a batch of arrowheads from the Urartian period levels at the Solak-1/Varsak site in Armenia led to this study, in which the arrowheads are described and also contextualized within the framework of Urartian archaeology and more generally of the Iron Age (Fig. 1). The archaeological site of Solak-1/Varsak (KSP016) has been excavated since 2013 by a joint Armenian-Italian archaeological mission, the Kotayk Survey Project (KSP)³. Archaeological evi-

dence was found over an area of 32 hectares, making it one of the most important sites in the River Hrazdan valley, Kotayk region (Fig. 2). Archaeological excavations have documented a long, discontinuous use of the site starting from the Middle Palaeolithic up to the Middle Ages. The investigations have mainly brought to light archaeological evidences dated to the Iron Age; in particular a fortified structure defined as Building A (Fig. 3), located on what has been called Hill A, was fully unearthed in plan, and two main phases of use were found. The first phase, relating to the construction of the fortified complex, dates to the Middle Iron Age (800-600 BCE), a time when most of the territory corresponding to modern

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¹ The authors wish to thank for their help and support Pavel Avetisyan, Director of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Armenia, Prof. Adriano V. Rossi, president of ISMEO, the Italian Ministry of External Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI), Alfonso Di Riso, Italian Ambassador in Armenia, Chiara Zecchi and Francesco Laurita. The Archaeological excavations in Solak-1 are conducted thanks to the financial support of ISMEO (through the “Progetto MUR quinquennale. Storia, lingue e culture dei paesi asiatici e africani: ricerca scientifica, promozione e divulgazione”) and MAECI. We also want to thank the archaeologists Varduhy Melikyan and Artak Avetisyan. Our heartfelt thanks to Ingrid Reindell for having given conservation treatment to some metal objects from Solak-1, including the arrowhead SL.18.R4.04/A. The contents of the present article were jointly developed by all the authors; specifically, R. Dan wrote “The leaf-shaped arrowheads from Urartian and Urartian period sites” and “Historical implications of the presence of Urartian arrowheads in Hasanlu”, P. Vitolo wrote “Leaf-shaped arrowheads with wide stem and long tang from Assyria”, A. Cesaretti wrote “Size, morphology and typological subdivision of the leaf-shaped arrowheads from the Urartian site” and “Some morphological aspects of the Urartian arrowheads”, Z. Hadi Dastjerdi wrote “An Urartian arrowhead in Giricano tepe?”, A. Petrosyan wrote “The metal arrowheads discovered in Solak-1: Archaeological context and catalogue”. Introduction and Conclusions were written jointly by all authors.

² DAN, CESARETTI, BONFANTI 2021.

³ On the site, see: DAN, PETROSYAN 2017; PETROSYAN, DAN, VITOLO 2019; 2020, 212-216.



Fig. 3 - Solak-1/Varsak (KSP016). Aerial view from the north of Hill A, with Building A in the foreground and Building B immediately behind. In the background the profiles of the two volcanoes Gutanasar (on the right) and Hatis (on the left) (Kotayk Survey Project photo archive).

Armenia was dominated by the state of Bia/Urartu. A second phase in which the Urartian structure was reused and some of its architectural features were partially altered has been dated on the basis of the finds (pottery and architectural changes to the original complex) to what is commonly called the Late Iron Age, an era in which the first local dynasty of the Orontids ruled over these regions within the Achaemenid empire. A second building found on the same hill and named Building B has yielded evidence dated to the Iron Age, again with two main phases of occupation (Fig. 4). Compared to Building A, the interpretation of the older level presents some problems that can only be solved through future investigations. It is in fact a fortified polygonal building on whose external walls most of the arrowheads discussed in this contribution were found. The items have been interpreted as Urartian arrowheads, a circumstance that would suggest that they were evidence of the military action that led to the site's conquest at the time of Argišti I's advance towards the shores of Lake Sevan⁴. Another possible explanation of the presence

of Urartian arrowheads on the fortified outer perimeter of the building might be linked to a temporary withdrawal of the Urartians from those regions and an attempt of a reconquest, a historically sustainable possibility based on archaeological evidence from other sites in the region such as Erebuni⁵. Overall, from the Solak-1 excavations a total of thirteen arrowheads referable to three types have been found. Ten of these are attributable to the type described in this paper as "leaf-shaped arrowheads with wide stem and long tang" which are the only ones analysed specifically in this contribution. Arrowheads of this type, which have a clearly recognizable morphology, are generally considered to be typical Urartian⁶. In addition

⁴ On the historical events related to the Urartian conquest of the territories corresponding to modern-day Armenia, see SALVINI 2002; DAN *et alii* forthcoming 2.

⁵ On this, see DAN *et alii* forthcoming 2.

⁶ On this aspect, see the section "The leaf-shaped arrowheads from Urartian and Urartian period sites" below.

