

SOMMAIRE

Le Bulletin de cette année se distingue par la variété des recherches présentées : Maria Judith Feliciano conduit une étude originale qui a pour but de réévaluer tous les textiles conservés dans des musées, églises et collections privées en Europe et aux Etats-Unis à travers la création d'une base de données (page 1). Karol Juchniewicz s'est intéressé à une catégorie de monuments mésestimés :

les mausolées construits en l'honneur de saints hommes dans la vallée de Iqlim el-Karrub au Liban (page 3). Enfin, Martina Müller-Wiener nous propose une prospection archéologique du site "à la splendeur proverbiale" de al-Hīra en Iraq (page 5). Relativement peu étudié, il est resté intact jusqu'à très récemment ; en plus de cartographier le site, elle réexamine tous les éléments trouvés lors de précédentes fouilles.

Entré au Comité scientifique en 1998, le professeur Heinz Gaube a participé à sa dernière séance en juin 2015. Au cours de quatre mandats au sein de cette instance, il a toujours été très actif et présent, et ses avis tranchés offraient toujours un point de vue original. Qu'il soit remercié pour les nombreuses années passées à la Fondation Max van Berchem !

Bonne lecture !

MEDIEVAL ISLAMIC TEXTILES IN IBERIA AND THE MEDITERRANEAN

The traditional approach to the study of medieval textiles in the Iberian Peninsula has sustained that the vast majority of the extant objects found in Iberian contexts was woven in al-Andalus and that when these objects crossed Iberian boundaries, they became inherently exotic and foreign signifiers, marks of "Otherness". This narrative also maintains that Andalusī artisans designed and wove while Iberian consumers received the visual information passively and that technical sophistication derived from Andalusī labor in Hispano-Muslim territories while "folkloric," popular, or less appealing products reflect "mudéjar" hands (*mudéjares* were conquered Muslims who lived in Christian jurisdictions). The dominant discourse outlined above is based on problematic suppositions that do not distinguish between the objects' desirability as refined items of trade and their modern academic perception as exotic indicators of Otherness. Indeed, they conflate the terms "foreign" and "exotic," which denote amazement driven by a lack of familiarity, with "refined" and "coveted," which indicate appreciation and desirability based on discernment. Equally problematic is the fact that there is no established distinction between the products of palatine workshops (*tirāz*), destined for the court and its needs, and their imitations, which were intended to enter the open luxury markets. The complexity of textile manufacture, trade, and consumption has remained unacknowledged in medieval Iberian studies.

The Medieval Islamic Textiles in Iberia and the Mediterranean Research Project seeks to establish a new methodology that recognizes the place of the Iberian Peninsula within the greater world of

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Fig. 1 – "221–Miquel i Badia Collection. From the sepulcher of the Bishop of Barcelona Arnaldo de Gurb and was given to Don Francisco Miquel i Badia by the architect Augusto Font when he restored [...] in the Chapel of Saint Lucy". From Macari Golferichs' (1866-1938) hand-colored album "Reproducciones policromadas originales de teixits perses, bizantins, arabics, italians, espanyols, etc." MD 3858, Centre de Documentació, Museu del Disseny de Barcelona Photo credit: Maria Judith Feliciano

medieval Islamic textile trade. We acknowledge the immense influence of the weaving traditions of the Islamic Mediterranean and the Central Asian silk route upon textile production, trade, and consumption in the Iberian Peninsula. We start from the premise that extant textiles in Iberian contexts must reflect the diversity so clearly expressed in the historical documentation and literary evidence, which attests to a high volume of textile goods that flooded Iberian markets from these areas. Our project intends to ascertain the cross-Mediterranean connections or reveal the Andalusī origins of surviving objects in a pioneering integration of cross-disciplinary analyses.



Fig. 2 – Textile offering good wishes to the ruler (Nasrid or Marinid, 13th-14th century?). Museu del Disseny de Barcelona, 28.394. MTIB 28.394: Top Band: الملك الدائم
Middle Band: (أ) جيد ملوك الأرض في النهي والامر (...) العرش سلطان و امرأة ايده بالسعد و الفتح
Bottom Band: السعادة الدائمة

Another objective is to recognize and explore the multiplicity of Iberian contexts through which the textiles moved and settled, and ultimately, the specificity of their cultural meanings, highlighting the vital role of sumptuous textiles in the production of cultural identities. For this purpose, we propose to drop old labels and preconceived notions, and to start anew from the perspective of the materiality and consumption of medieval Islamic material culture. It is a central principle of this effort to look both inside and outside of the Iberian Peninsula to refocus the lens through which we study these objects. It is equally important to consider the buildings, objects, and bodies, not to mention the beliefs, ideas, and modes of transmission of taste and technical knowledge, which provide a context for the uses and meanings of medieval Islamic textiles in the Iberian Peninsula.

