

UN MOT DU PRÉSIDENT

Le Conseil de fondation a connu cette année plusieurs bouleversements: M. Alain Dufour et M. Olivier Vodoz, respectivement membres depuis 28 et 40 ans, ont souhaité se retirer au mois de juin. Nous aimerions saluer leur action et leur engagement pendant ces nombreuses années au sein de notre fondation et, en remerciement de leur fidèle présence, nous leur dédions ce Bulletin. Un nouveau membre, M. Richard Gautier, a été élu au Conseil en novembre 2013.

Du côté du Comité scientifique, un spécialiste en archéologie, architecture, art et numismatique islamiques a été choisi pour remplacer le professeur Michael Rogers, parti en 2012. Il s'agit du professeur Alan Walmsley qui enseigne à l'Université de Copenhague. Nous lui souhaitons la bienvenue dans notre Fondation.

Le Bulletin présente cette année une grande diversité géographique puisqu'il propose un article de Nancy Steinhardt sur les mosquées de Chine (page 1), de Maria Vittoria Fontana sur le site d'Estakhr en Iran (page 3), de Toufik Da'adli sur les fresques du palais omeyyade de Khirbat al-Mafjar en Palestine (page 5) et de Laurence Smith sur la ville de Suakin au Soudan (page 6).

Costin van Berchem, Président

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THE MOSQUE IN CHINA

In June and July of 2013 I studied more than 50 mosques and Muslim tombs in 38 towns, cities, or Muslim autonomous counties of eleven provinces or autonomous regions of China. The number is only a small fraction of the more than 30,000 mosques in China today, for there is no large city and hardly a town without a mosque. The majority of China's mosques were built or rebuilt after 1980 and represent the open practice of Islam. Contemporary mosques in China share much with mosques across the globe, and the international communities who worship in them attest to the fact that they provide a comfortable worship environment as well as communal space for local Muslims.

My research this summer focused on China's old mosques, those that both remain at sites with long, documented histories of Muslim architecture from the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) or earlier and retain buildings or at least ground plans from the same period. About 70 that fit this description survive. The most famous of China's old mosques date to the Song (960-1279) or Yuan (1271-1368) dynasties and are in the southeastern coastal cities Guangzhou (Canton), Quanzhou, Hangzhou, and Yangzhou; or are in the large tourist cities Xi'an and Beijing. The purpose of this trip was to see less well-known mosques in other parts of China, as well as a few mausoleum shrines (*qubba*). The research trip focused on mosques in three regions: along the Grand Canal; on the Central Plain, specifically Hebei, Henan, Shanxi, and Shaanxi provinces; and in the region where Gansu Province, Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, and Qinghai Autonomous Region meet. My research was greatly enhanced by Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom, Norma Jean Calderwood Professors at Boston College and Hamad Bin

Khalifa Professors at Virginia Commonwealth University, who traveled with me for two weeks of the trip.

The Grand Canal is one of China's greatest engineering feats. Opened in the Sui Dynasty (581-618) by connecting pieces of earlier canals, the Grand Canal joined China's two greatest rivers, the Yangzi in the South and the Yellow River in the North. Thereby southeastern coastal cities could transport goods to and from Beijing in the north, and the Yellow River could carry goods to westernmost China where they could be delivered to or taken from land routes along the Silk Roads. When land routes were impassable, merchants could still travel from Indian ports to China by the sea and send good as far north as Beijing by water. Muslim merchants lived in towns along the eastern coast and up and down the Grand Canal. Still today every major town along the Canal in Hebei and Shandong provinces, including, from south to north, Jining, Jinan, Linqing, Dezhou, Qingzhou, Cangzhou, and Botou all have mosques that retain old buildings or new structures on old sites. Between Tianjin and Beijing, both self-incorporated cities along the Canal route, are counties with such large Muslim populations that they are designated Hui (Chinese Muslim) autonomous counties.



Fig. 1. Jining Mosque

Many of the most splendid mosques are in the largest cities along the Canal. Great East Mosque in Jining, Shandong Province, is one of them. Its front gate faces the canal, thus giving it the nickname "Great East Mosque along the Canal." The Muslim population in Jining dates to the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368), but no Jining mosque has a history earlier than the Ming period. A stele records the founding of Great East Mosque in the period 1454-1464 with expansion and repairs under the Kangxi (r. 1662-1722) and Qianlong (r. 1735-1796) emperors. Today all the buildings date to the Qing dynasty (1644-1911). Eight of them stand along an east-west line that begins at a three-entry, white, stone gateway of the Chinese form known as *pailou*, continues through



Fig. 2. Botou Mosque

two more gates, and then leads to the three-part worship complex that takes a cruciform shape with its *mihrab* at the back (fig. 1). A paved path behind it leads to a Wangyuelou (Tower for Viewing the Moon) and a wooden ceremonial gateway at the back end of the enclosed mosque area. Lecture halls, a hall for ablutions, and administrative offices and residences complete the mosque. No minaret is found there. There is no explanation why today some Chinese mosques have minarets, some have pavilions for viewing the moon, presumably during Ramadan, some have both of these structures, and some have neither.

A splendid mosque along the canal survives in Botou, Hebei province, a much smaller town today than in the fifteenth century. The mosque attests to a flourishing period of Muslim communities when trade along the Grand Canal was at its peak (fig. 2). Botou Mosque was founded in 1404 by Muslims who moved north along the Canal following the transfer of the Ming capital from Nanjing in the south to Beijing in the North at the beginning of the fifteenth century. The mosque has more than 4000 square meters of buildings on a site that at its greatest expansion in the first half of the seventeenth century was 14,600 square meters. Built on an east-west line that leads to the *mihrab*, the Botou mosque has a minaret with a hexagonal, ceramic-tile roof typical of a Chinese pavilion. The prayer hall is enormous, an 1144-sq-m building of 44 m in depth, a dimension that extends to 55 m when the front porch and *mihrab* are added. White marble balustrades of the kind seen in Chinese imperial architecture such as the Forbidden City line the approaches to buildings. Other noticeable Chinese features are the circular and octagonal windows cut into the Wangyuelou that stands behind the *mihrab*. There is also a small garden. Eighteen stele record the history of the Botou mosque, a larger number than exist for most Chinese mosques today. The use of marble and well-documented history confirm the high level of local patronage in the Ming period.

