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Bard, K. and Fattovich, R., *Mersa/Wadi Gawasis 2009-2010*, pp. 7-35

In December 2009-January 2010 the Archaeological Expedition of Università degli Studi di Napoli “L’Orientale” (UNO), and the Istituto Italiano per l’Africa e l’Oriente (IsIAO), Rome, in collaboration with Boston University (BU), Boston (USA) conducted the 9th field season at the site of Mersa/Wadi Gawasis, Red Sea, under the direction of Prof. Rodolfo Fattovich (UNO/IsIAO), and Prof. Kathryn A. Bard (BU). The team in the field included Italian, American, Egyptian, British, and German personnel with different specializations (archaeology, nautical archaeology, epigraphy, geology, paleoethnobotany and topography). The site of Mersa/Wadi Gawasis is located 23 km to the south of the modern port of Safaga, on the top and along the slopes of a fossil coral terrace, to the west of which is the lower Wadi Gawasis. Earlier excavations along the western slope of the terrace provided good evidence of the use of Mersa Gawasis as the pharaonic harbor for voyages to Punt in the Middle Kingdom and the early New Kingdom. In 2009-2010 fieldwork at Mersa/Wadi Gawasis included geological and archaeological investigations, mapping, laser-scanner surveying and conservation. Geological investigations were conducted in the wadi bed and confirmed the hypothesis that the lower Wadi Gawasis was originally a lagoon with an open channel to the sea. Archaeological excavations were conducted along and at the base of the western slope of the coral terrace and in the “harbor area” at the base of the southwestern slope of the terrace.

Bagnulo, C. et alii, *Ricerche archeologiche a Cirene - “Casa del Propileo” - Campagna 2009*, pp. 37-65

Oggetto delle ricerche archeologiche che l’Università degli Studi di Napoli “l’Orientale” conduce a Cirene è l’area occupata dalla cosiddetta “Casa del Propileo”, una vasta costruzione (25x50 m) situata in uno dei punti più interessanti della topografia cirenaica, immediatamente ad Ovest dell’ agorà,

alla quale l'edificio si allinea raggiungendone le proporzioni a Nord e a Sud. A Nord l'edificio insiste, proprio come l'agorà, su poderose sostruzioni, secondo un programma di ampliamento e monumentalizzazione che ha investito in età ellenistica tutto il settore; a Sud si affaccia con un monumentale propileo sulla Skyrotà, la famosa via che collega l'Acropoli alla città.

L'interesse per le indagini in questa zona, iniziate negli anni '70, proseguite con numerose interruzioni fino ai giorni nostri e non ancora concluse, è nato sulla base di precise problematiche, connesse con la individuazione di una probabile "piccola agorà arcaica" ad Ovest della agorà classica che permettesse la ricostruzione dell'assetto originario dell'area al momento della colonizzazione e la definizione dello specifico modello organizzativo urbano di Cirene, un centro che con le sue caratteristiche anomale nel panorama dei movimenti coloniali greci - composizione non omogenea del primo nucleo coloniale, rapporti amichevoli con le popolazioni autoctone e soprattutto regime monarchico ereditario - sembra rendere pleonastica l'esistenza di una agorà nei primi anni di vita della colonia.

de Maigret, A., *Joint Saudi-Italian Archaeological Project at Dûmat al-Jandal. Preliminary report of the 1st excavation campaign* (2009), pp. 67-83

A first archaeological campaign has been carried out at Dûmat al-Jandal between April 23 and May 7 2009. The field work, which follows a preliminary visit of the site we could accomplish on June 2008, has been realized after the approval of an "Italian proposal of research at Dûmat al-Jandal" by the "Saudi General Organization for Tourism and Antiquities" (GOTA). The project is co-sponsored by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MAE/DGPC), Università degli Studi di Napoli "L'Orientale" (UNO) and the Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente of Rome (IsIAO). The Italian Archaeological Mission carries on its researches under the patronage of the IsIAO. A formal Joint Cooperative Agreement for a five years period of activities was signed at Riyadh on May 5 at the presence of HH Prince Sultan ibn Salman ibn 'Abdul 'Aziz and the Italian Ambassador Eugenio D'Auria. The program of the first campaign was aimed to: 1) obtaining a first comprehensive map of the Archaeological Park around the

Mârid castle; 2) starting some systematic excavations in the same Archaeological Park.