Thanks to the generous support of the Max van Berchem Foundation, we have begun to lay the foundation of this long-term project with great success. In order to achieve the greater art historical and ethno-historical objectives outlined above, our research pro-gram has begun by tending to a series of sorely-needed basics. Throughout the past year, we have been working to complete an Arabic epigraphic corpus of extant textiles in collections across the United States and Europe; to build an extensive database of objects currently housed in museums, church treasuries, and private collections—many of them of very difficult access and rarely ever published—and lastly, amassing documentary, photographic and historical information that will allow us to complete a long-overdue reevaluation of nineteenth and early-twentieth century textile collecting practices and their influence upon the field of medieval Iberian studies, with an especially keen eye on object precedence and dispersal.

Our work leading to the *Medieval Iberian Textile Epigraphic Workshop* (*Seminario Epigráfico Textil: Tejidos Medievales en Iberia y el Mediterráneo*)¹—which took place at the Museo Arqueológico Nacional (Madrid) on June 29-July 3—entailed a combination of collaborative efforts with no less than twenty international museums and institutions, the creation of an image data bank with epigraphic

material in more than forty collections, a complementary digitized bibliographic archive, and a strong dose of detective work tracking provenance records in nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century acquisition registers, sale catalogues, sample books, and art historical and archaeological journals. Together, these efforts have formed the core of a future database, which we envision as a public, permanent, and ever-growing online resource for the advancement of Islamic textile studies. The design and activation of the database and online presence will be the focus of our 2016 work schedule, in addition to the preparation of a two-volume epigraphic corpus and critical studies publication.

The celebration of the *Textile Epigraphic Workshop*, the first of its kind focused exclusively on Medieval Iberian textiles, afforded us the unique opportunity to view the large sample of works with Arabic inscriptions as a single corpus, rather than as a varied collection of dispersed objects. From the exercise of viewing the material through the unifying lens of its epigraphic richness emerged an

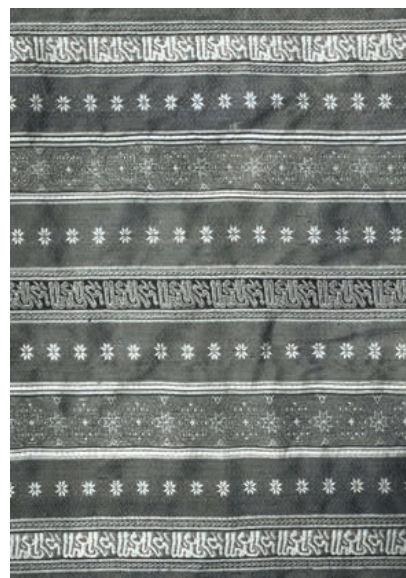


Fig. 3 – Burial robe of Queen Berenguela of Castile (1179-1246) from the Royal Pantheon of Santa María La Real de Huelgas (Burgos). The inscription *اليمين و البركة* was woven in reverse, thus the inscription reads backwards. Photo courtesy of the Fundación Rodríguez Acosta (Granada), Acervo Documental Manuel Gómez Moreno.

entirely new perspective on important groupings of previously unrecognized related objects (through different combinations of epigraphic content, calligraphic styles, weaving techniques, relationships to monumental epigraphy, and even technical mistakes). We are currently focusing our research on these areas of inquiry.

Lastly, the support of the Max van Berchem Foundation has made it possible for our team to meet an essential goal of our research project: already we have been able to leave a visible legacy in various Spanish textile collections with important, but understudied or largely undocumented medieval Islamic objects. We have been able to supply valuable information, epigraphic details, and high resolution images to enrich the documentation of various unpublished collections. In many instances, we discovered epigraphic information in faded, overlooked, or poorly understood objects.

We continue to work closely with our colleagues in collaborating institutions not just to advance but to transform the field of medieval Islamic and Andalusí textile studies.

Maria Judith Feliciano

1. The specialists invited to participate in the *Textile Epigraphic Workshop* included Dr. Nourane Ben Azzouna (Universität Wien), Dr. David Roxburgh (Harvard University), María Antonia Martínez Núñez (University of Málaga), and Corinne Muehleemann (Universität Bern) in addition to the organizers Dr. Maria Judith Feliciano, Dr. Ana Cabrera Lafuente (Museo Nacional de Artes Decorativas, Madrid) and Dr. Laura Rodríguez Peinado (Universidad Complutense, Madrid). Other participants included Dr. Cynthia Robinson (Cornell University), Dr. Renata Holod (University of Pennsylvania), Dr. Ana Echevarria Arzuaga (Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, Madrid), Dr. Delfina Serrano (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Madrid), Dr. Taufiq Ibrahim (numismatist), as well as museum curators and conservators from various institutions in Madrid and faculty and graduate students from the Medieval Art Department of the Universidad Complutense (Madrid).