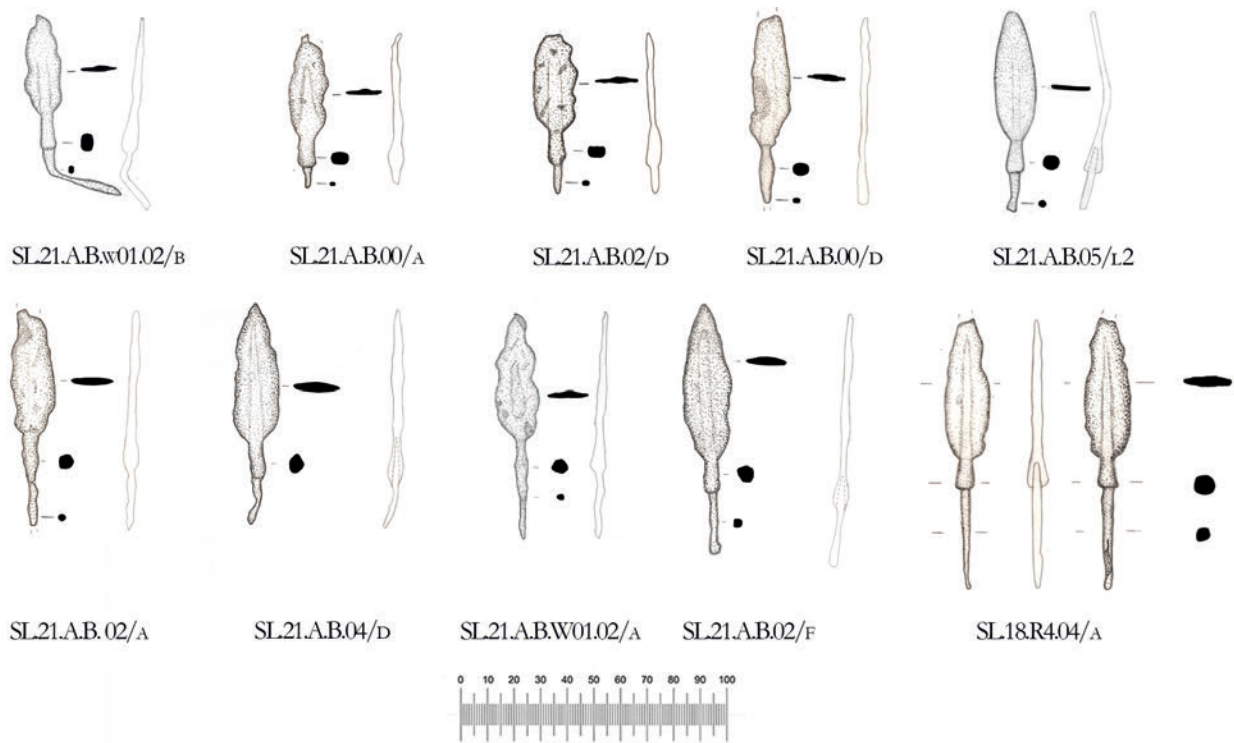


Fig. 7 - Solak-1/Varsak (KSP016). Drawings of the arrowheads (drawings by Z. Hadi Dastjerdi).



Fig. 8 - Microscopic views of the arrowhead SL.18.R4.04/a: A) remnants of wood on the tang; B) the graft point of the tang in the stem; C) the point where the stem attaches to the blade; D) detail of the tip of the broken blade.

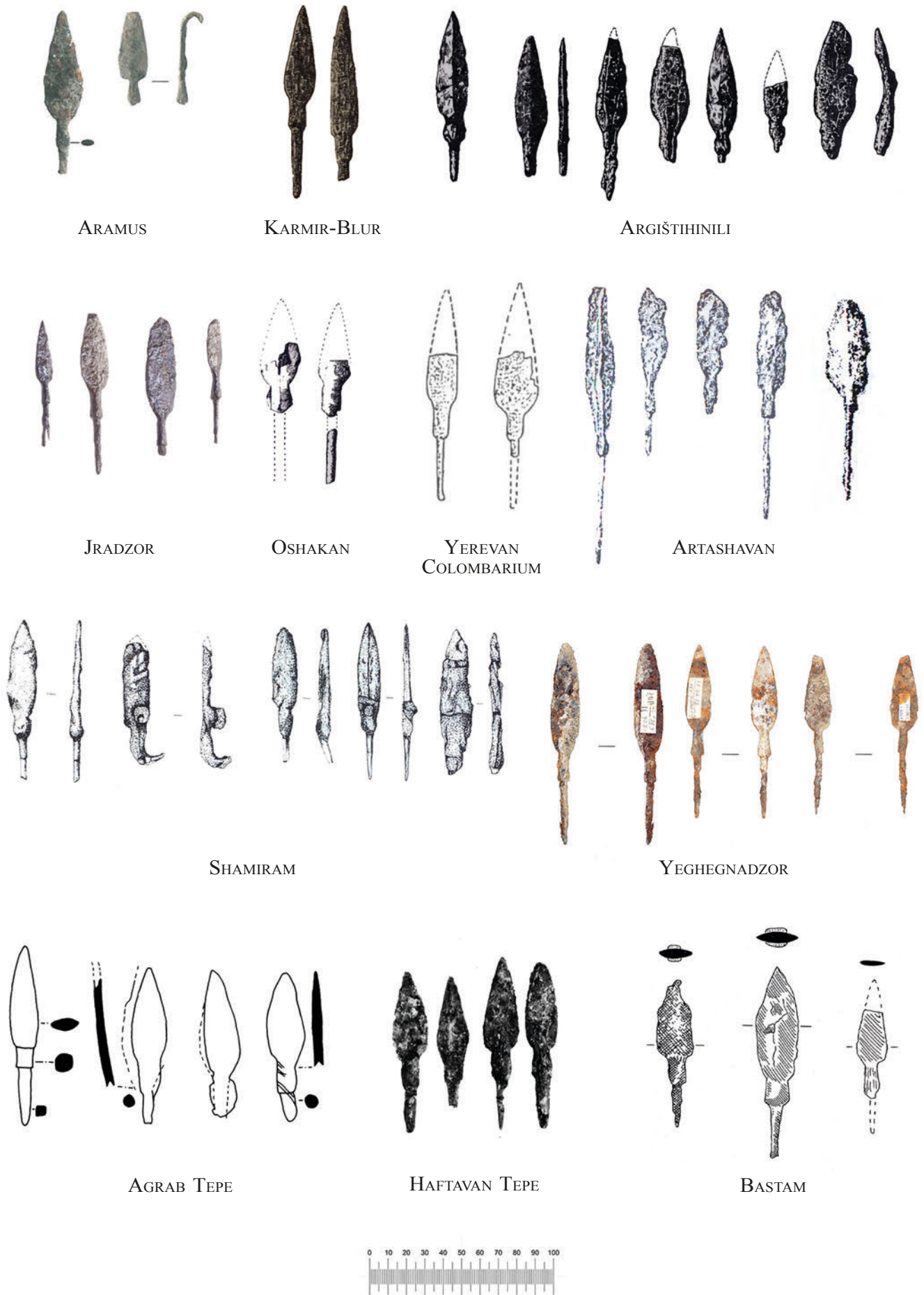


Fig. 13 - Iron arrowheads from the sites of Aramus (after HEINSCH, KUNTNER, AVETISYAN 2012, pl. XI.4-5), Karmir-blur (after PIOTROVSKIJ 1950, fig. 22), Argištihinili (after MARTIROSYAN 1974, fig. 896), Jradzor (after MAUERMANN 2017, 26, fig. 25), Oshakan (after ESAYAN, KALANTARIAN 1988, pl. LXIII.11-12), Yerevan Colombarium (after BISCIONE 1994, fig. 7.8-9), Shamiram (after AVETISYAN, AVETISYAN 2006, fig. 82), Artashavan (after AVETISYAN, AVETISYAN 2006, figs. 76.23, 79.2-4, 6), Yeghegnadzor (after DAN *et alii* forthcoming 1), Agrab Tepe (after MUSCARELLA 1973, 66), Haftavan Tepe (after BURNEY 1972, pl. VIIIb), Bastam (after KROLL 1979, pl. 9.5, 11.6, 16.4).

MARCO ROSSI
SEALS FROM TELL DEINIT (SYRIA)

ABSTRACT

This article deals with the seals found at Tell Deinit, a multiphase site in north-western Syria; twenty-one objects dated between the prehistoric and the late Achaemenid periods have been analyzed.

