

HCECR-MAIKI JOINT STUDY OF THE CERAMIC MATERIALS FROM THE ERBIL CITADEL



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In 2015 the High Commission For Erbil Citadel Revitalization (HCECR) and the Italian Archaeological Mission In Iraqi Kurdistan of Sapienza University of Rome (MAIKI) signed an agreement for a joint study of the ceramic material from the Erbil Citadel Excavation.



The Erbil Citadel is an archaeological site located in the centre of the modern city of Erbil, capital of the Kurdish Autonomous Region of Iraq.

The site, inscribed in June 2014 in the UNESCO World Heritage list, consists in a *tell* about 32 meter high with a top surface of almost 15 hectares and an archaeological stratigraphy of almost 24 meters.

The buildings visible on the top of the Citadel are mostly dated to the Ottoman period but the data collected so far seem to confirm an anthropic occupation of this area at least from the 4th millennium BC.



From December 2015 to August 2017 four campaign of the HCECR – MAIKI joint study of the ceramic materials have been carried out.

During the project four members of MAIKI, Dr. Luca Colliva, co-director of MAIKI, Marco Galuppi, Serenella Mancini and Aila Santi, worked together with the HCECR staff members Sangar Mohammed Abdullah, Chinar Faris Mohammed and Hezha Zayar Mohammed with the supervision of Dara al-Yaqoobi, Head of the HCECR.

The Ceramic material was collected during four excavation campaigns carried out by HCECR with the supervising of John MacGinnis and Mary Shepperson.

The stratigraphic data, provided by HCECR, were compared with those obtained from the study of the ceramic material in order to verify and update, when needed, the chronology proposed for the identified phases.

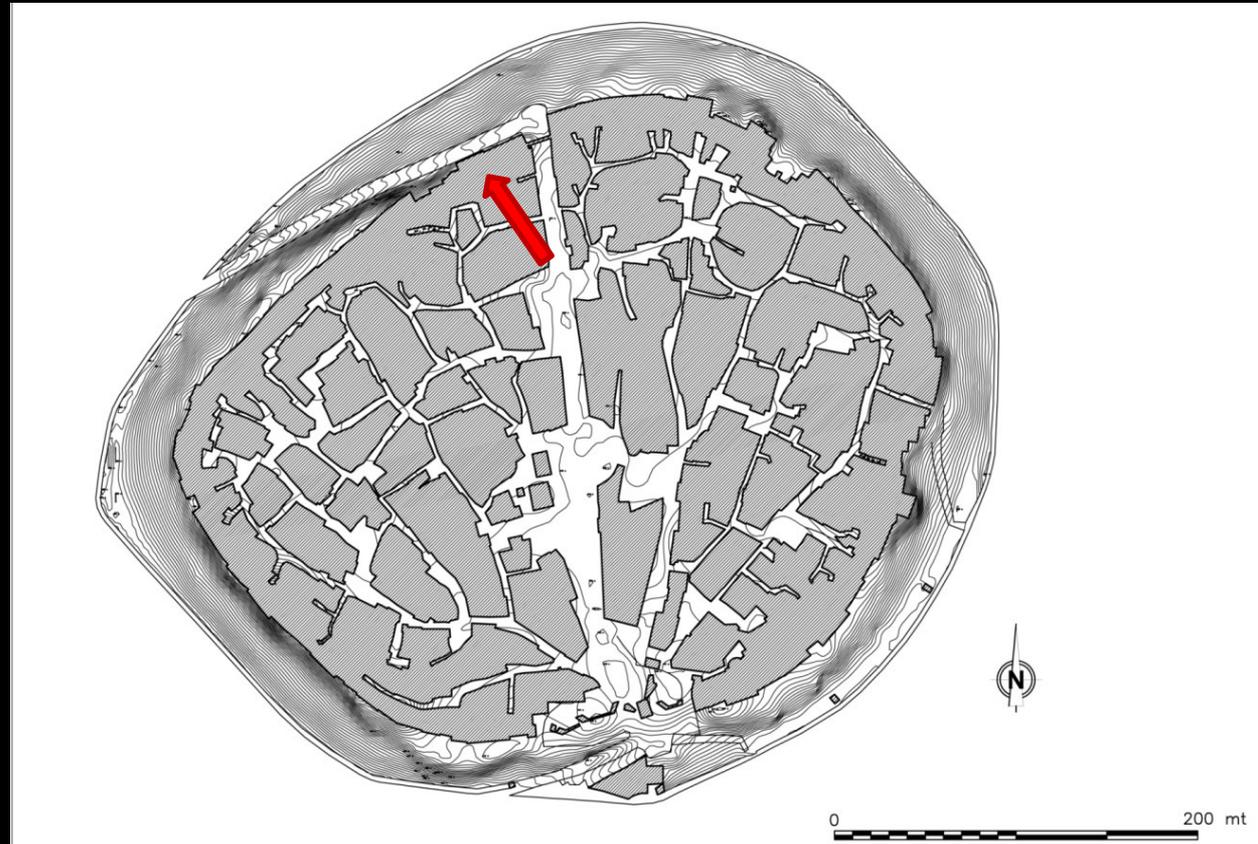
The study of the ceramic material also gave the possibility of investigate commercial connections, suggested by the presence in the corpus of some wares from both the Iranian plateau and the Syrian territories.