AWLIYA' ALLAH PROJECT Surveying Muslim Shrines in Lebanon

Introduction

Awliya' Allah Project is part of the extensive archaeological survey of Iqlim El Kharrub province (Chouf District, Lebanon) carried out by the Polish Archaeological Mission in Lebanon since 1999. Until 2014 the work was focused on establishing the archaeological and topographical background of the ancient village of Chhim as well as the coastal town of Jiyeh (ancient Porphyreon). Both sites date from the Roman and Byzantine periods, and their occupation ends somewhere in the 8th-9th century. Medieval and Ottoman periods have never been the subject of a separate study, although a substantial number of such sites and monuments were discovered during the survey. Intending to fill this gap, Awliya' Allah Project was launched.

The Project

Changes and disorder which are now taking place in the Middle East are also felt in Lebanon. Accordingly, the team had to take security measures during fieldwork. All places were visited only after having informed local authorities about the objectives of the project and obtaining the permission for work. Local communities were always very keen on the idea of the project and helped a lot in finding and gathering data on separate objects.

The main objective of the project is to create an architectural catalogue of the sites and monuments connected to the tradition of *ziyara* in the Iqlim el Kharrub province, of which Chhim is the local centre.

The research focuses on the long term effect of vital building activity in modern Lebanon. Such activity has increased dramatically during the last few years. Archaeological sites are usually protected; however many of them are not on the official list of heritage objects. Vernacular architecture is vanishing, demolished in order to make space for modern buildings. The necessity of intensive architectural surveys has therefore never been greater.

The situation of small, commemorative shrines has two main issues. While the problem of demolition is evident, restoration represents an even greater danger. Simply speaking, medieval walls are being covered with concrete or, as in the case of Sheikh Mohammad al Dimasi's *maqam*, are being overbuilt with entirely modern constructions (Fig.1).



Fig. 1 – *Maqam* Sheikh Mohammad al Dimasi. Monument incorporated in a modern building.

Along with vanishing monuments, some changes are being observed in the ritual of *ziyara*. People are still visiting the sites, however the ritual, so vividly described by Meri and Suwaed (Meri 2002 : 120 ; Suwaed 2013 : 17-24) is usually shortened and consists of reciting *Fatiha* (personal communication).

Standard documentation adopted for the project contains : plans and sections of the buildings (Fig. 2), separate drawings of architectural details, construction analysis, photo documentation and mapping

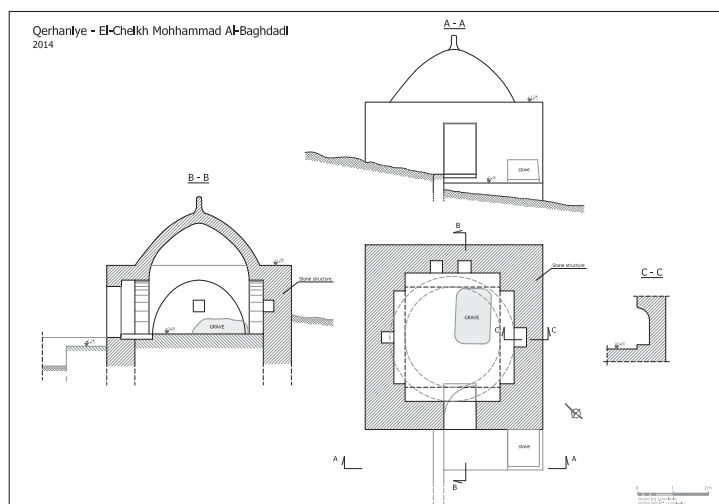


Fig. 2 – Sheikh Mohammad al Baghdadi. Documentation sample.

of the sites. Some sites, like the *maqam* in Bsebe or Nebi Yunis' mosque, have been documented in 3D (Fig. 3, 4) using different modeling strategies (due to accessibility of the site).



Fig. 3 – Seedee Bsebe. 3D documentation sample.

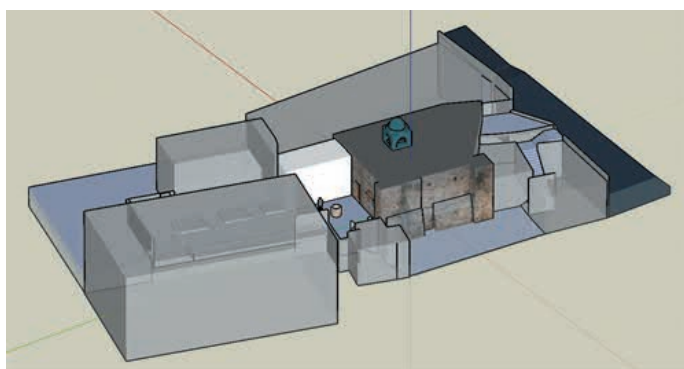


Fig. 4 – Nebi Yunis. Visualisation of the monument.