The group with oldest specimens consists of three stone seals found in the upper levels of the archaeological stratification of the site which have been attributed to the final part of the Neolithic period for their specific morphology and engraving style; a conical-shaped metal seal (engraved with zoomorphic image) and a small cylindrical seal of steatite (with traces of an anthropomorphic figurative scene) document the period between the final phase of the Bronze Age and the beginning of the Iron Age. Eleven seals were attributed to the central and final phase of the Iron Age, between the end of the 10th century and the first half of the 6th century, which were divided into three groups, the first with specimens engraved with a synthetic style, the second with button-shaped seals of international style and a third group consisting of Egyptian and Phoenician scarabs and a scaraboid. Three seals characterized by different morphologies, materials and engraving style are attributed to the Achaemenid period, between the end of the 6th century and the last third of the 4th century: a massive conoid-shaped seal made of glass and engraved in a synthetic style with linear cuts; a bronze ring with an oval bezel engraved with a hybrid creature; and a jar fragment with the seal impression of a rosette engraved in a naturalistic style.

The seals attributed to the oldest phases of the site were found out of their chronological original context, whereas the seals dated to the Iron Age and the Achaemenid period were linked to these chronological phases of the long history of the settlement excavated on the acropolis. The presence of non-local artisanal products highlighted a clear link between this internal trans-Orontic area and the coast, testifying that the local community of Tell Deinit had access to international trade passing through the Levant during the central and final phases of the Iron Age and in the Achaemenid period.

KEYWORDS

Stamp-seals; synthetic style; common style; international style; gabled seal; Egyptian and Phoenician scarabs; button-shaped seals; conoid-shaped glass seal; U-shaped bronze ring.

Tell Deinit is located a short distance from Idlib in northwestern Syria, in an internal area characterized by a limestone plateau cut by the Orontes river which, moving north, flows into the valley of Antioch (Fig. 1). The research at the site started in 1971 after the fortuitous find of a hidden hoard of Athenian tetradrachmas dated between the end of the 5th-beginning of the 4th century BC,¹ and was directed by dr. Shawqy Shaath until the suspension of the works in 1998.² In 2002-2004, an international cooperation program between the European Union and the General Directorate of Antiquities and Museums of the Syrian Arab Republic promoted a project (in collaboration with S. Mazzoni of the Pisa University and conducted by the A.) which enabled the preliminary analysis of the materials stored in the museum of Idlib, the first treatment and inventory of materials deposited in the house of the mission on the site, and led to field activities aimed at verifying the stratigraphy of the site.³ The research program continued until 2010 to complete the catalog, and create a digital database of the information acquired.⁴ These preliminary activities offered us a picture of discoveries distributed between the Neolithic and Islamic periods which characterize Tell Deinit as a multi-phase site.⁵ The excavations touched the stratigraphy of the site superficially, revealing just portions of the settlement of the most exposed archaeological phases (Fig. 2);⁶ the activities on the acropolis plateau have provided data for several phases from the Iron Age up to the Hellenistic and Roman period.⁷

While waiting for a final edition of the materials documented by the excavation, is here presented the study of a small number of objects already published in preliminary form by Dr. Sh. Shaath.⁸ The data relate to largely well-preserved seals found es-

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¹ SHAATH 1976; ROSSI 2019.

² SHAATH 1981/82; 1985; 2011.

³ MAZZONI 2007, 49-50; MAZZONI, ROSSI 2011.

⁴ MAZZONI 2011, 34-35; ROSSI 2021a, 13-19.

⁵ SHAATH 1981/82, 216-217, figs. 23-24; ROSSI 2007, 53-54.

⁶ ROSSI 2021a, 16.

⁷ SHAATH 1981/82, 216-217; 1985.

⁸ SHAATH 1986/87. The seals were first labeled on the site according to the general inventory of findings of the mission and a second label was then provided when delivered to the Museum of Idlib following the general register of the Museum.

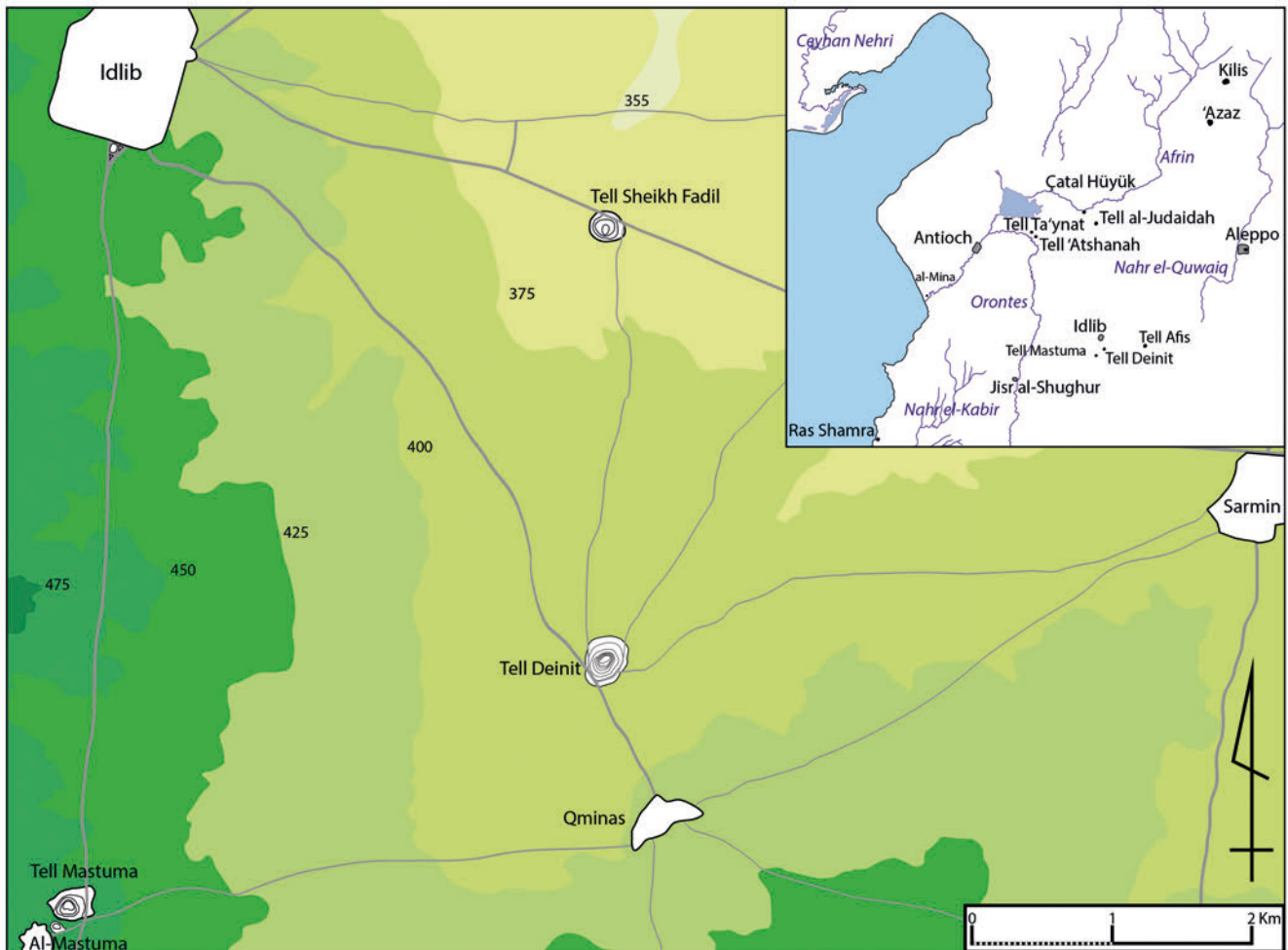


Fig. 1 - Map of part of the Idlib district.