Fattovich, R. *The Archaeological Expedition of Uno at Aksum (Tigray): 2009 Field Season Final Report*, pp. 85-112

During the 2009 field season the Italian Archaeological Expedition at Aksum (Tigray) of the Università degli Studi di Napoli “L’Orientale” (UNO), Naples (Italy), conducted a preliminary reconnaissance of the archaeological site at Yeha, near Adwa, for a preliminary assessment of the archaeological area. In conformity with the requirements of the Authority for Research and Conservation of the Cultural Heritage (ARCCH), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the activity of the expedition strictly focused on the area currently occupied by the village of Yeha where a) the systematic survey of the ancient settlement, and b) a Laser Scanner survey of the main temple were conducted. In addition, the expedition continued the archaeological survey of the region to the north of Aksum, along the May Gwodaie river, where few new sites were documented and included into the archaeological map of Aksum elaborated in 2005/2006 as part of the World Bank *Ethiopian Cultural Heritage Project - Aksum Branch - Site Inventory and Documentation Component*. Moreover, a Laser Scanner survey of the Mausoleum was carried out in the Stelae Park to generate a detailed 3D model of the funerary complex.

Genito, B. and Gricina, A., *The Achaemenid Period in the Samarkand Area (Sogdiana): Trial Trenches At Koj Tepa, 2009 Campaign*, pp. 113-161

The archaeological project in the Samarkand region aimed at detecting and investigating an Achaemenid horizon in Sogdiana after the first short campaign of May-June 2008 continued in summer 2009 through more extensive trial-trenches at Koj tepa. This tepa is a rather important settlement, constituted by a citadel encircled by walls, inside strongly destroyed, cut through by a modern activity of bulldozers, which, according to the topographic results achieved by the IAM of the Bologna University, presented partial remains of the city walls; though not still clearly identified;

this wall was most probably encircling a truncated-cone-sh high citadel, according to a settlement pattern of a constructive urban system typical for sites in ancient Samarkand and Ustrushana areas. A new general map of the site is going to be realized by a laser-scanner survey promoted by the Università degli Studi di Napoli, L'Orientale. The joint Uzbek/Italian team acts in a work inserted within the frame of an official agreement between IAASU and UNO, signed in October 2008 in Samarkand and April 2009 in Naples. The second season of excavation at Koj Tepe in 2009 has been aimed at investigating the area around section no 1 and 2, in the presumed area of the eastern city-wall of the site in order to achieve a typological and possibly chronological stratigraphic differentiation; in the meantime two main objectives were followed: to find some architectural evidence of the wall (length, width, height) and to collect as much dating material culture as possible.

Visconti, C., *The Chinese-Italian Archaeological Mission to Longmen*, pp. 163-176

The Chinese-Italian Archaeological Mission to Longmen was established in 1997 with the aim of bringing to light the Buddhist monastic complex of the Fengxiansi 奉先寺, whose remains lie southwest of the celebrated Longmen Caves, 12 km south of the present town of Luoyang 洛阳, in the Chinese province of Henan 河南. When Buddhism was at its most widespread in China, during the Northern Wei 北魏 (386-534) and Sui 隋 (581-618) dynasties, and for most of the Tang 唐 dynasty (618-907), the city of Luoyang stood out as both a political and a religious centre. The same period saw the excavation of the over 2000 sanctuaries cut in the limestone cliff along the banks of the Yi River 伊水, 12 km south of the modern city. The complex was to become famous with the name of Longmen 龙门, Dragon Gate, and was declared a world heritage of humanity site by UNESCO in 2000 .