During two seasons, 29 sites and monuments have been recorded. Preliminary typology is based mainly on that published by Grabar and supplemented by the work of Meri (Grabar 1966: 7-46; Meri 2002: 264-272). However, it is clear that, regarding the shrines in Iqlim el Kharrub, most of them bare distinctions applicable to more than one type. Therefore, such basic typology has to be considered as preliminary and wait for further study of separate monuments.

Most of the shrines represent the type called *qubba* (Fig. 5). Simple, modest constructions with small domes usually containing the burial or the cenotaph of the person venerated and to whom the place is dedicated. Some of the shrines commemorate more than one person, as in the case of the shrine of Sheikh Mohammad al Asmar, in Mazboud, who was buried with his sister, or in Daraya, where the situation is similar with the shrine of Sheikh Amar, also accompanied by his sister.



Fig. 5 – Sheikh Saleh, Katermaya. *Qubba* type monument.



Fig. 6 – Sheikh Said's, Hasrut. *Qabr* type monument.

Qabr is among the most modest monuments. This type of monument is located usually in local cemeteries, however, one – Sheikh Said's in Hasrut – was recorded outside, in a private garden (Fig. 6).

Nebi Yunis mosque is an ideal example of a monument connected with the *ziyara* tradition. Until recently it was the main mosque in the town of Jiyeh. The place was described and drawn by western travelers at least since the 18th century. According to local tradition, the beach of Jiyeh was the place where the prophet was vomited by a fish. The period we should attribute this monument to is still vague, however the 13th century seems to be the most probable. The tradition of Prophet Yunis is still vivid in Jiyeh. Today the mosque belongs to local Shi'a inhabitants and is visited mostly by Shi'a pilgrims and tourists. In the past however, it was a place of veneration for the people from the region – Shi'as, Sunnis, Druzes and Christians.

The highest density of shrines in Iqlim el Kharrub occurs in the central part of the province, around the towns of Chhim, Mazboud and Mghariyeh. Surprisingly, the coastal area and the hills in its vicinity seem to have been avoided by esteemed sheikhs or *murabitun*. Some of the monuments are located clearly along roads: Nebi Yunis is on the ancient track along the coast, Sbaile in Siblin on the route along Wadi ez Zeyni, connecting mountains and the coast, or Sidi Sebe in Bsebe stands on the mountainous route along Wadi Bisri. Most of the sites documented by the survey are located within or very close to modern settlements. The only *maqam* which is far from any settlement is Cheikh Mohammad al Baghdadi's built in the highest part of the mountains near Qerhaniye. This is the consequence of an intensive construction activity. Originally, most if not all shrines were located at some distance from the villages and towns.

Chronology remains one of the main problems to solve in the study on local Islamic shrines. Establishing a firm timeline for the *maqamat* in Iqlim el Kharrub is practically impossible without further archaeological research. There are only some hints pointing to the 12th-13th century as the time of appearance of most local shrines. Local tradition associates many shrines with *murabitun* – independently operating individuals or whole groups whose task was to establish or strengthen Islam within local populations. Such activity is said to be especially performed during the Ayyubid Period. It goes with the phenomenon of veneration of rulers, preachers, Sufis and scholars so common in the 12th and 13th centuries in Palestine and Syria.

Karol Juchniewicz
(PCMA)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF AL-ĤĪRA / IRAQ

Fieldwork campaign 2015

The historical site of al-ĤĪra is located to the east of al-Najaf and to the south of al-Kūfa in south-central Iraq. It covers some 25 square kilometres on the easternmost end of a rocky bluff stretching in northwest-southeast direction. The foundation of al-ĤĪra probably goes back to the 3rd century, when a change in the course of the Euphrates resulted in a shift of the major branch of the river to the west. In the 5th and 6th centuries al-ĤĪra became the capital of the

Arab Lakhmid rulers. Under their domination the city developed its proverbial splendour that was still praised by the Arab poets in the 9th and 10th centuries. In the year 633 al-ĤĪra was taken by the troops of the Muslim general Ḥālīd ibn al-Walīd. Only six years later, in 639, the garrison town of al-Kūfa was founded nearby. Whereas al-Kūfa subsequently developed into one of the centres of early Islamic Iraq, the sources indicate that al-ĤĪra continued to exist until the 10th century at least. After its final abandonment the relics of the city went into decay but they have never been transformed by construction activities until recently. Today a considerable part of the area of ancient al-ĤĪra has been built over and the rapid growth of al-Najaf threatens the undisturbed areas that remained.

