

PREFACE

These Proceedings are the results of the workshop *Cultural & Material Contacts in the Ancient Near East*, held at Torino the 1st and 2nd December 2014. The workshop, organised by Phd and Master Students of the University of Torino, was devoted to young scholars involved in the trending topic of the material and cultural contacts in the Ancient Near East between the 2nd millennium BC and the Parthian and Sasanian Periods. Scholars from many countries (Italy, France, England, Poland, Canada, Hungary, etc.) chose to participate to the call for papers, proposed by the Organizing Committee. The high number of participants has obliged us to select the papers and to open a larger poster session. During the two workshop days the high level of the talks was judged very promising by the participating professors, auditors and contributors and pushed us to publish it rapidly. Now this purpose has been achieved in only one year and a half after the workshop. We are proud of it also because we know that young scholars need publications to grow and to improve their carrier. We know also that usually the first papers trace a deep line in the research and in the history of each scholar. For this reason, we are glad for have given to them the chance of reaching this purpose and we are pleased that their name will be associated to this workshop. The papers, divided here in their respective sessions, show innovative approaches about archaeology, history and philology of the Ancient Near East in an integrated methodology, showing the complexity of the cultural and material contacts of this period and area.

The editors wish to thank the Centro Scavi e Ricerche Archeologiche di Torino per il Medio Oriente e l'Asia (CRAST) and the Università degli Studi di Torino (UniTO) for the publication grants and the Fondazione Fondo Ricerca e Talenti for the financial support of the workshop. We thank also the Scientific Committee – Profs. S. de Martino, C. Lippolis and V. Messina – for their work and their precious help in the reviewing of the papers. We are grateful also to the three chairpersons of the workshop sessions who have moderated and stimulated the debate: Prof. C. Mora (Università di Pavia) for the 2nd millennium, Prof. L. Peyronel (IULM – Milano) for the 1st millennium and Prof. P. Leriche (CNRS, Paris) for the Post-Assyrian Period. We would like to thank Dr. C. Greco, Director of the Museo Egizio di Torino, who has kindly open the workshop the 1st December 2014 and nevertheless, we would like to appreciate the contributors who have actively participated to the conference and, with their papers, to the publication.

The Organizing Committee

Enrico Foietta, Carolina Ferrandi, Eleonora Quirico, Francesca Giusto, Mattia Mortarini, Jacopo Bruno & Lorenzo Somma

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Questi atti sono il risultato del workshop internazionale *Cultural and Material Contacts in the Ancient Near East*, tenutosi a Torino l'1 e il 2 dicembre 2014. L'evento, organizzato da dottorandi e studenti dell'Università degli Studi di Torino, è stato espressamente rivolto a giovani studiosi interessati alla problematica dei contatti materiali e culturali nel Vicino Oriente antico tra il II millennio a.C. e l'età partico-sasanide.

Numerosi ricercatori provenienti da diversi paesi (Italia, Francia, Inghilterra, Polonia, Canada, Ungheria, ecc.) hanno scelto di partecipare al call for papers proposto dal Comitato Organizzativo. L'alto numero delle richieste ci ha obbligato a compiere una selezione tra i numerosi contributi pervenutici e ad aprire una più ampia sessione poster. Il livello degli interventi che hanno avuto luogo durante i due giorni del workshop è stato giudicato in maniera positiva dai professori presenti, dagli uditori e dai partecipanti e ci ha incoraggiato a pubblicarne gli atti il più rapidamente possibile. Questo obiettivo è stato raggiunto dopo solo un anno e mezzo. Sappiamo, infatti, che i giovani studiosi hanno bisogno di pubblicazioni per crescere e migliorare la propria carriera accademica e siamo coscienti del fatto che generalmente i primi lavori costituiscono un punto di riferimento importante per il proprio percorso di ricerca. Siamo dunque felici e orgogliosi di aver potuto dare ai partecipanti l'opportunità di presentare al pubblico accademico i loro primi e proficui lavori.

Preface

Gli interventi raccolti in questo volume, suddivisi conformemente alle diverse sessioni del workshop, mostrano approcci innovativi circa l'archeologia, la storia e la filologia del Vicino Oriente antico. L'integrazione di diverse metodologie e discipline ha permesso infatti di indagare in maniera più esaustiva la complessità dei contatti materiali e culturali nel Vicino Oriente tra il II millennio a.C. e il l'età partico-sasanide.

Gli editori desiderano ringraziare il Centro Scavi e Ricerche Archeologiche di Torino per il Medio Oriente e l'Asia (CRAST) e l'Università degli Studi di Torino (UniTo) per i contributi che hanno permesso questa pubblicazione e la Fondazione Fondo Ricerca e Talenti per il supporto finanziario per il workshop. Si ringrazia inoltre il Comitato Scientifico – formato dai proff. S. de Martino, C. Lippolis e V. Messina – per il lavoro e il prezioso aiuto nella revisione dei testi. Siamo grati inoltre ai presidenti delle tre sessioni del workshop che hanno introdotto e stimolato il dibattito: la prof.ssa C. Mora (Università di Pavia) per la parte del II millennio a.C., il prof. L. Peyronel (IULM – Milano), per la sessione del I millennio a.C. e il prof. Leriche (CNRs, Parigi), per il periodo post-assiro. Desideriamo in aggiunta ringraziare il dott. C. Greco, Direttore del Museo Egizio di Torino, che ha gentilmente acconsentito ad aprire la prima giornata del workshop e, infine, tutti i partecipanti che hanno contribuito alla buona riuscita di questo workshop con i loro interessanti lavori.

Il Comitato Organizzativo

Enrico Foietta, Carolina Ferrandi, Eleonora Quirico, Francesca Giusto, Mattia Mortarini, Jacopo Bruno & Lorenzo Somma

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ANGELO DI MICHELE

FROM BABYLONIA TO ASSYRIA:
REFLECTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS ON THE NABÛ TEMPLES

ABSTRACT

The importance that gradually the god Nabû acquires starting from the end of the 13th century BC in Babylonia and Assyria was widely discussed with the help of written sources by historians and philologists. Archaeological research has provided a rich architectural documentation that allows to analyze how this cult had its architectural definition both in South and North Mesopotamia. Basing on the analysis of the architectural space of Nabû's temples we will try to highlight their salient features in sacred architecture both of Babylon and Assyria with the purpose of focusing on common characters, distinctive features and, finally, reciprocal influences.

KEYWORDS

Assyria, Babylonia, Ezida, Nabû, temple

Within the complex process of interaction between Assyria and Babylonia, the figure of the god Nabû provides an excellent case study. A large corpus of epigraphical sources and abundant archaeological evidence such as architectural, intended as places of deity cults, and figurative art, understood as the representations of the god and the symbols connected with their cult, allow an almost unique observation of ancient Mesopotamia. The circulation of a cult of Babylonia was accepted, and reworked, in the Assyrian area.

