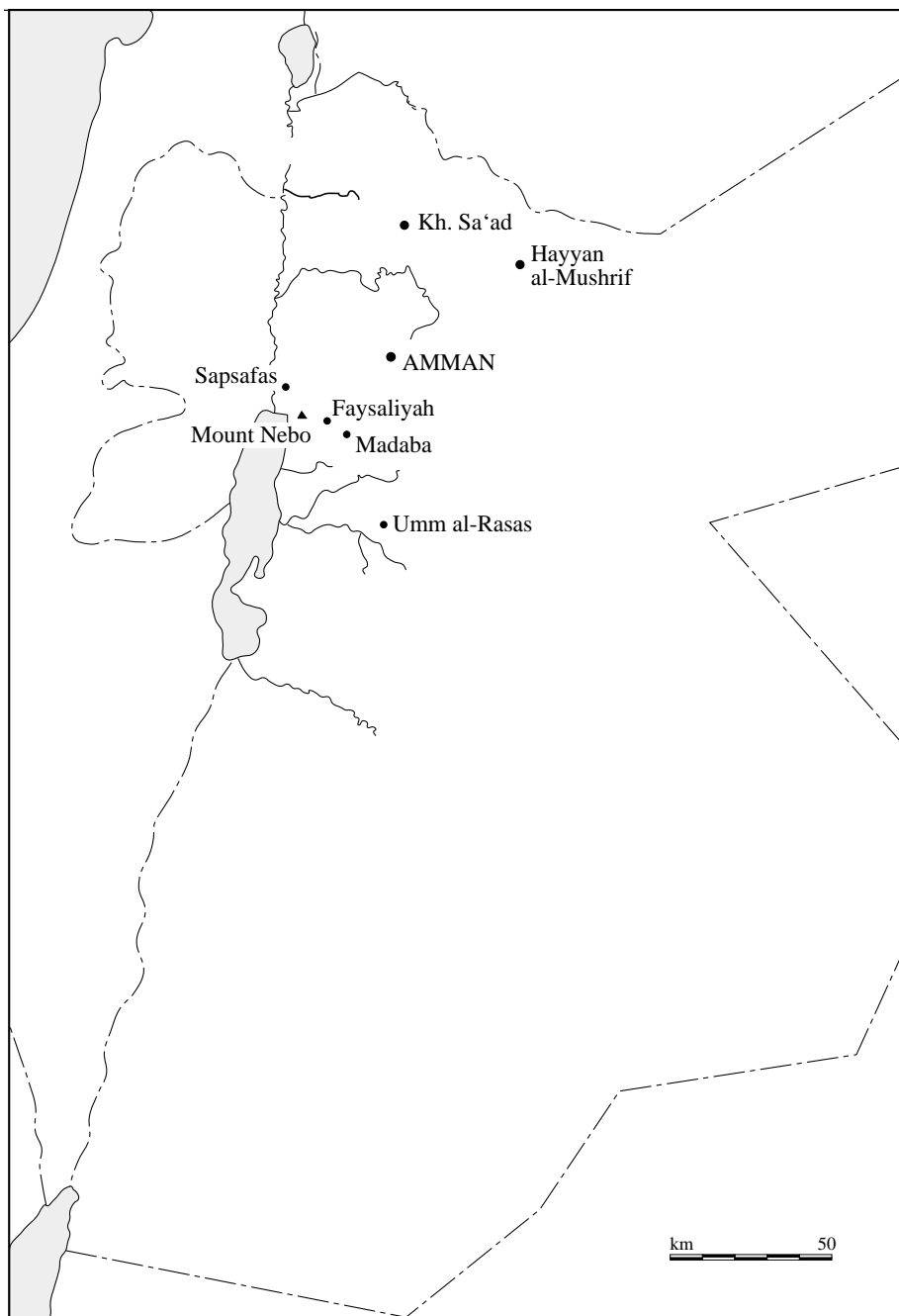

*RICERCA STORICO-ARCHEOLOGICA
IN GIORDANIA XV - 1995*



Principali località della Giordania menzionate nelle relazioni.

RICERCA STORICO-ARCHEOLOGICA IN GIORDANIA XV-1995

a cura di M. Piccirillo

I. RELAZIONI DELLE SPEDIZIONI ARCHEOLOGICHE

1. The Madaba Archaeological Park (Pls. 59-65)

“Her Majesty Queen Noor al-Hussein, Sunday 12th November 1995, formally inaugurated the Madaba Mosaic School and the Madaba Archaeological Park. The opening ceremony, held in the heart of Madaba’s old city, was attended by Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Abdul Ilah Khatib, Italian, U.S. and Canadian Ambassadors to Jordan, Romualdo Bettini, Wesley Egan, and Michel de Salaberry, along with officials from governmental institutions and the Madaba municipality and governorate.

The Madaba Mosaic School and the Madaba Archaeological Park represent the successful result of the combined efforts exerted by the Department of Antiquities at the Ministry of Tourism of Jordan, the Italian government, the US government and the Canadian government.

In fact, the Madaba Mosaic School is a public school established in 1992 within the framework of a bilateral agreement for cooperation between Italy and Jordan. The idea of creating a school to train young Jordanians to conserve and restore the large number of beautiful and precious mosaics excavated or under excavation in the Madaba area was started by Father Michele Piccirillo, director of the Franciscan Archaeological Institute on Mount Nebo.

The Madaba Archaeological Park was financed by the US government through the American Centre of Oriental Research. Located besides the Madaba Mosaic School, not far from the Church of St. George, that hosts the renowned mosaic map of the Holy Land, the Park includes a well preserved stretch of the late roman road, three Byzantine churches with beautiful mosaic floors, two Byzantine mansions, and a new building where mosaics of the Byzantine and Ummayyad period are displayed.

The main component of the project was the construction of a shelter over two of the most important sites: the Church of the Virgin and the Hippolytus Hall with their beautiful mosaic floors.

The Queen, accompanied by Nawzar Shaker, was received by HRH Prince Ra’ad Ben Zeid and Princess Majda Ra’ed, Pierre Bekai, director of ACOR, and Prof. Piccirillo, as well as officials from the Madaba Municipality and governorate”.

(by Francesca Ciriaci, *Jordan Times*, Monday, November 13, 1995, p. 3).

An Account of a Project

This note has at its origin the inauguration of the Madaba Mosaic School and the Madaba Archaeological Park held on the 12 November 1995, seen as the achievement of a long and complex cultural operation. This note is intended as a chronological account of an idea and its practical realisation, with all the inevitable difficulties, but which was positively brought to an end with modifications, additions and clarifications carried out in the ten years taken for it to be born.

As we have pointed out, in previous occasions, the urgency of the problem of preserving the Jordanian monuments, with particular reference to the restoration of the rich cultural heritage constituted by mosaic floors of the Roman, Byzantine and Umayyad era, which we have been studying or bringing to light in the last years:

A Project in the Making, 1977-1991

The research which I had to undertake in preparing the publication of the volume dedicated to the mosaics of Jordan led me, first of all, to a re-examination of the known mosaics in the episcopal city of Madaba, rightly considered as an old established mosaic centre (The Madaba School). In 1977 we started cleaning up and photographing the mosaic in the church of the Virgin which lies along the Roman Road that crosses the city from east to west. This was the first mosaic in Madaba, known to scholars even before 1890, a few years after the re-occupation of the city ruins by Christian families from Kerak. The date of the mosaic of the church had still to be established, even after one hundred years from its discovery. This resulted from a controversial reading, by some scholars, of the numeral in the hundreds place found on the dedicatory inscription. Also, no proper plan drawings of the building were available upon which a project plan for the conservation of the area, requested by Dr. Adnan Hadidi, the then Director General of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan, could be drawn up. This was felt necessary to remedy the state of abandonment in which the monument had gone into after the expropriation of the area by the Jordanian Government in 1979. The expropriated area included also the crypt with mosaic of the church of the Prophet Elijah. Having removed the ruins of a crumbling Arab house, in the Summer of 1980 we could perform a proper survey of the greater part of the singular plan of the church which had evidently been built with the utilization of parts of a previously existing Roman monument. This was comprised of a yard with narthex to the west, an internal vestibule, the central circular nave and the apsed presbyterium supported, at the same level by two vaulted rooms. On examination, it became clear that the mosaic had been laid, a first time, in the middle of the VI cen-

tury, and redone in the Umayyad epoch (VII-VIII century, A.D. 767 more precisely). In the summer of 1982, while probing the ground beneath the internal vestibule of the church we discovered the mosaic floor in the left sector of the Hippolytus Hall. This mosaic is one of the masterpieces of the Madaba mosaicists which decorated the hall of a rich Byzantine mansion.

The exceptional nature of the discovery, and the concurrence of monuments from different epochs; Roman, Byzantine and Umayyad all in the same area, induced us to file a request, which turned out to be premature, to entrust two architects of the Mount Nebo equipe with the drawing up of plans for covering the site.

Architects Lino and Massimo Benedettucci of Rome presented the general lines for a project to the Jordanian Authorities in November 1982, two months after the discovery. The determining factors of this project were: environmental considerations and the decision not to give any preferential treatment to any of the remains, from different epochs, found on the site of the Church of the Virgin. The covering of the whole of the archaeological area, sunken as it is in respect of the surrounding modern concrete buildings and exposed to environmental degradation, had the merit of isolating the site and creating a roofed museum in the heart of the city. This would have afforded the visitor the opportunity to appreciate an antique monument, excavated and brought to light, with the benefit of not having any modern additions except for minimal interventions that were necessary for its conservation. Side by side with the museum, on the northern side, giving on to the street, it was envisaged to have a building comprising artisans' workshops at the ground floor level, and living quarters or a school at the upper level.

A new impulse to the idea of setting up a school for the restoration and conservation of the mosaics at Madaba was given by the discovery of the mosaics in the Burnt Palace, again found further along the Roman Road in the summer of 1985, together with the inauguration of the Exhibition *The Mosaics of Jordan*, organised by the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum and the architects Benedettucci, at the Palazzo Venezia in Rome in June 1986. The school was to be set up as part of the museum which had already been planned for Madaba to protect the mosaics of the Church of the Virgin and of the Church of the Prophet Elijah.

In Spring 1987, the project was brought to the attention of the Italian Government during the official visit to Italy by the Jordanian Royal Couple.

In the aide memoir presented by the Ministry of Tourism which bore the title *The Holy Land Mosaic School Complex*, the project was envisaged as a continuation of the work that had been started by the archaeologists of the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum at Mount Nebo: "For the past 55 years, or since the Franciscan Fathers started work in the Mt. Nebo/Mukhayyat/Madaba region in 1932, Jordan and Italy have cooperated fruitfully in the field of archaeological excavations, mosaics restoration and historical research. The

Memorial of Moses Church on Mt. Nebo, excavated, conserved and restored by successive Italian teams since the 1930's, stands as a monument to constructive cooperation that serves the interest of international scholars, Jordanian and foreign tourists, and Jordan's tourism industry and its contribution as a foreign exchange earner to the national balance-of-payments accounts. Continued discoveries of high quality, well preserved and increasingly important Byzantine mosaics in the greater Madaba region by Jordanian and Italian archaeologists have generated an urgent need to implement a more ambitious project. It would encompass several of the key sites of antiquities in the area, and go a novel step beyond traditional antiquities preservation projects by linking ancient cultural traditions with contemporary objectives in social and economic development". Her Majesty Queen Nour al-Hussein visited the base of the Franciscan Expedition at Mt. Nebo in August 1987. This visit under the patronage of Dr. Luigi Amaduzzi, ambassador for Italy in Amman, was yet another occasion to touch upon the subject. At the end of the visit, Dr. Adnan Hadidi and Mr. Nasri Atallah, Director General at the Ministry of Tourism, who had both accompanied the Queen, made it a point to mention, in the press release following the visit, the project and the interest shown by the Italian Embassy in it.

In the winter of the same year, the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities engaged the studio of architect Ja'far Tukan in Amman to prepare a project for the museum-school complex. This project was to be presented to the Italian Government in view of obtaining financing within the Cooperation for Development Agency of the Italian Foreign Ministry. The detailed plans were completed on the April 4, 1988, and submitted to two Italian experts sent over from Rome. It was found that the plans fell short of the requirements as to the space allotted to the working rooms for the school of restoration. It was therefore decided to extend the project to include existing, mostly abandoned, buildings in the vicinity, thus realising an Archaeological Park right at the centre of the city.

The economic crisis in Jordan, worsened by the decision, taken in 1988, to sever all administrative and economic links with the West Bank, together with the impossibility for the Italian Cooperation Agency to finance directly the construction of the complex, even though the interest in the School for the Restoration of Mosaic never failed, as witnessed repeatedly by Dr. Franco de Courten, the new ambassador for Italy in Jordan, resulted in a widening of international involvement in the Madaba project. The appeals were enthusiastically answered by the officials of USAID (United States Agency for International Development) at the US embassy in Amman. They were prepared to finance, through ACOR (American Centre of Oriental Studies in Amman), the continuation of the archaeological excavations and the construction of the museum.

The Gulf Crisis during 1990-91 brought about a temporary suspension of US aid to Jordan. This positively resulted in the involvement of the Canadian Government in the Madaba project. A grant was made available which was utilised to carry on the excavations without interruption and for the restoration

of the buildings which were to be used by the School of Mosaic. In the meantime, as a result of the personal involvement of Ambassador De Courten, confirmation had been received of the definitive approval of Italian participation in the project. This involvement became operative between July and September 1990 with the detachment and removal of the mosaic in the Church of the Apostles. This mosaic was in serious danger of being lost because of the infiltration of rainwater as well as the trampling upon by visitors.

At the end of the long process of protection and revaluation of the archaeological site around the Church of the Virgin at Madaba, the final project envisages:

1. An Archaeological park that runs along the Roman Road that crosses the city, which extends from the Church of the Sunna' Family, to the east of the Church of the Virgin and the Church of the Prophet Elias, up to and including the area to the west of the Burnt Palace and the Church of al-Khadir.