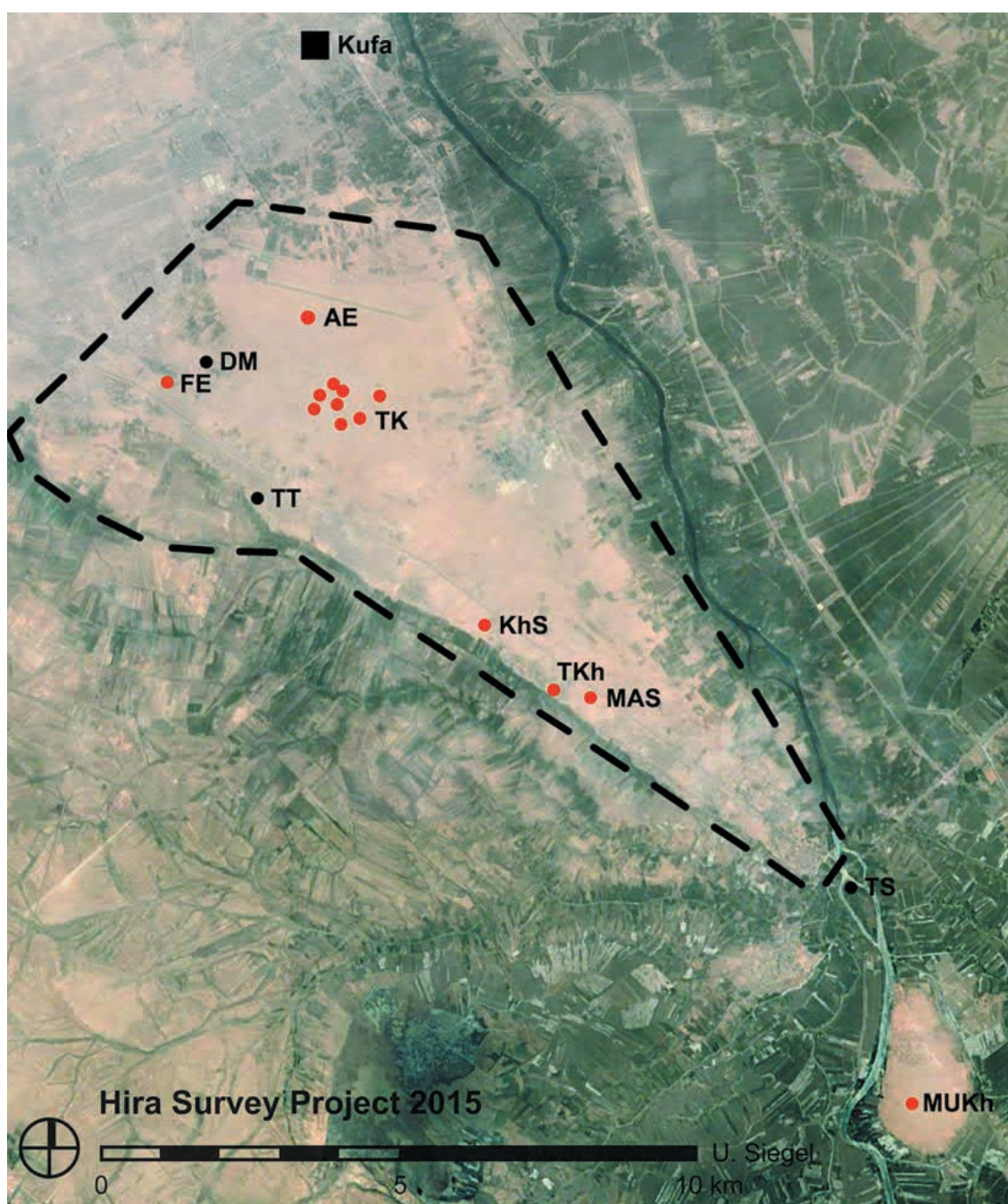


Fig. 1 – Total area of al-ĤĪra Survey (broken line); red dots: sites previously investigated or listed in the Iraqi Archaeological Atlas; black dots: no previous achievements. MUKh = Maqbarat Umm Khasham, TS = Tell Satih, MAS = Maqbarat Abū Sukhair, TKh = Tell al-Khwarnaq, KhS = Kharā'ib Sadir, TT = Tell Ṭa'arizāt, TK = Tulūl Kunaidira, AE = Airport excavation, DM = disturbed mound, FE = French expedition (Google Earth satellite image, modified by U. Siegel).

Whereas the history of al-Hīra has been the subject of several studies¹, archaeological research on the ground has been restricted to excavations of isolated structures, which were published in preliminary reports or remained unpublished. In contrast to this the present project pursues an integrated approach focussing on questions of settlement development and urban context and seeking to provide data for the definition of areas of high heritage value that should be protected and further investigated archaeologically in the near future. Relevant data are acquired by the evaluation of satellite images, aerial photographs and map data, by the topographical identification of previous excavations and a comparative review of their results and by a survey of still undeveloped areas and adjacent zones extending to the south and southeast of present day Najaf and Kufa. The project is carried out in cooperation with the Department of Antiquities, Najaf, the German Archaeological Institute (DAI), and the Berlin Institute of Technology (TU) and supported by the University of Kufa².