The question of the Nabû cult in Babylonia and Assyria has been approached from an historical perspective, with priority given to the vast corpus of textual sources which have revealed an increase in the worship of this deity, in particular during the 1st millennium BC¹. Written sources provide wide ranging information on the role of Nabû in the Babylonian and Assyrian pantheon, including information about practices, rituals and performances linked to his cult. In these historical contexts, archaeological evidence, in particular sacred building remains, provide additional information about the architectonic context in which the Nabû cult was performed. In fact, archaeological excavations have uncovered temples dedicated to Nabû, both in southern Mesopotamia, at Birs Nimrud, its principal place of cult, and at Babylon, in northern Mesopotamia, where temples of Nabû were uncovered at Nimrud, Khorsabad, Nineveh and Qal'at Shergat².

Methodological studies on sacred architecture have often undergone a privileged typological approach based on the plan of the buildings or on a particular feature of it, such as the shape of the cella. This study aims to interpret the spatial organization of Nabû temples as a reflection of social and cultural contexts. In order to provide the architectural and archaeological contexts, data has been inferred from epigraphical sources. Traits that will be analyzed in this paper which will form the focus for investigating these temples are: the topographical and urban context where the temple is located; the arrangement of the main cult sector; the presence of auxiliary places for the cult; the acknowledgment of auxiliary courts and rooms intended for specific functions; and finally, the recognition of places used for tablet storage and scholarly activities.

I. SOUTHERN MESOPOTAMIA

I.1. *Archaeological Data*

The analysis of the written sources allows us to observe the gradually increasing popularity of the cult of the god Nabû in the Babylonian pantheon. The emergence of the god around the end of the 2nd millennium, at the end of the Kassite period, during the reign of Kudur-Enlil (1254-1246 BC), is based on the symbol of Nabû appearing on *kudurru*³, although during the Kassite period the god Nabû was not mentioned in any royal inscriptions⁴. The period that follows the collapse of the Kassite reign shows an

¹ On the god Nabû, see POMPONIO, SEIDL 1998–2001; POMPONIO 1978.

² In addition to this list of temples of Nabû a probable temple of Nabû was excavated at Tell Halaf, in Syrian Jezirah, dating to when the site was under Assyrian rule. HEINRICH 1982, 270–271.

³ POMPONIO, SEIDL 1998–2001, 24. As well as on *kudurru* dating to king Kudur-Enlil, Nabû appears in some *kudurru* dating from the last kings of the Kassite period such as Meli-Šihu (1186–1172 BC) and Marduk-apla-iddina I (1171–1159 BC). POMPONIO 1978, 47–48.

⁴ Nevertheless, the popularity of the god Nabû is well documented in the Kassite period by onomastics; the name of the god in this period, in fact, was used as theophoric element. POMPONIO, SEIDL 1998–2001, 18.

increasing importance of Nabû⁵. During this historical phase the salient features of the god were defined. Nabû as god of wisdom is attested by an inscription on a *kudurru* dated to the reign of Murduk-apla-iddina I (1171-1159 BC)⁶; while in an inscription that refers to restoration work conducted by King Adad-apla-iddina (1066-1044 BC) in Ezida of Birs Nimrud, this site is designated as the main place of the cult of Nabû, in fact, in this inscription, Nabû is named “Lord of Barsippa”⁷ and “son of Marduk”⁸. The imposition of the cult of Nabû on Birs Nimrud determines a cultic change in this place of worship that was previously dedicated to Marduk. Although written sources allow us to understand the evolution of the god from the end of the 2nd millennium, the current state of archaeological data available for the temples of Nabû to Birs Nimrud and Babylon does not identify the temple beyond the 7th century BC. It should be noted that for both temples, written sources document an earlier pre-existence of these places of worship than the date supplied by archaeological research. Regarding the archaeological data, it does not go back earlier than the 7th century BC, although the royal onomastics of the 1st millennium BC comprehensively document the importance of Nabû in this historical period.

The main place of cult of Nabû, Ezida, as said above, is located in Birs Nimrud (Barsippa) and consists of a large enclosure that surrounds an area of approximately 350x200 m, in which the main buildings are the ziqqurat and the temple. The temple complex (fig. 1) was only partially investigated and the excavation reports are also spread out over time⁹. The temple is particularly damaged in the eastern sector; however, it has at least three entrances from the outside preserved: two located on the north-west side and one to the south-west behind the main temple. During the German excavations of the early 1900s, directed by R. Koldewey, the sacred complex was divided into five sectors marked by the letters A-E. Among them, A, B and C are interpreted as cultic places. These sectors have the same planimetric scheme, key elements in which are the temple and a courtyard surrounded by auxiliary rooms on three sides.

The main place of cult, temple A, with its court, occupies the central sector of the complex, while the temples B and C with their respective courts are located respectively to the west and east of temple A. The complex was probably equipped with more than the three entrances identified by archaeological excavations; however, on the basis of this evidence we are able to say that all approaches lead into court A. Temples B and C probably had no independent entrances. So according to the data available, the internal circulation is distributed by court A that communicates with the courts of the temples B and C through a vestibule.

The hierarchy of cultic places, as well as the size of the courts and temples, is also suggested by the internal division of the temples themselves. Temple A is tripartite, Temple C is bipartite, and temple B has a single room and is provided with two small annexes located in the area behind the cella. The temples share other features, such as the broad-room cella, inside which the main installation, the niche, is located in the middle of the former's end wall, aligned with the entrance. In temples A and C, the niche is connected to a leaning platform. Finally, the temple sector is completed by several auxiliary rooms, some of which communicate directly with the cella.

The Temple of Nabû ša Ḥarē in Babylon is located in the district named KÁ.DINGIR.RA in epigraphical texts TIN.TIR¹⁰. The building is situated approximately 13 m to the west of the processional street, along a secondary road axis¹¹.

The temple (fig. 2) shows two building phases that do not entail substantial changes. The walls of phase 1 have been used as foundations for those of phase 2. The phase 1 building dates to the reign of Aššur-ahhe-iddina (680-669 BC)¹², while the reconstruction, which does not involve any substantial modifications of the building's planimetric layout, dates to the reign of Nabû-kudurri-ušur II (604-562 BC). The temple of Nabû covers an area of 93x60 m, and it has two entrances. The main entrance opens onto the street which links the temple and the Processional Way. This gate is preceded by two free-standing platforms in alignment with the entrance. A secondary entry-way is located on the northern side. The temple is organized in two rectangular courts. The largest is

⁵ Nabû appears in the first royal inscriptions during the reign of Marduk-šāpik-zēri (1081-1069 BC). POMPONIO, SEIDL 1998-2001, 18.

