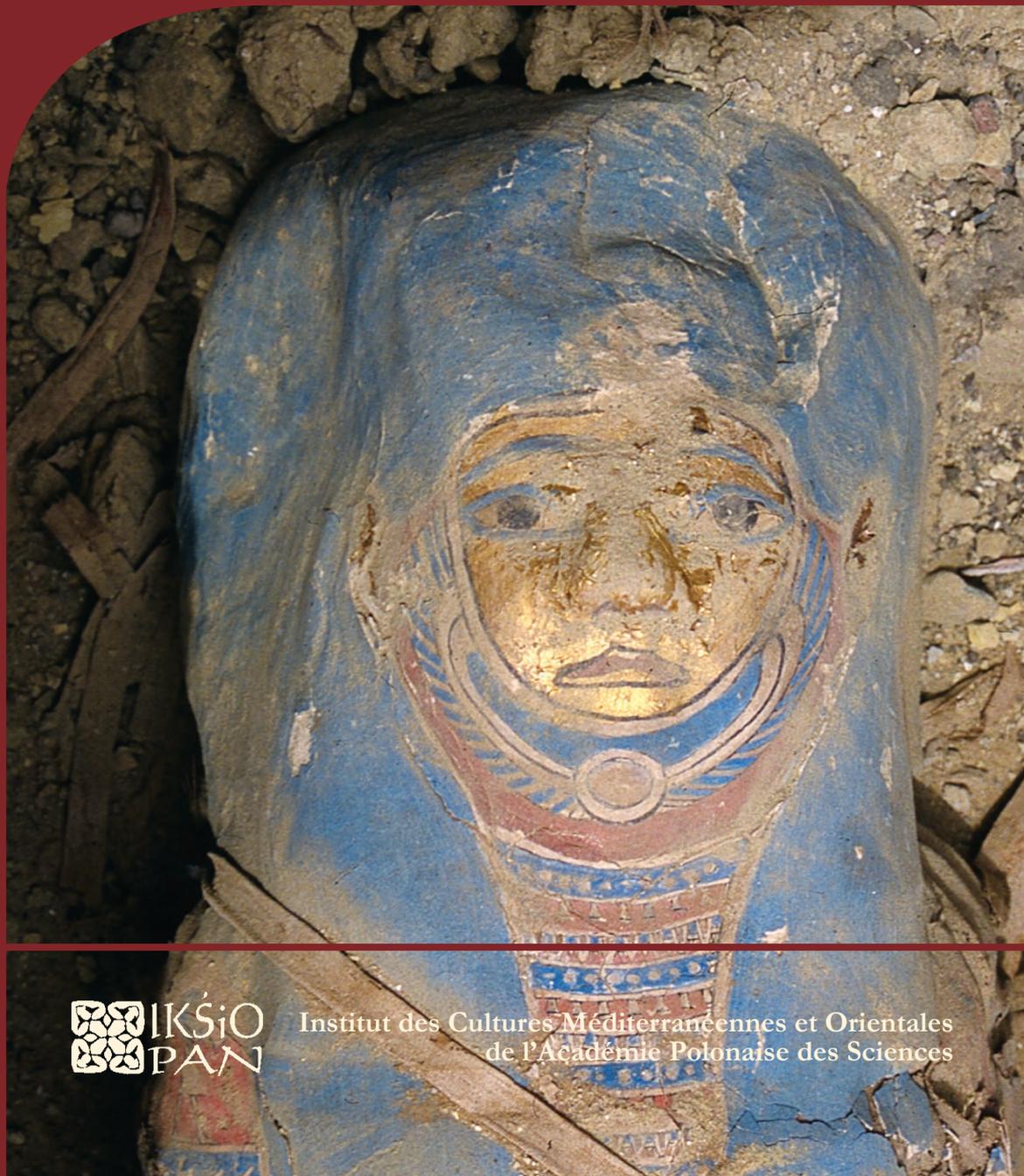


ÉTUDES et TRAVAUX

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de l'Académie Polonaise des Sciences

ÉTUDES et TRAVAUX
XXIX

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DE L'ACADÉMIE POLONAISE DES SCIENCES

ÉTUDES et TRAVAUX

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Exposition « Fouilles égyptiennes » au Musée National de Varsovie, 1937

LIDIA AMBROZIAK

Abstract: The University of Warsaw started the Polish-French excavations in Edfu (Egypt) under the agreement concluded in 1936 with the French Institute for Oriental Archaeology in Cairo. The numerous artifacts found during the first archaeological season at the site in 1937 were split between Egypt, France and Poland, while the last received the highest proportion of the findings (*c.* 2000 objects). After being transported to the National Museum in Warsaw the most interesting artifacts from Edfu were presented on an exhibition opened the same year. The exhibition attracted *c.* 60 thousand visitors within two months. As a result, the Gallery of Ancient Art – the first permanent exhibition of the heritage of ancient civilizations in Poland – was created in 1938. The Gallery was housed in the newly opened building of the National Museum in Warsaw. Professor Kazimierz Michałowski, one of the members of the archaeological team working in Edfu and the creator of the ‘Polish school of the Mediterranean archaeology’, was appointed its first curator.

Keywords: Polish excavations in Egypt, Edfu, archaeological exhibition, Kazimierz Michałowski, National Museum in Warsaw

English title: Exhibition ‘Egyptian Excavations’ at the National Museum in Warsaw, 1937

Lidia Ambroziak, Katedra Antropologii i Archeologii, Akademia Humanistyczna im. Aleksandra Gieysztora, Pułtusk; *lili542@wp.pl*

L'Égypte était un lieu d'explorations et de recherches depuis des siècles. En Europe, cet engouement pour les explorations des antiquités égyptiennes remontait à l'époque napoléonienne¹. Pour des raisons de dépendance de la Pologne durant plus d'une centaine d'années, celle-ci ne pouvait s'engager que tardivement sur ce terrain de recherche. Le principal initiateur et réalisateur des fouilles polonaises, était l'archéologue et professeur à l'Université Józef Piłsudski de Varsovie, Kazimierz Michałowski. Cet éminent scientifique a bien compris le double intérêt de prendre une part active dans les fouilles archéologiques

¹ Solé 2006.



1. Les participants de la première campagne de fouilles franco-polonaises à Edfou, devant la maison sur le site (auteur du photo inconnu © IKŚiO PAN).

en Égypte : le premier était évidemment d'ordre scientifique, le second était de signification plus vaste : de consolider la position de la Pologne, du nouveau indépendante, sur le plan européen. En outre, existait aussi un troisième objectif, pratique et immédiat : celui d'enrichir la modeste alors collection du Musée National de Varsovie au prix de faible apport financier². Pour atteindre cet objectif, Kazimierz Michałowski a fait appel aux contacts qu'il avait établi dans les années 20 lors de fouilles en Grèce à Thasos et à Delos, certains de ces chercheurs travaillant alors à l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale du Caire (p. ex. Pierre Devambez). Grâce à sa détermination, il a ouvert la voie à la signature, en 1936, d'un contrat de coopération directe entre la Pologne et la France sur le territoire égyptien, qui accordait des concessions de fouilles après 1913 uniquement à des institutions connues et ayant une bonne expertise scientifique. En résultat un contrat de collaboration entre le Recteur de l'université de Varsovie (en accord avec le ministère des Affaires Religieuses et de l'Éducation Nationale) et le Directeur de l'Institut français du Caire fut signé. Pour les jeunes archéologues, historiens, philologues et orientalistes de Varsovie se fut l'occasion d'acquérir de nouvelles compétences techniques en matière de fouilles en tant qu'« attachés étrangers » auprès de l'Institut français du Caire. Ce contrat prévoyait de plus la conduite conjointe des fouilles en Égypte et le partage des objets découverts entre les deux pays, avec l'approbation des services archéologiques égyptiens (Service des antiquités de l'Égypte) évidemment³.

² Michałowski 1957: 193.

³ Michałowski 1936: 122.



2a. Kazimierz Michałowski et Jerzy Manteuffel, directeurs de la mission à Edfou ; b. l’empreinte de l’estampe officielle de la mission (a. © Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe, inv. n° 1-K-405-1 ; b. © IKŚiO PAN).

Pour les fouilles on proposa trois sites différents : Leukos Limen (au bord de la Mer Rouge), Antinoupolis (Antinoé)⁴ et Edfou (en Haute Égypte). Étant donné le faible budget de 18.000 zlotys et l’intérêt religieux d’Edfou qui comptait de nombreux monuments des époques s’étendant dès l’Ancien Empire au Moyen-Age, ce dernier fut retenu⁵. Il est notable de remarquer que malgré ce modeste budget, le professeur K. Michałowski n’a dépensé que 16.000 zł.

La première campagne de fouilles à Edfou a eu lieu du 3 janvier au 26 février 1937 (figs 1–2)⁶. Cette expédition fut dirigée par les professeurs Kazimierz Michałowski et Jerzy Manteuffel (fig. 2a), papyrologue et maître de conférences à l’Université de Lviv, au nom de l’Université de Varsovie. Le résultat de ces fouilles mirent en évidence plusieurs différentes couches d’occupation du site. En outre, de nombreux objets furent découverts. En plus, des *mastabas* en pierre, plus de 200 *ostraka* grecs, 100 démotiques et quelques dizaines coptes et arabes, de nombreux objets en céramique, faïence, bronze, fer, albâtre etc.⁷ En accord passé avec l’Égypte, le musée égyptien avait naturellement la haute main sur toutes les découvertes archéologiques, donc la Pologne et la France devaient se partager ce que l’Égypte leur permettait. Mais l’Institut français du Caire a renoncé à la part qui lui revenait du droit au profit unique de la Pologne, en ajoutant plusieurs précieux sarcophages en bois des XVIII^{ème} et XIX^{ème} dynasties, de céramiques et d’autres objets provenant des fouilles françaises antérieures à Deir el-Médineh (fig. 3)⁸. Le Musée égyptien a quant à lui conservé de nombreux tableaux d’une grande rareté y compris quelques vases épigraphe

⁴ Bruyère *et al.* 1937.

⁵ Michałowski 1957: 194–198 ; 1936: 123–125.

⁶ Bruyère *et al.* 1937.

⁷ Michałowski 1937b: 272–277.

⁸ Michałowski 1937b: 276.



3. Professeur Michałowski avec Bernard Bruyère (directeur de la mission du côté de l'Ifao) et Christiane Desroches, à Deir el-Médineh, lors du choix des objets provenant de ce site, destinés pour l'exposition de Varsovie (auteur du photo inconnu © IKŚiO PAN).

d'albâtre et de cuivre. En fin compte un total de 22 caisses contenant environ 2000 objets dès l'époque prédynastique à l'époque arabe a été expédié vers la Pologne en bateau⁹.

Ainsi en 1937 s'ouvre une nouvelle période d'archéologie polonaise, qui jusqu'alors n'avait pas conduit de fouilles en Égypte. Le succès indiscutable de cette campagne, l'abondance des trouvailles archéologiques et leur valeur scientifique, ont suscité la curiosité des milieux savants quand ces objets sont arrivés sur le sol polonais. Avant le début des fouilles d'Edfou, le professeur Michałowski se posa la question du stockage et de l'exposition des découvertes qui allaient être réalisées, les salles de l'université n'étant pas adaptées en cet égard. C'est par hasard que le professeur Michałowski trouva la place adéquate à l'exposition des découvertes archéologiques d'Edfou. En discutant, autour d'une table de café à « Fregata », avec celui qui deviendra son futur collaborateur, M. Stanisław Lorentz, alors nommé directeur du Musée National de Varsovie, ce dernier lui proposa une salle d'exposition récemment construite au sein du musée¹⁰.

Quelques mois après l'arrivée des trouvailles archéologiques en Pologne, il a été agréé, par l'Université de Varsovie et le Musée National, d'organiser une exposition temporaire présentant les résultats des fouilles de la mission archéologiques franco-polonaise à Edfou. Cette exposition dura deux mois, du 28 septembre au 28 novembre 1937. Ce vernissage fut un événement important non seulement pour tout-Varsovie mais aussi pour le milieu scientifique polonais entier. L'ouverture officielle fut célébrée par le vice-ministre de l'Éducation Nationale M. Jerzy Ferek-Bleszyński (**fig. 4**). Étaient présents lors cette inau-

⁹ Manteuffel 1938: 116.

¹⁰ Jarocki 1981: 66–73.



4. Vernissage de l'Exposition des fouilles égyptiennes au Musée National de Varsovie (© Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe, inv. n° 1-N-1059-2).

guration, entre autres, le maire de Varsovie, Stefan Starzyński, l'ambassadeur de France, Léon Noël, l'ambassadeur de Grande-Bretagne, Howard W. Kennard, le chargé d'affaires à l'ambassade égyptienne, Kamil Abdoul et naturellement, les professeurs Stanisław Lorentz et Kazimierz Michałowski¹¹. Lors de la prise de parole le maire de Varsovie, a souligné l'importance d'apport des archéologues polonais dans le champ de recherches scientifiques, a exprimé l'espoir que la coopération entre le Musée National et l'Université Józef Piłsudski, l'une des plus grandes académies de Pologne, s'en trouverait renforcée. Puis, il a demandé au ministre de l'éducation d'ouvrir solennellement cette exhibition¹². Pour le vernissage, de nombreux représentants de la presse et photographes de Polska Agencja Telegraficzna (Agence télégraphique polonaise) étaient présents, pour mettre en valeur cet événement unique et symbole de la réussite scientifique polonaise en dépit du faible budget.

L'exposition fut un énorme succès, comme en témoigne plus de 60 mille visiteurs. Pour encourager les jeunes du milieu scolaire à venir et visiter l'exposition, le directeur du Musée National envoya une lettre à tous les professeurs d'histoire et de polonais du lycée général

¹¹ *Zaproszenie na Wystawę.*

¹² *Przemówienie Starzyńskiego.*

les informant sur cette exhibition et sur les fouilles d'Edfou. Il argua en outre que cette visite au Musée National correspondait parfaitement avec le programme scolaire, qu'elle tiendrait lieu de leçon pratique sur l'art et la technique égyptienne, qu'elle permettrait de mieux comprendre les sources historiques d'une puissante civilisation antique, et tout ceci pourrait accroître un intérêt des jeunes gens pour le passé sinon de susciter leurs vocations¹³. En outre de nombreuses mesures furent mises en place pour encourager les groupes scolaires à venir : une entrée à bas prix, 5 groszy par élève, des guides de musée gratuits¹⁴ et l'horaire d'ouverture approprié et commode, cinq jours par semaine, du mardi au samedi¹⁵. L'exposition s'étendait sur les deux salles : dans la grande salle se trouvaient les objets apportés par l'expédition d'Edfou, dans l'autre, plus petite, des acquisitions antérieures offertes, entre autres, par « Towarzystwo Zachęty Sztuk Pięknych » (Association des Beaux-Arts « Zachęta ») de Varsovie¹⁶. L'ensemble des objets étaient présentés en vitrines alors que les travaux des archéologues, dessins, plans et photographies relatifs aux fouilles ont été accrochés aux murs de la galerie¹⁷. Dans la salle consacrée aux recherches, se trouvaient entre autres : les stèles, les tables d'offrandes, les papyrus grecs et latins ainsi que des céramiques de différentes périodes. Dans la seconde salle, plus petite, les murs étaient ornés de gravures de cuivre relatant les premières découvertes scientifiques françaises du temps de Napoléon Bonaparte, afin de donner l'image du site au temps de XVIII^{ème}–XIX^{ème} siècles. Étaient également présentés dans cette salle, cinq sarcophages anthropoïdes en bois, des momies d'enfants, des figurines entières ou fragmentaires, des stèles votives en pierre et des couvercles de vases dits canopes¹⁸. Pour faciliter la visite de l'exposition, un catalogue des recherches effectuées à Edfou par le professeur Kazimierz Michałowski (*Wystawa Wykopalisk Egipskich Uniwersytetu Józefa Piłsudskiego. Przewodnik*) présentant les objets dans leur ordre chronologique a été mis à la disposition du public¹⁹. Pour les visiteurs, en dehors de l'attraction des momies, l'intérêt de visite résidait dans la découverte des objets de la vie quotidienne de l'Égypte ancienne. Entre autres choses, leur étaient donné à voir : lits et tabourets en bois au rembourrage en roseau, ou paniers en roseau, sandales en rotin, coffrets en bois, pinceaux, brosses et différents objets de toilette, barils et amphores avec le cachet encore visible du pharaon Thoutmosis, ou encore des produits alimentaires tels les crêpes d'avoine, blocs de sel ou fruits deséchés²⁰.

Ces recherches et l'exposition qui s'en suivit ont montré le grand intérêt pour les fouilles franco-polonaises à Edfou, que ce soit de la part des scientifiques ou de la presse populaire

¹³ *Do Dyrekcji.*

¹⁴ *Pierwsze Muzeum.*

¹⁵ Ces informations sont donnés par le directeur Lorenz à Jan Bilek, directeur du département de l'Éducation et de la Culture, dans la lettre du 23 septembre (*List Lorenz – Bilek*). En même temps le directeur du Musée National demanda à diffuser des informations auprès de toutes les institutions éducatives qui appartiennent au département de l'Éducation de Varsovie.

¹⁶ Michałowski 1937a: 5–6.

¹⁷ Michałowski 1937a: 25.

¹⁸ Michałowski 1937a: 42.

¹⁹ Michałowski 1937a ; Majewski 1938: 158.

²⁰ Majewski 1938: 159.

comme en témoigne les nombreux articles leur consacré²¹. On nota la fréquentation record et le sentiment d'inassouvissement provoqué par un temps d'exposition trop court, tout en comprenant la nécessité de s'occuper au plus vite de la conservation des artefacts. Les informations essentielles sur l'histoire des fouilles archéologiques d'Edfou ainsi que sur les découvertes liées à elles ont été publiées dans la presse.

La presse a également souligné l'importance de cette exposition, car elle mettait en évidence la compétence des archéologues nationaux, qui pouvaient dès lors mettre leur science au service de musées polonais afin de rivaliser avec les plus grands musées d'archéologie antique d'Europe, malgré le passé de « défaillance grave et flagrante » d'une telle institution en Pologne²². Une véritable collection publique devait constituer une part importante de l'héritage national et augmenter significativement la réputation scientifique et – sur la scène européenne – le prestige de notre pays, qui avait à l'époque vraiment besoin de remporter des succès et, par là même, de renforcer sa position en Europe. Le problème, qu'on remarqua dans la presse, était le manque de générosité de la population lorsqu'il s'agissait de transmettre des collections privées à l'État. Selon les journalistes, c'était à cause du manque de solidarité et de l'absence de sentiment de communauté nationale²³. Dans ce contexte fut soulignée la qualité des rendements des fouilles d'Edfou qui apportèrent à la Pologne « quelques cent objets précieux », et au prix des faibles moyens financiers engagés – ceux-ci ne dépassant pas selon la presse de l'époque « les possibilités d'un homme de classe moyenne »²⁴.

Ces premières fouilles polonaises en Égypte suscitèrent un grand intérêt de la part du public – si bien qu'un correspondant permanent du journal polonais « *Gazeta Polska* », Bogdan Richter, orientaliste et explorateur²⁵, s'est rendu sur place pour écrire une série d'articles au fur et à mesure des découvertes²⁶. C'est en janvier 1937, que sa première publication rélatant les préparatifs des fouilles d'Edfou a vu le jour. Cet article soulignait les conditions spartiates dans lesquelles l'équipe polonaise devait travailler, repas modestes au vu du laborieux travail et accès difficile à l'eau potable. À l'encontre des oppositions d'une part de l'opinion publique, critiquant les dépenses engagées pour ces fouilles, B. Richter insistait sur leur valeur en mettant en avant le fait qu'il est très important d'être « là, où les grandes civilisations se retrouvent »²⁷ sur le terrain de la science. Souhaitant approfondir le savoir archéologique des lecteurs non avertis, Richter consacra son deuxième article aux papyrus qu'espérait découvrir le groupe polonais (ce qui ne manqua pas d'arriver un peu plus tard). Cet article fournit plus d'informations aux lecteurs avides de découvrir un monde jusque-là étranger. Pour Richter, tout papyrus serait « une source inestimable de savoirs sur la vie quotidienne des peuples antiques ». Il décrivit une manière de fabrication

²¹ Aksamit 1999.

²² Młodecki 1937: 5. Toutes les traductions faites par l'auteur.

²³ Młodecki 1937: 5.

²⁴ Bunikiewicz 1937: 21.

²⁵ Śliwa 2012: 484, n. 25 ; Zieliński 1933: 406–408.

²⁶ Richter 1937a ; 1937b ; 1937c ; 1937d ; 1937e.

²⁷ Richter 1937a.

des papyrus, les techniques et manières d'écrire et souligna la résistance de ce matériel à l'écul du temps et exposa l'importance de ces sources pour l'étude des multiples aspects de la vie de tous les jours de cette civilisation²⁸. Dans sa publication suivante, à la fin de février 1937, il informe ses lecteurs des résultats des fouilles et sur les conditions de vie sur le chantier. L'article commence par le récit de son voyage en train, très confortable, en compagnie d'un chargé d'affaires polonais en Égypte, M. Alfons Kula, jusqu'à la traversée du Nil. Après son périple fut plus difficile : après une longue traversée du Nil, et arrivée au camp de fouilles polonaises, B. Richter relate alors sa première rencontre avec le chef des fouilles comme suit : *le Professeur Michałowski a perdu beaucoup de poids étant donné les conditions de vie sur le camp qui ne permettent à personne de s'engraisser. Mais malgré la difficulté de sa tâche, il reste optimiste, car comme il le dit : Allah a visiblement béni travail en lui offrant plus de rendement dans ses fouilles qu'il ne l'espérait pour la première campagne. Le magasin est plein et sur le terrain des fouilles le succès est au rendez-vous*²⁹. Dans la deuxième partie de cet article, l'auteur décrit ses premières impressions lors de sa rencontre avec le papyrologue renommé Jerzy Manteuffel, le second membre le plus important lors de la mission : *Du nuage de poussière émerge un homme, qui ne s'en différencie pas, courant vers nous. Après quelques pas, nous reconnaissons le Professeur Manteuffel. La poudre de sebbah le rend inidentifiable. La poudre de sebbah sur son visage lui donne une expression différente de l'habitude, il a une couche brune de poudre dans les cheveux, sur les cils et même sur les yeux. Que ce soit casque, chemise, pantalon, chaussures – ils ont tous, la même la couleur. Nous lui souhaitons cordialement bienvenue en polonais et immédiatement le sebbah nous envahit aussi. Dans la suite de l'article, son auteur décrit le travail laborieux des fellahs devant transporter de lourds paniers de terre issues des fouilles, qu'on doit examiner attentivement, afin de ne pas manquer quelque importante découverte : *Dans cet enfer, nos professeurs, tous les jours, du lever au coucher du soleil, sont sur le terrain et veillent au bon déroulement des fouilles, pour que la moindre figurine, la plus petite amphore en albâtre ou le petit fragment de papyrus ne soient oubliés. Le Professeur Manteuffel ne quitte jamais sa boîte à tabac en métal dans laquelle il met les fragments de papyrus, très chiffonnés, couverts de poussière, sauvés du sebbah, pour ensuite les purifier, les repasser, les mettre sous verre et les déchiffrer*³⁰. Le dernier article sur cette première campagne de fouilles franco-polonaises à Edfou, a été consacré à un résumé des résultats de la campagne. En journaliste, Richter, informe le public sur les découvertes les plus spectaculaires et sur les conclusions les plus précieuses, en insistant sur le caractère unique de ce travail minutieux qui avait mit en exergue plusieurs couches de civilisation égyptienne et aussi sur la détermination des savants dans leur examen détaillé du site. Avec de l'humour il compare ces découvertes égyptiennes aux maux de la capitale moderne telle Varsovie, mettant en relief l'insuffisance des installations sanitaires : *Le Professeur Michałowski dans une de ses salles de bain nous montre trois**

²⁸ Richter 1937b.

²⁹ Richter 1937c.

³⁰ Richter 1937d.

*baignoires. La première est semblable à la nôtre, mais peut-être plus petite, les 2 autres d'une taille plus petite, étant destinées pour l'hygiène intime – afin d'économiser de l'eau et de satisfaire à la fois aux besoins de propreté du corps. Chers citoyens de Varsovie, pouvez-vous vous imaginer 3 salles de bain dans une petite maison ordinaire, dans les profondeurs de l'Afrique il y a 2000 ans*³¹. Cependant, les commentaires dans les journaux n'étaient pas toujours aussi favorables. Une minorité de journaux remirent en question le coût réel des fouilles (qu'ils estimèrent à 100.000 zlotys au lieu des 16.000 avancés) ainsi que les conditions de travail des savants qu'ils jugèrent « luxueuses »³². Certains journaux publièrent des articles négatifs sur ces fouilles, arguant que la Pologne n'avait reçu aucun profit ni trouvailles et commentant ironiquement : *Notre pays est si heureux d'avoir tant d'argent à gaspiller pour soutenir la science*. Toujours plein d'ironie, l'auteur poursuit : *peut-être l'Égypte, en l'an 4000, pourra-t-il envoyer des archéologues à la recherche des civilisations polonaises pour découvrir les monuments d'une ère de l'allumette polie et pour reconstruire le budget d'un fellah polonais de 1937* de cette manière dépréciant l'importance des découvertes polonaises³³. En conclusion, le point culminant des fouilles d'Edfou de 1937 fut l'exposition qui s'en suivit. Elle fut un grand évènement culturel et scientifique, mettant au premier plan l'importance des deux institutions polonaises : l'Université Józef Piłsudski d'une part et le Musée National de Varsovie de l'autre – ce dernier étant d'ailleurs dans sa phase de réorganisation et de construction de nouveaux locaux d'exposition modernes et plus vastes, qui virent le jour en 1938. En conséquence du succès de cette exposition égyptienne fut créé, un an plus tard, le premier département permanent dans l'histoire de la muséologie polonaise, consacré à l'Antiquité. Elle a obtenu le nom de « Galerie d'art antique » avec le Professeur Kazimierz Michałowski, fondateur reconnu de l'ainsi dite école polonaise d'archéologie méditerranéenne à sa tête. Elle s'étala sur cinq chambres d'expositions, tandis que, avant la naissance de ce département, seules deux chambres d'expositions temporaires étaient consacrées aux objets et fouilles antiques. La partie majeure de la nouvelle section du musée était occupée par les objets acquis lors de la campagne de fouilles à Edfou en 1937, ainsi que pendant les deux missions d'exploration suivantes sur ces terres en 1938 et 1939³⁴. L'exposition de fouilles égyptiennes au Musée National de Varsovie en 1937 était la première à présenter et à documenter l'apport polonais dans la recherche égyptologique et elle contribua à vulgariser le savoir sur l'Égypte dans un large éventail de la société polonaise.

³¹ Richter 1937e.

³² D'après professeur Michałowski, auteur de cette exposition, cette information fut publiée dans le quotidien *Ilustrowany Kurier Krakowski* (plus probablement *Ilustrowany Kurier Codzienny*). On y suggera que cette somme importante pouvait être mieux utilisée, par exemple pour mener à bien les fouilles en Pologne à Biskupin, cf. Michałowski 1983 : 21.

³³ *Polska egiptologia*.

³⁴ Bruyère *et al.* 1937 ; Michałowski *et al.* 1938 ; Michałowski *et al.* 1950.

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‘Protecting the Temple of God’ On the Self-Presentation of Neshor on His Mendes Statue

HUSSEIN BASSIR

Abstract: New publication, edition, and reading of the self-presentation of the famous Neshor named Psamtikmenkhib on his fragmentary Mendes statue from Late Saite Egypt. The religious beliefs, moral values, and preservation of the self of Neshor as well as some concluding remarks are presented.

Keywords: Neshor named Psamtikmenkhib, Late Saite Egypt, Mendes statue, self-presentation, preservation of the self, religious beliefs, moral values, text and image

Hussein Bassir, Egyptian Expedition and Laboratory of Tree-Ring Research, University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona; husseinbassir2001@yahoo.com; hussein@email.arizona.edu

The text and the Mendes statue of the famous Neshor named Psamtikmenkhib (Neshor hereafter)¹ offer rich views and ideas about a Late Saite non-royal elite member. They shed light on the reign of Apries. Neshor represents the ‘military face’ of Egypt’s administration in this period. In the article, the author attempts to reconstruct the ‘fragmentary identity’ and ‘self-image’ of this non-royal individual through his preserved text and monument. To achieve this, the article examines a biography and a statue of this official, a principal member of the Late Saite non-royal aristocracy. The overarching approach is to integrate image, monument, and text with the place, participant, and broader historical context that give them meaning. The article explores the significance of image, representation, and memory. It also reads the inscription as a document in multiple ways, and focuses on reading of space as social text in addition to the readings of this monument. The article aims at bridging the gap between image and text. Below, a new publication, edition, and reading of the text of Neshor and his statue is presented, introducing the religious beliefs, moral values, and preservation of the self of Neshor, as well as some concluding remarks.

¹ Bassir 2014: iii, 51–52.

GENERAL PRESENTATION OF THE STATUE

Date: Reign of Apries Haaibre (589–570 BC)
 Current location: probably in Nahman-Viola Collection
 Height: 53cm
 Material: basalt
 Place of discovery: presumably Mendes/Tell er-Rub'a²
 Source: purchased from a dealer in Cairo in 1956

DESCRIPTION

The object is an upper part of the torso of a statue (**Fig. 1**); it represents three fragments joined together, seen in the antiquities market in Cairo and Switzerland in 1947, and forming the spine of a bust that could have once been a standing, sitting, or kneeling statue. The right half of the torso remains with a crack at its middle and the right arm is missing. The face of the statue is severely damaged. The back of Neshor's bag wig and his prominent ears remain; the wig has a break at its middle.

An inscription in six vertical columns running from right to left occupies the back pillar; the first three columns are longer and incomplete, with a crack at the middle. The other three columns are shorter and also incomplete. A vertical fracture divides the statue from the top of the head and runs through the back pillar. Because of that, the left edge of the third column and the right edge of the fourth column of text are now lost. The top of the third and the fourth columns is also damaged due to this long fracture. On the right side of the back pillar figures another incomplete inscription: the top is lost; there is a crack in the middle, and the end is missing. The left side of the back pillar bears also a short text with a missing end.

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THE MENDES STATUE TEXTS

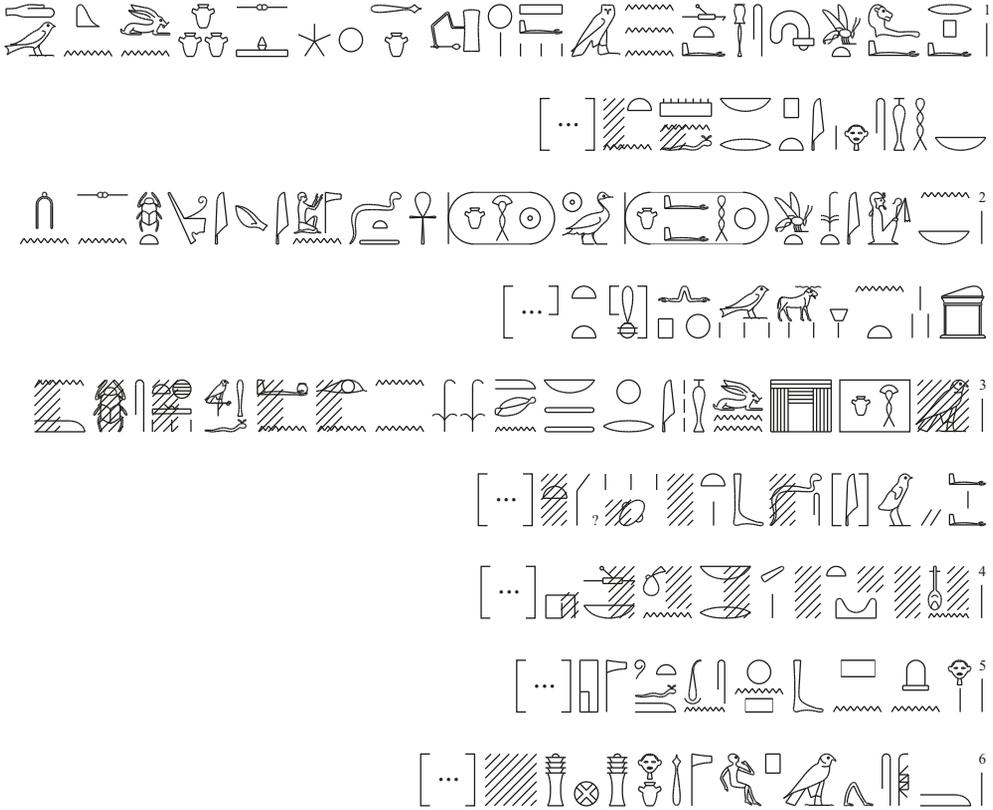
I. BACK PILLAR: BACK (VERTICAL; RIGHT TO LEFT) (**Fig. 1b**)

² For more on Mendes, see: Meulenaere 1975: 43–45; Meulenaere, MacKay 1976; Holz, Hall, Bothmer 1980; Redford (Ed.) 2004; Leclère 2008: 313–340, 349–361, 643; Redford 2010. This statue probably came from the older excavations at Mendes. For the recent excavations at Mendes, see, e.g.: Redford (Ed.) 2004; 2010.



1. Mendes Statue: a. left side; b. back pillar; c. right side (Meulenaere, MacKay 1976: Pl. 21/52c-e).

Text:



Transliteration:

1) (j)rj-p^c(t) h3(tj)-^c htmt(j)-bjt(j) smr w^ct(j) mw³ mš^c hrw ʿh3 ʿ3 jb hrw dmdjt⁴ šhtp jbw wn
 knd nb hzwt hr jpt nb(t)⁵ (jmj)-r(3)⁶ mnfjt⁷ [...]

³ Heise 2007: 203, n. 510, reads here *jmj-r3*, stating (without further explanation) that: *Die drei Wasserlinien sind von dem Kanalzeichen abgeleitet; daher sind diese wohl jmj-r3 zu lesen*. Also Pressl 1998: 225, reads: *jm.j-r' mš^c (m) hrw ʿh3*. However, Chevreau 2001: 93–94 (DOC. 118), does not refer to this title among the military titles of Neshor. I read *mw mš^c hrw ʿh3* – *the water of the army on the day of fighting*. If we stick with the literal meaning of the phrase and read the word as *mw* instead of *(jm)(j)-r(3)*, the phrase *mw mš^c hrw ʿh3* should be allegorically understood as a ‘brave epithet’ of Neshor, and not as an actual military title. This is what Perdu 1990: 40, suggests. This could mean that he in fact provided water for the army and supplied soldiers with provisions and food, becoming thus the metaphorical ‘water’ on which the army forces military value depended. Compare all of the epithets with *mw* – *water*, in *Wb* II, 52 (17) and 53 (1).

⁴ See: Hannig 2006: 980. The star-sign could also be read as *dw3*, so *hrw dw3* would mean: *day of adoring(?)*. This is an epithet referring to the military importance and engagement of Neshor especially on the battlefield as a military person – just as does the previous one, and both of them complete each other.

⁵ This epithet shows that Neshor was favored and praised in all things that he did and because of his acting in a proper way acceptable to the king.

⁶ *r* stands here for *(jmj)-r(3)*.

⁷ In the New Kingdom *mnfjt* (before the Eighteenth Dynasty, it reads *mnf3t*, see: *Wb* II, 80) meant: *the army, soldiers, trained soldiers, infantry, infantry-soldiers, and some type of militia*, which was a full military title,

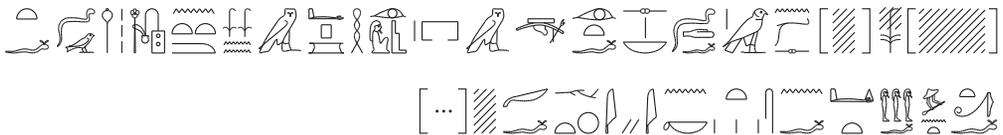
- 2) $n nb=j^8 njswt-bjt H^c-jb-r^c s3 R^c W3h-jb-r^c ^c nh dt dw3.n=j ntr sdm=j n hpr.t=sn ^c rk.n(=j) g3jw t n(w)t B3w-Wrw n-zp [mj]tt [hr hm n(?)]^9$
- 3) $Hr W3h-jb wnn^{10} hzw(t)=j hr nb t3wj m jsw n nn jrj.n(=j) hnk.n hm=f jhwt shpr.n(=j) m ^c wj[=j] ds(=j) bt wh^c t(?) [...]$
- 4) $nfr(?) n(?) ... nb(?) r(?) n w^c(?) nb(?) h(?) [...]$ ¹¹
- 5) $hr wd n jnr n bh n smn.tw=f m hwt-ntr [...]$
- 6) $m šmsw Hr-p3-hrd ntr 3 hrj-jb Dd(t) [...]$.

Translation:

- 1) *The (j)r(j)-p^c(t), h3(tj)-^c, the sealer of the King of Lower Egypt, the sole friend, the water of the army on the day of fighting, the great of heart on the day of the gathering, the one who satisfies the hearts when there is anger, possessor of favors in all accounts, the overseer of the mnfjt [...]*
- 2) *for my Lord, the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Haaibre, Son-of-Re, Wahibre, living forever. I praised god that I heard (things) before they came to pass. (I) finished up the chapels of the Great B3s. Never the [like]ness [occurred under the Majesty of]*
- 3) *Horus, Wahib. It is before the Lord of the Two Lands that my favors exist, in exchange for this that (I) have done. His Majesty presented gifts which (I) created with (my) own arms [...]*
- 4) *... ... [...]*
- 5) *on a stone stela of greywacke which was set up in the temple [...]*
- 6) *as a follower of Horus-the-Child,¹² the Great God who resides at Mend(es) [...]*.

II. BACK PILLAR: RIGHT SIDE (VERTICAL; RIGHT TO LEFT) (Fig. 1c)

Text:



see: Schulman 1964: 13–14. The title (j)m(j)-r(3) mnfjt first appeared in the Old Kingdom, see: Jones 2000: 137 (536). For more on (j)m(j)-r(3) mnfjt in the New Kingdom, see: Gnirs 1996: 12–17, 60; and also Faulkner 1953: 38, who transliterates and translates: jmy-r mnfjt as *commander of shock-troops*, who, in his opinion, was next in the field below the general. For more on this title in the Late period, see: Chevereau 2001: 263–264, who transliterates and translates it: *mr mnfyt – chef des troupes*.

⁸ Although it is clearly visible on the statue, Heise 2007: 203, does not transliterate =j.

⁹ The n probably fits the top of this column, while hr hm were perhaps at the end of the previous column, see: Bassir 2009: 68 (Carlsberg 1037).

¹⁰ Heise 2007: 204, starts with this sentence, which he transliterates and translates: *wn.n hz.wt=j...* as *Meine Gunst existierte...*

¹¹ This column is not obvious to read.

¹² I.e. Harpocrates.

Transliteration:

[...] *njswt(?)* [...] ¹³ *Ns-Hr dd=f s nb jr.t(j)=f(j) pn^c m pr Wsjr-H^cpj m nn ntt m sšw ḥdj. tj=fj tjt(w)=f hntjw=f dj.n=f st n kjj ḥtj=f [st(?) ...].*

Translation:

[...] *the King(?)* [...] *Neshor, he says: As for every man who will cause disorder in the temple of Osiris-Hapy concerning those things which are in the writings, and who will damage his image(s), and his statues, and having given them to somebody else so that he (re)inscribes [them(?) ...].*

III. BACK PILLAR: LEFT SIDE (VERTICAL; RIGHT TO LEFT) (Fig. 1a)

Text:



Transliteration:

*ntt prj(t)*¹⁴ *m p3 ḥtp(w)-ntr nfr(w) n B3-nb-ddt n ... [...].*

Translation:

which derives from the good divine-offering(s) of B3-nb-ddt and of ... [...].

INTERPRETATION

It is rather difficult to reconstruct this individual's history without having at our disposal his tomb – which has not been discovered so far. It does not seem unreasonable to presuppose that his tomb will be located one day in the Delta. However, his preserved statue can help us to reconstruct his self. The major goal of this article is to shed light on the various aspects of Neshor's self-presentation and statue: the historical and archaeological issues; artistic, linguistic, and literary notions; religious and moral values; and self-presentation features.

The main role of Neshor was related with the *mnjt* – the *mš^c*, in the task of securing Egyptian borders. In addition to his honorific titles and epithets, his administrative offices show that he was a leading military figure in the Late Saite period, and a confidant of the king. Neshor's epithet *štp-jbw wn knd* expresses his eloquence. All these reveal that Neshor was a high elite member who was more trusted than other official of the king, and that he had already reached the top of his career in the reign of Apries.

¹³ The beginning (c. two groups of signs) of this column – probably containing official titles of Neshor – is missing.

¹⁴ See: *Wb* I, 518.

NESHOR'S RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

The phraseology of Neshor's self-presentation is expressed in a high religious tone. Four deities, the Great *B3s*, Horus-the-Child, Osiris-Hapy, and *B3-nb-ddt* are mentioned in his text, and their presence is crucial in understanding his beliefs and religious piety. Their integration into his monument and text reflects his close relationship, belief, and intimacy with them. These deities are mainly local ones of the Delta, but also of 'national' status and the close ties of Neshor with them are expressed via his good deeds, e.g. donations to the temple(s) or uttering good praises of the divine.

Neshor's choice of the deities to whom he shows particular attention seem obviously ruled by two specific factors:

- his loyalty to the local deities of the Delta, where he was probably raised, and
- the overall 'national' religious beliefs of the country.

Therefore, he offered probably this statue to one of forms of Osiris since this god was the universally recognized ruler of the world of the dead, and Neshor appeals to him to enter into his afterlife realm. The phraseology of Neshor's text exposes his good deeds toward the deities in addition to the role he played in the care and restoring the affairs of that temple, although he was not a priest.

Banebdjedet¹⁵ is also mentioned in Neshor's vocabulary. The religious identity of this deity represents him as the worshiped *b3* of Osiris. His name literally means: 'the *b3* of the Lord of Djedet', and implies the notion of the *Djed*-pillar, the backbone of Osiris, connecting him with the city of Mendes. Banebdjedet was usually depicted as a ram or ram-headed man and a 'living sacred ram', and was given the epithets 'Lord of the Sky' and 'Lord of Life' – thus echoing the titles of the sun god, Re. The wife of Banebdjedet, the goddess Hatmehyt,¹⁶ was a fish-goddess worshipped in Mendes and associated with Isis. Her name means 'She who is in front of the fishes' or 'The foremost of the fish' and she was depicted as a fish or a woman with a fish-like emblem on her head. While Osiris was a prominent member of the 'visiting deities' at Mendes, Osiris-Hapy – to whom Neshor's phraseology also refers – was certainly less important. But, however it was, the presence of these deities in Neshor's text and monument shows the continuity and revival of their importance in Late Saite Egypt.

The religious statements and wishes of Neshor show his intimacy with the divine. This close relationship is well revealed through the direct and private dialogue between Neshor and the deity. Neshor is quite dutiful to the deities textually. He probably placed his statue in the temple sacred space designated to the deity to show his deep piety and faith in this precise divinity; and the monument extols his pious deeds to deities, the temple, and probably to the local people and city. The text shows that he is a true believer, a dutiful person to the deities and his belief encompasses two different worlds: the first being his beliefs on earth – where he perceived faith and learned about deities, their divine world and the afterlife – and the second one being his beliefs in the afterlife.

¹⁵ For more on *B3-nb-ddt* and his other manifestations, see: *LGG* II: 683–685; Zivie-Coche 2009: 545–557; 2013a: 93–99; 2013b: 761–771.

¹⁶ For more on *H3t-Mhjt*, see: *LGG* V: 17–18; Zivie-Coche 2009: 545–557; 2014: 447–461.

NESHOR'S MORAL VALUES

Neshor's moral values are varied, rich in content, highly significant, and well reflected in many phrases in his text. But his 'morality' is achieved differently from the traditional way in function during previous periods. It comes through his dutiful and pious actions, not through asserting cliché statements – as was in use in the Old Kingdom, for instance. Moreover, Neshor's self-descriptive phrases differ from their equivalents of previous periods. Therefore, he does not mention his moral responsibility toward the middle and lower classes. In earlier sources of different origin, namely false doors, tombs etc. – which differ from those placed on the statue destined for temple – we find, e.g. an Old Kingdom official saying: *I gave bread to the hungry, clothes <to the naked>, I brought the boat less to land. I buried him who had no son, I made a boat for him who lacked one.*¹⁷ Neshor's deeds do not specify any particular case or somebody who is in a need or in a bad condition, but they are clearly directed toward the community as a whole, as if he were comparing his actions to the royal deeds. Furthermore, his text also does not refer to the *rhjt*, i.e. 'the common people' – but that should not lead us to conclude that he ignored them completely. For example, in the Middle Kingdom, some officials describe themselves *par rapport* to the *rhjt* as *sꜥnh rhjt*, meaning: 'the one who nourishes the commoners'.¹⁸ Neshor did what he believed appropriate for them, according to his own understanding of the situation.¹⁹ He presumably did that because of the setting of his votive statue in temple, intended to convince the deities to grant him protection in the afterlife – and thus his stress upon benefactions he performed to the temple while alive. However, in the text Neshor refers to the king: *It is before the Lord of the Two Lands that my favors exist, in exchange for this that (I) have done.* Therefore, he presents standard offerings to the gods and acts for the temple wealth only in the name of the king – what is clearly stated in the text (and probably also in Text II; see above). It might be related to the fact, that placing one's statues in the temple was the privilege granted for exceptional achievements by the king. In a tomb or on a funerary stela, the speaker wished to inspire other people to give him offerings, and thus it is natural that he or she stressed his or her kindness to other people while alive. Perhaps in his tomb self-presentation Neshor would also have talked about the *rhjt*.

In Neshor's text on his statue its owner's good deeds are only narrated as the happy end of his first life. The text does not offer neither self-criticism, nor any misbehavior, bad deeds, or overall evaluation of Neshor's life and career. Instead the statue owner is always looking to display an ideal image of himself. Neshor's text was then seemingly a message addressed to the deities and the temple clergy intended to persuade them to act favorably towards him in the future. Stating the good deeds and moral values of Neshor was the visible and direct message behind the writing of his self-presentation. Therefore, his morality is

¹⁷ For the Sixth Dynasty self-presentation of Nefer-Seshem-Re called Sheshi, see: Lichtheim 2006: 17.

¹⁸ See: Doxey 1998: 194.

¹⁹ Doxey 1998: 201, points out that these self-descriptive phrases were also less common in the Middle Kingdom.

indirect, not apparent – as was often the case in many earlier texts. For example, contrary to the self-presentations of the Old Kingdom, Neshor does not mention any rewards he received from the king or the deities. That may show that his self-esteem was high and that he was rather confident in his self-sufficiency. Therefore, his self-presentation comes mainly through his earthly deeds, as well as his relationship with the king.

NESHOR’S PRESERVATION OF THE SELF

The self of Neshor is well manifested in his text and on his statue. In the text different modes of discourses appear, one of these being the afterlife one. Neshor’s conceptions that he followed to preserve his self in his text are expressed in different ways. According to P. Coleman’s definition, the self is as *an autonomous individual, testing rules imposed from without against a sensibility nourished from within, demanding as a matter of right to flourish in his or her own way*.²⁰ In this sense, Neshor’s self-presentation, of course, does reveal the rise of individualism as a key factor in Late Saite Egypt. This self-presentation is reflected by the free expression of Neshor’s wishes for securing himself the afterlife. In his self-presentations Neshor mentions his hierarchical offices that he held in his long career in order to make the living people and the future generations remember him forever and appreciate what he had achieved through time.

The notions of the self in Neshor’s self-presentation are highly visible. The features of the preservation of his self are illuminated by art and language. The self-presentation of Neshor encompasses his self, where it is conceived as its fundamental component. Historical perspective is also another means by which Neshor’s self is displayed. His activities highlight this self in a positive way. Neshor’s text portrays his life that had run enough of its course for its ultimate significance to be assessed. In short, the text reflects an emphasis on the form of Neshor’s self and identity in which this self is fully expressed. Nevertheless, Neshor’s self seems to be an expression of the period that has produced it. The history of Neshor’s self is briefly presented in this text, but his whole personal history remains basically unknown.

Thus, as we could see, the self of Neshor is well manifested in his text and statue. The afterlife discourse is the dominating tone of this self. Through it, Neshor presents proofs of his piety to be rewarded by the deities in the afterlife, his memory and remembrance to be commemorated by the living ones on earth and the future generations, and his afterlife cult and endowment be maintained by the temple personnel. In all his numerous good deeds that he recounts, Neshor brings out his self-concept and his personal piety and narrates his role at Mendes, extolling his distinguished achievements to the deities as well as to the king. He states:

²⁰ Coleman 2000: 3.

I praised god that I heard (things) before they came to pass. (I) finished up the chapels of the Great B3s. Never the [like]ness [occurred under the Majesty of] Horus, Wahib. It is before the Lord of the Two Lands that my favors exist, in exchange for this that (I) have done. His Majesty presented gifts which (I) created with (my) own arms [...]... [...] on a stone stela of greywacke which was set up in the temple [...] as a follower of Horus-the-Child, the Great God who resides at Mend(es) [...].

Then he continues:

As for every man who will cause disorder in the temple of Osiris-Hapy concerning those things which are in the writings, and who will damage his image(s), and his statues, and having given them to somebody else so that he (re)inscribes [them(?)].

*

So, Neshor's self-presentation clearly offers his own wishful image in which he wanted to be remembered and rewarded. Survival of memory is the most important key to understanding Neshor's text and statue. He believed that the survival of his memory would successfully secure his afterlife. His text does not at length speak of it, due to its intensive description of all his distinguished accomplishments. However, it is cleverly introduced. Thus, Neshor's self-presentation encompass two spheres, namely:

- the current sphere, that is that of Neshor's life on earth, and
- the wishful one – concerning Neshor's future in order to secure the life of this elite member after death, which is his expected goal.

Neshor's self-presentation is then highly concerned with remembrance. In my opinion, remembrance is here understood as the good deeds which should be performed by others toward Neshor both in word and action after his death. Therefore, it constitutes the dominant theme in the text. Forgetfulness is the opposite of remembrance; and if one wants to activate remembrance, one should practice and repeat all for what he or she wished to be remembered. Practicing here means: 'conducting physical actions and repeating words'. Through this, the remembrance of the human being could be achieved forever.

Neshor in his text places emphasis on his own good deeds for the deities as pious works for eternity. His ultimate goal behind this work is to enjoy eternity, and not to express his relationship with royalty, or to multiply the gifts, which he received from the crown – as was previously the case in Egyptian self-presentation traditions. It is probably because of the setting of his votive statue within the temple context.

CONCLUSIONS

Neshor's self-presentation brings forward a concept encompassing several levels. He probably had created this statue of himself at least for two reasons:

- to commemorate an achievement, and
- to record a new office that he reached in his career.

Therefore, this self-presentation does not show his transformation and self-fashioning. Both the text and statue of Neshor reveal his self.

The tools for promoting himself were first, a work of art – i.e. the statue itself – and then, his text. The statue, as a precious piece of art with its obvious message, was imposing itself to the sight of everyone entering the temple. The text, in turn, stated his name, titles and roles, and confirmed the identity of the statue and the statue owner. The text was then the 'indirect component' which was not necessarily visible or understood by anyone entering the temple since it represented a 'elite culture' – i.e. element not necessarily understood by all people. Thus, the text of Neshor was intended for those skilled in reading the hieroglyphs, such as, e.g. the temple clergy. Neshor promotes himself several times in this text moving from descriptive statements to his titles, and to a short narrative highlighting his distinguished activities. The presence of the names of the king in this self-presentation was a great privilege granted to this non-royal elite member.²¹ The interaction between image and text in this case is then very obvious and well employed.

Neshor's self-presentation offers, thus, a dualistic view of things such as: life and afterlife, royalty and nobility, public and private image. His self-presentation introduces a general view of his self through his own speech. The overall content of this self-presentation makes it more personalized than earlier ones, and the self-presentation receives here its own scope, interests, and concerns. For instance, Neshor's role at Mendes may convey royal prerogatives that he bestowed upon himself to perform in the kingly manner and/or in his name. It also documents the distinguished status of Neshor which he had reached among the elite members in the reign of King Apries Haaibre and obviously reflects the high level of appreciation by the crown. However, Neshor's self-presentation was clearly composed principally with a view to the afterlife realm.

The text and the statue preserve a single event concerned with public affairs – with regard to very specific actions and moments in his life – and not the entire career. Neshor represents the military face of the administration. He was coming from the local elites of the Delta, who probably had connections with the royal house or were among the supporters of the Saite House. And this non-royal elite member chose to narrate what he considered significant, exploring his self through his achievements. His text displays a different tone of self-presentation, and reflects his formal achievements, spiritual thoughts and beliefs, and his views for the afterlife.

The self-presentation of Neshor preserved on his statue reveals its own method and composes part of his self. It forms a separate unit with a distinctive identity within the whole world of this individual's identity. This genre of self-presentation in Late Saite Egypt, quite common in this period, can be called 'fragmentary biography' – versus the 'lengthy traditional biography', well known from earlier periods of Egyptian history. Thus, due to the limited space on which they were placed, these Saite examples are short, commemorative, and do not contain multiple topics.

²¹ For this latter point, see: Jansen-Winkel 2011: 57–64; Perdu 2011–2013: 112–129.

Neshor's individual 'presence' prevails in the text over the royal one, this latter being quite formal. The relationship between royalty and nobility in the Late Saite period was unique and can help us to understand the circumstances which produced this non-royal self-presentation.²² The role of the individual within the formal sphere of the political realm has much increased by then. The three presences of individuality, i.e. the individual's presence, the deity's presence, and the king's presence, were well interacted in Neshor's life, career, and the afterlife. The individual's self-presentation and the individual's concept of himself, the deities, and the king are intertwined in some of this text. The activities of Neshor prove that the Saite kings were very active and 'productive' in the Delta region, since they originated from there. The geographical location of his monument seems to confirm that the main activities and religious devotion of Neshor were then also focused on the Delta.

In this self-presentation the interplay of image and text is clear. The emergence and rise of individualism, as a historical phenomenon of the period, is an evident reality. Thus, the text and statue of this non-royal individual help us to explore the rise of the individual's self in this period. Moreover, this compels us to reevaluate the relationship between the kings and their high officials in Late Saite Egypt. This text highlights the distinctive characteristics of Saite self-presentation, and places it within the broad context of Egyptian self-presentation traditions.

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²² Bassir 2014: 1–4, 12, 15, 22–23, 149–152.

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A Spectacle Idol from Tell Abu Hafur (North Syria) and Its Possible Function

DOROTA BIELIŃSKA

Abstract: The spectacle idol from Polish excavations in northeastern Syria belongs to the class of artifacts that are known from different regions of the Ancient Near East – Syria, Mesopotamia and Elam – and that have been dated to the Uruk period (broadly speaking, the fourth millennium BC). The name derives from a characteristic shape that resembles the eye idols from Tell Brak. Indeed, the largest assemblage of spectacle idols was discovered at Tell Brak, in an older cultural level within the Eye Temple sector, leading a number of scholars to the conclusion that eye idols evolved from their spectacle predecessors. The ritual function of the eye idols has never been put into doubt, unlike that of spectacle idols, which has been heavily debated. The spectacle idol from Tell Abu Hafur affords the opportunity to discuss the different ideas put forward regarding the function of the objects and to return to the original interpretation of these as associated with worship based on an analysis of the iconography of contemporary glyptic art and a comparative review of finds from diverse archaeological sites.

Keywords: eye idols, spectacle idols, Tell Brak, Uruk period, Northern Mesopotamia

Dorota Bielińska, Instytut Kultur Śródziemnomorskich i Orientalnych PAN, Warszawa; asfura@wp.pl

An inconspicuous clay artifact was recorded in 1989 from the site of Tell Abu Hafur in northeastern Syria, where a second season of salvage excavations was then being carried out by a University of Warsaw PCMA expedition.¹ The object came from a layer at the bottom of a step trench located on the northern slope in sector B of the site. The shape of the artifact immediately called to mind the eye idols from Tell Brak, ancient urban centre situated approximately 40km to the northeast of Abu Hafur.

The object (inv. no. TAH/89/847/1874) (**Fig. 1**) was found in a layer formed by erosion runoff at the foot of the tell, already outside the limits of the town from the third millennium BC, which however could be dated by a fairly uniform collection of fragmented ceramics with two diagnostic sherds, placing the collection in a late phase of the Uruk period/Late

¹ Bieliński 1990: 21–25.



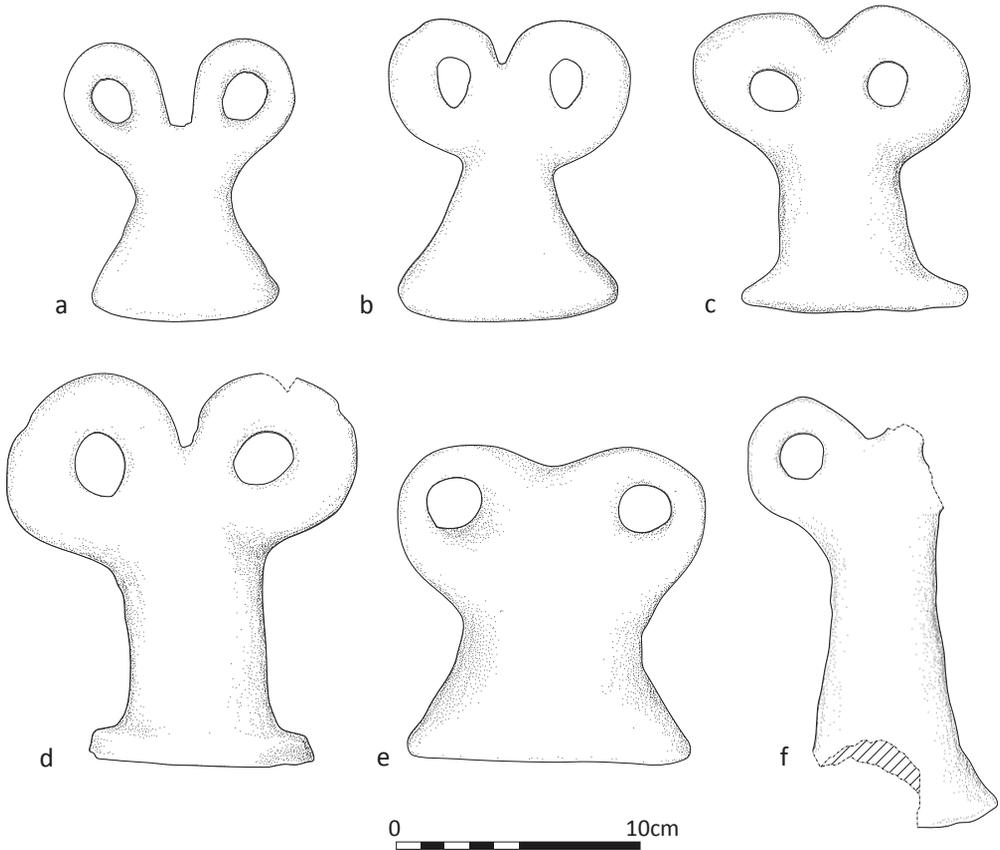
1. Spectacle idol from Tell Abu Hafur (Phot. P. Ciepielewski).