A search for old mosques in north central China, between the Grand Canal and western provinces, yields some of the least known and historically most significant mosques. This region includes Xi'an whose internationally famous mosque perhaps has eclipsed the importance of the others. The fame of Huajuexiang Mosque in Xi'an is due to its patrons. They include emperors of the Ming dynasty as well as the Muslim seafarer Zheng He (1371-1433). The Nanjing Mosque is less well known, but it had the same patrons and today retains an imperial placard and carvings that reflect its fifteenth-century grandeur. The North Mosque in Xuanhua, also of cruciform plan, is a grand mosque whose oldest buildings date from the early eighteenth century and with a minaret between the entry gate and worship hall, as the one in Hebei (fig. 3). Shanxi's most distinguished mosques are among the oldest in central China. They are located in the provincial capital, Taiyuan, and in the large city Datong in the far north, just south of the Great Wall. According to stele, both Shanxi mosques were founded in the Tang dynasty, although more credible information places the founding of Datong Mosque in 1324 with the oldest architecture at

the site from the Ming dynasty. Henan has mosques with Ming-period buildings and older histories in Qinyang, Kaifeng, and a village adjacent to Kaifeng named Zhuxian. The Qinyang mosque is announced by a gate that was repaired at the end of the twentieth century. Once behind it, one stands in a worship hall laid out according to a thirteenth-fourteenth-century arrangement in which the majority of interior pillars have been eliminated. Painting on wooden members and the ceiling brighten an otherwise dark interior space. The *mihrab* is covered by the highest dome I have seen in a mosque in China.

A very different kind of architecture is found in the third region of China visited this summer, the Muslim autonomous counties of Gansu, Ningxia, and Qinghai. The terrain is more mountainous than the locations of most Chinese mosques, but the more fundamental difference is that even though some mosques have earlier histories, they reflect Qing dynasty (1644-1911) building practices more than those of the Ming period or earlier. These are also communities in which new mosques stand on almost every street; in some cases, such as the town of Linxia in Gansu province, former known as Hezhou, it is common for several mosques to be on the same street. The Na Family Mosque (fig. 4) and Tongxin Mosque in Ningxia are among those with old buildings or that retain old plans. The first today functioning as a community center as much as a mosque, for local worshippers pray at a nearby new mosque, and the second under renovation, their histories are evidence of the well-documented history of this region as a location of multicultural war and peace in the nineteenth century. Of more fascination for an art historian is the relief sculpture on mosques and *qubbah* in Ningxia, Gansu, and Qinghai. Sculptural relief set into standard Chinese screen walls presents a Sino-Islamic iconography that includes floriated Arabic and Persian inscriptions alongside Chinese characters, elements of the accouterments of a Chinese scholar such as writing brushes and ink stands with copies of the Qur'an labeled in Chinese, and floral and vegetal motifs from peonies to pomegranates that could be found in purely Chinese or purely Islamic decorative programs.

Almost every mosque visited this year was under renovation or had recently been renovated. Each one also had affiliated clergy or lay leaders. In China today the old mosques are as much historical relics as places of worship. Year-by-year it will become more challenging to look beneath the new paint, carving, and brickwork to identify the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century architecture and decoration. I was thus extremely grateful to have the opportunity to study so many mosques



Fig. 3. Minaret of Xuanhua Mosque

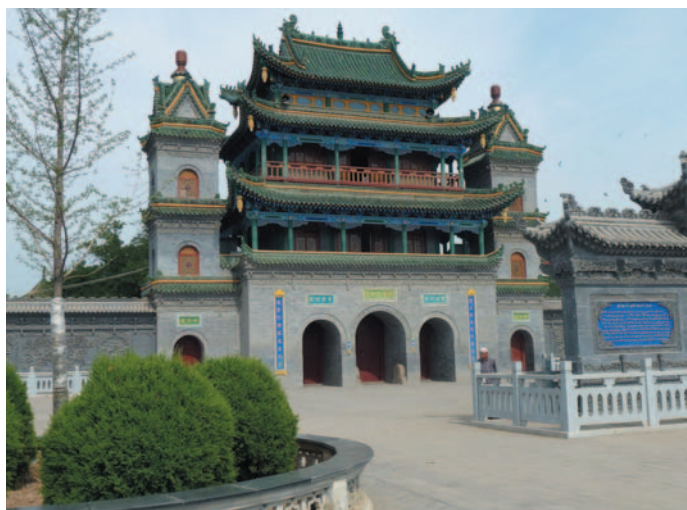


Fig. 4. The Na Family Mosque

during the summer of 2013.

Information gathered on this research trip will be discussed in more detail in a book entitled *China's Early Mosques*, to be published by Edinburgh University Press, in 2015.

Nancy S. Steinhardt
Dpt of East Asian Languages and Civilizations
University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

ESTAKHR ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT 2012 SEASONS

The archaeological area of Estakhr, 5 km north of Persepolis, consists of a large town enclosed by walls with rounded towers, whose remains are still discernible. It includes the remains of a large mosque, with a column and bull-capital dating back to the Achaemenid period. It was partly excavated in the 1930s by E.F. Schmidt and E. Herzfeld, but their researches were never fully published. The works of the Estakhr Archaeological Project (two seasons in 2012), have been addressed at a better understanding of the complexity of the archaeological area of the town and its surroundings, as well as at an in-depth investigation of a sector within the city walls. The works included archaeological and topographic surveys, and the realization of an archaeological map of the site, furthermore, in the chosen urban sector, digital terrain modeling, geo-physical investigation, the excavation of a test trench, and the preliminary study of the finds.