⁶ *Ibidem* 1998-2001, 18.

⁷ The epigraphic sources seem to suggest that in the Old-Babylonian period Ezida of Barsippa was a center of cult to the god Marduk. POMPONIO, SEIDL 1998-2001, 17. In particular, the attribution to Nabû of Ezida of Barsippa appears to have occurred at a later stage than the kingdom of Marduk-apla-iddina I. POMPONIO, SEIDL 1998-2001, 19.

⁸ Nabû is named with Marduk in several *kudurru*. POMPONIO, SEIDL 1998-2001, 18. The most ancient epigraphical record where Nabû is called son of Marduk date to the reign of Enlil-nādim-apli (1101-1097 BC).

⁹ Field excavations began in 1879 with H. Rassam. (READE 1986, 106-111). The work was resumed at the beginning of the 1900s by R. Koldewey. (KOLDEWEY 1911, 50-59). Finally, in recent decades, the excavations have been undertaken by an Austrian archaeological mission. (ALLINGER, CSOLLIICH 1998).

¹⁰ GEORGE 1985, 12.

¹¹ The building has been excavated by Iraqi archaeologists and lacks a comprehensive edition of excavation data. For a summary of the excavation data see DAMERJI 2012, 42-46.

¹² AL-MUTAWALLI 1999.

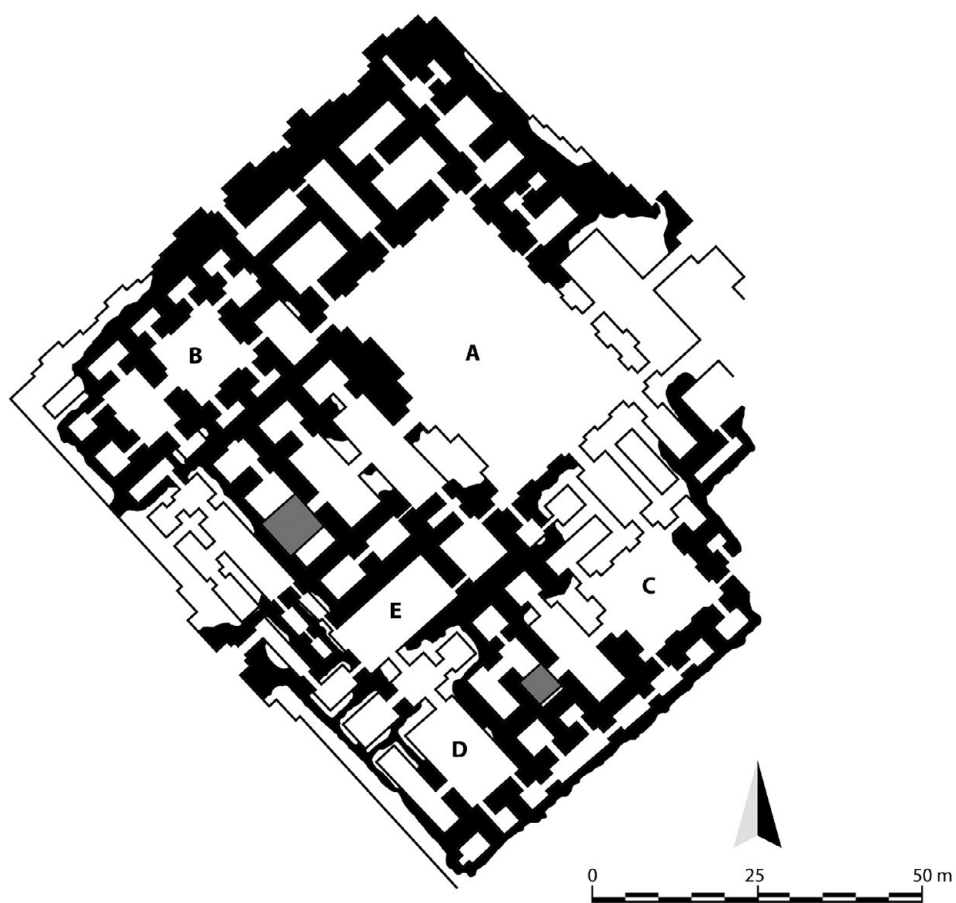


Fig. 1 - Ezida of Birs Nimrud (after Heinrich 1982, pl. 394, drawing by the author).

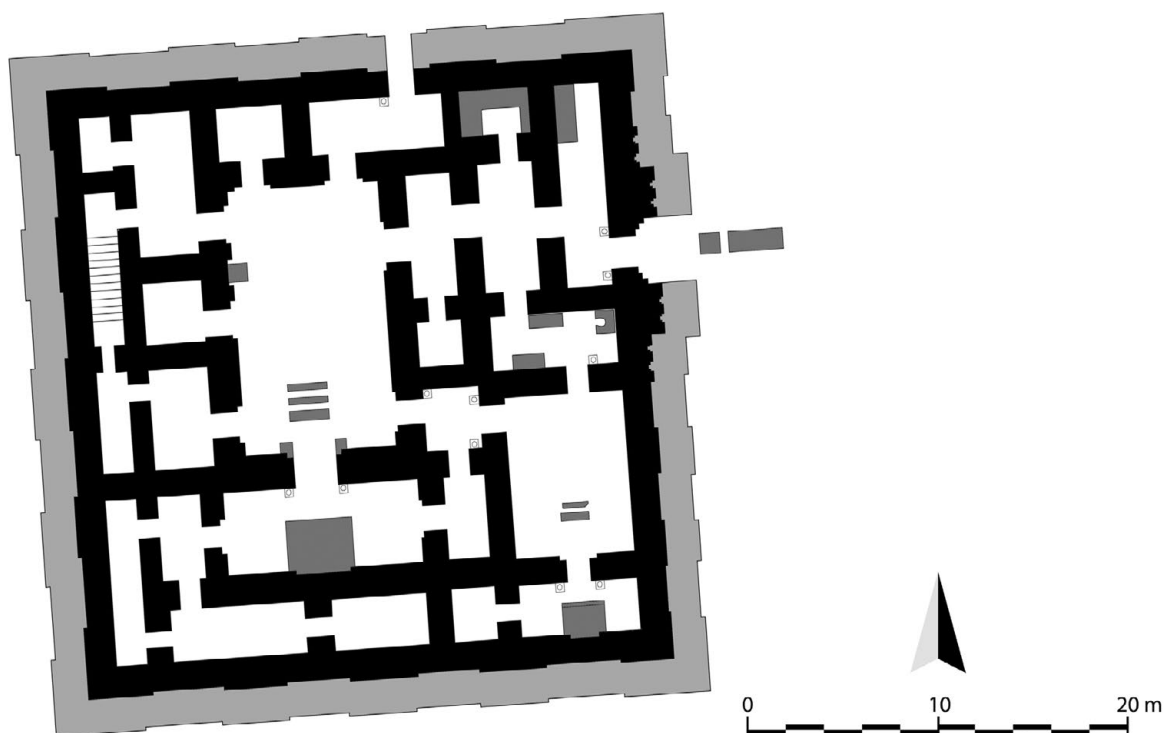


Fig. 2 - Temple of Nabû ša Ḫarē in Babylon (after Damerji 2012, fig. 35, drawing by the author).