THE CHINESE-ITALIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL MISSION TO LONGMEN*

Chiara Visconti

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The most spectacular of the rock-cut sanctuaries, commissioned by the Tang emperor Gaozong 高宗 (r. 649-683) and his wife Wu Zhao 武曩 in 662 and raised between 672 and 676, is known both as Da Lushena xiang kan, 大卢舍那像龕 (Cave of the Great Vairocana Statue) and, more commonly, as Fengxiansi 奉先寺, from the name of the monastery having control over it (Fig. 1). In fact, the caves of the Longmen complex were in a sense dependent on the monasteries in the area, often taking their names. However, the historical sources on the monasteries in the Longmen area

* The present text is largely taken from Visconti (forth.) *Architectural Decorations and Other Finds from the Excavation of the Fengxiansi, Longmen*, Napoli.

generally show considerable limitations, and are far from exhaustive, the Fengxiansi being no exception. Almost all that was known of the Fengxiansi before the excavation campaigns was based on an inscription (probably dating to 723) displayed on the pedestal of the great Vaiocana Buddha statue in the homonymous sanctuary. The inscription, that is a record of the establishment and of the early history of the imperial Fengxiansi Monastery up to its merging with the Longhuasi 龙华寺 Monastery, was recently reinterpreted by professor Antonino Forte (1996), whose epigraphic studies, together with the tentative identification of the site by Chinese archaeologists, led a delegation from the Università degli Studi di Napoli “L’Orientale” to visit the area in October 1994. This visit eventually resulted in an agreement for a three year scientific programme¹ signed in March 1997 between the Università degli Studi di Napoli “L’Orientale”, the IsIAO (Rome), the Italian School of East Asian Studies (Kyōto), the Longmen Grottoes Academy (Longmen shiku yanjiuyuan 龙门石窟研究院) and the Bureau for Cultural Relics of Luoyang (Luoyangshi wenwuju 洛阳市文物局).

From the very beginning the project was a collaborative interdisciplinary research effort involving specialists in archaeology, geology, history of art, restoration and philology. Beyond archaeological excavation, which constituted the main focus of the Mission, the project encompassed mapping and general surveying of the area, digital archaeology, conservation and restoration, training of both Italian and Chinese junior archaeologists. Thanks to the efforts of Prof. Antonino Forte and Prof. Lucia Caterina, directors of the project, Prof. Giovanni Verardi, fieldwork director of the Italian team, and Prof. Silvio Vita, there were many Università degli Studi di Napoli “L’Orientale” graduate and undergraduate students who had the opportunity to participate in the excavations, and I was one of them.

¹ The agreement has been renewed in 2000 and 2003.

The Site

The site of Fengxiansi is situated on a small plateau at an altitude of about 180m ASL, to the southwest of the Longmen complex and north of the village of Weiwan 魏湾 (Fig. 2).² The plateau consists of alternating loess and fluvial deposits attributable to the Pleistocene activity of the River Yi. The area morphology has been profoundly altered by human intervention. Long ago, in ancient times, the natural slope of the plateau had been levelled with the creation of a series of artificial terraces running north-south and west-east. Further terracing was carried out in modern times for agricultural exploitation of the area, in some cases entailing total removal of the archaeological deposit.

The complex is bounded to the north by a deep ditch, while to the south the archaeological deposit is covered - and in part obliterated - by the modern village of Weiwan. The northern area - the best conserved - consists of three terraces created with fills of archaeologically sterile earth, the upper level rising about 7 m above the lower.

During the excavation we found epigraphic evidence that the Fengxiansi corresponds to the site.

The Excavations

From 1997 to 2004, the Chinese-Italian Mission conducted seven excavation campaigns, opening trial trenches in different areas of the site to obtain as much information as possible about its stratification. Additional campaigns were conducted in 2003 to consolidate building remains and in 2004 to study, draw, and photograph the finds. From 2004 onwards the material studies are scheduled that shall be concluded by the publication of the final report.