2. A museum complex that covers and puts on exhibition the mosaics in the Church of the Virgin and the Hippolytus Hall.

3. The Mosaic School for the restoration of ancient mosaics which has been set up in refurbished existing buildings to the east of the area.

Her Majesty Queen Nour al-Hussein wanted to be present at the official inauguration of the works, on the August 4, 1991. Present at the ceremony there were also the ambassadors of Italy, the United States and Canada, who are financing the project as well as the Minister for Tourism and Antiquities of Jordan.

Finalising of the Project 1993-1995

A Commission was created to oversee the park's development. The Commission consists of: The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities; the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the project financing the American Center of Oriental Research (ACOR), partners with USAID in executing the project; and, the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum.

The Studium Biblicum Franciscanum (SBF) was entrusted with the continuation of archaeological excavations in the area of the Church of the Virgin and to the south east of the church at an area identified as "Beitjali". This research was carried out from 1991 to 1993. As part of the development of the Park, the SBF prepared a master plan for the park and the surrounding area in 1993 and 1994. (This was funded by USAID in partnership with ACOR).

At the same time, USAID, through a grant to ACOR, funded the construction of a shelter over the Church of the Virgin and the Hippolytus Hall. Architect 'Ammar Khammash designed and executed the structure. Following the suggestion of the SBF architects, mosaics found in the Madaba region have been exhibited on the walls of the newly constructed portico to the north of the church. All of these pavements were removed from their original places in order to preserve them. These pavements are: from the Herodian palace of Macherus; the Four

Season pavement from Madaba; and, the mosaic from the Acropolis Church in Ma'in. The preparatory work on these mosaics was carried out by the technical staff of the SBF. The final refinements to the pavements in order to exhibit them was done by Madaba Mosaic School students, supervised by two restorers, Fernando Harris and Luigi Miranda. This part of the project was financed by a grant from USAID which included two three-month training courses in 1993 and 1994. As part of these training courses other conservation activities were carried out in three churches which form part of the park: the Sunna' Church, named after a local family; the church of the al-Khadir, now known to be "the Church of the Martyrs", based on Ghazi Bisheh's recent excavations; and the Church of the Prophet Elijah, excavated by C. J. Lenzen. The master plan for the park and the surrounding area was developed under the archaeological supervision of Michele Piccirillo and Eugenio Alliata; and was executed by the Mount Nebo expedition architects, Luigi Marino, Claudio Cimino, Alfredo Roncalli, Alessandro Ferrari, Benedetta Steri, Roberto Sabelli, Ombretta Dinelli, Susanna Ognibene, with the participation of architects from the Cooperativa Archeologica in Florence.

Three distinct sectors along the axis of the paved Roman Road were determined: 1. the eastern sector, including the Madaba Mosaic School, the Beit Jali Courtyard and the Sunna' Church; 2. the central sector, including the Church of the Virgin, the Hippolytus Hall and the Church of the Prophet Elijah and the underlying crypt; 3. the western sector, including the Church of al-Khadir (the "Church of the Martyrs") and the "Burnt Palace". The master plan was presented to the Commission on April 6, 1994; it was decided to concentrate on completing the central sector initially. Following this agreement, the SBF and ACOR agreed (April, 1994) to develop detailed plans for the central sector. These were executed by the architects of the Mt. Nebo expedition in cooperation with architect Luigi Marino. In August of 1994, the Commission accepted the plan for the development of the Church of the Virgin area. In October 6, 1994, SBF and ACOR agreed to conclude the archaeological excavations in the Church of the Prophet Elijah, adjacent to the central sector.

Resumption of the development of the central sector began in the spring of 1995, following the completion of the structure over the Church of the Virgin. The completion of the central sector started February 21, 1995 with the arrival of the first two architects, Roberto Sabelli and Ali al-Khatib. As specified in the agreement, the architectural team was available on a rotation basis, to ensure continuity as well as to adhere to the parameters established by the Commission. Apart from the architects, who were in constant contact with Michele Piccirillo, who followed the works with periodical visits on site, with working meetings in Madaba, Jerusalem, Rome and Florence, as well as through telephone calls, letters and facsimiles, Garbo Younes and his assistant, Ahmad Abu Sitta, were permanently on site. Both Younes and Abu Sitta have long experience in supervising restoration and conservation activities, based on their work at Mount Nebo and in Madaba. At a meeting between ACOR and the SBF, it was

decided that ACOR would take responsibility for direct costs, pay the larger bills and that the SBF would pay expenses not exceeding 300 JD.

How the Development of the Central Sector Progressed

Several workmen were necessary at the beginning of implementation in order to remove the accumulate debris on the Roman Road. A ticket booth was added inside the newly constructed portico. This was added to the already extant entrance. A water run-off system consisting of underground tubing was laid. This crosses the paved courtyard under the portico and channels rainwater to the cistern to the south-east. In the process of laying the tubing, it was necessary first to lift the portions of the ancient and modern pavement as well as the ancient mosaic pavement. These were subsequently relaid. The damaged part of the cistern vault was restored to enable the reconstructions of the paving in the portico area using opus signinum (cf. 11a of the Restorations Project Details). The northeastern cistern manhole was reconstructed. A break in the eastern wall was sealed using iron gratings, thus allowing natural light in the northeastern corner of the exhibition corridor (portico area). The courtyard paving was completed using modern paving stones. Modern masonry was also used in the boundary walls.

Throughout this central sector, iron structures, "fences", were placed in order to protect the mosaic pavements, thus preventing visitor access. A suspended iron catwalk with handrails has been put to the north within the Church of the Virgin structure, thus enabling visitors to cross the mosaic corridor and reach the staircase that leads to the open area in front of the Church of the Virgin. A small opening allows access to the ticket office. The boundary walls and the jambs of a door in the mosaic courtyard were completed with new stone blocks cut with sharp angles thus ensuring that they are easily recognizable as new. Near to the ascending steps, excavations have been carried out up to bedrock. The area has been covered with irregularly sized paving blocks. The western containment wall has been emptied and restored; a small iron door has been opened in its northern wall. This area is now being used as a storeroom. Architectural elements found in the area have been utilised to embellish the courtyard.

The Western Courtyard of the Church of the Virgin

To harmonise and unify the park area within the previously existing inhabited areas, all the concrete boundary - walls have been plastered anew, using a unifying colour up to a height of 4 metres. In some points the walls were raised to the required height. The area has been stabilised with the reconstruction of the north wall and part of the west wall. An iron staircase with stone treads gives access to the entrance. The whole courtyard has been laid with stone paving slanted towards the manhole of the underlying cistern. A four-step stone

stand, which accomodates thirty people, was built between the western wall and the northern corner, blocking the door which had been in use during construction of the shelter. Flowers were planted in the resulting triangular patch to the side of the stand. The stand was covered with locally manufactured carpet material supported by four metal jointed structures.

The northern side of the courtyard was designed as a bench for use by visitors. The south side has been reintegrated to the sides of the old door using stones removed during the work. Two column bases from the colonnade present in the area, have been included in the wall. The part of the wall, to the east of the entrance has been completed to block the passage way. Two architectural elements, from the Roman Temple are exhibited on either side of the entrance to the Church of the Virgin.

An ascending staircase, at the southern end of the stand, offers access to a suspended iron catwalk which follows the boundary wall. This catwalk affords the visitor with a view of the paved Roman Road as well as a way to reach the Church of the Prophet Elijah. The catwalk is supported by concrete and metal plinths, has a wooden handrail and stone treads on the stairs descending to the Church of the Prophet Elijah. At the church level, there is a small balcony made of stone slabs with wood and paving which structurally completes the flooring of the northern nave of the church. In the east, protected with railings, a metal staircase with stone treads allows the visitor to descend to the level of the crypt of Saint Elianus as well as to the Roman Road. The aperture beneath the staircase has been closed by an iron grid. Greenery has been planted next to the stairs leading to the catwalk. At the western end of the catwalk which crosses the Roman Road, the three doors of the modern shops, which were removed, are closed using a metal grid; this allows intercommunication between the public road and the park.

The Church of the Prophet Elijah

The north wall of the church in that part which lies to the west of the entrance to the Saint Elianus Crypt was reconstructed and the boundary walls restored. The eastern wall of the chapel to the south was rebuilt. The apse and the boundary wall of the upper church have been partly rebuilt. A hole that had been made in the barrel-vault of the crypt during the last century has been repaired and closed. The presbyterium area is protected with a concrete sole covered with fine gravel. The internal walls of the crypt have been cleaned and re-puttied. The floor mosaic has been puttied, cleaned and consolidated.

The Rest Area to the Southeast

The area where arch piers of an Ottoman-period house were found has been paved and provided with stone benches along the internal boundary wall. The

area has been covered with a wood and cane structure. In the vicinity, part of the Roman Road has been redone using modern pavedstones. Column shafts and bases that were found in the area decorate this part of the road. The eastern limit of the park is closed off with a double railing with logo as well as with a removable chain which will allow, when necessary, vehicle entry.

The Church of the Virgin

The iron and wood catwalk that follows the internal wall of the facade and the south wall, following the curved contours of the central nave affords the visitor a comprehensive view of both the Hippolytus mosaic and the mosaic of the Church of the Virgin. The mosaic of the Church has been putied, cleaned and consolidated. The missing parts have been completed with the design of the tesserae in modern mortar. The Hippolytus mosaic which is in situ has also been putied, cleaned and consolidated. A long restoration process was necessary for the western part of the mosaic, which had been removed earlier. After a first failed attempt at restoration by the appointed restorer, the job was entrusted to Mario Arangio and Enzo Di Carlo.

Sections of mosaic have been removed from the old concrete support, repositioned on a new bed and replaced in the original position. The cooperation of third-year Madaba Mosaic School students is gratefully acknowledged.

The church walls, together with the walls of the two barrel vaulted crypts beneath the presbyterium, have been cleaned, restored and putied. The north-east corner of the Roman Temple's podium has been restored and covered with fine gravel in such a way as to give the visitor possibility of viewing the church's foundations. Electricity was installed, upon ACOR's request, without any reference to the project plans presented.

Michele Piccirillo

Studium Biblicum Franciscanum

2. Mount Nebo - 1995 Campaign. Excavations of the Monastic Complex at Siyagha (Pls. 66-67; Fig. 1-3)

Northern Group (A. Acconci - N. Grande)

The excavation, commenced on the July 31 was taken up in order to further study the areas of the monastery that lie on the north-eastern side of the mountain, more specifically it was intended to take up again the investigations of rooms number 36-37 and 40-43. These rooms had already been explored by fr. Saller during the campaigns 1933-37 and described in the comprehensive sche-

matic plan of the monumental area that was included in the 1941 publication of the excavations. These new surveys form part of a project which includes a systematic restudy of the Siyagha monumental complex in search of archaeological documentation destined to supply us with indications in support of the hypothesis formulated by Saller, regarding the different phases of construction and use of the rooms mentioned; thought to be dated between the V and VI century. This restudy of the area may also result in further evidence regarding the evolution of the northern sector of the monastery. A further reason for the new investigations carried out is the updating of the graphic documentation of the sector in question, as part of a new systematic survey being carried out.

As a preliminary job, which is normal routine in the circumstances, the seven rooms had to be emptied from the rubble accumulated in them since they were first excavated. At the surface level this included weeds, refuse and stones resulting from the area being used as a dumping site for other excavations in the vicinity, as well as remains of recent occasional occupation of the site. The latter included some hearths, probably used in connection with the presence on Mount Nebo of military units during the 1967 war. The area having been cleared, aided by the plan drawn up by Saller, we proceeded to the identification of the various areas in the sector, which areas are set at a sharp incline along the mountain slope.

The reconnaissance started with the largest area locus 41 (8.60 m in length and approximately 4.20 - 5.20 wide). A few stone courses of the walls to the east, west and south still survive; the latter wall has a door, blocked at a later stage, which lead to the paved courtyard 51 which runs along the north side of the basilica. This courtyard is about 50 cm higher than locus 41. It is to be remembered, in this circumstance that the 1941 plan shows a step, against this door, which step has not been found. The step, shown on the inside of room 41 could have easily made up the difference in level to the external threshold. The slab paving in room 41, as Saller already noted, covers only its northern half; it is made of dislevelled irregularly shaped slabs. The paving covers a domestic hearth (taboun) which had been dug up previously in the room and which was purposely contained in the floor: this can be seen from a set of slabs placed in a semicircle around it. The southern part of the floor is made up of beaten earth intermingled with scaled stones placed directly on the rock bed. A new find has been the discovery of a previous floor level, a few centimeters below. This lower floor, brought to light close to the western side of the room, is made of regular shaped flat slabs which are laid on a noticeable inclining plane towards north-east. Another new element is the identification of two cropped walls inserted in the latest slabbed flooring. A probe carried out in the corner contained by these walls (having a north-south and east-west direction), which corner occupied the present eastern half of the room, has revealed the lower level of these structures: showing three well cut stone courses above the foundation level.

It was not possible to confirm the presence of the door described by Saller as being in the northern wall of the room, which would rather be identified with one of the already described cropped walls which has survived up to a stone course level higher than the floor, only in the north-eastern corner: the point at which the northern wall of room 40 rests upon it.

The slightly higher level of the two cropped walls with respect to the floor level can be explained by the lowering of the latter, due to constant use, whereas the walls, built on solid foundations have not suffered any sinking.

The most recent paving, in the north-eastern sector of the room continues towards what Saller defines as being locus 42. This area has a narrow, roughly trapezoidal shape delimited by walls to the west (coarsely built), north and east (this latter wall is no longer visible), having an accented inclination towards the north. The difference in level between room 42 and 41 was filled in by soil, in two identifiable superimposed strata which contained stones and sherds (amongst which a nearly completely restorable pot) which are dated to the V - beginning of the VI century. The paving slabs in locus 42, as had been noticed by Saller, must have caved in because of the giving in of the underlying fill-in. This is witnessed by the few remaining fragments of slabs inclined towards the north, that have been found.