surrounded by auxiliary rooms on three sides, while the fourth, southern, side is entirely occupied by the single-room temple. The court is provided with numerous installations: three freestanding platforms are located in front of the temple access, arranged on the same axis as the temple gate. Two leaning platforms are close to the uprights of the gateway to the cella, while another, made of mud-brick, is built against the western wall of the court and is provided with a niche decorated with overlapping bands of black and white. In the middle of the cella's end wall there is a niche and a leaning platform, both aligned with the entrance. Moreover, the cella has two additional side entrances, opening onto auxiliary rooms.

A secondary place of worship, composed of a temple and a court, is smaller but has the same arrangement as the main place. Within the court, two free-standing platforms are aligned with the temple entrance¹³. The single-room temple is provided with the same cult installations as the main temple, the niche and platform, in the middle of the back wall of the cella. The cella is connected to an auxiliary room on the west.

I.2. Discussion

The topographic and urban planning perspective clearly reflects the different roles of the Nabû building in Birs Nimrud compared to that of the Nabû ša Ḫarē Temple in Babylon. In fact, the temple of Nabû in Birs Nimrud presents itself as the primary architectural space that can affect the urban landscape (townscape) of the site. This is in contrast with the temple of Nabû, which is certainly located in a major urban area of Babylon, but it does not play the same role of core generator and organizer of the urban structure as does the Nabû complex in Birs Nimrud. Another element that distinguishes the two buildings is the inclusion of the temple of Birs Nimrud in a complex where other architectural structures are situated, such as the ziqqurat and an enclosure with auxiliary rooms.

As regards the layout of the temples of Nabû, they are characterized by the presence of the same distinctive elements that distinguish traditional Babylonian temples during the 1st millennium BC: the broad-room cella, a court located in front of the temple and the cult installations such as a niche and leaning or free-standing platforms. In fact, the element of originality cannot be identified in architectural features, but can be seen in the organization of the cultic spaces within the building. The main temple and the auxiliary places of worship each occupy a different sector within the sacred building: the main temple is the core of the building, whereas the auxiliary temples occupy peripheral sectors.

Communication between these cultic places is achieved via the connection made between the court-

yard of the main temple with the courts of the auxiliary temples, with passages mediated by a vestibule. The arrangements of the temples inside the sacred complex, the dimensional scale of the places of worship and internal circulation are all elements that identify a definite and strict hierarchy between the temples.

The presence of hierarchically structured areas of worship within a single building is well attested in southern Mesopotamia and there are two patterns: one that provides for the placement of the main temple and places of auxiliary worship in separate areas of the sacred complex; the second involves the arrangement of auxiliary cultic places in the same court of the main temple.

During the Neo-Babylonian period, the first trend is an exclusive feature of the temples of Nabû and the second trend is documented at various sacred buildings such as the temples of Ninurta and Marduk in Babylon¹⁴ and the temple of Tell Haddad¹⁵.

The Temple of Nabû has areas and rooms used for functions not strictly related to worship; for some of these rooms a function connected with scholarly activities has been proposed, in particular in some rooms located in the north-east sector of the Temple of Nabû ša Ḫarē¹⁶.

II. NORTHERN MESOPOTAMIA

II.1. Archaeological Data

An important text of Sîn-šarru-iškun (626–612 BC) summarizes an exhaustive history of the kings who are distinguished for having built temples dedicated to the god Nabû¹⁷. This inscription, in addition to other written sources and archaeological evidence, allows us to observe the evolution of the cult of Nabû in Assyria. A Sîn-šarru-iškun inscription mentions previous kings who had built places of cult for Nabû, identifying Šulmānu-ašarēd I (1263-1234 BC) as the first builder of a temple of Nabû in Assyria. In the current state of archaeological research, no sacred building dedicated to Nabû can be attributed to Šulmānu-ašarēd I. However, the importance of the god Nabû in Assyria during the 13th century BC is documented by an important artifact found in the temple of Ištār in Qal'at Shergat. It is an alabaster pedestal bearing an

¹³ In two rooms in the northeast sector of the complex, numerous tablets were recovered that are devoid of chronological references. It is therefore assumed that they were related to simple writing exercises. CAVIGNEAUX 2008.

¹⁴ For the Marduk temple see HEINRICH 1982, 310-312; for the Ninurta temple see Ivi 1982, 317.

¹⁵ On the Tell Haddad temple see MIGLUS 2009, 160-161.

¹⁶ CAVIGNEAUX 1981.

¹⁷ MEINHOLDS 2009, Text n. 16, 445-466.

inscription of king Tukulti-Ninurta I (1233-1197 BC)¹⁸. The king appears on a relief located on one side of the altar, depicted in two different poses in front of an altar topped by a symbol of the god Nabû¹⁹.

From the 9th century onwards, epigraphical and archaeological data show the growing popularity of the god Nabû, promoted by the Assyrian kings. In the temple of Nabû, built in Nimrud during the reign of Adad-nārārī III²⁰, the Kalhu governor, Bēl-tarši-īlu, engraves an inscription on two statues of divine attendants placed outside the shrine of Nabû, in which a prayer is dedicated to the god Nabû, to the king and the king's mother Sammu-rammât²¹. The main interest of this text has already been noted, and resides in the exhortation that the governor makes to his king to rely on the god Nabû, as expressed by the formula: «trust in Nabû; trust in no other gods»²². The reign of Šarru-kīn II (721-705 BC) was particularly favorable to the god Nabû. Šarru-kīn II restored the Nabû temple at Nineveh²³ and in his new town's foundations, Khorsabad, a large building on the citadel was dedicated to Nabû. During his reign, an important hierarchical change involving gods Nabû and Marduk occurred. In fact, up to the previous stage the traditional Babylonian order of mentioning these gods in official inscriptions which provided the mention of god name Nabû after that of Marduk had been maintained. During the reign of Šarru-kīn II, this order changed²⁴. The period following Šarru-kīn II's reign, during the Sin-aḥḫe-eriba kingdom, marks a momentary break in the presence of Nabû in royal inscriptions²⁵. However, as early as the reign of the Aššur-aḥḫe-iddina, Nabû again assumes a prominent role in the Assyrian pantheon. Written sources dating to the reign of Aššur-aḥḫe-iddina show the king active in promoting restoration work, carried out in many temples of Nabû, including Birs Nimrud, Babylon and Nineveh²⁶. Written sources testify to the commitment of the last Assyrian kings, Aššur-bāni-apli (669-631 BC)²⁷ and Aššur-etil-ilāni²⁸ (631-627 BC), in promoting restoration work carried out in many temples of Nabû in southern Mesopotamia sites, such as Barsippa and Babylon, and in northern Mesopotamia, such as Nineveh and Nimrud. To conclude, in the last period of the Assyrian kingdom, Sîn-šarru-iškun built an important temple dedicated to Nabû at Qal'at Shergat.