Chalcolithic 4–5 (second half of the fourth millennium BC). Poorly preserved architectural remains from this period were discovered at Tell Hafur, mainly in the above-mentioned step trench on the northern slope. This hand-formed and fired clay artifact measures 15.3cm in height. Attached to the top of the bell-shaped lower part are two rings, each 2.4cm in outer diameter, one missing part of the circumference. The base is roughly 10cm in diameter and contains a semicircular concavity.

The association with eye idols was evident as the artifact belongs to a class of finds that is prolific on Near Eastern archaeological sites from Syro-Palestine through Mesopotamia to Elam. The characteristic loops at the top have earned the category the name of spectacle idols (**Fig. 2a-b**). The first to use the name was Max Mallowan, who discovered Tell Brak and who excavated there in the 1930's² – recording ‘thousands’ of both eye and spectacle idols. The latter group was found in layers underlying the platform of the so-called Eye Temple from the end of the fourth millennium BC, below the level in which the eye idols were proliferate, thus leading the discoverer to consider the spectacle idols as a prototype of the eye idols. The stratigraphic positioning, however, has come under doubt.³

² Mallowan 1947.

³ Mallowan 1947: 32–33; Breniquet 1996: 31–33.



2. Sample clay spectacle idols from northeastern Syria (a-b) and Tepe Gawra, with flat (c-d) or slightly concave base (e-f) (a-b. Camile Aboussouan collection, based on: *Visions d'Orient 2002*: 109; c-f. based on: Tobler 1950: Pl. LXXXVI; digitizing: M. Momot).

Despite the dubiety of Mallowan's stratigraphy and interpretations, and the questioning of the sacred nature of the building itself, it was the finding of the two assemblages generally in layers underlying the Eye Temple that led Mallowan to assume a common interpretation of function of the two sets of idols from approximately the same location as objects associated with the cult. Indeed, the widespread use of the term 'idol' as a name for the class, by Mallowan as well as by his critics, is tantamount to acknowledging ties with the sacred.

Before undertaking a discussion of the controversial function of the so-called spectacle idol, let us look at the territorial and chronological range of similar finds. All the known examples of spectacle idols come from excavations at sites roughly contemporaneous with the Uruk period, e.g. Hama, Sheikh Hassan, Arslantepe, Hacinebi, Tell Brak, Tell Feres al-Sharqi, Hamoukar, Tepe Gawra, Qalinj Agha, Khafaje, Ur, Uruk, Susa, Chogha Mish. The territorial distribution of spectacle idols is much wider than in the case of the ordinary eye idols. Larger assemblages of spectacle idols occur practically at only one site apart

from Tell Brak, namely at Tepe Gawra in northern Mesopotamia.⁴ In this context and taking into consideration that the idols are objects from the Uruk/Late Chalcolithic period, one would like to know whether they were the product of Southern Mesopotamian workshops or whether they should rather be connected with settlements in the Upper Mesopotamia. Precise dating of spectacle idols found in southern Mesopotamia would have ascertained whether they were earlier or only contemporary with the idols from the north, but the documentation standards in the first half of the twentieth century – when layers from the relevant early periods were excavated on most of the archaeological sites in southern Mesopotamia – were not up to par. It is therefore difficult, if not impossible, to determine the exact find contexts for these objects. In consequence, spectacle idols cannot be connected with southern Mesopotamia and Uruk expansion to the north, but there can be no doubt that the examples from southern Mesopotamia occur mainly in Late and Terminal Uruk contexts. Taking into account the proliferation of the type, one should think that northern Mesopotamia, and especially its western part, were the origin of spectacle idols.⁵ However, this assumption must be made with the reservation that Uruk-related sites in the Tigris valley and to the east of it have been by far less extensively investigated than those in regions lying further to the west.⁶ Neither should one put out of mind the fact that this class of artifacts was never recorded from any of the earlier Ubaid sites in southern Mesopotamia or the Halaf period sites in northern Mesopotamia, and that they do not occur in contexts later than the Uruk period. The relevance of this observation is that spectacle idols were a specific product of the Uruk period, that for whatever reason disappeared from cultural circulation with the decline of this civilization.

Mallowan divided discovered idols into ‘spectacle’ and ‘eye’ types, and observed a certain set of rules governing the production of the former. First of all, he noticed that an absolute majority of the spectacle idols were made of clay, while most of the stone examples are rather diminutive in size.⁷ With regard to the eye idols, they were made mostly of limestone and to some extent of clay, but also shell and mother-of-pearl. Taking into account raw material criteria, as well as size, C. Breniquet in her study of the idols divided the spectacle ones into two types: large idols from 7 to 27cm high, made of clay, and small ones, seldom higher than 7cm, made of stone.⁸ The clay spectacle idols were handmade and they stood on a massive base, occasionally constricted and flat on the underside (**Fig. 2c-d**) and sometimes concave – as in the case of the example from Tell Abu Hafur – to ensure greater stability (**Fig. 2e-f**). Among the stone idols Breniquet distinguished examples with a massive flat base, as well as others – featuring an irregularly worked and often rounded

⁴ Tobler 1950: 171–173, Pls LXXXVI/a, CLVI–CLVII/59–67; Rothman 2002: 65–66, Pls 82/30, 581, 1134, 1139; 83/1159, 1167, 1872, 1882; 84/2076.

⁵ Spectacle idols found during recent excavations at Tell Feres, Hamoukar and Hacinebi and their dating seem to confirm this hypothesis (Forest, Vallet, Baldi 2012: 37; Gibson *et al.* 2002: 20, Fig. 14; Quntar, Khalidi, Ur 2011: Fig. 3; Stein *et al.* 1997: 120, Figs 4/A, C, D, E; 12).

⁶ Tell Brak actually was an exception, the excavations uncovering a continuous chronological record from the prehistoric period (Halaf, Ubaid) to the Akkadian period (second half of the third millennium BC).

⁷ Mallowan 1947: 150–159, Pls XXV–XXVI.

⁸ Breniquet 1996: 31–53.

bottom, that made it difficult to stand them upright on any surface. The French scholar believed the stone and terracotta spectacle idols to be purely utilitarian, despite the fact that none have ever been found in a context determining their function unequivocally.⁹ She thus rejected Mallowan's religious interpretation of these artifacts, linking them with the worship of the Eye Deity from Tell Brak. A proposition to this end was put forward by W. Andrae, who observed the similarities between the spectacle idols and 'hut symbols', known from Uruk period and Early Dynastic glyptic art from Mesopotamia,¹⁰ and interpreted as houses of the god, that is – temples. For the sake of completeness, one should recall some more prosaic, if far-fetched ideas, e.g. H. Frankfort's comparison of the objects with vessel lids or another theory suggesting their use as andirons.¹¹

Breniquet's theory presented above should be taken seriously.¹² In searching for a non-sacral function for the artifacts, she points out the annular form of the top and the worn inner surfaces of these rings (although no evidence of wear of this kind was observed on the find from Tell Abu Hafur). Breniquet suggests that these artifacts would have been used for the production of woolen or linen thread. The larger clay objects would have been set up on the ground, making work easier for the spinner sitting slightly above the object, while the smaller spectacle idols of stone with narrow rings could have acted as a specific form of loom weight, ensuring that the thread was not snarled when pulled.¹³ Balls of yarn for spinning would have been placed in separate baskets. Breniquet referred primarily to Egyptian spinning bowls with their loops inside the vessel for distributing linen or woolen yarn.¹⁴ Similar vessels were in use in the Aegean as well.¹⁵ Breniquet also reviewed scenes of everyday life in early Mesopotamian glyptic art in search of confirmation for her theory and turned to ethnographic parallels.¹⁶ Without going into a detailed critique of her idea, the author believes that she has not considered the differences in the use of fibrous plants between Egypt and Mesopotamia.¹⁷ Moreover, the Mesopotamian pottery tradition knows no vessels even remotely resembling spinning bowls, which were also in use in neighboring Palestine.¹⁸ Finally, as said already, no spectacle idols were ever recorded in evidently utilitarian contexts.

⁹ Two out of the c. thirty idols from Tepe Gawra were found in a grave (Tobler 1950: Pl. LII/b), whereas at Qalinj Agha the idols were found together with figurines, obsidian points, loom weights and seals (Soof 1969: Pl. XI/1–3).

¹⁰ The interpretation of spectacle idols was discussed extensively by M. Mallowan (Mallowan 1947: 202–205). The term 'hut symbols' was coined in later literature on the subject (Soof 1969: 3–42; Rothman 2002: 65–66; Delougaz, Kantor 1996: 113–114).

¹¹ Breniquet 1996: 37; Thuesen 1988: 119, 184, Pls XXXIV/9, LX/1.

¹² Breniquet 1996: 31–53.

¹³ For example, Chogha Mish excavations have yielded such stone spectacle idols, or 'hut symbols' as the discoverers would have it, a few centimeters high and with a very small perforation (from 1 to 2mm), capable of acting as an amulet and referred to here as such (Delougaz, Kantor 1996: Pl. 31/AA, BB, CC, GG).

¹⁴ Allen 1997: 17–38, Pls 1–2; Mączyńska 2012: 65–75, Figs 1–8.

¹⁵ Barber 1991: 70–77.

¹⁶ Breniquet 2010: 52–67.

¹⁷ Climate in northern Mesopotamia did not favor the cultivation of flax.

¹⁸ Vessels from sites on the Diyala river, resembling in shape Egyptian spinning bowls, are not only much later in time, but also in some cases were not suitable for the purpose (Delougaz 1952: Pl. 168.C.011.201a,b).

Standing contrary to the ‘textile’ argument is also the relative scarcity of these finds. Had they indeed been used for the very mundane activity of spinning, then considering the role of textile production in Mesopotamia, also in the Uruk period, the preponderance of these artifacts should be more like that of spindle whorls. And why would they have gone out of use so suddenly, while remaining an important part of the spinning equipment elsewhere in the ancient world? We know of no revolutionary change that could explain why these objects functioned during the Uruk period and then after at once disappeared at all. Moreover, the ‘tool’ set of the Ancient Near East does not offer any kind of artifact of even remotely similar shape, possibly made of a different material, that could have served in this role.

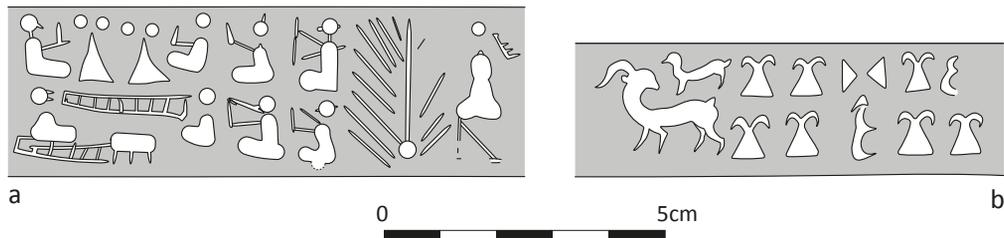
The glyptic art representations cited so often by Breniquet also fail to answer questions considering the functional interpretation of spectacle idols. Many cylinder seals present apparently secular scenes that can be interpreted as showing women at work (identified as such on a basis of their hairstyle) (**Fig. 3a**). The women are depicted sitting on mats or benches, but also kneeling, and close to them are artifacts resembling spectacle idols.¹⁹ Some of these scenes can be linked to loom weaving and spinning in general, especially when they are accompanied by symbols traditionally associated with weaving, such as a spider.²⁰ However, the schematic character of these images has to be kept in mind and its nature replete with symbolism that is inscribed in the typical Mesopotamian glyptic art convention. Motifs recalling spectacle idols can be observed, however, on a group of seals discovered in contexts of no apparent connection with ‘textiles’. In these scenes, a hugely schematic idol accompanies representations of animals (**Fig. 3b**). This is to the author’s mind an assurance of the magical and apotropaic function of the idols.²¹

The ‘classic’ eye-idol plaques, which are known essentially only from Tell Brak and Tepe Gawra, can be and are considered as *ex-voto* or an early form of orant. Arguing in favor is the schematic rendering of single, double and even triple figural images with heads marked only as a pair of eyes. The spectacle idols are just as schematic, although perhaps more attractive, and they are extremely widespread. They could well have been symbols of the same deity that the eye idols were dedicated to, but their function was in my opinion

¹⁹ Breniquet 1996: Fig. 6/B, D, E, G; Buchanan 1966: Pls 2.14a-d, 2.15. Female representations (so-called figures with a braid) on some cylindrical seals, depicted with objects resembling spectacle idols, may have actually held the idols in their hands. If so, then these scenes of work would be showing women at work on the making of these clay idols (Amiet 1961: Pl. 20,335). The same scenes, however, can equally well be interpreted as scenes of adoration or prayer (Buchanan 1981: Figs 144–145).

²⁰ Amiet 1961: Pl. 21,338.

²¹ A similar scene can be seen on a seal from Tepe Gawra, depicting a dog (or, judging by the head’s outline, possibly a lioness) surrounded by objects with annular volutes similar to the spectacle idols – although their interpretation as handled vessels cannot be precluded (Rothman 2002: 66, Pl. 52/2023). A completely different context for images of spectacle idols (in no way related to weaving or work scenes of any kind) appears in the glyptic art from Chogha Mish, being at the same time one of just a few such explicit depictions of spectacle idols in Ancient Near Eastern glyptic (Delougaz, Kantor 1996: Pl. 155/C). A cylindrical seal impression from this site shows the idol with a crescent and kidney-shaped symbols above it and two vessels at its sides. In this context it is noteworthy that elements visible on another impression from Chogha Mish can also be interpreted as schematically rendered spectacle idols (Delougaz, Kantor 1996: Pl. 155/B).



3. Impressions of cylindrical seals with representations of objects interpreted as spectacle idols: a. Tell Brak; b. private collection, Aleppo (a. based on: Matthews 1997: Pl. IX/41; b. based on: Amiet 1961: Pl. 19,313; digitizing: M. Momot).

entirely magical and apotropaic. These idols may have been some kind of guardian deity and the two groups may have been contemporaneous. The diversity of shape and material with regard to spectacle idols would reflect the cult range and the existence of local variants. Among the spectacle idols one can find stone products with decorated bases, referring perhaps to schematic representations of altars or other elements of sanctuaries.²² They can be assumed to represent an informal ‘domestic’ cult, a symbol of a guardian deity charged with protection of the household. The find contexts of spectacle idols are to a much greater extent domestic in nature, or funerary as was the case in Tepe Gawra in a few instances, thus arguing in favor of the proposed idea. Moreover, the disappearance of eye idols and spectacle idols at more or less the same time as the Urukian Eye Temple in Tell Brak was disused bolsters the proposed idea, as it is difficult to accept that the fading of any specific cult could have affected in any way utensils used in everyday circumstances.

Spectacle idols should in the author’s opinion be then associated with the *sacrum* rather than the *profanum* sphere. In this sense, Mallowan’s original interpretation was better motivated. The find from Tell Abu Hafur sits well in this perspective and may initiate further discussion of the function of these artifacts, which is not immediately evident. The issue of spectacle idols cannot ultimately be resolved without new finds from the field, but questions like the ones covered in this article should be reviewed closely from time to time, broadening our view of the ‘spiritual’ life of proto-historic communities in Upper Mesopotamia.

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²² With such vision can be associated small (H 21mm) stone spectacle idol found at Tell Brak, represented on a decorated base (Mallowan 1947: Pl. XXVI/2) and a North Syrian amulet-seal representing a pair of spectacle idols standing on a sort of altars (Hogarth 1920: Pl III/64).

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A Pseudo-Ionic Blocked-out Capital at Nea Paphos

ALEKSANDRA BRZOZOWSKA

Abstract: The paper discusses recent studies on the capital of a column found in the western courtyard of the ‘Hellenistic House’ at Nea Paphos in 2008. The capital presents a very specific set of features which allows us to identify it with the architectural decoration in the Nabatean type known from Petra, Egypt and Cyprus. The comparative analysis allowed the author to recognize the capital from the ‘Hellenistic House’ as analogous to the so-called pseudo-Ionic ones, so far known only from Petra. However, this term, suggesting that capitals of that type originated from the Ionic order, seems to be inappropriate due to specific features of the pseudo-Ionic capitals. The paper discusses one of the three recognized so far types of the blocked-out capitals in the ‘Nabatean’ style from the site; the other will be presented in further papers.

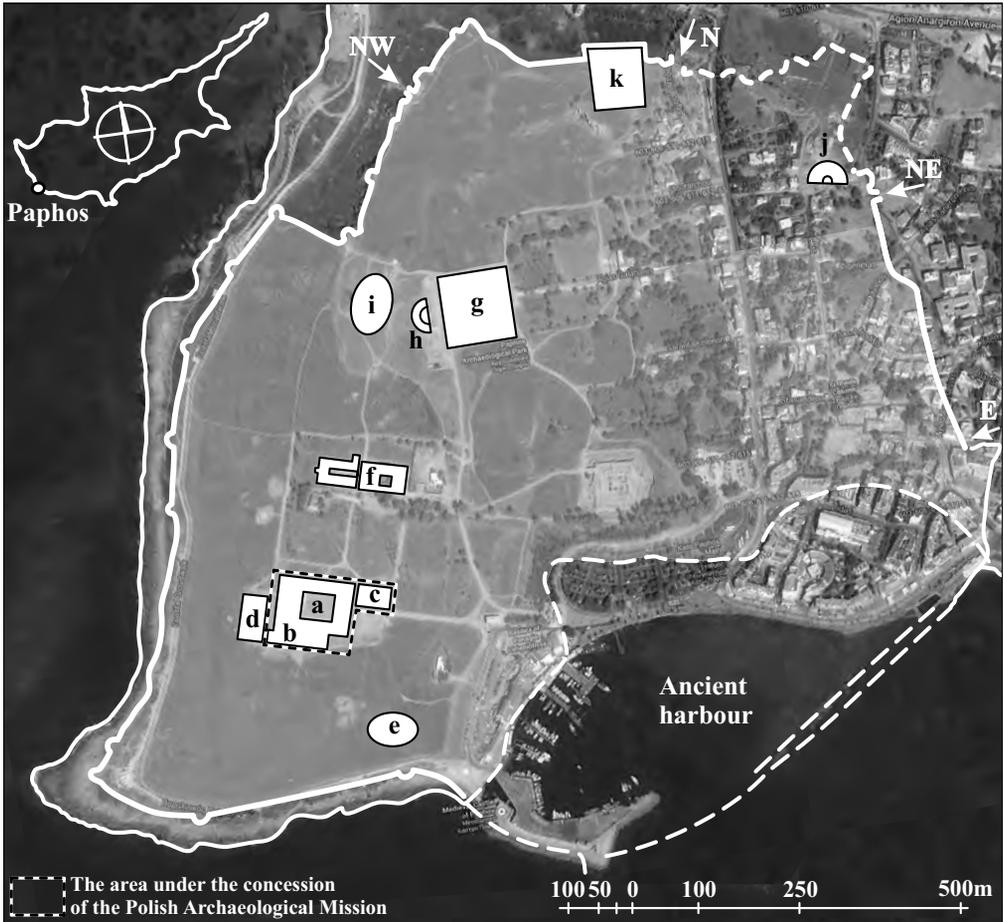
Keywords: Nea Paphos, ‘Hellenistic House’, architectural decoration, blocked-out capital, ‘Nabatean’ capital

Aleksandra Brzozowska, Katedra Historii Architektury, Sztuki i Techniki Wydziału Architektury PWr, Wrocław;
aleksandra.brzozowska@pwr.edu.pl

The subject of this article is the capital of a column found during archaeological works of Polish Archaeological Mission of the University of Warsaw (under the supervision of Dr Henryk Meyza) within the western courtyard (no. 13) of the ‘Hellenistic House’ in Nea Paphos (**Figs 1–2**).

During many years of excavations, while uncovering the city buildings, it was expected that traces of architectural decoration bearing Nabatean-type characteristics – known from other ancient Cypriot towns – would be found. The expectations resulted from a previous find in the area reported by G.R.H. Wright. He described it as an example of a Nabatean type capital found somewhere near the Apollo Hotel, perhaps connected with the underground sanctuary in Garrison’s Camp (**Fig. 1**).¹ The turning point came in 2009 during

¹ Wright 1992: 460–462, Pl. 308.2. The author’s description of the capital’s location is highly imprecise, the more so that the hotel no longer exists. Theoretically it was found to the south of the North Gate of the ancient

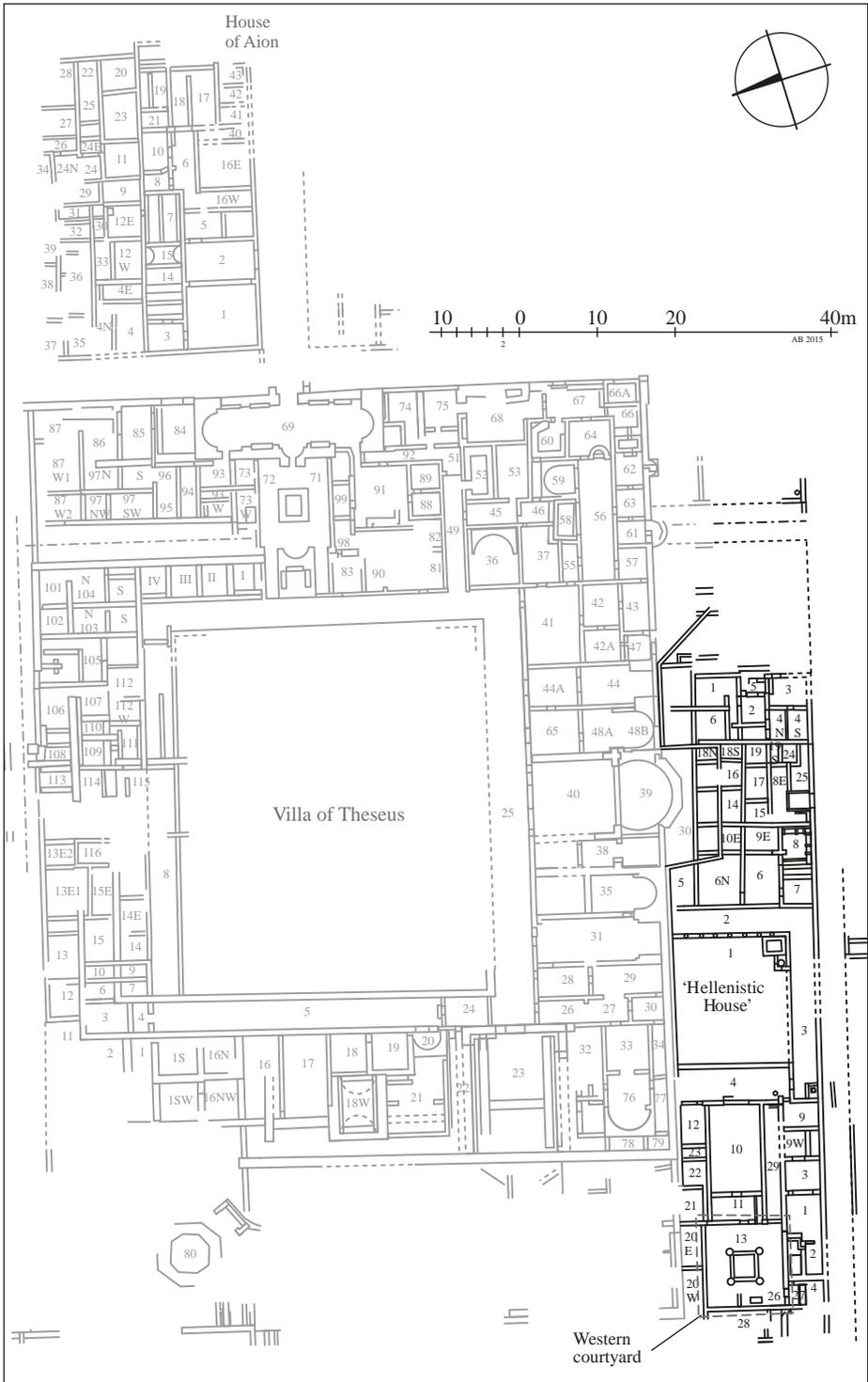


1. Plan of Nea Paphos: a. Villa of Theseus; b. 'Hellenistic House'; c. House of Aion; d. House of Orpheus; e. Amphitheatre; f. House of Dionysus; g. Agora; h. Odeion/Bouleuterion; i. Acropolis; j. Theatre; k. Garrison's Camp; Gates in defensive walls: NW – North-West; N – North; NE – North-East; E – East (based on: Medeksza 1998: 37, Fig. 1; Google Earth, accessed October 5, 2014).

excavations of the western courtyard of the 'Hellenistic House' (Fig. 2), which had not been previously studied.²

city walls, in the north-east part of the present Archaeological Park. The same capital has been, it seems, later seen close to the present site of Ayioi Anargyroi basilica and has most probably been covered up by thick soil layer, deposited to preserve underlying tombs and other antiquities. Personal communication of Dr Eustathios Raptou. Professor Demetrios Michaelides however refers also to other capitals in Nabatean style seen in the area of Nea Paphos: one in Agios Agapitikos (which is most probably the same as mentioned by G.R.H. Wright), and the second in the area around the North-West city gate – on the right-hand side of the ramp leading down from the city walls. The later was re-used and served for other purposes. Personal communication of Prof. Demetrios Michaelides. Author's last verification (February, 2016) did not confirm the existence of these capitals in the places mentioned.

² Meyza *et al.* 2012: 407, 412–418.



2. Map of the area under the concession of the Polish Archaeological Mission; major buildings: Villa of Theseus, House of Aion (grey lines) and 'Hellenistic House' (black lines), the western courtyard at the bottom of the drawing (processing by S. Medeksza, M. Słowińska, A. Brzozowska).

Excavations of the courtyard, whose modification is dated to the end of the first century AD,³ brought a series of interesting discoveries including architectural decorated elements of the type that were found for the first time on the site, and due to their close relation to capitals from Petra, may be qualified as elements of a blocked-out or Nabatean type of order.

THE BLOCKED-OUT CAPITAL FROM NEA PAPHOS

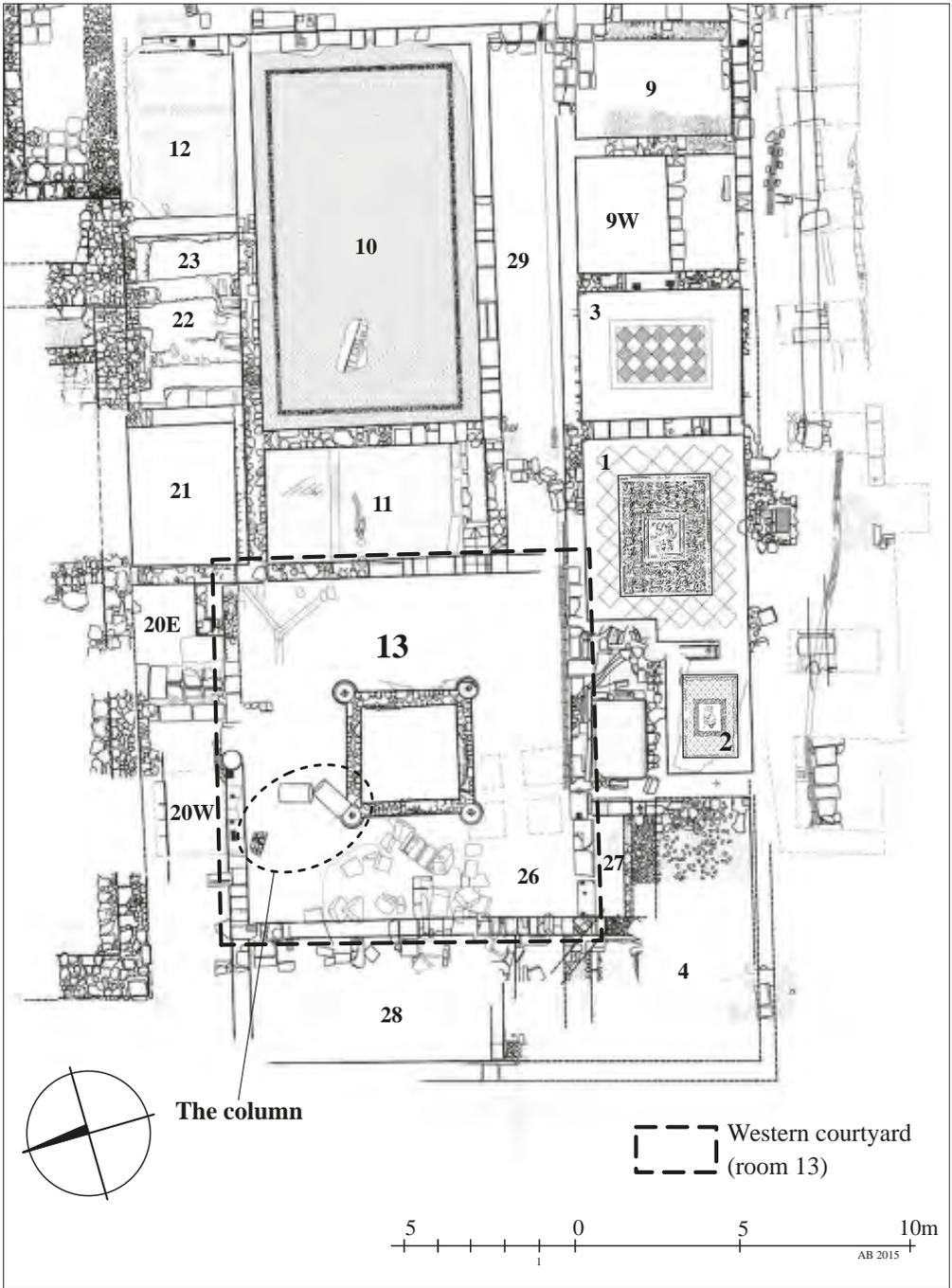
The capital was discovered in the north part of the western courtyard (**Figs 3–4**). Some remains of a *tetrastylus* were uncovered, in the middle of which there was an *impluvium* – a small basin for water. Bases of columns supporting the ceiling remained in the corners of the basin. Out of the four columns, fragments of one, from the northwestern corner, have been preserved nearby. A capital and some fragments of a smooth shaft (two drums covered with a thin layer of plaster) were discovered on the north side of the basin.⁴ The diameter of the lower drum of the shaft fitted the base, which confirmed the original position of the column in the northwestern corner of the basin. On the basis of remaining fragments of the column, Henryk Meyza reconstructed the original height of the column – it measured almost 4m, probably consisted of three drums and was characterised by squat, heavy proportions (**Fig. 5**). Based on the hypothetical reconstruction, the northwestern corner of the *tetrastylus* was rebuilt. The shaft of the column was reconstructed on the preserved base; a missing drum was added and a capital was placed on the top. Unfortunately, the capital was rotated by 45° in relation to its proper position – the line connecting the capital corners should not be the same as the axes of the *tetrastylus*, but 45° to them (**Fig. 5**).

The complete dimensions of the capital are: 78 x 80 x 35.5cm (**Fig. 6**). A broad cylinder, of radius of *c.* three-quarters of the height (H 35.5; r 25.5cm), forms the core of the capital. Four distinct corners protrude from the upper part of the core of the capital on its two diagonals. The corners have a shape of longitudinal cuboids with the ratio of width to height 0.3 to 1 (7.5 x 26cm). They broaden delicately in a wedge form when joining the capital's core. In their upper part, a slab – *abacus* is clearly noticeable, being broadened in relation to the core and corners (the height of 5cm). When the courtyard was destroyed, probably during one of the earthquakes that afflicted Nea Paphos in antiquity, the columns crashed, the impetus broke the capital into two parts and one of the corners fell out from the capital.

The core of the capital is surrounded by a ring with a quarter-circle cross-section, and turned upwards with its flat surface with a very small drop (W *c.* 8.5cm; H 10cm). The ring runs more or less to the middle part of the corners and rests on them. Under the ring, there is another subtle cylinder (2.5 x 3cm) close to the core. Then above the ring, between convergent corners, there is a geometrical projection having the shape of a cuboid wedge

³ Information obtained from Dr Henryk Meyza.

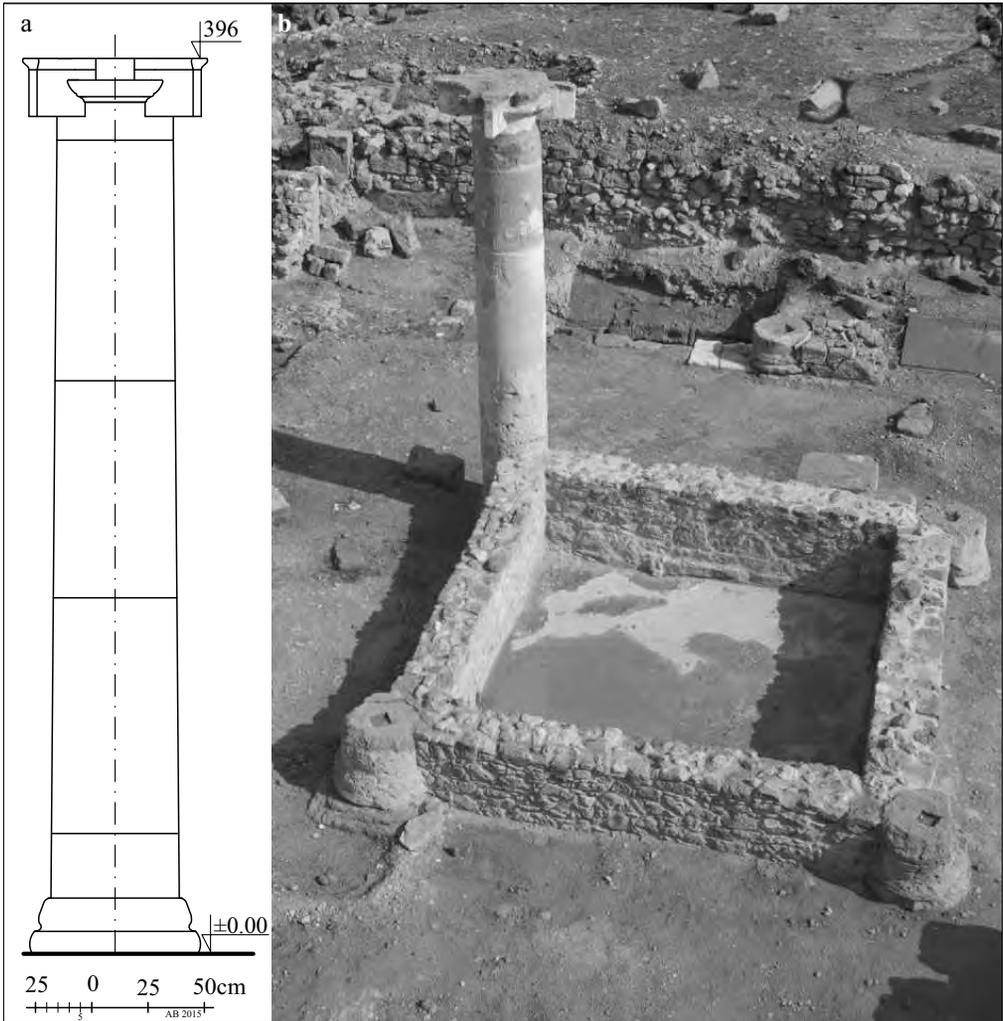
⁴ Meyza *et al.* 2012: 407, 412–418.



3. The western part of the 'Hellenistic House' (processing by S. Medeksza, M. Słowińska, A. Brzozowska).



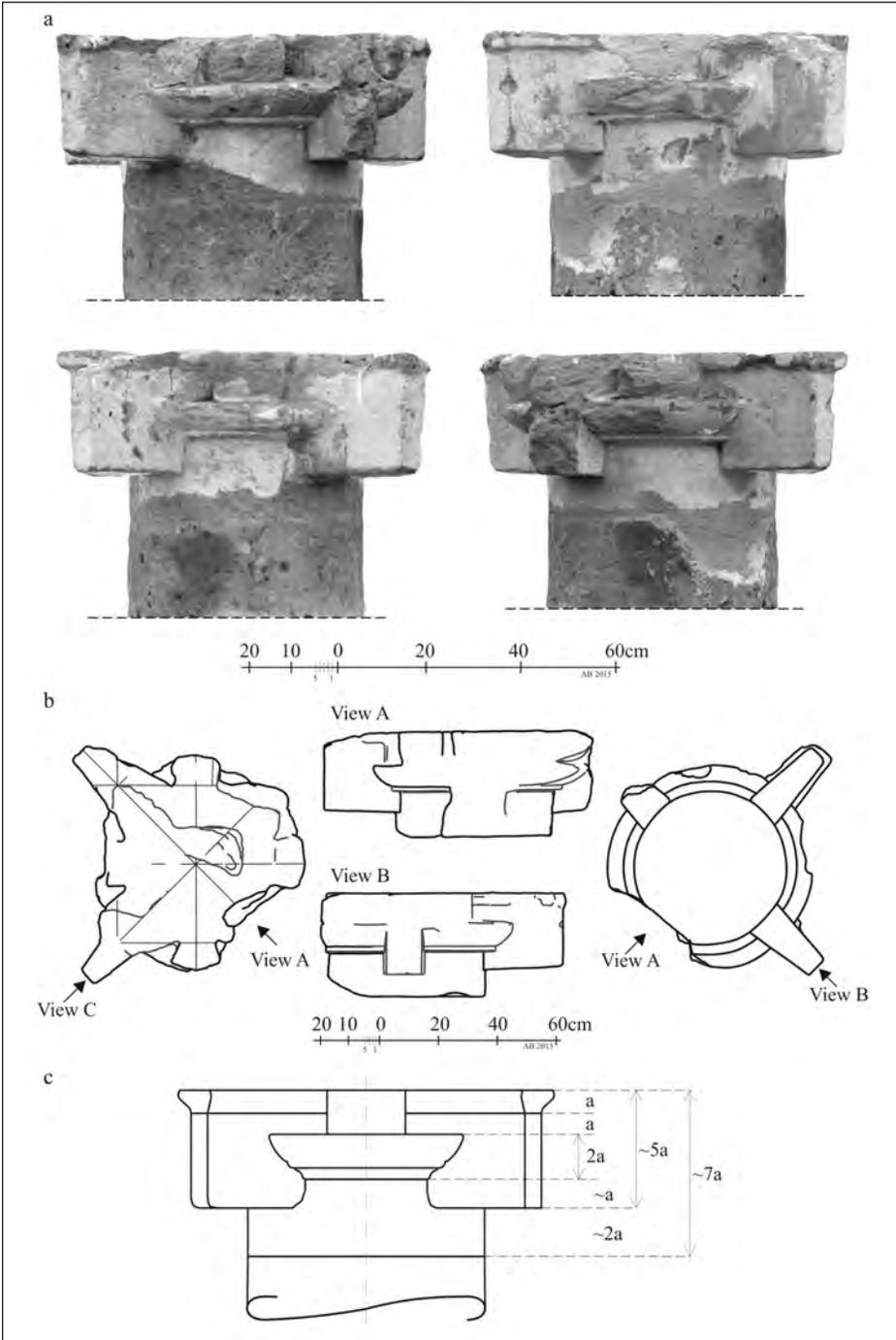
4. Two views of the western courtyard during excavations (Phot. H. Meyza).



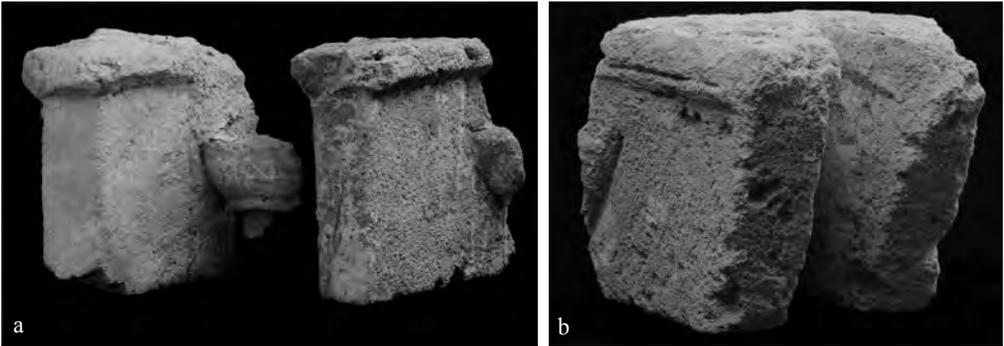
5. The column from the western courtyard of 'Hellenistic House': a. hypothetical reconstruction; b. restored at the original site (a. Drawing: A. Brzozowska; b. Phot. M. Jawornicki).

that narrows towards the core of the capital (W 17cm; H 9.5cm; D 9cm). It is most probably the equivalent of the Corinthian *fleuron*.

On the upper surface of the capital, there are mason's marks showing how it was designed (Fig. 6b). The longest lines run along the main axes of the capital and its diagonals. Parallel to the main axes, there are four mason's marks that form a square with corners where its lines cross the diagonals of the capital and are drawn outside the square – they show the axes of the corners. The main axes, which were extended outside the square, mark the axes of cuboid projections between the corners. The width of the outline of the square on the upper surface of the capital is almost equal to the diameter of the capital core at its bottom part (52cm).



6. Pseudo-Ionic blocked-out capital from Nea Paphos: a. the views prepared on the basis of the 3D model; b. the inventory drawings; c. the division of the capital height into seven equal parts (a. processing by A. Kubicka; b. drawing: P. Srokowski; c. drawing: A. Brzozowska).



7. Three corners of the capitals from Nea Paphos, analogous to the capital from the western courtyard of ‘Hellenistic House’: a. two single corners; b. one double corner (Phot. M. Jawornicki).

On examining the proportions of the capital, it may be observed that its height is divided into 7 equal parts: the *abacus* measures $1/7$ of the capital’s height, the corners – $5/7$, a geometrical projection (*fleuron*) $2/7$, and the ring’s height constitutes $2/7$ of the capital’s height (Fig. 6c).

COMPARATIVE MATERIAL FROM NEA PAPHOS

Three other unclassified corners of capitals from Nea Paphos resemble the one discussed above. After the discovery in 2008 of the whole capital, it was possible to identify two corners as coming most probably from similar capitals, and therefore from the western courtyard of the ‘Hellenistic House’ (Fig. 7a).

The third one of those corners (with no archaeological context) differs considerably from the rest – being a double corner (Fig. 7b). The block is of a very severe, geometrical form composed of two joining corners. They take the form of cuboids with a flat, slightly incised face. The corners (27 x 33 x 30cm) broaden wedge-like towards the unpreserved core of the capital. The corner to the left is larger and projects a little out in front of the face of the right one. There is also a slight difference in the inclination of both these corners – being greater in the one to the right side. Both corners have an *abacus* marked at the top and remains of a ring which probably surrounded the capital’s core. Despite that, it has practically remained only in the form of a slight impression on side faces of the corners, one can observe a clear resemblance to the form of the ring from the capital from the western courtyard. Barely visible traces of vertical mason’s marks can be noticed on the faces of the corners. On their surface there are remains of a great mass of mortar with hardly visible impressions of a slightly undulated surface – probably of an architrave that once rested on the capital. This fragment belongs to the most rough-hewn architectural details found in Nea Paphos, but it is also one of the most destroyed. That is why its present form may differ considerably from the original.

Fragments that are described above, as well as the majority of architectural elements from the area of Polish excavations in Nea Paphos, were carved out of a local stone –

calcarene.⁵ It is calcareous conglomerate (2.6g/cm³, with grains of *c.* 2–0.1mm) the structure of which resembles sandstone.⁶ It easily erodes and is characterised by weak durability and great absorbency; all those features had unquestionably adverse influence on the condition of blocks.

The capital from the western courtyard and its related corners have on their surface more or less dilapidated remains of a very thin layer of whitewash or fine-grained plaster. Undoubtedly, there were some reasons connected with the character of calcarenite, behind the use of this substance for covering capitals. Probably it was used to change the texture from rough into smooth enabling to even the surface, and/or to emphasize the carvings in places where the stone would not allow craftsmen to reach a desired shape. The outer layer of such plaster protected also the surface of stone by cutting off the access of water or giving it insulation properties. Whitewash changed also the colour of the capitals from a natural beige-brownish into white, which could be subsequently easily painted.⁷

COMPARATIVE MATERIAL FROM NABATEA, EGYPT AND CYPRUS

NABATEAN CAPITALS

The term Nabatean capitals refers to characteristic capitals first identified in the ancient town of Petra (**Fig. 8**).⁸ The appearance and development of Nabatean capitals are dated to the period from the first century BC to the middle of the first century AD.

Several types and variants have been distinguished among them; most commonly attested are Nabatean capitals type 1, 2, and 3 which are derived from Corinthian capitals and Alexandrian type floral capitals.⁹ They are all characterised by simplification of ornamental elements to blocked out forms, e.g. transformation of acanthus leaves into rings surrounding the capital core, or reduction and joining of volutes and *abacus* into solid corners that protrude far beyond the capital core (**Fig. 9**).

PSEUDO-IONIC CAPITALS FROM PETRA

Another type of a simplified capital known from Petra is the so-called pseudo-Ionic capital, which is supposed to derive its block, simplified form from an Ionic capital (**Fig. 9**). The analogy between the pseudo-Ionic capital and the capital from the western courtyard of the 'Hellenistic House'¹⁰ is of paramount importance for further analysis. That is why its

⁵ There are fragments of architectural detail made of other types of stone, e.g. granite or marble that were imported to Paphos. They belong to the classical orders from later buildings, most of them to the Villa of Theseus.

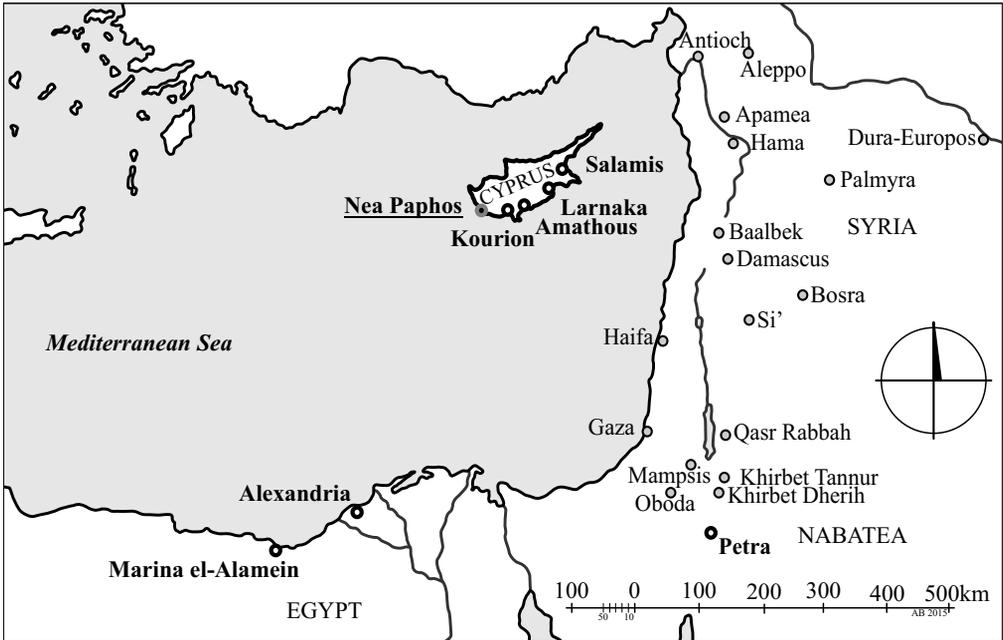
⁶ Information obtained from a geologist, Michalina Dzwoniarek-Konieczna.

⁷ There is no evidence of polychrome decoration on the surface of architectural details, but it may be the result of bad condition of the fragments. Painted decoration was found on the walls of the 'Hellenistic House' in east portico and adjacent rooms as well as on a shaft of a big column with painted fluting in the Early Roman House.

⁸ Bernhard 1980: 560–564; McKenzie 1990: 116–117.

⁹ McKenzie 1990: 116–117.

¹⁰ Meyza *et al.* 2012: 407, 413.



8. Map of the western part of the Mediterranean Sea basin with marked major archaeological sites from the Hellenistic and Roman periods (Drawing: A. Brzozowska; based on: McKenzie 1990: 5, Map 2).

detailed description seems to be necessary. The capital is massive with a strongly marked round core, from which four distinct corners project on the lines of two capital diagonals. The width of the capital is distinctly greater than its height, which makes it rather a squat form. The corners have the shape of vertically raised quarter-cylinders that are cuboids at the top, and the relation of the height to the width is about 1 to 1/3. In its middle part, the core is surrounded by a ring, the cross-section of which is a quarter-circle, and the height equals 1/3 of the capital. It is turned up with its flat surface.

Examples of pseudo-Ionic capitals in Petra may be found, among other places, on the Deir¹¹ and on the Palace Tomb¹² (Fig. 10). Outside Petra, this type of capitals or similar ones have not been found so far on any other archaeological site. The only exception is the capital from the 'Hellenistic House'.

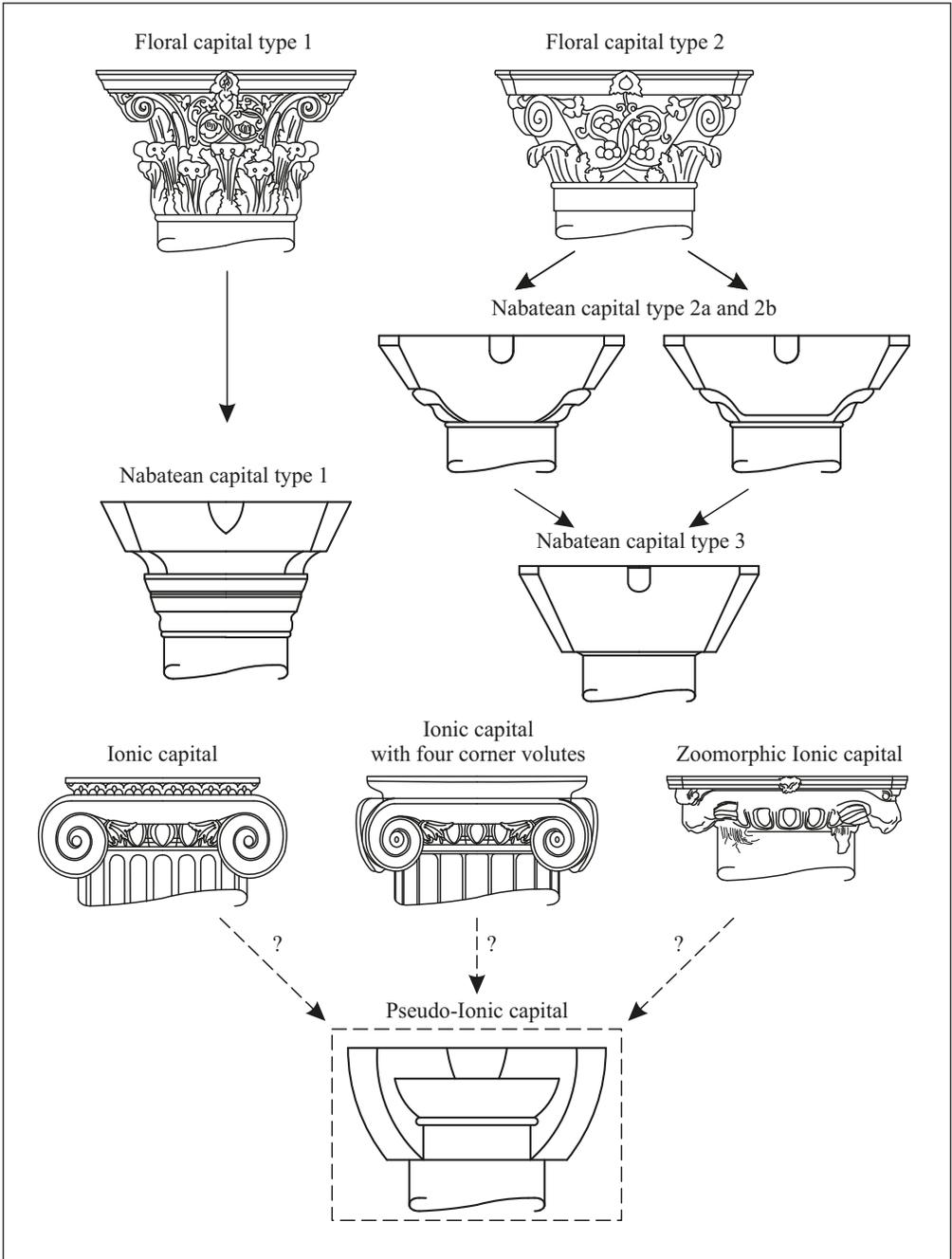
Judith McKenzie derives the genesis of a pseudo-Ionic capital from a classical Ionic capital and from a Ionic capital with four corner volutes (Fig. 9).¹³ She states that several capitals found near Colonnaded Street¹⁴ were a transitional form. Their volutes were left

¹¹ McKenzie 1990: 160.

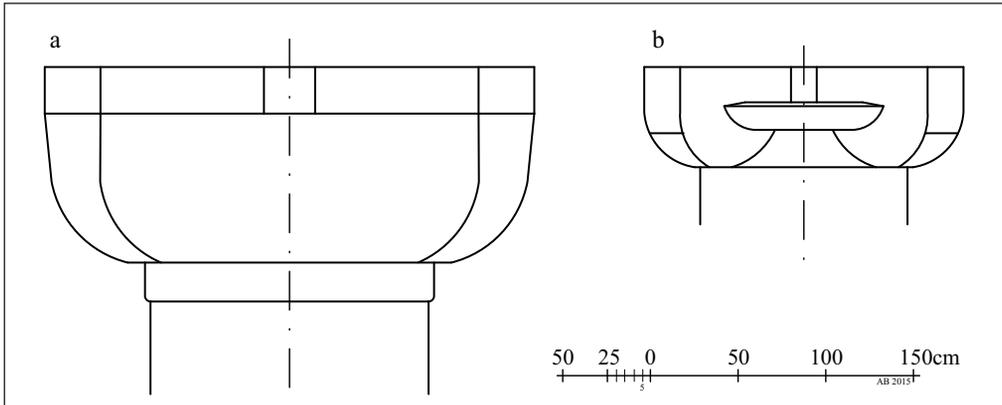
¹² McKenzie 1990: 162–164.

¹³ McKenzie 2001: 100–102.

¹⁴ McKenzie 1990: 167, 184. Finding the so-called pseudo-Ionic capitals in the neighbourhood of the Colonnaded Street does not prove its affiliation to the place – the differences of the diameters and shafts of the columns may suggest that the capitals could have originally belonged to a different building (McKenzie 1990: 132).



9. Evolution of capitals: from classical orders to Nabatean types (Drawing: A. Brzozowska; based on: McKenzie 1990: 190, Diagram 13–14; 2001: 101, Figs 11b, 14).



10. Examples of the pseudo-Ionic capitals from Petra: a. the Deir, the lower portico; b. the Palace Tomb, the upper portico (Drawing: A. Brzozowska; based on: McKenzie 1990: Pls 139, 146).

in the form of corners – still in a block form but in which conical spiral started to be cut out. According to her, capitals from the Deir and the Palace Tomb, were the next step in the evolution. Their form became even more simplified and was left as the intended one (Fig. 10).¹⁵

Nabatean capitals of all types are usually characterised as blocked out, having a reduced or abstract shape. Some researchers have even wrongly considered them to be unfinished,¹⁶ although it has been irrefutably proved that the simplification was an intentional and conscious decision of designing and not an accidental effect. It may be also confirmed by the range of this phenomenon – blocked out capitals were also found outside Petra and Nabatea, in Egypt and Cyprus.

ANALOGIES FROM EGYPT

Examples of capitals of the Nabatean type may be found in whole Egypt, e.g. in the temple of Augustus on the Island of Philae, in the Faiyum, or at Mons Porphyrites¹⁷ as well as in the most important city of Greco-Roman Egypt, namely Alexandria. In that metropolis however, the use of Corinthian capitals in the local Alexandrian type was evidently predominant in the Ptolemaic period.¹⁸

In Egypt the best, most cohesive and homogenous collection of capitals of reduced form may be found at Marina el-Alamein (Figs 8, 11).¹⁹ Interesting examples of architectural

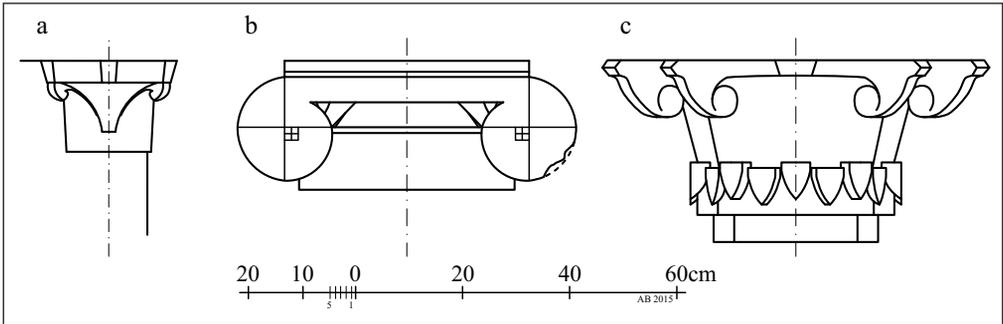
¹⁵ McKenzie 1990: 117.

¹⁶ Borchardt 1903: 73; Sabotka 1983: 200–201.

¹⁷ Czerner 2009: 7, 24.

¹⁸ McKenzie 2007: 85–88; Tkaczow 2008: 33–38.

¹⁹ Czerner 2009: 2.



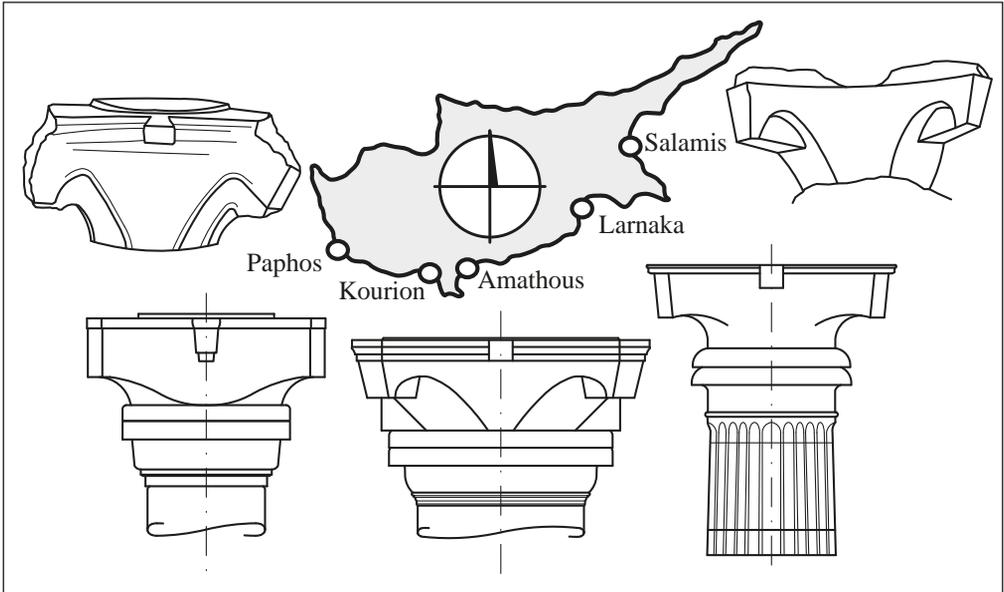
11. Capitals from Marina el-Alamein: a variant of the type 2 Nabatean capital (a), the pseudo-Ionic (b), and the pseudo-Corinthian (c) (Drawing: A. Brzowska; based on: Czerner 2009: 57, Figs 10/58, 13/68, 39).

decorative elements were discovered there in the area of a necropolis outside the city, as well as in the city itself. Those from the necropolis, from pillar tombs (first century BC – first century AD), show a great resemblance to the examples from Petra, being variants of the type 2 Nabatean capital. Crowning and capitals of pilasters decorating corners of pillars took a similar form. The architectural elements from the city (first–third century AD) are distinguished by such simplifications that have not been found anywhere else, and therefore researchers classified them as the type of architectural detail from Marina el-Alamein. They appear in three variations: 1. the pseudo-Corinthian order, 2. the pseudo-Ionic order, and 3. the pseudo-Doric order from Marina. Among these, pseudo-Corinthian capitals from Marina clearly stand out. They occur in several variants, e.g. crowning the ‘engaged’ columns with pilasters characterised by a very rich form. Simplified form of capitals from Marina relates them to decorations of the Nabatean type, but their stylization is different from those found at Petra and in Nabatea. Especially capitals from city buildings, although characterised by a strongly reduced form, preserved a very clear resemblance to classical orders, far greater than Nabatean capitals. The initial form was distinctly marked with characteristic details only slightly reduced.