Locus 43 is set to the north-west of room 41 and is separated from the previous room by an irregular poorly built wall segment. This small area, again having a trapezoidal shape is walled to the west and north. The lack of a wall to the south, again suggests that this room was directly connected with the larger room 41. There came to light, once again, parts of the floor paving made of irregularly shaped slabs and having a strong slant to the north. The slabs are interrupted close to the west corner where another oven covered both internally and externally with fired earth, was found. This oven was only partially excavated by Saller. Deeper investigation has in fact resulted in the recovery of a sizable amount of sherds, including a plate which has a strong resemblance to *terra sigillata* with numerous seals on its bottom, which are dated to the V - beginning VI century. This date agrees also with sherds obtained from the paved floor level, such as a near entire amphora and two completely intact oil lamps. A 40 *nummia* coin, manufactured at the time of emperor Anastasius (491-518), was found close by the western wall. An identical coin had been described by Saller as having been found by the eastern wall.

The rooms 36 and 37 are set at a third level, the lowest of this sector, along the mountain slope. These are two adjacent rooms which had already been explored by Saller. They were filled in with large stones from stratified recent falls as well as various debris which rendered them particularly polluted. Having removed the fall within the rooms, the slabbed paving in both rooms was returned to light. The polished flagstones have a regular shape and are properly levelled, they were covered with a stratum of fine soil, a few centimeters thick, which was probably laid to protect the slabs after their first discovery.

Room 36 (6.60 x 4 m) contains part of the elevation of the southern wall, having some traces of plaster, and a few stone courses of the other boundary walls. There is in this area a small haphazardly built enclosure, constructed with reused stones from the fall material, and leaning against the south-eastern corner; this evidently means that the area was partially reused since the first excavations carried out in the 1930s. Witness to this is the discovery nearby of a modern vase.

In locus 37 there remain a few stone courses of its boundary walls; the north wall has a door still having its threshold in situ. Very little pottery was found here, except for the rim of a phytos, found in a pavementless part of the room next to the north-western corner, some fragments of pots and two solid handled type oil lamps. The sherds recovered in this area are also to be dated to a period not later than the VI century.

The analysis of the wall structures allows the formulation of a hypothesis, as to the development and use of the rooms, which is in agreement with what Saller had briefly stated. Areas 36 and 37 can be referred to a more or less older period of the monastery; the same can be said of the approximately rectangular area formed by the cropped walls identified in room 41, lying further up right behind the northern side of the place of worship. Here, the walls having been cropped, there was obtained a much larger area, room 41 in fact, with direct communication to rooms 42 and 43. The walls of the latter small areas rest upon the pre-existing walls of rooms 36 and 37, set at a lower level upon the slope. The difference in level was filled in with a thick layer of soil, higher in room 42 but of less importance in room 43, where the tread level is lower, and wherein a deep household oven was dug. We have also ascertained the presence of a further phase, identifiable in room 41 which took place between the utilisation of the old room described by the cropped walls and the expansion indicated above which took place with the laying of the most recent paved flooring. This paving included the oven, which, although pre-existent, was reutilised; it also covered the underlying older slabs that came to light in one corner of the room. The fact that sherds, dating to the later part of the VI century, were found in the underlying preparatory soil which supports the latest paving can provide a useful chronological indication regarding the enlargement of room 41 and the construction of room 42.

Room 43, whose floor level is more or less connected with the lower paving of room 41, can probably be tied to the so called intermediary phase.

The investigations were continued in room 40, which had already been investigated by Saller, who had reached the mosaic floor (made of white tesserae) which is at the same level of the slabbed paving in courtyard 51. A probe opened under the mosaic bed, near to the north-eastern corner of the room, verified the construction, at a deeper level, of the west wall of the room, that is the dividing wall between rooms 40 and 41: nothing else but a third wall which had also been cropped at the time of the rise in level and enlargement

of room 41 with room 40 at its side. The ceramic fragments found with respect to this silted up wall are all dated prior to the VI century.

A further probe was carried out under a few slabs in courtyard 51 which is right next to the northern side of the basilica. Sherds were very scarce here, but a significant find was the remains of a "palm tree" oil lamp dated to the VI century.

Eastern Wing of the Monastery (E. Gabrieli - L. Montano)

This room had already been excavated and its original floor brought to light: now it was necessary to reach the virgin soil to obtain more information about the period in which the building was constructed and about its foundations. Excavations began beneath the level of the beaten earthen floor. The first layer we found was SU 1, a brown layer -sandy and silty-, with loads of pieces of broken rock, which reached the bedrock. We collected only a few Byzantine sherds and some tesserae from SU 1 and they were all from the very top of the layer. In some small areas the floor had been restored; here artifacts were a little bit more numerous, but we can say that SU 1 was almost lacking in handworks. Only in locus 205 (the south-eastern area of this large room) - where the floor was lacking - we found relatively more fragments of pottery: they belong to different periods and the latest are Late Ottoman sherds. These sherds show that the place had been frequented even after it had been abandoned, a known fact, but this is the first clear evidence we have found..

By 9 August we dug almost completely the eastern part of the room and here the bedrock has been completely exposed. The bedrock has a slight slope from north to south and also the floor slanted slightly. The foundations of the walls and those of the pillars lie at different levels too: the slope of the bedrock had been followed when the room was built.

Western Wing of the Monastery (E. Gabrieli - L. Montano)

The western courtyard of the monastery had already been excavated too; we cleaned the area and dug only some trenches to investigate the layers which lie below the floor level.

Trench 1: we found some filling material which reached the level of the foundations of the northern and western walls of the courtyard. The upper three layers were particularly rich in pottery; the lower one (SU 3), the thickest, is made up of dark yellow clay soil (the local virgin soil) and we collected only some sherds from it. The structure no. 55 has only a one-stone course foundation.

Trench 2: in this area we found some filling layers too. There were more or less the same layers found in trench 1, but here we could only dig up com-

pletely SU 3 since from here onwards the wall of the upper floor of room no. 56, which marked the western border of the courtyard, had collapsed and filling materials had partly fallen down. This situation is similar along all of the western side of the courtyard and in this area we obtained a long section, which shows all the filling layers which lie below the level of the floor. In fact we could only clean the upper part of the section and dig the lower one, from which we collected some pottery, glass fragments and some tesserae. All the sherds collected, coming from the filling materials, are dated to the Byzantine period. There are no intact pieces and the fragments belong almost exclusively to vases of common use (pots, amphorae, cups, etc.).

Trench 3: our aim in digging up this trench was to reach the foundation level of platform no. 57: these foundations have only one course of stone which lies directly on the filling layer (SU 3). The filling of the structure no. 57 is made up of medium-sized stones and earth.

Trench 4: below the beaten earthen floor there was SU 3. Here it was not as thick as we could see in the area of trench 1 and it lay directly on the virgin soil. The foundation trenches of the northern wall of the courtyard and that of the church's atrium were both dug into the virgin soil. The wall of the courtyard leans against the wall of the atrium and there are no doors through this last wall, which closes the courtyard on the east: this indicates that the western wing of the monastery was built at a later date than the atrium area.

North-East Sector of the Monastery (E. Bellomo - G. Bellomo)

During the excavation campaign 1995, a series of rooms, already partly excavated in 1994, were further explored. These rooms are situated to the north east of the basilica. During the excavations, started on the 31 July and not yet completed, four rooms 270, 271, 272 and 273 were identified and dug up in that order.

Room 270 has been partially excavated: based on the adjacent rooms, it can be assumed that it has a square shape with walls that are approximately 4.40 m long. The room has a paved flooring which has only partially been conserved. A wall about 1 m high lying in a east north-east direction separates this room from room 271. This wall is characterised with the presence of a niche as well as patches of mortar at floor level.

Another square area, Room 271, having walls 4,40 m long, has been brought to light adjacent to room 270 to the north-west. The room has a beaten earthen floor and has boundary walls which are in a very good state of conservation, particularly the north-western and south-eastern ones. The walls are made up of stones of various dimensions. The height of these walls varies from 0.50 m to 1,70 m. One wall shows traces of white mortar. The wall facing north-west has a niche which is at about 1 m from the floor and is outlined by smooth squared-up stones.

Room 272 is accessed from room 270 through a small opening, not larger than 1m wide. This room, as in the case of room 270, has not been excavated completely. The paved floor is made up of well cut and placed squared-up flagstones. On the south south-west side there is a set of four stone steps which reaches a beaten earthen floor which is at 0.25 m from the present street level.

From room 271, one passes to Room 273, again through a small opening. Room 273 also has similar dimensions as those of room 271. Here the floor is made up of beaten earth and the boundary walls have only been conserved in part. As a matter of fact, whereas the northern wall is present to a height of 1 m, only the foundations of the south wall have survived destruction which took place in recent years, probably during the 1967 war when military units were stationed on Mount Nebo.

The only sherds that were brought to light in these rooms consisted of fragments of various household pots and pans dated to the VIII century.

Sondaggi e interventi vari (E. Alliata)

L'esplorazione dell'estremo angolo nord-est del settore nord-orientale del monastero ha fatto conoscere due diverse fasi di occupazione di questo settore ambedue cronologicamente attribuibili al sesto secolo. Il materiale ceramico e numismatico più tardivo reperito al di sopra e al di sotto i piani dei calpestio dei quattro ambienti portati alla luce suggeriscono questa datazione. La comparsa di materiale anche più antico è però testimone della precedente storia occupazionale del sito. Abbiamo rinvenuto, ad esempio, una moneta costantiniana e addirittura un frammento di lucerna di epoca ellenistica. Il pendio settentrionale della cima di Siyagha non ha evidentemente finito di offrire sorprese: in realtà si individua ancora la presenza sottoterra di altre rovine che si estendono al di là dei limiti del nostro scavo in direzione nord ed ovest. Solo sul lato di est possiamo affermare di essere realmente giunti al limite estremo del monastero. Al di là si dovrebbe stendere un cimitero terragno individuabile dal casuale ritrovamento, fatto nel corso opere agricole alcuni anni or sono, di tre rozze steli funerarie ornate da una semplice croce.

Prima di concludere la campagna sono state ancora operati alcuni ben delimitati sondaggi sul lato occidentale dell'atrio. Questi hanno confermato la complessità degli interventi costruttivi in quest'area. Per ultimo è stato iniziato, anche se non portato a termine, il lavoro di riapertura della cisterna in muratura che esisteva al centro dello stesso atrio e fu riempita di macerie al tempo dei primi scavi (1933-37).

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3. Mount Nebo - 1995 Campaign. Khirbat al-Mukhayyat (Pl. 67; Fig. 1)

During the 1995 archaeological campaign, 31 July – 26 August, it was decided to restudy Saint George's Church at Khirbat al-Mukhayyat. The church had been discovered and excavated by brother Girolamo Mihaic. In 1935, fathers B. Bagatti and P. Lemaire could study and repair the mosaic. Some notes on the church, a schematical plan and a study of the mosaic floor were published in 1949 by B. Bagatti and S. Saller, *The Town of Nebo*, p. 41-45, 67-77, 139-172, pl. 6.4, 22-32. In 1977, M. Piccirillo removed the mosaic floor, that is now exhibited in the Moses' basilica on Mount Nebo-Siyagha. The other rooms of the complex have never been completely excavated.

The main scope of the campaign was to make sure of the plan published by B. Bagatti. Therefore, during the first three weeks, the weeds and other growths inside the church and other rooms have been removed. The discharge of this year's excavation was set on the northern and western slopes of the hill, and delimited by retaining walls built using stones from the same excavation. Stones pertaining to arches, those of the base of the chancel screen and other material thought to be of particular interest have been set against the northern and southern walls of the church.

It appeared that the church has suffered little damage since the publication of 1949. The work performed to the north of the building revealed the same plan as that already published. Along the northern wall of the church, there is a paved courtyard, that was accessed from the east through a door already known to us. A new door (0,80 m) has been discovered in the western wall of the courtyard, but it is not clear where it leads to. North of the courtyard, the two rooms mentioned by fr. Bagatti appeared slightly different. We have found a small wall between the western room (F) and the eastern one (room G), forming a small corridor (room I). Further investigation has shown that this wall was a later addition, since the paving slabs in room F continue under the wall into area I. None of the doors of these rooms have been identified yet. The northern wall of the complex is in a bad state: only the foundations are visible and they have fallen down toward the north. The walls of these rooms and courtyard are bound together, whereas the courtyard walls simply lean against those of the church.

West of the church, fr. Bagatti assumed the presence of a sequence of three rooms (C, D, E). Rooms C and D were identified, but there was no evidence of room E north-west of the church. The wall between rooms C and D appears to be more to the south than what fr. Bagatti thought. Moreover, room D was in a bad state: we were not able to find the western end of the walls, because they have fallen down the slope. In the middle of the room, there was a doric capital. On the contrary, the foundations of the walls of room C that are still preserved show that they were very thick (about 1,30 m to the north, 2,00 m to the south and 2,35 m to the west). The southern wall seems to have been

reinforced. Traces of three layers of a thick (waterproof) plaster already mentioned by fr. Bagatti could be observed on the internal face of the northern, southern and western walls. No evidence of doors could be found.

To the south of the church, all the walls of room B (about 14,10 x 6,85 / 5,70 m) have been brought to light. The room has a door leading to the church and another door towards the west. Like the other rooms to the north and to the west of the church, the walls of room B lean against those of the church. These walls are in a good state of preservation. The external face is built with well cut squared-up stones, while the internal face is composed of smaller rough blocks, between which small stones are inserted. All the stones that were found lying in the area have been cleared.

During the last week of the campaign it was decided to make a probe in the eastern third of room B, which had not been excavated and also to excavate room F, where there was some ceramic evidence that could give some indications about the history of the church and the complex.