Based on the current state of research, Ezida of Nimrud can be considered an archetype of the temples of Khorsabad, Tell Halaf and Qal'at Shergat²⁹.

The complex of Ezida on the acropolis of Nimrud seems to be the result of different building operations from the reign of Adad-nārārī III onwards³⁰. The architectural (fig. 3) constitutes three main groups of rooms located in as many courts of different dimensions. The access, named the fish gate³¹, is located on the northern side. A wide rectangular court, which

occupies the north-eastern area of the building, is accessible from the outside throughout the vestibule NTS 13. Communication between the outer court and the other two courts of the building is mediated through vestibules. The sacred core of the Ezida is located in the southern sector and is composed of two temples (NT 4 and NT 5), each consisting of two rooms: an antecella and a long-room cella. They were built next to each other and occupied the western side of the inner court. The two temples show differentiation factors; in fact, temple NT 4 is bigger and has the access to the antecella marked by buttresses and statues of divine attendants. The sacred sector is isolated from the boundary walls of the edifice by a corridor (NT 3, 6 and 8), which is linked both to the cella and to the antecella. Temple NT 4 is the main structure within the complex, and is therefore interpreted as the temple of Nabû. There is no epigraphical evidences that temple NT 5 is dedicated to Tašmetu, as suggested by M. Mallowan³². In the same court of temples, NT 4 and NT 5 open on at least 4 rooms with functions related to scholarly activities: NT 12, 14, 16, and 17³³.

¹⁸ During the reign of Tukulti-Ninurta I a *limmu* had a name composed with theophonic Nabû: Nabû-bēla-ušur. POMPONIO, SEIDL 1998-2001, 19.

¹⁹ Question of divergence between the relief, with the representation of the symbol of Nabû, and the inscription, which bears a dedication to the god Nusku was summed up by M. Herles, to whom please refer for a discussion of the state of the matter. HERLES 2006.

²⁰ In an inscription Adad-nārārī III is also known as the builder of the Temple of Nabû at Nineveh; while in Sîn-šarru-iškun, an inscription attributed the restoration of the Temple of Nabû in Assyria to Adad-nārārī III. POMPONIO 1978, 70-71.

²¹ POMPONIO, SEIDL 1998-2001, 19. On Bēl-tarši-īlu: FALES 2012, 119-128.

²² PORTER 1997, 254.

²³ Ivi 1997, 256, n. 11.

²⁴ Ivi 1997, 254-255.

²⁵ Ivi 1997, 257.

²⁶ Ivi 1997, 256-258.

²⁷ Ivi 1997, 260.

²⁸ Whose baked bricks were found in rooms NTS 8 and 10 and in shrine NTS 2. MALLOWAN 1966 vol. 1, 236-237.

²⁹ Unfortunately, the archaeological evidence from the temples at Nineveh is not well preserved, though excavated materials confirm that Adad-nārārī III constructed the temple of Nabû in this city, upon which both Šarru-kīn II and Aššur-bāni-apli carried out reconstructive work. POMPONIO, SEIDL 1998-2001, 20. For archaeological remains of the temple of Nabû at Nineveh: THOMPSON, HUTCHINSON 1929, 103-148.

³⁰ Also the building of Nabû at Nineveh is attributed to king Adad-nārārī III, on the base of epigraphic evidence. GRAYSON 1996, 218-220.

³¹ The name derives from the presence of statues flanking the entrance, statues denominated in excavation reports *mermen*. MALLOWAN 1966, vol.1, 233-235, fig. 198.

³² Ivi 1966, vol. 1, 263.

³³ OATES 1957, 29-30.

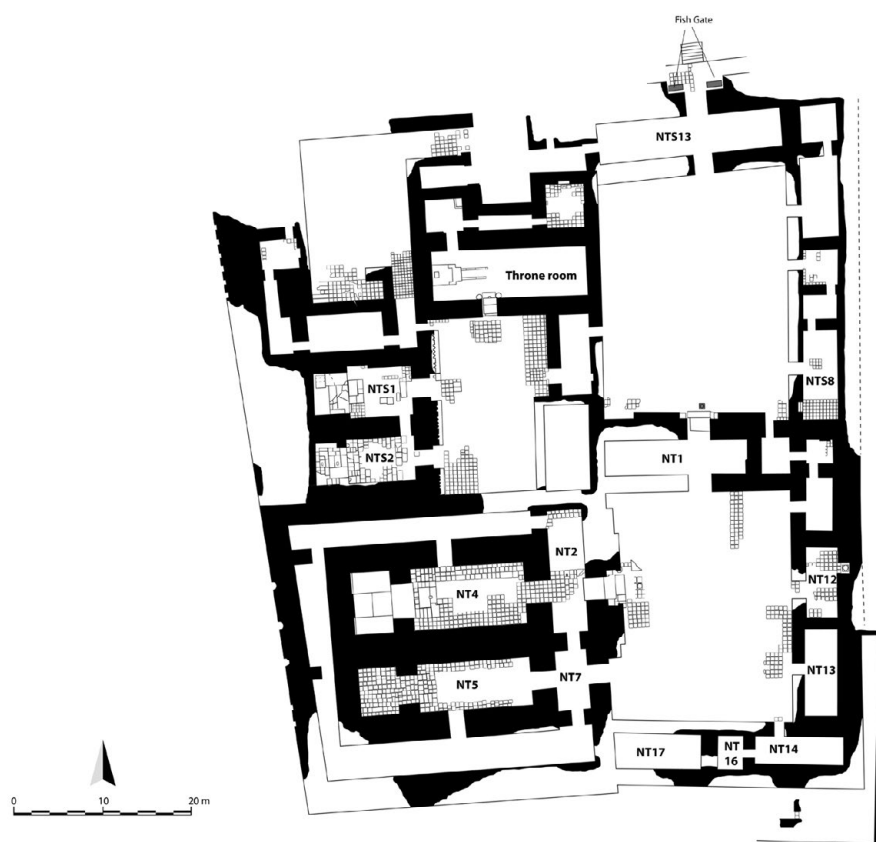


Fig. 3 - Ezida of Nimrud (after Heinrich 1982, pl. 349, drawing by the author).

