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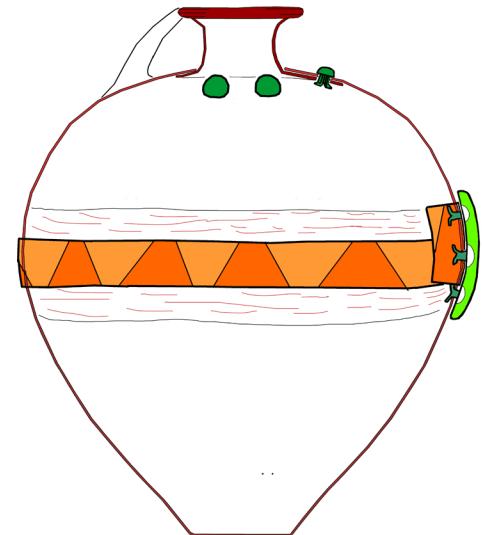
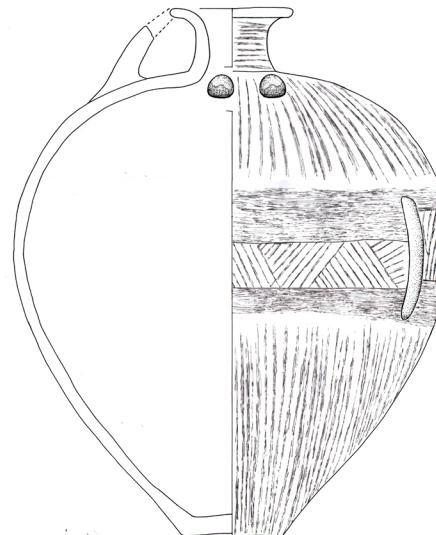
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In copertina: la brocca in ceramica rossa lustrata dalla Sala L.1110 del Palazzo B di Khirbet al-Batrawy (KB.11.B.1128/49), con disegno ricostruttivo del possibile prototipo metallico cui si ispira la decorazione dell'esemplare ceramico (disegno di L. Nigro).

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EDITORIALE

Quando iniziò le pubblicazioni nel 1978, *Vicino Oriente* era l’organo dell’allora Istituto del Vicino Oriente, diretto da Mario Liverani. Fino al 2000 furono pubblicati dodici volumi in ventidue anni (1978-2000), grazie alla infaticabile dedizione di Isabella Brancoli Verger. La riorganizzazione della rivista nel 2007 ha portato alla pubblicazione di sei volumi (XIII-XVIII) in sette anni (2008-2014), rispettando rigorosamente la cadenza annuale, fatto che ha consentito alla rivista di essere inserita in classe A e le ha permesso di iniziare il percorso di indicizzazione in *Scopus*. Dallo stesso anno *Vicino Oriente* è anche disponibile online e ha contestualmente ripreso la pubblicazione dei *Quaderni* (volumi dal IV all’VIII), dedicati ad ospitare raccolte coerenti di scritti derivanti per lo più da Convegni o *Festschriften* (FS Mayer, FS Amadasi, Convegno “La percezione dell’Ebraismo”, ecc.), come nel caso della pubblicazione dell’opera di Umberto Scerrato, in tre volumi. Complessivamente, sono stati dunque pubblicati tredici volumi in sette anni con un notevole sforzo economico e soprattutto editoriale e con un amplissimo spettro tematico all’interno delle discipline orientalistiche. Questi risultati sono solamente un aspetto della fiorente attività scientifica svolta da tanti colleghi interni ed esterni a quella che è stata prima la Sezione Vicino Oriente e poi la Sezione di Orientalistica del Dipartimento Scienze dell’Antichità.

Ora che una riorganizzazione dell’Ateneo ha di fatto disperso nuovamente gli orientalisti, *Vicino Oriente* resta un organo aperto e attivo, dotato di *referee* esterni (nazionali ed internazionali), di una precisa procedura di valutazione e accesso alla pubblicazione, di un comitato scientifico e, soprattutto, di una redazione cui va il mio più sentito ringraziamento per l’infaticabile sforzo profuso per rispettare i termini di uscita della rivista e garantire la coerenza interna dei contributi e la qualità grafica dell’impaginato.

In tempi tanto difficili per l’Italia e, specialmente, per i Paesi ai quali è rivolta non solo l’attenzione scientifica, ma la partecipazione umana di tanti di noi, questo lavoro svolto da giovani dottorandi volontari è la migliore risposta, silenziosa ed efficace, a chi avesse creduto che la fine, dolorosa, di una esperienza potesse esaurirle tutte. La continuazione degli scavi in aree molto difficili, dal Kurdistan all’Iraq, dalla Palestina alla Giordania, dalla Sicilia alla Sardegna, lo sforzo di tanti giovani colleghi nell’avvio di nuove imprese di ricerca sul campo, la prossima apertura del rinnovato Museo del Vicino Oriente, Egitto e Mediterraneo nella prestigiosa sede del Rettorato, testimoniano che una nuova generazione si affaccia – finalmente – con coraggio.

L’Oriente è ancora una sorgente di luce alla Sapienza.

Lorenzo Nigro

[Vicino Oriente XVIII (2014), pp. 1-5]

ČAHĀR ZAHAGĀN IN MIDDLE PERSIAN LITERATURE

Mahmoud Jafari-Dehaghi - University of Tehran

One of the main features of Sasanian era was the philosophical movement through which Iranian thinkers became familiar with new ideas. Xusrow The First ordered some philosophical texts, such as Aristotle's Book of Logic, to be translated from Greek into Pahlavi. They also introduced some texts from India and translated them from Sanskrit into Pahlavi. Through the process of translation, many Pahlavi philosophical terms were coined. They are scattered among the Pahlavi texts such as Dēnkard, Bundahišn, Wizīdagīhā ī Zādspāram and so on. The aim of this paper then is to introduce one of the well-known terms called čahār zahagān or four elements. In addition to other meanings mentioned in the article the term čahār zahagān denotes to the four elements of soil, wind, water and fire by which the whole world is constructed. This idea was borrowed by Iranian translators presumably from Greek and Roman philosophers. During the Islamic period the term čahār zahagān has a more broad meaning. From their point of view the Greater World or gēhān ī wuzurg was comparable to the human body or gēhān ī kōdak.

Keywords: philosophical terms; four elements; Čahār zahagān; Sasanid era; Middle Persian

1. INTRODUCTION

It seems that the movement of philosophy which took place in the Sassanid era resulted in the construction and deployment of a range of philosophical terminologies which were used in compiling and translating texts. The aim of this short article is to discuss one of these terms, as Čahār zahagān or “four elements”.

2. THE ROLE OF DĒNKARD AND THE DOCTRINE OF THE FOUR ELEMENTS

There is no doubt that at this stage, Iranians had a specific approach to philosophical texts and thanks to the philosophy of soul in some Middle Persian texts, including the fourth book *Dēnkard*, this is clearly described.

DkM 412.17: šāpuhr ī šāhān šāh ardašīrān nibēgīhā-z ī az dēn bē abar bizeškīh ud stargōwišnīh wizōyišn ud zamān gyāg ud gōhr dahišn bawišn wināhišn jadag-wihīrīh ud gōwāgīh ud abārīg kirrōgīh ud abzār andar hindūagān hrōm abārig-iz zamīgīha pargandag būd abāz ō ham āward ud abāg abestāg abāz handāxt. Har ān ī drust paččēn ō ganj ī šabīgān dād.

«Šapuhr, the king of kings, son of Artaxšahr reassembled books of the Dēn about medicine, astronomy, motion, time, space, substance, creation, genesis, corruption, alteration, eloquence, and other arts and skills that go into India, Rome and other lands and he compared them with the Avesta and everything which was right, he made a copy for Šabīgān treasure».¹

By the same token, the philosophical texts of India and Rome were compiled and translated.

¹ Cf. Bailey 1971, 81, 86.

Again the report of *Dēnkard* about this is as follows:

DkM 429.13: *Pad harōm pīlāsōfā ud pad hindūgān dānāg ud pad abārīg dānāg
šnāsag ān abētar stāyīhīd kē gōwišn ud nēzōmānīh az-išān padāgīhist
frazānagān ī ērān-šahr pasandīd estād.*

«Among the philosophers of Rome the sages of India and the sages of other (countries) the Knowing ones praise most highly those whose logic and skills were clear. The wise ones of Erānšahr».

The doctrine of the four elements was important among philosophers of ancient Greece and Rome. They knew that the world consisted of four elements: earth, wind, water and fire.² In the Sassanid era, for such idiomatic philosophical equivalents they employed the Pahlavi terminology. The word *Zahagān* was used for “elements”. Apparently, the meaning of this word was “more born” which was used in Middle Persian texts as well as New Persian dictionaries. For example the word “*Zahīdan*” was used in Dictionary of Rashidi, Anjoman ārā, Ānandrāj, and Nāzem-ol Atebbā; the phrase meaning “born and breathe” was used in the dictionary of Moein, “*Zihīdan*” meaning “to regenerate, to bring forth” was used in Burhān-ī Qāte (in the margin). Zēhidan: “to fall, to flow, to drip”. Žuhīdan: “drip” (analogous with the phrase “zih zadan”). It is likely that the etymology of this word is as follows: the prefix *uz-* meaning “down” and the root *ah-*⁽²⁾ which means “to shed”. In some Middle Persian texts, this term has been used clearly with the same meaning. Examples of this application are as follows.

A. Denkard in Chapter 123 of the third book:

DkM 121.3: *u-š dēsag ī fradom būdag ī pad dādār ud paymānkārīh az bawišn u-
š dēnīg nām bawišn-rāwišnīh u-š nāmčišt čahār zahagān ī hēnd wād ātaxš āb
gil.*

«The form of the first material existence of creator (was) moderation of existence and its religious name is setting in motion of existence, and in detail, it is (made of) the four elements, which are: wind, fire, water, and mud (=earth)».

Then, in another part, there is the same point of reference:

DkM 124.18: *pad dādār āfurišn rasīdag ū bawišn garm-xwēd, bawišn-rāwišnīh
zahagān ī ast wād, ātaxš, āb <ud> gil az bawišn-rāwišnīh bawišn-astišnīh.*

«Through the creation of the creator, one reaches to the existence of warmth, and moisture, and the setting in motion of existence, the (four) elements, which include: wind, fire, water and mud, and from the setting in motion of existence, the genesis of universe».

Chapter 157 of the third book of *Dēnkard* is devoted to medical knowledge, in which the human body is likened to the outside world and the world as the four elements of fire, water, soil and wind combined. The human body is of four elements which are the human bile and yellow bile, blood and phlegm. Similarly when in the four pillars of corruption, one of the world will lead to damage, lack of balance and disturb, unbalance and disorder in four humors (*axlāt*) will cause human health confusion.³ The third book of *Dēnkard* reports the same case:

² Gignoux 2001, 50.

³ Cf. Gignoux 2001; for more detailed information on the Medicine in ancient Iran see Saburi Helestani 1385.

DkM 158.22: *nigēzīg az zaraduxštrōtom dastwarīh ud dahibed hu-framānīh nigāh pādan ī zahagān ī tanān bun az winastagīh u-š ēwāzīgīh ēk ēk mardōm tan-bizeškīh ī az drustbedān hammōg pādan ī-šān rastagān az winastagīh bawēd.*

«According to the teachings of the guiding of the Zoroasterom and the good command of the *dahibed*, care must be taken towards the body elements from destruction, namely (care) of the origin of the body from corruption and of that it is unique medical doctrine which is for everyone and according to the teachings of “drustbedān” (physicians) is eyeing their temperament from corruption».

DkM 170.4: *tan-biziškīh kunišn abar cahār zāhagān ī gēhān pad dādan ī az winastagīh u-š frazāmišn par ristagān ī tan frēh-būd ud abē-būd az-iš be burden pad paymān winnārdan tan-drustīh.*

«The action of medical doctrine is about the four elements of the world, about keeping it from corruption. Its termination is the end of excess and waste in the human body and making it balanced and organized».

The terminology “čahār zahagān” meaning “the four elements” is frequently used in the fifth book of *Dēnkard*. This goes to show that keeping the four elements from pollution and dirt has been troubling the minds of Iranians, throughout times, for example:

Denkard: V.28a: *ud az ān čiyōn nasā pēsthā abāz ō ātaxš ud wād ud būm ud gil ī pāk ud kārīgīh pad nōg-zahagān ī zahagān ud wē- frayādīh ud mēh-sūdīh ī dāmān ēwēnīhā madan pad gugārišn ud sōzišn ī andar tan ī sagān ud wāyān abētar šāyēd...*

24.28a: «And it is most deserving that before Nasā (=corpse) reaches the fire, wind, the earth, and the clean mud, it would be activated as a new element, and as a result, in accordance with religion, it is more helping and interesting to the creatures, (and for this purpose) it gets burned and digested in the bodies of dogs and birds...».⁴

3. B. BUNDĀHIŠN

Apparently, the Mazdean cosmology in the second chapter of the *Bundahišn* which has the title: “*abar dām-dahišnīh ī gētīgīhā*”, records the origin of the first creatures as “*asar-rōšnīh*” or “boundless light”. It is known that the four elements have emerged from the (“*asar-rōšnīh*”):

GB. 17.1:*ohrmazd dām ō gētīg brēhīnīd: az asar-rōšnīh ātaxš, az ātaxš wād, az wād āb, az āb zamīg ud harwisp astōmandīh gētīg frāz brēhēnīd.*

«Ohrmazd created the creatures in the material world from endless light, fire; and from fire wind; from wind water, and from water earth; and thus made all the material beings».⁵

⁴ Cf. Amouzgar - Tafazzoli 2000.

⁵ Cf. Bahar 1991-1992, 39; Pakzad ed. 2005, 26.

However elsewhere in this book it is explicitly stated that:

GB. 149.5: *astōmandīh az čahār zahagān: āb ud zamīg ud wād ud ātaxš.*
 «Material existence is made from four elements: water, earth, wind and fire».⁶

4. C. WIZĪDAGĪHĀ Ī ZĀDSPRAM

Chapter VII of the book “*Selections of Zādspram*” is about five tempers of āsrōnān (religious leaders) and makes reference to ten admonitions that all other advice in religion is related to them. The fourth temperament is:

27.4: *čahārom yazišn, čiyōn yazišn ī ohrmazd mādayān pad hamāg wehīh dādārīh, xwadāyīh šnāxtan menīdan, padiš dēn astawān būdan ud kustīg, nišān ī-s dēn rāy, bastag dāštan, yazišn ī rošnān niyāšnōmandīhā, yazišn ī zahagān ī ast ātaxš, āb, zamīg, ud wād, kē kālbodōmand ud dāmān az-iš passāzīhist pāk, yōjahrēnīd az nasā ud daštān ud hixr ud abārīg wināhišn dāštan ī tā cīhrān az-iš passāzīhānd drust-čihrtar ud hu-bōytar ud pāktar ud kam-āhōgtar bawēnd.*

«Fourth Yazišn: is to praise Ohrmazd and all goodness, creativity, and to know God (and) to think about his religion, and practicing his religion. It is to show that you're a follower of this religion by wearing the *kustīg* (the famous belt). It is to praise the term of four elements: fire, water, earth and wind, and physical beings and creature made of it, pure and holy of *Nasā* (=corpse), and menstruation and other pollution and stench. In the hope that all natures made from these, are more right, more pure, more fragrant and without any faults».⁷

Moreover, it must be noted that in the Sassanid era, sometimes colloquial philosophical terms which were drawn from Greek texts were used identically. Apparently, the fragmented word “stwwkkwn” in the book of Dēnkard is the exact equivalent of the Greek term “stoicheion” which itself was another form of the word “astōqos” which has found its way into Arabic.

The meaning of quadruplet elements was broadened in the concept of Islamic philosophers. Iranian philosophers also used the new terminology. Extensive interpretations and texts related to the four elements in the Persian literature and philosophy show the significance and the importance of this philosophical concept.

Some of these terms are:

Čār ākhar: “Idiom used for the four elements which are the earth, wind, water and fire”;

Čār āxšīj: meaning the four elements. The word *āxšīj* is used for element;⁸

Čār arkān: four elements.

Other terms used in the Persian literature and Philosophy are as follows:

Čār onṣor, Čār aždahā, Čār ostād, Čār ajsād, Čār asbāb, Čār asl, Čār bālešt, Čār basūt, Čār band, Čār bix, Čār tā, Čār tār, Čār tāre, Čār tarkib, Čār jōhar, Čār xalīfē, Čār dari, Čār dast, Čār onṣor, Čār ayāl, Čār foras, Čār gōhar, and hundreds of other words.⁹

⁶ Cf. Bahar 1991-1992, 100; Pakzad ed. 2005, 265.

⁷ Cf. Gignoux - Tafazzoli 2000, 88.

⁸ See Dehkhoda 1970.

⁹ See Dehkhoda 1970.

5. CONCLUSIONS

According to the evidence cited above we can conclude that:

1. in the Sassanid era, Iranian made philosophical equivalents appropriate to their needs;
2. the Iranian world view about the four elements was influenced by Greek and Roman philosophy, as it can be seen in the book of *Dēnkard*;
3. according to Iranian thinking, the greater world (*Jehān i akbar*) *gēhān ī wuzurg*, was created by the four elements water, earth, fire and wind combined. This can in terms be comparable with the smaller world (*Jehān i asqar*) *gēhān ī kōdak*.

Thus, the human temperaments are also made up of the four elements of human bile, yellow bile, phlegm and blood. This view about the world was extended more in the Islamic era.

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BEYOND THE WORDS.
SOME CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT THE WORD
“TO TRANSLATE” IN SUMERIAN

Stefano Seminara - Rome

At least from the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC onwards, the translation from Sumerian into Akkadian represented an important part of the scribal activity in ancient Mesopotamia. Nevertheless a verb describing the specific activity of the literary translation is not known either in Sumerian or in Akkadian: inim-bal means “to speak (in order to resolve a misunderstanding)”, “to interpret” and only rarely “to translate” (while the word eme-bal, which is known from the 3rd millennium onwards, designates the simultaneous translator). This is not surprising: on the one hand, there was no real need for translations (the scribes knew both languages and the rest of the population was illiterate); on the other hand, Sumerian and Akkadian were not considered two different languages, but the two perfectly symmetrical sides of one single original idiom (eme-ha-mun / lišān mithurti). Sumerian was the “dark” side of this language: therefore the so-called translations are rather interpretations of the original Sumerian texts, made in order to disclose their deeply hidden meaning. The verb inim-bal, literally meaning “to go beyond the word”, suits well this kind of intellectual activity.

Keywords: Mesopotamia; Sumerian lexicography; inim—bal; bilingual texts; translations from Sumerian into Akkadian

1. THE RANGE OF MEANING OF inim—bal

According to the PSD¹:

1. the Sumerian word for “to translate” is the compound verb inim—bal;
2. inim—bal means - besides “to translate”, “to talk”, “to converse” - “to interpret” as well;
3. the compound verb inim—bal has to be distinguished from inim ... bal,² whose meaning is “to change the word”, “to change an order”.

This way the range of meaning of inim—bal partially overlaps with those of the following words:

1. dug_{4/e}: “to talk”, “to converse”, “to say”, and so on;
2. bur₂: “to interpret”;³
3. *eme—bal, “to translate”.

Nevertheless the verb inim—bal should not be confused with any of them.

The exact meaning of inim—bal can be found on one hand in its ‘etymology’, on the other hand in its written and literary contexts as a whole.

The meaning of inim (“word”) is quite clear, whereas the sense of bal in this semantic association is far from being completely understood.

All the following meanings (and many other related ones) are included in the word bal:

¹ *The Sumerian Dictionary of the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania*, The University Museum, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1984, vol. B, p. 54a.

² Unlike inim—bal, inim ... bal is not a compound verb.

³ This verb is quoted in PSD B, 55a as synonymous with inim—bal.

- “to rotate”, “to turn over”, “to cross”;
- “to revolt”;
- “to change”, “to transgress (the terms of an agreement)”.

As one of the basic meanings of bal is “to cross, overstep”, inim—bal should be translated as “to go beyond the limits – i.e. the literal meaning – of a word”, in order either to disclose its authentic sense or to resolve an ambiguity. This ambiguity can arise both from linguistic difference and from an accidental misunderstanding.

The use of inim—bal for “to talk, to speak” instead of the more common dug₄/e appears in the following contexts:

1. When the linguistic difference between the two speakers depends upon their substantial or ontological diversity:
 - A) when one of the speakers is an animal;⁴
 - B) when one of the speakers is a god;⁵

Two historical kings claimed to be able to speak (inim—bal) to their gods: Šulgi⁶ and Hammu-rapi.⁷

In his hymn king Hammu-rapi says (l. 28): šud₃ inim-bal-e-de₃ gir₃-a-me-en, “I’m able to correctly express prayers”.⁸ This way the king claimed to be the only one who was able to correctly communicate with gods. Probably at a later stage the scribes were proud of the same skill as well, as it appears from the proverbs (quoted below).

2. When a previous misunderstanding must be solved, as it appears from the evidence quoted in the PSD, for instance:
 - in TCS 1, 125 rev. 3-4 (Ur III period), the “man” (lu₂) of a certain Puzur-haja has got to appear before the court in order to explain (inim-bi a-bal-e) the delivery of eštub-barley instead of the expected kur-barley;
 - in *Iniminanna to Lugalibila* 9 two people have got to “interpret” (inim i₃-bal-en-dana) an “omen” (giskim);
 - the text *Enlil and Sud* is particularly interesting about the semantic relationship between inim—bal and other *verba dicendi*: only gu₃-de₂ (“to call”) and dug₄/e (“to say”, “to tell”) introduce direct speeches throughout the whole text, with the exception of lines 14 and 24. Here the verb inim—bal appears instead of those verbs (line 24, together with dug₄), probably because Enlil wants to express his own intentions, according to Sud (=Ninlil’s) request (ta-z[u], l. 19). The explanation is necessary because of a previous misunderstanding: seeing Enlil approaching to herself, Sud has feared that the god had mistaken her for a prostitute. That is why Enlil reassures her, explaining (inim—bal) that he doesn’t want just to have sex and that his intention is rather to marry her;

⁴ *Enmerkar and Ensuhkešdanna* 174 (a cow) and 187 (a goat).

⁵ OECT 1, 16 iv 16 (Nisaba); *Enmerkar and Ensuhkešdanna* 32 (Inanna); JCS 29, 17 (Nanaja).

⁶ Šulgi B 42.

⁷ ZA 54, 52: 28.

⁸ Instead of “I am ... powerful (when it comes) to invoking a blessing” (according to PSD’s translation).

- in YBC 7352 (obv. = rev.) lu₂ inim-gi-na bal-bal seems to mean “the man who correctly interprets (the words of the gods)” rather than “a person who (always) speaks a true word”.⁹ This way the proverb should sound like that: “The man who correctly interprets (the words of the gods): (his) word (comes) from his god – it is a favourable destiny – and (his god) is with him daily”.
To this last Sumerian proverb other ones are probably to be related:
- nig₂ inim bal-bal-e-en-na-zu a-ba-am₃ giš mu-ra-an-tuk-tuk, “Who will listen to your interpretations?”,¹⁰
- lu₂-gi-dur₅ ak-gin₇ lu₂-u₃-ra nig₂-gi-na inim nu-mu-un-da-ab-bal-e,¹¹ “A man who fares like a swaying reed does not interpret the truth to other men”.
In *Sinšamuh to Enki* 26 the verb inim—bal refers to a scribe as well. In consequence of a “sin” (nam-tag-ga-ĝu₁₀) he has inadvertently committed, Sinšamuh has lost his skill:
šu-ĝu₁₀ sar-re-de₃ ba-DU ka-ĝu₁₀ inim-bal-bal im-ma-an-la₂ (l. 26),
“My hand is ‘gone’ for writing, my mouth is inadequate for interpreting”.¹²

Here inim—bal probably refers to the will of the gods.

If we understand inim—bal in the above mentioned contexts as “to interpret” (instead of “to talk”, “to say” and so on, as in PSD), no wonder the same verb is found in connection with ma-mu₂(d) (“dream”), meaning “to interpret a dream”. On the contrary it must be explained why inim—bal is used in contexts concerning translation (and particularly from Sumerian into Akkadian).

2. “TO TRANSLATE IN SUMERIAN”: inim—bal AND *eme—bal

As a matter of fact, according to PSD, the verb inim—bal with the likely meaning “to translate” appears only in one Sumerian proverb (and its variants), which dates at the Old Babylonian period:

eme-gi₇-ta inim e-da-bal-e(-en) he₂-eb₂-da-gal₂ eme-gi₇ i-ri-dul-la(-aš),

“If it happens to you that you have to translate from the Sumerian, the Sumerian is hidden from you”.¹³

Besides, the common verb for “to translate” in Sumerian is not inim—bal, but *eme—bal, literally meaning “to change language, to pass from one language to another”. As a noun (meaning “translator, interpreter”) it appears in the administrative texts from the

⁹ According to PSD’s translation.

¹⁰ According to Alster 1997, I 13, rather than “to what you are speaking about” (as in PSD’s translation). Rather than “to an unskilled pupil” (Alster 1997, II 345a) this proverb could be referred to a scribe who cannot correctly interpret the omens of the gods.

¹¹ Alster 1997, I 203.

¹² Instead of “for dialogue”, in W.W. Hallo’s translation (Hallo 1968, 85).

¹³ UET 6/2 167: 41-42 and dupl.; cf. SP Coll 2.49 and UET 6/2 167: 4.

Old Akkadian period on (2nd half of the 3rd millennium BC), sometimes in connection with a geographical name (e.g. eme-bal Me-luh-ha^{ki}, “interpreter of the land of Meluhha”, eme-bal Mar-tu, “interpreter of the land of Martu”, and so on).¹⁴

As a verb eme-bal appears in the lexical lists from Ebla (Syria, 2nd half of the 3rd mill. BC), where it is followed by Eblaite glosses related to the Semitic root *'pl, “to answer”, “to take part in a conversation”.¹⁵ It is noteworthy that in the later (Akkadian) lexical lists (from the Old Babylonian period on, 2nd and 1st millennium BC) inim-bal and eme-bal tend to overlap: e.g. *napālu*, “speaker”, corresponds to Sumerian KA-bal (= inim-bal), but *nāpaltu* (“answer”, “satisfaction”) is equated with eme-bal.

This (later) overlapping confirms that at the very beginning eme-bal and inim-bal had different ranges of meaning. In fact it is only in connection with the ablative suffix /ta/ (in eme-gi₇-ta, “from the Sumerian language”) that inim-bal means “to translate” in the unique passage quoted in PSD as a proof of the equation inim-bal = “to translate”.

The proverbs – especially those of the so called “Collections” – can be considered as the pieces of a single mosaic. That is why it is possible to have the chance to understand the authentic meaning of inim-bal by combining two proverbs: the one quoted in PSD (UET 6/2 167, see above) and the proverb SP2.56:¹⁶

dub-sar ša₃-dab₅-ba nu-un-zu-a inim-bala-e me-da he₂-en-tum₃,
“If the scribe does not know how to grasp the meaning, how will the translation succeed?”¹⁷

3. SUMERIAN AS THE ‘DARK SIDE’ OF THE LANGUAGE AND THE NEED FOR INTERPRETATION

From the Babylonian point of view (at least from the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC) Sumerian is “obscure”, because its most authentic and deep sense (ša₃, literally its “core”) is so to speak “enveloped” (dul) by some sort of external wrapping. Nevertheless Sumerian is not accounted as a “foreign” language, both from a technical-historical and from an ideological-cultural point of view. Firstly the Mesopotamian civilization was culturally bilingual (actually multilingual) almost from its very beginning: the Babylonian scribes of the 2nd and 1st millennium knew both Akkadian and Sumerian, so that mere translations were of no use. Secondly Sumerian and Akkadian were accounted each as the mirror image of the other, as the two perfectly symmetrical halves of a single language. According to the so called “Incantation of Nudimmud” – part of an epic text known as *Emerkar and the Lord of Aratta*¹⁸ (lines 135-155, especially 141-146) – the world was divided into four geographic and linguistic areas: Šubur, Hamazi, Martu and the unity made up of Sumer (ki-en-gi) and Akkad (ki-uri). This unity is linguistically designated as eme-ha-mun, a mysterious compound word that was translated into Akkadian as *lisān mithurti*, i.e.

¹⁴ Gelb 1968; Heltzer 2000.

¹⁵ Fronzaroli 1980. Cf. Akkadian *apālu* A, “to satisfy a legitimate demand”, “to answer a question” (CAD A/II 155 ff.).

¹⁶ Alster 1997, I 56.

¹⁷ According to Alster’s translation.

¹⁸ See Mittermayer 2009.

“language of the correspondence/symmetry”. Why Sumerian was accounted as the obscure half of this “compound language” must still be explained.

Ancient Mesopotamian cultures shared with other civilizations the idea that human history is not linear, but circular. The same is true for every kind of historical development, included the history of language (or writing, being these two aspects of the communication hardly distinguished from each other in ancient Mesopotamia). According to the Sumerian myths, human writing was a gift of gods (in particular of Inanna, who had stolen it from Enki¹⁹) and at the very beginning²⁰ men “talked to Enlil in one and the same language”.²¹ The interpretation of the so called “Incantation of Nudimmud” is still very controversial, but from the beginning of the studies the time of the unique language has generally been described as a sort of “Golden Age” of mankind. The first step of the decline was determined by Enki, the wise god, who “put different languages in the mouth of men”,²² causing linguistic diversity. The literary echo of this myth can be found in the Biblical story of the Tower of Babel and the confusion of languages.²³

As a consequence of this linguistic change, according to Mesopotamian texts, all other languages of the world have become similar to animal cries, of course with the exception of Sumerian and Akkadian. No matter whether Sumerian should be identified as the original unique language²⁴ or not, this development – or decline from the Mesopotamian point of view – affected Sumerian and Akkadian, too: the original meaning of words (and of signs) was lost, as we can assume from the efforts to recover it, which are evident in the cuneiform literature of all time.

The Mesopotamian way to recover the original sense of writing is philology, which displays itself both in the (bilingual) lexical lists (where every sign is given its Sumerian reading and corresponding Akkadian equivalence) and in the ‘literary’ translations from Sumerian into Akkadian. It can happen that the Sumerian original text is given not the literal Akkadian equivalence (that of the lexical lists), but the one which was supposed to correspond to the original meaning. Sometimes one single translation is not enough and that is why two Akkadian translations can be given as equivalence to a single Sumerian line of text (‘alternative translations’).

The most meaningful example of this practice is the list of the names of the god Marduk at the end of the Babylonian poem known as *Enuma Eliš*. The (Sumerian) name of the god is given many different (Akkadian) translations (each of them possible from the Babylonian point of view), which all together disclose the personality and the power of Marduk (similar cases are the list of names of the god Ninurta in *Ninurta and Anzu* and the list of names of the temple Esagila).

From the Mesopotamian point of view it is possible to grasp the deep sense of the reality only through the study of the writing signs (or of the words). This study is not

¹⁹ *Inanna and Enki*.

²⁰ According to another interpretation, the text refers to the future (see bibliography in Mittermayer 2009).

²¹ ^dEn-lil₂-ra eme AŠ-am₃ he₂-en-na-da-ab-du₁₁ (*Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta* 146).

²² ka-ba eme-kur₂-kur₂ ... mi-ni(-in)-ĝar-ra (*Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta* 154).

²³ Genesis XI, 1-9.

²⁴ So, for instance, Vanstiphout 1994.

arbitrary, but depends upon a complex of rules, which all together form a sort of code. The Mesopotamian science primarily consists of all of the study of signs and the sign *par excellence* is the writing sign. So important is the interpretation of signs in the Sumerian civilization that this activity is put under the control of the gods, in particular of Nisaba, mistress both of wisdom and writing: she is usually represented with “the tablet of the stars” (dub-mul) on her knees.²⁵ Her task explains why in OECT 1, 16 iv 16 she is called inim bal-bal sa₆-sa₆, “who makes the interpretation (of signs) favourable”. It is not a chance that in the inscriptions of Gudea²⁶ Nisaba announces the building of Ningirsu’s temple (Eninnu) through “a bright star” (mul-ku₃): stars are the signs that the gods write in heaven and astronomy (or astrology) is nothing else but the study of this heavenly writing. This also explains why the range of meaning of inim—bal partially overlaps with that of bur₂, which expresses divination.

Both divination and translation had to go beyond the surface appearance of things and signs, in order to disclose their hidden sense, choosing it among many other possible meanings. A later development of the scribal art clearly demonstrates the affinity between divination and writing. Towards the end of the Mesopotamian civilization (end of the 8th – beginning of the 7th century BC) and probably under influence of the Egyptian writing system, the scribes of the last Assyrian kings invented new hieroglyphic signs for the representation of the royal names and titles (for instance bull or lion for “king”, mountain for “land”, plough for “Assyria”, and so on).²⁷

It is not a chance that king Esarhaddon called these signs (nowadays known among the scholars as “astroglyphs”) *lumāšt*, i.e. “constellations”, connecting the two kinds of signs *par excellence*: cuneiform and stars. This exoteric writing system probably aimed at protecting the kings from magical attacks. This way philology (i.e. the science of the interpretation of signs) could either reveal or conceal the true and authentic meaning of words (or images).

As in divination, even in writing coding and decoding are both parts of a single process. In fact the idea of reversibility and circularity was deeply rooted in the most ancient meaning of bal. That is why in connection with inim, bal can mean both “to interpret” (inim—bal) and “to change the meaning” of a word (inim … bal).

4. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion there is no proper Sumerian equivalence to our words “translation” and “to translate”; rather there are two words which partially correspond to them:

1. eme-bal (Akkadian *targumannu*), which means “interpreter”, “specialist in simultaneous translation”;
2. inim—bal, which means to “interpret”, “to uncover the true and authentic sense of a word (or sign) beyond the surface”, but also, on the contrary (and according to the ‘etymology’ of bal), “to reverse, to change the meaning of a word” (inim … bal).

²⁵ E.g. Gudea, Cylinder A V 21-25.

²⁶ Cylinder A VI 1.

²⁷ Roaf - Zgoll 2001.

According to some Old Babylonian proverbs the verb inim—bal could designate the translation from Sumerian into Akkadian as well. The meaning of inim—bal (“to interpret”, “to go beyond the word”) fits well in what we know about these translations, which are not just the conversion of a text from one language to another, but a new text resulting from the search for the true and deep sense which was supposed to be hidden in the original one.²⁸

ABBREVIATIONS

- CAD *The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of Chicago*, Chicago 1956-2010.
PSD *The Sumerian Dictionary of the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania*,
 The University Museum, Philadelphia 1984.

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²⁸ Cf. Seminara 2001.

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GLI ITITI E LA LORO RISCOPERTA NELLA TURCHIA REPUBBLICANA

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Among the reforms of Mustafà Kemal Atatürk in Turkey, there was also the cultural one and the re-evaluation of the past. The studies of the pre-classical history and the ancient cultures, particularly the Hittites, received a substantial boost.

Keywords: Turkey; Atatürk; Hittitology, cultural reform; re-evaluation of the past

Uno degli aspetti della radicale opera di riforme messa in atto in Turchia da Mustafà Kemal, appellato poi Atatürk, nel periodo che va dal 1923 al 1938, riguardò l'ambito culturale¹. Tra tutti i settori del sapere, un'attenzione particolare fu riservata agli studi di carattere storico-archeologico e linguistico, ritenuti essere l'appendice positivista della storia, e dunque utili a dimostrare scientificamente, con prove inconfutabili, quanto l'ideologia kemalista andava diffondendo.

Nell'ultimo periodo dell'Impero Ottomano le discipline storico-archeologiche in generale, relative all'Anatolia in particolare, erano state messe da parte, nonostante fosse palese l'interesse di alcuni governi stranieri ai siti archeologici turchi e venissero avviati scavi di notevole importanza in Anatolia, come quello di Boğazköy/Hattuša nel 1906. Con l'ascesa al governo di Mustafà Kemal, questa branca del sapere venne profondamente rivalutata. La visione che lo statista aveva al riguardo emerge chiaramente da un telegramma inviato il 22 marzo 1931 all'allora primo ministro İsmet İnönü: «*Le opere di grande e incomparabile valore appartenute alle civiltà ormai scomparse, che sono sepolte pressoché in tutte le regioni del nostro Paese, dovranno essere riportate alla luce, protette e classificate scientificamente in un prossimo futuro. Quanto ai monumenti che hanno sofferto della negligenza del passato, dovrebbero essere protetti con maggiore attenzione e, a tal fine, si dovrebbero formare più archeologi*»². Espressione di questo preciso volere è anche il decalogo che Atatürk dettò nel 1935 ad Afet İhan, sua figlia adottiva e personaggio chiave nella nascente Repubblica, e all'allora direttore della *Türk Tarih Kurumu*, “Società Turca per gli Studi Storici”, Hasan Cemil Çambel³.

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¹ In generale su Atatürk si veda Grassi 2008.

² Özgürç 1982, 6.

³ Özgürç 1982, 6-7. In questo decalogo sono contemplati tutti gli aspetti della valorizzazione e tutela delle antichità, dalle testimonianze scritte ai monumenti, sotto ogni punto di vista: dalla protezione contro i vandalismi, a quella contro il deterioramento provocato dagli agenti naturali; i finanziamenti che devono arrivare dalle fonti governative; la necessità di sensibilizzare la popolazione all'importanza dei reperti archeologici; il progetto di fare di Ankara, Istanbul, Bursa, Izmir ed Edirne ‘centri di antichità e di monumenti storici’ ad alto livello, per citarne solo alcuni.

L'intento di Atatürk, formatosi culturalmente all'epoca riformista e progressista delle Tanzimat "riforme"⁴, fu: dare solide basi culturali alla giovane Repubblica, rivalutando il passato più remoto, per giustificare sia l'unità nazionale presente che la forza stessa dell'etnia, se non 'razza', turca⁵.

1. I PRECETTI DELL'IDEOLOGIA KEMALISTA

Il nazionalismo kemalista fondava tutta la sua dottrina su sei precetti, elencati dallo stesso Atatürk ad A. İnan: unità politica, linguistica, geografica, genealogica, vincoli storici e vincoli morali⁶. La visione politica del fondatore della Turchia moderna tenne dunque le dovute distanze sia dal concetto di religione, che non avrà mai parte nell'ideologia laica kemalista, sia da quello di etnia, che invece verrà riportato in auge in un secondo momento per fronteggiare questioni pratiche.

L'esclusione del concetto di etnia nelle fasi iniziali dell'affermazione della politica del nuovo governo si rivelò estremamente funzionale: permise di accogliere nella Repubblica Turca chiunque, a qualsiasi etnia appartenesse, purché turcofono. E' pur vero che dopo il Trattato di Losanna del 1923 i musulmani turchi erano nettamente dominanti, costituendo il 97% del totale degli abitanti, ma non si potevano escludere i membri di altre etnie che pur risiedevano sul suolo turco, quali Armeni, Greci e Curdi. Per essere Turco, per appartenere cioè al nuovo stato, era necessario identificarsi in un gruppo politico-sociale che si riconosceva innanzitutto in una lingua comune. D'altra parte lo stesso statista sottolineò a più riprese l'inscindibile legame che vi era, dalla suo punto di vista, tra lingua e cultura turca: in un discorso del 1930 rimarcò che la lingua era senza dubbio l'elemento di coesione ed identificazione più importante in una nazione, pertanto coloro che si dichiaravano Turchi dovevano innanzitutto parlare il turco⁷. La lingua fu pertanto utilizzata quale strumento per inglobare le minoranze e a tal fine si attuarono numerose riforme, come l'eliminazione dall'insegnamento scolastico della lingua persiana e di quella araba, in favore del solo turco, e l'adozione dell'alfabeto latino per la sua scrittura.

La creazione di una solida coscienza nazionale fu una delle priorità del nuovo governo. Era infatti indispensabile che gli abitanti della nuova Turchia ritrovassero le loro radici in un passato nobile e glorioso in cui tutti potessero riconoscersi; per questo, tra tutte le scienze, quelle storico-archeologiche e linguistiche furono ampiamente rivalutate e fortemente patrociniate.

⁴ Questo termine è da intendersi 'riforme' sia per traduzione letterale, sia quale denominazione del periodo storico riformatore e progressista cominciato nel 1839. In questi anni vennero attuate una serie di riforme prendendo a modello la legislazione francese e in particolare le idee progressiste di Montesquieu. Le innovazioni di questo periodo servirono come prodromo per la Repubblica Turca; si veda Losano 2012, in particolare § 1 e nota 2. Per le tematiche generali affrontate in questo contributo, rimandiamo anche ad Atakuman 2008.

⁵ Sui concetti di nazionalismo turco, razza, e sui movimenti politico-culturali ad essi collegati: Losano 2012. Il sentimento nazionalistico che spinse Atatürk ad amare l'archeologia fu notevole, tanto che Özgürç (1982, 8) afferma che «è difficile separare Atatürk dall'archeologia in Turchia».

⁶ İnan 1930b, 13.

⁷ Arar 1981, 23-24.

2. IL TURAN, IL TURANISMO E IL TURCHISMO

Nell'ambito della rivalutazione del passato, vennero ripresi e riconsiderati gli ideali del *Turk Ocalari* ('Focolari Turchi'), movimento fondato nel 1911-1912, con il fine di dare nuovo vigore all'ideale di unità del popolo turco. A questo movimento si deve anche la diffusione del concetto di Turan quale patria ideale da cui avrebbero avuto origine i Turchi⁸. Nell'ottobre del 1935, per volere dello stesso Atatürk, venne costituita la *Türk Tarih Kurumu* "Società Turca per gli Studi Storici", sviluppo del *Türk Tarihi Tetkik Cemiyeti*, "Società Turca per le Ricerche Storiche", la cui espressione era la rivista *Belleten*, istituita nel 1930, sempre per interesse diretto dello statista. Molti dei membri di questa istituzione erano importanti personalità della cultura e della politica, solo per citarne alcuni: A. İnan, H.C. Çambel, Reşit Galip, Yusuf Ziya Özer, tutti, peraltro, amici personali di Atatürk. Quale supporto indispensabile alla *Türk Tarih Kurumu*, nel 1932, sempre su esortazione dello statista, venne fondata la *Türk Dili Tetkik Cemiyeti* "Società Turca per la Ricerca Linguistica", con il compito di dimostrare attraverso studi comparati l'importanza del turco tra tutte le altre lingue del mondo⁹.

Il riconoscere un passato comune a cui appellarsi non fu dunque un'idea originale di Atatürk: già in età ottomana, all'epoca delle *Tanzimat*, vi erano stati movimenti nazionalistici, come il citato *Turk Ocalari*, che inneggiavano ad una unità pre-ottomana del popolo turco nel mitico territorio del Turan. E' questo un leggendario paese collocato nell'Asia Centrale, considerato la culla delle popolazioni che, spinte da calamità naturali, in ondate migratorie diverse, avrebbero dato vita alle più grandi civiltà del passato preclassico. Il nazionalismo di età ottomana, che si appellava 'Turanismo' o 'Panturanismo', si riprometteva di unificare un territorio di vaste proporzioni, dall'area egea alla Cina, dall'India all'altopiano asiatico, ex Unione Sovietica, abbracciando anche l'Ungheria, la Finlandia, l'Estonia e la Lituania. Distinto dal 'Turanismo' o 'Panturanismo', almeno in origine, fu un altro movimento, il 'Turchismo' o 'Panturchismo'. Lo scopo del Turchismo era unificare sotto un'unica entità politica le popolazioni che si riconoscevano turche, anche se non risiedenti entro i confini dell'impero ottomano, come i Turchi della Russia meridionale o dell'Asia centrale. Successivamente si verificò una sovrapposizione

⁸ Con il termine Turan si alludeva ad un mitico territorio collocato in Asia Centrale. Il toponimo rimandava più ad una condizione ideologica che ad un'area geograficamente individuabile: una sorta di Eden, identificato solo in un secondo momento con il bassopiano turanico, tra l'Asia Centrale, il Turkmenistan, l'Uzbekistan e il Kazakistan. Originariamente il nome persiano Turan 'Terra dei Tur' abbracciava tutta l'area dell'Asia Centrale, senza chiari confini geografici. Secondo la leggenda, il popolo che l'abitava erano i Tura o Turiya, tribù nomade, noto fin dall'Avesta. La cultura iranica ha utilizzato in termine 'turanico' per indicare tutto ciò che non era iranico e l'identificazione dei Tura con i Turchi avvenne solo per questioni di assonanza: la somiglianza fonica dei due nomi favorì la sovrapposizione. Le identificazioni storiche sono ben diverse: probabilmente i Tura erano tribù appartenenti agli Sciiti ed ai Cimmeri. Per avvalorare l'identificazione dei Tura con i Turchi si ricorse anche allo *Shahnameh*, "Nomi dei re", opera del poeta iranico Ferdowsi, vissuto intorno al 1000 d.C., sebbene nel poema non si faccia mai alcun riferimento esplicito ad un legame tra i Tura e i Turchi. Secondo questo racconto leggendario, che ricostruisce la storia dalla creazione del mondo alla colonizzazione islamica, il figlio dell'imperatore Fereyudun si chiamava Tur/Turaj, riconosciuto successivamente come uno dei progenitori dei Turchi.

⁹ Gli studi condotti dalla *Türk Tarih Kurumu* furono resi pubblici in due congressi, nel 1932 e nel 1937; almeno tre furono i congressi tenuti dalla *Türk Dili Tetkik Cemiyeti*.

semantica: i termini ‘Turanismo’ e ‘Panturanismo’, ‘Turchismo’ e ‘Panturchismo’ furono usati come sinonimi, pur avendo nella loro genesi origini e finalità diverse¹⁰.

La politica di rivalutazione del passato preclassico promossa da Atatürk era basata su due teorie: i Turchi avevano abitato la Turchia da tempo immemorabile e la loro origine, da ricercare nell’area del Turan, era comune a quella di altre popolazione occidentali di stirpe indo-europea¹¹. Infatti, in epoca preistorica la popolazione del Turan, brachicefala¹², che già aveva scoperto l’allevamento, l’agricoltura, la lavorazione dei metalli, fu costretta a lasciare la sua sede originaria. Dall’Asia Centrale questa popolazione si diramò in tutte le direzioni, tanto ad est (Cina, India), quanto a ovest. Il gruppo che migrò verso ovest si fermò in Anatolia che divenne così la culla della civiltà occidentale¹³. Da qui gruppi migratori partirono a più riprese verso ovest e verso sud-est, dando origine alle civiltà preclassiche: la sumerica, la mesopotamica, l’egea, l’egiziana, l’italica¹⁴.

Tra i sostenitori e teorici di questa ideologia vi fu anche H.C. Çambel, padre di Halet Çambel, che ricopriva l’incarico istituzionale di addetto militare del governo in Germania. Questi era amico personale di Atatürk ed era stato membro attivo nella fondazione della Repubblica. In un suo scritto a sostegno delle idee kemaliste, affermò che gli Egei e gli Ittiti, che avevano colonizzato l’Asia Minore, nonché gli Sciiti, i Sumeri, gli Egiziani erano tutte popolazioni strettamente legate tra loro perché discendevano da un unico ceppo comune: quello dei popoli originari delle miniere di ferro degli Altai¹⁵.

3. GLI ITITI PROGENITORI DEI TURCHI MODERNI

A supportare e provare con dati scientifici incontrovertibili questa teoria fu dedicata la tesi di dottorato di A. İnan, *L’Anatolie le pays de la ‘Race’ Turque, Publication de la Faculté des Sciences Économiques et Sociales de l’Université de Genève*, Genève 1941, svolta presso la cattedra del Prof. Eugen Pittard a Ginevra e poi pubblicata a cura della stessa Università. İnan fu tra i membri fondatori della *Türk Tarihî Tektik Cemiyeti* “Società Turca per le Ricerche Storiche”, organo che si occupava del fondamento teorico e storico delle ideologie promosse. Per la sua ricerca İnan utilizzò metodologie antropometriche, del tutto pionieristiche per l’epoca e, attraverso le misurazioni di 64.000 crani di individui

¹⁰ Si veda Losano 2012, §§ 2-3.

¹¹ Erano questi ideali circolanti fin dal XIX sec. nell’ambito del Turanismo. Tra gli autori di opere che contribuirono a fondare e diffondere queste posizioni ricordiamo: C. Bosenski (1869); L. Cahun (1896), le prime poesie nazionaliste di M. Emîn; le opere di A. Vámbéry, nonché il principale teorico dell’ideologia nazionalista turca, Ziyâ Gök Alp, fervente panturcista, formatosi sull’opera di Cahun: egli affermò in una sua poesia: «la patria per i Turchi non è la Turchia né il Turkestan, la patria è un paese grande ed eterno, il Tûrân». Dopo la Prima Guerra Mondiale questi ideali furono portata avanti dall’associazione *Türk Oğlâghi* ‘Il Focolare turco’ fondata nel 1912, con la rivista *Türk Yurdu*.

¹² Particolare rilevante per l’epoca in cui, tra le varie peculiarità proprie della razza indo-europea, si riconosceva il brachicefalismo.

¹³ Anche questo ideale era già circolante, promosso dal movimento denominato *Anadolugiuluk* ‘Anatolismo’, nato ad opera di giovani universitari riunitisi intorno alla rivista *Anadolu Mecmuası*, ma che ebbe vita breve: dal 1924 al 1925.

¹⁴ Queste teorie furono esposte in forma canonica nell’opera di İnan 1930a, da cui fu poi ricavata una *forma brevis*, İnan 1931.

¹⁵ Çambel 1932, 201.

provenienti dall'Anatolia e dalla Tracia e la successiva comparazione con le misure dei crani Ittiti, arrivò a dimostrare che l'Anatolia era stata da sempre la patria di genti di razza turca brachicefala.

Stando a questi studi, pertanto, gli Ittiti potevano ritenersi i progenitori dei Turchi moderni sulla base di inconfutabili prove scientifiche. İnan ottenne il titolo di Dottore di Ricerca in Sociologia nel 1939 e poi una cattedra all'Università Ankara nel 1950.

Le tesi di İnan ben si conciliavano con quanto già da qualche decennio era stato provato da altri studiosi, primo tra tutti Bedřich Hrozný, del tutto estranei alla causa turca, cioè che gli Ittiti parlavano una lingua indo-europea¹⁶. Da queste premesse si comprende il motivo del grande interesse di Atatürk e dei suoi collaboratori per questa civiltà e la sua storia: tra tutte le popolazioni preclassiche che si erano succedute sul suolo anatolico, agli Ittiti fu riservato un posto d'onore, poiché potevano essere considerati l'anello di congiunzione tra le popolazioni turaniche di epoca pre-storica e i Turchi di epoca moderna, di cui erano ritenuti essere diretti progenitori.