In room B, the excavation revealed only a great quantity of stone blocks that had fallen down from the walls of the same room intermingled with very dusty red soil. Bases of two pillars that had sustained arches have been found against the southern wall of the room. Bagatti mentions and marks on his plan, columns or parts thereof. Evidence of these columns was found, at the level of the bases to the pillars already mentioned. These stand immediately on the ground without any foundation. A third column was brought to light to the west of the eastern pillar aligned to the second intermediary column marked by Bagatti. He was not able to explain their function. We were able to note that the part of one fust of a half column had been used for the foundations of the easternmost pillar and that the upper part of the other columns noticed by Bagatti lays at the same level as the foundations of the former pillar. So, it is probable that these columns have been reused from a former building – perhaps a temple, as the doric capital of room D seems to indicate – for the foundations of the pillars that sustained the tranverse arches in room B. Moreover, other fragments of fusts of identical columns were used in the masonry of the walls of the church (west wall) and especially in the east wall of room B. However, it is strange that the foundation level of the walls of the room has been reached without finding any evidence of occupation in this room at the level of the pilaster bases. Since no evidence of ceramic sherds was found, it is difficult to set dates to the room's construction, last occupation date and ruin.

The excavation of room F was richer in information: we were able to identify a partially destroyed stratigraphical sequence related to the abandon of the room. On the top, there were big blocks of stones that have been removed to the northern slope of the hill. Under this layer, there was a great quantity of small scaly stone (SU 0). It covered a layer of dusty brown-black soil (SU 1) that contained small stones, glass, roof tiles (tegulae and imbrices) and sherds dated to the VI beginning of the VII centuries, among which a small oil lamp (MK 1117),

drinking glasses (MK 1052, MK 1138, MK 1143), a small dish (MK 1050), cooking pots (MK 1137, MK 1345) and fragments of “bricks”, similar to what fr. Bagatti found at Siyagha and identified as being used for “window frames and mullions”. This layer was followed by a harder but not well compacted layer of yellow clay (SU 2). In fact, it has been partially destroyed by the fall of the stones from the walls that caused several ruptures of the level which resulted in a very irregular surface. Some sherds of the same period were found also in this layer, among which a jar, fragments of which had also been recovered in the former level. A fourth layer of ashes has been identified in the north-western corner of the room (SU 3). This level contained some fragments of glass and also a great quantity of sherds (MK 1202-MK 1211, MK 1231-MK 1241, MK 1253-MK 1259, MK 1256-MK 1281), among which an ointment vase (MK 1201), an oil lamp with a cross (MK 1259), a bowl (MK 1241). Fragment of two drinking glasses (MK 1346-1348) bearing traces of burning were also discovered in this level. It continued a little farther toward east beyond a small stone structure which function has not been explained. SU 3 does not seem to exist in the eastern part of the room, where the stones of a pavement (SU 4) appear immediately under the yellow level (SU 2). This pavement lays about 0,45 m under that of the courtyard H and is preserved only in the eastern part of the room. In the south-eastern corner of the room there is a small stone platform which function has not been explained until now; it may be related to a staircase leading to the courtyard, but the hypothesis remains to be confirmed. Here we removed some stones of the south wall of the room to see if there was some door. The expected door could not be found, but one more step of the stone structure SU 5 was brought to light against the wall. The stratigraphical sequence of room F may be interpreted as follows: the stone paving and the level of brown clay (SU 3) correspond to the last phase of occupation and abandonment of the room in the beginning of the VII century. The yellow level that has been identified in several other excavations in the region may be the clay or similar material from the roof of the room over which the walls later fell. The falling of the roof seems to have happened as the stone pavement was already destroyed, because this yellow level not only covered it, but also continued farther down where the stone pavement was broken.

In area I, east of room F, the stone pavement was also discovered under the wall SUM 9, showing that it is a later addition in room F. The pavement was only preserved along the wall and was broken toward east. The level (SU 28) above the pavement was of yellow clay identical with SU 4 in room F. It contained also a great quantity of sherds, especially against the north wall of the area. Among these we found a drinking glass (MK 1334), cooking pots (MK 1285-MK 1293). Under this level appeared a brown red granular clay (SU 29) that contained a lot of stone scales, sherds (MK 1320-MK 1333) among which a dish (MK 1319), and swerves of tesserae. Some of the sherds (MK 1335-MK 1336) found in this level belonged to one of the jars found in room F (MK 1136). At this level appeared stones aligned with the wall SUM 8; they seem to be part of a wall that

continues further down, but the probe has been stopped at this level, without clearing the exact relation of these new structures with the wall.

The ceramic evidence, that does not go beyond the beginning of the VII century, is of particular interest because it confirms the rather early date of abandonment of the complex, a supposition already arrived at from the study of the mosaic. Indeed, the mosaic does not show traces of the iconoclastic damage that occurs in so many buildings in the region and that is usually attributed to the first decades of the VIII century. Some other details lead us to think that the church was abandoned progressively. Two stones of the chancel rail, probably from its southern part already shown as being destroyed during the excavation of 1935, as may be seen from the old photographs, have been found among the stones lying in room B. Another one is still lying among the fall of the west wall of room F. Other evidence from falls of the walls in the complex have been found in room F (southern and western walls), room D (northern wall) and room B (southern wall). All these walls have fallen in the same direction, towards north/north-west. The presence of a stone coming from the chancel rail among the stones fallen from the west wall of room F lead to the assumption that the church may have been already abandoned when room F was still in use. The walls should have fallen a little later, after the beginning of the VII century, maybe due to an earthquake (?). This early date of abandonment of the complex fits well with that of the other churches of Khirbat al-Mukhayyat. These, like those of 'Uyun Musa, remain an exception in the region, where the Christian community is attested until the late VIII century, especially at 'Ayn al-Kanisah to the south of Mount Nebo, Madaba and Umm al-Rasas.

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4. Mount Nebo - 1995 Campaign. 'Ayn al-Kanisah: the Second Archaeological Campaign (Pls. 68-69)

The 1994 campaign saw the completion of excavations of the northern sector of the monastery at 'Ayn al-Kanisah which included the chapel with mosaics, the diakonikon and the mosaiced courtyard situated at the centre of the complex. During the second campaign, 1995, which lasted three weeks, investigations were completed, covering the structures of the monastery in the south sector and the rooms to the west of the mosaiced courtyard, which areas had not been previously explored.

Two probes were carried out on the inside and outside of the northern wall of the courtyard E, close to the door. These probes have shown that the wall on the inside cuts the mosaic paving and rests slightly deeper down on the sterile, compacted clay of the mountain whereas on the outside the wall reaches the rockbed at a greater depth. The pottery found in the internal probe, amongst which

a quite complete wash basin, is dated to the VI century. It has been found that, in the south west corner of the courtyard, there is part of a second mosaic.

On the mountain brow to the west of the courtyard, there have been identified some rooms which had been inhabited. Close to the north-eastern corner, a few steps descend from courtyard E to room E2 which has a mosaiced floor made of white tesserae. At the centre of the room there is a manhole to a cistern as well as a stone basin in the north-eastern corner. A small channel, coming from the courtyard, crosses the room in a north easterly direction ending into the water cistern. This channel is covered with stone slabs. Next to this room, to the south, is room E4, partly excavated during the preceding campaign. This room, in the final phase of its use could have been the point of arrival of steps, partly adapted from the rock, which lead up to the monastery from the spring below. In a previous phase an oven of the taboun type had been built in the south-eastern corner. A channel crosses the room in an east west direction. A second channel passes close to a stone basin to the north. A door, which was later blocked, leads from E4 to room E5 which is alongside it to the south. The room E4 is connected through the channel with the small E1 built in the central courtyard. In its final phase, the room became completely isolated. It is crossed by the channel which continues into E4. Room E5 has, on its east side, five stairs that lead to courtyard E. It is evident that the stairs were added in a second moment. They lean against the eastern wall which contained a plastered cupboard hewn in the same wall. The excavations have been interrupted at the level of the beaten earthen floor of the room on which the stairs rested. A stone bench is laid against the south wall. It could be that there once existed a door connecting E5 with D1. Beneath the western wall in room E5 there existed a lime channel hewn by the superimposed south wall.

The wall that closes the courtyard E to the south delimitates a spacious isolated area (D1). It seems as though it were an embankment built during the restructuring of the chapel and monastery. The living rooms on this occasion were thus shifted towards north. Inside the area there were brought to light the remains of a pilaster set against the north-western wall as well as the first course of a horseshoe shaped stone structure which has been partly obliterated by the eastern courtyard. The northern wall of D1 is constructed with large squared-up blocks of stone which seem to have been placed as terracement to sustain the south wall of the church. In the same area D1, in the south-east corner, one can partly see the remains of a still unidentified quadrangular structure. Two parallel walls consisting of a single course of stones, having a north south direction, cross the area finishing off against the north wall. D1 is closed off to the east by a wall which separates it from D3 which is at a much lower level than it. Area D3 still conserves part of its paved flooring with a central pilaster. The paving slabs are abruptly interrupted at the south-east corner.

The monastery was closed off to the east with a straight boundary wall having a north south direction, which ran along the chapel's apse.

Finally, in this area, we have followed up to the foundation level of the south wall of the church, another wall having a north south orientation which sustains the side of the same church and which rests on the containment wall mentioned above. It is possible that in a previous phase there existed, in the area between the north and south walls of the chapel, two autonomous rooms (D5 and D6). An oil lamp, similar to others which have been found in the monastery at Siyagha, was found in the yellow fill-in soil in room D5.

It is to be noted that, in the present phase of the excavations, we have not found any traces of doors or staircases which connect the different areas of the southern sector which are set at different levels.

A few days' work were dedicated to the tower east of the spring in an effort to identify its perimeter and possibly the date of its construction. A door of the tower was identified in the south-west wall which leads to a small room. The few sherds found here are to be dated to the Byzantine occupation. The building to which no certain date can be attributed, is noticeable for the very large but only lightly shaped, stones used in the construction of its walls

Conclusion

At the end of the second campaign the structural development of the monastery at 'Ayn al-Kanisah can be thus synthesised:

1. During a first phase (VIth Century), the monastery was certainly made up of the chapel with its diakonikon, the western courtyard and some rooms on the eastern brow of the mountain. It is to be imagined that the inhabited rooms were in the southern sector.

2. During the Umayyad period (762) the western sector of the chapel was redecorated with mosaic in relation to the building of the hypogeum below the facade. Both the diakonikon and courtyard had new mosaic laid, this time using larger sized white tesserae.

An earthquake might have caused the abandonment of the southern sector. The living quarters were shifted to the sector, north of the chapel, in the semi-rupestrian rooms adapted to the roughness of the mountain as well as in the western rooms set on the brow of the slope.

Together with the north door, possibly still in use, area E4 was used as an entrance with the addition of stairs coming from the outside.

Based on the inscriptions of the chapel which refer to ascetic monks and to the benefactor Abba Abraham the archimandrite of the whole desert, and based on the poor quality of the lodgements, the monastery of 'Ayn al-Kanisah seems more a hermitage than a cenobitic monastery.

5. La chiesa di Faysaliyah - Madaba (Pl. 72)

Fuori del villaggio di Faysaliyah (Kufeir Abu Bedd degli esploratori e Kufeir al-Wukhyan di un decennio fa prima che il villaggio ricevesse il nuovo nome) sul versante meridionale della strada che scende al Monte Nebo, verso il sesto kilometro, ci fu mostrata una casa costruita su un mosaico con iscrizione in greco, a dire di 'Atef Abu al-Ghanam (Abu Yousef) figlio del proprietario, al tempo funzionario del Dipartimento delle Antichità (M. Piccirillo, *Chiese e mosaici di Madaba*, Jerusalem 1989, 314; Idem, "L' Abu-Bedd sul piazzale di Siyagha - Monte Nebo", *LA* 37, 1987, 405s, tav. 70).

P.-L. Gatier riuscì a convincere il proprietario a mostrargli il mosaico nella casa utilizzata come stalla. Le poche parole dell'iscrizione furono fotografate e inserite nel corpus delle iscrizioni greche e latine della regione (*Inscriptions Grecques et Latines de Jordanie*, Vol. 2, Région centrale (Amman - Hesban - Madaba - Main - Dhiban), Paris 1986, 113s, n. 112, foto n. 81).

Nella primavera del 1995, l'ispettore delle antichità di Madaba, il signor Hazim Jazer (Abu Zayd) decise di condurvi una breve campagna di scavo. Prima di lasciare Madaba per la nuova destinazione a Jerash, mi consegnò la pianta e le foto che pubblichiamo con il suo permesso. Il rilievo grafico è stato eseguito da Muhammad A.S.

La casa moderna è costruita sul settore occidentale dell'edificio antico di cui restano lacerti di mosaico e tracce di murature. Il mosaico continua anche nel cortiletto all'esterno della parete orientale della stanza dove riaffiora la roccia della montagna.

Elementi decorativi del mosaico di tessere bianche di modulo maggiorato poste in diagonale sono una iscrizione greca in un riquadro policromo al centro della stanza e un medaglione circolare nei pressi dell'angolo di nord est decorato con un volatile che becca un fiore.

Il testo dell'iscrizione scritto con tessere rosse di modulo minore si sviluppa su quattro linee irregolari che non riempiono il riquadro completato con un diamante posto di punta tra due linee verticali di fiori. L'iscrizione è rivolta verso l'attuale porta della stanza cioè leggibile da ovest verso est.

Ⲑⲧ ⲟ Ⲡⲓ	ὕπερ
Ⲡ ⲀϚ Ω	[ἀνα]παύ[σε]ω[ς]
ⲬⲒⲒⲀ ⲕϚΘⲬ	Ἡλία κ(ἀ)ι Θη
ⲕⲒΩ	κλω

Gatier ha provato a completare con [Ὑπερ ἀνα]παύ[σεωϚ] Ἡλιακ(ο)ῦ Θηκλω.

La semplicità del testo e la posizione del riquadro al centro del mosaico bianco, come pure il poco che se ne ricava, sembrano rimandare ad un am-

biente funerario fuori del villaggio. Dopo lo scavo è quasi impossibile pensare ad una chiesa.

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6. Archaeological Campaign at Umm al-Rasas (Pls. 70-71)

On Monday 14 August a new archaeological campaign at Umm al-Rasas was undertaken with the specific aim of continuing the excavations of the sector to the south of St. Stephen complex. Our intention was to excavate a new structure which, from its outlying walls, had already been identified as a church. We named it temporarily "Church 9" and it lies to the north of the Peacocks' Church. It is approximately 7 m wide and 16 m long.