The pottery and the evidences of structures documented during a first survey revealed that the town was not totally abandoned in the 11th century, as formerly believed on the basis of the historical sources, but that restricted areas on the outskirts of the walled town were actively inhabited into the 13th-15th century. Their location, far from the earlier core of the town and the mosque as well as from the main gate of the town, may be related to the defensive requirements of a smaller community. More recent frequentation of the site is attested by tombs made of deposits of stones and by alignments of stones, probably related to temporary dwellers. The modern fort, called *takht-e tavus* (fig. 1), obviously points to a recent military occupation: an aerial photograph of 1932-1934 shows standing barracks within it.

The sector chosen for the in-depth investigation is the area to the west of the mosque. Main aim was to explore the urban development of the town in a promising sector during the early Islamic period, when the city flourished as a provincial capital first, and as a commercial town later. Here, an unearthed building was identified on one of Schmidt's aerial photographs by D. Whitcomb, who suggested that this

structure could be the 7th century *dar al-imara*, when Estakhr was capital of the Fars province. The combination of mosque and *dar al-imara* is known from other Islamic cities, but no examples have been yet investigated in Iran.

We started our investigation in this sector realizing a 3D digital terrain model (DTM), whose results initially seemed to contradict the aerial photograph: a deep depression corresponds to the line of the wall of the suggested building, while patches of elevated ground appear to the west of that line (fig. 2). Along the same line, following almost precisely both the route of the lines visible in the aerial photograph and the depression of the ground shown in the DTM, the geo-physical survey (by S. Gondet, K. Mohammadkhani) detected a strong anomaly, that extends to form a square having the same orientation of the mosque.

The excavation, undertaken with a test trench in this sector, had an unexpected outcome and explained these deceiving incongruities: a large paved street with an underneath sewer came to light, in correspondence of the depression shown in the DTM, of the geo-physical anomaly, and of the line visible in the aerial photograph.

On its east side, the test trench was set out from the *qibli* wall of the mosque where a small door was detected during the topographic survey. This secondary access to the mosque suggests a possibly significant connection with the area behind it encompassed by our investigations; it could be the passage between the mosque and the supposed building.

In the trench, at least eight phases were identified.

Phase 1 relates to the exterior part of the mosque wall (fig. 3), made of local limestone chips of various sizes joined with a small amount of mortar, and almost 2 m thick; a semi-circular tower con-



Fig. 1. A 19th century square enclosure, with mud walls on a small stone foundation, known as *takht-e tavus* (the peacock throne; photo M. Rugiadi)



Fig. 2. Preliminary digital terrain model of the area west of the mosque. The palest ground outlines the uncovered rectangular building suggested by Whitcomb 1979 (elaboration A. Blanco)

taining a filling of loose material projects on the exterior. When this wall was built, the small door was also planned.

The main retrieval of the excavation is the large paved street (more than 6 m wide) that covered a significant sewer running along it and sloping to the south. As its chronological relation to the mosque could not be established, it was thus assigned to Phase 2. Of the pottery found in the filling of the sewer one fragment of splash-ware can be broadly attributed to the 9th-11th century. The paving of the street is altered in its western sector, where it was mostly rebuilt using flakes of stones from the original paving in the subsequent Phase 3.

In Phase 3 the whole area that overlooks the west side of the street underwent a complete makeover. Beside the alteration detected in the paving of the street, this included the construction of a room slightly



Fig. 3. Phase 1: The wall of the mosque showing the door and the semi-circular tower (photo A.M. Jaia)

differently oriented than the mosque: we excavated its northeast corner located along the street. The walls are built *ex novo* from the foundations; their association with the makeover of the street are substantiated by the fact that they re-employ some elements from the original paving of the street, of which one complete.

In the western part of the trench, two floors were brought to light that are at the same level of the paved street (Phase 2a): the one closer to the street includes a *tannur* and does not relate to any wall (fig. 4); the second floor relates to a construction whose orientation follows that of the mosque, of which the northeast corner was excavated in the west end of the trench. Its preparation layer included one fragment of imported Iraqi gold luster ware (late 9th - 10th century); its employ must have ended not earlier than the 10th century for the ceramics found in the covering layers ("Samarra horizon" ware with turquoise-green splashes, and a fragment probably related to *graffita*).

Circumstantial evidences (their level; the orientation of the construction) suggest that both floors may have been in use at the same time of the street in Phase 2. They are certainly earlier than the construction in Phase 3 as this cuts the *tannur* (fig. 4). This happened not



Fig. 4. Phases 2a and 3: The *tannur* cut by the foundation of the walls WSU 197 (photo A. Blanco)

earlier than the 11th century, as suggested by the finds of the layers covering both *tannur* and floor (including *graffita*, unglazed molded wares, unglazed wares with emerging inclusions and vegetal chaff on their surfaces). The fabric and the shape of the latter suggest that they are related to the painted pottery (also called pseudo-prehistoric and Madabad wares) which is attributed to a range of dates from the 11th century or slightly earlier to the 14th in the scholarly literature.

The likely decline of the area between the street and the mosque is evidenced by the closing down of a *tannur* located at the door of the mosque, whose hob is set at the same level of the street and of the mosque door (Phase 4); subsequently, the wall of the mosque collapsed and a narrower path on the west replaced the street (Phase 5). From the collapse of the mosque wall came a carved grey stone fragment, which might have been originally part of a bell-shaped capital of the Achaemenid period (fig. 5) that was re-employed for the building of the mosque.