La propaganda politica dunque utilizzò dati scientifici certi, quali la matrice indo-europea, l'appartenenza alla razza brachicefala degli Ittiti e il fatto che si fossero stanziali in Anatolia, mescolandoli alle notizie pseudo-storiche di derivazione epico-letteraria, come l'ipotetica migrazione dal mitico Turan. Dalla fusione di questi elementi, nacque un assioma che rispondeva pienamente alle finalità del governo: gli Ittiti erano a tutti gli effetti da ritenersi una popolazione anatolica, dunque turca, e da essi discendevano direttamente i turchi moderni. Ben si comprende dunque l'appoggio incondizionato del governo agli scavi archeologici di siti preclassici come Alacahöyük, Ahlatlibel, Karalar, Göllüdağ, Boghazköy/Ḫattuša, come è provato dalle concessioni di scavo che Kurt Bittel, direttore della missione archeologica a Ḫattuša, ottenne incondizionatamente in quegli anni: da questi siti, che rappresentavano l'espressione diretta delle civiltà da cui poi erano discesi i Turchi moderni, potevano venire prove inconfutabili a sostegno delle tesi divulgate.

L'allora direttore di scavo di Alacahöyük, Hamit Zübeyr Koşay¹⁷, nel presentare il contributo di Alacahöyük alla storia della civiltà, affermò in un suo scritto che la cultura dell'età del rame di Alaca presentava connessioni sia con le culture pre-sciite della Russia meridionale e dell'area del Kuban, sia con quella dei Sumeri per la somiglianza delle tombe reali di Ur con quelle lì rinvenute. Queste affinità a suo avviso erano imputabili alla comune origine derivante dalle migrazioni dei popoli che dall'Asia Centrale si erano diramati ovunque: dalla Cina alla Scandinavia. L'antica cultura di Alacahöyük, sosteneva Koşay, era strettamente imparentata in tutto e per tutto con quella turca, essendone la diretta antecedente. Era inoltre innegabile l'apporto che la razza turca aveva dato all'umanità: essa era stata fondamentale per la nascita, la diffusione e il progresso della civiltà, tanto in età preistorica che storica¹⁸.

¹⁶ Hrozný 1915; 1917.

¹⁷ Originario di un paesino degli Urali, messosi in luce per le sue doti scientifiche, fu sostenuto negli studi dal governo dapprima in Turchia e poi in Ungheria. Una volta tornato in Turchia, divenne Ministro dell'Educazione e successivamente direttore del Museo Etnografico di Ankara. Dall'alto della sua posizione in ambito politico, supportò sempre, dal 1931 in poi, lo scavo di Boghazköy/Ḫattuša.

¹⁸ Koşay 1943, 31-32.

4. LA TEORIA LINGUISTICA

Come abbiamo già accennato, uno dei punti di forza dello storicismo kemalista trovava fondamento nelle teorie linguistiche. Tra le tesi diffuse vi fu anche quella denominata *Güneş Dil Teorisi* “Teoria della Lingua del Sole”, secondo cui il turco era l’idioma più vicino a quello da cui tutti gli altri avevano avuto origine, la ‘Lingua del Sole’, appunto, parlata nel mitico Turan. Y.Z. Özer, di professione avvocato, membro attivo della Società Turca per la Ricerca Storica, in uno studio presentato al primo congresso della Società nel 1932, arrivò ad affermare la seguente teoria: quando le popolazioni del Turan, costituite da tribù sia ariane che semitiche, lasciarono la loro sede originaria in epoca neolitica, erano tutte parlanti turco; separatisi poi per fattori esterni, culturali, climatici etc., ogni popolo sviluppò un idioma diverso, ma la lingua d’origine restava il turco, come era dimostrato dalle connessioni esistenti tra le lingue semitiche e quelle arie. Da ciò derivava anche che i Turchi, da sempre, avevano parlato il turco e da sempre erano stati Turchi¹⁹.

5. L’ISTITUZIONE DI NUOVE CATTEDRE E LA FORMAZIONE DI GIOVANI STUDIOSI TURCHI

Tra i meriti che possiamo riconoscere al processo di rivalutazione del passato preclassico kemalista, oltre al rilascio delle concessioni di scavo, vi fu l’istituzione di nuovi insegnamenti umanistici nelle Università di Istanbul ed Ankara. In questi Atenei vennero istituite le cattedre di Ittito, Sumerico, Cinese, Ungherese, Latino, Linguistica, Geografia, Storia, lingue e culture con cui i Turchi erano entrati in qualche modo in contatto nel corso della storia. Tra i giovani cultori di queste discipline vi furono quelli che poi diventeranno note personalità nell’ambito degli studi ittitologici, come ad esempio: Tahsin Özgür, Nimet Dinçer-Özgür, Mustafà Kalaç.

In questa politica culturale, Atatürk fu lungimirante e desiderò dare alla Turchia studiosi di alto livello internazionale nelle discipline storico-archeologiche e per questo inviò all’estero giovani promettenti, affinché approfondissero la loro preparazione, imparassero lingue straniere e nuove metodologie di ricerca cosicché, una volta tornati, potessero valorizzare i beni storico archeologici della madrepatria. Tra questi giovani vi furono lo stesso Koşay, oltre a Remzi Oğuz Arik, che fu il primo archeologo turco e scavò anche ad Alacahöyük insieme a Koşay e Sedat Alp.

Analogamente, lo statista fu propenso ad invitare professori stranieri nelle maggiori Università turche per promuovere gli insegnamenti delle discipline storico-archeologiche²⁰. A tal fine anche la Turchia, come gli Stati Uniti, si mostrò propensa ad accogliere gli studiosi tedeschi di origine ebraica costretti a lasciare il loro paese a causa delle persecuzioni razziali. Secondo Atatürk, infatti, proprio sotto l’egida della comune origine delle razze, i popoli dovevano trovare la motivazione per riunirsi, pur mantenendo la propria identità culturale, politica e nazionale.

Fu così che studiosi come Benno Landsberger, Hans Gustav Güterbock, ebreo da parte di padre, ottennero una cattedra all’università di Ankara dove avviarono gli insegnamenti di

¹⁹ Özer 1932, 246.

²⁰ Özgür 1982, 7-8.

Assiriologia e Ittitologia²¹. In questo periodo ad Ankara si formò quel gruppo di giovani ed entusiasti studiosi che Sedat Alp definì «*Çivi Yazısı İlmi'nin Ankara'daki Kurucuları*» «i fondatori dello studio del cuneiforme ad Ankara». Costui, come abbiamo già accennato, fu tra i giovani brillanti inviati in Germania dal governo ed è interessante seguire le vicende della sua vita in quegli anni, perché strettamente legate a quelle che favorirono lo sviluppo e l'affermarsi degli studi ittitologici per diretto interesse del governo turco.

6. IL SOGGIORNO IN GERMANIA DI SEDAT ALP E L'AFFERMAZIONE DELL'ITTIATOLOGIA IN TURCHIA

Il giovane Alp fu mandato in Germania nel 1932 per approfondire le discipline storico-archeologiche. Dapprima egli si dedicò allo studio del tedesco presso un liceo di provincia, imparando mediamente duecento parole al giorno, e successivamente, tra il 1933-1934, su diretto invito del ministro turco dell'Educazione, Reşit Galip, si trasferì a Berlino per l'apprendimento dell'Archeologia e della Storia antica. Qualche tempo dopo essersi stabilito nella capitale tedesca, Alp assistette ad una conferenza di Fritz Schachermeyr sugli Ittiti e sugli Akkadi. Rimasto affascinato da queste popolazioni e dalla loro storia, il giovane manifestò il desiderio studiare Ittitologia. Dopo aver ricevuto il permesso dal suo governo, si recò a Lipsia dove fu per molto tempo l'unico studente di Johannes Friedrich; contemporaneamente studiò Assiriologia con B. Landsberger. In quegli anni il governo turco inviava ai giovani all'estero il giornale 'Ulus' e fu proprio da questa fonte che Alp venne a conoscenza della nuova facoltà di Lingue, Storia, Geografia che si andava istituendo ad Ankara. Preso contatto con l'allora Ispettore Ministeriale di Berlino, Cevat Dursunoğlu, avanzò la proposta di chiamare ad Ankara, per la cattedra di Assiriologia, B. Landsberger che, essendo ebreo, era stato licenziato dall'Università di Lipsia ed era rimasto senza lavoro. La richiesta di Alp venne accolta di buon grado dal governo e così nel 1936 Landsberger venne invitato in Turchia a ricoprire l'insegnamento di Assiriologia ad Ankara, proposta che il professore tedesco accettò senza esitazioni. Era interesse della Turchia che i professori invitati ad insegnare nei propri Atenei avessero a disposizione tutto quanto fosse loro necessario per svolgere al meglio il loro mandato, pertanto quando Landsberger espresse il desiderio di avere con sé la biblioteca che fu di Heinrich Zimmer, suo professore, venne subito accontentato.

Al seguito di Lansberger giunse ad Ankara anche Hans Gustav Güterbock, che all'epoca aveva 28 anni, e stava conducendo presso di lui un dottorato in Assiriologia e Ittitologia. Come Lansberger, anche Güterbock era stato costretto a lasciare la Germania per motivi razziali. L'arrivo del giovane studioso destò sorpresa e interesse tra gli allievi, che non si aspettavano di incontrare un così giovane e fascinoso professore. Oltre che per la sua competenza nella disciplina, Güterbock fu apprezzato anche per le doti umane di tolleranza e di pazienza riguardo all'insegnamento stesso. Il giovane tedesco imparò subito la lingua turca e restò colpito dall'entusiasmo e dal desiderio di apprendere degli studenti, tanto da dire in seguito di non aver più avuto un simile gruppo di allievi; dal 1933 al 1936 Güterbock fu anche filologo a Böghazköy.

²¹ Per queste notizie si veda M. Doğan Alparslan 2001.

Per comprendere pienamente i criteri che il governo turco applicava nella scelta di accogliere gli studiosi dalla Germania, è esemplare il caso di Emil Forrer.

Venuto a conoscenza della grande apertura della Turchia agli studi di Ittitologia, anche Forrer desiderò trasferirvisi allo scopo di ottenere un insegnamento universitario²². Diversamente però da Landsberger e Güterbock, invitati dal governo stesso su segnalazione di un loro giovane studente, Forrer entrò autonomamente in contatto con la diplomazia turca. Ai funzionari giustificò il suo desiderio di trasferirsi in Turchia adducendo ragioni personali e illustrando le restrizioni che, a suo dire, il governo tedesco stava apportando alla disciplina. Ricevuti in un primo momento riscontri positivi alle sue richieste, Forrer si impegnò a fondo nell'elaborazione di un progetto di insegnamento da presentare alle autorità turche. Il progetto era estremamente complesso e articolato prevedendo quattordici lingue antiche che in qualche modo avevano avuto a che fare con l'Anatolia: dal protohettico, all'ittita, al luvio, all'ario, al persiano; erano poi proposti quattro seminari di approfondimenti paleografici e linguistici, tre diversi insegnamenti di storia ittita, divisa per fasi, antica, media, nuova, sei seminari di cultura generale ittita, luvia e hurrita (dalla politica alla religione); ancora, seminari di economia, società, diritto, archeologia. Le autorità turche in un primo momento sembrarono approvare questo piano di lavoro, senza tuttavia formulare alcun impegno concreto. Con l'appoggio di alcuni membri della *Türk Tarih Kurumu* solo alla fine di febbraio del 1937 Forrer riuscì ad entrare in contatto con il decano della Facoltà di Filosofia di Ankara e la lettera in cui lo studioso illustra dettagliatamente il suo progetto, si chiude con la sua e il saluto nazista 'Heil Hitler!'.

Il piano di Forrer, seppur appoggiato e sponsorizzato dalla Società di Cultura, fu accolto in Turchia con un certo gelo; le notizie che circolarono sottolinearono soprattutto gli elevati costi che la sua applicazione avrebbe comportato, ma non si può escludere che nella decisione di non invitare Forrer rientrassero anche motivazioni politiche. In ogni caso, con l'arrivo ad Ankara di Landsberger e poi di Güterbock nel 1936, fu palese che non vi fosse un concreto interesse nei riguardi di Forrer, che infatti non fu mai chiamato.

Nel frattempo Sedat Alp continuava il suo soggiorno in Germania cercando di imparare il più possibile dagli insegnamenti dei maggiori orientalisti dell'epoca: Hans Ehelolf, Emil Forrer, Bruno Meissner, Adam Falkenstein. L'impegno richiesto era notevole: lo studio era intenso, molti i corsi da seguire; Alp cominciava a studiare alle 5,00 del mattino e continuava per tutto il resto della giornata. L'eccessivo carico di lavoro e la notevole pressione psicologica gli causarono dei problemi di salute, come l'alopecia di cui soffrì in quegli anni. Nel 1940 conseguì il titolo di Dottore di Ricerca in Ittitologia in Germania, diventando il primo studente turco ad essersi addorottato in questa disciplina. Si era intanto giunti al 1941, alle soglie del Secondo Conflitto Mondiale e gli studenti turchi all'estero, Alp compreso, furono richiamati in patria.

Poco dopo il suo rimpatrio, Alp divenne professore di Ittitologia all'Università di Ankara. Intorno al 1948 Güterbock e Landsberger lasciarono la Turchia, forse per l'inasprimento delle relazioni interuniversitarie. Landsberger si trasferì a Chicago, mentre Güterbock si fermò un anno in Svezia, dove insegnò all'Università di Uppsala, per partire

²² Per le notizie su E. Forrer rimandiamo a Oberheid 2007, in particolare 207 e segg.

anche lui alla volta di Chicago nel 1949, dove poi restò e gettò le basi per il progetto del *Chicago Hittite Dictionary*, tutt'ora *in fieri*. Alla loro partenza i due professori lasciarono un'avviata e fiorente scuola di studiosi turchi di alto livello nei vari campi della disciplina.

7. CONCLUSIONI

Da questa breve panoramica sulle vicende che coinvolsero direttamente gli studi di Ittitologia e i suoi protagonisti all'epoca della fondazione della Repubblica Turca, è evidente il significativo interesse di Atatürk per questa disciplina, oltre che per gli studi storico-archeologici in generale, a prescindere dalle motivazioni che ne furono alla base. Notevole infatti fu l'impulso che ad essa venne dato, sia in Turchia che all'estero, e gli sviluppi ulteriori che seguirono, i cui effetti positivi, dal punto di vista scientifico, si protraggono ancor oggi.

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**MAIKI, MISSIONE ARCHEOLOGICA ITALIANA NEL KURDISTAN IRACHENO:
LA CARTA ARCHEOLOGICA DELL'AREA DI PAIKULI,
OBIETTIVI E METODOLOGIE APPLICATE**

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In the fall of 2012 the Italian Archaeological Mission in the Iraqi Kurdistan signed an agreement with the Sulaimaniyah Antiquities Directorate, for creating the Archaeological Map of the area surrounding the Sasanian monument of Paikuli. In the course of the four campaigns, which have been carried out, the team has started to survey the area, has developed a methodology for the classification of ceramic materials and started the preliminary study of the findings. Furthermore, in 2013 MAIKI commenced an ethnographic research aimed at studying the religious heritage of the area.

Keywords: Kurdistan; Paikuli; archaeological map; pottery; sheykh

La Missione Archeologica Italiana nel Kurdistan Iracheno (MAIKI) del Dipartimento di Scienze dell'Antichità della "Sapienza" Università di Roma, condiretta dalla Prof.ssa Maria Vittoria Fontana e dal Dr. Luca Colliva, si propone lo studio dello sviluppo storico, linguistico e culturale della regione curda in epoca storica. Dalla sua nascita nel 2011, quale erede delle attività del *team* italiano guidato dal Prof. Carlo Giovanni Cereti e attivo nel Kurdistan Iracheno dal 2006¹, la MAIKI ha avviato una proficua collaborazione con gli enti locali curdi deputati allo studio e alla salvaguardia dei beni storico-archeologici e culturali della regione e in particolare con i Direttorati delle Antichità, con l'*High Commission for the Erbil Citadel Revitalization* (HCECR) e con i tre principali musei archeologici della regione, il Museo di Sulaimaniyah, il Museo di Erbil ed il Museo di Duhok. Tutte le attività vengono programmate e realizzate in sinergia con questi enti locali, prevedono la partecipazione attiva di archeologi e funzionari curdi e sono effettuate grazie al sostegno del Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale, dell'Ambasciata d'Italia a Baghdad e dell'Ufficio Consolare Italiano a Erbil.

In questi anni la MAIKI ha scelto di focalizzare le sue attività sullo studio del sito archeologico di Paikuli e dell'area ad esso limitrofa (fig. 1). Il monumento sasanide di Paikuli sorge sui primi contrafforti occidentali dei Monti Zagros in prossimità di uno dei passi che permettono l'attraversamento di questi rilievi montuosi; nell'antichità questa zona si collocava al confine tra la provincia sasanide nota come Āśūrestān, la provincia reale dov'era situata la capitale Ctesifonte, e le regioni dell'altopiano iranico; in questo luogo i notabili dell'impero attesero l'arrivo di Narseh (293-302 d.C.) dopo la sua vittoria su Wahrām III per riconoscerlo come nuovo sovrano dell'impero sasanide. A memoria di questo avvenimento il sovrano fece erigere un imponente monumento turriforme

¹ Cereti - Giunta 2011; Cereti *et al.* 2012.

caratterizzato dalla presenza di una lunga iscrizione bilingue in mediopersiano e partico, nella quale vengono narrate le vicende che lo portarono al trono (fig. 2).

Nell'autunno del 2012 la MAIKI ha raggiunto un accordo quinquennale con il Direttorato delle Antichità di Sulaimaniyah, guidato dal Dr. Kamal Rashid Rahim, per lo studio del monumento di Paikuli e della sua iscrizione e per la realizzazione di una carta archeologica dell'area. Agli studi storico-filologici sull'iscrizione bilingue di Narseh, portati avanti dal Prof. C.G. Cereti e dal Dr. Gianfilippo Terribili fin dal 2006 e ora confluiti nella MAIKI², si sono pertanto affiancate attività di *survey* nonché di studio storico-archeologico e antropologico del territorio.

1. LA CARTA ARCHEOLOGICA DELL'AREA DI PAIKULI

Il programma della MAIKI prevede la realizzazione di una carta archeologica della valle lungo la quale corre la strada che collega le città di Chamchamal e Darbandikan; l'area, delimitata a nord e a sud dai fiumi Basra e Dyala, copre una superficie di circa 835 km² e comprende gran parte dei sottodistretti di Sangaw e Pebaz (fig. 1)³.

La zona è stata oggetto di *survey* pubblicato nella seconda metà del secolo scorso; da allora, complici l'instabilità politica e gli scontri militari, le attività archeologiche nella regione sono state minime, se non completamente assenti.

Date queste premesse, la realizzazione di una carta archeologica aggiornata dell'area, che permetta l'identificazione e il posizionamento di tutti i siti archeologici o di interesse storico-culturale, rappresenta non solo uno strumento fondamentale per lo studio dell'occupazione antropica della regione, ma anche un elemento propedeutico per ogni attività di protezione e valorizzazione dei beni storico-archeologici presenti nell'area. La consapevolezza dei rischi che corre il patrimonio storico-archeologico della regione, a causa della repentina crescita economica ed edilizia prima e dello scontro in atto con Daesh ora, ha reso prioritaria la necessità, per i Direttorati delle Antichità, di dotarsi con urgenza di tutti gli strumenti atti a proteggere questo immenso patrimonio.

Questi pericoli sono presenti anche nell'area oggetto del nostro studio, nonostante essa sia scarsamente abitata e solo marginalmente coinvolta dal repentino sviluppo economico della regione. Due siti archeologici sono stati distrutti e altrettanti sono stati danneggiati da opere di livellamento e irrigazione connesse alla crescente attività agricola. Nel corso delle due campagne di *survey*, inoltre, in almeno due occasioni sono state trovate, e immediatamente segnalate alle autorità competenti, tracce di scavi clandestini.

Le attività legate alla realizzazione della carta archeologica hanno avuto inizio nel 2012. Ad oggi la MAIKI ha realizzato quattro campagne, due dedicate al *survey* e alla raccolta di dati sul territorio e due focalizzate sullo studio e la catalogazione dei materiali archeologici raccolti⁴.

² Cereti - Terribili 2012; 2014.

³ I confini amministrativi dell'area sono attualmente soggetti a frequenti modifiche; per i nomi e i confini dei sottodistretti sono state usate come riferimento le mappe realizzate nel 2001 da UNOPS e UNJHIC.

⁴ Le quattro campagne hanno visto la partecipazione, insieme al team italiano e sotto la costante supervisione del loro direttore, il Dr. Kamal Rashid Rahim, di Zana Abdulkarim Qadir, Nawshirwan Aziz Mohammed, Khanda Osman Fatah e Parwin Yawar Manda del Direttorato delle Antichità di Sulaimaniyah.

La riconoscizione sul terreno è stata preceduta da uno studio preliminare di immagini satellitari di diversa provenienza e data. Tra queste si distinguono le immagini CORONA, recentemente declassificate, precedenti quello che è sicuramente l'evento recente di più grande impatto sul popolamento della regione, ovvero la campagna di *al-Anfal* (1986-1989) condotta da Saddam Hussein contro la popolazione curda (v. *infra*). Uno strumento fondamentale, inoltre, è costituito dalla banca dati geografica fornita da Google (*Google Earth*) che offre immagini attuali a buona definizione per gran parte dell'area sotto esame. Una terza fonte è costituita da stereo-copie di immagini *QuickBird* ad alta risoluzione, acquistate per porzioni limitate del territorio (in particolare l'area nelle immediate vicinanze di Paikuli). L'analisi di queste fonti ha portato all'individuazione di quasi duecento possibili siti di interesse archeologico e antropologico. Questo tipo di analisi, però, non può che essere preliminare a una riconoscizione sul campo. Le primissime campagne, infatti, hanno chiarito molte situazioni dubbie osservate dalle immagini satellitari: in diversi casi piccoli villaggi abbandonati possono essere facilmente interpretabili, a prima vista, come potenziali aree archeologiche e solo una verifica sul campo è in grado di stabilire in modo chiaro la loro natura. D'altro canto diverse tipologie di siti archeologici, facilmente individuabili dalle riconoscizioni sul campo, non lasciano sul terreno tracce osservabili dall'alto⁵. Le attività di *survey* si sono focalizzate, in questa primissima fase, sulla verifica dei siti segnalati nell'atlante iracheno edito nel 1975 e delle aree a essi limitrofe. Trattandosi, nella quasi totalità dei casi accertati, di siti di dimensioni importanti è chiaro come una loro adeguata e aggiornata documentazione sia premessa necessaria a qualsiasi ricostruzione storica del sistema insediativo dell'area in esame. La riconoscizione intensiva dell'intero territorio è in atto, pur con evidenti limiti dovuti ai recenti conflitti e al fatto che non tutta la zona interessata dal *survey* sia stata bonificata dalla presenza di mine antiuomo.

Un ulteriore problema che si è riscontrato fin dalle prime fasi di lavoro è quello della mancanza sostanziale di una cartografia di base adeguata. A questa si aggiunge la situazione caotica creatasi dopo i conflitti della fine degli anni '80 del secolo scorso con i toponimi dei villaggi. Durante la campagna di *al-Anfal* tutti i centri dell'area sotto esame furono spopolati e distrutti. In seguito alla Prima Guerra del Golfo molti centri sono stati ricostruiti nello stesso sito dei precedenti, mentre altri sono stati riedificati in luoghi differenti, pur mantenendo il toponimo d'origine. Infine, nel corso di questi ultimi 25 anni sono stati costruiti nuovi insediamenti, spesso di piccole o piccolissime dimensioni, che riprendono anch'essi il toponimo utilizzato per indicare il villaggio principale dell'area. L'attuale modello insediativo, dunque, è quantomeno dinamico e non ancora cristallizzato, sia per quanto riguarda posizioni e dimensioni dei centri sia per quel che riguarda la toponomastica. È interessante osservare come gli abitanti dell'area, per la maggior parte sedentarizzati da non più di 100-120 anni, non percepiscano questa confusione nella toponomastica e nella stessa dislocazione spaziale dei villaggi come un'anomalia⁶. Per formalizzare al meglio la situazione fin qui descritta si è resa necessaria una mappatura di

⁵ Durante le riconoscizioni sono state rilevate due tombe rupestri (MPS-S0013A, MPS-S0014) e due aree con dispersione di materiale litico (MPS-S0009; MPS-S0010) non visibili nelle foto satellitari.

⁶ Vi sono numerose testimonianze del fatto che l'apposizione di più nomi a un villaggio sia uso comune nelle aree rurali del Kurdistan iracheno.

tutti i centri attualmente abitati nell'area, segnandone la posizione precisa e il toponimo usato dalle persone che vi abitavano, in modo da realizzare *ex novo* la cartografia di base, strumento fondamentale anche per la programmazione e il proseguimento della ricerca antropologica.

Tutti questi dati sono stati inseriti in una piattaforma GIS collegata a un database relazionale collaborativo creato allo scopo, che raccoglie tutti i dati geografici acquisiti, le informazioni di carattere prettamente archeologico e i dati antropologici raccolti⁷.

Le due campagne di *survey* fino ad ora realizzate hanno portato al riconoscimento di 95 villaggi, 30 siti archeologici, 21 cimiteri moderni o contemporanei e 17 aree legate al culto degli *sheykh* (vedi *infra*). Tutti i luoghi di interesse, identificati con l'acronimo MSP (*MAIKI Survey Project*) seguito da un numero progressivo di quattro cifre, sono stati georeferenziati grazie all'utilizzo di un GPS palmare e inseriti nel database e nella piattaforma GIS (figg. 3-4).

Per ogni sito archeologico è stata indicata la presunta area di estensione, riconosciuta attraverso la presenza di strutture affioranti o materiali di superficie, e l'eventuale presenza di sotto-unità (*complex*)⁸, nei casi in cui erano evidenti aree diverse per funzione, tipologia dei resti o cronologia dei manufatti archeologici. La presunta area di estensione di ogni *complex* è stata anch'essa annotata.

In ogni sito è stato raccolto tutto il materiale ceramico considerato diagnostico e tutti i tipi d'impasto attestati. Tutti i materiali litici e gli oggetti metallici non contemporanei (ovvero non ascrivibili al XX e XXI secolo) sono stati raccolti; le ossa sono state raccolte solo quando rinvenute in contesti archeologici significativi (tombe, stretta connessione con altri materiali archeologici, ecc.) o in caso di presenza di tracce di lavorazione.

Lo studio dei siti e dei manufatti archeologici è ancora in fase preliminare e i dati di cui disponiamo sono da considerare estremamente parziali; tuttavia possiamo confermare un'occupazione antropica dell'area almeno dal periodo protostorico e l'esistenza di siti di grandi dimensioni che presentano tracce di un insediamento continuato quanto meno dal periodo di Uruk a quello proto-islamico (MPS-S0013).

Una prima analisi dei materiali, ed in particolare il ritrovamento di frammenti di *Bevelled Rim Bowls*, ha permesso di identificare fasi relative al periodo di Uruk in due siti (MSP-S0013 e MSP-S0034); quattro siti (MSP-S0005, MSP-S0012, MPS-S0013 e MSP-S0031) presentano materiali databili al periodo ellenistico, *Bowls with Inturned Rim*, e due siti (MSP-S0013 e MSP-S0037) presentano frammenti di ceramica decorata a stampo con iconografie sasanidi (Fig. 5). Ceramica proto-islamica (VIII secolo) e di periodo abbaside (VIII-XIII secolo) è stata rinvenuta in cinque siti (MSP-S0004, MSP-S0012, MSP-S0013, MSP-S0032 e MSP-S0037; fig. 6), mentre manufatti di periodo ottomano (XVI-XVIII secolo), come le caratteristiche *Ottoman Pipes*, sono attestati in sette dei siti visitati (MSP-S0004, MSP-S0008, MSP-S0011, MSP-S0012, MSP-S0013, MSP-S0033 e MSP-S0045).

⁷ Si ringrazia la BraDypUS s.a., l'ass. culturale Routes e lo Studio 3R per il supporto fornito alla MAIKI attraverso la realizzazione, lo sviluppo e il costante aggiornamento degli strumenti informatici della missione.

⁸ I *complex* sono indicati dal codice identificativo del sito seguito da una lettera maiuscola (es. MPS-S0013A).

2. LO STUDIO DEI MATERIALI ARCHEOLOGICI

I materiali raccolti nel corso del *survey* costituiscono un *corpus* quantitativamente notevole e molto eterogeneo; ogni classe di materiali, inoltre, presenta una vasta gamma di produzioni, relative a un ampio arco cronologico.

Durante le due campagne dedicate allo studio dei reperti è stata messa a punto la metodologia di classificazione dei materiali ed è stato avviato lo studio preliminare dei ritrovamenti. Tra i materiali studiati particolare attenzione è stata dedicata alla ceramica.

La classificazione è finalizzata all'identificazione delle differenti produzioni attestate nell'area, al riconoscimento del livello tecnologico raggiunto dagli artigiani locali nei diversi periodi di occupazione e all'individuazione dei manufatti di importazione e della loro provenienza. Questi studi sono funzionali alla datazione dei siti archeologici e al riconoscimento dell'orizzonte cronologico delle differenti fasi di occupazione dell'area. Lo studio dei materiali si avvale di analisi archeometriche realizzate in collaborazione con il Prof. Mario Piacentini del Dipartimento di Scienze di Base e Applicate per l'Ingegneria della Sapienza Università di Roma e con il Dr. Giolj Guidi. I dati sui materiali confluiscono anch'essi nel database relazionale utilizzato per i siti archeologici e a questo fine sono state messe a punto tre schede attinenti ai corpi ceramici identificati (*Fabric*), ai raggruppamenti ceramici riconosciuti (*Group*) e agli oggetti (*Object*).

Nella scheda *Object* sono elencati tutti gli attributi che descrivono il manufatto selezionato: oltre alle informazioni relative alla provenienza e agli aspetti tecnologici, morfologici e stilistici, si propone anche un'attribuzione cronologica e si annotano pubblicazioni utili allo studio comparativo del manufatto.

Per quanto concerne la ceramica, la varietà delle produzioni attestate e il fatto che si tratti di materiale proveniente da ricognizione e, di conseguenza, non databile sulla base del contesto archeologico, hanno imposto la scelta di un sistema di classificazione che sia duttile e applicabile a qualsiasi categoria ceramica. In questa prima fase si è reso necessario tenere in considerazione tutti gli aspetti tassonomici, dimensionali e qualitativi al fine di ottenere una descrizione il più possibile completa dei frammenti in esame. Per questo motivo si è deciso di combinare in un unico sistema due metodologie di lavoro, associate a tradizioni di studi che valorizzano caratteristiche differenti: una che pone l'accento sulla forma (tassonomia morfo-dimensionale) e un'altra che privilegia l'analisi del corpo ceramico e del trattamento della superficie in associazione alla forma.

Cardine di questo sistema di classificazione è il concetto di raggruppamento ceramico (*Group*): con questo termine s'identifica l'insieme delle principali caratteristiche o attributi che descrivono in maniera dettagliata un gruppo di frammenti simili. Tali caratteristiche sono: corpo ceramico, tecnica di modellazione, trattamenti superficiali, spessore delle pareti⁹.

⁹ La definizione di raggruppamento ceramico si avvicina al concetto di *ware* come impiegato nell'archeologia americana (Klejn 1982, 52) e come inteso nel 'type-variety system' (Rice 1987, 286-287; Sinopoli 1991, 52-53); tuttavia si è evitato di impiegare il termine *ware*, dal momento che nella letteratura specialistica esso indica generalmente una produzione ceramica ben definita, mentre i raggruppamenti ceramici descritti in questa fase possono essere considerati come varianti interne delle produzioni ceramiche.

Per facilitare e velocizzare l'inserimento dei dati e rendere intuitiva la consultazione delle informazioni si è scelto di denominare i raggruppamenti ceramici attraverso un codice alfanumerico, rappresentativo degli attributi identificati: ad esempio C001-WH-POL-F. La prima sigla corrisponde al numero del corpo ceramico, la lettera iniziale fa riferimento alla natura della matrice: argillosa, silicea, etc. (nel caso dell'esempio C indica un corpo argilloso, C = *Clay*). Il corpo ceramico (*Fabric*) è il primo degli attributi esaminati al momento dell'analisi. I caratteri considerati nell'analisi di ciascun corpo ceramico sono: colore, porosità, durezza e compattezza e l'aspetto complessivo del corpo ceramico. Infine si elencano gli inclusi vegetali e minerali di cui si valutano la frequenza, le dimensioni, il grado di arrotondamento.

La seconda sigla del codice, che identifica il *Group*, indica la tecnica di modellazione (nell'esempio presentato è stato riconosciuto l'uso del tornio, WH = *WHeel*); seguono una o più sigle relative ai trattamenti di superficie, ovvero le tecniche di rifinitura della superficie, le tecniche decorative e i rivestimenti (nell'esempio il frammento presenta una superficie lucidata, POL = *POLished*). L'ultima sigla corrisponde allo spessore del frammento, indicatore dell'aspetto morfo-dimensionale del manufatto ceramico (nell'esempio F è la sigla che indica una ceramica fine)¹⁰.

All'interno del codice del raggruppamento ceramico non rientra l'indicazione della forma, dal momento che a un raggruppamento ceramico possono corrispondere forme diverse che andranno a formare una serie di sotto-gruppi interni del raggruppamento ceramico. Per quel che riguarda lo studio delle forme è in corso di elaborazione una classificazione morfologica che ricorra anch'essa ad un codice alfanumerico; questa scelta è stata effettuata non solo per velocizzare la rappresentazione e la consultazione, ma soprattutto al fine di ottenere una descrizione delle forme quanto più possibile oggettiva, evitando l'uso di terminologie ambigue.

Limitatamente allo studio del materiale ceramico, la scheda *Object* è utilizzata per schedare forme complete o frammenti selezionati. Sono stati selezionati tutti i frammenti che per forma, particolarità tecnologiche (relative alle tecniche di modellazione o ai trattamenti della superficie), tecniche e motivi decorativi sono da considerare significativi per l'identificazione delle produzioni ceramiche attestate nell'area e rappresentativi dell'intero *corpus*.

3. LA RICERCA ETNOGRAFICA

Nell'intenzione di ricostruire il peculiare contesto storico-culturale della valle per la quale è in atto la stesura della carta archeologia, la MAIKI ha avviato un programma di ricerca etnografica il cui scopo primario è lo studio del patrimonio religioso e delle pratiche cultuali ad esso legate. Le attività di ricerca sul campo sono iniziate nel dicembre 2013 e a oggi sono state compiute due campagne ricognitive volte a chiarire e individuare l'oggetto di ricerca che costituirà il fulcro del progetto etnografico.

¹⁰ La ceramica è stata suddivisa sulla base degli intervalli degli spessori in tre gruppi: *fine* (spessore inferiore a 0,5 cm), *medium* (spessore tra 0,5 e 1,5 cm) e *thick* (spessore superiore a 1,5 cm).

I dati raccolti, benché parziali e riferibili solo a una piccola sezione del territorio in esame, indicano la capillare presenza di luoghi di culto dedicati agli *sheykh*, maestri spirituali delle confraternite sufi.

Nell'area a oggi indagata, dove insistono 30 villaggi, di cui 20 abitati, sono stati individuati 17 santuari di *sheykh*: 13 tombe all'interno di cimiteri, 1 tomba all'interno di una moschea, 2 luoghi di eremitaggio e 1 un mausoleo, nella città di Krpchna, sede della Kasnazaniyya, una branca della Qādiriyya, la più antica delle principali confraternite sufi oggi presenti nel Kurdistan iracheno (figg. 7-8).

La diffusione dei santuari sul territorio, unita alle testimonianze raccolte sul campo e alla letteratura di riferimento¹¹, permette di delineare i contorni di un sistema cultuale legato alla venerazione degli *sheykh*. La popolazione locale, di credo sunnita, reputa gli *sheykh* santi, in netto contrasto con lo spiccate teocentrismo dell'Islam ortodosso, e li riveste del ruolo d'imprecindibili intermediari con la divinità. Il potere degli *sheykh* si manifesta nel mondo come capacità di compiere azioni taumaturgiche e divinatorie. Tale potere non si esaurisce alla loro morte. Rituali terapeutici, apotropaici e propiziatori, che spesso includono il sacrificio animale, sono posti in atto laddove il potere degli *sheykh* permane oltre la morte, in particolar modo dunque sulle tombe.

Il culto degli *sheykh*, attuale fino all'abbandono della valle nel 1988¹² a seguito della terza campagna di *al-Anfal*, pare oggi interessato da un profondo quanto repentino mutamento. Nonostante la venerazione degli *sheykh* permanga viva nella memoria collettiva e vi siano, sul territorio, soggetti popolarmente riconosciuti come santi ed eredi dell'antico ruolo religioso e sociale detenuto dai loro predecessori, l'attualità del culto appare problematica.

Nel corso delle interviste l'intero sistema cultuale, e in particolare la ritualità sacrificale, è affermato solo quando riferito a un passato anteriore la deportazione. Viceversa, interrogati in riferimento al presente, la quasi totalità degli informatori afferma di non mettere più in atto alcuna azione rituale legata al potere degli *sheykh*, ma è altresì in grado di indicare chi ancora lo fa. Nella maggior parte dei casi sono le donne, primariamente anziane, a riferire di compiere tuttora riti terapeutici o divinatori ad essa legati, mentre tra gli uomini si riscontra una marcata resistenza a trattare l'argomento e non sono rare le affermazioni di viva condanna nei confronti di pratiche indicate come frutto d'ignoranza. In generale laddove si registra il permanere della frequentazione dei santuari degli *sheykh*, si rileva un'epurazione delle componenti taumaturgiche della ritualità praticata, nel segno di un reinserimento nel quadro dell'Islam ortodosso: i santuari vengono così reinterpretati quali luoghi di semplice riverenza.

Benché la ricerca sia nella sua fase germinale è possibile identificare alcuni dei fattori che possono aver concorso a tale modificazione:

¹¹ La devozione per i santi sufi non è una peculiarità della regione ma fattore che accomuna ampie zone del mondo islamico. Per una panoramica attuale si veda Werbner - Bosu 1998; per il contesto curdo si veda van Bruinessen 1992, 210-219.

¹² Sulla base delle testimonianze raccolte sul campo è possibile affermare che l'abbandono della valle rappresenti un momento di cesura radicale per il sistema religioso locale.

- la migrazione forzata, il distacco fisico dal territorio, e la conseguente rescissione dei legami tra gli *sheykh* e la popolazione;
- l'inxurbamento coatto della popolazione rurale, che nel 1988 ha posto gli abitanti dei villaggi a contatto con istituzioni estranee al sistema tradizionale;
- l'influenza degli *imam*, che dal 1991, nel corso della predicazione del venerdì, hanno iniziato a negare apertamente la realtà del ruolo intercessorio con la divinità degli *sheykh*; a questo proposito è interessante osservare come la valle abbia visto l'attuarsi di un programma, finanziato da organizzazioni filantropiche saudite, volto alla ricostruzione delle moschee presenti nei villaggi¹³;
- l'indebolimento dell'autorità religiosa degli *sheykh*, il cui potere pare oggi esercitarsi primariamente, se non esclusivamente, nella sfera politica. Da ciò consegue il progressivo abbandono dell'attributo di ‘santità’, all’origine del potere taumaturgico e divinatorio.

La ricerca etnografica si propone di indagare il mutamento in atto nel sistema cultuale connesso alla venerazione degli *sheykh*. Ci si attende di delineare un quadro esaustivo, per l’area in esame, dei riti terapeutici, apotropaici o propiziatori legati alla venerazione degli *sheykh*, così come messi in atto nel periodo immediatamente precedente *al-Anfal*, di tracciare l’attualità delle pratiche rituali in questione e di analizzare i possibili fattori che concorrono nel guidare il mutamento in atto.

Per quanto attiene la metodologia ci si propone di suddividere la ricerca in tre fasi. L’assenza di documentazione etnografica¹⁴ e demografica, come di cartografia relativa al territorio, rende necessario impostare una prima fase, ora in atto, sulla raccolta dei dati propedeutici al successivo sviluppo della ricerca. Si è deciso dunque di completare la mappatura dei villaggi, dei cimiteri, dei luoghi di rilevanza cultuale e di raccogliere sul campo, mediante l’identificazione di un informatore in ogni villaggio, dati quantitativi e qualitativi circa la composizione demografica e i movimenti della popolazione, con particolare riguardo per le modificazioni riscontrabili successivamente all’*Anfal*, i raggruppamenti genealogici, le strategie matrimoniali, l’economia e le pratiche religiose. In questa fase si procederà, inoltre, alla raccolta di testimonianze sui riti terapeutici, apotropaici e propiziatori legati alla venerazione degli *sheykh*. Laddove presenti, si raccoglieranno informazioni circa l’agiografia dello *sheykh* cui il luogo è legato, i peculiari effetti del suo potere e le azioni rituali messe in atto al fine di suscitarlo. La citata ritrosia riscontrata nella popolazione locale a trattare l’argomento suggerisce di focalizzare le

¹³ Con *imam* indichiamo qui la guida della preghiera sunnita, perché la popolazione della valle, così come quella dell’intero Kurdistan, è prevalentemente di credo sunnita e non sciita.

¹⁴ La letteratura antropologica relativa al Kurdistan iracheno è esigua. Per quanto attiene l’organizzazione sociale e politica, permangono centrali le ricerche compiute da Edmund Leach nelle province di Sulaymaniyah e Kirkuk (Leach 1940) e Fredrik Barth nella provincia di Erbil (Barth 1953). La peculiare complessità del panorama religioso curdo è stata studiata con particolare riguardo sotto il profilo storico religioso (Kreyenbroek - Allison 1996) primariamente per quanto attiene le sette sincretiche degli Yazidi (Kreyenbroek 1995) e degli Ahl-e aqq (van Bruinessen 1995) e le congregazioni suffi della Qādiriyya e Naqshbandiyya (Gaborieau - Popovic - Zarcone 1990; van Bruinessen 1999); particolarmente rilevante per la ricerca che qui si presenta è l’analisi socio politica del ruolo degli *sheykh* del Kurdistan compiuta da Martin van Bruinessen sulla base di una ricerca condotta in Iran, Iraq e Turchia all’inizio degli anni ’70 (van Bruinessen 1992).

interviste, di questa prima fase, sulla pratica rituale del periodo precedente *al-Anfal* e solo successivamente, a seguito di un più prolungato periodo di permanenza sul campo, verificarne l'attualità.

Si prevede di focalizzare la seconda fase del progetto sullo studio delle pratiche rituali nel momento presente, sottponendo le conoscenze acquisite a un campione etnografico che tenga conto delle fasce d'età come della stratificazione sociale. In questa successiva fase ci si propone inoltre lo studio dei fattori che, sulla base delle indicazioni precedentemente raccolte, s'ipotizza possano aver concorso nell'ingenerare il mutamento della pratica rituale. Verranno pertanto raccolte testimonianze relative al trasferimento forzato nelle città nel periodo dal 1988 al 1991, alla predicazione degli *imam*, e si tenterà di reperire in loco fonti documentali e d'informazione relative al programma di ricostruzione delle moschee nella valle finanziato dalle organizzazioni filantropiche saudite. Le fonti d'informazione e documentali, unite alla relativa letteratura di riferimento e alle testimonianze raccolte sul campo, forniranno la base per l'analisi della supposta traslazione del campo d'autorità degli *sheykh* dalla sfera religiosa all'arena politica.

Da ultimo s'ipotizza di allargare il terreno di ricerca alla città di Sulaymaniyah, sede da alcuni anni del centro del lignaggio della Qādiriyya di Krphena, al fine di considerare le possibili differenze nelle pratiche rituali legate alla venerazione degli *sheykh* nell'ordito sociale proprio del contesto urbano, rispetto all'area rurale.

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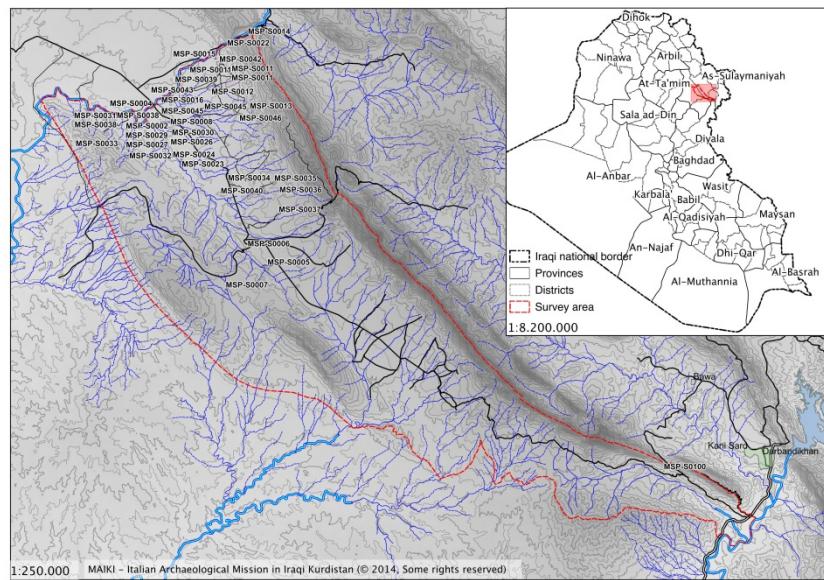


Fig. 1 - Iraq; l'area di indagine del MAIKI Survey Project. Il sito di Paikuli si trova nell'angolo SE della mappa (MSP-S0100) (immagine MAIKI).



Fig. 2 - Paikuli, il monumento di Narseh (immagine MAIKI).

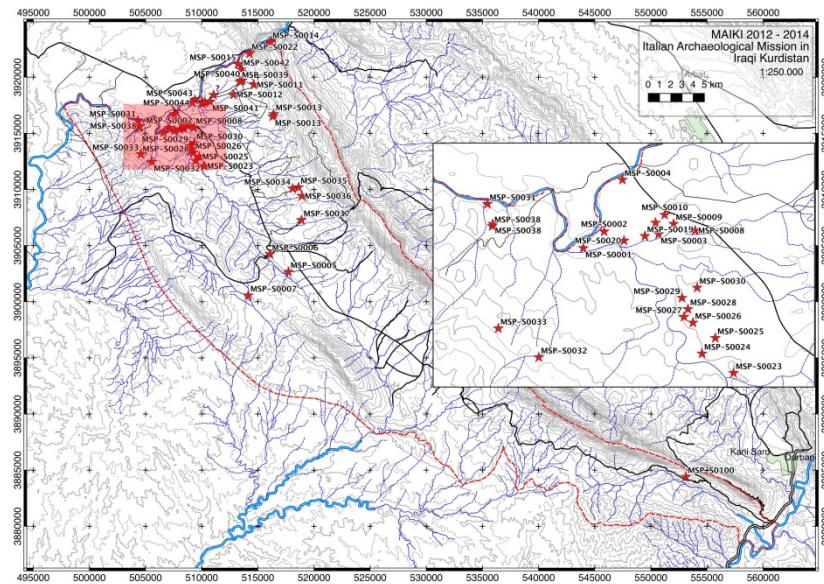


Fig. 3 - I siti storico-archeologici identificati dal MAIKI Survey Project (immagine MAIKI).



Fig. 4 - J. Bogdani e Nawshirwan Aziz Mohammed durante la *survey* (immagine MAIKI).



Fig. 5 - Ceramica non inverniciata con decorazione a stampo in rilievo, epoca sasanide, sito MSP- S0013 (immagine MAIKI).

MSP- S0012



Fig. 6 - Ceramica non inverniciata con decorazione a stampo in rilievo, epoca islamica, sito MSP- S0012 (immagine MAIKI).

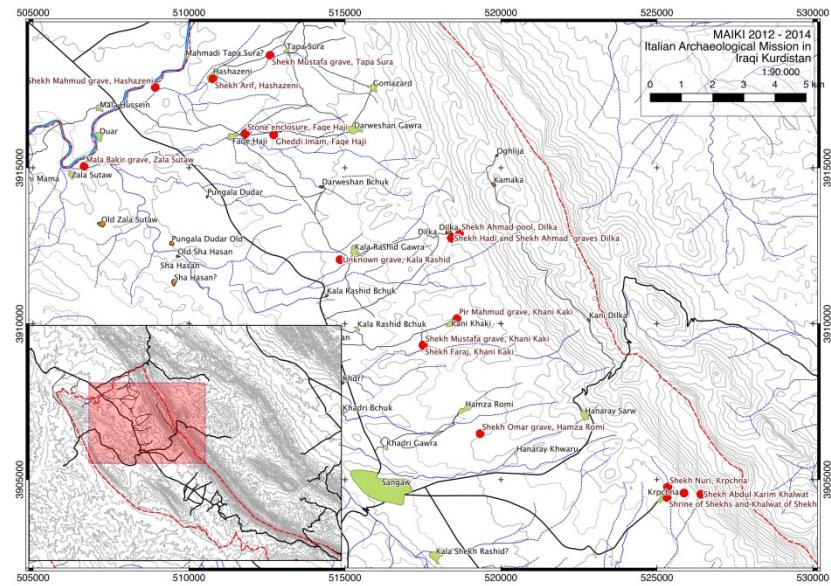


Fig. 7 - Luoghi di venerazione degli *sheykh* (immagine MAIKI).



Fig. 8 - Cimitero di Dilka, tomba di Sheykh Ahmed (immagine MAIKI).

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THE COPPER ROUTE AND THE EGYPTIAN CONNECTION
IN 3RD MILLENNIUM BC JORDAN
SEEN FROM THE CARAVAN CITY OF KHIRBET AL-BATRAWY

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Was the Kings' Highway used as "Copper Route" during the 3rd millennium BC and did this track enhance the connection between Pharaonic Egypt and Jordan? Finds from the 3rd millennium BC city of Khirbet al-Batrawy suggest that the Copper Route was a way of exchanging goods through the overland tracks crossing central Sinai. Moreover, this centre provided evidence for a variety of destinations on long-distance trade routes towards the west (Palestine and Lebanon), the north (Syria), and across the desert and the steppe, also to the east (Mesopotamia) and the south (Arabia).

The exploitation of the Copper Route as overland connection with Egypt during EB III may explain the flourishing of Jordanian urban centres in this period.

Keywords: Khirbet al-Batrawy; Egypt, copper; Faynan; urbanism

0. PREMISE

Recent discoveries by Rome «La Sapienza» University in the “Palace of the Copper Axes”¹ at Khirbet al-Batrawy offered some hints at the trade network within which this Early Bronze II-III Jordanian city was included. One major direction was the “Copper Route” to the Wadi ‘Araba south of the Dead Sea, reaching the Gulf of ‘Aqaba and the Sinai Peninsula.² It allowed a direct connection with Egypt, whose mining activities in the Sinai were flourishing during the second part of the Old Kingdom (IV to VI Dynasties). The “Kings’ Highway”, thus, not only gave access to the basic resource of copper ores of Wadi Faynan and possibly Timna (and even of Western Sinai), but also represented a way for Egyptian items (and cultural influence) to penetrate into 3rd millennium BC Jordan, bypassing the Palestinian centres on the “Way of Horus”. Whether long-distance routes control, exchanges with Egypt, and copper extraction and transformation influenced the formation and growth of the early Jordanian urban system it is difficult to say on the basis of sparse and often occasional materials (even the urban character of such early fortified sites has been often questioned by scholars).³ Nonetheless, their location in respect of the copper and salt routes (fig. 1) may reflect the determinant role played by caravans travelling back and forth on this main north-south track in their formation and development.