Excavations started by cleaning up the whole area from the debris and all the thorns and weeds that accumulated during the years. On removing the upper loose stones we immediately noticed that the two southern arches of the central nave had caved in in a northern direction with all the stones of the arches, capitals and pillars still bound together.

Excavations revealed that the church had two doors in the southern wall leading to an outside courtyard which is still not excavated. In the same wall another door leads to another unexcavated room which lies on the south-west corner of the church. All these doors had their lintels nearby. The two southern doors had an arch above the lintel. The outside doors are situated one at the presbytery level and another one at the centre of the church. In the northern wall at approximately 2.5 m from the ground, in the north-western corner, we found a slit window (app. 50 cm on the inside down to app. 20 cm externally) which on excavation still had its white plaster attached to the fragile western wall and all around the north, west and southern walls. On the above mentioned pillar plaster reaches the very top of the pillar itself, just under the capital which is still in situ. On the western wall of the facade another door leads to an unexcavated area. This door lies next to the southern pillar on the same wall and thus is off-centre of the church. We noticed that this door has what could seem to be a 50 cm step. This so-called step is plastered, which plaster carries on to either side of the door onto the church wall.

Excavations also revealed that the northern arches of the central nave gave in with all the weight of the roof slabs and tiles. These slabs are approximately 2 m long and 35 cm wide with a thickness varying from 10 to 20 cm. The roof tiles were of a rather squarish type measuring app. 35 cm by 29 cm. On one of these tiles an inscription invoking St. Paul and St. Germanus was found. Another interesting tile, of which we found only about three fourths, had a design on it depicting a girl, a serpent and something

else which could easily be a peacock. The northern part of the church was littered with these roof tiles and slabs.

Excavations revealed that the church was re-used after it had been abandoned. Witness on this is the north-west corner, just above the church's floor. Here about 80 cm of arches were found laying on a thick layer of lime with ashes spread all over the church. In this corner the walls of the church are burnt to a meter's height. It is also interesting to note that this corner was separated from the rest of the area by a single-stone retaining wall which was built on top of the compact soil lying on top of the floor. Further witness of the re-utilisation of the church in a later period come from also two other walls built to form a corridor in front of the central door on the southern wall. One of these walls (the eastern one) is still preserved for almost 2 m in height. It is interesting that the western wall of this corridor is almost 1 m wide and at the bottom it rests on a door's carved lintel app. 2 m long and 50 cm height. This lintel, which rests almost directly on the church's floor, lies upside down and at the centre it has two arches resting on two pillars enclosing a disfigured cross. Next to this central motif there are two cantharus on each side and next to them a radial geometric motif. All this is enclosed in a rope-type border with two columns at its lowest corners.

Excavations yielded also some sherds of pottery, especially from the last layer of soil above the church's floor. Most of this pottery is of the Umayyad type as was also one coin recovered.

Excavations also revealed a floor paved with mosaics, many parts of which are completely destroyed. It is interesting to note that this mosaic floor does not have intercolumnar panels that divide the central carpet from that of the lateral naves. Furthermore the figures have been ruined by the iconoclasts and repaired by the usual fill with tesserae. Looking at the mosaic carpet from the western wall one can see the first three panels (towards the west) of the carpet: the two lateral ones are made up of a geometric design created by small flowers and enclosed in a guilloche border while the central part is made up of four tiers of vine scrolls each containing various scenes amongst which is a grape-harvest scene. The second group also has a geometric design on the lateral naves enclosed in, while the central panel contains medallions enclosed in a colourful border. In one of these medallions the name of the river Euphrates was read. Excavations at this site ended on Saturday 26th August. In fact, a decision was taken to end the excavations at the level of the central door on the southern wall as more than 4 m of material had to be taken out from the site and towards the apse of the church this reaches almost 5 m. Excavations will be resumed next year.

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7. Il santuario di Sapsafas nel Wadi Kharrar

Ci avevamo provato altre volte con una richiesta formale alle alte autorità militari di Giordania. L'ultima volta, appena due anni fa, la richiesta era stata inoltrata dallo stesso Ministro del Turismo e delle Antichità di Giordania. La risposta anche questa volta era stata la stessa, cortese e ferma: "Non è possibile, non è ancora tempo per avventurarsi lungo il fiume".

Venerdì 11 agosto 1995 invece, come se non esistesse nessun divieto, non solo siamo stati scortati dai soldati nella zona proibita, ma lo stesso comandante, con una conoscenza invidiabile dei luoghi, ci ha guidato alle rovine. Il mio desiderio di visitare il wadi Kharrar nell'area di confine alla ricerca del santuario bizantino di San Giovanni questa volta lo avevo esposto al Principe Ghazi ben Muhammad, nipote di re Hussein con un ufficio a corte che si interessa dei beni culturali religiosi del regno. La risposta immediata: "Perché non andiamo insieme venerdì prossimo?".

Del wadi Kharrar mi stavo interessando anche recentemente per un progetto editoriale del Principe dedicato ai santuari del regno affidato allo Shaikh Hassan Saqqaf per i santuari musulmani e a me per i santuari cristiani.

A parte il santuario di San Lot a Ghor es-Safy, l'antica Zoara sulla sponda sud orientale del mar Morto e il santuario di Sant'Aronne sulla cima più alta di Petra, tutti i santuari visitati in territorio giordano dai pellegrini bizantini sono ubicati lungo la strada romana che da Gerusalemme scendeva a Gerico, attraversava il fiume, giungeva a Livias e saliva a Esbus sull'altipiano raggiungendo la Via Nova Traiana, l'arteria principale della Provincia Arabia.

La visita iniziava sulla sponda del fiume, dove l'attraversamento del Giordano, l'ultima tappa dell'esodo biblico, veniva ricordato insieme al battesimo di Gesù. Una chiesa costruita dall'imperatore Anastasio nella seconda metà del V secolo commemorava l'evento. Una colonna sormontata da una croce in mezzo al fiume voleva indicare ai pellegrini il punto esatto del battesimo.

Stando ai ricordi dei pellegrini, la chiesa era costruita sulla sponda orientale. Arcate di sostegno impedivano all'acqua di penetrarvi quando il fiume in primavera straripava. Gradini permettevano ai pellegrini di scendere al fiume e di farvi le loro devozioni. Molti infatti vi si bagnavano, come racconta il Pellegrino di Piacenza, che partecipò il giorno dell'Epifania al pellegrinaggio, e riempivano dei recipienti per portare l'acqua del fiume nelle loro regioni di origine.

All'altezza della chiesa di San Giovanni, un ramo del fiume penetra verso oriente in una valle che proseguiva per circa due, tre chilometri tra le collinette marnose. Presso la sorgente che dava vita alla valle sorgeva una laura o monastero per i monaci che sceglievano una vita eremitica.

Giovanni Mosco ne racconta l'origine nel primo fioretto del suo *Prato Spirituale*. "C'era un anziano di nome Giovanni, che viveva nel monastero di Abba Eustorgio. Il nostro santo arcivescovo di Gerusalemme, Elia, voleva nominarlo igumeno del monastero, ma lui rifiutava, dicendo: 'Voglio vivere sul

monte Sinai per dedicarmi alla preghiera'. L'arcivescovo insisteva: avrebbe potuto andarsene al Sinai dopo essere diventato igumeno. Ma poiché l'anziano non obbediva, Elia lo lasciò andare, con l'impegno che avrebbe accettato la carica al suo ritorno.

Dopo aver salutato l'arcivescovo, l'anziano prese con sé il suo discepolo e si mise in cammino verso il Sinai. Circa un miglio dopo aver attraversato il fiume Giordano, cominciò a sentire i brividi della febbre: non era più in grado di camminare. Trovarono allora una piccola grotta e vi entrarono per far riposare l'anziano. Egli rimase nella grotta febbricitante e quasi nell'impossibilità di muoversi.

Passarono là tre giorni; poi l'anziano vide in sogno un uomo che gli diceva: 'Dimmi, padre, dove vuoi andare?'

'Al monte Sinai', rispose lui, rivolto all'apparizione. 'Ti prego, non andare!', disse la figura, ma non riuscì a convincerlo. Allora si allontanò da lui e gli assalti della febbre aumentarono. La notte seguente, l'apparizione gli si presentò di nuovo sotto il medesimo aspetto, dicendo: 'Mio buon padre, perché ti vuoi tormentare? Dammi ascolto, non andare via!'

'Chi sei?', gli chiese l'anziano. 'Sono Giovanni Battista', gli rispose l'apparizione. 'Ti sto dicendo di non andare via perché questa piccola grotta è ben più grande del monte Sinai. Spesso il nostro signore Gesù Cristo vi è entrato per farmi visita. Dammi dunque la tua parola che resterai a vivere qui ed io ti renderò la salute'.

L'anziano accettò di buon grado, promettendo solennemente che sarebbe rimasto in quella grotta. Guarì immediatamente e rimase là tutta la vita. Trasformò la grotta in una chiesa e raccolse intorno a sé un gruppo di monaci".

"E' il posto chiamato Sapsafas", conclude Giovanni Mosco che ricorda anche un altro fioretto: "Nella stessa località di Sapsafas viveva un altro anziano. Era arrivato ad un grado tale di virtù da essere capace di ricevere i leoni che venivano nella sua grotta e dar loro da mangiare tenendoli in grembo".

La laura viene ricordata e raffigurata nella Carta musiva di Madaba. Il mosaicista l'ha identificata con Ainon-Betania il luogo dove Giovanni battezzava, secondo il Vangelo di San Giovanni 1,28: "Questo avvenne a Betania oltre il Giordano, dove Giovanni stava battezzando". Testo ripetuto successivamente in Gv 10, 40-42: "Cercavano di prenderlo di nuovo, ma egli (Gesù) sfuggì alle loro mani. E ritornò oltre il Giordano nel luogo dove Giovanni aveva prima battezzato e vi si fermò. E molti andarono da lui e dicevano: Giovanni non ha fatto alcun miracolo ma tutto ciò che egli ha detto di costui era vero. E molti credettero in lui in quel luogo."

Il santuario è ricordato dal Pellegrino di Piacenza che descrive, a due miglia dal fiume una valle con una sorgente dove Giovanni battezzava, abitata da eremiti. Al ricordo evangelico si era già aggiunto il ricordo dell'assunzione al cielo del Profeta Elia localizzato su una collina al centro della valle nota come il "piccolo Ermon". Il pellegrino ricorda anche una grotta con le celle per sette vergini che vi venivano rinchiusi da bambine e sepolte alla morte.

La leggenda più famosa raccontata nella valle riguardava la storia di Santa Maria Egiziaca, la prostituta di Alessandria convertita a Gerusalemme che si ritirò in questo deserto per 47 anni, dove fu seppellita dal monaco Zosima che ne raccolse la confessione in punto di morte. La leggenda è stata immortalata da San Sofronio patriarca di Gerusalemme nella Vita di Santa Maria Egiziaca. Il racconto del viaggio verso l'oltregiordano di Maria e del monaco Zosima, sono la testimonianza di epoca di un percorso di pellegrinaggio molto seguito.

Prima della guerra mondiale il Patriarcato Greco-ortodosso di Gerusalemme cercò di ridare vita al santuario e gli esploratori tentarono di localizzarne le rovine. La presenza dei militari ne ha tenuti lontano gli archeologi contemporanei. L'ultimo a visitare le rovine ci risulta padre Agostino Augustinovich nel 1948: *La Terra Santa* 23 (1948) 43-50; 95-101; 24 (1949) 46-52.

Grazie al nuovo spirito di pace che si respira nella regione e alla fattiva intraprendenza del Principe Ghazi, siamo riusciti a tornare nel Wadi Kharrar in cerca del santuario. La prima volta con padre Eugenio Alliata, successivamente con tutti i membri della missione sul Monte Nebo. Da Amman prendiamo la strada verso il ponte Abdallah distrutto durante la guerra del '67 e ora di nuovo in costruzione per smaltire il numero accresciuto dei visitatori. Passato il posto di blocco per Suweimah, l'antica Yesimot nelle steppe di Moab, i soldati della scorta lasciano a me la guida. Mi affido alle mie conoscenze e alle mappe che mi sono procurato. A circa 200/300 metri dalla sponda del fiume puntiamo verso nord prendendo una strada in battuto che costeggia una linea continua di camminamenti e torrette di avvistamento fortificati in abbandono. Giungiamo nel wadi Gharaba (Gharub, come preferiscono dire i soldati di guardia). Una breve sosta per una foto dall'alto della splendida macchia di verde e procediamo verso nord dopo aver attraversato la lussuriosa vegetazione del wadi ricco di acqua scortati da un ufficiale di Madaba di guardia al confine.

Giungiamo ad un secondo wadi infossato e invisibile nella piana di er-Ramah e di Kafrein che si estende a vista d'occhio fino ai primi campi coltivati dei villaggi che costeggiano la montagna. La piccola valle verde è ricca di canne e di tamerici.

Ma a parte due grotte che si aprono nella falesia marnosa del zor (di origine moderna, come successivamente veniamo a sapere) non notiamo nulla di particolare se non un mucchio di pietre tufacee squadrate ammucciate da un bulldozer in uno spiazzo antistante l'ansa del fiume che si affaccia sul Maghtas, il luogo del battesimo di Gesù sulla sponda occidentale del fiume. La piccola edicola costruita da padre Virgilio Corbo per la Custodia di Terra Santa vista da qui si distingue per la sua sobrietà rispetto alla tettoia ignobile con la scala di discesa al fiume costruita in cemento più a nord. Guardare il mondo capovolto fa sempre una strana impressione. L'edicola quadrangolare con la cupoletta e la croce in ferro in controluce in quest'ora della sera sui rami senza foglie di un albero

rinsecchito si muta in visione. Aprendoci un varco tra le canne, scendiamo al fiume limaccioso e quasi fermo incassato profondamente nel letto. Ha un aspetto di pozza d'acqua stagnante che ha poco di sacro.