pecially during excavations in the sector A on the site acropolis,⁹ and are presented according to the chronological development of the phases to which the artefacts have been attributed, through a – discontinuous – succession from the prehistoric period until the Achaemenid period.

Catalogue

1- TD 76.A.80 (Idlib Museum Inv. N° 2256)

Context: Sector A, square C3, lev. I; dimensions: h. 0.7; l. 2.4; w. 1.3; preliminary edition: seal n. 14 (TD 76.80) in SHAATH 1986/87, 38-39, drawing on page 43, picture on page 46: bottom first.

Stamp seal made of a limestone pebble in the shape of a half-disc of which three consecutive faces show a geometric design engraved with linear grooves (Fig. 3); a flat face of the seal has an irregular semicircular shape perimeter, and has five deep parallel grooves engraved in the field and arranged orthogonal to the base of the semicircle, two thin incisions are visible

in the remaining portion of the surface near a chip; the consecutive face of the seal towards the right (starting from the first face described) corresponds to the curved profile of the disc, and shows four parallel grooves clearly engraved on the irregular surface of the pebble; the consecutive face to the left (always starting from the first face described) corresponds instead to the flat profile of the half-disc, and shows a regular surface with an elongated rectangular shape in which a grid pattern with orthogonal crossing of parallel lines is engraved.

2- TD 76.A.50 (Idlib Museum Inv. N° 2254)

Context: Sector A, square B2, lev. I; dimensions: h. 1; l. 1.7; w. 1.3; hole diam. 0.3; preliminary edition: seal n. 7 (TD 76.5) in SHAATH 1986/87, 37, drawing on page 42, picture on page 45: third from above.

⁹ The findspot of the objects has been confirmed by the written indications kept with or marked on the finds.



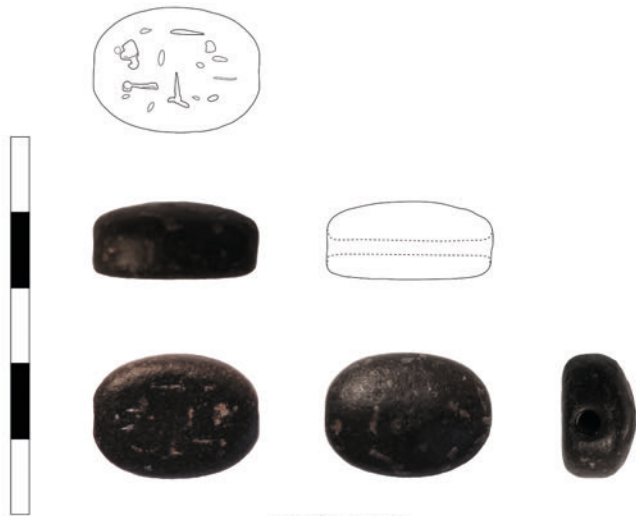
TD 76.A.83

Fig. 11 - Seal n. 9 (TD 76.A.83).



TD 72.A.45

Fig. 12 - Seal n. 10 (TD 72.A.45).



TD 76.A.104

Fig. 13 - Seal n. 11 (TD 76.A.104).



TD 76.A.120

Fig. 14 - Seal n. 12 (TD 76.A.120).



TD 72.A.162

Fig. 15 - Seal n. 13 (TD 72.A.162).



TD 76.A.122

Fig. 16 - Seal n. 14 (TD 76.A.122).

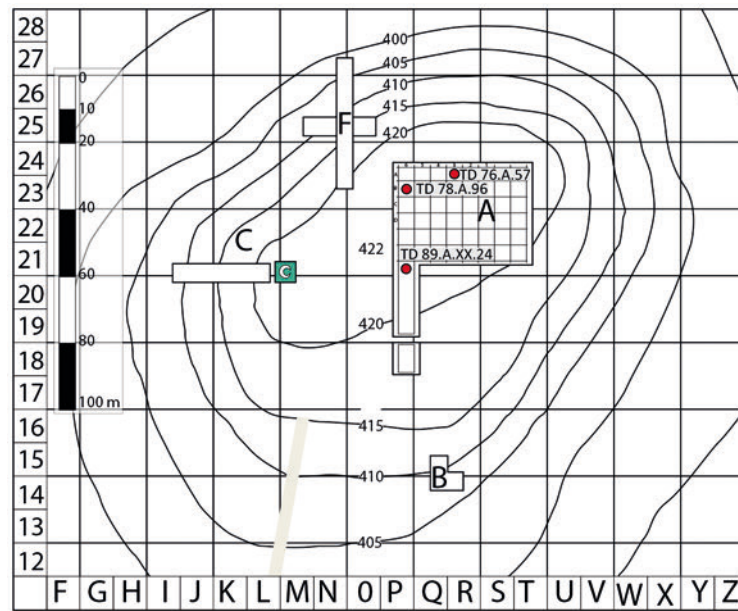


Fig. 29 - Detail of the plan with the location of the discovery of TD 76.A.57, TD 78.A.96, TD 89.A.XX.24.