¹ Nigro 2010a; 2013a, 496-501; 2013b, 198-204; 2014.

² About trade routes between main centres of the Southern Levant and Old Kingdom Egypt, across the Sinai, during Early Bronze II-III see: Oren 1973, 204-205; Beith-Arieh 1974; 1983; 2003, 201-204; Ward 1991.

³ The impact of metal exchange on early Southern Levantine urbanism has been widely debated with different perspectives and interpretations: Ilan - Sebbane 1989, 139; Knapp 1998; Genz 2000, 63; 2003, 72; Segal - Rosen 2005; Barker *et al.* 2007, 232-235. Scholars usually are inclined to extend to a wider panorama finds (or in some cases absence of finds!) made in their own excavation (see e.g., the reduced relevance attributed to metal by Genz in Early Bronze Jordanian urbanization). No copper items were found in Khirbet Yarmouk-Tel Jarmuth EB IIIB Palace B2 (de Miroshedji 2006). Actually, this site was abandoned, and not suddenly destroyed and this may well explain the lack of metal items in such a huge palace. However, this lack does not seem a sufficient prove to minimize metal role in early Southern Levantine urbanization (de Miroshedji 2014, 320), which is altogether illustrated by finds in Tell el-Hesi (Bliss 1894, 39, figs. 69-78), Pella-Tabaqat Fahl (Bourke - Sparks - Mairs 1999, 62-64, fig. 11) and, above all, Khirbet al-Batrawy.

1. KHIRBET AL-BATRAWY: AN EARLY BRONZE II-III CARAVAN CITY

Recent excavations by Rome «La Sapienza» Expedition at Khirbet al-Batrawy in north-central Jordan,⁴ an Early Bronze Age city ruling over Upper Wadi az-Zarqa, the easternmost affluent of the Jordan, provided some new data on economic and cultural interaction between Southern Levant and Egypt at the times of the IV to VI Dynasties (i.e. during Levantine Early Bronze III, 2700-2300 BC).⁵ The retrieval of Egyptian-style luxury and symbolic items, as well as of Egyptianizing vases (see below § 5.), seems to suggest that a direct connection existed at that time with Pharaonic Egypt. The quest for the modes of such contact and its consequences seems an intriguing one.

The location of Batrawy at a strategic junction of the tracks crossing east-west the desert and the steppe and north-south the Jordanian highlands, made it the dominant site overlooking the relatively large and well irrigated county of Upper Wadi az-Zarqa, and especially the ford through the Zarqa river, located underneath the fortified hill (fig. 2).⁶

Batrawy's vocation as caravan city was clearly epitomized by donkey and onager remains prevailing in the faunal record of this site.⁷ The river banks offered good grazing land and beverage for such pack-animals, which at the time were the main mean of transportation on long-distance overland routes. Stone lined kites and precincts in the steppe of Jordan still testify how the region just east of Batrawy was a reproductive basin for onagers and donkeys.⁸ It seems, thus, not surprising that finds from the palace highlight commercial interconnections also with far away regions such as Egypt, Syria, Anatolia and Mesopotamia.

For caravans coming from the east, Batrawy was not only the entrance to the Wadi az-Zarqa, but also the main gate to the Jordan Valley (fig. 3).⁹ a shortcut from the ford through the river Zarqa leading straight to the Jordan.¹⁰ Otherwise, the bend of the river reached more gently the irrigated lowlands passing through Tell al-Bire,¹¹ Tell Handaquq South¹² and Tell Umm Hammad.¹³ From there, one might descend the eastern side of the Jordan Valley up to Tell el-Hammam, or to cross the Jordan to arrive at Jericho. Conversely, to the north, Tell Abu al-Kharaz, Pella-Tabaqat Fahl, Tell esh-Shuna,¹⁴ and, on the other side of the Jordan, of course, Beth-Shean and Khirbet Kerak, completed the list of the directly connected centres of the Early Bronze II-III Southern Levantine road network (fig. 4).

The main track connecting Batrawy with the south was the “Kings’ Highway”, running upon the Jordanian highlands as early as the end of the 4th millennium BC onwards. From

⁴ Nigro 2010b; 2012a; ed. 2008; ed. 2012.

⁵ Nigro 2009a; 2013a; 2013b.

⁶ Nigro 2010c, 434; 2012b, 610-611.

⁷ Alhaique 2008; 2012, 334-345.

⁸ A later references to this tradition in animal husbandry is provided by the frescoes of Qusayr Hamra. The site was restored by World Monument Fund, the Italian ISCR and the DoA under the direction of Gaetano Palumbo and Giovanna De Palma.

⁹ Sala 2008a.

¹⁰ Nigro 2006, 663-665; 2011, 60.

¹¹ Glueck 1939, 213-214, site 320; Palumbo *et al.* 1996, 385-386, 388, 390-391; Sala 2008a, 369-370.

¹² Chesson 1997; 1998.

¹³ Betts ed. 1992.

¹⁴ Baird - Philip 1992; 1994; Philip - Baird 1993.

Batravy soutwards the EB III fortified sites were Tell el-‘Umeiri¹⁵ in the Madaba Plain, El-Lehun¹⁶ on the edge of Wadi Mujib; then the track and possibly descended to the Dead Sea through Wadi Kerak down to Bâb edh-Dhrâ¹⁷ and Numeira.¹⁸ From there, one may get access to a distinct series of valuable raw materials: above all, Dead Sea salt, sulphur, bitumen,¹⁹ but also Wadi Faynan copper and even reach the Gulf of ‘Aqaba (before it the ores of the Timna district), and the shortcut crossing the Sinai towards the Gulf of Suez, with several possible deviations to the mines spread over the Sinai western wadis.²⁰ It was this highway which represented, for the early Jordanian “cities”, the most direct connection with Egypt.

Conversely, towards the north the overland route from Batravy reached Khirbet ez-Zeraqon, entering in Syria, or reached the eastern steppe with some major fortified towns like Qarassa²¹ and Labwe²² and, further east, Khirbet al-Umbashi.²³

Towards the east, Batravy was at the end of the track crossing the desert (fig. 5), along a route touching Al-Qihati²⁴ towards Jawa, or Qasr Hallabat straight to the east, reaching (after 700 Km, that is a 1 month-long trip with a donkeys/onagers caravan) the Euphrates in central Mesopotamia (in the Falluja district).

Due to its location and connections Batravy might have served as exchange point on a long-distance interregional trade network.

2. COPPER AND THE CITY IN SOUTHERN LEVANT

It has been suggested that trade routes developed on the ways to metals,²⁵ and this seem particularly true in the case of Early Bronze Age Southern Levant.

Metal hoarding was a common feature of Southern Levantine societies at least since the Chalcolithic period,²⁶ when copper objects collection was, however, strictly connected with an economy firmly founded upon massive ideological and religious bases.²⁷ Also in Early Bronze I, main copper retrievals, like as the Kfar Monash hoard,²⁸ gathered weapons basically destined to a ritual employ (religious and funerary).²⁹

It is, however, with the following urban Bronze Age (EB II-III) that copper items were introduced as “apical tools” dispensed from the ruling institution, and for this reason they

¹⁵ Harris *et al.* 2002.

¹⁶ Homès-Fredericq 2009, 795-796.

¹⁷ Rast - Schaub 1989; 2003.

¹⁸ Waheeb - Mahmod - Dweikat 2013; Schaub - Chesson 2007.

¹⁹ Connan - van De Velde 2010, 15-16.

²⁰ Recent discoveries on the eastern coast of Egypt (Wadi al-Jarf) have corroborated the scenario showing IV and V Dynasties Pharaohs exploiting routes to the Sinai and to the East (Tallet - Maruard 2012).

²¹ Braemer - Ibanez - Shaaranai 2011.

²² Braemer - al-Maqdissi 2006; 2008, 1823-1830; Braemer - Nicolle - Criaud 2010.

²³ Braemer - Échallier - Taraqji éd. 2004.

²⁴ Sala 2008a, 375.

²⁵ Muhly 1991; *contra* Genz 2000 (see note for the Author’s comment).

²⁶ Moorey 1988; Golden 2010; Milevsky 2013.

²⁷ Knapp 1988, 149-150; Philip 1988; Kletter 2013, 7-8.

²⁸ Hestrin - Tadmor 1963.

²⁹ As the renown spear head from the temple of Megiddo (Loud 1948, 66, pl. 283:1) suggests: Montanari 2011.

quickly gained an economic pole position in the exchange chain between raw material and finished items. Early urban polities rather quickly became capable to import semi-worked ingots from the copper ores (e.g. from Wadi Faynan)³⁰ as well as finished tools, and successively start to produce them by themselves. Early cities pursued wealth accumulation to re-invest it in productive improvement, technological innovation and power self-representation fulfilling ideological demand. For such a purpose, metal weapons fully accomplished the fundamental symbolic function of rank stating, and, furthermore, witnessed the ability of their owner in procuring metal and working it.

Early Bronze II-III metal hoards³¹ consist, in the majority of cases, of weapons, which though preserving their original symbolic meaning (and economic value) especially in public or socially relevant contexts, also achieved a more immediate utilization in the new activity linked to the urban rise: war. As stated elsewhere,³² war was an outcome of Levantine Early Bronze Age urban centralization of wealth, and copper turned out a mostly wanted ingredient to produce weapons and to support a newborn military class.

3. THE COPPER ROUTE AS A WAY OF LONG-DISTANCE TRADE OF PRECIOUS STUFFS

With the emergence of copper (weapons), the direct control of trade routes rapidly became a strategic asset for early urban communities, which intended to exercise a form of territorial control.

In the Lower Jordan Valley/Dead Sea earliest “geo-political” system (fig. 4), the cities of Tell es-Sultan/Jericho, Tell el-Hammam, Bâb edh-Dhrâ‘, Numeira (in EB III), and the outpost of es-Safî, as well as el-Lehun (on top of the highlands of Wadi Mujib), and Arad were all active on the route of copper,³³ which run back and forth into Wadi ’Arabah and on the highlands. Nonetheless, especially for the two latter cities (Arad and Bâb edh-Dhrâ‘) the Copper Route – in relationship with the nomadic component of the EB II-III society probably protagonist of such trade – is perhaps one of the main reasons for having them being erected in somewhat agriculturally unfavourable environments,³⁴ the other being salt and the secondary (but very appetitive) stuffs available from the Dead Sea (sulphur, bitumen, alumina, etc.). Traded stuffs from long-distance destinations were a further reason for these cities to exist and thrive by seasonally integrating tribes of nomad merchants into their economic system. The commercial vocation of such centres has been possibly only partially appreciated, due to the fact that a large part of exchanged materials are invisible in the archaeological record because of their perishable nature (textiles, spices, drugs, powders, timber, cosmetics, etc.; see below § 5.).

³⁰ Levy *et al.* 2002.

³¹ This phenomenon is illustrated by the case of hoards retrieved in the Early Bronze II site of Pella (Bourke - Sparks - Mairs 1999, 62-64, fig. 11), and the Early Bronze III site of Tell el-Hesi (Bliss 1894, 39, figs. 69-78).

³² Nigro 2009b, 188.

³³ Kaufman 2013, 686.

³⁴ Even if it has been argued that the climatic and environmental situation of the 3rd millennium BC was warmer than today, natural resources in the Ghôr necessitated specific adaptive strategies to let a settled community flourish.

4. THE COPPER AXES FROM BATRAWY AND ANCIENT JORDANIAN ROUTES

Among the remarkable finds in the Palace of Batrawy, the four axes retrieved in a *cachette* in Pillared Hall L.1040,³⁵ a dagger found in the south-corner of the same room,³⁶ and a fifth axe from nearby Hall L.1110 (fig. 6),³⁷ may provide fresh evidence concerning the routes of metal trade through the Levant during Early Bronze III.

Compositional analyses on copper used for the six Batrawy weapons point to the possible provenience from two mining compounds along the Wadi ‘Arabah (Wadi Faynan and Timna), and from Anatolia (Ergani Maden).³⁸ However, it is impossible to ascertain that copper was not re-melted, and to demonstrate that metal used in the Batrawy axes, thus, derived from an clearly identifiable mining ore. The almost total absence of arsenic (< 1 %) coincides with the metallurgical profile of Wadi Faynan Early Bronze III mines of Khirbet Hamra Ifdan and Barqa el-Hetiyeh.³⁹ The absence of cobalt, however, might even suggest a compatibility with Timna copper. A possible Early Bronze Age III exploitation of the Timna mining district – far south in the Wadi ‘Arabah – is, however, still deemed hypothetical.⁴⁰ The weapons typological criterion might, nonetheless, be useful. Three⁴¹ of the five copper axes from the Palace of Batrawy fit well the typology represented by clay moulds retrieved at Khirbet Hamra Ifdan (elongated body with fan blade and round tang), as another hint at the provenience of the axes. The biggest specimen, conversely, might be related with Anatolia, while the fifth axe is Southern Levantine elongated sub-type.

5. IMPORTED ITEMS FROM PALACE B TRACKED ON THE ANCIENT ROAD NETWORK

What adds further pregnancy to such copper retrievals are associations in their finding spot, i.e. the destruction layer of EB IIIB Palace B (fig. 7), where a vast series of items was found sealed underneath the burnt and collapsed ceilings of the building.⁴² Some of these items and material might have reached Batrawy through the same Copper Route (the so-called “Kings’ Highway”) and connected branches, the track crossing Jordan south-north on the highlands east of the rift valley of the Dead Sea and the Jordan river (fig. 4). Precious and semi-precious stones (carnelian, olivine, calcite, hyaline quartz, smoky quartz, gypsum, translucent limestone, amethyst, pumice, schist, etc.), mineral and curative muds and sands, ointments, spices and drugs, as well as other invisible goods (pulses, seeds, leather, animals, timber, and plants derived products, such as pigments and aromatic or adhesive resins) transited on this route from the Arabian Peninsula, the Gulf of ‘Aqaba, the Red Sea and Egypt to Jordan, Palestine and Syria.⁴³

³⁵ KB.10.B.130, KB.10.B.131, KB.10.B.132, KB.10.B.133: Nigro 2010d.

³⁶ KB.10.B.97.

³⁷ KB.11.B.120: Nigro 2012a, 705.

³⁸ Hauptmann 2007, 299.

³⁹ Najjar *et al.* 1990, fig. 1; Adams 2003.

⁴⁰ Hauptmann 2007, 69, 72, 78–79, 201. Cobalt geochemically correlates with iron, nickel and manganese. At Timna (according to Rothenberg ed. 1990) a high cobalt contents was not found, while the cobalt content in Feinan copper ores is higher than in Timna ores (Segal - Yahalom-Mack 2012, 397).

⁴¹ KB.10.B.130, KB.10.B.132, KB.10.B.133.

⁴² Gallo 2014, 158–160, fig. 14, with bibliography on Palace B destruction.

⁴³ Ben-Tor 1986, 9–10.

5.1. *The four-strings necklace from Hall L.1110*

Along with the copper weapons, a major piece of evidence which first provided numerous hints at the trade network within which the Early Bronze Age city of Batrawy was included, is the four-strings necklace retrieved in Hall L.1110. It has been already illustrated in a previous issue of this journal.⁴⁴ It may be useful to recall the different semi-precious gems included into the necklace and imported from abroad:⁴⁵ carnelian,⁴⁶ olivine, hyaline quartz, and, above all, amethyst (fig. 8), which was extracted in Egypt in Wadi Abu Had (north-eastern desert),⁴⁷ or, further south, in Gebel el-Asr (in the western desert) and Wadi el-Hudi, 35 Km south-east of Aswan. Also carnelian and olivine might come from Egypt or from other sources in the Arabia Peninsula, as well as hyaline quartz (commonly named “rock crystal”). Smoky quartz, instead, more probably came from Anatolia. Also sea-shells were included coming from the Red Sea.

5.2. *The pedestal cup or krater*

Along with more than 20 pithoi mainly containing barley of a finely selected quality,⁴⁸ numerous vessels belonging to the palace services were retrieved.⁴⁹ Some of them can be ascribed or compared to foreign types. The first one is the ceremonial cup or krater on a high grooved foot, characterized by a finely highly obliquely burnished light reddish-brown slip (KB.10.B.1054/11; fig. 9).⁵⁰ This vase is inspired by Khirbet Kherak Ware high stands or pedestals, which exhibit similar deep round grooves (imitating those of copper prototypes).⁵¹ Also the flattened rim slightly upraised, with an inner step intended to host a lid, is a feature sometimes occurring on KKW specimens. A very peculiar look is given to the vessel by the oblique fast burnishing of its outer surface, which is quite rare on highly polished vases of the Early Bronze Age II-III Levantine inventory.⁵² Also the spherical shape, and especially the two vertical handles applied on the maximum diameter, however, are quite unusual, and convey the vase a goblet-like shape which suggests a ceremonial or ritual function. Furthermore, the couple of handles, which might be connected with the northern Levantine coastal tradition, where this feature is more frequent,⁵³ suggest that the cup was intended to be raised or brandished when its content was offered and picked up.

⁴⁴ Nigro 2012c.

⁴⁵ Moorey 1999, 93-99.

⁴⁶ Sowada 2009, 94-95.

⁴⁷ Bomann - Young 1994.

⁴⁸ Food accumulation has been long recognized as the main (if not exclusive) function of the Palestinian and Transjordanian Early Bronze Age palatial buildings (lastly, Genz 2010).

⁴⁹ Nigro 2013a, 499-500, fig 16; Sala 2013, 608, fig. 21.

⁵⁰ Nigro 2013a, 499-501, fig. 17.

⁵¹ Paz 2006, figs. 3.13; 3.27:9.

⁵² Eisenberg - Greenberg 2006, fig. 8.46:3.

⁵³ Handles were frequently added to jars and more rarely to open shapes. A double handled bowl from Khirbet ez-Zeraqon (Genz 2002, pl. 21:15) has a more markedly open shape, even though represents the closest comparison for this vessel. Similar pedestal shapes are also known in the northern Syrian tradition of the middle Euphrates horizon (Rouault - Masetti Rouault eds. 1993, 299, fig. 218).

5.3. *The bear skin*

The same northern direction (Northern Syria) is suggested by the paw of Syrian brown bear (*Ursus arctos syriacus*), i.e. what is left of a bear skin, possible a mantle, deposited at the basis of the second pillar of Hall L.1040 in Palace B aside the *cachette*, where the four copper axes were found (§ 4.). Even though it cannot be excluded that north-central Jordan was inhabited by this plantigrade during the 3rd millennium BC (especially the mountain region north of Batrawy in the district of Jerash), however the nearest areal of diffusion of such an animal is from Lebanon (Mount Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon) and Syria (Mount Hermon) to the Taurus and Amanus Chains in Southern Anatolia.

The bear skin might also be viewed a symbol of strength and power, with special reference to the military power of a leader, as several archaeological and ethnographic parallels suggest.⁵⁴ It was, in any case, imported in Batrawy and deposited at the bottom of the second pillar of Hall L.1040 during the final attack to the city of Batrawy together with other valuable and symbolic items.

5.4. *Red Ochre*

Another imported stuff was red ochre, found in a pithos⁵⁵ in the same hall (fig. 10), a pigment which has probably to be connected with élite embellishment and funerary treatment (but also with ceramic production, and the jar was aside a potter's wheel). It was probably imported from hematite-iron ores in south-eastern Anatolia, even if ochre ores were perhaps available also in the mountain of the western Arabian Peninsula.

5.5. *The Red Polished Jugs*

Two red polished jugs (KB.11.B.1128/49; KB.11.B.1128/65) of a fine lustrous red-burnished ware, retrieved in Hall L.1110, were characterized by a peculiar reserved decoration.⁵⁶ They belong to a pottery specialized ware of the Early Bronze Age (RAHD), attested to in several sites of central Palestine, and possibly produced in a major centre of the Jordan Valley.⁵⁷ They were a couple among several others in the palatial set.⁵⁸

These peculiar jugs were inspired from copper prototypes, as it is shown by their decoration. According to what can be reconstructed by observing the ceramic specimens, the metallic prototypes were built up by joining the neck with two rivets (the couple of knobs usually replicated at the bottom of the neck in several EB jug types), and the upper and lower halves by means of a horizontal midband made by two twisted foils of copper, tied up by vertical clamps (resulting in vertical ridges across the band on the vases girth in the ceramic imitation).

⁵⁴ Nigro 2014.

⁵⁵ KB.10.B.1040/9: Nigro 2013a, 497.

⁵⁶ This production has been recently identified and described as "Reserved Alternate-Hatching Decoration" (Fiaccavento 2014).

⁵⁷ Fiaccavento 2014 for a thorough treatment. In the meantime, the absence of Khirbet Kerak Ware and other EB II-III specialized wares in the Palace inventory has been seen as a consequence of the later date of such a ceramic assemblage, which can be ascribed to the last stage of development of the Early Bronze III horizon (Sala 2014a).

⁵⁸ Nigro 2013a, 501; Nigro - Sala 2012, fig. 14.

6. EGYPTIAN AND EGYPTIAN STYLE FINDS IN BATRAWY

Most meaningful for the sake of the Copper Route characterization are finds attesting a connection with Pharaonic Egypt. Along with the carnelian and especially the biconical amethyst beads of the above mentioned four-strings necklace (§ 5.1.), a “lotus vase” and a siltstone palette might be enlisted among Egyptian or Egyptian-like items of the Batrawy Palace.

6.1. *The “lotus” shaped deep bowl*

A flaring vase with flat bottom (KB.11.B.1128/76; fig. 11),⁵⁹ of the type more often called “lotus” shaped bowl, was found in storeroom L.1120. Such vessel has been connected with a common type of coeval Egyptian-like pottery widely spread over Palestine during the Early Bronze Age.⁶⁰ Primary examples of this shape are specimens found in the *cachette* attributed to the layer (J-5) just over the Great Temple of Level J-4 at Tell el-Mutesellim/Megiddo,⁶¹ even though their dating is markedly earlier than that of Palace B destruction.⁶² Small “lotus vases” found in Megiddo are very near to the Batrawy specimen (fig. 12).

Though it is made of a local fabric, the Batrawy “lotus vase” exhibits a formal detail which is almost uniquely attested to on Egyptian originals, that is a narrow horizontal groove just under the rim (this might descend from the fact that the original type of this shape was made of stone).⁶³ Such a detail makes the Batrawy “lotus vase” a very faithful replica of its Egyptian prototypes.

The finding spots and chemical analyses suggests that it was used for an ointment or a semi-liquid substance. It might have been either an aromatized mud, to be devoted to a symbolic use (a perfume - possibly *nardus*), or a mineral glue or a make-up colour. Since “lotus vases” usually did not bear a lid, their shape allowed to mixing up a powder with a liquid (oil or aromatized water). This might have favoured the making up of curative or ornamental coloured muds, and the retrieval of red-ochre in Pillared Hall L.1040 might support such an interpretation. In any case, this vase and its content were possibly connected with the ruling élite luxury ostentation and, at a good extent, with funerary treatment (the largest number of such vessels retrieved in Palestine are found in tombs or in temple contexts, for example at Et-Tell/‘Ai).⁶⁴ Its shape may be also paralleled with that of a distinct series of small Egyptian calcite vessels, possibly devoted to the same purpose, that is preparing and containing a semi-solid ointment or a gelatinous stuff (perfume or an ornamental colour) to be used in ritual acts or for funerary displacement.

⁵⁹ Nigro - Sala 2012, 50-51, fig. 13; Nigro 2013b, 204.

⁶⁰ Sala 2014b.

⁶¹ Joffe 2000, 170-175; Goren - Ilan 2003.

⁶² Such a chronological discrepancy might be only partially overcome by ascribing the Megiddo Temple to Early Bronze II, as it was suggested by several hints at scholars: Nigro 2010e, 335-338.

⁶³ A similar, but less regular, incision runs all around the flat bottom of the vase (fig. 10).

⁶⁴ Marquet-Krause 1949, 195-197, pls. LI:1534,1536,1541, LXV:1524,1534,1536, LXXVI:1541; Callaway 1972, 303-304, figs. 73:1, 76:3-5. Such vases were sometimes coated with a dark reddish slip, possibly to be connected with their function (e.g. Marquet-Kraus 1949, pl. LXV:1486; Callaway 1972, fig. 76:6).

6.2. *The Egyptian palette*

The most noticeable Egyptian find is the fragment of a siltstone palette (KB.11.B.100, fig. 13) of rectangular shape (width 9.5 cm; preserved length 9.3 cm; thickness 0.5 cm), with an incised design visible only for a very small portion of the original drawing.

The material is gray siltstone of a common Egyptian vein, according to literature extracted in Wadi Hammamat east of Thebes, characterized by a compact and fine texture and some light red-yellowish shadows. Remains of a dark pigment (kohl?) have been identified on the palette upper surface.

The sub-rectangular shape of the palette (which is, actually, broken: the lower part is missing under the incision, while the upper edge is badly eroded) is that known from several common specimens retrieved in coeval Palestine and, of course, in the homeland of such kind of items, i.e. Egypt.⁶⁵ A small round erosion on the upper edge suggests the location of a hole of diameter 0.4 mm, while the overall length can be reconstructed around 13 cm (fig. 14).

The incised motive is very marginal and might be integrated as the crest of an animal, like the flame of a bird (an eagle or a hawk?), or the mane of a lion, either the fins of a catfish. However, the incision (instead of carving) of a central figure in the palettes of this type is quite unusual and it is, thus, impossible to suggest a possible reconstruction of the motive. It cannot be even ruled out the hypothesis that the incised decoration is a secondary addition to the palette.⁶⁶ In this case, one might also compare it to the snake (a cobra?) and the scorpion plastically depicted in the *metopae* decorating the shoulder of a small jar retrieved in Pillared Hall L.1040.⁶⁷

The location of the incised motive is also puzzling. The palette as it arrived to us is 9.5 cm wide and 9.3 high. Since the drawing has its top in the lower preserved part of it, one should surmise that the original artifact had an elongated rectangular shape (fig. 14), with the incised decoration developed just over a certain surface (maximum one third of the entire object). Nonetheless, square or sub-rectangular Egyptian siltstone palettes of the same type do not usually bear incised figures (relief-carved palettes are earlier; see note 63), and this makes more arduous the interpretation of the specimen retrieved in the Palace of Batrawy. It is, anyhow, an import from Egypt, as the petrographic analysis testified to.

The cosmetic function of such an object, commonly retrieved in tombs, and destined to personages of a high social status, allow to ascribe it to the group of luxury items gathered in the Palace of Batrawy, which also included finely worked bones used as kohl sticks.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ For a comprehensive discussion of Egyptian palettes in Southern Levant, see Sala 2014b, 66-68; a good number of comparisons may be found in the on-line catalogue of the Petrie Museum of the University College, London.

⁶⁶ In some rare examples rectangular siltstone palettes show a hatched decoration around their edges similar to the motive incised on KB.11.B.100; on the latter specimen, however, the motive is not along the object margin and the line is curvilinear, so that one has to rule out the possibility that the incised line belonged to such a frame.

⁶⁷ Jar KB.11.B.1054/1 exhibits an applied and incised decoration on the shoulder showing a snake and a scorpion inside two opposite *metopae* separated by a herringbone motive.

⁶⁸ Nigro 2010a, fig. on page 110.

7. ARCHITECTURAL REMAINS – IMPORTED TIMBERS AS BUILDING MATERIAL

Even though much of the organic content of the “Palace of the Copper Axes” vanished due to the fierce fire which drastically destroyed it, some sparse remains kept safe in the collapsed and burnt layer provide further insights into foreign raw materials imported into the city, as an outcome of wealth centralization and long-distance trade.⁶⁹

The main building material employed in Batrawy public buildings and fortifications are several different kinds of limestone, set on in the massive foundations walls high in some spots more than 2 m (the superstructure was made of sun-baked clay bricks), which were basically extracted locally. Clay and limestone (of a relatively fine texture easy to be cut in regular blocks) were largely available in the area surrounding the site, and mortar and plaster were obtained by mixing lime, marl and clay (with sand, straw or even ash as dryers).⁷⁰

Other perishable building materials employed in the palace architecture may, however, indicate import routes. Wooden beams used for ceilings and supporting pillars (or furnishings) into the building belong to different essences: tamarisk (*Tamarix palaestina*), terebinth (*Pistacia palaestina*), and especially Palestinian (*Quercus coccifera calliprinos*) and Turkish (*Quercus cerris*) oak, and Aleppo pine (*Pinus halepensis*). Wadi az-Zarqa could provide the first two of such plants, while Aleppo pine and the two different kinds of oak were imported from the north-west (Lebanon and Syria, where they grew copiously), even though forests of such trees may also have populated the western slopes of the not too far away Wadi Kufrinjeh, reachable with a one-day trip.

Apart from some special wood items, like a not-carved-yet cylinder seal (KB.10.B.147; fig. 15),⁷¹ found carbonized in Pillared Hall L.1040,⁷² which is made of boxwood (*Buxus sempervirens*) and might have been imported from the far east (Iran), the other essences all belong to the natural Northern Levantine environment.

⁶⁹ Nigro 2013a, 492-494.

⁷⁰ The only possible foreign reference detectable from the study of Batrawy stone walls is offered by some traits of the EB II-III Main City-Wall, where some carefully cut parallelepiped blocks were employed, which may recall a building technique already identified in the Temple Et-Tell/Ai in Palestine (for a critical discussion, Sala 2008b, 254-255, note 134, with previous bibliography), thought to be inspired from a III Dynasty onwards Egyptian technique of “stone bricks”, exemplarily adopted in kings Djoser and Sekhemkhet pyramids and related temenos at Saqqara).

⁷¹ Nigro 2010d, 567.

⁷² Interesting enough, also in the Tell el-Hesi copper weapons hoard a wooden seal was included (Bliss 1894, 39-40, fig. 79).

8. EB III BATRAWY AND THE EGYPTIAN CONNECTION IN A DIACHRONIC PERSPECTIVE

All the above mentioned finds from the EB IIIB Palace of Batrawy allowed to trace a map of the Near East with some major tracks over which retrieved items and stuffs were transported and exchanged (figs. 1, 5).

What seems definitively relevant, especially in the perspective of Southern Levantine urban rise characterization, is the connection with Egypt, which, after the initial boom during Early Bronze I,⁷³ developed in EB II along the “Way of Horus” basically involving Southern Palestine.⁷⁴ In the following Early Bronze III, the overland track across the Sinai Peninsula and beyond through the ‘Arabah, continuing further north in what was later called the Kings’ Highway, possibly represented an alternative way of trade between Transjordan and Egypt, which exploited the Copper Route also for other stuffs exchange. It, of course, was connected with the Jordan Valley, which during EB III occurred a distinct development.⁷⁵

Copper industry and related trade along this track possibly enhanced the urban phenomenon, especially in the Jordan Valley and in the highlands east of it during Early Bronze III, when a series of towns and cities with their “small scale” palaces flourished.⁷⁶

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⁷³ Braun - van den Brink 2008.

⁷⁴ Kafafi 2011.

⁷⁵ A reinforced EB III connection between Egypt and the cities in the Jordan Valley was also recently suggested by the retrieval of a carved palette Khirbet Kerak: Greenberg - Wengrow - Paz 2010.

⁷⁶ In a very schematic synthesis, one may indicate a list of fortified cities (from south to north: Numeira, Bâb edh-Dhrâ‘, and in the Jordan Valley: Tell es-Sultan/Jericho, Tell Hammam, Tell es-Saidiyeh, Pella-Tabaqat Fahl, Beth-Shean, Tell Abu-Kharaz, Tell esh-Shuna, Khirbet Kerak; in the highlands: El-Lehun, Khirbet al-Batrawy, Khirbet ez-Zeraqon), possibly representing a double-level polities system. EB III Palaces and city-states have in this region their dimensional and functional specific definition, depending on demographic, economic and cultural features and proportions: a proper definition of Southern Levantine urbanism, which takes into account the dimensional specificity, social characteristics and inner subdivisions of each region like Transjordan, falls beyond the limit of the present paper. It is quite obvious that comparisons with Mesopotamia, Anatolia and even Syria or central Palestine have to cope with the different geo-morphological and dimensional characteristics of each historical scenario.

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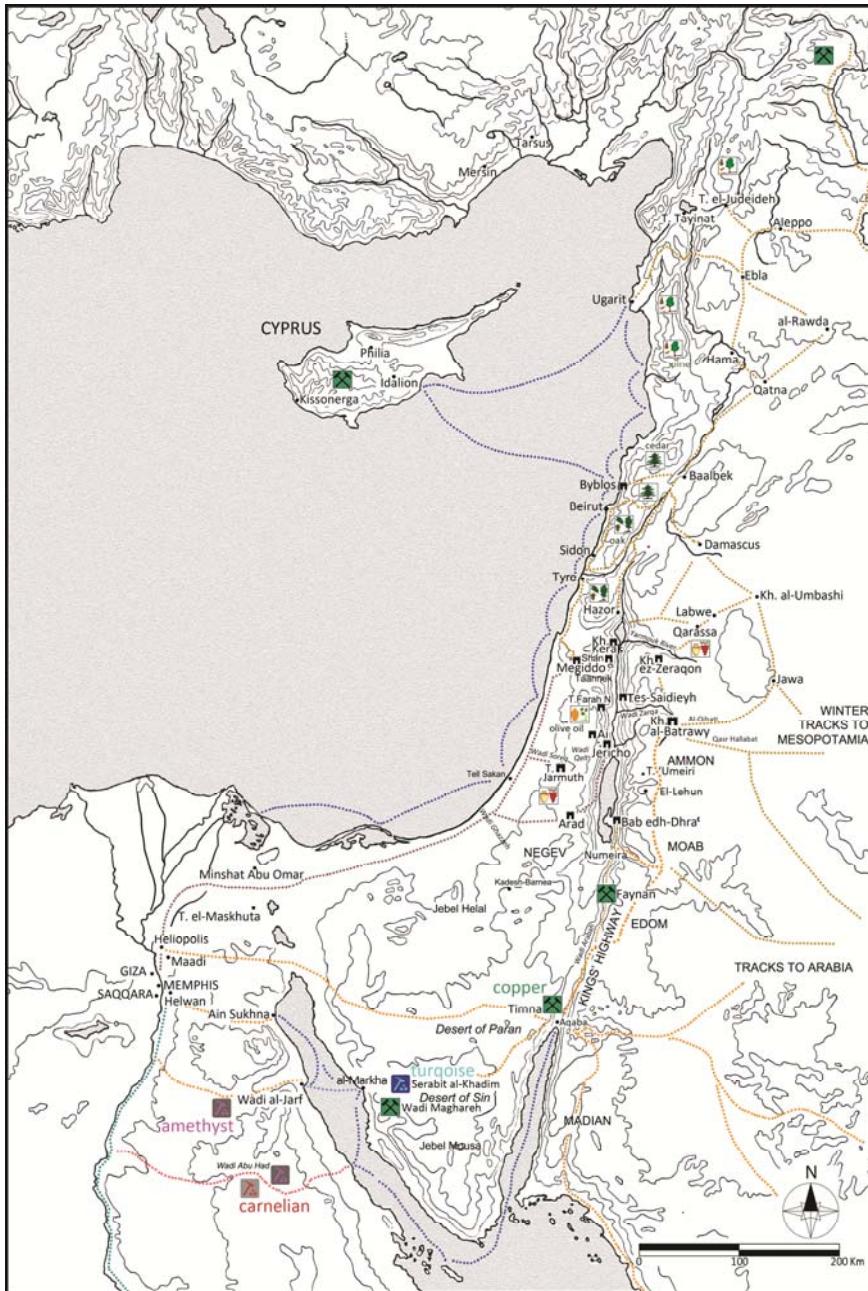


Fig. 1 - Map of Eastern Mediterranean illustrating supply points of gemstones, copper and other precious stuff, and trade routes during the 3rd millennium BC.



Fig. 2 - Reconstruction of the Batrawy fortified hill dominating the ford through the Zarqa river, from west.

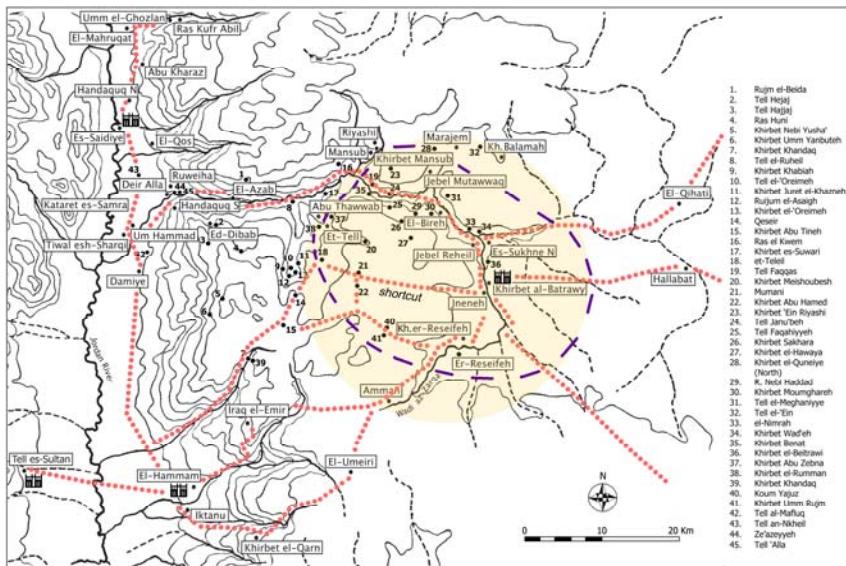


Fig. 3 - Tracks in the area of the Lower Jordan Valley and connected Wadi az-Zarqa, with highlighted the county possibly under the control of the ancient city of Batrawy.

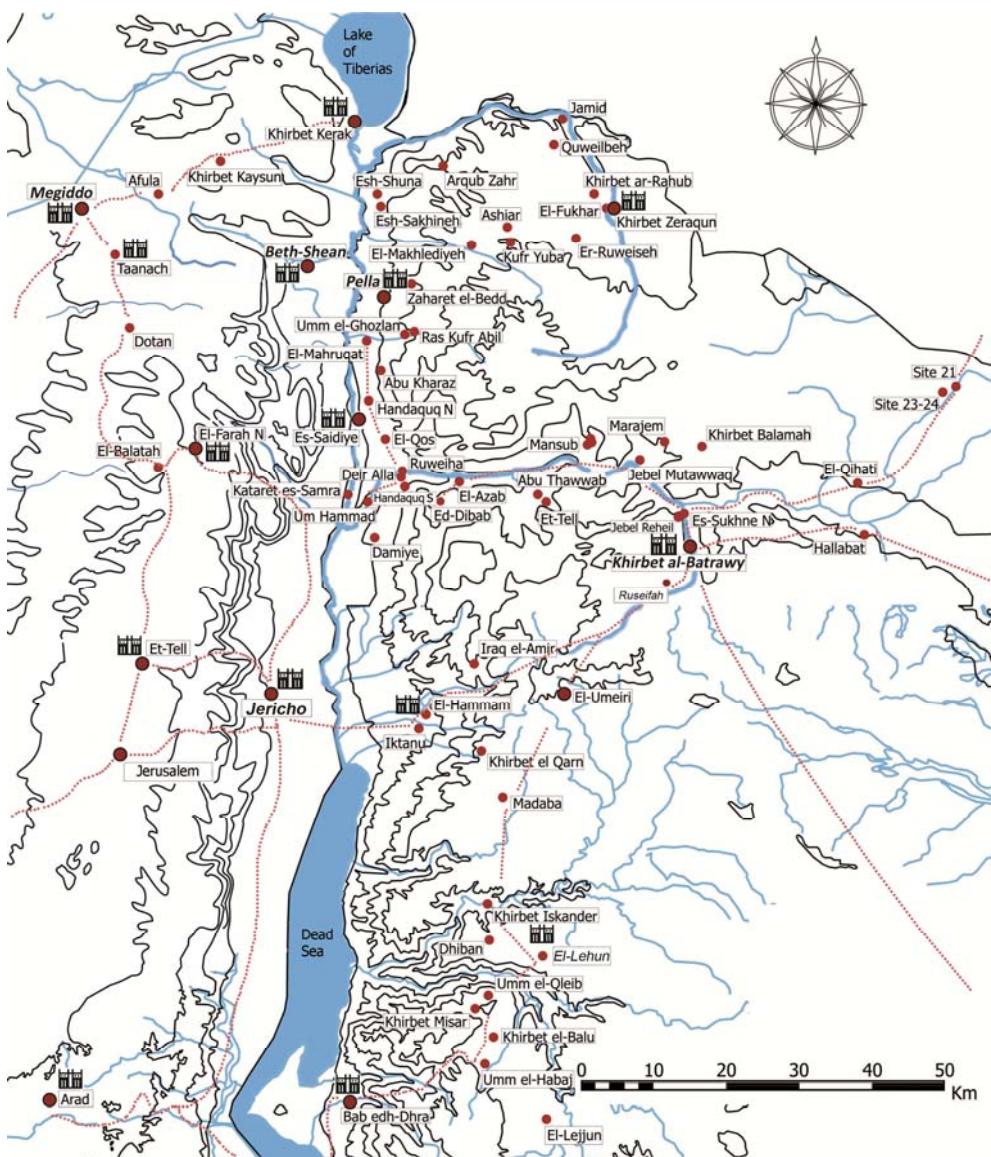


Fig. 4 - Early Bronze II-III road network, rivers and major centres in central Southern Levant, with the location of ancient palaces/ruling institutions.

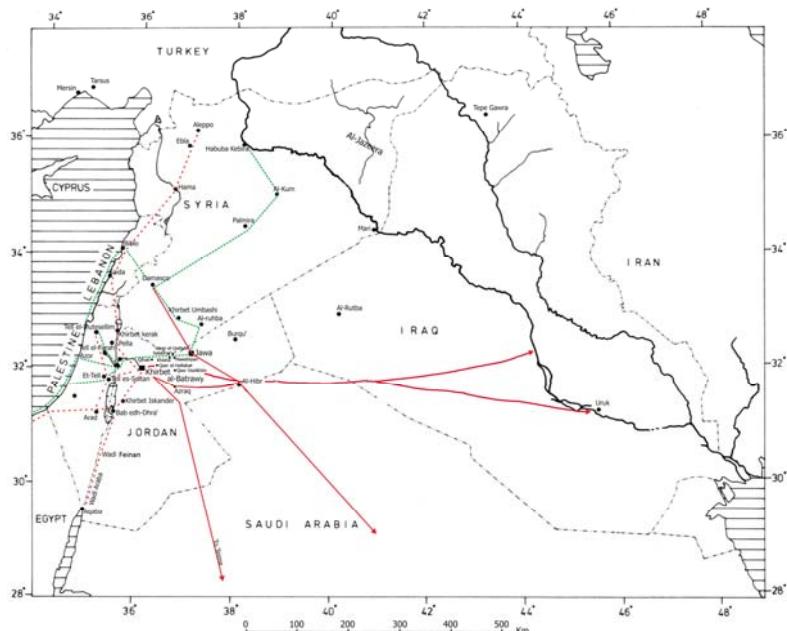


Fig. 5 - Map of long-distance interregional trade networks illustrating Batrawy as a key city in tracks crossing the desert eastwards.



Fig. 6 - The four axes retrieved in a *cachette* in Pillared Hall L.1040 and a fifth axe (the first on the left) from the nearby Hall L.1110 in Palace B of Khirbet al-Batrawy.



Fig. 7 - The destruction layer of EB IIIB Palace B of Khirbet al-Batrawy in Pillared Hall L.1040, from west.



Fig. 8 - Detail of the biconical central amethyst bead of the four-strings necklace retrieved in Hall L.1110 of EB IIIB Palace B at Khirbet al-Batrawy.



Fig. 9 - The ceremonial cup or krater on a high grooved foot, characterized by a finely highly obliquely burnished light reddish-brown slip (KB.10.B.1054/11) retrieved in Pillared Hall L.1040 of EB IIIB Palace B at Khirbet al-Batrawy.



Fig. 10 - Red ochre at the moment of recovery, found in a pithos in Pillared Hall L.1040 of EB IIIB Palace B at Khirbet al-Batrawy.



Fig. 11 - "Lotus" shaped bowl (KB.11.B.1128/76) found in storeroom L.1120 of EB IIIB Palace B at Khirbet al-Batrawy.

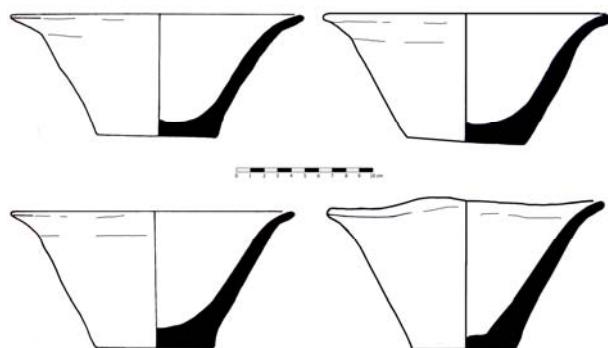


Fig. 12 - "Lotus vases" found in the *cachette* attributed to Stratum J-5 at Tell el-Mutesellim/Megiddo (Joffe 2000, fig. 8.6).

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Fig. 13 - Egyptian siltstone palette (KB.11.B.100) retrieved in Pillared Hall L.1040 of EB IIIB Palace B at Khirbet al-Batrawy.

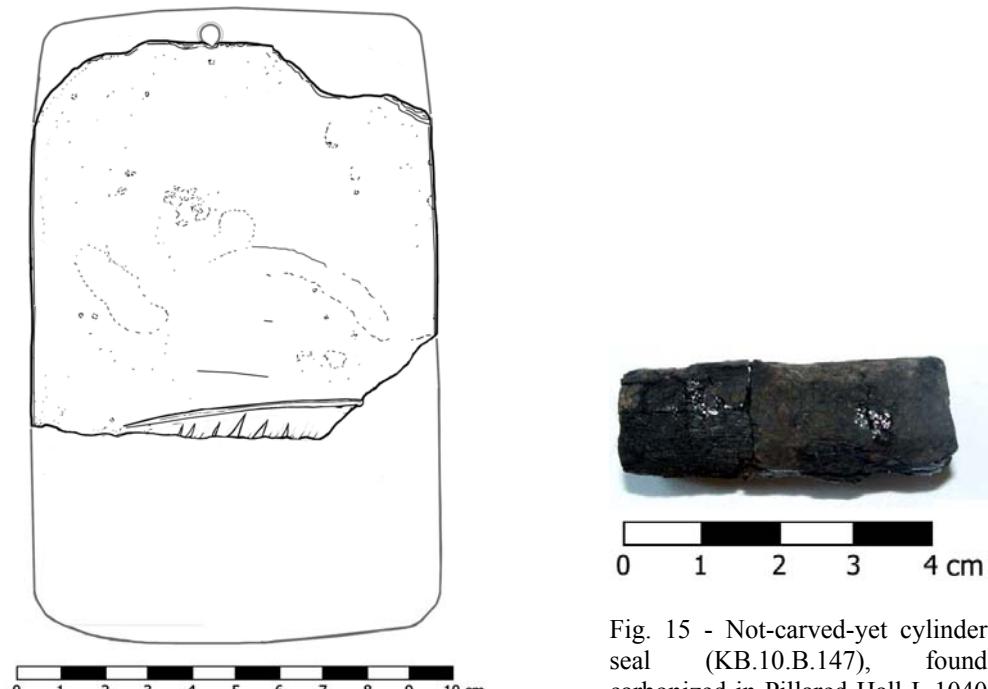


Fig. 14 - Reconstructive drawing of Egyptian palette KB.11.B.100.

Fig. 15 - Not-carved-yet cylinder seal (KB.10.B.147), found carbonized in Pillared Hall L.1040 of EB IIIB Palace B at Khirbet al-Batrawy.

[Vicino Oriente XVIII (2014), pp. 65-81]

EB II-III AEGYPTIACA EAST OF THE JORDAN:
A REEVALUATION OF TRADE AND CULTURAL INTERACTIONS
BETWEEN EGYPT AND THE TRANSJORDANIAN URBAN CENTRES

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Trade and cultural interconnections between pre-dynastic Egypt and the Southern Levant are established early, and most intensely since the end of the 4th millennium BC, to continue in renewed forms during the 3rd millennium BC between the Pharaonic state and the earliest urban centres of the Levant, both west and east of the Jordan.

The increasing number of Egyptian, and Egyptian-style items, identified in the first Jordanian cities of Early Bronze II-III, provides an opportunity for a reconsideration on the movement of Egyptian objects beyond the Jordan, up to the edge of the Syro-Arabian desert; on the evolution of the relations between Pharaonic Egypt and the urban centers of southern Levant in the 3rd millennium BC; and, eventually, on the role these commercial and cultural interactions played in the early urban societies of the region.

Keywords: Jordan; Egypt; earliest cities; Egyptian/Egyptian-style objects; trade and cultural contacts*

1. EGYPTIAN-PALESTINIAN CONTACTS IN THE 3RD MILLENNIUM BC: AN OVERVIEW

Exotic raw materials, as well as manufactured items (mainly luxury objects, like maceheads, palettes, shells, and beads), flowed from Egypt towards the Southern Levant as early as the 4th millennium BC. After an initial phase of occasional exchanges during the Chalcolithic and the Early Bronze (henceforth EB) IA,¹ a network of steady relationships and trade exchanges was established in EB IB in south-western Palestine, supported by the presence of Egyptian outposts (as ‘Ain Besor and Tell es-Sakan), and groups of Egyptian merchants,² with the main aim of supplying Egypt with products lacking in the motherland. Concurrently, a range of Egyptian commodities started to be traded in, and spread in Southern Levant.³

With the establishment of the Palestinian urban society in EB II-III, and the emergence of local polities, Egyptian presence in Southern Levant withdrawn. Nonetheless, Egyptian-Palestinian contacts continued in a renewed form, through Egyptian emissaries supervising economic interests of the Pharaonic state in the Land of Canaan, and accomplishing commerce and diplomatic tasks between the latter and the Palestinian rulers. Stuffs that Egypt needed (as oils and resins, salt and bitumen, as well as wine) were exchanged by local elites in return for Egyptian luxury objects,⁴ acquired as status insignia because of

* This study moves from archaeological researches carried out by Rome “La Sapienza” Expedition to Palestine & Jordan at the EBA site of Khirbet al-Batrawy, in North-Central Jordan.

¹ De Miroshedji 2002, 40-41; Lovell 2008; Braun - van den Brink 2008, 644-659; Braun 2011, 105-110.

² De Miroshedji *et al.* 2001; de Miroshedji 2002, 41-45; Braun - van den Brink 2008, 659-672; Braun 2011, 112-119.

³ Among them, perishable goods imported from Egypt, like textiles, basketry, bones and wooden objects (as toilette articles), should be also present, even if they are often difficult to be detected in the archaeological record (Sowada 2009, 237-238).