Considering that archaeological work at al-Hīra started in 1931, it is not surprising that the conclusiveness and informative value of the available data varies greatly. This refers in particular to the earliest explorations and soundings. Their exact position remains vague or even unknown. Another difficulty is that pottery and small finds were documented very briefly if at all. Against this backdrop one objective of our work was the definition of exact geodata and mapping of all sites of previous archaeological activities on georeferenced satellite images. Based on a close analysis of the respective reports and their synchronisation with satellite images, a preliminary map was produced. During the survey the data were checked on the ground and the map was corrected if necessary. In addition, archaeological sites identified in the Archaeological Atlas

of Iraq (Tulūl Kunaidira, Tell al-Khwarnaq) and sites that were known or subject to investigations by Iraqi colleagues in 2007, 2009, and 2011 were added³. The resulting map (fig. 1) shows the location of 10 archaeological sites or groups of mounds, with the exception of the excavation conducted by the Oxford University Team in 1931. While it was possible to identify an area that most probably contains the Oxford mounds, due to the disturbed nature of the surface, it was not possible to confirm this on the ground.

Linked to the mapping program was the reassessment and (re)interpretation of the available data about small finds according to the present state of knowledge. Based on the combination and comparative analysis of this body of evidence, a first working hypothesis was put forward. Accordingly, the earliest traces of usage and settlement activities are found in the more easternmost find-places such as Maqbarat Abū Sukhair, Maqbarat Umm Khasham and Tell Satih (MAS, MUKh and TS on fig. 1). With respect to Maqbarat Abū Sukhair, a chronological outline from the 1st to the 5th century AD has been proposed, whereas the majority of graves belong to the 4th and 5th centuries⁴. The sites further to the west (Airport excavations 2007-2011, AE on fig. 1) revealed finds indicating a dating between the 6th and 8th century⁵. Finally, the re-examination of the material from the brief French expedition (FE on fig. 1) published by M.-O. Rousset together with the finds from the Oxford excavations kept in the Ashmolean Museum revealed that the pottery from the survey dates to the 7th and 8th centuries exclusively⁶. In contrast to this the Oxford excavations produced pottery-types datable to the 8th century as well as types that are characteristic for the 9th and 10th centuries. This preliminary synopsis seems to indicate a shift of settlement activities from east to west resulting in the spatial juxtaposition of different use phases.