The scarab n. 14 documents the figurative motif of the open hand (TD 76.A.122, Fig. 16), a traditional Egyptian symbol which finds iconographic and morphological comparisons with scarabs of the Cairo Museum dated to the XIX dynasty (late 14th-early 12th century BC).¹³⁰ The hypothesis of a symbolic interpretation of this image seems to be confirmed by its presence among the “enhancement” figures engraved on the scarabs,¹³¹ or counted among the amulets made of various materials;¹³² in particular among the latter there are specimens with the limb depicted open, documented in Egypt,¹³³ and in the southern Levant.¹³⁴ The iconographic motif of the open hand finds comparison in the East with a scarab of the British Museum,¹³⁵ coming from Amrit on the Phoenician coast, and attributed to an Iron Age production which evokes the Ramesside scarabs.¹³⁶ The image also appears on specimens from the Palestinian area, such as one scarab found at Shechem in an archaeological level of the 9th century BC,¹³⁷ and a specimen from the Jerusalem antiques market which is attributed to the Ramesside age for the comparison with the already cited scarabs from Egypt.¹³⁸ Another precise comparison is provided by a steatite scarab found in the Mesopotamian area during the Ur excavations,¹³⁹ and reasonably attributed to an Egyptian Iron Age production;¹⁴⁰ whereas for a simple thematic comparison can also be considered few specimens of indefinite provenience kept in public¹⁴¹ and private¹⁴² collections. This small number of scarabs has given rise to an in-depth study of the particular iconographic motif in the hypothetical attempt to bring the image back to a Near-Eastern iconographic tradition.¹⁴³ Anthropomorphism referring to divinity is a very popu-

lar topic in the biblical studies,¹⁴⁴ and the symbolism of the hand, depicted singly or in pairs,¹⁴⁵ is associated with the divine “strength, action, protection and blessing”.¹⁴⁶ But about this hypothesis it is necessary to objectively consider that the attribution of the production of these scarabs to an Egyptian origin only

¹³⁰ NEWBERRY 1907, 88, 288, pl. XIV: 36350, 37149.

¹³¹ REISNER 1958, 18, pl. IV: 12667.

¹³² Specimens from Egypt in PETRIE 1914, 11, pl. I: 11 a-g; carnelian specimens in ANDREWS 1994, figs. 67, 74-d; hand-amulets in the superstitious gesture with the thumb between the fingers in REISNER 1907, 119-120, nos. 12115-12119, pl. IX: 12115-12116.

¹³³ REISNER 1907, 118-119, nos. 12111-12114, pl. IX: 12111-12113.

¹³⁴ The various amulets with distribution map in HERRMANN 2016, 246; the type 3.3 consists of open hand amulets, 247-248, nos. 645-748; the type 3.4 of hand amulets with closed fist, 248, n. 649, pl. XXXIV: 155-156; the type 3.5 of hand amulets with propitiatory gesture, 248, n. 650.

¹³⁵ British Museum number: E48220; Registration number: 1884, 0714.206.

¹³⁶ GIVEON 1985, 154, cat. 59 from Amrit.

¹³⁷ HORN 1966, 54-55, fig. 1: 53, pl. VI: 53.

¹³⁸ KEEL 2020, 184, fig. 436.

¹³⁹ British Museum number: 118706; Registration number: 1927,0527.203; Ur excavation number: U.7065.

¹⁴⁰ GIVEON 1985, 154.

¹⁴¹ One scarab of the Basel Museum in *ibidem*, 154; HORNUNG, STAEHELIN 1976, 124-125, 349, n. 804.

¹⁴² HORN 1966, 54, fig. 2.

¹⁴³ *Ibidem*, 54-55.

¹⁴⁴ SCHROER, STAUBLI 1998.

¹⁴⁵ SCHROER 1983; MITTMANN 1997; CORNELIUS 2017, 216-224.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, 226-227.

MICHELE MINARDI*

“PERSIAN RIDERS” ON A POST-ACHAEMENID TERRACOTTA MOULD FROM THE BHIR MOUND, TAXILA

ABSTRACT

This article examines the iconography and the style of a fragmentary terracotta mould unearthed in the early 2000s by a Pakistani archaeological team in a post-Mauryan context at the site of the Bhir Mound, Taxila. The mould bears the impression of two mounted horsemen galloping during a hunt or a fight. Their well-defined attributes, such as their attire and the trappings of their horses, indicate that these characters were undoubtedly meant to illustrate Achaemenid Persian riders. The object, by its very nature crafted to copy or replicate a prototype through a cast, is discussed in context considering the historical implications that it conveys. It is here argued that its “anachronistic” imagery, not isolated as one may think, may be evidence of the persistence of formal elements from Achaemenid times in the northwest region of India between the 2nd and 1st centuries BC, a long time after the empire’s demise.

KEYWORDS

Achaemenid Empire; Persian riders; transmission of iconographies; artistic legacy; Central Asia; north-west India; Taxila; the Bhir Mound.

Introduction

During a recent visit to the Taxila Museum, I had the chance to take a closer look at a fragment of a relatively small terracotta mould (~ 9.4 x 6.9 cm) published by M. Bahadar Khan and his associates in 2002. The item was discovered at the site of the Bhir Mound, the place considered by some to have been the earliest of the settlements of Taxila.¹ The mould, as it is preserved, and despite the incorrect description of it that appeared in the original publication,² clearly bears the depiction of two archers mounted on galloping horses (Figs. 1-2). As we shall see, the outstanding characteristic of this representation is that the riders seem to be characterized as Achaemenids/Persians (from the point of view of identity and/or status); moreover, for the first time, this kind of iconography, which is much better known in the imagery of the Achaemenid west, is found in India, remarkably in a post-Achaemenid archaeological context.

The mould under scrutiny was found in a “layer 6” of one of the forty-two 5 x 5 m squares opened in the “Stadium Area” (so named because the area used

to be a sports ground) of the site of the Bhir Mound.³ This area was not chosen for what some colleagues term “vertical excavation”.⁴ Consequently, the *layers* identified in its squares were assigned to the “occupational periods” IV and V of the reconstructed chronological sequence on the basis of two other deep soundings carried out in the northeastern part of the same site (Fig. 3).⁵ These “occupational periods” (henceforth, periods) have been recognised as corresponding to the most recent archaeological phases of the Bhir Mound. According to the authors of the report, such periods in the Stadium Area were “very difficult to distinguish them from one another [sic]”.⁶

Although Period IV is dated by Bahadar Khan *et alii* as being between the 3rd and the 2nd centuries BC (300 to 200 BC), so well into the Mauryan age (for Taxila very possibly 303 to 190 BC),⁷ the more recent

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¹ BAHADAR KHAN *et alii* 2002, 24-28 with references to the previous excavations at the site (MARSHALL 1951a-c; SHARIF 1968). Cf. CALLIERI forthcoming, who proposed the Hathial ridge as the possible original Achaemenid settlement of Taxila.

² “A terracotta mould depicting a warrior holding a sword in his right hand, riding on a charging horse. The warrior is wearing an [sic] helmet and armor. Another warrior is seen, riding on another horse, parallel to the first warrior” (BAHADAR KHAN *et alii* 2002, 177).

³ *Ibidem*. No stratigraphic sections relative to the archaeological work done in the “Stadium Area” are published.

⁴ In other words, the excavation in the Stadium Area was limited to the clearance of some of the most recent structural remains encountered during the work and it did not reach the most ancient stratigraphic units (and eventually bedrock).