THE ORIGIN OF NABATEAN CAPITALS AND ANALOGIES FROM CYPRUS

The name ‘Nabatean capitals’ implies that the original place of their creation, was Nabatea. This assumption is nowadays partially negated by some scholars.²⁰ The main controversy over the origin of this architectural order relates to the possible cultural and economic primacy of Alexandria over Petra. At present, the majority of specialists derive the origin of Nabatean forms from Ptolemaic Egypt, whose unquestionable centre was Alexandria. In those times there were no builders and artisans in Nabatea who could have constructed Petra. Therefore, at least at the beginning specialists were probably brought to the region from faraway places to create the city and to teach local craftsmen masonry. Similarity

²⁰ Pensabene 1989: 63, 131; Daszewski 1990: 121–123; McKenzie 1990: 117; Czerner 2009: 2.



12. Distribution of Nabatean capitals on Cyprus (Drawing: A. Brzozowska; based on: Callot 1988: 219–228; Czerner 2009: 11; Sinos 1990: 220, 228–229, Fig. 250; Wright 1992: Pls 308.2, 308.3, 309, 311).

of the architectural detail from Petra and Alexandria indicates from where those foreign builders could have been brought.

The presence of simplified forms of ‘Nabataean’ architectural elements, dated between the first century BC and first century AD, outside Nabatea – in Egypt – may confirm the thesis of the Alexandrian origin of this architectural detail. It is postulated by some scholars²¹ who connect this phenomenon with supremacy of the Ptolemies over the region. In the context of studies of the capital from the ‘Hellenistic House’, it becomes important inasmuch as Nea Paphos²² was also under Ptolemaic rule in the period discussed. It could be a crucial clue concerning the origin of Nabatean forms and their spreading over the eastern part of the Mediterranean basin, because the third territory (after Nabatea and Egypt) where examples of Nabatean orders were found is Cyprus (**Figs 8, 12**).

During excavations carried out in ancient Cypriot cities, on the south coast of the island, several capitals and their fragments were discovered, which bear features with the characteristic simplifications described above. In Salamis,²³ on the south-eastern coast, the Nabatean order was used in the gymnasium. In a quarry of Xylophagou near Larnaca, a capital was found which, although unfinished, yet shows a clear resemblance to Nabatean capitals.²⁴

²¹ Pensabene 1989: 131; Daszewski 1990: 121–123; McKenzie 1990: 117; Czerner 2009: 2.

²² Daszewski 1998: 8–9.

²³ Wright 1972: 175–177, Pls XXXII–XXXVII; 1992: 460–462, Pl. 308.3; Sinos 1990: 228–229; Czerner 2009: 11.

²⁴ Callot 1988: 219–228; Czerner 2009: 11; Wright 1992: 460–462, Pls 309, 311.

Capitals of supports found in the middle and western part of the south coast of the Island, in the temples of Amathous²⁵ and Kourion²⁶ and at Nea Paphos²⁷ also acquired decoration of the same type. It is worth mentioning that stylization of all Cypriot Nabatean capitals was characterised by certain original features, not attested in other regions, either in Nabatea or in Egypt. However, all edifices found so far on Cyprus with Nabatean architectural detail were built in the orders related to the Nabatean capitals type 1 (**Fig. 12**). The capital from the 'Hellenistic House' is the exception to this rule. It is so far the only example of an architectural order outside Nabatea that shows evident similarity to the so-called pseudo-Ionic capitals.²⁸ The similarity is really striking with only two small differences. The first is the rounding of the lower parts of the corners in the capitals from Petra which in Nea Paphos are cuboid. The second one concerns the ratio of the height of the corners to the height of the whole capitals. In case of the capital from Nea Paphos, the corners measure about 5/7 of the capital height whereas in the capitals from Petra they have the full height of the capital (**Fig. 13**). Unfortunately, too schematic drafts and diagrams of this capital in Judith McKenzie's publication on Petra²⁹ do not allow us to complete more detailed analyses and comparisons.

THE ORIGIN OF THE SO-CALLED PSEUDO-IONIC CAPITALS

There are at least two theories of the origin of the so-called pseudo-Ionic capitals. Andreas Schmidt-Colinet considered them to descend from the Doric order – Doric capitals with 'horns'.³⁰ However, it seems that the dominant form of the corners does not allow us to treat them only as additional elements, but as an integral and specific feature of these capitals. The capitals' core also does not share many common features with the form of the Doric capital.

Judith McKenzie classified capitals from the Deir and the Palace Tomb as derivatives of the classical Ionic order³¹ and Ionic capitals with four corner volutes.³² The following features of these capitals were supposed to prove the thesis: the ratio of the capital's height to its width (the capital being clearly wider than higher), block form, corners' placing on two diagonals of the capital, which was supposed to correspond to the localisation of four volutes of the Ionic capital, and a ring surrounding the capital's core, considered to be a reminiscence of the *echinus*(?).

²⁵ Hermary, Aupert 1982: 745–751; Hermary, Schmid 1985: 279–286; Wright 1992: 460–462, Pl. 310.

²⁶ Scranton 1967: 22–23; Sinos 1990: 220, 227–228, Fig. 250; Soren (Ed.) 1987: 127–152; Wright 1992: 460–462, Pl. 308.1.

²⁷ Wright 1992: 460–462, Pl. 308.2.

²⁸ Meyza *et al.* 2012: 407, 412–418.

²⁹ McKenzie 1990: 117. What is more, the scheme presented in diagram 14 (McKenzie 1990: 190) varies considerably in shape and proportions from the capitals shown in the photographs of the Deir and the Palace Tomb.

³⁰ Schmidt-Colinet 1983.

³¹ McKenzie 1990: 117.

³² McKenzie 2001: 100–102.

One has to remember, however, several fundamental differences between a hypothetical original – a classical Ionic capital – and its probable transformation – the Nabatean pseudo-Ionic capital. The first one concerns entirely different shape of corners (longitudinal, symmetrical cuboids in case of the Nabatean capital) that, in a potential Ionic original, were volutes characterised by an irregular, sculptural form. Secondly, the so-called pseudo-Ionic capitals lack the basic attribute of the Ionic capital – namely the differentiation of the front and back sides and the lateral ones. According to McKenzie the lack of this differentiation is derived from the Ionic capitals with four corner volutes, which were also found in Petra.³³ However, it should be remembered that such capitals were relatively rare, surely far more infrequent than the classical Ionic ones. In our opinion, these features make the McKenzie's hypothesis difficult to accept.

As it has already been mentioned, on the basis of decorations from Petra, Judith McKenzie presents how the capitals were transformed: from classical Ionic capitals into Nabatean pseudo-Ionic ones we know from the Deir and the Palace tomb. An intermediate phase of simplification or reduction would include afore mentioned examples of capitals from the Colonnaded Street.³⁴ Unfortunately, the photographs from Judith McKenzie's publication illustrate only their front side, but even such a presentation, in our opinion, does not prove that there is a connection between their form and capitals defined as pseudo-Ionic.

One should also pay attention to the fact that examples of simplified capitals derived from the Ionic order are known from Egypt, e.g. Mons Porphyrites and Marina el-Alamein,³⁵ as well as from Israel, e.g. Masada.³⁶ Their form maintained a clear connection with the classical Ionic capital by preserving differentiation of capital sides (**Figs 11b, 13f-g**). Schematized Ionic capitals from Hellenistic period were also found in Cyprus. Their volutes are much simpler, nevertheless the prototype is easily recognizable (**Fig. 13e**).³⁷

A characteristic element of the pseudo-Ionic capitals from Petra as well as the pseudo-Ionic blocked-out capital from Nea Paphos is a geometrical projection, which most probably constitutes a simplified form of a flower – a *fleuron* decorating the middle part of the *abacus*. It does not appear in any Ionic capitals; neither in classical version, nor in the version with four volutes (**Fig. 9**), nor in the blocked-out version known from Kition, Masada or Marina el-Alamein (**Figs 11b, 13e-g**). It is, however, a feature of the Corinthian and floral capitals, as well as zoomorphic capitals known from Petra (**Fig. 9**).³⁸ In those latter, the corner volutes were replaced by animal heads, e.g. elephants or goats. Judith McKenzie defines them as the Ionic capitals with animals protomes, whereas Joseph Patrich as zoomorphic Ionic capitals.³⁹ It seems worth considering whether these capitals might

³³ McKenzie 2001: 100–102.

³⁴ McKenzie 1990: Pl. 49.

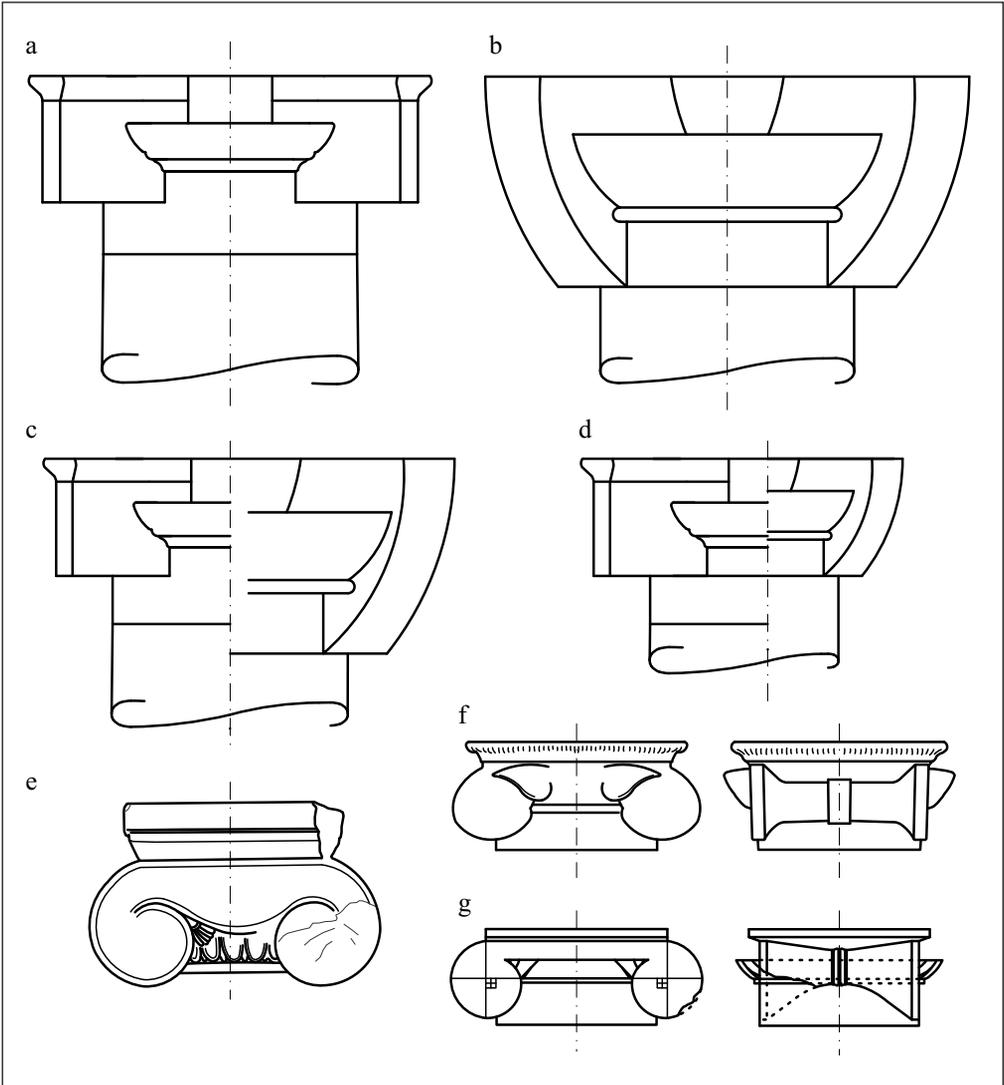
³⁵ Czerner 2009: 7, 24, 68, Fig. 39.

³⁶ Czerner 2009: 69, Fig. 42.

³⁷ Wright 1992: 460–462, Pl. 308.1.

³⁸ McKenzie 2001: 102; Patrich 1996: 207.

³⁹ McKenzie 2001: 102; Patrich 1996: 207.



13. Comparison of the pseudo-Ionic blocked-out capital from Nea Paphos (a) with the pseudo-Ionic capital from Petra (b); the juxtaposition according to: the diameter of the shaft of the columns (c) and the height of the corners (d). Simplified Ionic capitals from: e. Kition (Hellenistic period); f. Masada; g. Marina el-Alamein (Drawing: A. Brzozowska; based on: Czerner 2009: 68, Figs 39/69, 42; McKenzie 1990: 190, Diagram 14; Wright 1992: Pl. 308.1).

have been a hybrid form joining classical features: Corinthian (*fleuron*), Ionic (egg-and-tongue pattern) together with oriental – eastern features in the form of a corner volutes converted into animal heads.

Perhaps the so-called pseudo-Ionic capitals might be related to such zoomorphic capitals but with far more complicated genesis. The blocked-out form of the former and the delicate decoration (animal heads, *fleuron*, etc.) of the latter are characterised by similar

proportions and a comparable time of origin (first century AD).⁴⁰ However, the assessment of their mutual dependence might be difficult due to the lack of the univocal and final records.

In the light of the discussed data, it would be more accurate, in our opinion, to define pseudo-Ionic capitals as an independent order. Since there is not enough comparative material, it is difficult to decide about their origin which perhaps should be sought somewhere else. However, since the term pseudo-Ionic capitals is widely accepted, there is no point in changing the name, but one should keep in mind the doubts enumerated above.

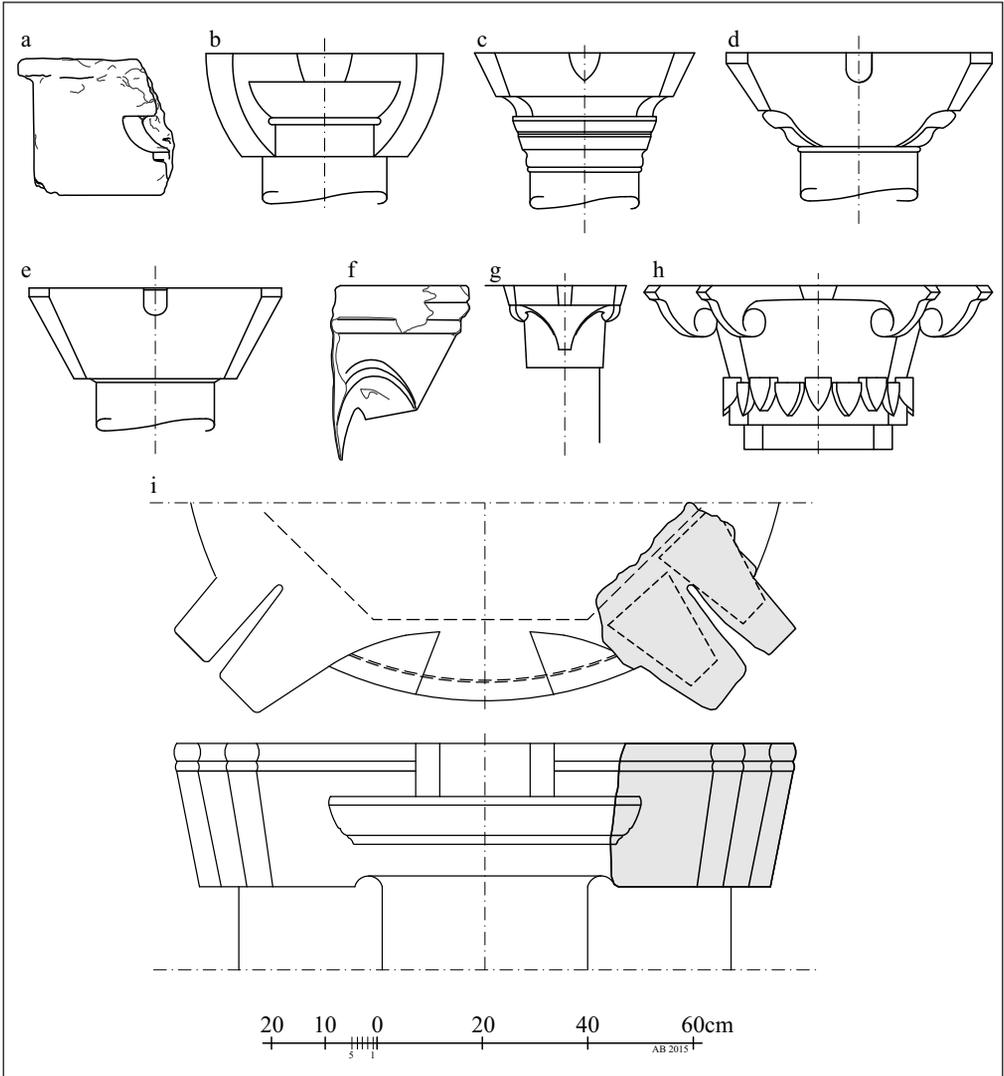
PSEUDO-IONIC BLOCKED-OUT CAPITAL FROM NEA PAPHOS

Since the term ‘Nabatean’ in relation to capitals of simplified form may be rather controversial, the name ‘blocked-out’ seems more adequate. It points to the features characteristic of the capital form and not to the geographical region. The latter may be misleading, especially as far as capitals from outside Nabatea are concerned. Therefore, in the context of what has been said above, it may be proper to name the capital from the western courtyard of the ‘Hellenistic House’ pseudo-Ionic blocked-out capital from Nea Paphos. The above-mentioned double corner, without context (**Fig. 7b**) but showing certain similarity to the pseudo-Ionic blocked-out capital from Nea Paphos, has no direct analogies in any material, either in Paphos or other ancient cities of Cyprus, Egypt or Nabatea. It has, nevertheless, many characteristics that enable one to associate its form with different Nabatean capitals in general. The remains of the ring surrounding the core of the capital seem to be related to the pseudo-Ionic blocked-out capital from Nea Paphos and the so-called pseudo-Ionic capitals from Petra (**Fig. 14a-b**). The incised face of the corner makes it similar to the Nabatean capitals type 1, 2, and 3, crownings of pillar tombs from Marina el-Alamein or the Nea Paphos blocked-out capital (**Fig. 14c-g**). Finally, the double form of the discussed capital associates it with engaged columns, for example with many Nabatean capitals type 2a and 2b from the tombs in Petra⁴¹ or with a pseudo-Corinthian capital from Marina from the *aedicula*. Its architectural frame was formed by engaged columns with pilasters having such double corners (**Fig. 14h**).

A remnant of the ring characteristic of the pseudo-Ionic blocked-out capital from Nea Paphos would entitle us to qualify it as belonging to the group of the pseudo-Ionic blocked-out capital from Nea Paphos type ‘a’. The category ‘a’ that we propose here would indicate the variants of the basic form, characterised by corner’s incised face. On the other hand, the fact of redoubling the corner of the capital suggests that this is a relic of a complex support, perhaps similar to those from Marina. Reconstruction, based on these two assumptions, is highly hypothetical because of the lack of any clues concerning the form of the capital’s core and of the whole support (**Fig. 14i**). Neither the lack of archaeological context nor a specific form of this block allow us to establish its original location, even approximately.

⁴⁰ McKenzie 1990: 46, 50, 52, 133, 139; 2001: 100–102.

⁴¹ E.g. McKenzie 1990: Pls 2d, 3a, b, 4d, 5c, d, 9a, b.



14. Analogies to the pseudo-Ionic blocked-out capital from Nea Paphos type 'a': a. the corner of the pseudo-Ionic blocked-out capital from Nea Paphos; b. the pseudo-Ionic capital from Petra; c-e. the Nabatean Capitals type 1, 2 and 3; f. corner of the Nea Paphos blocked-out capital; g. the pilaster of the pillar tomb T1GH from Marina el-Alamein; h. the pseudo-Corinthian double capital from Marina el-Alamein; i. hypothetical reconstruction of the pseudo-Ionic blocked-out capital from Nea Paphos Type 'a' (a, f, i: drawing: A. Brzozowska; b-e, g-h: drawing: A. Brzozowska, based on: McKenzie 1990: 190, Pl. 149a, Diagram 14; Czerner 2009: 57, 77, Figs 8, 56).

SUMMARY

The capital from the western courtyard of the 'Hellenistic House' and its related three corners are first examples of architectural details of Nabatean origin discovered in Nea Paphos, within the area excavated by the Polish Archaeological Mission. In general,

capitals of the Nabatean type – of reduced, block or simplified abstract form – have been encountered in the territories dependent on or related in some way to the Ptolemaic Egypt, and first of all Alexandria. This situation is reflected by the time of erecting buildings with decoration ‘in Nabatean type’, the majority of which were built between the first century BC and the first century AD, irrespective of the place – would that be Egypt, Nabatea or Cyprus.⁴² It corresponds well to the political situation of Nea Paphos, which originally was an important Ptolemaic and Roman harbour on the Mediterranean Sea. It is also confirmed by dating of the western courtyard of the ‘Hellenistic House’ (before the end of the first century AD) and by the used forms of architectural decoration in the Nabatean style.

The pseudo-Ionic blocked-out capital from Nea Paphos is clearly analogous to the so called pseudo-Ionic capitals, however their forms are not identical. The simultaneity and independence of their appearance in Petra, Egypt and Cyprus may be a manifestation of some general tendency to simplify architectural detail. It could, however, manifest itself in different, specific, regional solutions.

It may be observed that both in Petra⁴³ and in Paphos, and even in Marina el-Alamein, the form of architectural details depended, to a certain degree, on the building material. In each of those places, local stone of rather inferior quality was used. Perhaps difficulties in achieving planned precision of architectural detail (such as ornamental openings, delicate adornments, filigree decorations, e.g. acanthus leaves, volutes, etc.) contributed, at least initially and indirectly, to the simplification and geometrizing of capitals’ forms that could have been easier to be cut out in such coarse material. With the passage of time, these reduced shapes became approved and popular, and changed into more sublime, abstract style of decoration.

An important aspect of studies on Nabatean capitals concerns connection of their form with a *chiaroscuro* effect. Light and shade uncover all imperfections of spatial forms, especially in the case of geometrical solids, in which – contrary to those with numerous small ornaments or openings – nothing distracts the observer’s eye and diverts his attention from the shape. In this context, the pseudo-Ionic blocked-out capital from Nea Paphos seem to speak for themselves in their geometrized form, the nuances of which light and shade unveil beautifully.

Summing up, it is worth underlining that the form of ‘Nabatean’ capitals, irrespective of the place they appear (Nabatea, Egypt or Cyprus), is a fully intentional artistic effect. The process of cutting capitals representing classical architectural orders, consisting in gradual transformation of a block form into more realistic ones, could have been stopped on every stage in order to achieve an interesting shape. The appreciation of proportions of transitional forms led ancient craftsmen to resign consciously from a classical shape and to start advanced stylization based on geometry and reduction of the form, which resulted

⁴² Czerner 2009: 2; Hermary, Schmid 1985: 286; McKenzie 1990: 46, 50, 52, 133, 139; Sinos 1990: 21–25; Wright 1972: 177.

⁴³ McKenzie 1990: 117.

in departure from realism in favour of abstraction.⁴⁴ The pseudo-Ionic blocked-out capital from Nea Paphos is a perfect example of this phenomenon.

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⁴⁴ Czerner 2009: 12.

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‘Bottle-brush’ Tree and Its Role in Creating Standard Compositions on Neo-Assyrian Seals in the Linear-style

MATEUSZ ISKRA

Abstract: Neo-Assyrian glyptics produced several standard compositions which were repeatedly reproduced over the three centuries of the Neo-Assyrian empire’s existence, as attested by the numerous seals engraved with almost identical scenes of rituals or hunts. The canon of these compositions could be upheld by applying a rigid scheme in the scenes’ planning and maintaining the same technique of their execution. The seal-cutters often used simple incisions as outlines for the planned scene, which they subsequently masked as floral elements resembling a bottle-brush. These elements of the compositions provide a key to exploring the seal-engraving techniques of the first millennium BC.

Keywords: Neo-Assyrian period, Mesopotamia, seals, seal-cutter, ‘bottle-brush’ tree, standard composition

Mateusz Iskra, Centrum Archeologii Śródziemnomorskiej UW im. Kazimierza Michałowskiego, Warszawa; iskramateusz87@gmail.com

In the assemblage of the British Museum Department of Western Asiatic Antiquities collection there is a rather ordinary cylinder seal catalogued as BM WA 13640,¹ made of serpentine² and dating from the Neo-Assyrian period (the second half of the eighth century BC).³ Although the scene depicted on that seal is not outstanding in any way, its technique of execution provides the departure point for this short discussion of the role of a floral element – the so-called ‘bottle-brush’ tree⁴ – in the creation of the standard composition.

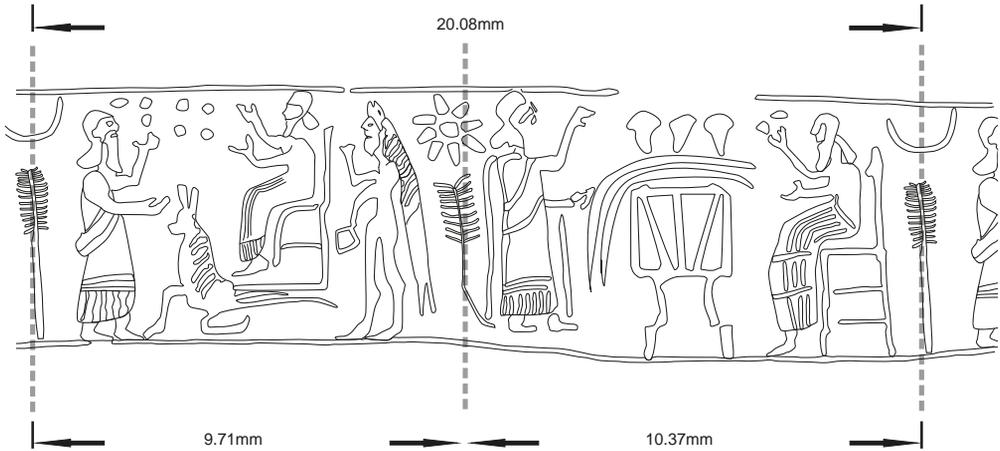
The seal is engraved with two scenes (**Fig. 1**): the first one depicts the worship of a deity, the other – a banquet scene, each taking up a similar surface. Both scenes are divided by two

¹ Collon 2001: 70, Fig. 125.

² The seal is slightly barrel-shaped, with an oblique top, which – considering the difference in the diameters of its top and bottom (18mm and 20mm), led Dominique Collon to regard it as the bottom part of a larger seal (Collon 2001: 71).

³ Collon 2001: 64.

⁴ A term coined by D. Collon while presenting a collection of first millennium BC seals (Collon 2001). It stands for a floral element with a long stem and an oblong crown.



1. Sketch of impression BM WA 134640 seal (Drawing: M. Iskra; based on: Collon 2001: Fig. 125).

plants shaped as the ‘bottle-brush’ tree (**Fig. 2a**), which might be treated as an additional decorative element. However, this would be a superficial observation, since the role of such elements is much more significant for the composition as a whole. To appreciate this, envisage yourself as an ancient ‘Assyrian’ seal-cutter. These craftsmen worked in small, hard stones, up to 4cm high and did not have at their disposal the specialist tools available today. The basic materials used in the production of Assyrian linear-style seals were relatively soft stones, such as serpentine, limestone or chlorite.⁵ Results of technological analyses on the first millennium BC specimens, point to four engraving techniques: microchipping, filing, drilling and wheel-cutting.⁶ With regard to soft materials, linear-style seals were usually deeply engraved by use of hand-held tools, such as burins.⁷ Some small details, elliptical in shape and grooved longitudinally were engraved by use of lapidary engraving wheel.⁸ With the tools at the engraver’s disposal, he needed to be very precise in the planning of the scene about to be executed. Up till now, no sketches or ready models have been identified which could have served as aids in this process.⁹ However, according to the present author’s hypothesis, traces of guidelines which provided reference points for the various elements depicted in a given scene can be found on the seal itself. This observation is well exemplified by seal BM WA 13640, where these elements are clearly visible.¹⁰

On this seal, due to the symmetrical position of the two ‘bottle-brush’ trees, spaces between them are of equal width and the scenes they contain form a harmonious composition.

⁵ Buchanan 1966: 106.

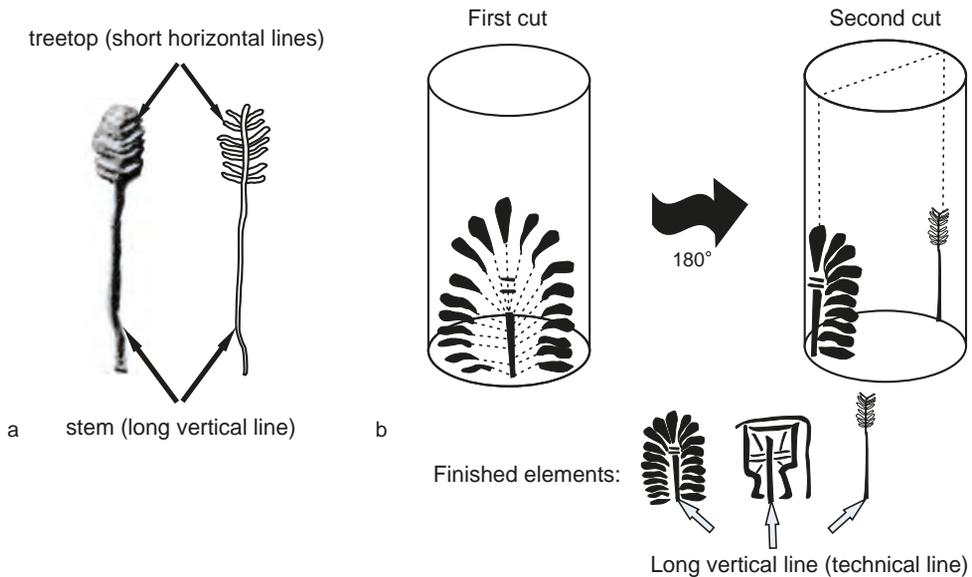
⁶ On engraving techniques, see: Sax, Meeks 1994; 1995; Sax, Meeks, McNabb 1998.

⁷ Sax 2001: 21.

⁸ Sax, Meeks, Collon 2000.

⁹ Moorey 1994: 104.

¹⁰ According to P.R.S. Moorey’s hypothesis, seals, particularly in variegated stones, were covered with a layer of clay or plaster to take initial guidelines (Moorey 1994: 104).



2a. The 'bottle-brush' tree; b. illustration of engraving process (Drawing: M. Iskra).

Execution of the 'bottle-brush' tree element is technically easy, as it consists of a long vertical incision for the 'stem' and a few short horizontal notches imitating branches. Without the latter, the 'stem' is simply a long vertical line which would have been very useful to the engraver at the beginning of his work. It must be kept in mind that while working such a small object of cylindrical shape it is difficult to measure the precise proportions of the particular elements of its ornament. First, the engraver needed to mark some reference points for the intended composition, most probably by engraving thin, vertical lines. If the scene comprised many elements, as in the case of seal BM WA 134640, at least two such reference points would be needed. After making the first incision, the seal was turned by 180° and the second line was placed so as to obtain two equal fields for each of the planned scenes (**Fig. 2b**). If the preparations for the carving of the seal did indeed proceed this way, the 'bottle-brush' tree can be regarded as a technical element, which was turned into an ornament at a further stage of the work. Use of such elements is not rare and can be found in the standard compositions of Neo-Assyrian linear-style seals.

The 'bottle-brush' tree is most frequently encountered in popular compositions depicting palace scenes, known in the subject literature by the names of the 'Pot-stand group', the 'Table group' and the 'Sacred tree with a winged disc and worshippers', popularized in the works of Dominique Collon and Edith Porada.¹¹ Despite visible differences, all these

¹¹ Porada 1948: 76–77; Collon 2001: 64–65.

scenes have a similar composition (**Fig. 3a-b**). It usually comprises three main elements: the middle one (usually a stylized palmette, a table or a stand with a vessel) and two side ones, placed antithetically (usually in the form of human figures). The ‘bottle-brush’ tree element in such scenes is usually located at a margin, behind the human figure’s back.¹² Its main, technical role was to keep the two side elements from overlapping, but it could also be of use in determining their respective widths. For this, however, a second technical guideline was needed. In this context, the form of the middle element of these compositions needs to be considered. From a technical point of view, the ‘sacred tree’ is a collection of notches to both sides of a straight vertical line, while a T-shaped table, which often features in the ‘Table group’ scenes, also incorporates a long, straight line visible between the table’s legs.¹³

These long, straight lines are important as they seem to be the long sought-after second technical guideline needed to establish the widths of the three main elements of the composition. Having made the two technical incisions, the seal-cutter could start work on the actual engraving of the central element of the scene, disguising it in the form of a table or the ‘sacred tree’, and then proceed to the engraving of the two side elements. In some cases, however, the middle feature was not particularly elaborated on and this element was left in the form of a ‘bottle-brush’ tree.¹⁴ In the author’s opinion, the correct execution of the two technical guidelines was the decisive factor in proper placement of the various elements of the scene, which was essential in the creation of repeatable compositions.

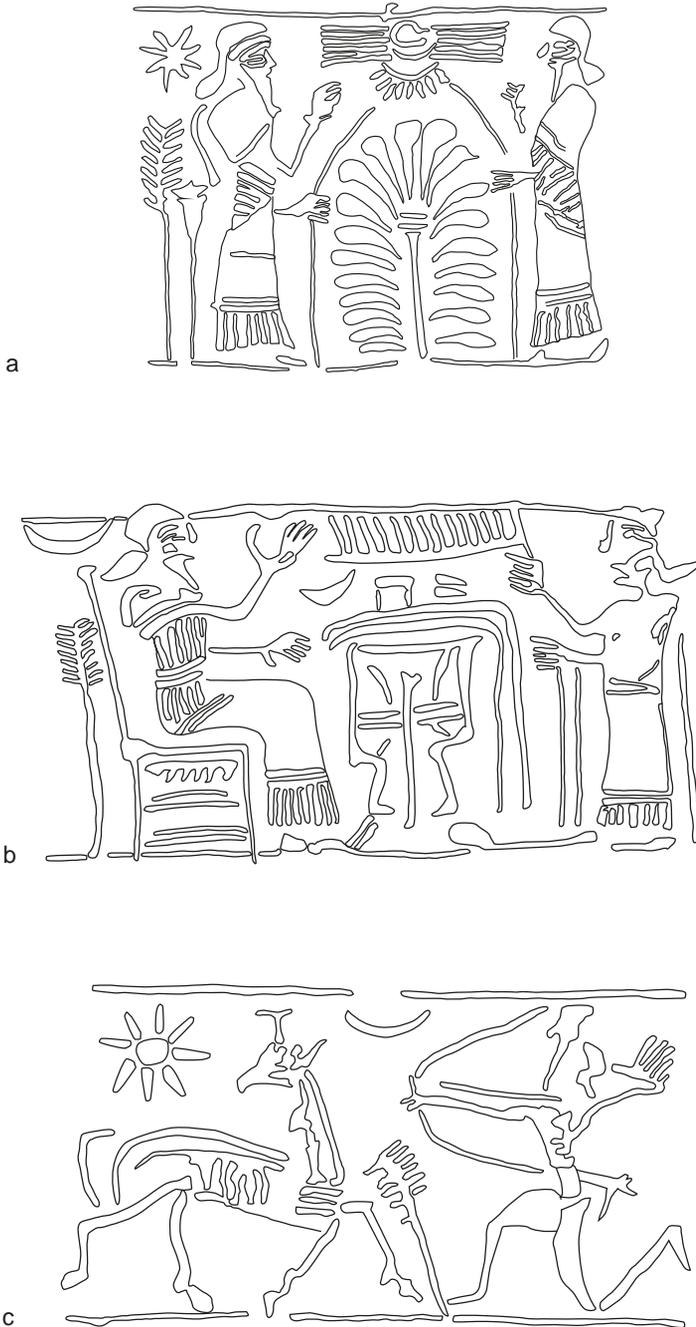
In the case of other popular compositions made in the linear-style, a somewhat different use of the ‘bottle-brush’ tree can be observed. Hunting scenes (**Fig. 3c**) provide a good example of compositions where the ‘bottle-brush’ tree determined the form of the scene’s remaining components. Such compositions usually consist of two main elements (a human figure and an animal or fantastic creature) set antithetically. The ‘bottle-brush’ tree is located between these two main features, yet it is much smaller than in scenes depicting rituals. An important trait of these scenes is the lack of proportion between the main components – for instance, an archers arm seem much too long or an animal takes up 2/3 of the scene.¹⁵ This may have occurred if the composition was planned with reference to just one set point provided by a single technical incision, later turned into a small plant or a ‘bottle-brush’ tree located in the middle of the scene. With just one axis set at his disposal, the engraver could hardly estimate the required width of the elements he was adding to the scene. Therefore, he needed to start by engraving elements (such as a bow or an animal head) that were nearest to the set axis and above the technical

¹² Compare: Moortgat 1940: Figs 660, 663–667, 637–647, 679; Porada 1948: Figs 642, 644, 665–666, 670, 673; Teissier 1984: Figs 192–193, 196, 205–207, 210; Collon 2001: Figs 104, 107, 108, 110, 112, 116, 117, 130, 131.

¹³ Moortgat 1940: Figs 663, 673; Porada 1948: Figs 644, 673; Buchanan 1966: Figs 593, 606.

¹⁴ Collon 2001: Figs 111–112; Teissier 1984: Figs 202, 205.

¹⁵ Porada 1948: Fig. 622; Collon 2001: Fig. 30.



3. Examples of scenes with the 'bottle-brush' tree: a. 'The Sacred tree with a winged sun disc and worshipers'; b. 'The Table group'; c. 'Hunting scene'; not to scale (Drawing: M. Iskra; a-b. based on: Porada 1948: Figs 644, 673; c. based on: Moortgat 1940: Fig. 642).

incision.¹⁶ Moving on to the remaining elements of the composition further afield, the engraver had to improvise relying on his experience, as he did not know the exact position of the other border between the elements. It was this lack of precision that resulted in the distortion of proportions between these elements and those situated near to the axis of the composition.¹⁷

Admittedly, the seal-cutters made frequent mistakes, as can be seen in the floral elements, such as the ‘bottle-brush’ tree. The author is of the opinion that crooked forms of the ‘bottle-brush’ tree can be traced back to the execution of two technical incisions instead of just one; the first was incorrect so the second one was a necessary amendment.¹⁸ Probably, most of the seals we know were not made by ‘master engravers’ but rather by ordinary artisans using popular compositions and well-known engraving techniques. In Edith Porada’s opinion, seals were often made by priestly scribes who drew figures like ideograms and combined them in the scenes.¹⁹ Therefore, the abundance of seals with similar scenes did not result from a particular demand but it was rather conditioned by the simplicity of their execution. More complex scenes with continuous arrangement (such as the chariot hunt scene or Ninurta’s mythological combats) are relatively rare and floral elements in the form of the ‘bottle-brush’ tree feature there only occasionally. These were the seals that could have been made by highly-skilled engravers.

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¹⁶ Osten 1934: Fig. 414.

¹⁷ This is particularly well visible in examples illustrated by Moortgat 1940: Fig. 642; Parker 1955: Fig. 4; Teissier 1984: Figs 146, 147.

¹⁸ Porada 1948: Figs 613–614; Buchanan 1966: Figs 574, 577; Collon 2001: Fig. 36.

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The Murals on Entrance Porch of the Faras Cathedral

STEFAN JAKOBIELSKI

Abstract: The aim of the article is to discuss a dating of two murals painted in a *tempera* technique on the walls of the southern entrance porch of Faras cathedral, namely the representations of an archangel and St Mercurius on horseback. Both were originally dated to the late tenth or the early eleventh century, but some scholars suggested that these works of arts could have been painted as late as in the late twelfth century or even later. That is at the time when area of the porch together with adjoining staircase had certainly been covered with a roof. Such a dating however, seems largely inadequate in view of the stylistic evidence and the artist's workshop characteristics, so an effort to restore the original dating has been undertaken in the present article, in the belief that the porch must have been covered earlier in a something way. There follows a suggestion concerning construction of the original roofing. The latter part of the article concerns a possible identification of the archangel's figure as Gabriel (and not Michael).

Keywords: Nubia, Cathedral of Faras, mural paintings, Christian iconography, archangels, St Mercurius

Stefan Jakobielski, Instytut Kultur Śródziemnomorskich i Orientalnych PAN, Warszawa;
sjakobielski@iksio.pan.pl

It would seem that after nearly fifty years of studies on wall paintings from Faras at least its chronology would have been firmly established, but still, as appears, the dates prompt further debate, this time on the paintings from the southern porch (**Fig. 1**).

The Faras collection is of major significance, not only in terms of its artistic value, but also because the paintings were executed on successive layers of plaster coating the cathedral's walls thus enabling a general chronology to be proposed for this mural art.¹

¹ A preliminary chronology and stylistics of murals from the Faras cathedral has already been published by Kazimierz Michałowski in a series of works: Michałowski 1964; 1967; 1970a; 1972; 1974. A document of fundamental significance for the chronology is the *List of Bishops of Pachoras*; see: Jakobielski 1966; 1972: esp. 190–195; 1982a: 127–133; 2013: 23–24, 28–29 (revised edition).



1. Painting representing an archangel in the moment of discovery. Stanisław Jasiewicz and Marek Marciniak cleaning the mural under the eye of Professor Michałowski (Phot. T. Biniewski © IKŚiO PAN).

It has even led, in the course of further detailed studies (observation of stylistic features and decorative patterns including) to the distinguishing of diversified groups of works painted by individual artists or teams of artists working at Faras.²

Amongst the assemblage of the early Faras murals alone there are examples of two groups. The first one (comprising about 30 paintings) consists of a planned – uniform decorative scheme for the cathedral made after its rebuilding by Bishop Paulos and dated generally to an undefined period within the eighth century.³ The second group forms later supplementation of the décor, as wall-space allowed, with works by a variety of ninth-century painters. Their efforts to perfect their skills gave rise to the characteristic features of Nubian painting. In the early tenth century the cathedral interiors were re-plastered and adorned with some new murals. However, the new decorative scheme was not completed until the latter half of the tenth century, when, during the episcopate of Petros (974–997), it was decided to comprehensively remodel the cathedral's *naos*. Its granite columns were replaced by massive mud-brick piers which supported domed vaulting. At the turn of the tenth century 60 murals were painted in the new interior by artists from a single atelier,

² See esp.: Martens 1972; 1973; Martens-Czarnecka 1982a; 1982b; 1989; Jakobielski 1982b; 2002; 2007; 2014; Godlewski 1992a; 1992b.

³ See recently: Jakobielski 2014: 257–259.

clearly inspired by Byzantine art,⁴ in a style in which figures are depicted with a great attention to the details added to their lavishly decorated robes and attributes. The school of painting represented during this period was widespread in Nubia and numerous examples of it have been encountered throughout the territories of the Nubian Kingdom.

The later development of a distinctive local style of painting, dated to the late eleventh till mid-twelfth century, took place in keeping with the same artistic principles, similar canons of composition and even decorative motifs being retained,⁵ both in the Nubian capital, Dongola and across the whole of the northern province – Nobadia.

The final phases of the cathedral's artwork, starting from the late twelfth century, making use again of available empty wall-spaces, brought an entire series of representations of the court and Nubian Church dignitaries depicted under the protection of holy figures. From the mid-thirteenth century onwards we witness a gradual decline in the art of painting, though there is still an active interest in embellishing the cathedral with murals. At that time the last rebuilding episode takes place. It was intended primarily to ensure that the edifice remained accessible in the face of the serious threat by the sand dunes building up around it; the ground level outside had already reached the level of windows, and external corridors with staircases leading down to entrances were installed alongside north and south façades of the cathedral. In the place of the entrance porch which is of a particular interest herein, a staircase had been created, and its area roofed.

The aim of this article is to discuss a somewhat controversial dating of two murals painted on walls of the southern entrance porch of Faras cathedral (**Fig. 2**).

One of these is the representation of an archangel (**Fig. 3**) located on the north wall.⁶ The archangel is depicted as a full-length standing figure, 1.75m in height, in frontal pose with his shod feet set apart and with outstretched yellow wings, edged with red and black lines, and with their ends turned outwards. The inner edge of wings forms a wavy line imitating plumage. With both hands the archangel removes a red sword of yellow hilt and red blade from its purple-brown scabbard decorated with precious stones and provided with red sword-belts. Archangel's head is encircled by a yellow halo with black circumference, contoured with a thick red line. His white face with facial features done in black, red and green lines is framed by his red hair, rendered in the form of fish-scale motifs, which is swept up into a topknot. He wore a yellow crown (not preserved). The archangel is clad in a white *chiton* with long, narrow sleeves decorated at the hem with a band of red double diamond lattice dotted red in each diamond, and with two green

⁴ See esp.: Martens-Czarnecka 1982b: 82–84; 1989: 10–12; 2010; Mierzejewska 1999: esp. 290–294; otherwise cf. Scholz 2001: 184–185, 193.

⁵ Martens-Czarnecka 2011: 261–262.

⁶ The painting is at present in the National Museum, Warsaw, inv. no. 149671; Field inv. no. 102. See: Wesel (Ed.) 1963: cat. no. 473, Pl. XII; *Exhib. Zürich 1963/64*: cat. no. 390; *Exhib. Paris 1964*: cat. no. 300, Pl. X; Michałowski 1965: 88–93, Fig. 63; 1967: 129–130, Pls 49–50; Michałowski (Ed.) 1969: cat. no. 13; 1970b: cat. no. 13; Michałowski 1974: cat. no. 41; Martens-Czarnecka 1982b: 60–62; Górecki 1990: 535–540; [Mierzejewska, Łaptaś] 2002: 95–97 (cat. no. 27); Mierzejewska 2014: 90, Fig. on p. 91; Jakobiński *et al.* forthcoming: cat. no. 121.



2. Entrance porch of the Cathedral seen from the south-west (Phot. M. Niepokólczycki © IKŚiO PAN).

galloons on the sleeve as also decorative cuffs with a pattern similar to that on the hem. Over it he wears a dalmatic with wide, three-quarter-length sleeves adorned with pairs of yellow bands comprising four red lines, each pair separated from its neighbour by double green stripes. The robe is tied at the hips with a brown belt emblazoned with green and red precious stones. The archangel is represented as an armed warrior in *chlamys* patterned by a red single-line lattice featuring alternate rows of red and green dots within the diamonds and edged by a band of plain yellow trim and has a semi-circular green collar. The *chlamys* is fastened on the right shoulder by a large cruciform brooch encrusted with red and green jewels.

The other painting to deal with is located on the east wall of the entrance porch and represents a scene of killing the Emperor Julian the Apostate by St Mercurius (**Fig. 4**).⁷ The saint is represented in an attitude of a warrior on horseback galloping to the right. In his left hand seen from behind the horse's neck he holds reins and a round white shield.

⁷ See: Wessel (Ed.) 1963: cat. no. 472, Pl. XIII; *Exhib. Zürich 1963/64*: cat. no. 389; *Exhib. Paris 1964*: cat. no. 299, Pl. XI; Michałowski 1965: 94–95, Fig. 94; 1967: 128, Pl. 48; Michałowski (Ed.) 1969: cat. no. 16; 1970b: cat. no. 16; Michałowski 1974: cat. no. 42; Lucchesi-Palli 1982: 162–169; Martens-Czarnecka 1982b: 63, 73, 77; Górecki 1990: 535–540; Scholz 2006: 164–209; [Mierzejewska, Łaptaś] 2002: 93–95 (cat. no. 26); Mierzejewska 2014: 88–89, Fig. on p. 89; Jakobielski *et al.* forthcoming: cat. no. 122.



3. Mural representing an archangel from the entrance porch of the Faras cathedral. National Museum, Warsaw, inv. no. 149671 (Michałowski 1974: cat. no. 41).



4. St Mercurius on horseback, a mural from the entrance porch of the Faras cathedral. National Museum, Warsaw, inv. no. 149672 (Michałowski 1974: cat. no. 42).

In the right (not preserved) hand possibly raised high he clutches a brown shaft of a spear with long black spearhead with which he pierces through a small bearded figure of man lying beneath the horse's hooves. The figure of the warrior is shown in profile but his white (partly preserved) face of furrowed forehead is turned to front. Facial features, similarly to those of the Archangel are painted with red, black and green lines. The Saint wears a spherical bonnet with a fish-scale motif (a half is green, the other half is red) and a golden diadem adorned by three *pinnae* and green and red precious stones. Long ends of a red-and-green ribbon with tassels at their ends escaping from beneath the diadem are visible on either side of the figure's head. The warrior is clad in a yellow mantle patterned with a red lattice design embellished with green and red dots arranged in alternating rows. A part of it is billowing behind the horseman. Most probably (as the upper part of figure is

not extant) the Saint wore a yellow cuirass reaching to the hips, on the hemline of which a row of straps with green jewels are affixed. Beneath the cuirass he has a knee-length purple-brown robe with wide green band in the middle, all patterned with fine fish-scale motif possibly imitating chain mail and under it a white *chiton* decorated with pairs of vertical yellow bands comprising four red lines, partly covering his feet shod in grey shoes. The chestnut steed of a black tail and hooves is depicted in right profile, its head turned backwards, to the left, the front legs raised above the recumbent figure represented (except legs) in three-quarter profile. His hands and face are pale brown; his pointed beard and thin moustache are black. Traces of yellow crown adorned with green jewels and a doomed cap on the head as also blood stains on his white tunic (or dalmatic) are recognisable. He also wore a *chlamys* fastened at the right shoulder, covered with a pattern of black lines and is shod in black shoes. The horse has a yellow saddlecloth on its back patterned by rows of green dots with framing band of green and red circles, a breastplate in the form of three wide reddish-brown bands decorated with white eight-petal rosettes amidst green dots with a row of round yellow bells attached to them and two narrower bands of the same colour, secured in the middle of the chest by a large yellow cup-shaped bell. The upper band is embellished with green dots nestling between two white leaves. The lowermost has the decoration similar to that on the saddlecloth border, and is fringed by jewel encrusted straps with a square yellow plate at the end of each. The identical straps are attached also to a crupper, except that plates are alternately red and green.

Location of murals painted in *al secco* (more precisely, in a *tempera* technique) on the outer walls of buildings is unusual in Nubia, where rains sometimes occur, and therefore it would be unlikely to create the discussed paintings in an unroofed area. Włodzimierz Godlewski believes that the walls of the porch were not plastered, and in the normal course of events the murals would not have been made until the late twelfth century⁸ when, according to his opinion, a layer of plaster was applied in the same time as a roof was raised over the staircase which included the whole porch area (**Fig. 5**).⁹ Godlewski's dating of both paintings to the late twelfth century (known earlier than published), was accepted in some works,¹⁰ although it seems largely inadequate. The left part of the mural, as related by the excavator¹¹ shows *effacements caused by its being partly covered with later construction* (precisely, by the staircase wall enclosing from the west the entrance platform). Thus, the painting must have been at any rate older than the staircase and its walls and the roof.

⁸ Godlewski 2006: 117.

⁹ In point of fact, according to the excavator, these murals were painted on the third layer of plaster. All subsequent layers of coating in this spot are described in detail by Kazimierz Michałowski (1965: 88; 1974: 197, cat. no. 41).

¹⁰ E.g. Mierzejewska 2005: 30; [Mierzejewska, Ląptaś] 2002: 93–96 (in both, the date of twelfth–thirteenth century is given). Bożena Mierzejewska, however, in her recent publication (*de facto* later than this article has been written) dates both these murals into the eleventh century (cf. Mierzejewska 2014: 89, 91).

¹¹ Michałowski 1965: 88; 1974: cat. no. 41.



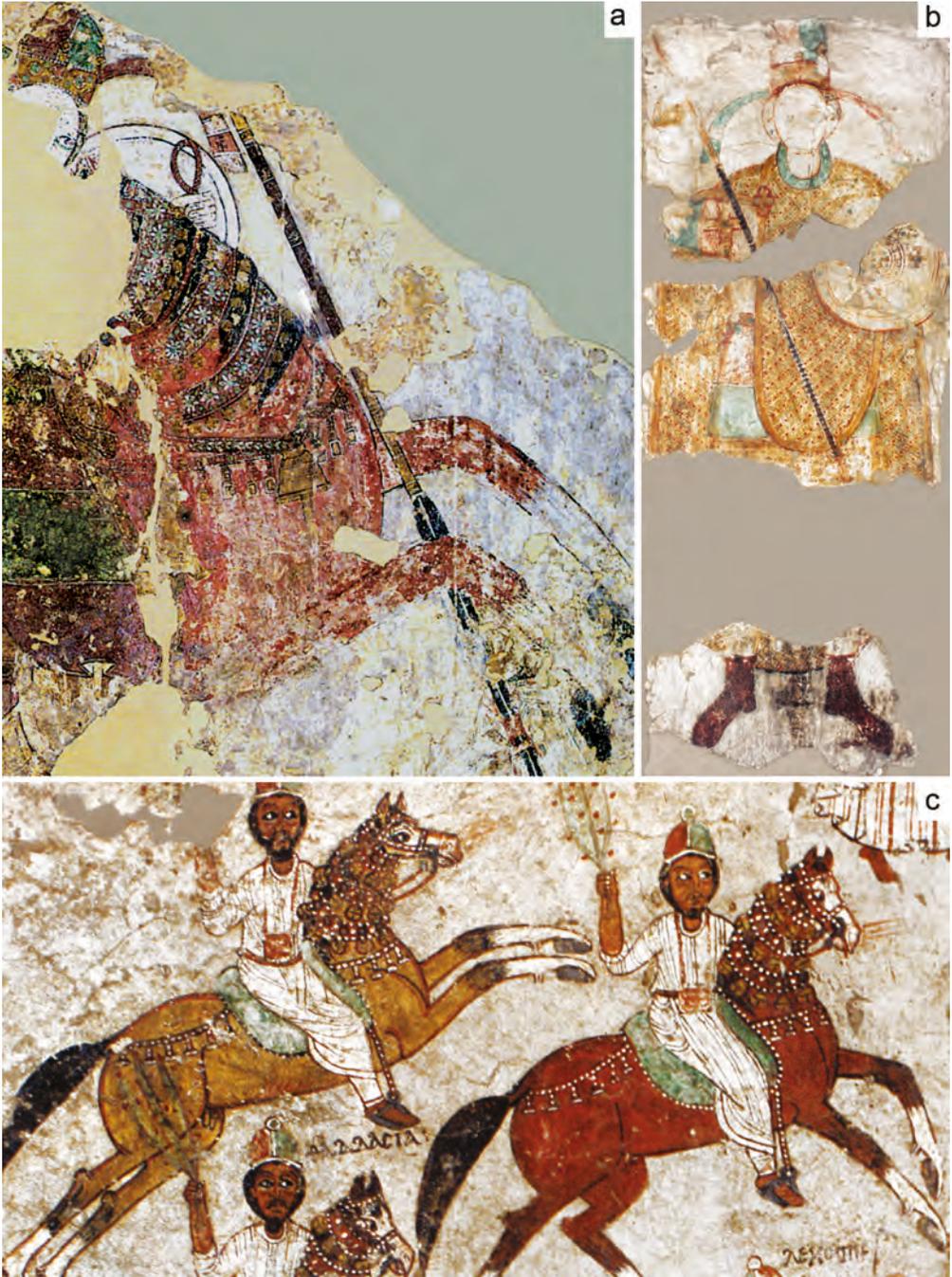
5. Staircase of the late twelfth-century date covering the area of the entrance porch seen from the south-west (Phot. T. Biniewski © IKŚiO PAN).

Enough evidence for classifying these murals as a work of artists acting in the late tenth to early eleventh century can be found in the rendering of details of both figures represented on them as also in decorative motifs identical to those used in other artworks of this large group, embellishing the cathedral after its renovation by Bishop Petros (**Figs 6–7**). Affiliation of the above-mentioned murals to this particular atelier is, in fact, nothing new as it was initially proposed by the excavator and his followers.¹² But the problem exists and is worth analysing, because both paintings were installed on the walls of the entrance

¹² In a matter of fact the dates published so far were very approximate and variable, thus, e.g. of the painting of the Archangel: Michałowski 1965: 93 (beginning of the tenth century); 1967: 129 (second half of the tenth century); Michałowski (Ed.) 1969 and 1970b: cat. no. 13 (second half of the tenth century); Michałowski 1974: cat. no. 41 (later part of the tenth century). Similarly, on the painting of St Mercurius: Michałowski 1965, 95 (most probably from the same time as the Archangel, i.e. beginning of the tenth century); 1967: 128 (late tenth century); Michałowski (Ed.) 1969 and 1970b: cat. no. 16 (late eleventh century); Michałowski 1974: cat. no. 42 (end of the tenth century). The best definition of the date for both murals has been given then by Małgorzata Martens-Czarnecka who wrote (Martens 1973: 201–202) that *the both murals came into being during the period of the consecutive episcopates of Petros, Yoannes and Marianos, i.e. in theory, from 974 till 1036 but in reality from an unknown time when the effigy of Bishop Petros's was painted until Marianos's portrait is depicted in the Cathedral, most probably at the beginning of his episcopate (i.e. AD 1005).*



6. Similitude of style: a. detail of Mural representing an archangel from the entrance porch; b. Archangel Michael from the Baptistry Room, early eleventh century; c. Archangel Michael from the Commemorative Chapel of Ioannes, c. AD 1005; d. Archangel Michael, fragment of the composition: Youths in the Fiery Furnace, from the Narthex of the cathedral, end of the tenth century (a. National Museum, Warsaw; b-d. Sudan National Museum, Khartoum; repertory of documentation IKŚiO PAN).



7. Similitude of style: a. detail of painting of St Mercurius on horseback from the entrance porch; b. Standing Warrior Saint (Mercurius?), painting from the south aisle of the cathedral, end of tenth century; c. the Magi on horseback, a detail of the Nativity scene from the north aisle of the cathedral, c. AD 1000 (a. Michałowski 1974: cat. no. 42, National Museum, Warsaw; b-c. Phot. T. Jakobielski, Sudan National Museum, Khartoum, repertory of documentation IKŚiO PAN).

platform, hitherto thought to have been unroofed during the period in question. Therefore, some further arguments are needed in order to strengthen the original hypothesis. Some of multifarious examples of similar rendering of details on these and other murals are here illustrated based mostly on observations and studies of Małgorzata Martens-Czarnecka.¹³ The artistic manner of the painters belonging to the late tenth- and early eleventh-century atelier was, as a rule, to slightly modify the represented patterns in order to individualise the painted figures. It was achieved by adding to (or removing) small elements of the ornament: either dots, or circles, or border lines, etc. Quite often painters merely transposed colours conversely. However, despite their efforts many elements appear to be strictly identical in the whole ensemble (**Figs 6–7**). This includes, e.g. the way of representing types of the garments and most of their decoration, haloes, shape of wings, thrones, crowns, jewels, brooches, etc.