⁴ De Miroshedji 2002, 45-47; Greenberg - Eisenberg 2002, 214-221; Greenberg *et al.* 2012, 96; Sowada 2009, 36-37, 109, 127.

their exotic origin, precious material and sophisticated technique of manufacture: such prestige items contributed to the elite differentiation at the dawn of Palestinian urbanization. The rising presence of locally made Egyptian-style objects during the EB II-III urban phase is similarly related to the status marking and high-level consumption of the emerging ruling class.⁵

2. EGYPTIAN OBJECTS IN EB II-III SOUTHERN LEVANT

Among the prestigious objects that streamed from Egypt to Southern Levant during the 3rd millennium BC, stone maceheads, calcite vessels and siltstone palettes played a prominent role.⁶ Stone maceheads, made of different materials, spread in Southern Levant since the Late Chalcolithic/EB I Period, mostly as ritual objects; and they continued to be acquired during the EB II-III as high status insignia. The lack of detailed petrographic analyses makes at times tentative to establish if they were Egyptian-imported or locally manufactured artefacts; nonetheless, marble, calcite, diorite and granite maceheads were definitely Egyptian importations, like the specimens retrieved at EB II-III Megiddo,⁷ Tell el-Far‘ah North⁸ and Jericho⁹ (for the Transjordanian samples see below § 3).

Also Egyptian cosmetic palettes appear in Southern Levantine settlements and funerary contexts since EB IA,¹⁰ and they endured in the proto-urban EB IB in both the animal-shaped and squared typology.¹¹ Specimens retrieved in Southern Levant are basically made of siltstone, a stone locally unavailable.¹² During the EB II-III, when these objects are progressively dismissed in their own motherland,¹³ the number of their attestations increases in the Palestinian urban centres, where palettes become wealth items of elite consumption and display, and achieve a status-related value due to their exotic origin and fine craftsmanship.¹⁴ Animal-shaped palettes present in the earlier phase (and in Egypt

⁵ Most exemplificative is the case of Jericho/Tell es-Sultan, where the presence of Egyptian finds, attested since the EB IA, is associated to an increasing percentage of local Egyptian-style objects during the EB II-III: Sala 2012.

⁶ Egyptian-imported beads and personal ornaments, primarily in carnelian, amethyst, steatite, frit/faience or Nilotite shells, are present as well, mostly in funerary contexts.

⁷ Loud 1948, pl. 270:5-10.

⁸ Sowada 2009, 232.

⁹ Holland 1983, 804-806, fig. 365:3-5, 7, 10-11, 13 (Reg. 311, 444, 611, 710, 1048, 1116, 1449, 1593, 1781, 2922, 3194); Wheeler 1982, 630, fig. 256:1; Kenyon 1960, 171, fig. 66:4 (Reg. 151); Sala 2012, 285-286.

¹⁰ As attested to by the specimens retrieved at Gaza (de Miroshchedji 1992), Meser (Dothan 1957, 226, pl. 37A), Tell el-Far‘ah North (de Vaux 1951, 587, pl. XXVIIb:4 [Tomb 12]), and Jericho/Tell es-Sultan (Garstang *et al.* 1936, pl. XXXVI:26; Sowada 2009, 228).

¹¹ As attested to by the specimens from EB IB contexts at Azor (Druks - Tsaferis 1970 [Tomb 40]; Ben-Tor 1975a, 28, fig. 14:1, pl. 21:2-3 [Tomb 4]), in the cemetery near ‘Ain Assawir (Yannai 2002, 338, 340-341, fig. 22.1:22; Braun - van den Brink 2008, 671), and at Jericho/Tell es-Sultan (Holland 1982, 559, fig. 226:16, Reg. n. 1955; Sowada 2009, 228).

¹² Siltstone/greywacke and schist were extracted in Egypt from quarries in the Eastern Desert, in use since the Pre-dynastic through the Roman Period (Astor - Harrell - Shaw 2000, 57-58; Stevenson 2007, 150-152; Klemm - Klemm 2008, 307-309; Teeter ed. 2011, 70).

¹³ After a series of changes, in shape as well as in destination (from functional to elitarian and ceremonial, and from burial goods to votive offerings), cosmetic palettes eventually disappear towards the end of the Naqada period (2nd Dynasty); they are present in some later deposits only as heirlooms.

¹⁴ Different hypotheses have been advanced to explain this chronological divergence, suggesting that they could be either heirlooms from an earlier period, products of tombs robbing, or results of long-term exchange

during the Naqada II period)¹⁵ fade, and two main types are documented in the EB II-III Palestinian contexts: the squared/rectangular-shaped type, no more than 1 cm thick, bordered by one or two incised lines parallel to the edge, attested in Egypt since the early Naqada III period,¹⁶ like the specimen from Tell el-Khuweilfeh (stratum 14, EB III),¹⁷ and the three items from Khirbet Kerak¹⁸ (for the Transjordanian samples see below § 3); and the thicker rectangular plain type, largely attested in Egypt in the Saqqara, Abu Roash, and Minshat Abu Omar necropolis of the 1-2 Dynasties, like the two specimens from EB III contexts at Khirbet Yarmouk.¹⁹ The fragment of a ceremonial siltstone palette carved with an Egyptian relief (a hand grasping a *was*-sceptre and ‘*ankh*’), found at Khirbet Kerak in an EB III context next to the “Circles Building”,²⁰ is an outstanding, but up to now isolated find from Southern Levant: except of it, examples with relief-carved decorations are known only from Egypt itself, and their use seems to have been confined to the early Egyptian elites of the 0-1 Dynasties.²¹

Egyptian-style palettes made by Canaanite craftsmen from local stones are also present in EB II-III contexts, as specimens from Jericho²² and Bab edh-Dhra^c (§ 3) clearly illustrate. They usually exhibit a plain rectangular shape (with slightly rounded corners), with a hole drilled in the top centre, contrasting the Naqada III Egyptian-imported palettes, still attested to in EB II-III contexts (at Tell el-Khuweilfeh, Khirbet Kerak, Bab edh-Dhra^c and Numeira), which show a sharp squared shape decorated by parallel lines incised along the border. A large rectangular palette, made of siltstone, but almost certainly locally produced, was eventually found at Khirbet Yarmouk (in Area G).²³

Finally, Egyptian stone vessels mostly made of calcite (the so-called “Egyptian alabaster”),²⁴ or highly polished limestone, spread as luxury objects in Southern Levant since the beginning of the 3rd millennium BC,²⁵ mainly in temple and palatial contexts,²⁶ as

mechanisms (Sowada 2000, 1531-1534; 2009, 243-244). Nonetheless, the recently proposed “High Chronology” for Southern Levantine EBA would at least partly shorten this temporal gap (see below § 4).

¹⁵ Petrie 1974, 37-38, pls. LII-LVII; Spencer 1993, 41; Hendrickx 2006, 77-79.

¹⁶ Petrie 1974, 38, pl. LIX.

¹⁷ A handful of siltstone fragments was also found in EB III stratum 13: Jacobs 1996.

¹⁸ Greenberg - Eisenberg 2002, 214, and note 3, fig. 13.2; Sowada 2009, 121-122.

¹⁹ Sowada 2000, 1531; 2009, 104-105, fig. 19:124-125, pl. 14. One more siltstone palette, of a slightly different type, comes from EB II Arad (Amiran *et al.* 1978, 55, pl. 68:21), while a diorite palette was retrieved in the 1930s at ‘Ai/et-Tell (Marquet-Krause 1949, 60, pls. XXXVIII:482, LXIX:482). A further trapezoidal palette, with a hole drilled in the top centre, has been recently found in an EB III context (level J-7b) at Megiddo/Tell el-Mutesellim (Blockman - Sass 2013, 900, fig. 15.15:538, Reg. n. 04/J/13/AR1), but its material is not specified.

²⁰ Greenberg - Wengrow - Paz 2010; Greenberg *et al.* 2012, 96-97.

²¹ Petrie 1953, 1, 9-18, pls. A-K; Wengrow 2006, 41-44, 140-142, 176.

²² One item from an EB II layer in Tomb D12 (Kenyon 1960, 125, fig. 40:3, Reg. n. 353; Sala 2012, 284-285), three from EB II layers on the tell (Reg. ns. 2630 [Dorrell 1983, 559], 2632 [Dorrell 1983, 559, pl. 21c], and 1197 [Dorrell 1983, 559, fig. 230:12]), and another one from an EB III context on the Spring Hill (Dorrell 1983, 559, Reg. n. 3267; Sala 2012, 286).

²³ Sowada 2000, 1532.

²⁴ The so-called “Egyptian alabaster”, i.e. calcite or travertine (also named calcite-alabaster), is not available in Southern Levant, and differs from proper alabaster, i.e. gypsum, which conversely is present in both Palestine and Transjordan (Aston - Harrell - Shaw 2000, 21,-22, 59-60; Klemm - Klemm 2008, 147).

²⁵ Sparks 2003; Sala 2012, 279-280.

²⁶ Sala 2008, 17-18, 69, 235-236, 302-303; Sowada 2009, 110, 216-218.

the specimens from Arad,²⁷ Tell el-Far‘ah North,²⁸ Khirbet Yarmouk,²⁹ Megiddo,³⁰ Tell el-‘Areini,³¹ and Jericho,³² up to the renowned collection of vessels from EB IIIB “Sanctuary A” at ‘Ai/et-Tell,³³ testify to.

3. EGYPTIAN AND EGYPTIAN-STYLE FINDS FROM EB II-III TRANSPORT

Egyptian prestigious items as stone maceheads, siltstone palettes and calcite vessels have been retrieved also east of the Jordan River. A calcite macehead from an EB II context (fig. 2:7),³⁴ and a hippopotamus ivory cylinder seal, dating to the transitional EB II/III phase, were found at Tell Abu Kharaz; the latter was locally made, but its raw material may point to an Egyptian connection.³⁵ A further find from the site is represented by a juglet made of Egyptian Marl Clay, though its shape belongs to the local EB II Palestinian repertoire.³⁶

A corner fragment of a rectangular siltstone palette, with a single line incised parallel to the edge on the polished obverse, and a hole drilled in the top centre, was found in an EB III context at Numeira (fig. 2:1),³⁷ in addition to two maceheads;³⁸ while a handful of cosmetic palettes is said to have been uncovered at Tell el-‘Umeiri (but no further information is given).³⁹

Anyhow, the most significant group of EB II-III Egyptian and Egyptian-style objects comes from Bab edh-Dhra‘, probably due to strategic location of the site in an area close to the Dead Sea (procurement source of raw materials such as salt and bitumen), and the copper mines of the Wadi Faynan, and dominating the northern part of the Wadi ‘Arabah joining with south-western Palestine. Here, four Egyptian palettes were found in both the settlement and the nearby necropolis: two palettes come from Field XVI (fig. 1:1-2),⁴⁰ one

²⁷ Amiran *et al.* 1978, 57, pl. 77:1-2; Sowada 2009, 45, fig. 5c.

²⁸ Sowada 2009, 48-49, fig. 4a-b.

²⁹ Ben-Tor 1975b, 72, note 26; de Miroshchedji *et al.* 1988, 88, pl. 48:9-12; Sowada 2009, 49-50, 105-109, figs. 4c, 5a, 19-21, pl. 15.

³⁰ Loud 1948, pl. 258:1, 262:7; Hennessy 1967, 60-61.

³¹ Sowada 2009, 103, fig. 20.

³² Dorrell 1983, 554, fig. 229:17, pl. 19a (Reg. 1507, 1619); Sowada 2009, 49, fig. 5b.

³³ Marquet-Krause 1949, 16-21, 29; Hennessy 1967, 69-70; Amiran 1970; Callaway 1972, 299-302. Two calcite bowls were found also in the Temple of Phase A on the Acropolis (Amiran 1970, 175-179).

³⁴ Fischer 2002, 328, fig. 21.2:5; 2008, 229, fig. 243:6. Locally made limestone maceheads were also found in phase II-III contexts (Fischer 2002, 328, fig. 21.2:4, 6-7; 2008, 68, fig. 50:1-2, 237, fig. 248:9, 359, fig. 322). For the Egyptian finds from the EB IB see below the conclusions (§ 4).

³⁵ Fischer 2002, 328-330, fig. 21.3:1; 2008, 212, fig. 218:7. Two more hippopotamus ivory fragments were retrieved at Tell Abu Kharaz (Fischer 1997, 160; 2008, 358). Perhaps not by chance, the hippopotamus ivory cylinder seal was found close to an inverted conical cup with concave profile, which could be either an Egyptian import or an Egyptian-style copy (Fischer 2002, 325-327, figs. 21.1:4), and which may find parallels in the votive cups found in the EB IIIB sanctuary at ‘Ai/et-Tell (Marquet-Krause 1949, pls. LIII and LXXV:1486-1488, 1490, 1496, 1499-1502, 1504, 1509, 1513, 1526, 1537-1538, 1540; Hennessy 1967, 70).

³⁶ Fischer 2002, 327, fig. 21.1:5.

³⁷ Sowada 2000, 1528-1529, fig. 3b; 2009, 93-94, pl. 13.

³⁸ Rast - Schaub 1989, 294.

³⁹ Geraty *et al.* 1986, 135.

⁴⁰ Reg. ns. 1262 and 2924: Rast - Schaub 2003, 294, fig. 10.39:2, 400, fig. 12.6:3-4; Lee 2003, 631.

from Charnel Houses A21 (fig. 1:3),⁴¹ and another one from Charnel Houses A51 (fig. 1:4).⁴² Egyptian-style specimens made from local stones, plain and with a hole drilled in the top centre, were also uncovered in the EB II-III tombs of the necropolis: two specimens come from Charnel Houses A22 (fig. 1:5-6),⁴³ two from Charnel Houses A41 (fig. 1:7-8),⁴⁴ and three from Charnel Houses A51 (fig. 1:9-11);⁴⁵ they find meaningful comparisons in contemporary EB II-III local items from Jericho (see above).

Additional Egyptian and Egyptian-style finds come from Bab edh-Dhra^c EB III town-site: a local cylinder seal (2860) made of pink alabaster, a material of possible Egyptian provenance (fig. 2:3),⁴⁶ and a second cylinder seal (2823), made of chlorite, which is instead a confident Egyptian importation, because of both its material and decorative motif (fig. 2:2).⁴⁷ A fragmentary Egyptian calcite jar has been also retrieved in Field XIV (fig. 2:4),⁴⁸ while a handful of Egyptian pear-shaped maceheads, made of calcite⁴⁹ and granite (fig. 2:6)⁵⁰ comes from EB III contexts at both the town-site and the nearby necropolis. Moreover, a possible Egyptian-imported ceramic jar was found in Charnel House A22⁵¹, along with predominately EB III material (fig. 2:5).⁵²

A further item belonging to the class of Egyptian palettes recently came from EB IIIB Palace B at Khirbet al-Batrawy. This is so far the easternmost specimen of this class retrieved in Southern Levant. The Batrawy palette (KB.11.B.100) is a rectangular-shaped thin slice of grey fine schist, with an engraved line and some oblique strokes at the broken edge.⁵³ The Batrawy Palace gave back additional Egyptian and Egyptian-style objects, namely: a bi-conical amethyst bead, inserted in the centre of the four-strings pectoral (fig. 3:1) of gemstones necklace KB.11.B.101;⁵⁴ and an Egyptian-style “Lotus Vase” (fig. 3:2).⁵⁵ The latter belongs to the medium-sized type appearing in Southern Levant as early as EB

⁴¹ Rast - Schaub 1989, 343; Wilkinson 1989, 455, fig. 261:7.

⁴² Rast - Schaub 1989, 384-385; Wilkinson 1989, 454, fig. 261:3. See also Sowada 2009, 95-97, fig. 18, pl. 13.

⁴³ Reg. ns. 1900, 3364: Sowada 2000, 1529-1530, fig. 1c, 1e.

⁴⁴ Wilkinson 1989, fig. 261:5-6.

⁴⁵ Wilkinson 1989, 452-454, fig. 261:1-2, 4.

⁴⁶ Lapp 1989, p. 5, fig. 4; 2003, 541-543, fig. 18.16. The motif recalls the Arad Stele, and a vessel from Bab edh-Dhra^c, now in the Franciscan collection at Jerusalem.

⁴⁷ Lapp 1989, pp. 9-11, fig. 8; 2003, 547-550, fig. 18.21.

⁴⁸ Reg. n. 1888: Lee 2003, 625, fig. 21.5.3; Sowada 2009, 99, fig. 20. A bowl rim fragment in “soft calcite” retrieved in Charnel House A21 could be also an Egyptian importation (Wilkinson 1989, 459, fig. 263).

⁴⁹ Reg. ns. 752, 766, 1340. Two more calcite maceheads were found in the town-site, but out of context (Reg. ns. 1717 and 1602: Lee 2003, 624, 632, pls. 141:11, 142:10).

⁵⁰ Wilkinson 1989, 459, fig. 263:4.

⁵¹ Reg. n. 2209: Rast - Schaub 1980, 39, fig. 11:3.

⁵² A number of beads made of different materials (such as carnelian, calcite, faience, gold, sea-shell) could be also of Egyptian origin (Sowada 2009, 94-95). Finally, a Red Sea mother-of-pearl shell pendant was found in EB II-III Charnel House 8 (Wilkinson 1989, 456, fig. 262:1).

⁵³ <http://www.lasapienzatordan.it/Discoveries%202011/discovery2011.htm>; and Nigro - Sala 2012.

⁵⁴ Nigro 2012. Egyptian Eastern Desert was, in fact, the primary location for amethyst mining in pre-classical Near East (Astor - Harrell - Shaw 2000, 50-52). Extraction and working of amethyst is known in Egypt since the late Pre-dynastic period, above all in jewellery. An early source, as early as the First Dynasty, was the Wadi Abu Had, in the northern part of the Eastern Desert; while the use of most renown sources as the Gebel el-Asr and, above all, the Wadi el-Hudi dates back from the Middle Kingdom (Sadek 1980; Shaw - Jameson 1993).

⁵⁵ KB.11.B.1128/76: Nigro 2013, 204.

IA,⁵⁶ and well-known in south-western Palestine in the EB IB, when the presence of Egyptian and Egyptian-style pottery spread in the area. In Egypt, the “Lotus Vase” type appears from the 1st to the 6th Dynasty, even though attestations decrease at the time of the 5th Dynasty. The dating of the Batrawy “Lotus Vase” to EB IIIB is, thus, much significant. The best comparisons can be found in the Egyptian-style vessels retrieved in the *cachette* from Temple of level J-4 at Megiddo/Tell el-Mutesellim,⁵⁷ while other comparable specimens come from EB IIIB Sanctuary A at ‘Ai/et-Tell,⁵⁸ similarly witnessing enduring Egyptian-Palestinian cultural connections throughout the EB II-III urban phase.

4. TRADE AND CULTURAL CONTACTS BETWEEN EGYPT AND THE EB II-III TRANSJORDANIAN URBAN CENTRES

Occasional contacts between Egypt and the centres east of Jordan, probably through down-line trades via middlemen in Cisjordan, or sporadic visits of Egyptian merchants, occurred since the Late Chalcolithic and EB I periods: calcite (and marble?) maceheads and siltstone palette fragments from Tuleilat el-Ghassul,⁵⁹ a lentoid diorite macehead from el-Khawarij,⁶⁰ some piriform hematite maceheads from Abu Hamid,⁶¹ samples of *Aspatharia rubens* and a stone vase from Tall Hujayrat,⁶² date back to the Chalcolithic Period; while calcite and diorite maceheads come from EB IA tombs at Bab edh-Dhra^c,⁶³ and, especially, two Egyptian cylindrical jars fragments and calcite and limestone maceheads were found in EB IB contexts at Tell Abu Kharaz.⁶⁴

Stronger Egyptian-Jordanian connections developed in the following EB II-III phase,⁶⁵ when Transjordanian settlements, which had achieved the status of urban and more

⁵⁶ As attested to by two specimens from the Jericho necropolis (Kenyon’s Tombs A114 and K1): Kenyon 1960, fig. 17:23; 1965, fig. 12:6; Sala 2005, 177-178.

⁵⁷ Goren - Ilan 2003.

⁵⁸ Marquet-Krause 1949, 195-197, pls. LII:1534,1536,1541, LXV:1524,1534,1536, LXXVI:1541; Callaway 1972, 303-304, figs. 73:1, 76:3-5.

⁵⁹ Along with a number of calcite, serpentine, carnelian, ivory and faience beads: Bourke 2002, 155-156. Samples of Nilotic *Aspatharia* and *Chambardia rubens acruata* were also found at the site (Braun - van den Brink 2008, 647).

⁶⁰ Lovell 2008, 749-753, figs. 4-5:a.

⁶¹ Dollfus - Kafafi 1986, 517, fig. 15:7-8, pl. 86.3-5, 7-9.

⁶² Klinscha - Notroff - Siegel 2014, 168-169.

⁶³ Rast - Schaub 1989, 289-294.

⁶⁴ Fischer 2002, 325-328, figs. 21.1:1-2; 2008, 49, fig. 34:5, 82, fig. 78:7, 118, fig. 119:15, 220, fig. 229:12-13, 359, fig. 322; 2014, 23-24. We can add an inverted conical cup with straight sides, either an Egyptian import or an Egyptian-style copy (Fischer 2002, 325, figs. 21.1:3); and some faience beads from a necklace (Fischer 2014, 20, fig. 3:15). The region east of the Jordan did not witness during the EB IB such an intense Egyptian frequentation as the sites of south-western Palestine, where Egyptian and Egyptian-style pottery represents up to 80% of local assemblages in centres like Tell el-‘Areini and Tel Ma’ahaz (Braun 2003; Amiran - van den Brink 2002). The easternmost site outside the main area of Egyptian frequentation, showing strong Egyptian connections since EB IA, is Jericho/Tell es-Sultan, thanks to its location at one of the main ancient crossroads, and the proximity to key raw materials, as salt, sulphur and bitumen from the Dead Sea (Nigro 2008, 649-650, 653; Sala 2012, 281-284). Anyhow, the Egyptian jars and maceheads retrieved at Tell Abu Kharaz extend well beyond the Jordan River the geographical limits of the distribution of Egyptian objects during the EB I.

⁶⁵ All over Southern Levant, in fact, during EB II-III, Egyptian objects start to be well attested also outside the main area of permanent Egyptian presence (i.e. south-western Palestine), pointing to a reassessment of the

powerful centres, were able and eager to trade local raw materials (oil and wine, salt, asphalt, etc.) required by the Pharaonic state, in exchange for exotic luxury commodities: local rulers looked for valuable Egyptian artefacts (palettes, maceheads, stone vessels, etc.) as status-related insignia and forms of elite display within a developing stratified society (fig. 4). The local manufacture of Egyptian-style objects similarly accomplished the require and consumption of wealth objects by the emerging ruling class (tab. 1). The EB III collection of Egyptian and Egyptian-style objects recently found at Khirbet al-Batrawy, at the edges of the Syro-Arabic Desert, further illustrates the trade and cultural contacts acting between Egypt and the Transjordanian EB II-III urban centres, triggered by the new local polities (it is not by chance that Egyptian and Egyptian-style objects found at Khirbet al-Batrawy come from the EB IIIB Royal Palace).

Such exchanges were likely negotiated by royal Egyptian agents or merchants, residing in south-western Palestine, or in a few key centres,⁶⁶ and performing as liaisons between Egypt and the area to the north and to the east of the Jordan River, which laid beyond the immediate Egyptian sphere of influence.

The expanding collection of Egyptian-imported objects identified in Southern Levant, both west and east of the Jordan River, in either past or current excavations, provides an opportunity for a re-evaluation on the range, nature and extension of the relationships between Egypt and Southern Levant at the time of its first cities; on the interactions between Old Kingdom Egypt and the urban centres of 3rd millennium BC Palestine and Transjordan; and, eventually, on the role these trade and cultural contacts played in the rising of the earliest urban culture in the region.

A larger evidence of these interactions, and Egyptian imports, is expected to be found in the archaeological record as long as analysis and identification of imported material (according to both typological and technological/petrographic studies) will improve. Diverging from what commonly and previously believed (and with the mere exception of the phenomenon of Egyptian and Egyptian-style pottery confined to EB IB south-western Palestine), the percentage of Egyptian items in Southern Levant does not decrease during the EB II-III urban phase. The number of such prestigious items appears well attested to all over Palestine and Transjordan, and its ratio does not decline moving to the north, or to the east. Key centres like Khirbet Kerak to the north, or Khirbet al-Batrawy to the farthest east, prove the continuous flow of Egyptian items towards Southern Levant up to the mid-3rd millennium BC (see below), within a framework of well-established cross-cultural contacts and trade relationships between the region and Old Kingdom Egypt;⁶⁷ they illustrate the increasing request and consumption of such commodities by the local urban elites as rank insignia, in order to reinforce societal hierarchies and ruling status. On the other hand, the retrieval of Palestinian objects, mainly ceramic containers, in the Egyptian necropolises of

Egyptian-Palestinian relationships after the dawn of the earliest urban organizations: direct exploitation of the Palestinian products by Egyptian colonists was replaced by royal Egyptian emissaries acting as mediators in the Palestinian territory (de Miroshedji 2002, 44-47; Kafafi 2014, 151-154).

⁶⁶ As it has been suggested for Khirbet Kerak: see Greenberg *et al.* 2012, 96-97; 2014, 94-95, 97.

⁶⁷ On this topic see: Sowada 2009; Greenberg *et al.* 2012, 97; Nigro 2012, 231-232.

the 1st and 2nd Dynasties, also points to the presence of a continuous exchange.⁶⁸ Eventually, if one relies upon the newly calibrated radiocarbon dating, which fixes the end of the EB II between 3000-2900 BC, and the end of the EB III, i.e. the collapse of the earliest Palestinian cities, around the 2500 BC (instead of 2300 BC as previously estimated), a new synchronization pattern emerges: Palestinian EB III appears to be coeval to the earliest Old Kingdom Dynasties (3rd, 4th, early-5th Dynasty), while the last phase of EB III should not continue into the 6th Dynasty, since the collapse of the Southern Levantine urban society would take place somewhat during the 5th Dynasty.⁶⁹

Aegyptiaca retrieved in EB II-III Palestine and Transjordan may be thus interpreted as residual, or might indicate a different (higher) dating of the period (and interactions), as suggested by radiocarbon. The correlation with Egypt remains difficult for the EB II-III, when dated objects bearing reference markers diminish; anyhow, no Egyptian object later than the 5th Dynasty has been apparently found in EB III Southern Levantine contexts.⁷⁰

Egyptian-Southern Levantine interactions would be active until the mid-3rd millennium BC, when they apparently dismissed following the breakdown of the Palestinian urban centres that could have happened earlier than it was traditionally retained. This is in general agreement with the evidence offered by both textual evidence⁷¹ and petrographic analyses,⁷² namely that since the mid-3rd millennium BC, i.e. during the late Old Kingdom (5th - 6th Dynasties), Egypt developed stronger contacts with Central and Northern Levant, primarily centered on the flourishing EB III harbor city of Byblos. Most interesting from this point of view are the results of recent petrographic analyses from Elephantine, where imported Levantine pottery retrieved in strata of the late Old Kingdom (late 5th - early 6th Dynasties)⁷³ came from Byblos and its surroundings, or from the area north of Tell Arqa.

Site	Object type						Egyptian-style Vessels	
	Egyptian-imported							
	Palettes	Maceheads	Cylinder seals	Stone vessels	Ceramic vessels	Other		
Tell Abu Kharaz		1 (plus 3 locally made)			1 (?)	raw material (hippopotamus ivory)	1	
Tell el-'Umeiri	unspecified number							
Numeira	1	2						
Bab edh-Dhra ^c	4 (plus 7 Egyptian-style palettes)	6	1	1 (plus 1?)	1	raw material (pink alabaster)		
Khirbet al-Batrawy	1					1 amethyst bead	1	

Tab. 1: Summary table of Egyptian and Egyptian-style objects from EB II-III Transjordanian sites.

⁶⁸ Lastly, Müller 2014, with an updated analysis of Palestinian-Egyptian contacts in light of Tomb of Den at Umm el-Qaab.

⁶⁹ Regev *et al.* 2012; Höflmayer 2014.

⁷⁰ Already Hennessy 1967; then, Chapman 2009; Sowada 2009, 123-124.

⁷¹ Marcolin - Espinel 2011.

⁷² Köhler - Ownby 2011; Forstner-Müller - Raue 2014.

⁷³ Forstner-Müller - Raue 2014, 59-60.

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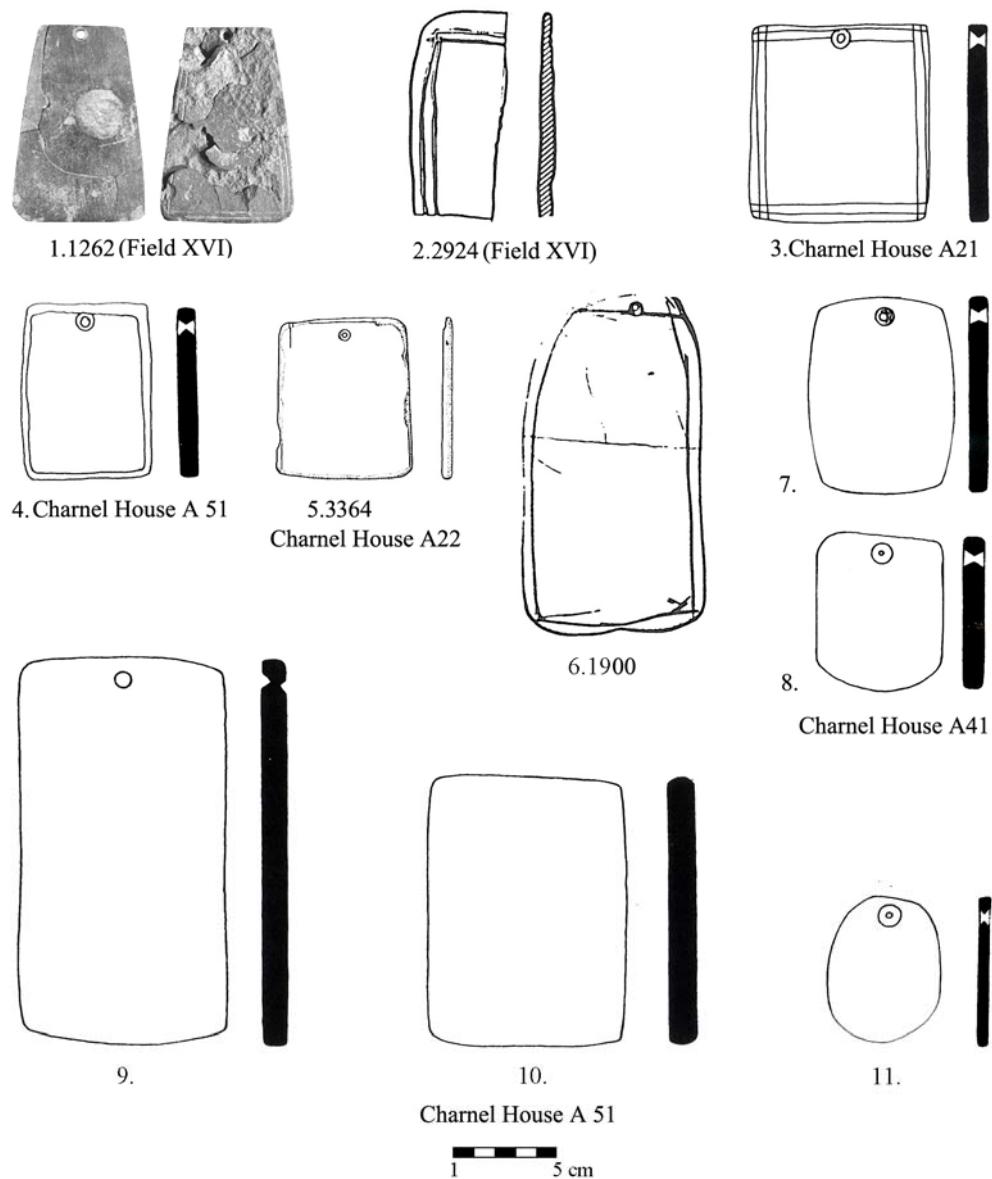


Fig. 1 - Egyptian and Egyptian-style palettes from Bab edh-Dhra' (after Wilkinson 1989, fig. 261:1-7; Sowada 2000, fig. 1c, 1e; Rast - Schaub 2003, figs. 10.39:2, 12.6:3-4).

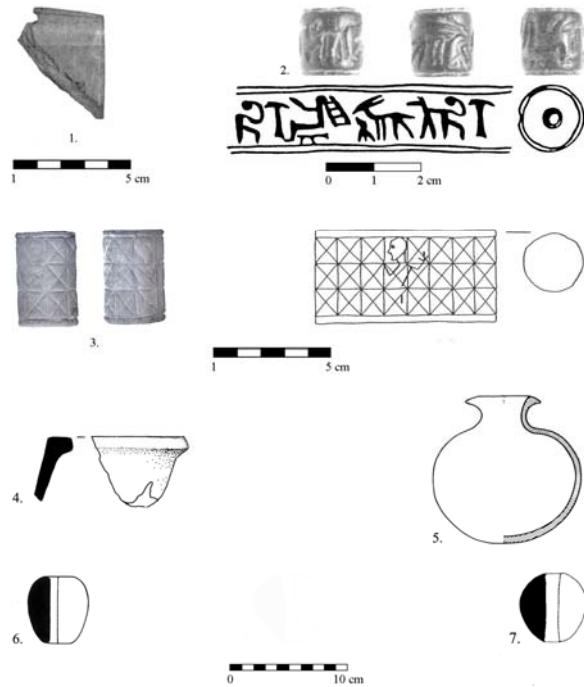


Fig. 2 - 1, Egyptian palette from Numeira (after Sowada 2000, fig. 3b); 2-3, Egyptian and Egyptian-style cylinder seals from Bab edh-Dhra' (after Lapp 2003, figs. 18.21, 18.16); 4, Egyptian calcite vessel from Bab edh-Dhra' (after Lee 2003, fig. 21.5:3); 5, Egyptian ceramic jar from Bab edh-Dhra' (after Rast - Schaub 1980, fig. 11.3); 6, Egyptian granite macehead from Bab edh-Dhra' (after Wilkinson 1989, fig. 263:4); 7, Egyptian calcite macehead from Tell Abu Kharaz (after Fischer 2008, fig. 243:6).

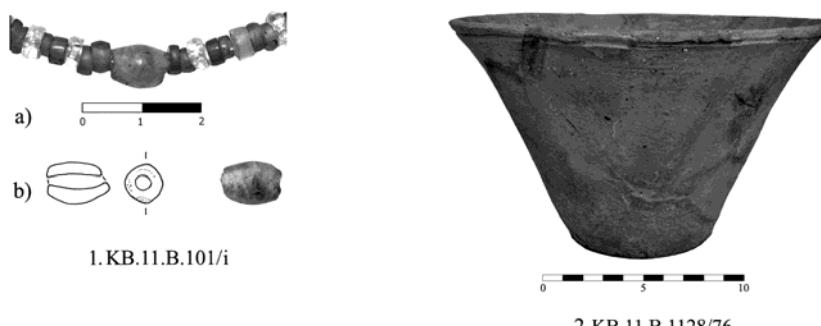


Fig. 3 - 1. Bi-conical amethyst bead, and 2. Egyptian-style Lotus Vase KB.11.B.1128/76 from Khirbet al-Batrawy (© Rome "La Sapienza" Expedition to Jordan).

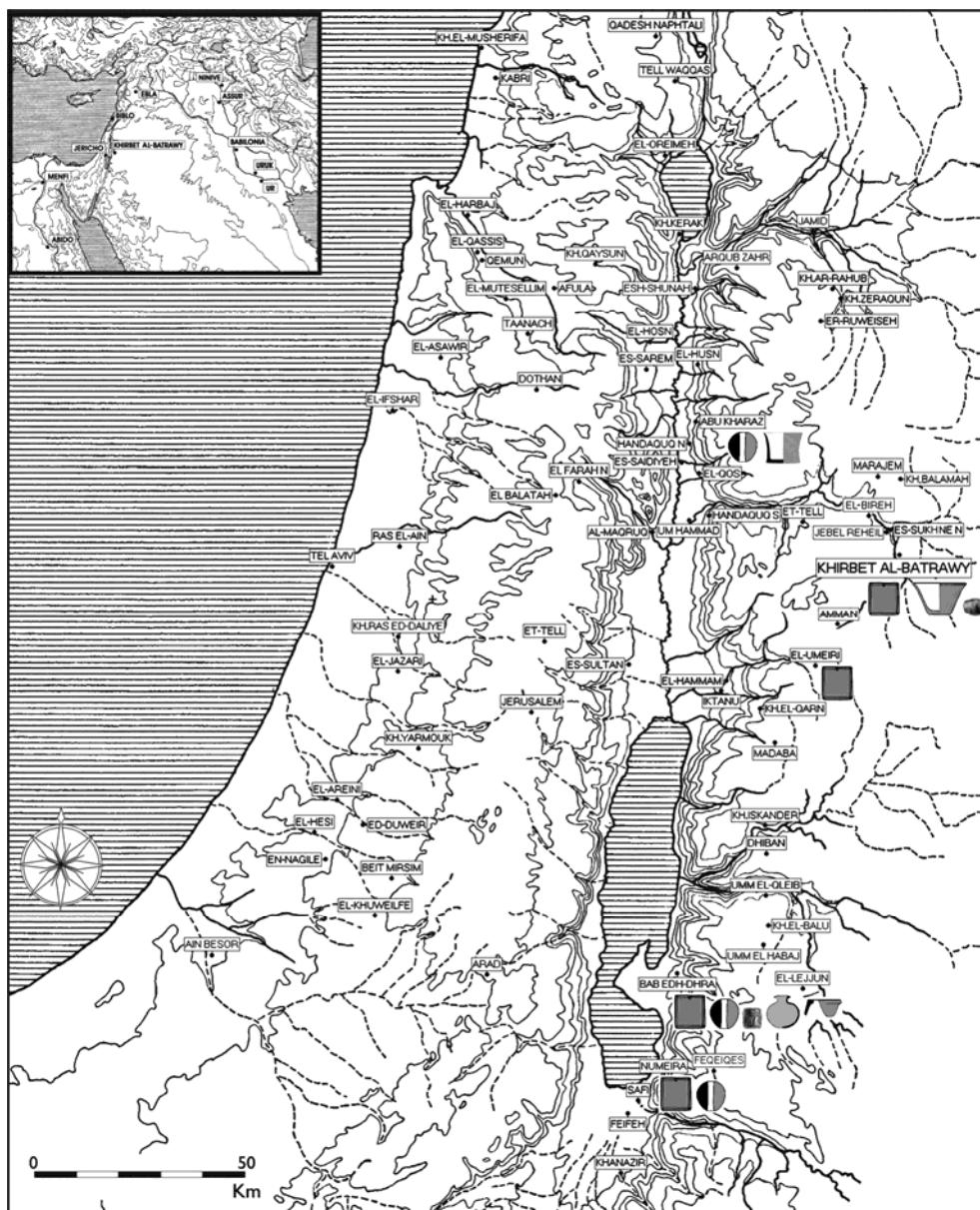


Fig. 4 - Main EB II-III Southern Levantine sites, with indicated the Egyptian and Egyptian-style finds retrieved east of the Jordan River.

[Vicino Oriente XVIII (2014), pp. 83-100]

TWO EB III RED POLISHED JUGS
FROM PALACE B IN KHIRBET AL-BATRAWY
AND JUGS WITH RESERVED ALTERNATE-HATCHING DECORATION (RAHD)
FROM PALESTINE AND TRANSJORDAN*

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The Early Bronze Age III (around 2700-2350 BC) represents the zenith of the Southern Levantine cities of the 3rd millennium BC, both in terms of growth and social complexity. Between the numerous valuable items (high-quality stone objects, metal weapons, Egyptian or Egyptian-style luxury pieces, jewels) gathered by local élites inside temples and palaces, or preserved as heirlooms in grave goods, a specific typology of ceramic vessels seems to be linked to these prestigious contexts: red-burnished/polished jugs, with a reserved decorated band on the girth in form of diagonal burnished hatching. Two jugs recently recovered from the EB IIIB Palace B of Khirbet al-Batrawy (North-Central Jordan) have allowed an evaluation of this decorative motif with its related retrieval contexts.

Keywords: red-polished jugs; hatched reserved burnishing; Khirbet al-Batrawy; Early Bronze III; urbanism and status display

1. THE AFFIRMATION OF CITY-STATES SYSTEM AND THE COLLECTION OF LUXURY OBJECTS

In the passage between Early Bronze I and Early Bronze II (3200-3100/3000-2700),¹ from a not-organically structured society studded with numerous small villages to the appearance of a few major cities,² several elements in architecture³ and material culture⁴ highlighted this social change.

* Grateful thanks are addressed to Prof. Lorenzo Nigro, for encouraging and training me in the research on the Early Bronze Age and for charging me with this study, discussing thoroughly with me many issues of it, and to Maura Sala, for having patiently shared her knowledge of EB pottery with me throughout these years.

¹ In the present contribution, traditional Early Bronze II-III chronology (3050-2300 BC: Mazar 1990, 108-110) has been kept basically unchanged. Recent debate on EB chronology, and new calibrated radiocarbon dating, brings back the beginning and the end of the EB II-III, fixing the end of the EB II between 3000-2900 BC, and the end of the EB III around 2500 BC (Regev *et al.* 2012). For an overview of Egyptian artifacts retrieved in Transjordanian contexts (and at Khirbet al-Batrawy itself) during the Early Bronze II-III, with the related chronological implications, see Nigro 2014a, 46-47; Sala 2014.

² Speculative approaches to Early Bronze Age walled sites characterized them in different levels of social complexity as cities within secondary states (Esse 1989), city-states (de Miroshedji 2009) or corporate villages (Chesson - Philip 2003; Philip 2008). It is difficult to come to a shared agreement, since the 3rd millennium panorama in Southern Levant appears highly diversified, and also if general tendencies can be pointed out, no theoretical model succeeds in meeting the totality of the cases. Nevertheless some EB III centers have those characteristics belonging to what can be considered a local way to urbanism (Nigro 2009).

³ The erection of the first massive defensive systems (Mazar 1990, 119-123) and the appearance of temples (Sala 2008, 121-186), took place between EB I and EB II (see e.g. the monumental temple of Megiddo in level J-4/stratum XVIII, corresponding to EB IB: Adams - Finkelstein - Ussishkin 2014).

⁴ The regional material fragmentation detectable in the Early Bronze I pottery underwent a general standardization in terms of paste and shapes in the following EB II, with the emergence of a southern horizon (Amiran 1969, 58-59) and a northern one (Greenberg - Porat 1996); during the EB III the homogenization became much more evident with the sole exception of the KKW (see below fn. 6).

Nevertheless, the apex of the urban culture was reached nothing but in the EB III (2700-2350 BC), when most of the cities stretched to their maximum extension,⁵ with the achievement of an almost full degree of homogenization in material culture,⁶ and the emergence of the first buildings erected for housing local élites,⁷ i.e. central institutions ruling over major cities. One of the principal functions of the palaces was certainly gathering in secure places (the fortified cities) foodstuff and other staple goods:⁸ with the latters, or through/in function of them, the central institutions gathered also immaterial resources as power and control over the incomes tied to the land (water and agro-pastoral products). Other kinds of immaterial resources became as important as the material ones, if not more: control over craft production (and over the ability and the possibility to reproduce that craft)⁹ and trade connections,¹⁰ whose material outcomes were stored in the palace itself, as physical representations of an intangible status.¹¹ Between these prestige objects, a new class of jugs with a particular reserved decoration on the girth seems to be related to some EB III public contexts, or funerary ones. Significantly not one of these pieces derived from an EB II context, not even in those cases that demonstrate a noteworthy accumulation

⁵ In the passage between EB II and EB III, many fortification systems of Palestinian cities are strengthened or doubled with the addition of advanced defensive works or towers, such as, for instance, at et-Tell/'Ai (Callaway 1980, 147-158), Khirbet Yarmouk (de Miroshchedji 1990, 57-60), Tell es-Sultan/Jericho (Nigro 2014c, 73, n. 14 with previous references), Khirbet al-Batrawy (Nigro 2012, 38-52; Nigro ed. 2008, 89-95), Khirbet Kerak (Greenberg *et al.* 2006, 249-267), Khirbet ez-Zeraqon (Lower City: Douglas 2007, 30, figs. 4, 14-18, 26, plans 6-9). This general strengthening of fortifications, likely due to an higher level of conflict between the Levantine city-states, can be seen also as a positive response to the catastrophic telluric struck that hit the region at the end of EB II (for a recent summary on this topic see Gallo 2014, 146-153).

⁶ Despite the phenomenon of the so-called Khirbet Kerak Ware (KKW), whose foreign origin and northern derivation justify the outstanding difference in manufacturing technique, typology and decoration in respect to the rest of the local repertory (Greenberg - Goren eds. 2009), EB III pottery underwent a general standardization, marginalizing or losing completely the specialized productions of EB II, such as North Canaanite Metallic Ware (Greenberg - Porat 1996) or Light Faced Painted Ware/Abydos Ware (Amiran 1974; Kantor 1992).

⁷ The evidence of Southern Levantine palaces (as attested at Palace B of Khirbet Yarmouk - de Miroshchedji 2003; Palace 3177 of Tell el-Mutesellim/Megiddo - Loud 1948, 70-78; Nigro 1994, 1-27; the 'palace' in the Upper City of Khirbet ez-Zeraqon - Genz 2002, 96, fig. 6.2; Palace B at Khirbet al-Batrawy - § 2.), i.e. residences of an institutionalized ruling class, is basically restricted to EB III (Nigro 1994, 5-7, 16-27; Genz 2010) thus in a secondary moment compared to temples (fn. 3), with the possible exception of the commercial building at Tell es-Sa'idiyah (Field 1, Stratum L2) of the EB II (Tubb - Dorrell - Cobbing 1997, 55-65). It is always in the passage between EB II-EB III as well during EB III that larger buildings destined to communal functions were built, e.g. the so-called Granary of Khirbet Kerak (Greenberg *et al.* 2012, 97-102).

⁸ The principal function of accumulation of primary goods performed by EB palaces is well attested by the high number of storage containers filling them (Genz 2010).

⁹ About the use and the significance of potters' wheels in EB public contexts see Fiaccavento 2013, 86-88; Roux - de Miroshchedji 2009.

¹⁰ See Nigro 2014a, on the role and the importance of copper/copper items trade in EB Southern Levant, with a special focus on Khirbet al-Batrawy.

¹¹ Chesson - Goodale 2014, 122-124.

of wealth, as verifiable in the public building of Tell es-Sa'idiyeh¹² or in the public complexes of Arad.¹³

2. THE KHIRBET AL-BATRAWY SPECIMENS FROM PALACE B

The 3rd millennium city of Batrawy arose over a high *khirbet* dominating the valley of Upper Wadi az-Zarqa.¹⁴ Its lifespan covers EB II-III periods, giving back a continuous stratigraphic sequence with three major phases (EB II, EB IIIA, EB IIIB), marked by destructions and rebuilding, showing the flourishing but alternate fate of one of the principal centres of the EB urban phase on the eastern side of the Jordan river.¹⁵

Despite the massive fortifications on triple lines that surrounded the city,¹⁶ and its uncomfortable position to attack, Batrawy was totally destroyed at the end of EB III, during EB IIIB, and reoccupied shortly and in a village-dimension only after a certain lapse of time, in EB IVB.¹⁷ This stratigraphic superposition allowed to perfectly preserve, immediately inside the northern defence walls, a major EB II-III public building - Palace B - consisting so far of two symmetrical pavilions, each being made up of a main rectangular hall with auxiliary rooms to the south.¹⁸

Hundreds of ceramic containers along with many others high-status and rare items¹⁹ were carefully gathered inside the palace, especially in the Western Pavilion, composed of Pillared Hall L.1040, Hall L.1110, Storeroom L.1120.²⁰

Between these precious goods a jug with a distinctive and carefully refined decoration was retrieved in the destruction layer of Hall L.1110, jug KB.11.B.1128/49²¹ (tab.1:1; fig. 1:1). It shows an ovoid body, with short cylindrical neck, out-flaring rim and narrow flattened base. It is high 36 cm and large, at the maximum point of the girth, 30 cm. The outer decoration is both colouristic and plastic. Plastic, since it is characterized by the presence of two small rounded knobs applied at the bottom of the neck, and one flattened vertical ridge at the girth of the body. Colouristic because the real specificity of the jug remains the

¹² On the lower tell of Tell es-Sa'idiyeh a large EB II palace complex has been discovered with areas destined for olive oil production and storage, wine-making and textile preparation (Tubb 1993, 1300).

¹³ Amiran *et al.* 1978.

¹⁴ The exploration of Khirbet al-Batrawy was carried on for nine seasons (2005-2013); the results of the excavations are illustrated mainly in five preliminary reports (Nigro ed. 2006; 2008; 2011; Nigro 2010a), as in several specific studies (Nigro 2011; 2014a; 2014b, 2014c, with previous references).

¹⁵ For an assessment of the Batrawy stratigraphic phases on ceramic bases see Sala 2013.

¹⁶ Nigro ed. 2008, 89-101; Nigro 2009, 667-669; 2010b, 438-440; 2013, 197.

¹⁷ Nigro - Sala 2011, 88-89; 2012, 46-47; Sala 2012.

¹⁸ For a complete overview of the architecture of the Palace see Nigro 2014a, with previous references.

¹⁹ Between the rank objects gathered in Palace B remarkable is the presence of four copper axes and a dagger (Nigro 2010a, 73-74; 2010c, 568-570), a complete gemstone necklace (Nigro 2012), a ceremonial pedestalled krater (Nigro 2014a; 2014b), a lotus-shaped vase and an Egyptian palette (Nigro 2014a; Sala 2014); it is noteworthy that inside the palace there was also an accumulation of technical skills and innovative means, as testified by the presence of three potter's wheels (Fiaccavento 2013).

²⁰ These rooms are those completely excavated so far, two other - L.1250, L.1230 - are still under investigation (Nigro 2014a).

²¹ KB.11.B.1128/49, from destruction layer F.1128, in Hall L.1110 (square BmII8), Batrawy III (activity 3b); see particularly Nigro 2012, 228; Nigro - Sala 2012, 51, fig. 14.

decoration: over an highly red polished body, a reserved band shows a pattern in form of alternating-hatched burnishing (thus with an alternation of matte and burnished diagonal lines). The band is high about 3 cm, each alternated trapezoid having the larger part of around 5-6 cm and the narrower one of 2-2.5 cm; the decorative motif probably began to be drawn starting from the ridge and turning the object, without regard to the junction point of the band around the ridge, thus resulting slightly unaligned. The type of applied décor is not unique, other luxury specimens in the Batrawy Palace itself²² (fig. 1:2) as well in other EB sites show the same ornamental motives (§ 3.), maybe formerly intended for a functional use²³ and then changed in shape but remained in heritage in a stylistic continuity, with the partial loss of their original practical purpose. In this specific case, on the basis of the combination between plastic and colouristic decorations, another reading can be tentatively put forward, and will be illustrated below (§ 4.).