Phase 6 is represented by a wall of reused bricks and irregular limestone blocks, resting on a layer of earth and covering the walls of Phase 3 below. Phase 7 consists of a pottery dump located approximately in the middle of the trench, that contained several nearly complete unglazed vessels that can be assigned between the 10th and the 14th centuries (fig. 6). Phase 8 shows recent agricultural activity (traces of plough and of animal farming).

In conclusion, the excavations revealed that the anomaly of the geo-physical survey is in correspondence of the paved street and the sewer, which also correspond to the depression shown in the DTM; the construction of Phase 2a in the west part of the trench conforms to the raised forms shown in the DTM.

The orientation and development (geo-physical evidence) of the paved street and the sewer seem to define an important quarter that was situated to the west of the mosque, whose development can be partly followed on the geo-physical survey. The construction of Phase 2a belonged to a building that certainly was part of this quarter, and that may be coeval to the street; further investigation will clarify its nature, but the discovery of a door in the mosque wall might well indicate a privileged passage between the two buildings, and give some clue on its significance. It is possible that the area between the street and the building was initially free or that a fence separated them; cooking activities are attested here by the *tannur* of Phase 2a. In Phase 3 the area was occupied by a new construction, in conjunction with the partial reconstruction of the west side of the street.

The later developments, as the narrow paths that replaced the street, point to a decline in the relevance of the quarter to the west of the mosque, most probably connected with the decay of Estakhr in the 11th century.

Maria Vittoria Fontana
Dipartimento di Scienze dell'antichità
Sapienza University of Rome

References and published reports: the complete list of both can be found on our website

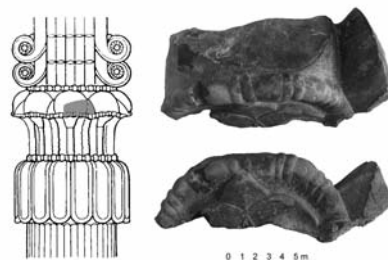


Fig. 5. Phase 5: Fragment of an Achaemenid capital re-employed in the mosque wall (photo and rendering A. M. Jaia)



Fig. 6. Phase 7: A painted jar (Inv. ES 52; SU 142), from a dump of unglazed pottery (10th - 14th century; photo M. Rugiadi)

THE FRESCOES OF KHIRBET AL-MAFJAR

Khirbet al-Mafjar, one of the most famous Umayyad palaces, was intensively excavated by D.C. Baramki and R. W Hamilton during the years 1934-1948. A portion of the results of the twelve excavation seasons was published by Baramki in preliminary reports in *QDAP* and later, in an almost complete report by Hamilton (R.W Hamilton. *Khirbat al-Mafjar: An Arabian Mansion in the Jordan Valley*. Oxford, 1959). In these publications Hamilton discusses the building methods and the different decorations in mosaic, stucco, stone relief and fresco. His publications served as a basis for further analyses of the royal complex by other scholars. However, little was done concerning the frescoes.

The wall frescoes were found in a fallen state both on the floors of the palace and on the floor of the bath hall. Only a part of the fresco paintings was described in the final report by Hamilton with a discussion of their style by Oleg Grabar. Recently, two large files with many aquarelle copies of the frescoes were found in the Mandatory Archive at the Rockefeller Museum in Jerusalem. The aquarelle paintings were prepared as part of the documentation undertaken by Baramki. Unfortunately, at this stage the identity of the aquarelle painter is unknown, as we have only a picture of his hand while illustrating the face of a worker. Dozens of the paintings in the files were not included in Grabar's discussion. Furthermore, Grabar's report includes only black and white reproductions while the paintings are colorful (fig. 1).

This project aims at reconstructing the paintings, their location in the palace and, if possible understanding the iconography. In this short report I would like to represent but one scene that I refer to here as the "battle scene."

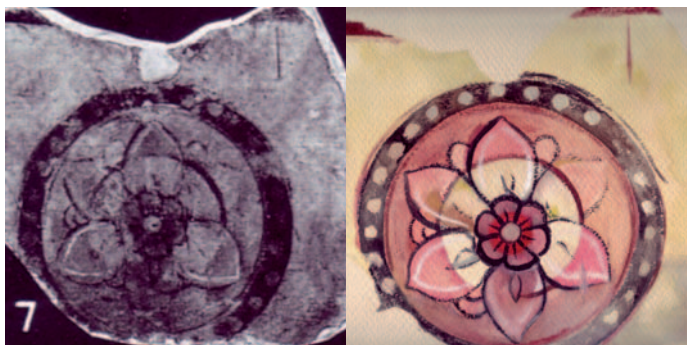


Fig.1. A fresco fragment as published in the final report and as newly found in the Mandatory Archive at the Rockefeller.

The "Battle Scene"

On the southern part of the east wing where the entrance to the *qasir* unit is situated, large ashlar stones were found in a fallen position. Part of the blocks were found inside one of the rooms, room Vb (fig. 2), and the others were found in the southern portico outside the enclosure. At least five different-sized pieces can be brought together to create the "battle scene."

One of the major blocks, more than 1.5 m long, with frescoes on it, depicts a row of at least four heads painted on a blue background and five black diagonal pointed lines outcropping behind and to the side of the heads (fig. 3). Those heads and lines gave the impression that these are soldiers holding spears in a battle field, hence the proposed name of the scene (fig. 4). This piece is framed by thick border lines on two sides, one above the heads and one to the side of them. This border sets the piece as an upper corner of the scene. As such, it determines the border of this wall painting (fig. 4a).