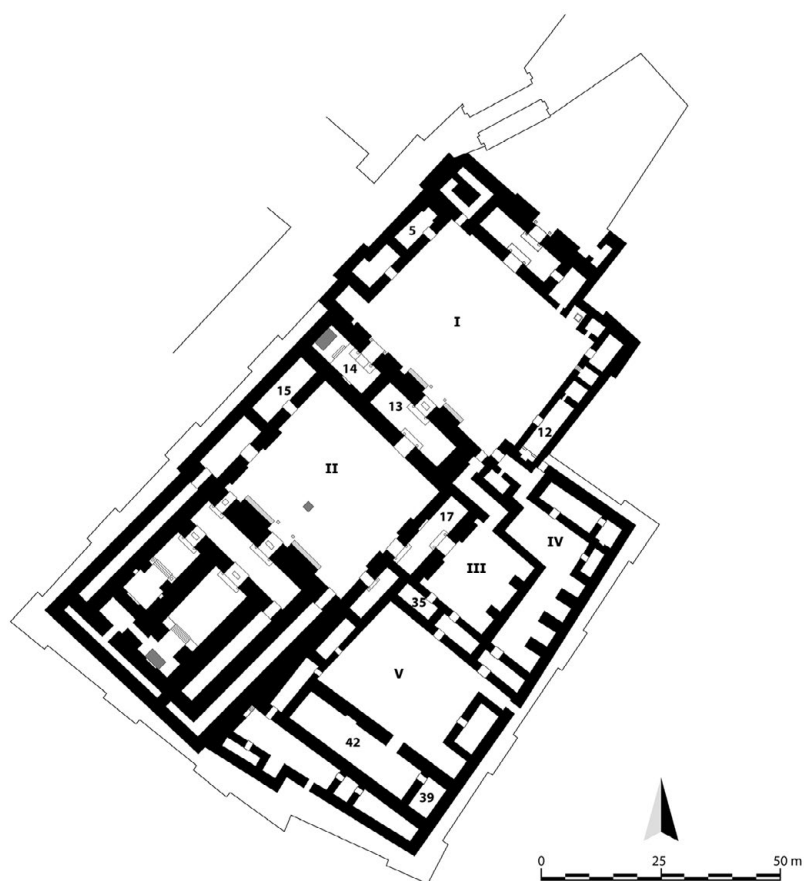


Fig. 4 - Temple of Nabû in Khorsabad (after Heinrich 1982, pl. 355, drawing by the author).

FEDERICO MANUELLI

WHAT REMAINS WHEN CONTACT BREAKS OFF? SURVIVAL OF KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNIQUES IN THE MATERIAL CULTURE OF THE PERIPHERAL REGIONS OF THE HITTITE EMPIRE AFTER ITS DISSOLUTION

ABSTRACT

The last centuries of the 2nd Millennium BC in the Near East are characterized by the collapse of the Late Bronze Age polity and by the disintegration of its economic system. Nonetheless, recent research carried out in Anatolia allowed to reconsider the decay of the Hittite Empire as a slow process of internal weakening and power decentralisation instead of an abrupt catastrophe. With the disappearance of the centralised power and the loss of the administrative role of Hattuša, new independent political entities were able to flourish in some regions at the edges of the Hittite core. This paper analyses the survival of the Hittite material culture into the 12th-10th Century BC through assemblages of some of these southern and south-eastern Anatolian sites. Its goal is to inspect the residual manifestations of this long-lasting cultural and material interaction, clarifying the weight and significance of a phenomenon that occurred in a period marked by the decline of long-range political relations.

KEYWORDS

Late Bronze-Iron Age transition, Arslantepe, monumental relief, ceramic production and use, glyptic material

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by Alice Siracusano (*Archivio Missione Archeologica Italiana in Anatolia Orientale*).

I. MATERIAL CULTURE AND POLITICAL CONTACTS IN THE SYRO-ANATOLIAN REGION AT THE TURN OF THE 1ST MILLENNIUM BC

Material culture is a medium that allows the analysis of the contacts that existed between ancient civilisations from several points of view. In the specific case of the so-called “international period” the visibility of material and cultural contacts, resulting from the increased political relations and the expansion of the early empires, is well reflected in the archaeological record.

But what happens to the material culture when the political system fails? What remains of the contacts when the relations break off? This paper illustrates selected cases of continuity or discontinuity of the contacts that occurred during the last centuries of the 2nd Millennium BC in the Syro-Anatolian region, passing through the period of the Late Bronze Age centralised-powers collapse.

The historical background of the research is rooted in the Hittite expansion of the 14th-13th Century BC, which created an intensive circulation of artifacts, techniques, knowledge and in general ideas between the motherland and its neighbouring areas¹. However, the ensuing political consolidation of some regions at the edge of the empire, from southern and south-eastern Anatolia to northern Syria, and the contemporary progressive economical weakening of Hattuša, provoked the gradual loss of the position of power that the capital had during the previous centuries as well as the governmental and religious decentralisation towards provincial sites².

The following formation, in these peripheral regions, of the Early Iron Age independent polities of the 12th-11th Century BC is a consequence of the abovementioned changes. Even if no evidence for the continuation of the Hittite tradition is attested during the Early Iron Age in the central Anatolia plateau, with

¹ See PODANY 2010, 243-264.

² SEEHER 2010, 220-221.

the exception of a feeble longevity in some aspect of ceramic production, some forms of stability are clearly visible in the previous provincial territories³. Linguistically and politically this is evident through the use of the Luwian hieroglyphic system of writing and the organisation of the communities still according to monarchy systems based on family ties⁴. Hints for the continuity of dynastic lines from the late-imperial period are indeed attested in inscriptions from the Euphrates regions and, with more scepticism, from the southern Konya and the Cilicia plains, in addition to the emergence of a new influent kingdom linked to the Hittite royalty in the 'Amuq valley⁵. These historical circumstances are well-reflected in material culture. Stone sculptures with religious and dynastic celebration themes adorning monumental architecture and the decoration of open-spaces monitoring the territory through a combination of texts and images, display the endurance of the Hittite ideology⁶. Moreover, the long-lasting employment of specific groups of seals and the survival of aspects of ceramic manufacturing are witnesses of how the memory of particular Late Bronze Age practices is still tangible in the customs of the new societies⁷. Despite the apparent consistency of this scenario, several doubts emerge: why the new societies linked their cultural expressions to these old trends? Did the transitional period evolve for them without any specific consciousness of the transformations or, conversely, how did they perceive the changes? An attempt to answer these questions is provided in the following pages⁸.