It is remarkable that another smaller red burnished jug with a particular decoration, unfortunately in a fragmentary status, derives from the same stratigraphic context in L.1110, jug KB.11.B.1128/65 (tab. 1:2; fig. 1:2). The preserved part of its body, over the girth, shows a single vertical ridge 5 cm high and 0.7 wide, and a continuous reserved band around 2 cm high, in this case embellished with a cross-hatching decoration, dividing the body in two parts which in turn are vertically burnished.²⁴

3. OTHER EXEMPLARS SHOWING RAHD: SHAPES AND CONTEXTS

Red polished jugs from Khirbet al-Batrawy are not the sole specimens of this class recovered from an EB III context: at least 5 other examples can be ascribed to the same decorative idea and particular technique (tab. 1). Two large jugs from Tell el-Mutesellim/Megiddo are pretty well-known, since recently restored and republished with their complete shapes (§ 3.1.), the others are from funerary contexts, one from Tell es-Sultan/Jericho (§ 3.2.) and one from Bab edh-Dhra' (§ 3.3.). Finally, another little jug deriving from the Hebron area (§ 3.4.), unfortunately without a certain context, bears the same precious technique.

²² Another complete jug (KB.11.B.1124/36) from the palace shows the combination of burnished decoration, knobs and ridges even if lacking the reserved band that is the own characteristic of the production.

²³ Real handles located on the girth of jars/jugs (or on other forms, as vats) are attested since EB I: during EB II-III most of the girth-handles met a process of flattening and narrowing, until changing into simple ridges (often described also as “vestigial handles”), without a clear practical use. The knobs, instead, were probably used to secure with ropes the leather lids of the containers, thus absolving a practical aim, rather than a merely aesthetic one.

²⁴ This is not the only specimen with this kind of reserved decoration: a black slipped jug from Tomb F4 in the Jericho, with globular body, stump base and two small vertical lugs at girth, interestingly shows a trellis pattern (or cross-hatched burnishing) on the girth (Kenyon 1960, 134, fig. 45:5), in a kind of external treatment emerged at Megiddo (Greenberg 2006, fig. 10.9: 6-7; Adams 2013a, 325-327) and Hazor (Greenberg 1997, 21, fig. II.3:12) as well (in these last cases on the entirety of the body), and linked to the northern horizon of Byblos (Sagheieh 1983, pls. 35-36, 50-51), where this type of decoration began to be attested in EB III (local Level KIII).

CAT. (PL:NO)	SITE	TYPE OF CONTEXT	RESERVED ALTERNATE- HATCHING DECORATION (RAHD)	PLASTIC DECORATIONS		BIBLIOGRAPHY (MAIN PUBLICATION, FOR OTHERS SEE INFRA)
				KNOBS [K]	VERTICAL RIDGES [VR]	
1 (1:1)	Khirbet al-Batrawy	Palatial	1	x	x	Nigro - Sala 2012, fig. 14, 51
2 (1:2)	Khirbet al-Batrawy	Palatial	1 ²⁵	-	x	unpublished
3 (3:1)	Tell es-Sultan / Jericho	Funerary (Tomb A)	1	x	x	Garstang 1932, pl. VIII:6
4 (3:3)	Bab edh-Dhra'	Funerary (Tomb A8)	1	x	x	Rast - Schaub 1989, fig. 202:2
5, 6 (3:5-6)	Tell el-Mutesellim / Megiddo	Cultic / Public	2	-	x	Adams 2013a, figs. 8.14.2-3, 8.15, 324-325
7 (3:2)	Beit Ula	Funerary	1	x	x	unpublished ²⁶

Tab. 1 - Table of jugs with Reserved Alternate-Hatching Decoration (RAHD).

3.1. Tell el-Mutesellim/Megiddo

The renewed excavations²⁷ in the Jezreel Valley at Tell el-Mutesellim/Megiddo, in Area J, have further refined the EB stratigraphic sequence of the acropolis, a space consisting of several terraces, where the religious and political compound of the ancient city with its monumental structures was established during EB IB.²⁸ During the EB III (levels J-5 and J-6)²⁹ on the eastern terrace was constructed a large palatial building,³⁰ whereas on the upper western terrace a larger composite urban space included a round altar and flagstone-paved streets flanked by public buildings.³¹ Inside one of them there was a sort of minor cult installation³² surrounded by an elaborately paved ‘red-sherd’ floor, Floor 98/J/76.³³ From

²⁵ The decoration in this case is reserved cross-hatched and not alternate, see the description *supra* and fig. 1:2.

²⁶ The author wishes to thank Osnat Misch-Brandl, curator of the “Land of Canaan” section of the Israel Museum of Jerusalem, for the details given about this object. See also Pelta 2013.

²⁷ Gottlieb Schumacher conducted the first excavations at the site from 1903-1905, on behalf of the German Society for Oriental Research. Excavations at Megiddo were renewed in 1925 by the Oriental Institute (OI) of the University of Chicago. In the late 1960s and early 1970s short seasons were carried out by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and resumed (and still ongoing) under the auspices of the Tel Aviv University in conjunction with the George Washington University. The area of the acropolis was explored only by the OI (Area BB - Strata XX-XVI; Loud 1948) and by the latest excavations.

²⁸ Level J-4/Stratum XVIII. Adams 2013b, 50-79; Adams - Finkelstein - Ussishkin 2014.

²⁹ Strata XVII-XVI of Oriental Institute Excavations (Loud 1948, figs. 392-393). Following the stratigraphic interpretation of recent excavations, EB II at Megiddo is represented by a phase of ephemeral and squatter occupation after the destruction of the Great Temple (J-4a: Finkelstein - Ussishkin 2000, 585-586; Adams 2013b, 74-76).

³⁰ OI building 3177 (Loud 1948, 70-78, figs. 392-393; Nigro 1994, 1-27).

³¹ Adams 2013b, 82-94.

³² The feature (04/J/62) was composed by four flat-topped stones neatly arranged around a smaller flat-topped stone, creating a round flat table, used to support some sort of icon. This could not be interpreted as a column base since built up against one of the walls of the room (Phase J-6a: Adams 2013b, 91-93).

this floor, which contained more than 18 different vessels in shards, derived two large jugs showing the RAHD.³⁴ One was preserved with its complete shape, the other was partially broken, missing the neck, but both bore the decoration and a similar form (fig. 2:4-5).³⁵ Both the jugs had flat base, rounded walls, short cylindrical neck and out-flaring rim, with single handle from rim to shoulder. The surface is vertical burnished from the base to the decorated strip (wide in one case 2 cm and in the other 3 cm), and diagonal, following the inclination on the upper part of the body, until the neck. Both of them showed the vertical ridges, but not the knobs.

3.1.1. An experimental study on the RAHD of the Megiddo jugs

The distinction of the decoration over the Megiddo jugs led R. Pelta to try experiencing the technique of manufacture that produced this specific motif.³⁶ Through the reproduction of different decoration techniques, the scholar achieved to replicate the effect visible on jug 98/J/76VS12, thus understanding the *chaîne opératoire* undertaken by the potter. The decoration was attained through three passages: 1) complete slipping of the vessel; 2) horizontal and vertical burnishing of the upper and lower areas, leaving an un-burnished matte strip between them; 3) burnishing of the band creating diagonal burnished lines (each consisting of multiple burnished lines) and leaving light-coloured matte lines in-between.³⁷

Since it is very likely that it existed a single production centre for this type of unique decoration (§ 5.), the conclusions reached by this study on the Megiddo specimens can be relevant also for all the other specimens hereby reported.

3.2. Tell es-Sultan/Jericho

Tell es-Sultan/Jericho necropolis was one of the largest of the Southern Levant,³⁸ the existence of which was primarily recognized, even if not with the awareness of its huge extension, by J. Garstang in 1931. The first discovered tomb was Tomb A, from which the juglet with RAHD derives; it was a collective burial (hosting more than five hundreds individuals) excavated in the limestone plateau west of Tell es-Sultan, roughly square-shaped (around 5.0 x 5.0 m) with a reserved pillar in the middle.³⁹ Between the rich pottery

³³ The name derives from the high concentration of red-burnished/polished vessels in fragments composing it (Finkelstein - Ussishkin - Peersman 2006, fig. 3.27; Adams 2013b, fig. 2.53).

³⁴ Phase J-6a 98/J/76VS11-12 (Adams 2013a, 324-325, figs. 8.14:2-3; 8.15). They were published by R. Greenberg (2006, 165, fig. 10.10:1-2) who primarily recognized the specific decoration, naming it “reserved burnish”.

³⁵ A third jug in the same context, very similar for dimensions and exterior burnishing, unfortunately was missing of the central part of the body where the decoration is attested (Adams 2013a, fig. 8.14:1).

³⁶ Pelta 2013.

³⁷ Pelta 2013, 337-341, figs. 9.4-9.6. Interestingly, this procedure is also the more direct one between those experimented, even if required a great expertise in the techniques of slipping, burnishing and firing.

³⁸ The total number of the tombs is more of 500, spanning primarily from Early Bronze to Middle Bronze Age (i.e. the apex periods of the Jerichoan culture - even if the great majority of MB burials were in re-used EB IV tombs), with scarce evidences of later epochs (Late Bronze, Iron Age and Roman Period) (Garstang 1932; 1933; 1934; Garstang - Deroop - Crowfoot 1935; Garstang - Ben-Dor - FitzGerald 1936; Kenyon 1960; 1965).

³⁹ Garstang 1932, 18-22, fig. 7, pls. XVII, XXI-XXIII, XXVI.

assemblage, dated back mostly to EB II-III,⁴⁰ one jug with a typical shape of the EB III, that is the presence of a high stump base,⁴¹ sustaining a globular body, with loop handle and wide mouth, showed a decoration in form of a single band horizontally subdivided in two mirrored strips, with the same alternation of burnished hatching (fig. 2:1); this is the only exemplar that exhibited the decoration on a doubled line. Also in this case there are two knobs at the basis of the neck and the vertical ridge on the girth. Other specimens in the same tomb had the applied elements (both features or just one, generally the ridge),⁴² but none had that specific decoration.⁴³ In other tombs too,⁴⁴ as well as on the tell,⁴⁵ there were several jugs or juglets with applied plastic knobs or ridges.

⁴⁰ Garstang 1932, pls. II-VIII, XXVII-XXVIII. This huge familiar tomb seems to be inaugurated already during EB I (as attested by some ceramic forms - Garstang 1932, pls. VIII:1-4, XXVIII:3-5) but was mostly in use during the urban period, until early EB IIIB (Sultan IIIc2). For a punctual description (and distinction) of EB II pottery in Garstang's Tomb A see Nigro 2010d, 211-213, pls. LIX-LXI.

⁴¹ Garstang 1932, pl. VIII:6; thick stump-bases or pointed/spike-like bases are typical of jarlets and jugs/juglets of the Early Bronze III (e.g. Megiddo: Loud 1948, pl. 5:1; Greenberg 2006, figs. 10.4:13, 10.7:8; or Khirbet Yarmouk: de Miroshedji 2000, fig. 18.6:3).

⁴² Garstang 1932, pls. II:10, VII:1,3,6-7.

⁴³ See the description of a jug from Tomb F4 (fn. 24), with a cross-hatched decoration, that can share the same decorative concept with that here outlined.

⁴⁴ In Tomb D12, described by K.M. Kenyon as «the tomb that contained the best and largest collection of EB III pottery found at Jericho» (Kenyon 1960, 94-96, fig. 32), the numerous pieces showing knobs or ridges, or both, are shown below: upper part of a burnished jug with double knobs at the base of the neck (Kenyon 1960, 99, fig. 34:3); 4 juglets with two vertical lugs at girth (Kenyon 1960, 102, figs. 34:19,24,26,27); lower part of a burnished globular juglet with double knock and vertical ridge (Kenyon 1960, 102, fig. 34:25); burnished globular juglet with pointed base and double knobs (Kenyon 1960, 108, fig. 35:35); burnished jug with globular body and flat base, two knobs (Kenyon 1960, 111, fig. 36:25); pink slip jug with wide mouth, pointed base two opposed vertical lugs on girth and single knob on shoulder, opposite handle (Kenyon 1960, 112, fig. 37:6); black slipped juglet, globular body, everted rim, spike base, two vertical lugs on body, two knobs on shoulder opposite handle (Kenyon 1960, 117, fig. 37:48); black slipped juglet, everted rim and spike base, three vertical lugs on girth (Kenyon 1960, 117, fig. 37:47); red burnished jug, vertical lugs on globular body, one preserved knob (Kenyon 1960, 121, fig. 39:2); red burnished jug with slender body, two vertical lugs at girth; brown burnished jug with two vertical lugs at girth (Kenyon 1960, 121, fig. 39:3); red slipped juglet, globular body and spike base, with two vertical lugs on shoulder, pair of knobs on shoulder opposite handle (Kenyon 1960, 123, fig. 39:11). Other 3 specimens derived from Tomb F2: red burnished jug with globular body and flat base, pair of nipples on shoulder, a raised bar on each side (Kenyon 1960, 162, fig. 59:5); red burnished jug with globular body and flat base, a nipple on shoulder opposite handle, a raised bar on each side (Kenyon 1960, 162, fig. 59:6); globular juglet with two nipples on shoulder (Kenyon 1960, 168, fig. 61:18)

⁴⁵ Significantly a red-burnished jug with applied knobs has been retrieved in EB IIIB Palace G (TS.10.G.1172/49; Nigro *et al.* 2011, fig. 19); another derives from Site L: a buff burnished jug, with rounded body and narrow flat base, with two plastic knobs on shoulder (Kenyon - Holland 1983, 476, fig. 213:4).

3.3. *Bab edh-Dhra'*

The huge Early Bronze (I-IV) necropolis of Bab edh-Dhra' in the Ghor, which stands out for the peculiarity of its funerary customs during the EB urban period,⁴⁶ gave back one jug with RAHD. The specimen was found in Charnel House A8, a broadroom building of parallelepiped shape, with the entrance slightly off centre on the southeast side, and the threshold slab still *in situ*.⁴⁷ Between the complete pottery vessels located into the tomb, whose shapes belonged both to EB II that EB III, a jug with tall and flat stump base (thicker than wall), rounded body, handle from shoulder below a rim sharply flared, bore two knobs and a raised ridge on the central part of the body, with a reserved band of "angled burnish strokes", high around 3.5 cm (fig. 2:3).⁴⁸ In the same funerary chamber another jug showed the combination knobs/ridge⁴⁹ and other two just the ridges.⁵⁰ As already observed at Tell es-Sultan, several other exemplars presented the plastic applied decorations,⁵¹ but none the reserved one.⁵²

3.4. *Beit Ula*

One last jug belongs to this class. Its acquisition by the Israel Museum of Jerusalem prevented its loss in favour of a private collection, but without bridging the gap of information about its retrieval context. The only available datum is the area of origin, that is the Palestinian village of Beit Ula in the Hebron Hills, ten kilometres northwest of Hebron. Anyway, seen the integrity of the object it is easy to suppose that it was part of the grave goods of an EB III tomb. It presents a flattened circular base, globular body, short neck and everted rim, with the handle from the rim to the shoulder (fig. 2:2); it is 20 cm high, with a maximum diameter of 17 cm, double knobs on the shoulder and vertical ridge on the

⁴⁶ Funerary practices at Bab edh-Dhra' show an evolution in EB IB correlated to the establishment of a stable village, switching from shaft or cist tombs to built-up structures, the Charnel Houses (first circular and then rectangular), which remained in use until the end of the urban phase of the walled city (established in EB II and lasted during EB III), and getting back again to shaft-tombs (even if built underground) in the EB IV village phase (Rast - Schaub 1989).

⁴⁷ In respect to other Charnel Houses Tomb A8 was not particularly well built nor well-preserved: it lacked of certain typical features of these funerary structures as a small forecourt in front of the entry, or two large doorjambs (smoothed or dressed) flanking the entry on both sides (Rast - Schaub 1989, 319); other elements as the floor (generally slab-paved) were maybe unfinished or partly robbed, the bones were fewer than in other charnel houses and the entire structure suffered of an intense fire. The dating of the destruction layer through C14 on a piece of burnt cloth gave a date recalibrated to 3035-2535 BC (Rast - Schaub 1989, 325-326).

⁴⁸ Rast - Schaub 1989, 330, fig. 202:2.

⁴⁹ Rast - Schaub 1989, 330, fig. 202:1.

⁵⁰ Rast - Schaub 1989, 330, fig. 202:7,36.

⁵¹ Other jugs/juglets derived from the necropolis are: 4 from Charnel House A41 (one with a "vestigial handle": Rast - Schaub 1989, fig. 218:3; one with dots on shoulder, ridge at neck, vestigial straps: Rast - Schaub 1989, fig. 220:11; two with vestigial straps: Rast - Schaub 1989, fig. 231:8,32); 1 from Charnel House A44 (with dots on the shoulder: Rast - Schaub 1989, fig. 230:6).

⁵² Another juglet from Bab edh-Dhra' (Charnel House A 44: Rast - Schaub 1989, fig. 231:27) can be tentatively ascribed to a similar decorative concept : black/grey burnished ware, it reproduces the alternate-hatching motif on the shoulder, and on the neck in a diagonal band, but in form of incised band instead of the burnishing technique.

maximum width of the body. The decoration is particularly refined: over the highly red polished body sticks out a band 2.5 cm high, where the alternation of the hatching bands is more spaced, resulting in less changes of orientation and in a more graphical style.

4. A CERAMIC REPRODUCTION OF A MORE PRECIOUS PROTOTYPE?

A careful consideration of all the parts composing the body of the jugs, especially regarding the central strip and the applied decorations, could be tentatively lead to read them as decorative reproductions of a copper prototype.

All the RAHD jugs, in facts, seemed to be composed by four parts and six elements in all. Starting from the top (fig. 3):

1	rim and neck, fixed to the body through (2);	1 st part
2	two rivets, that is the pair of knobs reproduced on the upper part of the body, immediately under the neck;	2 nd part
3	the upper half of the body;	
4	a horizontal mid-band made by two twisted foils of copper, tied up by vertical clamps;	3 rd part
5	vertical tenons (one or more to fix the union strip of the two parts of the body);	
6	the lower half of the body.	4 th part

Significantly in the literature the vertical ridges have been also defined as “straps”,⁵³ so recalling in the description an hypothetical primary function that involved a ‘fixing aim’ of the ridges. Plus, this would not be the first example of ceramic reproduction of copper luxury vessels, integral part of display repertory of palatial élites,⁵⁴ even if often not preserved as well in the archaeological record as like as the pottery specimens.

The horizontal shape of the rim (like Iron Age horizontally expanded rims of Phoenician oil juglets), the junction between the two halves of the original vessels, as well as the twisted band fixing them with the straps, are all easily readable details supporting such an interpretation.

The presence of two jugs with this kind of the decoration in the same room amounts the possibility that they were a couple intended as a wine set, which is linkable to an élite *milieu* appearing in Southern Levantine archaeological record during the apogee of the urban period (EB III).

⁵³ In the short inventory description of the jug from Bab edh-Dhra’(fig. 2:3; § 3.3.), the object was described along these lines: “band of angled burnish strokes mid-body, raised dots on shoulder, straps mid-body” (Rast - Schaub 1989, 330, fig. 202:2).

⁵⁴ The presence of pottery vases reproducing metallic prototypes is well attested from the Middle Bronze Age onwards. Even more interesting in this sense seems to be the influence exerted by the northern center of Byblos, where a bronze bowl in the Montet’s foundation jar, provided a good metallic prototype for the MB pottery vessels (Tufnell - Ward 1966, fig. 9:207). Already in the last phase of EB III Byblos would have strong connection and influence on the Southern Levant (fn. 24).

5. CATALOGUE

No. 1. - Red polished jug with Reserved Alternate-Hatching Decoration (fig. 1:1)

Original number: KB.11.B.1128/49. Provenance: Khirbet al-Batrawy. Excavation: Rome «La Sapienza» Expedition to Palestine and Jordan (ROSEPAJ); Area: B South. Locus: F.1128. Square: BmII8. Activity: 3 (= EB III). Class: Red Polished Ware. State of preservation: whole shape. Technique of manufacture: coil-built, wheel-turned. Fabric colour: Outer 2.5YR 6/6 (light red) + inner 2.5Y 6/1 (gray). Surface Treatment: Polished slip 10R 4/8 (red). Decoration: outer applied (2 knobs+1 ridge) + outer reserved burnished. Rim diameter: 8.5 cm; base diameter: 6.7 cm; body diameter (max.): 30 cm; rim width: 0.55 cm; wall width: 0.65 cm. Dating: EB IIIB. Bibliography: Nigro - Sala 2012, 51, fig. 14.

No. 2. - Red polished jug with cross-hatching decoration (fig. 1:2)

Original number: KB.11.B.1128/65. Provenance: Khirbet al-Batrawy. Excavation: Rome “La Sapienza” Expedition to Palestine and Jordan (ROSEPAJ); Area: B South. Locus: F.1128. Square: BmII8. Activity: 3 (= EB III). Class: Red Polished Ware. State of preservation: wall. Technique of manufacture: coil-built, wheel-turned. Fabric colour: Outer 2.5YR 6/6 (light red). Surface Treatment: Polished slip 10R 4/8 (red). Decoration: outer applied (1 vertical ridge) + outer reserved burnished. Wall width: 0.65 cm. Dating: EB IIIB. Bibliography: unpublished.

No. 3 - Red polished jug with Reserved Alternate-Hatching Decoration (fig. 2:1)

Provenance: Tomb A, Tell es-Sultan/Jericho. Excavation: Marston-Melchett Expedition (Garstang); Class: Red Polished Ware. State of preservation: complete. Technique of manufacture: coil-built, wheel-turned. Surface Treatment: Polished slip. Decoration: outer applied (2 knobs+1 vertical ridge) + outer reserved burnished. Dating: EB IIIB. Bibliography: Garstang 1932, pl. VII:6.

No. 4 - Red polished jug Reserved Alternate-Hatching Decoration (fig. 2:2)

Provenance: unknown (Israel Museum, Jerusalem, inv. n° 71.9.295), Beit Ula area (Hebron); Class: Red Polished Ware. State of preservation: complete. Technique of manufacture: coil-built, wheel-turned. Surface Treatment: Polished slip . Decoration: outer applied (2 knobs+1 vertical ridge) + outer reserved burnished. Dating: EB IIIB. Bibliography: unpublished.

No. 5 - Red polished jug with Reserved Alternate-Hatching Decoration (fig. 2:3)

Provenance: Charnel House A8, Bab edh-Dhra'. Excavation: Dead Sea Plain Expedition; Class: Red Polished Ware. State of preservation: complete. Technique of manufacture: coil-built, wheel-turned. Surface Treatment: Polished slip. Decoration: outer applied (2 knobs+1 vertical ridge) + outer reserved burnished. Dating: EB IIIB. Bibliography: Rast - Schaub 1989, fig. 202:2.

No. 6 - Red polished jug with Reserved Alternate-Hatching Decoration (fig. 2:4)

Provenance: Area J, Tell el-Mutesellim/Megiddo. Excavation: Tel Aviv University/George Washington University expeditions; Class: Red Polished Ware. State of preservation: missing part of the neck. Technique of manufacture: coil-built, wheel-turned. Surface Treatment: Polished slip. Decoration: outer applied (1 vertical ridge) + outer reserved burnished. Dating: EB IIIB (phase J-6a). Bibliography: Adams 2013a, 324-325, fig. 8.14:3.

No. 7 - Red polished jug with Reserved Alternate-Hatching Decoration (fig. 2:5)

Provenance: Area J, Tell el-Mutesellim/Megiddo. Excavation: Tel Aviv University/George Washington University expeditions; Class: Red Polished Ware. State of preservation: complete. Technique of manufacture: coil-built, wheel-turned. Surface Treatment: Polished slip. Decoration: outer applied (1 vertical ridge) + outer reserved burnished. Dating: EB IIIB (phase J-6a). Bibliography: Adams 2013a, 324-325, figs. 8.14:2, 8.15.

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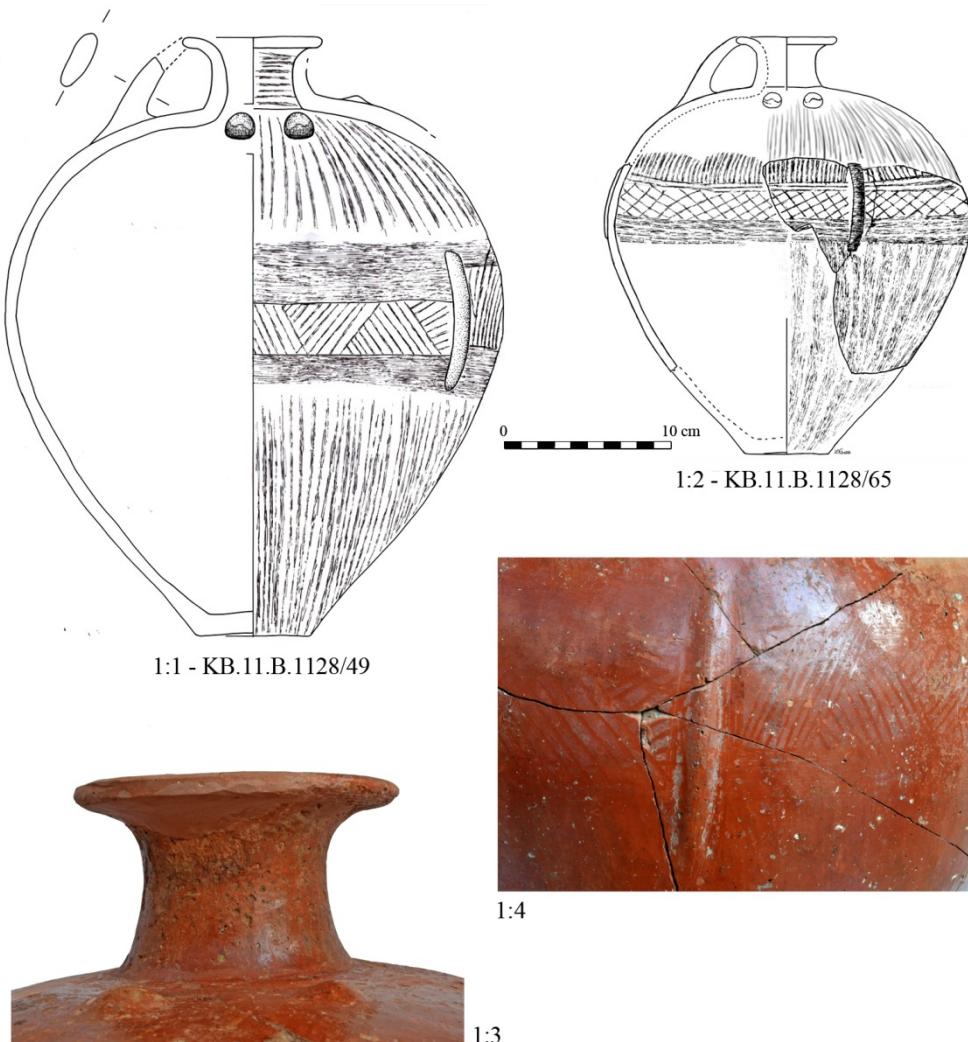


Fig. 1- Red burnished jugs from Khirbet al-Batrawy. 1:1 - drawing of jug KB.11.B.1128/49 with reserved alternate hatched decoration (RAHD), ridges on the girth and knobs on the shoulder, from destruction layer F.11128 in Hall L.1110; 1:2 - reconstructive drawing of jug KB.11.B.1128/65, with cross-hatched decoration and vertical ridge; 1:3 - detail of jug KB.11.B.1128/49 with the two knobs at the bottom of the neck; 1:4 - detail of jug KB.11.B.1128/49 with the vertical ridge on the girth and the RAHD (photo courtesy: ROSEPAJ 2014).

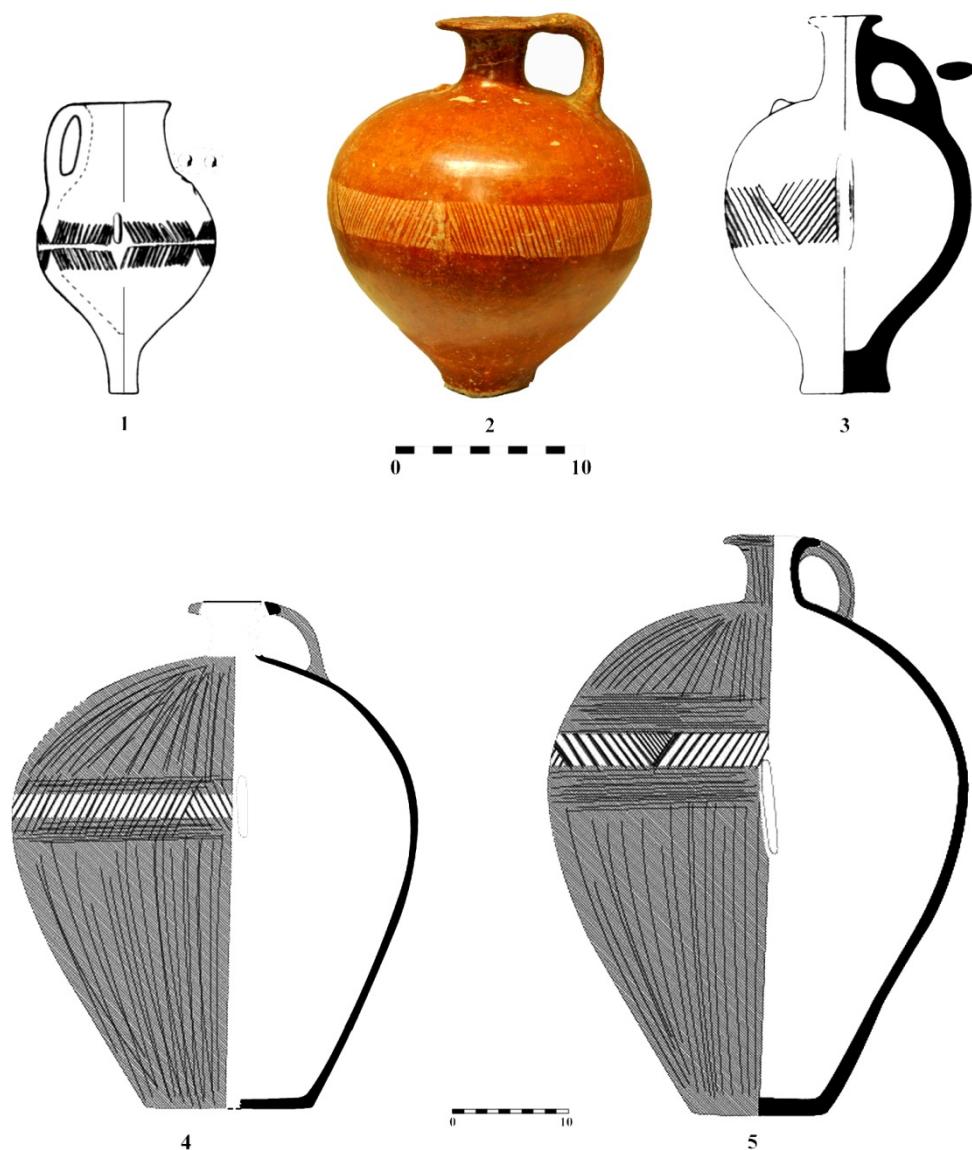


Fig. 2 - All the specimens where the Reserved Alternate-Hatching Decoration is attested.
 2:1 - Tell es-Sultan/Jericho; 2:2 - Beit Ula (Hebron) (Photo © The Israel Museum, Jerusalem); 2:3 - Bab edh-Dhra'; 2:4-5 - Tell el-Mutesellim/Megiddo.

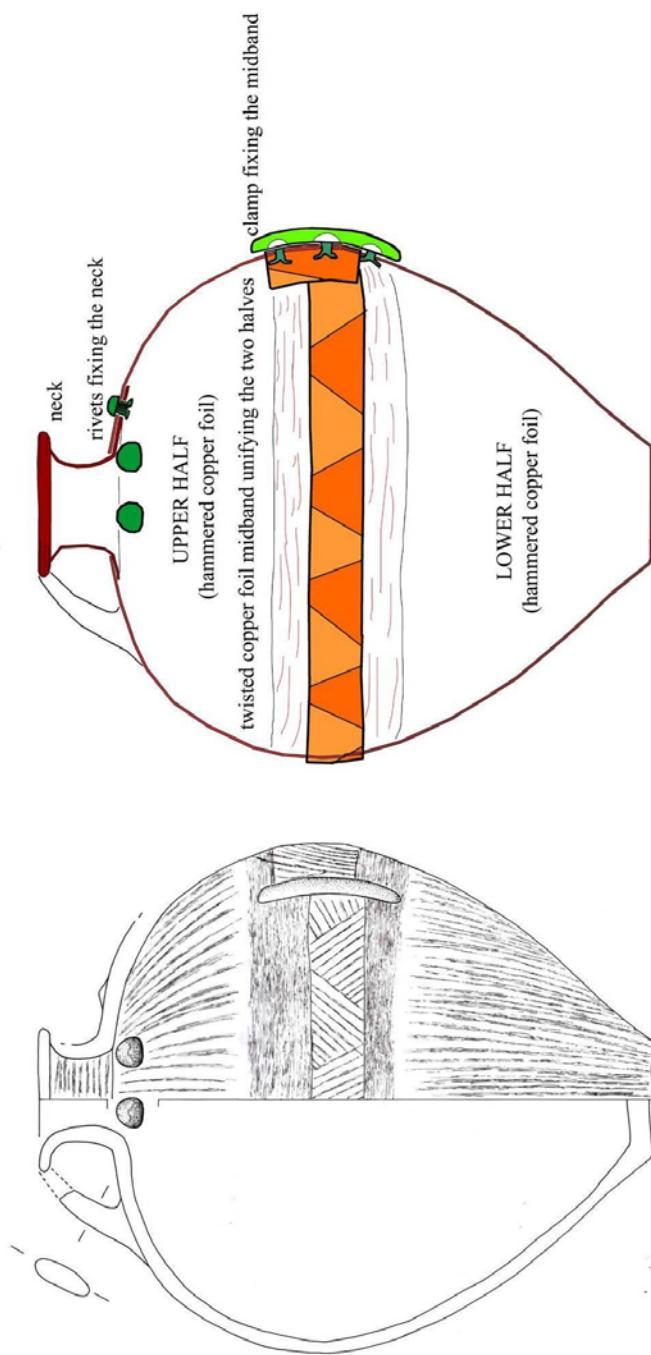


Fig. 3 - Graphic reconstruction of the hypothetical copper model inspiring the RAHD decoration, with all its parts underlined
(drawing by L. Nigro).

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AN EB IV DAGGER FROM TELL ES-SULTAN/JERICHO*

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The paper is focused on dagger TS.14.143, a weapon found in the Jericho Necropolis in an EB IV shaft tomb unfortunately violated by illegal diggers in the area of Cemetery A recovered by archaeologists. Such an item allows a series of observation on this renowned class of weapons, widely spread over Southern Levant during the Early Bronze Age IV.

Keywords: Tell es-Sultan/ancient Jericho; dagger; copper; weapon; EB IV

0. PREMISE

Early Bronze IV (2350/2300-2000 BC) is the period in which metal items have a wide diffusion in Southern Levant. In this phase, the number of weapons deposited in funerary kits grew up in respect of previous periods, especially among grave goods of a distinguished class of individuals bearing daggers, which stand as the most widespread class of weapons,¹ as it can be exemplarily observed in the necropolis of Tell el-'Ajjul and Tell es-Sultan.²

The number of tombs with metal weaponry in Early Bronze IV was considered a proof of the emergence of a military class.³ Daggers in tombs were useful to display social rank, as well as to indicate the male gender, as a result of shifted social needs, changed economic conditions and subsistence strategies, compared to ones of the preceding urban phase.⁴

In this period also labeled “Intermediate Bronze Age” due to several basic innovation which distinguish it from the linear development of the Early Bronze Age, new technologically advanced skills were accomplished, such as the tin copper alloy, and new types were manufactured, such as fenestrated axes,⁵ anticipating a future development of Middle Bronze Age metallurgy.⁶

1. THE DAGGER TS.14.143 FROM TELL ES-SULTAN/ANCIENT JERICHO

The dagger TS.14.143 (fig. 1) was recovered in the area north of Tell es-Sultan by a villager of the refugees camp, who entrusted it to the Italian-Palestinian Expedition to Tell es-Sultan/ancient Jericho (Rome “La Sapienza” University and MOTA-DACH).⁷ The finding spot (and presumably the location of the tomb which contained it) is conceivably

* I wish to express my most sincere and deep thankfulness to Prof. L. Nigro, director of ROSEPAJ, who offered to me the chance to study this dagger recently recovered.

¹ Muhly 2003, 175.

² Kenyon 1956.

³ Oren 1971; Philip 1995; Thalmann 2000, 50-53; Antonetti 2003; 2005, 6, 20; Doumet-Serhal 2004; Doumet-Serhal - Kopetzky 2011-2012, 9-10; Cohen 2012.

⁴ Palumbo 1986; Nigro 2003a, 41; D'Andrea 2013, 139.

⁵ Nigro 2003a.

⁶ Khalil 1980, 161; Merkel - Dever 1989, 1; Philip 1991, 94; 1995, 153; Cohen 2009, 3; 2012, 313.

⁷ Nigro - Marchetti 1998; 2000; Nigro - Sala - Taha 2011; Nigro - Taha eds. 2006; Nigro - Taha 2009; Nigro *et al.* 2000; 2011.

Area A of Early and Middle Bronze Ages necropolis of Jericho. The weapon is an almost complete short dagger, attributable, as it is argued below (§ 2.), to the group of the EB IV simple type well-known at the site in funerary repertoires.

1.1. Dagger TS.14.143 in detail

Class: short dagger; type: simple tang - 4 rivets (?); site: Tell es-Sultan/Jericho; field number: TS.14.143; site period: Sultan IIId1 (?); type of context: funerary (shaft individual tomb); length: tang 2.5 cm, blade preserved 7.9 cm; width: tang max preserved 1.9 cm, blade 2.3 cm; thickness: tang 0.3 cm, blade 0.25 cm; weight: 23 g; state of preservation: middling; date: EB IVA (?).

The dagger TS.14.143 is preserved little more than half of its reconstructed full length (19.5 cm; see below). It is damaged on a side of the tang, and the tip is unfortunately broken. Four rivets originally were placed on two rows in the tang, as it is still recognizable even though the weapon surface is corroded (fig. 4). In the lower row one rivet hole is visible, and the other one is partially detectable in the fractured section; in the upper row, the first rivet hole is placed 1.3 cm above the other preserved in the lower row, and a second one is symmetrically placed on the opposite end, above the broken part (fig. 2).

The tang has a quadrangular, nearly trapezoidal, shape showing the maximum width just in front of the upper row of rivets. Holes for rivets, occluded by corrosion products, had a circular shape, as like it is attested in other specimens,⁸ to accommodate them which usually have a quadrangular cross-section.⁹

The cross-section of the weapon is thin and flattened along its overall length.

On the basis of dimensions of tang and of preserved blade, and comparing to ones of some daggers known, the original length of the blade had to be roughly 17 cm, and the whole length of the weapon had to be around 19.5 cm (fig. 3).

As far as it concerns the material composition of the dagger, corrosion analysis suggests that it was made by an alloyed copper, probably with arsenic, a quite common feature in respect of attestation in the Jericho Necropolis during EB IV (§§ 2.-3.).

2. EARLY BRONZE AGE SOUTHERN LEVANTINE DAGGERS

The weapon can be ascribed to the functional class defined as close-range weapons,¹⁰ a kind of weaponry which began to appear since initial phase of the Early Bronze Age, primarily in funerary and ritual contexts.

Such class of copper (and in some cases copper-alloyed) weapons is characterized by the short length of the blade (up to 18 cm in the case of short daggers, and from 20 cm up to

⁸ See for example round holes in daggers from Tomb 1570 at Tell el-Ajjul (Petrie 1932, pl. XI:54), and from Great Cave 1001 at Tell el-Jazari (Rowe 1935, pl. IV).

⁹ Nigro 2003b, 69. See for example squared rivets in daggers from Tomb SE.1 at Tiwal esh-Sharqi (Tubb 1990, fig. 40b), and Tomb 64 at Tell el-'Umeiri (Dubis 2002, fig. 11.2:7).

¹⁰ Burke 2008, 41.

30 cm for the regular type).¹¹ Daggers types can be also subdivided according to the composition of the metal (copper, arsenical copper, and tin copper).

A further mean of classification is the tang or the stick which allowed to fix the handle to the metal blade.¹² The tang could be simple, developed, or peduncular.

The simple group usually has a plain blade naturally linked to the tang. This part can culminate either in a round or in a quadrangular shape, wearing in most cases four rivets placed on two rows, as it is the case of the dagger from Jericho, or less frequently six on three rows; more rarely rivets are three arranged in a triangle. In this group, short and regular blade types are equally represented. The blade has generally a lenticular or lozenge shaped cross-section, especially in the short type; the regular type exhibits sometimes a midrib. Daggers with simple tang in the period between EB I-III were made mainly of copper, and of arsenical copper (with a low arsenic content); during the subsequent phase of EB IV, they were made mainly of arsenical copper with a percentage of arsenic generally encompassed between 1.5% and <5%, and secondly of tin copper with a highly variable percentage of tin (>3% up to 15%).¹³

Dagger TS.14.143 shares its diagnostic features with such simple type. The tang and blade lengths allow the attribution of the weapon to the short daggers group.

2.1. EB daggers of simple type from Tell es-Sultan/ancient Jericho

The class represented by TS.14.143 is well illustrated in the Jericho Necropolis. Daggers collected in the necropolis of Tell es-Sultan (tab. 1) may illustrate in a very clear way the simple type of short and regular daggers. The tang can be either rounded or quadrangular shaped, wearing in most cases four rivets placed on two rows; in a few cases rivets could be three, arranged in a triangle, or six on three rows. Some blades present midribs.

The quadrangular tang is frequently associated to the presence of four rivets, of midribs, in the simple group specimens from the Jericho Necropolis, which are predominantly of the regular type.

Daggers from EB Tell es-Sultan/Jericho were basically made of copper and arsenical copper, just a few specimens made of tin copper are known. Among arsenical copper items, two clusters can be detected according to the content of arsenic: one shows an average percentage of arsenic at 2%, and another has an average percentage of arsenic at 4%. These data allow to distinguish three groups: it might be tentatively attributed to different chronological phases. The latest one is the one including tin copper, which thus appear as a later introduction in EB IV development.

¹¹ These daggers are represented by types 18 of Maxwell-Hyslop's classification (1946, 21), 2 of Philip's typology (1989, 103-104), and by P.3 and P.5 listed by Gernez (2007, 472-480, 482-486).

¹² Tubb 1990, 95.

¹³ These data derive from main publications: Kenyon 1960; 1965; Khalil 1980; Philip 1989; 1991.

TOMB	TYPE OF DAGGER (Short; Regular)	TANG AND RIVETS (Simple; Developed)	METAL	WEIGHT (g)	LENGTH (cm)	WIDTH (cm)	THICKNESS (cm)	DATE
A 23 <i>Dagger T.</i>	S	S - 4 rivets	-	-	tang 3.6; blade 17.2; tot. 20.8	tang 2.6; blade 3	blade 0.8	EB IVA
A 110 <i>Dagger T.</i>	S	S - 4 rivets	Cu 93.1%, As 1.91%	95	tang 3.8; blade 15.7; tot. 19.5	tang min 2.1, max 3.1; blade 3	tang 0.5; blade 0.5	EB IVA
A 111 <i>Dagger T.</i>	S	S	Cu 98.1%, As 1.9%	61	preserved tang 2.7; blade 17.7; tot. 20.4	blade 2.5	blade 0.4	EB IVA
A 132 <i>Dagger T.</i>	S	S - 4 rivets	-	58	tang 2.6; blade 16.5; tot. 19.1	tang max 2.4; blade max 2.3	tang 0.3; blade 0.5	EB IVA
L 1 (1:2) <i>Dagger T.</i>	S	S - 4 rivets	-	-	tang 2.8; blade 16; tot. 18.8	tang 2; blade 2	tang 0.4; blade 0.4	EB IVA
L 3 <i>Dagger T.</i>	S	D - 4 rivets	-	-	tang 3.2; blade 17.2; tot. 20.4	tang 2.4; blade 2	tang 0.4; blade 0.6	EB IVA
L 5 <i>Composite T.</i>	S	S - 4 rivets	-	-	tang 4; blade 19.2; tot. 23.2	tang 2.8; blade 2.6	tang 0.6; blade 0.6	EB IVA
L 6 <i>Dagger T.</i>	S	S - 4 rivets	Cu 96.04%, As 3.96%	-	tang 2.8; blade 20; tot. 22.8	tang 3; blade 2.8	tang 0.2; blade 0.6	EB IVA
D 1 <i>Square-Shaft T.</i>	S	D - 5 rivets	Cu 96.67%, As 2.71%	-	tang 4.8; blade 16.8; tot. 21.6	tang 2.4; blade 3	tang 0.4; blade 0.5	EB IVA
TS.VAT.2 <i>Dagger T.</i>	S	S - 4 rivets	Cu 88%, As 11.2%	31.4	tang 2; blade 15.3; tot. 17.3	tang 1.6; blade 1.7	blade 0.4	EB IVA
A 26 (26:2) <i>Dagger type</i>	R	D - 1 rivet	Cu 95.58%, As 4.36%	96	preserved tang 2.3; blade 28; tot. 30.3	tang 1.7; blade 2.3	tang 0.2; blade 0.5	EB IVA
A 28 <i>Dagger T.</i>	R	S - 6 rivets	Cu 98.51%, As 1.49%	-	tang 3.8; blade 20.8; tot. 24.6	tang 3.2; blade 2.6	blade 0.8	EB IVA
A 82 <i>Dagger T.</i>	R	S - 3 rivets	-	-	tang 4; blade 21.6; tot. 25.6	tang 2.4; blade 2.8	tang 0.4; blade 0.6	EB IVA
A 86 <i>Dagger T.</i>	R	S - 3 rivets	Cu 96.21%, As 3.82%	-	tang 3.2; blade 22.4; tot. 25.6	tang 3.2; blade 2.8	tang 0.4 ; blade 0.8	EB IVA
A 91 <i>Dagger T.</i>	R	S - 3 rivets	-	-	tang 3.6; blade 20.8; tot. 24.4	tang 2; blade 2.8	tang 0.8; blade 0.8	EB IVA
A 95 <i>Dagger T.</i>	R	S - 4 rivets	Cu 95.28%, As 3.31%	-	tang 2.8; blade 22; tot. 24.8	tang 2.8; blade 3.2	tang 0.4; blade 0.6	EB IVA

A 128 <i>Dagger T.</i>	R	S - 4 rivets	-	-	tang 2.8; blade 22.4; tot. 25.2	tang 2.6; blade 2.4	tang 0.6; blade 0.6	EB IVA
A 129 <i>Dagger T.</i>	R	S - 4 rivets	-	-	tang 3.8; blade 23.6; tot. 27.4	tang 2.4; blade 2.6	tang 0.4; blade 0.6	EB IVA
A 131 (131:1) <i>Dagger T.</i>	R	S - 4 rivets	Cu 97.9%, As 2.1%	162	tang 4; blade 29; tot. 33	tang 2.7; blade 2.7	tang 0.7; blade 0.7	EB IVA
A 131 (131:2) <i>Dagger T.</i>	R	S - 4 rivets	Cu 98.72%, As 1.28%	-	tang 4; blade 24.8; tot. 28.8	tang 2.8; blade 2.8	tang 0.4; blade 0.4	EB IVA
A 26 (26:1) <i>Dagger T.</i>	R	S - 4 rivets	Cu 95.24%, As 4.76%	145	tang 3.7; blade 24; tot. 27.7	tang 2.9; blade 2.8	tang 0.5; blade 0.7	EB IVA
B 14 <i>Dagger T.</i>	R	S 4 rivets	-	-	tang 3.2; blade 22.8	tang 2.6; blade 2.8	blade 0.8	EB IVA
G 83 <i>Composite T.</i>	R	D - 6 rivets	Cu 84.9%, Sn 15%	143	tang 5.8; blade 31.9; tot. 37.7	tang 2.7; blade 3	tang 0.3; blade 0.6	EB IVB
K 26 <i>Bead T.</i>	R	S - 4 rivets	-	-	tang 3.6; blade 24.4; tot. 28	tang 2.6; blade 2.4	tang 0.6; blade 0.8	EB IV
L 1 (1:1) <i>Dagger T.</i>	R	S - 4 rivets	-	-	tang 4; blade 25.2; tot. 29.2	tang 2.6; blade 2.8	tang 0.6; blade 0.6	EB IVA
L 2 (2:6) <i>Composite T.</i>	R	S - 4 rivets	-	-	tang 2.8; blade 21.6; tot. 24.4	tang 2.4; blade 2.4	tang 0.8; blade 0.8	EB IVA
L 2 (2:5) <i>Composite T.</i>	R	S - 6 rivets	-	-	tang 6; blade 24; tot. 30	tang 2.8; blade 2.8	tang 0.4; blade 0.4	EB IVA
L 4 <i>Dagger T.</i>	R	S - 3 rivets	Cu 87.95%, Sn 8.45%, As 3.6%	-	tang 3.6; blade 21.6; tot. 25.2	tang 2.8; blade 2.6	tang 0.4; blade 0.4	EB IVA
L 7 <i>Composite T.</i>	R	S - 4 rivets	-	-	tang 4.4; blade 23.6; tot. 28	tang 2.8; blade 2.8	tang 0.2; blade 0.4	EB IVA
M 13 <i>Composite T.e</i>	R	S - 4 rivets	-	-	tang 5.2; blade 21.6 tot. 26.8	tang 2.4; blade 2.4	tang 0.6; blade 0.8	EB IVB
M 16 <i>Composite T.</i>	R	D - 6 rivets	Cu	109	tang 6.2; blade 21.4; tot. 27.6	tang min 2 max 2.8; blade 3	tang 0.3; blade 0.5	EB IVB
P 12 <i>Outsize T.</i>	R	S 2 rivets	-	-	tang 2.8; blade 22.8; tot. 25.6	tang 2; blade 2	blade 0.3	EB IVA
TS.VAT.1 <i>Dagger T.</i>	R	S - 4 rivets	Cu 98%	175.7	tang 3.8; blade 24.8; tot. 28.6	tang 2.8; blade 3	tang 0.5; blade 0.7	EB IVA

Tab. 1 - Comparative table of daggers recovered in Early Bronze IV tombs of Jericho Necropolis.

3. COMPARISONS TO THE DAGGER TS.14.143

Consistent comparisons to dagger TS.14.143 can be observed within the repertoire of Tell es-Sultan, in specimens dated to the EB IV, and among weapons recovered in other coeval Southern Levantine necropolis.