Another two pieces with blue sky background were found in the room: one with the head of a man illustrated in profile and with a stretched hand (fig. 4b), and the second illustrating a man's head with

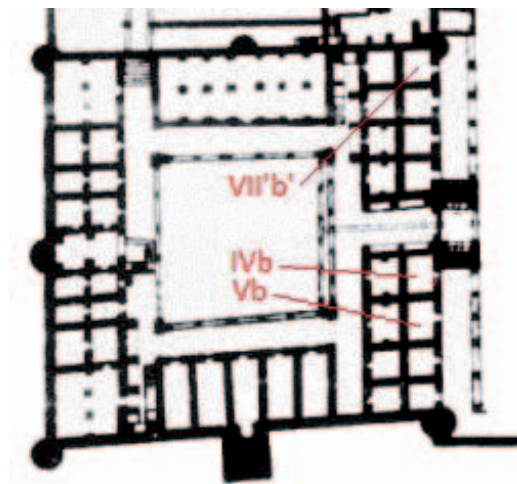


Fig.2. Frescoes locations in the *qasir*.

a surviving eye gazing at the observer, a spear and what looks like part of another head (fig. 4c). Those pieces form the skyline, occupying the upper part of the scene.

As for the lower body of the scene, two pieces are proposed; both are bordered on the side and therefore should be placed closer to the frame. One of them illustrates what looks like three legs, a round shield and a quiver (fig. 4aiii). The lower parts of the legs are covered with gray strips and red bands, while the upper parts are exposed. The rounded curve of the shield is painted in yellow and the quiver is painted in the same color of the strips on the legs. These features look like part of two soldiers standing, one frontal and one in movement to the right. One of them is holding a quiver. To their back a shield is positioned. Traces of a third soldier can be seen to the left near the border line. Only portions of the legs survived, one of them partly covered with gray strips. Another fresco with a circular feature illustrated in it, was found in the south portico outside room Vb, thus it is considered to be another piece of this scene (fig. 4aai). It seems that the circular piece is a part of a shield; therefore we propose that it was on top of the lower piece of the shield. Above the shield a hand can be seen.

The scene is far from being clear, though at least we can reconstruct a row of soldiers standing and holding spears and shields. The projecting spears recall the spears from the famous battle scene of Alexander dated to the second century B.C. In that mosaic the two rivals, the Persian king Darius and the Macedonian one, Alexander, face each other in battle. One of the clear fields is the skyline where horrified faces can be seen and spears stick out, while the lower part is less obvious: horses and warriors are clashing, which makes it difficult to distinguish between the different features. The same applies to the lower body of the battle from Mafjar, where few pieces survived.

Discussion

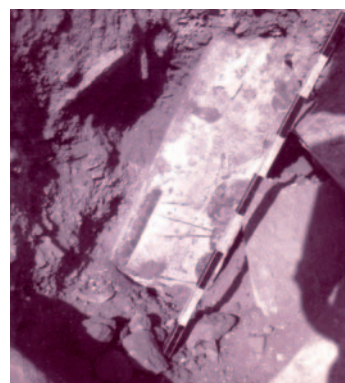


Fig.3. The 'heads block' when just uncovered and before becoming damaged.

Artists active under the Umayyads can be seen as largely integrating two artistic traditions, the Sasanian and the Roman-Byzantine. The newly established art language emerging from the two traditions can be seen in the various Umayyad monuments, either serving religious purposes such as the Dome of the Rock and the Great mosque of Damascus, or palatial complexes, for instance Qusayr Amra and Qasr al-Hayr

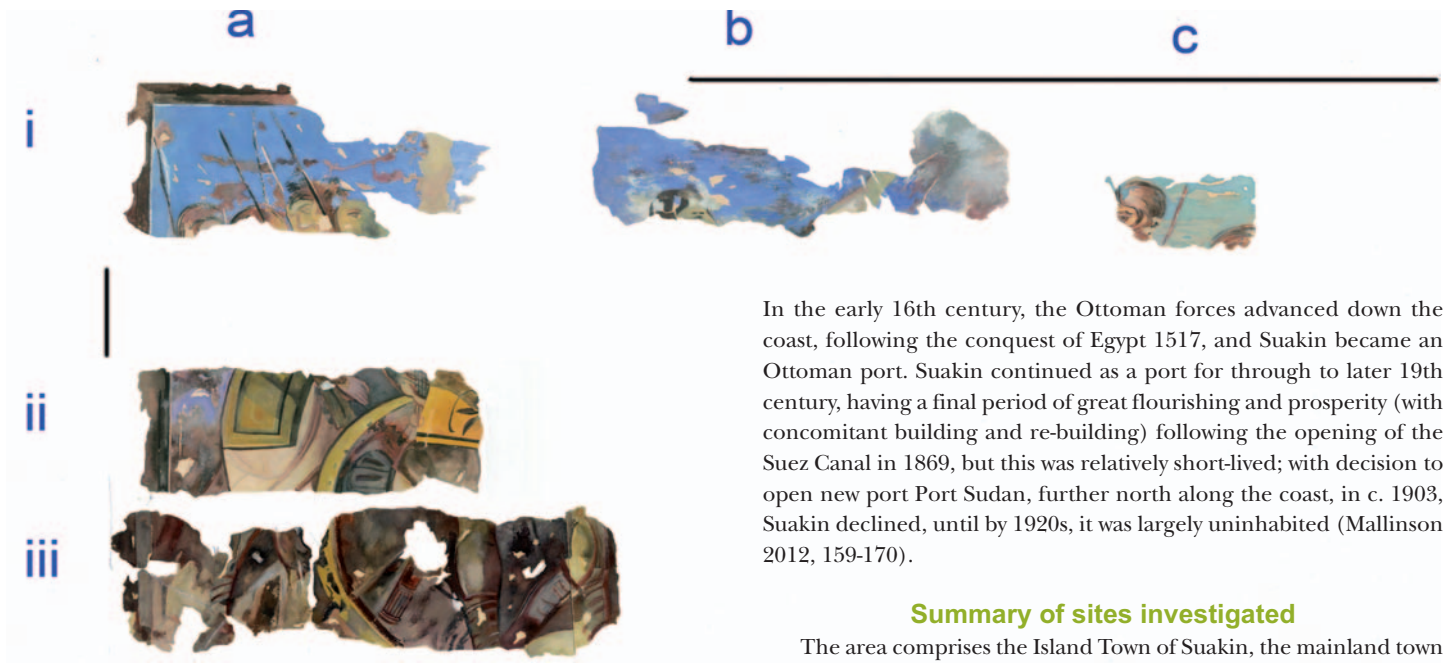


Fig.4. The reconstructed 'battle scene.'