II. THE EARLY IRON AGE AT ARSLANTEPE AS A CASE-STUDY

The paper examines some controversial cases of residual manifestation of the Hittite culture in the peripheral areas of the empire after its demise, that emphasize the complexity of this phenomenon and might help to better understand some of its aspects. Specific problematic related to each group of analysed material are also stressed in order to contextualize the discussion within the framework of the late-2nd Millennium BC Syro-Anatolian world. The analysis deals with iconographic data and archaeological finds. Monumental reliefs, glyptic material and pottery production are specifically selected to inspect this interesting endurance of cultural and material contacts that started between a "center" and a "periphery" and later developed *in absentia* of specific political relations among the parts previously involved⁹.

The focus is mainly on the site of Arslantepe and its region, the Malatya plain, located in the central-eastern part of the Anatolian plateau, due to its important role in the period and the abundance of data, in addition to the significant results obtained through the renewed investigations of the Iron Age phases¹⁰.

Arslantepe offers important insights into the theme here inspected, especially given the dearth of direct evidence coming so far from Karkemiš concerning the 12th-11th Century BC¹¹. In this framework, the historical circumstances characterizing the site are emblematic. During the Late Bronze Age, the settlement was culturally and politically linked to the Hittite Empire and known as the peripheral city of Malitiya, identified through cuneiform texts from Boğazköy¹². On the other hand, reliefs and rock inscriptions dated to the Early Iron Age discovered at the site and in its surrounding territory, allow to deduce the existence of an important regional polity, namely Malizi, with its capital at Arslantepe and its domain extending to a vast territory westwards of the site¹³. Inscriptions record the earlier Malizi rulers as immediate descendants of Kuzi-Tešub, the last known king of the Hittite dynasty who governed at Karkemiš at the end of the 13th Century BC, providing clear evidence of political continuity¹⁴. Renewed excavations, took place at Arslantepe from 2007 to 2010 in the area where the famous "Lions Gate" has been unearthed in the 1930s, and recent analyses, carried out on the Late Bronze-Iron Age materials coming from both the old and the new investigations, are confirming and widening the aforementioned historical picture¹⁵. An uninterrupted 13th-11th Century BC sequence, characterized by the succession of three different fortified city-walls, have been brought to light. Insights into associated materials allow the identification of a strong continuity and the conservation of aspects of the Hittite tradition following the political breakdown.

³ For an overview of the situation in central Anatolia see GENZ 2013, 472-476 and for wider reflections on the topic see SUMMERS in press.

⁴ KLENGEL 2000, 26-28; HAWKINS 2008, 34-35.

⁵ See HAWKINS 2000, 77-83, 288-289, 426-429 and *Idem* 2013. For different interpretations and new hypothesis see BRYCE 2012, 21-22, 28-29, 85-87; SIMON 2013; FORLANINI 2014, 258-260.

⁶ MAZZONI 2013a, 469-473.

⁷ See YALÇIN 2013, 198-199; MORA 2014, 139-140, 143-144.

⁸ The concepts of "consciousness" and "perception" of the cultural changes of the Late Bronze-Iron Age transition have been examined by BONATZ (2000, 210) and MAC SWEENEY (2011, 67-69).

⁹ See NOVÁK 2015, 343-345.

¹⁰ See LIVERANI 2012.

¹¹ See ARO 2013, 247-256; WEEDER 2013, 6-7; HAWKINS, PEKER 2014; GILBERT in press.

¹² See DE MARTINO 2012.

¹³ HARMAŇSAH 2011a, 65-78.

¹⁴ HAWKINS 2000, 282-329; BRYCE 2012, 98-109.

¹⁵ See LIVERANI 2012; MANUELLI 2012.



Fig. 1 - Arslantepe. The two new bas-reliefs (late-11th/early 10th Century BC).

III. IMAGES, SIGNS AND OBJECTS: SOME CASES OF CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY IN THE TRANSMISSION OF KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNIQUES

Before entering into the details of the analysis, it is necessary to note that the variety in the nature, meaning and evolution through time of the examined categories requires dissimilar approaches and provides diversified results.

The iconography of Hittite monumental art and its related ideology probably represents the most intriguing form of survival of a Late Bronze Age tradition into the new era. The problem of dating the individual stylistic-groups, at the transition from the Hittite to the post-Hittite period is undeniable, given the difficulty to identify a general development of this art¹⁶. This fact is mainly due to the differences in style found at contemporary places and to the generalised paucity of the research to improve the comprehension of the local evolution of the individual workshops prior to pursuing broader reconstructions. Differences and similarities in iconography and style could in fact transpire from factors beyond the chronological, such as geographical or cultural¹⁷. Furthermore, the existence of long-lived traits or deliberate archaisms can mislead the dating of the monuments in the absence of reliable contexts. Another problem arises from the reuse of slabs, a practice widely attested in the Syro-Anatolian world, because of the evident difficulty in working and transporting new blocks. Nonetheless, since stylistic and iconographic evolutions are often the only criteria to identify a secondary use of the slabs, several cases remain questionable, especially in the absence of clarifying inscriptions or stratigraphic and architectonic

hints¹⁸. In this framework, the reuse of old sculptures inevitably leads to the reproduction and proliferation of ancient trends and the visibility and accessibility to the archaic subjects must have prompted the new artisans to find at least part of their inspiration in these sources. The presence of older themes in younger reliefs seems thus to represent a natural tendency in the evolution of this form of art, although inevitably it increases the problem concerning the dating of the single groups.

Within these arguments the Arslantepe case is iconic. The fact that the reliefs found in the 8th Century BC “Lions Gate” were reused from a 12th-11th Century BC context is ascertained on palaeographic and stylistic analyses and emphasizes the existence of trends devoted and linked to the past¹⁹. Insights into this topic are obtained thanks to the new data gained during the 2010 campaign. Two new bas-reliefs have been found lying on the floor connected with the latest of the abovementioned superimposed city-walls, the use of which can be set between the mid-12th and the very beginning of the 10th Century BC (Fig. 1).

¹⁶ ORTHMANN 2002, 153-155.

¹⁷ See SASS 2005, 91.