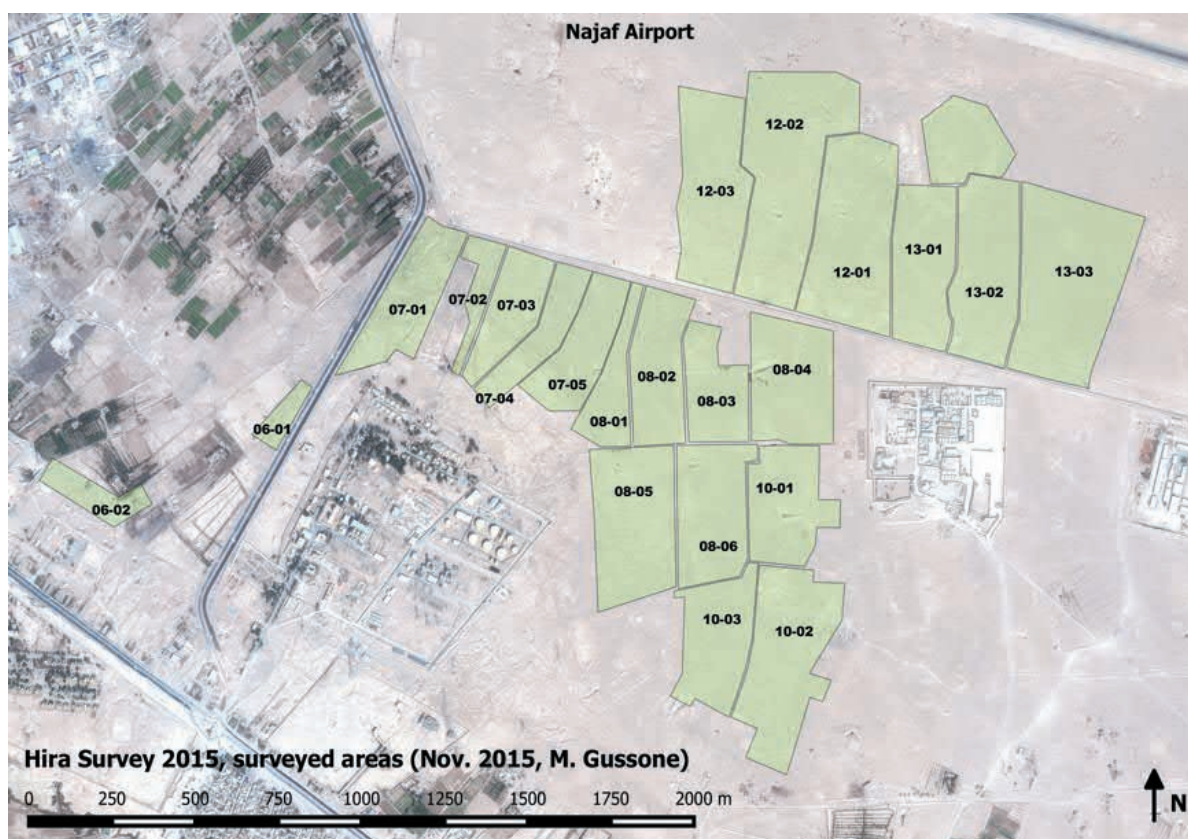


Fig. 2 – Surveyed areas located within the precincts of al-Najaf International Airport and to its south (Bing maps satellite image, modified by M. Gussone).

One of the objectives of the survey is the testing and verification of this working hypothesis by enlarging the investigated area and the systematic collection of diagnostic finds. For the survey, five areas were defined in advance: the area on the edge of the Baḥr Najaf, between Maqbarat Abū Sukhair and Kharā'ib Sadir (MAS, TKh, KhS in fig. 1), the zone around the archaeological sites in the area of al-Najaf International Airport (AE), the area around the Tulūl Kunaidira (TK) and the area of the former French expedition (FE). Due to the limited time, not all of the predefined areas were surveyed completely during this campaign.

The survey was carried out from the 6th to the 14th October 2015. Due to the different nature of the areas and sites investigated, surveying was conducted following two different methods. Sites of restricted extension such as those on the edge of Baḥr Najaf were surveyed intensively. This is to say that the team members walked in a distance of 5-10 meters. For areas of broad expanse such as those to the south and within al-Najaf Airport a different strategy was developed. The team members walked regular tracks roughly in north-south direction, taking into account ground conditions. The width of each surveyed field was approximately 200 m, the length of the tracks varied between 300-500 m. The surveying comprised the collection, documentation and evaluation of diagnostic pottery, stucco, glass and slag, the systematic description and mapping of architectural remains (mounds, tells) and of topographical features with GPS, including disturbed areas. The resulting data are combined, evaluated and presented in the form of site sheets and area sheets.

The condition of the various surveyed areas varies considerably. Consequently the informative value of the data obtained is fairly different. The entire edge of the Baḥr Najaf is severely disturbed by settlement and constructions activities as well as by erosion. The surface shows little traces of historical structures, the amount of surface finds is comparatively low. The area of the former French expedition is likewise partly settled and cultivated, though there is much surface pottery, among them moulds, wasters and slag indicating productions sites. Interestingly, only this area revealed moulds and moulded pottery. The most interesting results were obtained from the extensive surveying within the precincts of al-Najaf International Airport and to its south (fig. 2). Even if these areas are partly disturbed by former agricultural cultivation and some mounds were partially levelled in order to install military positions, it was possible to trace surface features indicating architectural structures and to collect meaningful numbers of diagnostic finds, among them two stucco plaques with incised and coloured decoration representing a cross (fig. 3). The evaluation process is still underway, but it is already quite obvious that the settlement layout consists of groups of building clusters and that areas of open space separated these clusters. In this respect our results confirm the descriptions given by the text sources. The survey also demonstrated, however, that remains of building and settlement activities cover wide areas around and beyond the clearly visible high mounds. The still ongoing mapping of the sites on georeferenced satellite images demonstrates this clearly. The finds collected from the area indicate a dating between the 6th and 8th centuries.

We express our thanks to the Max van Berchem Foundation for its generous support. The very interesting results encourage us to envisage the continuation of the survey and its expansion by way of geophysical investigations in the near future.



Fig. 3 – Stucco plaque with incised and coloured decoration.

Martina Müller-Wiener (University of Bonn)
Ulrike Siegel (DAI Berlin)
Martin Gussone (TU Berlin)
Ibrahim Salman (DAI Berlin)

¹ Most recently I. Toral-Niehoff, *Al-Hīra. Eine arabische Kulturmetropole im spätantiken Kontext*, Leiden/Boston 2014, with an extensive bibliography listing relevant earlier studies.

² We express our heartfelt thanks to the head of the Najaf Directorate, Muhammad Hadi Bidan al-Mayali and his collaborators during the survey, Walid Matar and Wissam Abd al-Hussein, to Margarete van Ess (second director of the Oriental Department of the German Archaeological Institute), Alaa al-Lami (University of Bagdad) and Nabeel al-Mezel (University of Kufa) for their great support and the mutual scientific exchange.

³ We thank the Department of Antiquities, Najaf, for providing access to the field reports and the field directors, Shakir al-Jabari and Diya Abd al-Hasan for their valuable indications.