al-Gharbi. The battle scene displays soldiers illustrated in the Roman-Byzantine style rather than the Sasanian one. Unfortunately, its fragmental condition does not offer any clue regarding the nature of the battle. However, this scene points to a section of the palace where visitors would be able to sense the type of life the patron wished to present. On the other side of this section we found other royal motifs, especially the Simurv, which is illustrated on the walls to the side with classical motifs influenced by the Sasanian tradition.

Tawfiq Da'adli
The Martin Buber Society of fellows
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK AT SUAKIN, SUDAN

Introduction

The site of Suakin lies on the Red Sea coast of Sudan about 60 km south of present-day Port Sudan. It is important through having been the main Red Sea trade port for inland Africa throughout the later Mediaeval and early modern periods, with links from Scotland to China. It was a major port for the *Hajj*, and formed one of the nodes in the Indian Ocean and Red Sea trade network at least as early as 10th-12th century AD. Architecturally, the site is significant, since it comprises the remains of a complete town built in the local coral, forming one of the few remaining examples of the 'Red Sea' style of architecture.

The Suakin Project, has been underway as a project of the Sudanese National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums since 2002, under the overall direction of the Director-General of Antiquities, with field-directors from Britain. The project involves the study of history, archaeology and architecture, together with a programme of building restoration and community outreach.

Currently, earliest possible identification for a port at Suakin proposed is with *Evangelon Portus*, of Ptolemy, from a 2nd century AD account. Probably the earliest true historical reference is from the Arab historians and geographers of the medieval period. However, Suakin became the main trading port on the Sudanese coast following the decline of an earlier port (Aydhah) to the north during the 15th century.

In the early 16th century, the Ottoman forces advanced down the coast, following the conquest of Egypt 1517, and Suakin became an Ottoman port. Suakin continued as a port for through to later 19th century, having a final period of great flourishing and prosperity (with concomitant building and re-building) following the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, but this was relatively short-lived; with decision to open new port Port Sudan, further north along the coast, in c. 1903, Suakin declined, until by 1920s, it was largely uninhabited (Mallinson 2012, 159-170).

Summary of sites investigated

The area comprises the Island Town of Suakin, the mainland town (Geyf) and Condenser Island. Most work has concentrated on the Island Town, but surveys and test excavations have been carried out on Condenser Island and on the mainland. On the Island Town, several areas have been investigated, of which the most significant are: Beit el-Basha; the Shafai Mosque, the *Muhafaza* (Governor's Residence), the Beit 'Osman Digna' and Beit Khorshid Effendi (see Fig. 1).

Beit el-Basha: This is located near the centre of the island. The house has two courtyards, and rooms including *diwan* and *dihlis*. Trenches and soundings, in courtyards and in some of rooms, provided the first evidence found for the existence of stone-built structures pre-dating those until recently standing, and showed the existence of a depth of stratigraphy in the centre of the island. Subsequent area exca-

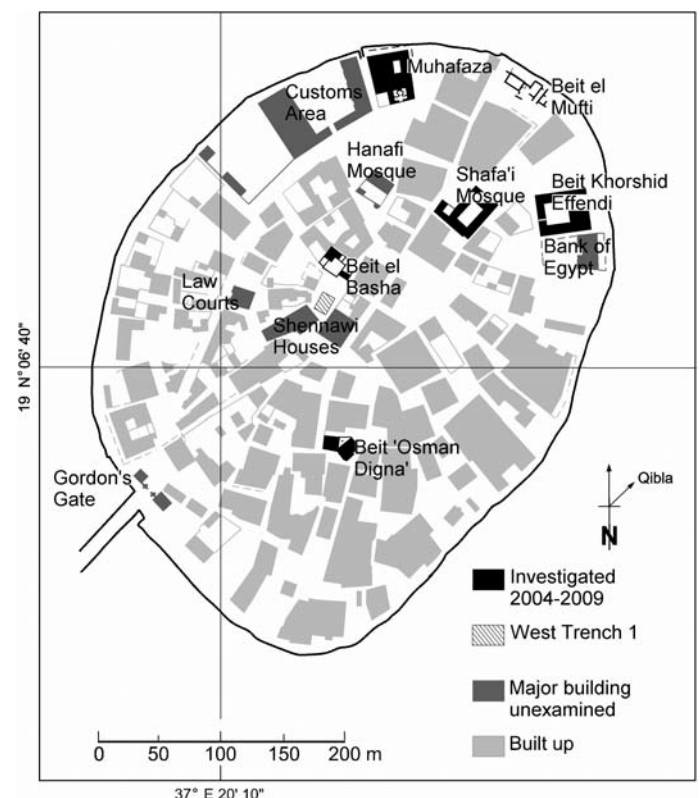


Fig. 1. Plan of Suakin Island Town showing main locations investigated

vations to the south-west of the Beit el-Basha, in 2006 and 2007, provided evidence 3.1m depth of stratigraphy. This included a 19th-century cistern and much 18th-19th century pitting, but also post-holes from timber, probably round structures. Stratigraphy indicated that this building tradition was not simply replaced by that of stone building, but that the two types of structures overlapped for a period in the 16th century, at least.

Evidence was obtained for the space having been an open cooking area over several hundred years, likely to have been related to the adjacent *souk*. Occupation here extended to the early 11th or late 10th century AD, as indicated by 14C. This forms one of most significant discoveries of the archaeological work, since this is likely to be currently the longest largely continuous sequence so far discovered along the Sudanese Red Sea coast (Breen, et al. 2011, 205-220).