Very characteristic is the rendering of facial features, the shape of mouth and nose, ears, as well as hairstyles (in a limited variety). Identical traits in the final touches applied to faces are in this style striking, particularly the shading on chin or creases on the neck and also shadows under the eyes (**Fig. 8**). If examined with a sharp eye two paintings in question would reveal most of characteristic features mentioned above, including also the popular patterns. The figure of the archangel on the porch is different only in a few respects: an untypical manner of rendering wrinkles on the forehead and the shape of the mouth. This may be due to the painter's not fully successful attempt to depict a menacing face of an armed guardian of the main entrance to the cathedral. A certain novelty in representing wings is that their top sections are separated from the rest by thick horizontal lines and covered with small scales each containing a single dot (**Fig. 6a**).¹⁴

Another argument for dating is provided by a legend to this painting (visible at the moment of discovery) in form of a fragment of Greek text in black paint, written above the figure's head and containing only one word: + ἄρχάγγελος (**Fig. 9a**). One can notice in it a peculiar form of letters popular in the late tenth and early eleventh century, including an elsewhere unknown shape of the *rho* and the *sigma*, that leaves no doubt as to which artistic atelier the scribe belonged (**Fig. 9b-c**).

If, however, paintings on the porch were originating from the late tenth and early eleventh century, one has to admit that the porch must have been covered by then in a something way. Włodzimierz Godlewski, who further in his book on Faras refers again to the question,¹⁵ rejects the evidence of possible occurrence of any roof before the late twelfth-century one, though some elements most likely belonging to such a structure were already recorded and even mentioned by him. Thus, a capital embedded into the late twelfth-century wall of the staircase built then, a column base used in its flight of steps, and also a considerable fragment of a column shaft (top part missing), lying against the east wall on the platform

¹³ Martens 1973: 164–212; Martens-Czarnecka 1982b: 50–88; 1989.

¹⁴ Analogous rendering of wings, cf. cat. nos 61 and 62 from room 24 of the Monastery on Kom H at Old Dongola (Martens-Czarnecka 2011: 186; 2005: 163–164).

¹⁵ Godlewski 2006: 129.



8. Similitude in the rendering of facial features: a. head of the archangel from the porch. Further there is a selection of faces painted in the period of late tenth and the beginning of the eleventh century: b. Apostle Peter; c. St Onophrius; d. Archangel Michael (in the composition of the Three Youth in the Fiery Furnace); e. Bishop Marianos; f. Queen Martha; g. the Virgin Mary and Child (the same composition as f.); h. the Virgin Mary and Child (the same composition as e.); i. Misael (the same composition as d.) (a-b, e, h. National Museum, Warsaw; c-d, f-g, i. Sudan National Museum, Khartoum; repertory of documentation IKSiO PAN).



9. Similitude of the graphic style of script: a. legend to archangel's figure on the porch; b. part of the legend to the representation of St Onuphrios, end of the tenth century; c. legend to the representation of the *Maiestas Crucis* (a. Phot. T. Biniewski; b. Phot. M. Niepokólczycki, Sudan National Museum, Khartoum © IKŚiO PAN; c. National Museum, Warsaw; Michałowski 1974: cat. no. 54).

were being noted (Figs 2, 11b). These may have originally supported a roof structure of some kind, which must have been dismantled (and its granite elements discarded, but still left at the entrance) when the porch was replaced by a staircase. The height of the support reaching c. 4m (base – 0.32m; presumable height of a column shaft – c. 3.40m; plus small capital – 0.36m) appears quite sufficient to locate roofing beams just over windows situated



10. A putative reconstruction of the entrance porch of Faras Cathedral (Drawing: M. Momot).

in the north and the east walls (**Fig. 10**). Unfortunately none of these walls is preserved high enough to restore precisely the type of construction of the roof itself. It is however, obvious that for technical reasons the roofed area would have sheltered the platform only, excluding the stairway. Additional argument for its extent provides the location of mural representing St Mercurius, painted on northernmost (i.e. roofed) part of the east wall and not at its centre.

Examining the paving of the entrance platform, composed – as many other parts of Paulos’s cathedral – of re-used sandstone blocks, one can see some remains of a furnishing being once installed in the porch. Hollowed out rectangular openings and a deep post hole that could be seen at south-west corner, close to the platform edge, feasibly mark the place of a wooden railing (**Fig. 11a**). A granite stand or capital with characteristic carved channels for fixing wooden or stone flat railing component was found reused in construction of the stairs together with aforementioned base (**Fig. 11b**). Whether it has belonged to a furnishing of the porch remains, of course, unknown, but possible.

If judged by then ground level outside the cathedral, during the eleventh century an extra entrance platform (of dimensions: 2.95m x 1.30m) was build adjoining the porch from the west (**Fig. 11c**). Its purpose was apparently to facilitate the passage to the cathedral entrance for those coming from the north by a path along its western façade. Perhaps for



11. Area of the porch, architectural details: a. paving of the entrance platform; b. interior of the late twelfth-century staircase built on the porch seen from the north; in its construction a base and a granite block with carved channels on sides are visible; c. paved rectangular structure adjoined to the entrance platform from the western side, seen from the north; d. the entrance platform edge and the paving of the rectangular structure, seen from the north-west; note the wear and tear step on the edge and a capital embedded in the staircase wall (a-b. Phot. M. Niepokólczycki; c-d. Phot. T. Biniewski © IKŚiO PAN).

some reason it was somewhat difficult for people to reach the main stairway leading to the porch. This could be, for instance, a partial landslip on the western slope of the *kom* causing that the slope become too steep. Hence, the new platform roughly corresponded in length to that of the porch and was situated only one step lower than the level of the porch's paving but in order to enter it only the north part of the western platform edge was used as is witnessed by distinct traces of the wear and tear on the stone used as a step (**Fig. 11d**). This may also mean that the remaining southern part of the western border of the porch was fenced at that time.

*

Apart from dating there is another question which, as it seems, needs a comment. It concerns the mural on the north wall of the porch (**Figs 1, 3, 6a**). Although referred to in all previous publications as a representation of the Archangel Michael, there is no convincing evidence to suggest this identity. On the contrary, the iconographic detail that sets Michael apart from all other archangels – namely peacock feathers and eyes adorning the wings – are missing from this painting. This particular detail was scrupulously employed in representations of Michael by artists working at the cathedral from the late tenth century onwards.¹⁶ Another element that may be used to identify this archangel, as was already suggested,¹⁷ is the sword he holds. Although in Nubian iconography the sword does not appear to have been an attribute associated with Michael like in Coptic tradition,¹⁸ it does, however, feature on representations of the Archangel Gabriel. His figure, holding a sword was depicted, along with Michael's on an earlier Faras painting (**Fig. 12a**)¹⁹ which – according the most popular hypothesis – represented two standing guards of the west entrance to the cathedral.²⁰ Further examples of Gabriel with sword were found in the Monastery on Kom H in Old

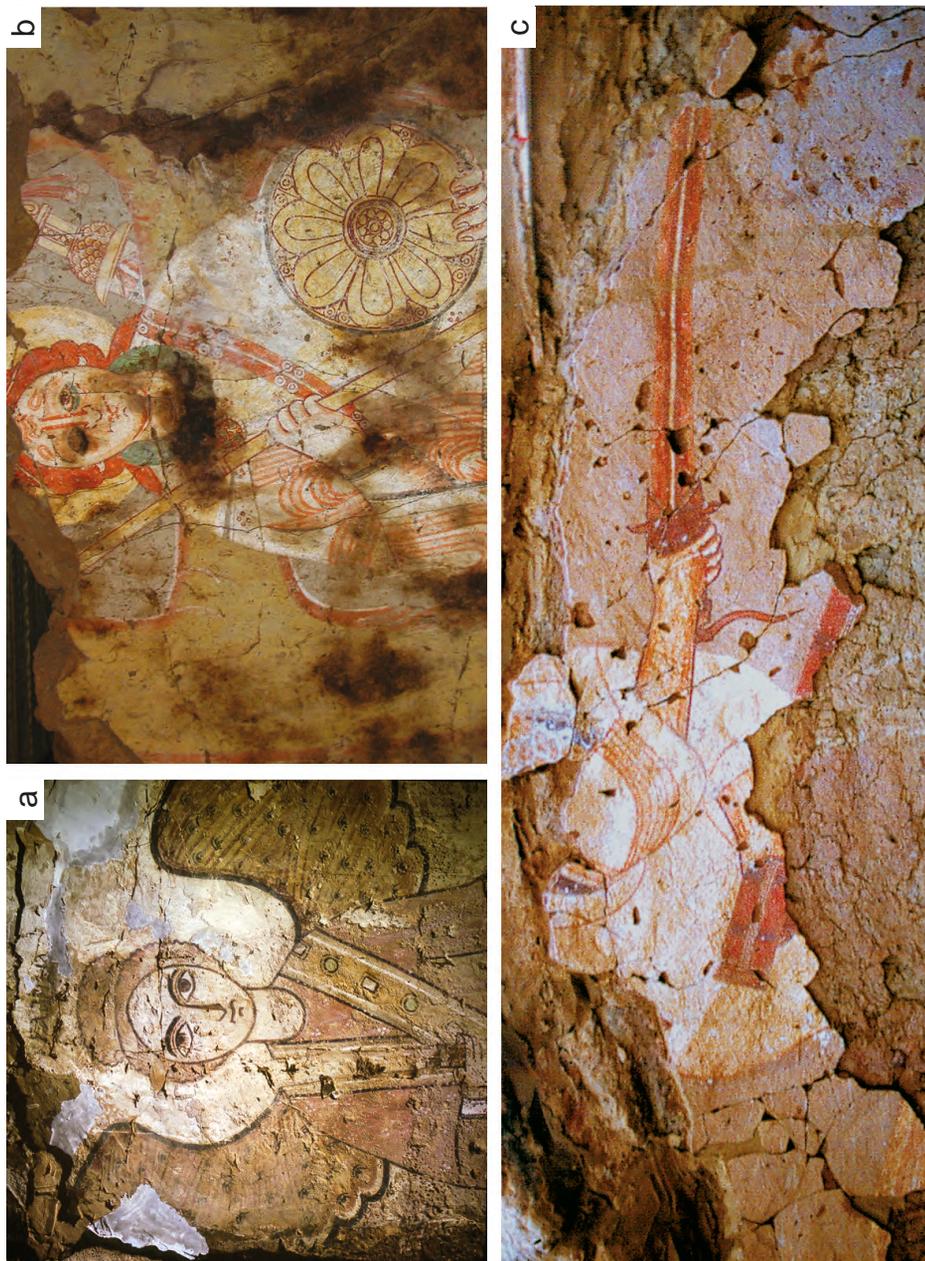
¹⁶ The similar rule is observed also amongst the assemblage of murals from Old Dongola Monastery comprising paintings dated to a period ranging from mid-eleventh until the thirteenth century, cf. Martens-Czarnecka 2011: 186, Figs 89, 91; see also: 2005: 163–164.

¹⁷ Martens-Czarnecka 2011: 195.

¹⁸ See: Müller 1959: 37, 143.

¹⁹ Michałowski 1967: 105–106, Pls 23, 25; 1974: cat. no. 7; Michałowski (Ed.) 1969: cat. no. 1; 1970b: cat. no. 1; Mierzejewska 2001; [Mierzejewska, Łaptaś] 2002: 75–76 (cat. no. 9); Mierzejewska 2014: 120, Fig. on p. 121; Jakobielski *et al.* forthcoming: cat. no. 32.

²⁰ The state of preservation of figures as they were found appeared somewhat strange because a part of left wing of Archangel Michael and paralleled the right one of the accompanying Archangel Gabriel were as if cut short on the edge of doorway jambs, just below the lintel. How it could happen that the painter – having at his disposal the whole blank surface of the wall – could have plan the execution of the figures so bad that there not enough space to fit the entire wings remained. These wings were an important argument for Bożena Mierzejewska (2006: 155) in her reasoning, while she suggested that at the time when their figures were painted the main entrance was already walled up and a niche arranged instead. On both sides of the conchoidal top of the niche would have been sufficient space for the archangels' wing endings – as if they were embracing the niche – where a figure of the Holy Virgin (cf. Michałowski 1974: cat. no. 24; Jakobielski *et al.* forthcoming: cat. no. 60) was painted at the same time, thus forming together with archangels one composition. This led to conclusion that archangels were represented here not as entrance guards, but they simply adored figure of the Virgin. See also: Mierzejewska 2014: 120, where the composition is dated to the ninth century (sic!).



12. Nubian representations of the Archangel Gabriel: a. Faras cathedral, eighth century; b. Old Dongola Monastery, SW Annexe room 6, late eleventh century; c. Old Dongola Monastery, SW Annexe room 1, late eleventh century (a. Phot. M. Niepokólczycki, National Museum, Warsaw; b. Phot. H. Pietras; c. Phot. W. Chmiel © IKSIO PAN).

Dongola (**Fig. 12b–c**).²¹ One of these, painted over the entrance to Southwestern Annexe, shows Gabriel with a flaming sword. Note, that on painting from the porch the sword-blade is represented in red(!). On the other hand the fiery sword is associated with Archangel Uriel, however, mostly in the western tradition. Tomasz Górecki²² possibly rightfully sees a probable thematic link between this representation and the neighbouring one of St Mercurius on horseback, based on Coptic text of *Encomium of Acacius, Bishop of Cesarea on Mercurius, the Martyr* (Brit. Mus. MS Or. no. 6802, fol. 26a–b), and other hagiographic texts of this collection relating a story of receiving a sword by Mercurius from an angel.²³ The angel's name, however, is nowhere mentioned. The association of the angel with the Archangel Michael was most probably due to the angel's utterance: *I am the Commander-in-Chief of the hosts of the Lord*, what is certainly Michael's competence, but no one can know with any degree of certainty whether a Faras painter knew this version of the Mercurius's legend. Painters would likely have been familiar with attributes, and the characteristic features of figures which they were going to depict. So, a supposed his connotation: when somebody with a sword is concerned it would be rather Gabriel than Michael. It is hard to imagine that an artist of this particular atelier, who created several murals of Archangel Michael would have forgotten about such a common Michael's feature as peacock feathers on wings. Therefore, the present author is rather inclined to suggest Archangel Gabriel as a possible identification of the angel's figure on the porch.

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²¹ See: Martens-Czarnecka 2011: cat. nos 80, 116.

²² Górecki 1990: 538–540.

²³ Budge (Ed.) 1915: 233, 287, 811, 859.

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Decoration of the Two Chests from the Frieze of Objects in the Southern Room of Amun in the Temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari

KATARZYNA KAPIEC

Abstract: During epigraphic works carried out in the Southern Room of Amun (Temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari) in season of 2014/2015 painted decoration of two chests with sloping lid from the frieze of objects was recorded. On the side of each chest there are two offering scenes, painted with the use of red colour on the yellow background. In those scenes Hatshepsut is the celebrant and Amun-Re is the beneficiary of the offered goods. Names of the king and the god are originally preserved. The content of these chests, described with the use of labelling inscriptions next to each one of them, and the royal iconography in offering scenes are an expression of the renewal aspect, referring to the king. No analogies to this type of decoration on chests have been found so far.

Keywords: New Kingdom Egypt, Hatshepsut, Amun-Re, Southern Room of Amun, Deir el-Bahari temple, frieze of objects, chests with sloping lid

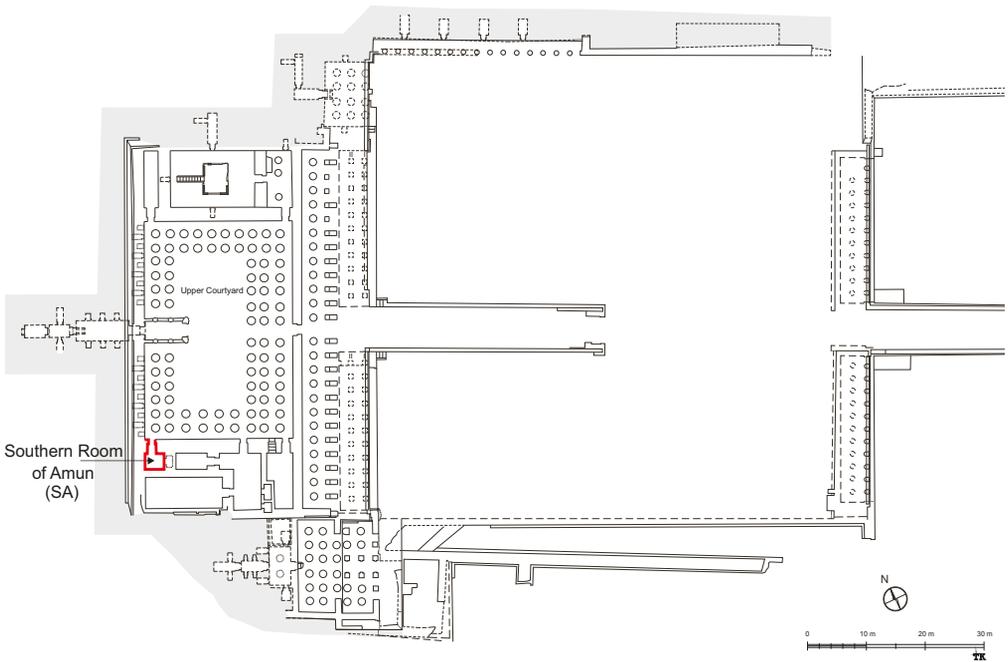
Katarzyna Kapiec, Instytut Kultur Śródziemnomorskich i Orientalnych PAN, Warszawa; *k.kapiec@poczta.onet.pl*

Southern Room of Amun is located in the south-western corner of the Upper Courtyard of the Temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari (**Fig. 1**). Decoration of this room represents: offerings of oils performed by Hatshepsut towards Amun-Kamutef (western and eastern walls),¹ offerings of two different kinds of linen performed by Hatshepsut and Thutmose III towards Amun-Re (double scene on the southern wall)² and an embracing scene with Hatshepsut and Amunet on the right side of the northern inner wall.³ On the northern inner wall, just above the lintel over the entrance, there is a frieze of objects located, in which several vases for oils and chests for linen are depicted. The polychromy of the reliefs is

¹ Naville 1906: Pls CXXXI–CXXXII.

² Naville 1906: Pl. CXXXIII; Sankiewicz 2011: Fig. 8. Figure of Hatshepsut on the western wall was replaced by an offering table during Thutmose III's reign (see: Naville 1906: Pl. CXXXII). Concerning the removal of Hatshepsut's figures during the reign of Thutmose III, see: Roth 2005: 277–281.

³ Naville 1906: Pl. CXXX.



1. Plan of the Temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari with marked Southern Room of Amun (Drawing: T. Dziejdzic; processing: K. Kapiec).

remarkably well-preserved⁴ and due to this fact it was possible to document painted decoration from two chests of the frieze of objects.⁵

THE FRIEZE OF OBJECTS

The frieze of objects is located on the northern inner wall of the Southern Room of Amun, just above its entrance lintel, occupying thus the western half of the wall span. The composition is arranged in two rows. In the upper row there are vases with oils represented, grouped in three. The second row consists of five chests containing different materials. An inscription defining content of these vases and chests is located next to each group of vases and next to each chest. The vases in the upper row contain four oils from the so-called seven sacred oils⁶ and *ʕntjw*. Starting from the right, according to the relief's orientation, these are: *stj hb* (first sacred oil), *hknw* (second sacred oil),

⁴ Polychromy was subjected to the conservation works of the Polish-Egyptian Archaeological and Conservation Mission during the season of 2006/2007 (see: Uchman-Laskowska 2010).

⁵ The epigraphic work over this scene was carried out during the season of 2014/2015 and was included in the study programme aiming at the publication of this room.

⁶ To find out more about seven sacred oils and other Egyptian oils, see: Koura 1999.



2. Fragment of the frieze of objects from the Southern Room of Amun (Phot. M. Jawornicki).

tpj.t n.t ʕntjw (first quality frankincense), *nhnm* (fourth sacred oil) and *tw3.wt* (fifth sacred oil).⁷

The five chests in the second row are mostly considered as ‘the ones with sloping lids’.⁸ Their resemblance to the *pr-wr* shrine is sometimes noticed.⁹ These chests contain different kinds of linen. Starting from the right, these are: *sšr tpj* (first quality linen), *dmj* (variant of *jdmj*, red linen), *sšr nswt* (royal linen), *sšr tpj w3d* (first quality green linen) and *jrtjw* (blue linen). Chests were painted yellow, probably in order to imitate gold¹⁰ and were decorated with scenes drawn with a thin red line. Only two first chests from the left have its decoration still preserved (**Fig. 2**). The right part of frieze of objects lacks polychromy due to a hole in the roof that existed previously, with rain water and sun having detrimental effect on the wall paintings.¹¹ This decoration was not recorded in the E. Naville’s publication.¹²

⁷ The content of the frieze of objects, especially the replacement of the *sft* oil (third sacred oil) with *ʕntjw* will be discussed in a separate article.

⁸ Jéquier 1921: 248; Lacau, Chevrier 1977: 33–34; Reeves 2005: 192–193.

⁹ Jéquier 1921: 248.

¹⁰ Wilkinson 1994: 108.

¹¹ The roof was repaired by the Polish-Egyptian Archaeological and Conservation Mission during the season of 2005/2006 (see: Szafrński 2008: 272–273).

¹² Naville 1906: Pl. CXXX.

DECORATION OF THE FIRST CHEST

The decoration of the first chest from the left is preserved well enough to notice that it had not been fully finished. It represents two offering scenes, in which Hatshepsut is the celebrant and Amun-Re is the recipient of the offerings (**Fig. 3**).

THE FIRST (LEFT) SCENE

Hatshepsut wears *nemes* and royal kilt and presents *nu*-vases.¹³ She is accompanied by her *ka* in form of a standard with her Horus name – *Wsr.t-k3.w*. A protecting bird in a shape of a falcon – as Behedety (no name preserved) appears above the king and her *ka*. The inscription accompanying this part of the scene goes as follows:

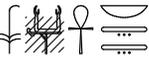
Text above Hatshepsut:

I.1.1. 

I.1.1. *ntr nfr nb t3.wj M3^c.t-k3-R^c dj(.w) ʿnh mj Rc d.t*

I.1.1. *The good god, lord of Two Lands, Maat-ka-Re,^(a) given life like Re for eternity.*

Text above the royal *ka*:

I.1.2. 

I.1.2. *k3 nswt ʿnh nb t3.wj*

I.1.2 *Living ka of the king, lord of Two Lands.*

Text behind the king and the royal *ka*:

I.1.3. 

I.1.3. *dd mdw dj.n(j) n.t ʿnh w3s nb snb nb 3w.t-jb nb(.t) hk3.t Šmʿw T3-mḥw*

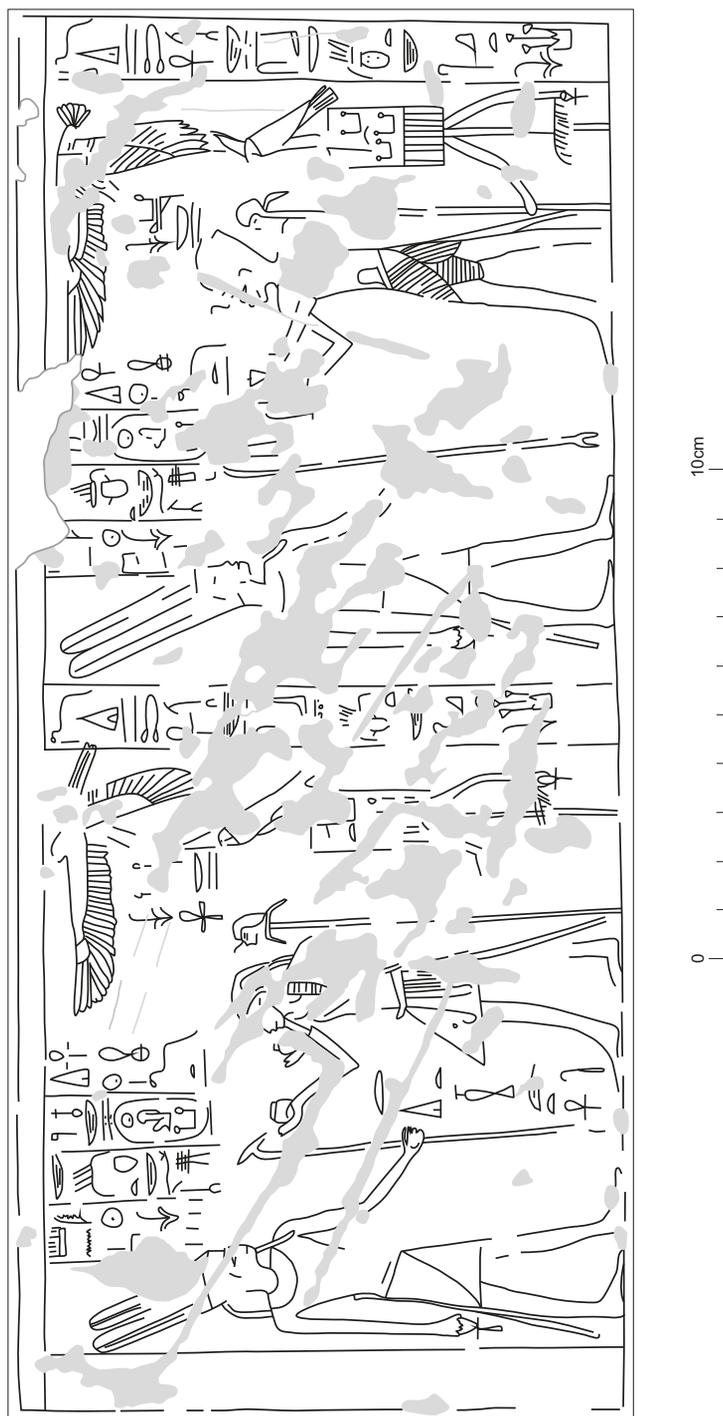
I.1.3. *Words spoken: (I) have given you^(b) all life and dominion, all health, all joy and rulership over South and North.^(c)*

^{a)} Hatshepsut's prenomen is originally preserved here and in other inscriptions from the chests (nos I.2.1, II.1.1, II.2.1).

^{b)} The feminine forms of the Hatshepsut's pronouns used in the dedicatory formula are originally preserved here and also in other inscriptions from the chests (nos I.2.3, II.1.4, II.1.5, II.2.3, II.2.5).

^{c)} The god speech is unusually located behind the king and the royal *ka* here and in the second scene on the first chests and on the second scene of the second chest.

¹³ *Nu*-vases seem to be used for water or wine, here the offering formula specifies that it is water; Beaux 2012: Pls 39, 40; Brunner 1977: Pl. 77; Naville 1896: Pl. XL; 1901: Pl. CV; 1906: Pl. CXLIII; Nelson, Murnane 1981: Pls 85, 95, 106, 122, 131, 189, 195, 209, 253; *Epigraphic Survey 2009*: 47–48, 50–51, 63, Pls 63a, 67b, 91; sometimes when there is no text or text does not specify it, scholars describe it in general term as 'a drink', see: Nelson, Murnane 1981: Pls 1, 193, 246, 256.



3. Decoration of the first chest (Drawing: K. Kapiec).

Amun-Re, the recipient of the offerings, is represented wearing a two-feather crown, with *was*-scepter in his left hand and *ankh*-sign in his right hand. The original inscription had never been completed – the whole column behind Amun-Re remains empty. The following wording appears above his figure:

I.1.4. 

I.1.4. *nb 3w.t-jb nb.f(sic!)*^(a) *dd w3s Jmn-R^c nswt ntr.w*

I.1.4. *Lord of the joy, lord of the eternity and dominion, Amun-Re,^(b) king [of god]s.*

^{a)} There is clearly a writing mistake – the sign *f* after word *nb*, which is an attribute and a possessive pronoun in masculine form, is redundant. Similar instance can be observed in the inscriptions nos I.2.3 and I.2.4.

^{b)} Amun-Re's name here and in all other inscriptions from the chests was not destroyed during the Amarna period (nos I.2.4, II.1.3 and II.2.4).

The inscription placed between the god and the king serves the purpose of labelling the scene and describes the offering in the following way:

I.1.5. 

I.1.5. *rdj.t kbhw jr.t (sic!)*^(a) *nh.tj*

I.1.5. *Performing the offering of the cold water, what she does being endowed with life.*

^{a)} There is another writing mistake – instead of the second singular feminine suffix pronoun there should be a third singular feminine suffix pronoun *-s*, as in no. II.1.5. and in other examples of this type of inscriptions.¹⁴

THE SECOND (RIGHT) SCENE

On this very chest, on its right side, figures a similarly arranged offering scene. It is difficult to identify the offered object, especially since the whole offering formula is not visible anymore. The precise spot where the offering formula should normally appear is now an empty background with minor signs of damage – it is possible that the labelling text has never been written there. Based on an analysis of the iconography, it is also hard to recognize the type of offering because the place has been destroyed. Visible lines might indicate several possibilities – *senetjer*-incense,¹⁵ milk,¹⁶ ointment,¹⁷ or *nemset*-vase¹⁸. The way of arranging arms and hands suggests that Hatshepsut was holding the offered object in her right hand and the left hand was raised vertically, in a gesture of adoration (**Fig. 4**).¹⁹

¹⁴ E.g.: Beaux 2012: Pls 12, 23, 27–28; Naville 1901: Pl. CII; 1906: Pl. CXXXIII.

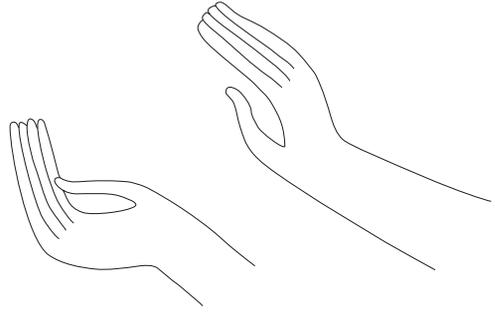
¹⁵ Brunner 1977: Pls 54, 88, 100, 181; Caminos 1998b: Pls 67, 71; Naville 1895: Pl. XXII; 1896: Pl. XXVIII; Nelson, Murnane 1981: Pls 2, 12, 40, 57, 65, 94, 113, 173; *Epigraphic Survey 2009*: 24–25, 37–38, 46–47, Pls 23, 49a, 61b.

¹⁶ Beaux 2012: 39, 40; Brunner 1977: Pls 76, 110; Caminos 1998a: Pl. 20; Naville 1901: Pl. CV; 1906: Pl. CXLIII; Nelson, Murnane 1981: Pls 55, 59, 132, 155; *Epigraphic Survey 2009*: 36–37, 50, Pls 47, 67a.

¹⁷ Brunner 1977: Pls 51, 175; Nelson, Murnane 1981: Pls 30, 32, 164, 176, 196, 221, 224, 249.

¹⁸ Caminos 1998b: Pl. 63; Nelson, Murnane 1981: Pls 56, 94, 140, 208; *Epigraphic Survey 2009*: 48, Pl. 63b.

¹⁹ For more gestures of this kind, see: Brunner 1977: Pls 51, 54, 88, 100, 144, 175, 177, 181; Caminos 1974: Pl. 49; Naville 1895: Pl. XX; 1896: Pl. XXIX; Nelson, Murnane 1981: Pls 2, 3, 6, 57, 84, 94, 175, 205, 217, 236.



4. Hypothetical reconstruction of the gesture of Hatshepsut in the second scene on the first chest (Drawing: K. Kapiec).

Hatshepsut is represented with the use of a different iconography than in the first scene. She wears a *kheprsh*-crown and a *shendjyt*-kilt. Royal *ka* is represented behind the king in a form of a standard, again with king's Horus name in *serekh*. Nekhbet or Wadjet (details of the bird's head are lost, there is no name preserved) is above Hatshepsut and her *ka*.

Text above the king:

I.2.1.

I.2.1. [*ntr nfr*] *nb t3.wj M3^c.t-k3-R^c dj(.w) ʕnh mj R^c d.t*

I.2.1. [*Good god, lord of*]²⁰ *Two Lands, Maat-ka-Re, given life like Re for eternity.*

Text above the royal *ka*:

I.2.2.

I.2.2. *k3 nswt nb t3.wj*

I.2.2. *Ka of the king, lord of the Two Lands.*

Text behind the king and the royal *ka*:

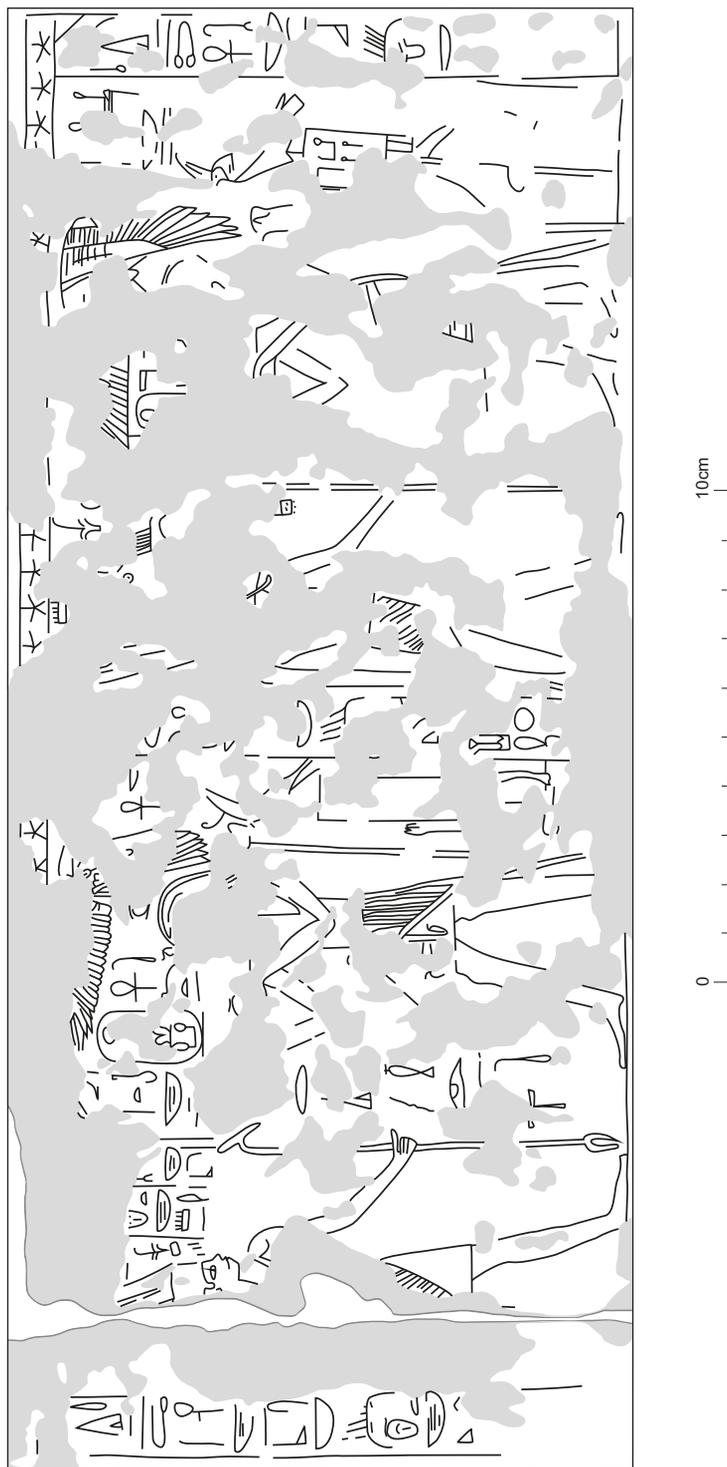
I.2.3.

I.2.3. *dd mdw dj.n(.j) n.t ʕnh w3s nb.f(sic!) snb nb 3w.t-jb nb(.t) hk3.t Šm^cw T3-mḥw*

I.2.3. *Word spoken: (I) have given you all life and dominion, all health, all joy and rulership over South and North.*

Amun-Re is represented with the use of the same iconography as on the scene from the left side – with a two-feather crown, a *was*-sceptre and an *ankh*-sign. The inscription is only placed above the god, there is no place for a column behind his figure as it was the case with the left scene. The text reads as follows:

²⁰ The damage on this spot makes it difficult to read, but this is the most probable reconstruction based on the numerous analogies, e.g.: Beaux 2012: Pls 8, 14–16, 28, 39, 42, 43; Karkowski 2003: 142, 233, 240, 242–243, 248, 252; Naville 1895: Pls IV, VII, XIV, XVIII, XX; 1896: Pls XXVIII, XXXIV, XL, XLV; 1898: Pls LXIII, LXV–LXVI; 1901: Pl. XCVIII; 1906: Pl. CXLV.



5. Decoration of the second chest (Drawing: K. Kapiec).

CHESTS WITH SLOPING LIDS

Chests which showcase such an exceptional decoration in the Southern Room of Amun constituted popular pieces of Egyptian furniture. They used to be displayed in different contexts, both within the royal and private sphere. During the times of the Middle Kingdom, they were placed in private tombs and painted friezes of objects.²³ During the New Kingdom period, they were often appearing in the decoration of the private tomb walls as containers for funerary equipment and goods to be used in a temple, carpenter's tools boxes (e.g. tomb of Rekhmire TT 100)²⁴ or to store writing materials of scribes (e.g. tomb of Menna TT 69,²⁵ tomb chapel of Nebamun²⁶). Their presence in temples is less common. From the times of Hatshepsut, they are known from the Punt Portico in the Temple at Deir el-Bahari and *Chapelle Rouge* where they are represented as containers for fine gold.²⁷ Such chests appear in a similar context – i.e. as gold containers – in a scene from Karnak, where Thutmose III is depicted offering treasures to Amun-Re.²⁸ They were also found among the funerary equipment of the Tutankhamun's tomb.²⁹

Chests with sloping lids were usually found without decoration or, in the most elaborated cases, with patterns such as checkerboard or imitation of the wood (Nebamun's tomb chapel).³⁰ The two examples with the most sophisticated decoration, made of gold foil, lapis lazuli (no. 044), ebony wood, glass and ivory (no. 540 with lid no. 551) come from KV 62, where they were found among the funerary equipment, as mentioned above.³¹ The no. 044 is decorated with Tutankhamun's nomen, prenomen and the Horus name. The chest contained linen, jewellery, an alabaster vase, a bowl and sceptre, although its content was not original and had been replaced at some point before its discovery.³² The decoration of chest no. 540 depicts different scenes with the royal couple and different animals, mainly hunting scenes.³³

As it could be observed, this type of chests served mainly as containers in a very broad sense, they did not have a ritual meaning themselves and they cannot be associated with any specific ritual like, for example, *meret*-chests.³⁴ No other chest among so many different examples of this type can serve as an analogy for the decorated chests from the Southern Room of Amun.

²³ Willems 1988: 224.

²⁴ Davies 1943: Pls XXX–XXXII, XXXIV, LV, XCII.

²⁵ Hartwig 2013: 32.

²⁶ Parkinson 2008: 98, 102, 104, 106.

²⁷ Punt Portico: Naville 1898: Pl. LXXX; *Chapelle Rouge*: Burgos, Larché 2006: 76, 128; Lacau, Chevrier 1977: 33–34, 230–231.

²⁸ *Urk.* IV, 636.21.

²⁹ Four chest of this kind were found: Reeves 2005: 193.

³⁰ Parkinson 2008: 102, 104, 106.

³¹ *Griffith Institute*: nos 044, 054ddd, 267-269, 271, 540, 551; Reeves 2005: 192–193.

³² *Griffith Institute*: no. 044.

³³ *Griffith Institute*: no. 540.

³⁴ Egberts 1995: 7–204.

INTERPRETING THE DECORATION

In spite of the significant degree of damage to the decoration, especially in the case of the second chest, we can say with great likelihood that both objects were depicting the same or similar scenes. The decoration on both items consists of two scenes, both representing Hatshepsut's offering to Amun-Re. Her royal iconography is the same, the only doubtful element being the type of object she is handling in the right scene of the second chest. Inscriptions, even when not completely preserved or originally painted, are similarly composed for both cases and while some parts of them are missing in one place and present in the other, almost the whole text can be reconstructed.

Since the two of five chests in frieze of objects are decorated as described, there is a strong possibility that originally all of them used to expose similar decoration – on the left side, there was an offering of water represented, and on the right side – some other kind of offering. As not even one offering can be fully recognized in both right scenes, it is impossible to state what kind of scenes sequence was applied.

A significant feature of these representations is the originality of Hatshepsut's and Amun-Re's names. They are partly damaged here and there but this seems to be natural. Lack of intentional damages is a result of the fact that decoration of the chests' was invisible from the ground level due to the high localisation (on upper part of the wall) and since it was drawn only with a red thin line on the yellow background. Thus, the decoration on the chests remained untouched by human hands even though someone had climb a ladder or scaffolding in order to change Hatshepsut's name into Thutmose II's name in the embracing scene next to the frieze of objects.³⁵

It must be emphasized that this kind of painted decoration on the chests representation has no analogy in the material studied by the present author so far. The painted decoration was particularly vulnerable to be washed away, making these two examples exceptional cases. The described decorations although miniature ones reproduce usual rules of the iconographical composition observed on the wall reliefs of the temples and, in particular, obviously refers to the decorative repertory of the Southern Room of Amun – for instance the offering scenes where Hatshepsut is the celebrant and Amun is the beneficiary, the presence of a royal *ka* or some elements of the royal iconography (the royal kilt).³⁶

The content of these chests, described with the use of labelling inscriptions next to each one of them, is linked both with the temple and funeral sphere. The particular role played by the *jdmj*-linen because of its transformative power,³⁷ was linked also with Sed Festival and coronation.³⁸ Some of these linen (e.g. *w3d.t*, *jrtjw* and *jdmj*) were used in the Daily Cult Ritual,³⁹ where their colour and luminosity properties are emphasized. Luminosity

³⁵ Naville 1906: Pl. CXXX.

³⁶ Naville 1906: Pls CXXX–CXXXIII; Sankiewicz 2011: 140, Fig. 8.

³⁷ Goebis 2011: 58.

³⁸ Rummel 2006: 381–407.

³⁹ Goebis 2011: 64, 66–72.

was connected with freshness, brightness, arising sun – generally rebirth.⁴⁰ In this ritual the shining aspect was enhanced with ointments, which were applied just after the dressing. Colours such as red or green are associated with freshness and life.⁴¹ The content of the frieze of objects in the Southern Room of Amun – oils and linen – underlines the importance of the conception of transformation, transfiguration, rejuvenation and rebirth in this part of the temple. Oils and linen are also known from funerary texts as those for securing the body of the deceased, guaranteeing the eternal survival thanks to the possibility of constant regeneration.⁴² This aspect of renewal, referring to the king, might be also well visible when examining the details of the chests' decorations – the selection of the royal crowns. A *khepresh*-crown was interpreted as a headdress for the living king, while a *nemes* was proven to be connected with the rebirth of the king⁴³ and connected with the sunrise⁴⁴ – once again the luminosity is emphasized. Actually, both headdresses have close connection to the solar and radiance properties.⁴⁵ K. Goebis states that a *khepresh*-crown is closely related to the *nemes*, which appears to mark a deceased king when both headdresses are shown together.⁴⁶ The presence of the royal *ka*⁴⁷ completes the regeneration meaning of the scenes. These complex issues of transformation, regeneration, rejuvenation and rebirth have to be taken into consideration when identifying all functions of the Southern Room of Amun in the Temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari.

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⁴⁰ Goebis 2011: 78–80.

⁴¹ Goebis 2011: 67; Pinch 2001: 183.

⁴² Allen 2005: 22.

⁴³ Collier 1996: 124; Egberts: 177–186; Goebis 1995: 179; Goebis 2001: 324; Hardwick 2003: 119–120.

⁴⁴ Goebis 1995: 166–167.

⁴⁵ Goebis 1995: 158, 166–168, 178–181; Goebis 2011: 85–86.

⁴⁶ Goebis 2001: 324.

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‘A Temple Comes to Being’ A Few Comments on the Temple Foundation Ritual

JANUSZ KARKOWSKI

Abstract: Building a temple in Ancient Egypt began with the Foundation Ritual and ended with the consecration of the completed monument to its gods. The moment when the temple was ready for its cultic functions is by a majority of authors placed at the end of the process. The importance and complexity of the Foundation Ritual shows that directly after its completing the Egyptians might have treated extent of the future temple as a sacred space which already during the construction of the temple required some sort of cult. There seems to be no royal document referring to the official worship, but a number of ostraca from Deir el-Bahari and another longer document may be linked to this early stage unmaterialized existence of the temple. All these documents record the offerings presented in the temple by different officials of the time of Hatshepsut. At least some of them predate the completion of building operation.

Keywords: Pharaonic Egypt, temple Foundation Ritual, Deir el-Bahari, temple of Hatshepsut, ostraca

Janusz Karkowski, Instytut Kultur Śródziemnomorskich i Orientalnych PAN, Warszawa; jankark@iksio.pan.pl

Building a temple in ancient Egypt was a complex undertaking not only on the practical side that included planning and organizing the construction process, but also for its religious and symbolic significance of creating a new symbolic microcosm. Most of the texts that allude to this symbolic side of the process lack in detail and are difficult to interpret. Prior to the Ptolemaic period the scenes of the Foundation Ritual were but a sort of conventional selection of the complete ceremony. The accompanying texts are schematic and provide little evidence for the significance and sequence of the ritual. The evidence from such late temples as Edfu, Dendera, etc. is much more detailed. In addition, the texts preserved on the walls of these temples shed light on the mythical archetypes of the temples that might have been based on a much earlier tradition. The Foundation Ritual followed the mythical events that happened at the beginning of the creation.¹

¹ Reymond 1969.

A text on the Karnak stela of Thutmose III describes the beginning of the Foundation Ritual, lasting at least few days. This took form of a feast with procession lead by the king who left his palace and went to the place of the planned new temple.² The most important act *pd-šs* – ‘Stretching the Cord’, occurs in all the preserved depictions of the ceremony on temple walls. The Foundation Ritual preceded the construction process and the decoration of temple elements. These consisted of levelling the ground, digging the foundation trenches, quarrying and transportation of the building material, construction of walls, columns and roofs, decorating the temple, painting the decoration. In reality, the construction and decoration could take some years or even decades to complete. At the end the temple was consecrated through purification, Opening of the Mouth ceremony performed on the entire temple, probably at its main entrance, its statues, wall figures of gods and kings and possibly even on the particular rooms of the temple.³ Finally the temple was handed down to the main divinity of the temple (*rdit pr n N*).

The list of ceremonies of the Foundation Ritual may be restored from preserved scenes dating from all the periods of the Pharaonic civilisation. It must be kept in mind that no sequence of scenes in particular temples is complete. They usually show a characteristic selection from the entire suit of episodes. Thus, e.g. the Consecration of the Foundation Deposit is known only from the Solar Temple of Newoserre from Abusir⁴ and is omitted in all the remaining examples. How important this act was is proved by numerous foundation deposits known from ancient Egyptian temples of all epochs.⁵ On the other hand, the ceremony of filling the bottom of the foundation ditch with sand is depicted on two Abusir blocks and on the walls of the Ptolemaic temples only,⁶ being absent from all the remaining and preserved examples.

The restoration of the sequence of the ceremonies is usually based on comparison of particular occurrences and their analysis aimed at finding a logical order.⁷ The temple of Hatshepsut at Deir el-Bahari gives a typical New Kingdom selection of scenes on the west wall of the southern wing of the Lower Portico. The Foundation Ritual follows here the famous scene of transportation of obelisks from Aswan to the temple of Amun-Re at Karnak and another scene of presentation of two pairs of obelisks at Karnak.⁸ The Foundation Ritual is separated from the two preceding scenes by yet another depiction showing Thutmose III in a ceremonial run before the ithyphallic form

² *Urk.* IV, 835–838 and Burkhardt *et al.* (Eds) 1984: 275–277; Beckerath 1981: 42–49. See also the New Kingdom copy of a Twelfth Dynasty text: Buck 1938: 48–57.

³ This is apparent from two dedicatory texts from the Horus temple at Edfu: Blackman, Fairman 1946: 75–91.

⁴ Bissing, Kees 1923: Pl. I.2.

⁵ Weinstein 1973.

⁶ Bissing, Kees 1923: Pls. 1,1b (second scene from the left), 2,5; see description on p. 3; Montet 1964: 89–91.

⁷ Bissing, Kees 1922: 3–13; Moret 1902: 130–142; Montet 1964: 74–100; David 1973: 69–74; Letellier 1977; Zibelius-Chen 1986; Adly 1981; cf. Goyon 1983: 352–354.

⁸ PM II², 342 (nos 5 and 6,1); Naville 1908: Pls CLIII–CLVI.

of Amun-Re.⁹ All the foundation scenes of the Deir el-Bahari temple show Hatshepsut as the only builder of the monument. Her figures and names were destroyed with chisel. At some point also the background around the lower parts of the queen’s figures was hammered out. Under Akhenaten the figures of gods were destroyed. Finally, the divine depictions were restored under Ramesses II, who placed his restoration texts ‘for his father, Amun-Re’ in front of each of the restored figures. Probably at the same time the destroyed surfaces left after the removing of the queen’s figures were again plastered and whitewashed.

The Hatshepsut Deir el-Bahari scenes start with the ceremony of Stretching the Cord performed with the goddess Sefekhet-abuy.¹⁰ The restorers of Ramesses II modified her figure, and at present she is shown holding the *w3s*-sceptre in her right hand and the *ḥb*-sign in her left one (**Fig. 1a**). The remaining traces of signs of the scene title make possible the restoration of the complete text between two poles kept together by a rope (**Fig. 1b**). The lower, completely destroyed part of the text is restored after a contemporary parallel from the Hours temple at Buhen.¹¹ The following two scenes show untypical arrangement. Usually the pharaoh was shown performing each religious ceremony before a divinity, but in the first scene the god’s figure was omitted (**Fig. 2**). Together with the next scene the episodes of the ritual are performed before a single figure of Amun-Re placed to the right of them.¹² Originally, the first scene showed the queen, accompanied by her *k3*, Scattering the *bsn*-grains (*wps* *bsn*) around an oval containing a small hieroglyph of a shrine (*sh-nt*). The next scene apparently depicts the ceremony of offering the Deir el-Bahari temple to Amun-Re (**Fig. 3a**). The name of the temple inside the *hwt*-enclosure is recognizable in the thoroughly erased scene title once placed between the queen and the god (**Fig. 3b**). These three scenes are followed by the Great Offering before the ithyphallic form of the same god (**Fig. 4**).¹³

Thus, the Deir el-Bahari version of the ritual omits important episodes depicted on the walls of the late temples at Edfu and Dendera. The idea to build a new temple was always taken by the pharaoh. According to Pierre Montet ten ceremonies of the Foundation Ritual should be restored:

1. departure in procession from the palace to reach the area of the future temple;
2. the gods join the pharaoh to take part in the ritual;
3. Stretching the Cord with Sefekhet-abuy;

⁹ PM II², 342 (no. 6,2) – Thutmose III is wrongly described as ‘the Queen’; Naville 1908: Pl. CLVII – the king is named ‘Hatshepsu’ in apparent disaccord with signs inside the fragment of the cartouche above the king; cf. some additional blocks from storerooms with almost complete cartouches of the king in: Karkowski 1976: 256, Fig. 4.

¹⁰ PM II², 342 (no. 6,3) – only the restored figure of the goddess is shown. Some additional blocks with the goddess’ head and the text above are shown in Karkowski 1976: 255, Fig. 3.

¹¹ Caminos 1974: 20–21, Pl. 26.

¹² PM II², 342 (no. 6,4) the scene of Scattering the *bsn* is not mentioned; Naville 1908: Pl. CLIX – only part of the oval with the small shrine from the scene of spreading *bsn* is shown.

¹³ This scene remains unpublished, despite its comparatively better preservation. This enumeration is based on author’s study of scenes, tracings of identified blocks, and copies of texts. In addition to fragments published in Karkowski 1976: 255–256, Figs 3–4, many more fragments from the foundation scenes were identified in the temple storage areas.

4. Hacking the Ground with a Hoe;
5. Forming the mud-brick;
6. Pouring Sand into the foundation trench;
7. fabrication of plackets of gold and stone for the four angles of the temple (episode known from the Ptolemaic temples only);
8. building the temple, transporting and manoeuvring the stone blocks (again scene absent from earlier examples);
9. Scattering the grains of *bsn* around the temple to purify it;
10. Giving the Temple to Its God.¹⁴

To this list the Consecration of the Foundation Deposits should be added, known from a fragmentary scene in the temple of Newoserre at Abusir.¹⁵ This part of the ritual might have followed the Stretching the Cord ceremony.

In the Egyptological literature the listed episodes of the ritual are treated as a continuous process – from the selection of the site until the final ceremony of handing down the temple to the divinity.¹⁶ The construction of a temple with all its noise, dirt, dust and sweat is treated as a sort of gap, when no cult could be performed in the building as long as it was under construction. A temple was meant to be not ready to play its religious role until its construction has been completed, has undergone the purification, and has been ritually animated. On the other hand the stela of Thutmose III from Karnak and a text on a leather scroll, possibly a copy of the Twelfth Dynasty document,¹⁷ show the importance of the beginning of the Foundation Ritual, preceding the construction activity. Already the most characteristic ceremony of Stretching the Cord (*pd-šs*) performed at the very beginning of founding of a new temple had great symbolic significance, and so the Thutmose III text reports that the day of the new moon during a feast of Amun was chosen to perform the ceremony. A much later texts speak about observation of *mshntyw*, or the Ursa Maior constellation during this ritual, using the *mrhyt* instrument. Only after this action, the four angles of the temple were fixed.¹⁸ It seems probable, that the Stretching the Cord took place during the night of the new moon to make the observation of the stars easier. The observation of Ursa Maior is an easy way to find the true north and had a purely symbolic meaning, since almost all the New Kingdom or later temples were not oriented in accordance with the cardinal points, thus one has to look for different principles according to which particular temples were oriented: direction towards the Nile, towards the point of the sun-raising during the Winter Solstice, towards the point of reappearance of Sirius, and other stellar or topographical reasons.¹⁹ Observation of the stars gave a greater importance

¹⁴ Montet 1964: 74–100.

¹⁵ Bissing, Kees 1923: Pl. 1,2, the leftmost scene.

¹⁶ See: Weinstein 2001: 559; Belmonte, Molinero Polo, Miranda 2009: 197–198.

¹⁷ Buck 1938: 48–57.

¹⁸ Chassinat 1932: 44; Montet 1964: 77–82.

¹⁹ Gabolde 1998: 127–137; 2010; Shaltout, Belmonte 2005; 2006; Shaltout, Belmonte, Fekri 2007; 2008; Cauville-Colin 1992.

and a cosmic dimension to the performed ceremony. The remaining episodes of the ritual were intended to secure the sanctity of the place of the future temple. Contrary to Montet’s opinion the ‘Scattering the *bsn*’ should be moved to this early stage of ritual before the construction. It had a purifying meaning and might have been performed on a model of the future temple.²⁰

The first ceremonies of the Foundation Ritual delimited the sacred place of the planned temple. It may be asked if these important ceremonies were not the true coming into being of the temple that was yet to be built. The pharaoh conceived the idea to provide the god with his new sacred seat and ritually brought it to life. If this assumption was true, one might expect some further cultic actions within the extent of the ritually activated future temple during its construction. It seems that no archaeological evidence is known of such actions performed in the name of the pharaoh. There seems to be none royal document with clear record of actions performed during the temple construction, such as offerings during the feasts.²¹ If such cultic actions took place, they might have been performed in a temporary shrine of light construction or even in a space protected from the disorder of the building activity by a light mud-brick wall. Such a construction might have left no traces, since it could be eventually dismantled when the temple construction had been completed.

It is among the private documents that we may find record of offerings presented by private persons of the high rank at the early stage of construction. Already the expedition of the Metropolitan Museum of Art found at Deir el-Bahari two ostraca with receipts of offerings. Unfortunately, neither of the two documents has a regnal year preserved. Both objects were found in a rubbish dump, in a hollow in the south-east corner of the Lower Court of the Hatshepsut temple. The first of them belongs to the wife of the well-known First Prophet of Amun, Hapuseneb.²² It is noteworthy, that the temple of Deir el-Bahari in this ostrakon is called *pr Imn m Dsrw*. This may point to an early date of the text. The second document records offerings presented by the Scribe of the Steward Senenmut – another name connected with Hatshepsut – and by the Steward Rau.²³ Another fragmentary ostrakon of the same kind was found by the Polish-Egyptian mission in 1975. It has no regnal year, neither. The text records the receipts of offerings of Senenmut (*recto*) and another one of a more obscure *sdm-ꜥš* Hat (*verso*).²⁴ The ostrakon was discovered in the dust filling the triangular relieve construction above the roof of the Bark Room of Amun-Re. The very place in which it was found shows that it was put there relatively early, still during the construction of the temple. The triangular construction was sealed when the

²⁰ For the meaning of *bsn* see: Ćwiek 2009.

²¹ A number of jar labels from Ramesseum may point to the cult in the temple possibly following the completion of the sanctuary (Leblanc 1997: 49).

²² Hayes 1960: 36–37, Pl. XI, no. 9.

²³ Hayes 1960: 37, Pl. X, no. 10.

²⁴ Marciniak 1978: 165–170, Pl. LI. The same Hat may be depicted on the prow of one of the ships in the scene of transportation of obelisks (Naville 1908: Pl. CLIII, first ship in the second register). This reference author owes to J. Iwaszczuk.

central part of the casing wall of the protective platform was built above the west part of the Upper Terrace of the Hatshepsut temple.²⁵

The text of Hat was written on day 20 of the first month of the *akhet*-season. The month-sign and the numeral below in the text on *verso* is not preserved, and only the season and day 1 are readable. This means that the two texts were written on different days. M. Marciniak proposes to restore ‘month 1’ on the *verso*. In this case, the span of time between the two recorded events would have amounted to twenty days. Another possible restoration ‘month 2’ would have reduced this span to eleven days. In any case, the fact that the same flake of limestone was used twice to record two visits to the temple area supports the suggestion already expressed by W.C. Hayes, that receipts of this kind were destined to be copied on a papyrus roll or another material, to be stored in the future temple archive.²⁶

The occasion at which the offerings were made and the divinity to which they were presented are not mentioned in the above documents. However, the place in which the three documents were found leaves little doubt that the offerings were made in the temple of Hatshepsut for its god Amun-Re.

There is yet another document which may show another stage of recording the offerings brought to the temple of Hatshepsut. This is a wooden tablet with hieratic texts on both sides. On the *recto* a text of a different character was inscribed. It is the text on the *verso* that shows close similarities with the three receipts of offerings discussed above. In this case, the text contains a list of receipts arranged in a tabular form.²⁷ The document may be interpreted as a draft for the final recording on papyrus of offerings brought by twenty four different personages and institutions, including many well-known officials of Hatshepsut. Among them one finds the following entries: ‘Domain of the Pharaoh’, ‘Domain of King’s Wife’, ‘Vizier User’ and ‘Senenmut’. The document is dated to ‘year 5, second month of the *peret*-season, day 26’. There can be little doubt, that the King’s Wife was Hatshepsut, who used this title until her coronation in year seven of Thutmose III, when she assumed the complete royal titulary. As to the Pharaoh it must be Thutmose III himself who succeeded his father.