Riprendiamo la strada del ritorno un po' delusi e scoraggiati dall'impossibilità di ritrovare resti antichi nella giungla amazzonica che è la sponda del fiume, rifugio paradisiaco, forse ancora per poco, di aironi e cinghiali.

I soldati ci invitano al comando per un tè che non si può rifiutare in questo caldo torrido riflesso dalle pareti delle colline marnose. Passiamo vicino ad una specie di anfiteatro naturale dove al centro spuntano alcune palme. Forse la sorgente di Wadi Kharrar che andiamo cercando. Ma non osiamo deviare e ritardare ulteriormente il convoglio dei nostri premurosi ospiti.

Seduti sotto un grande eucaliptus tra palme secolari ricche di datteri, gli ufficiali vengono a salutare il principe in attesa che giunga il colonnello che comanda il contingente. E' lui al suo arrivo che chiarisce i nostri dubbi e titubanze. Con molta gentilezza ci guida di persona all'anfiteatro da noi prima intravisto. In mezzo ad una conca verde il colonnello ci indica la meta delle nostre ricerche, una collinetta che raggiunge con la sua sommità la quota della piana sovrastante.

Tessere di mosaici policromi in situ e sparse per la china, creste di muri emergenti, ceramica inequivocabilmente bizantina ci assicuravano che avevamo raggiunto lo scopo della nostra visita desiderata da anni e solo oggi resa possibile. Durante la seconda visita abbiamo tempo e modo di raccogliere nel campo arato, a sud del tell, ceramica di epoca romana con frammenti dei tipici boccali in pietra usati dagli ebrei del primo secolo. Tanto da chiederci perché padre Féderlin era andato a cercare la Betania del Vangelo altrove a Tell el-Medesh sulla sponda settentrionale del Wadi Nimerin ("Béthanie de Pérée", *Terre Sainte* 1902).

Il più colpito dal nostro entusiasmo è proprio il principe: "Quando iniziamo lo scavo?" Più pragmatici pensiamo alla protezione del tell e di questa piccola valle ancora vergine, finora protetta dai soldati e dalla segregatezza del confine di guerra, quasi raggiunta dalla lottizzazione e dallo sfruttamento agricolo della valle del Giordano. Insieme sogniamo un parco naturale con un angoletto per un santuario musulmano, un maqam per Yahya, il Battista del Corano, e un santuario per riaccogliere sulla sponda orientale del fiume i pellegrini cristiani sempre attratti dal fiume del Battista e di Gesù.

Discorrendo di progetti resi possibili dal nuovo spirito che si vive nella regione, risaliamo verso il monte Nebo che mostra il suo fascino più accattivante a quest'ora del tramonto dopo una giornata di fuoco. Ci lasciamo con un patto di vincere sul tempo gli effetti funesti della pace anche per un luogo santo di Giordania da troppo tempo dimenticato perché irraggiungibile.

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8. Les fouilles de Hayyan al-Mushrif (Pls. 73-78)

Le projet concernant le site de Hayyan al-Mushrif est conduit par l'Université Al-Bayt, sous la direction du Dr. Zeidun al-Muheisen en coopération avec le Département des Antiquités de Jordanie et avec l'assistance technique des forces aériennes jordaniennes.

Hayyan al-Mushrif est situé dans le nord de la Jordanie à environ 8 km au sud-est de la ville de Mafraq (PGE: 276.500 - Pgn: 189.500) à une faible distance des deux grandes voies antiques qui reliaient Bosra à Jerash et à Philadelphie-Amman (Fig. 1). Comme Hayyan el Mushref se trouve à la même hauteur que le site de Thughrat al-Jubb dont on a proposé l'identification avec la ville de Thantia située dans la Table de Peutinger à une distance de 23 milles de Bosra, il serait possible d'envisager également cette identification pour le site de Hayyan el Mushref. Cela impliquerait cependant que la voie romaine s'infléchisse vers le nord-ouest sur une longueur de cinq kilomètres, ce qui semble peu probable. Dans la mesure où des vestiges d'une voie antique ont été reconnues sur le site il est vraisemblable qu'ils appartiennent à une autre voie dont le tracé supposé, qui partait de Mafraq pour aboutir au sud de Khirbet es Samra, figure dans certaines études concernant les voies de communication de cette région.

Le site a été visité par M. Piccirillo et E. Alliata. Les deux archéologues ont reconnu dans les ruines la basilique, l'église centrale et le ed-Deir en donnant une description sommaire avec un plan (M. Piccirillo, *Chiese e mosaici della Giordania settentrionale*, Jerusalem 1981, 99).

Dans son état actuel, le site se présente approximativement comme un carré d'environ 200 m de côté (Fig. 2). Des routes modernes ceinturent la partie centrale du site mais plusieurs structures ont été relevées au-delà de ce périmètre interdit de construction aujourd'hui. Etant donné l'accumulation des ruines ainsi que la présence de constructions récentes employant les blocs éparpillés sur le site, le plan original de ce dernier est malaisé à déterminer. Cependant un vaste réservoir maçonné (birkeh) semble indiquer le point central du site.

Des prospections conduites à cet endroit durant l'été 1996 ont permis d'entreprendre une première campagne de fouilles durant l'automne qui a abouti à l'identification et au dégagement de six structures incluant une grande église de type basilical, un complexe identifié comme un monastère, deux églises plus petites ainsi qu'un bâtiment civil et une mosquée.

La basilique (structure 1)

Cette église qui mesure 36 m x 18 m se trouve sur une petite hauteur qui domine au nord-ouest le site. Elle comprend trois nefs et une abside flanquée de deux pièces latérales de 3.50 m x 2.95 m). En avant s'étendait une vaste cour carrée

(atrium). Bien que l'ensemble de cette structure n'ait pas encore été complètement dégagé, les principaux éléments de cette église ont été identifiés, et l'on a pu reconnaître la présence d'une banquette le long du côté nord ainsi que l'existence de deux petites pièces de part et d'autre de l'entrée. L'abside était entourée par deux gradins étagés. Au centre on reconnaît les bases de l'autel et à l'ouest les restes du chancel (Fig. 3). Lors de son dégagement, la pièce sud était partiellement obstruée par une large banquette maçonnée dont l'enlèvement a révélé la présence de fonts baptismaux se présentant comme un bloc maçonné de forme carrée dont l'intérieur avait été creusé selon un plan cruciforme. La pièce possède deux pavements et les fonts reposent sur le niveau récent, ce qui prouve, étant donné le style de ce dernier ainsi que la poterie associée, que c'est à la fin de l'époque byzantine ou au début de la période omeyyade que la pièce méridionale a été utilisée comme baptistère.

Les trois nefs sont pavées mais l'abside et les pièces latérales sont ornées de mosaïques. L'abside est entourée par une tresse tandis que deux arbres encadrent l'autel devant lequel est placée une amphore. Les représentations animales intégrées à cette composition ont été détruites par les iconoclastes et ont été remplacées par des tesselles blanches. Il en demeure cependant quelques fragments appartenant à un lion qui sont encore reconnaissables. D'après différents indices, il semble que ce pavement doive être daté du VI^e siècle.

Comme mentionné plus haut, l'ancien diakonikon présente deux pavements. Le premier, bien que de style géométrique, appartient à la même phase que celui de l'abside tandis que le second, très endommagé, comprenant uniquement des tesselles blanches, date de la phase de remaniement de la pièce qui a dû prendre place vers le milieu du VII^e siècle.

Les murs de l'abside étaient décorés de fresques dont il subsiste quelques fragments dont les plus importants ont été détachés durant la fouille pour en assurer la conservation. Plusieurs petits piliers et chapiteaux en marbre ainsi que de nombreux fragments de marbre ont été relevés à proximité du chancel dont certains se trouvaient encore à l'intérieur de rainures d'encastrement (Figs 4-6).

Les tessons de poterie recueillis dans l'ensemble des zones étudiées s'échelonnent entre le début de l'époque byzantine et la période abbasside. À l'exception d'un unique tesson recueilli extra-muros datant de la période mamelouke, aucune trace d'occupation ultérieure n'a été mise en évidence dans ce secteur du site.

Le monastère (ed-Deir - structure 2)

Cet ensemble est situé au sud-ouest du site sur une petite hauteur. Il comprend une petite église mesurant 12 m x 5 m avec une nef et une abside fermée par un chancel dont il subsiste quelques vestiges. Cette église était reliée par deux portes au secteur nord du complexe qui incluait plusieurs pièces de dimensions

moyennes dont cinq ont été dégagées (Fig. 7). La pièce centrale présente un pavement de mosaïque relativement bien conservé représentant un quadrillage en damier renfermant des croix. Près du seuil de la porte communiquant avec l'église se trouve une inscription de deux lignes en syro-palestinien que l'on peut rapprocher des inscriptions funéraires de Khirbet es Samra, situé un peu plus au sud, écrites dans le même dialecte. Au nord du monastère, en contrebas, a été localisé un petit cimetière.

L'église centrale (structure 3)

Cette église est située au centre du site, au nord-ouest de la birkeh. Elle mesure 17.60 m x 13 m et comprend trois nefs et une abside entourée d'une banquette (Fig. 8). Au milieu de la nef centrale se trouve une citerne d'un diamètre de 6 m et profonde de 8 m. Dans une phase ultérieure, un mur a été construit de façon à diviser l'espace intérieur dans le sens de la longueur.

L'ensemble de l'église était décoré de mosaïques de style géométrique à l'origine mais dans une seconde phase le pavement du diakonikon au sud a été recouvert par des dalles tandis qu'un nouveau pavement, uniquement composé de tesselles blanches, était posé dans la pièce nord.

De nombreux éléments architecturaux ont été retrouvés, notamment des chapiteaux ainsi qu'une partie du linteau de la porte principale dont le motif central composé de trois croix figure un calvaire (Fig. 9).

Les restes du décor sont également importants. Parmi eux on relève de nombreux fragments de marbre ainsi que des vestiges de fresques dans l'abside dont l'un représente une croix.

La poterie recueillie dans cette église date de l'époque byzantine ainsi que des périodes omeyyade, abbasside et mamelouke.

L'église nord (structure 5)

Cette petite église a été identifiée sur le côté nord-ouest, le long de la route moderne qui délimite le site. Elle comprend une abside, deux pièces latérales et trois nefs mais étant donné la présence d'une maison moderne au-dessus d'une partie de l'église, seule la partie orientale de celle-ci a pu être fouillée (Fig. 10).

Divers sondages conduits sous cette maison ont permis de confirmer l'existence de mosaïques, dont il ne subsiste que des fragments, dans le prolongement de celles reconnues dans le secteur est. Dans l'abside un gradin a été posé dans une phase ultérieure sur le pavement d'origine qui, bien que presque entièrement détruit, présente des vestiges de motifs style géométrique. Deux petits autels remployés portant des traces d'inscriptions étaient placés de chaque côté du chancel tandis qu'un troisième gît à l'intérieur de l'abside. En avant

du chancel on reconnaît les vestiges des piliers qui supportaient les arcs de couverture. L'aile nord possède un pavement de mosaïques composé d'écailles adjacentes renfermant un motif central. Devant le presbyterium la mosaïque comprend un médaillon avec des motifs végétaux ainsi que deux amphores.

La mosquée

La fouille de cette structure a été motivée notamment par le nom de mosquée (al masjed) qui lui était donné par les habitants du village. La destruction de ce bâtiment semble d'ailleurs relativement récente puisque certains des habitants les plus âgés se souviennent de l'avoir connu encore muni de voûtes. A cet égard son mode de couverture est similaire à celui utilisé pour la mosquée de 'Ain Bene Hassan qui se trouve à 10 km à l'ouest de Hayyan al Mushref qui date de la période mamelouke ainsi que celle reconnue à Rihab. En outre la niche mise en évidence dans le mur sud du bâtiment a été identifiée comme un mihrab semblable à ceux des mosquées mentionnées ci-dessus.

La mosquée de Hayyan al-Mushrif mesure 6.60 m de long et 3.80 m de large (Fig. 11). La hauteur des assises restantes est de 1.80 m et la partie supérieure tend à s'infléchir vers l'intérieur pour suivre la forme de la voûte. Le mihrab implanté selon une direction sud-est est haut de 1.45 m pour une largeur de 1.20 m et une profondeur de 1.25 m. L'entrée se trouve dans le mur est près de l'angle nord-est. Plusieurs blocs architecturaux ont été relevés à l'intérieur de la mosquée, notamment une base de colonne ainsi qu'un fragment de linteau près de l'entrée.

Le bâtiment officiel (structure 4)

Cette structure se trouve dans le secteur est du site. Bien que la fouille n'en soit qu'à son début certains éléments significatifs ont pu néanmoins être relevés. Ainsi la présence d'arcs supportant un étage pavé de mosaïques dont il subsiste quelques vestiges a été mise en évidence. Le niveau inférieur semble avoir été partiellement occupé par des écuries. Une monnaie en or datant du IV^e siècle de notre ère a été retrouvée à l'intérieur de ce bâtiment. Le plan de celui-ci ainsi que ses dimensions permettent d'attribuer une fonction officielle à ce bâtiment.

Etant donné l'étendue du site un programme prévoyant deux campagnes annuelles a été mis en place afin d'assurer une progression satisfaisante dans la fouille et une meilleure évaluation de ce site ainsi que d'en assurer la conservation et l'aménagement pour en permettre un accès plus aisé.

Zeidoun al-Muheisen - Dominique Tarrier
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9. Hayyan al-Mushrif. Iscrizione in aramaico palestinese cristiano (Tav. 79)

A Hayyan al-Mushrif, nel nord della Giordania, lungo una strada secondaria che scende verso Khirbet es-Samra è stata recentemente trovata l'iscrizione in Aramaico Palestinese Cristiano (APC), generalmente detto Cristo-palestinese, della quale qui proponiamo la lettura. Tale iscrizione è stata rinvenuta sul pavimento mosaicato di un ambiente coperto addossato a una cappellina che formava con questa un piccolo complesso monastico¹. L'iscrizione su mosaico è ben conservata, tutte le lettere sono conservate per intero e abbastanza facilmente leggibili (fig. 1; foto 1). E' disposta su due righe parallele della lunghezza di circa 170 cm e dall'altezza complessiva di 30 cm. L'altezza (e la lunghezza) delle singole lettere varia da caso a caso. Le lettere che si trovano all'inizio della riga sono più grandi (8-10 cm) rispetto a quelle che seguono. Sono composte da tessere di modulo maggiorato tipiche di un ambiente di servizio. Il contesto archeologico suggerisce di datare l'iscrizione non oltre la fine del VI secolo.