⁵ BAHADAR KHAN *et alii* 2002, sections illustrated at p. 30, fig. 2, and 38-39, figs. 4-5. In the drawing of the section of the area “AQ & AR” (*ibidem*, 30), layer 7 is erroneously marked as belonging to Period III (in the whole excavation report this layer is said to belong to Period IV along with nos. 6 and 5). But layer 7 seems actually the topmost layer (although not the topmost stratigraphic unit, as layer 6 overlays a structure built over layer 7) of the preceding Period III, which is overlaid by layer 6, and already contained a Mauryan coin (*ibidem*, 206-207, pl. XXIII).

⁶ BAHADAR KHAN *et alii* 2002, 51-52. Cf. MARSHALL 1951a, 87, who wrote that there were “overlappings in the buildings of strata II and III”.

⁷ Taxila before Alexander entered India (326 BC) was already an important centre of Asia that, under the Achaemenids, was quite possibly the capital city of an Indian district under their control (CALLIERI forthcoming with references). Seleucus



Fig. 4 - “Oxus Treasure”. Detail of an embossed silver disk with hunting Persian riders (©British Museum).



Fig. 5 - Sidon. Detail of a Persian sculpted on the so-called Alexander Sarcophagus (Istanbul Archaeological Museums, author’s photo).



Fig. 6 - Scaraboid seals, said to be from Mesopotamia (©British Museum).



Fig. 7 - Detail of the Çan sarcophagus (Çanakkale Museum of Troy, Creative Commons).

CRISTINA TONGHINI*

AN EARLY ISLAMIC POTTERY ASSEMBLAGE
FROM GIR-E GOMEL, KURDISTAN (IRAQ)

ABSTRACT

This article presents and discusses an assemblage of Early Islamic pottery excavated at the site of Gir-e Gomel, in Iraqi Kurdistan. The thorough publication of a corpus of pottery from a well-defined chronological horizon aims to contribute to a better understanding of the ceramic types used in the northern regions of the Early Islamic caliphate, and to the identification of regional patterns of circulation and consumption.

KEYWORDS

Early Islamic pottery; Early Abbasid pottery; Early Islamic Iraq; Islamic archaeology.

Introduction

Our knowledge of Early Islamic pottery has been greatly expanded by research activities in Bilad al-Sham, Jazira and Iraq conducted in the last few decades. However, a detailed framework of reference has yet to be formulated, especially with regard to the northernmost regions. In particular, as far as the area between the Tigris valley in the Mosul region and the Greater Zab plains is concerned, there is a scarcity of stratified reference corpora. Recent studies have shown how regionalism is an important feature of the material culture of the Islamic period, and how the search for parallels within the better known assemblages of southern Bilad al-Sham can be misleading when dealing with assemblages from the northern areas.¹ The present work aims to contribute to a better definition of the ceramic types used in these northern regions in the Early Islamic period with a thorough publication of a ceramic corpus from a well-defined chronological horizon that emerged from the recent excavation campaigns at the site of Gir-e Gomel, in Iraqi Kurdistan. A partial study of these ceramic finds has already appeared in a joint article on the results of the whole excavation project,² while here the entire assemblage pertaining to the Early Islamic period is presented and discussed.

*The site and its occupation history*³

The site of Gir-i Gomel is located on the eastern bank of the River Gomel, in the heart of the Navkur

plain, in the north-eastern part of Iraqi Kurdistan. It consists of a small mound (1.4 ha, height 38 m) surrounded by lower formations (height 10-15 m) to the north, east and south, covering an area of 30 ha (Figs. 1-2). Today a village occupies part of the much larger ancient settlement, with scattered houses that have been built over the last twenty years. The development of the site in its long history was related to its strategic position at the river crossing point, part of the communication network connecting the Erbil plain with the Greater Zab Valley, the Navkur and Duhok plains and the Tigris Valley.

The long occupation history of Gomel stretches from the Late Chalcolithic (5th-4th millennium BC) to the Late Islamic period, with peaks in the mid-late 3rd millennium and in the Middle Bronze Age; it is especially in these two periods that the site must have played a central role in the context of the fertile and strategically positioned Navkur plain.⁴

Any attempt to reconstruct the history of the site in the Islamic period will have to cope with the fact that there is a marked dearth of written documentation. The site may have maintained (or recovered) a significant role in the area from pre-Islamic occupation, as it is mentioned as the seat of two Jacobite bishops of the Marga region: Ithalaha, who was appointed in the year 629 (and was thus perhaps still in charge at the time of the Arab conquest), and Bar Hadhbshabba, who was active in the year 818.⁵ In this early period a bridge very likely spanned the river, but this had disappeared by the 13th century, as reported by the renowned geographical work of Yaqut al-Hamawi;⁶ Bar Haebreus, writing in the 13th century, still refers

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¹ MÜLLER-WIENER 2017; WALMSLEY 2000, 326. In the present study, *comparanda* is provided with assemblages from the area between eastern Khabur and Greater Zab, from other major sites in the south, such as 'Ana, and with Tell Aswad, Raqqa, in consideration of its major role as a (transregional?) pottery production centre.

² MORANDI BONACOSSO *et alii* 2018.

³ For a detailed description of the site, its geographical context, its occupation history and for an in-depth presentation of the research project and its results see *ibidem*.

⁴ *Ibidem*, 69-75, and Tab. 1.

⁵ FIEY 1965, I, 230-231; HONIGMANN 1954, 97.

⁶ MELKÇAK forthcoming.