This important document leaves many questions unanswered. Its connection with the Deir el-Bahari is probable, but not sure, because it is not known where the tablet was found. The early date in the reign of Thutmose III is in disaccord with the names of the queen on objects from the foundation deposits. Hatshepsut’s names as the royal consort or royal daughter do occur on scarabs in some of the deposits, but the majority of objects in the same deposits show her royal titulary. The earliest date which was proposed for the foundation of the temple is year seven of Thutmose III. It is based on a hieratic text on a broken oil jar, found under the embankment of the processional avenue of the temple.²⁸ On the other hand, the Deir el-Bahari temple seems to be the earliest temple constructed by Hatshepsut on the

²⁵ Wysocki 1983: 243–253, Pls 60–65.

²⁶ Hayes 1960: 37.

²⁷ Vernus 1981: 106–118, 121–124, Pl. 5.

²⁸ Hayes 1957: 78–79, and 81 with Fig. 1A.

West Bank. The fact that so many people presented offerings during the same day means that it must have been a rather important religious occasion. P. Vernus, who published the document, proposes the feast of Amun, which took place on this day of the *peret*-season.²⁹ The first line mentions the place where the offerings were presented. Vernus translates this fragment: *enumeration des offrandes faites dans (le district) du canal*.³⁰ Further he points to two ostraca from Deir el-Bahari, with mentions of two channels. One of these documents is especially important: its text lists participants, Senenmut among others, in some event that takes place on the ‘landing stage (*d3d3w*) of the channel’.³¹ But the word *d3d3w* was also interpreted as a building or a colonnade within the temple precinct that served as a resting place during temple processions.³² Could it not be the place arranged for a temporary cult located at the entry to the temple under the construction? Could not this celebration precede by two years the actual Foundation Ritual in the Upper Temple at Deir el-Bahari in year seven? The two years could have been spent on preparation of the transportation road and preliminary levelling the area of the future temple to facilitate the performance of the Foundation Ritual.

The above argument merely points to a possibility, that after the Foundation Ritual the area of a temple could have been treated by the contemporary Egyptians as a sacred place and an animated entity that requires provisions. Some offerings apparently were presented in the temple still under construction by nobility members. It is possible that the feasts might have been celebrated in a place, or more places arranged within a sacred space created during the Foundation Rituals.

Waiting until a temple was completed and all the technical activity ceased would have meant that many temples might have never functioned properly. In some sanctuaries, and first of all in the Amun temple at Karnak, the building, rebuilding, dismantling, decorating, restoring, and changing the decoration practically were going on continuously. On the other hand, this unmaterialized existence of the temple does not exclude the final inauguration of a completed building after all the animation and purification rituals on the temple, on all its statues, and possibly also on depictions of gods and kings on its walls.

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²⁹ Vernus 1981: 115–116.

³⁰ Vernus 1981: 107, and 112 with n. d.

³¹ Hayes 1960: 35–36, Pl. X, no. 8

³² Spencer 1984: 130–133; *Wb* V, 532.6–7 ‘Gebäude vor dem Tempel’; Barguet 1962: 301–302, proposes to identify the term *d3d3w* with the front colonnades or pavilions at the temple entrance (such as Taharka’s colonnade in front of the Second Pylon at Karnak). See also: Szafranski 1998: 102–106, where *d3d3w* constitutes part of the palace and has its own stone doorway (examples predate the New Kingdom).

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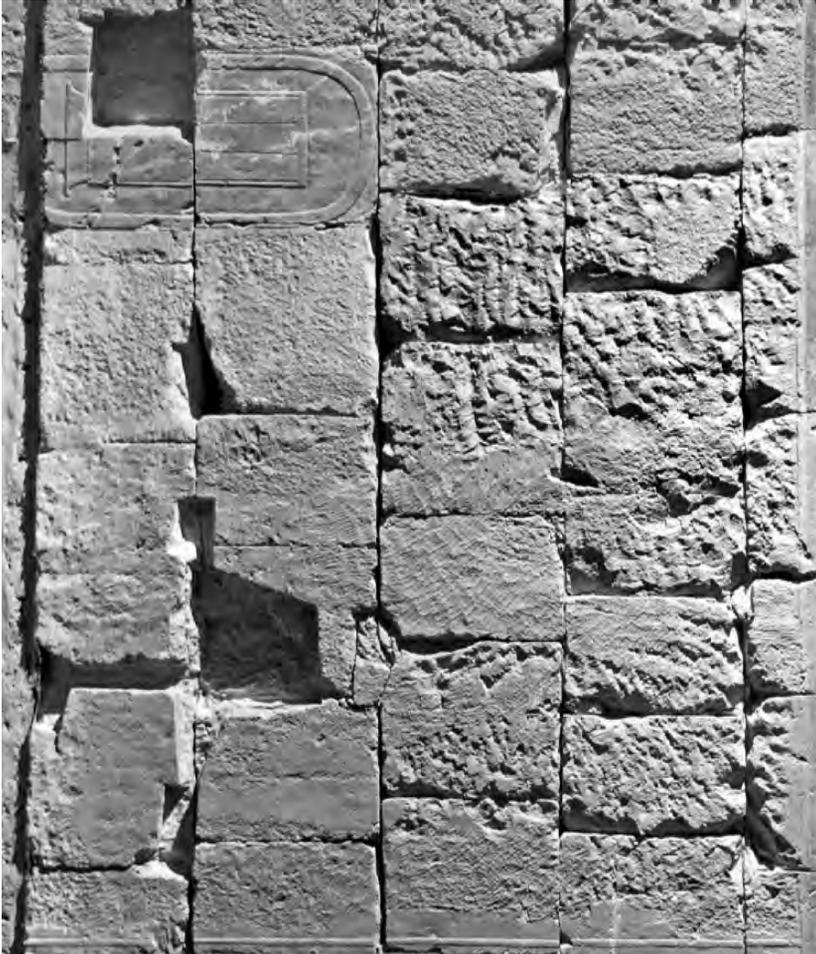
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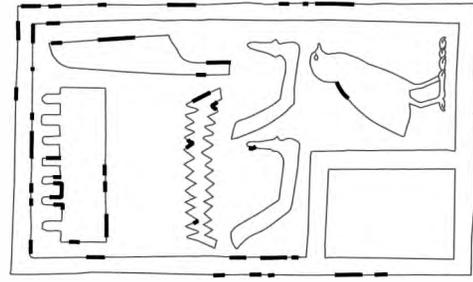
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b

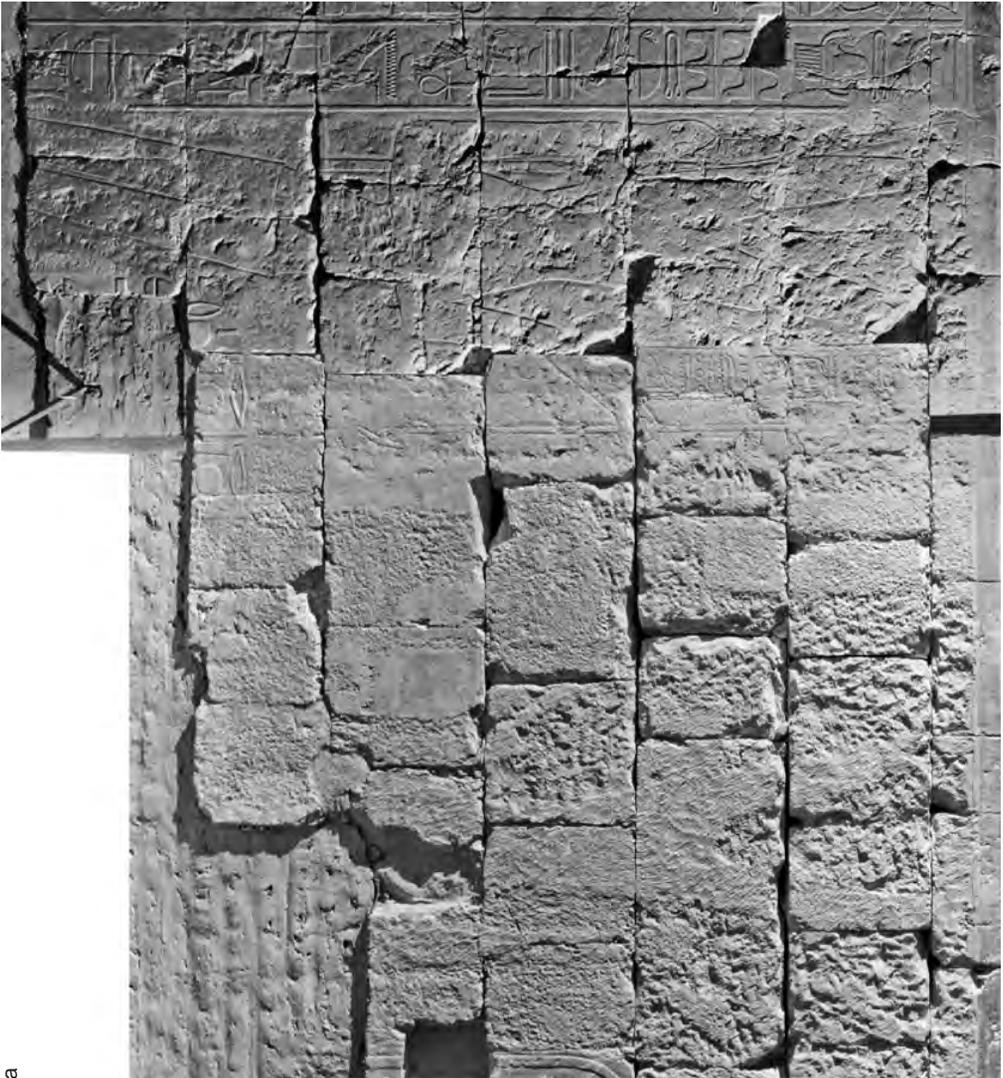
1a. Remains of the scene of Stretching the Cord. Hatshepsut's figure on the left has been destroyed with chisel. The attitude of the goddess on the right has been modified after the Amarna destruction; b. restored title of the scene: heavy line – preserved outline of the original text; thin line – restored signs (no traces has remained of the lower signs) (Phot. Z. Doliński, repertory of documentation IKSIO PAN; drawing: J. Karkowski).



2. Remains of the scene of Scattering the *bsyt*-grains. Hatshepsut's figure and her *k3* were destroyed with chisel (Phot. Z. Doliński, repertory of documentation IKStO PAN).



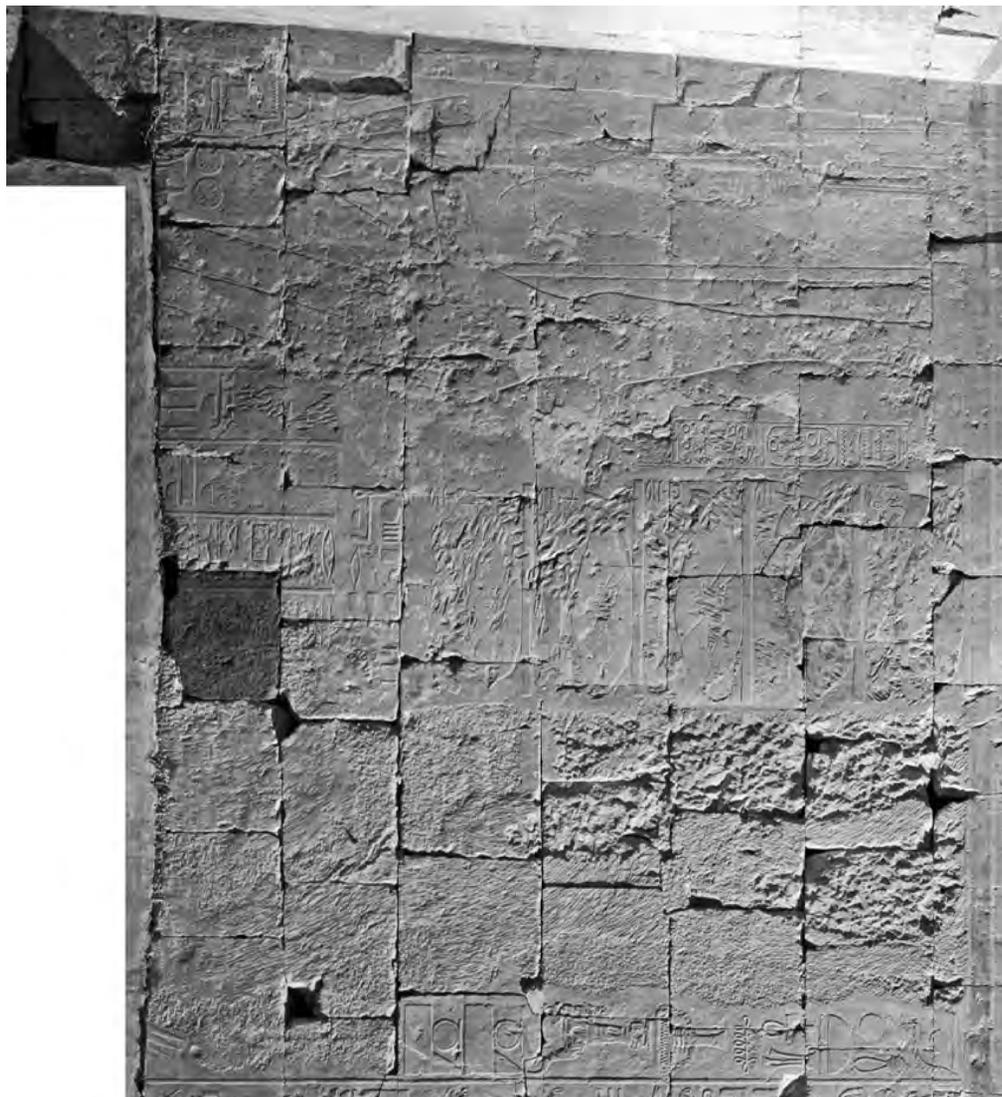
b



a

3a. Remains of a much reworked scene, most probably of Giving the Temple to Its Lord; b. restored name of the Deir el-Bahari temple in the scene; heavy lines figure preserved outline of the original text; thin line – restored signs (Phot. Z. Dołński, repertory of documentation IKŚIO PAN; drawing: J. Karkowski).

4. Scene of the consecration of meat offerings to ityphallic Amun-Re-Kamutef (Phot. Z. Dolinski, repertory of documentation IKŚ(O PAN)).



Mosaic Floral Plaque Fragment from Alexandria

RENATA KUCHARCZYK

Abstract: Recent archeological work at the Kom el-Dikka site in Alexandria yielded a fragment of cast mosaic-glass floral plaque. It is one of just a few pieces of this category of glass known from regular excavations in the city. It exhibits a set of stylized flowers and fruits arranged in right-left symmetry, characteristic of this type of objects, which are generally assigned to the first century BC – first century AD. It is presumed that they were intended as inlays on wooden boxes and other furnishings, whereas larger examples were used as revetment panels in architectural contexts. The plaque from Kom el-Dikka was found in a late Roman context, containing also residual material from the early Roman period.

Keywords: Alexandria, Kom el-Dikka, Roman mosaic glass, mosaic floral plaque

Renata Kucharczyk, Centrum Archeologii Śródziemnomorskiej UW im. Kazimierza Michałowskiego, Warszawa; renatalex@yahoo.com

Mosaic glass is inseparably associated with the Alexandrian glass industry after the Hellenistic period.¹ Alas, like in the case of many other categories of luxury glass credited with being an Alexandrian specialty,² the archaeological evidence for polychrome glass from the

¹ The earliest evidence of the Alexandrian glass industry comes from the late Hellenistic period and is based solely on textual references, see: Cicero, *Pro Rabirio Postumo* 1931: 14.40; Strabo, *Geogr.* 1930: 16.2.25.

² A surprisingly small number of luxury glasses of the Hellenistic and Roman periods was found in Alexandria during regular excavations: Breccia 1912: 99–107; 1922: 229–231; Adriani 1952: 53, Pl. 35.4; Nenna 1993: 45–52; for a gilded cup excavated at Kom el-Dikka, see: Davidson-Weinberg 1987: 133–136; for toilet flasks, including mold-blown double-faced cosmetic vessels, see: Kucharczyk 2004: 43–45, Fig. 1; 2010a: 59, Fig. 2:5; 2011: 63–64, Fig. 7; for a double-faced toilet flask excavated at the Marina el-Alamein site, most probably of Alexandrian origin, see: Kucharczyk 2010b: 115–116, Fig. 1.7; for dichroic glass excavated at Kom el-Dikka, the only other site in Egypt (beside Oxyrhynchos) where this extremely rare late Roman glass came to light, see: Kucharczyk 2014: 29–35; for mosaic glass that was probably made in Alexandria, see: Nenna 2013: 309–325; for painted glass, see: Hope, Whitehouse 2003: 291–310; for glasses with cut decoration excavated in Egypt, some apparently of Alexandrian origin, see: Nenna 2003: 359–375; Auth 1983: 39–44; for two fragments of the late Hellenistic cast colorless hemispherical bowls with cut vertical fluting on the exterior, recently excavated at the Boubastis temple in Alexandria (the author is currently preparing a publication of glass finds from this site).

city is still limited and disappointing. Some fragments had been reported from a few sites in Alexandria: from the Chatbi and Ras el-Tin cemeteries.³ The most abundant assemblage (more than 100 fragments) comes from Kom el-Dikka.⁴ It consists of deep and shallow bowls exhibiting floral patterns of diverse colors and motifs, fragments of wall decoration, beads and gaming counters. Moreover, there are patterned mosaic canes reinforcing the case for a local production of polychrome glass. Mosaic glass from Kom el-Dikka belongs both to the early and the late Roman periods, although most pieces fit in the latter period. They represent chiefly pieces of wall revetments mimicking various types of marbles and *serpentino verde* (*lapis lacedaemonius*). It should be emphasized that the imitation of the latter was very popular in the Alexandrian glass workshops, particularly in the late Roman period as evidenced by many finds excavated at Kom el-Dikka, including, besides vessels and wall decoration, also mosaic canes.⁵ It seems that the similar material recently excavated at the Red Sea port city of Berenike could be of Alexandrian origin.⁶ This may be the case of a few early Roman bowls, including a *patellae* cup with an imitation of *serpentino verde*. Of Egyptian, often labeled also as being ‘of Alexandrian provenance’, are many fragments in various museums and private collections. A rich collection of mosaic glass is in the Graeco-Roman Museum in Alexandria.⁷

The object discussed here is a fragment of cast mosaic floral plaque recently found at the Kom el-Dikka site (inv. no. 250.18.12). It came to light during excavations in sector U, located northwest of the Theater Portico, in a context dated to the fourth–sixth century AD, with some residual material of the first century BC to third century AD.⁸ It is worth remembering that earlier excavations in this sector yielded a few fragments of similar plaques showing a daffodil and a grape cluster. They came from layers dated to the mid fifth century AD.⁹ One more fragment with a tulip-shaped flower and also with a grape cluster made of yellow, white, blue, green and red glass was discovered in the residential quarter (sector W1), situated in the eastern part of the site (unpublished, inv. no. W1/2634/76). Unfortunately, similarly to the other mosaic glass from Kom el-Dikka also this fragment was found in the late, mixed context.

³ Breccia 1912: 99–106, nos 312–347, Figs 65–79; Adriani 1952: Pl. 35.4; Grimm, Wildung 1978: nos 1–8; Nenna 1993: 45–52.

⁴ Kucharczyk 2010a: 67, Fig. 7:2; 2011: 66–67, Fig. 9:3.

⁵ In this context two sites in Egypt should also be mentioned: Ain et-Turba and the Bagawat necropolis in Kharga oasis where a large quantity of late Roman mosaic glass fragments has come to light (Nenna 2002: 153–158; 2013: 309–325; 2010: 202).

⁶ Kucharczyk forthcoming.

⁷ Breccia 1922: 229–231; Wente 1983: 19–22; Shahine 1995: 426–428, Pl. LXXXII; Nenna 1993: 378–379; Grimm, Wildung 1978: no. 133.9–10.

⁸ For the results of the excavations in sector U initiated in 1980–1981, see: Rodziewicz 1984–1985: 241–242; for the continuation of the work in 1990–1991, see: Majcherek 1992: 7–10; Majcherek, Kucharczyk 2014: 23–37; for campaigns in 2012 and 2013 and the glass material, see: Majcherek 2015.

⁹ Rodziewicz 1992: 319–320, Fig. 6.

DESCRIPTION AND MANUFACTURING PROCESS

The fragment (two joining pieces), broken horizontally along the short side, represents about one half of a rectangular plaque with one original short edge preserved on the bottom of the inlay. The present length is 3.8cm to 3.6cm, width 4cm, thickness varying from 0.7cm to 0.5cm. The vegetal decoration is composed of sections of pre-formed composite mosaic canes and strips of colored glass arranged as flowers, leaves, stems and fruits. Additionally, the decoration includes irregular chips of blue glass. The separate sections of mosaic canes were assembled in a mould in the desired pattern and set into a dark blue ground (now appearing as opaque black), then heated until the fusing of the glass. Subsequently the object was ground outside a mould. The slightly convex upper side was polished to smoothness. The back surface is rough and rippled. Whitish weathering is evidenced both on the upper and back surface. All preserved sides are vertical and fairly smooth. The glass is of low quality with sand particles and small cavities clearly visible in the section. All elements of the decoration penetrate the plaque through the thickness, but disappear towards the underside. The vegetal composition was inlaid only on the front of the plaque and was undoubtedly intended for viewing only from one side.

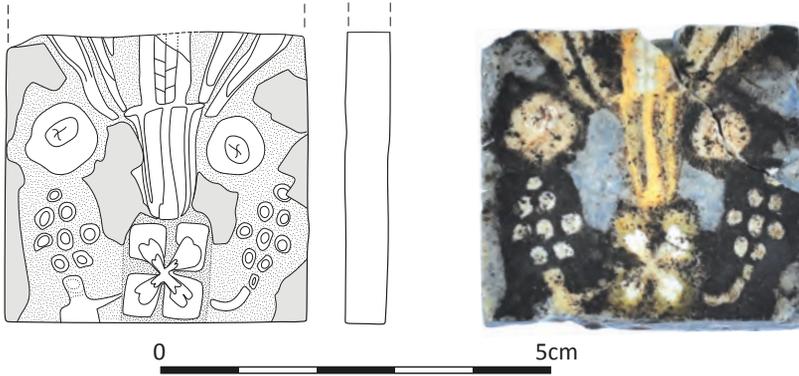
The plaque, made of opaque glass, exhibits a set of stylized flowers and fruits arranged in right-left symmetry, characteristic of this type of objects (**Fig. 1**).¹⁰ The centre of the design occupies a fragment of a large floral element, which dominates the entire decoration. It consists of a sheaf of wheat, with a yellow stem and head composed of squarish, off-white kernels with pale green outlines, and yellow beards. It is flanked by thin yellow leaves. Two thick stems, each composed of two thinner stems made of white and yellow glass, project from both sides of the sheaf.

The stem is flanked by two rounded fruits or buds of various sizes, with a white center and a dark x-shaped element set in milky-white glass. Below them are two fruits, which look like inverted grape clusters with a milky center embedded in white matrix. In the middle of the lower border is a quatrefoil flower with four heart-shaped petals. Each petal has a white-yellow centre tipped in yellow. The decoration is completed by irregular chips of blue glass, visible along the edges of the plaque and next to the wheat stem.

The fragment of floral plaque from Kom el-Dikka is not one of the finest surviving examples of this kind, both in terms of the colours and the quality of manufacture. If not for the blue and yellow glass, it would look almost monochrome. The number of colors used is surprisingly limited. When compared to many similar objects made of fresh, vividly colored glass, ours is rather odd. The quatrefoil flower with four heart-shaped petals is a good case in point. This motif, which is one of the most popular on plaques, is usually composed of several colours: opaque yellow, white, grey and red, and turquoise.¹¹ Here,

¹⁰ For the principal varieties of flowers and plant motifs employed in floral plaques and illustrated in drawings (Nilotic lotuses, daffodils, tulip-shaped flowers, fan-shaped flowers, quadrefoils, wheat sheaves, poppy-heads, grape clusters), see: Grose 1989: 355, Fig. 167.

¹¹ For examples of individual polychrome inlays with a quatrefoil flower with four heart-shaped petals, broadly dated either to the third century BC – first century AD or first century BC – first century AD, see:



1. Fragment of mosaic floral plaque (Phot. A. Zawadzińska; drawing: A. Jurgielewicz, M. Momot).

there are barely two colours: opaque white and yellow. On the other hand, poor workmanship is evident, even if only in the sheaf of wheat. It lacks the finesse that characterizes this motif in other finds of this type.

Although the plaque is not complete, it is sufficient to show the paucity of elements forming the decoration. Compared to other examples, which are crowded with various flowers and fruits, ours seems almost blank. Wherever on other plaques there are, for example, daffodils, buds or quatrefoil flowers, elements ‘condensing’ the decoration, on our object this role is filled by ordinary chips of blue glass, a feature not seen on any other specimens. Chips and stripes of mosaic and monochrome glass (waste) were incorporated into such objects, but only as backing.¹² The piece from Kom el-Dikka lacks flair. It remains in great contrast to other objects of this type, which show high levels of formative technique and beauty.

Floral plaques are divided into two subclasses based on stylistic grounds. The first, to which our find belongs, is characterized by clearly defined motifs, embedded in translucent cobalt blue or dark blue ground. The second has floral elements embedded in a translucent to transparent greenish-blue ground, and they are less regular with slightly blurred contours. Examples from this group are by far the more numerous.

None of the plaques was ever found in position, hence their purpose has not been established beyond doubt. Given their size, these attractive and exuberant objects may have been intended as decorative elements in the architectural context, as inlays for wooden jewel boxes and furniture and the like, where they undoubtedly could have been admired at

Bianchi *et al.* 2002: 142–143, no. EG-28b, presumably from Alexandria; Grose 1989: 346, nos 632, 639; *Per-neb II* 1993: 28–29, lots 28–29; *Per-neb III* 1993: 30–34, lots 53–57, 64–65; *Kofler-Truniger Coll.* 1985: 123–124, lot 240; 130, lot 248; Filarska 1962: 90, Pl. XXVII, no. 200267; Ettinghausen 1962: 18–19.

¹² Grose 1989: 356; Stern, Schlick-Nolte 1994: 404.

close range. In this context, one should recall evidence from Petra. The unburnt fragment of wood which may come from wooden furniture, was found with a mosaic floral inlay.¹³

ORIGIN AND DATE

Mosaic floral plaques come almost exclusively from Egypt. Beside Alexandria, the find places include sites in Middle Egypt: Asyut,¹⁴ Antinoopolis¹⁵ and Ihnasya.¹⁶ A significant number of fragments are said to be from Bahnasa (Oxyrhynchos).¹⁷ Many pieces were purchased at Luxor, which may suggest an Upper Egyptian origin.¹⁸ Other evidence from the region came from Dendera.¹⁹ They have also been observed at two sites in the Eastern Desert: Douch²⁰ and Ain et-Turba.²¹ Outside Egypt, isolated examples are noted in Upper Galilee²² and Petra.²³ The fairly widespread find spots include also Olympia²⁴ and Dion²⁵ in Greece, Aquileia²⁶ and Aosta²⁷ in Italy, Ptuj in Slovenia,²⁸ and Castra Vetera in Germany.²⁹ Additional examples have been reported from Limoges and Autun³⁰ in France and Clunia in Spain.³¹

An abundant number of fragments are housed in many museum collections around the world. In Egypt, they are kept in the Graeco-Roman Museum in Alexandria³² and the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.³³ A few object are in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem³⁴ and the Miho Museum near Kyoto.³⁵ Among published examples are those stored at European museums: Benaki Museum in Athens,³⁶ Egyptian Museum in Florence,³⁷ National Museum in

¹³ Kolb, Keller, Fellmann Brogli 1997: 243.

¹⁴ Cooney 1976: 134, no. 1661.

¹⁵ Cooney 1976: 133, nos 1642–1643.

¹⁶ Newby 2000: 16–17, no. 1.

¹⁷ Object stored in the Graeco-Roman Museum in Alexandria, no. 25153; Grimm, Wildung 1978: no. 133.9–10; *Kofler-Truniger Coll. 1985*: 114–115, lots 221–222.

¹⁸ Cooney 1976: 133–134, nos 1646–1660.

¹⁹ Petrie 1900: 31–32.

²⁰ Excavation of the IFAO, inv. nos 311c, 79.24.

²¹ Object stored at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 08.268.e3.

²² Davidson-Weinberg 1973: 47–51, Figs 5–6.

²³ Kolb, Keller, Fellmann Brogli 1997: 242–246, Figs 15a, 16a, 17a.

²⁴ Furtwängler 1890: 207, no. 1335.

²⁵ Object stored at the Museum in Dion, unpublished.

²⁶ Mandruzzato 2008: no. 165.

²⁷ Barovier Mentasti *et al.* (Eds) 2003: 42, no. 12.

²⁸ Korošec 1982: 33–39, Pl. 3.

²⁹ Lehner 1927: 298, Pl. XII.

³⁰ Hochuli-Gysel 1992: 103–107; Loustaud 2000: 292, Fig. 52.

³¹ Unpublished.

³² Shahine 1995: 154, no. 91.

³³ Aldred *et al.* 1978: Fig. 184.

³⁴ Spaer 2001: 242–244, 248–249, nos 600–603; Bianchi *et al.* 2002: 81:V–36a, V–36b, V–36c, V–37.

³⁵ *Egypt to China 2001*: 86, no. 118.

³⁶ Clairmont 1977: 6, Pl. I, no.15.

³⁷ *Le vie del vetro 1988*: 101–102, nos 23–24.

Warsaw³⁸ and the Antikensammlung in Berlin.³⁹ To this list one can add the British Museum,⁴⁰ the Victoria and Albert Museum,⁴¹ the National Museums Scotland⁴² and the Louvre Museum.⁴³ Examples can be cited also from a few American museums: the Corning Museum of Glass,⁴⁴ the Metropolitan Museum of Art,⁴⁵ the Toledo Museum of Art,⁴⁶ the Princeton University Art Museum,⁴⁷ as well as the Fitzwilliam Museum.⁴⁸ Some private collections, e.g. ‘Per-neb’ Collection,⁴⁹ Gréau Collection,⁵⁰ Sangiiori Collection,⁵¹ Ernesto Wolf Collection,⁵² Kofler-Truniger Collection⁵³ and Erwin Oppenländer Collection,⁵⁴ are worth mentioning.

Although there are many examples of such plaques, they are very poorly dated. Generally, they tend to be assigned to the first century BC – first century AD.⁵⁵ Fragments excavated in Alexandria have also offered no definitive conclusions regarding the dating. Those from the Chatby necropolis come from the fill overlying the Ptolemaic necropolis, though the stratigraphy of the site cannot be dated securely.⁵⁶ On the other hand, fragments from Kom el-Dikka were found in the late Roman (fourth-sixth century AD) context, containing also residual material from the early Roman period (first-third century AD).⁵⁷ A similar situation occurred at Douch and Ain et-Turba⁵⁸ and the atypical example from Upper Galilee is similarly burdened.⁵⁹ Only a very few fragments are well dated. Those from Petra⁶⁰ and Limoges⁶¹ were found in a first century context. The one from Ptuj has been dated contextually to the mid-first century BC through mid-first century AD.⁶²

³⁸ Filarska 1962: 91, 119–121, Pls XXXIV–XXXV.

³⁹ Platz-Horster 2002: 147, Fig. 1.

⁴⁰ Cooney 1976: 133–134, nos 1642–1664.

⁴¹ Honey 1946: 24, Pl. 3.E.

⁴² Lightfoot 2007: 188–189, nos 492–493.

⁴³ Arveiller-Dulong, Nenna 2011: 393–395, nos 649–653.

⁴⁴ Goldstein 1979: 254–257, nos 758–776.

⁴⁵ Grose 1989: 355, Fig. 166.

⁴⁶ Grose 1989: 365–367, cat. nos 646–653.

⁴⁷ Antonaras 2012: 286, no. 477.

⁴⁸ *Fitzwilliam Museum 1978*: 27–28, no. 44c.

⁴⁹ *Per-neb I 1992*: 11, lots 7–8; *Per-neb II 1993*: 9–12, lots 4–10; *Per-neb III 1993*: 25, lot 30.

⁵⁰ Froehner 1903: Pl. LXIV.

⁵¹ *Sangiiori Coll. 1999*: 38, no. 95.

⁵² Stern, Schlick-Nolte 1994: 404–407, nos 146–147.

⁵³ Müller 1964: A234a–g, p, r, u–x; *Kofler-Truniger Coll. 1985*: 114–115, lots 221–222.

⁵⁴ Saldern *et al.* 1974: 123, no. 333.

⁵⁵ Stern, Schlick-Nolte 1994: 404, 406 late first century BC to first century AD; Spaer 2001: 248–249 probably late first century BC to first century AD; Grose 1989: 355–356: *since no plaques are preserved in dated context, their chronology cannot be fixed precisely in the Hellenistic period.*

⁵⁶ Breccia 1912: 104–106, nos 337–345, Figs 70–77; Nenna 1993: 46–47, Fig. 1a-b.

⁵⁷ Cf. *supra* nn. 8–9.

⁵⁸ Arveiller-Dulong, Nenna 2011: 393.

⁵⁹ Davidson-Weinberg 1973: 47.

⁶⁰ Kolb, Keller, Fellmann Brogli 1997: 242–243, Figs 15a, 16a, 17a.

⁶¹ Hochuli-Gysel 1992: 105.

⁶² Korošec 1982: 33–39.

Since most plaques have been found in Middle Egypt and they are scanty attested elsewhere it seems that their production site was located somewhere in the region. The similarity in size and shape (they are usually 12–15cm long and 6–7cm wide), as well as homogeneity of technique and decoration style seem to reinforce the claim that they were produced not just in one region, but even probably in just one glass workshop. It is worth recalling that although never quite identical, they always share the same basic decorative elements, such as flowers with and without stems, fruits, leaves, stalks of grain, all arranged in various combinations in right-left symmetry.

Can Alexandria have been the place of production for these plaques? Strabo not only refers to the glassmakers at Alexandria, but he also mentions polychrome glass being produced there.⁶³ He meant most probably mosaic glass. Up to now only the finds from Kom el-Dikka seem to confirm his words and also the common opinion of the scholars, that mosaic glass was made in the city. Unfortunately, the limited numbers of mosaic glass coming from regular excavations and the very limited evidence of Roman glass workshops largely destroyed by intense urban sprawl causes our knowledge of the manufacturing of this and many other categories of luxury glasses in ancient Alexandria to be based on conjectures rather than on the archeological record.⁶⁴

Despite all these ‘shortcomings’, the fragments from Kom el-Dikka are a valid contribution to the still very short list, not only of mosaic floral plaques excavated in Alexandria, but mosaic glass from this city in general, of which so much is said, but unfortunately so little is known.

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⁶³ Strabo, *Geogr. 1930*: 16.2.25.

⁶⁴ Kucharczyk 2014: 34–35.

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Amphores romaines tardives et la stratigraphie de l'île de San Lorenzo (lagune de Venise) Discussion et nouvelles observations

IWONA MODRZEWSKA-PIANETTI

Abstract: The paper aims at analyzing discoveries of Ernesto Canal (a lifelong explorer of the Venetian lagoon archaeological remnants – both on land and under water) in the light of Sauro Gelichi studies. In particular, the critical review of ceramics from the area allows to conclude that the San Lorenzo isle was inhabited from the second through sixth century AD nevertheless great inundations of coastal zones of High Adriatic in that epoch. From the seventh century AD the isle gradually turned into a cemetery grounds, the dead being buried there in pit graves or in huge amphorae. Further on, author examines reasons behind inhabitation of these isles, connecting formation of the habitation centres (creation of the system of communication and commerce on the lagoon north) with climatic changes on the coasts of the Venetian lagoon and in ancient *Altinum*, what, at its ultimate phase, has lead to the growth of later settlements on the lagoon south, including Venice.

Keywords: Venice lagoon, San Lorenzo island, Torcello island, habitation centres, Roman *domus*, pit graves, amphorae reused

English title: Late Roman Amphorae and Stratigraphy of the Island of San Lorenzo (Venice Lagoon). Discussion and new observations

Iwona Modrzewska-Pianetti, Instytut Archeologii UW, Warszawa; iwonamodrzewska@poczta.onet.pl

Les premières prospections archéologiques de la lagune de Venise furent réalisées par Ernesto Canal, Inspecteur honoraire de la Lagune (**fig. 1**), qui commença ses travaux en 1962 et les dirigea jusqu'en 2010. Publiée en 2013, la grande monographie de ces recherches est sans aucun doute l'oeuvre de sa vie.

Ernesto Canal naquit à Venise en 1924. Ses 50 années de travaux se sont soldées par la découverte sous les eaux et sur des îles de près de 300 « sites archéologiques », comme il appelle les concentrations de trouvailles archéologiques faites dans les canaux et les marécages. Les résultats de ses travaux furent publiés systématiquement¹. Parmi les structures

¹ Canal *et al.* 1989 ; Canal 1995 ; 1998 ; 2013.



1. Ernesto Canal dans son atelier à Venise (phot. I. Modrzewska-Pianetti).

submergées aujourd'hui par les eaux de la lagune se trouvent des constructions en pierre et en brique, des digues de fascine intercalée de tessons d'amphores. Les fouilles de la lagune dirigées par Canal ont en outre abouti à la mise au jour de môles, d'entrepôts portuaires, d'ouvrages de consolidation, de voies et de villas romaines. Mais la découverte la plus significative fut certainement celle d'une *domus* romaine sur l'île de San Lorenzo dans la Lagune Nord². Depuis, des archéologues de l'Université de Venise et de la Surintendance des biens archéologiques de Vénétie ont ouvert sur cette île quelques chantiers de durée limitée³. De 2007 à 2011 de nouvelles recherches furent entreprises par Sauro Gelichi avec l'équipe de l'Université de Venise⁴.

Les chantiers de Canal et de Gelichi ont été localisés à des endroits différents⁵. Les résultats obtenus par l'équipe de Gelichi diffèrent dans l'interprétation et la datation de ceux auxquels ont abouti les travaux de Canal. Dans son ouvrage de 2013, Canal révisé très sérieusement la datation de certaines structures qu'il a découvertes dans la seconde moitié du XX^e siècle sur l'île de San Lorenzo, appelée aussi San Lorenzo di Ammiana.

² Modrzewska-Pianetti 2000: 35–41.

³ Canal 2013: 372 ; Gelichi *et al.* 2012.

⁴ Gelichi *et al.* 2012.

⁵ Canal 1995 ; Gelichi *et al.* 2012: figs 2, 3, 7.

OBJECTIF VISÉ

Dans mes recherches sur la lagune de Venise j'ai eu l'occasion de travailler avec Ernesto Canal. C'est la principale raison pour laquelle j'ai décidé d'entreprendre une analyse critique des données recueillies par Canal et Gelichi au cours des fouilles réalisées sur l'île de San Lorenzo. J'ai l'intention de réviser la stratigraphie ainsi que l'identification des amphores dégagées pendant ces campagnes afin de pouvoir procéder à la reconstitution du système d'échanges commerciaux de la lagune à l'époque antique, la finalité de cette entreprise étant de reconstituer les phases successives d'occupation de l'île depuis la période romaine jusqu'à la Basse Antiquité et de confronter ces résultats avec les données livrées par les fouilles des îles de Torcello et de San Francesco del Deserto. Dans la présente étude l'attention portera tout particulièrement sur les amphores. Je me suis vu confier l'examen d'une des amphores mises au jour sur l'île de San Lorenzo, elle me servira de prétexte pour débattre du rôle des amphores sur cette île⁶. L'île de San Lorenzo, à côté de celle de Torcello, présente de ce point de vue un intérêt capital, compte tenu du caractère unique des vestiges matériels dégagés par les fouilles⁷. Les différences de caractère ainsi que les différences dans la chronologie de l'aménagement des deux îles permettent en effet de poser des hypothèses sur la dynamique de création de centres lagunaires avant la fondation de Venise.

La question de savoir si, à l'époque antique, la lagune ressemblait à ce qu'elle est aujourd'hui ou si c'était, dans son essentiel, une terre ferme est discutée depuis des années⁸. Tout porte à croire que les fouilles archéologiques seront à même d'apporter la réponse à cette question. Pour établir l'histoire de la lagune de Venise, il est essentiel de prendre en compte les conditions naturelles de cette région et les changements qui s'y sont opérés dans le passé et qu'elle connaît aujourd'hui.

CONDITIONS HYDROGRAPHIQUES DE LA LAGUNE DE VENISE

Processus dynamique qui se poursuit de nos jours, la formation de la lagune de Venise est due à l'interaction des cours d'eau et des transgressions de la mer (**fig. 2**). Les modifications du littoral du Haut Adriatique ainsi que la création et la disparition des îles de la lagune surviennent aussi à la suite de la subsidence⁹. Les carottages réalisés dans le canal San Felice ont bien démontré la présence de sables du Piave¹⁰. Les plus importants fleuves qui ont formé le littoral lagunaire sont le Sile (*Silis*) et le Piave (*Palvis*) qui se jettent dans la Lagune Nord. Au sud-est de l'île de San Lorenzo, à 2,50 m de profondeur, furent découverts les vestiges d'un lac formé par les fleuves débouchant dans la lagune. L'actuel cours du Piave est très différent de celui de l'époque antique, la modification étant due à des travaux

⁶ Modrzewska-Pianetti 2000: fig. 24.

⁷ Leciejewicz, Tabaczyńska, Tabaczyński 1977.

⁸ Modrzewska, Pianetti 2005: 173–176 résumé de la discussion ; Canal 2013: 49–52.

⁹ Brambati 1985 ; Cavazzoni 1995 ; Modrzewska-Pianetti 2000: 14–20 ; 2008: 130–131.

¹⁰ Modrzewska-Pianetti 2000: fig. 11.



2. Vue sur la lagune à partir du littoral (phot. I. Modrzeska-Pianetti).

d'améliorations foncières. À l'époque post-glaciaire, le fleuve se ramifiait du côté du Sile¹¹. Les deux fleuves ont sans doute joué un rôle non négligeable dans la formation de l'île de Torcello. Il est probable que les deux confluaient au nord de l'actuelle lagune¹². A l'est du cours du Sile, aux environs de San Lorenzo se trouvait un confluent du Piave¹³. Le Piave traversait le nord-est de l'actuelle lagune avant la formation de celle-ci, soit il y a environ quatre mille ans. Entre le Sile et le Piave se trouvent de nombreux bras morts¹⁴. Il s'agit donc d'un système de deltas des Sile-Piave lesquels ont contribué à la formation de la partie orientale de la Lagune Nord. A l'époque romaine et aux temps postérieurs, le Sile s'éloigne du Piave, s'approche de la cité romaine d'*Altinum* sur le littoral¹⁵ (**fig. 3**) et débouche dans la lagune en formant des marécages¹⁶. Au XVII^e siècle, la construction du canal du Sile permet de déverser définitivement les eaux du fleuve hors lagune, dans l'ancien lit du Piave. Signalé par le chroniqueur Paul Diacre, le *diluvium* du VI^e siècle aurait entraîné la

¹¹ Comel 1960 ; Pianetti 1979.

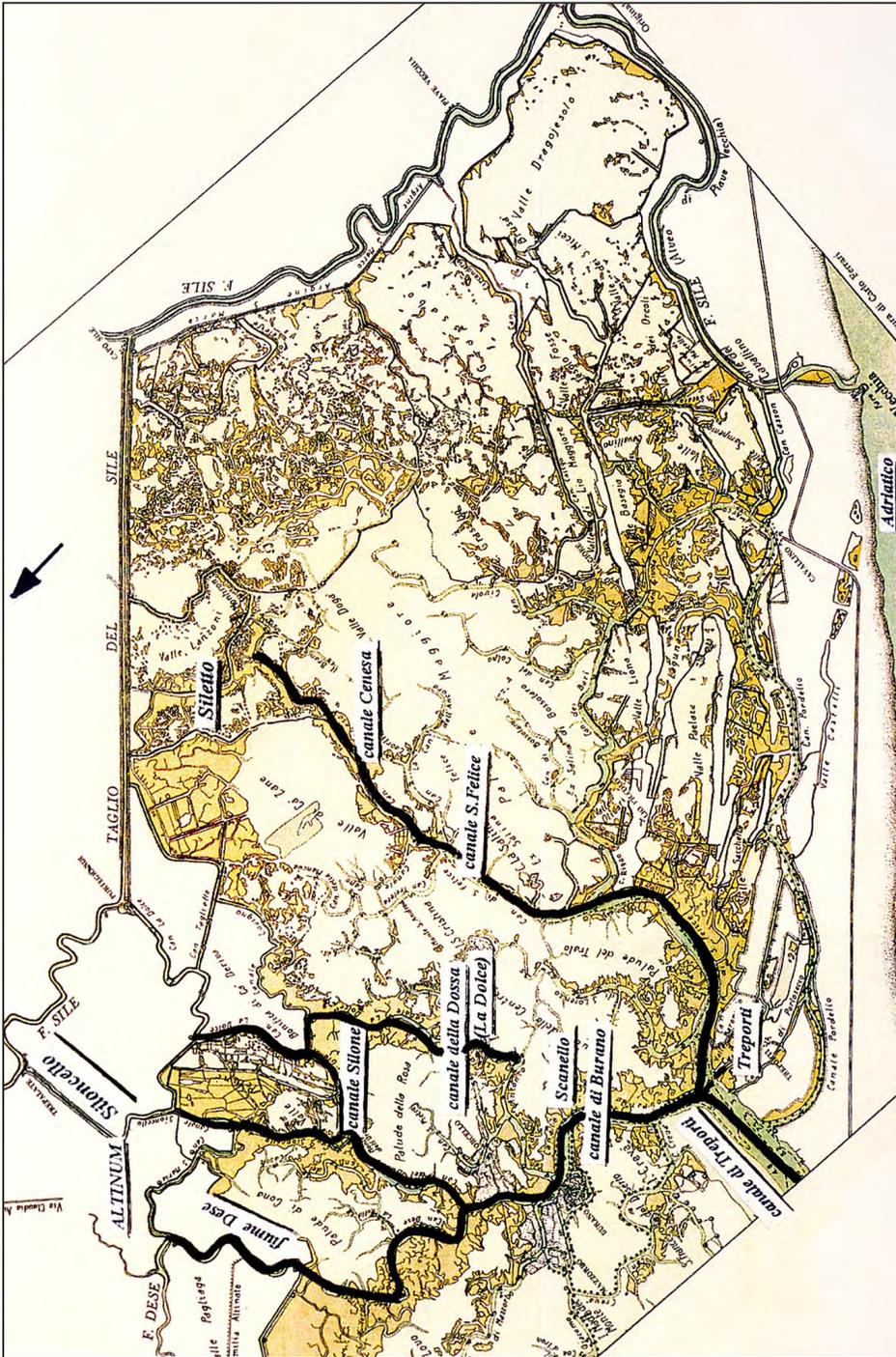
¹² Micheli 1924a ; 1924b ; Pianetti, Modrzeska-Pianetti 2008.

¹³ Canal 2013: 424.

¹⁴ Gelichi *et al.* 2012: 48.

¹⁵ Modrzeska, Pianetti 2005: 173–176.

¹⁶ Modrzeska-Pianetti, Pianetti 2012.



3. La Lagune Nord avec indication des bras morts de fleuves et situation d'Alitnum (dessin : I. Modrzewska-Pianetti ; basé sur la Carta Idrografica della laguna Veneta 1:50.000 de O. Bernardi, Ufficio Idrografico del Magistrato delle Acque, 2^e édition de 1931 et Zille 1955: 3^e carte de l'Annexe, sans n°).

séparation des deux fleuves¹⁷. Il est possible qu'à l'époque romaine le Sile et le Piave aient une embouchure commune à la hauteur d'*Altinum*¹⁸. Reconstituée après différentes études environnementales, l'image générale concerne les quatre premiers siècles de notre ère, soit la période de fréquentes régressions des eaux qui font émerger des lidi et favorisent l'occupation des îles¹⁹. Aux IV^e–VI^e siècles, avec la montée des eaux, les lidi de l'époque romaine se trouvent submergés et tout revient à l'état de l'époque préromaine. Les sols ne réapparaissent qu'après le VIII^e siècle. Jusqu'au VI^e siècle l'embouchure du fleuve Piave se trouvait à l'est de la Lagune Nord, à l'endroit où fut ensuite dirigé le cours du Sile²⁰. A l'époque romaine, moins étendue qu'aujourd'hui, la lagune était parsemée de plusieurs vastes îles séparées les unes des autres par les fleuves Piave, Sile, Zero et Cenesa²¹. Des processus de formation et de disparition d'îles et de canaux naturels se poursuivent de nos jours dans la lagune de Venise²². Il s'agit d'un phénomène dynamique mais très irrégulier, d'où la difficulté d'en dresser un modèle unique. L'île de San Lorenzo est une des îles submersibles.

SITUATION GÉOGRAPHIQUE DE L'ÎLE ET ÉTAT DE RECHERCHES

Ammiana est le nom d'un archipel aux environs de l'île de Santa Cristina (anciennement Ammiana), dans la Lagune Nord²³, auquel appartient l'île de San Lorenzo (**fig. 4**). L'île, de même que tout l'archipel, est affectée par une lente subsidence de l'ordre de 8 cm par 100 ans²⁴. Les archéologues qui étudient la lagune se trouvent confrontés au problème du niveau variable des eaux et des îles, mais la véritable difficulté vient de ce qui s'ensuit, à savoir : le rehaussement fréquent des sols et la pratique courante de remploi de matériaux issus des constructions plus anciennes, y compris de céramiques et, tout particulièrement, d'amphores. Il manquait jusque-là de datations précises des céramiques dégagées sur l'île, ce qui rendait impossible la datation correcte des couches stratigraphiques²⁵. Les bâtisseurs de l'île utilisaient deux types de briques : briques romaines, *sesquipedales* (22 x 22 x 31,5 cm), en usage jusque vers le VI^e siècle, et *altinelle* (7 x 8 x 5 cm) en usage depuis le XII^e siècle. Les *altinelle*, qui servent à dater les constructions médiévales²⁶, seraient un indice de chronologie relativement simple, si le phénomène de remploi n'était pas aussi répandu. Les conditions de vie sur l'île ont fait que tout matériel de construction comptait parmi les biens précieux.

Accompagné de son équipe, S. Gelichi fouilla à proximité des anciens chantiers de Canal au centre, dans l'est et dans le nord de l'île. L'île de San Lorenzo fut définitivement

¹⁷ Pianetti, Modrzevska-Pianetti 2008 ; Canal 2013: 431.

¹⁸ Rosada 1990 ; Canal 2013: 426.

¹⁹ Ammerman *et al.* 1999: 303–312.

²⁰ Canal 2013: 431.

²¹ Canal 2013: 432.

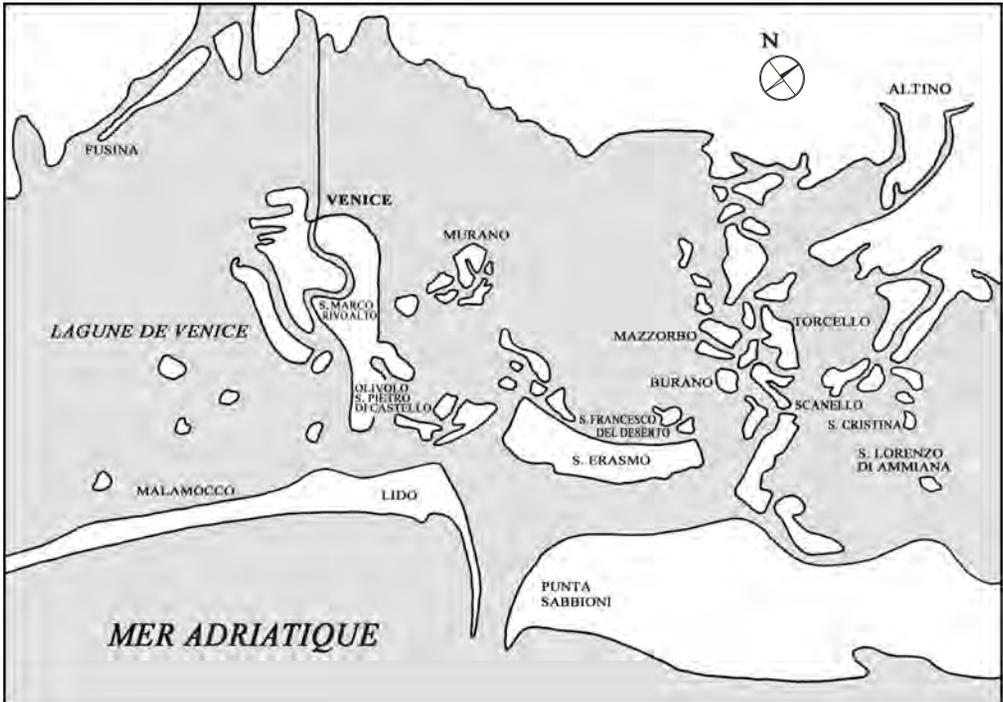
²² Cavazzoni 1973 ; Modrzevska-Pianetti 2000: fig. 14.

²³ Canal 1998: 70–71, n° 83 sur la carte ; Gelichi *et al.* 2012: fig. 1.

²⁴ Canal 2013: 371, n. 40.

²⁵ Gelichi *et al.* 2012: 14.

²⁶ Canal 2013: 370.



4. Dessin de la lagune de Venise avec les principales îles et emplacement d'*Altinum* (élaboration : I. Modrzewska-Pianetti).

abandonnée au XV^e siècle. Son altitude par rapport au niveau moyen de la mer en 1970 est de 40 cm²⁷. Canal découvert des structures médiévales appartenant à une église et un couvent ainsi qu'un cimetière médiéval²⁸. Au sud des ces structures, une autre tranchée a permis de mettre au jour une *domus* romaine et un cimetière (fig. 5). Canal a en outre réalisé des sondages dans le sud et dans l'est de l'île où il pensait trouver des fortifications byzantines²⁹. C'est dans cette région de l'île que furent mises au jour des inhumations en amphores.

FOUILLES DE LA *DOMUS*

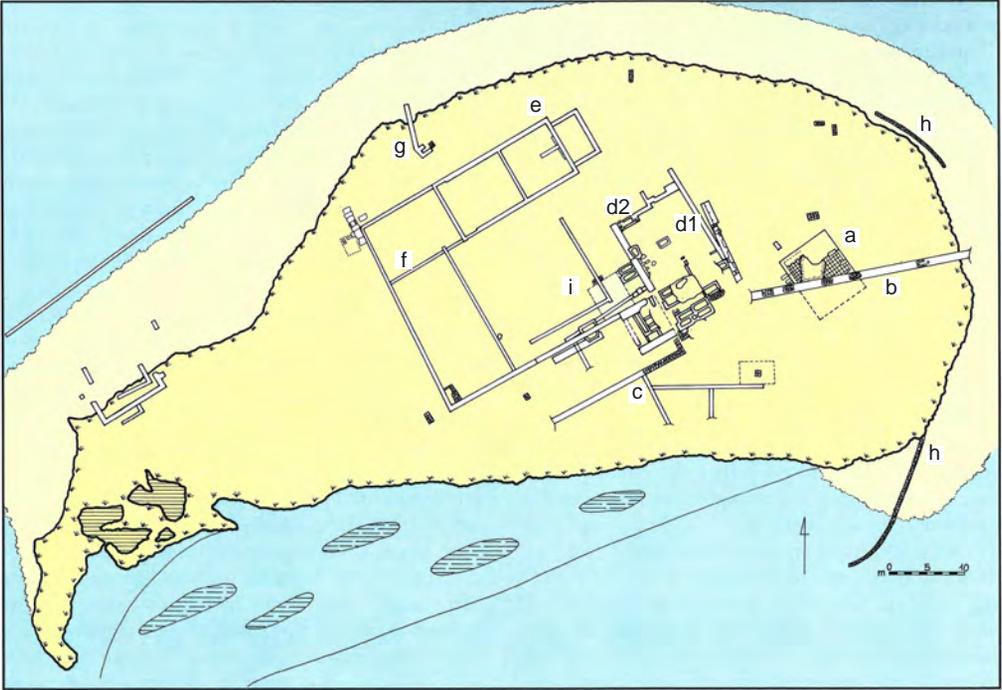
La plus grande découverte de Canal sur l'île de San Lorenzo est sans aucun doute le pavement de la *domus* mis au jour dans la partie orientale de l'île à env. 2 m au-dessous du niveau de sol³⁰ (fig. 6). Daté du II^e siècle ap. J.-C., le pavement (7,60 x 5,40 m) était fait de *sesquipedales* posées sur une couche de mortier de chaux de plus d'un mètre d'épaisseur

²⁷ Canal 1998: 38.

²⁸ Canal *et al.* 1989 ; Canal 1998: fig. 7, secteurs E, F.

²⁹ Canal 1998: fig. 7, secteur B ; 2013: 384–385.

³⁰ Canal 1995: fig. 4A ; 1998 ; tranchée IV, couche VIII.



5. Plan du chantier d'E. Canal sur l'île de San Lorenzo : a. zone indiquée par E. Canal comme *scavo IV* (tranchée IV) où se trouve primitivement la *domus* romaine, puis les sépultures en amphores ; b. vestiges des murs byzantins des VII^e–VIII^e siècles ap. J.-C. ; c. fondations de la tour byzantine ; d1. cimetière des VIII^e–XI^e siècles ap. J.-C. ; d2. sépulture recouverte d'une dalle de pierre datée du VIII^e–IX^e siècle ap. J.-C. ; e. église de San Lorenzo utilisée dès le XII^e siècle par les Bénédictines ; f. monastère de San Lorenzo fondé au XII^e siècle ; g. petit port desservant le monastère des Bénédictines ; h. murs protégeant contre le vent le potager des Bénédictines ; i. zone attenante au cimetière indiquée par E. Canal comme *scavo II* (tranchée II) (d'après Canal 1995: 214).

(couche IX–VIII) (fig. 7). Un autre sol (4 x 5 m), reconstruit après le premier incendie au milieu du III^e siècle, fut en mortier de chaux (couche VII–VI). Cette couche a livré des socles et des piliers de pierre. Puis, au IV^e siècle, après un autre incendie, fut réalisé un nouveau sol en mortier de chaux solide posé sur un remblai d'argile mélangée avec des tessons de céramique (couche V–IV)³¹. Ce revêtement de sol, plus grossier, fut posé sur une couche rehaussée de 40 cm, sans doute à cause du niveau plus élevé des eaux de la lagune. Sous le sol de l'habitation furent découvertes des monnaies du IV^e siècle (monnaies de Maxence et Constantin) et des céramiques nord-africaines de la seconde moitié du IV^e siècle³².

S. Gelichi reconnaît n'avoir pas eu la possibilité de continuer sa fouille en creusant plus bas dans la partie septentrionale de la *domus*, et c'est pour cette raison qu'il situe la première phase d'occupation de l'île au IV^e siècle³³. Il conteste les résultats des

³¹ Canal 1998: 41 ; note critique Moine 2011: 75–76.

³² Canal 1995: 216 ; 2013: 367.

³³ Gelichi *et al.* 2012: 19.