Linea 1:

La parola *mr'*, frequente all'inizio di questo tipo di iscrizioni, è la prova che abbiamo a che fare con un testo in APC. E' un vocativo rivolto al Signore da tradursi: o Signore! La lettera Resh in questa parola non è munita di segno diacritico. Nelle successive 3 occorrenze dell'iscrizione compare sempre col segno diacritico. Invece la lettera Daleth, che compare 4 volte nell'iscrizione, non ha alcun segno diacritico.

La seconda parola è una forma imperativale dalla radice 'bd "fare". La forma 'ybd, probabilmente (')ebhadh qui attestata, con Yodh dopo la prima radicale, è caratteristica dell'APC². Traduciamo: fa' (imper. 2 m. s.).

Il terzo gruppo di lettere, scritto *rh'mynl* (oppure *rh'my'l*), dovrà essere diviso in due parole. La prima possibilità di divisione, *rh'myn - l*, crea qualche problema di ortografia. Nella scriptio continua la *nun* finale che compare nel

1. Su invito del signor 'Abd al-Qadir Mahmoud al-Hassan, ispettore delle antichità del governatorato di Mafraq, padre Michele Piccirillo e padre Eugenio Alliatia furono invitati a visitare lo scavo in corso delle chiese di Hayyan al-Mushrif (cf. notizia di Z. al-Muheisen, p. 519) da loro identificate e sommariamente rilevate negli anni settanta (M. Piccirillo, *Chiese e mosaici della Giordania settentrionale*, Jerusalem 1981, 99-100). Il signor al-Hassan chiese di aiutarlo nella lettura dell'iscrizione in aramaico palestinese cristiano scoperta nell'ambiente mosaicato a nord della cappella di ed-Deir da lui scavata. Padre Piccirillo dopo aver pulito e fotografato l'iscrizione mi ha affidato lo studio di cui ringrazio sia lui che l'archeologo. Grazie di cuore al prof. M. Bar-Asher per gli utili suggerimenti di carattere linguistico.

2. Per la caratteristica grammaticale in generale si veda C. Müller-Kessler, *Grammatik des Christlich-Palästinisch-Aramäischen. Teil 1: Schriftlehre, Lautlehre, Formenlehre*, Hildesheim 1991, 158. Per la forma verbale in questione vedi F. Schultess, *Grammatik des christlich-palästinischen Aramäisch*, Tübingen 1924, 62. La stessa forma viene discussa anche in G. Dalman, *Grammatik des jüdisch-palästinischen Aramäisch*, Leipzig 1905², 275-276.

corpo della parola viene scritta come *nun* mediale (oppure '). Questo uso è attestato in altre iscrizioni³. Un'altra possibile lettura e divisione, suffragata dall'ortografia, potrebbe essere *rh'my - 'l*⁴. In questo caso però la prima parola risulterebbe essere una forma strana perché mancante della lettera Alef alla fine, mentre la Alef che troviamo nel corpo della parola rimane comunque problematica⁵. Le ultime due lettere (*nl / 'l*) sono congiunte ma leggermente distaccate dalla *yod* che precede; segue uno spazio prima della parola seguente. Per questo la prima divisione e lettura che si impone basandosi sull'ortografia è proprio quest'ultima (*rh'my - 'l*).

Dal punto di vista linguistico l'espressione '*bd rhmyn* può essere seguita dalla preposizione *l* come complemento del verbo '*bd* (fare qualcosa a qualcuno) e anche dalla preposizione '*l* (la parola *rh'myn* è seguita generalmente dalla preposizione '*l*). L'espressione in questione non è frequente nella letteratura biblica⁶. La grafia favorisce la seconda ipotesi. Anche la grammatica sembra favorire la stessa ipotesi. Perciò proponiamo di leggere '*ybd rh'my 'l*. La forma *rh'my / ܪܗܡܝ* è da considerarsi una storpiatura di *rh'my' / ܪܗܡܝܐ* oppure di *rh'myn / ܪܗܡܝܢ*.

La parola *q'syš'* "sacerdote" è abbastanza frequente in questo genere di iscrizioni. Si noti qui la lettera Alef dopo la prima consonante che funge da *mater lectionis* e indica la vocale "a", da leggersi dunque *qaššiša*.

L'ultima parola della prima riga, *q'y'*, ci fornisce il nome del sacerdote. Dovrebbe trattarsi di Caio.

Linea 2:

La parola *brh* è composta dalla parola *bar* "figlio" con pronome prolettico suffisso di 3 m. s., letteralmente "figlio suo", nel contesto tradotto semplicemente "figlio".

Il gruppo di lettere che segue è problematico in quanto non tutte le lettere sono unite fra loro come ci aspetteremmo. Dovrebbe trattarsi di un nome proprio (non semitico) preceduto dalla particella *d*. Il nome in questione è, con ogni probabilità, Eusebio (da scriversi ܐܘܨܝܒܝܘܨ ?).

La prossima parola è *d'bd*, perfetto qal 3 m. s. preceduto dal pronome relativo *d*. Significa "che ha fatto, che fece".

3. Si veda, ad es., M. Halloun - R. Rubin, "Palestinian Syriac Inscription from 'En Sweinit", *LA* 31 (1981) 297-298 (in particolare nota 23). Si veda anche E. Puech, "Notes d'onomastique christo-palestinienne de Kh. Es-Samra", *AIUO* 43 (1983) 514 nota 28, dove troviamo un altro caso simile.

4. La penultima lettera è più simile ad una Ayin che a una Nun. La lettera Nun non compare altrove in questa iscrizione, mentre la Ayin vi compare altre due volte.

5. La Alef finale potrebbe essere finita per errore dello scriba nel corpo della parola. In questa iscrizione questa lettera nel corpo della parola si lega liberamente nelle due direzioni.

6. Ho trovato una costruzione simile nella Peshitta di Is 47,6 dove si dice: *wl' 'bdty 'lyhwn rh'm'* "non hai fatto loro misericordia" dove il complemento di '*bd* è '*l*.

L'ultima parola dell'iscrizione indica l'oggetto che è stato fatto / costruito dal personaggio in questione. Si tratta di una parola conosciuta in APC, *drt'* (dārtā), che significa "cortile, atrio, vestibolo"⁷. Nel *Testamentum Domini* nel capitolo dedicato alla descrizione degli edifici sacri la parola ܕܪܬܐ ricorre tre volte preceduta sempre dalla parola ܕܠܚܘܒܐ, da tradursi "ante-atrio, vestibolo" o in maniera simile⁸. La parola dārtā può significare, secondo il contesto, sia un ambiente esterno (sagrato, cortile, portico) che interno (vestibolo, navata di una chiesa)⁹. Dal punto di vista paleografico è degna di nota - anche se non si tratta di una novità - la grafia della lettera *Taw* (penultima lettera della parola) che è scritta inclinata di 90 gradi in senso antiorario. Di fatto la parola in questione dovrebbe riferirsi all'ambiente del complesso in cui è stata trovata l'iscrizione fatto costruire dal presbitero in questione. Trattandosi di un ambiente interno coperto si potrà tradurre con "atrio, vestibolo".

In definitiva questa è la lettura e la traduzione da noi proposta:

linea 1: mr' 'ybd rḥ'my 'l q'syš' q'y'

linea 2: brh d'swbwzw d'bd drt'

*O Signore, fa' misericordia al presbitero Caio
figlio di Eusebio che fece l'atrio (o vestibolo).*

ܕܪܬܐ ܕܠܚܘܒܐ ܕܠܚܘܒܐ ܕܠܚܘܒܐ ܕܠܚܘܒܐ
ܕܠܚܘܒܐ ܕܠܚܘܒܐ ܕܠܚܘܒܐ ܕܠܚܘܒܐ

7. La parola si trova, ad es., in Mc 15,16 dove indica l'atrio del pretorio di Pilato. Si veda Müller-Kessler, *Grammatik des Christlich-Palästinisch-Aramäischen*, 114; G.A. Kiraz, *A Computer Generated Concordance to the Syriac New Testament According to the British and Foreign Bible Society's Edition*, Leiden - New York - Köln 1993, ad vocem. La parola compare 15 volte nel NT siriano e diverse volte anche nel NT in APC con gli stessi significati: cortile, proprietà, abitazione, ingresso, vestibolo. La parola ܕܪܬܐ (senza dagesh nella ܬ) è attestata anche in G. Dalman, *Aramäisch-neuhebräisches Handwörterbuch zu Targum, Talmud und Midrash*, ad vocem, nel senso di *Hofraum, Vorhof* oppure *Hofgebäude*. E' attestata anche nei dialetti neo-aramaici con lo stesso significato. Si veda, ad es., A.J. Maclean, *A Dictionary of the Dialects of Vernacular Syriac*, Oxford 1901, 71.

8. Nell'ed. Rahmani (I, 19) il testo siriano compare a p. 22, righe 18 e 20 con la traduzione latina a p. 23 e a p. 26 riga 1 con traduzione a p. 27. Rahmani in tutti e tre i casi traduce l'espressione in questione con "atrium". Questo testo tradotto in inglese si può trovare in C.H. Kraeling, *Gerasa City of the Decapolis*, New Haven 1938, 175 e note 4-5 con utili riferimenti bibliografici.

9. Si veda in proposito J. Sader, *Le lieu de culte et la messe syro-occidentale selon le "De oblatione" de Jean de Dara*. Étude d'archéologie et de liturgie, Roma 1983, alle pp. 38-39 dedicate ai diversi significati di questa parola.

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Massimo Pazzini

Studium Biblicum Franciscanum

10. A Church at Khirbat Sa'ad. A New Discovery (Pls. 80-84)

Khirbat Sa'ad is located 27 km to the west of al-Mafraq city (Map I). It rises to a height of almost one kilometer above sea level.

Khirbat Sa'ad was first surveyed by Mittmann in 1970 (S. Mittmann, *Beiträge zur Siedlungs und Territorialgeschichte des Nordlichen Ostjordanbandes*, Wiesbaden 1970, 119). His survey ascertained the significance of the site indicating too the different remains which are still partially standing. The human settlement seems to have started as early as the classical period, probably earlier, and is seen to have continued up to the Ottoman period.

Its archaeological exploration was initiated in the summer of 1994 by an expedition of the Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology in co-operation

with the Department of Antiquities of Jordan. It was funded by the Deanship of Research and Graduate Studies of Yarmuk University and headed by Salih Sari.

Until now, among the most important discoveries are: a mosque of the Umayyad period reused during the Ayyubid and Mameluk periods, two wine presses, one of them is the best preserved and the biggest of its kind in the whole region, which reflects the prosperity prevailing at that time, i.e. the 6th century A.D., as shown in the inscription, and the church about which this report deals.

The Church

The church is located west of the mosque excavated in Area A and east of the wine press complex (Map II). Excavations in the 1994 season exposed most of the foundations of the church and the whole parts of the mosaic pavement. The church consists of a nave, presbytery, two aisles and a narthex. The interior measures 24 m x 11 m (Fig. 1).

The church was partly built on bed rock and boulders. The foundation stones were exposed at spots where the soil is thick. On the bed rock, only one outline remains, and it is supposed that the cut was made to lay the foundation stones. The foundation was exposed in most the southern, south-eastern part of the wall and 1/3 of the apse. Of the northern wall, only the eastern part, huge slabs partly uncovered, appears. The western part of the northern wall and the western wall of the church are totally demolished. However, there is a clear outline on the bedrock where the northern wall was built. Entrances exposed in the northern wall are: a pavement in the middle part leading to the church and an entrance to the narthex at its end, east of the northern wall.

The Mosaic Floor

The floor of the church was paved with a mosaic depicting plants, trees, a basket, an amphora and geometric designs. Traces of restoration could be observed which indicates continuous use of the church (Fig. 2). The remains of the church was close to the surface and as a result the mosaic floor was exposed to repeated ploughing, and extensive damage was inflicted. Most of the western and south-eastern part of the mosaic pavement of the nave was intact. At the aisles only parts of the mosaic were preserved.

The floor must have been decorated with three different types of panels. Only two types of panels were exposed, i.e. the main carpet and a smaller panel east of it. The decoration of the presbytery was totally demolished. The prominent pavement is the main carpet of the nave. It is a rectangular panel formed of lines of different colors of tesserae and saw tooth and triangles bordered by

tongue-shaped guilloche. The decoration inside the panel consists of twelve scrolls out of which only four are mostly preserved. The remainder was damaged and repaired by using bigger tesserae and plaster.

The decoration inside the scrolls is composed of palm trees with dates, grapes, leaves (Fig. 3), geometric designs (Fig. 4) in addition to a high footed amphora and a partially damaged basket (Fig. 5). The colors used to decorate the scrolls and their contents are red, brown, pink, blue, black and cream. There were figurative motifs removed by the iconoclasts as manifested in the floor by using different tesserae in terms of size and of color. I believe that the medallions originally contained birds and animals which were later on replaced by plants during the iconoclastic crisis well attested in the region.

The Inscription

The main panel also includes a tabula ansata inscribed with white tesserae and on a reddish brown background. Most of the inscription is preserved except in the north eastern edge. Traces of repair could be seen. At a later period it must have been exposed to fire by camping bedouins.