Archaeological excavation of the Fengxiansi has been conducted mainly on the middle terrace, in the northern area of the site, where the deposit appeared best conserved. Over 2500 sq m were unearthed, bringing

² For a description of the site, see also the report on the 1997 excavations (Verardi and Liu Jinglong 1998, 411-3; Forte 2003; Verardi 2005).

to light the remains of a large-scale monastery and reviling a long chronological sequence with practically uninterrupted frequentation of the site from the first centuries BC up to the 13th century AD.

In the early centuries of the Current Era the area was used as a burial place: two tombs datable to the Eastern Han 东汉 (25-220 AD), one of which complete with grave gifts, were excavated at the foot of the terrace on which the *stūpa* rises (Fig. 3).

To judge by the material brought to light, the monastery is unlikely to have been founded before the end of the 7th century³. Our excavation has also provided evidence attesting to the fact that the structures of the Fengxiansi were not abandoned in a single phase but were restored or even rebuilt over a long period. We know with certainty that the Fengxiansi continued to be a well-known monastery at least until the end of the 11th century. In fact, two inscriptions attesting to the existence of the monastery in this period have been found, dating to the mid-11th century and October 1081. Contrary to the evidence offered by the sources, however, the life of the monastery came to an end shortly after, at least in the area so far investigated. By the 12th or, at the latest, the 13th century the monastery had ceased to exist, and the site saw activities mainly associated with the presence of kilns on the site itself or in an adjacent area. Some of the structures were abandoned, while others were put to different uses. By the end of the 13th century activities on the site had ceased, and both the monastery structures and subsequent installations were covered by the layers of rubble that began to form in this period. Accumulations subsequent to the final abandonment of the structures led to the formation of an archaeological deposit of about 1,5 m on average. In the 18th-19th century the site began to see use as a burial place. In modern times the area has been used mainly for agricultural purposes.

³ These structures probably belonged to the Longhuasi monastery, with which the Fengxiansi was merged in 723 (Verardi and Liu Jinglong 1998, 416).

The structures of the Fengxiansi

Even before the beginning of the excavations, the remains of the monastery *stūpa*, built by compacting layers of tamped crude earth one upon another, were visible in the northeast corner of the site, on the upper terrace (Verardi and Liu Jinglong 1998, 411-12).

The excavations in the Fengxiansi area have concentrated on the exposure of the remains of the monastery on the middle terrace, north of the highway that crosses the site from east to west (Figs. 4 - 5). The uncovered structures are likely to belong to three halls and stratigraphically reveal at least two phases of occupation.

The pavement uncovered at the centre of the terrace (central hall), built on a basement of earth filling, in part compacted, belonged to a great quadrangular hall (25×17 m) accessed from the south by means of a trapezoidal ramp connecting it with an external level. On either side of the ramp is a basement displaying slots for wooden fixtures, probably for an entrance portal of 3,40 m in breadth. The pavement in square bricks and the bases of columns in stone are best conserved in the northern part. A drain with brick facing represents the northern limit of the hall.

Another structure (east hall), delimited by column bases, rose to the east of the first hall, access being again from the south, by means of a small ramp that still conserves its brick facing (Fig. 6).

On the opposite side another hall (west hall), set symmetrically to the east hall, was delimited to the south by a drain and stretched in a north-south direction for the entire length of the courtyard giving access to the central hall. The excavation of the latter hall has not been completed.

Two rooms dug in the loess in the northern area of the middle terrace were also brought to light. The relation between the halls and the rooms is not yet completely clear.

As for chronology, a general framework of more or less absolute dates has been worked out for the excavated remains. Towards the mid-9th century the structures of the monastic establishment were abandoned probably in consequence of a traumatic event. The area was probably reoccupied by the monastery after fifty years at the latest, and most of the structures were extensively restored or rebuilt, while the statues belonging to the original complex found new use.