At the same time we had the possibility to identify some interesting local productions.

CERAMIC MATERIALS FROM AREA E

We present a survey of the materials from area E, near the north gate of the Citadel.

In this sector, the excavations brought to light the remains of an imposing multi phase perimeter wall.





On the basis of the material and stratigraphic data, we identified eight different phases, almost coincident with the phases proposed by John McGinnis and the HCECR team at the end of the excavation.

Here we present the main stratigraphic units for each phase and the most significant materials up to now identified.

Phase 8 and Phase 7

7	ARSACID PERIOD? (WITH SOME ISLAMIC INTRUDER)	SU 161	<u>Siliceous paste</u> Monochrome glazed ware	<u>12th-13th century AD</u> Arsacid Period?
8a		SSU 145		
8b		SSU 164		
		SSU 155		

In Phase 8b we have only two mud brick walls corresponding to the oldest identified remains of the perimeter wall of the Citadel.

No material is associated with these layers and we have no direct data for its chronological attribution.

Phase 8a, corresponds for us to a repair or reconstruction of the Perimeter wall.

Also for Phase 8a we have no material associated with this layer.

On the contrary, the accumulation layer assigned to Phase 7 yielded some interesting materials.

A fragment of siliceous paste with monochrome turquoise glaze visibly altered, provisionally dated between the 12th and the 13th century AD, is most likely an intruder, probably connected with a pit.

Perhaps more significant are two small fragments of glazed monochrome ware. The presence of these two fragments, together with the dating of the materials found in the subsequent Phase, allow us to tentatively propose for Phase 7 an Arsacid period chronology.



Siliceous paste

Phase 6

6a	SASANIAN OR ISLAMIC PERIOD (?)	SU 143	<u>Moulded ware</u> Monochrome glazed ware Impressed ware Fishplate with red slip	<u>10th-13th century AD</u> - "Sasanian period" ?? 4 th -1 st century BC
		SU 141	<u>Underglazed painted ware</u>	<u>12th-14th century AD?</u>
		SU 153	Opaque Monochrome glazed ware	11 th -13 th century AD
6b	ARSACID OR SASANIAN PERIOD ? (WITH SOME ISLAMIC INTRUDER)	SU 142	<u>Siliceous paste</u> Monochrome glazed ware Semicircular grip Egg shell	<u>12th-13th century AD</u> - 4 th -9 th century AD
		SU 160	Fishplate Slip ware	4 th -1 st century BC
		SU 162		
		SSU 148		
		SSU 147		
		SU 154	Monochrome glazed ware Basin with two grooves on the rim Brittle ware Fishplate Lachrymatory Phiale	- Hellenist or Arsacid 1 st -10 th century AD 4 th -1 st century BC 4 th -1 st century BC 4 th -1 st century BC

Ceramic material from phase 6b, suggests a dating to the Arsacid or Sasanian period, as indicated by fishplates, monochrome glazed ware, *lachrymatory*, *phiale* and fragments with Semicircular grip.