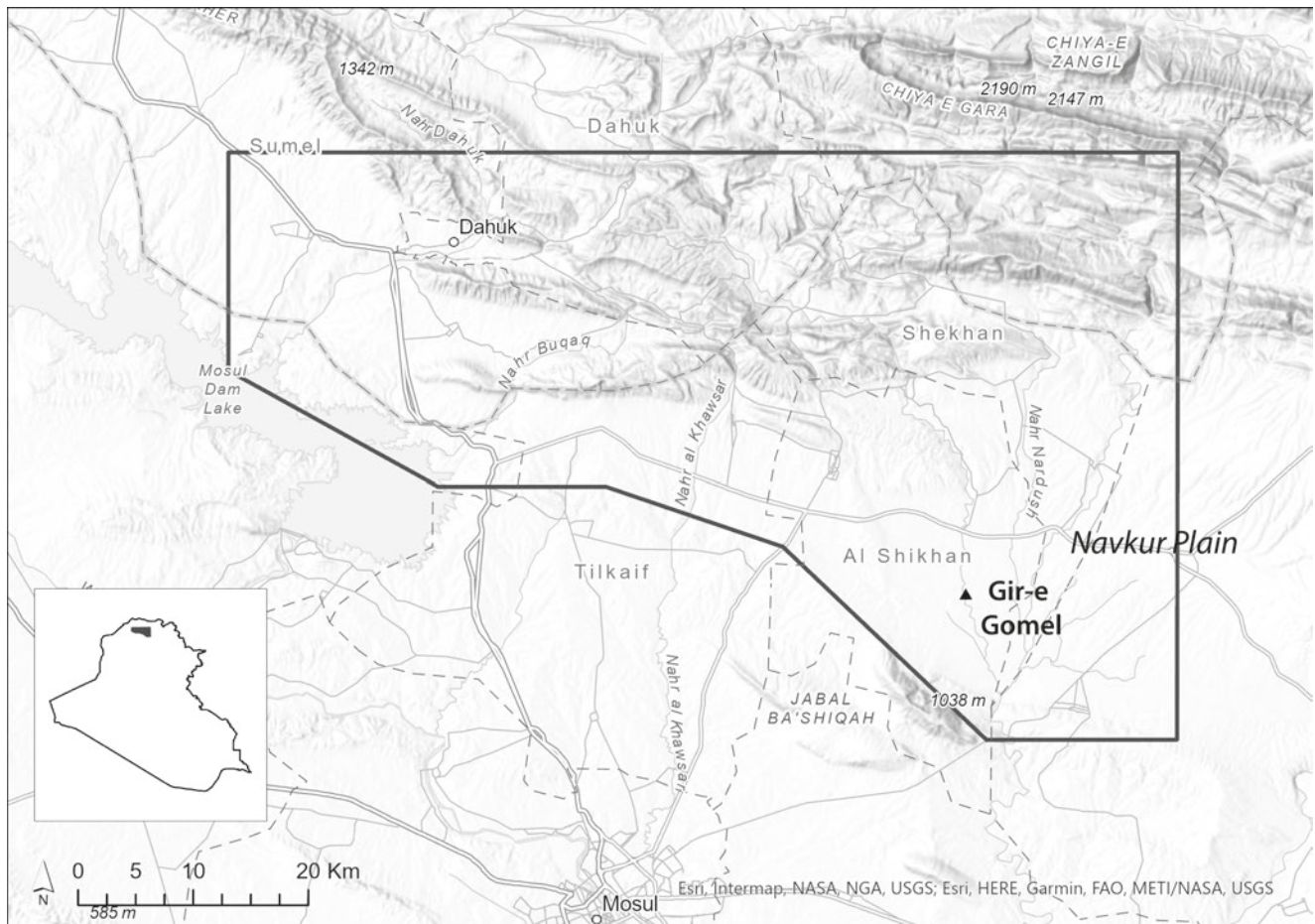


Fig. 1 - Location of Gir-i Gomel and the area of the LoNAP survey in northern Iraqi Kurdistan (F. Simi)

to the site as a town.⁷ It is not mentioned in the rich documentation of the Ottoman period, indicating that its central role in the region may have come to an end earlier on.⁸

As to the archaeological evidence, the survey carried out by the *Land of Nineveh Archaeological Project* (LoNAP) makes it possible to draw a more comprehensive picture. Surface finds testify to a continuous occupation, at least in broad terms, with evidence pertaining to the Early Islamic period (7th-10th c.), the Middle Islamic period (11th-15th c.), and the Late Islamic period (16th-19th c.).⁹ It should certainly be noted that our understanding of the material culture of the area is very limited, especially in relation to certain periods, such as the second part of the Middle Islamic (second half of the 13th-15th c.) and the whole Late Islamic period.¹⁰ However, the quantity and the quality of the material recovered in relation to the Early Islamic period and to the first part of the Middle Islamic period testify to intensive occupation with an urban character, and reveal that the settlement was still well connected with the rest of the region.¹¹ As far as the Early Islamic period

is concerned, the picture derived from study of the surface collection was confirmed in part by examination of the finds retrieved in the course of the Gir-e Gomel excavation campaign, as will be discussed in the present work.

The Islamic period in the light of the excavations

Archaeological excavations at Gir-e Gomel started with the opening of exploratory trenches in 2012-2013, in the framework of LoNAP. In 2017, with the establishment of *The Kurdish-Italian Gir-e Gomel*

⁷ FIEY 1965, 230.

⁸ USTA forthcoming.

⁹ TONGHINI, VEZZOLI 2020. For the LoNAP project see in particular MORANDI, IAMONI 2015.

¹⁰ MORANDI BONACOSSO *et alii* 2018, note 21; TONGHINI, VEZZOLI 2020; MORANDI BONACOSSO, TONGHINI forthcoming.

¹¹ For the pottery see TONGHINI (Early Islamic period) and VEZZOLI (Middle Islamic period) in MORANDI BONACOSSO, TONGHINI, forthcoming.



Figs. 7-7b - W6: unglazed light buff ware (Photo: LoNAP; drawing: E. Girotto).

with regular “honeycomb” impressions that cover the whole surface of the vessels, and “smeared ware,” with finger impressions that create decorative patterns such as wavy bands. The first appears in the Early Islamic period only, while the second is also found in the Sassanian period.²⁷ Such a distinction is rarely adopted in publications, and both types are discussed as a single one in most cases;²⁸ in fact, smeared bands, cellular impressions that recall *Honeycomb* patterns and “true” *Honeycombed* patterns may be present on the same vessel, as illustrated by some jars excavated at Tell Tuneinir, east of the Khabur River.²⁹ In the case of small sherds, therefore, a distinction is probably meaningless; nevertheless we preferred to adopt the more neutral *smeared decoration* term at Gomel, W4SD. Four sherds of this kind were found; two come from the dumping pits US 257 and 318 (sherds 257.33 and 318.49, not illustrated), two others, probably pertaining to the same vessel, were recovered from an exterior surface (Figs. 8.2-3); here cellular patterns are created by finger smearing, but they do not show the regularity of “true” *Honeycomb ware*.

The absence of evidence for a Sassanian occupation at Gomel confirms an attribution to the Early Islamic period, as is probably the case at other sites.³⁰ The

²⁷ SIMPSON 1996, 100. See ADAMS 1981, 234, for a description of the various patterns. KENNET 2004, 80, for dating evidence of “true” *Honeycomb ware* from a number of sites: this type can be ascribed to the late-7th and 8th centuries, with evidence for continuity in the 9th century.

²⁸ MÜLLER-WIENER 2016; 2017, 49-50, with discussion of dating evidence and distribution, without a distinction between “true” *Honeycombed ware* and “smeared ware.”

²⁹ FULLER, FULLER *undated*, Tell Tuneinir website, area 10.