Shara'i Mosque: Excavations in 2004 at eastern end showed the first indications of earlier structures beneath the present structure. Excavations 2007 in centre of open court found a rectangular pier or base and the top of round base or pillar extending down c. 60cm; this was sitting on or in rectangular feature, seemingly outlined in plaster, with a plaster floor appearing. The nature of this structure remains unclear (Smith et al. 2012, 175). In 2010, excavations were made at three locations within the Mosque: the interior (EE-Trench 1) and exterior (EE-Trench 2) on either side of the east wall, and the central portion of the south arcade. These excavations produced further sequences of well-defined occupation layers, (36 layers in EE-Trench 1), extending to the water-table or to bedrock. 14C samples taken from several charcoal-rich contexts in both locations gave a late 13th century beginning to activity on this part of the site, including construction work on the mosque, which may, therefore be one of the earliest in Sudan, pre-



Fig. 2. The frontage of the Muhafaza, the Governor's Residence (Photo. M. Mallinson)

dating the Mosque at Old Dongla (early 14th century). Restoration work was carried out on the main walls of the Mosque in 2010.

Muhafaza (Governor's Residence): Excavation was undertaken within the courtyard of the *Muhafaza* (Fig. 2) with the aim of determining whether any earlier occupational levels may have existed before the extension of the building in 1870s. A trench 2m x 1m was dug in the centre of the courtyard, reaching a depth of 2m before encountering the present water-table. *Phase 1:* the present day *Muhafaza*, comprising floor slabs, mortar foundation and infill over a sandy base. *Phase 2:* a layer of compact coralline material, which formed a floor level and infilled two ditches cut from a previous phase. *Phase 3:* successive layers of activity from which a great deal of pot and bone fragments were obtained. This phase contained a structure (062) with a wall running east-west and midway another running north-south. *Phase 4:* along the north-east and south section there was an area comprising several thin layers which were cut through by successive pits. Currently, structure (062) is thought to be 17th to 18th century in date, while the area thin layers and pits represents medieval occupation. This was the first time such early layers have been found relatively close to the present edge of the Island Town (Smith et al. 2012, 177-178).

Beit 'Osman Digna': This is situated in the south-west quadrant of Island Town where we had not worked prior to the 2008-9 season. It ap-



Fig. 3. Beit Khorshid Effendi excavations in forecourt 2013, showing remains of walls of probable store-rooms, and part of the area of laid blocks by the shoreline (Photo. L. Smith)

peared to be sited on a boundary between the original coral atoll, and the later artificial build-up around the perimeter. The site comprised a house, associated with the local Mahdist leader Osman Digna, a small triangular courtyard, and small mosque. In the post-medieval period two structures were built, subsequently levelled for the construction of the mosque by the 19th century. A trench across the street in front of the house, excavated to c. 2.2m depth, exhibited five phases of activity. (Smith et al. 2012, 178-179).

Beit Khorshid Effendi: This was both the first and the most recent building investigated, being a prime candidate for restoration, since its diwan walls survive to roof level on one side, and it is architecturally significant, with elaborately decorated plasterwork in the *diwan*. Restoration of this section of the building is on-going. Work in 2002-2010 concentrated on the *diwan*, the main block of the house and the rear courtyard, revealing a more detailed plan than that published in the best-known account of the architecture of the town by Greenlaw (1995), and a developmental history of the structure can be proposed (Phillips 2012, 189-198). For example, several small rooms, and a *hamam* were discovered. This site is remarkable for the remains of wooden structures surviving, especially timber from the main *roshan*, which collapsed outwards with the fall of the upper portions of the front wall. *Rauwashin* were formerly a significant feature of Suakini architecture, sometimes being quite elaborate (Mallinson et al. 2009, 477-479).

In 2012 and 2013 excavation of the Beit Khorshid Effendi forecourt was undertaken. An area covering 9.7m x 11.55m, revealed two structures preceding the BKE. The earlier survived only as a short stretch of coral-built wall. The long, relatively narrow, rooms of the second structure indicate it may have been a magazine for storing off-loaded goods (Fig. 3). Probably when building or extending the BKE, the structure was demolished to its lowest course, the rooms infilled and the blocks used to raise the area near the shoreline to a similar level. Later activity comprised the digging of small pits and a slightly irregular ditch, and possibly burning fires. Samples for soil-micromorphology study of strata and coral plaster surfaces were obtained from re-excavation of a 2012 test-pit in BKE, and excavation south-west of the Shafa'i Mosque.

Progress was made in recording small finds in various materials from the current and previous seasons. In addition to the usual imported and indigenous ceramics, study focused on the blown glass, 19th century glass medical bottles and military accoutrements, together with further wood conservation and recording. The construction of a typology for the hand-made ceramics was completed, forming the most extensive and continuous pottery sequence, to date, for the Sudanese stretch of the Red Sea coast.

The trading links of the port

Ceramics have provided evidence for the most wide-ranging contacts of Suakin. European historical accounts, combined with the archaeological ceramic evidence indicates that trade, over the period from 14th to early 20th century, concentrated on three major regions:

1. Closely neighbouring countries then within the Ottoman Empire itself: Egypt and the southern Arabian peninsular. Historical sources indicate that the trade from Suakin to Egypt went through Cairo and Alexandria, whilst the main port for the trade with the Arabian Peninsula was Jeddah.

2. South Asia. The places mentioned in historical accounts are generally identified with locations in the Indian subcontinent. A Black Burnished Ware at Suakin is similar in appearance to a ware at Ras el-Khaimah, having parallels at sites in present-day India (Kennet 2004, 66).