TS.14.143 can be paralleled particularly with two short daggers and to one regular dagger recovered in three tombs of Tell es-Sultan, namely Tombs A110 and L1,¹⁴ and Tomb A131,¹⁵ all graves belonging to the Dagger Type group¹⁶ and dated to EB IVA.¹⁷

The short dagger from Tomb L1 (fig. 5:2) possibly represents the more reliable comparison. In fact, it exhibits the same overall dimensions and shows a very alike trapezoidal tang, with four rivets arranged in a similar way, and a blade that develops in the same manner, but with a thicker trapezoidal cross-section.¹⁸

The dagger from Tomb A110 (fig. 5:3), made of arsenical copper, exhibits a roughly trapezoidal tang with four rivets, similarly to TS.14.143, but in respect of the latter one it has a thicker and lozenge shaped cross-section.¹⁹

The regular dagger from Tomb A131 (fig. 5:4), made of arsenical copper, has a trapezoidal tang, but more expanded due to greater dimensions, four rivets, a similar plain shape of the blade, but a more bulged trapezoidal cross-section.²⁰

Extending the look to other sites of the Southern Levant, comparable specimens can be also found in necropolis of Tell el-'Ajjul, in Palestine, and of Tell el-'Umeiri, in Transjordan. The regular dagger from Tomb 1531 at Tell el-'Ajjul (fig. 5:5),²¹ made of arsenical copper and dated to the EB IVB, similarly to TS.14.143 has a trapezoidal tang, but more marked, with four rivets and a plain blade with thin but lozenge shaped cross-section. The regular dagger recovered in Tomb 64 at Tell el-'Umeiri (fig. 5:6),²² made of bronze, is characterized by a roughly trapezoidal tang with four rivets, a plain blade and a lozenge shaped cross-section.

4. CONCLUSIONS: A NEW DAGGER FROM THE EB IV JERICHO NECROPOLIS

In Southern Levant, daggers appear in funerary equipment since the beginning of the Early Bronze Age, made of copper and, at later stage, of alloyed copper (basically arsenic), and they are displayed alone or, more rarely, with other weapons, such as javelins.²³

¹⁴ Respectively: Kenyon 1960, 196, fig. 70:10; 1965, 54-56, fig. 24:8.

¹⁵ Kenyon 1965, 52-53, fig. 24:5.

¹⁶ Kenyon 1960, 181-182.

¹⁷ Nigro 2003c, 136-137.

¹⁸ Tomb L1 is a single crouched burial; the dead was provided with two daggers, placed near the forearms near hands, and some sheep's bones.

¹⁹ Tomb A110 is a single crouched burial equipped with the dagger.

²⁰ Tomb A131 is a double burial, originally crouched, both deceased were provided with a dagger, displaced beside the chest.

²¹ Petrie 1932, pl. XI:57.

²² Dubis 2002, 226, fig. 11.2:7.

²³ Montanari 2013, 110.

Moreover, short daggers of simple type, as like as dagger TS.14.143, are attested during each phase of the Early Bronze Age and homogeneously widespread in the region, placing themselves as an emblematic class of weaponry of the Southern Levant.

The simple indication available about the original context of the newly discovered dagger from Jericho, as well as its just illustrated features and comparisons suggest that dagger TS.14.143 was originally deposited in an Early Bronze IVA shaft tomb, probably belonging to the so-called “Dagger Type” group. Tombs of this kind were located in Areas B, G, L, and mainly in Area A, where well-fitting comparisons to TS.14.143 were retrieved. The latter was located directly to the north-west of the tell, where dagger TS.14.143 was presumably collected.

In conclusion, dagger TS.14.143 highlights a common type of short daggers occurring in a vast number of individual tombs (tab. 1), which may be associated with a distinguished social group (warriors?), even though such weapons may have been more widely and simply intended to stress the social rank of their owners, not necessarily in a direct connection to a military class.

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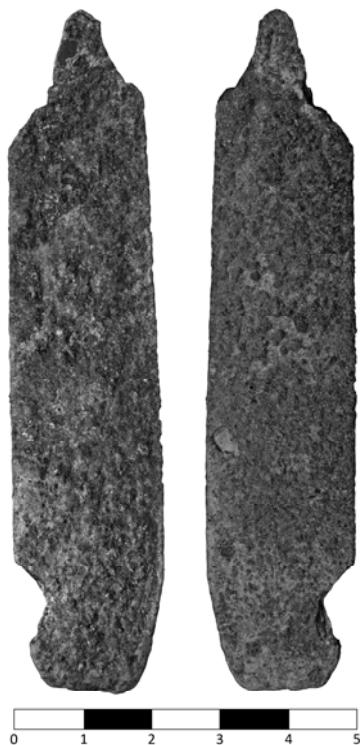


Fig. 1 - Dagger TS.14.143 from Tell es-Sultan/ancient Jericho.



Fig. 2 - Detail of trapezoidal tang and rivet holes of dagger TS.14.143 from Jericho.

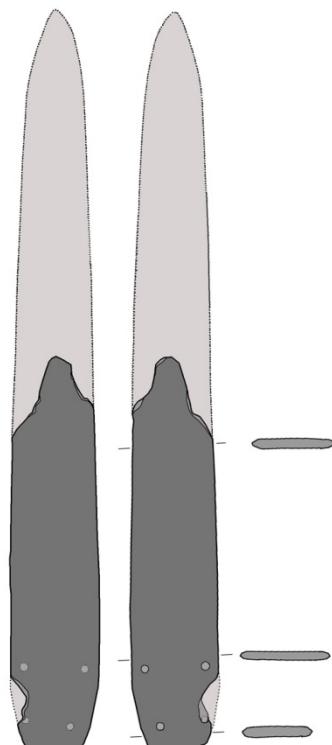


Fig. 3 - Reconstructive drawing of the dagger TS.14.143 from Tell es-Sultan/ancient Jericho, ratio 1:2.



Fig. 4 - Magnification of the lower preserved rivet hole.

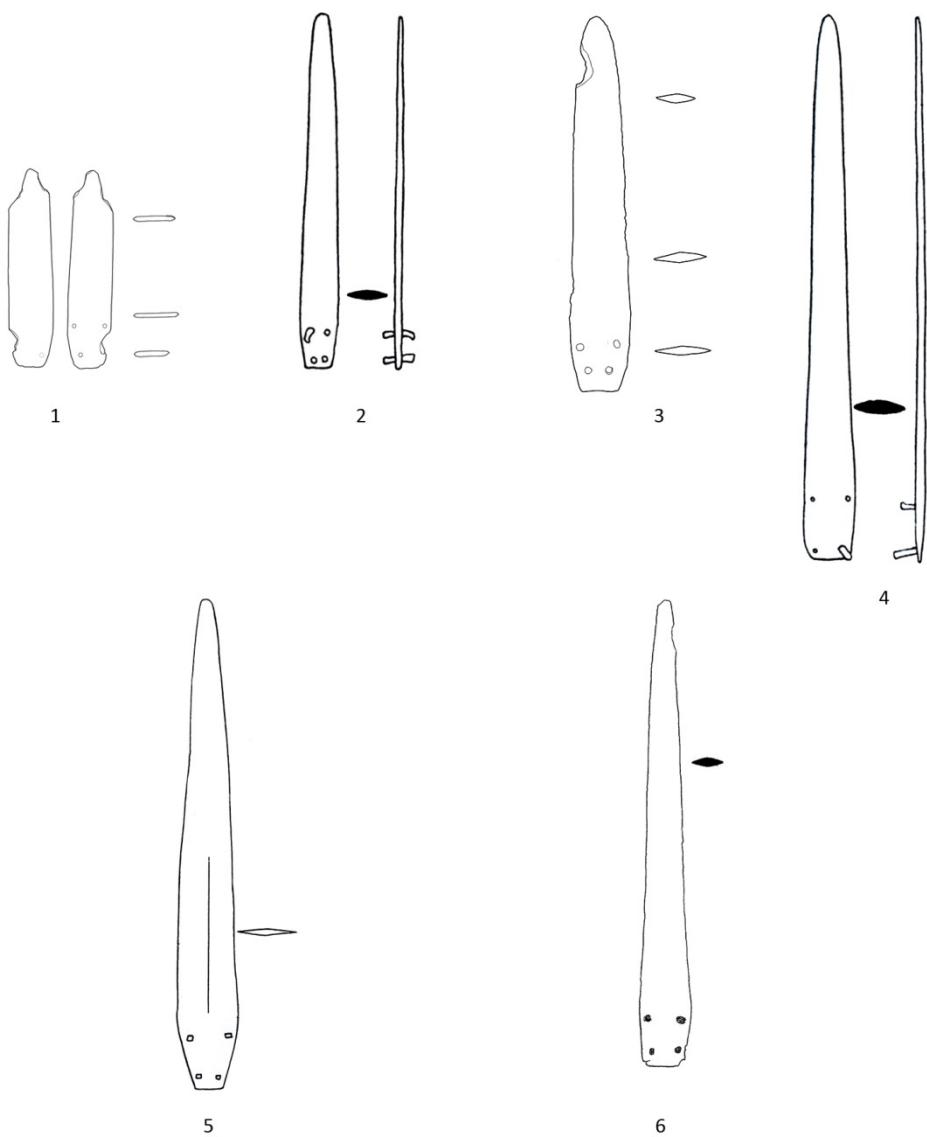


Fig. 5 - Plate of comparisons to dagger TS.14.143 (n. 1); 2, short dagger from Tomb L1, Tell es-Sultan/ancient Jericho (after Kenyon 1965, fig. 24:8); 3, short dagger from Tomb A110, Tell es-Sultan/ancient Jericho (after Kenyon 1960, fig. 70:10); 4, regular dagger from Tomb A 131, Tell es-Sultan/ancient Jericho (after Kenyon 1965, fig. 24:5); 5, regular dagger from Tomb 1531, Tell el-'Ajjul (after Petrie 1932, pl. XI:57); 6, regular dagger from Tomb 64, Tell el-'Umeiri (after Dubis 2002, fig. 11.2:7) (ratio 1:4).

[Vicino Oriente XVIII (2014), pp. 113-121]

UNA BROCCHETTA DIPINTA DAL TEMPIO DI ASTARTE NELL'AREA SACRA DEL KOTHON A MOZIA

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During the XXXIV season of excavations carried out by Rome «La Sapienza» University Expedition to Motya, a votive deposit (D.4362) lying west of the Temple of Astarte – Temple C4 of the Sacred Area of the Kothon – was brought to light. In addition to several cult objects and offerings, the deposit included a Punic painted juglet (lekythos) which may epitomize once again the complexity of the cultural tendencies ruling the ceramic repertoire of Motya during the 5th century BC.

Keywords: Punic pottery; painted pottery; votive deposit; Astarte; Motya

1. INTRODUZIONE

Durante la XXXIV campagna condotta a Mozia, nel mese di settembre 2014, dalla Missione archeologica dell’Università di Roma «La Sapienza»¹, è stato approfondito lo scavo del Tempio di Astarte² (Settore C Nord) e dei dintorni dello stesso, dove è stato individuato un deposito votivo (D.4362) che ha restituito, insieme a varie offerte, una brocchetta punica dipinta. L’analisi e lo studio del reperto in questo particolare contesto offrono degli spunti di riflessione su alcuni aspetti della cultura materiale moziese nel V secolo a.C.

2. LA BROCCHETTA MC.14.4362/2

La brocchetta MC.14.4362/2³ (fig. 1) è stata rinvenuta tra le offerte votive del deposito D.4362, localizzato nello spazio aperto a ovest del Tempio di Astarte⁴. Ricomposta in diversi frammenti, essa è interamente ricostruibile nel profilo nonostante alcune lacune, forse determinate dalle modalità di deposizione e di offerta. L’orlo svasato e conformato a coppetta ha un bordo a profilo triangolare, distinto con un risalto dal collo cilindrico, stretto e corto, che si congiunge alla spalla con una lieve risega. L’ansa si innesta sul bordo e si appoggia sulla spalla. Il corpo è globulare, il piede indistinto e il fondo concavo.

¹ Un sentito ringraziamento al Professor Lorenzo Nigro per avermi affidato lo studio e la pubblicazione della brocchetta MC.14.4362/2, e per avermi saputo ancora una volta trasmettere l’entusiasmo della scoperta. A Daria Montanari, Chiara Iacopino e Gaia Ripepi, che hanno curato la documentazione dei reperti presentati in questo contributo, vanno i miei più vivi ringraziamenti.

² Il Tempio di Astarte si trova a nord del Tempio di Baal, la principale fabbrica templare dell’Area sacra del Kothon. Individuato già nel 2004, presenta diverse fasi architettoniche che seguono parallelamente i rifacimenti e i restauri che interessarono il tempio maggiore e in generale tutte le strutture che occupano l’area sacra (Nigro 2014, 8-9). La fase 5 (Mozia VI, 520-470 a.C.) è rappresentata dal Tempio C6; alla Fase 4 (Mozia VII, 470-397/6 a.C.), nella quale si colloca il deposito D.4362, è ascrivibile il Tempio C4: Nigro 2010, 4-5, nota 12; Nigro 2012, 209, fig. 303; Spagnoli 2014a, 92, nota 13.

³ La brocchetta è alta 16 cm, il diametro massimo del corpo è 13 cm; l’imboccatura ha un diametro di 3,5 cm, la base di 8 cm.

⁴ Il deposito D. 4362 è attribuibile alla Fase 4 (470-397/6 a.C.) in base alla tipologia della deposizione, dei reperti, e della stratigrafia.

Il vaso è ricoperto da una ingubbiatura bianco-beige⁵ sulla quale è una decorazione orizzontale a fasce sottili di colore rosso⁶, disposta immediatamente sotto la spalla (una linea) e a circa metà del corpo (gruppo di tre linee); è ragionevole ipotizzare che un analogo gruppo di linee dipinte dovesse essere anche nella parte lacunosa del vaso. Anche l'ansa è decorata alla sommità da una fascia dipinta dello stesso colore.

La brocchetta è da considerarsi un prodotto locale, in base al tipo di impasto rosso scuro, compatto, ricco di inclusi calcarei e minerali, in particolare microciottoli e quarzo, e per il tipo di rivestimento, o ingubbiatura, della superficie. L'analisi della decorazione dipinta e della morfologia, e l'individuazione delle tradizioni pittoriche e dei modelli formali cui l'esemplare si ispira, contribuiscono a chiarirne l'inquadramento cronologico.

2.1. La decorazione dipinta e il rapporto con la tradizione fenicia

La decorazione a bande parallele orizzontali su ingubbiatura bianca o chiara è comune nel repertorio orientale: questa, infatti, è ben attestata nella costa levantina dall'inizio del II millennio a.C. e ricorre anche nelle produzioni più standardizzate del Tardo Bronzo (Ceramica Bicroma)⁷ e del Ferro I (ceramica filistea)⁸. A Cipro la decorazione lineare esclusiva, cioè non associata ad altri motivi, geometrici o figurati, è poco comune nel Medio e Tardo Cipriota⁹; nella vasta produzione di brocchette cipriote tra XI e VI secolo a.C., tuttavia, le bande dipinte a gruppi di tre alternati alla banda singola sono frequenti principalmente quando la decorazione dipinta è monocroma¹⁰.

Nel repertorio moziese il motivo decorativo a linee parallele è presente sin dalle prime attestazioni di ceramica fenicia dipinta (periodi Mozia IV-VA, 750-625 a.C.)¹¹. In queste fasi più antiche la decorazione lineare delle brocche e delle anfore è generalmente associata ad altri motivi più complessi, come le metope, le losanghe e il tremolo¹². In alcune forme, come le brocche con orlo a fungo, le brocche con orlo trilobato e le *neck-ridge*, invece, le linee orizzontali sono alternate a bande in Red Slip¹³; per quanto concerne le forme aperte, i piatti e le coppe presentano esclusivamente la sola decorazione a linee dipinte in nero, e l'associazione alla Red Slip si riscontra negli esemplari più antichi¹⁴. La varietà dei motivi

⁵ Munsell Soil Color Chart 2013: 10YR8/3, Very Pale Brown.

⁶ Munsell Soil Color Chart 2013: 2.5YR4/6, Red.

⁷ Doumet-Serhal 2008, 26, figg. 78-80.

⁸ Dothan 1982; Herscher 1975, fig. 26:7, 52:5.

⁹ Nelle produzioni ceramiche di questi periodi la decorazione lineare incornicia parti figurate in crateri, anfore e brocche, oppure è presente in associazione a complessi motivi geometrici; a titolo esemplificativo si vedano: Karageorghis 2003; Doumet-Serhal 2008.

¹⁰ Bikai 1987, 13-14, tav. VIII:120.

¹¹ Nigro 2013b, tab. 1.

¹² Si veda il ricco repertorio di ceramica dipinta della Necropoli Areaica (a titolo esemplificativo: Tusa 1978, tavv. XXV:3, XLIX:3), e delle tombe intramurali (Ciasca 1978, 234-240; 1980, 238-249; Spagnoli 2007-2008, figg. 4:a, 6:b; 2012, fig. 1), e degli strati profondi del Tofet (Ciasca 1999, 71, fig. 1).

¹³ Alcuni esempi in Tusa 1972, tav. XXVII; 1978, tavv. XLIV-XLV.

¹⁴ Come negli esemplari recentemente rinvenuti nelle Zone C Sud-Ovest e C Sud, dove gli scavi hanno portato alla luce alcuni tra i più antichi reperti ceramici fenici di Mozia (Mozia IVA, 775-750 a.C., Fase 9: Nigro 2013b, figg. 4, 10).

decorativi che caratterizza le produzioni più arcaiche tende, a partire dal periodo Mozia VB (625 - 550 a.C.), ma soprattutto in Mozia VI (550 - 470 a.C.)¹⁵, ad una progressiva semplificazione e a una graduale selezione e perdita dei motivi geometrici più articolati, per attestarsi su una generalizzata standardizzazione delle decorazioni. Questa consiste principalmente nell'alternanza di bande e linee orizzontali o, più semplicemente, in una decorazione a linee singole o a gruppi. Anche nell'uso dei colori si registra una maggiore diffusione della pittura rossa su fondo bianco rispetto al più frequente utilizzo della pittura nera nella ceramica più antica¹⁶.

La brocchetta MC.14.4362/2 si inquadra all'interno di questa produzione, caratteristica dei periodi Mozia VB-VI, nella quale il motivo a linee parallele è attestato non solo su piatti e coppe, ma anche sulle brocche e sulle anfore. Le superfici decorate sono rivestite da una ingubbiatura che varia dal rosa chiaro al bianco-beige, che fa da base alla pittura, e da una decorazione geometrica a linee parallele¹⁷. Sia nelle forme chiuse che in quelle aperte, le linee decorative dipinte sono poste in modo da mettere in risalto la costruzione tettonica del vaso, cioè in corrispondenza di parti diagnostiche, di carene o di ampie superfici¹⁸; analogamente, nella brocchetta la decorazione è collocata nei punti nevralgici, come l'innesto dell'ansa sulla spalla o il limite superiore (e forse anche quello inferiore) della zona di maggior diametro del corpo.

2.2. Analisi morfologica e modelli di ispirazione

A partire dalla seconda metà del VI secolo a.C. si registra a Mozia il progressivo incremento della presenza di ceramica di tradizione greca, sia di importazione che di imitazione, e la diminuzione delle forme che attingono al repertorio fenicio tradizionale¹⁹. Questo fenomeno, nell'Area sacra del Kothon inizialmente limitato a specifici contesti cultuali²⁰, si fa più consistente nel corso del V secolo a.C.²¹. I modelli formali di ispirazione

¹⁵ Vedi sopra, nota 11.

¹⁶ La standardizzazione della decorazione segue la progressiva standardizzazione delle forme ceramiche riscontrata nel repertorio moziese (come mostra la sequenza ceramica del repertorio di ceramica dipinta della Zona C che copre un arco cronologico che va dalla fondazione fenicia della città al periodo successivo alla distruzione dionigiana).

¹⁷ Questo tipo di decorazione dipinta, con ingubbiatura bianco-beige e pittura rossa o nera, è ampiamente diffuso nello stesso periodo, con maggiore incidenza e attardamento rispetto al contesto moziese, anche in altri centri punici del Mediterraneo, come Cartagine e Malta: Ciasca 1999, 76-79, figg. 5, 7; Bechtold 2007, 362-363, fig. 17.

¹⁸ Per gli esemplari di VII secolo a.C.: Caltabiano - Spagnoli 2010, 122-124, tavv. IV-IV. Per quelli di VI e V: Ciasca 1968, 37-38, tav. XXXIV: 1, 3 (piatto); 2, 4 (coperchio), strato III; 39, tav. XXXVI: 2, 4 (coppa), strato IV.

¹⁹ Ciasca 1992, 183-185; Nigro 2010, 41.

²⁰ Ad esempio, gli strati superiori della Favissa F. 1680 (US.1685, che rappresenta la Fase 6 di obliterazione e pareggiamiento del Tempio C5), che ha restituito un ricco repertorio di coppe ioniche (Nigro 2010, 38-39, fig. 41). Anche alle pendici occidentali dell'Acropoli, Casa del Sacello Domestico, il deposito di obliterazione del Basamento Meridionale (US.1056, secondo quarto del V secolo a.C.) mostra in misura maggiore ceramica attica a vernice nera rispetto alla ceramica punica (Nigro [a cura di] 2007, 75-77, fig. 2.81, 2.83).

²¹ A partire dal 470 a.C., periodo Mozia VII, che include la Fase 4 della Zona C: Nigro 2013b, tab. 2. Il Tofet, invece, mantiene anche nel periodo Mozia VII un certo conservatorismo nel repertorio ceramico, come già evidenziato da A. Ciasca soprattutto per alcune forme ceramiche tipicamente di VI secolo a.C., come l'olla

della brocchetta rinvenuta presso il Tempio di Astarte vanno dunque ricercati nel contesto di graduale contaminazione tra tradizione punica e cultura greca²² in corso nel periodo Mozia VI.

La brocchetta, infatti, mostra una certa vicinanza morfologica con le *lekythoi* attiche a bande o a vernice nera diffuse tra la fine del VI secolo e la fine del IV secolo a.C. Queste sono documentate in molte varianti, sia formali che nelle dimensioni, proprio a causa dell'ampiezza del periodo di attestazione²³. Le caratteristiche che collegano l'esemplare moziese con queste produzioni sono principalmente la forma dell'orlo, conformato a coppetta con bordo estroflesso di forma triangolare, e la forma del collo, cilindrico e sottile, piuttosto corto, evidenziato sia in alto, nell'attacco con l'orlo, che in basso, nel punto di innesto della spalla, da leggere riseghe. Queste affinità morfologiche avvicinano la brocchetta punica alle *lekythoi* ateniesi della prima metà del V secolo a.C.²⁴; rispetto alle produzioni più antiche, infatti, le *lekythoi* di V secolo a.C. sono caratterizzate da una minore definizione dei punti di raccordo delle varie parti del vaso, che negli esemplari più antichi era molto pronunciata²⁵. La conformazione del fondo, non ad anello come i modelli greci, ma piatto con interno concavo²⁶, è propria, invece, dalla tradizione punica²⁷.

In Sardegna la diffusione di questo tipo di *lekythos* fin dal VI secolo a.C. avviene probabilmente grazie alla mediazione di alcuni centri etruschi, principalmente Tarquinia e Cerveteri²⁸. Nella necropoli di Nora è attestata una brocchetta simile a quella moziese per forma e decorazione dipinta a linee e fasce parallele; le sole differenze riguardano la conformazione del corpo, leggermente rastremato, e del piede, ad anello nell'esemplare sardo. La *lekythos* di Nora è datata al pieno V secolo a.C. in base al contesto di rinvenimento e al confronto con esemplari simili rinvenuti in alcune necropoli nord africane²⁹.

globulare (Ciasca 1992, 185; Orsingher 2011, 129) e confermato dalle recenti indagini al Tofet della Missione Archeologica a Mozia della Sapienza (Nigro 2013a, 48-49, fig. 12).

²² Spagnoli 2013, 160.

²³ Il successo di questo tipo di *lekythos* in ambito punico è attestato dal rinvenimento, in alcune tombe di Lilibeo di IV secolo a.C., di esemplari che, sebbene a vernice nera, presentano notevoli affinità morfologiche con la brocchetta in oggetto (Bechtold 1999, tav. XIX:199).

²⁴ Sparkes - Talcott 1970, 152, 306-307, nn. 1103-1104, 1109, 1111, tav. 38; gli esemplari più recenti sono datati alla prima metà del V secolo a.C.

²⁵ Forse per ispirazione a forme metalliche, come in un esemplare della fine del VI secolo a.C. (Sparkes - Talcott 1970, 313, n. 1102, tav. 38, 500 a.C.). Le riseghe, molto pronunciate negli esemplari a vernice nera più antichi, diventano mero elemento decorativo verso la fine del V secolo a.C. Anche la forma globulare e globulare schiacciata del corpo è caratteristica di alcuni tipi di *lekythoi* di inizi V secolo a.C.: Sparkes - Talcott 1970, 151

²⁶ La forma del fondo è analoga a quella che le brocche *neck-ridge* conservano ancora nel V secolo a.C.: Ciasca 1992, 185.

²⁷ Un frammento di orlo di *lekythos* acroma con ansa sormontante databile alla metà del V secolo a.C., simile alla brocchetta in esame, proviene dallo scavo di M11, settore nord-orientale della cinta muraria: Ciasca 1977, 211, 210, tav. XLIX:1.

²⁸ Bartoloni - Tronchetti 1981, 20, nota 11 con bibliografia precedente.

²⁹ Bartoloni - Tronchetti 1981, 47-48, 100-101, fig. 15 (n. inv. 231.35.2).

In associazione alla brocchetta è stato rinvenuto un bruciaprofumi (MC.14.4362/1, fig. 2) anch'esso dipinto all'esterno con una banda di colore rosso scuro. Si tratta della coppa inferiore: è, infatti, visibile la frattura del cilindro centrale che doveva sostenere la coppa superiore. Tra i confronti, si può citare un esemplare rinvenuto nella Zona Industriale³⁰. L'offerta di bruciaprofumi spezzati è attestata nell'*eschara* dell'*adyton* del Tempio C³¹. Forma e decorazione collegano il bruciaprofumi del deposito D.4362 alla tradizione ceramica della Fase 5 dell'Area sacra del Kothon (Mozia VI) ma, data la specifica funzione cultuale del reperto e del suo contesto di rinvenimento, non è da escludere che possa trattarsi di un esempio di attardamento della forma³².

3. CONSIDERAZIONI FINALI

Nel corso del periodo Mozia VI, si intensifica a Mozia l'afflusso di vasi di importazione attica, tra cui spiccano principalmente vasi potori, soprattutto *skyphoi* e coppe, e brocche/*lekythoi*³³. La circolazione e la maggiore diffusione di forme greche condiziona, sia dal punto di vista formale sia funzionale, la produzione ceramica locale. Il risultato di questa contaminazione tra elemento allogeno e tradizione locale è rappresentato da produzioni "ibride" che, se da un lato accolgono e reinterpretano i modelli greci, dall'altro non si affrancano da alcuni tratti della tradizione ceramica locale. La brocchetta MC.14.4362/2, infatti, si collega, per forma e dimensioni, alle *lekythoi* attiche degli inizi del V secolo a.C., ma preserva un tipo di trattamento superficiale e decorazione che si ispirano al repertorio decorativo più antico di tradizione fenicia³⁴. Alla luce di queste considerazioni, la brocchetta è da datarsi attorno al 450 a.C.

Nella brocchetta MC.14.4362/2 confluiscono e si fondono tradizioni ceramiche diverse, quella greco-attica e quella punica dipinta³⁵, reinterpretate in modo originale. Mozia è, infatti, luogo di elaborazione e produzione di forme ibride che si inseriscono in un quadro culturale contraddistinto da una estrema permeabilità³⁶, con soluzioni che rispecchiano la recettività dell'ambiente culturale moziese e la naturale predisposizione alla contaminazione tra tradizione fenicia, elaborazione locale e influenze esterne³⁷, secondo un

³⁰ Il c.d. Luogo di Arsione: Tusa 1972, 19, tav. XV.

³¹ Nigro 2010: 25-26, fig. 26.

³² Sul conservatorismo formale di alcuni contesti sacri moziei, Ciasca 1992, nota 21. Un esempio può essere fornito anche da un fondo ritagliato con iscrizione proveniente dalla Favissa F.1680: MC.07.1685/149: Nigro 2010, 139, fig. 41.

³³ Ciasca 1992, 185. La presenza di ceramica attica a Mozia, in controtendenza rispetto ai centri greci sicelioti, tenderà ad aumentare tra fine del V e la metà del IV secolo a.C.: Nigro 2009, 707-708; 2011, 93-94, figg. 3.83-3.84; Rocco 2011, 110-111.

³⁴ Rispetto ad un contesto mediterraneo in cui questo stile decorativo lineare va oltre la metà del V secolo, arrivando anche alla metà del IV ad esempio a Malta: Ciasca 1999, 73-74, 77-78.

³⁵ Spagnoli 2012, 305-307.

³⁶ Nigro - Spagnoli 2012, 32, nota 64; Spagnoli 2013, 159-160.

³⁷ Evidente tanto nel V secolo a.C. nei confronti dell'ambiente greco coloniale quanto nei primi secoli dello stanziamento fenicio rispetto ai *milieux* indigeni dell'entroterra siciliano: Ciasca 1992, 186; 1999, 71; Nigro - Spagnoli 2012, 30, figg. 39-42. Un'analisi del repertorio ceramico delle prime fasi della presenza fenicia sull'isola in: Nigro 2013b, 47-49, figg. 11:12-13, 12:9-12, 13:11-12. Per i contesti ceramici di fine VI-V e IV

percorso che si dispiega dalla metà del VI secolo a.C. in avanti e che giunge a piena maturazione verso la metà del V secolo a.C.

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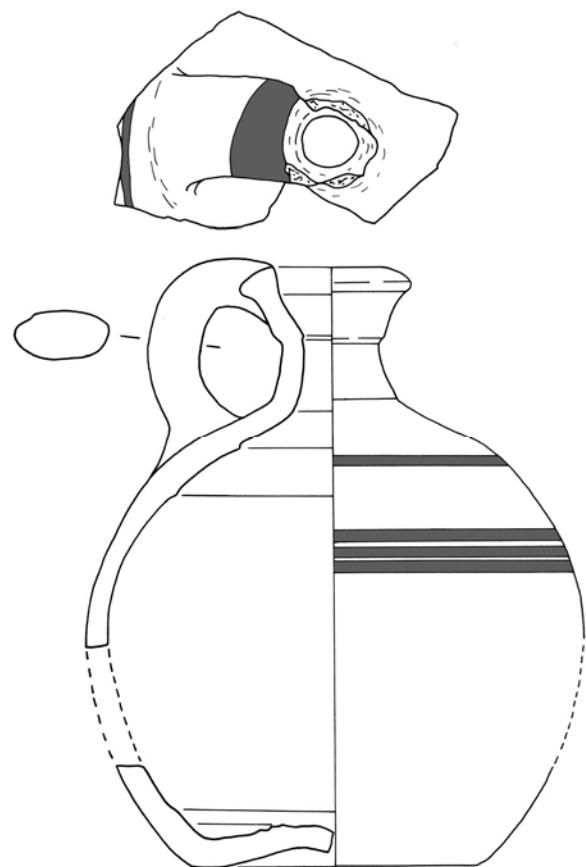


Fig. 1 - La brocchetta punica MC.14.4362/2, scala 1:2.



Fig. 2 - Il bruciaprofumi MC.14.4362/1, scala 1:2.

[Vicino Oriente XVIII (2014), pp. 123-144]

NUOVE STELE DAL TOFET DI MOZIA*

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This paper analyses nine new votive stelae discovered during the archaeological investigations at the Tophet of Motya carried out in 2009 by the Regional Superintendence BB.CC.AA. of Trapani and the Rome «La Sapienza» Expedition to Motya.

Keywords: Phoenicians; Motya; tophet; Baal Hammon; stelae

0. IL CONTESTO DI RITROVAMENTO

Le indagini condotte nel 2009 nell'ambito dei lavori per il restauro e la musealizzazione del tofet dalla Soprintendenza BB.CC.AA. Regionale di Trapani e dalla Missione archeologica a Mozia dell'Università di Roma «La Sapienza» hanno consentito il rinvenimento di nove stele votive¹. I reperti erano sempre in giacitura secondaria, come del resto la stragrande maggioranza delle stele del tofet².

1. MT.09.3011/S2

Il monumento lapideo³, rinvenuto nel corso della pulizia preliminare del santuario (US.3011; fig. 1:1), è un piccolo cippo di arenaria spezzato alla sommità, in particolar modo sul lato destro, caratterizzato da varie scheggiature perimetrali e abrasioni superficiali, soprattutto alla base (fig. 2:1-3; alt. 17,8 cm; largh. 9,3 cm; spess. 3,8 - 8,8 cm). La forma del cippo è quella di un trono con spalliera e braccioli aggettanti, il raccordo tra i due è ad angolo ottuso e, sulla faccia anteriore, è costituito da un gradino rilevato su cui è posto un betilo con base indistinta, leggermente rastremato, reso con un rilievo molto basso ottenuto attraverso un'ampia solcatura dei due lati. La tipologia dei cippi a trono con betilo è attestata nel repertorio lapideo moziese in una decina di casi⁴, alcuni dei quali

* Le stele esaminate in questo contributo sono state presentate dall'autore nel corso della IX Giornata Romana di Studi Mozesi Antonia Ciasca «From Sidon to Motya 2010» (Roma, 25 febbraio 2011). Ringrazio il Prof. Lorenzo Nigro per avermi concesso l'opportunità di studiare queste stele e per aver seguito la stesura dell'articolo.

¹ Nigro 2012, 212-213, figg. 312-314. Alle indagini del 2009 è seguita una ripresa e un'estensione delle ricerche archeologiche al tofet da parte della Missione archeologica a Mozia dell'Università di Roma «La Sapienza». Queste ricerche, che continuano tuttora, hanno prodotto notevoli risultati per quanto riguarda l'architettura e la stratigrafia del santuario: Nigro 2013.

² Solo in qualche occasione A. Ciasca ha segnalato, soprattutto per gli strati V e III (corrispondenti alle fasi 6 e 8 della stratigrafia del santuario proposta da L. Nigro sulla base dei recenti scavi: Nigro 2013, 39), l'esistenza di stele *in situ* deposte in connessione all'urna cineraria: Ciasca *et al.* 1964,, 52, tav. LIX; Brancoli *et al.* 1967, 17, tavv. XI e XIII-XVI; Ciasca *et al.* 1970, 75, figg. 6-7, tavv. XL-XLI; Bevilacqua *et al.* 1972, 91; Ciasca *et al.* 1973, 85, tavv. LX-LXI. I casi in cui il rapporto diretto tra la deposizione della/e urna/e e quella della stele è riconoscibile sul terreno sono rari anche nei tofet del Nord Africa analizzati recentemente dall'autore: D'Andrea 2014, 296-297.

³ Per le stele votive, per le deposizioni e per il contenuto delle urne cinerarie, nel corso della missione del 2009 è stato elaborato e utilizzato un nuovo sistema di catalogazione e informatizzazione dei dati modellato sulle specifiche problematiche archeologiche poste dai santuari tofet.

⁴ Moscati - Uberti 1981, 112-115, nn. 188-210, tavv. XXIV-XXVIII.

direttamente confrontabili con il reperto in esame (fig. 2:4)⁵. Quando il dato è disponibile, i cippi a trono di Mozia sono sistematicamente attribuiti allo strato V, il primo strato del tofet in cui compaiono le stele votive corrispondente alla fase 8 della stratigrafia del santuario recentemente elaborata da L. Nigro (620-550 a.C.)⁶. Questa tipologia formale corrisponde al tipo III,2 variante a^β della classificazione proposta da H. Bénichou-Safar per il tofet di Cartagine, dove viene datata tra il secondo quarto del VII sec. a.C. e una fase compresa tra la metà del VI e la fine del V sec. a.C.⁷; nel catalogo delle stele arcaiche del tofet di Cartagine di P. Bartoloni compaiono oltre cinquanta cippi-trono con betilo singolo⁸. La tipologia è attestata raramente nei repertori di Nora, Sulcis e, probabilmente, Monte Sirai⁹, mentre è assente a Sousse e Tharros¹⁰.

2. MT.09.3011/S3

Il reperto, recuperato nel corso della pulizia del santuario (fig. 1:2), appartiene alla stessa tipologia del primo, ma in questo caso il trono è privo di braccioli (fig. 3:1-3; alt. 28,5 cm; largh. 16,1 cm; spess. 6,3 - 16,9 cm). Si tratta di un cippo di arenaria calcarea spezzato alla sommità e caratterizzato da scheggiature perimetrali e abrasioni superficiali; sulla faccia anteriore si riconoscono ampie tracce dell'originaria intonacatura. Il raccordo tra spalliera e base, quest'ultima aggettante di circa 3 cm, è ad angolo ottuso, l'apparato illustrativo è costituito da un grosso betilo leggermente rastremato ottenuto attraverso una sottile incisione dei lati. Il reperto trova un confronto abbastanza stringente nel repertorio moziese (fig. 3:4), qualche altro confronto proviene dal tofet di Cartagine¹¹. La modalità di resa del betilo, con sottile incisione dei quattro lati, è attestata su stele di tipo diverso a Cartagine, Mozia e Sulcis¹².

3. MT.09.3011/S2

Il cippo è stato rinvenuto appoggiato, probabilmente in epoca moderna, sui blocchi che costituivano il muro denominato G da A. Ciasca (fig. 1:9). Esso, di arenaria calcarea poco coerente, è pressoché integro ma presenta su tutte le facce, in particolar modo su quella laterale sinistra, alla base e alla sommità, rotture, abrasioni e scheggiature diffuse dovute anche alla scarsa qualità della roccia impiegata (fig. 4:1-3; alt. 19,1 cm; largh. 9,4 cm; spess. 9,2 - 17,4 cm). La forma è quella del cippo a trono con raccordo tra base e spalliera

⁵ Moscati - Uberti 1981, 113, n. 196, tav. XXVI (strato V); 114, n. 201, tav. XXVII.

⁶ Nigro 2013, 39 (cfr. Nigro 2004). A. Ciasca aveva proposto una datazione compresa tra il secondo e l'ultimo quarto del VI sec. a.C.: Ciasca 1992, 123-126 e 129.

⁷ Bénichou-Safar 2004a, 139-140 e 184-185, tav. LII, 3-5. Cfr. D'Andrea 2014, 19, fig. 1.2 (III, 2a2); 50-51; 55.

⁸ Bartoloni 1976, 87-88, nn. 69-76, tavv. XIX-XXII; 88-92, nn. 79-125, tavv. XXIII-XXXVI. Cfr. 89, n. 90, tav. XXVI; 89, n. 92, tav. XXVI; 90, n. 104, tav. XXVII; 91, n. 108, tav. XXXI; 92, n. 123, tav. XXXV (= CMA, 161, Cb 513, tav. LXIV).

⁹ Moscati - Uberti 1970, 83, n. 2, fig. 1a, tav. I (Nora); Bondi 1972, 96, n. 1, fig. 1,1, tav. I (Monte Sirai); Bartoloni 1986, 38, nn. 66-69, tav. IX (Sulcis; cippi estremamente frammentari).

¹⁰ Per lo studio del repertorio lapideo di Sousse: D'Andrea 2014, 81-97. Per Tharros: Moscati - Uberti 1985.

¹¹ Bartoloni 1976, 88-89, nn. 84-85, tav. XXIV.

¹² Cfr. ad esempio Bartoloni 1976, 105, n. 226, tav. LXIV; 111, n. 281, tav. LXXVIII; Moscati - Uberti 1981, 139-147, nn. 352-409, tavv. LIII-LX; Bartoloni 1986, 43, n. 103, tav. XV; 47, n. 136, tav. XXI.

ad angolo ottuso e la base presenta un aggetto di circa 5 cm. L'apparato illustrativo è costituito da un betilo leggermente rastremato scolpito con un bassorilievo molto marcato, la cui base corrisponde a quella del trono. Soltanto un altro cippo moziese, attribuito allo strato V¹³, presenta un betilo rilevato alla stessa maniera, ma in questo caso la forma è un po' diversa, con raccordo tra spalliera e base ad angolo retto. Qualche altro confronto proviene da Cartagine¹⁴ e dall'unico cippo-trono del repertorio norense (fig. 4:4)¹⁵.

4. MT.09.M3020/S4

Il reperto è stato rinvenuto appoggiato su un grosso blocco facente parte di M.3020¹⁶, ma la circostanza di ritrovamento non permette di affermare che fosse stato riutilizzato all'interno di questo muro in età antica (fig. 1:3). Si tratta di un cippo a trono di pietra calcarea caratterizzato da scheggiature, rotture e abrasioni superficiali più o meno ampie, del quale risultano mancanti la sommità e la parte anteriore della base (fig. 5:1-3; alt. 39,4 cm; largh. 20,9 cm; spess. 11,9 - 16,1 cm). Il reperto ha un profilo a forma di L, la base aggetta attualmente di 2,5 cm. La tipologia dei cippi a trono vuoti è ampiamente attestata nel repertorio moziese per tutta la sua durata (fig. 5:4-5)¹⁷, dallo strato V allo strato III (fasi 6-8 della nuova stratigrafia del santuario: 620-470 a.C.)¹⁸. Essa corrisponde alla variante a^a del tipo III,2 della classificazione proposta per Cartagine da H. Bénichou-Safar (fig. 5:7)¹⁹; è possibile che cippi di questa tipologia fossero in uso già nella parte finale della prima fase di vita del tofet cartaginese, cioè nel corso della prima metà del VII sec. a.C. Il tipo appare ben rappresentato nei repertori di Sulcis (fig. 5:6) e Tharros²⁰, mentre è assente a Nora e Monte Sirai, dove la produzione lapidea comincia in una fase un po' più tarda²¹, nonché a Sousse, dove la produzione si caratterizza, soprattutto nelle prime fasi, per l'elaborazione di nuove tipologie formali²².

5. MT.09.M3020/S3

Come il cippo precedente, questo reperto è stato rinvenuto in M.3020 ma in questo caso esso appariva effettivamente reimpiegato nel muro ed è pertanto stato lasciato *in situ* (fig.

¹³ Moscati - Uberti 1981, 113, n. 194, tav. XXV.

¹⁴ Bartoloni 1976, 87, nn. 68-69, tavv. XIX-XX; 88, nn. 75-76, tavv. XXI-XXII; 88, n. 79, tav. XXIII.

¹⁵ Moscati - Uberti 1970, 83, n. 2, fig. 1a, tav. I. Sembra essere dello stesso tipo anche l'unico cippo a trono di Monte Sirai: Bondi 1972, 96, n. 1, fig. 1,1, tav. I.

¹⁶ Si tratta di un muretto ad andamento est/ovest, forse di terrazzamento, costituito da piccolo pietrame e stele votive riutilizzate, perlopiù in stato di conservazione frammentario. Oltre alle tre stele trattate nel presente articolo, nel muro era riutilizzata una quarta stele (MT.09.M3020/S2), lasciata *in situ*, il cui apparato illustrativo è caratterizzato da un disco solare e un betilo rastremato.

¹⁷ Moscati - Uberti 1981, 95-99, nn. 68-96, tavv. IX-XIV; 108-112, nn. 159-186, tavv. XX-XXIV.

¹⁸ Nigro 2013, 39 (cfr. Nigro 2004).

¹⁹ Bénichou-Safar 2004a, 139-140 e 184-185, tav. LII, 1-2. Cfr. D'Andrea 2014, 19, fig. 1.2 (III, 2a1); 46; 50-51.

²⁰ Moscati - Uberti 1985, 97, nn. 18-19, tav. VI; 98-99, nn. 25-28, tavv. VIII-IX; Bartoloni 1986, 35-38, nn. 42-65, tavv. VI-IX.

²¹ A Nora non prima della fine del VI sec. a.C., quando sembra iniziare la vita del santuario; a Monte Sirai nel corso del IV sec. a.C.: D'Andrea - Giardino 2013.

²² Per le tipologie formali di Sousse: D'Andrea 2014, 81-83, tab. 3.1; 84-85; 87-89.

1:4; 6:1). Si tratta di una lastra di roccia calcarea giallastra, organogena, di cui risultano spezzati l'angolo inferiore sinistro e quello superiore destro (fig. 6:2-3; alt. 27,1 cm; largh. 16,7 cm; spess. 6,5 cm); la faccia anteriore reca resti di un'originaria intonacatura. L'apparato illustrativo è costituito da un grosso betilo a sezione semiellittica e sommità leggermente arrotondata ottenuto attraverso dei solchi abbastanza profondi scavati sui quattro lati, i quali al tempo stesso delimitano un'edicola di tipo semplice. La tipologia formale con edicola semplice a cornice è ampiamente attestata nel repertorio moziese (fig. 6:4-5), con almeno tre varianti (A-C)²³, mentre in quello cartaginese è molto più rara²⁴; a Cartagine l'edicola, sovente egittizzante, è resa in maniera più dettagliata, spesso con inquadramenti plurimi, ed è provvista in genere di trabeazione, cella e basamento²⁵. Il tipo trova pochi confronti anche nei repertori lapidei degli altri tofet²⁶, meno che a Sulcis dove è ampiamente attestato come a Mozia²⁷.

6. MT.09.M3020/S1

Il reperto è attribuibile alla stessa tipologia formale del cippo precedente, nello specifico alla variante C, e anch'esso era riutilizzato in M.3020 (fig. 1:5). Si tratta di una lastra di pietra calcarea grigio-verdastra, ricomposta da tre frammenti, integra ma caratterizzata da scheggiature profonde lungo la cornice esterna e da abrasioni superficiali diffuse (fig. 7:1-3; alt. 33,7 cm; largh. 30,7 cm; spess. 9,6 - 18,8 cm). La faccia anteriore è costituita da un'edicola a inquadramento semplice aggettante entro la quale è scolpito, con un bassorilievo non molto profondo, un betilo rastremato a sommità arrotondata.

7. MT.09.M3035/S1

La stele è stata rinvenuta appoggiata, probabilmente in età moderna, a uno dei blocchi del limite A (rinominato M.3035) della solida massicciata che nella prima fase del santuario costituiva una sorta di terrazza cultuale che poteva ospitare, secondo A. Ciasca, una piccola cappella egittizzante (fig. 1:6)²⁸. Si tratta di una lastra di arenaria calcarea grossolana della

²³ Nella variante A i limiti del betilo corrispondono grossomodo a quelli dell'edicola (fig. 8:4-5; cfr. Moscati - Uberti 1981, 139-147, nn. 352-405, tavv. LIII-LX; 155-158, nn. 458-477, tavv. LXVII-LXX); nella variante B la base del betilo è indistinta e gli altri tre lati corrispondono a quelli dell'edicola (Moscati - Uberti 1981, 148-153, nn. 415-443, tavv. LXI-LXV); nella variante C l'edicola semplice è distinta dal betilo (Moscati - Uberti 1981, 153, nn. 444-445, tav. LXV; 159, nn. 482-484, tav. LXXI; 162-163, nn. 502-505, tav. LXXIV; 164-165, nn. 514-518, tavv. LXXVI-LXXVII).

²⁴ Per qualche esempio: Bartoloni 1976, 105, n. 222, tav. LXIII; 105, n. 226, tav. LXIV; 109, n. 264, tav. LXXIV; n. 296, tav. LXXXII.

²⁵ Cfr. Bénichou-Safar 2004a, 139 e 180-184, tav. L-LI (tipo III,1); D'Andrea 2014, 50, tav. I; 54-55. Questo tipo di edicola è ampiamente attestato anche nel repertorio moziese.

²⁶ Ad esempio Moscati - Uberti 1970, 84, n. 3, tav. II; 88-89, n. 11, tav. VI; 90, n. 13, tav. VII.

²⁷ Bartoloni 1986, 42-48, nn. 96-142, tavv. XIV-XXII (predomina la variante C).

²⁸ Ciasca *et al.* 1964, 47-60; Ciasca 1992, 119; Nigro 2004, 41 (l'autore parla di un sacello quadrato). In realtà i dati archeologici non permettono di avanzare ricostruzioni certe sulla configurazione e sull'uso di questa terrazza, nella quale si avvicendarono sicuramente più interventi nel corso del tempo che ne cambiarono l'assetto originario; gli scavi in corso apporteranno informazioni fondamentali a questo proposito. La centralità e la sacralità dell'area all'interno del santuario è garantita dal fatto che essa è installata su uno sperone roccioso dominante rispetto alla piana circostante e che qui non furono rinvenute urne cinerarie. Le ricerche del 2009 hanno rivelato la presenza di un individuo adulto inumato proprio vicino all'importante

quale si conserva poco meno della metà superiore (fig. 8:1-4; alt. 23 cm; largh. 21,5 cm; spess. 5-6,5 cm). Il reperto, caratterizzato da scheggiature perimetrali e abrasioni superficiali diffuse, è di buona fattura: la pietra è tagliata e sbozzata con cura, la faccia anteriore è lisciata in maniera rifinita e reca tracce dell'originaria intonacatura. La forma è quella di una lastra rettangolare con taglio superiore piatto e depressione obliqua, sulla faccia anteriore si sviluppa un'edicola con pilastri raccordati in alto e sormontati da una trabeazione; quest'ultima è costituita in basso da una gola egizia posta tra listelli incisi, i quali si sviluppano anche nella parte centro-superiore. All'interno dell'edicola è scolpito con un rilievo basso e schiacciato un personaggio maschile stante, di profilo, rivolto a destra; di esso si conservano soltanto la parte superiore del busto e la testa, l'immagine risulta di difficile lettura a causa dell'abrasione del rilievo. Il personaggio, che indossa un copricapo conico, ha una lunga barba, il braccio destro piegato in alto con mano aperta e il braccio sinistro proteso in avanti.