6. Sol de la *domus* romaine en cours de fouille, île de San Lorenzo (phot. E. Canal ; archives privées d'E. Canal).

travaux de Canal. Pour ma part, je ne vois aucune raison de remettre en cause la datation du pavement primitif de la *domus*, que Canal situait au II^e siècle³⁴. La datation de l'habitation plus ancienne est basée sur les dates établies pour les sigillées estampillées mises au jour à *Altinum*³⁵.

Le pavement du IV^e siècle était recouvert d'une couche de sable contenant de nombreux tessons de céramique. Il s'agit sans doute d'un remblai réalisé après l'abandon de la *domus*, car ce terrain devait être transformé en cimetière. Le rehaussement du niveau de sol fut une nécessité résultant de l'élévation du niveau de la mer d'environ 1 m entre le I^{er} et le V^e siècle³⁶. Dans son dernier ouvrage Canal date cette couche du VII^e–VIII^e siècle, en avançant ainsi la datation de près de deux cents ans, par rapport à ses premières estimations publiées dans les textes plus anciens. Il s'appuie maintenant sur les résultats des datations fournies par le carbone 14 et calibrées par la dendrochronologie³⁷.

Au VI^e siècle eut lieu le *diluvium* qui fait l'objet du récit de Paul Diacre³⁸. Aux V^e–VI^e siècles, dans la seconde phase de la *domus*, malgré les inondations attestées par des traces au niveau du sol, l'habitation n'est pas abandonnée³⁹. À la même époque, sur l'île

³⁴ Canal 2013: 388, 392, 396.

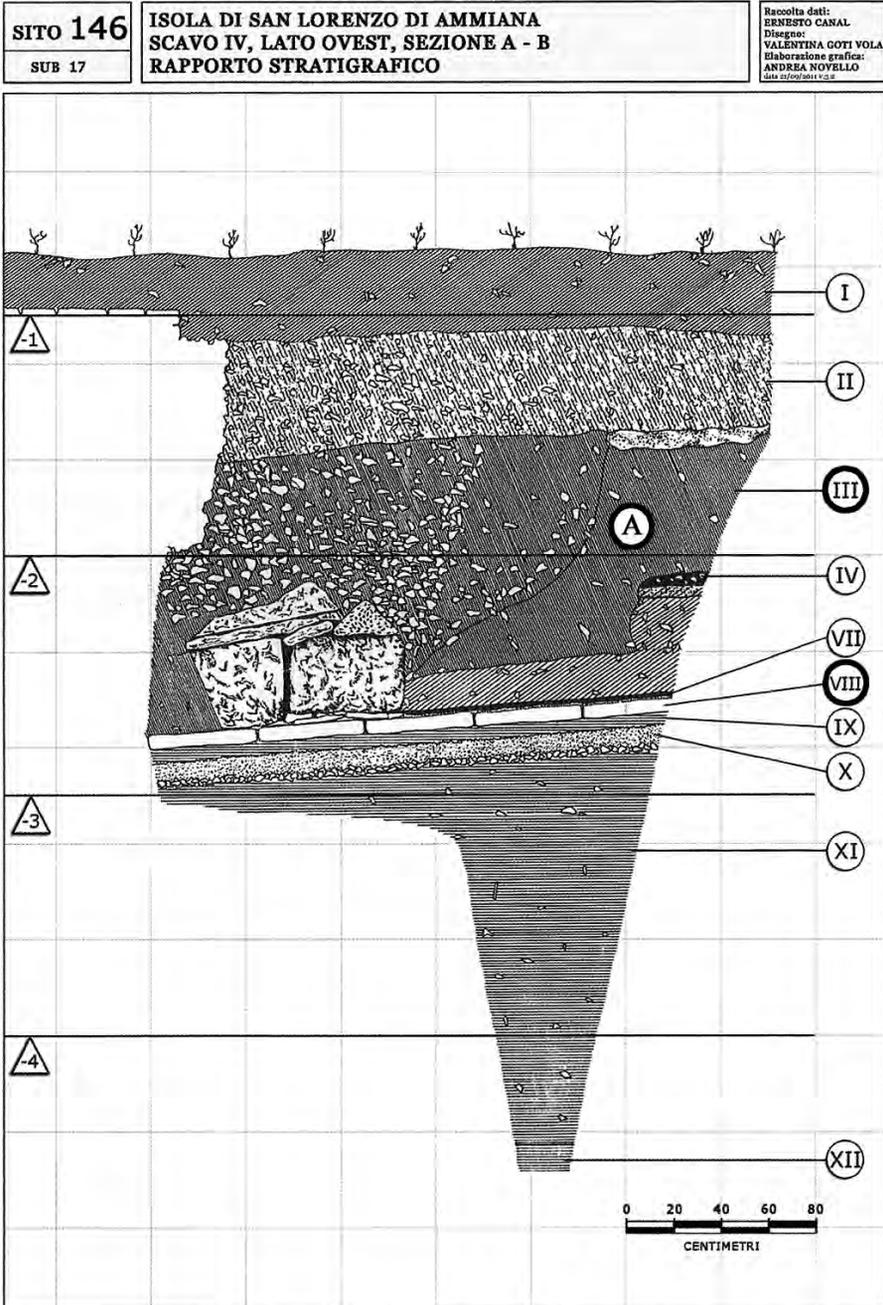
³⁵ Ravagnan 1985.

³⁶ Canal 1995: 217.

³⁷ Canal 2013: 391.

³⁸ Pianetti, Modrzewska-Pianetti 2008.

³⁹ Canal 2013: 376.



7. L'île de San Lorenzo di Ammiana, stratigraphie, vue de l'ouest, coupe A-B d'après E. Canal. À droite, en chiffres romains, les couches stratigraphiques de la tranchée IV. La couche III contient des sépultures en amphores (A) ; plus bas, dans la couche VIII fut découvert le sol de la *domus* romaine antérieure au cimetière. À gauche, en chiffres arabes est indiquée la profondeur des couches repérée par rapport au niveau de sol (d'après Canal 2013: 392 ; élaboration graphique : V. Goti Vola, A. Novello).

de Torcello, afin de rehausser le sol on fit venir des environs des Collines Euganéennes près de Padoue une certaine quantité de gravier⁴⁰. Les périodes de submersion ne signifient pas l'abandon des îles par leurs habitants.

Créé à l'emplacement de l'ancienne *domus*, le cimetière est daté par Canal des VII^e–VIII^e siècles, ce qui correspond tout à fait aux résultats des travaux de Gelichi réalisés au nord du chantier de Canal⁴¹. Gelichi situe l'écroulement définitif des murs dans la partie septentrionale de l'habitation au début du VII^e siècle. Le cimetière nord est daté des VII^e–VIII^e siècles⁴². D'après Canal, à la suite d'un autre incendie, au VI^e siècle, la partie méridionale de la *domus* est transformée en cimetière⁴³.

Comme l'ont démontré les travaux de Gelichi, la *domus* du IV^e–VI^e siècle était composée de plusieurs pièces qui n'avaient pas été découvertes pendant les premières campagnes de fouilles. Il y a des raisons de croire qu'une partie de cette maison était encore habitée au début du VII^e siècle, lorsque sa partie orientale était déjà transformée en cimetière⁴⁴. A l'emplacement de la *domus* sud, à 1,40 m au-dessous du niveau de sol, se trouve un cimetière avec des inhumations en amphores⁴⁵. Le cimetière découvert par Canal contenait 5 inhumations en amphores et 6 inhumations en terre.

Au VII^e siècle, la fonction du terrain de l'ancienne *domus* change. La construction fouillée par Gelichi n'existait plus : elle avait été abandonnée et s'était complètement écroulée⁴⁶. Sur la couche de gravats fut découverte une amphore de type Keay 53 du VII^e–VIII^e siècle⁴⁷. Après cette période, l'île de San Lorenzo présente un hiatus d'occupation jusqu'au XI^e siècle, l'époque à laquelle elle est à nouveau investie et réaménagée⁴⁸. Selon Canal, au VII^e–VIII^e siècle l'île se dote de remparts byzantins munis de tours⁴⁹. C. Moine situe au VIII^e siècle la construction des murs que Canal reconnaît comme byzantins, sans pour autant remettre en cause leur fonction⁵⁰. A la différence de S. Gelichi qui, lui, nie l'existence d'ouvrages byzantins de défense sur l'île de San Lorenzo⁵¹. Les murs ont traversé la partie sud-est du cimetière à amphores. Sous les dalles de constructions en pierre fut découverte l'amphore qui a fait l'objet de notre étude⁵².

⁴⁰ Modrzewska-Pianetti 2000: 89.

⁴¹ Canal 2013: 391–393 ; Gelichi *et al.* 2012: 35.

⁴² Gelichi *et al.* 2012: 35.

⁴³ Canal 2013: 375.

⁴⁴ Gelichi *et al.* 2012: 35–36.

⁴⁵ Canal 2013: 391, n° 146.17, tranchée IV, couche III.

⁴⁶ Gelichi *et al.* 2012: 24.

⁴⁷ Gelichi *et al.* 2012: fig. 26.

⁴⁸ Gelichi *et al.* 2012: fig. 16.

⁴⁹ Canal 1995: 214, fig. 4, secteur B.

⁵⁰ Gelichi *et al.* 2012: 24.

⁵¹ Gelichi *et al.* 2012: 56.

⁵² Canal 2013: 391, n° 146.

MATÉRIEL CÉRAMIQUE

À la lumière des dernières études du matériel céramique de l'île de San Lorenzo, il apparaît que 92% des tessons datent de la période comprise entre le V^e et le début du VIII^e siècle⁵³. 11% de l'ensemble du matériel céramique est à attribuer à la période romaine. L'analyse du matériel dégagé de la fosse à détritiques voisine de la *domus* et des sépultures a porté sur les céramiques et les lampes en verre des IV^e–VIII^e siècles. Les terres sigillées ont été fabriquées sur place, tout comme sur l'île de Torcello⁵⁴. Elles représentent 2% de l'ensemble du matériel céramique qui, pour l'essentiel, provient de Tunisie du IV^e–VII^e siècle⁵⁵. Les amphores constituent 63% des trouvailles dont 14% sont d'origine tunisienne⁵⁶. Les amphores de type Keay 62 apparaissent dans le matériel mis au jour par la mission de Gelichi, mais aussi dans le matériel dégagé par Canal pendant la fouille de l'habitation et du cimetière créé à l'emplacement de celle-ci⁵⁷. Originaires de Moknine en Tunisie, les amphores de type Keay 62 sont attribuées par L. Sabbionesi au VII^e siècle⁵⁸. Je tiens à préciser qu'une seule amphore fragmentaire de ce type, trouvée en position résiduelle sur l'épave de Yassi Ada I, peut être attribuée au premier quart du VII^e siècle. Il s'agit donc d'une datation trop basse des amphores de ce type fabriquées de la fin du V^e jusqu'à la fin du VI^e siècle⁵⁹.

L'amphore dont l'étude m'a été confiée appartient au type Keay 62 A2 (**fig. 8**). Elle fut découverte par Canal dans la partie orientale du cimetière contenant des inhumations en terre et en amphores⁶⁰. Cette amphore, comme les autres, date du VI^e siècle et fut réemployée au VII^e–VIII^e siècle. Tranchée longitudinalement sur la panse, elle avait été préparée pour recevoir la dépouille, mais elle ne contenait pas de restes du défunt⁶¹.

Le cimetière fouillé par Canal a livré trois autres amphores d'origine africaine⁶². Les amphores dégagées dans la partie orientale du cimetière représentent le type Keay 62 A et sont issues de l'atelier de Moknine en Tunisie. Une de ces amphores, celle qui contenait les restes de 3 enfants et d'un jeune garçon (paré d'un collier de perles de verre et d'ambre), représente le type qui se rapproche du Keay 25 Q⁶³. Cette amphore possède une lèvre et des anses de type Keay 61 A⁶⁴. Les amphores de type Keay 25 Q proviennent de l'atelier de Nabeul en Tunisie et datent du IV^e siècle. Les anses de type Keay 61 sont typiques des

⁵³ Gelichi *et al.* 2012: 25–31.

⁵⁴ Gelichi *et al.* 2012: 26.

⁵⁵ Gelichi *et al.* 2012: 29.

⁵⁶ Gelichi *et al.* 2012: fig. 22.

⁵⁷ Canal 2013: 395.

⁵⁸ Gelichi *et al.* 2012: 29.

⁵⁹ Keay 1984: 305.

⁶⁰ Canal 1995: 217, fig. 7 ; 1998: pl. 13 ; 2013: 391 amphore du milieu, à l'est de la sépulture n° 8.

⁶¹ Modrzevska-Pianetti 2000: fig. 24.

⁶² Canal 1998: 41, tranchée IV, couche III ; 2013: 395 avec une erreur : tranchée IV, couche VI au lieu de tranchée IV, couche III.

⁶³ Canal 1998: pl. 3, amphore n° 3 ; 41, couche III ; 2013: 395, n° 146.17q.

⁶⁴ Canal 2013: 391, n° 2 et 30.



8. Amphore issue du cimetière créé à l'emplacement de la *domus* romaine sur l'île de San Lorenzo (phot. E. Canal ; archives privées d'E. Canal ; Modrzewska-Pianetti 2000: pl. 24).

amphores du V^e siècle, dont la fabrication finit avec l'invasion byzantine en 533⁶⁵. S.J. Keay est d'avis que l'arrêt de fabrication de la forme 25 témoigne d'une réorganisation de la production après la conquête de l'Afrique par les Vandales au V^e siècle⁶⁶. Les amphores de type Keay 25 et Keay 61 servaient au transport d'olives et d'huile d'olive, tout comme la plupart des amphores tunisiennes de l'épave Dramont E datées *post quem* par les monnaies entre 425 et 455⁶⁷. Dès le début du VI^e siècle la production nord-africaine d'amphores reste sous le contrôle de Byzance. Les fouilles à Carthage ont confirmé la réduction de l'exportation des amphores africaines à la fin du VI^e siècle, la majeure partie de la production étant destinée au marché local⁶⁸. Un phénomène semblable a été observé en Syro-Palestine où, à partir du VI^e siècle, l'huile d'olive était destinée à la consommation locale⁶⁹.

Les fouilles de E. Canal sur l'île de San Lorenzo ont permis de mettre au jour 4 sépultures d'adultes et une d'enfant, inhumés en terre, recouvertes d'une couche de mortier de chaux, 3 inhumations en amphores égéennes et 2 en amphores nord-africaines qui viennent d'être mentionnées⁷⁰. Les amphores dégagées pendant ces travaux contenaient les ossements

⁶⁵ Keay 1984: 424.

⁶⁶ Keay 1984: 423.

⁶⁷ Santamaria 1995: 27–50.

⁶⁸ Keay 1984: 424.

⁶⁹ Waliszewski 2014: 250.

⁷⁰ Canal 2013: 391, amphores n^{os} 2 et 3 ; 395, n^{os} 146.170 et 146.17q.

de 6 enfants, un jeune individu et un adulte. Les sépultures en terre étaient recouvertes d'une couche de mortier de chaux. La sépulture de l'enfant a livré une fibule attribuée au V^e siècle⁷¹. Certaines inhumations étaient recouvertes de briques *sesquipedales*. La couche contenant les sépultures en amphores se trouve à 1,50 m au-dessous du niveau de sol.

Les amphores remployées au cimetière de San Lorenzo proviennent sans doute de la *domus*. Elles datent de la dernière phase d'importation des amphores nord-africaines de la fin du V^e–VI^e siècle. Ceci concerne le type Keay 61, car, à cette époque tardive, on ne trouve plus le type Keay 25 auquel ressemble l'amphore contenant les ossements d'enfants⁷². Les autres amphores nord-africaines ne peuvent pas être attribuées plus tard qu'au VI^e siècle, même si leur emploi date des siècles postérieurs. Ce qui témoigne de l'utilisation exceptionnellement longue d'amphores sur la lagune de Venise, phénomène observé aussi sur l'île de Torcello où les panses d'amphores servaient à recouvrir les fours de verrier du IX^e siècle⁷³.

Trois amphores dégagées de la couche correspondant au cimetière créé à l'empalcement de la *domus*, y compris l'amphore que j'ai étudiée (Keay 61 A2), ne contenaient pas d'ossements au moment de leur découverte⁷⁴. Elles ont pu ne jamais contenir de restes humains, même si l'une d'entre elles avait été destinée à cette fin. Ces amphores ont en revanche servi à soutenir le mur qui avait traversé le terrain du cimetière dans sa partie sud⁷⁵. Canal voit dans ce mur un fragment de fortifications byzantines du VII^e–VIII^e siècle⁷⁶. En admettant cette date comme celle de la construction du rempart, dit byzantin, il faudrait reconnaître que cette partie du cimetière n'était plus utilisée aux VII^e–VIII^e siècles. Il y a des raisons de penser qu'à cette époque c'est la partie septentrionale de la *domus*, celle qui a été fouillée par Gelichi, qui a servi de lieu d'inhumation⁷⁷.

L'étude des amphores livrées par les fouilles du site de Comacchio au nord de Ravenne jette une toute nouvelle lumière sur la question d'importation d'amphores dans les régions adriatiques⁷⁸. Depuis la publication des amphores provenant des îles de Torcello, Comacchio et San Lorenzo il est possible de faire une étude comparative des importations d'amphores méditerranéennes dans les régions adriatiques du III^e au IX^e siècle⁷⁹ (**fig. 9**).

Comme on a signalé déjà 92% des céramiques dégagées par Gelichi sur l'île de San Lorenzo peuvent être datées entre le V^e et le VIII^e siècle. Il s'agit du matériel de fabrication locale (argile lagunaire)⁸⁰. Les amphores de l'est égéen constituent 78% du matériel céramique mis au jour sur l'île de Torcello et 67% du matériel provenant de l'île San Francesco del Deserto, tandis que les amphores nord-africaines représentent respectivement

⁷¹ Canal 1995: 211 ; 2013: n° 146.17d.

⁷² Keay 1984: 420.

⁷³ Modrzeska-Pianetti 2000: 40, 75 ; Leciejewicz 2000: 91 ; Pazdur 2000.

⁷⁴ Keay 1984: 92.

⁷⁵ Canal 2013: 391, n° 146.

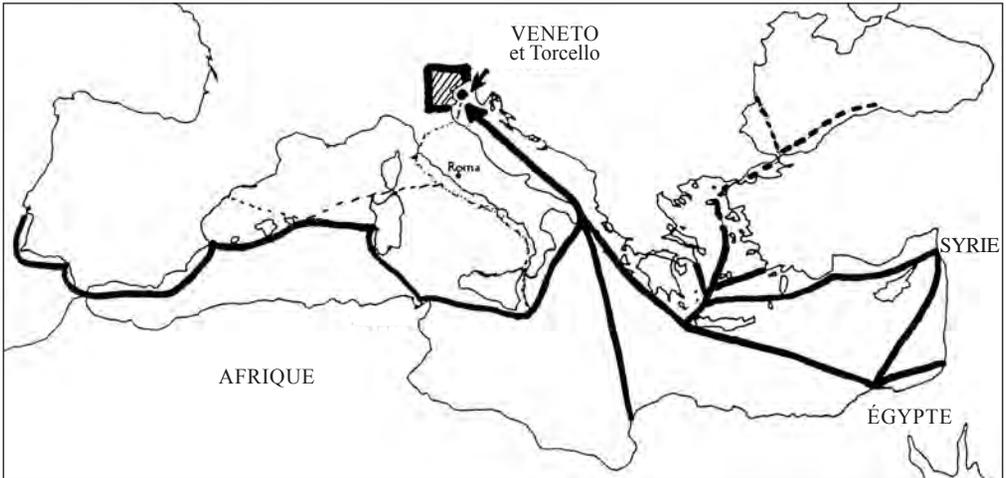
⁷⁶ Canal 1995: 214.

⁷⁷ Gelichi *et al.* 2012: fig. 32.

⁷⁸ Gelichi, Negrelli 2008.

⁷⁹ Modrzeska 2000 ; Modrzeska-Pianetti 2000: 73–75 ; Toniolo 2007 ; Gelichi, Negrelli 2008.

⁸⁰ Gelichi *et al.* 2012: 25–29.



9. Directions d'affluence d'amphores sur l'île de Torcello du III^e au VII^e siècle (élaboration : I. Modrzewska-Pianetti).

21% et 31%. Cette proportion est inverse sur l'île de San Lorenzo où les importations nord-africaines dominent sur celles de l'est égéen. Les amphores remployées au cimetière créé après l'effondrement de la dernière habitation au début du VII^e siècle avaient sans doute été utilisées par les habitants de celle-ci.

Les amphores constituent plus de 65% des céramiques découvertes par la mission de Gelichi. A notre grand regret, 41% des tessons sont des fragments difficilement exploitables, comme la plupart des trouvailles lagunaires. Parmi les amphores, 14% représentent le type Key 61 et sont issues de l'atelier de Moknine en Tunisie⁸¹. Mais il y a d'autres formes de récipients : des spatheia de type Key 25 de l'atelier de Nabeul du IV^e siècle, des petites *spatheia* du VI^e–VII^e siècle et des amphores globulaires 2 et 3 Bonifay du début du VII^e–VIII^e siècle⁸². Les travaux de Gelichi sur l'île de San Lorenzo ont en outre permis d'identifier les amphores globulaires appartenant à un type connu du site de Saraçhane en Turquie et de celui de Yassi Ada I du VII^e–VIII^e siècle⁸³.

L'étude du matériel dégagé par la mission de Gelichi montre bien que 7% des amphores proviennent d'Orient : il s'agit des LR 1, 2, 3 des V^e–VII^e siècles, un seul fragment d'amphore de type Key 52 est originaire du sud italien et date du IV^e–V^e siècle⁸⁴. Après la dernière publication de T. Waliszewski, l'identification des amphores à huile importées du Proche-Orient devra sans doute faire l'objet d'une révision, car l'auteur a formellement prouvé que les amphores à huile proche-orientales n'avaient jamais existé⁸⁵.

Pour l'île de San Lorenzo, la domination quantitative des amphores nord-africaines sur les orientales est bien démontrée. Les importations d'amphores permettent

⁸¹ Gelichi *et al.* 2012: 29, fig. 22.

⁸² Bonifay 2004: 153, fig. 83 ; pour ce type d'amphores voir Gelichi, Negrelli 2008.

⁸³ Gelichi *et al.* 2012: 30–31 ; Bass, Doorninck 1982: 157–160.

⁸⁴ Gelichi *et al.* 2012: 30.

⁸⁵ Waliszewski 2014: 250.

d'affirmer que la lagune se trouvait dans la zone d'échanges commerciaux byzantins et en dehors de la zone d'affluence de céramiques d'Italie du Sud. Il faut insister sur le fait que 14% des trouvailles d'amphores remployées aux VII^e–VIII^e siècles proviennent de Tunisie.

L'étude des couches stratigraphiques datées par des céramiques fait apparaître que l'île de San Lorenzo fut habitée à partir du II^e siècle et que, à l'emplacement de la *domus* restaurée au IV^e siècle, au milieu du VI^e/début du VII^e siècle fut créé un cimetière. Sur le terrain de la *domus* et du cimetière fouillé par Gelichi fut découverte une fosse à détritiques dont le comblement ne contenait pas de matériel postérieur à la première moitié du VII^e siècle ni de fragments de mortier provenant des murs de la *domus*⁸⁶. Compte tenu de la datation établie pour les amphores vides et celles contenant des ossements, la plus haute date d'utilisation du cimetière peut être située au milieu du VI^e siècle, tandis que celle de la partie septentrionale du cimetière se situerait aux VII^e–VIII^e siècles.

La couche indiquant l'assèchement de cette zone correspond à la période de fermeture du cimetière. Cette phase se caractérise par la présence d'amphores globulaires (type *Castrum Perti* de la seconde moitié du VII^e siècle). Les amphores globulaires *Saraçane 29*, c'est le dernier type d'amphores acheminé sur l'île au début du VIII^e siècle⁸⁷. Au VIII^e siècle l'importation d'amphores cesse jusqu'au XI^e siècle.

NOUVELLES DONNÉES ET CONCLUSIONS

L'absence de matériel céramique et d'autres témoignages de présence humaine marque un hiatus d'occupation sur l'île de San Lorenzo entre le VIII^e et le XI^e siècle. Alors que Canal, dans tous ses travaux, cherchait à démontrer la continuité d'occupation de l'île à partir du II^e jusqu'au XV^e siècle⁸⁸. La même thèse, basée sur les recherches de Canal, fut avancée par W. Dorigo⁸⁹. Les derniers travaux réalisés dans la région de la lagune apportent cependant de nouvelles données.

Les recherches menées sur l'île de Torcello par Diego Calaon de l'Université de Venise en 2012–2013 ont bien montré que la plupart des amphores découvertes à l'emplacement des anciennes habitations provenaient d'Afrique du Nord⁹⁰. Ces données viennent contredire les conclusions de l'étude comparée réalisée plus tôt pour les îles de San Lorenzo et de Torcello⁹¹. Les derniers travaux archéologiques menés par Calaon sur l'île de Torcello, au nord de la cathédrale Santa Maria Maggiore, ont mis au jour des habitations du X^e–XI^e siècle et, plus loin, au bord du canal, un môle et des constructions correspondant à des magasins portuaires du VI^e–VII^e siècle⁹². Les résultats préliminaires de cette fouille

⁸⁶ Gelichi *et al.* 2012: 31.

⁸⁷ Gelichi *et al.* 2012: 30.

⁸⁸ Canal 1998: 33 ; 2013: 366.

⁸⁹ Dorigo 1995: 182–183.

⁹⁰ Calaon 2013.

⁹¹ Gelichi *et al.* 2012: 31 ; Toniolo 2003.

⁹² Calaon 2013.

laissent supposer que, pour l'île de Torcello, les travaux à venir pourront modifier le tableau des importations d'amphores.

Les amphores mises au jour sur l'île de San Lorenzo témoignent de l'occupation de l'île depuis le début de la période romaine jusqu'à la fin du VI^e siècle. Au V^e-VI^e siècle l'aménagement de l'île consistait principalement en un réhaussement du terrain, rendu nécessaire à cause de la montée du niveau des eaux et l'affaissement des rives du canal au confluent du Piave⁹³. La phase suivante correspond à la création et le fonctionnement du cimetière à l'emplacement de la *domus*, au VI^e-VII^e siècle, puis, au VII^e-VIII^e siècle apparaissent des ouvrages de fortification sous forme de murs qui coupent à travers le cimetière. La question de leur fonction continue à faire l'objet d'une discussion entre E. Canal et S. Gelichi, alors que W. Dorigo a déjà exprimé son opinion⁹⁴. L'Américain J.A. Ammerman, qui s'est aussi engagé dans les recherches sur la lagune, en réalisant des sondages à Venise et des fouilles sur certaines îles, soutient la thèse selon laquelle le début de l'occupation des îles remonte à la période romaine⁹⁵.

Les chercheurs ne sont pas d'accord sur la datation de l'église San Lorenzo. Selon Canal, celle-ci fut construite au VII^e-VIII^e siècle, tandis que Gelichi la situe, d'après les sources d'archives, au X^e-XI^e siècle⁹⁶. Les vestiges matériels dont la stratigraphie est fortement perturbée ainsi que la pratique de remploi répété de matériaux de construction ne permettent pas de trancher la question.

Les amphores restent un témoignage direct de contacts entre les îles habitées de la lagune et les régions méditerranéennes à l'époque romaine et tardo-antique⁹⁷. Les importations plus récentes restent en rapport avec la fondation de l'église San Lorenzo, au plus tard au XI^e siècle⁹⁸. Il s'agit d'une toute nouvelle fonction de l'île qui devient lieu d'inhumations et fonctionne comme tel du VIII^e au XI^e siècle. L'absence de traces d'habitat pendant toute cette période peut signifier que cet endroit servait de lieu d'inhumation pour les habitants des îles environnantes de l'archipel d'Amiana⁹⁹. A cette même époque, l'île de Torcello accueille un évêché, transféré au VII^e siècle de la ville littorale d'*Altinum*¹⁰⁰. L'île de San Lorenzo perd de l'importance pour reprendre de l'essor avec la création de la paroisse au XI^e siècle. L'île est définitivement abandonnée au XV^e siècle¹⁰¹.

L'utilisation de vieilles amphores du VI^e siècle pour les inhumations aux VIII^e-IX^e siècles est caractéristique de toute la région de la lagune de Venise. La prédominance des amphores importées d'Afrique du Nord est typique de l'île de San Lorenzo, à la différence des îles de Torcello et San Francesco del Deserto où prédominent les importations égéennes et orientales. Les différences de caractère entre les îles de la lagune s'expriment aussi par

⁹³ Canal 2013: 376-377.

⁹⁴ Canal 1995: 214 ; Gelichi *et al.* 2012: 42 ; Dorigo 1995: 188.

⁹⁵ Housley, Ammerman, McClennen 2004: fig. 1.

⁹⁶ Canal 1998: fig. 8 ; Gelichi *et al.* 2012: fig. 5.

⁹⁷ Modrzewska-Pianetti 2000: fig. 55.

⁹⁸ Gelichi *et al.* 2012: 38-41.

⁹⁹ Gelichi *et al.* 2012: 38, 51.

¹⁰⁰ Ortalli 1981: 87.

¹⁰¹ Gelichi *et al.* 2012: 43.

les différences dans le emploi d'amphores. Alors que San Lorenzo était une île au caractère rustique et horticole, l'île de Torcello était un centre religieux¹⁰². Aucune sépulture en amphore n'y a été découverte, les tessons d'amphores servaient de revêtement aux fours de verrier. Sur l'île San Lorenzo, les grandes amphores nord-africaines étaient utilisées à l'inhumation. Il apparaît donc que chacune des îles avait un caractère différent. Il reste la question de savoir pourquoi l'île de San Lorenzo est devenue lieu d'inhumations à partir du début du VII^e siècle.

Les récents travaux archéologiques sur les îles de Torcello, San Francesco del Deserto, San Lorenzo et Sant Pietro di Castello à Venise ont confirmé l'existence de centres d'habitat dispersés sur la Lagune Nord au moins à partir du IV^e siècle¹⁰³. L'île de San Francesco del Deserto a livré des témoignages d'occupation datant des IV^e–VII^e siècles liés à la présence d'un petit port de commerce qui dépérit par la suite, à cause de fréquentes immersions¹⁰⁴. Ces dernières découvertes prouvent bien que la théorie selon laquelle l'occupation des îles fut l'effet des migrations des populations à l'époque des invasions barbares n'est plus d'actualité.

Il convient de mettre l'accent sur le fait qu'à aucun des endroits mentionnés il n'existe de traces d'occupation aussi anciennes que celles identifiées par E. Canal sur l'île de San Lorenzo. Les résultats des travaux archéologiques de S. Gelichi attestent la présence de vestiges d'occupation de l'île au IV^e siècle. Les différences découlent sans doute de la localisation différente des chantiers de fouille. Pour ma part, je suis d'avis qu'il n'y a aucune raison de contester la thèse de l'occupation de l'île au II^e siècle ap. J.-C. Ceci dit, il faut constater qu'il y a des preuves de la continuité d'occupation de l'île de San Lorenzo à partir du II^e siècle jusqu'à la fin du VI^e/début du VII^e siècle. L'absence de trouvailles d'importations, y compris de céramiques d'importation, démontrée par les travaux de Gelichi, dénonce l'existence d'un hiatus d'occupation de l'île pour la période comprise entre le VIII^e et le XI^e siècle.

Les vestiges de céramiques du I^{er}–II^e siècle découverts sur l'île de Torcello, devant la basilique Santa Fosca, ont été probablement charriés du continent pendant la période de la montée des eaux¹⁰⁵. Au VI^e–VII^e siècle, à l'époque où s'élève le niveau des eaux de la lagune, apparaissent des centres d'habitat sur les îles de Torcello, San Francesco del Deserto et Santa Christina, ainsi qu'un centre administratif et religieux sur l'île de San Pietro di Castello appelée autrefois L'Olivolo, une des îles vénitiennes (**fig. 10**)¹⁰⁶.

L'occupation des îles de la lagune est sans doute liée au rôle que cette région a joué dans les échanges commerciaux avec les villes du littoral et plus particulièrement avec *Altinum*. En-deçà de la ligne de l'actuel littoral, sur la lagune, au lieu-dit Scanello, furent découverts des vestiges d'habitations avec des sols de briques et des magasins portuaires¹⁰⁷.

¹⁰² Canal 2013: 379 ; Ortalli 1981.

¹⁰³ Housley, Ammerman, McClennen 2004.

¹⁰⁴ Ammerman 1996 ; Min 2000: 20–23.

¹⁰⁵ Leciejewicz 2000 ; Modrzewska, Pianetti 2005: 171.

¹⁰⁶ Tuzzato 1991: 50 ; Modrzewska, Pianetti 2005: 177–183 ; Gelichi *et al.* 2012: 49 ; Gelichi, Moine 2013.

¹⁰⁷ Canal 1998: 59–69, fig. 17.



10. Situation des villes romaines, fleuves, et *mansiones* du Haut Adriatique. Le trait discontinu indique la ligne du littoral adriatique à l'époque antique (élaboration : I. Modrzewska, M. Różycka).

Situé dans l'axe d'*Altinum*, Scanello fut sans doute le port extérieur de la ville. La ville elle-même décline petit à petit à partir du II^e siècle, sans que l'on connaisse les raisons de ce déclin¹⁰⁸. La crise se poursuit jusqu'au VI^e siècle, même si toutes les sources attestent l'existence de la ville aux IV^e–V^e siècles. Les cimetières témoignent de la continuité d'occupation d'*Altinum* jusqu'au VI^e siècle¹⁰⁹. Ce qui veut dire que la ville n'a pas été entièrement détruite par Attila en 452. L'abandon de la ville est dû aux changements climatiques¹¹⁰. Ces changements ont pu être à l'origine de la migration accrue des populations vers les îles de la lagune qui, au temps du fonctionnement de la ville, constituaient ses centres satellites avec des installations portuaires et des magasins. Dans le nord de l'île de San Lorenzo se trouvait un môle visible à marée basse¹¹¹. Les fleuves étaient navigables, le Sile de *Altinum* dans la direction de Torcello et le Sile Vecchio qui reliait les régions situées à l'est d'*Altinum* dans la direction d'*Opitergium* et qui se jetait dans la mer aux environs de l'île de San Lorenzo¹¹². *Opitergium* fut ravagé par les Longobards en 639, ce qui entraîna le déplacement de sa population vers la lagune, à *Heraclia*¹¹³. C'est de cette même époque

¹⁰⁸ Modrzewska-Pianetti, Pianetti 2013.

¹⁰⁹ Scarfi 1987.

¹¹⁰ Mozzi *et al.* 2011.

¹¹¹ Canal 1995: 222–225 ; 1998: pl. 7 ; 2013: n° 146.31.

¹¹² Gelichi *et al.* 2012: fig. 47 ; Modrzewska, Pianetti 2005: 176.

¹¹³ Salvatori 1989.

que date le déclin d'*Altinum* et la création de l'évêché sur l'île de Torcello¹¹⁴. La création de ce nouveau centre résulte des changements qui s'opèrent dans le milieu naturel de la région d'*Altinum* et de la décentralisation des centres d'habitat sur le littoral. A l'étape actuelle des recherches, il est impossible de créer un modèle de peuplement des îles de la lagune depuis le V^e jusqu'au IX^e siècle. Au VI^e siècle, la Lagune Nord reste toujours un territoire d'échanges commerciaux avec le continent avant l'abandon définitif d'*Altinum* et d'*Opitergium* à l'avantage du nouveau centre administratif et religieux à *Heraclia*. C'est à *Heraclia* à la fin du VII^e siècle que fut élu le premier *dux* de la communauté des villes du littoral adriatique¹¹⁵. Un autre *dux* y fut assassiné dans la première moitié du VIII^e siècle.

C'est à cette même époque que sont fondés les centres d'habitat et d'administration sur la Lagune Sud, tels que Malamocco ou San Pietro di Castello qui donneront naissance à l'actuelle Venise. Il s'agit d'une nouvelle image du peuplement de la lagune et de la mobilité interlagunaire du II^e au VIII^e siècle.

(traduction K. Bartkiewicz)

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¹¹⁴ Ortalli 2009: 26–27.

¹¹⁵ Ortalli 1981.

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Contexts of Appearance of Water in the *Pyramid Texts* An Introduction

JOANNA POPIELSKA-GRZYBOWSKA

Abstract: The author collected in her paper introductory remarks concerning the occurrences of water in the *Pyramid Texts*. The article outlines main issues which appear to be assumed by the ancient Egyptians the most vivid while thinking about water and its role in Egyptian religion of the Old Kingdom. In the world oldest religious texts it may be evenly observed that water was a way to travel both on Earth and in the sky as well as to transport goods in both realities. The above-mentioned and the ways of transport confirm watery nature of the hereafter. Water could have both good as well as bad, involving peril, connotations. Furthermore, it appears – that water was perceived as a sacralised sphere, the one of primordial value. However, in the *Pyramid Texts* more emphasis was put on its purifying and rejuvenating qualities.

Keywords: Old Kingdom Egypt, *Pyramid Texts*, water, religion, primordial element, rejuvenation

Joanna Popielska-Grzybowska, Zakład Kultur Starożytnych, Katedra Archeologii i Antropologii, Wydział Historyczny, Akademia Humanistyczna im. Aleksandra Gieysztora, Pultusk; joannapopielskag@hotmail.com

In the beliefs of the ancient Egyptians water was undoubtedly the prime, primordial, matter from which life had originated, from which the creator had come and where his will to create turned into existence. Moreover, the first land appeared in it. However, the contexts of its appearance in the *Pyramid Texts* deserve more attention than they have received to date.¹

¹ See: Kaplony 1992: 16–44 and some bibliographical references therein; Bickel 2005; Rotsch 2005; Tatomin 2005 and the other articles in: Amenta, Luiselli, Novella Sordi (Eds) 2005.

MANIFESTATIONS OF WATER IN THE *PYRAMID TEXTS*

Water (*mw*) is mentioned in the *Pyramid Texts* (*PT*) ninety times.² This is quite often in comparison, for instance, to *Nu*³ – invoked forty-six times. Water, similarly as the Earth,⁴ was a sacralised sphere,⁵ though both could have perilous connotations.

§ 1044a *h33 ppj pn m mw*

§ 1044b *wtz sw wsjr rmn sw psdtj*

§ 1044c *d r^c f jr ppj jr bw (nb) ntjj ntr jm*

§ 1045a *h33 ppj m t3*

§ 1045b *wtz sw gbb rmn sw psdtj*

§ 1045c *d r^c f jr ppj jr bw (nb) ntjj ntr jm*

When this Pepi goes down into water, Osiris will raise him up, the Dual Ennead will support him and Re will give his arm for this Pepi for every place in which the god is. When Pepi goes to the Earth, Geb will hold him up, the Dual Ennead will support him and Re will give his arm for Pepi for every place in which the god is. (PT spell 486 §§ 1044–1045 /P 338, N 548/)

Thus the King who had to immerse himself into the water must have been assisted by the gods. Nevertheless, death in the water was perceived as an infamy and obloquy.⁶

Water was of course treated as a way of transport on the Earth and in the Beyond. As far as the Beyond is concerned, this can be presupposed, judging from various kinds of boats used by the deceased and the gods, as means of transport and the verbs used (see below), which confirm even more the watery nature of the hereafter:

§ 1382a *wb3 nm^ct n jt wsjr ppj j3h mr-n-h3j*

§ 1382b *njs r.f jt wsjr ppj jr hm jr smt*

§ 1382c *d3.snj jt jr gs pf j3bj n pt*

Nemat-canal of father Osiris Pepi has been opened, the Winding Waterway has flooded. Thus, father Osiris Pepi shall call for the steersman and for the-one-who-listens and they will ferry father to that eastern side of the sky. (PT spell 556 § 1382 /P 529/)

² All number references are based on the transliteration and index of the words in the *Pyramid Texts* by J. Popielska-Grzybowska.

³ See: Grieshammer 1982: 534–535; Pépin 1989: 340–343; Popielska-Grzybowska forthcoming a.

⁴ Otto 1975: 1263–1264.

⁵ Water particularly when life and the sources of the Nile are concerned, see: Kaplony 1992: 21; Hoffmeier 1985; Grimal 2012: 15–33; Haikal 1994: 205–212; Borges Pires 2015; forthcoming a and b, and the further literature therein.

⁶ Kaplony 1992: 22–23.

Furthermore, such dangerous creatures as crocodiles came from water and such as serpents should better stay deep down in the Earth. Moreover, the latter were supposed to arrive in Egypt via water on ships with transportations of wood from the East.⁷ Consequently, peril seems to mean the unknown, deep in the water or in the Earth or simply far away.

As far as the *Pyramid Texts* are concerned and what was mentioned above, water is the main feature of the Beyond and of the sky in the *Pyramid Texts*. One of the *passuses* refers directly to ‘the waters ... that are in the sky’ (*PT* spell 685 § 2063a). *The watery nature is implicit in verbs that are used to express the journey across the sky, e.g.: nmj: traverse (with a boat determinative), hnz: travel, hnj: row, d3j: cross.*⁸

As J.P. Allen claims,⁹ particularly two designations make us think that the sky consisted of water, namely ‘cool water’ *kbhw*¹⁰ which on several occasions has the sky sign as a determinative, e.g. spell 452 § 841b (P), spell 463 § 876a (P 313a, N 256a, N 405a), spell 539 § 1327b (P 486), spell 625 § 1765c (N 27). However, R.O. Faulkner thought the determinative of the sky, added after the word under discussion, resulted from mistaking the proper word for the sky with *kbhw*.¹¹ Furthermore, Faulkner sometimes translated the word in question as ‘cold water’, in other cases as a ‘firmament’.¹² However, it appears much more evident that the ‘cool water’ is a synonym of a part of the sky or the sky itself, as it may be assumed when the journey of Osiris was described:

§ 464c *m prt.f jr pt*

§ 465a *d3.f jr kbhw z3.f hrw jr dbw.jf*

When he ascended to the sky and ferried to the cool water and his son Horus beside him. (PT spell 303 §§ 464c–465a /W 208, T 291, P 428, M 326, N 518/).

or in other words:

§ 1360a *tz tw 3hj p ppj pn mw.k n.k b^ch.k n.k*

§ 1360b *rdw.k n.k pr m hw33t wsjr*

§ 1361a *wn n.k 3wj pt jzn n.k 3wj kbhw*

§ 1361b *wn.t n.k 3wj h3t n^hbb^hb n.k 3wj nwt*

§ 1362a *n.j n.j j.t jn jst sd3 m htp j.t jn nbt-hwt*

§ 1362b *m3.n.s jt.k wsjr hrw pw n h3b m mt*

§ 1362c *k3 ddbwt grgw b3.k*

Raise yourself, akh of this Pepi! You have your water, you have your inundation, you have your effluence that comes from the decomposition of Osiris.

⁷ Steiner 2011: 80–82.

⁸ Popielska-Grzybowska forthcoming b.

⁹ Allen 1989: 8.

¹⁰ Mercer 1952: 53–54.

¹¹ Faulkner 1969: 150, n. 1.

¹² For instance: Faulkner 1969: 92.

The door of the sky has been opened for you, the doors of the cool water have been pulled open to you: the door of the tomb shall be opened for you, and the door of Nut shall be unlocked for you. "To me! To me!" said Isis; "advance in peace!" said Nephthys, when they saw your father Osiris on the day of the reed-festival. Erected are the shrines of the settlement of your ba. (PT spell 553 §§ 1360a–1362c /P 526/)

Moreover, as J.P. Allen noted: ...indications from the Pyramid Texts suggest an early image of the celestial domain as an expanse (*pdwt*) of water (*bj3*, *kbhw*) above the Earth (*hrt*), whose shores (*jdbw pt*) consist of marshland (*sht j3rw*, *sht htp*) with canals (*mrw ptrw (ptrtj)*) and lakes (*šjw*), bordered perhaps by desert (*wrt*, *jzkn*).¹³

Then the other term used in the Pyramid Texts, that makes us think of the sky as a space filled with water is *bj3* – ‘basin’. It is written that Unis will acquire the sky and will open the basin of the sky (e.g. PT spell 257 § 305a /W 168, T 192/).¹⁴

Furthermore, there are different forms of water named in the texts scrutinised here. The Egyptians made four references to rain and four to rivers, one to a stream, nineteen to the Nile in all but the Neith’s pyramid and twenty-nine to inundation (*bʿh*)¹⁵ in all of the tombs. There is also an enthralling referral to the sources of the Nile river – hence the pure water originating from Elephantine. The most explicit example appears to be the beginning of the spell 459 (P 296, M 214, N 398), where the pharaoh must receive this pure water of his which originates from Elephantine, and added to the water are natron and incense – as these indispensable for reinforcement of the King’s life and his rule over the living and the dead as well as the gods. Additionally, twenty-four times the word ‘flood’ was mentioned in all of the texts of the pyramids and ‘great flood’ twice, only in Teti’s writings. Concurrently, a lake was evoked thirty-eight times and added to that there are many mentions of the Lake of Duat,¹⁶ Lake of God,¹⁷ Great Lake,¹⁸ Lake of Jackal,¹⁹ Lake of Life,²⁰ Lake of Nurse,²¹ Lake of Osiris,²² Lake of Reeds,²³ Lake of Shu,²⁴ Spread Lake,²⁵ Lake of Stork²⁶ and Lake of Turquoise.²⁷

¹³ Allen 1989: 9.

¹⁴ Allen 1989: 9.

¹⁵ For detailed analysis of the topic see, for instance: Oestigaard 2011 and further literature therein.

¹⁶ PT spells: 268 (W 175); 511 (P 450), 512 (P 452), 504 (P 458), 568 (P 507), 577 (P 519); 671 (N 349), 697 (N 564); 511 (Nt 271), 504 (Nt 280).

¹⁷ PT spell 593 (M 206).

¹⁸ PT spells: 262 (W 172); 262 (T 186); 466 (P 317); 461 (M 284), 619 (M 399); 262 (N 69); 666 (Nt 242).

¹⁹ PT spells: 268 (W 175), 301 (W 206); 512 (P 452), 504 (P 458); 691D (N 529), 697 (N 564); 504 (Nt 280).

²⁰ PT spell 670 (N 348).

²¹ PT spells: 264 (T 187); 265 (P 320).

²² PT spell 324 (T 9).

²³ PT spells: 323 (T 8); 526 (P 474), 564 (P 502); 526 (M 344).

²⁴ PT spell 222 (W 155).

²⁵ PT spells: 300 (W 205); 674 (P 312), 483 (P 334), 521 (P 469), 553 (P 526); 521 (M 351), 610 (M 375); 669 (N 347); 667B (Nt 244).

²⁶ PT spells: 473 (P 324); 473 (M 260).

²⁷ PT spell 627B (N 32).

With some bewilderment one can observe that the Great Green (*w3d wr*), namely the Sea, does not appear in Unis's texts at all and in general appears sixteen times, but the Great Continuousness, the Ocean (*šn wr*), was referred to only once, in the pyramid of Teti (T 198):

- § 628a *j n.k sntj.k jst nbt-ḥwt sd3.sn kw*
 § 628b *km.t wr.t m rn.k n km-wr*
 § 628c *w3d.t wr.t m rn.k n w3d-wr*
 § 629a *m kw wr.t šn.t m šn-wr*
 § 629b *m kw dbn.tj šn.t m dbn pšr ḥ3 nbwt*
 § 629c *m kw šn.tj ʕ3.tj m šn ʕ3 sk*

Your two sisters Isis and Nephthys have come to you, they make you sane, you greatly black in your name of the Great Black Lake,²⁸ greatly green in your name of the Great Green. Look, you have become great and enclosed as the Great Continuousness. Look, you have become encircled and round, as the circuit that surrounds the External Isles.

Look, you have become round and big, as he who surrounds the Big-Waters-that-Perish. (PT spell 366 §§ 628–629 /T 198/)

The puzzling 'Big-Waters-that-Perish' were described once more in spell 593 (M 206, Nt 36*). This intriguing designation may turn to be an implicit reference to annihilation that might afflict living beings, the gods included, at the end of the world (see below).

The Egyptians assigned water one more riveting trait, namely the fact that *the water of Unis was wine like Re (mw m jrp mr rʕ)* (PT spell 210 § 130 c /W 143/).

WATER IN THE PROCESS OF CREATION AND REJUVENATION

CREATIVE ASPECTS OF WATER

Studying the *Pyramid Texts* one can assume the creative aspects of water. The King was born in Nu in Heliopolis before anyone and anything else had come into being:

- § 1039a *j.nḏ ḥr.tn mw jnw šw wtzw mndftj*
 § 1039b *wʕbw.n gbb ʕwt.f jm.sn*
 § 1039c *jbw m ḥt snd ḥ3tw m ḥt sʕt*
 § 1040a *j msjw m nw*
 § 1040b *nj ḥpr.t pt nj ḥpr.t t3*
 § 1040c *nj ḥpr.t smntj nj ḥpr.t ḥnnw*
 § 1040d *nj ḥpr.t snd pw ḥpr hr jrt ḥrw*
 § 1041a *ppj [pw wʕ] n ḥt tw ʕ3t msjtt m b3ḥ m jwnw*

²⁸ The other authors translate: Bitter Lakes. Concerning the translation Great Black Wall, see: Allen 2005: 81, 431.

Hail to you, waters that Shu brought about and two begetters raised, in which Geb cleansed his limbs when minds were permeated with awe and hearts were permeated with viciousness!

I was born in Nu when the sky had not yet come into being, when the Earth had not yet come into being, when the establishment (of the world) had not yet come into being, when disorder had not yet come into being, when the awe had not yet come into being for the eye of Horus had come into being.

Pepi is [the unique one of] that great body that was born formerly in Heliopolis (...). (PT spell 486 §§ 1039a–1041a /P 338, N 548/)

For the present argument this is one of the most important spells regarding water (and Earth) in the *Pyramid Texts*, for it describes creation and the order of the created world emphasising the priority and pre-existence of water.

As a result of the pre-creation of the pharaoh, exactly as it happened with the creator god, the Egyptians seemed to believe that the monarch – as the creator – was the one who completed the ‘land which came out of the lake’, that is the first land that came from the water – *benben*, and then consequently Egypt, as well, uniting its lands and the two banks of its river:

§ 388a *wnjs pj mhj t3 pr m šj wnjs pj zšš w3d*

§ 388b *wnjs pj htp t3wj wnjs pj zm3jj t3wj*

Unis is this-who-made-complete the land that came out of the lake: Unis is a green water-lily. It is Unis, thus be complacent, Two Lands. It is Unis, thus unite, Two Lands. (PT spell 271 § 388 /W 178/)

Creative powers of the water are mentioned rarely and much more often may just be presupposed from the context, as for instance in spell 587 §§ 1590b-c and 1600b-c:

§ 1599a *sdm.t n ppj nfr k3 r^c swt db3 tm*

§ 1599b *jn ppj nfr k3 r^c kd tm swt grg tm*

§ 1600a *jr.t n.f ht nb j.ddt.f n.t m bw nb šm ppj nfr k3 r^c jm*

§ 1600b *f3.t n.f mw jwn jmw.t*

§ 1600c *f3.t n.f mw jwn hp^rt.sn jm.t*

You shall listen to Pepi Neferkare, he is the one who reconstructed you, he is the one who constructed you, he is the one who constituted you. You should do for him everything he says to you wherever Pepi Neferkare goes.

You should lift to him all the waters that are in you, you shall lift to him all the waters that will come into being in you. (PT spell 587 §§ 1599–1600 /N 404/)

Consequently, the water was life and gave life and even some references to giving birth in water, as for example in spell 669 were made, although it was written that ‘the waters

of Nu have been cut' when Isis screamed while giving birth to the King. Thus, water was providing renewal and re-birth, gave life and force, physical and spiritual strength:

- § 2063a *j mw ʿnh̄ jm̄w pt j mw ʿnh̄ jm̄w t̄3*
 § 2063b *nbj n.k pt sd̄3 n.k t̄3 tp ʿwj mswt n̄tr*
 § 2064a *wpj̄j d̄wwj h̄pr n̄tr sh̄m n̄tr m dt.f*
 § 2064b *wpj̄j d̄wwj h̄pr ppj n̄fr k̄3 r̄ʿ pn sh̄m ppj n̄fr k̄3 r̄ʿ pn m dt.f*
 § 2065a *m-k j ppj n̄fr k̄3 r̄ʿ pn j.sn.tj rdwj.f jn mw wʿbw*
 § 2065b *wnnw hr tm jr h̄nn šw sh̄pr k̄3t tfnt*
 § 2066a *jw.n.sn jn.n.sn n.k mw wʿbw hr jt.sn*
 § 2066b *sʿb.sn tw sn̄tr.sn tw*
 § 2067a *f̄3.k pt m d̄rt.k w̄3h̄.k t̄3 m t̄bt.k*
 § 2067b *wdh̄.t kbh̄w jr rwt ppj n̄fr k̄3 r̄ʿ pn j̄ʿ hr n̄tr nb*
 § 2068a *j̄ʿ.k ʿwj.k wsjr j̄ʿ.k ʿwj.k ppj n̄fr k̄3 r̄ʿ pw*
 § 2068b *rnpw.k n̄tr 3 nw.tn w̄d-h̄tp*
 § 2068c *st̄ ht-wtt jr ppj n̄fr k̄3 r̄ʿ pn*
 § 2069a *bnb̄n m h̄wt zkr h̄p̄s̄ m pr jnpw*
 § 2069b *w̄d̄3 ppj n̄fr k̄3 r̄ʿ p ʿh̄ʿ mn̄jw ms 3bd ʿnh̄ sp̄3t*
 § 2070a *jr n st̄3wt sk̄3.k jt̄j sk̄3.k bdt*
 § 2070b *h̄nk.t ppj n̄fr k̄3 r̄ʿ pn jm n dt*

The waters of life in the sky have come, the waters of life in the Earth have come. The sky has been alight for you, the Earth has quivered for you, before the birth of the god.

The two mountains have been separated: the god has come into being, the god has power in his body. The two mountains have been separated: this Pepi Neferkare has come into being, this Pepi Neferkare has power in his body.

Beware, this Pepi Neferkare, his feet shall be kissed by the pure waters that exist by Atum, that the phallus of Shu made and the vulva of Tefnut brought into being.

They have come having for you the pure waters from their father, that they may cleanse you, that they may purify you with natron, Pepi Neferkare. You shall sustain the sky with your hand and set down the Earth with your foot. May the cool water be poured at the gate of this Pepi Neferkare and thus the face of every god will be washed. You shall wash your hands, Osiris; you shall wash your hands, Pepi Neferkare. You will become young god, your third Peace-Commander.²⁹ The fragrance of the Begotten Thing is on this Pepi Neferkare; the benben is in the residence of Sokar, the foreleg is in the house of Anubis.

Become sane, Pepi Neferkare! The shrine shall await the month be born. The countryside will live and arouae will be made for them, that you may cultivate barley and cultivate emmer.

This Pepi Neferkare will be bestowed with them forever. (PT spell 685 /N 519/)

²⁹ Cf. Allen 2005: 292.

WATER IN RITUALS

However, most often water was a means of cleansing in the Daily Rituals, among them mouth-washing with water with natron – an act commencing breakfast. In one of the spells called by J.P. Allen ‘Preparation of the Offering Table’, namely in spell 87 (W 60), the scholar translated the offering as the ‘mouth-washing meal’.³⁰ The King was asked to collect ‘the water that is in it’ and an offering of two bowls of water shall be made (*PT* spell 108 /W 70, T 76, P 127, M 118, N 174, Nt 109/). These activities that ensured physical cleanliness were obviously religious and thus included psychical cleanness and purity as well:

- § 788a *mw.k n.k b^ch.k n.k*
 § 788b *r^dw pr m n^r h^w33t prt m wsjr*
 § 788c *j^cj.j ^cwj.k wb3.<j> ms^drwj.k*
 § 789a *s3h.j s^hm pn n b3.f*
 § 789b *j^c t^w j^c sw k3.k h^ms k3.k*
 § 789c *wⁿm.f t hⁿ.(k) nj nwr n dt dt*

You have your water, you have your inundation, the effluence that comes from the god, the decomposition that comes from Osiris.

Your arms have been washed and your ears opened: this powerful has been made akh for his ba. Wash yourself and your ka will wash himself, your ka will sit and eat bread with you without termination forever and ever. (PT spell 436 §§ 788–789 /P 30/)

Even if the texts refer, as was shown above, to cleaning and purification, they very often mention inundation and outflow of the waters of the Nile. The decay comes from Osiris, who first of all is a god of vegetation and renewal, that require decay and decomposition, and secondly was one of two gods who were foretold to survive the end of the world. Both of them, Atum and Osiris, in the forms of the serpents, were predicted to stay in the primaeval waters together with the pharaoh (see: *Book of the Dead*, chapter 175).³¹ Notwithstanding the previous phrase, in another fragment, where water implies cleansing and hence purity as well, this purity comes from Osiris. Osiris because all the other gods can enclose in him various – antithetical – characteristics and thus fulfil his divine complex role credited him in Egyptian religious thought:

- § 848a *m^h mrw j3hw jtrw*
 § 848b *m r.f ^cbw pr m wsjr*
 § 848c *sm rp^c wr-m^dw ^ch wr-m^dw jwnw*
 § 849a *psdt wrt h^ms*

³⁰ Allen 2005: 24. On the rituals based interpretation of the *Pyramid Texts* see, for instance: Piankoff 1968: esp. 1–13; Spiegel 1971; Altenmüller 1972.

³¹ See also: ElSebaie 2013.

The canals have filled, the rivers have been flooded by the purity that comes from Osiris.

You sem-priest, you noble one, you great ten of the palace, you great ten of Heliopolis and you Great Ennead sit. (PT spell 455 §§ 848a–849a /P 50/)

Consequently, cleaned and purified pharaoh undergoes the process of rejuvenation in his name of ‘young’ (nascent) water:

§ 589a *j hr jp.f jt.f jm.k rnp.tj m rn.k n mw rnpw*

§ 589b *wp.n hrw r.k*

Horus has come, recognising his father in you rejuvenated, in your identity of the young water. Horus has opened your mouth. (PT spell 357 § 589 /T 146, P 291/)

*

All in all, it may be asserted that water in ancient Egyptian culture had connotations of both life and death.

In conclusion, water according to the *Pyramid Texts* was an essential constituent of every day rituals, washing and rejuvenation by means of its creative power. Water was a creative, principal element, but in the *Pyramid Texts* it is not so much evident. As it could have been perceived from the texts analysed above, in the oldest religious writings water was associated rather with washing in every day rituals and hence purifying in every sense. Added to that the most crucial role of water in the *Pyramid Texts* seems to be re-establishing, re-construction and thus rejuvenation of the deceased. This overview acquaints us in general terms with the contexts in which water recurred in the Old Kingdom religious texts. Notwithstanding the various hindrances and perplexity which analysis of this multi-faceted issue of the Egyptian religious accounts provide, it may be assumed that the creative power of water in the *Pyramid Texts* must have been crucial for the ancient Egyptians and the arguments need to be scrutinised meticulously.

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Child Burials at Saqqara Ptolemaic Necropolis West of the Step Pyramid

MAŁGORZATA RADOMSKA

Abstract: The author analyzes the child burials from the Ptolemaic necropolis to the west of the Djoser pyramid in Saqqara. Issues of whether there was a separated child cemetery there in the Ptolemaic period and/or whether the burial practices with regard to children were different from those practiced for adults are discussed. To achieve these goals, the presence and location of possible clusters of child graves at the site as well as type of graves, burial practices and funerary equipment connected with sub-adults interments are examined.