¹⁸ The reuse in the “Water Gate” of reliefs coming from earlier 2nd Millennium BC buildings at Karkemış can for instance be assumed on this basis (ÖZYAR 1998, 634-635; GILBERT 2011, 25-28). Differently, a secondary use of the small-orthostats at Tell Halaf from an early building in the 9th Century BC temple-palace seems to be assumed thanks to the presence of earlier inscriptions on the sculptures and a lack of a formal or logical correlation between the neighbouring blocks (ÖZYAR 2008, 404-406; ORTHMANN 2013, 535-536; GILBERT 2014, 42-43).

¹⁹ HAWKINS 2000, 296-297, 306; MAZZONI 1997, 311-313.

SÉGOLÈNE DE PONTBRIAND

EUROPOS-DURA AT THE CONVERGENCE OF HELLENISTIC, PARTHIAN AND ROMAN ARCHITECTURES: THE CASE OF GOVERNOR LYSIAS' RESIDENCE

ABSTRACT

The well known archaeological site of Europos-Dura in Syria offers an unique example of the civilization of the Roman Near East in the middle of the third century AD, since it has been totally abandoned in AD 256 after a Sasanian siege.

Discovered in 1920 and actively excavated by two successive expeditions who opened about 20 % of its surface¹, between the two World Wars, Europos was generally considered as a Parthian² then a Roman city.

But this perspective has now been changed as a result of new researches by the Mission Franco-Syrienne d'Europos-Doura (MFSED)³ which evidenced the Hellenistic character of this Seleucid foundation.

We are hence confronted with four civilizations in contact, if we take in account the Syro-Mesopotamian heritage. It is perhaps possible to measure what in Europos' civilization comes from each of them, through the example of Governor Lysias' Residence, the largest private building⁴ of the city.

KEYWORDS

Europos-Dura, Architecture, Residence, Construction techniques, Cultural transfers

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Located on the right bank of the Euphrates, about ninety kilometres South-East of the modern city of Deir ez Zor, Europos-Dura lays in a characteristic landscape between the steppe and the fertile valley of the grey green greasy Euphrates river. It has been founded around 300 BC as a military *phourion* hanging on a cliff forty meters over the river (Fig. 1).

The site covers an area of 75 hectares between two deep *wadis*, one to the North and one to the South. The city was surrounded by a strong Hellenistic fortification made of gypsum cut stone and mud brick. Inside the city wall, the town has been designed according to Hippodamian gridiron system, with more than hundred blocks each measuring 70 x 35 m (100 x 200 feet). This strategic place served as a stronghold

along the Royal road from Antioch on the Mediterranean coast to Babylonia downstream and Seleucia on the Tigris.

Totally forgotten during more than fifty years after the Second World War, the ruins inhabited only by the shepards, their flocks and the jackals. In 1986, a French-Syrian Archaeological Expedition headed by P. Leriche and A. al Mahmoud resumed the archaeological research. Ancient monuments were re-examined with new methods and modern strategies and some of the most important buildings under threat of collapse have been restored. A precise checking of the previous publications by the Yale team, gave way to a new chronology of the site, especially in the oldest period. Thus the general approach of the site has been deeply modified and a new form of the city name is now in use.

I. GENERAL PRESENTATION OF THE RESIDENCE

Among the three palaces and about hundred houses⁵ excavated in the site, some buildings of exceptional size⁶ can be considered as 'residences' (Fig. 2). This is the case of the so called 'House of Lysias' in block D1, a monument that has been nearly totally dug⁷, but that remained unpublished by the Yale Expedition. That is the reason why the publication of this residence has been entrusted to me and it is a part of my observations that I want to present here.

¹ The first expedition was headed by F. Cumont (1922-1924) with the support of the French Academy. The second one was directed by M. I. Rostovtzeff (1928-1937) sponsored by the Yale University.

² ROSTOVITZEFF 1935, 157-304.

³ MFSED : Mission Franco-Syrienne d'Europos-Doura.

⁴ The study of this building was the subject of my PhD: "*La Résidence de Lysias à Europos-Doura (Syrie) et les grandes demeures urbaines privées au Proche-Orient, des Séleucides à la conquête Sassanide*". University of Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne, 2015.

⁵ Previous researches on domestic architecture in Europos-Dura have been conducted in the frame of the MFSED by A. Al-lara and C. Saliou in the 90s and more recently by J. Baird with a material approach of the houses based on the archives of the Yale-French Academy Expedition.

⁶ The size of a common house is about 300 m².

⁷ During two seasons: eighth, 1934-35 and ninth 1935-1936.



Fig. 1 - Aerial view of Europos-Dura. View to the South-West (© MFSED).

The house of Lysias stands in the South-Eastern part of the city, which Rostovtzeff called 'the Acropolis'⁸. This name comes from the fact that in this quarter we find two main monuments of the Greek city – the Zeus Megistos Temple (block C4) and the Palace of the *Strategos* (block C9) – and also the *bouleuterion* and a house (D3-D4) with some Hellenistic features (Fig. 3).

The name 'House of Lysias' has been given by the archaeologists after the discovery of two *graffiti* scratched on a jamb of an arched window, the only one preserved of the building. Those inscriptions mention an 'epistates' Lysias who died in AD 159 during a police expedition in *Beth Ilaha* and his son *Lysanias* who replaced him. Thus we have a *terminus post quem* for the last phase of construction of the building. After this date, the house remained as it was used till the abandonment of the city⁹. Let me precise, that the function of the *epistates*¹⁰ has been created to represent the Great Parthian King in Europos after the city has been conquered around 113 BC. Then this function was held by one person who had the title of *strategos kai epistates*, i.e. the governor of the city. That means this house was the private residence of the most important person of the city and his office was located in the Palace of the Strategos.

The house, as it appears on the field, covers nearly the whole surface of an *insula* that means about 2400 m². At the time of the excavations, the building was well preserved with some walls in some parts higher than four meters. The house is composed of fifty-six rooms organized around six courtyards. Through the analysis of the circulation inside the building, I have identified five different areas, each of them having a specific function (Fig. 4). The house of Lysias as we can observe it through the plan has an internal structure that reflects a well conceived organization of the inner life¹¹.

⁸ Let me precise that this part of the city is exactly at the same level than the remaining part of the plateau.

⁹ There are some evidences of temporary occupation of the city in some quarters, but a few examples of them in this building.

¹⁰ Others mentions of the title of *strategos kai epistates* were found in Susa and Babylon. CUMONT, 451, LERICHE 1999, 1329-1330.

¹¹ The diggings have revealed that this residence has been built on the place of previous houses from the early Parthian period. In this paper, I will not take in account the previous periods, the remains of which are too poor to allow any hypothesis.



Fig. 2 - Map of the domestic and palatial architecture in Europos-Dura (© S. de Pontbriand).