7.1. L'iconografia del personaggio con copricapo conico, barba lunga e mano alzata: caratteri, confronti e proposte interpretative

La stele trova confronti puntuali nel repertorio moziese in una ventina di reperti (fig. 8:5; 9:1-4) pertinenti agli strati IV-III, dunque alle fasi 6-7 (550-470 a.C.)²⁹. Gli elementi che caratterizzano il personaggio moziese, attestato probabilmente anche nel tofet di Cartagine³⁰, sono la vista di profilo e la resa egittizzante con barba lunga, folta e in alcuni casi a punta, copricapo conico e braccio destro alzato con mano aperta in segno di saluto/giuramento³¹; il vestiario è costituito da una lunga veste che ricade sulla gamba posteriore, in due casi il personaggio sorregge un'asta terminante con qualcosa alla sommità e utilizzata come scettro³². Come proposto in passato da E. Acquaro e S. Moscati, il personaggio moziese può essere accostato a quello raffigurato su una stele di Sulcis dataata al VI sec. a.C. (fig. 9:5)³³: in questo caso la figura sorregge un'asta terminante con un elemento lanceolato e interpretata come una lancia. Qualche altro esempio del tipo può essere costituito da una stele di VI sec. a.C. proveniente da Kouklia, purtroppo in pessimo

stipe votiva scavata da A. Ciasca tra i blocchi D ed E: R. Giglio - L. Nigro, Intervento di restauro al Tofet di Mozia: Ah. Ferjaoui (ed.), *Actes du VII^e congrès international des études phéniciennes et puniques (Hammamet, 10-14 novembre 2009)*, Tunis (in stampa). Appena a est del muro B, a una quota molto più bassa perché il settore è posto alla base dello sperone roccioso, A. Ciasca rinvenne i resti di almeno cinque individui collocati l'uno sull'altro senza ordine apparente (Ciasca *et al.* 1964, 49). Tali resti si trovavano, probabilmente in giacitura secondaria, in un terreno compatto giallastro molto simile al terreno alluvionale e privo di ceramica; non si può escludere che tale terreno fosse dilavato dallo sperone sovrastante, considerando anche il fatto che il muro di contenimento B è sicuramente serio ad A (Ciasca *et al.* 1964, 59-60). Per confronto, si può ricordare il ritrovamento di un individuo inumato nel tofet di Sousse associato a un'anfora di VI sec. a.C., dunque apparentemente contemporaneo alla vita del santuario (D'Andrea 2014, 76).

²⁹ Per i confronti: Moscati - Uberti 1981, 242-246, nn. 920-940, tavv. CLXIV-CLXVIII; 248, n. 947, tav. CLXX; 248, n. 949, tav. CLXXI. Per la cronologia delle fasi 6-7: Nigro 2013, 39.

³⁰ Bartoloni 1976, 146-147, n. 576, tav. CLVIII; 151, n. 605, tav. CLXV.

³¹ Per l'interpretazione del gesto cfr. Bénichou-Safar 2004b, 99-116; D'Andrea 2014, 62, nota 364.

³² Moscati - Uberti 1981, 248, n. 947, tav. CLXX (potrebbe trattarsi di uno scettro *w3s*); 248, n. 949, tav. CLXXI.

³³ Moscati 1967, 63; Acquaro 1969, 69-72. Secondo E. Acquaro il lapicida non era riuscito a calcolare bene lo spazio per riprodurre il cartone che aveva a disposizione, da ciò l'assenza del copricapo conico.

stato di conservazione (fig. 9:6)³⁴, e da uno scarabeo di probabile provenienza cipriota, nel quale però il personaggio reca sulla testa una mitra (fig. 9:7)³⁵; un altro confronto, ipotetico in assenza delle braccia e considerando che in questo caso il torso è nudo, è costituito da un bronzetto di VII sec. a.C. proveniente da Sancti Petri (Cadice)³⁶.

Potrebbe costituire una variante della resa stante quella, meglio testimoniata e canonizzata, presente probabilmente anche nel repertorio moziese, seppur in maniera estremamente stilizzata (fig. 10:1-2), nella quale un personaggio simile è assiso su un trono, in genere sorretto da sfingi alate. Questa iconografia fenicio-egittizzante è attestata in ambito orientale (fig. 10:4-7)³⁷, ma è nel mondo fenicio e punico d'Occidente che trova la sua massima diffusione. La cosiddetta stele di Baal del tofet di Sousse, databile al V sec. a.C., costituisce un'ottima esemplificazione del tipo (fig. 10:3): il personaggio è visto di profilo, la resa è egittizzante con barba lunga, copricapo conico, atteggiamento di saluto/giuramento, asta con elemento ellisoidale/lanceolato e trono sorretto da sfingi alate³⁸. Altri esempi consistono in alcuni scarabei: uno di diaspro verde-scuro montato su un anello d'argento (fig. 10:8)³⁹ e un secondo di diaspro verde, entrambi provenienti da Ibiza (fig. 10:9)⁴⁰; due scarabei, il primo di diaspro verde (fig. 10:10)⁴¹ e il secondo di agata (fig. 10:11)⁴², da Tharros; uno scarabeo di diaspro verde di probabile provenienza moziese (fig. 10:12)⁴³ e altri due di provenienza sconosciuta (fig. 10:13-14)⁴⁴. La resa del personaggio è più stilizzata in un anello d'oro proveniente da Utica databile al IV-III sec. a.C. (fig. 10:15)⁴⁵ e in uno scarabeo di diaspro verde da Sulcis (fig. 10:16)⁴⁶. In altri casi lo stesso personaggio è assiso su un trono di tipo diverso, privo di sfingi alate (fig. 10:17-26)⁴⁷, e può essere sprovvisto dell'asta (fig. 10:27-28)⁴⁸. In relazione a quest'ultima, è

³⁴ Wilson 1974, 142-146, tav. XXI, 6.

³⁵ Acquaro 1969, 70-71, fig. 1. Secondo l'autore qui, come nella stele di Sulcis, il personaggio è interpretabile come Resheph.

³⁶ Peters ed. 2004, 342, n. 19.

³⁷ Ad esempio: uno scarabeo di diaspro rosso-bruno proveniente da Tiro (fig. 13:4 = Gubel 1987, 39-40, n. 6, tav. IV); uno scarabeo di diaspro verde di provenienza sconosciuta, ma comunque dalla Fenicia (fig. 13:5 = Gubel 1987, 40, n. 7, tav. IV); una bulla, anch'essa dal territorio fenicio ma di provenienza sconosciuta (fig. 13:6 = Gubel 1987, 40-41, n. 9, tav. V); uno scarabeo di diaspro verde-scuro montato su un anello di bronzo dorato da Nicosia (fig. 13:7 = Boardman 2003, 63, n. 17/30, tav. 17; cfr. Gubel 1987, 42, n. 12, tav. VI).

³⁸ Picard 1954, 298, Cb 1075, tav. CXXVI. Cfr. Bisi 1967, 94-96, fig. 56; D'Andrea 2014, 82, S. 2, tav. VIII, 1.

³⁹ Boardman 2003, 62, n. 17/1, tav. 16. Cfr. Gubel 1987, 43-44, n. 16, tav. VII.

⁴⁰ Boardman 2003, 62, n. 17/2, tav. 16. Cfr. Gubel 1987, 44, n. 17, tav. VII.

⁴¹ Boardman 2003, 63, n. 17/8, tav. 16. Cfr. Gubel 1987, 44, n. 18, tav. VIII.

⁴² Boardman 2003, 65, n. 17/x13, tav. 53. Cfr. Gubel 1987, 44, n. 20, tav. VIII.

⁴³ Gubel 1987, 47, n. 28, tav. IX.

⁴⁴ Boardman 2003, 66, n. 17/x15, tav. 54 (corniola, Museo di Kassel); 66, n. 17/x17, tav. 54 (impressione conservata a Oxford).

⁴⁵ Peters ed. 2004, 235, n. 13. Cfr. Gubel 1987, 42, n. 13, tav. VI; D'Andrea 2014, 148, fig. 6.2.

⁴⁶ Gubel 1987, 44-45, n. 19, tav. VIII.

⁴⁷ Ad esempio: un anello d'oro proveniente da Cartagine (fig. 13:17 = Culican 1970, 28-32, fig. I, b; cfr. Gubel 1987, 114, n. 51, tav. XX); uno scarabeo di diaspro verde ancora da Cartagine (fig. 13:18 = Boardman 2003, 63, n. 17/24, tav. 16; cfr. Gubel 1987, 179, n. 130, tav. XXXVI); uno scarabeo di diaspro verde da Ibiza (fig. 13:19 = Boardman 2003, 63, n. 17/3, tav. 16; cfr. Gubel 1987, 142, n. 98, tav. XXXII); quattro scarabei da Tharros (fig. 13:20-23 = Peters ed. 2004, 183; Gubel 1987, 181, n. 141, tav. XXXVIII; 126, n. 58, tav. XXII;

ipotizzabile che essa, sia quando termina superiormente con un elemento lanceolato o ellissoidale sia quando tale elemento è reso in maniera più particolareggiata, funga da scettro e costituisca un riferimento al mondo vegetale, una pianta su alto stelo tipo papiro, palma, bocciolo di loto o spiga di grano⁴⁹; questa tipologia di scettri è ampiamente attestata già in ambito orientale, negli scarabei come, ad esempio, negli avori fenici di Nimrud⁵⁰.

Il personaggio rappresentato nella variante in trono sembra essere una divinità, mentre resta dubbia l'ipotesi che il personaggio della variante stante sia interpretabile allo stesso modo: pur essendo le due iconografie simili, difatti, la differente postura potrebbe costituire una discriminante fondamentale, ad esempio fra l'ambito umano (personaggio stante: sacerdote?) e quello divino (seduto). Per il personaggio assiso su un trono sorretto da sfingi alate è stato proposto che possa trattarsi di Baal Hammon⁵¹: in realtà, nel dossier l'unico reperto nel quale il tipo iconografico e il dio appaiono direttamente associati è la stele del tofet di Sousse; ulteriori indizi a favore di un'interpretazione di questo tipo provengono da due reperti rinvenuti nei tofet di Cartagine e Mozia, ma in questi casi a parte il trono con sfingi ai lati non è possibile ricostruire l'iconografia del personaggio⁵². A partire dal III-II sec. a.C. sono attestate in più occasioni iconografie che costituiscono un'elaborazione tarda del tipo analizzato finora e sembrano effettivamente rappresentare Baal Hammon⁵³; ciò è ulteriormente testimoniato dal fatto che talvolta questi tipi iconografici vengono utilizzati per la rappresentazione di Saturno, che in età romana viene identificato con il dio fenicio-cartaginese⁵⁴. Va notato, tuttavia, che su un trono con sfingi alate possono essere assise

126, n. 57, tav. XXII); altri scarabei di provenienza incerta (fig. 13:24-26. Boardman 2003, 63, n. 17/26, tav. 17; 64, n. 17/39, tav. 17; 64, n. 17/40, tav. 17).

⁴⁸ Gubel 1987, 126, n. 60, tav. XXII (scarabeo di diaspro verde scuro proveniente da una collezione privata); 136, n. 82, tav. XXVII (scarabeo di corniola di provenienza cipriota). Cfr. anche 135, n. 77, tav. XXVI (scaraboide di agata di provenienza siriana, tra Homs e Palmira).

⁴⁹ L'ipotesi del papiro è stata proposta per uno degli scarabei di Ibiza (fig. 13:9), quella della palma per un altro scarabeo ibicenco (fig. 13:8), quella del bocciolo di loto o della spiga di grano per la cosiddetta stele di Baal (fig. 13:3) e per l'anello d'oro di Utica (fig. 13:15).

⁵⁰ Herrmann - Mallowan 1974, 92, n. 51, tav. LX (anche trono con sfingi alate alla base); 104-105, nn. 77-80, tav. XCII-XCIII (personaggio in trono con scettro “vegetale”); 105-106, nn. 84-85, tav. XCIV (pianta su alto stelo a sommità lanceolata simile alla “lancia” del personaggio della stele di Sulcis). Per l'interpretazione di tali scettri cfr. Gubel 1980.

⁵¹ Cfr. Bisi 1967, 94-95; Xella 1991, 112-130; D'Andrea 2014, 26.

⁵² Dal tofet di Cartagine proviene una statuetta di calcare databile alla prima metà del VI sec. a.C. che rappresenta un trono con sfingi ai lati su cui è assiso un personaggio di cui non si conserva praticamente nulla (cfr. Picard 1954, 37-38, Ca 8, tav. VIII; D'Andrea 2014, 51). Nelle trincee di spoliazione del sacello A del Tofet di Mozia è stato rinvenuto un tronetto frammentario di calcare caratterizzato da sfingi sui lati e datato fra la parte finale del VI e il V sec. a.C.: Ciasca 1996.

⁵³ Ad esempio: una statuetta fittile proveniente dal santuario di *Thinissut* databile al II-I sec. a.C.; delle monete coniate alla fine del II sec. d.C. a Sousse/*Hadrumetum* con legenda *Saeculum Frugiferum*; due stele di II-I sec. a.C. provenienti da Costantina. Per un quadro complessivo dei reperti nei quali è attestato questo tipo iconografico: D'Andrea 2014, 315-316. Una statuetta di bronzo proveniente da Genoni, in Sardegna, è datata tra IV e III sec. a.C. raffigura un personaggio stante con copricapo turrito di piume, barba folta e braccio destro alzato con mano aperta in segno di saluto/benedizione (Xella 1991, 121, tav. 9:1); nella mano destra del personaggio era originariamente collocato un oggetto, verosimilmente un'asta/scettro.

⁵⁴ Ad esempio in una coppa decorata proveniente da Chitimou (I-II sec. d.C.) e in una stele di Sidi Bou Rouis (II sec. d.C.): D'Andrea 2014, 316.

diverse divinità, sia maschili che femminili⁵⁵, e anche personaggi regali⁵⁶; al tempo stesso, un personaggio molto simile a quello in esame può recare, sia nella variante stante⁵⁷ che in quella assisa⁵⁸, un'ascia sulla spalla che viene tradizionalmente considerata un attributo di Melqart, si pensi in proposito alla stele di Bar-Hadad di Aleppo (metà IX sec. a.C.)⁵⁹.

8. MT.09.3004/S1

L'ottavo reperto del lotto in esame è un piccolo frammento proveniente dalla pulizia dell'edificio b (US.3004; fig. 1:7). Il frammento, di arenaria calcarea, dovrebbe costituire l'angolo superiore destro o quello inferiore sinistro di un'edicola a doppio inquadramento semplice con betilo a rilievo (fig. 7:4-5; alt. 9,1 cm; largh. 6,7 cm; spess. 1 cm); stele dello stesso tipo sono già attestate nel repertorio moziese (fig. 7:6)⁶⁰.

9. MT.09.M4/S1

Il reperto era riutilizzato nell'angolo settentrionale di M.4 ed è stato lasciato *in situ* (fig. 1:8; 11:1-2). Si tratta di una lastra di calcare apparentemente integra con un apparato illustrativo non comune costituito da una sorta di betilo con due gambe (fig. 11:3; alt. 40 cm; largh. 22 cm; spess. 7,5 cm)⁶¹; un'iconografia simile compare su un'altra stele moziese attribuita allo strato III (fig. 11:4), dunque alla fase 6 (520 e 470 a.C.). In realtà, non si può escludere che il solco centrale sia una scheggiatura e che dunque sulla stele in esame fosse raffigurato un betilo di tipo tradizionale.

10. CONCLUSIONI

Le nove stele inedite esaminate in questo contributo, pur non essendo caratterizzate da elementi innovativi e peculiari rispetto al repertorio lapideo moziese già conosciuto, hanno permesso di fare il punto sulle caratteristiche di alcune tipologie formali e di alcune iconografie e sui confronti che esse trovano a Mozia e nei repertori lapidei degli altri tofet del Mediterraneo. La raffigurazione, su una delle stele del lotto, di un personaggio con copricapo conico, barba lunga, braccio destro alzato e mano aperta ha offerto l'opportunità di analizzare i caratteri, i confronti e le ipotesi interpretative proposte per questa iconografia, ampiamente attestata in ambito fenicio e punico sia nella resa stante che in quella assisa del personaggio.

⁵⁵ Per qualche esempio in proposito si osservino gli scarabei riprodotti in Gubel 1987 e Boardman 2003.

⁵⁶ Si pensi ad esempio al sarcofago di Ahiram di Biblo (Matthäus 2004, 330).

⁵⁷ Cfr. ad esempio Gubel 1980, tav. II; 1987, 199-200, n. 153, tav. XL; Boardman 2003, 64, nn. 17/49, tav. 17; 66, 17/X19, pl. 54.

⁵⁸ Cfr. ad esempio Gubel 1980, tav. II; 1987, 46, n. 25, tav. VIII; D'Andrea 2014, 315-316, fig. 11.4, a.

⁵⁹ Bonnet 1988, 132-136.

⁶⁰ Moscati - Uberti 1981, 176-177, nn. 580-588, tav. LXXXVIII.

⁶¹ MT.09.M4/S1 (alt. 40 cm; largh. 22 cm; spess. 7,5 cm).

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Fig. 1 - In alto: Mozia, parte centrale del Tofet, foto aerea da nord. In basso a sinistra: particolare di M.3020, foto da nord-ovest, in primo piano la stele MT.09.M3020/S4 (n. 3), appena ad ovest MT.09.3020/S1 (n. 5). In basso a destra: particolare di M.3035, foto da est, in primo piano MT.09.M3035/S1 (n. 6). La foto in alto è di L. Nigro (rielaborata dall'autore), quelle in basso di N. Chiarenza.

XVIII (2014)

Nuove stele dal Tofet di Mozia

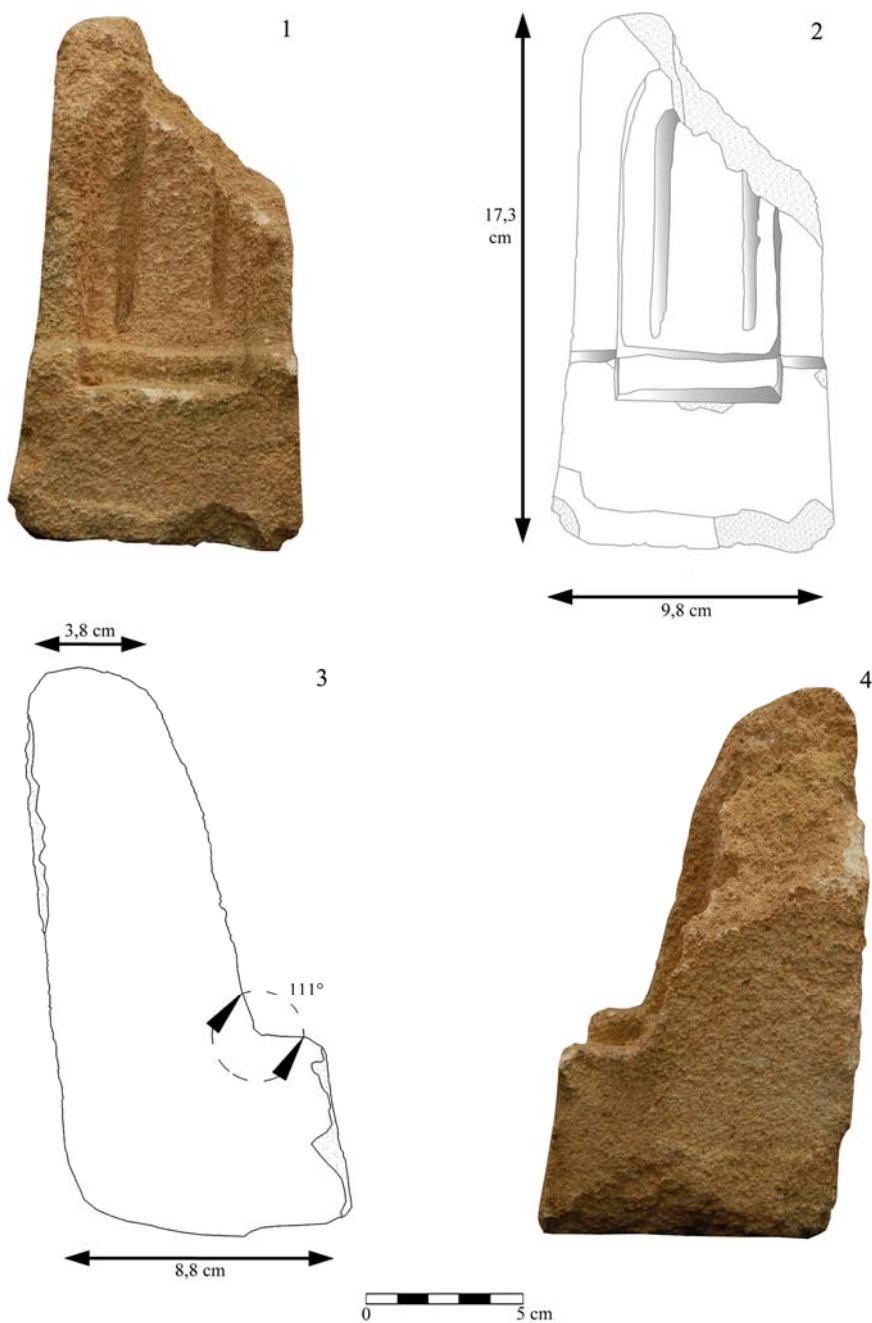


Fig. 2 - Mozia, Tofet: foto e disegni della stele MT.09.3011/S1 (foto e disegni dell'autore).

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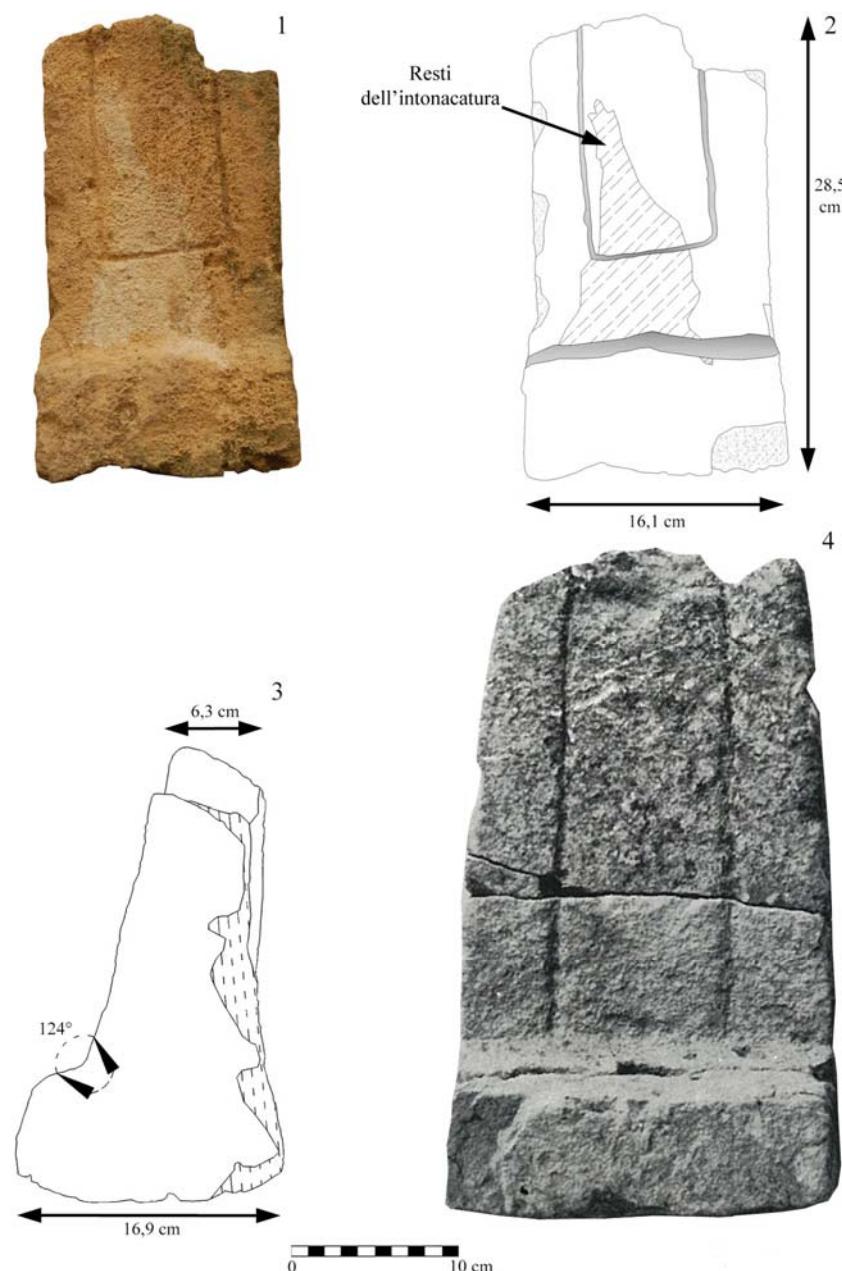


Fig. 3 - Mozia, Tofet: foto e disegni della stele MT.09.3011/S3 (nn. 1-3: foto e disegni dell'autore). Confronto dal repertorio lapideo moziese (n. 4: Moscati - Uberti 1981, 112, n. 188, tav. XXIV).

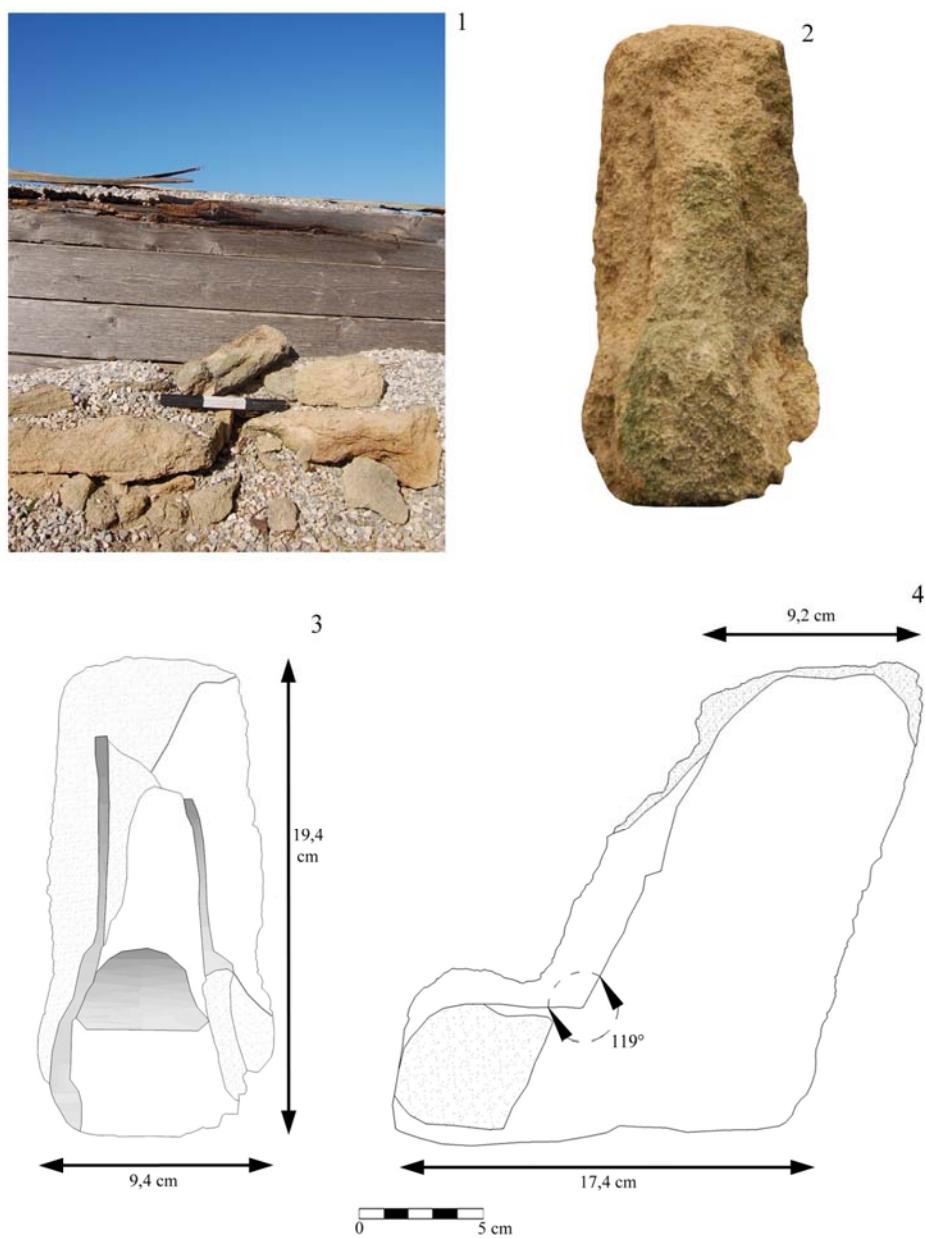


Fig. 4 - Mozia, Tofet: foto del muro G, da est; in primo piano la stele MT.09.3011/S2, sullo sfondo una delle costruzioni lignee installate per la conservazione del santuario e rimosse nel 2009 (n. 1: foto di N. Chiarenza). Foto e disegno della stele MT.09.3011/S2 (nn. 2-4: foto e disegni dell'autore).

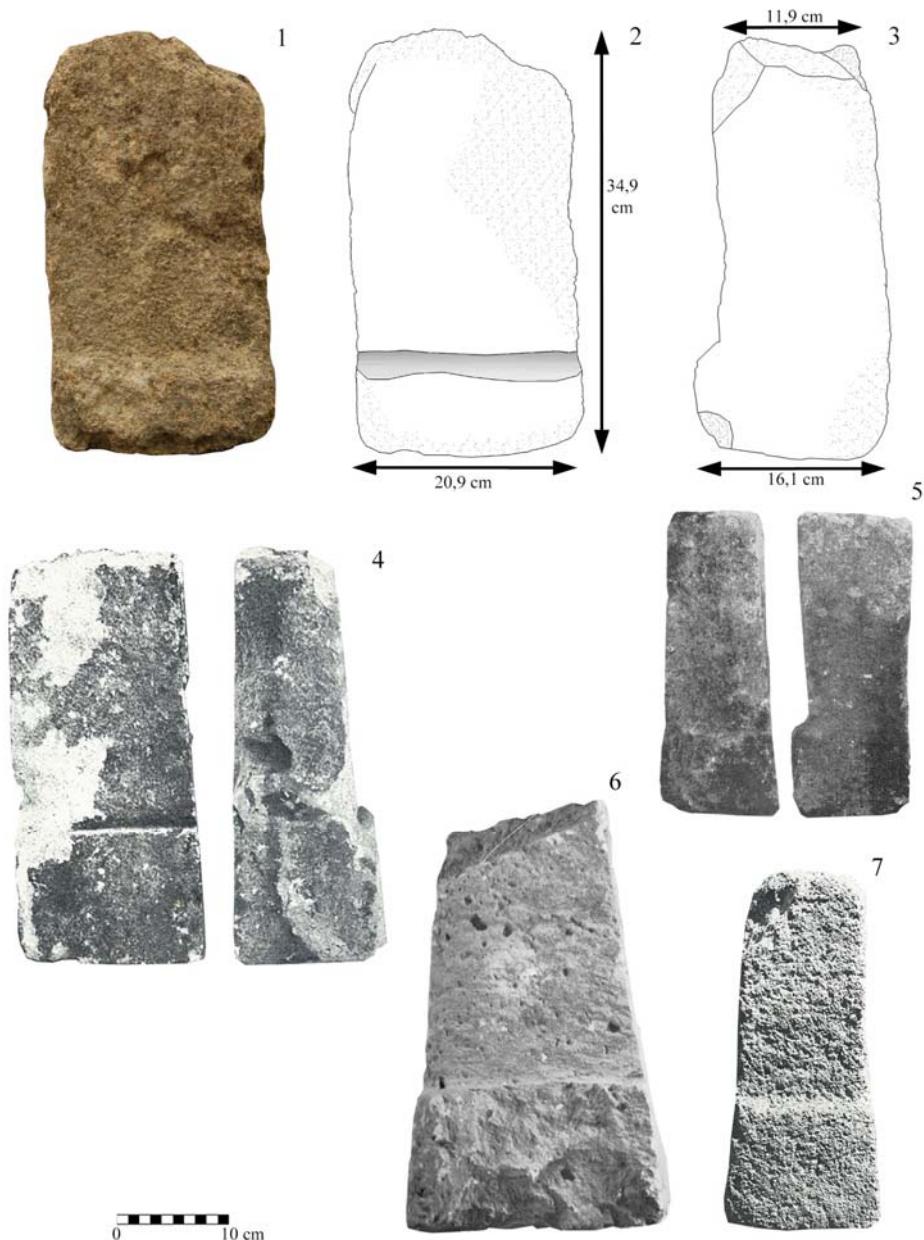


Fig. 5 - Mozia, Tofet: foto e disegni della stele MT.09.M3020/S4 (nn. 1-3: foto e disegni dell'autore). Cippi a trono vuoti, con profilo a L, dai Tofet di Mozia (nn. 4-5: Moscati - Uberti 1981, 95, n. 68, tav. IX; 96, n. 78, tav. XI), Sulcis (n. 6: Bartoloni 1986, 36, n. 49, tav. VII) e Cartagine (n. 7: Bartoloni 1976, 86, n. 54, tav. XV).

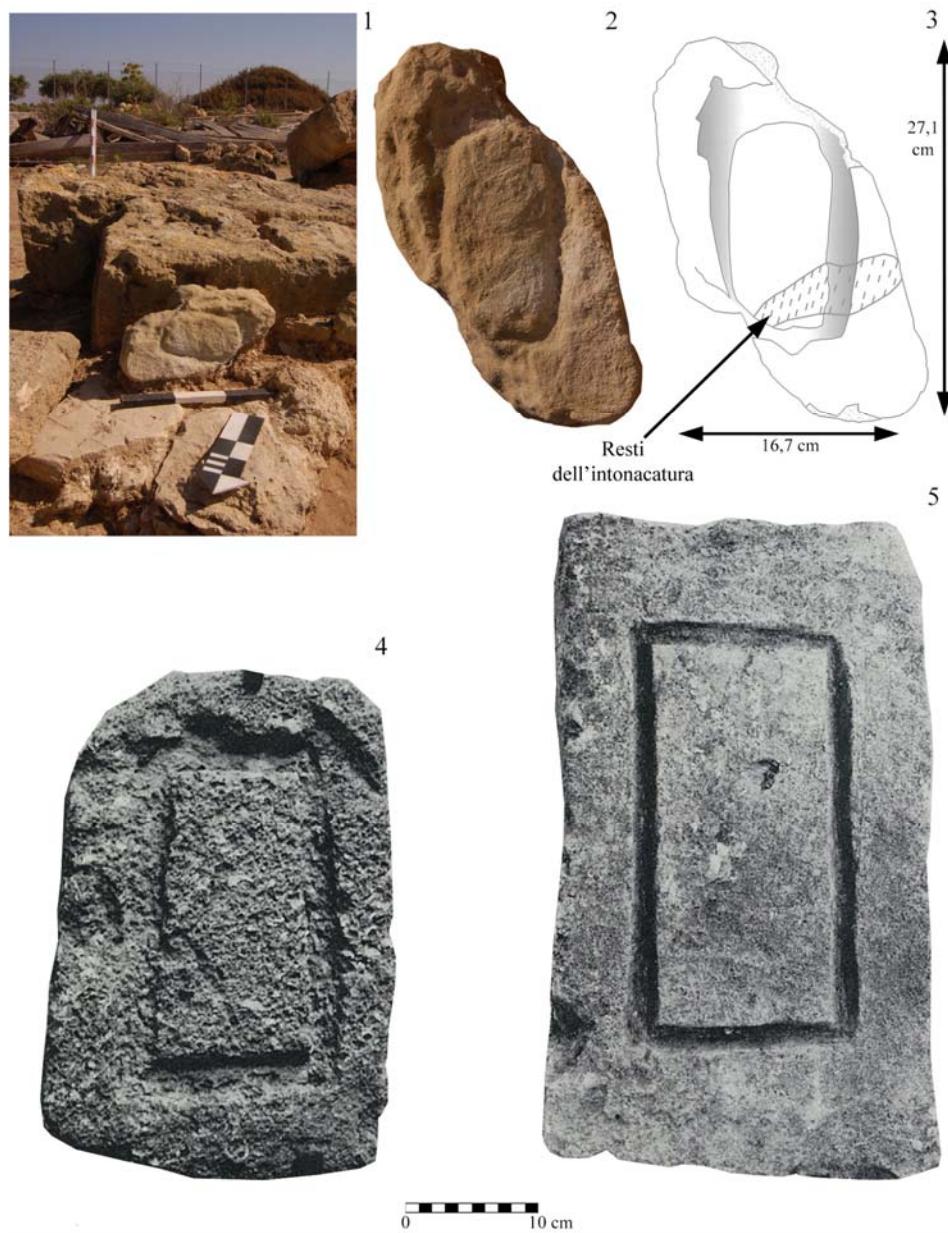


Fig. 6 - Mozia, Tofet: foto di MT.09.M3020/S3, da nord (n. 1: foto di N. Chiarenza); foto e disegno della stele (nn. 2-3: foto e disegno dell'autore). Altri esempi della variante a del tipo dal Tofet di Mozia (nn. 4-5: Moscati - Uberti 1981, 144, n. 383, tav. LVII; 139, n. 352, tav. LIII).

Bruno D'Andrea

VO

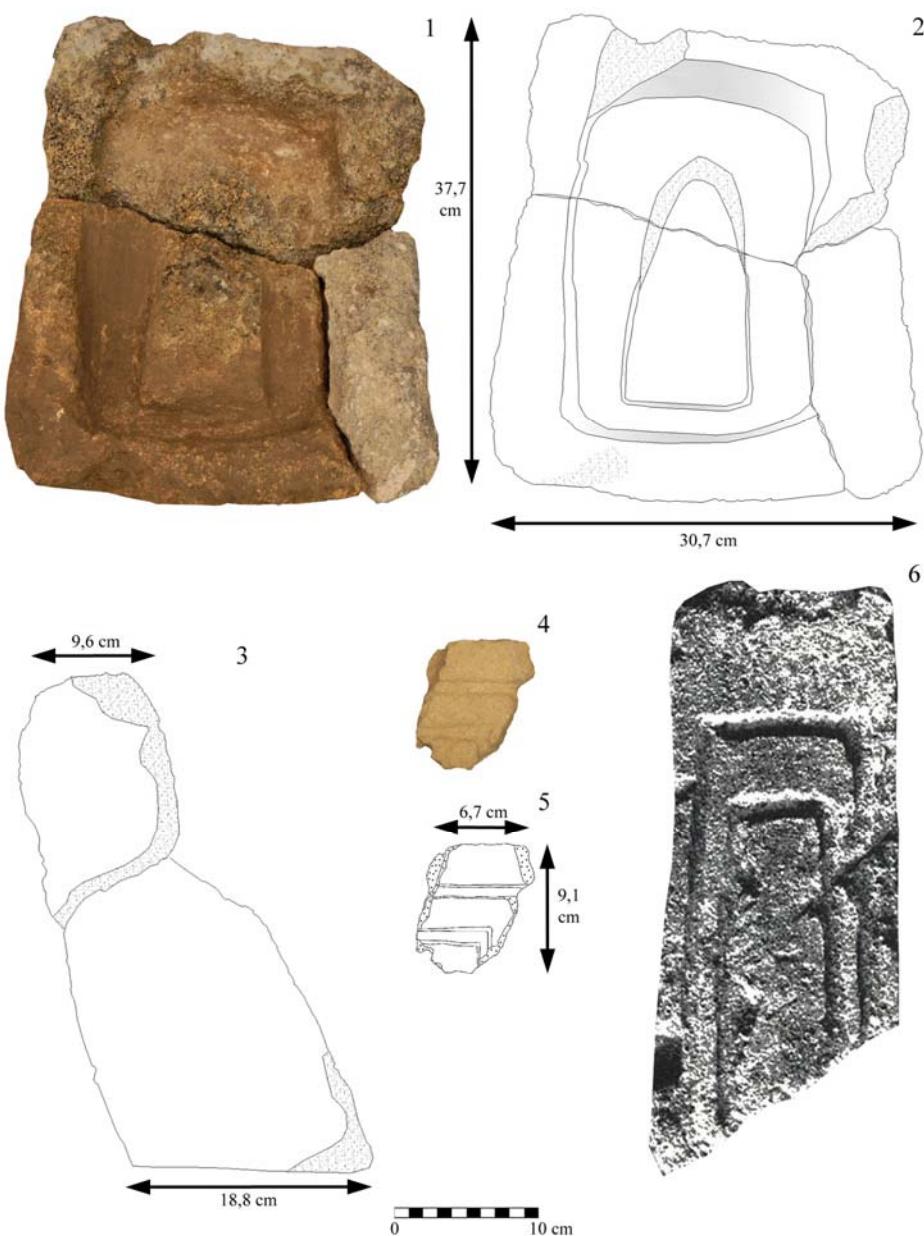


Fig. 7 - Mozia, Tofet: foto e disegni della stele MT.09.M3020/S1 (nn. 1-3: foto e disegni dell'autore); foto e disegno di MT.09.3004/S1 (nn. 4-5: foto e disegno dell'autore). Confronto dal repertorio lapideo moziese (n. 6: Moscati - Uberti 1981, 176, n. 583, tav. LXXXVIII).

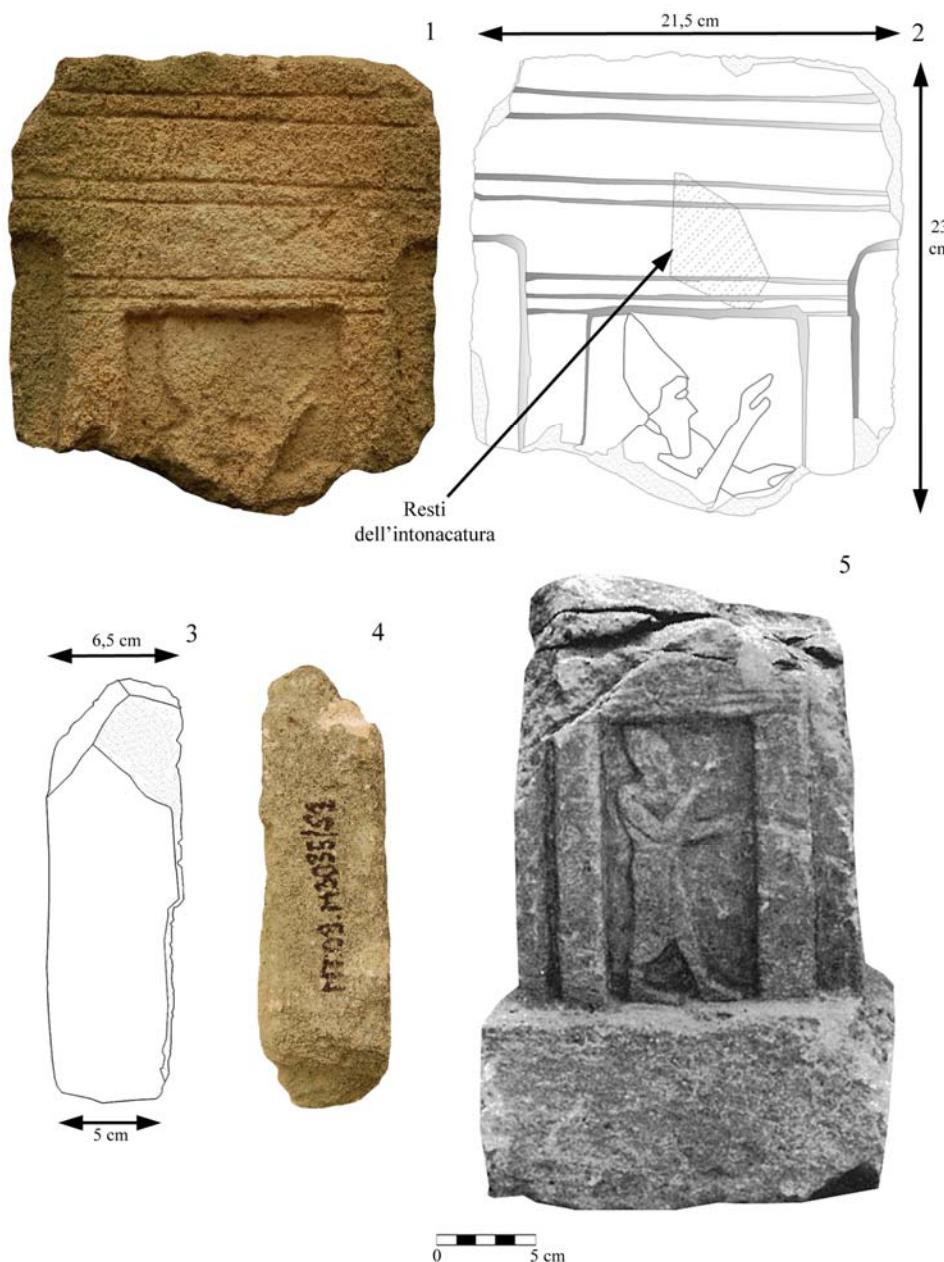


Fig. 8 - Mozia, Tofet: foto e disegni della stele MT.09.M3035/S1 (nn. 1-4: foto e disegni dell'autore). Confronto dal repertorio lapideo moziese (n. 5: Moscati - Uberti 1981, 243, n. 924, tav. CLXV).



Fig. 9 - Confronti per il personaggio rappresentato su MT.09.M3035/S1: stele dal Tofet di Mozia (nn. 1-4: Moscati - Uberti 1981, 243, n. 925, tav. CLXV; Moscati 1990, fig. 69; Moscati - Uberti 1981, 248, n. 947, tav. CLXX; Moscati 1990, fig. 68), dal tofet di Sulcis (n. 5: Bartoloni 1986, 56, n. 194, tav. XXXII) e da Kouklia (n. 6: Wilson 1974, tav. XXI, 6); scarabeo di probabile provenienza cipriota (n. 7: Acquaro 1969, 70-71, fig. 1).



Fig. 10 - Personaggio con barba e copricapo seduto su un trono: stele dai Tofet di Mozia (nn. 1-2: Moscati - Uberti 1981, 259, n. 1005, tav. CLXXXIV; 259-260, n. 1007, tav. CLXXXV) e Sousse (n. 3: Picard 1954, Cb 1075, tav. CXXVI); scarabei e gioielli di varia provenienza (nn. 4-28: per la bibliografia dei singoli reperti si vedano le note 41 e 43-52).



Fig. 11 - Mozia, Tofet: foto della stele MT.09.M4/S1 riutilizzata nell'angolo settentrionale di M.4, da nord-ovest (nn. 1-2: foto di N. Chiarenza); foto della faccia anteriore (n. 3: foto rielaborata dall'autore). Confronto dal repertorio lapideo moziese (n. 4: Moscati - Uberti 1981, 254, n. 978, tav. CLXXIX).

[Vicino Oriente XVIII (2014), pp. 145-171]

LISTEN AND PROTECT:
RECONSIDERING THE GRINNING MASKS
AFTER A RECENT FIND FROM MOTYA*

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"A mask tells us more than a face"
Oscar Wilde, *Pen, Pencil and Poison: a Study in Green* (1889)

Le maschere occupano una posizione di rilievo all'interno degli studi sulla coroplastica fenicia e punica, testimoniando dapprima il reiterarsi di modelli ispirati al repertorio siro-palestinese, poi una rielaborazione autonoma di Cartagine, in seguito adottata e in parte modificata in alcune produzioni locali, infine il sopraggiungere di stilemi e iconografie legate alla tradizione greca. Il recente rinvenimento di un frammento di maschera punica a Mozia costituisce l'occasione per un riesame di alcuni temi connessi a questa classe, agevolando l'inquadramento della nuova attestazione.

Keywords: Phoenicians; Motya; Mediterranean; masks; Carthage

0. IN THE SHADOW OF THE VINEYARD: THE FIND AND THE MISSING CONTEXT

Motya is in many respects an ideal archaeological context as very few modern buildings cover the ancient city. It has remained undisturbed apart from agricultural activities, which – in some areas of the island – continue until today, sometimes resulting in unexpected discoveries.

During the spring of 2011, a fragmentary terracotta¹ was found on the eastern edge of the vineyard bordering, to the west, the olive road ($37^{\circ}52'10.7''N$ $12^{\circ}28'02.9''E$), about sixty meters from the southern fence of the Tophet (fig. 1). The position and the presence of a recent fracture suggest that this discovery was the result of spring ploughing. The original context, however, is indeterminable. The proximity of the Tophet is clearly suggestive, but a recent geophysical survey² seems to indicate the presence – to the south of the sanctuary – of several architectural structures, whose function, dating and possible relation to the nearby sacred area, only future archaeological investigations will be able to clarify.

* I am greatly indebted to Professor Lorenzo Nigro, Director of Rome “La Sapienza” Archaeological Expedition to Motya, for allowing me the publication of this fascinating find and for his advice and encouragement. I owe many thanks to Professors Maria Giulia Amadasi Guzzo, Piero Bartoloni, Anna Maria Gloria Capomacchia and Josephine Crawley Quinn for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper. I gratefully acknowledge the kind help and assistance of Dr Alessandra Guarì, author of the drawings in fig. 2. Figs. 3-4 are the Author’s elaborations: the drawings in fig. 4 are stylized and not to scale, based on available photos and drawings. I would like to thank the following institutions and individuals for kindly providing me with illustrations, inventory numbers and bibliography references: The Trustees of the British Museum, *RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre)*, Dr J.H. Fernández (*Museu Arqueològic d'Eivissa i Formentera*), Dr Jordi Principal (*Museu d’Arqueologia de Catalunya*), Dr Pamela Toti (G. Whitaker Museum), Prof Raimondo Zucca (*Università degli Studi di Sassari*) and Prof Pier Giorgio Spanu (*Università degli Studi di Sassari*).

¹ Inv. no. MO.11.0/a; that is Motya; followed by the year of the finding (2011), 0 corresponding to the humus and the letter referring to the chronological order among the finds.

² Di Mauro *et al.* 2014. On the recent archaeological investigations in the Tophet of Motya, see: Nigro 2013.

This paper aims to analyse the terracotta fragment³ (fig. 2), providing a typological and chronological framework within the very extensive Phoenician and Punic coroplastic production.

1. THE PIERCED EAR: MOVING AMONG HEADS, BUSTS, PROTOMES AND MASKS

In this fragmentary terracotta part of a right cheek and ear, characterized by the presence of two holes made on the lobe and the helix, is preserved. The presence of one or more holes on the ears⁴ (sometimes also on the nose⁵) – which could originally have contained a metal earring⁶ – was common to different types of votive terracottas,⁷ such as masks, protomes,⁸ busts⁹ and heads.¹⁰

Despite the fragmentary conservation status, the manufacture of the back side (hollow and worked) and the morphology of the ear suggest that it is a mask. Among the various mask typologies, the only currently known one¹¹ with these kinds of holes in the ears is the grinning type, to which this fragment can be thus attributed.

2. APPROACHING THE MASKS: CONTEXTS, (RE)USES AND FUNCTIONS

The function of the masks cannot be defined *a priori*, but must be clarified individually taking into account the context (usually industrial areas, dwelling quarters, sacred areas and tombs) and some morphological elements, such as the dimensions (full-size or over life-

³ MO.11.0/a (G. Whitaker Museum, inv. no. 8071), mask. Context: 37°52'10.7"N 12°28'02.9"E, humus. Material: clay. Manufacture technique: matrix moulded, hand-modelling and stick finishing. Description: right ear and cheek of a mask. Conservation status: fragmentary. Fabric colour: 2.5Y7/3 Pale Yellow, core 5YR6/8 Reddish Yellow. Production: non local (Carthage?). Ware: hard, porous, rough to the touch; inclusions: white limestone (size: small/large, frequency: high/rare) and quartz (size: small; frequency: high). Surface treatment: beige washing (5Y8/2 Pale Yellow) on both sides, coated with yellow paint (7.5YR7/8 Reddish Yellow), preserved only in a few spots. H. 7,0 cm. D. 0,5/0,9 cm. L. 4,8 cm. Chronology: c. second half of the 6th century BC.