Keywords: Ptolemaic Egypt, Saqqara, necropolis, child burials

Małgorzata Radomska, Instytut Kultur Śródziemnomorskich i Orientalnych PAN, Warszawa; *malrad@wp.pl*

One of the most dramatic stories connected with the burial of children in the necropolis at Saqqara is described in the *Complaint of Artemisia*.¹ The text is one of the earliest known documents in Greek recorded on papyrus. This fourth century BC source came from the Serapeum. Addressing her plea to Oserapis, the distraught Artemisia cursed her husband for depriving her dead daughter of a burial and grave goods and asked that both her husband and his parents be denied a suitable burial.

The text, which is a source of information on the religion and burial practices of the Memphite community of the period, coupled with archaeological discoveries made on the western side of the Djoser pyramid complex in 2014, inspired the present examination of child burials from the so-called Upper Necropolis, superimposed on the remains of Old Kingdom structures and functioning from the terminal phases of the Late period through Greek and Roman times.² The importance of these finds is evident in view of the small number of well preserved burials from the period in Egypt, as emphasized recently in a publication edited by Marie-Dominique Nenna, devoted to child burials in antiquity.³

¹ Wilcken 1922: no. 1.

² Myśliwiec 2002: 349–359.

³ Nenna 2012 (Ed.); particularly, on the Saqqara necropolis, see: Ziegler 2012: 61–77.

One hundred of the 540 burials discovered in the Upper Necropolis⁴ until 2014 were sub-adult's interments: from a newborn dead upon birth after 38 weeks of pregnancy (B. 663) through juveniles aged 18 years. According to anthropologists,⁵ the closure of the *synostosis spheno-occipitalis* is one of the main criteria for distinguishing sub-adult remains from those who survived above the age of 18 and died in adulthood. In the Saqqara sample, children (aged 0–14 years) make up 15% of the population (83 burials), but juveniles (aged 15–18 years) – only 3% (17 burials). The highest death rate, 31% of total sub-adults, was observed within the 4–7 years age group. It is by 3% more than that observed in the younger age group of 0–3 years (**Tab. 1**). Juveniles who anyhow belong to the group of sub-adults but are not children anymore, were excluded from statistics as an article is devoted to the child burials. They could appear only as a comparative material.

Tab. 1. Age distribution of burials excavated in the Saqqara West cemetery (Kaczmarek 2003: 157–158; 2008: 457–458, updated by I. Kozieradzka-Ogunmakin, personal communication).

Age	Number of individuals	Burial field number
Foetal (38–39 weeks gestation)	1	B. 663
Infants (birth to 12 months) 6 weeks 0–6 months less than 3 months 3 months less than 6 months 6 months 6–9 months less than 12 months	10	B. 515 B. 643 B. 430 B. 423 B. 98 B. 606, 668, 670 B. 415 B. 116
Children (1–3 years) 1.5 year 2–3 years	17	B. 35, 184, 418, 487, 546 B. 46, 99, 162, 167, 189, 425, 456, 468, 601, 602, 642, 674
Children (4–7 years) 4 years 5–7 years	31	B. 523, 556, 575, 584, 634, 681 B. 49, 73, 77, 144, 181, 195, 206, 226, 244, 254, 261, 320, 338, 404, 410, 412, 438, 467, 566, 585, 608, 624, 625, 673, 676
Children (8–10 years)	7	B. 53, 85, 139, 183, 322, 347, 354
Children (11–14 years)	6	B. 126, 185, 188, 318, 543, 627
Children of indeterminable age	11	B. 1, 2, 4, 32, 33, 130, 229, 230, 247, 249, 282

⁴ Kowalska *et al.* 2008: 29–381; Kowalska, Radomska, Kozieradzka 2010: 27–79, Pls I–XXXI; see also next (sixth) volume of the *Saqqara* series (forthcoming).

⁵ Kaczmarek 2012: 298.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

An analysis of distribution of the child graves in the cemetery in question demonstrates their presence all over the site between the enclosure wall of the Djoser funerary complex and the western edge of the 'Dry Moat' (**Figs 1–3**). A clustering of these graves was observed in a relatively small area in front of the entrances to three cult chapels of Old Kingdom date: nos 7/8 (grid squares 1909 and 2009) (**Fig. 2**), 13 and 14 (grid squares 1714 and 1814) (**Fig. 1**).

The child graves discovered west of the pyramid enclosure were recorded in three layers: cut into the bedrock, in the superimposed layer of *dakka*⁶ and in the sand above it. The difference in altitude between the lowest- and the highest-lying burial was 10.6m (B. 681: H 44.97 m a.s.l.; B. 98: H 55.57 m a.s.l.).

According to Karol Myśliwiec, the Director of the project, *the ground west of the pyramid enclosure wall falls away to the west implying that the absolute level of particular burials need not be a reflection of chronological sequence; consequently, specific groups of burials found in different contexts need to be dated individually. From the point of view of site stratigraphy, the lowest layer of the Upper Necropolis is constituted by mummies deposited in anthropoid burial pits hewn in bedrock, although their absolute level is much higher than e.g. that of evidently later burials in the "Dry Moat"*.⁷

TYPE OF CHILD GRAVES

Child burials cannot be associated with any specific tomb architecture and the only cases of an architectural setting concern bodies intentionally interred in already existing structures. Of the 83 identified child burials, the largest group (56) was buried directly in the sand (**Fig. 4**) or *dakka* without a grave pit. Only in the case of 27 burials the state of preservation was sufficiently good for the grave type to be examined. The following types of interments were distinguished based on an analysis of this set.

The most common type was an oval pit cut to the size of the body in the *dakka* deposits (**Fig. 5**).⁸ In one case, where a child was buried with an adult (B. 566), the hollow was cut much larger, perhaps even for more bodies (**Fig. 6**); in another case (B. 99), the pit was longer than the child buried in it, hence it may have been intended originally for an adult (**Fig. 7**). It was standard practice to cover the wrapped and bandaged body with earth thrown directly into the pit. This kind of inhumations is represented by 17 burials (B. 1, 2, 49, 53, 73, 85, 98, 99, 167, 189, 261, 282, 566, 584, 585, 606, 608).

The second type was a rectangular structure of irregular blocks of white limestone encasing the interred body, recorded within existing structures from the Old Kingdom

⁶ *Dakka* in archaeological parlance refers to a mix of mud brick, stone fragments, sand and pottery, compacted over the ages into a solid, practically petrified agglomerate.

⁷ Myśliwiec 2002: 350, 352.

⁸ E.g. analogous pits with child burials were discovered at a Late Roman necropolis in Ismant el-Kharab in Dakhleh Oasis: Bowen 2012: 357.

period, such as cult chapel walls. Burial 35 is the only example of a child grave located within the structure of the brick wall, namely that of a chapel no. 9 by the southeastern corner of shaft no. 14 (**Fig. 8**).⁹ A niche was first cut in the wall, the body interred and the opening blocked from the west with six reused limestone blocks. At the eastern end, feet of the deceased were surrounded with mud bricks laid in a semicircle. A flat limestone slab covered the grave; it proved to be a fragment of an anepigraphic offering table of Old Kingdom date (**Fig. 9**).

The third and fourth types were, respectively, oval pits cut into the walls of two thousand years earlier mastabas (**Fig. 10**) – represented by four burials (B. 185, 188, 347, 412) – and niche cut into the side of rock-cut burial shaft, closed with large blocks of limestone after the interment, as in burial B. 487 (**Figs 11–12**).

The last distinguished type were anthropoid-shaped burial pits cut in the rock, covered with flat limestone slabs, represented by two burials: B. 4 and B. 456 (**Figs 13–14**).

Eventually, in one case, two separate child burials (B. 467, 468) were laid to rest on top of slabs that had served as the covering of an adult male (B. 508).

BURIAL PRACTICES

BODY ORIENTATION AND POSITION

Children were interred either singly, in twos or in groups of several individuals. Most of the burials (59) were single interments. In 16 double burials, there were five cases of two children in a grave, four cases of a child with an adult female and five cases of a child buried with an adult male. Children were also identified in two group burials, consisting of five bodies interred together (**Fig. 15**); adults were included in all of these graves.

Body orientation was discernible in 73 cases of burials with a good state of preservation. The predominant position was an east-west alignment of the body with the head to the west (55 cases) or to the east (three cases). Eight burials had the body aligned north-south, the head being to the north (five cases) or south (three cases). In seven cases, the recorded orientation was northeast-southwest, the head to the northeast in one case and southwest in six.

All interments were laid out supine, some differentiation being noted in the hand arrangement (indicated in **Tab. 2**). The predominant position was arms laid alongside the body and the palms of the hands placed flat on the pelvis (24 cases).

⁹ Myśliwiec *et al.* 2004: Pl. II.

Tab. 2. Child burials at Saqqara: positions of arms and hands.

Arms and hands position	Number of individuals	Burial field number
Arms extended alongside the body, hands not identifiable	3	B. 418, 601, 606
Arms extended alongside the body, hands along thighs	2	B. 98, 625
Arms extended alongside the body, palms flat on the upper part of the thighs	7	B. 144, 415, 467, 487, 546, 585, 602
Arms extended alongside the body, hands flat on the pelvis	24	B. 33, 116, 126, 139, 162, 183, 185, 254, 261, 282, 320, 338, 347, 468, 523, 584, 608, 634, 642, 670, 673, 674, 676, 681
Arms crossed over the chest, palms flat on the shoulders	5	B. 425, 438, 456, 575, 624
Left arm alongside body and palm on the pelvis, right arm bent at elbow at the lowermost ribs, palm pressed against left flank	1	B. 318
Not identifiable	42	B. 1, 2, 4, 32, 35, 46, 49, 53, 73, 77, 81, 85, 99, 130, 167, 181, 184, 188, 189, 195, 206, 226, 229, 230, 244, 247, 249, 322, 354, 404, 410, 412, 423, 430, 515, 543, 556, 566, 627, 643, 663, 668

BODY TREATMENT

Most of the 83 recorded child burials were in a satisfactory state of preservation. The damaged burials consisted of loose bones in fragmentary condition, mixed with scraps of bandages. Small child's bones, especially in the facial part of the skull, were crushed under the pressure of sand, *dakka* or stone slabs covering the bodies.

Mummification processes were recorded for 63 bodies, while the remaining 20 were skeletal inhumations. Anthropological examination of the remains identified two techniques of body mummification. One way was to pour liquid hot resin copiously over the bandaged body repeatedly in the course of the bandaging. A thick, burned, black mass was formed in effect, solidified with the bandages and shroud to the point that it was impossible to identify individual anatomical features. The other technique called for pieces of bandage to be dipped in hot liquid resin and then wrapped around the body (e.g. B. 183).¹⁰ Several layers of bandages of different quality, both new and reused, were applied in latter case. The condition of the bones and fabric scraps in this technique was fairly good, facilitating further analyses.¹¹

¹⁰ Kowalska *et al.* 2008: 166.

¹¹ Kaczmarek 2008: 460–461.

The brain was removed through the nostrils and the empty skull subsequently either filled with resin or not (B. 575, 602); it could also be left in place, turning into black powder as a result (no evidence of brain removal in burials: B. 566, 584, 585, 601, 606, 608).

In most of the cases, the mummies preserved traces of dark brown to black body wrappings adhering to the bones, carbonized due to contact with a resinous substance. The pattern of the outer bandaging was recognizable in 12 cases. Two main bandaging patterns were identified:

1. Body wrapped in a shroud and tied with thin intersecting strips of bandages (1.5cm wide) to form a rhomboid net pattern on the surface (B. 35, 183, 247, 602) (**Fig. 8**). In the case of Burial 183 the external layer was formed of 12 strips of bandages of equal width, looped horizontally around the body from head to knees; the mummy of Burial 247 additionally had two strips, 1.5cm wide, crossing diagonally on the pelvis and knees.
2. Body wrapped in a shroud and tied on the surface with two strips, 1.5cm wide, crossing diagonally on the chest. The external layer consisted of horizontal wrappings, 1.5cm wide, binding the entire body from head to feet, the feet being wrapped with wider strips, more tightly spaced than on the rest of the body (B. 4, 77, 282, 412) (**Fig. 16**).

In the case of three child mummies (B. 415, 418, 487), the bodies were wrapped in shrouds and tied diagonally on the surfaces with wider strips of bandages (5cm wide); the tying was horizontal in the case of B. 546.

Children's mummies were protected by being placed inside a wooden coffin or contained within a cartonnage. Not single case of a cartonnage mummy inside a wooden coffin was found, unlike for the adult burials. There were four child burials in wooden coffins: a rectangular one (B. 625) (**Fig. 17a-b**) and three anthropoid ones (B. 32, 53, 185) (**Fig. 18**). Only one of these had the surface painted red (B. 53) and it was used for the burial of an 8-year old girl. A column of inscription in black ink written on a white background runs on the long axis of the lid, with the gods Osiris and Sokar being asked to care for the dead child.¹²

One girl of indeterminate age (B. 4) had a cartonnage covering. Her body was covered additionally with a palm-leaf mat. The cartonnage¹³ had a head cover with a gilded face and long lappets descending to the chest and a large piece reaching from the bottom edge of the head cover down to mid-calf (**Figs 19–20**). The decoration consisted of panels.¹⁴

¹² Kowalska *et al.* 2008: 112 (translated by K.O. Kuraszkiwicz).

¹³ The cartonnage decoration was studied and published by A. Niwiński, K. Myśliwiec and A. Kowalska: Myśliwiec, Herbich, Niwiński 1995: 191–195; Myśliwiec 1999: Pls 8–10; Kowalska *et al.* 2008: 49–51. Graeco-Roman masks and portraits: Corbelli 2006; on mummy masks from the Roman period: Grimm 1974; a collection of 12 masks from the first century BC is studied in detail in: Stadler 2004.

¹⁴ Panels typical of cartonnage adornment in the Late as well as Ptolemaic periods: e.g. cartonnage from the Late period (Hermitage inv. nos 18421a, b, 18422), representing a *wsh*-collar, winged goddess and Anubis on

Wsh-collar and an image of a winged goddess holding a *mꜣꜥt*-feather below it appear on the upper body.¹⁵ Anubis, god of mummification¹⁶ and Lord of the Necropolis, in the form of two facing black canids lying upon two chests, occur on shin panel (**Fig. 21**).¹⁷ A winged solar disk on the chin encircles the face of girl from the bottom (**Fig. 19**) in a rare instance of such a placement of this motif, which usually appears on the forehead or, represented as a winged scarab symbolizing resurrection, on top of the head.¹⁸ The only parallel for the motif appearing on the chin of deceased coming from the necropolis under examination is provided by the cartonnage of an adult male (B. 483).¹⁹

The differentiated state of preservation of the embalmed children's bodies is mostly the result of the embalment method. In the Ptolemaic period the art of mummification had deteriorated substantially reaching a much lower standard than in previous periods. Indeed, examination of the bodies from the Saqqara necropolis suggests that they were often brought for embalming already in an advanced state of decay. The carelessness of Ptolemaic embalmers was noted by anthropologist Maria Kaczmarek in the case of the mummy of an infant which died at the age of 6–9 months (B. 415); its small crus bones

the foot case: Bolshakov 1992: 7, Fig. 3; moreover, anthropoid sarcophagus of Taosir (*T3-Wsir*) from Akhmim, dated to the Twenty-sixth Dynasty (cat. no. APR.VL.01175.S), decorated with a *wsh*-collar terminating in falcon heads, winged goddess below and representations of Anubis in jackal form lying on naoi: Redford 2001: 283; see also: *Virtual Egyptian Museum* no. APR.VL.01175.S; and from the Ptolemaic period: Schweitzer 1998: 325–352; also, e.g. mummy of Nesmin from Akhmim decorated with a *wsh*-collar terminating in falcon heads with a winged goddess below and representations of Anubis on the feet (MMA no. 86.1.51). In the necropolis under examination cartonnage of the juvenile girl (B. 534) is composed of two separate parts presenting a similar composition to cartonnage from Burial 4: Kowalska, Radomska, Kozieradzka 2010: 57–63. The remaining cartonnages with a *wsh*-collar panel: Kowalska *et al.* 2008: 48–52, 81–85, 93–102, 116–125, 268–284, 325–335, 364–370; Schweitzer 2008: 521–544. Stylistically similar cartonnages have been found, among others, in Akhmim: Küffer, Siegmann 2007: 138–178, as well as in Saqqara: Cortopassi, Pagès-Camagna 2008: 45–68. On mummy portraits see also: Parlasca 1966; Parlasca, Seeman (Eds) 1999; for more recent bibliography see: Rondot 2013.

¹⁵ In the necropolis under examination, cartonnages of: B. 4, 37, 75, 269, 406, 483; Kowalska *et al.* 2008: Figs 57, 82, 335, 414. Cf. cartonnages: Madrid II, 15232, Mummy Pelizaeus-Museum inv. no. 1905, Mummy H, Madrid II, 15229; Schweitzer 1998: 351–352, Figs 23–25.

¹⁶ In the necropolis under examination, cartonnage of B. 37: Kowalska *et al.* 2008: Fig. 59; also on the shroud of a child mummy from the Roman period (third century AD) from Antinoe (Louvre AF 6486).

¹⁷ On spelling and etymology of the name of Anubis see: Witkowski 1983: 37–52. The usual position for black canids lying upon two chests in decoration of the late and Ptolemaic cartonnages is the bottom register: shin panel or foot cover. On the said necropolis, cartonnage of B. 406 and 529: Kowalska *et al.* 2008: 284, Fig. 337, Pl. CCXXXVIIIc-d; Kowalska, Radomska, Kozieradzka 2010: Pl. XXII; also, e.g. cartonnage of Tasheret-Min from Akhmim, dated to the Ptolemaic period (Colmar, L 18519): Schweitzer 1998: 346, Fig. 5; cartonnage plaque from the Graeco-Roman period (Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid, inv. no. 15238), between representations of Anubises, containing an inscription that mentions the god with epithet of Lord of the Sacred Land referring to the necropolis: *Hombres sagrados* 1999: 352–353; sarcophagus of Irtirutja from Akhmim, dated to the Macedonian-Ptolemaic period (MMA no. 86.1.52a, b).

¹⁸ E.g. cartonnage mask of a mummy from grave E422 in Abydos, dated to the Roman period (BM EA51146).

¹⁹ Kaczmarek *et al.* 2008: Pl. CCXLIXc; for the same motif and parallel placement see also cartonnage, probably from Thebes: Musée de Grenoble (inv. no. MG 3566(3)).

having been replaced with the much larger bones of a child dead at seven years of age,²⁰ creating what is called a ‘composite mummy’. Typically, the bones of one or more dead persons, children and adults, were used to fill out a different mummy in order to replace missing body elements and achieve an anthropoid shape. The procedure was believed by Kaczmarek to take place whenever body decay had resulted in parts of the body missing at the time of the mummification process. ‘Composite mummies’ have been attested also at other necropolises, for example, at Hawara²¹ and in the west cemetery of the Roman period site at Ismant el-Kharab (Kellis) in Dakhleh Oasis.²²

Sticks were found inserted into the bodies in the case of three child burials: in the skull in one instance (B. 35), and lengthwise along the body in two others (B. 415, 566).²³ This was done in the course of the mummification, in an effort to reconnect the head of the deceased with the rest of the body and to stiffen the corpse to retain its human shape. The sticks could be placed both on the body and inserted between the layers of bandages. This solution was useful particularly when the corpse was not interred in a coffin. In all examples the sticks were identified as palm leaf ribs.²⁴

A typical feature of late Ptolemaic and Early Roman mummies is the heavy use of liquid resin both inside the body cavity as well as on the surface. As a result, the bones are largely destroyed. It seems to be the evidence of poor embalming technique. The wrapping of the mummy became at the time more important than the preservation of the body itself. As stated by Salima Ikram, a features of those periods were also so-called ‘dummy mummies’ (body, wrapped to look like an infant, when unwrapped revealed an old muddy bones), and ‘composite mummies’, described above, as well as a practice when a head of a mummy was reconnected to the torso with a stick.²⁵

FUNERARY EQUIPMENT

Grave goods were found with 17 child burials and there is no distinction by age to be noted: from infants of 6–9 months (B. 415) to children aged less than 15 years (B. 543).

The equipment consisted of the following items (indicated in **Tab. 3**).

²⁰ Kaczmarek 2008: 467.

²¹ Petrie 1889: 14–15; Ikram, Dodson 1998: 127.

²² Aufderheide *et al.* 1999: 197–210.

²³ Kaczmarek 2008: 468; Radomska 2013: 95.

²⁴ Radomska 2013: 95 (identification by J. Zieliński).

²⁵ Ikram, Dodson 1998: 130.

Tab. 3. Funerary equipment from the contexts of child burials in the Upper Necropolis at Saqqara.

Grave goods	Context and description
Floral bouquet	Bouquet of dried flowers was found in one child burial (B. 183). ²⁹ Archaeobotanical examination of the remains of the bouquet indicated the presence of papyrus stems (<i>Cyperus papyrus</i> L.).
Bracelets	Two bronze bracelets found lying beside the left leg, at knee height of B. 99 ³⁰ (Fig. 22a-b), two others by the shoulder and head of B. 162 (Fig. 22c-d). ³¹
Earrings	Copper earring, covered thickly with verdigris, found by the right ear of a child's skull (B. 206), consists of a loop with heart-shaped pendant (<i>ib</i>) (Fig. 22g). ³² Two others, bronze, were found by the right and left ears of B. 585 (Fig. 22e-f). Three copper beads, found by the left shoulder of the body (B. 673), could have been part of an earring that once decorated the ear of the child. Unidentifiable fragments of copper objects were also found in the vicinity of the body remains in B. 244. ³³
Pendant	Small copper-alloy pendant in the form of a thin sheet of metal engraved with a rectangle, found between the neck and chest vertebrae (B. 642).
Beads	Two blue-glazed faience beads were found by the right side of the body in B. 35 (Fig. 22h-i), two others in the context of B. 162 (Fig. 22j-k), and one by the pelvis, above the thigh bone of B. 543. ³⁴ Two glass beads were found under the shoulder blades of the body in B. 189 (Fig. 22l-m). ³⁵
Wreath	In the case of one child mummy, a wreath had been placed on the head (B. 35) (Fig. 23a). ³⁶ It was made of a rope of date-palm leaf fiber (<i>Phoenix dactylifera</i> L.) wrapped in grass blades and covered with bandages wrapped around this core.
Onion	Found in one child burial context: B. 423.
Amulets	An amulet made of cedar wood found between the layers of bandages in the region of the neck in B. 415. Of possibly a squatting or standing female figurine shape, it was threaded on a string plied from several strands (Fig. 23b). ³⁷ A green-glazed faience <i>wḏ3t</i> -eye amulet was found in B. 162 (Fig. 23e).
Cowrie shells	White cowrie shells were found in two cases: under the shoulder blades of the body in B. 189 ³⁸ (Fig. 23d) and by the right thigh bone of the mummy in B. 681. The top of the shell from B. 189 was struck off to allow stringing. ³⁹ Originally, it was part of a necklace,

²⁶ Kowalska *et al.* 2008: 166, 291. The second example from the necropolis under examination comes from an adult burial (B. 417).

²⁷ Kowalska *et al.* 2008: 131, Fig. 97, Pl. LVIIb.

²⁸ Kowalska *et al.* 2008: 158, Fig. 147, Pl. LXIXd-f.

²⁹ Kowalska *et al.* 2008: 177, Fig. 179.

³⁰ Kowalska *et al.* 2008: 192.

³¹ Unpublished.

³² Kowalska *et al.* 2008: 169, Fig. 165.

³³ The remaining 23 cases of wreaths decorating the head of the deceased were all adults (B. 8, 25, 26, 34, 47, 51, 80, 216, 217, 358, 359, 406, 451, 459, 463, 466, 477, 478, 486, 494, 495, 498, 504): Kowalska *et al.* 2008: 377.

³⁴ Kowalska *et al.* 2008: 289, Pl. CXLIIId.

³⁵ Kowalska *et al.* 2008: 169, Fig. 165.

³⁶ Cf. Petrie 1914: 27, Pl. XIV (no. 107c); Reisner 1958: 39–40, Pl. X (CG 12831–12833); Giddy, Smith, French 1992: 67, Pl. 52.

	composed of a shell pendant and two small beads. Stringed cowrie shells were found around the upper left arm in B. 546 (Fig. 23f), ⁴⁰ and in the context of B. 642, where it was under the vertebrae (Fig. 23c).
Plaited basket	Woven reed basket placed with the mummy in B. 183, at hip level ⁴¹ (Fig. 24a). Made of a bunch of (bulrush?) stalks coiled into a flat spiral, bound with thin strands of the same stalks, radiating from the center. Judging by the thickness of the bundle, the plaiting could have been part of the bottom of a large basket.
Pottery	Juglet found north of B. 139 (terminal Late period) ⁴² (Fig. 24b), small juglet next to B. 254 ⁴³ (Fig. 24c) and a large pot on the feet of B. 624 (Fig. 24d). ⁴⁴

DISCUSSION

Items intentionally buried with the children can be divided into two groups: purely decorative, included probably as a last farewell, and symbolic. In the latter case, the term symbolic engages a broad spectrum of meanings, including protection and state that these are formal funerary rather than personal. On occasion, artifacts could have combined different functional roles.

Floral bouquet and jewelry form the first group. Pendant and beads could have been parts of decorative collars or pendant necklaces. Adorning the body with jewelry was one of the important elements of burial practices, for children as well as for adults.⁴² Jewelry might have been items made specifically for burial purposes or used in everyday life.

Wreaths and amulets belonged to the symbolic funerary equipment and were imbued with a protective function.⁴³ The custom of decorating the head of a deceased with a wreath may be related to the so-called crown/wreath of justification, also referred to as a 'crown of victory'.⁴⁴ Wreaths of justification were common from the Twenty-second Dynasty to the Graeco-Roman period. Philippe Derchain shows that in the Ptolemaic era, when the custom became very popular, the emphasis was put on Osirian

³⁷ Kowalska, Radomska, Kozieradzka 2010: 67, Pl. XXb.

³⁸ Kowalska *et al.* 2008: 166, Figs 159–160, Pl. LXXIVa-b.

³⁹ Kowalska *et al.* 2008: 148; Rzeuska 2008: 426, Fig. 534 (pottery cat. no. 18).

⁴⁰ Kowalska *et al.* 2008: 195; Rzeuska 2008: 420, Fig. 531 (pottery cat. no. 1), Pl. CCLXIa.

⁴¹ Unpublished.

⁴² Copper bracelets accompanied also several child skeletons at the 'late necropolis' around the mastaba of Ptahshepses at Abusir: Strouhal, Bareš 1993: 23, 24, 27, 31, 33 (Burials I 305, I 327, I 387, I 413, I 465). Two bronze bracelets came from the grave of a child (D19) in the necropolis at Douch in Kharga Oasis: Dunand, Lichtenberg 2012: 335. Also earrings were recorded in three child burials from the 'late necropolis' around the mastaba of Ptahshepses: Strouhal, Bareš 1993: 23, 24, Pl. 34 (Burials I 305, I 313 and I 465).

⁴³ Instances of amulets from the context of child burials are known from Abusir: Strouhal, Bareš 1993: 23, 39 (Burials I 313, J 1950); as well as from the necropolis around the Anubieion in Saqqara: Giddy, Smith, French 1992: 48, Pl. 38 (Burial BIA). For the custom of decorating the head of a deceased with a wreath and its symbols, see: Barguet 1967: 67–68; Schweitzer 1992: 21; Kowalska *et al.* 2008: 56; Radomska 2013: 95.

⁴⁴ Derchain 1955.

connotations.⁴⁵ The basic idea was that the deceased person who is identified with Osiris will receive the crown which signifies his triumph in the judgment after death.⁴⁶ The ritual of offering of the crown was accompanied by the words *m3c hrw* ‘the one justified by voice’. Placing the wreath of justification *vel* crown on the head of the deceased in this ritual could have been intended as a symbol of favorable judgment issue at the Court of Osiris. It is awarded to those who pass the divine test, thus symbolizing the passage to the new life. Anne Schweitzer suggested that the plant wreath may be associated with Osiris and is a crown symbolizing victory over his enemies.⁴⁷ The wreath protects the deceased, representing the victory over Seth and the enemies of Osiris, as mentioned also in the text on the mask from Abydos.⁴⁸ The contribution of Re to the triumph of Osiris is recalled also at the end of spell 151a, inscribed in the lower band of the mummy mask of Takerheb.⁴⁹ As stated by Luca Miatello⁵⁰ spell 19 of the *Book of the Dead*, entitled ‘Spell for the wreath of justification’,⁵¹ celebrates the resurrection of Osiris and his triumph over his enemies, symbolized by the ‘beautiful wreath’ bound on his head by Atum. In Ptolemaic papyri inscribed with spell 19 of the *Book of the Dead*, the vignette shows Atum, ‘the father of the gods’, in front of whom is a large loop-shaped wreath with knot.⁵² The upper band of the mask of Takerheb, the fillet in the mask of Asetemachbit and one of female from Abydos, all make reference to the spell 19 of the *Book of the Dead*. Different writings indicate the wreath, made of vegetable material.⁵³

The mummy portraits of the Graeco-Roman era often show wreaths either on the head or in a hand of deceased, and sometimes in both places.⁵⁴ According to Miatello the custom of inscribing mummy masks with spells of the *Book of the Dead* in the Ptolemaic period is more common than previously thought.⁵⁵ The inscriptions represented protective,

⁴⁵ Derchain 1955.

⁴⁶ Derchain 1955: 231 n. 2.

⁴⁷ Barguet 1967: 68; Schweitzer 1992: 21.

⁴⁸ *British Museum*: EA 51147 (reg. no. 1912,1012.52).

⁴⁹ Egyptian Museum of Florence 5708: Miatello 2012–2013: 74.

⁵⁰ Miatello 2012–2013: 73.

⁵¹ An early version of this spell appears in a papyrus of the Twenty-first Dynasty Queen Nedjmet, from Deir el-Bahari, and is found in papyri and sarcophagi of the Late and Ptolemaic periods: *Urk.* V, 136–144.

⁵² See: Allen (Ed.) 1960: 34–35. Bibliography on spell 19: Backes *et al.* 2009: 127–128.

⁵³ Miatello 2012–2013: 73.

⁵⁴ Cf. Parlasca 1966: 144ff., who accepts Derchain’s interpretation that it is the Osirian ‘crown of justification’ that is figured, whether it is on the head or in the hand.

⁵⁵ Three cartonnage masks from the Ptolemaic period, inscribed with spell 19 (‘Spell for the wreath of justification’) from the *Book of the Dead* (after Miatello 2012–2013: 62–63, 69–71, 80): 1. mask of a woman called Takerheb, of Theban provenience (Egyptian Museum of Florence 5708), combines spells 151a and 19. Multitude of amulets were placed at the head of the mummy, including two hypocephali. Around the top of head are two inscribed fillets. On the upper headband is the beginning of spell 19 of the *Book of the Dead*: the “beauty of justification” is exalted, the wreath made for Osiris by the father Atum and his Tefnut. The noble is crowned with the wreath; 2. mask of female of Abydos provenience, from the tomb E437 (British Museum EA 51147). In the text on the fillet around the head the green ‘wreath of justification’ is extolled; 3. mask of Asetemachbit (Kunst-historisches Museum Wien ÄS 297). Around the top of the head is a fillet inscribed with the incipit of spell 19 of the *Book of the Dead*, exalting the ‘wreaths of justification’ made by Atum for his son.

apotropaic and revivifying means associated to the head.⁵⁶ The fillet around the head, symbol of justification and new life, is made of vegetable material, as the garlands of leaves and flowers, associated with the lotus flower as sign of rebirth. The vegetal wreaths found with the mummies in the Upper Necropolis at Saqqara could have signified this particular rite taking place during the course of the funeral ceremonies.

Probably in the very same category of grave goods one should count also an onion found in one child burial context, namely B. 423.⁵⁷ The antiseptic and deodorizing qualities of onions made them ideal for inclusion in the mummification process. Archaeobotanical analysis of the onion from burial in question identified it as a vegetal (*Allium cepa* L.) not floral species. This choice must have been of symbolic significance. The possible interpretation was prosaic: its smell warded off snakes. Defensive magic against poisonous snakes was popular as from the *Pyramid Texts* onward, if not before, and is represented also by spells of daily magic against dangerous animals. Snakes appear also in the Ptolemaic versions of the *Book of the Dead* on mummy wrappings (chapters 33–35 and 39 are devoted to spells for repelling snakes).⁵⁸ As stated by Rita Lucarelli, compared to the *Pyramid Texts*, the spells against snakes recorded in the *Book of the Dead* seem to focus more on the action of physical warding off the animal rather than on healing the body from the snake's poison, as in the spells of daily magic.⁵⁹

The symbolic meaning of the vegetal onion for the protection of the bodily remains deposited in a grave must have been considered of great importance. The presence of onions in mummy burials may also be associated with the worship of Sokar.⁶⁰ On the eve of the main feast of this god, participants tied garlands of onions at their necks and followed Sokar's cult statue in procession within the temple precincts. Garlands of onions were also worn during the night of that eve, and onions were offered at tomb chapels. The onions *can represent the gift to, and receipt by, the dead of all manner of garden-vegetables*.⁶¹

⁵⁶ Miatello 2012–2013: 80–81.

⁵⁷ Onions were found also in context with three adult burials: B. 417, 466, 495. In two cases (B. 417 and 495) they had been placed between the feet of the deceased, under the inner bandages. One of them (B. 495) had another onion clasped in the palm of the left hand. A third deceased (B. 466) had two onions wrapped together with him in bandages: one under the flat right palm, and the second one on the left foot.

⁵⁸ The archive of the *Book of the Dead* project in Bonn contains 16 fragments including such spells: Lucarelli 2009: 107–108.

⁵⁹ E.g. *BD* 35 from Fragment 2 (National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden inv. no. F 2008/1.1) dated to the Thirtieth Dynasty – early Ptolemaic period from Theban area: Lucarelli 2009: 115–116. Also in the vignettes of the *Book of the Dead*, which refer to these spells; see especially the vignettes in the papyri of the Late period, like in pRyerson and pMilbank: Allen (Ed.) 1960: Pls 20–21, 66. Recently on the Theban *Book of the Dead* tradition in the Late period, see: Mosher 2010: 139. *BD* 35 belongs to the set of serpent spells and is entitled: 'Spell for not allowing a man to be eaten in the necropolis by any snake (*ḥf3w*)'. The familiar illustration to the Saite or later Memphite document with the vignette of this spell can be observed in the Louvre N 3089 and Ryerson groups as well as in the greater subset of the Louvre N 3079 group, where the deceased is depicted spearing an advancing serpent. This scene is clearly based on the title of the spell. For artistic variety in the depiction of the serpent, compare: vignettes of *BD* 35 in pLouvre N 3249, N 3151, N 3089 and in pBM EA 10257).

⁶⁰ Niwiński 1993: 209.

⁶¹ Gaballa, Kitchen 1969: 54.

Shells, in their turn, also combine decorative as well as protective functions.⁶² They are found on statuettes and figurines, and occur in the funerary equipment as personal adornment. Cowries, in particular owe their popularity to a specific and suggestive shape that brings to mind the female vulva or a squinting eye and their symbolic meaning is connected with their appearance.⁶³ They have been recognized in the human mind as amulets protecting against infertility and shielding from the evil eye.⁶⁴

From the Late⁶⁵ and Graeco-Roman periods in Egypt⁶⁶ they are known mainly from the grave goods accompanying burials of women and children. Cowrie shells were also a symbol of the goddess Anuket, daughter of the Elephantine Triad of Khnum and Satet.⁶⁷ Her role in fecundity symbolism led to her identification as a goddess of desire in the Ptolemaic period, thus beginning her iconographic association with cowrie shells.⁶⁸ Finally, these shells' role in protecting from the evil eye derives from the association of their appearance with the squinting eye. The connection is emphasized by finds of cowrie shells in the eye sockets of many skulls with gypsum masks, as for example in the case of the skulls from Jericho.⁶⁹ This aspect of the cowrie shell was particularly important to women during pregnancy and childbirth, and it is for this purpose that they may have been included in children's burials.

Since the bodies of two children had been covered respectively with a basket and a large pot, a similar purpose of the two latter items belonging to the funerary equipment seems

⁶² Shells have also been noted in the context of child burials on the 'late necropolis' around the mastaba of Ptahshepses (Burials I 305, I 313, J 1963): Strouhal, Bareš 1993: 23, 42, as well as around a child's neck in a grave at the cemetery surrounding the Anubieion in Saqqara (Burial BIA): Giddy, Smith, French 1992: 48, Pl. 38. On cowrie shells, see recently: Golani 2014.

⁶³ Golani 2014: 72.

⁶⁴ Clark 1986: 23ff.; Andrews 1990: 65; 1994: 42. The use of cowries in a protective role is known already from Neolithic times: Golani 2014: 73. For Predynastic period burial of a young girl see: Reese 1991: 189. They became common as amuletic jewelry in the Bronze Age, occurring usually in the graves of women and children: Golani 2014: 71; Kovács 2008: 17. In the Middle Kingdom, their amuletic function was confirmed in two ways. First they are attested on female figurines as tattoos depicting waist belts with suspending cowrie shells, e.g. figurine of a woman from grave 518 in Assasif (JE 47710; Morris 2011: 80, Fig. 3), faience figurine of a naked female (Louvre E. 10942), faience figurine of a dancing girl from the tomb of Neferhotep (Tassie 2003: 94). Secondly they were used as elements of actual belts, e.g. in belt with 12 silver cowrie shells (MMA nos 13.180.1–18; Capel, Markoe (Eds) 1997: 84–85) from the female burial 840 in Assasif in Thebes; belt consisting of large golden cowrie shells, belonging to princess Sit-Hathor-Yunet and originating from her BSA Tomb 8 in el-Lahun (MMA no. 16.1.5; Wilkinson 1994: 17). Reminiscences of cowrie shells in the form of stylized beads occurred also in the hip belts of the New Kingdom, e.g. in the Wadi Qabbanat el-Qurud tomb in Thebes (MMA no. 26.8.60), and in Mesheikh (MFA Boston 12.1430).

⁶⁵ E.g. string of cowries from tomb MMA 825 in Asasif, dated to the Twenty-first – Thirtieth Dynasty (MMA no. 31.3.113j).

⁶⁶ E.g. from Fayum, now in the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology collection, no. E11473; *Pennsylvania Museum*: object no. E11473; also from Akhmim, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art collection, no. O.C.2d.

⁶⁷ Lesko 1999: 266.

⁶⁸ Auset 2009: 6.

⁶⁹ E.g. Bar-Yosef, Garfinkel 2008: Figs 339–341, 358.

probable.⁷⁰ The plaited basket may have been used to hold an infant, as in the case of an interred infant from the necropolis at Umm el Boraigat in Tebtynis, dated to the end of the eighth and beginning of the ninth century AD (T 06-40), which had been buried in sand and half covered with a basket.⁷¹ In the case of burial B 183 from the Saqqara necropolis however, the child's age (10 years) makes such a purpose of the basket rather improbable. In Ismant el-Kharab (Dakhleh Oasis), broken jars were used in the late Roman period to cover children bodies.⁷² And it seems that such was also a role of the large pot found in our Saqqara burial B 624.

SOME PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

An analysis of distribution of the child burials discovered in the Upper Necropolis at Saqqara leaves no doubt that there was no special place in the cemetery set aside for children alone. They were neither isolated from adults nor buried in special age groups. Even so, two slightly more evident clusters could be observed, around chapels from the Old Kingdom,⁷³ not extensive enough however to argue in favor of recognizing them as separate special burial grounds.

SOCIAL STATUS

An examination of child burials from the Upper Necropolis demonstrates no significant differences in burial practices between children and adults.⁷⁴ Social status, regardless of whether an adult or a child, is expressed in the type of grave, its localization, equipment and the treatment of the body, whether it was embalmed and in what way. The further west of the pyramid, the poorer the child burials. Better prepared graves, set up either within earlier architecture or purposefully cut in the ground, as well as decorated mummy cartonnages, show up closer to the Djoser's pyramid enclosure. A similar regularity could be observed with regard to the adult burials. Nonetheless, a group of more affluent adult burials, evidently from a wealthier social class, was observed on the western side of the 'Dry Moat', to the north and west of Old Kingdom chapels nos 13 (anonymous) and 14 (Ikhi/Mery), not far away from the area in front of them, where the most numerous group of child burials was unearthed.

Although there is no single type of grave assigned to a specific age group of children, one may observe, compared to those for adults, that there are no bodies buried inside

⁷⁰ At the Upper Necropolis in Saqqara, two other baskets were discovered with the body of an adult (B. 422): Kowalska *et al.* 2008: 294; Kaczmarek *et al.* 2008: Pl. CCLXd. Pot burials dated to the Late period are also well attested for children at Saqqara and Abusir: Grajetzki 2004: 117.

⁷¹ Gallazzi, Hadji-Minaglou 2012: 395, 397, Fig. 7.

⁷² Children covered with ceramic storage jars (grave 677): Bowen 2012: 359–360.

⁷³ Grid squares 1909/2009 and 1814.

⁷⁴ No differences were observed between child and adult burials also at the Roman period necropolis at Marina el-Alamein. The character of the burial was a factor of the social status and affluence of the family of the deceased (Daszewski, Zych 2012: 285). Older children were buried singly, very small children with adults (2012: 286).

a stone enclosures in the sand layer or in the Old Kingdom funerary shafts in the group of children.

Contrary to the adults not single case of a cartonnage mummy inside a wooden coffin was found.

Some differences in the funerary equipment could be observed between individual age groups of sub-adults: bracelets, shells and amulets were discovered with those aged 0–3 years, but earrings – only among children aged 4–7 years.

Finally, it was observed that larger concentrations of sub-adults burials were located in the agglomeration of visibly poorer inhumations. Most probably all multiple or family graves with children also belonged to the impoverished inhabitants of Memphis.

KINSHIP (FAMILY GROUPS)

Multiple burials – comprising two adults, male and female, and two children or a double one, containing woman or man and child buried in one grave – can, to our mind, be rather safely considered as family burials. Siblings can be suspected in the case of the individuals buried in B. 601 and B. 602, as well as in B. 673 and B. 674.

RELIGIOUS ASSOCIATION

Ancient Egyptian burial traditions appear to be attested here by mummification methods, the iconography of the cartonnages, the decoration of the coffins, the body position, and the presence of standard funerary equipment. However, the evidence does not exclude Memphite individuals of different ethnic origin who were already assimilated into the local religion system and beliefs from being buried there as well.

AILMENTS AND CAUSES OF DEATH

Pathological changes observed by the anthropologists examining the bones suggested a whole catalogue of ailments suffered by children in this age buried in the necropolis. Malnutrition and poor resistance to all kinds of parasitical diseases and infections were common,⁷⁵ but to consider them as direct causes of death in this social group would be a hasty interpretation.⁷⁶

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⁷⁵ Kozieradzka 2010: 34; Kaczmarek 2008: 472–473.

⁷⁶ A special chapter prepared by I. Kozieradzka-Ogunmakin to the sixth volume of the *Saqqara* series will be devoted to a discussion of the anthropological issues.

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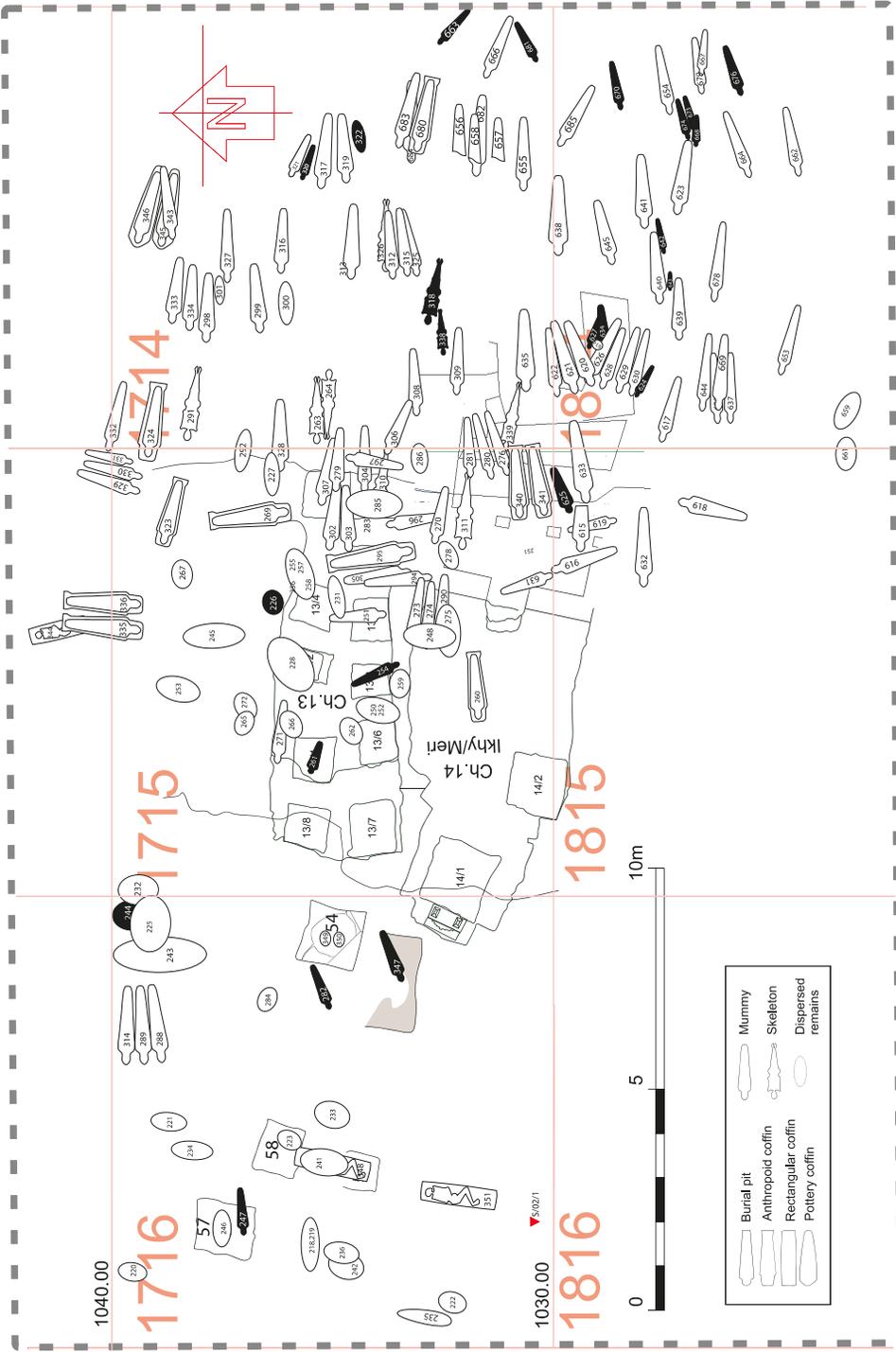
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DRY MOAT



1. Distribution of burials on the west side of the 'Dry Moat'. Child burials are indicated in black (Drawing: K.O. Kuraszkievicz, M. Radomska).

STEP PYRAMID



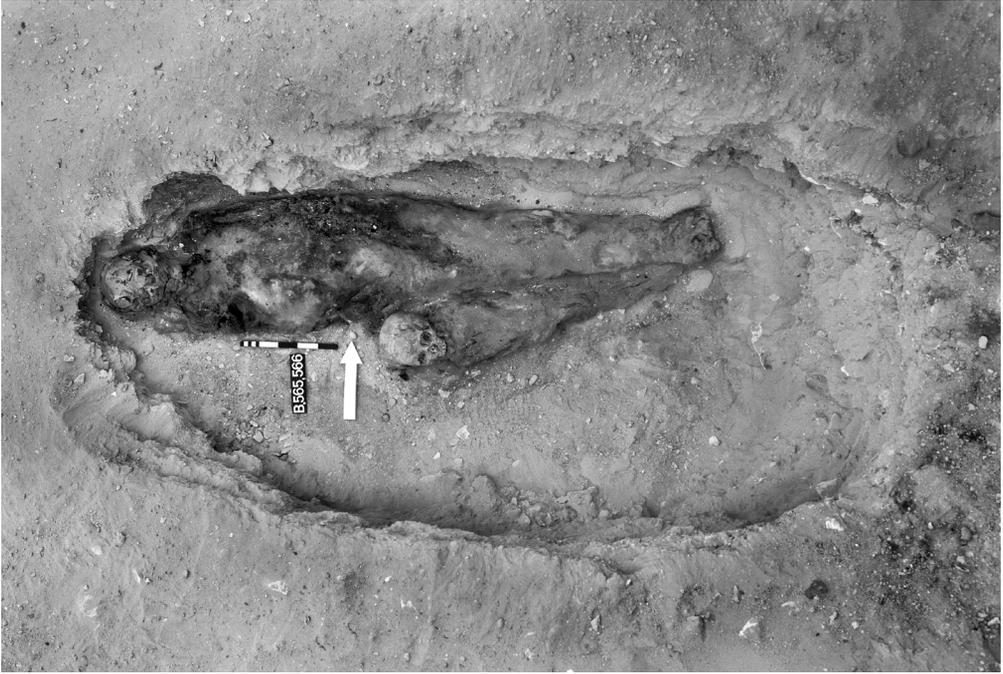
3. Distribution of burials between the enclosure wall of the Step Pyramid and the Chapel of Merefnebef. Child burials are indicated in black (Drawing: K. O. Kuraskiewicz, M. Radomska).



4. Double child burial (B. 673–674) in the sand layer (Phot. J. Dąbrowski).



5. The standard oval pit burial of a child aged 5–6 years (B. 73) in the *dakka* layer (Phot. M. Jawornicki).



6. Double burial in the *dakka* layer: child with adult (B. 565–566) in an oversized pit (Phot. W. Wojciechowski).



7. A child aged 2–3 years (B. 99) in the pit longer than the body (Phot. M. Jawornicki).



8. A child aged 18 months (B. 35) with male adult (B. 34) in the stone enclosure arranged in Old Kingdom wall (Phot. Z. Kość).



9. Reused Old Kingdom offering table in the structure of burials B. 34 and B. 35 (Phot. Z. Kość).



10. Child aged 4–5 years (B. 412) in oval grave pit dug in the Old Kingdom wall (Phot. M. Jawornicki).



11. Stones closing burial niche (B. 486–487) in the east wall of Old Kingdom funerary shaft no. 90 (Phot. P. Lelek).



12. Double burial inside the niche: child aged 18 months (B. 487) and female adult (B. 486)
(Phot. P. Lelek).



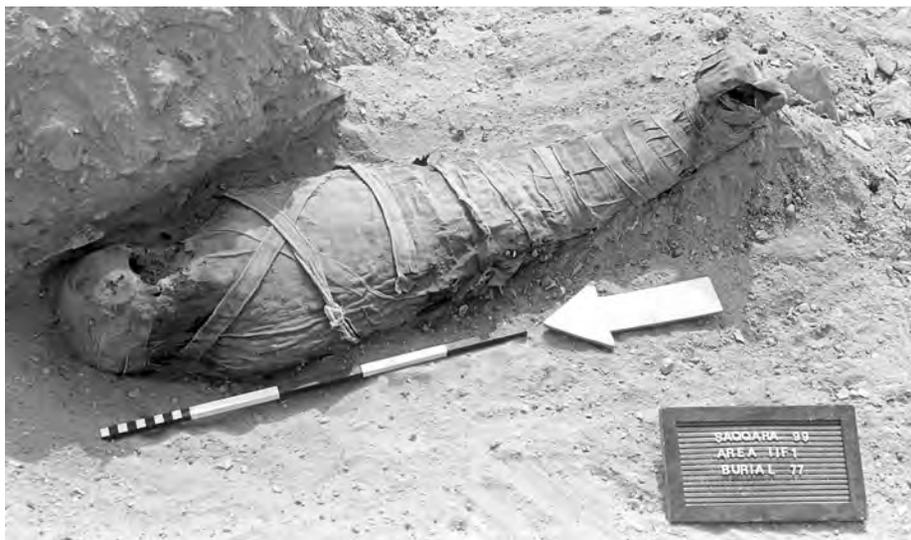
13. Child aged 2–3 years (B. 456) in the rock-cut anthropoid burial pit (Phot. J. Dąbrowski).



14. Stone casing over an anthropoid burial pit (B. 456) (Phot. J. Dąbrowski).



15. Multiple burial (B. 317, 319–322) in the sand layer (Phot. M. Jawornicki).



16. Mummy of a child aged 7 years (B. 77): an example of pattern of wrappings (Phot. M. Jawornicki).



a



b

17. Child aged 6 years (B. 625) *in situ*: a. in rectangular wooden coffin; b. after removal of the lid (Phot. J. Dąbrowski).



19. Cartonnage of the mummy of a small girl (B. 4): head cover with a gilded face and winged solar disc on the chin (Phot. G. Wyrzykowski).



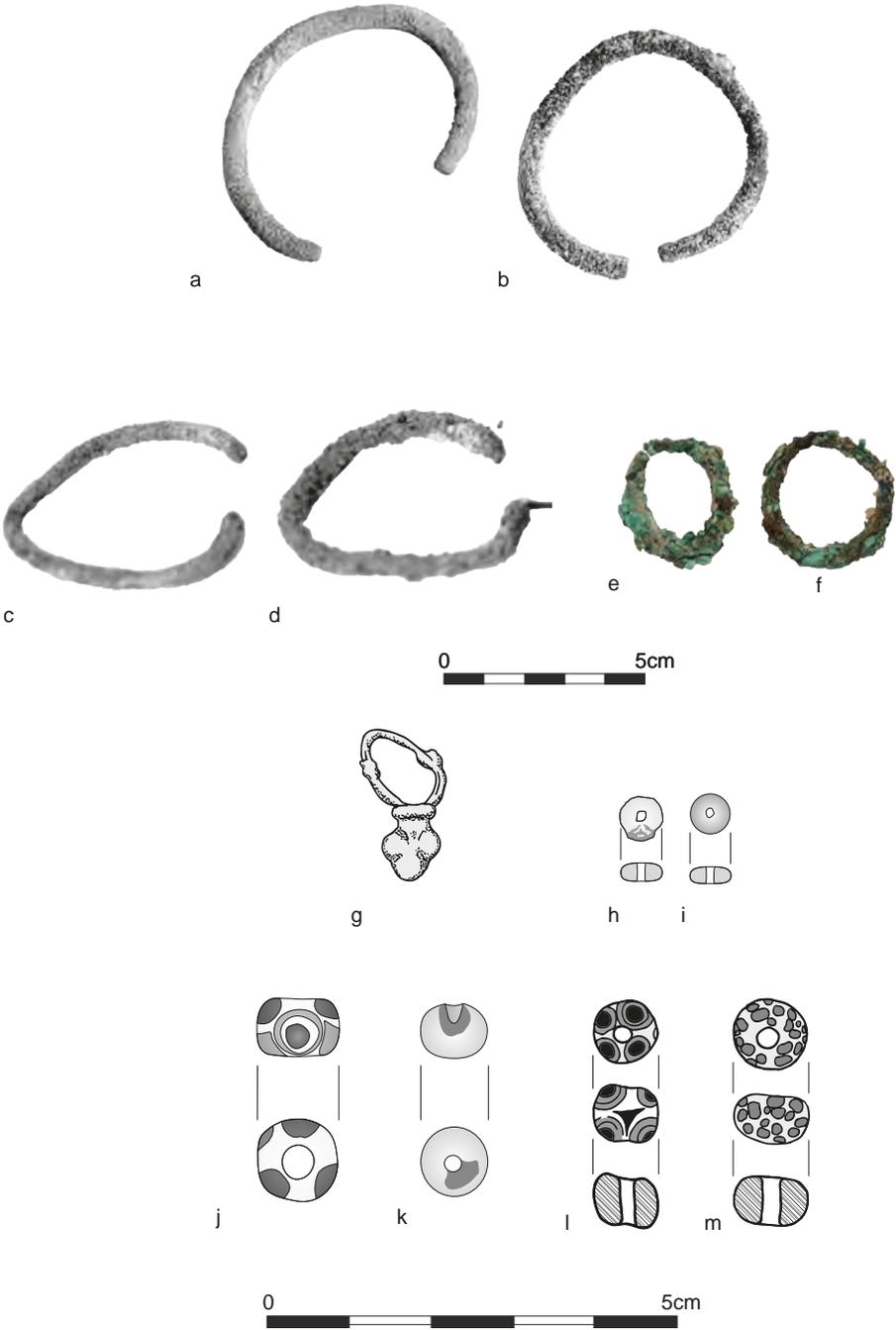
18. An anthropoid wooden coffin containing a child aged 8–9 years (B. 53) (Phot. Z. Kość).



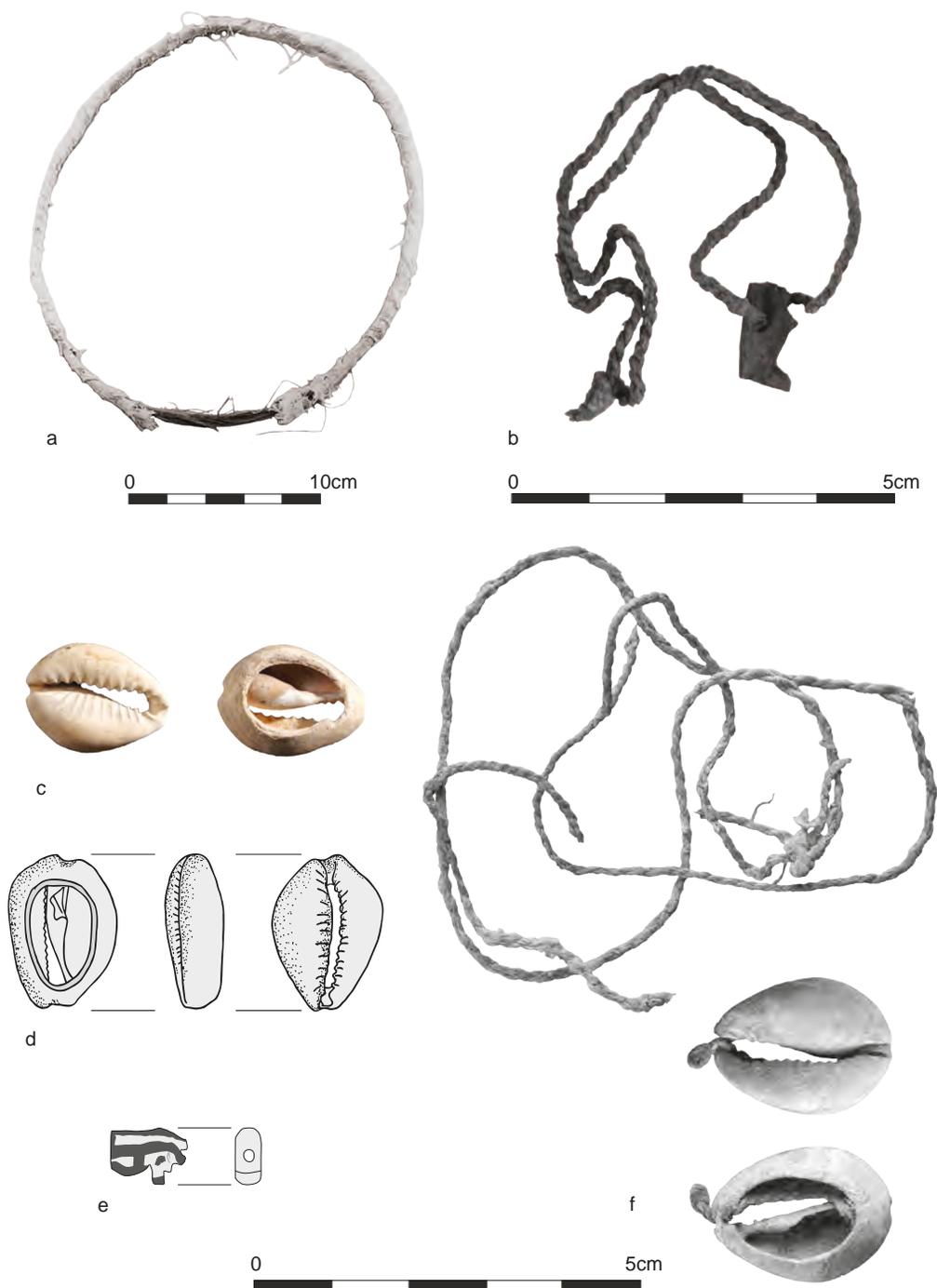
21. Detail of the B. 4 cartonnage: shin panel with representations of two canids lying on two chests/shrines (Phot. G. Wyrzykowski).