3. East and South-east Asia. The countries or areas specifically indicated by the current provenances assigned to porcelain from Suakin include China, together with south-east Asia. Historical sources mention places including China, Malacca and Pegu.

4. North-west Europe: During the period from 1880s to the abandonment of Suakin, much European china and stoneware was imported. These have so far been identified as coming from potteries in England, Scotland (Glasgow) and France. South-east Asia and north-west Europe constitute the most extended Suakini trade links indicated by the material remains and historical sources published in English so far examined (Smith et al. 2012, 179-185).

Laurence Smith (*McDonald Institute*),

Michael Mallinson (*Mallinson Architects*),

Jacke Phillips (*SOAS and McDonald Institute*)

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DEMANDES DE SUBVENTION

La Fondation Max van Berchem, dont le but est de promouvoir l'étude de l'archéologie, de l'histoire, de la géographie, de l'histoire de l'art, de l'épigraphie, de la religion, de la littérature islamiques et arabes, accorde des subventions à des recherches menées dans ces domaines par des scientifiques titulaires d'un doctorat.

Les candidats doivent s'adresser à la Fondation pour obtenir un formulaire qu'ils devront compléter et lui renvoyer avec les annexes demandées.

Ces documents doivent être en possession de la Fondation le **31 mars 2014 au plus tard**. Le Comité scientifique se réunit à Genève à fin juin et le Conseil de Fondation rend sa décision définitive en juillet.

Le Comité scientifique, présidé par le professeur Charles Genequand de l'Université de Genève, comprend les personnalités suivantes: les professeurs Giovanni Curatola, Université d'Udine, François Déroche, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes (IV^e Section), Paris, Heinz Gaube, Université Eberhard Karls, Tübingen, Renata Holod, Université de Pennsylvanie, Ludvik Kalus, Université de Paris-Sorbonne (Paris IV), Hugh Kennedy, School of Oriental and African Studies, Londres, Gregor Schoeler, Université de Bâle et M^{me} Louise Martin-van Berchem, membre du Conseil de la Fondation Max van Berchem.

Fondation Max van Berchem

5, avenue de Miremont, CH-1206 Genève

Tél. et Fax +41 22 347 88 91

E-mail: info@maxvanberchem.org

Internet: <http://www.maxvanberchem.org>

EN COURS

Katia Cytryn-Silverman a conduit cet automne une 5^e saison de fouilles à Tibériade (étude d'une mosquée, du complexe médiéval qui y est associé, d'une église byzantine, des quartiers d'habitation et voies de circulation).

Après une mission préparatoire en 2012, Denis Genequand et Alastair Northedge vont poursuivre en 2014 l'étude archéologique et topographique de Dihistan, sud-ouest du Turkménistan. Le site présente des niveaux d'occupation du X^e au XIII^e siècle.

La 11^e double-livraison du Thesaurus d'Epigraphie Islamique avec les inscriptions du Proche-Orient (Syrie, Liban, Jordanie, Israël, Palestine, Cisjordanie, bande de Gaza) et de la Turquie a été mise en ligne par Frédéric Soudan, à l'adresse <http://www.epigraphie-islamique.org>. Cette nouvelle version a été enrichie de nouvelles fonctionnalités (accès direct aux inscriptions et photos, recherches croisées, opérations de tri). Les consultations en ligne sont gratuites, mais, afin de sécuriser leur accès, l'utilisateur est invité à s'identifier par son adresse électronique et son mot de passe lors de son inscription.

Sophie Gilotte a mené une campagne de fouilles au mois de septembre à Albalat ; situé le long du Tage, en Estrémadure (Espagne), ce site se présente comme une forteresse qui s'est retrouvée, dès la fin du XI^e siècle, prise en étau entre les terres contrôlées par les chrétiens et celles restées aux mains des musulmans. Ce projet pluridisciplinaire et international a pour but d'apporter des informations inédites sur les pratiques alimentaires, la nature des activités dans la ville et les techniques artisanales employées.

Un colloque à la mémoire d'Henri Seyrig (1895-1973) s'est tenu le 11 octobre dernier à l'Académie des inscriptions et belles-Lettres de l'Institut de France. Cousin de Marguerite van Berchem, Henri Seyrig fut directeur des Antiquités de Syrie et du Liban sous mandat français entre 1929 et 1942, puis directeur de l'Institut Français d'Archéologie du Proche-Orient à Beyrouth de 1946 à 1967.

Pizzo Monaco est un site fortifié datant du XI^e siècle, à près de 500 mètres d'altitude dans les montagnes de Trapani, en Sicile. Jose Maria Martin Civantos va y mener une fouille stratigraphique et étudier la culture matérielle afin de définir les stratégies des paysans pour préserver leurs moyens de subsistance.

Rosa Varela Gomes a commencé la fouille de la nécropole du ribât de Arrifana, une petite fortification qui domine l'océan Atlantique, dans l'ouest de l'Algarve (Portugal). Le site a été fondé autour de 1130 par un maître soufi, Ibn Qasi (et abandonné en 1151), et il n'était connu que dans les textes avant sa découverte par R. Varela Gomes.

Nuria Martinez de Castilla Muñoz va étudier des manuscrits de tradition morisque, ottomane et iraniennne, des XVI^e au XIX^e siècles, conservés à la Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana à Rome ; ces sont des copies populaires en format réduit du Coran, parfois avec une traduction interlinéaire, qui furent utilisées dans un contexte socio-culturel où la connaissance de l'arabe était pratiquement nulle.

Le Musée Ariana à Genève, musée de la céramique et du verre, va organiser une exposition Terres d'Islam – L'Ariana sort de ses réserves II, du 26 février au 31 août 2014. Elle présentera de la céramique islamique provenant d'une zone allant de la Transoxiane à l'Espagne, en passant par l'Iran, la Turquie, la Syrie et l'Égypte, et datant du IX^e au XIX^e siècle.

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