During the 10th-11th centuries the monastery structures underwent restoration works, as attested, for example, by a pavement, made of reused bricks, and restoration of a drain. However, the life of the monastery came to an end shortly after, at least in the area so far investigated. Some of the structures were abandoned during the 12th century, while others were put to different uses. The only primary roof collapse on the site offers material datable to, and no later than, the 12th century.

The Finds

Besides the pottery corpus, which, due to its size, requires a separate study, nearly 560 finds have been inventoried, showing considerable variety and covering a fairly extensive chronological span. Study of the finds began with identification and cataloguing of the objects - tasks that often proved challenging given their fragmentary conditions. Initial classification was made grouping the material together in six broad classes: stone sculptures, inscriptions, architectural decorations and building materials, coins, metal objects, and furnishings.

The sculptural fragments came from various contexts: many were part of the layer of rubble covering the paving, while some were in direct contact with the pavement. A considerable number of fragments fitted together, and the original statues could thus be reconstructed, in some cases completely. The statues depict Buddhas, Bodhisattvas (Fig. 7), monks and iconographical motifs such as the Thousand Buddhas. The material used to sculpt the images is a grey limestone, obtained from the nearby Longmen rock formation. On the stylistic evidence the earliest of these statues can be dated precisely to the late 7th-early 8th century, thus belonging to a period in which the new Fengxiansi had yet to come into existence (Testa 2002). It is in fact this date that suggests they belonged to the Longhuasi, which is of course the monastery with which the Fengxiansi was eventually merged. Some of the sculptures look to have suffered destruction on purpose for reasons that are still unclear.

Some fragments of stone inscriptions have also been brought to light, one of which constitutes the evidence that the Fengxiansi was actually in the excavated site (Forte 2003; forthcoming).

Most of the fragments belong to architectural decoration (Fig. 8). As is the case with the other Buddhist monasteries, the framework of columns and horizontal beams, made in perishable materials, does not survive. The wooden pillars, now lost, supported roofs covered with tiles, great quantities of which were found all over the area. The major effort was to ascribe as precise as possible a chronological horizon to these finds on the basis of the site's stratigraphy, and comparison with dated material from similar contexts. In China archaeological research has seen a considerable boost in the last few years. An increasing number of excavation reports are being published, with consequent extension of the scope for comparison but the dating systems are often based on the dynastic grid, covering sometimes a chronological span of two or three centuries. Moreover, in the case of the Fengxiansi the greatest difficulties resulted from the fact that hardly any of the finds were found in primary deposit, while early material was often found in recently formed layers. However, comparison with objects found in undisturbed units of stratification and a careful examination of their horizontal distribution allowed us to re-contextualize the majority of the finds.

All data have been stored in a digital archive and 3D reconstructions of the roofs of the monastery have been generated. The reconstructed 3D models have been created through the identification of the roofing material, the definition of the relations between different elements and of their building functions. The resulting photorealistic images are especially useful to visualize the original appearance of the roofs of the monastery during its different periods of life and are intended as a first step towards the 3D rendering of the site.

Publications

The Fengxiansi complex is one of the few Chinese Buddhist monasteries to have been extensively excavated. The Italian and Chinese teams' efforts to gain the broadest possible understanding of the site and the surrounding area have already led to the publishing of several studies. Even before the beginning of the excavation, Wen Yucheng (1992) and Antonino Forte (1996) carried out studies of the monastery based on epigraphic sources. Wen Yucheng, who at the time was the director of the

Longmen Grottoes Academy, had already published the results of the first survey of the site (1986).

The first preliminary report, based on the excavation campaign of 1997, was published in volume 58 of the *Annali dell'Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli* (Verardi and Liu Jinglong 1998). This was followed by a second preliminary report published by the Chinese team, updated to 2001 (Fengxiansi 2001). Giovanni Verardi later provided a brief illustration of the structures and materials brought to light (2001; 2005).