Fishplate



Semicircular grip

Phase 6

6a	SASANIAN OR ISLAMIC PERIOD (?)	SU 143	<u>Moulded ware</u> Monochrome glazed ware Impressed ware Fishplate with red slip	<u>10th-13th century AD</u> - "Sasanian period" ?? 4 th -1 st century BC
		SU 141	<u>Underglazed painted ware</u>	<u>12th-14th century AD?</u>
		SU 153	Opaque Monochrome glazed ware	11 th -13 th century AD
6b	ARSACID OR SASANIAN PERIOD ? (WITH SOME ISLAMIC INTRUDER)	SU 142	<u>Siliceous paste</u> Monochrome glazed ware Semicircular grip Egg shell	<u>12th-13th century AD</u> - 4 th -9 th century AD
		SU 160	Fishplate Slip ware	4 th -1 st century BC
		SU 162		
		SSU 148		
		SSU 147		
		SU 154	Monochrome glazed ware Basin with two grooves on the rim Brittle ware Fishplate Lachrymatory Phiale	- Hellenist or Arsacid 1 st -10 th century AD 4 th -1 st century BC 4 th -1 st century BC 4 th -1 st century BC

Phase 6a, on the contrary, is quite problematic and appears to be connected to a late Sasanian or Islamic horizon.

We know that the C14 analysis made on samples from layer SU 141-153, a layer of ash possibly connected with a destruction or large fire and spread over the entire area outside the perimeter wall, gave a dating around the 1st century AD, but the presence of sasanian sherds and the increasing number of Islamic sherds and monochrome turquoise glazed wares, even opaque, suggest a later dating.

Noteworthy is the underglazed painted earthenware sherd. This production appears to be an imitation of underglazed painted ware in siliceous paste and we can suggest for it a dating between 13th-14th centuries.



Opaque Monochrome glazed ware



Underglazed painted ware

103

Starting from these layers, the corpus includes an increasing number of relief moulded wares with different decorations.

They are all dated between the 10th and the 13th century AD.



Moulded ware

Phase 5

5	TERMINUS POST QUEM: 12TH-13TH CENTURY AD	SSU 119	Moulded ware	10 th -13 th century AD
		SSU 150		
		SSU 158?		
		SU 152		
		SU 136	Siliceous paste Sgraffiato monochrome ware Monochrome Turquoise	12 th -13 th century AD 12 th -13 th century AD "Early Islamic"?

The presence of siliceous paste, moulded ware and Sgraffiato monochrome ware suggests for Phase 5 a dating between the 12th and 13th century AD.

No layers connected with the early Islamic period has been clearly identified and we cannot exclude that these layers have been completely removed, at least in this area, perhaps due to levelling actions.



Siliceous paste handle



Sgraffiato monochrome ware



Moulded ware

Phase 4 and Phase 3

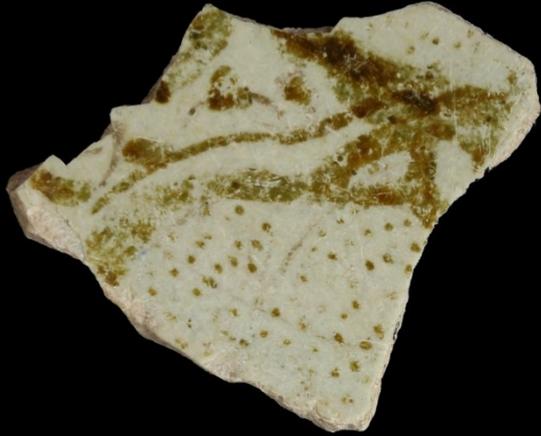
4a	TERMINUS POST QUEM: 12TH-13TH CENTURY AD	SSU 018?		
		SSU 163?		
		SSU 017?		
		SSU 132		
4b	TERMINUS POST QUEM: 12TH-13TH CENTURY AD	SSU 133		
		SSU 134		
		SSU 137		
		SU 135		