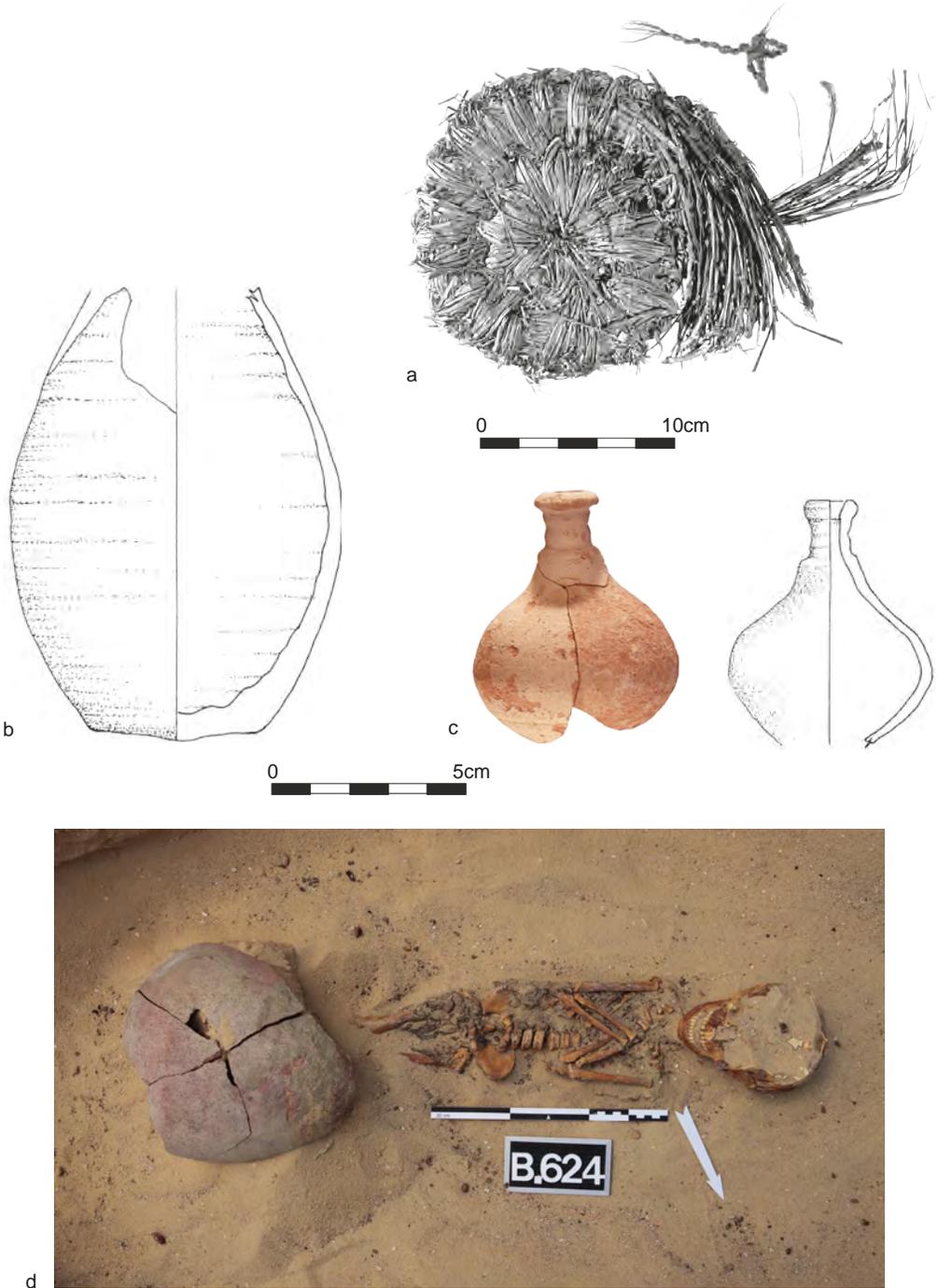
20. Winged goddess and shin panel decorating the middle and lower parts of the cartonnage from burial B. 4 (Phot. G. Wyrzykowski).



22. Funerary equipment from child burials: bracelets from B. 99 (a-b) and 162 (c-d); earrings from B. 585 (e-f) and 206 (g); beads from B. 35 (h-i), 162 (j-k) and 189 (l-m) (Phot. M. Jawornicki (a-d), W. Wojciechowski (e-f); drawing: A. Kowalska (g-i, l-m), D. Czerwik (j-k)).



23. Funerary equipment from child burials: wreath from B. 35 (a); amulet from B. 415 (b); *wꜥ3t*-eye amulet from B. 162 (e); cowrie shells from B. 642 (c), 189 (d) and 546 (f) (Phot. Z. Kości (a), P. Lelek (b), W. Wojciechowski (f) and J. Dąbrowski (c); drawing: D. Czerwik (e), A. Kowalska (d)).



24. Funerary equipment from child burials: fragment of woven reed basket from B. 183 (a); juglets found near B. 139 (b) and 254 (c); large pot found on the feet of B. 624 (d) (Phot. M. Jaworncki (a, c), J. Dąbrowski (d); drawing: T. Rzeuska (b-c)).

The Altar Casket with a Representation of St Thecla *ad bestias* from the Vicinity of the St Menas Church in Selib (Northern Sudan)

BOGDAN ŻURAWSKI

Abstract: The excavations in Selib have brought to light a few objects used in the liturgical practices performed in the local churches. Among a dozen or so fragmentarily preserved chalices, juglets and patens, there is a terracotta roundel provided with a circular aperture in the upper side. Made of pinkish red clay, it is decorated with a repeated stamped motif of a haloed orant figure shown *en face* with arms held parallel to the upper body. It is accompanied by figures of animals set in profile. The masterly execution of the animal figures enables the recognition of the images of lionesses. Consequently the orant figure in between two metopes with a lioness each could only be St Thecla.

The author suggests that the Selib roundel plausibly served as an altar casket placed on an altar to house a Eucharistic chalice. An alternative use would have been as a stand for a peculiar Nubian paten(?) with a depression in the bottom. Regardless of the real purpose, in the case of the Selib roundel the label of ‘altar casket’ is valid.

Keywords: St Thecla cult, altar casket, St Menas, Eastern liturgy, church architecture, Nubia, Christian altar, Holy Communion

Bogdan Żurawski, Instytut Kultur Śródziemnomorskich i Orientalnych PAN, Warszawa; bzuraw@iksio.pan.pl

The village of Selib¹ sits on the right bank of the Nile, fifteen kilometres to the south-east – as the crow flies – from Old Dongola. Archaeological exploration of the site was started in 2008. Since then it has been excavated by the mission from the Polish Center of Mediterranean Archaeology of the University of Warsaw under the direction of the present author. Before 2008 the site was visited by F. Griffith in 1910,² in 1984 by K. Grzymski and his team³ and in 1998 by the present author.⁴

¹ On the excavations in Selib, cf. Żurawski 2014a: 890–900; 2011: 259–261; 2013a: 280–287; 2014c: 330–338.

² Griffith Institute, Griffith Manuscripts, Envelope No. 1, containing various notes on antiquities in the Northern Province, dated 20th March 1910.

³ Grzymski 1987: 9. It was registered as ROM 100. The present author was privileged to participate in the ROM Dongola Reach Survey when this visit to Selib took place.

⁴ Żurawski 2003: 166–170.



1. Aerial (kite) photograph of Selib 1 site taken after the 2014 season. The northern building is seen on the left of the smaller *peribolos* with the church inside (Phot. B. Żurawski).

Inland from the modern village, there are three archaeological sites consequently coded Selib 1, Selib 2 and Selib 3. Their location as compared to the main course of the river might have been different in the past. The oral testimonies recorded by Griffith in 1910 state that the Nile flowed near Selib 1, thus separating(?) it from Selib 2 and Selib 3.⁵

⁵ The geophysical soundings carried out in March 2015 revealed a shift in the course of the palaeochannel of the Nile. The river used to flow at the foot of the Selib 3 site, not in between Selib 1 and Selib 3, as Griffith's informant suggested.

The oldest of the three sites (Selib 2) was settled around the first century AD and abandoned before the fourth century. It lies close to the modern village which was settled in the eighteenth/nineteenth centuries, and since then inhabited permanently⁶ until the present day. Our visit to the site in 2008 was caused by the accidental discovery of a Meroitic settlement (Selib 2) during the marking out of the course of a gravel road connecting the Karima-Nawa tarmac with the village of Selib. The outlines of a couple of Meroitic houses were brushed out during this initial season.

In the same year, a small sondage was done on top of the elevated *kom* within a rectangular enclosure (called *murabba kebir* by the local inhabitants).⁷

In 2010, full scale excavations were carried out both at Selib 1 and Selib 2. The *kom* in the middle of the bigger *peribolos* appeared to contain a church (later identified as St Menas Church). In the same year, a trial pit was dug on top of the elevated *kom* of Selib 3, where an early Christian bicameral house was unearthed.

In the ceramic materials revealed so far during excavations at all three Selib sites there is no pottery typical for the post-Meroitic period. Nevertheless, a huge post-Meroitic tumulus field was found in 1998 two kilometres to the northwest of Selib 2, near Jebel al-Alim.⁸ Regular rescue excavations were carried out at this site by Al-Tahir Adam al-Nour on behalf of the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums (unpublished so far).

In the eighth/ninth centuries AD, the Christian settlement (and part of its Late Meroitic substratum) between Selib 1 and the Nile was swept away by a disastrous rain flood.⁹

The first church of a series of five, built each on top of the ruin of its predecessor within the bigger *peribolos* at the Selib 1 site, was raised in the early seventh century at the latest. Its construction was preceded by a residential structure on its northern side (**Fig. 1**). The relative chronology of both structures is fixed by a red brick basin made for slaking lime needed during the plastering of the walls of the first church. This basin was inserted into the already built complex.

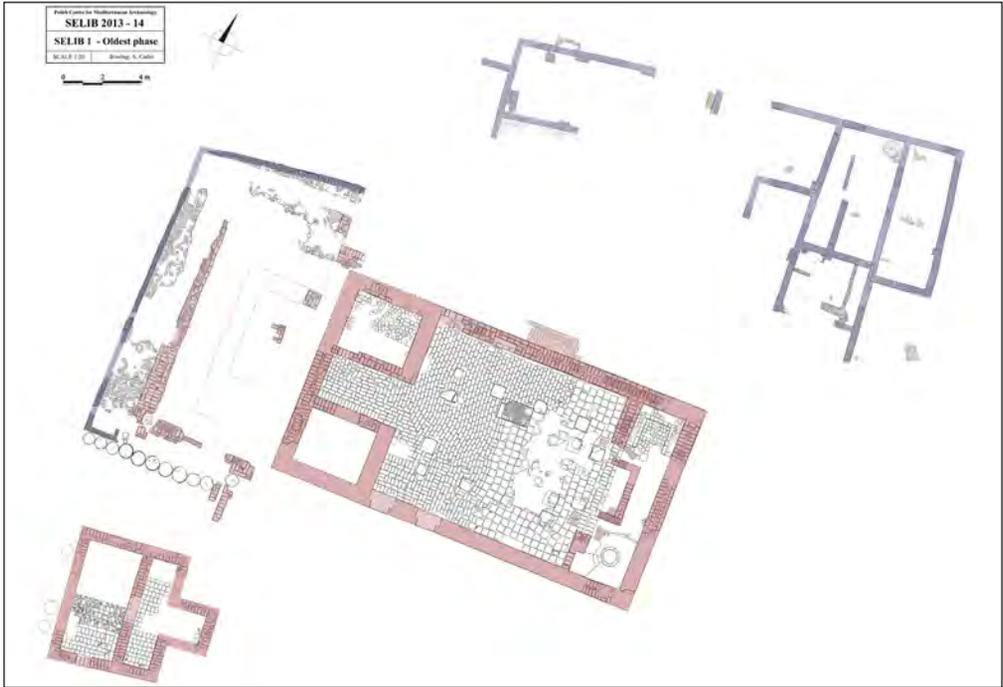
The complex provisionally labelled the northern building (coded as Building 09–10/14; cf. **Fig. 2**) is constructed in a manner that is more characteristic for the houses in the nearby

⁶ The time span between St Menas Church falling into ruin (in the thirteenth/fourteenth centuries) and modern times has never been scholarly explored in Selib due to the lack of corresponding archaeological material and reliable oral testimonies. The oldest Islamic remains are said to be datable to the Shaiqiyya period at the earliest. It should be mentioned at this point that the village of Selib, now intensely modified, reveals the old plan of a compact village with narrow lanes separating densely built houses. It is a scheme typical for the oldest sites in the region.

⁷ In publications, the terms ‘bigger *peribolos*’ or *Selib 1 enclosure* for the *murabba kebir* and the ‘smaller *peribolos*’ for the bricked inclusion that only surrounds the church are used.

⁸ Cf. Żurawski 2003: 155–156 (registered as Banganarti 14 = Bng. 14); cf. also Grzymiski 1987: 10 (registered as ROM 65).

⁹ There is a sort of depression made by the dunes that formed a barrier along the river, stopping rain flood waters coming in from the desert. Such rain flooding (known in Arabic as *siil*, cf. Tamis, Persson 2011) in 2014 caused severe damage in Selib and in the surrounding areas.



2. Plan of the oldest phase of the Selib 1 site (Drawing: A. Cedro).

Merotic settlement than for any other known houses from other early Christian sites. Its walls are one brick thick and are raised without foundations. At least the central room, with pilastered walls, is coated with a thin layer of lime plaster. The ceramics found within and beneath its walls belong to the earliest Christian horizon.

Another building that might have preceded the construction of the earliest church on the spot is a chapel-like structure which now sits near its southwestern corner (Building S/13, **Fig. 2**). The reasons behind the identification of this building, of an apparently religious character, as connected to the St Thecla cult will be given below.

The putative sanctuary of St Thecla reveals features very rarely encountered in church architecture in Egypt and almost unknown in the Middle Nile region. First of all, it is a building of reversed proportions, i.e. its width is larger than its length. It is also provided with an exterior apse (protruding from the eastern wall). A sort of analogy is provided by the North Church at Medinet al-Maadi (Narmuthis) in al-Fayyûm, dated by Grossmann to the fourth century.¹⁰ The only Nubian church with a projecting apse is the first church built on Kom D in Old Dongola.¹¹

¹⁰ Capuani 2002: 140, Fig. 62; Grossmann 2002: 419, Fig. 39.

¹¹ Dobrowolski 1988: 5, Fig. 1.

Apart from the plan it is built on, the main argument for such an early dating of this structure is the use of Meroitic *spolia* in its original construction.¹² The building was provided with a porch on the western side that was lined with a row of Meroitic columns.¹³ Last but not least, the putative Thecla sanctuary was originally paved with relief-decorated floor tiles. Some tiles of this kind were used as *spolia* in the last phase of the nearby St Menas Church. Three tiles with similar relief decorations were also found during excavations in House A/2015 in Banganarti in February 2015 (unpublished so far).

The proposed late sixth/early seventh-century date for the putative St Thecla chapel in Selib is consistent with the chronology of Thecla's cult in Egypt. It was a time of the decline and fall of Thecla veneration north of the First Cataract.¹⁴ Nevertheless, in the sixth century there was a street named after Thecla and a church dedicated to her in Arsinoe (Medinet al-Fayyūm).¹⁵ One or two sixth-century churches dedicated to Thecla are also attested in Oxyrhynchus.¹⁶ In Thebes, her name was scratched on the wall of a late sixth-century church.¹⁷

While there are some doubts as to whether the chapel-like structure outside St Menas Church could be attributed to St Thecla, the dedication of the Church itself should leave no room for any uncertainty concerning its attribution. The main argument is the foundation inscription cut into one of the columns that clearly says that King Zacharis gave this church to Saint Menas.¹⁸

A second argument is provided by an ostrakon and an inscription scratched into the flaring rim of an earthenware jar.¹⁹ The most important evidence, however, exists in the form of four visitors' inscriptions, all addressed to St Menas, written on the northern wall of the first church at the site. Interestingly, the first three inscriptions refer to the thrice-blessed Menas (*τρισμακάριος Μηνᾶ*), an epithet rarely encountered in Nubia in later times.²⁰

ALTAR CASKET

Coherent with the early context of the place of its discovery are the immanent features of the altar casket²¹ which occasioned this article, e.g. its fabric, paste and slip (**Figs 3, 5a**).

¹² It was extensively rebuilt; a part of an oven(?) incorporated into its northern wall was found together with a layer of bricks and half bricks laid above the pavement of relief decorated ceramic tiles.

¹³ The drums were brought from elsewhere and haphazardly reassembled with no regard paid to the relief decorations on them. Also, some of the bricks used in the southern entrance seem to have been dragged from a ruined Meroitic temple(?).

¹⁴ Her cult survived in Upper Egypt until the seventh/eighth centuries (Davis 2001: 173).

¹⁵ Antonini 1940: 170, no. 15.

¹⁶ Davis 2001: 173, n. 77; Antonini 1940: 179, no. 30.

¹⁷ Davis 2001: 174.

¹⁸ Żurawski 2013a: 284, Fig. 8; Deptuła 2015: 123, Fig. 1.

¹⁹ Deptuła 2015: 125, Fig. 3.

²⁰ Deptuła 2015: 126–128.

²¹ There are many alternative denominations for the object which we decided to term the altar casket (after Butler 1884: 43 – vol. II): *κιβωτος*, *arca*, *sedes calici*, *tabut*, tabernacle, chalice stand, chalice holder, chalice throne, chalice ark, ark, altar case. The Copts know it as *kursi al-kas*; cf. also Evelyn White 1933: 158; Burmester 1967: 24, 417, Pl. XVa; Graf 1938 used the term *Kelchthron*.



3. Altar casket WSl.145/11-12 from Selib (Phot. A. Cedro).

All are typical diagnostics of sixth/seventh-century ceramics. Equally important, it bears a close resemblance to a wide range of moulded and mould-decorated vessels and pottery objects which are more precisely dated to the seventh century or earlier.²² The features that point to such an early date of manufacture are the mastery of the execution, the veracity and the likeness of the relief images of the lionesses on the side walls (cf. *infra*, 211–212).

FORMAL FEATURES AND THE FUNCTION

The first small fragment of the altar casket (inv. no. WS1.145/11–12)²³ was discovered on the 17th of January 2012 in the northwestern corner of the smaller *peribolos* that surrounds the St Menas Church (**Fig. 1**). The next adjoining fragment was found in 2013, stuck in the northern wall of the red-brick chapel-like building south of St Menas Church, which we think was dedicated to St Thecla (cf. *supra*, 206 and **Fig. 2**). Four other fragments of the casket were excavated in between a huge mausoleum-type grave and the eastern wall of the smaller *peribolos*.

Altogether, the six fragments retrieved so far constitute *circa* two thirds of the object which – when complete – measured 35cm in diameter and 12cm in height. The diameter of the circular opening in its upper surface is 17cm. It is enough to have held, for example, the famous seventh-century chalice of Theophilos, which has a cup diameter of 14cm and a height of 15.2cm.²⁴ The fragments of chalices, made both of glass and pottery (**Fig. 4**), found in and around the St Menas Church, suggest the Eucharistic chalices of local manufacture were even smaller. The upper rim of the cups would remain flush with the upper surface of the casket.

The body of the casket was wheel made (**Fig. 5**). When the clay was still soft, the side relief decorations were moulded. Finally, the object was covered with reddish slip (shading to purple) and fired (the paste is orange-red). A conspicuous carbon core streak is observable in the section of the side walls and the upper roundel.

The angle between the upper roundel and the side wall is secured by triangular abutments which segment the underside into six sections (**Fig. 5b**). The inner rim of the round aperture in the upper roundel is thickened to form a roll; nevertheless, the upper surface of the object remains plain.

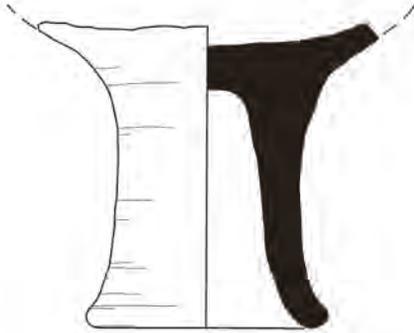
There are deep fingerprints on the inner side of the side walls of the body that provide some information about how the decorations were applied to the outside. As already stated above, soft clay was pressed with fingers into a mould held firmly against the other side of the casket's wall. Four different moulds were used to accomplish the whole decorative scheme. Two were used to impress the animal figures, one for the orant figure, and one for the central rosette. In its lowest part, the casket is encircled with a recessed plain band

²² Adams 1986: 76, 253.

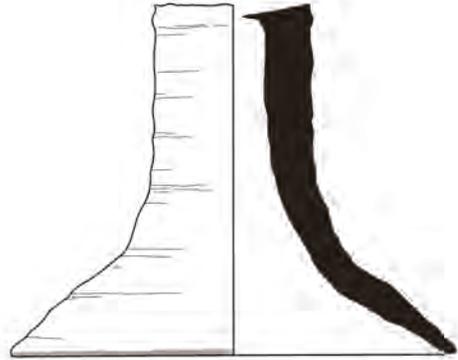
²³ It was found together with objects labelled with an aggregated context as no. S1.75/11–12.

²⁴ Weitzmann (Ed.) 1979: 599, no. 531.

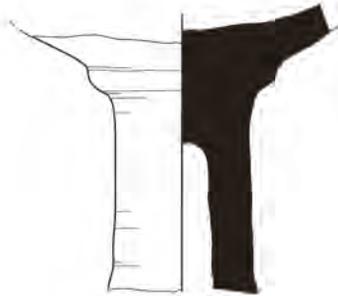
W SEL1/10/2014



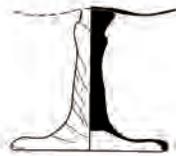
W SEL1/67/2014



W SEL1/14/2014



W SEL1/18/13



4. Fragments of Eucharistic chalices found in and around the St Menas Church. Object inv. no. W SEL 1/18/13 is made of glass (Drawing: A. Cedro).

painted with sticky, glossy paint of a dark purple colour that resembles a glaze. It contrasts with the upper body, which is significantly lighter.

There are no abrasion marks on the edge of the aperture in the upper roundel, which, if anything, might suggest the use of the object as a support for a vessel with a globular lower body.

The object has no bottom. It was intended to stand on its side walls (their lowest parts are mostly crumbled off). The lack of a bottom and the round aperture in the upper side are diagnostic features that limit to a minimum the possible purposes the object could have served. I think that only two functions can be taken into consideration seriously. Firstly, it might have been a holder for a Eucharistic chalice (or chalice and paten); secondly, it was perhaps a support for a peculiar Nubian type of paten.²⁵ Regardless of whether the first or second function was the case, the object deserves its name.

The option of chalice holder seems to be a better fit. It could have provided protection for a Eucharistic chalice, which was placed inside it through the upper opening, during

²⁵ A peculiar Nubian paten that aggregates the function of chalice and paten itself (cf. Żurawski 2013b: especially 780–781).



5. The Selib altar casket: a. oblique view; b. view of the underside (Phot. A. Cedro).

Mass. The paten (if any) could have been put on top of the chalice, flush with the upper surface or above it.

DECORATION OF THE ALTAR CASKET AND ICONOGRAPHY OF ST THECLA

The decorative scheme seen on the side walls is based on the principle that each metoped visualization of the orant saint is separated by two images of the lionesses in relief. The lionesses situated to the right of the saint are moulded into square-framed metopes and represented as squatting with their tails held upwards running along the course of their backs. The

tails end in hairy tufts.²⁶ In the upper right corner of each metope with a squatting lioness, there is an embossed rosette. Its purpose is unknown, while its decorative merit is problematic. The animals are masterly executed and the likeness to live animals is superb. They differ, however, in some details. The predator left of the orant saint, pictured as walking, has shorter legs and a shorter but thicker tail (with no tuft at the end). This last detail would suggest another animal, perhaps a bear, which is mentioned among the animals which menaced Thecla in the arena. The corpus, however, perfectly fits the image of a lioness.

The centrepiece of the Selib altar casket's body decoration is a metope bigger than the others. It is filled with an eight-lobed rosette with alternating pointed and rounded lobes, with the pointed lobes fitting into the metope's corners. The rounded lobe's endings are filled with dots. The need for symmetry would require another Thecla image left of the metoped rosette (which has not been preserved).

The orant saint is not menaced by the beasts; in fact, the lionesses looks rather friendly. The moment portrayed on the casket fits a scene known from the hagiography of St Thecla. After the beasts were led in procession to the arena at Antioch in Pisidia, where Thecla was to be martyred, she was bound to a fierce beast, *but the lioness, when Thecla was set upon her, licked her feet, and all the people marvelled* (*ATH*, 28).²⁷

There are many other features (cf. *infra*, 213–215) which lend credence to the identification of the orant saint on the Selib altar casket as St Thecla.

The iconography of St Thecla cannot be understood without knowledge of some basic facts from her life. According to the second-century *Acta Pauli et Theclae*,²⁸ Thecla was a disciple of Paul. They first met in Iconium, Thecla's hometown, where Paul was visiting and preaching on the issue of a woman's chastity, among other subjects. His message, especially his 'discourse on virginity' had a tremendous impact on the young noblewoman Thecla, who listened to his preaching from the window of a neighbouring house.²⁹ She broke off the betrothal to her fiancé named Thamyris and abandoned her family. Thecla's uncommon behaviour led her mother Theoklia³⁰ and her fiancé to form a mob which dragged Paul to the governor, who imprisoned the Apostle. Soon after, Thecla joined him in prison and – following a short trial – she was sentenced to be stripped naked and burned alive at the stake for her disrespectful attitude toward the sacred institution of marriage (*ATH*, 22). However, she was miraculously saved by a sudden storm which extinguished the fire (this moment is illustrated by the wall painting in the chapel of al-Bagawat).³¹

²⁶ The lion's tail tuft is one of the most distinctive characteristics shared by both females and males.

²⁷ Another saint who is represented with lions (not lionesses) is Daniel.

²⁸ Cf. AASS, September: VI, 546–568; *ATH*. Carl Schmidt (Schmidt (Ed.) 1905) made an attempt to prove that the *Acta Pauli et Theclae* formed an integral part of the *Acts of Paul*.

²⁹ This episode is plausibly depicted on the mural from the Cave of Saint Paul in Ephesus, cf. Pillinger 2005: 56–62.

³⁰ Pillinger 2005: 56–62.

³¹ The scene from the Exodus Chapel in al-Bagawat resembles another episode in Thecla's martyrdom, when in Antioch's arena she was enveloped in a cloud of fire, so that neither did the beasts touch her, nor was she seen to be naked (*ATH*, 34).

She tried her luck and sought divine protection once again at Antioch in Pisidia, where she travelled with Paul. The reason behind her troubles was her beauty. A certain nobleman named Alexander was so captivated by her corporal splendour, paying less attention to the attractiveness of her soul, that he tried to rape her (first he wanted to purchase her from Saint Paul). As he was refused by both, and ridiculed in front of the town folk, he complained to the local governor who condemned Thecla *ad bestias* in the arena (for physically assaulting a nobleman). She was again stripped naked and menaced by lions, bears and bulls,³² and finally by ravenous seals (after she jumped into a pool to baptize herself).³³ After being freed from all these vicissitudes by the providence of God and help of local women, Thecla went to Myra in the guise of a man (this last episode was partly responsible for the resemblance of her representations to those of St Menas). From Myra she returned to Iconium where she continued to spread Paul's word, with the latter's blessing. She ended her pious life in Seleucia (in Cilicia), where a pilgrimage centre (Hagia Thecla) was located above her grave.

From Cilicia, Thecla's cult spread first through the cities associated with her life, such as Iconium and the neighbouring towns of Dalisandus, Selinus and Aigai. It soon reached Constantinople, where there was a sixth-century church dedicated to her. In spite of the fabulous character of her *Vita*, which caused more than one condemnation by the Church, she is honoured with the title of 'protomartyr'. Her cult in the East flourished between the fourth and the eighth centuries. In the fourteenth century, her veneration was revived in the West.³⁴

Her worship in the Nile Valley lasted until the seventh century. Did the cult of Thecla move to Nubia afterwards? If so, it must have been very restricted, both in terms of time and territory. Apart from the Selib find, her iconography is completely unknown in the Middle Nile.

In the Selib altar casket, three identical Thecla busts³⁵ are set within a square framed metope (**Fig. 6**). The metope's upper edge cuts off part of the saint's halo and her hair curls. Although there are some faults and differences between the imprints, there is no doubt that all were made with one mould (the differences between the imprints result from the difficulties in the execution of so many impressions on one object).

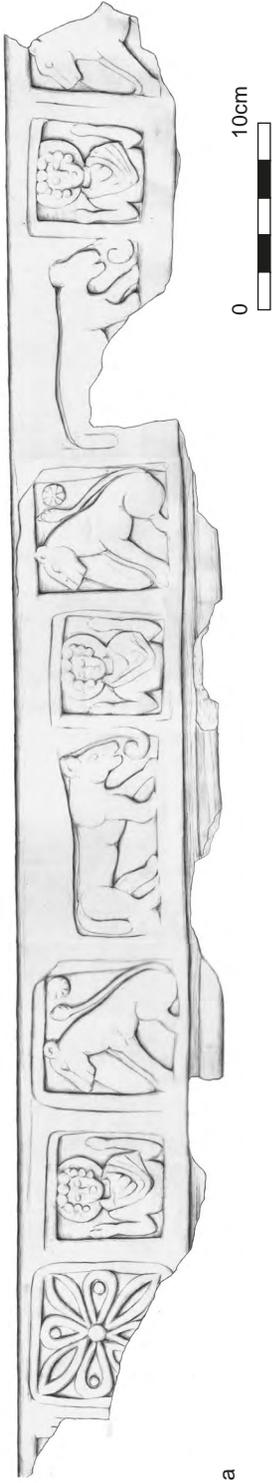
The style of Thecla's image, especially her haloed head and face, is reminiscent of the fifth-century representation of the female saint in the limestone roundel from the

³² The various beasts Thecla had to face in the arena in Antioch were frequently aggregated into a single scene of her martyrdom. Thecla's representations on the reverse of the Menas *ampullae* are the best examples of such an iconographic manner (cf. Nauerth 1982: 14–15, 16, Figs 1–2; Davis 2001: 118–119).

³³ Thecla *ad bestias* is represented among other representations also on the Menas *ampullae*. Characteristically enough, the *ampullae* with Thecla's image belong to the earliest produced at Alexandria (Kiss 1989: nos 5–6; Davis 1998: 303–339, n. 18 after Kaminski-Menssen 1996: 41f.).

³⁴ Leibbrand 1976: 433.

³⁵ Thecla's representations *en buste* are rare; cf. the sixth-century image of the saint in the St Euphrasius Church in Poreč (Istria). The roundel with a haloed Thecla is identified by the legend SCATECLA (Nauerth 1982: n. 8).



a



d



c



b

6. Decoration of the exterior wall of the Selib altar casket: a. fold-out of the decoration; b-d. three of St Thecla's busts in detail (Phot. and drawing: A. Cedro).

Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City.³⁶ One of the best analogies to the Selib Thecla representation seems to be Thecla's sculptured image on a marble slab found in 2007 in Laodycea.³⁷

Thecla's iconography adopted in the Selib tabernacle follows the scheme known from the Menas *ampullae*. A haloed Thecla is shown in the orant posture with hands held upright, bent at the elbows with her forearms parallel to the upper body,³⁸ palms turned *en trois-quarts* towards the spectator, the thumb clasped with the forefinger. Her hair is set in curls, much in the style of contemporary St Menas representations. The reasons behind the visual resemblance of Thecla's images to that of St Menas are manifold. Thecla was in some ways Menas's female counterpart.³⁹ Her sanctuary was somewhere in Mareotis very close to Abu Mena.⁴⁰ On a dozen or so *ampullae* she is represented on one side, while St Menas is depicted on the opposite.⁴¹ The *ampullae* decorated with the portraits of St Menas and St Thecla are usually much bigger than those containing the images of only one saint.⁴² They might have been intended for use by more than one person, a man and his wife for example, as the dual iconography on these objects might suggest.

The Selib Thecla is clad in an over-garment thrown over the left shoulder.⁴³ This deserves a short comment; when discussing the dense draping around Thecla's upper torso in the gold pendant from Princeton University Art Museum,⁴⁴ Claudia Nauerth wrote that the saint *trägt eine Art Schal, der über ihre beiden Arme drappiert ist*.⁴⁵ It somewhat resembles the 'mantle' worn by Thecla on the ivory relief from Laodycea, which *wraps the figure over and across her chest and falls freely over the elbows to the back in vertical drapes*.⁴⁶

Her inner garment, if there is any at all, is narrow-sleeved. Although her likeness to St Menas is evidently underlined by the hair style and attire, her countenance is definitely female. Her round and youthful face is emphasized by a distinctive jaw and protruding chin. She is staring forward with eyes which seem to be wide open. The nose and mouth are rendered with more or less convex roundels. The artist ended her portrait with a line at the height of her elbows. The outline of her breasts is not even marked. According to the known episodes from her *Vita*, she concealed her femininity in some situations. Consequently, her gender was a fragile iconographic issue.

³⁶ Weitzmann (Ed.) 1979: 574, no. 513; for the illustration cf. *Nelson-Atkins Museum*.

³⁷ Şimşek, Yener 2010: 325, Figs 4–5.

³⁸ St Menas on the so-called Menas *ampoullae* is represented with arms spread wide, rather at a right angle to the body axis (cf. Kiss 1990).

³⁹ Cf. Davis 1998: 312–317.

⁴⁰ Davis 1998: 314–315.

⁴¹ Davis 1998: 335–339.

⁴² Kiss 1989: no. 5.

⁴³ The draping of the over garment does not preclude that she is tied with a rope. If so, the enigmatic rope endings at the mouths of the lionesses would make more sense.

⁴⁴ From Constantinople, fifth-sixth century, acc. no: y1968–136.

⁴⁵ Nauerth 1982: 16.

⁴⁶ Şimşek, Yener 2010: 325, Figs 4–5.

Some iconographic details of Thecla's iconography present in the Selib casket are difficult to explain on the grounds of her hagiography, e.g. the curious shapes that resemble the endings of a rope(?), which are being licked, rather than devoured, by the lionesses. This iconographic particular resembles the limestone roundel with the haloed Thecla bound to a pole in the Nelson-Atkins Museum. Here, the rope encircles Thecla's neck and becomes tangled up with her belt. Her hands are tied behind her back and the endings of the ropes touch the mouths of a lion and lioness standing beside her.⁴⁷

How and when the cult of St Thecla of Iconium was transmitted to Egypt has not been explained in details. It must be said at this point that Coptic liturgy knows two other saints with this name. Another Thecla, the daughter of Kyros the *πολιτευόμενος* of Siut, was sentenced to death by decapitation for 'following the sorcery of the Christians'.⁴⁸

THE CULT OF ST THECLA

In Egypt, Thecla's cult has been confirmed outside Alexandria, in al-Fayyûm and in the Western Desert, as early as the fourth century.⁴⁹ In al-Kharga Oasis, Thecla's painted representations appear during the same period. The Chapel of the Exodus, where Thecla was depicted surrounded by flames burning at the stake, belongs to the earliest on the huge necropolis of al-Bagawat.⁵⁰ Her image among those of St Paul, the Virgin, and other biblical figures in the Chapel of Peace is painted in the Byzantine style of the sixth century.⁵¹

Thecla was venerated in Upper Egypt at least until the end of the sixth century, when the last church dedicated to her was consecrated at Thebes. From Upper Egypt her cult could have penetrated into Lower Nubia and further south to the Debba Bend. Her appearance in Selib in the sixth/seventh centuries confirms to some extent her worship in the Middle Nile (although there is no other confirmation of her cult south of Aswan).

Thecla's imagery is generally restricted to minor arts, such as e.g. the Menas *ampullae*. Generally, the *Einzelbilder* represent her with accompanying animals as the Selib casket proves.⁵² Regardless of the medium and acolytes, she is depicted as miraculously delivered from the beasts in the arena, either with her arms tied behind her to a pole or held up in the orant posture.

The main problem with her iconography known from Egypt is the question of whether the saint depicted is Thecla of Iconium or one of the two Theclas known from the Coptic liturgy. Even if one of the other Theclas was intended, the iconography of Thecla of Iconium was usually applied.⁵³

⁴⁷ Weitzmann (Ed.) 1979: 574, no. 513.

⁴⁸ Till 1935–1936: 134; Davis 2001: 180–187.

⁴⁹ Davis 2001: 149, 172–173.

⁵⁰ Cf. Zibawi 2004: 27, Fig. 19; Davis 2001: 154; Zaloscer 1974: 150.

⁵¹ Bourguet 1991: 541. In the Chapel of Peace, Thecla is depicted seated in front of Saint Paul and writing down something the apostle is dictating to her (Zibawi 2004: 36, Fig. 28).

⁵² Cf. also Bourguet 1991: 541.

⁵³ Bourguet 1991: 541.

Thecla was considered to be particularly helpful in the case of eye diseases, which in Egypt and the Middle Nile were a real plague. In the collection of miracles wrought by her,⁵⁴ written by a fifth-century anonymous Basilius Seleucensis,⁵⁵ there are multiple descriptions of her miracles worked on behalf of people suffering from eye diseases.⁵⁶ Interestingly, the neighbouring pilgrimage centre at Banganarti dedicated to Archangel Raphael also specialized in eye diseases.⁵⁷ In her sanctuary at Seleucia, pilgrims underwent incubation, probably in the ‘incubatorium’ located south of the main church.⁵⁸

DATING OF THE ALTAR CASKET

A troublesome aspect of the hermeneutical analysis of the altar casket found in Selib (and its decorations) is its age. Needless to say, it precedes the next firmly dated known object of this kind by several centuries.

The chronology of the later altar caskets is also problematic. In 1884, Joshua Butler gave a compact description of the Coptic *kursi al-kas*: *It consists of a cubical box, eight or nine inches high; the top side of which is pierced with a circular opening just large enough to admit the chalice.*⁵⁹

In his description of the ancient specimen, which he discovered in the north aisle-chapel of the church of Abu al-Sifain, Butler made a grave mistake in the dating.⁶⁰ His reading of the date written partly in Coptic and partly in Arabic as AD 1280 was corrected by Graf to be AD 1564/5.⁶¹ According to Y.N. Youssef, object dates from the eighteenth century;⁶² however, he admits the scenes depicted on their side walls seem to have been copied from older examples.⁶³ Although the known altar caskets are datable to the sixteenth century at the earliest, the written testimonies confirming their use in the Coptic ritual reach back to the twelfth century.⁶⁴

The later Coptic *karasi al-kas* were made as square or polygonal objects. They were able to contain big chalices measuring 25cm or more. The differences in shape, height and mode of decoration between the round casket from Selib and the later caskets from Egypt made on a plan of a square or polygon are apparent at first glance. There are fair grounds however to assume that the smaller round objects were also used in the past. At least the

⁵⁴ *Vie et miracles*.

⁵⁵ The text is wrongly attributed to Basilius Seleucensis (*Vita ac miraculis*; cf. Dagron 1974: 5–11).

⁵⁶ Kötting 1950: 153.

⁵⁷ Żurawski 2014b: 241–242.

⁵⁸ Kötting 1950: 156.

⁵⁹ Butler 1884: 42 (vol. II). A more detailed description of the *kursi al-kas* from the church of Abu al-Sifain is contained in the first volume of Butler’s book (1884) on pages 109–110.

⁶⁰ Butler 1884: 109 (vol. I).

⁶¹ Graf 1938: 31.

⁶² Youssef 2011: 256 (based on Langen 1986–1989: 75–79).

⁶³ Graf 1938: 31; Youssef 2011: 256.

⁶⁴ Moorsel 1991: 302. He put forward an interesting hypothesis explaining the reasons which made the Copts use the *karasi al-kas* while the object is unknown in other oriental churches (Moorsel 1991: 302–303). According to Evelyn White (1933: 158 n. 2): *the chalice holder prevents the chalice from being accidentally overturned during the mass*.

altar caskets employed in the Ethiopian Church ritual were made on a plan of a circle.⁶⁵ The prayer that preceded the Canon in Ethiopian Mass was put into Latin by Renaudot as *Oratio super arcam sive discum majorem*.⁶⁶ What the *arca* (or a bigger roundel) was and what it was used for in Egyptian ritual, Renaudot explained in 1716: *Fortasse igitur arcam vocaverunt, aut arculam ut Latini interpretes, vas majus aliquod, quo discus et calix continentur (...)*.⁶⁷ Butler attempted to answer the same question in 1884: *There can, I think, be no doubt that this tabernacle or altar-casket of the Copts is the mysterious “arca” which has puzzled liturgical writers from Renaudot to Cheetham*.⁶⁸ Renaudot quotes a prayer preceding the Ethiopic canon entitled “*Super arcam sive discum majorem*”, and thinks that the ark was a sort of *antimensium*. But the title is at once explained if we remember the Coptic practice of placing the chalice inside and the paten on the box, – a practice from which the Ethiopic was doubtless derived.⁶⁹

Contrary to Neale, who thought that the altar casket (*arca*) was used in the Ethiopian Church for the reservation of the blessed sacrament,⁷⁰ Butler assumed that *the ark at its dedication is intended not for the reservation but for the consecration of the host*.⁷¹ Cheetham argued that the tenor of the prayer which preceded the Ethiopian Canon suggested the *arca* was used for precisely the same purpose as the *paten*, inasmuch as in both cases the petition is that in or upon it may be perfected (*perficiatur*) the Body of the Lord.⁷² He thus contradicted Renaudot’s opinion, who rather sided with the hypothesis that the *arca* served as an *antimensium*.⁷³

The supposedly round Ethiopian *arca* is not the only analogy to the Selib altar casket. The *kursi al-kas* from the Monastery of the Syrians in Wadi al-Natrun, which according to van Moorsel belongs to the group of the oldest known altar caskets,⁷⁴ was originally round in shape.⁷⁵ It is also the lowest of all known Coptic *karasi al-kas*.⁷⁶

Apart from the accounts by Butler, Graf, and Johann Georg zu Sachsen,⁷⁷ there are some more recent studies on Coptic altar caskets.⁷⁸ In 1933, Evelyn White provided a compact

⁶⁵ Cf. Raible 1908: Fig. 12 on page 64 showing a diakon carrying *schüsselartigen Patene auf dem Haupte* (in Latin descriptions of their use the word *discus* was frequently employed by the translators or writers).

⁶⁶ Renaudot 1716: 501 (vol. I); cf. also Butler 1884: 43 (vol. II).

⁶⁷ Renaudot 1716: 525 (vol. I).

⁶⁸ Cf. Smith, Cheetham (Eds) 1876: 134–135 (vol. I), s.v. *arca*.

⁶⁹ Butler 1884: 43 (vol. II).

⁷⁰ *O Lord our God, Who didst command Moses Thy servant and prophet, saying, Make Me precious vessels, and put them in the tabernacle on Mount Sinai, now, O Lord God Almighty, stretch forth Thy hand upon this ark, and fill it with the virtue, power, and grace of Thy Holy Ghost, that in it may be consecrated the Body and Blood of Thine only-begotten Son, our Lord* (Neale 1850: 186).

⁷¹ Butler 1884: 44 (vol. II); cf. Renaudot 1716: 501 (vol. I).

⁷² Smith, Cheetham (Eds) 1876: 134 (vol. I), s.v. *arca*. It did not seem improbable to him that *this arca was an actual chest or ark, on the lid of which, the Mercy-Seat, consecration took place* (Smith, Cheetham (Eds) 1876: 135 – vol. I).

⁷³ Renaudot 1716: 525.

⁷⁴ *Leider konnte auch dieses zweifellos sehr alte Stück noch nicht datiert werden* (Moorsel 1991: 301).

⁷⁵ Moorsel 1991: 301.

⁷⁶ 16cm, cf. Moorsel 1991: 301.

⁷⁷ Johann Georg zu Sachsen 1914: 11–12.

⁷⁸ E.g. Moorsel 1991; Burmester 1967; Langen 1986–1989; Youssef 2011.

description of the altar casket he found in the main church of the monastery of Anba Bishoi: *The altar is covered with a rectangular marble slab measuring 1m by 83cm. Upon it stands a disused chalice holder which merits a word of notice. It is of wood, square in section, and its four sides have a marked batter; a circular opening in the top admits the chalice (...).*⁷⁹

The *kursi al-kas* from the Monastery of the Syrians (Wadi al-Natrun), with all four sides seen, attributed to the eighteenth century has been published by Capuani.⁸⁰

FUNCTION OF THE ALTAR CASKET

As said at the very beginning of our discussion, there are two possible interpretations of the object from Selib. The first and the more plausible (in the present author's opinion) understanding has been presented above, while the other will be presented below. It is based on one feature of the Selib casket which seems to be useless if the object was solely intended for storing a chalice (and paten) inside. What then was its flat spacious upper side intended for? It seems logical that such a broad and flat surface should serve a specific purpose. What could it have been?

It is possible to find an answer to the latter question if we assume that a peculiar Nubian paten with a bowl-like depression in the middle of the bottom was placed on top of the Selib casket in such a way that its lower protrusion fitted the aperture in the upper roundel. In 2013 the author of the present article argued, on the basis of some archaeological finds from Selib and elsewhere, that in a later period such patens used for the Communion of the congregation took on different shapes and sizes.⁸¹ All of them had a bottom depression for Eucharistic wine since these patens served for Communion by intinction.⁸² A huge paten (dated to the late period),⁸³ found in Selib north of the St Menas Church, was most probably placed on a hollowed capital located near the northern entrance to the church (**Fig. 7**). Needless to say, it was too big, too heavy and too late to fit the Selib casket.

Nevertheless, in earlier times these patens were smaller. The object found in the northern sacristy of the Lower Church at Banganarti, if put on the altar casket for consecration (atop the altar casket) would have fitted better.⁸⁴

The diameter of the Banganarti paten fits the diameter of the Selib casket. The latter's lower cup is slightly bigger than the diameter of the upper aperture of the casket.

⁷⁹ Evelyn White 1933: 158.

⁸⁰ Capuani 2002: Fig. 9. The same object, also in four views, has been published in colour by Skalova and Gabra (2003: Fig. 4).

⁸¹ Żurawski 2013b.

⁸² Żurawski 2013b: 780–781.

⁸³ Cf. Żurawski 2013b: 777.

⁸⁴ Żurawski 2012: 201–202. The remains of chalices and patens found in Selib are more than suggestive that a twofold manner of Communion was practiced there (at least in the later period); the clergy was communicated under two species from chalices and small saucer-like patens at the altar/altars and the communion was administered to the congregation also under two kinds but by intinction from big patens placed on stands near the entrance to the church.



7. Earthenware paten (inv. no. S1.117/2011) from Selib. The picture shows the *asteriskos* above the depression in the middle of the bottom that was found in 2014 (Phot. A. Cedro).

However, other Nubian patens, as e.g. the object known from al-Ghazali Monastery, fit perfectly.⁸⁵

As for the chronology of the Banganarti paten, nothing can be said for certain. It is undoubtedly earlier than mid-tenth century, when the Lower Church was ruined. Concerning the issues of how long it was used before the mid-tenth century and what its predecessors looked like, nothing can be stated at the moment.

CONCLUSIONS

Regardless of its real purpose – as support for a Nubian paten for Communion by intinction or as a container for a Eucharistic chalice – the object found in the vicinity of the St Menas Church retains its designation as an altar casket. No doubt it is a liturgical object of a very early date. Its discovery confirms close contacts with Egypt in the sixth/seventh centuries or even earlier. It also confirms the character of the Selib enclosure as a pilgrimage place associated with the cult of St Menas. It was probably through the agency of the pilgrims from Egypt that the cult of St Menas and St Thecla was brought to Selib.

⁸⁵ Shinnie, Chittick 1961: Pl. XI. Described as a *cruciform pottery dish*.

The foundation inscription, mentioning King Zacharias as the commissioner of the St Menas Church in Selib, most probably refers to Zacharias I who ruled from 835 to 856.⁸⁶ The columns used for Zacharias's church were plausibly brought from a ruined church nearby.⁸⁷

It is impossible to avoid the assumption that the founding of the St Menas Church coincides with the fall of the Menas Sanctuary in Abu Mena in Mareotis, where Thecla's shrine was also confirmed. Was it the purposeful act of a Nubian king, who decided to move the cult of one of the most important Egyptian saints to Nubia and consolidate it in Selib, fifteen kilometres from the capital in Tungul/Dongola?

The history of St Menas's cult in Selib shows correlations with the events which took place in Egypt (and affected the cult of the Saint in the Lower Nile). The construction of the first church in Selib coincides with the general decline of Abu Mena after the Persian invasion and Arab conquest.⁸⁸ The commissioning of the second church by King Zacharias overlaps with the final abandonment of Abu Mena in the ninth century.⁸⁹ It is also worth noting that the plan of the first church at Selib reveals distinct traces of Egyptian influence, seen e.g. in the so-called return aisle (*Westumgang*) that was present in the earliest Egyptian churches.⁹⁰ Especially interesting is the example of the North Basilica in Abu Mena, which had a reception hall (provided with a kitchen) to its north and an atrium-like court to the west.⁹¹ All these features are present in the first St Menas Church in Selib.

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⁸⁶ Godlewski 2008: 277.

⁸⁷ It possibly stood in a village south of Selib 1, which was devastated by a rain flood at the corresponding time.

⁸⁸ Grossmann 1998: 297.

⁸⁹ Grossmann 1998: 298.

⁹⁰ Grossmann 1998: 295, 297; 2001: 18–19, 26. It is worth noting that the earliest St Menas Church in Selib was provided also with an *Ostumgang* (on *Ostumgang* in the earliest Egyptian churches, cf. Grossmann 2002: 26, 30–31, 108, 459, Fig. 76).

⁹¹ Grossmann 1998: 295.

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Abréviations

<i>AAWG</i>	<i>Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philologisch-Historische Klasse</i>
<i>AAWMun</i>	<i>Abhandlungen der bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philologisch-Historische Klasse</i>
<i>AcArch (Lj)</i>	<i>Acta archaeologica (Ljubljana)</i>
<i>ADAJ</i>	<i>Annual of the Department of Antiquities in Jordan</i>
<i>AegTrev</i>	<i>Aegyptiaca Treverensia. Trieren Studien zum griechisch-römischen Ägypten</i>
<i>Aegyptus</i>	<i>Aegyptus. Rivista italiana di egittologia e di papirologia</i>
<i>Anatolica</i>	<i>Anatolica. Annuaire international pour les civilisations de l'Asie antérieure</i>
<i>AnBoll</i>	<i>Analecta Bollandiana</i>
<i>ANES</i>	<i>Ancient Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>AnOr</i>	<i>Analecta Orientalia</i>
<i>Antiquity</i>	<i>Antiquity. A Review of World Archaeology</i>
<i>AquilNostr</i>	<i>Aquileia Nostra. Bolletino dell'Associazione nazionale per Aquileia</i>
<i>ARCE</i>	<i>American Research Center in Egypt</i>
<i>Archaeology (B)</i>	<i>Archaeology. An Official Publication of the Archaeological Institute of America</i>
<i>ArchVer</i>	<i>Archäologische Veröffentlichungen</i>
<i>ASAE</i>	<i>Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte</i>
<i>ASEg</i>	<i>Archaeological Survey of Egypt</i>
<i>ÄgAbh</i>	<i>Ägyptologische Abhandlungen</i>
<i>ÄgForsch</i>	<i>Ägyptologische Forschungen</i>
<i>ÄgLev</i>	<i>Ägypten und Levante. Internationale Zeitschrift für ägyptische Archäologie und deren Nachbargebiete</i>
<i>BAR-IS</i>	<i>British Archaeological Reports, International Series</i>
<i>BASOR</i>	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research in Jerusalem and Baghdad</i>
<i>BCH</i>	<i>Bulletin de correspondance hellénique</i>
<i>Beitr.Äg</i>	<i>Beiträge zur Ägyptologie</i>

<i>BiEtud</i>	<i>Bibliothèque d'étude</i>
<i>BIFAO</i>	<i>Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale</i>
<i>BiMes</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Mesopotamica</i>
<i>BiOr</i>	<i>Bibliotheca Orientalis</i>
<i>BMNV</i>	<i>Bulletin du Musée national de Varsovie</i>
<i>BMSAES</i>	<i>British Museum Studies in Ancient Egypt and Sudan. http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/bmsaes</i>
<i>BonnJb</i>	<i>Bonner Jahrbücher des rheinischen Landesmuseums in Bonn und des Vereins von Altertumsfreunden im Rheinlande</i>
<i>BSAC</i>	<i>Bulletin de la Société d'archéologie copte</i>
<i>BSEG</i>	<i>Bulletin de la Société d'égyptologie de Genève</i>
<i>BSFE</i>	<i>Bulletin de la Société française d'égyptologie</i>
<i>CahKarn</i>	<i>Cahiers de Karnak. Centre franco-égyptien d'étude des temples de Karnak</i>
<i>ChronEg</i>	<i>Chronique d'Égypte</i>
<i>CoptEnc</i>	Atiya, A.S. (éd.), <i>The Coptic Encyclopedia</i> 1–8, New York 1991
<i>DamMitt</i>	<i>Damaszener Mitteilungen</i>
<i>EgUit</i>	<i>Egyptologische Uitgaven</i>
<i>Eos</i>	<i>Eos. Commentarii Societatis Philologiae Polonorum</i>
<i>EtudAlex</i>	<i>Études alexandrines</i>
<i>EtudTrav</i>	<i>Études et travaux (Institut des Cultures Méditerranéennes et Orientales de l'Académie Polonaise des Sciences; auparavant: Centre d'Archéologie Méditerranéenne de l'Académie Polonaise des Sciences)</i>
<i>ExcMem</i>	<i>Excavation Memoirs</i>
<i>FFP</i>	<i>Fouilles franco-polonaises</i>
<i>GM</i>	<i>Göttinger Miscellen. Beiträge zur ägyptologischen Diskussion</i>
<i>GOF</i>	<i>Göttinger Orientforschungen</i>
<i>HbOr</i>	<i>Handbuch der Orientalistik</i>
<i>Iraq</i>	<i>Iraq. Journal of the British Institute for the Study of Iraq</i>
<i>JAC</i>	<i>Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum</i>
<i>JARCE</i>	<i>Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt</i>
<i>JCoptStud</i>	<i>Journal of Coptic Studies</i>
<i>JDAI</i>	<i>Jahrbuch des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts</i>
<i>JEA</i>	<i>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i>
<i>JGS</i>	<i>Journal of Glass Studies</i>
<i>JHA</i>	<i>Journal for the History of Astronomy</i>
<i>JJP</i>	<i>Journal of Juristic Papyrology</i>
<i>JNES</i>	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
<i>JSSEA</i>	<i>Journal of the Society of the Studies of Egyptian Antiquities</i>
<i>Kêmi</i>	<i>Kêmi. Revue de philologie et d'archéologie égyptiennes et copte</i>
<i>LAPO</i>	<i>Littératures anciennes du Proche-Orient</i>
<i>LÄ</i>	<i>Lexikon der Ägyptologie I–VII, Wiesbaden 1975–1992</i>

LCL	<i>Loeb Classical Library</i>
LGG	Leitz, Chr. et al., <i>Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen 1–8</i> , OLA 110–116, Leuven 2002
MAIBL	<i>Mémoires de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres</i>
MCA	<i>Mitteilungen zur christlichen Archäologie</i>
MDAIK	<i>Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo</i>
MEEF	<i>Memoir of the Egypt Exploration Fund</i>
MEFRA	<i>Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'École française de Rome. Antiquité</i>
MIFAO	<i>Mémoires publiés par les membres de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale</i>
MMAF	<i>Mémoires publiés par les membres de la Mission archéologique française au Caire</i>
MVEOL	<i>Mededelingen en Verhandelingen van het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Genotschap</i>
NubChrist	<i>Nubia christiana</i>
Nubica	<i>Nubica. Annuaire internantional pour les études éthiopiennes, méroïtiques et nubiennes</i>
NubLett	<i>Nubian Letters</i>
OBO	<i>Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis</i>
OCA	<i>Orientalia Christiana Analecta</i>
OIP	<i>Oriental Institute Publications</i>
OJA	<i>Oxford Journal of Archaeology</i>
OLA	<i>Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta</i>
Orientalia	<i>Orientalia. Commentarii periodici Pontificii Instituti Biblici</i>
Paléorient	<i>Paléorient. Revue pluridisciplinaire de préhistoire et de protohistoire de l'Asie du Sud-ouest et de l'Asie Centrale</i>
PAM	<i>Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean</i>
PCMA	Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology
PM	Porter, B., Moss, R.L.B., <i>Topographical Bibliography of Ancient Egyptian Hieroglyphic Texts, Reliefs and Paintings I–VIII</i> , Oxford 1927–
PMMA	<i>Publications of the Metropolitan Museum of Art</i>
PSAC	<i>Publications de la Société d'archéologie copte</i>
RDAC	<i>Report of the Department of Antiquities, Cyprus</i>
RdE	<i>Revue d'égyptologie</i>
RevArch	<i>Revue archéologique</i>
RivArch	<i>Rivista di archeologia</i>
SAGA	<i>Studien zur Archäologie und Geschichte Altägyptens</i>
SAK	<i>Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur</i>
SASOP	<i>Sudan Antiquities Service, Occasional Papers</i>
SAT	<i>Studien zum Altägyptischen Totenbuch</i>
ShirEgypt	<i>Shire Egyptology</i>

<i>StudAeg</i>	<i>Studia aegyptiaca</i>
<i>Sumer</i>	<i>Sumer. A Journal of Archaeology and History in Arab World</i>
<i>TAPS</i>	<i>Transactions of the American Philosophical Society</i>
<i>Urk.</i>	Urkunden des ägyptischen Altertums I–VIII, Leipzig-Berlin 1903–1957
<i>Wb</i>	Erman, A., Grapow, H., Wörterbuch der ägyptischen Sprache I–VI, Leipzig-Berlin 1926–1963
<i>YES</i>	<i>Yale Egyptological Studies</i>
<i>ZÄS</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprache und Altertumskunde</i>

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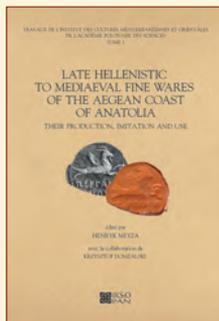
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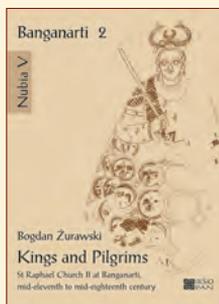
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