Erika Forte has focused on the inscriptions found on the site, publishing one (2003) and discussing another at the 50th Anniversary of the Longmen Grottoes Academy 2004 (forthcoming).

Aurora Testa (2002) has conducted a detailed study of the sculptures brought to light at Fengxiansi, some of which have been shown at exhibitions in Japan (Miho Museum 2001), Belgium (Van Alphen, 2001), and Italy (in Naples and, more recently, Florence) (Caterina and Verardi, 2005; Rastelli, 2008).

A detailed study of the architectural decorations, from which the present text is taken, will be published shortly in the forthcoming volume of the *Annali dell'Università degli Studi di Napoli "L'Orientale"* (Visconti forthcoming).

Finally, Marco Guglielminotti Trivel (2004; 2005; 2006) has carried out further investigations of the Longmen area.

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Fig.1- Longmen Caves. Fengxiansi Shrine.
Copyright IsIAO (photo by E. Monti)



Fig.2 - site of the Fengxiansi. Aerial view before excavation. Courtesy of the Longmen Grottoes Academy



Fig.3 - site of the Fengxiansi. Grave goods of the Eastern Han tomb. Copyright IsIAO (photo by E. Monti)



Fig.4 - site of the Fengxiansi. General view of the excavated area with the central hall.
Copyright ISIAO (photo by E. Monti)

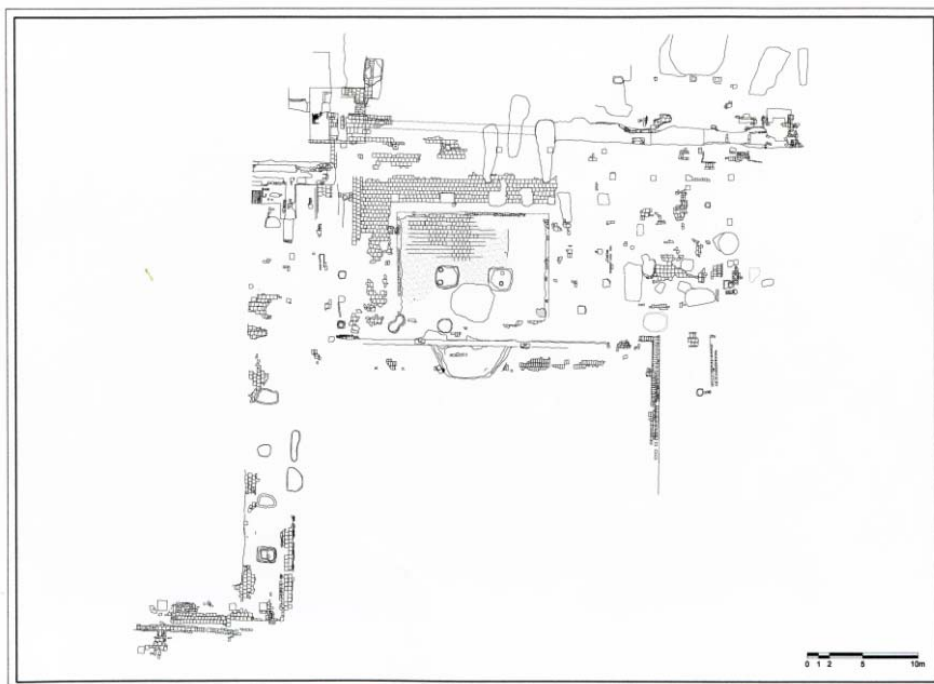


Fig.5 - site of the Fengxiansi. Plan of the structures in the excavated area
(Drawing by A.G. Fabiani)



Fig. 6 - site of the Fengxiansi. Ramp giving access to the east hall.
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Fig.7 - site of the Fengxiansi. Statue of Mahastamaprapta.
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Fig.8 - tile-ends with lotus flower decoration. Copyright IsIAO (photo by E. Monti)