1. [Χάριτι Θεοῦ καὶ Κ(υρίου) Ἰ(ησοῦ) Χ(ριστοῦ) ἔθεμηλιώθη
2. [καὶ ἔψηφώθη] καὶ ἔκοσμήθη ὁ ναὸς τοῦ
3. [ἀγίου Θ]ῶμα τῆς? ὑποστάσεως Γεροντίου
4. [...] καὶ Ἡλίου αὐτοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ σω(ερί)ας Πορφυρίας
5. συμ]β(ίου) πρ(οτέρας) αὐτοῦ υἱοῦ τῶν κ(αί) ἀναλωσάντων.
6. [Κε Ἰησ]οὺς πρόσδεξ(αι) τὴν καρποφορίαν. Ἐψη(φώθη)
7. [...]ς παρ () ε ἰνδ(ικτιῶνος) ἔτ(ους) υξξ. Μνήσθητι ὁ Θε(εὸς) εὐχαίς
8. [...]ιου τοῦ λαμπρ(οτάτου) ζυγοστ(άτου) Βοστρῶν καὶ Ἰωάννου.

By the grace of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ this church of Saint Thomas was founded (and paved with mosaics) and furnished for the life of Gerontios [] and of his son Elias and the salvation of Porfuria the former wife of his son and of of the people who have paid the money. O Lord Jesus accept the offering. It was paved (by care of ?) on the fifth indiction of the year 467 (572/3). Remember o God the vows of [] the illustrious master of weights of the people of Bostra and of John.

The inscription with the obvious missing words presents minor difficulties which do not affect the general meaning.

The area of the presbytery in front of the altar 17 cm higher than the nave was decorated with a rectangular panel enclosed in a braided guilloche. The decoration inside the panel was filled with florets. The panel is mostly damaged and only the southern part remained intact.

The decoration of the aisles is of geometric design. The northern aisle was decorated with a geometric pattern of joined squares. The southern aisle is decorated with a geometric grid connected with florets.

The decoration of the intercolumnar panels is various. The northern part is decorated with classical emblems of interlaced geometric composition. In the south there are two types of decorations: wave-like patterns with three different colors with traces of repair, and the other is decorated with interlaced quadrifoil and patterns of semi-circles.

In conclusion, based on the inscription, the church was built in A.D. 572/3, and I believe was later restored during the 7th-8th centuries A.D. in the Umayyad period.

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II. BIBLIOGRAFIA SULLA GIORDANIA

ADAJ 38, *Annual of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan XXXVIII*, Amman 1994.

Il volume contiene 29 contributi in lingua inglese e 6 contributi in lingua araba. Comprende inoltre 2 note rispettivamente sul Ninfeo di Amman (a cura di M. Waheeb - Z. Zubi) e sui papiri bizantini trovati di recente a Petra (a cura di P.M. Bikai). La scoperta di questi ultimi si presenta come uno dei maggiori ritrovamenti epigrafici in Giordania, sebbene il materiale sia molto danneggiato. Per il momento la lettura dei testi non è stata ancora fatta. La maggior parte dei contributi riguarda i rapporti preliminari degli scavi condotti attualmente in Giordania. Come sempre il criterio seguito è quello cronologico, pertanto l'esposizione inizia con il rapporto di G.O. Rollefson - Z. Kafafi sul sito di 'Ain Ghazal (Neolitico Yarmukiano) e termina con la presentazione di F. Zayadine sugli scavi di Ayla/ 'Aqaba (dalle origini fino al periodo crociato). I contributi più consistenti sono nell'ordine: rapporto preliminare della 14^a campagna di scavo a Pella (1992) sotto la direzione di B. Hennessy (pp. 81-126); rapporto preliminare sulla 3^a campagna di scavo a T. Abu al-Kharaz (1992) diretta da P.M. Fisher (pp. 127-145); rapporto sulla 4^a campagna di scavo a T. el-Umeiri e T. Jalul (1992) nel contesto del *Madaba Plains Project* a cura di L.G. Herr - L.T. Geraty - O.S. LaBianca - R.W. Younker (pp. 147-172); rapporto sulla 4^a campagna di scavo a T. Jawa (1993) diretta da P.M.M. Daviau (pp. 173-193); rapporto sulla 3^a campagna di scavo a T. Nimrin (1993) diretta da J. Flanagan - D.W. McCreery - Kh.N. Yassine (pp. 205-244) cui è aggiunta la presentazione del lotto di 34 monete d'argento bizantine, da Valentiniano I fino a Anastasio I, che coprono gli anni 364-518 d. C. (pp. 245-265); rapporto della 5^a campagna di scavo (1993) a ez-Zantura diretta da R.A.

Stucky (pp. 271-292); rapporto sugli scavi del 1993 al tempio di Petra (Southern Temple) ad opera del Brown University Center (pp. 293-332); la nuova iscrizione nabatea trovata a Qasr al-Hallabat (1992) da G. Lacerenza (pp. 354-349); rapporto preliminare sulla 7ª campagna di scavo (1992) a Abila della Decapoli diretta da W.H. Mare (pp. 359-378); la pubblicazione di un importante lotto di ceramica tardo bizantina da Madaba a cura di T.P. Harrison (pp. 429-446). I contributi pervengono regolarmente e puntualmente dai cantieri di scavo, a testimoniare l'abbondanza e la serietà delle varie spedizioni scientifiche in Giordania.

Pietro Kaswalder

Khairieh 'Amr - Fawzi Zayadine - Muna Zaghloul (edd.), *Studies in the History and Archaeology of Jordan, V: Art and Technology Throughout the Ages*, Amman 1995, 776 pp. + 54 (Arabic Section).

Il 5° simposio internazionale su storia e archeologia di Giordania si è svolto nel 1992 all'Università delle Scienze e della Tecnologia di Irbid (Giordania settentrionale). Aveva per tema *"Arte e tecnologia in Giordania attraverso i secoli"*. Il tema come si può capire è molto vasto, e copre un raggio di interessi alquanto esteso: dalle industrie litiche delle culture preistoriche alla creazione della ceramica, dalla produzione del vetro alla architettura e pianificazione dei centri abitati, dall'agricoltura e produzione di cibo alle miniere, dalla tecnica metallurgica a molti altri aspetti della vita dei popoli. *"I contributi presentati ora in questo volume testimoniano chiaramente l'ampiezza delle varie discipline scientifiche che interessano la ricerca archeologica"*, si legge nella presentazione di p. 21. Infatti nelle varie équipes che dirigono uno scavo troviamo di frequente il geologo e il geografo, il paleobotanico assieme all'antropologo, a testimoniare che oggi la ricerca archeologica è frutto di un gruppo di studio più che campo di ricerca di un singolo scienziato. Tutta la ricerca archeologica va compresa nella prospettiva di studiare il passato per trovare soluzioni al presente, come è nelle intenzioni di coloro che hanno iniziato la serie delle conferenze internazionali molti anni fa. Nel discorso di apertura del Principe Hassan il concetto più rilevante mi pare questo: *"Archaeology should be a study of Man's past for the benefit of today's Man. The protection of our cultural heritage constitute an important corner stone in our strife to achieve sustainable development for the benefit of the modern Jordanian and generations to come"* (p. 27). La presentazione dei contributi segue uno schema di nove argomenti. 1) Una serie di studi generici sulle innovazioni del passato che hanno segnato il progresso umano nella regione (pp. 29-81); 2) una serie di contributi che riguardano la documentazione e conservazione dei siti archeologici di Giordania (pp. 83-117); 3) una lunga serie di articoli su architettura e pianificazione urbana, dal Neolitico di 'Ayn Ghazal al moderno villaggio di Tayyba (pp. 119-373); 4) alcune considerazioni su affreschi e pitture, mosaici, iscrizioni

e sculture (pp. 375-435); 5) studi su statuaria, figurine e piccoli oggetti in pietra (pp. 437-495); 6) alcuni contributi relativi alle industrie litiche (pp. 497-518); 7) alcune osservazioni sulla produzione dei metalli e del vetro (pp. 519-539); 8) una discussione accurata sulle tecniche di produzione della ceramica dal Neolitico al periodo Omayyade (pp. 541-672); 9) una serie di considerazioni interessanti sulle tecniche di regolamentazione delle risorse idriche in funzione della produzione di cibo (pp. 673-776). A questa serie di articoli in inglese segue una sezione di contributi in lingua araba (pp. 5-54). Come si vede il volume raggiunge le 830 pagine, e mi pare troppo oneroso descrivere singolarmente i 93 contributi pervenuti alla redazione del simposio. Il numero e il buon livello delle esposizioni, in genere accompagnate da grafici e illustrazioni, indica il progresso continuo della ricerca archeologica in Giordania, nonostante le difficoltà ambientali ed economiche sempre in agguato.

Pietro Kaswalder

Chrysantos Kanellopoulos, *The Great Temple of Amman. The Architecture*, (ACOR 2), Amman 1994, 123 pp., 13 Plates. Figures and Pictures in the Text.

La collana delle pubblicazioni di ACOR - Amman che era iniziata con il volume di M. Piccirillo, *The Mosaics of Jordan*, Amman 1993, si arricchisce del secondo numero, dedicato al tempio romano che si trova nella Cittadella di Amman. È il primo di due volumi dedicati al progetto di scavo e restauro del tempio; il secondo volume, per ora solo annunciato, riguarderà gli aspetti archeologici. Il primo riporta gli studi fatti in vista del restauro del santuario. I primi quattro capitoli (pp. 1-85) riguardano la storia, la ricerca e il progetto di restauro del santuario. Il tempio Romano di Philadelphia / Amman è da sempre un'attrazione, non solo per i turisti ma pure per gli studiosi. Ch. Kanellopoulos ci offre uno studio completo sull'edificio e così siamo in grado di apprezzarne ancora di più il valore. Di fatto il tempio non è conservato molto bene, a causa delle distruzioni sofferte fin dall'antichità. Le parti meglio preservate sono le imponenti fondazioni. Tuttavia da ciò che si può vedere si ottiene un'idea abbastanza precisa dell'imponenza e della spettacolarità che lo caratterizzava. La storia della ricerca su questo edificio non è particolarmente ricca di elementi, e l'Autore confessa che le domande su alcuni aspetti della costruzione sono più numerose delle risposte, a cominciare dalla divinità a cui era dedicato, per finire alle dimensioni del tempio. Normalmente si pensava che era dedicato a Eracle, ma questa sembra piuttosto una credenza popolare. Tra le informazioni sicure troviamo la data della costruzione rimasta nella iscrizione ancora parzialmente leggibile. La datazione dell'edificio è 161-166 d.C., al tempo del governatore romano Geminus Marciano: “[Per la salute] dei Signori gli imperatori Marco Aurelio Antonino e Lucio Aurelio Vero, assieme a ... ha dedicato il santuario [al dio?] ... Al tempo di Geminio Marciano legato dei Cesari giusti. Anno ...” I resti del tempio furono visti per primo da U.J.

Seetzen nel 1806, e poi sono sempre stati ricordati dagli esploratori del secolo scorso. Solo in questo secolo sono cominciati scavi veri propri nella Cittadella (al-Qal'a) di Amman, ad opera della Missione Italiana guidata da R. Bartoccini e C. Ceschi. Va ricordato che i rilievi di Bartoccini-Ceschi sono stati pubblicati per la prima volta nel 1983 da A. Almagro in *ADAJ* 27 (1983): 607-639. L'esplorazione della Cittadella è continuata poi negli anni '50 (L. Harding) e negli anni 1960-1970 (cooperazione tra il Dipartimento delle Antichità e la ACOR guidata da R. Dornemann). Negli anni 1979-1981 si registra il primo scavo stratigrafico del tempio a cura di A. Northedge. Negli anni '90 è ripreso lo scavo a cura di K. Yassine, R. Dornemann, W. Russel e M. Najjar. Scopo principale delle ultime ricerche era di definire il piano dell'edificio, rimasto in sospenso fino ad oggi. Al riguardo, la conclusione che presenta Ch. Kanellopoulos sembra decretare la fine delle ipotesi proposte in passato. Secondo l'Autore si tratta di un edificio costruito su di un podio, con temenos e facciata hexastile (cf Fig. 112 p. 62; Fig. 121 p. 72). La città bassa di Philadelphia era collegata al tempio mediante una scalinata monumentale, che accedeva al santuario attraverso una piazza circoscritta da un propileo (cf Fig. 3 p. 3) e una porta monumentale (cf Fig. 13 a p. 12). Gran parte dello scavo attuale è stato dedicato al ritrovamento del temenos, che ha un perimetro di m 72x122, che ora si conosce per intero (cf Plate I). Il santuario misura m 26x31 e si avvicina per la sua pianta sofisticata al tempio di Bacco a Baalbek. Interessante notare che il restauro potrebbe seguire ben 5 ipotesi di misurazioni, e quindi di differente disposizione delle colonne e altri elementi. Questo forse perché il tempio si è preservato in condizioni molto povere. Riguardo alla divinità cui il santuario era dedicato, si possono fare le seguenti considerazioni. Il nome di Eracle fu avanzato per primo da C.R. Conder (1889) e riproposto da L. Harding (1967), sulla base della storia del culto di Eracle, molto diffuso in Philadelphia e nella Decapoli (cf le monete con la raffigurazione del carro di Eracle). Si suppone poi una successione temporale e contenutistica dal culto del dio ammonita Milkom al culto del dio ellenistico Eracle. Un elemento ulteriore che spinge in questa direzione, potrebbe essere l'iscrizione trovata su una pietra riusata nella chiesa di S. Giorgio posta sul J. al-Webdeh, in cui si parla di Martas figlio di Diogene, costruttore dell'Eracleion (cf p. 83). Dato però che non è possibile unire l'iscrizione di J. al-Webdeh con il santuario della Cittadella, l'ipotesi sulla divinità venerata nel santuario resta ancora aperta a varie soluzioni. La fine del tempio sembra essere stata causata da un terremoto, quello del 363, del 520, o forse meglio ancora, quello del 749. Il volume è arricchito da due capitoli (il quinto e il sesto) e dalle appendici (A-E) che riguardano le tecniche specifiche del recupero e rimessa in posa dei pezzi architettonici rimasti, delle analisi chimiche e di altre questioni tecniche. La bibliografia e le piante annesse al volume sono buone, e testimoniano l'accuratezza del lavoro presentato.

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