³⁰ MÜLLER-WIENER 2017, 49-50. Examples from stratified contexts in the area are extremely rare. ‘Ana: NORTHEDGE, BAMBER, ROAF 1988, pl. 38, 18 (Late Sassanian and Umayyad pottery group). Raqqa, Tell Aswad: MIGLUS, STEPNIOWSKI 1999, pl. 76, I and J (dated to the early occupation of the site, i.e., 796-808, MIGLUS, STEPNIOWSKI 1999, 24). Rusafa: MÜLLER-WIENER 2016, 414-415, fig. 1 (8th century). For reference material from surveys in the northern regions: WILKINSON, TUCKER 1995, pl. 77, 18-19 (Sassanian-Early Islamic group); UR 2010, 293, Type T16/10, Period 16, “Sassanian-Early Islamic.”

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‘AQAR QŪF (ANCIENT DŪR-KURIGALZU) IN EARLY ARAB, AND PRE-1700 OTTOMAN SOURCES

ABSTRACT

‘Aqar qūf is the post-ancient world name for the ancient site of Dūr-Kurigalzu (founded by the Kassite king, Kurigalzu I, ca. 1400 BCE). This paper presents a review of the written and limited archaeological evidence for ‘Aqar qūf from 539 BCE until the end of the 17th century. The records of western travelers after this period are not examined as they have been reviewed elsewhere. The core of the paper is the written work of 29 different scholars (26 Arabic and 3 Ottoman) drawing on works dated to between the late Sāsānid period and the end of the 17th century. The studies of these scholars provide evidence for a complex set of associations that existed between ‘Aqar qūf and a range of issues. Early Islamic studies, drawing on earlier source material, ascribe a pre-Islamic past to ‘Aqar qūf, including the naming of the site, the origins of garlic cultivation in Mesopotamia, and a link to Nimrūd. ‘Aqar qūf features in an early eschatological work that remains relevant in extremist Islamic circles today. Located just to the west of Bahgdād, ‘Aqar qūf appears in numerous early Islamic histories detailing events, mainly military, that took place there. There are descriptions of the ruins at the site, and in one instance a recollection of a rest taken in the shadow of the ziggurat ruin. The site features in a poem, and even in a joke at the expense of the Byzantine emperors. In the Ottoman period ‘Aqar qūf was described by Evliyâ Çelebi and features on two maps with small drawings of a building in one case and the ziggurat ruin in another. The scant archaeological evidence for activity at the site demonstrates that there was occupation at ‘Aqar qūf at various points between the 8th and 17th centuries. In summary the study demonstrates the complex metamorphosis of an ancient site as its original purpose is lost and new uses of, and associations with, it are made.

KEYWORDS

‘Aqar qūf; Dūr-Kurigalzu; Sāsānid; Nabatean; early Islamic history; eschatology; Nimrūd; Ottoman maps.

Introduction

The ruins at ‘Aqar qūf, 30 kms to the west of Bahgdād, are the site of ancient Dūr-Kurigalzu founded in the early 14th century BCE during the Kassite

Period. The site remained in continuous occupation for nine centuries until at least the Persian conquest of Babylonia in 539 BCE. At some point after 539 BCE the ancient focus of the site – the worship of some of the major deities of the Babylonian pantheon centred on the ziggurat and temple complex – ceased.

In the centuries following the 6th century BCE, intermittent activity occurred at ‘Aqar qūf. The nature of the activity changed, and the archaeological evidence is less dramatic than for the ancient period. However, a relatively rich set of textual references exist, predominately from the early Arabic period, which provide glimpses of events at the site, and of the traditions and beliefs with which it became associated. Ottoman sources from the 17th century provide not only a written description of the site, but two maps showing its location and illustrations of structures at ‘Aqar qūf.

This paper reviews the available body of written material (detailed in Appendix A) and limited archaeological evidence for ‘Aqar qūf from 539 BCE until the end of the seventeenth century. From the 16th century on, there are an increasing number of western traveller accounts of the site (not included in this discussion).

Background

The ancient site of Dūr-Kurigalzu, consisted of city walls, a palace, housing, and a temple complex including a ziggurat. It has been under near continual excavation or restoration since 1943.¹ Situated on the shortest route between the rivers Euphrates and Tigris, and in the unrelievedly flat landscape of central and southern Iraq, the ruin of the ziggurat, still 57m high, is an enduring landmark. Some western travellers from the 16th century onwards mis-identified

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¹ CLAYDEN 2017.



Fig. 4 - The north-west wall of a temple court-yard east of the ziggurat at ‘Aqar qūf. The depth of deposit above the brick wall of the ancient structure can be seen (photograph Tim Clayden, 1985).

The archaeology of post-ancient occupation at ‘Aqar qūf

The textual sources refer to, or depict, settlement at ‘Aqar qūf in the Sāsānid (A.13) and early Islamic (A.4) periods, the 12th/13th centuries (A.17, A.21 and A.22), and in the 17th century (A.28).

The excavated material has yet to be fully published. However, the first two seasons of work at the site – when the upper most stratigraphy of the remains was first examined in the temple area – did expose post-ancient occupation. Baqir noted that the excavations revealed a ‘deep accumulation of Islamic debris, beneath which their ruins (i.e., ancient Babylonian) are buried, [which] testifies to the long Arab occupation of the site after their disappearance’ (see Fig. 4).⁶⁰

Subsequent reports, all very brief, refer to remains and activity at the site dating to the ‘Achaemenid’,⁶¹ ‘Abbasid’,⁶² ‘Ilkhanid’,⁶³ ‘Islamic’,⁶⁴ and ‘late Islamic’⁶⁵ periods.

Moulded mud-brick elements of a disassembled life-size cultic frieze of the late Kassite period, were found in a secondary and utilitarian context in one of

the temple courtyards.⁶⁶ The use of the bricks and the context suggest that the original religious significance of both elements had lapsed. We might conclude that this might be evidence for post-ancient Babylonian occupation at the site – but not very much later as mud-brick walls decay relatively swiftly.

Private houses dated to the Achaemenid period, consisting of rooms about a courtyard built of unbaked bricks, were found adjacent to the ziggurat.⁶⁷ The foundations included bricks, including some baked bricks bearing inscriptions of Kurigalzu I, taken from the fabric and exterior of the ziggurat.⁶⁸ The buildings and remains were dated to the Achaemenid

⁶⁰ BAQIR 1944, 11.

⁶¹ BAQIR 1959, 3; SALMAN 1969, e-f; AL-JUMAILLY 1971, 84 and fig. 32.

⁶² DAMERJI 1981, 17; RIDHA 1984; GULLINI 1986, 133.

⁶³ DAMERJI 1981, 17.

⁶⁴ SALMAN 1969, e-f; ROAF, POSTGATE 1981, 172.

⁶⁵ AL-JUMAILLY 1971, 83 and fig. 32.

⁶⁶ CLAYDEN 2000.

⁶⁷ AL-TIKRITI 1970, 75-76 and fig. 3.

⁶⁸ *Ibidem*.