⁴ This was a practice frequently attested in the Near East. At first, it was apparently limited to (male and female) divine figures, but, afterwards, it was extended to the royal and possibly, later on, to high ranking figures (such as dignitaries and knights).

⁵ Quillard 1987, 157-159.

⁶ Quillard 1987, 159-161, pl. XXXIV:1-2.

⁷ On the terminological issue, see: Fariselli 2011, 155, note 1. Considering the existence of common features, masks and protomes have often been analyzed together (Ciasca 1988; 1991, 6). Three main criteria usually distinguish them from one another: in protomes the representation also included the neck, while the apertures for the eyes (and the mouth) were missing (they could be painted or coated with precious materials) and the back side was flat. However, there were some hybrid specimens. Some protomes presented – sometimes simultaneously (Nigro 2004, 39, fig. 3) – intermediate features: the representation could be limited to the face (Acquaro - De Vita 2010, 108) and the back side could be hollow with through holes along the edge. In a terracotta (Acquaro - De Vita 2010, 109), classified as a mask in consideration of the apertures for eyes, the representation was extended to the neck.

⁸ Ciasca 1988, 368.

⁹ Bisi 1988, 334, 352.

¹⁰ Ciasca 1988, 369.

¹¹ The morphology of a mask with pierced ear from Carthage is different (Acquaro - De Vita 2010, 109).

size) and the profile, besides the presence/absence and the number and position of through holes along the edge.¹²

Since the first studies,¹³ their apotropaic value has been unanimously¹⁴ recognized, considering their presence both in dwellings and tombs¹⁵ (where the masks were often deposited next to the dead, close to or facing the entrance).¹⁶ This apotropaic function¹⁷ seems to be confirmed by the replica of some types as amulets¹⁸ (especially the negroid¹⁹ and silenic²⁰ ones). Similarly, this value can also be recognized for the (divine) faces, figures and symbols carved or painted in the chamber tombs.²¹

The masks with one or more suspension holes on top were likely hung²² on the walls of houses or sanctuaries.²³ Whereas, those under life-size and with several holes along the edge could be applied to any (wooden or other material) support, such as the head of statues.²⁴

Regarding the life-size clay masks, the issue of whether they could be worn during religious ceremonies has often been raised. This use, illustrated by several Cypriot terracottas,²⁵ has often been denied²⁶ taking into account some considerations: a) the presence of a single top hole (which presumes the suspension); b) the stiffness of the material; c) the depth²⁷ and the manufacture of the inside (without an enlargement corresponding to the ears); d) the absence of nasal (and sometimes mouth) openings for

¹² Among the most recurrent pattern, there were: one or two holes on top; one on top and two above the ear; one on top and two pairs above and below the ear; four on top; holes all around.

¹³ Taramelli 1915.

¹⁴ Among the others, see: Moscati 1968, 132; Bénichou-Safar 1982, 267, note 219; Fariselli 2011, 165.

¹⁵ Recently (Fariselli 2011, 165), the issue has been raised that the deposition of masks in tombs was the final destination instead of the primary function, namely the re-use of an insignia previously employed in daily life (Lancellotti 2006, 63). Although plausible, this hypothesis may be difficult to prove without use-alteration traces, fractures, ancient restorations and morphological features incompatible with the tomb architecture (such as through holes for a mask placed on the floor) or when the context clearly testified an heirloom value.

¹⁶ Cintas 1946, 48; Bénichou-Safar 1982, 313.

¹⁷ Bénichou-Safar (1982, 275) did not rule out their use in rituals preceding the deposition of the dead. This hypothesis has been taken up and extended in: López-Bertran - Garcia-Ventura 2008, 30.

¹⁸ Moscati 1968, 257-258; Culican 1976; Del Vais - Fariselli 2012, 75. The grinning type was also reproduced in some Carthaginian cretulae (Morstadt 2010, 209, fig. 14).

¹⁹ Bartoloni 1973, 184-185, 195, pl. LIX:50; Moscati 1987, 125, pl. XXXII:2.

²⁰ Moscati 1983.

²¹ A few examples are in: Garbini 1968, 323-324; Culican 1975-1976, 73. For a different interpretation of a recent case, see: Bernardini 2005, 75-76, proposing to consider the figure carved in a chamber tomb of Sulky as the representation of the dead.

²² For a wide mask from Akhziv (Culican 1975-1976, fig. 16) attachment to a wall could be presumed.

²³ This is the case of the mask (with three holes on top) found close to the entrance of the *Chapelle Carton* (Carton 1929, 13, no. 20). See also the considerations in: Smith 2009, 120-121.

²⁴ Ciasca 1992, 149.

²⁵ Karageorghis 2006, 159-161, figs. 154-155.

²⁶ Campanella 2009, 530.

²⁷ Gauckler 1915, pl. CXCIX:1-2. Considering the frequent absence of the masks' profile drawings, the various functional hypotheses cannot be verified – without an autoptic analysis – solely through frontal images.

easy breathing.²⁸ Moreover, it has been suggested that the clay masks were not worn and they reproduced perishable²⁹ prototypes made of leather, wood³⁰ and cloth.³¹ This thesis, however, would not explain the presence of the eye-holes and why – if the masks were just meant to be hung or attached to simulacra – protomes were not used.

3. A VIEW ON THE GRIMACING MASKS

The production of face masks in the Near East dates back to at least the Pre-Pottery Neolithic B.³² However, the first specimens with features next to the 1st millennium BC masks appeared during the Late Bronze Age.³³ Currently, the earliest masks found in Phoenicia during the Iron Age are the specimen from Khaldeh, whose chronology is uncertain,³⁴ and the fragment from Tyre stratum X-1, dating back to the mid-9th century BC.³⁵ The production of masks continued in the West,³⁶ probably ending during the 2nd century BC, when the models relevant to other traditions – which had already been accepted in the Punic repertoire (as evidenced by the silenic type) – prevailed.

Among the numerous types composing the repertoire of Phoenician and Punic masks, which were classified by Pierre Cintas, then reworked by Colette Picard and later sketched by Ephraim Stern³⁷ (Tab. 1), one of the most well-known has been defined as grinning because of the mouth shape.

The grinning masks portray male hairless characters with some defined features: the moon crescent-shaped eyes, the engraved or impressed furrows on the forehead and cheekbones, the open mouth baring teeth. On the forehead engraved or impressed symbols, sometimes repeated also on the cheekbones and chin, could be applied. These

²⁸ These features could be a real obstacle only if we assume a continuous and long lasting use during the rites. It was also observed (Kletter 2007, 194) that the masks could be kept in one hand and used away from the face. According to this hypothesis, also the under life-size masks could be employed.

²⁹ Based on a bronze mask from a private collection in Budapest, G. Garbini (1968, 325-326, pl. III) suggested also metallic prototypes. To my knowledge, there is no further information on this specimen and its authenticity – considering the similarity with the mask from San Sperate – is highly dubious.

³⁰ The hypothesis of wooden prototypes seems particularly persuasive for the negroid masks; see in particular a specimen from Carthage: Picard 1965-1966, fig. 2.

³¹ Picard 1965-1966, 89; Karageorghis 1996.

³² O'Neill 1986, 46, fig. 22; 48-49. See also the recent exhibition: “Face to Face: The Oldest Masks in the World”, The Israel Museum, Temporary Exhibition Gallery, Samuel and Saidye Bronfman, Archaeology Wing, 11 March - 11 September 2014.

³³ Glenn Markoe (1990, 14-16), based on stylistic considerations, in the Cypriot production of the Late Bronze Age, the prototypes of the earliest Phoenician specimens recognized. See also: Fariselli 2014.

³⁴ The context of this mask – an infant burial dating back to the end of the Iron Age I/early Iron Age II (Culican 1975-1976, 55, no. 3 fig. 11) – is still unpublished.

³⁵ Bikai 1978, 67-68.

³⁶ Currently, in the West, the earliest masks – fragmentary and therefore difficult to classify typologically – are an item from Morro de Mezquitilla (Horn 2005, 1409, fig. 4), usually dated to the 8th/7th centuries BC, and a specimen (Niemeyer 2007, 763, no. 6143) from phase IIIA of Carthage (c. 700-675 BC).

³⁷ Considering – at least – the terminological issues (such as the distinction between masks and protomes) and the new iconographies testified by recent discoveries, both these typologies should be updated.

characteristics changed or fell out of use over time, but – albeit singly – allow us to recognize the specimens belonging to this type.³⁸

Cintas 1946		Picard 1965-1966					Stern 1976				
grimacing masks	I	I	demonic masks	A)	grotesque	a)	negroid	1st group	grotesque family		
	II			b)	grinning						
	III			B) satirical							
	V										
	IV	II	male protomes-masks					2nd group	Phoenicio-Egyptian Style		
protomes	Egyptian style	III	female protomes- masks	A)	Egyptisant style						
	intermediate style			B)	Greek-Phoenician style						
	Greek style			C)	Rhodium style				Phoenicio-Greek Style		

Tab. 1 - Correspondence table between the various classifications.

Some of these traits³⁹ can be recognized in masks found in Cyprus and the Levant, even if the overall iconography was different. Therefore, this type seems to be a Western (likely Carthaginian) autonomous reworking, which made use of elements already present (although separately) in the Levantine coroplastic tradition.

3.1. A chronological analysis: the key-contexts

The chronological framework of this type is hindered by several factors: a) most of the intact specimens were found – during the 19th and early 20th century – in tombs which grave goods are usually unknown; b) the long-term use of some graves and c) the possible presence of heirlooms. Considering their relevance to the outlining of chronological anchors, some contexts have been identified.

3.1.1. The dwelling quarter of Carthage

An important contribution to the framework of this class has been offered by recent discoveries at Carthage.⁴⁰ Based on such small fragments, the production of masks started at least around the mid-7th century BC.⁴¹

³⁸ The typological attribution of the fragmentary mask found in the so-called Luogo di Arsione at Motya is uncertain (Ciasca 1991, 30). Here, we prefer to exclude it from the catalogue of the grinning-type specimens.

³⁹ These are: the furrows on the forehead of two masks from Tel Dor (Stern 2010, figs. 29:4, 6); the engraved lines on the cheekbones of a mask from Kourion (Ciasca 1988, 357) and a fragment of Amrit (Culican 1975-1976, 57, no. 5, fig. 20); the wrinkles of a specimen from Akhziv (Culican 1975-1976, 57, no. 4, fig. 12=Dayagi-Mendels 2002, fig. 7.23); one (Culican 1975-1976, 55, no. 3, fig. 11; 57, no. 6, fig. 17; 64, fig. 18, see also: Gjerstad *et alii* 1935, pl. CCXXII:1-2) or two applied disks (Vermeule ed. 1972, fig. 30), the plant motif engraved on the forehead of a Tel Dor specimen (Stern 2010, fig. 29:4), the apparently grinning mouth of a fragment from Tel Beersheba (Kletter 2007, 195, fig. 5) and another specimen from Tel Dor (Stern 2010, fig. 29:1).

⁴⁰ Niemeyer 2007, 762-763.

3.1.2. Gauckler's tomb 30 of Carthage

Besides the specimens from the dwelling quarter, the earliest context of the North African metropolis is tomb 30 of P. Gauckler's excavations, which – according to a recent analysis by R. Zucca⁴² – can be dated between the late 7th and the early 6th century BC.

3.1.3. The middle favissa in the Tophet of Motya

As has been pointed out recently,⁴³ the central favissa in the Tophet of Motya is a complicated context. This votive deposit – dug in the stratum V (c. 625-550 BC) – included ten terracottas:⁴⁴ a grinning mask, a Selinus female protome, six Egyptianising female busts, a plaque with a female head and a female protome with klaft. According to its excavator, the favissa should be considered a uniform deposit, despite the doubts raised by the grinning mask's peculiar position: it was discovered at the bottom of the favissa, above the mouth of a stratum VI cooking pot.⁴⁵ Among the terracottas, the Selinus import – attributed on the basis of the comparisons⁴⁶ to the decades c. 510-480 BC – is the *terminus post quem* for the favissa dating and a reference point for the chronology of the other specimens. Therefore, all these terracottas dated back to approximately between the second half of the 6th and the first decades of the 5th century BC.⁴⁷

3.1.4. Tomb 7 of Tharros

Another (small) reference point can be recognized in Tomb 7 of the excavations carried out by Gaetano Cara at Tharros:⁴⁸ in this burial kit, a few materials dating back to the late 5th century BC⁴⁹ were discovered.

3.1.5. Hypogeum 22 of Puig des Molins

Among the masks from Ibiza,⁵⁰ the only datable specimen comes from Hypogeum 22⁵¹ investigated by Carlos Román Ferrer⁵² in the necropolis of Puig des Molins. In this recently re-examined tomb,⁵³ an Attic lamp, Howland type 22B (c. 475-410 BC), was retrieved.

⁴¹ According to their chronological order, these contexts are strata IVb (c. 645-550 BC), IVc (c. 600-550 BC); VIa (c. 480-425 BC). The typological attribution of the sherd (Niemeyer 2007, 763, no. 6143, pl. 49) from stratum IIIa (c. 700-675 BC) is uncertain.

⁴² Zucca 2012, 477.

⁴³ Orsingher 2013, 693, note 4.

⁴⁴ Ciasca 1964, 61-68, pls. XLIV-XLVIII, L-LIII; Ciasca - Toti 1994, 9-12.

⁴⁵ Considering the chronology of stratum VI (c. 675-625 BC, for the stratigraphy and chronology of the Tophet, see Nigro 2013, tab. 1), we can exclude the hypothesis of an original relation between the deposition and the mask: otherwise, the terracotta would be one century older than the other specimens of this type. In any case, the special care demonstrated in the placement of the mask still has to be explained: above the urn's mouth and with the face turned upwards.

⁴⁶ Wiederkehr Schuler 2004, 80, 202, note 14, pl. 57.

⁴⁷ Based on the above historical considerations, the deposition of these votive terracottas, which were probably part of the ritual kit, could be included among the actions taking place in Motya after the battle of Himera in 480 BC. Their displacement may testimony a cultural change, such as the exit of Motya from the orbit of the North African metropolis (in fact nine-tenths of the specimens were Carthaginian imports or types).

⁴⁸ Barnett - Mendleson eds. 1987, 152, 7/16, pl. 30.

⁴⁹ Zucca 2012, 476.

⁵⁰ Almagro Gorbea 1980, 236-239, pls. CLXVIII-CLXIX.

3.1.6. The “Chapelle Carton” in Carthage

Finally, a chronological anchor is represented by the mask⁵⁴ recovered at Carthage by L. Carton in the destruction layer of a shrine located 500 m west of the Tophet. The construction of this small temple has been assigned to the end of the 3rd century BC,⁵⁵ while its destruction could be the outcome of the 3rd Punic War. Therefore, the dating of this mask falls within these two extremes (c. 225-146 BC).

3.2. *Looking East to Look West: a Carthaginian model and its transformation*

These contexts allow us to put forward a broad definition of the development of the grinning type masks (fig. 3). Currently, its elaboration does not seem to forerun the mid-7th century BC. The mask from Tomb 30 in Carthage (fig. 3:1) represents the earliest type (I). The elliptical shape recalls some specimens from Akhziv,⁵⁶ while other elements recur between the fragments from the dwellings of Carthage: the open mouth baring teeth,⁵⁷ the furrows on the forehead, near the eyebrow arches⁵⁸ and – sometimes – separated by two or more applied discs,⁵⁹ which were a feature already known in Cyprus and the Levant. Possibly, four masks without context data – two from Carthage⁶⁰ (fig. 3:2-3) and two from Tharros⁶¹ (fig. 3:4-5) – also belong to this stage, which – according to the Carthaginians specimens – dates back to c. 650-550 BC.

The next stage (II) is testified by several specimens: two from Carthage (figs. 3:10-11), one from the Tophet of Motya (fig. 3:6), one from Tharros (fig. 3:7), one from San Sperate⁶² (fig. 3:8), one from Sinis di San Vero Milis⁶³ (fig. 3:9) and one from Puig des

⁵¹ Almagro Gorbea 1980, 238, no. 3904, pl. CLXVIII:2.

⁵² Román Ferrer 1923, 13, 19, pl. V:c.

⁵³ Fernández 1992, 107, 125-126; fig. 64, pl. LX.

⁵⁴ Carton 1929, 13, no. 20, 53, pl. I:1.

⁵⁵ Mancini 2012.

⁵⁶ Dayagi-Mendels 2002, 158-159, figs. 7.22-7.23.

⁵⁷ Niemeyer 2007, fig. 417:6136.

⁵⁸ Niemeyer 2007, fig. 417:6137, 6139.

⁵⁹ Niemeyer 2007, fig. 417:6139. Currently, this feature is known only in Cyprus.

⁶⁰ R. Zucca (2012, 477) suggested a chronology between the mid-7th and early 6th century BC for the mask (fig. 3:3) retrieved in tomb 1 during the excavations of P. Gauckler (1915, 1). Previously, C. Picard (1965-1966, 12, no. 3), concluded on the basis of the excavator’s observation (Gauckler 1915, XVII) that this tomb should be included among the earliest ones and proposed a dating in the first quarter of the 7th century BC. Because there are no pictures and drawings of the burial vessels, we prefer to consider the grave as undatable. Equally, Hélène Bénichou-Safar (1982, 419) excluded it from the list of dated tombs.

⁶¹ These two examples have already been compared on a stylistic bases, first by Sabatino Moscati (1987, 99-100) and recently by R. Zucca (2012, 477), to the Tomb 30 specimen. The latter scholar also included in the earliest group the mask in the National Museum of Cagliari (fig. 3:14), which is here considered relevant to a later stage. The two masks from Tharros differ from the Carthaginian examples in their proportions and in their features, perhaps indicating their posteriority. Especially the mask in the *Antiquarium Arbonense* (fig. 3:5) – with the upper and lower teeth close to each other and circular holes at the sides – resembles the later types. Two circular impressions, which may indicate the original presence of two applied circular discs, on the cheekbones of the specimen in the museum of Cagliari (fig. 3:4) seem recognizable.

⁶² The context of the mask from San Sperate is unknown. The tombs so far investigated in this necropolis date from the 5th century BC (Bartoloni 1967; Tronchetti 1986, 101; Ugas 1993, 58), which could be a *terminus ante quem* for the dating of the mask.

Molins (fig. 3:11).⁶⁴ Data provided by such contexts suggest a chronological framework between the second half of the 6th and the first decades of the 5th century BC. During this phase, the grinning mask lost its humanised traits, acquiring more stylized characteristics: the eyes turned into half-moons, the grooves engraved on the forehead were placed higher and the absence of the applied discs or – more often – their replacement by impressed or engraved vertical bands or other applied decorations, rarely repeated also on the chin. The ears became over-sized, sometimes with one hole on the lobe, which might also be repeated on the helix and nose.

At this stage, two groups can be distinguished: in the former, composed by the masks of Motya and Tharros, the upper and lower teeth were distant from each other and the ears well-proportioned; in the latter, formed by some masks from Carthage, the upper and lower teeth were close to each other and the ears were over-sized. The specimen from San Sperate and possibly the one from Sinis di San Vero Milis, both with the distant upper and lower teeth and giant ears, testify intermediate characteristics. The close upper and lower teeth, a feature existing also in the earliest example from Puig des Molins⁶⁵ and in the later group, may be a marker of posteriority.

A following stage (III) – to be dated to the 5th century BC, perhaps until the first decades of the 4th century BC – is recognizable through the masks of Ibiza,⁶⁶ in which the eyes became enlarged half-rounds and the furrows on the forehead and cheeks were impressed (fig. 3:13-14). Furthermore, the ears were again proportionate, while two circular holes were cut on the sides of the teeth. To this group probably belongs a mask from Tharros, which is likely earlier than Ebusitan specimens (fig. 3:12). This suggestion is based on some features: the half-round mouth, the close upper and lower teeth, with the two circular holes at the sides; the high position of the grooves engraved on the forehead and the impressed eyes sockets.

The last stage (IV) corresponds to the mask retrieved in the *Chapelle Carton* (fig. 3:15), in which the eyes maintained a half-moon shape, the grooves on the forehead and cheeks were engraved, and the applied discs reappeared, repeating, in their number and position, the pattern of the earliest masks.⁶⁷ The headband tied around the forehead and the large and semicircular mouth, without teeth, were the main features deriving from the Hellenistic tradition.⁶⁸

⁶³ Spanu - Zucca 2011, 53, note 289, fig. 29:right.

⁶⁴ The ear from Motya can also be included in this group. Its dimensions make it similar to the two specimens from Carthage and San Sperate. In the Motyan fragment, the clay (visible only through a recent fracture) seems – according to a macroscopic examination – similar to the fabric type CAR-REG-C-3 FACEM. <http://facem.at/car-reg-c-3> (June 2, 2014).

⁶⁵ In this mask the holes on the sides of the teeth are lacking. Maybe, it could depend on an oversight, as it would suggest coarse manufacture, especially evident in the irregular and asymmetrical edge.

⁶⁶ Almagro Gorbea 1980, pls. CLXVIII:1-2, 4; CLXIX.

⁶⁷ The reference to an archaic pattern during the Hellenistic period testifies the will to take inspiration from the Near Eastern roots, as occurred for the statue of the enthroned goddess from Soluntum (Chiarenza 2013). Following Diodorus (XX, 14, 1-3), at Carthage, during these stages, there would be – as a reaction to the danger represented by Agathocles – the restoration of ancient religious traditions (Xella 1999-2000, 363).

⁶⁸ For the handkerchief (in a female character), see: Bernabò Brea 1981, 229-230, no. 41, fig. 393, pl. XLI:1-2, while for the mouth: Bernabò Brea 1981, 121, figs. 196-197.

Currently, the phase I type has been discovered only at Carthage and Tharros, where it probably arrived at an advanced stage and local production soon began. During phase II, the distribution area included other settlements in the central Mediterranean (Motya, San Sperate, Sinis di San Vero Milis and Ibiza): all these centres were within the economic and political orbit of the North African metropolis. The lost specimen from Sinis di San Vero Milis confirms the active role of Tharros in the inland distribution of Carthaginian imports. Likewise, the mask from San Sperate might imply a similar role for Cagliari. Afterwards, phase III showed a decline in production, which apparently was still active only in Ibiza and Tharros. The only mask belonging to the final stage brings us back to Carthage and to some features of the earliest specimens: it could be evidence of an archaizing taste, perhaps tied to the recurrence – during the Hellenistic Age – of earliest religious traditions practiced in the Phoenician West.

4. “UNMASKING THE FACE”: SEARCH FOR AN IDENTITY

The identity of the male character represented in the grinning masks remains difficult to clarify. Several suggestions have been made,⁶⁹ but these investigations were not concerned with all the features characterizing (not always simultaneously) this iconography, such as the furrows on the forehead and cheeks, the smile, the applied, engraved or stamped symbols on the forehead, the cheeks and the chin and the over-sized ears. Hereinafter, their analytical analysis is undertaken.

⁶⁹ The hypothesis of a link between the iconography of Huwawa/Humbaba and the grinning masks has been suggested by R. Barnett (1960, 147) and subsequently resumed by other scholars (such as Culican 1975-1976, 67, and recently Stern 2010, 25). A disc-shaped plaque from Sippar (c. 1800-1600 BC) in the British Museum (Smith 1924) is the only reliable iconography of this deity/demon (i.e. based on an inscription). The characteristic form of the face – formed by one continuous line of clay – is explained by the omen written on the back that begins: «If the entrails [resemble] the face of Humbaba, it is the omen of Sargon». Since the publication of this plaque, many iconographies have been attributed to Huwawa/Humbaba. We can distinguish two groups: a) the disk-shaped plaques with the image of a face, that is an iconography rarely replicated on masks and architectural elements; b) the beheading scene of a male character (usually) between two heroes. This subject was reproduced also on plaques and seals, then on reliefs, ivories and bowls. Despite the variations over time of these iconographies, the figure identified with Huwawa was characterized by the presence of (long) hair and a curled beard. The only common feature between the Punic masks and the Huwawa iconography is the sneer, recurring however only in the first group. The second iconographic scheme is documented also during the 1st millennium BC in the Levant, as evidenced by a North Syrian ivory and two bowls – possibly Phoenician products – found at Nimrud (Lambert 1987, to which must be added the essays in Steymans ed. 2010). Instead, the disk-shaped plaques do not seem attested outside of Mesopotamia and after the 2nd millennium BC (Moorey 2005, 94-95, no. 92). Therefore, the hypothesis of the influence of Huwawa on the Punic masks is limited to the grimace. However, this feature – which has yet to be unanimously interpreted: grin, smile or something else? – is also known in masks belonging to very distant cultural and chronological contexts (Rose 2006).

4.1. *The furrows and the smile*

Horizontal/wavy (engraved or impressed) grooves were located on the forehead and cheekbones. P. Cintas interpreted them as wrinkles, recognizing these masks as representations of elderly people.⁷⁰

Despite other proposals,⁷¹ this hypothesis remains the most credible explanation, especially looking at some details in the earliest masks (characterized by naturalistic traits): the crow's feet around the eyes,⁷² the wrinkle undulations on the forehead and cheekbones,⁷³ all features – according to recent medical studies⁷⁴ – of adult individuals.

The other characteristic is the pronounced smile, what Paul Ekman in his studies of emotions and their relation to facial expressions (which are universal and related to the muscles of the face) defined as a “broad enjoyment smile”.⁷⁵ Some wrinkles of expression – such as the pushed up cheeks, the gathered skin under the eyes, the narrowed eye aperture and even the crow's feet wrinkles – can be traced back to this.⁷⁶

4.2. *The symbols*

The iconological analysis of the symbols on the grinning masks raises some issues: 1) their identification (sometimes different readings of the same motif have been suggested⁷⁷); 2) their meaning or, at least, their correlation to a certain sphere (e.g. uranian, chthonic, etc.) or to a specific god (the same symbol/animal can be associated with a range of deities and demons); 3) the ideological value of a symbol may change and even diminish over time (some of these motifs were imprinted on the rim of several basins during the 4th-2nd centuries BC⁷⁸ and – apparently – many signs became fillers in the stelae from Tophet during the Hellenistic and Roman periods). Furthermore, it has been suggested (but cannot currently be demonstrated) that these symbols could be copies of paintings, tattoos⁷⁹ or jewellery.⁸⁰

In the repertoire of symbols applied to the masks (fig. 4) several motifs, such as the simple disc, the crossed disc, the lion's-head protome, lotus flowers, rosettes, the so-called apexed triangle and the ear, are recognizable.

⁷⁰ Cintas 1946, 49.

⁷¹ Recently (Del Vais - Fariselli 2012, 77), these signs have been dubiously related to a biblical passage, identifying them with self-inflicted wounds during trance-like states.

⁷² Gauckler 1915, pl. CXCIX:2. A (colour and high resolution) photo of this detail is available on the web: <http://terraeantiquae.com/m/blogpost?id=2043782:BlogPost:224742> (July 20th 2014). Otherwise, the crow's feet could be related to the smile expression.

⁷³ The furrows on the cheekbones were naturalistic (following the curve of the cheeks) only in the earliest specimens, as in the one from Carthage (fig. 3:2), very shortly (already during phase I) becoming stylized.

⁷⁴ Hatzis 2004, 202-203, figs. 3-6.

⁷⁵ Ekman 2003, 204-208.

⁷⁶ The smile issue reminds the *risus sardonicus*, on this topic, see: Ribichini 2003.

⁷⁷ Facenna 1996, 704, note 40.

⁷⁸ Campanella 2008, 144-147.

⁷⁹ This hypothesis has been put forward several times (Cintas 1946, 37; Fariselli 2011, 166). About tattooing practices in the Near East, see: Huehnergard - Liebowitz 2013, 69-73, where it has been considered a custom reserved for slaves. Therefore, it is not applicable to this instance.

⁸⁰ Ciasca 1991, 39, 49. This would be jewelry such as: Poinssot - Lantier 1926.

⁸¹ For an analysis, see: Facenna 1996.

In the earliest group of masks, there were only two types. The most common one, apparently the first, was the applied disc (sometimes mistakenly called wart⁸²): two discs were vertically aligned in the mid-forehead (fig. 4:1-4), occasionally adding two more, one on each cheekbone (fig. 4:1-2). In the specimen from the *Antiquarium Arbonense*, there were four discs⁸³ on the forehead (fig. 4:5), as many as the crossed discs (sometimes considered rosettes) engraved on both sides of the forehead and the jaw.

The disc can be considered as an astral symbol.⁸⁴ This interpretation is based mostly on the analysis of two negroid masks,⁸⁵ where one disc was surmounted by a crescent.⁸⁶ The subsequent identification of this disc with a particular heavenly body – the most common ones were the sun, the (full or crescent) moon and a star (most likely Venus) – remains uncertain, as well as determining whether different stylized astral symbols or the same ones repeated⁸⁷ were represented when they recur. Similarly, the crossed disc⁸⁸ could be considered an astral symbol, such as the sun.⁸⁹

Later, the iconographic repertoire was renewed. Currently, it seems a radical change (whose causes remain undetermined) rather than a gradual one. Certain new symbols – the lotus flower⁹⁰ (fig. 4:8,13), the ear⁹¹ (fig. 4:12) and, obviously, the so-called Sign of Tanit⁹² (fig. 4:9) – are often connected to goddesses, fitting, as plant motifs, the fecundity theme. The case of the lion's head is uncertain: this feline, in fact, was associated with different deities.⁹³ Moreover, several doubts⁹⁴ were raised about the identification of another symbol

⁸² Cintas 1946, 37.

⁸³ On the forehead of a fragmentary specimen discovered at Carthage (Niemeyer 2007, fig. 417:6139), there were – at least – three applied disks.

⁸⁴ Picard 1976, 79-83.

⁸⁵ Picard 1965-1966, figs. 1-2.

⁸⁶ In a late stele (c. 4th/3rd century BC), there were three disks arranged in a triangular shape: the lower one was surmounted by a crescent moon (Picard 1978, 21, pl. XV:1).

⁸⁷ The repetition of astral symbols – already observed in the stelae of Motya (Del Vais 1993, 59) – could allude, as it has been suggested for ancient Mesopotamia (in this regard, see: Pizzimenti 2014, 152, with an extensive bibliography), to the main positions of the same heavenly body at different times of the day (or year?). Even the position of the disc on the cheekbone still needs to be clarified.

⁸⁸ This is the symbol of Hadad/Baal since 2nd millennium BC, with several renewed attestations in the Levant (e.g. a statue and a standing stone from the Orthostats Temple at Hazor: Yadin *et al.* 1961, pls. CCCXXIV-CCCXXV, CCCXXXI:1; see also: Ben-Tor 2006, 8, no. 16). For a recent analysis of the specimens, see: Hvidberg-Hansen 2007, 223-224. Sometimes, certain symbols (such as the apexed triangle, see: Fariselli 2012, 543) have been associated with alphabetic signs. The crossed disc apparently corresponds to the letter Tēt (*ante* 6th century BC).

⁸⁹ Pizzimenti 2014, fig. 1:b.

⁹⁰ In this regard, see: Orsingher 2007, 119, notes 22, 25.

⁹¹ Nigro 2004-2005. See also: Picard 1978, 54-55.

⁹² Fantar 1996. The earliest examples of this symbol can be dated to the third quarter of the 6th century BC, corresponding to the end of the second phase in the Tophet of Carthage (Bénichou-Safar 2004, 69, note 423).

⁹³ Black - Green 1992, 40; Cornelius 1994, 195-196. For some lioness's heads, a special relationship with Astarte has been proposed in: Gubel 1985.

⁹⁴ Furthermore, one symbol – variously interpreted – on the mask from San Sperate (fig. 3:8) is not recognizable (Facenna 1996, 704, note 40).

as an apiced triangle or multiple cross⁹⁵ (fig. 4:9-11). The rosette (fig. 4:8, 13-14) is usually interpreted as an astral symbol, as it seems confirmed by its presence below a crescent moon in the stelae from the Tophet of Carthage.⁹⁶ Possibly, the rosette, in this case and, perhaps, also when it is repeated three times, may have replaced other astral signs,⁹⁷ a phenomenon already observed in Neo-Assyrian art.⁹⁸

4.3. *The ears*

In masks belonging to phase II, the ears were over-sized and protruding. This emphasis is particularly evident in four specimens (no. 8-11), all likely Carthaginian products, to which the fragment here examined can probably be added. An analogy can be postulated with the ear stelae of the New Kingdom,⁹⁹ a reference to the God's (hoped?) skill to listen to (and thus to accept) the worshipper's requests.

5. A (CARTHAGINIAN) PORTRAIT OF A GOD?

The iconography here examined seems to be a Carthaginian creation, elaborated at least around the mid-7th century BC, mostly reusing features already known in the iconographic repertoire of the Syro-Palestinian coast and Cyprus (the wrinkles, the pair of discs on the forehead, perhaps even the grimace). The figure represented is a male character, probably an old man (if the interpretation of the furrows on the forehead and cheekbones is correct), whose main feature is a wide smile, which seems to testify his benevolent character. The pair of discs on the forehead – likely referring to an astral connection – seems to be a divine attribute. They are testified in distant contexts,¹⁰⁰ as well as in some bearded male protomes and masks.¹⁰¹ an iconography frequently used, since the 2nd millennium BC, for several deities (Reshef, the various Baal-named deities and Melqart),¹⁰² usually recognizable through the different elements held in their hands.

During the 6th century BC, the iconography became stylized: the appearance of plant motifs (possibly referring to the fertility theme and usually connected to goddesses, such as Astarte and Tinnit¹⁰³), along with or as an alternative to new astral symbols, was observed. In some specimens the ears were oversized, perhaps suggesting the skill to listen to

⁹⁵ The comparison, suggested by H. Sader (2005, 67-68), between the apiced triangle and the incised marks on the mask from Bou Minjel has been rejected by A.C. Fariselli (2012, 543, note 40), who recently reviewed this symbol, proposing instead to consider these signs as juxtaposed cruciform motifs. The problem remains open to perhaps even other solutions (double triangle? taw?).

⁹⁶ Picard 1976, pl. VIII:10; 1978, pl. XVI:2.

⁹⁷ Picard 1978, 5-6, 86-89.

⁹⁸ Black - Green 1992, 156-157. In Neo-Assyrian art, it has been considered a symbol connected to Ishtar.

⁹⁹ Luiselli 2013, 24-25, with extensive bibliography. The ears depicted in these stelae are interpreted as the iconographic translation of the divine epithet "he who hears prayers", whereas the large number of ears possibly reflects the worshipper's desire to increase the god's capacity to hear. Otherwise, given their continued growth (Niemitz - Nibbrig - Zacher 2007), the over-sized ears could be considered alternatively as a sign of aging.

¹⁰⁰ Facenna 1996, 697, 701. See, also, the concluding remarks in: Garbini 1996.

¹⁰¹ Facenna 1996, 703, note 33.

¹⁰² Bonnet 1988, 77-90; Lipiński 1996.

¹⁰³ The relation between these two gods has long been debated, see: Lancellotti 2010, 23-29.

worshipper's requests. During the final decades of the 3rd century BC, the archaic iconography of this character was resumed. In fact, according to classical sources, during these phases the Carthaginians referred to the earliest traditions of the North African metropolis. The recovery of this iconography could imply a primary role of the represented character, which – based on the contexts (sacred areas, dwellings and tombs) – had to be widespread in all areas of daily life.

Currently, the sacred contexts – such as the Tophets (of Motya and, possibly, of Tharros) and the *Chapelle Carton* – permit the broad outline (if not the identify) of this figure. In the Tophets, the inscriptions give the leading role to Baal Hammon, which was accompanied (since the 5th century BC) by Tinnit¹⁰⁴ and exceptionally (from the 4th century BC) by other deities, testifying perhaps cases of single or collective devotion.¹⁰⁵

Since inscriptions were not found in the *Chapelle Carton*, only the several terracottas retrieved allow the identification of the deities worshipped in this temple. Recently, Lorenzo Mancini,¹⁰⁶ resuming and substantiating the hypotheses of C. Picard¹⁰⁷ and Paolo Xella,¹⁰⁸ attributed this building to Baal Hammon and Tinnit-Caelestis. Because of its remarkable size (h. 51 cm), the mask found there could be included among the shrine simulacra rather than among the *ex voto*.

In both these contexts (the Tophet of Motya and the *Chapelle Carton*), the only standard feature is represented by the god Baal Hammon, along with the references to the goddess Tinnit¹⁰⁹ recognizable also in several symbols. Some of them (the Sign of Tanit, the rosette and the crossed disc) – as already noted¹¹⁰ – were found together in the mosaic decoration of the domestic shrine discovered at Carthage in the Ben Ayed plot (Phase VI: c. 425 BC).¹¹¹

Considering all these data, two hypotheses can be proposed for this group of masks: a) it could be a (divine?) character – without epigraphic evidence – linked to the circle of Baal Hammon or b) it could be identified with a peculiar facet of the same god, perhaps connected to a specific ritual.

A hairless male protome retrieved in the Tophet of Motya (fig. 5) and interpreted – according to Antonia Ciasca¹¹² – as a *simulacrum* of Baal Hammon,¹¹³ testifies to the

¹⁰⁴ Amadasi Guzzo - Zamora López 2014, 162. However, in the Tophet of Motya, only votive protomes and terracottas testified to the presence of a female deity. Apparently, the introduction of the cult of Tinnit in the small Sicilian island did not forerun the 4th century BC.

¹⁰⁵ For a list of these cases, see: Amadasi Guzzo 2008.

¹⁰⁶ Mancini 2012, 63-65.

¹⁰⁷ Picard 1965-1966, 90.

¹⁰⁸ Xella 1991, 123, 135.

¹⁰⁹ Picard 1965-1966, 90. Recently, on these two divine characters, see: Garbati 2014.

¹¹⁰ Fariselli 2011, 166.

¹¹¹ Hvidberg-Hansen 2007. Among the sacred contexts, we can include also the archive retrieved by Friedrich Rakob at Carthage. It comprehended 4762 *cretulae*, some of which representing grinning masks (Berger 1997, 142, nos. 394-397, pl. 73).

¹¹² Ciasca 1991, 30-31; 1992, 149. This is the only deity epigraphically attested in the Tophet at Motya.

¹¹³ Nigro 2004, 39, fig. 3.

presence of iconographies different from the one that became canonical¹¹⁴ around the 3rd century BC: the bearded standing or, more often, the enthroned character.¹¹⁵

This observation especially could support the latter hypothesis, which also explains (some of) the transformations and anomalies observed in the development of the grinning masks. The changes occurring during phase II, when references to a female deity appeared, echo the Tophet inscriptions, namely the later addition of the goddess Tinnit. The epithet “face of Baal” attributed to this goddess takes on interesting meaning when there are female symbols on the face of a male character perhaps recognizable as Baal Hammon. Moreover, the reference to Tinnit of these motifs could explain their absence in the grinning mask from the Tophet of Motya, where this goddess seems to appear only in the 4th century BC. Furthermore, there is perhaps a direct visual connection between the oversized ears of some phase II masks, their possible interpretation and the final formula – “indeed [the god] has heard the voice of his words” – of some Tophet inscriptions, approximately contemporaneous (c. 6th-5th centuries BC).¹¹⁶

In any case, these proposals should be checked in light of future discoveries, also adding a religious and historical perspective to those adopted in this study.

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¹¹⁴ Niehr 2008.

¹¹⁵ Xella 1991, 106-140.

¹¹⁶ Amadasi Guzzo - Zamora López 2014, 175-176.

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Fig. 1 - Motya, Tophet: aerial view of the finding spot (circle), from the south-east (courtesy of Rome «La Sapienza» Archaeological Expedition to Motya - Prof L. Nigro).

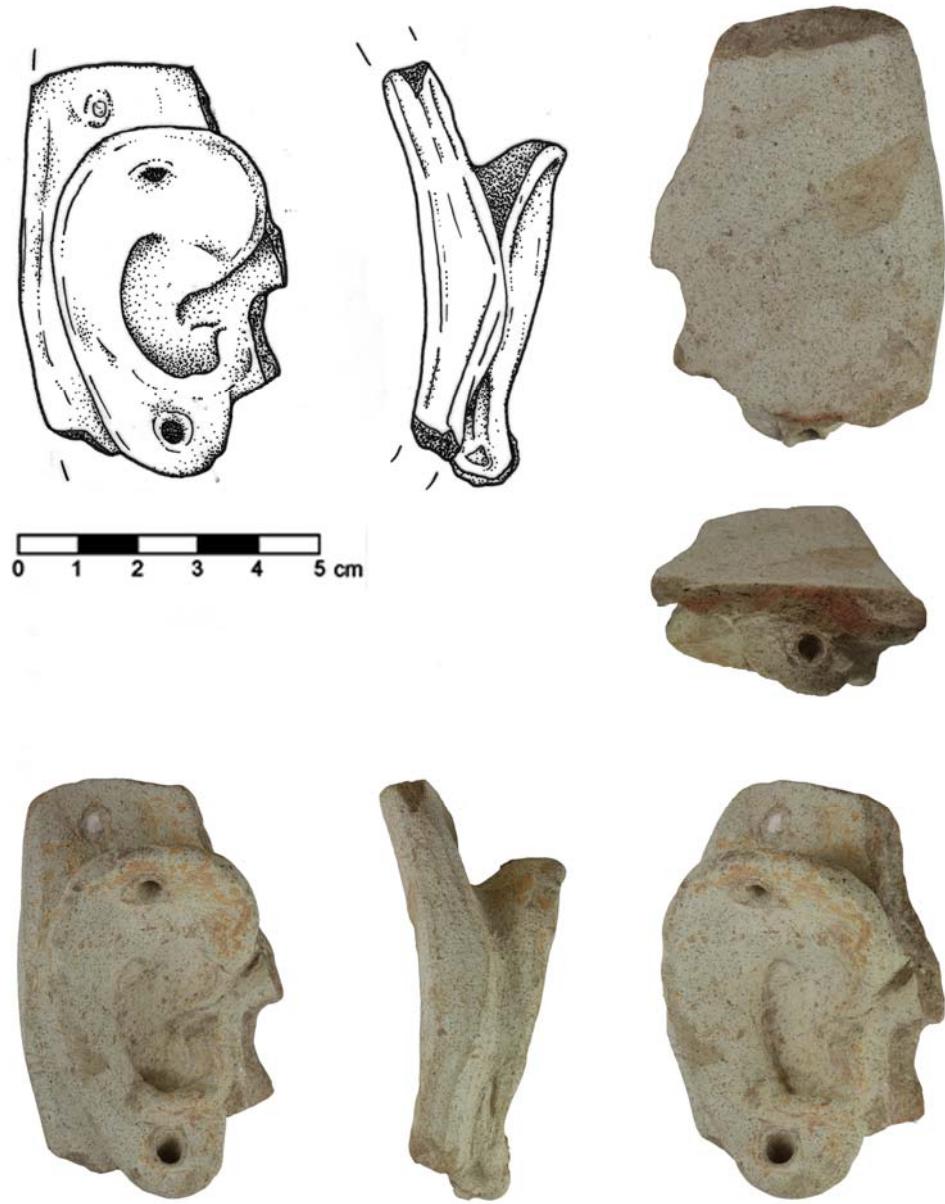


Fig. 2 - Motya: fragmentary mask or protome, G. Whitaker Museum, inv. no. 8071 (drawing by A. Guari and photos by the Author).

Fig. 3 - Chrono-typological sequence of the grimacing mask:

- 1, Carthage, necropolis: tomb 30. Musée du Louvre, Paris, Département des Antiquités orientales, inv. no. AO 3242. H. 19 cm, L. 16 cm (photo © RMN-Grand Palais [musée du Louvre] - Christophe Chavan);
- 2, Carthage, necropolis: tomb 1. Musée National du Carthage, Tunis, inv. no. unkn. H. 13 cm, L. 12 cm, D. 3.5 cm (after Moscati 1996, pl. 22);
- 3, Carthage, necropolis. Musée National du Bardo, Tunis, inv. no. unkn. H. 17 cm;
- 4, Tharros, necropolis. Museo Nazionale "G.A. Sanna", Sassari, inv. no. 2652. H. 17.5 cm, L. 6.5 cm (after Moscati 1996, 125);
- 5, Tharros, necropolis/tophet. Antiquarium Arborensi, Oristano, Efisio Pischedda Collection, inv. no. P.301. H. 19.2 cm, L. 14.1 cm (after Moscati 1990, 125);
- 6, Motya, Tophet: middle favissa. G. Whitaker Museum, Marsala, inv. no. 2387; MT64/2723. H. 20 cm, L. 15 cm (after Moscati 1996, 124);
- 7, Tharros, necropolis: tomb 7. British Museum, London, inv. no. ME 133128, AN32498001. H. 17.7 cm (Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum);
- 8, San Sperate, necropolis. Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Cagliari, inv. no. 20849. H. 18 cm (Peters 2004, 165-166, no. 49);
- 9, Sinis di San Vero Milis. Lost. Dimensions: unavailable (after Spanu - Zucca 2011, 53, note 289, fig. 29, right);
- 10, Carthage, necropolis. Musée National du Bardo, Tunis, inv. no. unkn. H. 14 cm, L. 13 cm, D. 10 cm (after Lancel 1995, 45);
- 11, Carthage, necropolis. Musée National du Bardo, Tunis, inv. no. unkn. H. 17 cm, L. 15 cm, D. 8 cm (after Lancel 1995, 44);
- 12, Puig des Molins, necropolis. Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid, inv. no. MAN 1923/60/256. H. 13 cm, L. 9 cm, D. 7 cm (after Rodero Riaza 1991, 73, 75, fig. 15);
- 13, Tharros, necropolis. Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Cagliari, inv. no. unkn. H. 19 cm, L. 15 cm (after Moscati 1990, 84);
- 14, Puig des Molins, necropolis. Museu d'Arqueologia de Catalunya, Barcelona, inv. no. MAC 8600. H. 13.5 cm, L. 11 cm (after Moscati 1990, 220);
- 15, Puig des Molins, necropolis: Hypogeum 22. Museu Arqueològic d'Eivissa i Formentera, Eivissa, inv. no. MAE 3904. H. 12 cm (Courtesy of the Museu Arqueològic d'Eivissa i Formentera);
- 16, Carthage: *Chapelle Carton*. Musée National du Carthage, Tunis, inv. no. unkn. H. 50 cm, L. 41 cm, D. 17 cm (after Lancel 1995, 25).

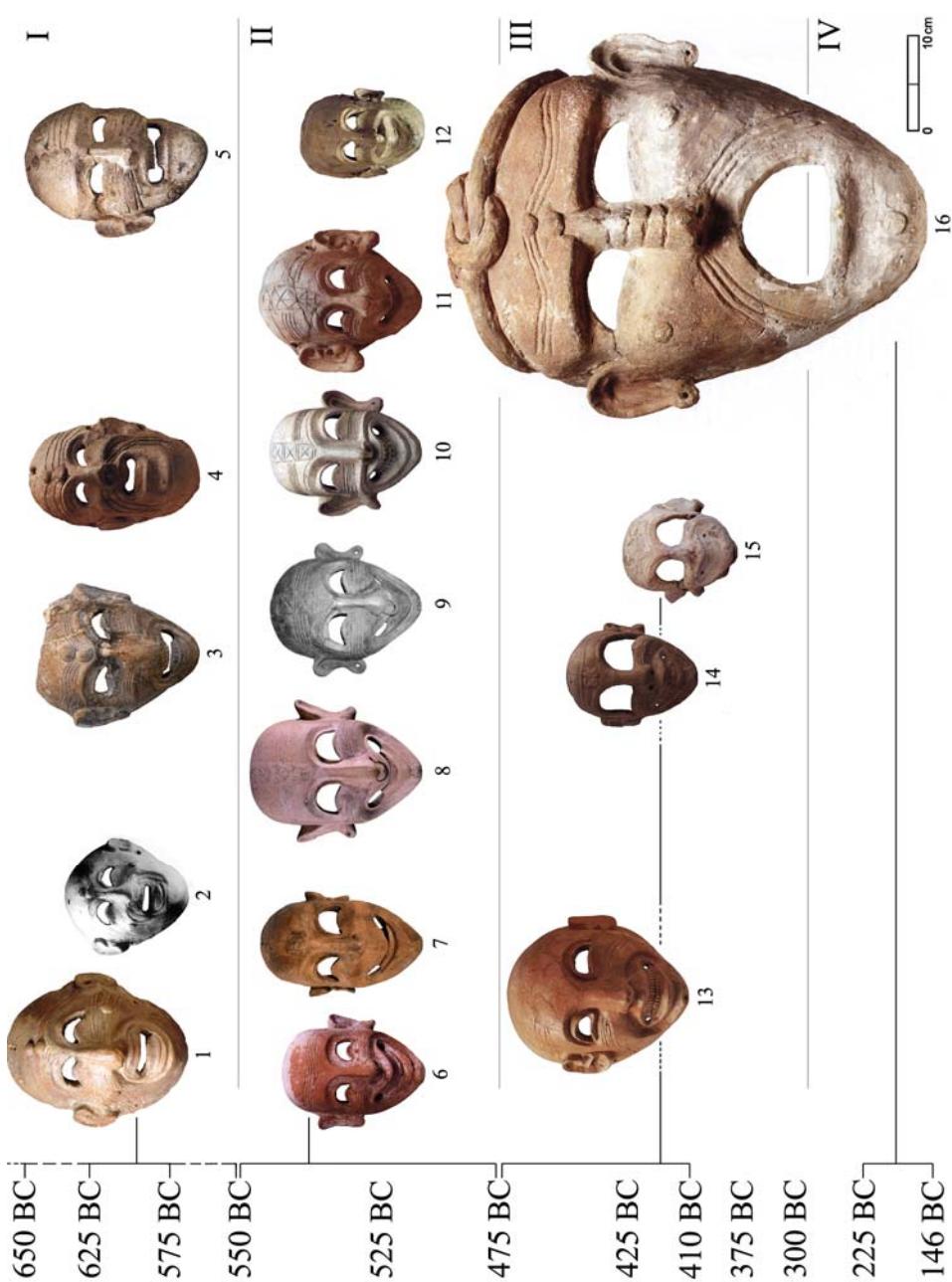


Fig. 3 - Chrono-typological sequence of the grimacing mask.

		Tipology																I								II				III				IV			
		top								right								middle								left											
		top		right		middle		left		right		middle		left		right		middle		left		right		middle		left		right		middle		left					
		CHIN	JAW	CHEEKBONE	FOREHEAD	left	right	left	right	left	right	left	right	left	right	left	right	left	right	left	right	left	right	left	right	left	right	left	right	left	right						
Catalogue		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16				

Fig. 4 - Chrono-typological sequence of the symbols on the grimacing masks.



Fig. 5 - Motya, Tophet: male protome MT67/387, c. 5th century BC. G. Whitaker Museum, Marsala, inv. no. 2420 (photo by the Author; courtesy of the G. Whitaker Museum).