⁴ M. Negro-Ponzi Negro-Ponzi, *Mesopotamian Glassware of the Parthian and Sasanian Period: Some Notes*, in: Marie-Dominique Nenna (ed.), *Annales du 16^e Congrès de l'Association Internationale pour l'Histoire du Verre*, Nottingham 2005, 143-144.

⁵ The unpublished reports do not provide any dating except for a general ascription to the period of al-Hīra. The proposed dating is based on personal inspection of parts of the pottery finds by M. Müller-Wiener in February 2014.

⁶ Rousset, M.-O., *Quelques précisions sur le matériel de Hīra (céramique et verre)*, in: *Archéologie Islamique* 7 (1997), 19-55.

EN COURS

Frédérique Soudan continue de rassembler des inscriptions pour le Thesaurus d'Épigraphie Islamique. La prochaine livraison sortira en juin 2017 et comprendra les inscriptions du Caucase et de l'Ukraine en plus, comme d'habitude, des mises à jour des précédentes livraisons (notamment l'Espagne, l'Arabie et l'Égypte). Elles sont disponibles à l'adresse <http://www.epigraphie-islamique.org>; leur consultation en ligne est gratuite, mais l'utilisateur est invité à s'identifier par son adresse électronique et un mot de passe.

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Elodie Vigouroux et René Elter vont reprendre l'étude du site de Khirbat al-Dūsaq, situé à 6 km de la forteresse de Shawbak (sud Jordanie). Depuis 2008, plusieurs missions de courte durée ont permis d'en dessiner le plan et d'amorcer la fouille de ce qui s'avère être un bain luxueux. La découverte de ce hammam et la possible attribution du complexe à la période ayyoubide ou mamelouke, tout comme la présence d'un gigantesque enclos, font de Khirbat al-Dūsaq un site unique en son genre. Il s'agit en effet d'un ensemble de plaisance, destiné à une élite locale, doté d'un bain et d'un verger dans une zone aujourd'hui semi-aride.

DEMANDES DE SUBVENTION

La Fondation Max van Berchem, dont le but 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 2016 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 Études (IVe Section), Paris, 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, Alan Walmsley, Université de Copenhague, et Mme Louise Martin-van Berchem, membre du Conseil de la Fondation Max van Berchem.

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Sophie Gilotte poursuit ses recherches à Albalat, une forteresse du XI^e siècle en Estrémadure (Espagne) avec des enquêtes auprès des habitants actuels de la région pour déterminer les habitudes en matières de pratiques agropastorales, d'extraction des matériaux de

construction et de production de chaux. Son équipe et elle vont aussi agrandir les zones fouillées précédemment, notamment pour identifier un probable bâtiment public et étudier les abords d'une forge. Un relevé photogrammétrique de structures fouillées antérieurement en vue d'une reconstitution 3D, des sondages profonds pour tenter de retrouver et de dater des périodes de construction antérieures sont aussi prévus ainsi que des restaurations et des analyses spécialisées.

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L'exposition **Byzance en Suisse** vient de s'ouvrir au Musée Rath à Genève. En plus de la présentation du riche patrimoine byzantin conservé dans des collections privées et publiques, elle entend aussi valoriser l'apport de la Suisse dans la "redécouverte" de cette civilisation, notamment avec des photographies et des carnets de Max van Berchem. Elle dure jusqu'au 13 mars 2016.

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Timothy Insoll a débuté une recherche archéologique sur les origines de Harar en Éthiopie. La ville est le centre islamique le plus important de la Corne de l'Afrique et n'a été que peu étudiée. Elle contient dans ses murs 2'000 maisons, 82 mosquées et plus d'une centaine de sépultures de saints et mausolées. L'approfondissement de ces connaissances permettra de mieux connaître l'islamisation, les centres urbains islamiques, les processus d'urbanisation dans la région ainsi que le commerce musulman entre la Mer rouge et les hauts-plateaux éthiopiens.

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Fathi Jarray et Nouri Boukhchim vont entamer une prospection épigraphique dans les montagnes de Matmata et de Demmer dans le sud tunisien. Cet ensemble montagneux, peuplé de Berbères Ibadites, puis Malikites établis dans des villages fortifiés, détient une position clé entre la côte méditerranéenne et les espaces sahariens avec une identité politique, administrative et culturelle propre. Toutefois, les études consacrées à cette région ont été jusqu'ici rares et un inventaire systématique des inscriptions n'a jamais été entrepris.

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Maroun Aouad poursuit ses recherches sur les manuscrits philosophiques de la bibliothèque Qarawiyin de Fès (Maroc).

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Maria Vittoria Fontana s'est rendue une dernière fois à Téhéran pour analyser la céramique mise au jour lors de ses fouilles à Estakhr en 2012; elle a établi une typologie d'après les pâtes, glaçures, techniques de fabrication, décors et formes des tessons retrouvés.

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