Phase 4 is a structural phase that includes some minor structures, in detail the remains of a stairway against the wall 119.

Up to now no dating material has been identified in these layers.

3	UNCERTAIN TERMINUS POST QUEM: END OF THE 12TH-14TH CENTURY AD	SU 122	Siliceous paste Sgraffiato monochrome ware Moulded ware	11th-14th century AD 12th-13th century AD 10th-13th century AD
		SSU 056?		
		SU 126	Sgraffiato monochrome ware Moulded ware Splashed ware	12th-13th century AD 10th-13th century AD 9th-10th century AD
		SU 127	Siliceous paste Sgraffiato monochrome ware Moulded ware Splashed ware	11th-14th century AD 12th-13th century AD 10th-13th century AD 9th-10th century AD
		SSU 093		
		SSU 016		
		SSU 123	Ottoman pipe Champlevé Moulded ware Fishplate	Ottoman period 12th-13th century AD 10th-13th century AD 4th-1st century BC
		SU 128	Lustre ware Siliceous paste Sgraffiato splashed ware Moulded ware	12th-14th century AD 11th-14th century AD 11th-13th century AD 10th-13th century AD
		SU 129-130	Lustre ware Siliceous paste Unglazed earthenware with applied decoration Sgraffiato monochrome ware Sgraffiato splashed ware Moulded ware Splashed ware Semicircular grip Brittle ware	12th-14th century AD 11th-14th century AD 13 th-14th cent. AD 12th-13th century AD 11th-13th century AD 10th-13th century AD 9th-10th century AD 4th-9th century AD 1st-10th century AD

Phase 3 is much more rich and the ceramic materials suggest for this Phase a dating between the end of the 12th and the 14th century AD.



Lustre



Champlevé



Unglazed ware with applied decorations

Phase 2 and Phase 1

2	TERMINUS POST QUEM: 12 TH -14 TH CENTURY AD	SU 115	Moulded ware <u>Bowl with inturned rim</u>	10 th -13 th century AD 4 th -1 st century BC
		SU 120	Fritware Moulded ware Splashed ware	11 th -14 th century AD 10 th -13 th century AD 9 th -10 th century AD
		SSU 094	Unglazed earthenware with applied decoration	13 th -14 th cent. AD
		SSU 095	Splashed ware	9 th -10 th century AD
		SU 121		

Phase 2 and Phase 1 mostly show materials in secondary deposition, probably caused by levelling actions.

In particular for Phase 1, equivalent to Phase 3 identified by John MacGinnis, we support the dating from the 18th century AD he proposed. This dating is also confirmed by the presence of a large number of ottoman ceramic pipes.

The collection of ceramic pipes found on the Citadel is quite interesting and deserves a dedicated study that we hope to schedule for the next future.





In Phase 1, the presence in the same layers of Raqqa ware, dated to 12th-13th century AD, together with ottoman pipes; fishplates and bowl with inturned rims together with splashed ware and sgraffiato wares, both monochrome and Splashed; sasanian stamp ware together with Ottoman pipe, moulded wares and splashed ware confirm the secondary deposition of most of the material and the levelling activities already identified by MacGinnis.



Raqqa ware



Sasanian stamp ware

The presence in the layers of Phase 1 of a kiln peg and trivets used as spacers suggest the existence of a local production on the Citadel, but unfortunately, the nature of the layers do not permit any dating.



Trivet and Kiln peg



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